

# Women who re-return to a Domestic Violence Shelter

Anne Elvira Øgelund Pedersen



International Relations and Development  
Refugee Studies  
Aalborg University  
Master theis - 148.188 keystrokes  
Supervisor - Vibeke Andersson  
Student no - 20211496

# Abstract

This thesis examines the experiences of why women re-return to domestic violence shelters and in which sense their background might influence the return. Insights from qualitative interviews with four professionals reveal variations and also approaches that look similar in their approaches to women from diverse backgrounds. Furthermore, I use my own experience in this paper due to my experience within the field of five years. Looking at the women's different networks and support systems and how it affects the women's ability to handle abuse, emphasizing the importance of intersectionality. The research challenges misrecognition and recognition, using Honneth's three spheres, and highlights the universal psychological effects of abuse. Prioritizing the needs of all survivors, irrespective of background, is crucial. Continuous learning in domestic violence support organizations is essential, recognizing intersectionality and providing accessible services. Factors contributing to re-return include emotional attachment, manipulation, recognition, and rights. This study illuminates complex factors influencing re-return, including work, economic concerns, shared kids with the abuser and social networks. Specific challenges faced by Tamilian, Romanian, and Middle Eastern women are highlighted.

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## 1.0 Introduction

As a social worker working within the field as both an unskilled and skilled professional with six years of experience in this field, I have encountered many strong and inspiring women who have faced unimaginable hardships in their lives. In particular, I focus on this research on women who have returned to domestic violence shelters is an area that is both important and often overlooked.

Throughout my work experience, I have had the opportunity to meet women who have stayed in multiple shelters, gaining unique insights into their experiences and perspectives. Whether through personal interactions or formal advocacy, my work has allowed me to explore the complex and multifaceted nature of domestic violence, and to shed light on the challenges and obstacles that these women face.

As I delve deeper into my research, I may encounter new people and new stories that challenge my assumptions and expand my understanding of why women re-return to a domestic violence shelter. This research on why women re-returning to domestic violence shelters uses the interdisciplinary field by drawing on insights and methodologies from multiple fields. It combines perspectives from social work, sociology, and refugee studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex factors involved. By integrating these disciplines, the research aims to look into the individual, interpersonal, and structural aspects that contribute to women seeking shelter multiple times. This interdisciplinary ap-

proach allows for a more nuanced examination of the phenomenon and offers potential insights for developing effective interventions and support systems for women experiencing domestic violence more than one time.

The issue of domestic violence is complex and multifaceted, and it requires a collaborative effort from a wide range of professionals in order to effectively address it. As a researcher in this field, I have had the opportunity to meet and interview a number of professionals who work with women who have experienced domestic violence. While my focus may be on the experiences of the women themselves, it is important to also acknowledge the vital role that these professionals play in providing support and resources to those who have been affected by domestic violence.

I have made interviews with professionals from different organizations and educational backgrounds which have provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of working in this field. I have gained a deeper understanding of the various roles and responsibilities that these professionals have, as well as the different approaches and strategies they use to support and empower the women.

As a social worker and researcher, it is important to maintain a professional distance and to respect the privacy and confidentiality of the women I work with. By focusing on the perspectives of professionals, I am able to conduct my research in an ethical and responsible manner, while still making a contribution to the field. My work is a testament to my commitment and passion for this important cause, and I am excited to see the impact it will have on both research and practice.

## 2.0 Problem Field

Based on my experience, it seems that there are several key issues in the field of Domestic Violence Services (DVS) that need to be addressed. One issue is the prevalence of violence among women from diverse backgrounds, particularly those from Middle Eastern countries, Asian and North African countries who I have through my experience seen having a specific conflict with Danish culture. This suggests the need for sensitive and appropriate interventions that take into account the unique needs and experiences of women

from different backgrounds. Throughout my years working in the field of domestic violence, I have observed Danish women facing various challenges related to the Danish law system. In contrast, women from different backgrounds, who are not Danish, not only experience difficulties in comprehending the legal system, but I have also witnessed the added obstacles posed by language barriers for both the women and the shelter workers.

Another issue that I have observed is the role of intimate partners and family members as perpetrators of violence. Observing women from different backgrounds I have seen how the violence is more complex the more people who are involved. There is no doubt that women with a Danish background often come from an individualistic upbringing. On the other hand, women from backgrounds other than Danish may have experienced a more collectivistic upbringing, leading to a more intricate perspective in understanding their experiences of violence. Which is something I have seen throughout my five years of experience. Furthermore, the observation that the level of security of women is inversely proportional to the number of individuals involved in the perpetration suggests that there is a need for strategies to protect women who are at high risk of violence, particularly those who are in situations involving multiple perpetrators.

DVS have played a critical role in the response to domestic violence over the years. They provide a safe space for women who are experiencing violence to access support, protection, and resources necessary to rebuild their lives. Over the years, DVS have evolved and developed in response to the changing needs of women and the recognition of the complex nature of domestic violence. In the past, DVS primarily focused on providing emergency shelter and crisis intervention services to women who were fleeing violence. However, in recent years, there has been a shift towards providing a more holistic approach that addresses the long-term needs of the women and their potential kids. This includes providing comprehensive services such as counseling, legal assistance, job training, education, and healthcare services to help women rebuild their lives and gain independence.

Moreover, technology has also played a role in the development of DVS, with the emergence of online resources and support services, including chat services and virtual counseling, enabling women to access support from the comfort of their homes.

When that is said, I have seen women re-return to the perpetrator and come back to the shelter or another shelter. Despite the availability of the services which are provided at the

shelters, there remains a persistent issue of women returning to the perpetrators and seeking shelter repeatedly. Understanding the factors contributing to this cycle of re-return is crucