Danish, with some extra spice

A qualitative study into the ethnic and cultural identity construction of multiracial Danes

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Abstract

Due to increasing migration, Denmark becomes a diverse country. As a result of this growing diversity, transnational and transracial families become more common, leading to an increase in multiracial individuals within Danish society. Multiracial Danes are defined as individuals who have one Danish parent as well as one parent of another racial background. Relating to issues of identity, this study aims to understand the process of ethnic and cultural identity construction in multiracial Danes. For this purpose, six in-depth interviews have been conducted with multiracial Danes of different ethnic backgrounds.

A qualitative study was conducted, based on the philosophical stances of interpretivism and social constructionism. The chosen research design was a case study design in combination with a grounded theory approach for the data analysis. Additionally, two theories on ethnic and cultural identity construction were used in the data analysis. The primary data was analysed following the three-step grounded theory model resulting in four main categories. which were used to construct a theoretical model on multiracial identity.

The four main categories that emerged from the data of the interviews were used to answer the central research question that aims to explore the complex process of ethnic and cultural identity construction amongst Multiracial Danes and their relationship to the concept of Danishness. These categories are: (1) Being multiracial in Denmark, (2) Physical Appearance, (3) Exploration of ethnic identity, and (4) Self-identification with cultural identity. The results from the analysis show that Multiracial Danes self-identify with two possible identity patterns when it comes to their ethnic identity: (1) Situational identity, where ethnic identity is contextually dependent, or (2) Multiple Mono-ethnic identity, where the individual identifies with the ethnic identities of their heritage. Moreover, all identify culturally as Danish.

The findings highlight the dynamic and complex nature of identity construction, underscore the challenges faced by multiracial Danes in relation to Danishness, and emphasize the need for inclusive approaches to accommodate identity construction of Multiracial Danes within Danish society. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on mixed race studies in a Scandinavian context and serves as a foundation for future research, hoping to inspire others to engage in critical conversations regarding experiences of minoritized individuals.

Key words: ethnic identity, cultural identity, multiracial, Danishness, identity construction, discrimination

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1. Introduction

A year ago, I had an interesting conversation with one of my friends I met at university here in Denmark, we will call her Celine. Celine and I are both of West-African heritage, we both grew up with our mothers in a predominantly White European country, and we both did not have our West-African father involved in our upbringing. Celine and I thus have very similar background as mixed-race individuals. Yet she remarked that our experiences are probably still different, since I grew up in a more multicultural country than she did, thus implying that having been exposed to diversity at a younger age has been more beneficial in my identity development.

The suggestion that multiracial individuals have different experiences based on external factors in their upbringing is the implication that lies at the root of this thesis. The influence of external factors on identity formation is a topic that has been well-researched in academic literature on social identity (Jenkins, 2014). However, there is a lack of research on the identity formation of multiracial individuals, especially in a European context. Even within Europe's borders, the difference in experience of multiracial individuals can be examined as the demographic make-up of the population varies widely across the continent, which is suggested by Celine to be of significant importance on the experiences that multiracial individuals have, living in Europe.

The European continent in itself is already incredibly diverse in different ethnicities and cultures, with a high number of migrations contributing more to this level of diversity. With migration having become a contemporary global phenomenon, diversity has developed itself into a salient topic within social research (Haas et al., 2022). This has caused social researchers to look with ever-growing interest at the impact of migration on the concept of the nation-state, nationalism and national identity across the continent.

Increasing levels of globalisation have had important social and political implications on the role of the nation-state in contemporary politics. According to Cederman, the nation-state happens when the nation and the state coincide both territorially and demographically (Cederman, 2020). The nation, in this case, is a social construct, created and imagined by people who ascribe themselves as members of a group that share a common identity based on a shared sense of belonging (Anderson, 1991). When looking at the history of mainland Europe, the notion of the nation-state has had an important role in the creation of national identity and nationalism.

In the case of Denmark, the nation-state ideal has been a crucial aspect of Danish nationalism and the construction of Danish identity. Denmark, as a small Scandinavian country, has a long history of

nation-building and a strong attachment to its national identity. It has, for a very long time, maintained the idea of being a homogenous nation. And this perceived homogeneity is deeply rooted in the way both outsiders and insiders look at Denmark. One only has to look at political discourse on the welfare state and immigration to get an example of how many attribute the possibility of the existence of this robust welfare-state to the "fact" that Denmark is homogenous (Siim & Meret, 2016). Too much difference, and the whole system will crumble. Too many foreigners, and the Danish national identity will vanish.

Like many other European nations, Denmark has to deal with the 'consequences' of an increasingly globalised world in which migration is no longer stranger to its population. Due to increases levels of migration, Denmark is becoming increasingly multicultural, which becomes visible in the ethnic makeup of its population (Kærgård, 2010). In 2023, immigrants and their descendants make up 15.4% of the population, with projections showing that this will only increase (Statistics Denmark, 2023).

This increase in migration and an increasingly pluralising society has led to discussions about the nature of Danish national identity. This shifting landscape has prompted a critical examination of the concept of Danishness and its relationship to ethnicity, culture, and race. Put more bluntly, it revolves around the question of who is Danish and who is not?

Moreover, this increase in migration has led to an increase in transnational marriages. It is difficult to get an estimate of the exact number of multiracial children that resulted from these marriages as the Danish institution for statistics does not categorise multiracial Danes as a category of their own, just referring to them as Danes. However, as more individuals are growing up in multicultural households, they will face unique challenges in forming their identity within a Danish society that maintains a predominantly White and homogeneous self-perception (Skadegård, 2022). In this context, the exploration of ethnic and cultural identity formation among multiracial Danes becomes particularly relevant.

Research shows that multiracial individuals in Denmark experience various problems that influence identity construction, such as structural discrimination, inclusion/exclusion narratives and also stigmatisation and racialisation (Skadegård & Horst, 2021). Peter Hervik mentions how racially minoritized individuals are presumed to be outsiders, often based on their physical appearance and are thus perceived as not equal but a mere visitor in someone else's space or territory (Hervik, 2004). This is often implicitly articulated in public discourse on national identity, belonging and citizenship (Skadegård, 2018).

Multiracial individuals thus find themselves in a confusing environment in which they are categorised by outsiders as the other, while also navigating their own Danishness being of Danish heritage themselves. By examining the complexities of ethnic and cultural identity formation among multiracial Danes, this thesis seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how the concept of Danishness is evolving in response to globalization and changing societal dynamics. The following central research question has been formulated to investigate these matters in this thesis:

"How is ethnic and cultural identity constructed by Multiracial Danes, and how do they relate to the concept of Danishness in this process?"

To answer this question comprehensively, this thesis will be structed according to several steps. First, a definition of the terminology that has been used will be presented. Thereafter, literature on the topics of mixed-race studies will be outlined, emphasis will also be placed on mixed-race studies in a Danish context as well as an overview of existing literature on the concept of Danishness in relation to multiraciality. The next step contains the methodological framework that has been used to collect and analyse. The methodology chapter will also cover questions of ontology and epistemology in order to give a transparent overview of the research process.

Next, a chapter dedicated to theories that have been used for the analysis of data will follow the methodology, including existing theoretical models on ethnic identity development. The chapter will furthermore include a self-constructed model on ethnic and cultural identity construction based on the findings from the interviews that have been conducted. The analysis of the collected primary data will follow next, in which the most important findings will be presented using quotes from the interviewees personally. A grounded theory approach was used in order to analyse, code and interpret the collected data. The chapter will be organised according to the selective codes that were identified during the analysis process. Finally, the most important findings will be discussed in the Discussion with a focus on implications of the research and suggestions for further inquiry, followed by a conclusion to round up the research and summarize the answer to the research question.

2. Terminology

This chapter will give an overview of the terminology that has been most frequently used throughout this thesis. It provides a socio-historical context to the different concepts that underpin my analysis as well as an explanation as to why I have chosen these terms and concepts and how I will use them. The aim of this is to enhance the clarity and coherence of this study.

2.1. Types of identity: Cultural, ethnic, national, racial.

For the purpose of this thesis is important to properly define the concepts of race, ethnicity and nationality to avoid conflation between these. These concepts are often used interchangeably, especially in the case of identity construction. However, I would like to make a distinction between the three of them.

Identity in itself can be understood as a set of meanings that define who an individual is in a role, in a group or social category (Burke, 2020). It gives answer to the question of what it means "to be" for an individual, i.e., what it means to be a woman. One can have multiple identities, thus it is possible to identify both with the racial, the ethnic, the national and the cultural (Jenkins, 2014).

2.1.1. Racial identity

Within the literature there exists a long-standing controversy regarding the use of the terms 'ethnicity' and 'race'. Some authors recommend using only *ethnicity*, as the use of *race* implies the existence of a biological foundation (Cokley, 2007; Smedley & Smedley, 2005; Stanfield, 1995). Others argue that we should continue using *race*, especially to get a better understanding of racism and the experiences of racialised individuals (Osanami Törngren & Suyemoto, 2022; Song, 2018).

In my thesis, I apply Lentin's understanding of *race* as that of a technology of power (Lentin, 2020). *Race* has often been presented as an objective and natural social category rooted in phenotypes and supposed biological difference in physical abilities linked to those phenotypes (Osanami Törngren & Suyemoto, 2022). Although this is a faulty view, it does not mean that race is not real or does not matter anymore. Rather, as Törngren and Suyemoto explain: "Race as a social category is rooted in the historical and current creation and maintenance of hierarchies of power and related privilege and oppression." (Osanami Törngren & Suyemoto, 2022; p. 2) it is then linked to that which is visible: phenotypes.

Through this understanding, Törngren and Suyemoto explain that thus it is not about race, but rather about racism. Racism is a structural system of hierarchies of power that manifest itself in either privilege or oppression. Privilege is automatically ascribed through membership of a certain socially constructed category which renders them more powerful as opposed to those who are powerless

and marginalised: the oppressed. This privilege/oppression hierarchy is thus what dictates *race*, as "the racial privilege or oppression that one experiences is not an individual choice, given that race is a social construct embedded in societal cultures and institutions." (Osanami Törngren & Suyemoto, 2022; p.2)

Through this understanding of race and racism, I choose to adopt Maria Root's definition of racial identity as a process of healing from the wounds of racism. She sees racial identity formation as the antidote to racism, as a ways for an individual to "establish a constructive sense of self which affirms the possibility of a positive racial and ethnic identity" (Root, 1998; p. 144). This definition, I feel like, gives back agency to individuals to positively identify with a social construct that is imposed upon them by a racist system. Racial identity is thus an amalgamation of meanings, attitudes and importance an individual ascribes to a certain racial category, mostly based on perceived biological characteristics.

2.1.2. Ethnic identity

Ethnic identity is more concerned with how an individual relates themselves to a certain ethnic group. Braswell understands ethnicity as a description of shared cultural expressions and self-identification of a group (Braswell, 2022). The ethnicity an individual can identify with is historically, geographically and contextually dependent (Fenton, 2010). Often nationality plays a role in this, however, it is possible for an individual to identify with a different ethnic group regardless of nationality. Moreover, it is also possible for an individual to identify with multiple ethnicities such as someone being .

It is important to note that ethnicity is, to certain extents, fluid, in the sense that ethnic identities are constantly "reinvented". Joane Nagel (1994) explains how the two building blocks of ethnicity 1) identity and 2) culture are internally redefined, reconstructed by setting ethnic boundaries. These boundaries determine who is and isn't a member of the ethnic group. Through this process certain ethnic identities can re-emerge, e.g. the emergence of a Latino ethnicity amongst Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in the U.S. separate from "previous" ethnic affiliation (Nagel, 1994; Padilla, 1985)

2.1.3. National identity

For this thesis I use the definition of national identity as the sense of belonging to a state or nation. Important for this is to understand the concept of the nation as an entity that represents the traditions, culture and language. I understand it as a way it solves the need of an individual to belong to something, it gives them purpose and a sense of "individual and collective worth" (McCrone & Bechhofer, 2015). This way it can exist alongside racial and/or ethnic identity, or function as a fix for when one does not feel attached to one of those.

However, I also recognise that national identity is complex and multifaceted, thus people choose what national identity means to them which can be different from "what's on offer", national identity is thus transactional and by extension situational (Jenkins, 2014; McCrone & Bechhofer, 2015).

2.1.4. Cultural identity

Cultural identity is interconnected with both the racial, the ethnic and the national. It encompasses a sense of belonging to a particular cultural collective. Collective identity answers to question of "who am I as a member of my collective/group" thus referring to one's beliefs and attitudes towards group membership (Parcel, 1981; Usborne & de la Sablonnière, 2014). Ashmore et. al. explain how the collective experiences, history, norms, values and traits associated with said group are internalized by the individual to make up a key component of their identity (Ashmore et al., 2004).

2.2. Othering

'Othering' refers to the process of the construction and the identification of the self, which is seen as the in-group, and the other, which is seen as the out-group, in unequal opposition through the attribution of relative inferiority or alienness to the 'other' (Brons, 2015). When we 'other', we create a boundary between difference and sameness, the person on the outside of the in-group becomes the other.

The concept of 'the other' has been a consistent and recurring notion throughout history. In a contemporary analysis of 'othering', Tseëlon (2001) places the nation-state central to the process of othering:

> "Modernity's obsession with order and ordering, epitomised by the nation-state, created a myth of cultural homogeneity. (…) Thus, the nation-state became a source of identity that was intertwined with exclusion. By setting boundaries around the self one is also defining the non-self (insiders/outsiders, established/strangers)" (Tseëlon, 2001; p. 5).

The process of *othering* can be understood through different academic lenses. Within the sociological field, 'othering' is not only understood as an ordinary process that every individual experience, but as something that involves a power dynamic (Dervin, 2016). It refers to different discourses that give rise to both moral and political judgements of superiority of "us" over "them".

The other is often characterised through a so-called 'deficit-framework', in which "they" are seen as not as good/capable/intelligent/etc. as "we" are (Dervin, 2016). This leads to stereotyping and misrepresentation of the 'other' within societies, which is often accompanied by the idea that certain groups are deemed inferior and are thus dehumanised through the process of 'othering'.

It is important to note that 'othering' relates to all kinds of identity markers such as ethnicity, nationality, gender, religion etc. Moreover 'othering' is not reserved to groups with power, it can also occur in marginalised or "powerless" groups, as a form of defending oneself (Dervin, 2016). An example relevant for this study is the use of 'Oreo' or 'Bounty-bar' (referring to the black outside and white stuffing on the inside of these candy bars and cookies), used to refer to someone who is phenotypically "Black" on the outside, but stereotypically White on the inside.

2.3. Multiracial, mixed race or biracial?

In this thesis I will primarily use the term *multiracial* to describe my target group. The term refers to individuals of mixed racial background. Historically there has been a plethora of terms to refer to these individuals, most also bound by geography and culture, such as: mulatto, mestizo, coloured, half-blood or zambo (Ifekwunigwe, 2004; Root, 1996). Most of these terms, however, have over time fallen out of use and deemed offensive due to the connection to colonialism, slavery and race theory.

With mixed race studies emerging as a new scholarly field, it accompanied a debate on correct use of terminology. An early dissertation on the topic by Christine Iijima Hall, was one of the first academic publications to adopt the term multiracial (Donella, 2016; Hall, 1980). The term started to spill over into academic language and was also adopted by various advocacy groups across the English-speaking world. The term was regarded as an "antidote" to the negative connotations of the term mixed.

Although mixed has been used to refer to the identity of individuals with blended racial background, it is not a completely neutral and uncontroversial term. The word mixed is often used in words like 'mixed up', 'mixed-signals' or 'mixed-company' in which mixes signals confusion, untrustworthiness or something that is not right (Donella, 2016). Moreover, some associate 'mixed' with animal breeding, which alludes to the existence of something pure-bred of which mixed is the opposite which can be seen as problematic.

Even though there is a general consensus that race is a socially constructed reality, I would like to argue that it still holds value bot inside and outside of the academic world. Especially outside the academic world race is still used and understood by many as a social category. Hence the frequent use of race in terminology used to refer to individuals of blended heritage (Donella, 2016). *Multiracial* can therefore be seen as a term that is better suited to use as opposed to 'mixed-race', and it is also my preferred terminology.

However, not everyone feels comfortable adopting this term, which I believe is important to comment on. Just as the identity of multiracial individuals is fluid, so is the terminology we use. In

many instances the different terms that have become accepted are used interchangeably. Moreover, Maria Root discusses in her work the right that individuals have to create and change one's identity across time and place (Root, 1996; Woozeer, 2022). Which I believe is of key importance in the multiracial experience, as it gives multiracial individuals more agency in an often already complex process of identity development.

Multiracial remains reserved primarily for academic language, whereas in regular conversation 'mixed-race' or 'biracial' seem to be preferred. Ultimately, it comes down to the individual which term is preferred, which I acknowledge throughout my thesis as well.

2.4.   Racialization

Racialization refers to the process through which previously racially unclassified individuals, groups of people or social practices, are assigned racial meanings (Myong Petersen & Cho, 2009; Omi & Winant, 2015). Through this process, ideas about race are constructed and regarded as meaningful and consequently acted upon (Murji & Solomos, 2005).

It is created through the complex tendency to organize and create hierarchy within populations, historically this has been often based on appearance. For example, the racialized notion that people strength or intelligence correlates to phenotypical differences such as skin colour. This and similar notions have been used to justify decades of systemic racial classification and the hierarchies connected to them (Li, 2023).

2.5.   Black/White/PoC

This next section will give an overview of the different racial terminology used in this thesis. The terms Black, White and PoC are capitalized to showcase the political and social meaning in this thesis. Multiple authors argue for the use of capitalization of racialized terminology to highlight its usage as not simply and adjective but as a noun that emphasizes group identity (Blay, 2021; Claybrook, 2021; Daniszewski, 2020; Painter, 2020).

2.5.1. Black

The term 'Black' is commonly used to describe a racialized class of people of African ancestry or by those who self-identify or are identified by others as Black, regardless of their national or ethnic origin, often based on the dark complexion of the skin. The term Black originates from the U.S., as it gradually replaced the word Negro that was much used until the mid 20th century.

Black as an identity emerged in the 60s, used by Black activists to construct a "positive and reaffirming racialized identity, developed out of a shared history of racialized experiences for people

of African descent" (Claybrook, 2021). The Black identity is an emerging, changing and complex social construct, not solely based on colour, but also on the self-designation, self-determination and shared historic socio-cultural experience of oppressive, exploitative and racist conditions (Blay, 2021; Claybrook, 2021; Hecht & Ribeau, 1991).

2.5.2. White

The term 'White' is commonly used to describe a the racialized class of people of European ancestry, or by those who self-identify or are identified by others as White (Jay, 1998; Kéré, 2022). The concept of 'Whiteness' comes forth from historic hierarchies of social power. Those with greater social power over others at the time of the development of the concept of the 'White race', e.g., the Anglo-Saxons, were the first to be considered White. Over time, Whiteness was extended to other ethnic groups of European descent of which eventually a strong and socially powerful in-group emerged, with shared identity and a collective feeling of belongingness regardless of socioeconomic class:

> "The concept of Whiteness helped to solidify the social power of the economic elite by encouraging poor and working-class people who became White to see themselves as part of an ingroup with the elite, a group that excluded and subordinated people of colour." (Halley et al., 2011; p. 16)

As other scholars have pointed out, Whiteness is not necessarily a biological reality. They point to the dependency that the concept of Whiteness has on the racial other (Green et al., 2007; Halley et al., 2011; Leonardo, 2004). Whiteness is only perceived as White in contrast to other social groups of colours:

> "Whiteness only exists as an ingroup because it is contrasted with outgroups—groups with which members of the ingroup do not identify, do not feel a sense of connection, and might classify as "the other"." (Halley et al., 2011; p. 16)

However, though it is not a biological reality based on a white skin-colour, it should be seen as a social construction through which White people are granted access to resources, political and social power and opportunity i.e. 'White privilege' (Miller & Josephs, 2009).

2.5.3. Person of Colour (PoC)

The term 'Person of Colour' (PoC), or in plural: 'People of Colour', is primarily used in the U.S. and other countries associated with the Anglosphere to describe any person who is not considered White. It is an umbrella-term, encompassing all non-White groups, emphasising the common experience(s) of systemic racism. Moreover, the term PoC has the ability to enable solidarity

amongst marginalised groups for collective political and social action (Moses, 2016; Tuman, 2003). It is therefore a suitable and attractive term for social justice, civil rights or human rights contexts and has recently become more popular in use in online activist spheres.

The term emerged in the late 20th century as preferable alternative to the term non-White (Moses, 2016) . Moreover, it also counters the use of terms such as 'minority' or 'non-White' which can imply condescension or unequal power dynamic. Moreover it highlights the persistence of racialization in within Western society (Zack, 1995).

2.6. Racism

Generally, racism is understood as the prejudiced belief that a person- or a certain group of people's, behaviour, values and attitudes are determined by one's physical appearance or '*race'* and can subsequently be classified based on the superiority of one race over the other (Schaefer, 2008).

It is a complex form of power and discrimination, as Schaeffer describes: "it is the result of social, economic, and political factors that have ascribed power to some groups, while leaving others powerless." (Schaefer, 2008; p. 1114). Racism, similar to race, is a social construct. A product of historical invented racial hierarchies that were used to classify human populations and justify oppression and exploitation of marginalised groups.

Racism continues to have a profound effect on the everyday lives on those affected by it in the form of systemic disadvantage, exclusion, devaluation and even violence (Osanami Törngren & Suyemoto, 2022). Racism can be both overt and covert. Overt, or explicit, racism can be defined as unconcealed, intentional and/or unapologetic harmful attitudes or behaviours towards another minority individuals or groups because of the colour of their skin (Elias, 2015). In contrast, covert or aversive racism, describes racial discrimination which is expressed in more subtle and indirect ways (Schaefer, 2008).

Aversive racism is the most common type of racism nowadays since the dawn of social and civil rights, evolved attitudes towards 'race', global activism and awareness campaigns against racial discrimination which has resulted in a gradual lack of tolerance towards racist behaviour (Kandola, 2018).

3. Literature review

This chapter presents an overview of existing academic literature on the chosen topic. It will provide the reader with a background into the field of study, reviewing the most important scholarly perspectives and giving more information on the topic at hand. The chapter has been separated into three sections for the reader's convenience, beginning with an exploration of the historical development and chronology of the field of mixed-race studies. The second section focuses specifically on the Danish context, highlighting relevant research and knowledge on mixed race studies in Denmark. Lastly, we delve into the relationship between Danishness and multiculturalism, shedding light on the evolving discourses and debates surrounding cultural diversity in relation to the Danish national identity.

3.1. Mixed Race studies, a chronology

The investigation of issues related to mixed-race Danes can be placed within the scholarly area of mixed-race studies. Mixed race studies as a scholarly field is a relatively new and controversial scholarly area within the field of racial and ethnic relations. It emerged as a new academic field in de late twentieth century, predominantly focused on the U.S., with renewed interest in race relations and the deconstruction of race as a biological reality (Ifekwunigwe, 2004).

For the longest time, the construct of race has had biological meaning within our societies. This belief of biological race and the theory of multiregional origin[1] was challenged with the gradual acceptance of the 'Out of Africa' theory that demonstrates that all modern humans can trace their ancestry to one group of 'Africans' that migrated out of Africa ±100,000 years ago (Stringer & McKie, 1998). This theory explains that genetic variants cannot be attributed to racial differences, but are rather a result of evolutionary adaptation to environmental influences. Therefore we can argue that race itself cannot be seen as a biological category and there can be no such thing as racial purity (Banton, 2015; Hochman, 2021; Stanfield, 1995).

Despite the ever-growing literature on race as a non-biological construct, the folk perception and concept of race as a category real has been persistent (Ifekwunigwe, 2004). The persistency of race as a social category in human societies could be seen as an indication that race, over time, has become 'true' and accepted. Ifekwunigwe (2004) describes this as the ultimate paradox that Mixed race studies tries to explore; why does both academic and popular interest in the concept of 'mixed

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[1] The theory of Multiregional Evolution is a scientific model that assumes that human evolution and diversity in humans are a result of separate but simultaneous evolutionary processes in different parts of the world. According to this theory the human species arose at a specific time in history and encompasses all forms of human species, even ancient ones such as H. Erectus and Neanderthals. (Wolpoff et al., 2000)

race' persist and continue to grow if biological explanations for racial differences keep being discredited through research? A strong argument for the importance of mixed-race studies deals with the ability of mixed-race studies to actively deconstruct dominant racial discourse and dismantle harmful and limiting racial categories in our societies (Daniel et al., 2014).

Although mixed race studies is a relatively new academic field, interest in interracial relationships and its offspring can be traced back to the Victorian Era and its beginnings in race science. In his book, Colonial Desire, Robert Young (1995) details the history behind the concept of 'hybridity'. Hybridity in the context of nineteenth century discourse on biological race was seen as the result of sexual transgression between two separate races of which one (the White race) is deemed to be 'pure' (R. Young, 1995). Hybrid children were thus seen as the embodiment of moral degeneracy and perversion.

Ifekwunigwe views this as the first of three era's in the history of mixed race studies; the Age of Pathology (Ifekwunigwe, 2004). At the core of this age lies the now discredited evolutionary theory of polygenism, which interprets that human races can be understood as separate with different origins and characteristics (Wolpoff & Caspari, 1997). Races could be ranked according to physical characteristics and intelligence through which White Europeans were placed at the top of this hierarchy.

Interbreeding between the races was believed to threaten the supremacy of the White race and miscegenation was strongly condemned. Nevertheless, the concept of miscegenation traces even further back to the time period of European Exploration and the Trans-Atlantic slave trade that forcibly displaced millions of Africans, to be sold into chattel slavery on the plantations of Brazil, the Caribbean and the Southern United States. Miscegenation between the original inhabitants of the Americas and African slaves with Europeans resulted in the birth of 'mulattos' and 'mestizos' (Bost, 2003; Sheffer, 2019). Moreover, these societies were economically dependent on the exploitation of non-White slaves and 'miscegenation' between racially pure slave masters and their female slaves contributed to the labour force (Jordan, 2013). After the abolition of slavery, legislation was kept in place to control and manage 'mixed-race' offspring which form the basis of contemporary politics and conflicts based on 'race', (Williamson, 1995; Jordan, 2013).

Negative discourses about miscegenation and racial hybridity dominated the academic field, heightening during the inter-war period and the period following the second world war up until the late 20th century. The 1990's saw a sharp increase of mixed-race publications in the U.S.A. and signified a renewed interest and radically different approach to mixed race studies than before.

Ifekwunigwe coins this era the Age of Celebration, as authors who themselves identified as mixed race argues for the inclusion of actor-centered points of view on 'mixed-racedness' (Azoulay, 1997; Goldberg, 2016; Root, 1996). The publications included the view that the process of identity-formation is personal, complex, fluid, situational and ever changing. Ifekwunigwe also argues that this Age was important to the development of 'I-amist' discourse that continues to take up a prominent part in the identity-development of multiracial people; which delegates identity formation to the personal: "I am not White or Asian, I am just me." (Ifekwunigwe, 2004; p. 8).

The third age of mixed-race studies was kickstarted in the transitioning period from the 20th century into the 21st century, when publications focused on a (post)modern rethinking of mixed race. Ifekwunigwe labels this: The Age of Critique. In this era, the dominant paradigm of mixed race is increasingly being replaced by the multiraciality as scholars continue the unresolved discussion on conceptualisation and terminology as well as the difficulty of multiraciality in a contemporary context e.g. census terminology (Winters & DeBose, 2003).

Much of today's literature in mixed raced studies is a mix of both celebration and critique, focusing on the individual experiences of mixed people. With the field being relatively new, there still remain gaps in knowledge while existing literature is constantly scrutinized and adapted to more contemporary understandings. An important critique in the field is that existing empirical work on multiraciality is very one sided. This critique can be understood as the field being too binary, deeply U.S.-centric and in general not diverse enough.

Binarism lies at the root of the disagreement over the categorisation of 'mixed race', 'biracial', and 'multiracial' as the *Black/White* binary is the most dominant paradigm in American and British racial discourse (Park & Park, 1999). While the emphasis on Black/White mixedness is not surprising given both the countries history with slavery and colonisation and their long-lasting effects on the state's demographics, it is important to acknowledge that this fails to include individuals who are of dual-minority background or more.

This binarism also overlooks the fact that perceptions on 'race', 'mixed-race' and corresponding social status are culturally, historically and geographically dependent and do not apply equally to every society. The one-drop rule in the U.S., that declared anyone with one known African ancestor, regardless of any European ancestry, as 'Black' differs very much from the notion and understanding of race and colour as more fluid in Brazil, with markers such as 'Black' and 'White' being mere extremes on a continuum where other signifiers outside of physical appearance, such as class, determine identity and social status (Daniel, 2006).

Moreover, 'Blackness' and 'non-Whiteness' are also constantly shifting. Noel Ignatiev, in his book *"How the Irish Became White"*, argues how the Irish as an ethnic group were not considered to be really 'White' but gradually 'became White' in the late twentieth century (Ignatiev, 2009). A parallel can be drawn to the Jewish community as Karen Brodkin demonstrates in *"How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America"* (Brodkin, 1998). Ultimately, it shows that binary markers such as 'Black' and 'White' are not very reliable.

3.2. Mixed Race Studies in the Danish context

Whereas the field of mixed-race studies in the American context has extensive literature and a developed academic language to refer to and describe the experience of multiracial individuals, it is rather new in a European context and even more so in the Nordic context, the geographical area Denmark is a part of. Literature on multiraciality in a Danish context is scarce and lacks depth.

An explanation for this could be that Denmark has a smaller migrant population as compared to countries that have significant history of migration and an established migrant population already. People of colour only make up a small portion of the Danish population, they can be categorised as either of immigrant background or as of adoptive background (Skadegård, 2022). Moreover, Denmark statistically categorises multiracial Danes, this means those born in Denmark or those with one Denmark-born parent, as Danish and of Danish origin (Statistics Denmark, 2022). This statistical categorisation makes multiracial Danes invisible as a separate group of Danes and erases their multiracial identity.

This erasure is consistent with the way the race and racism are being portrayed in Danish society. The narrative of *Danish exceptionalism* influences public perception of Denmark being a non-racist, largely colour-blind society in which the colonial past remains unacknowledged (Danbolt, 2017; Danbolt & Myong, 2019). Denmark actively participated in the Transatlantic slave trade, shipping African slaves from their established forts along the African Westcoast to the Caribbean, where Danish colonies under the name of the 'Danish West Indies' (*Dansk Vestindien*) were established (Marselis, 2008). The colonies remained under Danish control until they were eventually sold to the U.S. in 1917.

As mentioned before, the influence of history on the construction and understanding of race in societies is significant, also for the Danish case. With most of the Danish colonising practices happening outside of European borders, many racist practices such as enslavement and the exploitation and social exclusion of African peoples remained more or less invisible to the Danish population. Additionally, traditionally Scandinavian ideologies of equality and a lack of codified racist

practises contributes to the persistent self-perception of Denmark being a non-racist society (Jensen, 2012; Skadegård, 2022).

Despite this history, there seems to be a "collective amnesia" of Denmark's colonial past and its effects on today's society which can be seen e.g. in the dominant narrative of Denmark having a homogenous population despite the existence of people of colour in Denmark tracing back to the 17th century (Blaagaard, 2010; Marselis, 2008; Rodrigues, 2011). Moreover, literature on the experience of multiracial Danes consistently emphasise the implicit and explicit forms of discrimination they still face e.g. the persistent use of problematic racialised terms such as *N*ger* and *Mulat* (mulatto) (Bang Appel & Singla, 2016; Omolo, 2022; Skadegård & Horst, 2021; Skadegård & Jensen, 2018).

3.3. Danishness and multiracialism

Many multiracial Danes point towards the tendency of other Danes to comment on, and question their ethnic and national background, as a source of discrimination. This tendency is based on ideas of what Danishness is *supposed* to look like, which is often congruent with their appearance. Skadegård (2022) notes that Danishness is widely articulated and understood as being equivalent to Whiteness.

The notion of *Danskhed* (Danishness) can be understood as a national identity. In one of the most influential theories on national identity construction, Anderson (1991) refers to national identity as an imagined community, a social construct imagined and subscribed to by people who identify with a certain group. A shared national consciousness of sorts, the nation is constructed and maintained through powerful narratives of perceived shared similarities (Anderson, 1991).

The history of the Danish national identity project can be traced back to the nineteenth century during the Danish golden age. Before this, there was very little evidence of nationhood amongst the Danes in an agricultural society ruled over by an absolute monarchy (Jenkins, 2012). Østergaard (1992) argues that the roots of the modern day Danish national consciousness lie in the peasant society of nineteenth century Denmark, which in turn are encapsulated in the ideas and values of N.F.S. Grundtvig, one of the most influential figures in the formation of Danish national identity.

Grundtvigian values mirror those Danish "peasant" values of hard work, participation, egalitarianism, resourcefulness, community and self-help and still penetrate everyday Danish life and culture, and lie at the heart of the dominant narrative that Danes are one homogenous *folk* (Jenkins, 2012; Korsgaard, 2015; Østergaard, 1992)*.* As Jenkins states: "They are the ideological foundations of the

settled social democratic consensus that, despite recent difficulties and social change, continues to underpin and legitimate the Danish welfare state." (Jenkins, 2012; p. 58).

However, scholarly research keeps pointing out that this claimed homogeneity is a myth, especially in a modern multicultural Denmark (Hedetoft, 2010; T. G. Jensen & Söderberg, 2022; Schmidt, 2019; Skadegård, 2022; Skadegård & Horst, 2021). Nevertheless, it still continues to permeate public discourse regarding immigration and the integration of foreigners and their descendants. It is also in this debate that Danishness becomes racialised.

Skadegård's work on structural discrimination in Danish contexts argues that the implicit notion of Whiteness that is equated to Danishness, her work is crucial in understanding and making sense of the experiences of multiracial Danes in Denmark in an already underrepresented scholarly area. In her cases, descriptive words such as *n*ger,* or *mulat* are concepts that rest on notions of race being a biological marker with obvious colonial heritage. Moreover, these words are often used in a context where they are being defined in opposition to Danishness, the individual in turn becomes marginalised, and *othered* (Skadegård & Jensen, 2018). Implicit bias lies at the root of this process, as it involves assumptions at an underlying level (Banks et al., 2006).

Yue describes this process as the politics of vision (Yue, 2000), minority status has historically been linked to appearance and visibility and visual markers such as complexion, hair and eye-colour remain key signs for the categorisation of people as foreign-looking contributing even more to the conflation of national identity and racial identity (Skadegård, 2022; Song, 2020).

Peter Hervik is one of the earliest anthropologists dedicating time to investigate race and racism in a Danish context. His work has been significant in the understanding of how racialisation, racism and discrimination in speech and praxis is employed and has been naturalised in Denmark and how it continues to impact the everyday lives of ethnic minorities and their exclusion of the Danish nation (Hervik, 1999, 2019b, 2019a, 2022).

4. Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology employed in this thesis, outlining the philosophical underpinnings, research design, data collection methods, sampling techniques, research strategy, analysis approach, and ethical considerations. The chapter contains two sections dedicated to the philosophy of science, establishing the epistemological and ontological framework guiding our research. Following that, a detailed account of the research design is provided, including the method of data collection, sampling methods, and research strategy employed. Additionally, we discuss the analysis process and the ethical considerations that informed our study, concluding with the limitations of this study.

4.1. Epistemological considerations

Epistemology revolves around the central question of *how* we know things and the study of study of knowledge production (Della Porta & Keating, 2008). It addresses questions of the 'nature, sources and limits' (Klein, 2016) of said knowledge and what can be regarded as acceptable knowledge within a discipline (Bryman, 2016).

There are several epistemological approaches on how the social world can be studied. The positivist approach agrees that the social world can be studied the same way as the natural world. It argues that the world can be observed in a neutral way in which the research and the object of their research can be separated without affecting the observed object (Della Porta & Keating, 2008). In contrast, the interpretivist approach argues that the social actor's interpretation affects the observation of the social world, therefore there should be a difference in the way the natural and the social worlds are studied (Bryman, 2016).

Interpretivism holds that we can only understand an individual's reality through *their* experience of that reality, this can in turn be different from someone else's understanding as they may be shaped by different historical and social perspectives (University of Nottingham, n.d.). Access to reality happens only through "social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings and instruments" (Myers, 2009).

Interpretivism is suitable for my inquiry into the identity construction of multiracial Danes, as I will also investigate how their experiences and social environments have had an influence on the construction of their identity and how they experience being multiracial in Denmark. This epistemological approach allows me to use qualitative methods to collect and analyse my data, keeping in mind the complexity of identity construction as a process of each individual's personal

perceptions and experiences of reality. This helps me to better understand and acquire knowledge on the different meanings and values that individuals attach to matters of identity.

4.2. Ontological considerations

Ontology is concerned with *what* we study, the what being the object of investigation (Della Porta & Keating, 2008). With ontology we are interested in how we make sense of the world around us. In relation to studies of the social world ontology revolves around the central question of whether social entities can and should be considered objective, or whether they are social constructions built up from "the perceptions and actions of social actors" (Bryman, 2016; p. 32).

The terms social constructionism and constructivism are often used interchangeably or merged under the term constructivism. Van Niekerk defines constructivism as "the process by which reality is created by the observer" (Van Niekerk, 2005; p. 61), while social constructionism has a social focus rather than an individual one (R. A. Young & Collin, 2004).

In essence, social constructionism asserts that:

> "the content of our consciousness, and the mode of relating we have to other, is taught by our culture and society; all the metaphysical quantities we take for granted are learned from others around us" (Owen, 1992; p. 386).

Therefore, it argues that social actors and social interaction are the driving forces behind the creation of social phenomena, categories and their meanings (Bryman, 2016).

Social constructionism is helpful in research that investigates and tries to understand social phenomena amongst social groups. Since the purpose of this research is to better understand how multiracial Danes construct their ethnic and cultural identity, it is necessary to get a deep understanding of how their individual perspectives are influenced by the social context, interactions and relationships with others surrounding them. Moreover, in regard to social identity theory, social constructionism adequately captures the dialectic interplay between internal and external identification. Since the process of understanding one's, own identity happen internally in the observer, but are always shaped by and validated through external social interaction.

4.3. Research design and strategy

Research strategies help the researcher with the orientation and the general direction of the social research they are going to conduct (Bryman, 2016). Bryman separates between two types of general research strategies: the quantitative and the qualitative. Quantitative research can be described as a type of strategy that focuses on quantification in the collection and analysis of data used, often

employing a deductive approach often used in the natural science model (Bryman, 2016). In contrast, qualitative research focuses more on words rather that quantification of data and is more suitable for research adopting interpretivist epistemology (Bryman, 2016).

As qualitative research seeks to "interpret, understand and contextualize views from a particular group" (Swayne & Dodds, 2011), rather than make generalizations across a larger population it is more suitable for research with a social constructionist approach. Due to the exploratory nature of this research, a qualitative research strategy is the appropriate choice as I seek to understand how a social phenomenon, i.e., identity construction, is experienced and perceived by the research participants.

Connected to the chosen research strategy is the research design, which provides a framework for the execution of the research (Bryman, 2016). For this study, I will use a case study design combined with a grounded theory approach, with the case study being the overall research design and the grounded theory approach being used for data analysis.

According to Della Porta and Keating, case studies are based on in-depth empirical investigation of one or more small phenomena in order to better understand the features of these phenomena by developing and testing theoretical explanations (Della Porta & Keating, 2008). Case studies give researchers a better and understanding of complex issues and phenomena, as case study methods allow for the researcher to closely examine and investigate "contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships" (Zainal, 2007; p. 2). Due to the limited nature of the case study's research population, a case study is not intended to be widely generalizable, but rather give a detailed and rich account of social phenomena e.g. social behaviour (Bryman, 2016; Zainal, 2007).

In the case of this research, a case-study gives me the opportunity to closely examine and create more knowledge about a smaller group, in this case multiracial Danes, without making a generalization of the population as a whole, seeing as most of the participants come from different backgrounds with different upbringings. An advantage of case studies in social research is that they allow for multiple perspectives to be captured within one case to get a greater understanding of the phenomenon at hand (Salmon, 2017).

Additionally, I will apply a grounded theory approach as a method for the analysis of my data. Grounded theory, as developed by Glaser and Strauss, is a unique methodology in which theories are generated through the collection and analysis of the researcher's data, thus being *grounded* in this data (Chun Tie et al., 2019). Grounded theory as a method is especially suitable in research where there is not sufficient knowledge yet about a phenomenon amongst a specific group, as grounded

theory's aim is theory building as opposed to theory testing (Cullen & Brennan, 2021). This approach is suitable for this research, as the aim of my research is to create more knowledge on the identity construction of multiracial Danes, a social group there isn't a lot of knowledge about in the Danish context. Grounded theory can thus aid in generating knowledge about this phenomenon amongst the specific group. Moreover, grounded theory is an established method in social research studying human behaviour and making knowledge claims about individuals' interpretations of reality (Suddaby, 2006). A benefit of grounded theory is the ability for researcher and participant to collaborate together to generate data which is used to produce new theory and knowledge (Chun Tie et al., 2019).

Charmaz has developed a constructivist approach to grounded theory which requires the researcher to adopt a position of mutuality with the participant during the research process, thus co-constructing knowledge while being aware of the historical, social and situational context in which the research process takes place (Charmaz, 2017). A benefit of this approach is that it "brings people and their perspectives into the foreground." (Charmaz, 2017). It allows us to dig deep into our participants experiences and get a better understanding of their meanings and actions, a suitable approach to the delicate and personal matter of racial and cultural identity construction.

The coding process of Grounded Theory helps with the organisation and categorisation of my data. While there are no set standards and procedures for this coding process, one of GT's weaknesses, it can also be seen as a point of strength as it makes data analysis more complex as it asks the researcher to maximize their analytical capabilities.

4.4. Research method and data collection

Within qualitative research, there is a multitude of different methods to opt for when conducting research and collecting data. Interviews are helpful when conducting qualitative research for a number of reasons. They help provide a deeper understanding of social phenomena by exploring the "views, experiences, beliefs and/or motivations of individuals on specific matters" (Gill et al., 2008; p. 292). Moreover, interviews are especially appropriate when exploring more sensitive and/or personal topics, as the participant might feel more comfortable talking about their experiences or views in a one-on-one setting as opposed to a group setting (Gill et al., 2008). Qualitative interviews were thus a logical choice as it gives me an insight into the understanding and experience of individuals lives and in this case, their process of identity construction (Kvale, 2007).

Qualitative interviews can be structured into three categorisations of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Gill et al., 2008). Structured interviews are typically characterised by a predetermined list of questions in a set order, in which there is little to no room for variation,

flexibility or follow-up questions (George, 2022; Gill et al., 2008). Oppositely, unstructured interviews do not have any predetermined question list or a structured procedure of interviewing which makes it feel more like a conversation in which the interviewee has a lot of agency and control (Bryman, 2016; Gill et al., 2008).

Alternatively, semi-structured interviews are a blend of structured and unstructured, in which the researcher often prepares an interview guide with questions and topics that may be covered but are not subjected to a particular order which leaves space for flexibility on behalf of the researcher (George, 2022). Semi-structured interviews give the interviewer the chance to diverge and pursue a different idea, response or perspective that may not have been considered prior to the interviews (Gill et al., 2008) which is why I a semi-structured style of interviewing was chosen as my method of data collection. This style of interviewing is most appropriate for the nature of my research as I want to encourage the participants to elaborate on their experiences, thoughts and opinions while still being able to follow a general framework of topics and questions I want to be included.

Therefore, the main method of data collection are semi-structured interviews. The primary data gathered from these interviews will serve as the basis for my analysis. Additionally, I have used secondary data such as multiple academic sources, statistics, theories and news sources in order to write my other chapters on theory, definition of terminology, methodology and literature.

4.5. Sampling methods

The interviews for this thesis were conducted between the 21st of March and the 7th of April 2023. In total I had six interviews, of which five were female participants and one male. A number of six interviews was chosen due to the limited time frame available for the interviewing, analysis and writing of the findings. In order to select relevant participants for the topic of this research I established a few selection criteria.

The first criterion being that the person was of multiracial heritage themselves. Therefore, the participants must have one ethnically Danish parent and one parent of a different racial background. Secondly, all participants must have grown up in Denmark. And last, all participants must be between the ages of 20-30 in order to avoid a comparison between too greatly differing generations as this falls outside the scope of this research. Moreover, the age delimitation enabled me to ask them questions regarding identity construction in their childhood and recent adolescence, as multiple theories on multiracial identity have pointed out that these are regarded as formative stages in the development of multi-racial identity (Huang & Stormshak, 2011; Miville et al., 2005; Phinney & Ong, 2007; Renn, 2008; Rockquemore et al., 2009).

In order to find and recruit participants for this thesis, an approach of purposive sampling was used in the form of snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a strategy which involves sampling an initial small group of people relevant to the research question, and consequently obtaining other relevant participants from this group of sampled participants (Bryman, 2016). Snowball sampling was useful in this case in order to access a demographic I found relatively difficult to access, in this case multiracial Danes. Once I had found someone who knew more multiracial individuals, it was easier and more reliable to find and approach possible participants and build up a network who trusted me as a researcher as well.

A limitation to this strategy is the high chance of bias amongst the sample, as participants know each other and share similar characteristics (Nikolopoulou, 2022). A way to combat this from happening, I placed limits on the number of referrals from one participant to secure a certain amount of difference and distance between all participants. All participants and their relevant background information are described in table 1 below. The names of the participants have been anonymised and numbered one to six throughout the analysis.

Participant	Gender	Age	Educational background	Current occupation	Hometown	Place of residence	Ethnicity	Family background
P1	Woman	24	Bachelor	Student + marketing assistant	Copenhagen	Aalborg	Danish (M) Ivorian (F)	Parents divorced, grew up with mother
P2	Woman	24	Gymnasium	Artist + bartender	Aalborg	Aalborg	Danish (F) Ethiopian (M)	Parents together, grew up with both
P3	Woman	22	Gymnasium	Student + activity worker	Varde	Varde	Danish (F) Botswanan (M)	Parents divorced, grew up with father
P4	Woman	26	Bachelor	Student + fundraising assistant	Over Jerstal	Copenhagen	Danish (F) Korean (M)	Parents divorced, grew up with mother
P5	Woman	26	Bachelor	Student + student assistant	Copenhagen	Copenhagen	Danish/Swedish (M) Beninese (F)	Parents divorced, grew up with mother
P6	Man	26	Gymnasium	Apprentice	Aalborg	Copenhagen	Danish (M) Ivorian (F)	Parents divorced, grew up with mother

Table 1 Interview Participants

4.6.   Interview procedure

All interviews were held online in order to save time on preparation and to accommodate for participants who were not based in my area. The interviews were held in English. Prior to the interview, an information form that also requested their consent to the recording and analysis of their data was sent out via email in order to make the interview procedure as transparent as possible.

Prior to the interviews I created an interview guide, which can be found in appendix 1, to help me structure my interviews and organise my thoughts and questions beforehand in order to optimise the interviewing process. The interview guide contained a number of closed and open-ended questions organized by topics I definitely wanted to include in the interviewing process. The three main topics were: *biographical*, *identity and identity formation* and *Danishness*. Categorising the questions in this order helped me to organise my thoughts and translate them to questions that would aid me in getting the type of data I needed. Moreover, it helped me stay on topic and gave a general framework to think about possible follow-up questions within the topics I had outlined.

Because each interview was unique, it was my responsibility to create an optimal dynamic between researcher and participants, this meant that I often altered the order in which I asked questions or left out certain questions if the participant had already answered the question beforehand. The questions were designed to encourage the participant to give elaborate answers and develop their ideas and thoughts while they were answering which was possible due to the semi-structured manner of interviewing. The questions were mainly focused on their personal experiences, opinions or thoughts.

4.7.   Analysis of Data

As mentioned before, each interview was recorded and individually transcribed. Because of the recordings it was not necessary to take any additional notes and I only needed to focus on the dialogue during the interviews, which meant I listened actively and was more engaged with my participant (Bryman, 2016). The transcriptions of the audio recordings serve as the basis for my analysis. During the transcription process I decided to format the text in a way that it was not always literally transcribed in order to make it more comprehensible as Bryman (2016) recommends. I also lay emphasis on any emotions or intonation in the transcription to it make the context in which something was said clearer. For example, by adding; (mocking) or (laughs) to the text or emphasising certain words by altering the font to *italic*.

In order to understand the collected data, I applied the three steps of the Grounded Theory approach during my analysis: *open coding*, *axial coding* and *selective coding*. Coding is one of the key components of grounded theory. During this process the transcripts are reviewed and given labels (codes) according to perceived significance to the study (Bryman, 2016). The codes serve to "label, separate, compile and organise data" (Bryman, 2016; p. 568) and are viewed as potential indicators of concepts which are constantly compared against each other to see which concept they fit best with (Bryman, 2016).

The *open coding* process helped me to break down the data that I had collected into smaller sections that that are later grouped into categories that represent a certain concept (Bryman, 2016). The first step of breaking up my data also allowed me to preliminarily connect these to some of the concepts I had assembled from theory and literature. Bryant and Charmaz note that this first step in the process can result in confusion as it usually generates a lot of codes which can be overwhelming (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). However, as I continued into the next step, I was able to recognize an emerging pattern in the codes.

The second step of the process, *axial coding*, refers to the process of re-categorising the codes that were generated after open coding by making connections between categories and themes (Bryman, 2016; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This is where the codes begin to get connected, as opposed to open coding which merely divides the data into codes. The last step of the process is selective coding, where all codes are systematically related to a set of core categories (Bryman, 2016). Table 2 gives an overview of the coding process, which open codes constitute the axial codes, and ultimately which axial codes constitute the four selective codes or 'categories' that have been used for the analysis. Moreover, the codes are represented in my own theoretical model that will be presented in the theory section.

Open code	Axial code	Selective code
Location Friendship Family relationship Questioning of identity "Where are you really from?" Racism Exclusion Upbringing Bullying Racism Insults Violence Youth Childhood Teenage years Stereotyping Assimilation	Social environment Negative experiences Adjustment Time Othering	**Being multiracial in Denmark**
Hair Body Skin-colour Looking different Changing appearance Fashion style	Appearance	**Physical appearance**
Rituals with self Discovering cultural values Navigating own identity Questioning previous beliefs Prioritizing identities Negative self-perception Insecurity Confidence Impostor-feeling Anger Sadness Apathy Frustration Confusion Embarrassment Defensiveness Family culture	Feelings Emotions Exploration of identity Cultural presence	**Exploration of cultural and ethnic identity**
Connecting with heritage Performing culture Empowerment Pride in identity Acceptance Cultural values Cultural symbols National identity	Connecting with culture Cultural markers Acceptance	**Self-identification with culture/ethnicity**

Table 2 Codes retrieved from the coding process

4.8.   Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations in research refer to the principles and guidelines to which researchers should adhere while conducting their research (Ayenew, 2022). Bryman asserts that the most important issues surrounding ethics in social research can usually be broken down in four main areas: harm subjected to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and whether deception is involved in the nature of the study. (Bryman, 2016)

With regards to my research the most salient consideration deals with consent and privacy. To ensure informed consent, I sent each participant a document with information about the nature of my research and asked them to sign the consent form on the second page of the document. The document also detailed how their data would be processed anonymously. Throughout the data collection process, I maintained transparency with my participants which meant that they could reach out to me at any point of time before or after the interview in case they had questions or things they need clarified.

During the interviews I had to be sensitive and aware of the feelings and emotions that could arise within the participants as the topic can be perceived as very personal. Therefore, I would clarify at the beginning of every interview that they were in control of what information they wanted to share. Moreover, I was careful to not push the participants for an answer to something they were reluctant to talk about. Moreover, I tried my best to create the feeling of a safe space or conversation where they felt comfortable to share their story.

4.9.   Limitations

In order to guarantee a high quality of academic work, the methodological choices made in this chapter have to be critically reflected on and issues arising from questions of validity, replicability and reliability have to be addressed (Bryman, 2016).

Due to the interpretative and constructivist nature of this study there will always be a certain level of personal interpretation involved in the analytical process. To combat researcher bias, it was important for me as a researcher to constantly be critically self-reflective of my own believe systems and the influence this can have on the outcome of the study. Moreover, I ensured that the methodology was compatible with and linked to the research questions, so that the research precisely investigates and measures what I want to explore.

Multiracial identity is a complex concept and process that has not been investigated as much, especially in a Danish context. Because of this, there are some limits to the theory and literature that was available to me in my research progress, which is also why a grounded theory approach was

used in this study. Additionally, the sample size used in this study is relatively small due to time constraints and could be more diverse. It therefore only offers limited insight into the experiences of multiracial Danes' identity construction process and cannot be claimed to be representative for the whole group. A larger sample size with a more diverse array of ethnic backgrounds, and more male participants would have given a broader perspective on the topic and strengthened the overall results. However, a smaller sample size allowed for more in-depth interviewing which in result generated rich data.

5. Theory

When writing about matters of identity it is important to investigate how identity formation works. Authors on social identity theory suggest that individuals use a sense of belonging to a certain group to develop a sense of self. This process involves deciding which parts and messages of a in individual's (cultural) group(s) are incorporated into this notion of self and whether one agrees with and ascribes to a cultural prescribed worldview (Lusk et al., 2010).

Racial and ethnic identity have been recognised as a key determinant of how racial/ethnic minority individuals' attitudes towards themselves, members of the same racial or ethnic minority group as well as how they relate to their environment and individuals who are part of the majority group. Extensive analysis of racial and ethnic identity has helped to eliminate the idea that everyone from a particular minority group is a monolith, with similar preferences and attitudes.

However, racial and ethnic identity can be difficult for individuals of multiracial background to navigate. Multiracial people often undergo a complex process in which they may use different approaches towards developing their identity which can result in identification with either one, both or neither of their biological heritage (Rockquemore et al., 2009).

Early theories on multiracial identity were often linear, they described a clear path through different stages that individuals would embark on that would ultimately have an ideal end stage. Authors described a healthy outcome as an identity in which a multiracial individual incorporates their dual/mixed heritage in their identity (Kerwin et al., 1993; Poston, 1990; Root, 1990). In other words, identifying as multiracial was seen as the desirable outcome.

These theories treat identity as rather fixed, however, more recent research suggest that identity isn't fixed and linear for all multiracial individuals (Renn, 2004; Rockquemore et al., 2009; Root, 2003). Multiracial individuals, more often than not, construct, deconstruct and reconstruct identity in different contexts. As a response, ecological models on multiracial identity have emerged. These ecological models "contain the flexibility required to meet the postmodern call to understand identity as fluid, shifting and contextual." (Renn, 2004; p. 50).

Therefore, I base my analysis on a combination of an ecological approach towards identity development in multiracial individuals. More specifically Renn's (2004) ecological theory of mixed-race identity development, as well as Phinney's (1989) Model of Ethnic Identity Development.

5.1. Renn's Ecological Theory of Mixed-Race Identity (2004)

Renn used Bronfenbrenner's (1979) person-process-context-time (PPCT) model to determine which ecological factors have the biggest influence on a multiracial individual's developing identity. Her research focused on the experiences of multiracial university students. Under *Person,* Renn (2004) considered the following aspects: family background, extent of cultural knowledge, exposure to diversity during youth and personal/physical appearance.

Process refers to the interactions between a developing individual and the persons, objects and symbols in their environment. These processes need to 1) be ongoing, 2) increasingly complex, 3) reciprocal, 4) involve interactions with other persons, objects and symbol in their environment and 5) happen in setting containing the developing individual (Renn, 2004).

Context refers to the ecological environment surrounding the developing individual, referred to as the micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1996; Renn, 2004). These four levels work independently and as a system to influence development through the process described in the abovementioned section.

Time, referred to as the chronosystem, captures two perspectives of time: the historical and the personal. The abovementioned notions operate both through a personal perspective of time on an individual level, as well as on a sociohistorical level; the greater time period an individual exists in (Bronfenbrenner, 1996; Renn, 2004).

The four components of the PPCT model thus create a unique and personal developmental environment. This model offers an explanation for the different outcomes in identity formation in individuals who appear to be similar on the surface level.

Five identity patterns

Renn ultimately identified five *'identity patterns'* amongst multiracial university students. Renn emphasises that these patterns are neither exclusive or rigid, nor unchangeable. This reinforces the idea that identity is fluid and even preferred over rigidity. As Maria Root (1996) proposed in her early work on multiracial identity: "it is possible for a multiracial person to have one or more of a number of racial and ethnic identifications over a lifetime and be considered psychologically healthy" (Renn, 2004; p. 68). The five patterns are as follows:

1. The individual holds a Monoracial identity. In this case the individual identifies only with one racial identity e.g. "I am Asian".

2. The individual holds Multiple Monoracial identities. In this case the individual identifies with multiple racial identities e.g. "I am half White, half Nigerian".

3. The individual holds a Multiracial identity. In this case the individual exclusively identifies as multiracial e.g. "I am mixed or biracial".

4. The individual holds an Extraracial identity. In this case the individual does not identify with any of the socially "prescribed" racial categories or deconstructs race entirely e.g. "I don't believe in race; I am just human".

5. The individual holds a Situational identity. In this case racial identification is dependent on the situation or context the individual finds themselves in, e.g. "When I am at home, I feel Syrian. When I am with my friends, I feel American like them".

Renn emphasises that the patterns should not be understood as different stages an individual must chronologically go through, however, there is a possibility that some development within patterns can be detected (Renn, 2004).

5.2. Phinney's Model of Ethnic Identity Development (1989)

In addition to *Renn's Ecological Theory of Mixed-Race Identity*, I have chosen to integrate another model on ethnic identity development in my analysis. I chose Phinney's three stage model of ethnic identity development that detail the stages an individual goes through in their process of identity development.

Figure 1 Phinney's Three-stage Model of Ethnic
Identity Development (own illustration)

During the first stage, ethnicity is not explored or given little thought by the individual. Ethnic identity status is thought of as derived from others but is not personally examined. Social environment plays a factor, as attitudes and beliefs towards one's ethnicity are believed to be socialized or passed on through for example parents or a majority culture (Phinney, 1989). Although awareness of ethnic

differences between the individual and others is not yet developed, negative attitudes or beliefs about one's own group can be internalized by the individual as a result of socialization (Turcatti, n.d).

The second stage, the individual starts to explore their ethnic identity which is often accompanied by a questioning of earlier accepted views of one's ethnic identity. This exploratory phase is often triggered by a significant personal or social event/experience that creates heightened awareness of one's ethnicity (Phinney, 1989). This can lead to increased interest into the unexplored aspects of ethnic identity, such as the cultural customs. However, it can also lead to an identity crisis in which an individual might feel confused or overwhelmed by this process (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

The third stage is generally characterized by acceptance, appreciation, clarity, and internalization of one's ethnicity. Individuals will feel a secure and stable sense of self in relation to their ethnicity. As mentioned earlier, ethnic, and cultural identity are not linear and often an individual will fluctuate in their identity. Phinney's more recent research acknowledges this, categorizing this stage as not final, emphasising the continues aspect of exploration of ethnic identity (Phinney, 2006; Phinney & Ong, 2007)

Phinney's model has theoretical underpinnings of both Erik Erikson's (1968) research on identity development in young adults and James Marcia's (1993) Identity Status Theory. Phinney's model focuses on adolescence, a tumultuous time period in which an individual starts to contemplate ethnic identity in relation to complex life events, significant changes, as well as the individual getting exposed to thing and people outside of their established community (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

Moreover, Phinney's model is relevant because it both acknowledges the role of social environment and more importantly parents on the initial ethnic identity formation (Phinney & Ong, 2007). The parent-child relationship and (early) life experiences both have significant effect on this process both in early childhood and continuing in adolescence (Huang & Stormshak, 2011).

5.3.   Construction of Multiracial Identity (own model)

Figure 2 presents my own theoretical model that was constructed following the data analysis. The model incorporates concept of both Phinney (1989) and Renn's (2004) models on identity construction. The model should be read from left to right and details the factors that lead to the exploration of ethnic and cultural identity and the subsequent self-identification of ethnic and cultural identity.

The model shows how personal and environmental factors such as social environment, physical appearance, social interactions and experiences, and internal emotions can be triggers for the exploratory phase of ethnic and cultural identity construction that interviewees went through.

This eventually leads to the three outcomes that are presented in the model, where the interviewees self-identified with one or more of the following: Situational Identity (1), Multiple Mono-ethnic identity (2) and Danish cultural identity (3).
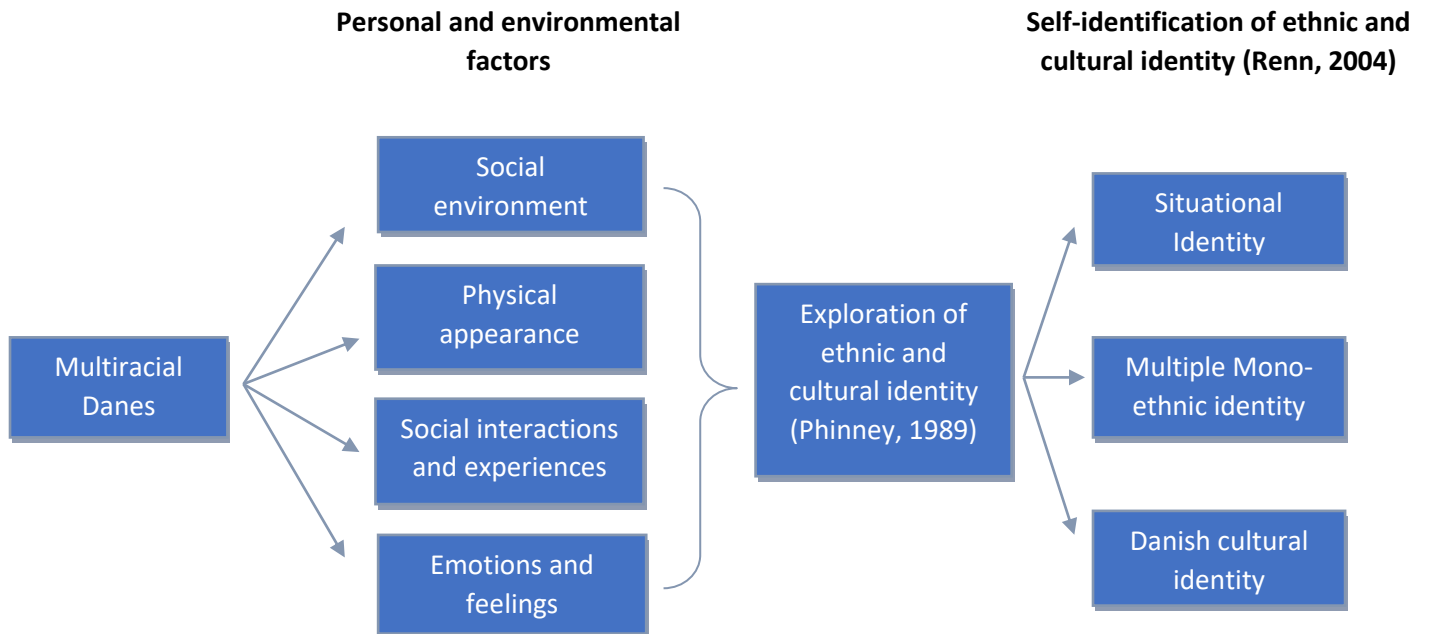
Figure 2 Construction of cultural and ethnic identity in multiracial Danes

In the analysis chapter, the personal and environmental factors will be presented as subcategories to the four main categories I have identified during the coding process. Social environment, social interactions and experiences, emotions and feelings will be part of the category 'Being multiracial in Denmark', whereas 'Physical appearance', 'Exploration of identity' and 'Self-identification' will constitute categories on their own. The discussion will discuss the three outcomes I have identified under self-identification of ethnic and cultural identity.

6. Analysis

In this section the results of the analysis of the six semi-structured interviews are presented. As outlined in the methodology, a grounded theory approach was used to analyse the data. This approach involved a coding process that helped organise the data. I identified four core categories out of the data, which are also represented in the self-illustrated theoretical model. The chapter is thus structured following the chronology of the model, with the first category being 'Being multiracial in Denmark'. Which examines the life experiences of the interviewees being multiracial in Denmark, including their social environment and interactions with others in Danish society. The second category, 'Physical Appearance', delves into the effect that appearance has had on their identity construction. The third category, 'Exploration of Identity', examines the process of identity exploration that the interviewees went through in their process of constructing cultural and ethnic identity. The final category, 'Self-identification with culture', includes the interviewees relation and connection to cultural markers and the resulting self-identification with a certain cultural and ethnic identity.

6.1. Being multiracial in Denmark

This section of the analysis I have collected the analysis based on the general lived experience of being a multiracial individual in Denmark. Through the interviews I was able to collect a broad array of aspects linked to this experience, detailing their process of identity formation through both their childhood and adolescence. The section is divided in two subcategories: Social environment and social interactions and experiences.

6.1.1 Social environment

Social environment is one of the most salient influences on identity formation. Multiple authors have pointed to the significant influence of social environmental factors such as family, friends and living environment (Phinney, 2006). Especially when growing up, the influence of family relationship is one of the most noticeable as the family is the first to present adolescents with social cues, thoughts and opinions that influence their interpretation of their own ethnicity (Huang & Stormshak, 2011). Most interviewees also acknowledge their relationship with their family as one of the most important factors that moulded their perception of culture and ethnic identity.

Interviewees 5 and 6, for example, mention how their sibling (sister) was of enormous influence in their understanding of ethnic and cultural identity. Interviewee 5 speaks about her as guide of sorts, introducing her to a different cultural side and encouraging her to develop closer interest to her 'other side'. Interviewee 6 also credits his sister being of importance into becoming more comfortable with his identity, in particular his physical appearance:

> *"I became comfortable and confident in it [my identity]. Also, on account of my sister in particular being brown, and really always enforcing the idea that that was gorgeous and anybody who said otherwise was stupid. And my mother doing the same […]" (P6)*

From the data it also became clear that the parent-child relationship is one of the dominant factors in the early stages of identity development. Individuals are likely to accept values and attitudes towards ethnic identity from their social environment, but Huang & Stormshak assert that a healthy ethnic and cultural identity is largely dependent on the relationship one has with their parents (Huang & Stormshak, 2011).

This is supported by the data from my interviews, as all interviewees talked about how their parents were instrumental in passing on beliefs, values, and attitudes towards their own ethnicity. Interviewee 2 talks about how she has always felt confident in her more ethnic appearance, regardless of being exposed to teasing and bullying in her school years. She accredits this largely to her mom raising her to be proud of her Ethiopian heritage.

> *"I have always been very confident in my looks. Liking how I look, and my hair, my nose, my skin colour. I think my mom put that into me. […] I realized, OK even when I was bullied in school and someone was saying something about my nose, I would never be sad because my mom always told me 'it's your Ethiopian nose and you have a royal face' and stuff like that, you know" (P2)*

Moreover, the parent's attitude and perception towards <u>their own</u> ethnic/cultural identity can be seen as an obstacle to establishing a healthy relation to culture and ethnicity. Those who grew up with their parent who was ethnically non-Danish expressed how they found it difficult to deal with seeing and being exposed their own parent struggling with their identity. The two interviewees who grew up with their ethnically non-Danish parents coincidentally both have mothers who were adopted to Denmark and subsequently grew up being a POC in Denmark as well. Both interviewees talk about how they were affected by their mother's negative view on their ethnic appearance.

Interviewee 4 mentions how her mother, being an adoptee from South Korea, has completely disregarded her Korean background and assimilated into the Danish culture. Because of this, she felt like her family and particularly her mother, have become incredibly closed off and almost refuse to acknowledge or discuss matters of Korean heritage. Duo to this she perceives Korean identity as something that is not allowed to be explored, leaving her only exposed to Danish culture. Moreover, she explains how she has had an overwhelmingly negative attitude towards her multiraciality as it was never celebrated as a good thing in her household.

"I don't feel like I am allowed to look into South-Korea, because my mom is like 'That doesn't matter, you are not Korean, you are Danish.'. And then I am not going to look into it." (P4)

Interviewee 2 similarly describes her mother's relationship with her ethnicity as negative, especially towards her being of African heritage and her discomfort toward her skin-colour. She explains how she subconsciously picked up on her mother's struggles, but nevertheless, her mother made sure to instil a certain pride in her appearance and Ethiopian heritage.

"She doesn't like being African, she doesn't want to be called African, she doesn't want to be called Black, bla bla bla. But she always told me- Like I have my hair, my nose, my skin, I'm so beautiful, bla bla bla. So, she really instilled this in me, but I think because I've grown up with my mom, I think I was always super aware that I'm different, because these scars that she still has had from growing up, it's impossible to not - it's impossible for you to not like, affect a child even subconsciously" (P2)

Therefore, the composition of the family as a factor should not be overlooked. It brings complexity to the analysis of the parent-child relationship, the individual's upbringing and the degree of exposure to the parent's culture (Bang Appel & Singla, 2016). Out of all the interviewees, only interviewee 2 has grown up with non-divorced parents, however, her mother is a transracial adoptee. Thus, most interviewees have been brought up in a predominantly Danish household, which is acknowledged by all interviewees as instrumental to their adherence to a Danish cultural identity.

"I mean, I grew up with my mom. So, in terms of, like the cultural aspect I feel very Danish. Like the way I celebrate Christmas, it's very Danish. The food I eat, everything is very, like what it has been for my friends and people around me." (P1)

Moreover, growing up with the Danish family also affected their relationship with their other family and often left the interviewees feeling like an impostor when being around their ethnically non-Danish family members. Interviewee 3 describes feeling out of place around her 'African family', being more aware of her Danishness and lacking a feeling of belonging. Interviewee 1 similarly describes feeling different, and mentions how her cousins tease her for being 'too White', leaving her confused and in conflict with her identity:

"I think the older you get, and the older they get, your cousins and stuff like that will also make comments like: 'Oh you're White' or, 'White people can't say that' or 'White people can't do that.'. So that also starts a conflict in you because you'd be like 'Oh, but I thought that these were my people?' because I'm not really White looking." (P1)

Social environmental factors also extended beyond the family sphere. Next to family, location and friendships were identified as the other most significant factors behind their identity development. This is in line with Renn's model, which asserts that ethnic identity development is a complex system of relationships affected by the surrounding environment (Renn, 2004).

Interviewees pointed out that their living environment was of impact on their perception of their ethnic and cultural identity. Being in predominantly White spaces, or spaces that lacked diversity altered the kind of people they came into contact with and the interactions they had with those people. This subsequently changed their perceptions on their own ethnic and cultural identity. Generally, interviewees reported an heightened awareness of their difference in appearance which lead to insecurity. Interviewee 1 for example mentions the impact that moving between cities and residential areas has had on how other people perceived her. In particular moving from Copenhagen to a smaller suburban place she noticed how people perceived her differently from other peers, leading to teasing and othering.

Moreover, friendships were perceived as a contributing factor to positive identity development. Interviewees described a positive impact on their ethnic identity development when making new friends of similar multiracial background as theirs. Interviewee 6 points to a friendship with a friend who made him more accepting of his ethnic identity and made him understand how to take proper care of his hair, which lead to a more positive connection to his hair. Something he describes as instrumental to his ethnic identity.

> *"When I moved from the area I grew up in and met some other people. And got some, to be honest, Black friends, it was super easy for me to be with them. Because I didn't have to explain to them why or how it was possible for me to turn my straightener to 210 degrees because my hair needs more heat. Or how come I use bronzer as my powder because my skin is darker. It wasn't necessary to explain all that stuff, and it was just super easy for me." (P5)*

In this quote, interviewee 5 explains how for her it was refreshing to not have to explain herself, her appearance or certain beauty practices related to an outward marker of identity to others because they understood her experience. Connecting with similar peers outside of the family environment is thus often perceived as a positive factor in ethnic identity development as it can give an individual a increased sense of belonging and positively impact their identity construction process (Huang & Stormshak, 2011).

6.1.2. Social interactions and experiences

Social interactions and experiences are what shape our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world around us. They are of vital importance in the identity construction process, as they can cause an individual to think differently of their identity, initiating the exploration of one's identity. Phinney's model asserts that individuals can reach this second stage of ethnic identity due to a personal or social event or experience that can alter their world-view, making them receptive to new interpretations of their identity (Phinney, 1989).

When asked whether they could describe a defining moment in their identity development, many referred back to moments in their early childhood that involved interactions with peers or were shocking enough for the interviewee to realise that they were different from others, thus kickstarting a questioning of their identity. Often these experiences were negative and incredibly impactful for the interviewees. Interviewee 5 for example details how an incident with her dyeing her hair, which resulted in her hair falling out, was an experience that left a deep impression on her and made her realise she was different from her peers:

> *"I remember the first time I straightened my hair, for maybe a year straight without breaks. And then I wanted to dye it, because my friend used to dye her hair all the time. And then I dyed my hair and it completely fell off. And I was crying in my room and the bathroom with my friend. And she was like 'Oh maybe it's because your hair is different.' And it just hit me. Like, sh*t my hair is different. It's not the same." (P5)*

Most interviewees, the first experience that made them start questioning their identity was due to an experience or interaction at school. Most remember the moment they went to elementary school for the first time as a realisation of their ethnic difference, before that, most were unaware of their multiraciality. Those who were aware ascribed that to their parents, but were not very concerned by it, which aligns with the stage of unexamined identity development that is characterized by a lack of exploration or disinterest (Phinney, 1989). Children usually see ethnicity as a nonissue and it stays this way until they are confronted by something that causes them to explore. Kindergarten or schools are often the first social environments where they come in contact with peers outside of the familial context and are thus confronted by interactions and experiences that alter their self-perception.

Most of the experiences and interactions that have had a lasting impact on the interviewees include othering, bullying or even outright violence. In almost all cases, the experiences or interactions were racially charged and sometimes outright overt racism would be experienced by the interviewees. For example, interviewee 6 vividly remembers the teasing in elementary school by children who would make remarks about his skin colour:

"But the first few years of school were hard. I was very like: 'hmm these White kids and their insults…'. Because they hit home every time, it was so specific. […] So, they said: 'Oh you're brown. That must mean you were born out of the wrong hole!'." (P6)

Interviewee 2 recalls similar remarks being made about her. Moreover, she explains how she dealt with another layer of bullying by kids in class who would be purposefully violent towards her. However, she recalls how she was always the one made to apologise after she would speak up for herself with an insult. For her these interactions dominated throughout her educational career, up to the point where she felt she was still expected to apologise to teachers who were racist, even after reporting racist incidents. This victim blaming response to hurtful racist experiences can lead to disillusionment, anger and resentment amongst the individuals exposed to it and can, in the worst case, lead to internalisation of negative views on their own identity or individuals not speaking out about their experiences.

"I was so used to being told like, 'Don't whine about this stuff bla bla bla', so I would come home and I told my mom about this. And I was scared to even cry and describe it, because I've been going through eight years of school where you are just taught to like, be nice and don't say anything about stuff like that […] It's like a situation where I can tell, OK everything is f*cked up because of me." (P2)

Apart from experiencing forms of overt racism, more subtle ways of racism also impacted interviewees perception of themselves. Most of the interviewees talk about these subtle ways of racism in terms of feeling othered by Danes or Danish society as a whole. These experiences often come down to the 'Where do you really come from?' question, to more subtle ways of othering such as commenting on their capacity to speak the Danish language.

"When I am not 'looking' Danish, I feel like I have to prove to a lot of Danish people that I belong in Denmark and that I am Danish. Because a lot of people, when I stand at a station or something, say to me like 'Wow, you speak very good Danish'. And then I get annoyed. Like I grew up here my whole life, thank you so much." (P3)

The effect that this othering has had on the interviewees is that most of them felt that they had to prove more than others that they are Danish. The interviewees reported that in response to this othering they would often 'over-perform' on their Danishness or became extra aware of their behaviour and actions when they were around other Danes.

"For example, with my ex-boyfriend, when we were at these family dinners and we were going to discuss stuff. I was always just super aware of how I expressed myself and the words

I was using. Thinking about speaking in a very clear and correct way, because I wanted to be taken serious." (P5)

An interesting nuance is that the interviewees reported othering not only happening in majority Danish contexts, but also from the ethnic identity they would identify themselves with. For them these experiences were often more jarring and left them feeling like an impostor, which was very confrontational for the interviewees and made them question their identity even more. This emphasises the duality that many multiracial Danes are feeling when they navigate their identity and speaks of this feeling of being 'stuck between two worlds'.

"It's harder when it's for example Ethiopian. If someone African says to me: 'Oh you are not Ethiopian', it's much harder because what can I say to them? I can't say that... I don't speak Amharic, I can't make Injera, I can't dance Eskista. I am not culturally like that. So that's much harder because that shakes me, that makes me sad." (P2)

6.2.   Physical appearance

This section of the analysis involves the interviewees relationship to their physical appearance as an important factor in their ethnic and cultural identity process. The previous section emphasized social environment and social interactions. It is important to mention that many of the experiences and interactions previously described were a result of physical appearance. The literature also points to physical appearance as primarily affecting the way others perceive and treat an individual (Omolo, 2022; Renn, 2004; Rockquemore et al., 2009; Root, 1990). Physical appearance here refers to both the appearance that an individual does not have control over (phenotype) and the appearance that the individual does have control over (clothing, make-up etc.).

In terms of physical appearance, the interviewees talked mostly about the effect that physical appearance had on the awareness of their multiraciality. As mentioned before, for them, looking different from the majority is what made them initially question their identity of themselves. Interviewees describe the feeling of looking like the 'odd man out' as a very alienating experience. Interviewee 1 describes how she became aware that she was 'totally different' as she started to compare her own appearance to the other kids in school and being 'the odd man out', as opposed to the other kids who she characterizes as all looking a similar way. Interviewee 4 also attributes an heightened sense of awareness about their ethnic identity to looking different from the kids at school.

> *"I lived with my grandparents before I started school and I remember that I became aware that I did not look Danish the day I started in school. […] And I was like, 'Oh, so I don't look like the blonde girls, or the blue-eyed girls.'." (P4)*

Interestingly, all interviewees mentioned physical appearance as an important aspect to Danishness. Skadegård talks about Danishness having a certain look, associated with Whiteness (Skadegård, 2022). The interviewees mention their perception of themselves in connection to Danishness and often describe being unhappy about their looks and the resulting insecurity from that as something that has defined their process of ethnic and cultural identity development. Especially the female interviewees go into detail about their physical appearance as something they have struggled to come to terms with:

> *"Because I look so Asian, I get very intimidated and sad when I see a tall Danish girl with blonde hair because I know I will never look like that. I think that is my biggest insecurity, because I don't have the ethnicity or the bone structure." (P4).*

Many of them describe wanting to look 'more Danish' in their youth as a constant wish and would find various ways to try and assimilate into their perception of Danishness by altering their clothing style, their make-up or hair. It was identified that for them, their Danish identity was linked to physical appearance.

> *"Yeah, I just adopted immediately the slick-back hair like the way they do it here [in Copenhagen]. But to be honest, I adopted things that are probably not what suit me best. […] I remember I bought some stickers that I could put on my eyelids and push them back, so I'd have double eyelids and not a mono-lid. It was a thing they sold, and I just did it because I thought I don't look like others and I wanted a more open eye." (P4)*

> *"I have been super uncomfortable with my identity. Especially when I was younger, a teenager. I would do anything to just be Danish, without any 'spices' on top" (P5)*

Moreover, skin-colour and body-shape were identified as two other aspects of physical appearance that were of importance to the interviewee's perception of themselves and their identity. Interviewee 3 describes having felt insecure about her skin-colour and body type in her youth, but as she changed, she noticed that beauty standards were changing and how this in turn changed other people's perception of her. Instead of perceiving this as a positive development, she describes how it only made her more wary of the people around her.

"And then as I quickly got older, it became popular to have a body shape. And then people noticed me and thought I was looking good. And it's not that it made me feel good, it just made me more scared of the world." (P3)

Interviewee 5 describes a similar experience to her relationship with her body, as she felt more sexualized and fetishised as soon as she got older and 'curvier'. Fetishisation or exoticisation is a form of racially charged objectification of an individual, usually of a different ethnic background from the other person (Silvestrini, 2020). It can involve stereotypes of sexual nature or reducing one's ethnicity solely to a sexually desirable trait. Although this might be perceived as a compliment or a positive interaction, it is often entrenched in racist discourse and can have a negative effect on the person being fetishised.

"And then I remember when I started to grow my more womanly parts of my body. I was really sexualised because I was dark. And I remember in that time, Black women were sexualised a lot. In the media and music videos and stuff from the U.S. So, I remember me being called different names and getting aware that I am different because my boobs are bigger and my butt is bigger." (P5)

The one aspect of physical appearance that has consistently been mentioned by all interviewees is hair. Especially the interviewees with of African heritage discussed how their hair type was of importance in their process of identity development. Interviewee 6 mentions how growing up, he always wanted to have straight hair because then he could wear his hair like the other kids in school. Interviewee 3 explains how she feels the least Danish when it comes down to 'dealing with' her hair. For her, her hair is a source of great insecurity and annoyance.

"I don't feel Danish every evening and morning when I have to comb my hair. That is a struggle, it's something that I'm very, very insecure about. It's something that people love to touch when I wear braids. It's something people ask me every time I change my hair. That thing can really get me to the point of wanting to go bald." (P3)

Nevertheless, the interviewees describe their perception of their ethnic identity as improving and becoming more positive as they developed a more positive relationship to their hair type. Interviewee 2 describes finding confidence and an almost spiritual connection to herself and her ethnic identity as she learned to do her hair. Interviewee 6 also describes learning how to take care of his hair as an important step towards acceptance of his ethnic identity, as he recalls his mom being bad at managing his hair and taking control of that gave him a sense of self-reliance.

"When I put a lot of lotion in my hair, and it's wet, and I do this thing with my finger. My hair will coil up just like that, like a little spiral. And it's a very specific thing. It's stuff like that where I look at myself in the mirror and I feel the most beautiful. It's kind of spiritual almost, because it's like, I just feel a connection to… not necessarily anything, just… I don't even know how to explain it." (P4)

These experiences and the relationship that interviewees have with their hair align with Phinney's second stage of identity search, as individual's start to explore their ethnic and or cultural identity through e.g., learning about certain cultural habits or starting to experiment with their ethnic appearance.

6.3.   Exploration of ethnic and cultural identity

According to Phinney's model, the second stage an individual goes through during their ethnic and or cultural identity development is one of exploratory nature (Phinney, 1989). In this section I will analyse how this process of identity is experienced by the interviewees. What I found through the interviews is that most participants described this process as ongoing and fluid, even those who felt comfortable in their identity, they describe how they keep discovering new ways to experience their identity.

One of these ways is through new relationships with social actors. As mentioned before, social environment has a massive impact on an individual's identity development process. Meeting similar peers has also been established as a positive influence on identity development, as being in spaces where you identify yourself with your peers can be world-changing for an individual. Interviewees describe how new relationships with others who were of similar background encouraged them to explore or re-think their identity more.

Interviewee 5 recalls her sister encouraging her to surround herself by people who were more 'like' here. She explains that the moment she did, it was easier for her to relate to her own ethnic identity. Event though she did not understand at first why her sister would day such a thing. Moreover, she speaks on how being in multiracial spaces she feels heard and acknowledged, which for her has been beneficial to becoming more accepting of her identity and finding a sense of belonging to a group she can identify herself with. The opportunity to identify with other multiracial people made her own multiracial identity more salient.

"I do feel more Danish, but I also feel very comfortable in situations where we are a lot of mixed people together. Because I feel like that's where I belong. Because I am not just Danish, I'm also African, but not pure African as well. It's a mix, so I like mixed environments" (P5)

Interviewee 3 describes how she felt that she always felt like there was something that she missed, that she could not fully express herself. She details how that was something that she only found once she started diversifying her friend group and started to come into contact with Black people. Interviewee 6 mentions how he started to realise how he was 'over-performing' his ethnicity and had to come to terms with certain behaviours he displayed that could be interpreted as offensive to others. It was not until he met other POC who let him realise the history and meaning behind certain expressions and stereotypes he was adopting, which started an internal process of re-evaluating and reexploring his own identity.

> *"So I overindulged and it got to the point where I kind of, again, was just realising my identity and the history of being a person of colour. […] Being a person of colour, there's a lot of universal things we all kind of suffer from regardless of which culture you specifically grew up in. And I think the whole, you know, putting on a show, exaggerating the stereotypes of any kind of aspect of yourself to the point where you no longer even identify with what you are doing. You need to be aware of that." (P6)*

Something that should be noted is the effect that cultural presence in the life of a multiracial individual has on the exploratory stage of the identity process. Interviewees who grew up without the cultural presence of their ethnically non-Danish parent describe having little connection to that culture but at one point found interest in exploring their other parent's culture. This included bonding with the parents they did not grow up with, and also travelling to the country of their parents' heritage. For them, travelling to the country of their heritage is perceived as a positive part to cultural and ethnic identity develop as they continued to explore their non-Danish cultural side and discovered new things that gave them a different perspective on and a better understanding of the culture.

Alternatively, interviewee 6 describes his gratitude towards his Danish mother for transferring some Ivorian culture to him in his youth. He describes her naturally including this part of his heritage by learning how to cook West-African dishes and exposing them to the Ivorian culture through encouraging family visits to his aunt which helped him get a some more understanding of Ivorian culture before he reconnected with his Ivorian father.

> *"She learned how to cook a lot of West-African dishes while she was with my younger brother's father for instance. So, there was this very natural inclusion of my other side. And my auntie was also good at including me in things, like explaining how they did things in the Ivory Coast. Or she would take me when we went to visit her mother who lived behind us." (P6)*

Some interviewees started exploring their identity themselves, rather than starting this process through connecting with others. Interviewee 4 mentions how she was able to explore her Asian heritage through cooking and eating cultural foods. Interviewee 2 mentions how a lack of representation in the people surrounding her led her to investigate her own identity by herself.

> *"I remember this was the time I used to stay more in my room by myself; I listened to a lot of Bob Marley because he talks a lot about Ethiopia and I wanted to know more about my mom's country and all of these things. So, I really feel like I began to go to my room every night and I would sit and listen to music and I would do my hair in hairstyles I found online."*
> *(P2)*

Something that all interviewees described during their process of identity development were the turbulent emotions and feelings that they experienced during this process. The identity search stage is often accompanied by a range of different emotions as the individual embarks on a journey towards developing a sense of self and confronting new information about themselves or their heritage (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Many talk about feeling confused in their childhood and early teens, which gradually transformed into emotions such as sadness, anger, or frustration as they developed themselves more.

Interviewee 3, for example, describes a feeling anger towards her mother for not teaching her native language to her as she feels that it would have a good skill to have which would have also facilitated a better connection to the Botswanan culture. Interviewee 2 expresses being upset towards Danish society for what she perceives as not wanting to learn or change when POC are speaking out against racism and negative experiences. She describes it as a 'rude awakening' for her to realise that she was always going to have to be the bigger person when speaking out about her emotions and the unwillingness of other Danish people to engage in a critical discussion about what she describes as structural problems.

> *"I feel like it's really hard in a society like this, no matter what, to say 'I am not happy about this, this makes me sad'. So, it's even harder when people don't know anything. They just literally don't know anything. I've heard adults in Denmark say they don't understand why we talk about slavery in Denmark. As if we had nothing to do with it. That's so f*cking crazy!"*
> *(P2)*

Overall, the interviewees have all talked about being frustrated with Danish society and the lack of being able to express their identity without feeling ostracized. Many interviewees describe that the moment they started exploring and experimenting with their identity, questioning earlier held cultural beliefs it created conflict with Danes surrounding them. Interviewee 5 talks about speaking

out about the Black Lives Matter movement in regard to Denmark and the amount of negative feedback she received to that. Interviewee 4 talks about close friends having trouble understanding why she gets racist comments and their lack of understanding as to why her multiracial identity is important to her. Interviewee 6 talks about strained relationships with friends and family members when he started to become more outspoken about identity politics and life as a person of colour in Danish society.

> *"Let's say this whole Black Lives Matter movement that made its entry into Denmark. They would be like: 'All those people are so loud. And I don't understand why they need to, you know, there isn't that big of a problem with racism in Denmark anyway.' And just sitting there and being like; I honestly don't want to have to try and argue with you, because I don't want to lose a friend over this." (P6)*

These experiences all display how identity construction has been an emotionally straining process for the interviewees as well. But they describe it as experiences that have strengthened their character and helped them understand their own identity better and overall helped them become the person they are today.

6.4.   Self-identification with culture

In the last chapter of the analysis, I analyse how the interviewees identify themselves and how they have arrived at this identification. During the interviews, they were asked an initial question about how they identified themselves culturally and/or ethnically. This question elicited deeply layered and complex response. Throughout the interviews I was able to gather more insight into their process of determining their identity and was able to create my own model based this. In this model I state three outcomes to this process which this section will be based on: situational identity, multiple mono-ethnic identity, and Danish cultural identity. This section is mostly aligned with Phinney's third stage of identity development: ethnic identity achievement, in which individuals come to terms with their identity (Phinney, 1989)

6.4.1.   Situational identity

Renn identified situational identity as a major outcome in her study of Mixed Race students across the U.S (Renn, 2004). She characterizes this identity pattern as being highly fluid and contextually dependent. This is similar to the type of response I got from some of the interviewees. When asked about their identity, three out of six interviewees found it difficult to answer straight to the point. Some of the language used to describe this difficulty were 'It depends', 'that's hard':

> *"It's difficult because I change the answer depending on who I am talking to." (P2)*

Interviewee 6 describes changing his answer based on the person who asks him. For him, it depends on how much people know about different ethnic and cultural backgrounds as well as the intention behind the question. He says he often makes that judgement based on the other person's ethnic background.

> "If someone asks me, I would definitely as Danish. But that's mostly if- this might be weird, but if it's a White person who asks me 'So, where are you from?'. I immediately go, 'Oh I'm from Aalborg'. Because I know what they're trying to ask, but I want them to ask the right way because it p*sses me off. So I usually say I am from Aalborg, but if I'm just talking to people and they don't give me that vibe I'll say I'm part Danish, part Ivorian." (P6)

Situational identity involves the shifting of ethnic and or cultural identification depending on the context in which the individual finds themselves, either consciously or unconsciously (Renn, 2004). Most of the interviewees describe a change in their identification based on the people they are surrounded by as well. The describe shifting their identity on whether they were in a predominantly White space, in a multiracial environment or a general POC environment, their identity being dependent on social cues from their immediate environment.

> "If I talk to someone who's African- and I think that's most of the people I meet in Denmark that are of colour- and they are like, first or second generation, I'll say that I am mixed. It's a hard question, because culturally I don't have a lot of [Ethiopian] cultural background. And that is probably why I can't like, conform to either group." (P2)

6.4.2. Multiple Mono-ethnic identity

Multiple Mono-ethnic identity is the second identity pattern identified amongst the interviewees. Multiple Mono-ethnic identity refers to the self-identification with two or more of the individual's ethnic heritages. Three out of six interviewees were very straight-forward about their answer when asked how they identify culturally and or ethnically. They identified themselves along ethnic lines, with responses including: 'Danish-Asian', 'African-Danish' and 'Danish-Ivorian'.

> "I see myself in terms of nationality. I feel like I'm Danish, but I also feel like- I am obviously also an African woman, being my dad is from the Ivory Coast. So I would like to be seen in both ways, I would like to acknowledge that I am Danish and from Denmark, but also Ivorian" (P1)

Thos who held Multiple Mono-ethnic identity identified as 'both x and y', but recognised that it could also be dependent on their situation sometimes. For example, interviewee 1 describes emphasising her Danishness more in professional or educational environments and her Ivorian side more when

being around het father or members of her family on her father's side. However, this did not take away from her identifying as Danish-Ivorian.

> *"Let's say I wanted to get a job. Then I definitely want to show that 'Oh I grew up Danish and I am just like everyone else'. So in those kind of instances I would definitely showcase more like the side of me that I feel like I have from my mom. But then when I'm with my dad, obviously, I also want to say like I fit in there, so then I will try to play on some of the aspect that is part of that culture." (P1)*

The interviewees express feeling pride in their heritages and engaged with both. An interesting thing that was identified amongst the responses of the interviewees identifying with this pattern was the higher level of acceptance with their ethnic identities. This identity pattern therefore seems like one of the healthiest resolutions of ethnic identity development, which aligns with Renn's (2004) findings. Interviewee 1, for example, explains feeling at peace with her identity, not feeling bothered by uncertainty, external questioning. She feels very confident in her identity as a Danish-Ivorian woman and is not upset anymore by people questioning her identity, expressing that she feels like others make it a bigger thing than it is. Interviewee 5 also describes feeling more acceptance towards her identity after she came to terms with the fact that looking different from the majority is OK and a part of her. Interviewee 4 also gives an interesting perspective on this. Feeling that her other side is what makes her more unique from other Danish people, she expresses pride in her Korean heritage while feeling comfortable and confident in her Danish identity as well:

> *"I wanted to prove a bit more that I was Korean. […] maybe in terms of my family, I want them to acknowledge that we are half Korean too. I find that part more interesting than the Danish part. Because everyone knows what Danish is in Denmark, it's more fun to be half Asian." (P4)*

6.4.3. Danish cultural identity

Since Danishness takes up an important aspect of my research question, I dedicated a big section of my interview guide to questions about Danishness. I asked them, for example, if they identify as Danish, what makes them feel Danish, how they would describe Danishness but I was also interested in knowing which situations made them not feel Danish. In this way I got an interesting overview of how the interviewees construct Danishness and their relationship to the concept.

Every single interviewee that was interviewed identified themselves culturally as Danish. They used the distinction 'culturally Danish' because most of them acknowledged that although they were ethnically mixed, they often had little connection to their other cultural heritage and identified completely with the Danish culture. As mentioned before, even those who grew up with their

ethnically non-Danish parents were predominantly exposed to the Danish culture as their parents are adoptees.

Firstly, it was important to collect they interviewees thoughts and perceptions of Danishness in order to determine in which way they identified most with Danishness. I asked them what it means to be Danish and how they would describe Danishness to get a better understanding of the concept. Most interviewees linked Danishness to cultural values. Two interviewees talk about *community* as quintessential to Danishness. Taking care of each other, valuing the communal over the individual and appreciating everyone regardless of their background. Interviewee 3 links this value to the Danish welfare system:

> *"Like the government is on top. And after travelling to Egypt and the Netherlands, I see how much support you can get in Denmark and that you are never really alone if you have a social network. And the government of course also helps you." (P3)*

Togetherness in this sense is another value that is linked to community; however, interviewees describe both the positive and the negative side of this. The positive side is encapsulated in the concept of '*hygge*' for many interviewees. They describe *hygge* as the ultimate word to describe the enjoyment of sharing and enjoying things together with others. Interviewee 6 relates this to a certain type of nostalgia that all Danes feel and are acquainted with if they have been raised with Danish culture, he captures it in the following quote:

> *"Well, I think it's hard to quantify, but as far I think every Danish person would say it's about 'hygge' but I think 'hygge' as a concept is very much about, you know, the chill, laidback, everybody knows everybody kind of vibe. Because there's only 5 million people, we all speak the same language, we have all attended more or less the same school, we have a- you know two TV channels, like national TV channels. There is this sense of belonging and I also think that's what makes it so hard for people who don't belong, or who haven't grown up in it or conform to it, to fit in. Because there is this assumption, by everybody who grew up as part of the majority that we are all the same. But that to me is- like peak Danishness is ridiculous levels of, you know, sameness but in like the cosiest way possible. It's like one long nostalgia trip, it's so weird" (P6)*

Sameness was also identified by many as an important feature of Danishness. Richard Jenkins mentions how Danish national identity is captured in the notion of one homogenous people: det danske folk (the Danish people) (Jenkins, 2012).The underlying notion of Danishness, he argues, lies on the notion that all Danes are relatively equal to one another, leaving little room for deviation from the social and cultural norm (Jenkins, 2012).

The interviewees also express this view, especially when they talk about *Janteloven* (the law of Jante), which can be interpreted as a code of conduct that can explain the egalitarian nature of Danish society. Interestingly, two interviewees gave an interesting perspective on the link between what they identify as a tendency to trivialise the hardships of POC in Denmark and *Janteloven*:

> *"Do not presume to know better, that you are better, that you can do better, that you should do better than anyone else. You are no better than the next and you better conform to that idea, so people also instinctively- I think maybe that's also why they have a hard time with the whole, you know, racism thing and minorities saying no. Because for them they kind of interpret it as them saying my struggles, or our struggles are more real or we deserve more."*
> *(P6)*

This was thus identified as a more negative side of togetherness by the interviewees. They express their difficulty with navigating this side of Danishness, which was also touched upon in the previous section.

Apart from cultural values, the interviewees identified themselves strongly with other cultural markers such as cultural celebrations like Christmas lunches, consuming 'typically' Danish food such as stegt flæsk (fried pork) with potatoes and sauce, a minimalist fashion style and personality traits that they described as Danish. Interviewees describe these personality traits as being quite tempered, using descriptors such as: 'laid-back', 'calm', 'mild'.

> *"I feel like, in general you can describe a Danish person as quite mild from the outside. Like, yes, we get happy and we get angry. We like to dress up, but it's not too much you know. It's always straight in the middle."* *(P5)*

Interviewees describe feeling most Danish when celebrating holiday with friends and family, indulging in partying and Danish drinking culture, referring back to the concept of hygge again. They portray pride in their Danishness in these instances. However, the most salient aspect of Danish culture that the interviewees identified themselves with, is the Danish language.

> *"I think what I tried to explain before about speaking and grammar and stuff like that; I feel that's a really big thing for being Danish, it's the language. […] If you have a broken Danish accent, you are just ruled out. People don't even- you can be more light-skinned than me and you will still be seen as a foreigner. But because I speak fluent perfect Danish, I'm always told 'Oh you're not like them!'."* *(P2)*

The describe the Danish language as being instrumental to their Danish identity as well as being instrumental to how foreigners who moved to Denmark are being judged. In the quote above,

interviewee 2 describes that the Danish language often gives her a heads up, explaining that other Danish people are more willing to extend Danishness to her because of her ability to speak Danish. Even if she does not 'look' Danish on the outside.

To conclude, Danish identity has been described as a complex concept by the interviewees, with which they wholeheartedly identify themselves. They identified the aspects of Danishness that were deemed most important by them and linked them to themselves. They find pride in their Danishness and fully accept themselves as Danish.

7. Discussion

The aim of this study is to explore the construction of ethnic and cultural identity amongst Multiracial Danes and examine its relationship with the concept of Danishness. The analysis of the interview data revealed four prominent categories that were also shown in the self-illustrated theoretical model: "Being multiracial in Denmark," "Physical appearance," "Exploration of identity," and "Self-identification." In this section, we will discuss the most important findings of each category in relation to the research question and shed light on the multifaceted nature of ethnic and cultural identity construction among Multiracial Danes.

The analysis shows that multiracial Danes have a relatively early awareness of their multiraciality. Phinney describes the first stage of identity development as being a stage where children are aware of their identity but remain relatively uninterested in developing their identity until later in early adolescence where the exploratory stage is catalysed by an impactful event (Phinney, 1989). However, the interviewees mostly describe an increased awareness of their ethnic difference starting early, around the time they first go to elementary school as opposed to Phinney's model. They were confronted with heavy impactful and sometimes even traumatic experiences and interaction that they need to process before they have entered adolescence, having an significant impact on their social development and perception of self.

This increased awareness may be related to social environment, as less exposure to diversity highlights the difference between the multiracial child and the others. Especially because most interviewees mention growing up and going to schools in predominantly White areas with little diversity of other ethnicities and cultures. Growing up in a multicultural environment can and thus normalise diversity, bringing a level of comfort towards the individual's difference in cultural or ethnic identity leading to a more relaxed phase of identity exploration instead of a confrontational one.

Interviewees describe being confronted by experiences and interactions that included both overt and subtle racism, exclusion, othering and even fetishisation. These have a negative impact on an individual's identity development as interviewees describe feeling negative emotions towards their ethnic identity. This can then lead to multiracial Danes having the feeling of needing to work extra hard to be accepted and recognised by society as Danish, a sentiment that was shared by the interviewees.

Another significant finding from the data is the role of the parent-child relationship. Parents play a formative role in creating ethnic and cultural awareness plus the transfer of attitudes towards self. Interviewees describe most of their initial attitudes towards their own ethnic and cultural identity as being shaped by the parents' attitudes. Moreover, the transfer of cultural values and habits is heavily dependent on the relationship the individual has with their parent in the formative years. With most interviewees growing up with their Danish mothers, they were more exposed to the Danish culture which was also identified as the main culture the interviewees identified with. For further research, it is recommended to apply a gendered perspective to this and investigate the differences between father-child vs. mother-child relationships on ethnic and cultural identity development.

The next significant impact on ethnic and cultural identity development is described by the interviewees to be their physical appearance. Physical appearance was impactful on the way they perceived themselves but also on how they are perceived by society. Interviewees describe physical appearance in relation to beforementioned early awareness of multiraciality, as they describe being minoritized by others based on their looks. As described before, this served as a catalyst for rethinking their identity as they were forced to think about how they fit in a society that perceives and categorises them as different from being Danish.

Based on the analysis it can be argued that physical appearance is a significant aspect of Danishness that remains upheld by Danish society subconsciously. Skadegård describes how Danishness is usually constructed as being equal to Whiteness and the experiences and attitudes of interviewees in this study confirm this narrative (Skadegård, 2022).

Interviewees themselves identify appearance as an important aspect of Danishness and describe not feeling Danish when it came down to matters of physical appearance such as skin-colour, hair, or facial features. This had an negative impact on their self-perception as the interviewees describe the struggle of trying to fit into a standard of Danishness that was not attainable for them; blond, blue-eyed, and tall. Sometimes to their own detriment such as the case of interviewee 5 who described significant hair loss after consistently applying high heat to her natural afro hair for a year straight. Multiracial Danes thus feel exclusion from the based on mostly phenotypical differences, it is through

this that they are categorised as the 'Other'. This raises significant questions about how the current dominant idea of Danishness will adapt to a Denmark that becomes increasingly multicultural and multi-ethnic.

Apart from the negative impact that physical appearance was perceived to have on the identity construction process, interviewees also describe how learning to accept their looks in the long run also helped with getting a more positive and confident attitude towards their multiraciality.

Acceptance of one's ethnic features can thus be described as an important process within a process, that is the process of ethnic and cultural identity construction, in order to achieve a healthy relationship with one's racial and ethnic identity.

The abovementioned factors are contributing to the exploration of ethnic and cultural identity and are frequently expressed to be causes of not only being contributions but causes for exploration. Exploration of identity can be seen as the active and ongoing process through which multiracial Danes seek to understand and define their identity. More specifically their non-Danish ethnic/cultural identity as Danish cultural identity is described by the interviewees as the identity they feel comfortable with and thus they don't feel the necessity to explore.

In the case of this exploration, interviewees describe the change of their social environment as highly influential on their perception of their ethnicity. Developing friendships with other minoritized individuals helped creating a better understanding of themselves and their place in Danish society. Although this is overwhelmingly positive, interviewees also describe feeling alienated in spaces with predominantly minoritized people, especially those of monoracial background, as well. The dynamic between multiracial and monoracial individuals is an area that has not been explored as much and would be an interesting area to explore in order the get a better understanding of the imposter-feeling that is frequently described the multiracial individuals. For the interviewees, finding fellow multiracial individuals helped in combatting this imposter-feeling and also helped them with navigating their own identity.

Apart from the influences of social environment, interviewees also describe the need to explore their ethnic/cultural identity as coming from wanting to reconnect with the culture they did not grow up in. Self-exploration was seen as a beneficial tool to establish a healthy ethnic/cultural identity by the interviewees. This often involved reconnecting with the other parent, who's presence was not significant enough to transfer knowledge and attitude about this culture to the individual in childhood. Travelling to the country of their other parent's heritage, discovering, and engaging in cultural activities, consuming cultural foods were all seen as tools to strengthen this connection.

As a result, I determined that the interviewees have differing ways of identifying themselves. Situational identity was expressed by multiple interviewees and describes their identity as dependent on external factors such as time, place, and person. Ethnic identity is thus described as something fluid, reflecting the complexity and multidimensionality of this social construct. More importantly, situational identity acknowledges individual agency. Recognizing that individuals have the autonomy to define their identity based on their experiences, beliefs, and social environments.

Situational identity can be perceived as a positive resolution to ethnic identity development. Firstly, it enables the individual to be adaptable. This can facilitate social integration and positive interactions with both diverse and less diverse social environment, as individuals can emphasize aspects of their identity that are most relevant or accepted in a given situation. It enables the individual to navigate complex social dynamics and potentially reduce the risk of exclusion or discrimination.

Furthermore, situational identity can give an individual a certain level of protection against discrimination. individuals may choose to downplay or conceal aspects of their ethnic identity for self-protection. Situational identity allows individuals to navigate these situations by selectively disclosing or concealing their ethnic background, reducing the potential for negative consequences or bias.

Alternatively, multiple mono-ethnic identity was identified amongst the interviewees. In this case an identity is constructed from two or more of the individual's own ethnic heritages. This identity pattern allows the individual to acknowledge and embrace the diverse cultural backgrounds that contribute to their identity. It can facilitate connections with respective ethnic communities, promoting a sense of belonging and fostering cross-cultural understanding and empathy.

One interesting finding is that the self-designation 'Black' is often used to describe identity amongst interviewees with African heritage, as opposed to the ethnic identity of their ethnically non-Danish parent. More literature points out that a collective Black identity is often attractive to as it makes identity less complicated and highlights similarities between minoritized groups and offers community to individuals who are already struggling with finding their place between what seems like very rigid monoethnic groups. The problem with this is that the umbrella term Black can contribute to the erasure of the distinct struggles and cultural diversity of different ethnicities and can be problematic to apply in a broad sense to anyone who is of African descent. However, ultimately, multiracial individuals have a right to self-identify with their preferred identity and with what they feel most comfortable with.

Both identity patterns present healthy outcomes to ethnic identity construction and result in identity achievement, which is described as the stage characterized by acceptance, comprehension and

appreciation of one's ethnic identity (Phinney, 1989). Although multiple models include a final stage as described beforehand, I would like to argue that identity does not have to be final and often the individual will keep developing and maturing in their identity beyond adolescence. This again ties into the notion that identity is ever changing.

When it comes to cultural identity, the analysis revealed that, although they acknowledged their mixed ethnic background, all interviewees identify as Danish culturally despite mentioning that they don't see themselves represented in the idea of what Danishness looks like.

Literature surrounding Danishness points to the difficulty of integrating people of colour into the Danish national identity as it is still largely based on a dominant narrative of social and cultural homogeneity which is equal to Whiteness, as argued before. Moreover, the view that some interviewees mentioned about the link between the law of Jante and the reluctance of Danish society to acknowledge colonial history, stories of structural racism and discrimination and inequality of minoritized people would be interesting to explore further as it can give a better insight into the persistency of racism in Danish society.

This is also linked to the important question of the future of Danish national identity in an ever-diverse Denmark. However, the future does not look to conservative. The data from the interviews shows that although it takes up an important factor, Danishness encapsulated more than just physical appearance. They argue that Danishness most importantly promotes community and togetherness, values that are important for social cohesion and inclusivity. Values that the interviewees identified themselves personally with. This shows that Danishness is not have to static but can adapt and be redefined to include and represent all demographics of Danish society.

8. Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the process of ethnic and cultural identity construction within Multiracial Danes and how they relate to the concept of Danishness during this process. The study revealed that there are a number of factors that influence the ethnic and cultural identity of Multiracial, showing the diverse and nuanced ways in which multiracial Danes negotiate their identity within Danish society.

By focusing on multiracial Danes specifically, this research has contributed to filling a gap in the existing literature on mixed race studies in a Nordic context. The Nordic region, including Denmark, has historically been characterized by a relatively homogenous population, and discussions on racial and ethnic identity have often been limited. This study expands the conversation by shedding light

on the experiences of multiracial individuals and their unique challenges in navigating identity construction within the Danish social and cultural context.

Ethnic and cultural identity is first and foremost linked to a multitude of social factors including environment, interactions with others and experiences in childhood and early adolescence leaving an impact on the multiracial individual's self-perception and having an significant effect of the early stages of identity development. Their early understanding of and attitudes towards their ethnic identity were thus mostly shaped by these negative experiences.

Moreover, physical appearance was revealed to be instrumental in the way that others perceive multiracial individuals, often being the leading cause behind racism, bullying and othering which were all catalysts for identity exploration in multiracial individuals. Consequently, identity exploration contributed to creating a more positive attitude towards especially their non-Danish ethnic and cultural identity. During their identity exploration they were able to create a new connection with themselves and their culture, creating a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in the world. Ultimately this led to two types of outcomes: situational identity; in which the individual's ethnic identity is dependent on the context, or multiple mono-ethnic identity; in which the individual identifies themselves with the ethnic identities of their heritage. All individuals identified culturally as Danish, primarily because of their socialization in Danish society.

This research has broader implications for the cultural understanding of Danish society. As Denmark becomes increasingly diverse, it is crucial to acknowledge and address the experiences and needs of multiracial individuals. By gaining a deeper understanding of the identity construction process among multiracial Danes, progress can be made towards creating a more inclusive and equitable Denmark and accompanying national identity that values and celebrates diversity.

In conclusion, this thesis has explored the intricate process of identity construction among multiracial Danes and its relationship to the concept of Danishness. By delving into the narratives and experiences of multiracial individuals, we have deepened our understanding of mixed-race studies in a Scandinavian context. The findings highlight the dynamic and complex nature of identity formation, underscore the challenges faced by multiracial Danes in relation to Danishness, and emphasize the need for inclusive approaches to accommodate multiracial individual's identity construction process within Danish society. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on multiracial experiences and serves as a foundation for future research, hoping to inspire others to engage in critical conversations regarding experiences of minoritized individuals who are of Danish heritage.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 – Interview Guide

Introduction

- **Welcoming and introducing myself**
- **Repeat purpose of interview, consent form, explicitly state recording aspect**

The inspiration for the topic of my thesis came from my own experiences as a mixed woman growing up and struggling with finding my place and own identity in the Netherlands. Although the Netherlands prides itself on being a multicultural society, it is still difficult. I thus began to wonder how this process might be for an individual like me in a society/culture that hasn't been that exposed yet to migration and where multiculturalism is relatively new. Moreover, there hasn't been a lot of research done on the experiences of mixed-race individuals in Denmark so I hope to contribute to that with my thesis.

During the interview I'm really just looking to hear about your opinions, experiences and feelings so there is literally no right or wrong answer. It is my goal to make this interview more of a conversation, as opposed to an interrogation and hope you feel comfortable enough to engage with me. If this is not the case I would like to remind you that you can always withdraw to not comment on something. You can also always withdraw your consent at any time, I will then stop and delete the recording.

Biographical questions
1. How do you identify yourself in terms of gender?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your educational background?
4. What is your current employment?
5. What is your hometown?
6. Where do you currently live?
7. What is your ethnic background?
8. What is your familial background (Did you grow up with both your parents? Nationality of both parents?)

On identity

The first questions will be more generally about your personal process of identity formation.

1. How do you identify yourself ethnically and/or culturally?
2. Have you always felt comfortable in your identity, how has this changed?
3. Have you always been aware of your mixed heritage?
4. What would you describe as a defining moment in your identity development?
5. What other factors, such as family, relationships, living environment etc., do you feel have had an influence on your identity development? (could you give examples of this?)
As a mixed person you deal with the duality of having multiple ethnic and cultural identities, I'm interested in understanding how these interact with each other for you.
6. Do you feel more connected to one of them?
7. Do you feel like you have to prioritise one of them?

On Danishness

In my thesis I am particularly interested in the concept of Danishness and the role it plays in the identity construction of mixed race Danes. The following questions would be related to Danishness, you could think of it in terms of a national/cultural identity if it helps you answer these questions better.

8. What does it mean to be Danish?
9. What does Danishness look like for you? (How would you describe/define Danishness?)
10. Which aspects do you feel are most important to Danishness? (examples: appearance, values, language, culture, religion, citizenship etc)
11. Do you feel Danish? (If yes, have you always felt this way? If no, why not?)
12. What makes you feel Danish?
13. When do you feel most Danish?
14. When do you not feel Danish?
15. Do you feel attached to your Danish identity? (Is it important/dear to you?)
16. Have you had people question your Danishness? (if yes, could you elaborate on one of these instances)
17. How do you respond to this questioning of your Danishness?
18. Has this questioning of your Danishness impacted your identity development? (If yes, how?)

Concluding
19. Is there anything we have not talked about that you feel is of importance for me to know?
- **Thank for participation**
- **Ask if they want to be updated about the results**

Interview 1

Audio: 30 minutes

Date: March 21, 2023

Interviewer: So the first questions are really just very basic informational questions for all of my respondents; so first question is how do you identify yourself in terms of gender?

P1: A woman.

Interviewer: And what is your age?

P1: 24.

Interviewer: Uh what are you currently doing like in terms of employment or studying?

P1: I'm studying a masters in culture communication and globalisation, and then I have a part-time student job at a marketing agency.

Interviewer: Okay. And where did you grow up?

P1: Um I grew up in Denmark and more specifically like Sjælland and then later on moved to Jutland.

Interviewer: Okay. And you're currently living in Aalborg? Or...

P1: Oh. Yeah.

Interviewer: Could you maybe specify the city that you grew up in?

P1: Uh yeah I grew up um I've lived, lived different places so first I grew up in Copenhagen and then some place called Nykøbing Falster it's like an island and then um a place here in Northern Jutland called Fjerritslev.

Interviewer: Okay. Um what is your ethnic background?

P1: So my dad is from the Ivory Coast and then my mom is like completely Danish.

Interviewer: Yes and your familial background - did you grow up with both of your parents?

P1: I grew up um - my parents are divorced - so I grew up with my mom and then my dad was like a weekend, weekend kind of dad so visited him in, during the vacations and stuff like that.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you have siblings?

P1: Uh yes I have three siblings.

Interviewer: Okay well that were the first kind of like basic questions now we're getting more into the questions about identity, so the first questions will be more generally about your personal process of identity formation. Um... So I would like to start off with just asking very broad, how do you identify yourself ethnically?

P1: Um I mean I see myself in terms of nationality. I feel like I'm Danish, but I also feel like- I am obviously also an African woman, being my dad is from the Ivory Coast. So I would like to be seen in both ways, I would like to acknowledge that I am Danish and from Denmark, but also Ivorian.

Interviewer: And have you always felt comfortable in your identity?

P1: I mean if you grew up in places where you know, everyone in school does not look like you it's obviously very difficult to feel, you know, in the right place sometimes they just because um no one can kind of relate to what you have like the background you come from, um, so I would say especially in the teenage years it becomes difficult. So um, stuff like your hair for instance, and just not being able to wear it the same ways as girls with straight hair for instance can do, but also just the way people look, you obviously look different also in terms of skin color and everything, and I think the older you get the more people will remind you of that, and, or, it, like yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. So would you say this has also changed as you got older? Did you start to feel more comfortable or less?

P1: Yeah I feel like, um, I definitely... it's more confident in just being whatever I feel like I am, instead of having to live up to expectations for instance... At least from my experience it just seems that if, it's better if you are more, white, I don't even know what that is but it feels like you have to be a certain way, so you have to put the maybe African side of you apart and then just focus on the culture you have from your mom's side, and I feel like the older get the more I'm able to not care about that, and just, you know, be both.

Interviewer: Yeah, just like, kind of be your own person instead of trying to fit in, yeah. Makes sense.-

P1: Exactly.

Interviewer: Have you always been aware of your mixed heritage or was there like a point where --

P1: Yeah

Interviewer: -- you really started to realize like, oh I am different, or something?

P1: Yeah. I mean I've always, you know known that my parents are like, look two different ways, being my dad is black and my mom is white, um, but I think when I was younger and we moved from Copenhagen to a more like, suburban kind of place, it was where I really realized that, like the kids they didn't think of me the same way as they thought of their other peers, um, so obviously there could be like the teasing with the skin color and everything... Um, but that was really the part where I realised, oh so I'm like totally different even though I always thought we were like the same but we just looked different, yeah.

Yeah. So would you describe that kind of as a defining moment like the moment where you switched, um, places or like environment I would almost say that that is kind of like a defining moment and where you started to realize – oh, yeah.

P1: Yeah I would definitely say that because when I went to school in Copenhagen it was, uh, more diverse, so people came from, like, their parents came from different parts of the world, so obviously the kids all looked different, so not only white or black but also other kind of races... Um, and then when I moved out to the more suburban place, then everyone looked one way and then I was like the odd man out.

Interviewer: Yeah.

P1: Yeah.

Interviewer: What other factors do you feel have been on an influence on your like, identity development you can think of? Family, or relationships with friends... well we just talked about living environment also being a big part of it.

P1: Yeah I think... Um... also family plays a role, also just in the whole conflict between who am I, am I like, my mom's side of me, am I my dad – dad's side of me? I think family also plays a big role in that, like, inner conflict, also because the family on my dad's side, that side, they are mostly from the Ivory Coast also... and their parents are not really mixed so they are also just two parents from the Ivory Coast who have met in Denmark and stuff like that... Um, so they will all look the same, and not have this, um, other side of them that me and my siblings have. And I think the older you get and the older they get, your cousins and stuff like that, they will also make comments like, 'Oh, you're white' or, 'White people can't say that' or 'White people can't do that'. So, that also starts like a conflict in you because you'd be like, 'Oh but I thought these were my people' because I'm not really white looking, so then identify with my dad's side of the family, and then they'll be like 'Oh but you're not really a part of us' and then you're like, 'Oh but then then I must be white'. But when you go to school and stuff like that, you will also feel different, so I feel like even family can contribute to that, like, inner conflict.

Interviewer: Mmm-hmm. No I can definitely understand that. Umm... And also in terms of friendships? Do you feel like that has had an impact on how you view yourself, or..?

P1: I feel like, when I was younger then I wanted to be like, everyone else, so obviously, if you are friends with people who are not mixed then you will try to be like them, and... but the older I get the more I feel like I find people who may also make me feel like it's OK to be both sides of me.

Interviewer: Um well as a mixed person you deal kind of like with that duality of having multiple ethnic and cultural identities, and I'm also interested in understanding how these interact with each other for you. So we kind of touched upon it before but do you feel like you're more connected to one of them?

P1: Um... I mean, I grew up with my mom, so in terms of, like the cultural aspect I feel very Danish, like it the way I celebrate Christmas, it's very Danish. Like the food I eat, everything is very, like what it has been for my friends and people around me. And then in terms of looks, then I obviously feel like more connected to my dad's side, even though obviously I have lighter skin, and maybe my hair is not as curly as my cousins and stuff like that. But I feel like culturally I feel more connected to what my mom has shown me, and then physically I feel more connected to my dad's side of me. Yeah.

Interviewer: And do you feel like you have to prioritize one of them over the other?

P1: Um, I mean... If it's like uh, let's say I wanted to get a job. Then I definitely want to show that 'Oh I grew up Danish and I am just like everyone else'. So in those kind of instances I would definitely showcase more like the side of me that I feel like I have from my mom... but then when I'm with my dad obviously I also want to say like I fit in there, so then I will try to play on some of the aspect that is part of that culture.

Interviewer: So it's very situational depending on like, context, circumstances.

P1: Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer: Now I'm moving on to a part where that kind of takes a central role in my thesis problem formulation, because I'm particularly interested in the concept of Danishness as well and the role it plays in the identity construction of mixed race Danes, so the following questions are going to be related to that - Danishness - and you can think of it kind of, in terms of a national or cultural identity if it helps you answer these questions better. So first question would be: What does it mean to be Danish?

P1: I mean... I'm not totally sure because it's very... like what is it to be Danish? But, I mean... it's about... I feel like it's about... many things even if you talk to Danish people they will be like 'it's about what you eat' or 'the clothes you wear', um... But like, what it *specific* means to be Danish, I'm not quite sure to be honest.

Interviewer: OK. That's fine. Um... Do you feel like it has maybe like a certain look if you could describe what is - what Danish is, feels like for *you*, like, what is *your* personal idea of what it means to be Danish?

P1: Yeah I mean if... To be Danish for me would be to not be too loud per se, because I know... I don't even know if it's a stereotype or... But, in my dad's culture you could easily be termed 'loud' just because you are very out there - you dance, you play music, it's… Where I feel like the Danish is more not even conservative but it's all like... I don't even know what to call it in English but it's more laid back, um... so...

Interviewer: More grounded maybe.

P1: Yeah. So I feel like that's definitely Danishness to me, but I also feel like it's a lot of pride in what we feel like define our culture, so it could be instance be you eat pork, or you go watch the football match on a Sunday, or you drink beers with your friends, um... yeah.

Interviewer: So more of the cultural aspects like kind of sharing that and understanding together that, that is what it means to be Danish?

P1: Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer: Do you feel like there are other aspects that are important to that? Such as language, citizenship, appearance maybe even, or values?

P1: Yeah, I mean... Language this is also very important think, also because every time you hear like debates about, it could be immigrants and stuff like that, one of the focal points is that you have to speak the language to be a part of the Danish culture and what it means to be Danish. And in terms of looks I would say for me, is when I think of Danish people I would think blond with blue eyes, and white skin obviously, because I think the majority of Danes are white, um... Yeah and... yeah.

Interviewer: Do you feel like you kind of fit into that idea of Danishness?

P1: I mean... in terms of, you know, celebrating Christmas or drinking beer with your friends – I feel like yeah I fit into that because that's what I've been doing growing up. Uh... In terms of looks I do not feel like I fit the mold... But if it were like maybe clothing-wise then I would feel like I blend in quite well. But if it's like my appearance in terms of skin and hair and stuff like that I would not say I am that Danish.

Interviewer: I mean we kind of touched up on it before, so, again - do you feel Danish? And if yes, have you always felt this way?

P1: I think... I would say yes, but I'm also aware that when people look at me, the first thing that comes to mind is, 'Where are you from?' so... From the outside I don't feel like people see *me* as Danish just because I don't *look* the part, but as a person myself I feel like I'm Danish. Yeah.

Interviewer: When do you feel most Danish?

P1: Umm... I think... I mean, when I'm with my dad's side of the family I obviously feel very Danish just because I grew up with my mom, so you can easily feel different. Also just, even my dad, I think

he sees me and my siblings as being Danish, and then he sees himself as not Danish but living in Denmark, so when I'm with that side of my family I definitely feel like I'm a white Dane even though I'm not. And then when I have to be in new environments, I feel not very Danish, just because I have this thought of 'What do people think' and 'Do you maybe have something against me' or 'What will it mean that I do not look like other people'. So when I have to be in new environments, that's where I feel the least Danish.

Interviewer: Do you feel like you kind of have to prove yourself in those situations? That you're like 'Yeah but really I am also Danish' and you're trying to kind of like come across maybe as Danish just to kind of, how do you say that, appease the idea of others?

P1: Yeah yeah definitely. Like I even had a conversation with my boyfriend a couple weeks ago, where I just talked about that feeling of having to be more Danish that I -- than I may feel. For instance, I like to wear headdresses sometimes. But I totally stopped doing that just because I feel like, that it was very, putting me aside from the idea of what a Danish person is. So I just stopped doing it to feel like I fitted in. So yeah I definitely feel like sometimes I just try to live up to something, or, like, an idea of something. Yeah.

Interviewer: So, is there also certain situations where you do *not* feel Danish?

P1: Um... I mean... For instance, if I am with my boyfriend, he has a very traditional Danish family I feel like. So when I'm at home with his family I feel like 'Oh I'm definitely the least Danish person here'. Because even though I grew up with my mom being Danish, she never was like the 'traditional' Dane. So we never had those, um, family birthdays, and we've always been a very, like, talkative family and everything, where I feel like Danes are more like, just eating, looking at each other, not always talking that much. So I definitely feel the least Danish in, like that context.

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you feel like that also has to do... Like, that's interesting because on the one side it's kind of like you grew up *in* Danish culture, and I mean your mom is Danish and you grew up here with her, but it's like... Do you feel – how do I say this? In certain moments where it's kind of like... I can word this better in my native language, it's a kind of a struggle but like... Me myself, I also kind of like, understand what you - what you say, what it's like. I grew up in the Netherlands, and... then when I'm at someone where I feel like that's a *different* kind of Dutchness that they are presenting to me. It's kind of like a weird connotation because you really *feel* Dutch, or like Danish in your case. So that's a weird feeling, but then it's kind of still this question or idea, like 'what is Danishness' or 'what is Dutchness?' - I guess that depends for everyone else and what is traditionally Danish and what is *not* traditionally Danish... Do you feel like that's shifting and changing?

P1: Yeah I feel like... If you were like traditional Danish in the sense of my boyfriend's family, I feel like that's the old school, that's, you know, also what I remember my friends' families being when I was little and stuff like that. And now I feel like also just because our generations and younger generations are just growing up in a different time, they are also even more talkative, and discussing stuff, and this is the situation of the world and everything, so I feel like it's definitely shifting what it means to be Danish. Also I feel like, with time, it will also maybe not only be blond, blue eyed, white skin - but will definitely change also as like people just see the world differently. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah probably they also like, a bigger stream of migration as the world becomes more localized and stuff like that.

P1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you feel very attached to your Danish identity? Is it something that's very dear to you?

P1: No, not at all. But I feel like it's also just because growing up, and even now you constantly get reminded that you are not 'truly Danish'. So I feel like that also would have made me be like, 'nah it's not that deep for me then', you know. So I think I'm not *that* attached to it but definitely is a part of me. Yeah.

Interviewer: Could you maybe like, go into a moment, or like an instance where you have people question your Danishness? Like do you have an example of that?

P1: Um... I think... It's just... I feel like it's never... I mean it's not like, really explicit, but even when I started my student job - I think I had been there a couple of times and then the conversation would be like, 'Oh but like where you from?' and, 'How is that side of you?'. And I feel like when you get those questions it's like intrinsically saying, 'Oh but you're not really Danish so let's talk about why that is'. Even though I haven't really shown them anything that is not Danish, but yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. And how do you respond to that? Does it annoy you? Or do you kind of like keep a...

P1: Yeah, I feel like... I always feel like it's uncomfortable, so I definitely always feel uncomfortable when the conversation has to be centered around my ethnicity and stuff like that. But I also feel like I don't wanna be a problem even though I feel like, I'm not the problem - people should respect the conversations I want to have - but I don't want to seem like a problem so I would just politely try to answer the questions as I feel. But I definitely feel uncomfortable every time it has to be about, like, my skin colour, or how different my dad's culture is, and stuff like that. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. You mentioned like, kind of like not wanting to be like a burden. But do you feel like, that's kind of maybe unfair in a way, where you just sometimes just wanna be like, 'Can you *not* ask me something like that?', or 'Why?' or just respond maybe in a different tone, as opposed to always being calm and like, kind of having to *take* those questions?

P1: Yeah, I definitely feel like it's a burden cause if I would just speak my mind, then I would be like, 'Why do you care? Why is this important to you? I'm not asking you about *your* background and culture and family and everything'. Like, it can feel like people are just very 'questioning people they don't even know'. And like sometimes I just want to ask them like, 'Wouldn't you feel that was weird? I never ask you, "oh why are you white?" or "why do you look like that?"'. So I'm like, I definitely feel like it's a burden, and I feel like I just have to do it, because if I don't, then I'm definitely not Danish. Like, if I get annoyed then I'm definitely beginning to like, build a wedge between me and other people, I feel like.

Interviewer: And do you also feel like this has impacted your identity development? Like have you... Like we kind of touched on it a bit earlier - do you feel like it has really impacted you in a way where you kind of started to change yourself because of this questioning?

P1: Yeah I mean... I feel like, I maybe, like everyone, are different versions of themselves in different situations, but I definitely feel like I have like 'the very Danish but ethnic looking' side of me, and then the 'more critical, the one my close circle knows' side of me. So I feel like it has very definitely created like a split in my personality. So there is the, maybe 'the Danish me' and then the, 'me that is both Danish but also African', and, so... Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, yeah. That makes a lot of sense. Ummm... let me see if I... I went through all my questions, so that was really nice. Do you feel like there's anything that you just kind of wanna - that we have not talked about that you feel like is important for me to know, or do you want to speak your mind about something really... or where it's like, 'Ugh, all these Danish people' or something like that?

P1: No, I don't think so. But also it's because even though it's a big part of me, I feel like I never think about it very deeply. I may, you know, I think about it, but that is in context of 'how does it affect me?' Then it's maybe, 'Oh, *this* was so annoying' or *'this* was so annoying', but never like, really thinking hard about the bigger picture. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah makes sense. So it's never really like, bothered you that much to really...

P1: No, cause I feel like... I mean, it is obviously like... I feel like definitely growing up this inner conflict of 'who am I if I'm like either or but both?'. But at the same time I feel like like I'm also just very at peace with it, so I'm like, I don't care. People can think what they want and then, every now and then when they have to question it all the time then I'd be like, 'Oh yeah. It's so annoying.'

Interviewer: Yeah. It kind of always seems like, maybe for me at least when I was younger, I always - it was really a big deal with me especially throughout puberty, where I tried to kind of convince people around me. And then as you grow older, it seems that the people *around* you are more concerned about that, and are more, like, how do you say it, ... than you are yourself. Because sometimes I also get these questions if I'm around people who are not necessarily mixed but who are, you know, migrants and face discrimination themselves, that they're always very angry at the outside world, whereas I kind of feel like I've already made a peace with it. Yeah.

P1: Yeah, exactly. Yeah, I definitely feel that like, it's everybody else is thinking about it way more than you are yourself and you're just like, 'yeah'.

Interviewer: Ohh that seems like a nice note to end it on... And so then I will stop the recording.

Interview 2

Audio: 55 minutes

Date: March 22, 2023

Interviewer: So the first few questions are really basic questions just to kind of like get a background of the respondents that I have so first question is how do you identify in terms of gender?

P2: As a woman.

Interviewer: And what is your age?

P2: 24.

Interviewer: And what is your current employment, or what are you doing?

P2: I am a bartender and server, and then I am painting and making sculptures, so, artist, kind of.

Interviewer: That's really cool.

P2: Thank you but it's so difficult to say I'm an artist but I make no money! (Laughs) I don't make enough to support myself. So yeah, kind of a hobby still.

Interviewer: But I mean it's still cool that you find kind of like an outlet to be creative. I wish I was more creative. I, I mean, I did dancing for a long time, but that's the limits of my creativity.

P2: Yeah but that's good, so it's good to be creative sometimes.

Interviewer: I agree, I agree. And what is your educational background?

P2: I have a business degree from, uh, høje (?) well, what's it called? Like just from business school.

Interviewer: Yeah.

P2: And that's it - I didn't take any further education.

Interviewer: And, uh, what is your hometown?

P2: Aalborg.

Interviewer: And where do you currently live?

P2: In Aalborg.

Interviewer: And what is your ethnic background?

P2: I am mixed Danish and Ethiopian.

Interviewer: And your familial background? So, is your - is it your father that's Ethiopian or Danish, or the other way around?

P2: He is Danish, and my mom is Ethiopian.

Interviewer: OK.

P2: And she was adopted to Denmark when she was... the adoption paper says three years old, but probably 5 because we've had that whole thing with the adoption things.

P2: Interviewer: Oh, like there was also a scandal...?

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P2: Yeah we had a scandal too – (about babies?)...

Interviewer: Yeah well it's the same everywhere.

P2: (Laughs) That's so fucked up! Yeah but there were pictures of her when came, and she could run around, she spoke fluent Ethiopian... Yada yada. So I don't think she was just 2, 3 years old... She looked very young.

Interviewer: OK.

P2: Yeah.

Interviewer: And did you grow up with both of your parents?

P2: Yeah.

Interviewer: You have any siblings?

P2: Yeah, a half-brother - he is only Danish.

Interviewer: OK. Now we're just going to go more into your general process of identity formation. So my first question about that is – have you, or like, how do you identify yourself ethnically? And/or culturally, if someone asks you that?

P2: Yeah. Well, it's difficult because I change the answer depending on who I'm talking to. So, if they're someone who is white ask me, then I'll tell them that I'm black, I'm African. Because I don't think there is as much space for the, you know, there is like an 'either/or'. I know why they're asking me.

Interviewer: Yeah there's no nuance to the question.

P2: Yeah. But if I talk to someone who's African - and I think that's most of the people I meet in Denmark who is of color - they are like, first or second generation... If I talk to them, I'll say that I'm mixed. So yeah it's, it's hard - it's a hard question because culturally I don't have a lot of cultural background. And that's probably why I can't like, conform to either group. Or sometimes feel like I'm left out from one of the groups, but... yeah so culturally I identify as Danish, and ethnically I identify as black. I feel like that's how it is.

Interviewer: Yeah.

P2: Yeah.

Interviewer: And have you always felt comfortable in this identity, or how is this changed?

P2: I always felt comfortable in my skin color, in the way that I never thought about if I changed, like, 'can I change, what if I just look some other way', something like this. I never thought about it like that, but I was very confused as to why, when I was younger, as to why it I would feel like it has to make like this big difference for other people. So obviously I would want other people to not think of me this way, so... I think I've always been very confident in my looks. Liking how I look, and my hair, my nose, my skin colour... I think my mom put that into me. But I just, I felt quite uncomfortable being mixed in Denmark, like most of my childhood years it was like, really hard. Because I have, because like I say there's like no representation, there is no nuances, and like just when I was 12, 13 I remember I used to Google everywhere on the Internet to find the – something - tutorials for my kind of hair, and I couldn't find it, and like, there was *nothing* on the Internet, that was my fucking thing, I searched everywhere! I couldn't find it, but I'm sure if I was able to speak like Spanish or

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something, or Arabic, and I had Googled in one of *these* languages, I would have found a lot of people with my hair texture, how to do this, bla bla bla. But like back then, Danish or English search, there was nothing for like mixed hair or anything.

Interviewer: No. So... do you feel like you've always been aware of this? Or like that you... of your 'mixed-ness'? Or... not... For example for me, I felt like when I was younger, for a long time, and especially in elementary school... I mean, of course I knew I had a different skin colour, but I wasn't really that aware of that. But that's also because I grew up with my mom, and she's Dutch, so I really grew up with that Dutch side, and it wasn't until I went to high school that I was like 'oh OK I'm *different* different' - and people have a problem with that or something.

P2: Yeah.

Interviewer: But for you, you feel like you've always kind of been aware of this?

P2: Yeah. I feel like, but I think... I think really it's like, when my mom was a child in the 70s in Denmark, she - she was one of six girls and they were the only black women in Aalborg and entire of North Jutland. Not *entirely* of North Jutland obviously, but like she would – she'd walk around in the 70s in Vesterbro in Aalborg city center, cars would sometimes slow down to look at her - that's how few black people they would see. So like she used to, I think most of the people in Denmark like, some years ago - she used to be called a 'nigger' all the time - that was like her nickname. And the old people, they say it all the time here. So she was... she has like, a lot of weird feelings about her skin and stuff like that. She doesn't like being African, she don't want to be called African, she don't want to be called black, bla bla bla. But she always told me... Like I have my hair, my nose, my skin, I'm so beautiful, bla bla bla. So she really instilled this in me, but I think because I've grown up with my mom, I think I was always super aware that I'm different, because these scars that she still has had from growing up, it's impossible to not - it's impossible for you to not like, affect a child even subconsciously. So I think that's why, I think it's because like Danish society, it does not let you forget anytime that you *look* different, and that there *is* a difference. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. No no, I definitely, I understand that. And it's true, it's like, as a child, unconsciously it's kind of like your parents give – transfer it onto you, even though it might not be their intentions. But it's just so ingrained in the way they speak of themselves, or yeah, are around you. So no I definitely understand that. And would you feel like there's one defining moment in your identity development where you really feel like 'oh - that's where I started to feel more comfortable' or 'where I really started this process of like, Oh who am I?' For me it really was high school, for example. But I know for other people that might be a different moment.

P2: Yeah. I think... I think maybe it has been like, pre-puberty like at 11, 12, 13 maybe. Because I remember this was like the time I used to stay more in my room by myself; I listened to a lot of Bob Marley because he talks a lot about Ethiopia and it was like I had - I wanted to know more about like, my mom's country and all of these things. So I really feel like, I began to like, go to my room every night and I would sit and listen to music, and I would do my hair in hairstyles I found online, and ladada. Like stuff like where I feel like it was just childish ways to really get closer to this other side, because you feel like there is something missing kind of. Yeah so I feel like, that's probably when I like, really accepted myself, started loving myself, because I realized, OK but even when I was bullied in school and somebody was saying something about my nose, I would never be sad because my mom always told me 'it's your Ethiopian nose and you have a royal face' and stuff like that that, you know? And the times I felt, I remember I started, uh, African dance. I started at a class at 12 years old too, and all the girls they were like, *real* African. So they would tease me a lot - they called me Eminem - like I was the 'white' of the group! But yeah I just, I just remember like when I used to... I

just think that it changed a lot for me, I started to, instead of feeling sad when people teased me, I was like, I was more proud because I *knew* something. I had, now I had more things to like put it up to. So I would like chase this more 'OK so she's from there, she does this hair, bla bla bla, she speaks like this... OK maybe I should want to learn about it, maybe I should do my hair like this', stuff like that. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. That's really, yeah. It's really interesting that you said that thing about, with the African dance and when you're around people who are like a full African heritage, that they still treat you differently. It's like... it's never good enough like, like damn that's just me, kind of, I can't be myself here I can't be myself there and it's always someone who has make fun of me in some way.

P2: Yeah like at that time I, I remember that was like the time in my life where instead of like getting sad and feeling like, exactly as you say, like I'm never good enough, I think because I was more happy about myself, or understood *why* I should be happy about myself. Like, I think that made it like, possible to, instead when they joked about something, instead of getting really sad and feeling like 'oh this says so much about me, they can tell that I'm fake' you know, I get this whole like, like a...

Interviewer: You're like an impostor.

P2: Yeah I'm an impostor! That's a totally good word. Yeah. So and I just feel like, that feeling went away at that point. And that's when I really started to like, be like, try to have some pride in who I am. Yeah don't let anybody tell me what I am and am not, because I feel like that's what I've been told my entire life.

Interviewer: Yeah, and you decide that for yourself at some point, once you feel more, most comfortable in yourself. Do you feel like – like, we've already talked about your mom having a big influence on how you felt about yourself and how you viewed yourself - is there like, any other factors such as living environment, or relationships with friends, or I don't know, romantic relationships, that have also had an influence on your identity development?

P2: I think... Well I don't know, not in a good way, I don't think a good way.

Interviewer: Okay!

P2: I think everything good, uh, about this is something I had to find with myself. And so maybe I haven't been as receptive towards the positive things. Maybe I can only remember like, things that has, that was tough for me. Like, I remember when I started in school, and at that point we've been four or five years old, I still remember all the jokes they would say - the kids. And it's like, because already back then I would stand there and I would think it was like, then you play with someone and you are friends, and then some other person joins them - and then they would get really nasty towards me, but it was always, like, racially charged... And so it's like, even in the, like zero grade – yeah. Even then I remember I was like thinking, 'Why do they hate me? Why is it a problem for them?', I didn't understand. But it was like, I don't know if it's the parents who say stuff like this, but it was like... schoolyard riddles. Like whenever, whenever we were on field trips, and someone sees a shit on the ground, they would say or would yell 'Olivia, it's your baby on the ground!'

Interviewer: What.

P2: Yeah, and in the schoolyard, the kids, like, from I remember this from, like five or six years old - they would, then they would start like, teasing me, like, say something like, 'Uh did your mom wipe her ass with you?' or 'Were you born through the ass?' That's stuff they would say! 'Were you born through the ass'! It's just like so absurd! And I remember a joke the kids would say like all the time

was, 'Why do niggers hate God?' and they say, 'Because they have pussy hair on their head.' Like, these things, they are like, grown into my brain. I laugh about it now, but back then I would cry a lot! I would cry every time I went back from school, I would talk to my mom... She would tell me 'they are jealous because you're beautiful' bla bla bla, so you know but it's like... Of course it's not because they are jealous, it's because they have bad parents, or are ignorant. But like... when you are a child, you start to think, 'Why does everyone hate me? What am I doing wrong?'

Interviewer: Yeah. It becomes very personal.

P2: Yeah.

Interviewer: No I definitely understand that and recognize it as well.

P2: Yeah, and I just think it's also funny when I think about the small classes, like younger grades. All the time I've been sent in a classroom with a teacher and a girl, and I've been told to apologize because a girl... because I've said something, I said something stupid - 'Shut the fuck up you bitch' or something. Nothing really bad, I know. But I've been sent in these classes so many times, and told to apologize, because a girl is crying, because somebody yelled 'shut up' at her. After she's been annoying for three hours, and she's like crying for like 30-40 minutes and I'm like the devil. But I've never experienced at the same school, to be put in this room with somebody and then telling them to not say these bad things to me, and I feel like it's because I *didn't* start crying. But I feel like teachers, adults, if they knew better, they would be able to see like, maybe I don't cry because as I'm telling you, I'm being yelled at everyday, I'm being called these bad things, they say XYZ... So obviously maybe I don't cry as much as this girl, but I still come to you and I tell you. So when I yell at her the next day, 'shut the fuck up Erica' - the teacher, they'll ask me to apologize because she cries a lot, instead of actually talking to the girl saying, 'but you know you really bullied her for three days now', you know?

Interviewer: Yeah.

P2: And I think it's like such a tense topic that they don't even want to talk about it. I switched schools in 6th grade because I was - two boys from my grade and the grade below me, they were friends - they waited for me outside the choir room... And I was on crutches at this point, and they kicked my crutches away from underneath me, and they pushed me to the ground, and they kicked me and hit me... I'm sorry I'm getting like... I just don't like talking about it, it's not like I don't like talking about it, but it's like, hard to talk about, because I switched school after this. Because I came home and I was so used to like being told like, 'Don't whine about stuff bla bla blabla,' so I would come home and I was like, I told my mom about this like, 'they did this to me, bla bla bla...' And I was scared to even cry and describe because I've been going through eight years of school where it's like, you're just taught to like, be nice and don't say anything and stuff like that, because nobody really understands like how difficult is. And yeah, so I just switched schools and I just... Another thing about that, is I think it's really funny in Denmark, how people – old people, especially people over 40 - they will pretend like they don't... they think the youth is crazy, 'oh we have all this political correctness, bla bla bla', but if they don't think it's right, then why are they not acting like they did just ten years ago? There is like a *major* fucking difference from all of them, to like, adults who would stand in the fucking middle of Kvickly or some shopping place and say 'nigger' before, and would like, say provocative when there's like people around, because they want to make sure that everyone knows that they can say this word. Like, they don't do that anymore, but they still want to claim that we are being like...

Interviewer: Yeah like asking for too much, or something.

P2: Exactly and now they say 'oh it's never been this bad, it's never been that bad, it's not that bad.' OK but then why did you change? Yeah it's not that bad because you actually changed a *little* bit so let's continue what we are doing.

Interviewer: Yeah. And also the fact that they didn't used to get called out on their bullshit, and now they *are* getting called out on it, and then it's like, 'oh but back in the days no one said anything.' Oh I wonder why, you know?

P2: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah but... And it's very unfair because you always feel like you have to be the bigger person and not respond, and like you say, like hold back and not show your feelings, when in real life it's like, you're the person who's getting hurt. And it's like, I also read another article for my thesis by someone who was also talking about this, like, sort of bullying in elementary school, where also the teachers themselves were ignorant because someone told another girl that she was like a mulatto. And she didn't like it. And then the teacher was like, 'Why? There's nothing wrong with being a mulatto.' So the fact that they already don't understand why it can be offensive to call someone that is just part of the whole problem, because otherwise they would have to recognise that they themselves are being racist or hurtful towards someone else, and no one wants to do that. Yeah.

P2: But I hear about that a lot, like really a lot, from girlfriends and whatever. I feel like if a teacher has these kind of opinions they will bring it into the classroom, and they won't have any repercussions about that. And I experienced it at my, at the business school I went to, I had a teacher who didn't like me. And she would consequently, like every single class, she would use examples of Africa about segmentation, she would use examples about Africa all the time saying, 'Oh the niggers they don't need a smart TV, so that's why, that's why you won't put, segment, these kind of countries'. And she would use these words that she would like to prove-provoke-prov-

Interviewer: Yeah

P2: Yeah. Provoke me.

Interviewer: Yeah. That is insane. Did you make a report out of that or not? You did.

P2: Yeah I'm meeting with the school, with her, teachers and everything. And they... the room exploded the second I said the word nigger. The room, she... flew out of her seat and yelled that, with that white lady shaken voice, 'I will not tolerate you calling me a liar or racist' and stuff like that. And yeah, so I had to apologize. I didn't *have* to apologize, but like as you say, you have to be the bigger person. It's like a situation where I can tell, OK everything is fucked up because of me, because of me, because she chose to take it more personal like... it's always like that. You don't even have to say the word racist. You just have to say, 'Oh I don't like you saying nigger,' then you have to listen to how they are not racist, and how their grandpa is not a racist, and...

Interviewer: Yeah, they always try to convince you so much, and I'm like, 'but you are still using the word.'

P2: Yeah.

Interviewer: But yeah, there's really an element of self-reflection that's missing in a lot of people. This is really unfortunate, I'm sorry you had to deal with all of that. It's so... it's really tough.

P2: Yeah. It sucks, but I feel like it's worse, that... it's worse for a lot of people here. So I feel like I have to be happy that I'm not them necessarily.

Interviewer: Yeah but in a way that's also kind of fucked up because... I also, like, had to kind of train myself to stop thinking in that way, because I was thinking, if that is the case, then there's always someone who's going to have it worse than me, does that mean I have no right to be, you know, upset or hurt by a situation just because someone else in the world is having it worse than me? Like no, people should just be decent fucking human beings... Yeah.

P2: Okay one second - it's because I forgot my grandma, she's in the hospital - and my dad is calling me up right now. Hej? One second, sorry – Hej far.... ja, oh (talks to dad in Danish). … Sorry, she was supposed to get, go under surgery yesterday, and they rescheduled it for today because they didn't have enough time. So she probably just woke up and he wanted to ask me if I can come, and I told him I'll be done in thirty minutes, he said that's fine.

Interviewer: Okay. I hope she's doing fine.

P2: Yeah she is. What were you saying? I'm so sorry I got really stressed out.

Interviewer: No it's okay, I don't even remember what I was saying, but I can go on to the next question actually. So I feel like as a mixed person, you kind of deal with the duality of having you know, multiple ethnic identities or cultural identities, and I was just interested in understanding how these also interact with each other for you. Do you feel like you're more connected to one of them? Or do you have to prioritize one of them over the other?

P2: I feel like I have to prioritize my Ethiopian side more than the other. Both for myself and my self-love, I feel like that is a hundred percent what takes up the most... But that's also because I grew up in Denmark. Whatever anyone says, I am Danish I am born and raised here, that's just like such a natural part of what and who I am. Whereas like my ethnic background is what everyone sees, what everyone judges me on, what I think about, like when it's like, comes to like, growing up, and the issues I've been going through - most of them were probably caused by what I look like. So yeah I feel like it just requires more love, and nurture - and also it's like, it's kind of like the shield, I feel like. It's - no matter how little cultural background I have, I'm still in Ethiopian, I still have a lot of pride, like my hair now I don't have a really good hair day today -

Interviewer: Me neither...

P2: But like... It's just, I feel like, when I see the pictures of like, Ethiopians with their coils it's like, a special, it's like really tight - it looks like a straw because there is no breaks between the curls... And when I put a lot of lotion in my hair and it's wet, and I just do this with my finger - my hair will coil up just like that - like, like a little spiral. And it's like a very specific thing, and it's stuff like that where where I look at myself in the mirror and I feel the most beautiful. I feel like it's my most, it's like kind of spiritual almost because it's like, I just feel a connection to... to not necessarily anything, just... Yeah I don't even know how to explain it.

Interviewer: Yeah, no, just... to your identity I guess. To your heritage.

P2: Yeah.

Interviewer: That makes sense and you've also already talked about the Danish side, and I'm also like, for my thesis, specifically interested in this whole concept of Danishness and what role it plays in, for mixed race Danes. So for you, what does it mean to be Danish?

P2: I think... that's a really difficult question. I think... I don't really know. When I think about myself traveling, for example, I'm very prideful that I'm from Denmark in some situations, it depends on who I'm talking to. Sometimes I'll start apologizing immediately, but when I'm proud of being Danish

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it's always about this, uh, the way... I don't know how to, how to even answer that. It's like, do you know about, like Danishness? In Danish we call it 'danskhed' - and it's like a question everyone talks about, what is danskhed? I think it's like the same question as you asked, like what does it mean, to be Danish? Yeah. And I feel like, whenever I talk to old people about stuff like this, I always say that's like danskhed, that's Danishness, to be aware of your local community. It's like... it's very *local.* I just feel like everything is very local, both for good and for bad, but I think mostly for good, when people are connected in some kind of way. I think... I feel like that is what is like... I don't feel like racism is very Danish. I don't feel like it is, or ignorance in general. But I feel like if people... when I hear about all the people talking about Danish societies and cities just 30 years ago, it was like small communities, and people would fight for each other, and people will listen to each other. And I think when you come from a country where the security system is as big as ours, you get enough... When you are well off, when you, when you don't have to worry about basically dying, or stuff going wrong, you can have extra mental capacity to take care of other people, and to listen to them, and help each other. And I feel like, we've been separated maybe a lot for a long time, that's what I can see from like, political decisions and stuff like that. And when we do that, I just think that people can't go together as much. I feel like a lot of people would actually want to, join the side of no hyggeracisme (sp?) - they call it 'hygge racism'. I think 90% of people would be totally OK with not allowing people to act like this in a Danish society, not allowing people to be pushed out, or not welcome somewhere. But I just think that the last 10%, like people who hate, they have a lot more will to like, get together, to get their word across, stuff like that. Yeah. I feel like I'm more Dan - what I'm trying to say is, I feel like I praise Danishness more than a lot of white people, and a lot of like, the older generation here because, at one time they will talk about the old bodegas... We used to have like, 3500 of them 20 years ago, all around Denmark. You can walk three streets and there will be a bodega. Now there is only 230 left, and that's like some of the things where I can see from old people. They would talk about just 30 years ago when they went to these places, that's where you went, and there were rich people, poor people, *poor people* - you know? There were alcoholics, there were family men, that's like a place of community where everyone is welcome and that was like a very common thing in Denmark, something that all the people are very proud of. But even stuff like that today we don't have that, and people they don't get together across, like... They don't hang around, hang out in these different groups mixed up anymore.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. So for you it's more about... community feeling and like values, of like, shared values of respecting each other and... yeah, getting along with each other, and caring for each other.

P2: Yeah. And I think that's just *lacking* and I think that's why the people who are ignorant have a lot more space to actually talk, and... yeah. You hear them a lot more. Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you feel like there's other, like, aspects that are accorded for Danishness? So for example you could think of appearance, or we just talked about values, language of course, culture, religion, or even citizenship? Like, do you feel like there's one that's more important to Danishness or danskhed?

P2: Yeah. I think uh.... I don't even know anymore, because I feel like I've been told a lot of things growing up - 'oh this is what it should look like, this how society is bla bla bla'. But I don't think any of those things are actually real, so sometimes I'm trying to think like, what is even this freaking country (culture?) I grew up in? Because it's hard to sometimes get it, like, what you're standing in now, compared to what you were being told it's supposed to look like. Those are very different things, so I don't really know. Because for example about religion, I just know that it's important that you don't have anything. It's like, they don't - people they don't like Muslims here, even if they say they don't

have a problem with it, they are still lying. You just know that. Like, most of them are lying because the statistics when people vote out there, the statistics when people answer about how they feel about immigrants, are there, and they are really bad. I feel like that's... that's really weird. Like religious-wise you cannot be a Muslim, but you can be a Jew. You you can't circumcise a child if you are Muslim, but you can if you a Jew... When the politicians talk in the TV about ethnicity, they talk about Jews as if they are part of the Danish society and has been for a long time, that they are Nordic... Where it's like so fucking weird that a politician who was supposed to know things can stand there and say Jews are Nordic. They are not Nordic! Like, what the fuck? So I just feel like danishness now, when you listen to politicians, is about not being a Muslim, uh not being... Yeah you have to be from Scandinavia, and if you have a religion, just don't be a Muslim. And if you have a religion and you are not a Muslim, don't talk about it.

Interviewer: Mm. Yeah. So it's really about like, everyone should kind of be, the same. Like... yeah. And a lot based on whiteness, and what they find like, is - how do you say that - appropriate for whiteness for like... or where they still feel comfortable. Yeah.

P2: I feel like the Law if Jante is very Danish. But... I'm scared to say it sometimes, because I've said it before as if it was a real law, because I thought it was, because it made so much sense. And I Googled it one day and I see it's like, some made-up from a book or something.

Interviewer: Yeah, it's kind of like a social construct right. Where... But it's very instilled in Danish people. Like I'm not even Danish and I've been reading way too many books on like, what Danishness is, and Danish identity and nationality and stuff. And I mean it kind of, makes sense because I kind of say it the same in the Netherlands even though I feel like lately it's been less than that. I call it like a lawnmower culture. It's like if you are a little bit above the rest of the grass, it's like immediately cut off, like, 'no you're not allowed to be different, you should be normal, then you are normal enough'.

P2: I think also when you don't, like, in Denmark, when we don't actually get taught about history and also not even just not taught about it, we are taught like in public school when you go in the lower grades... You are basically taught that slavery has nothing to do with Denmark even though we were the third biggest slave - slavery country – something, I don't know how to say it in English.

Interviewer: Yeah like slave exporters.

P2: Yeah. And I think when, I just, I feel like when we don't, when we are not taught about these kind of things, and people don't even have the historical knowledge to understand how much it fucking means in Denmark too, I feel like it mixes together with that Law of Jante, this lawnmower thing even more because... When people are already in this mindset of 'we are all the same, don't think you are better, don't think you are anything like that' - obviously they will not react well when they also feel like they are being driven out, or there's not space for them to be themselves, bla bla bla. And then I come here and I say 'oh don't call me a nigger, it makes me so sad' or 'don't use this word'... Uh, maybe that's like a bad comparison because they should know that. But you know, like other things, like talking about saying something rude about people's food, what it smells like, what they smell like, what their hair looks like when they come into work, 'oh your hair looks like this and that,' that stuff like that. I feel like it's really hard, I think it's hard in a the society like this, no matter what, to say 'I am not happy about this, this makes me sad,' so it's even harder when people just don't know anything. They just literally don't know anything. I've heard adults in Denmark say, they don't understand why we talk about slavery in Denmark, as if we had nothing to do with it. That's so fucking crazy.

Interviewer: Yeah that's crazy. It's... heh. And then I feel like, for them, it's even more important because you can really see... In the Netherlands it's a whole discussion as well, because we also had a *huge* part in the slave trade, and with colonialism. And now the government has come out with apologies, and the amount of people who are like, 'That's not my government,' and 'Why should I apologize for something that happened so long ago?' and... Then they can't recognize the impacts that that had, how that's *still* impacting society today. Yeah. It's just a lack of critical thinking skills as well.

P2: Yeah, I don't get it. I really don't get it because, why do they tell me about Hitler all the time, why do they tell me about him? Why does he matter when everything else doesn't matter? Denmark is very disconnected from the world. It's like so obvious and it's embarrassing. Like, not as a country but like the people here - also as a country, but I ion't follow politics so I don't know that. But Iijust know people, when they talk about Afghanistan, Israel... It's really embarrassing, it's really really embarrassing, sand I think it's hard to be around and adult people who will say stuff about Palestinians, say that they are like this, this, and that, and... you can tell them that this is straight up apartheid, and you could explain these things, and they will look you dead in the eyes and just say 'no that's not how it is'. But it's not even like a conspiracy theory, it's just like, just open your fucking laptop and Google! It's -- they want to hate people. I feel like, a lot of people say today, they *want* to hate people. They *don't* want to listen, they don't want to learn anything. They just want to be Danish and white by themselves, and everyone else should go away.

Interviewer: That makes sense.

P2: Sorry I'm getting so petty whenever I talk about race.

Interviewer: Yeah I feel like maybe sometimes it's also... I'm also way too academic into this because I've been like, reading so many of these things about how it can be also a coping mechanism, which is like, being very cynical about the state of the world and around you. Because it's like, just the sheer amount of ridiculousness that we're living in.

P2: That's the hole I go into when I talk about race sometimes. I'll just be like oh fuck them because they - they love - they love it how it is, they don't want the good conversations, they only want the bad ones. But obviously that's not true.

Interviewer: So we already kind of talked about, that you feel Danish, and you have said that you always felt this way. Is there a certain times where you feel more Danish than other times? Or the moments?

P2: Yeah the are moments, but it's like it's mostly when I meet... So I work in two bars, and both of them are like for old, an older crowd - it's like 40 years plus who go to these places only. It's like night clubs for old people. So I'm around a lot of different adults every weekend, and they are really drunk, so they'll be so super honest. And I can go like this and what I mean, it gets easy to feel the vibe of the person who's standing in front of you. And sometimes someone will start to talk to me about things where you could just tell, 'okay, you are only saying this to me right now because you see, look at me right now and think, *she's a black person and she is maybe also a Muslim*.' And I'm not a fucking Muslim, I don't even know a lot of African countries who are straight up Muslim except for North Africa and Somalia, but they still just think everyone who's dark skinned is a Muslim. They'll start to talk to me about stuff like this, and then I'll just correct, but they'll say grammatical issues, and I'll make a little bit fun of them - I'll say 'oh that's too bad, you should go to the language school again because you speak worse than me' and I'll just joke with them. There is a lot of times when I'm standing in front of old people, and I'm standing there and I'm thinking, 'I can laugh at them.' I can

think, 'oh, you're just ignorant because you don't even understand that I can sit and talk to your grandma for 20 minutes and we can talk about things and bla bla bla, and she would be so disappointed in you and so happy about my generation, even though you come here and talk to me about how she used to say nigger, and she's not a bad person, and your kind of people, you do this, this, and that'. When they say 'your kind of people' I think whenever I'm put in these situations, that's where I'm really proud of being Danish, because I'm really prideful in the parts where I'm Danish. It's like even though school was hard, I had some really good teachers too, and I had friends in school. I learned a lot - there was like, a lot of space for me to be there because we are not crammed in third year (?) students, at least that we weren't like... It was, everything else was so... good? Except for the bad things that... I feel like I grew up in a country where people are nice to each other, I want to be nice to other people, that's how I feel sometimes.

Interviewer: Yeah.

P2: And yeah, I have a great education, I've... I just feel like everything turned out quite okay. And, a lot of people, they are not in the same situation of these older generations... So... I might be more Danish than them anyways.

Interviewer: And you've also had people question your Danishness?

P2: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah it's like... how do you respond to that?

P2: I'm... I just make fun of them.

Interviewer: Yeah.

P2: Yeah I don't take it to heart.

Interviewer: No.

P2: Because... I feel like... Yeah. I just don't take it to heart that much. Not when it's about Danishness, or being Danish. Because I know I'm Danish, so. And then like, I also think like because I have my dad's side of the family, to me it's like, something I've said to some people when they have been like, when I've been in, like, a situation that kind of sucked, about my ethnicity when someone tries to -- sometimes I'll just have weird conversations where I don't know what the point of the conversation for the person is, other than them wanting for me to give them a 'straight answer'. They want me to say I'm white or black. But I can't say that. When I say I'm mixed, just accept that. Yeah but... Then I'll feel like really prideful, so I'm thinking to myself, I feel like I'm coming from two of the oldest countries in the world! Ethiopia is really fucking old. Denmark is really old too. So I'm very prideful of that. I'll just say that, that will be my reaction I'll be like, 'oh but my nationality is like, it's stronger than yours because I'm both a Viking and I'm from here.'

Interviewer: So it's kind of like you... just try to see the positive things, in all of it, or like turn it into a positive thing rather than let it weigh you down or have it impact you, personally.

P2: Yeah. And also like just having family, and having - living in the country, and speaking the language, having taken an education, working, like you have all of these things that it's like, if somebody told me I'm not Danish I'll just think that's stupid. Like, why would you even say that? And family heritage and stuff like that but... it's harder when it's for example Ethiopian, if someone African says to me, 'oh you are not Ethiopian,' it's much harder because, what can I say to them? I can't say that... I can't say that.... I don't speak Amharic, I don't - I can't make injera, I can't do, I can't

dance eskista, I can't do anything that's like, Ethiopian. I'm not *culturally* like that. So that's much harder because that's like, that shakes me, that makes me sad. That's the situation where I'm like, 'just *please* accept me!'

Interviewer: Oh that's interesting, I really, I hadn't thought about it like that. So do you feel like you have to kind of like, prove yourself in a way then then? If someone questions it? From, on the other side, your Ethiopian side. ...That makes a lot of sense. And I think there's also like, kind of fits in, like, a broader thing of what people have been saying so far, so I can definitely use that for my thesis. No, anyways the whole interview has been like super useful, and I've also gone through my question list, so... that's great. We are on time.

Can I say one last thing?

Interviewer: Of course!

P2: Just about the Danishness... I think what I tried to explain before about, you know, speaking and grammar and stuff like that; I feel like that's like a really big thing for being Danish. It's like, the language. So even if I go to Copenhagen, they will bully me because they can hear I'm from Jutland. And if I'm from the Mid-Jutland, people would be like, 'oh you are like a farmer'. They can't even take you serious. if you are from the North it's not as bad, but it's in another way... And if you have like a broken Danish accent, then you are just ruled out. People don't even - you can be more light-skinned than me, and you will still be seen as foreigner. But because I speak fluent, perfect Danish, I'm always told, 'oh you are not like them.'

Interviewer: Mm.

P2: But how do they know my cultural background? So I feel like Danishness is like a lot about language. You can at least hide, you can be seven different colours. If you just speak perfect, perfect Danish -- people won't look at you as a foreigner, just a 'not ethnic' Danish person.

Interviewer: Mm-hm. Oh that's true. And that question of 'oh yeah but you, *you* are different.' The amount of times that has been said to me, 'oh you're not like one of them' when we're talking about migration issues. Like 'no, you, you integrate well.' The amount of times I've had compliments on my Dutch and I'm like, 'Oh, yeah, it's because I was born here! And I grew up here!' Such a radical concept!

P2: People are *so* weird.

Interviewer: Yeah.

P2: But it was, it was a great interview. You are a good interviewer.

Interviewer: Thank you! Thank you. Um, yeah I wanted to say is there anything we haven't talked about, you feel is important for me to know? But I mean you just like, talked about the whole language part. So other than that... thank you for participation, and I don't know if you want to keep updated in some way, about my results or... I don't know.

P2: Yes I would love to.

Interviewer: Yes? Of course.

P2: It's really exciting.

Interviewer: Yeah. So once I'm finished and hopefully graduate and everything, I can come out with something. And like, send like a little thing of thank you so much for being part of it and... with a bit of the things I've found, so...

P2: That's awesome, thank you. And if you want to have anything answered, you can also just text me on Instagram, I can send you a voice note back.

Interviewer: Okay, yes thank you. I'll see if anything comes up.

P2: Cool.

Interviewer: Okay well then, I would say have a very nice rest of the day.

P2: Thank you.

Audio: 38 minutes

Date: March 23, 2023

Interviewer: So the first few questions are very basic, it's just to have kind of like an overview of my participants. So first question is, how do you identify yourself in terms of gender?

P3: A woman.

Interviewer: Mmm-hmm. And what is your age?

P3: 22.

Interviewer: And what is your educational background?

P3: Uh... Gymnasium.

Interviewer: And what is your current employment?

P3: Activity worker in Legoland.

Interviewer: And what is your hometown?

P3: Varde.

Interviewer: Varde. And where do you currently live?

P3: Varde.

Interviewer: What is your ethnic background?

P3: My mother is from Botswana. My dad is Danish.

Interviewer: And what is your familial background? Did you grow up with both parents?

P3: I grew mostly up with my father in a Danish home.

Interviewer: And do you have any siblings?

P3: 4.

Interviewer: Well, that was that. So now I'll just continue with the questions on identity. So the first question is, how do you identify yourself ethnically or culturally?

P3: Hard to say. It is very very difficult. I think I identify as a Danish woman from the inside, but from the outer world I am... I don't know, black or Latina or - but just nothing - until I speak.

Interviewer: Yeah. So if someone would come up to you and ask you your ethnic background you would say 'I'm Danish' just... or would you also say...?

P3: They ask because it's difficult. If they ask 'where are you from,' I ask them, 'do you mean town or my roots?'... If that answers the question.

Interviewer: Yeah, no I get it. It's just more of like, how *you* would identify yourself? Like for example I would say, I'm Dutch Ghanaian. Like, in my ethnic identity. And of course it's true, like, it depends on who asks, and the circumstances. But more generally I would say I identify myself as a Dutch Ghanaian woman.

P3: Mmm.

Interviewer: So have you always felt comfortable with your identity? --

P3: No.

Interviewer: -- Or has this changed? And *how* has this changed?

P3: *Oh my god*. No, I haven't always been comfortable with my color and my body shape. I have been bullied as a kid. I am *now* confident with my skin and my shape, but when you come from a little, little village, and you're the only two - me and my brother were the only people that was darker - then people look weird at you.

Interviewer: Yeah. No I get that. Would you feel like that has also had a big influence on, like just in general, your formation of identity and how you view yourself?

P3: Yeah, it really took me down a lot. When I was a kid. Everybody thought my hair was different, my body shape, my colour...

Interviewer: Yeah.

P3: But now, as I grow up, when you go to the bigger cities, the capitals of Denmark or something, then it's something else. Nobody looks at you.

Interviewer: No, that's true.

P3: Yeah.

Interviewer: That's also kind of something that I will come back to a bit later. But have you always been aware of your mixed heritage or mixed background?

P3: No, because when I grew up, I feel like I'm a Danish person. But sometimes I get certain looks at people, or they judge me for my skin color.

Interviewer: So, do you feel like as a kid, you weren't as aware of it, and still necessarily aren't? Like for example with me, I didn't really think about my identity that much when I was in elementary school, because, I don't know, I just felt like a kid, I just felt like a girl. And then I went all of a sudden to high school, and then it seemed like everything changed, and there's like 'oh I'm different' or something.

P3: Mmm... I think because I was living mostly with my dad, and my dad was not alone, or I was with my grandmother - they're both white - we got asked a lot if we were adopted.

Interviewer: Oh yeah.

P3: And then clearly goes into your brain.

Interviewer: Yeah. So that kind of... It's like... You start to think about, 'oh I'm different'. Yeah.

P3: Yeah.

Interviewer: And um, what would you describe as a defining moment in your identity development? Is there like, one moment where you started to feel very confident? Or where... it might have also been like, a negative experience, where you were starting to think about, 'oh who am I and how do I present myself?'

P3: Uh... That is difficult because I think with the... Back in the days, it was really popular to be skinny and thin as a stick. And then as I quickly got older, then it became popular to have a body shape. And then people *noticed* me, and thought that *I* was looking good, and... It's not that it made me feel good, it just made me more scared of the world.

Interviewer: Okay.

P3: Like, yeah, like... Okay so now I fit in the - what is it - fit in the box, *now* you find me attractive. But before when it was, 'uh you're not supposed to be fat or have big hips', then you're like 'ugh', then - then they're disgusted. So that is like a crisis. Cause you get the... get the what - not the fame but... you get the attention, as soon as you fit in. But (mumbles) if it has anything to do with the colour, but has something to do with the body shape that you get genetically.

Interviewer: Yeah. So it's more about beauty standards for you and kind of like -

P3: Yeah.

Interviewer: That switch in, 'oh all of a sudden I'm seen as desirable.'

P3: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah that makes sense as well.

P3: Thanks.

Interviewer: Do you feel like there's other factors um that have had an influence on identity development like family? Or, like we just talked about living environment, um...

P3: Yeah, culture.

Interviewer: Yeah.

P3: Yeah, the way, when I go to my dad's house, I'm in peace, I can relax. When I go to my mom's house, it gives me stress. Uh, the way she's living, is like the African way, I call it. There's a whole other experience also to be with her family, how they're structured or not... And I have been growing up in a Danish home, so I cannot handle this like, 'hakuna matata' vibe. And that - that's difficult. To switch on, and then... First I always had white friends, then I started to hang out with black friends, and then it all was big explosion for me like... to see how structured the... one group is compared to the other, see how they do their life.

Interviewer: So would you feel that it was more of a positive experience or negative?

P3: It is a positive experience because you get more clue of how other cultures work. But I will say even though I am black, when I go to my black community, I feel white; when I go to my white community, I feel black. So.

Interviewer: Yeah. I feel like that's something that's very characteristic for mixed people because it's kind of like on both sides it's - you're not that, but you're also not that, and yeah, where do you fit in? Yeah. I'm also interested like, this whole duality of having multiple ethnic or cultural identities and how they interact with each other for you. Is there like, one that you feel more connected to? You kind of already touched upon - you feel more at home with your dad, so..

P3: Yeah, and the Danish vibe. I don't know, have we got to say black and white?

Interviewer: Well that depe- there's no right/wrong answers, it's just how you want to frame it.

P3: Yeah. The white culture suits me, because of how I grew up. That's, yeah. That's what I think.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. Do you also feel like you have to prioritize one over the other?

P3: Oh this is a big and long question. I have two groups, white friends and black friends. The black friends were open for... that you also have another life than these people. But the white friends only wanted me to be in that group. When I went with the black friends, they got angry because I don't prioritize them... So... what was your question?

Interviewer: Yeah, if you feel like you have to prioritize one identity over the other?

P3: Yeah. I think out of natural, I prioritize the white one because that's what suits me best. But I do like it every now and then to be in the black circle. To dance wild, to not be so, introvert as the white culture is.

Interviewer: Okay so is that... do you feel like, how do I say that - like why for example, do you feel... Is there certain instances where you feel more comfortable being on like the black side and on the white side? And when is that?

P3: When it comes to arranging – arranging -- arranging things, I'm on the white team. Structure, planning, and this and this. But when it comes to, hygge, I'm on the black side. There there's no stress.

Interviewer: Okay. And so it's kind of values as well.

P3: Yeah.

Interviewer: And the cultural aspect, or not that so much?

P3: Mmm.

Interviewer: (Muffled) Um... Okay. Um, then I'm going into more questions related to Danishness and this is, this can be a bit – how do you say it – vague to understand, but... In my thesis I'm also particularly interested in the concept of Danishness, and what role it plays in mixed race Danes. So you can kind of think of it as maybe national identity or cultural identity. I know for a previous interview, for her it helped to think, to understand it as like, 'danskhed'.

P3: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. So for you what does it mean to be Danish?

P3: For me, the only thing when I think of Danish is like a high social society environment system. Like the government system is on top. And after traveling to Egypt and the Netherlands, I see how much of support you can get in Denmark, and that you're never alone if you have a social network. And the government of course also helps you. Uh... other than that... Yeah, in the young age, I think about people that are drinking. Alcoholism is, is too crazy in Denmark. And uh... then uh... hygge. Overall the Danish people are using a lot of time on, going on cafes or eating good dinner.

Interviewer: So, from what I hear it's really more about kind of a community feeling.

P3: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. So like, community values that comes through, through for example the government, or sharing things. Yeah. So...

P3: Also you have a better chance of surviving if you're a single mom at, let's say 20, than in - in another country. If you have nothing.

Interviewer: So what makes a person, for example, a Danish person? Would you say?

P3: In my opinion it uh... it's difficult what makes a person Danish.

Interviewer: Yeah. I mean it's difficult because, but at the same time it's so interesting because I feel like, everyone I asked the question to, they really have to think.

P3: Yeah.

Interviewer: But, at the same time, it is the thing that is so prominent in political discussions and migration issues, so it's like, it seems to be a big thing but then when you ask people it's like, 'hmmm.'

P3: I think the overall question if, if you adapt to the... not to the system, but to the Danish... country? Do the things that you have to do, like you get a job, you're - you're learning Danish if you come from 'not Denmark' and uh... yeah. If you just follow the *rules* basically you act like - you go to work, you go home, you cook dinner, you... Like a normal lifestyle for a Danish person. Yeah. Go to work... go home... cook... and then... meet up with some friends. And uh.... yeah.

P3: The way I look, if I see, look at somebody, I can tell by their clothes – okay, you're Danish. Especially if you're out of the world. I look at the clothes, and if I'm in Denmark, I'll look at their hair. Then I can tell if they're Danish or not. But that's like the outside. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah no, but it's kind of like – that's also one of my questions. It's kind of like, other characteristics because, like, some literature that I've read, Danishness is a whole... how do you say that - it's comprised of many things. You can think of appearance, or like you say, outer – outwards. I know some people are like 'yeah for me I feel like a lot of people think of Danishness as being white,' as well. Or values, or - what is it - religion even comes up.

P3: Yeah.

Interviewer: Citizenship, culture, and language of course. So, do you feel like one of them is more important in Danishness?

P3: I think religion is not important at all in Denmark. People are not taking it serious. They go to the church maybe for Christmas and, uh, confirmations, but I don't think that it's such a high thing in Denmark, be religious.

Interviewer: Okay. So would you say for you also it's not important in Danishness?

P3: No.

Interviewer: No. Other things are more important.

P3: I think it matters if you're Muslim or, whatever your is, and if you are immigrated to Denmark, you're still Danish. Just be above like, the religion.

Interviewer: Okay. So is there one of those that I just previously mentioned, that you feel is most important?

P3: Yeah I think values are different from house to house. So it's difficult to say, but... uh... Appearance. You can easily spot a Danish person according to me.

Interviewer: Okay. And um... Yeah. So, we've kind of already established this, but my question is like, do you feel Danish? And if yes, have you always felt this way?

P3: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

P3: Yes, until I met my black friends.

Interviewer: A-ha. Okay.

P3: Yeah, I still felt Danish, but I also felt something coming from the inside of me that had to get out. The wildness, the...

Interviewer: Do you feel like you had to suppress that? Under, like your Danish identity?

P3: Yeah. Yeah. I feel like there's a lot of standards that you have to live up to in Denmark. That's what I wanted to say.

Interviewer: Okay.

P3: There's a high standard, there's a certain way of doing things, now we have all the - what is it called - stræbers -

Interviewer: Yeah, I understand. Yeah.

P3: In the school. That you have to get perfect grades, you have to do certain way of living. It's like uh, yeah. *Villa, Volvo, and Vovse...* that.. yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So.. How do I say it. It's kind of also about keeping up, sort of -

P3: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you feel, you felt like, like you had to fit in, into that, too much.

P3: Yeah. I feel like really when you are another colour than the Danish... peop- how do you say... When I'm not looking Danish, I feel like I have to prove a lot of Danish people that I belong to Denmark and that I am Danish. Because a lot of people when I stay at a station or something people say to me like 'wow you speak very good Danish!'

Interviewer: Yeah.

P3: And then I get annoyed.

Interviewer: Yeah.

P3: Like, I grew up here my whole life, thank you so much.

Interviewer: Yeah no I get that, yeah that's also something I feel like is very common, this need that you have to prove that you are Danish even though... yeah. People won't question that from someone who they feel like 'looks' Danish. So then we kind of come back to this whole appearance again, which is apparently very important in what Danishness looks like. And is there also a time where you feel most Danish? Like, or a certain environment or...

P3: Like it must.. *feel* most Danish or I have to *behave* most Danish?

Interviewer: Okay. There's a difference between that?

P3: I would say so because I feel very very Danish when I go to my grandparents, but that's because of the environment. But I feel like I have to represent myself most Danish, uh... the first week of a new school. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So... why, for example?

P3: My grandparents live, they, you know they have a farm, and they're really Danish. They eat potatoes every evening, with sauce and meat, a few vegetables... and then they just talk about the news. That's like, very Danish. And drink a beer. That's how I see a Danish family.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

P3: And in school I feel like, people can easily judge you by your colour, and if they get the impression that I slacked, or I'm not listening, or I'm not that, and my pronunciation or what words comes out of my mouth... Then they will assume that I'm not Danish, or I'm not good enough, or they don't want to be friends with me, that's what I feel. The same also when I go to supermarkets, it's actually very very funny. Normally I walk in my own clothes when I go to supermarkets, and sometimes you know you get these looks, and the person at the customer line is just looking at you very very 'mrreh' like, 'I don't need to smile to you'-ish, especially in this little area that I'm in. Yesterday I went in my Legoland outfit. All the people that I walked past, they were looking at me; when I came to uh – uh, customer - what is it?

Interviewer: Like the checkout, the cashier.

P3: Yeah, the cashier. She was smiling *so much* and was 'hello ma'am - how are you - blah blah blah'... you know? I know that Legoland represents a lot in Denmark but at lea – like, I was like, if you can act like this just because I'm wearing this jacket but still has my skin colour, I know you're not going to react the same way if I'm just wearing my normal jacket. That's how I felt.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. Yeah. So... yeah it comes again kind of thing.

P3: It's a little bit status, you know?

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. That makes sense. And... well, we kind of touched upon that now already, like, when do you not feel Danish? It's kind of like when people point it out? Or is there other instances when you feel like, not so Danish?

P3: I don't feel Danish every evening and morning when I have to comb my own hair. That is a struggle, it's something that I'm very very insecure about; it's something that people love to touch when I wear braids, it's something people ask me every time I change my hair. That, that thing can really get some people to the point of, wanna go bald.

Interviewer: (Giggle)

P3: That - that is, that is a hard thing.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

P3: Yeah. My hair. That's when I don't feel Danish. I feel like if I had straight hair, brown hai,r people would assume me as a Danish person. But since I'm having this...

Interviewer: Even if you would have a different skin color?

P3:...You mean darker?

Interviewer: Yeah I mean like, like for example you said, 'I feel like if I had just straight hair regardless of my skin color people would be more accepting or like more seeing me as a Danish person, as compared to when I have...'

P3: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

P3: Because my... I would say that my way of clothing is very Danish. And my, uh... not sound, but the way you talk, like your...

Interviewer: Pronuciation?

P3: Yeah? Not, yeah. Yeah yeah. That's also the only thing I can say. Uh... yeah. The way I speak Danish is very Danish, it's normal, it's not with an accent.

Interviewer: Yeah.

P3: So I would assume people would straight away I think I was Danish.

Interviewer: Okay. So, do you feel like that has always been like a struggling point for you, your hair?

P3: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

P3: Also you cannot get the products here, you have to go all the way to Copenhagen if you wanna find just a little piece of whatever you're looking for. It's just an issue. And it's starting to move, the wave is moving, but it has been gone for a long time.

Interviewer: Do you feel like it should be happening sooner?

P3: Yeah. Also compared to the fact that you can get it in Germany, you can get it in Sweden, you can get it in Holland, you can get it *around* this country.

Interviewer: Do you feel like that says something about Denmark and Danish people?

P3: It does. But it also yeah, then it goes beyond. It's political how many uh... *invandrere?* What is the -

Interviewer: Yeah like, foreigners, migrants.

P3: Yeah, foreigners. How many foreigners do you take in, immigrants? Compared to the other countries. And we don't. We don't have really a mixed cultu - cultural... country, as the ones close to us.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. So that's good that there's sort of change coming.

P3: Yeah.

Interviewer: Umm... Is your Danish identity important to you?

P3: Much.

Interviewer: Yeah.

P3: I feel like um... it's a privilege if you go out of this country and you say to people that I am from Denmark and I have the Danish passport. It does something with people, because people would also

slu- uh, easily assume that I'm from Morocco, or Egypt, or wherever, but I'm actually a Danish person. And then they value me higher, because they know the living standards in Denmark.

Interviewer: Yeah. So it's um... how do you say that? It's also kind of like, not just within Denmark, but outside of Denmark, that it's important for you to have this Danish identity?

P3: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Have you had people question your Danishness?

P3: I think it's difficult for people, but I think a lot of people are interested *knowing*, how it all goes. Um... but I've not had somebody necessarily say like, 'how Danish are you'. But I think I have a few people said like 'do you feel like a Danish person?' Where my answer is yes.

Interviewer: Yeah. So... You feel like, I mean, yeah we kind of touched up on about it, touched on it already, where you kind of like, 'yeah people would not question me being Danish as much if I have like a different appearance'. But do you not really feel like people have really have been questioning you? Like for example, I can tell many accounts of people being like, 'uh but you must be... I don't know, adopted' or, like this whole questioning, for me, it can be very subtle as well. It can be, for me, already in the way that people tell me, 'oh you speak such good Dutch' and I'm like, 'would you assume that I'm not Dutch' or something like that. Feel like that also depends per person, how much value of course they attach to that. Whereas for me it's really about, like, kind of this constant reminder of like 'oh you're not Dutch' or 'you're not fully Dutch'.

P3: Yeah. That I understand. Like, sometimes when I speak to a new person, and I speak fluent Danish, they look surprised. And then I'm like, why are you already judging people before you talk with them? That is something that can bother me a lot.

Interviewer: Yeah.

P3: But I think, since I grew up with the fact that feeling different, it does not really do much to me anymore when, when they say stuff like that.

Interviewer: So you wouldn't really respond to it as much anymore.

P3: No, I, I... no. If they say like, 'ohh you're actually Danish' -- 'Yeah. I am.' You know. Cut it.

Interviewer: Yeah. But is this – is that diff – has that changed?

P3: I think in the beginning, when I was eight or nine, it was very very difficult for me, to accept that people would even dare to *ask* me. And this was adult people asking a little kid. Then... I feel like I have to step up for myself, you know?

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you feel like you kind of had to have a mask of sorts? To kind of... do you feel like you've had to, for yourself, sort of be like, 'well it doesn't bother me that much.'

P3: I think it will always bother me, that people don't always see me as a Danish person. But it does not bother me from the inside anymore. But just, it's - it's difficult because I feel that I constantly have to *prove* my standard of being a Danish person.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. Do you feel like that's – mm, yeah. That's interesting.

P3: I think if I chose to wear something else to walk around in, people would look weird at me and they would not be speaking to me. If I was gonna wear African clothes.

Interviewer: Do you feel like it has also had an impact on your identity development? Like when you...

P3: Yeah, because I was surrounded by white friends my, mostly entire life. I did what they did, most of the time.

Interviewer: Yeah. Do you feel like, it has also made you insecure?

P3: No, it has made me more confident on being a Danish person.

Interviewer: Okay. So it's kind of like, almost had the opposite effect of what people might think it would have.

P3: Yeah. Because I'm proud to be Danish, it's just hard to prove it to some people. But since I grew up with only Danish people... then. Yeah. That's like a plus.

Interviewer: Yeah. I get that. Do you feel like it would have been very different if you would have grown up on more of the other side?

P3: Yeah. If I have grown up or I was raised only by my mother, uh, it would have been so different life that I would have had by now. I'm sure. On many many things, I don't think I would have been so structured. I think I would have worn clothes in another way. I don't think I would have given, uh, a shit about what other people would think about me, which means I would also not dress the way I do. I'll dress in African clothes or whatever. Um... yeah, it would have been very different -- also just the meal, it would have been African food instead of Danish food.

Interviewer: Do you feel like you've missed out on that?

P3: Uh, yeah.

Interviewer: And does it bother you, or not that much?

P3: It's... I wish I have had more of the cultural experience with my mom's side, but on the other hand, it is also easy to travel nowadays. So I feel like if I really wanna get cultural with the African culture, I will - I will travel to that place, and I will find myself in peace, there, for that moment.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. So it's kind of like you kind of have that agency yourself, like you can have the choice yourself, to engage in it or not.

P3: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah that's - that's a nice thing to have, I feel like. I'm the same, but also sometimes it can be difficult because I wish my father would have given me more of the Ghanaian... Like I wish I could have, I could speak the language also because I think it's a plus to speak multiple languages.

P3: That is an issue. I have been very very angry with my mother.

Interviewer: From not doing that?

P3: For not doing that. I don't get it, I think it's a big, uh, step ahead in life. ...She said they agreed on, when I was born for example, that I was only gonna speak one language because they did not want me to feel weird in school. so they thought about me, 'she's gonna live in Denmark she's gonna behave like a Danish kid'.

Interviewer: Yeah. So it's kind of already been decided for you, in that.

P3: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. And I always like, in a way always sympathise with that, because I understand that. For example for my dad it would have been hard to have come to Denmark, and maybe for your mom as well, that you know, they don't want their kids to experience certain discrimination, or experience that they've had, but... And it's not that I, for example feel *resentment* towards my father, but it is that I was like 'yeah but at the same time you kind of took that experience away from me'. Like...

P3: Yeah.

Interviewer: Maybe... I wouldn't have had that, you know? Maybe. But I would have learned that language, which I would have really liked, because it also helps much more to get in touch with your other side, with family and their stuff. So yeah. Yeah. Umm... Okay, I feel like I've gone through all my questions. But is there something that you feel like you want to speak out about, or you're like 'oh this is important' or 'I want to have this thing said', before we stop?

P3: Uh... I'm proud to be Danish person, but I'm also proud to be mixed race. I also like that I stand out from the other people that are here but it's just not easy.

Interviewer: Mm-hm, that's true. It's kind of like you're unique, but it's... yeah. It does give you something unique that makes you stand out from the crowd and normal, normalcy.

P3: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. That's true. I also always say that in the Netherlands, I don't know if you agree with me or not, but I feel like there's a lot of - especially out of the bigger cities - a 'lawnmower culture' where it's like, you know, like you have a perfect grass lawn, and... the moment you are a bit taller than one of the other grass things, immediately like *mmpp!* - you all need to be the same. And I've kind of found peace with, *not* being the same, even though the Netherlands is also changing much more in multiculturally. I do feel like in Denmark, people I've talked, to they've been like 'yeah we have even *more* of a lawnmower culture here.'

P3: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I agree on that. I feel like, in Holland, they divide people up in, or them they do it themselves, they divide themselves up in cultures. And that's what the Danish people are trying not to do, so the immigrants can become more Danish, and I think - I think that's fair.

Interviewer: Any other last words before I stop the recording?

P3: No. But there's something I wanna tell you after.

Interviewer: Okay. I will stop.

Audio: 50 minutes

Date: March 30, 2023

Interviewer.: So, my first questions are really basic just to get like an overview of the person I am interviewing. So the first question is, how do you identify yourself in terms of gender?

P4: So I am she, her. Woman. Nothing out of the ordinary here.

Interviewer.: And your age?

P4: I'm 26

Interviewer: What's your educational background?

P4: So my Bachelor's degree was Philosophy, Applied Philosophy. And the I am studying CCG now. And all the basic, elementary school. You know?

Interviewer: Yeah, and what is your current employment?

P4: I just got a new job yesterday.

Interviewer: Congratulations!

P4: So it's just fundraising at an NGO here, parttime. And it's just for now until I get a fulltime job. But it's nice.

Interviewer: yeah it's nice to get some experience with that too. I feel like persuasive writing is always. Good as a skill. To persuade people to invest or something.

P4: Yes! I need that pitch skill. I don't have that, I need to be more precise with the way I communicate.

Interviewer: I get that. What is your hometown?

P4: It's called Over Jerstal. So it's Danish in the South of Denmark, like one hour from the border to Germany.

Interviewer: Can you write it in the chat maybe? Because I have no idea how you write that.

P4: Even Danes are like: ""how do you say that?" And I'm like: it's Over Jerstal. Where's the chat? Oh there.

Interviewer: Aha.

P4: So it's two words. It's over and under. So there's a place called Over Jerstal and some place called Under Jerstal.

Interviewer: We have those types of towns in the Netherlands as well.

P4: It's so weird.

Interviewer: and where do you currently live?

P4: In Copenhagen.

Interviewer: Uhm, What is your ethnic background?

P4: So my dad, he's very Danish. Like I don't think he has any other ancestors from out of Denmark. And my mom is from South Korea and she was adopted when she was eight months old by Danish parents.

Interviewer: And did you grow up with both of your parents?

P4: No, unfortunately my mom and dad got divorced so I only saw my dad like, once every half year to be honest. So I lived with my grandparents and my mom, throughout my childhood. Because my mom couldn't afford to live alone.

Interviewer: Okay, and do you have siblings?

P4: Yes I have an older sister, but she doesn't have the same dad. But he's also Danish and I live with her too. We have the same mom. Obviously.

Interviewer: Okay, that was it. So now I'm going in more on the questions of identity. And my first question is; how do you identify yourself ethnically and/or culturally if someone asks you that?

P4: Yeah, so it's a weird question because I think it has changed the older I've gotten. Because when people ask me where I am from, I think that they want to know my ethnic background because they can tell that I am not from Denmark but I do. I have lived here all my life. And I identify as Danish. And I always ask them back: "what do you mean?". And then I say my mom is adopted, and I am aware that I need to clarify where my looks are from. Even though that might not be what they meant.

Interviewer: I feel like that is very… a shared experience by a lot of mixed race people. And have you always felt comfortable in your identity? Because you already mentioned that this has changed. Can you explain in what way?

P4: Yeah I think… I lived with my grandparents before I started school and I remember that I became aware that I did not look Danish the day I started in school. And the asked me where I was from and I lived with my Danish grandparents. And my mom was also there, but I couldn't tell them apart. I didn't have an eye for that. And I was like: oh so I don't look like the blonde girls, or the blue-eyed girls. And at that point I realised it was okay that I looked different, but I need to be aware that when people ask me where I am from I need to say that it's also because my mom is Asian.

Interviewer: And do you feel like that is really a defining moment, or a moment where you for the first time started to think about…

P4: Yeah, I remember that very vividly. And I came home and was like: 'is this a thing?'. And my grandparents, they were just ignorant. Or, not ignorant but they were just like 'Oh we don't care about that. Don't put yourself in a box.'. And I was like: 'But I am not, but the other people are so I need to know where I am from.'.

Interviewer: yeah and navigate that.

P4: Yeah, but they were kinda neglect- What is that word again? They didn't want to talk about it. I think because they also told stories about my mom's childhood and that their friends would comment on the looks of my mom saying: 'Oh you are not the real parents obviously.'. And I think they just became very sensitive about that.

Interviewer: Yeah, that makes sense. I feel like it is a sensitive and personal topic as well. And to have that being point out so often. It can also be a coping mechanism to just like not talk about it and shut down the conversation immediately.

P4: Yeah, because it didn't occur to them but they just handles it very badly. Like rather than talking about it they made it a big deal.

Interviewer: Hmhmm. So do you wish it was more talked about? Do you miss that while growing up?

P4: Yeah, I think I do. Yes I do. Because my mom didn't talk about it either and they never told me the reason for why they adopted my mom. Or where she came from. And I remember finding a book with pictures my grandparents had gotten before they adopted her from her orphanage. And it contained her real, or, birth name. And I was like: 'What is this?' and they didn't tell me much. And it's like my mom's life story before she came to Denmark, those eight months before; I know they didn't know much because they weren't there. But it's just weird that this background is kinda in the dark. Because she won't research it, and I don't feel like I am allowed to look into South Korea because my mom is like 'that doesn't matter. You are not Korean, you're Danish.'. And then I am not going to look into it. But I had I friend who liked K-pop and then I liked it too. And I feel like when I adopted that taste in music it felt like something natural to do. But it was only because a friend was listening to it and not because I found it myself. So I don't know, it's just weird that I had some taste that you might identify as Asian, but I don't know why. And I feel like there's a reason for it, but I've never been there and my mom hasn't been there. And my mom is the most Danish person that you will ever meet. She cooks Danish food, she's very Southern Danish. You know, like conservative in her opinions. And… you know parents…

Interviewer: Yeah hahahaha

P4: Old school.

Interviewer: Yes, my father too.

P4: Oh what did you say?

Interviewer: I was just saying, I don't think we see eye to eye on any political matter to be honest.

P4: Ad it's just funny, because my grandparents and my mom will have some racist comments. And I'm like… With my grandparents especially I'm like 'my mom is not Danish. You know that comment is also reflective on her?'. And then they're like: "No, we don't mean adopted kids obviously.". And then I'm thinking: 'that's not obvious'.

Interviewer: Yeah it's always like, oh but you are not like them. But who is them?

P4: Yes, it's like the other group.

Interviewer: No I get that. Do you feel like there's other factors… Like we have just talked about your friend, like that kind of had an influence on you starting to think more about your identity. Do you feel like there's other factors that have had an influence on that? You can think of living environment, or relationship, both friendships, romantically or family.

P4: Yeah.

Interviewer: Travelling? I don't know.

P4: It'siInteresting. It's weird because I grew up with no one else like me. No one else looked like me, no one at my school looked Asian. So they were all very Danish. And I think I didn't have anyone to kind of share the experience with. Even my sister, she didn't really share. And for some reason she looks Italian, and I don't know why. Everyone thinks she is Italian, even though she is the same "breed", can you say that? Hahaha.

Interviewer: she has the same heritage?

P4: yeah heritage, when I came to England I noticed a lot more people like me. And I talked to this one friend who liked K-Pop and she was so fascinated by this whole world and the fact that I was mixed-race. She just loved that, and I had never thought of the fact that I was mixed-race as a good thing. I didn't think it was bad necessarily, just not positive. It was like, just a think that was part of me. And the I became more proud of it, and then I remember being more proud when people asked me where I am from and being mixed. Not just one race, but yeah. But I don't know. It's just weird. I'm kind of ashamed at one point, because you know there's like this stereotype with Asians and Danish white men. That they go to maybe Thailand and find a wife and maybe bring them back?

Interviewer: oh yeah.

P4: And then I kind of started to joke with my boyfriend, because he's ginger and very Danish too. I started to joke, that when we get old that people might think that we did the same thing. Uhm, and it's a joke but I'm kind of scared too that it's going to happen. Also because my dad is Danish, and his new wife is Asian too so there's clearly a preference or taste for him. And my sister's father too, he also got a new wife and she's also South Korean. It's just very… It becomes a think I'm kind of ashamed of, because it kind of fetishises it in my world. It might not be like that for them, but it does look like that on the surface at least.

Interviewer: And maybe they themselves are not that aware of that stereotype, but you grow up in like… I know how people in high school can be so vicious about stereotypes. So you are much more exposed to it, and you start to rethink that.

P4: Yeah, and also getting told… Because, you know the Asian shows up a lot more in my looks than the Danish and just being approached in town, out and about just because I am Asian. I hate that, that's the worst thing in the world. Like, "Oh do you like rice?" or, yada yada. You know the comments and all the creative stuff they can say. It's like, it's funny because I feel more Danish but I am really aware that I don't look Danish because you made that comment to me right know in their conversation.

Interviewer: Oh yeah.

P4: And then you become aware that the approached you not because you look nice but because they had an idea of you already. Like a stereotypical idea of you. And that has happened a lot actually, especially in Aalborg I think. Not it Copenhagen that much.

Interviewer: Yeah, I am sorry to hear that first of all.

P4: It's okay, it's just…

Interviewer: Yeah, I've just heard that a lot of others as well that they grew up in a small town and then moved to a bigger city where the change in living environment improved their situation. And it made their mixed race identity much more positive of an experience to them. Because eyou are just exposed to more people from different cultures in bigger cities so it's not so much of you sticking out like a sore thumb. Opposed to everyone else who looks the same. So you are just kind of able to blend in and focus more on yourself instead of constantly having to adapt.

P4: Yeah exactly, I just remember one thing from elementary school like. The last grade before I went to gymnasium. I came to another school from a small town to a little bit bigger, not much but slightly bigger. And then there was one other girl who had Asian origins or something. And then she was very confident in her ethnic background. Because she was adopted and she had done a lot of research

into her culture and her parents did a lot for her to make her feel like she was a part of both worlds and cultures. And then I was confused, because she had a reason to dig into her background, but I didn't. I couldn't justify why I looked different than Danes, because I felt Danish. It was just because me my mom had the looks from another part of the world. But whenever people see me they just assume that I know stuff about Korea or something, but I didn't. I know less than you do. Whenever they asked me about, "Oh what does the flag look like?" for instance, well I don't know. No one ever told me and my mom also doesn't know. At one point I had the idea I wanted to know Korean, so that whenever people asked me I had something to tell them. But I didn't, I learned two words.

Interviewer: That's the same with me and a local Ghanaian language. I only now 'welcome' and 'hi, how are you?'.

P4: Exactly, I remember it now.

Interviewer: But still, trying to reconnect with kind of like the other part of your identity can be really difficult as a mixed-race person. Especially if you have parents who are not that in-touch with it.

P4: Yes.

Interviewer: Um let me see. We kind of talked about it already, like as a mixed-race person you kind of deal with the duality of having multiple ethnic and or cultural identities. Do you feel more connected to one of them, or do you feel like you have to prioritise one of them?

P4: I think it depends on what setting I'm in. When I am at home alone I am definitely just Danish. It's only when people point out to me that I don't look Danish that I think about it. Or shift a bit in my identity. I don't mind being two different races, but it's just annoying when I don't get to pick myself what people see. I hate when they point out to me that I look different, I'd rather that I told them myself before they do. Or that it was something for me to incl… what is that word? To share I think is the best.

Interviewer: Yeah it kind of is like they take that away from you, or it's already decided for you.

P4: Also because I feel like most just assume that I'm just Asian, Korean. And then I always say, 'I know I don't look like it but I am also Danish, half Danish, fifty-fifty'. And they accept it, I guess. But they just assume I'm just Asian.

Interviewer: So it's very situational, how you relate to your identity?

P4: Also because for my work, I sold ice cream for some time. And I remember this customer, he came out with his Asian wife. And he started to make connections between me and her. And I didn't mind because I was just there to sell ice cream and to make money. But he was like: "Oh you guys are the same, you guys probably speak the same language!". And I was just like 'Uhm, no'. But yeah, he was weird.

Interviewer: yeah that is strange. Because they just assume that you all look the same, so you must be the same. Even though that is not true at all.

P4: And he was a middle-aged white man, of course. Whenever I have a white middle-aged man coming to the ice cream truck, I'm just very aware of… Or I'm more insecure. And 'm always ready for them to make comments. And it happens like fifty percent of the time, they would make some kind of Asian joke. It's just very uncomfortable, but I knew it was coming. And the I'm just like 'Hmm, yeah funny hahaha. Buy some more. And the he just left'.

Interviewer: Hahaha, just here trying to make some money.

P4: yeah, exactly hahahaha

Interviewer: And I'm now just moving more into Danishness. Because I'm also taking that as a focal in in my thesis, this concept of Danishness and how important it is for mixed-race Danes. SO maybe you can think of it in terms of a national identity, or a cultural identity if it helps you answer these next questions better. Because I have noticed from past interviews that most people find these very hard questions to answer. And I didn't intent that, but I understand how it can be difficult So my first question is, what does it for you to be Danish? What does that mean?

P4: That's funny. Because I think it's funny because you came from the Netherlands and then you probably saw Danes, and the way we acted together. And we don't see that ourselves because we're just in it.

Interviewer: Hahahaha.

P4: Uhm, to be Danish. I don't know. Like I don't know how it's different from other parts of the world. I have to think. Maybe the food?

Interviewer: Hmhmm.

P4: Because I've noticed with my grandparents, they make very traditional food. And I didn't get any of that in England, and it just instantly takes me back to Denmark when I got something that reminded me off it. Like potatoes or something. Uhm, and I guess the flag also. I don't see the flag as a representation of the identity of Denmark. I see it more as a symbol of celebration. Whenever I see the flag the first thing I think off is a birthday. And maybe I see it more as confetti, then as a symbol of our nationality. The red and the white is just happy colours in my mind.

Interviewer: Makes sense because every time you have a celebration, your mind automatically connects that. It's also funny because always when I ask question most people have a lot of difficulty with answering it. But at the same time I find it so interesting that when you look at political debates it's always such a big thing, but no one can actually answer it. It's always like yeah Danish news is going to disappear if we have more migrants, or they need to be more Danish. But no one can really explain then what is it is someone Danish. Like are there different aspects that are important for you? I feel like everyone defines it differently for themselves.

P4: I think it's kinda generational too. Older people will say something else and what is Danish and what's not. And it's definitely political. Like some parties just make up problems, or at least that's my opinion, and they don't have any arguments for why we have to be more Danish or have to take care of our heritage. And I don't agree with them, maybe also because I'm not fully Danish. But, can you maybe- What's the question again?

Interviewer: Yeah, it's more like what does it mean to be Danish. But I can also give like- I have another question where I kind of ask for a ranking. So it's like which aspects do you feel are most important to Danishness. You can think of appearance, or values, language culture, religion, citizenship. Do you feel like one of those is more important than others?

P4: Hmm. I just have a small comment on the question before. Because last summer I went to see football in one of those big arenas, stadiums here in Copenhagen. People love showing that they are Danish whenever there is like a competition for a World Championship, like hello we are Danish. And I find that like, so cringey. I hate that we like, build a championship in our nation personality. And I like the competitiveness, but don't base it on like country against country.

Interviewer: Yeah okay.

P4: I think it's kind of embarrassing when we sing the national song before a football league. Like stop it. So yeah, the rankings.

Interviewer: Yeah of the aspects of like appearance, or values, language, culture, religion, citizenship. Is there something that makes you know think that is of importance to the Danish identity?

P4: I think the language. Like I hear a lot of people say that we should not adopt too many English words into our language. We need to make sure that we keep the dialect from Southern Denmark too. Also I think foreigners comment on how weird the Danish language is. Yeah, you can tell from the crowd who is Danish just from the language, obviously.

P4: Citizenship and values, I think that's just equal. I don't know. To me I don't know what's particularly Danish when it comes to values. I don't know. I think it's mostly the looks for me. Because I look so Asian, I get very intimidated and sad when I see like a tall Danish girl with blonde hair because I know I will never look like that. I think that's my biggest insecurity, because I don't have the ethnicity or the bone structure. I think that's the most typical thing.

Interviewer: So appearance?

P4: Yeah appearance.

Interviewer: I feel like Danishness really has a certain look.

P4: Yeah also in Copenhagen, people look so fashionable. But like, Danish girls do. Whenever someone tries the same, the same style, it doesn't look as good. It might just be me, but they look better.

Interviewer: Yeah hahaha, that's what I also heard. One of my other respondents said that she can immediately see when someone is Danish because of style and the way they style their hair.

P4: Yeah, I just adopted immediately the slick-back hair like the way they do it here. But to be honest, I adopted things that are probably not what suit me best. After I stopped gymnasium I watched youtube tutorials on make-up from Asian girls. To learn how to do my eye-liner on hooded eyes. And I remember I bought at some point some stickers that I could put on my eyelids and push them back, so I'd have double eyelids and not a monolid. And it was a thing they sold, and I just did it because I thought I don't look like the others and wanted a more open eye. And I would never do that now, It's just because I was insecure.

Interviewer: yeah, but it's interesting how much of an impact it has on how you see yourself if you feel like you don't look like other people.

P4: yeah I felt so off. I'd do everything I could just to blend in. I would wear the same clothes, everything. But my face would always reveal the true me.

Interviewer: I feel like that's so, quintessential- or like, very prominent in the mixed-race experience of wanting to fit in so much with one culture or having to prove so much.

P4: Yes, that's true. Like, I'm more Danish than you.

Interviewer: Yes, it's always a recurrent thing I feel like in interviews that I've had so far. People really feel like they had to up their Danishness around other Danes.

P4: It's funny you say that now, because I feel like I kind of had the opposite. I wanted to prove a bit more that I was Korean. Uhm, not like- I researched more. I just- maybe in terms of my family I wanted them to acknowledge that we are half-Korean too. But I find that part of me more interesting

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than the Danish part. Because everyone knows what Danish is in Denmark, it's more fun to be half Asian.

Interviewer: Yeah and be unique in a way, different. Do you feel like that has changed with time? That you have grown more comfortable in this?

P4: Yeah, definitely. I do know that when I moved back to Denmark a friend of my friend came over a lot. And he made a lot of jokes about my eating a lot of rice, or me being good at cooking rice. And I was thinking- this is a but much, you can stop now. And it's just funny because I love Asian food, but it's just a hobby of mine to cook a ramen. I love that whole culinary world, but people just assume that because eI am Asian I must love it. Or that my tastebuds must be prone to that. But that cannot be a thing, like it can't be because of that.

Interviewer: I don't know, it's just so situational and it depends on what you grew up with eating. For me as well, I grew up with Dutch staples. And whenever I am visiting Ghana or my dad and eat more traditional Ghanian food, I'm always a bit like "I don't know if I like that, that's a bit spicy for me". So it's, yeah-

P4: My mom never makes Asian food, but I love making dumplings, and ramen, and salads and all authentic Asian food. I researched a lot how authentic Asian food tastes. And I- I don't hate Danish food, I just think it's very boring compared to Asian food. But it's just a preference.

Interviewer: But I get that, I feel like so many cuisines taste more interesting and have more intense flavour or depth of flavour as compared to potatoes.

P4: Yeah, hahahaha. It's so bland. When I went to England it was even more bland, it was so much worse.

Interviewer: Hahahaha. Do you feel like there's times where you feel very Danish, and times where you don't feel Danish?

P4: You mean like, specific situations?

Interviewer: Yeah

P4: Most of the time I forget that I'm not fully Danish ethnically. Because culturally I'm fully Danish, I grew up here in the culture and I've never been to Korea. But, I don't know.

Interviewer: Is there a time where you feel most Danish?

P4: Just when I'm with my family I guess, because they're also very Danish. It's funny because I feel insecure when I'm with other Asians, even though I don't have any Asian friends and I don't know why. When I started my Bachelor's degree there was this one guy, he was from Thailand. So we had nothing in common, but I was just so insecure whenever he wanted to talk to me. Because he was also making comments that- It was just a weird feeling because I think he was trying to acknowledge that we might, or might not have the same background. But he would make like funny jokes with all the other Danish people, but when he talked to me he became this very proud person of like- his nationality. And I'm like, yeah that's fine. So he coloured his hair this one time and he asked me "Oh, do I look like a K-Pop star now?" and I was like "I don't know, maybe? But you're obviously not a K-Pop star". But he wouldn't ask anyone else about that. And he didn't have any reasoning for it, because he never asked me where I was from. And I don't think I ever told him, because it never came up. It might be him, but he was very insecure about his Asian background I think. Especially when I looked Asian too, with the other Danes he could just forget about it I guess.

Interviewer: interesting.

P4: And I felt guilty about it at some point, because I was like don't worry about me, I'm Danish too.

Interviewer: People kind of expect you to automatically be super in-touch with he other side. For me it's also very similar, because when I'm around African people or West-African people, I'm constantly reminded of how not African I am. And just how much I don't relate to their upbringing and culture, and sometimes I miss that.

Yeah, It's almost like I feel more bad about myself hanging around with them because I'm not in touch with my Ghanaian identity at all and everyone else seems so proud of that, and I can't be because I have no relation to that. So you feel that shame of like, am I supposed to feel more of that? And I had it one time on TikTok, I was commenting on something in Ghana and someone said something I wasn't agreeing with. And then someone commented saying: "Oh and she's Ghanaian too, look at her name. She's embarrassing all of us Ghanaians". And I was like, oh bold of you to assume, first of all. And second of all, I don't identify that much with Ghanaian culture and to immediately get that stamp of being an embarrassment to our culture was very difficult for me. Because I felt like even by my own people I wasn't accepted.

P4: Yeah, that's so interesting. I've never been face-to-face with someone from South Korea, maybe some other Asian culture but I think I would feel like such an imposter. Like I'm just a Dane pretending to be Korean.

Interviewer: Yeah that imposter feeling.

P4: I'm so much more Danish at that point.

Interviewer: But people have also questioned your Danishness?

P4: yes, because they just assume I'm not Danish. And then- I don't know if I have to prove that- Because inside I know, oh that's Danish culture so I don't get weird about it. But, I think at some point I'd rather just be Asian. Because that's just so much more cool. I've been asked a lot of times if I wanted to go to Korea. And I do, I do want to see what it's like. But I think I'm kind of scared too. Because I could've gone a lot of time too, during my gap-year but I've never done it because it's kind of scary to be faced with the culture I'm supposed to be from . Or not supposed to be from, but could have been from. And I don't know if I'm going to fit in. And obviously I'm not going to fit in, to be honest I'm wondering if they would be able tell that I'm half Danish. That's kind of funny, but I do want to go some day to just see it and experience it.

Interviewer: Yeah, I get that and it can also be just nice as a holiday thing.

P4: Yeah, it's funny.

Interviewer: but do you still feel very attached to your Danish identity? Or less? Is it something that is dear to you?

P4: I will always feel Danish. It would be different if for some reason my sister would get into the Asian culture more, because then I would have someone to share it with. The truth is that my family is Danish, my mom is acting the most Danish ever and- I don't have anyone to share my thoughts with in that aspect. I don't even know if my sister even cares. But because she doesn't have the hooded eyes as I do, I don't think she gets as many comments as I do. And she went to Korea at some point, with my granddad. And at some point Asian tourists would come up to her and want a picture of her, like she wasn't from there. She stood out there a lot more than I would, I think. So I don't

think she has the same reflections as me. I think it's very much because she looks more Danish- or more Western, I guess.

Interviewer: That's interesting. I feel like I've gone through all my questions, so I just wanted to ask you if there was anything we have not talked about? Or if you had any lastminute statement that you'd lie to say.

P4: Nice! No, I'm sure there's more things. But this is what I can think of now. I think it's definitely something I have spend a lot of time wondering about when I was younger. About fitting it. And it's still hard. I think the most hard thing is to explain to my boyfriend that I get racist comments too. And then- not my boyfriend, he's understanding to be honest. But others have said 'but why?', and they just don't get it and I don't know why. But the act like it's not a big deal that I'm half Danish, half Asian but the truth is that it's a lot of a bigger thing in my world than what they think it is.

Interviewer: That's also, yeah-

P4: They don't acknowledge that I'm half something else than they are. But they just assume- Oh she's Danish and she's just my friend. And they never ask me about it, and it's never something I talk to them about, never. I told a friend once that I got a comment. And she was like "What? Why? Are you like from Korea?". And I was like "What do you mean?" and she was like "I just never noticed" and I was like "What do you mean?". And that's still what she says, that she can't tell that I'm half Asian.

Interviewer: But that is also so interesting. I have had that too. It's always like they don't associate you with that. And then I'm like 'But that doesn't mean that I don't get that from other people'.

P4: Exactly, they just see you as a fully culturally Danish person. Also because you act they way they act, you share the same values and political opinions and so on.

Interviewer: And maybe it's also- They're always like, oh but I just see you as my friend and nothing else. And I'm like, yeah that's nice. But overall in society I'm not just a friend. I am put in a box or labelled as something.

P4: And that's- I've never thought of the fact that I've never talked to my friends about it. Because it's such a big part of my life and my though-process. My identity, throughout my childhood especially. But it's never something I want to explore with them, because they don't get it. And they don't ask.

Interviewer: But that can be another barrier again. And I feel like as a mixed-race individual you can always clearly feel yourself who you can talk to bout it and who not. And I always say to myself- Because some of my friends have also said horrible things in the past about me, and they thought it was funny. And I never felt comfortable to share about it with them until they became more mature. And then we once had a really good conversation about it, and after that I was like- Okay, now I feel comfortable to invite you guys into this part of who I am.

P4: I hope that comes for me too one day. Because I mostly have to defend the way that I'm feeling towards my friends still. So…

Interviewer: that's really unfortunate, I hope for you that also will happen some day.

P4: It's not something I'm sad about on a daily basis. I've just never thought of it like that, it's not something I relate to.

Interviewer: But again, that's different from person to person. And if there's one thing that these interviews have shown me it's that mixed-race people are not a monolith and everyone has different- Like there's certainly overlapping themes, but everyone experiences "mixed-raceness" differently.

P4: Oh that's interesting. I'd love to have some friends who I could relate to or somehow can talk to bout it and explore it together with them. But maybe I'll one day have some friends who are not just Danish.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you want to say as a conclusion? Because I feel like this is a really nice way to end the conversation.

P4: No, and I agree. I'm going to stop talking.

Audio: 51 minutes

Date: 30 March, 2023

Interviewer: So, the first few questions are really basic questions to get an overview of the participant. So the first question is: how do you identify in terms of gender?

P5: I identify myself as a woman

Interviewer: And what is your age?

P5: I am 26 years old

Interviewer: And what is your educational background?

P5: I have a bachelor in Christianity, Culture and Communication. And I'm currently a student at CCG.

Interviewer: It's almost the same, it's like CCC and CCG.

P5: Yeah, but the worst thing is that in Danish Christianity, Culture and Communication is like KKK.

Interviewer: Oh no hahahaha, and what is your current employment?

P5: I am a student assistant, or a junior something- junior planner

Interviewer: And what is your hometown?

P5: Copenhagen

Interviewer: And where do you currently live?

P5: Also Copenhagen.

Interviewer: What is your ethnic background?

P5: I am half Danish and half West African, from a small country called Benin. Nobody knows where it's at.

Interviewer: I do, because it's very close to Ghana.

P5: You do, yeah hahaha. That's true.

Interviewer: What is your family background? What is the background of both of your parents, is your mother Danish?

P5: Like ethnicity?

Interviewer: Yes.

P5: My grandmother on my mothers side, she was half Swedish, half Danish. And my dad is just fully Beninois.

Interviewer: And did you grow up with both your parents?

P5: No I grew up with my mom, and then I saw my father every second weekend.

Interviewer: Do you have siblings?

P5: Yes I have sigblings, I have a little brother and a big sister.

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Interviewer: Okay, that was the first part. Now I'll move on to questions about your identity and identity formation. So first off, how do you identify yourself ethnically and/or culturally?

P5: Uhm, I think that ethnically I identify myself as a African-Danish person. But culturally I'm probably just Danish. But I also think that the Danish culture has a lot more than just the traditional Danish culture. So I feel like I represent a part of that.

Interviewer: Okay. And have you always felt comfortable with your identity? Or how has this changed?

P5: No, not at all. I have been super uncomfortable with my identity. Especially when I was younger, a teenager. I would do anything to be just Danish, without any spices on top hahaha. So I feel like me getting older and accepting the fact that I don't have straight hair and I'm not white has made it much easier for me to identify as a black Danish person. Or mixed Danish person. And also me accepting my African family, and culture, and stuff.

Interviewer: Do you feel like you've always been aware of being mixed race?

P5: Yes, I have since I was a kid. The schools I went to were either private or in an area where people were quite wealthy. So most of them were just white Danish people. So I was very different from the beginning, just from the fact of my skin colour and hair.

Interviewer: Would you feel like there is one defining moment, where you started to think about your identity and who you are as a person, and how you identify yourself?

P5: Yeah I feel like there was some moments in my life. I remember the first time I straightened my hair, for maybe, a year straight without breaks. And then I'd want to dye it, because my friend used to dye her hair all the time. And then I dyed my hair and it completely fell off. And I was crying in my room, and the bathroom with my friend. And she was like "Oh maybe it's because your hair is just different." And it just hit me, like shit my hair is different. We're not the same.

And then I remember when I started to grow my more, womanly parts of my body. I was really sexualised because I was dark. And I feel like at that time women were sexualised a lot, in the media and music videos and stuff from the U.S.. So I remember me being called different names, and getting aware that I am different. Because my boobs are bigger, my butt is bigger.

Interviewer: Do you feel like this has always been more of a negative experience as opposed to a positive one?

P5: Uhm, Yes and no. Because when I was younger I thought it was very negative. And it also was at some point. But when I grew older and I- When I hear the intention behind the comments that I got from people. Maybe my colleagues were complimenting my hair, like oh you people have such a nice skin and you always look young. Or, your type of people always have beautiful hair, I wish my daughter would have the same hair but she's just Danish. I didn't realise that it was actually compliments, because I found it very annoying. But it was compliments at some point, so I guess yes and no.

Interviewer: But I can also see how you can not see it as a compliment. Because I feel like- something that I've heard coming back in all these interviews is the feeling of like you really want to fit in with the people around you and you don't look like them. And then to have people kind of like, point that out again and being like- 'Yes but I am'- how do you say it? Like, 'But I am trying so much to be like you guys and blend in that this is not really helpful' in a way that's how you internalise it maybe?

P5: Uhm, can you repeat that because it was lagging a bit.

Interviewer: I was saying something that I've heard coming back in all these interviews is the feeling of like you really want to fit in with the people around you and when you get those statements, you might not interpret them as compliments. Because you might be like: I'm trying do hard to look like you and here you are once again pointing out to me that I'm different. And you might internalise that in that way.

P5: Yeah, I'm not sure what internalise means but hahahaha uhm

Interviewer: The process of how you take that within you- how do you say it… You know that commentary they have about internalised racism, that you're not happy with yourself and those racist comments you reflect on yourself and then you end up becoming just like them because you want to prove so much that you're not like those Africans, or something like that.

P5: Yeah, I feel like for me it was depending on how I felt that day. If I felt like, okay I'm super happy with myself today, then it wasn't a problem for me to hear that and take it as a compliment. But if I didn't feel happy about myself or felt very insecure about something, maybe how I look or feel or whatever. I get super focused on those types of comments and the thought of me being different hits me.

Interviewer: Okay.

P5: But I also feel like- That's a whole other thing that you have to take in as a mixed-race person here. It is that you always have to be prepared for some comment, even though it's not negative. Because there aren't that many mixed people, if you look at other countries here in Europe. I don't know if that was an answer?

Interviewer: I mean, there's no right or wrong answer here. I'm going to look back on it and transcribe it and probably find a lot of good stuff in everything. So, there are no right or wrong answers, only what you have experienced as a person. So don't worry about that.

P5: Do you feel like there's other factors, such as family or relationships, living environment, that you feel have had an influence on your identity development?

Interviewer: Uhm, yes. I feel like my family had a big influence on my identity and how I see myself. Because I remember me being young, I had a lot of Danish friends. And my brother and sister grew up in an area where there was a lot of mixed people, especially Arab people. And they went to a French school, so there were a lot of other African and French-speaking people. So they had many more coloured friends than I had. And my sister used to tell me: "You need some friends in who you can mirror yourself in.". And she said that to me, she's like 16 years older than me, so when she told me that I was like "What's your problem? Don't you like me friends? Because I really like my friends myself.".

But when I moved from the area I grew up and met some other people and got some, to be honest black friends, it was super easy for me to be with them. Because I didn't have to explain to them why or how it was possible for me to turn my straightener to 210 degrees, and not one hundred and something. Because my hair needs more heat. Or how come I use bronzer as my powder, because me skin is darker. It wasn't necessary to explain all that stuff, and that was just super easy for me. And the I realised, okay maybe she was right. Because I felt like I could relax in some other ways. But also, the family thing. My sister she used to take me to churches where there was a lot of African people. And she also, she was the one I went to Benin with the first time, to meet my family. It was

just like, I felt a part of something that I never though that I'd miss out on. Do you understand what I mean?

Interviewer: Yes, it's like you sort of had someone to guide you through that whole process of finding another part of yourself.

P5: Yeah, and also my dad. He moved back to West-Africa when I was around 11. And he was always saying to me that I was too Danish, and I have to remember my roots. And that I couldn't run from them, because everyone just had to look at me. And I didn't get what he meant at that time, but I do now. Because I was really trying not to accept my African side, but the moment I did, everything went so much easier for me.

Interviewer: Aha, that's nice and an interesting statement. The feeling of like, pushing something away the whole time but then after you finally accept it it's like 'ahh, peace.', or something like that. Things make much more sense now.

P5: Yes, exactly.

Interviewer: And do you feel like- As a mixed race person you kind of deal with this duality of having multiple ethnic and/or cultural identities. Do you feel like you connect more to one of them or have to prioritise one of them?

P5: I would say that I connect more with my Danish side but I also think it's because I grew up here. I would say that the other part is also very important for me and yeah it's very important. As I said before it was the moment that I accepted it, I got like peace in life in a way. I don't know, I do feel more Danish but I also feel very comfortable in situations where we are a lot of mixed people together. Because I feel like that's where I belong, because I'm not just Danish I'm also African but I'm also not pure African as well so it's like a mix so I like mixed environments.

Interviewer: Is that depending on the situation as well?

P5: Yeah.

Interviewer: Makes sense. So the next questions I have are going to be more about Danishness, because I'm also particularly interested in how that concept and the role it plays for like mixed race Danes in their identity construction. But I realised through my interviews that a lot of people find these questions very hard to answer, which I did not anticipate. So maybe it helps to think of it in terms of like a national or cultural identity and it's also okay to just take some time to think about it and I can sort of help as well if you find it hard. Just from reading a lot of literature stuff. But, but anyways first question is kind of like for you what does it mean to be Danish?

P5: Sorry it lagged, can you say it again?

Interviewer: what does it mean to be Danish for you?

P5: For me it means you are very humble. I would like to say you are not a person who brags about stuff not even stuff you're good at. It's a thing that's like very common for all of us, also mixed Danes. I feel like there's something that really- I don't know how to say it. It's just something that you see in these and then- It is a hard question actually.

Interviewer: Yeah, I know.

P5: I also feel like, Danes are not very good at interrupting. In general, not just when you speak but also if you see something on the street that you don't like or you know it's wrong. You'll just ignore it

because that's none of your business and you don't know what the person is going through you, don't know why the person is in that situation, but you just don't go there and interrupt because somebody will probably do it for you. So maybe also not being very- Don't have that much, I would like to say temperament.

Interviewer: Aha, like being more laid back.

P5: Yeah, and also not very good at conflicts. Like, not talk about at all rather then talk about something that does not feel good. I feel like the things that I just said come off a bit negative. But it's also in a positive way, because I feel like it probably makes it a bit easy to be around Danes. But probably you will not feel fully accepted or comfortable because you are not Danish, so yeah.

Interviewer: So it's more like certain values you feel that are really visible throughout Danish society. Like it's these things that make someone Danish?

P5: Yeah. I also think many Danes are quite curious. But not too curious. They would like to see and listen themselves and then say okay I'll just stick to what I know because I know it works. And also not be very emotional on the outside, unless they're drunk.

Interviewer: That's very true. Oh my God when Danes are drunk, it's like they're a completely different person.

P5: Yeah, hahaha. I also feel like that's a very good way to describe Danes, because they have so much to say, and opinions, and also knowledge. Sometimes I feel like most Danish people are quite- They know stuff, they're not like stupid because they have the time to search knowledge because we're quite privileged. But also in the same way they won't come out with it because they don't want to cause trouble or they just want to stick it to themselves because it's better that way. But when they get drunk they have so much to say. They have so many opinions, they have so much love and laughter and also rage, but they just keep it in on the inside.

Interviewer: So it's almost like this ying and yang thing. Like, now this other personality steps out of the shadows.

P5: Yeah.

Interviewer: Interesting. Do you feel like there are certain aspects that are more important to Danishness than others? You can think for example of appearance, or language, culture, religion or citizenship.

P5: I feel like Danes are very proud of Denmark, like very proud. And I get that, because Denmark is a great country in so many ways. It's also very random at the same time if you ask me, but I get why people are so proud of Denmark. And I feel like it means a lot to them, like "Oh we have that and that in Denmark" or "in Denmark we do it like that, like the Danish way is always the best way." because everything just works so well back here.

P5: So I think culture is the biggest thing. And then there is like the religion thing, about "Denmark is a Christian country blah blah". Yeah but no one here gives a shit. Like nobody goes to church, nobody is praying to God, no one here talks about Jesus or God or Christianity or whatever. And nobody knows anything about it, because they don't care. But it's just like a part of the history and it's a part of the very romanticised picture of how Denmark is today. So it's still important to do, to keep reminding us all about it. And also that the fact that Danish people are very afraid of Islam and Muslims so in that contrast we always have to remind ourselves that Denmark is a Christian country that we have Christian values but nobody gives a shit in real life.

Interviewer: it's true it's the same in the Netherlands.

P5: So I feel like the religion part is just very superficial. It's just like an excuse to not let too much Islam into Denmark and that's it.

Interviewer: That is just something that happens across every European country nowadays. It's the same in the Netherlands. They're always talking about Jewish/Christian values and how we are a Judaeo-Christian society. And I'm like, 60% of people in the Netherlands are atheist so it's very weird to say that.

P5: Yeah, but I feel like it's just a part of the narrative. And so if we don't keep telling the narrative, then at some point it will just crack and who are we then if we are not who we used to be. I feel like it's very- a part of the Danish identity at some point. Or maybe, it's very common for most European countries because the history is all the same.

Interviewer: Yeah that is a good statement of if not for that, who are we then?

P5: Because I feel like that's the thing. It's a very good example of how, you know, like modern Danish and then the traditional Denmark conflict. Because at some point Denmark says it's really modern and we're all into globalisation and all into multicultural stuff. And we are willing to send our young people abroad on travels so they can go to Asia and get good and healthy grownups afterwards because they have been out of the country and now came back. But at some point we just don't want to mix it that much. It's like it's super fine to go out and come back, but don't bring all kind of mushy stuff back into Denmark because we like to keep it as it was. I don't know if that maes sense?

Interviewer: No it does. It's all okay if you do that, but don't do too much. Like what you said about Danish personality being very laid back, but just stick to what you know.

P5: Yes, exactly.

Interviewer: What- Very random maybe departing from this point, but what makes you feel Danish?

P5: What makes me feel Danish?

Interviewer: Yes.

P5: I feel like the party culture. I really embrace that and I still embrace that. A lot. I feel like that's very Danish. I like to drink. Hahahahahahaha. I like to party and I like to hygge, like doing all these Easter lunches and Christmas lunches and it's just like super nice times with your friends and family. I feel like the whole drinking culture makes me makes me very Danish.

And I also think that, even though many of my friends and people who have met me know that I can be very out there and also a bit loud and I have my own opinions. But I feel like I'm still quiet laid back if you compare me to some of my cousins from Chicago or whatever. So, I feel like this also makes me quite Danish. And also my very minimalistic way of dressing. And my apartment is also very Danish, I guess.

Interviewer: It's interesting if you think about it, in a way it's like the whole minimalism aesthetic is again sort of a reflection of this whole laidback attitude in Danish identity. I'm connecting lines between things I've never thought of before in my own mind.

P5: I feel like, in general you can describe a Danish person as quite mild from the outside. Like, yes we get happy and we get angry. We like to dress up but it's not too much you know it's always straight in the middle.

Interviewer: Just average.

P5: Yes, really hahahaha.

Interviewer: when do you not feel Danish?

P5: I don't feel Danish when I sit in my car with one of my friends who is not ethnic Danish as well. And then we are told to leave the place before they call the police, even though I have lived in that area for nine years and grew up in that house. So that's where I feel very un-Danish.

I also don't feel Danish when me and my friend who's from the Dominican Republic are at clubs and people come over to us and ask us to have sex with them if they pay us or give us a night at a hotel because their biggest dream is to be with an ebony or whatever they call it. And I also don't feel Danish when people start speaking to me in English, because they just assume that I don't speak Danish in public transport or in the stores or whatever. Like those kind of situations.

Or whenever I am at predrinks and people put on music and it's like some sort of Danish pop/rock. And I sit there and I just really want to listen to my Afrobeats or R&B stuff. But it depends on who I'm with. Because I also have Danish friends who love that kind of stuff.

Interviewer: So do you feel like often when you not feel Danish, it has to do with how people perceive you and like appearance?

P5: Yes.

Interviewer: And do you feel like have questioned your Danishness a lot?

P5: No actually not. Because I feel like I have always been- what's it called? For example, with my ex-boyfriend when we were at these family dinners and we were going to discuss stuff I was always just super aware of how I expressed myself and the words I was using. Thinking about speaking very clear and very correct in a way, because I wanted to be taken serious. And I wanted to be ahead so they wouldn't have to question, like "okay yeah, but maybe it's because you grew up that way or maybe it's because you have like…" whatever. So I feel like I'm always working extra to avoid situations like that, because I don't like them. Because it's uncomfortable for me, but it's also uncomfortable for them, because it's awkward. So I just wanted to avoid that awkward situation.

Interviewer: Something that also keeps coming back in interviews is exactly this. About having to prove that you are Danish to others. Either through being ahead of them or when you are already engaging with them, that you have to kind of like double on how you are Danish.

P5: If go out with my mom, who is white and Danish, there is there's no such problem. But if I'm out with my sister or my brother, those kinds of situations are more likely to happen than if I'm with my mom. Because she's like my entrance ticket to say: 'Yeah I'm my really Danish look at my mum she's white'. Hahahahahaha.

Interviewer: She's kind of that deciding factor there, like a judge hahahaha. Yeah, that's relatable for me too. So, you said before that you kind of find awkward, like this sort of questioning and that's why you try to stay ahead of it. Is that your number one way to respond to preventing the questioning of your danishness or? Or are there other instances where you might respond differently?

P5: I feel like my mom has always told me to just let it go or to not let it hit me. But I'm just a person who is always up for discussion. I will discuss about anything almost. So if I feel like the person is totally closed or you're not able to communicate with them like a wall, I'll just be like 'Yeah okay that's your opinion of me'. Like good for you, live your life happy. But no I'm always questioning them back. Like how can it be that you ask me this because I found it super weird. And sometimes I'm also like "Do you know that this question can be very hurtful for someone else?", You don't have to think about me because I'll do fine, but maybe if you ask someone who is not that confident or whatever it can be very devastating for them because it's quite personal in a way.

Interviewer: Do you feel like you kind of pick your battles in that way? Like, there are certain instances where you feel like - now I'm going to confront someone or now I'm just going to let it slide because it's not worth it?

P5: Yes, but mostly I feel like it's very important to educate. Because it's not just about confronting others, because they said something mean so now I'm going to say something about you. It's more like; I feel like most people just don't know stuff and that's why they ask stupid ass questions. Because actually it's a good thing when people ask questions. Because I'm like okay, let's talk about it then.

So I feel like it's important to educate also because I'm also a person who likes to get new knowledge and I also ask stupid questions sometimes. But sometimes I'm like 'Okay I don't know if this is wrong to ask that this way', about the whole thing if someone is not identifying with their gender and like that kind of stuff. I'm not super into that because I don't know a lot of people who are in that environment, but I would like to know more about it. And I know that sometimes I also don't know how to ask, but I feel like it's important to ask anyways.

And I feel like it's the same way the other way around, but because there has been so much focus on racism and discrimination and stuff like that, many people are so closed off when they get such questions. But I feel like it's super important to open up for the discussion, then let's talk about because it could be that I could give the person some knowledge then. And if they don't agree, at least they know how to ask next time or whatever.

Interviewer: But that's true. I also feel like often now in this society it's so easy to just close off a conversation and just brand someone as ignorant racist or whatever. But it only contributes more to polarisation. And right now it's getting extremely bad in the Netherlands. They've had to come out with public campaigns to combat polarisation within society because it's getting so bad. So I feel like we just need more people who are very much in this mindset of let's talk about it before jumping to conclusions.

P5: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you feel like when people question your identity, has it impacted the way you look at yourself or your process of identity development?

P5: Yes it has. I feel like- You know as we were talking about in the beginning, the thing when people question you or make you aware that you are not like us. Even though it's not in a negative way, it does hit sometimes. Especially if you're not that confident. And I feel like especially when I was younger. But also now. Sometimes I'd be like: I wish that I had like better African genes so my butt would be more round and not that square. And I wish- you know, all kind of stuff. But it's mostly about my looks and not my identity or my values. It's more my physical appearance, I guess

Interviewer: So it's like you're more comfortable with your identity than the outwards package, hahaha.

P5: Yeah, and I also feel like that's reflected in the way I have been answering these questions. It's about my hair, or skin or blah blah blah.

Interviewer: I have gone through all my questions, so I just want to ask if there's anything that we have not yet talked about that you feel is of importance for me to know? Or anything that you just want to say before we ended it?

P5: All right, yes I actually have one point. I don't know what to think about it myself, but I think it's important to remember. It's the fact that Denmark is very influenced by the States in all kind of ways. And also the whole Black Lives Matters wave that was up here. Many Danish people and also black Danes have take it over and, again I don't know what to think about it, I don't know. I don't think it's a bad thing, but I also think that it can be quite problematic at some point. Because the United States and Denmark are not the same and we do not have the same issues even though we do have issues here. I don't know, I just feel like it's a good thing too keep in mind.

Interviewer: No that makes sense. And also for me personally, like quick anecdote: when I first started to think about my identity and how I identify when I was in high school it was because all of a sudden on Instagram there was a lot of focus on blackness, and Vine and all this sort of rap artists becoming really big again in the Netherlands. Before it was very much pop dominated. And then I felt like I could identify with African Americans so much, I was like yeah I'm black. I struggle the same as you. And it took me a while to figure out that that is not the case at all. They have a totally different experience than we do and that's okay. Even though it might be easy to kind of, take Black Lives Matter or black American culture as a starting point because that is what is so dominant in the media.

P5: Yes it's so dominant. It is not just dominant it's like, is the trend now. Everyone wants to be black, that is how it is and it will probably tip again to something else and then life is getting harder once again.

Interviewer: That's true. And I'm wondering- Because it is true what you say about the whole Black Lives Matter movement, that it kind of in Europe also started to spark conversations. But I almost feel like it has created more push back. Every time I started to talk about it with my parents or with other white people they were like "Yeah, but that's not the same as in America and why are you importing all this stupidity from America over here" and they just don't want to listen. So it should be more adapted to the specific issues that are people, or like people of colour are facing in their respective countries.

P5: And that's what it is, it shouldn't just be adopted from the United States but it should be more localised. And I feel like when they were trying to do that, I'm talking about Denmark here, but when they were trying to do that here, it was like it was almost too late because people were so much against it. They were like; "This is nonsense, we don't have police brutality in the same way as the United States" and many of us including myself were like; Yes, but that's not what we are saying, but there is an issue here too. And let's talk about them.

But they didn't want to listen and just shut it down. And then there was a whole Corona thing and it was just like; "Oh that's typically you guys. You people don't take anything seriously you don't respect the country and don't respect the rules! You don't care old people are dying from Corona!"

blah blah. And we were like yes that's an issue but this is also an issue. And discrimination and racism will also be the issue after Covid-19, so.

Interviewer: That's interesting too. Maybe I should read up a bit more on that as well. I know right now for my thesis, there is so little research done about mixed race people in Denmark. There's a lot of research about migrants, which is understandable after the European migrant crisis and everything. But it's never really focused on- It's a whole different experience, the migrant experience from someone who is Danish grew up, in Denmark with one Danish parent, but is still ethnically different. I'm going to try and find if there's more knowledge.

I know one researcher who's really specific on Scandinavian issues and mixed race issues in Denmark, but I'll try find out more because I get a lot of my theories now from American literature. And that's also what I'm criticising in my thesis, that there's too much of a focus on the US.

P5: But I could imagine maybe in Sweden that would be some research about what it would say to be like to be a second or third generation migrant. I feel like you could also draw some parallels from that to being mixed, because when you are third generation, you are also quite Danish but your parents are not.

I don't know. For instance, my brother grew up with a lot of second generation migrants. But they had many of the same issues, like even though you were Danish you always told that you were not and you're never fully accepted. And you are part of some statistics that you are not really a part of, because you are actually not that foreign. There's so may grey areas. So maybe there could be something interesting there as well.

Interviewer: Definitely. Actually in the beginning when I was figuring out what my problem formulation would be like it was like either I'd focus on third generation migrants or I'd focus on mixed race people. But here in Denmark is very hard to find third generation migrants, because they're like either not born yet or they are all in kindergarten. So I decided to go with mixed race.

P5: But I thought they were some really good questions and I'd like to read or know more about it when you are finished!

Interviewer: I can definitely keep you updated! I'll stop recording now then.

Interviewer: These are really basic questions just to kind of like get you know an overview of the person I am interviewing so the first question is how do you identify yourself in terms of gender?

P6: I identify myself as male, yeah he/him. I flirt with my gender expression every once in awhile, but other than that. If I want those pants and they happen to be in the women's section I'll still buy them and wear them.

Interviewer: Because it's just clothes either way.

P6: Exactly.

Interviewer: And your age?

P6: 26

Interviewer: and what is your educational background?

P6: I have a high school equivalent degree. And I'm currently studying to become a blacksmith you know, making railings and stuff like that.

Interviewer: That is very cool! You don't hear that often.

P6: No, me neither. So I was like, I will do this and worst case I will apply for an apprenticeship and best case I will find something great! And it turned out to be great!

Interviewer: And you current employment?

P6: It's a paid internship, I suppose. Or paid apprenticeship. So I work at a company that produces metal stuff, it's a workshop. And then at the same time I attend school every four months, I have like a two months schooling period where I do technical work and stuff. It's like a working education, but it's fulltime.

Interviewer: Yeah, and what is your hometown?

P6: Aalborg. In the north of Jutland.

Interviewer: Yes, normally I would be there now too. But I'm in the Netherlands. I study and live in Aalborg too.

P6: So you know A-town?

Interviewer: Yes, the 9000! And you also currently live there?

P6: No, I live in Copenhagen now.

Interviewer: Ah okay.

P6: I moved here for my education

Interviewer: And what is your ethnic background?

P6: I am born and raised in Aalborg by my mother, she's Danish- Caucasian. And my father is from the Ivory Coast. I didn't really get a personal relationship with him until I was 15, but my younger

brother's father is also from the Ivory Coast so through him and his family I kind of still got the introduction and the connection to it. Although it's a fun- it's not you know, I would say, oh I'm very Ivorian because I didn't grow up with an Ivorian member of the household present at all times but I would say I'm definitely, you know, a little spicy.

Interviewer: So you grew up with your mother?

P6: Yes, I grew up with my mother.

Interviewer: Okay, so those were the first "easy" questions. Now we get to the more elaborate answers on identity. So first of all, how do you identify yourself ethnically and/or culturally if someone would ask you?

P6: If someone asked me, I would definitely identify as Danish. But that's mostly if- this might be weird, but if it's a white person who asks me "So where are you from?". I immediately go 'Oh I'm from Aalborg'. Because I know what they're trying to ask but I want them to ask the right way because it pisses me off. So I usually say I'm from Aalborg, but if I'm just talking to people and they don't give me that vibe I'll say I'm part Danish, part Ivorian. But I mostly identify, I suppose, with the Danish side of my heritage, because that's what I know the best and I feel the most comfortable operating within.

Because when I talk to people who are more connected to their African heritage or especially if they are connected to their Ivorian heritage, you know, I can very clearly feel like; 'Oh, there are a lot of things or small specific kind of aspects of that identity that I don't necessarily identify with or haven't really known the struggle of.'- Like the whole- My father has a very gorgeous accent when he speaks and I kind of adopt it whenever I talk to him for a while, but it's something I've been a little aware of that I do. Because does he consider, that you know, does he think I'm mocking him?

I know he's talked about, you know, the perception of him and especially his intelligence whenever he speaks with an accent. And that has been a struggle for him. So I don't really have that accent naturally I just kind of adopt it when I'm with him. So you know those things where it's like cultural markers that possibly have been a struggle for the people who have them genuinely. As opposed to me kind of electing, you know opting in and out of this place. It's a weird dance, also because in Aalborg in particular there isn't really that big of a community you can kind of talk about these experiences with. So you're either forced to like identify as one or the other. And white friends ain't for shit gonna provide no nuance on the matter. They're like: (mocking) "Oh but you're brown, not Ivorian. Their flag is the Irish flag.". And I'm like, you're wrong. You're wrong in so many ways.

Interviewer: So it's really situational?

P6: It is. But in my privatest heart of hearts, I think I primarily identify as Danish. Danish, plus a twist of spice.

Interviewer: Yeah, and have you always felt comfortable in your identity? Or has this changed?

P6: When I was a kid, or at least younger. Those very first years of going to school, it was hard cause that was when the other kids sort of became very focused on outward markers of identity. And I was- First of all, I really I was very gender nonconforming as a child, you know. At least for the time, because I wanted to play with the girls, and I wanted dolls. I didn't really like the whole football thing, even though that was like the religion at the time. So there was a lot of, already me suddenly going from being in kindergarten, where the environment was very inclusive, to go to school where suddenly, you know, the girls only want to be with the girls and the boys only wanted to play with

the boys. And the school officials were very focused on me playing with the boys and being comfortable in that, because they felt all things was wrong. But they also started focusing on the fact that I was obviously a different shade of human than they were.

So that was my first interaction with people really suddenly treating me bad or using race specific slurs to kind of get at me. Which was very frustrating to me, because again, I grew up in my mother's household. And my sister, my older big sister, her father is African American and part Native American. And I'm, of course part Ivorian and so is my little brother. So there has never been a vibe of this in my family. Even with my other white family members, because my mother has always made it very clear that if you have anything to say you can say it to my face and then you can get the fuck out (laughs). So, for me suddenly going out in the world and be confronted with the fact that me being brown was a bad thing was very weird because I didn't know it from before at all. I had never really experienced it. So I had a time where I was very- I didn't want to be not brown, but I definitely wanted to fit in. I wanted to feel like I could still play by their rules. So I really wanted to have straight hair for a long time, because you could flick it around and I liked that. But I was also very much easily imitating the style of my peers, but my mother was like; I mean you're gonna die before your hair straightens out so that's not gonna happen sis.

Interviewer: Reality check.

P6: So I became comfortable and confident in it. Also on account of my sister in particular being brown and really always enforcing the idea that that was gorgeous and anybody who said otherwise was stupid. And my mother doing the same, it made it so that I never took it as like a 'Oh I wish I wasn't brown' it was more of a: I wish people weren't assholes. But, the first few years of school were hard. I was very like: hmm these white kids and their insults. Because they hit home every time, it was so specific. I remember the meanest one- do you mind hearing it or would you prefer me not to repeat it?

Interviewer: I don't mind, only if you're comfortable sharing.

P6: So they said: "Oh you're brown. That must mean you were born out of the wrong hole". And I was like what the fuck, like who says this? Even till this day it's such a wild comment to make about someone. And I remember I couldn't really- I didn't have a an equally hurtful come back, because how am I going to come back from that? What are you going to say to someone who is like, well you're brown because you were covered in shit while being born. Well and you're a pea because you're white (mocking).

Interviewer: And do you feel like- because you have touched upon your sister and your mom being sort of hammering on the fact that you have another side that you can be proud of and that it's beautiful, and you should embrace it. Have you always felt aware of your mixed background?

P6: Yes I have. I think my mom has been very good at including it, but in this very natural way. It was never like: Oh let me sit my kids down and talk to them and always bring it up. It was more like a natural part of- Like she learned to cook a lot of West African dishes while she was with my younger brother's father for instance. So she would make this food and we would ask what it is. "Oh you know it's that thing that your auntie Henriëtte makes sometimes" and I'm like "Oh that's delicious". And Henriëtte was my brothers auntie, she's also from the Ivory Coast. So there was this very natural inclusion of my other side.

And my auntie was very good at also including me in things. Like explaining how they did things in Ivory Coast. Or she would take me when we went to visit their mother who lived behind us. She was

like an OG African granny, like you did not fuck around with her because she would hit you with a fly swatter and she did not care whether you were blood or not. Be noisy in her house and she would hit you with a fly swatter. It was amazing, I loved her.

But she was very good at, in that sense, making it a natural part of my life. Because she felt comfortable with it. And I think she got to learn that from having had my sister and be very involved in the community her father came from. In a really genuine sense, you know? She took the time to listen and learn a lot about their struggle and what they went through, and was put through a lot herself. I mean having a mixed race baby in America in the 90s is, you know, that's a whole vibe in itself. So I think she, on account of that, she really did very well at making our identity something we were comfortable with in a very natural way. Like we didn't feel we had to dress up in traditional garb or anything like that to express it because it was a natural part of our everyday lives.

Interviewer: That sounds very nice.

P6: It was. Like, shout out to my mom. She really turned it out on that one.

Interviewer: So we kind of already talked about like family, but do you feel like there's other factors that have had an influence on your identity development? Like relationships with other people or living environment or travels?

P6: It's kind of funny, because I think I started to really lean into my identity as a person of colour around the 6th or 7th grade. So I must have been 12/13-ish. And I remember I had started a new school and this was the first time where I remember more consciously being aware of social structures in the classroom. And also feeling like I wasn't necessarily out in the cold from the jump, like they were still- there was a difference.

And the thing I found out is; because of my sister being American and showing me all these shows when I was a child. I was very good at doing like the, you know, AAVE. The African American vernacular. So I did that very well. And these white kids they lost their marbles when I could pull out the hand movements and doing all those things. And then I know and I felt like: okay social capital, what up? (laughingly). So I leaned into that and you know, in extension because I felt this huge positive social feedback I might have overindulged a bit. But what it did is really propelled me to really start looking at my identity not as something private and just a natural part of life, but as something I could celebrate an actually should celebrate. And also something that set me apart in certain ways, like you know hair care. That was one area where my mother just completely dropped the ball.

She did not know how to deal with all this hair, so she just kept it short and then I grew it out and then I didn't really know how to take care of it. So learning that was very important for me. And at the same time I met Olivia, I think you talked to her as well. She was also mixed, with a kind of similar background. And me meeting her- She was at the time, I remember, very comfortable living that African bohemian lifestyle, you know? Giving all that voodoo queen vibe and I was like: "Oh wow, you're allowed to do this?" (shocked).

So that was a time in my life with me engaging with other people, my peers, socially and finding techniques that worked. And meeting peers that I could kind of mirror myself in helped me to kind of instead of just accepting who I was just like: Oh yeah that's who I am, I can't really subtract or add from it it's just the way it is. To like: this is an identity and you know it both has positives and negatives. There are positive perceptions, negative perceptions. Things that I need to be aware of,

things that I have been aware of but should've been behaviours I need to check off in myself and in others. And I think that was a process, it took a lot of years.

I don't think it was until like after- I would say midway through high school that was where I kind of realised – OK I have been getting to a point where I would also say it was getting kind of minstrel like what I was doing. Like I was putting on a show for these people because I knew they would clap, laugh and think it was hilarious to have a "sassy gay black friend" (sarcastic mocking). But you know it was nice- having been very anti social growing up and feeling like social relationships were very hard for me to navigate, to something you have in shortcut every time I would get a laugh, a positive response, a new friend.

So I overindulged and it got to the point where I kind of, again, was just like realising my identity and the history of you know being a person of colour. And I think it's kind of- today, sure there are specific specifics for your heritage, your cultural heritage. But being a person of colour there's a lot of universal things we all kind of stuff for from regardless of which culture you're specifically grew up in. And I think the whole, you know, putting on a show. Exaggerating the stereotypes of any kind of aspect of yourself to the point where you no longer even identify with what you're doing. You need to be aware because that's just going to feel sad in like, 10 years and you're still doing that. And also just meeting other people of colour and having them kind of go; Girlll? Why are we doing the most? (imitating). And I was just like: "Girl I don't know!" (exaggerating). So you know, again, it's a whole ride. But it's fun!

Interviewer: Yeah definitely, it's a process.

P6: It's definitely a process, you learn what to opt into and what not in regards to which struggles can I relate to and which not, or are not an experience of mine necessarily. Even if it's not something that I struggle with, it's definitely something that if I hear people talk about it I won't try to speak against it. Because even if it's not something I struggle with personally, I would still like to recognise that some people do struggle with it. It kind of forces you to grow in a weird way. You know, also like, I'm gay. So I had a real big deck of minority cards to play with. And for me- it kind of forces you from a very young age to take a stance on yourself in a whole other way than if you are a part of the minority. There were questions I needed to answer to both myself and others, because they felt like they deserved an answer. Like: are you gay or not? And if so who are you into? And is it okay to be into them? And will it result in you being treated differently? And also, oh so you're black, what's your opinion on racism? You know, you need to deal with a lot of traumatic shit before you are even fully developed. Because people did- you know when those riots happened in America in Minnesota, and people just wrote me constantly and wanted to talk to me about it because I was apparently their spokes person or something.

Interviewer: Like you are now the representative of black people all over the world, hahahaha.

P6: Like do you sometimes want to riot? But listen, first of all I find it very hard to watch people, in particularly in this country, all these white people just sit there and have completely unempathetic discussions on the validity of people rioting. Like "Oh let's rationalise everything. Of course it's awful and people should not be racist but they also shouldn't be doing what they are doing in the streets." (mocking). And I'm like, yo these are people how have lost something, like family members to systemic injustice and your main point- you still feel like you have an authority to speak on it. It does not effect you in any way of form, but you will still sit there and try to have a conversation with me on whether they are allowed to do that they are doing? It's so weird. And to me also, you really have to be aware from a very early age about a lot of things as compared to other people who, even to this day, have never really had to think about that stuff. And for that you really had to answer some

questions about yourself and your place in the world. And I think that's true for any kind of person who's not part of the majority. You have to think about, who am I in relation to the majority and how can I lessen or circumvent some of the negative associations that are linked to the type of minority that I am. And it's a weird way to navigate the world, but it gives character and a little bit of backbone (sarcastic).

Interviewer: It builds personality (joking).

P6: It sure does! But to be honest, thank God for that! Because otherwise it would have been a total lose-lose situation, like no ma'am.

Interviewer: In Dutch we have a saying: every negative situation has its benefits. And it is true in most cases.

P6: That's why I like the Dutch.

Interviewer: So poetic.

P6: Very poetic in that weird Dutch way. That's one thing I find hilarious, Dutch people can't whisper. Because you have those "-G" sounds and you can't do that silently.

Interviewer: But I'm from the south, so I have a different -G sound, so my -G sound is more whisper appropriate.

P6: Good, because I was in England once and we were doing this house exchange thing. And the people who lived there has a group of Dutch guys living there. And we found out because one evening we had been told to be very quiet because we were right next to the children's room. And suddenly across from the hall you could just hear "pss-pss-psss-G-pss-pss-pss-G". And we were like, what's going on? And the we found out that they were Dutch.

Interviewer: That's hilarious. Our weird language.

P6: Oh welcome to the club. I think Danish and Dutch are the weirdest sounding languages out there. It sound like Simlish.

Interviewer: Yeah exactly. So as a mixed person you kind of deal with the duality of having multiple ethnic and/or cultural identities and I'm interested in understanding how these interact with each other for you. So do you feel like you are more connected to one of them? Or feel like you have to prioritise one of them over the other? Or is that, again, situational?

P6: I think it's very situational for me. Because I have my family, my mother's side of the family they are very Danish. Like very, very Danish. But of course my mom has kind of whipped them into shape in order to not say stupid stuff. And has done an excellent job at it, because I've never had to be like: Hey don't say that. They don't even try it, because they know she will just be in their face immediately. But I think it's very situational, but I always end up at my dads roots. Because I wanted to identify more with my Ivorian side, especially after going there in 2018 with my father and one of my sisters on my father's side. Because they accept me wholeheartedly down there. I am part of the family structure and am treated with all the bells and whistles. But it was also very strange to me, because to feel so welcomed by someone and feel so included and then suddenly being aware of how little you know. I didn't have an easy way into it, there were a lot of situations where I was like, what am I supposed to do now? What is the appropriate response? Am I causing offense without being aware? Because technically I am my father's eldest, so there is some things there that are at interplay. And my father isn't necessarily a great ambassador. There's a lot of things he forgets to

explain, or maybe explains after the fact that it would have been nice to know when we were there. A little head's up next time would be nice. And he's just like "You did perfect, son.". And I'm just like 'Yeah, but I could have done better. I really could've done better, let me know.'. And sometimes I think, in a way, I have a very strong American side to my identity on account of my sister being born and raised in America and always had a strong tradition of importing American things into our household. Like movies and TV-shows. And my sister really kept me up-to-date on all the latest hottest shit in America when it came to TV and stuff. So I often have an ease when I interact with Americans. Because they always ask me where I am from in America and then I have to say I am not American whatsoever. And they always think I am lying. So I think I have been good at making this sort of soup or being brown, which works for me. And I can kind of add and subtract from it depending on the situation but I think because I didn't have my father or someone from my other culture living with me and teach me more about my heritage and stuff, I feel like my mixed-race heritage has always had to be situational. It was very rarely me deciding how I wanted to be, it was often dependent on the people around me telling me how to be and then me having to take a stance on whether I agreed or not. So that's a weird way to build up an identity as a person of colour, when a lot of it started out with a lot of white people telling you about your culture or what it meant to be mixed. Or how you should act, behave and react to certain things. So in that sense it's still a work in process. So when people ask me about my heritage I would say: well my father is there and my mother is here but I grew up with her and the rest is something I have constructed. And I think I have had to because I don't have a strict direct link with my father's culture. And my mother's culture, the Danish culture, doesn't really have the historic background of interacting with people of colour which is why they have this weird condescending way of going without it. We're not racist, we've never been racist (mocking) and I'm like no that's because you sold all your slaves to America in 1917 sweetheart. But they're very naïve, bordering on maliciously ignorant about things.

Interviewer: That's very interesting because I have been reading up on that history as part of my literature review. And there's also literature pointing towards that kid off, collective amnesia amongst Danes when it comes to their role in the slave trade. They're just thinking that they were not a part of that racist system.

P6: No we didn't, we would never (sarcastic). And then sometimes I hear people, who are aware of our colonial background, say "Well, I mean, we just bought them. It was the Africans who did it to each other.". And I just sit there like, there's so much more nuance to that and the fact that you can look me in the eye, and say it even with you hearing the absurdity of it, just feeling the ick to say it, I am very surprised my dearest. But to be faced with that, consistently, has also very much forced me to like- if I want to learn, and have an identity as a person of colour, I will have to carve it out myself. Because they are not going to give it to me whatsoever. Especially that whole cultural amnesia. Even when you talk to people about what they have done to the Inuit people of Greenland. I literally would sit in English class, and we saw that movie called Rabbit Fence about the aboriginal children in the nineteen hundreds in Australia who were abducted and trying to get to their families again. And we would sit and after the movie everyone would find it so awful, and "How could anyone ever do that?". And I'm like, literally we did it. And the people we did it to, they couldn't run nowhere because we literally sailed them to this country, broke them, and now we make jokes about them having rampant alcohol abuse in their communities. As a direct result of us killing their culture, and then giving them a flag in exchange and say 'we really like you guys. We love your sealskins and stuff.' (mocking). It's very strange, and it also meant I think that I had to be careful with my colour. Because I know that people- Even people I care about, certain Danish people they have this hard-line, shut down any notion that they are not the most inclusive people in the world. They will get angry and defensive. I can have conversations about culture or race, without ever saying the word racist or

racism, or even implying that there is an injustice happening, and some will just go: "I'm not racist though.". Immediately that's where they go. They are aware that being racist and racism is a problem in the world, but only as far as they are definitely not that. They hear the details of why this could be seen as problematic or racist, but they will immediately go "Oh no, but I'm not racist. I don't believe black people should sit at the back of the bus.". And then they will end it. To them that is a complete sentence or discourse. Started, had, ended, boom. And it's so weird because you have to talk to them and eggshell around them by being like 'You know, not saying that you're racist at all. But can't you see that maybe, possibly this or that could be misinterpreted or seen as upsetting? Because it reminds me of some racist behaviour I have been subject to in the past.'. And they'll go "No, because I don't mean anything racist by it when I say it.".

Just last week, a guy I met- he was peripherally friends with some people I know from the bar I work at every once in awhile, and we got to talking. He seemed sweet, you know, wearing glasses, little office bug. Very kind. Seemed very into me as well. So we had a conversation. And he tells me how he loves to travel and his travels around Africa. How he loves the people down there and I'm like; great, amazing. But while saying that he consistently refers to them by the n-word. Whenever he talks about people of African descent or colour he consistently refers to them by the n-word. The first time I like- because he's talking about South Africans here and having been to South Africa you can't escape the fact that that word has mad history attached to it. Regardless of not being necessary South African history, it still ties into the whole international problem of racism.

So I hear him using the word a few times and eventually I sit there and he looks me dead in the eye and there isn't a hint of him registering the discomfort this is giving me. So eventually I go: Well I've just noticed now a few times throughout our conversation you decided to use that word. So, I just want to know what is your relation to it ? And I made it very clear that this isn't me ramping up to tell him off, I'm genuinely interested in you being obviously an educated man, who has an office job in Copenhagen one of the wokest places in the country. So for you to use that word tells me you must have relationship with it, that somehow explains why you are this indifferent to using it to a person of colour.

And he goes: "Well I'm gonna need you to be a little bit more specific about when I used it because otherwise I feel like this conversation is going to be very meta." and I was like; well, it doesn't really matter how or when you used it, like, that word is not good point blank period. And then he went: well he grew up as the gay son of a small town mayor where everybody knew his face and his sexuality so he had been through it too. And that to him was like, so he knew struggle, so when he used that word didn't mean anything by it. And then I was like- I tried to baby step explain to him: well if you- let's say you and I grew up in that town together, sure everybody would know you were gay and the mayor's son. Let's say you and I went to Aarhus to party together. Everyone wouldn't know who the fuck you were, but every single racist will still be able to point to me and go: "look at that n-word over there!". Do you understand how that- you know I'm not saying your struggle wasn't awful because I'm sure it was. Growing up gay in a small town in Nord Jylland, that sounds like the worst, but that doesn't mean that you can say that. Especially not to me because you have to- Next thing I tried to explain to him was the whole part of like: well maybe you don't mean anything by it, but to me it reminds me of some truly ugly things that have been said and done to me with that word featuring prominently in almost every single one of those episodes. So I'm not telling you what to think, feel, or have an opinion on. I'm just telling you, that as a person you're having a conversation with, claiming to have decent amount of respect for, why won't you abstain from using the word when it literally triggers me? But no, you know, he didn't really feel like it. And he also then went and said: "But you aren't like black black. You know you aren't dark, there are people darker than you.".

And I said yeah and their struggle is way realer but that doesn't really like again, my guy, what the fuck?

Interviewer: Yeah that doesn't negate the fact that-

P6: It's just so wild. And that's why a lot of times if I interacts with someone and they use language that I know they know it's racist, and they use it to my face but not in a fuck you way, but just casually. I've decided I don't really engage. I don't try to talk to them about it. I don't try to restrain them, because I feel like at this point in time, people who still use the word are the ones who are ready to argue with you about it. Because they really made their stance on it, and I would rather keep my peace of mind because it always gets me so pissed off every time. I get so mad, like I don't act on the rage, but inside it's stifling to be that angry. Because I know if you take it to the next level, there is a really good chance that everyone around them is suddenly of it being a racial thing. And that's just where you really feel like, oh I am definitely one of very few brown people in a very white country. Because they will wake the fuck up, especially with the word racist. They'll be like: "I mean, I understand that you're upset and that he said something wrong, but I don't think it's fair to call him a racist." (mocking). But then how am I supposed to talk about this with you guys if I can't use the terminologies and I have to be so mindful of your feelings? Even though, all I'm trying to do is tell you all like, hey that one word you don't even have to use but choose to? In some settings to me it's upsetting. That's it

Interviewer: I just like, I went completely past that point. I was like: there's no use in talking to them so I will just slap sense into them, and I literally did that. I was like: I've said it now multiple times, don't use the N-word around me, because I'm not comfortable with it. I'm not going to keep repeating myself so whenever I was in a space where I new people and they were just like friends of friends and we've been going out in clubs and they still said it, I would just like literally- I would slap them against the head. I was just so done.

P6: I have to start doing that. Just one of those blanket statements: from now on anybody who uses the N-word, I will slap them. Not hard, but enough for it to be embarrassing for you.

Interviewer: I almost had to train them like dogs. But it worked. They stopped.

P6: You do. Because honestly these people- When you're in a majority white country that doesn't have a big or long history of systemic racial oppression, at least not one that they're aware of. It's like raising a child. It's like raising a stupid, stupid, stupid child to understand something that their little tiny brains just seemingly don't want to. The best part is, sometimes we try to include like a whole, you know- How are the Muslim minority, or just any kind of Middle Eastern in the eyes of the Danish people, how they are treated. And it's so hard because people are like "Oh well I'm not racist. I don't believe that black people should sit in the back of the bus." No but what about Middle Eastern people? "Well… you know…" (mocking) But then it comes out, like so you are like the worst kind of racist because you're ignorant about it. And again, I would rather sit at the table with loud and proud racists who will say: "Yes I'm racist. What are you gonna do about it?", rather than a person so in denial about their own racist feelings that they're like: I'm not racist but it wouldn't piss on you if you were on fire.

Because no, I don't- I can't deal with that. How can I operate- How do I navigate being around you, when I constantly basically have to be extra aware of are you being racist or not? And if so, can I call you out on it? Because you're fully in denial. Because you suddenly feel like this isn't about you having done something, it's about me judging your character and I don't judge your character, I judge

her actions but if your actions repeatedly are the same I will start to think of you as having a racist character.

They are the worst. Like, honestly it is so hard and this often frustrates me so. But I lived here my whole life, and it's my friends and it's my family and I'm lucky that the majority of the people I have in my life- or at least they understand that I don't want to hear it and they're smart enough to not push it. But there are just sometimes where I can feel like that tolerance, it has a limit. That there re certain times where if- Let's say this whole Black Lives Matter movement that made its entry into Denmark. Just watching how even though they might disagree with the front person's way of going about it, they instead of saying, yeah I'm not necessary a superfan of her but I think, you know, it's important work, it's important conversations that they are starting. They would be like: All those people are just loud. I don't understand why they need to, you know, there isn't that big of a problem with racism in Denmark anyway. And just sitting there and being like; I honestly don't want to have try to argue with you, because I don't want to lose a friend over this. I really don't because you're so great, but then this happens. I think it's there was this- I don't know if you know this guy that was killed on Bornholm-

Interviewer: Sorry if you hear this in the background (laughing)

P6: Is that a bird?

Interviewer: Yes we have two parrots. I wanted to warn you in the beginning but I forgot.

P6: Great, I just needed to make sure no one was actually getting murdered.

Interviewer: No it's a parrot. But no I haven't heard of that.

P6: Yeah, he was from Tanzania, or at least his mother. And he was born and was raised in Bornholm. He was murdered in the forest, like brutally killed. Tortured and then killed by two brothers. And immediately after this was announced, a video started surfacing of these brothers. With one of the brothers having drawn a swastika on his leg and just, there was a very heavy vibe of this was definitely racially charged in someway or another. And then the camp that went out to kind of protect these dudes, to kind of argue their case where like: I people are way too quick to judge them and that this is actually a private matter, like there are private reasons for why what happened, happened. And then my aunt, my white aunt. I had to check her, cause she got a little too fucking fresh and then she said: "Well we can't know if race had anything to do with it.", so then I said: "Girly…" (sarcastic).

You know allegedly what happened was that this guy had had sex with their mother. And there were discussions- there were slight murmurings about whether it had been consensual or not, but I think in the end it comes up to him and the mother had a consensual sexual relationship. They found out, they got angry, lured him into the woods with beers and such and then they beat him to death, violently. I've never in my entire life in Denmark heard of someone being killed in this way. It is the wildest. And I had to tell her like: well can you look me in the eye and tell me that if this had been a random, like one of their white friends. These brother's white friends that would have a sexual relationship with their mother, they might still beat him up. But to torture him over the course of hours and then kill him and leave him in the woods? That's just, you know, how can you be like that?

It's like the worst. And just watching so many people in this country scream instantaneously: "it's not about race! Don't make it about race!". Immediately they all try to shut it down. And any time you try to talk about it, they wouldn't even think to consider whether it's my personal beliefs it's racist or not. This is a friend, or a person of colour that is upset by this. They feel hurt, or scared. But no,

immediately it becomes a: no let's shut it down, it's not about race. That was just the worst. Those times is where I find it the hardest to be a brown person in this country. Whenever something happens that is racially charged here or anywhere in the world, you are suddenly surrounded by white people where a lot of them are like: oh we shouldn't make it about race. And you can't express your anger or sorrow, because they will always feel the need to defend themselves from it. Of course I am not mad about you being white, that would be nonsensical. But for me this kind of shows me a little bit about the mindset. Because why are you all immediately assuming that whenever I have a reaction about anything that deals with race, I automatically have a problem with all white people? Is that a mindset you have as a white person? That if you know that people have a problem with a person of another race, suddenly that problem with is with the person's race itself. Well, that kind of to me shows where there is an issue with how white people, at least white people in this country, think about race. Because they are so quick to feel attacked when it's not about them. And that to me very much indicates, like, okay so there is something to be said about the whole, like you know, you probably are a little racist, you just don't want to say it.

Interviewer: Speaking about Denmark, kind of going into the next part of my questionings here, because I'm also particularly interested in the concept of Danishness and what role it plays for mixed race Danes. So I feel like there's some things we're going to come back to that you touched upon, but first of all I just want to ask you: what does it mean to be Danish?

P6: Well, I think it's hard to quantify, but as far I think every Danish person would say it's about 'hygge' but I think 'hygge' as a concept is very much about, you know, the chill, laidback, everybody knows everybody kind of vibe. Because there's only 5 million people, we all speak the same language, we have all attended more or less the same school, we have a you know two TV channels, like national TV channels.

There is this sense of belonging and I also think that's what makes it so hard for people who don't belong, or who haven't grown up in it or conform to it, to fit in. Because there is this assumption, by everybody who grew up as part of the majority that we are all the same. But that to me is- like peak Danishness is ridiculous levels you know sameness but in like the cosiest way possible. It's like one long nostalgia trip, it's so weird. But yeah there is a sense of togetherness and 'hygge' and, you know, long summer evenings I think that to me is very Danish. And our grocery stores, I can't put my finger on it but there is something about our grocery stores that makes it hard for me to shop anywhere but here.

Interviewer: Actually I had this realisation yesterday, after having lived in Denmark for almost two years. And I was in a Dutch grocery store, I couldn't find anything. It was so hard for me to navigate a store and I was standing in line and I was like, literally almost scared, because someone started talking to me in line and I was like: why are you talking to me? Such a realisation moment where I started thinking oh I've been too long in Denmark.

P6: That's so fun, because I don't think that's- you know in Denmark we're both like: oh don't talk to- a lot of people come to Denmark and are like: oh you're not very talkative. And the thing is, we're not, but in my experience and that's where I know that I might not look the part of the white Dane but I know all the cultural cues. If I have to approach a stranger or anything, I immediately know what to say, what vibe I need to bring for them to open up, because if you don't do it right then immediately they'll be like: so are you trying to scam me? I this a scam? Are you trying to get something out of me? What's going on? There is a lot of cues you need to know. There's a whole way of how do you put your head, tone of voice. I often catch myself kind of like crouching a bit whenever- because I know like you need to exude this kind of vibe of like: I'm so sorry to bother you,

but at the same time we're both Danish though. We're in the know. So it's weird amalgamations of being sorry but also knowing the person because you're both Danish. We both watched TV2 growing up, we know who- "Der er et yndigt land!", you know, that vibe.

Interviewer: So yeah, but I think for me that's Danishness. It's weird, because we don't really have national values. Or, yeah we have one national value. We don't talk about it as much anymore but we have it. And that's all, I think, because everyone has kind of had the same experiences, the same kind of starting off point, you know. So many things are taken care of in childhood, there is a very strong sense of like, Janteloven. Do not presume to know better, that you are better, that you can do better, that you should do better than anyone else. You are no better than the next and you better conform to that idea so people also instinctively- I think maybe that's also why they have a hard time with the whole, you know, racism thing and minorities saying no. Because for them they kind of interpret it as them saying my struggles, or our struggles are more real or we deserve more.

Interviewer: Like you don't deserve different treatment.

P6: Yeah, that. And for me it takes some mind gymnastics but for the average white person, they look at a pride parade and they go: I should have a parade. And the to explain like: Well it isn't so much- it's more like a, you know, we are trying to reclaim space and we are starting a conversation, we're bringing attention to the fact that, hey, maybe these people's lives are almost not like being a parade. If I can put it to you in childhood terms. And then they'll be like; "Yeah, but still I would like a parade. And I think it's kind of weird that I can't get one because then I'm suddenly racist or homophobic." If you want one you can just make a parade for yourself. But your entire life has been one giant parade. Everywhere you go there's white people in beautiful clothes, with beautiful eyes and celebrating other beautiful white people. So I think you have a parade, you're just, you just been in it for so long you don't see it and that's very, you know, parade blind. That's what you are.

Interviewer: So, do you feel like there's other like aspects that are important to Danishness? I just wrote a few examples down that you can think of like: appearance, values, language, culture, religion or citizenship?

P6: I think to me the most defining thing is that you must be born here. You have to speak the language and you have to speak the language flawlessly. And that's unfair because Danish pronunciation is so hard we can barely even do it ourselves.

Interviewer: It's kicking my ass right now, I'm learning it.

P6: I know several people who came here as teenagers. I have a very good friend who's Polish, she came here as a teenager. She knows the language, she knows the language flow fluently and flawlessly but she has a slight Polish accent. She has completely stopped speaking Danish, even to people who know her to be able to speak it, because she immediately is treated like her IQ points fell by 50. Immediately, the moment people detect an accent they'll go: oh. And she's writing a PhD, she's one of the, unequivocally most intelligent people that I know, and she has just stopped trying to speak Danish because she feels like she gets more respect by simply speaking English with an accent, then speaking fluent Danish with an accent.

Also personally for me, if I can detect an accent in someone, immediately I think: Oh well, where they from? Because it can't possibly be from here. And being part of that whole notion of being Danish, I don't think it's something anyone ever really- at least other Danes won't give that status to other people. But if other people have lived here their entire life, know the language, they consider themselves Danish. Other Danes will go: Yeah great, sure, cool. They won't try to deny them, but I

think mentally to be considered like, you know, 'Vi er hvide, vi er rode' you gotta be born here. I gotta be able to vibe with you when talking about: oh so how was your folkeskole, eller… There are these things, the little buzz words experiences, again the whole nostalgia thing I talked about. I think a lot of our togetherness of our culture is based on this shared nostalgia for things that are very universal regardless of whether you were born rich or poor, male or female or whatever there is. Things that we all can relate to instinctively.

And then of course appearance. When I think what Danish people are of course I think of like you're some kind of white. You know maybe white with a tan. A lot of Danes and Scandinavians tan incredibly well. They're like these Eiffel towers with perfectly tanned skin.

Interviewer: It actually scares me a little bit (laughs).

P6: Like, I had friends when I was a kid in school, who would go travel two/three times a year who would have like all year around tan. They were more brown than me during winter. But to me you're some kind of white, or tanned whit. Caucasian in appearance, but I consider myself Danish and I mean, I know for a fact in the way that other Danish people approach me and the questions they ask me is, they know I am you know Danish cultured and raised Danish, but they always assume that I'm from somewhere. To the point where it's not something they ask, they will just assume. A lot of people at the bar I work at, they'll just go: oh are you Brazilian? They won't ask where you are from or if I am maybe Danish. They will just go: oh you are Brazilian. And I'm like: No, I'm mixed though. And you know there is a lot of mixed people in Brazil because of slavery. But that's about it, that's where the connection stops. And then they'll go: "But are you Moroccan?". No. It's weird. The fact anyone can just guess someone's heritage or nationality from just looking at them. I find it absurd.

I've done it once. I was at this bar in Aalborg, drunk. And I just saw this couple who were very Middle Eastern looking to me. And I just went: "I bet you I can guess where you are from". And thank God I got it correct. Because they just gave me that look of, you know, when white people are going to be bullshitting you. Like: Okay?. And I said: "You're Lebanese.". And they were Lebanese. So you know, God bless. But that is the first and last time I did it again. Because the look that they gave me, I was really shook. Because first of all, that white people haven't caught on to this yet. They do this so much, but they never really look at the face of who they are doing it to. Because it always screams: really? You're going to guess where I am from? I obviously am the zoo animal on display, go guess what I am. I don't think they realise it feels very othering when they do it. It feels very: you're just assuming that I don't belong here, or it feels to me like you are assuming that I don't belong here. A lot of them have this naïve vibe of like: oh no I am just curious where you are from, I didn't intend anything. But this is not about you though. It's not about you or your intentions, it's about how it makes other people feel. And I feel there is this heartlessness when it comes to it in this country. They don't want to listen to you when you say: hey I know you didn't intend to be upsetting, or rude, or whatever, but you were. And try to not be like that in the future. And they are very bad at this.

I think it also comes from the way we are raised. We are raised like you have to be a good person. You have to be inclusive, at the end of the day we are all the same. But it kind of translate into this insistence on it where instead of actually doing it you just insist on well I am a good person and then they start they don't listen when people actually tell them like: hey you were upsetting me in a way only you can upset me on account of some very ugly history that exists in the world. But they are just like: no you're equating me with that ugly history and I'm a good person. But no, you're wrong but that's weird to me, very weird to me.

Interviewer: Do you feel like sort of like the questioning of your Danishness in some instances has impacted the way you view yourself your identity?

P6: I mean, I not in in a way that I notice but I'm sure that it has. On account of you know, I feel more upset whenever the politicians go on the news and start talking about immigration or, you know, basically start quantifying good cultures versus bad cultures.

I got a letter from the EU recently asking me to participate in a survey for refugees and descendants of refugees and all I was thinking was: why? And that's because my father technically was an asylum seeker when he came to the country. This is not a man I've grown up with, his name is on my birth certificate but other than that he's never sent money, he's never been my caregiver or anything. I really only got to know him when I was 15 years old, so for me to receive a questionnaire that- to know that I am listed somewhere in some system as that… Because you could say: why is that an issue? And then I realised it's an issue because I've heard how- that word to me, you know, descendant of refugees, refugees or immigrants, is solely used for negative references. The people that fall into those categories have been so categorically talked shit on, that the minute I was put in that category, my instinctual reaction was: no. Like, I didn't want to be that.

Interviewer: feeling like you aren't like that.

P6: That really opened my eyes to, first of all, wow I might have some latent judgments or ideas of- I wouldn't say this isn't necessarily race, but the thing is immediately when I read those words the picture that comes to mind. And that is some brown person, with a lot of fabrics on him, walking around looking struggling. You know, that's what came to me, because that's the picture that's painted. That's what you're told.

They use these words, instead of saying Middle Eastern people or African people, they'll say refugees or migrants. Never immigrants, it's always a migrant you know. And it's just so ugly. And to me, because I know that I am brown- First of all, some people look at me and assume I'm not from here. It hits me different. I get more upset whenever this happens, when I try to express this upset to my friends or my family they will always go: "Yeah, I mean I suppose".

They really showed their true colours. I remember there was an election a few years back where Dansk Folkeparti, who were like the Crusaders of racism at the time, became the, I think, largest party in the country. Like a ridiculous amount of the votes they got. This was right around when we had the migrant crisis, as they like to call it. You know where they show pictures of people walking up the highway and people greeting them with angry letters and spit, which was also ridiculous, but they won that election and I wrote a update on Facebook where basically I said that I was disappointed and I was upset and I thought it was far fucking out that that many people had decided that these policymakers were OK. That they basically gave them their seal of approval.

And I remember my godmother whose white, she wrote a comment saying: "Oh well darling I don't think you know you don't have to worry" Because they also had been against adoption for gay couples, so there was a lot of issues I took with that particular party. And then she said: "I think you're going to be a great parent. I don't think you have to be worried." and also you know, that people who voted on the party didn't necessarily agree with every part of the programme. And I responded with saying: listen, it doesn't matter whether or not they agree. That you don't give your vote with specifications, that's blanket statement you are giving with a vote for somebody. And the fact still is that they might not agree, but they still feel in their hearts that those points in their party programme are not bad enough that they aren't willing to look it over. It wasn't bad enough for them to say; well I can't actually vote for them because that is part of their programme. You're still saying it's bad, but it's not bad enough. You know, and that that's what I'm trying to get people to understand. It's the nuance. Because a lot of people will be like: if you are not literally threatening to lynch somebody, people should stop being upset. Remember, you have to understand a lot of this is

implied. I know a lot of white people have to think in these ways, about these implied threats and the implied, you know, feelings of estrangement that they put out when they continuously use hostile wording around migrants, and immigrants, and people of Middle Eastern cultures or whatever. And they consistently give time and an authority to people who are declared racists, and are saying outrageous xenophobic things under the guise of: well you know I don't agree with all of what they are saying and I shouldn't be held accountable for all of this person's sayings. And I'm like: well you should. Because there are public person, they're a politician. You give them your vote, so they represent you. Their person is a representation of you in government, so please stop voting for people and then running away from all the fucked up shit they get up to. Especially as it relates to race, and culture, and discrimination, Jesus Christ.

It's also very hard to vote sometimes, because you know finding a politician where I'm like- Because I want to be able to say: no there isn't anything about this person I need to overlook in order to agree with them. Because some people will vote for someone from the far left and I'm like: no. Because some of them are saying some stupid shit too. Some stupid, stupid shit. And it simply frustrates me that I have to vote, why do I have to vote? Like, I do because you get shamed if you don't, but when with all of them it's either: 'I agree sort of with their economic policy, but they're fucking racists' or 'I sort of agree with their social policy, but they're just completely delusional', I'm not going to waste my vote. I'm not going to have that person represent me.

And the fact that people don't want to have this conversation. They get annoyed. They act like it's my problem for not conforming to the system. The rest of us are doing it, so why can't you? I'm not trying to be special here, I'm just saying we have some fucking serious issues with laziness in this general populace. People have had it too good, for too long. So whenever you question the status quo, people get upset because they are all benefiting from it. They don't want to deal with it, and I get it. There are days I don't want to deal with it either, but it's just so annoying that people can get away with being this lazy about it. Being this unwilling to have the conversation and are tired about having to talk about it because everything is an issue, everything is a political debate. And I'm like, that's because a lot of shit went unchanged for a very long time and we are now in the process of change. That sucks, but it unfortunately needs to happen. So pick yourself up by the bootstraps, put your listening ears on or you're screaming cap on and get to it sis, get to it. Rant over.

Interviewer: I think I went through all of my questions.

P6: Well you also said you had to be done by 12:30, so that's exactly on the money.

Interviewer: Yes that is pretty good timing. So I'll stop the recording now then.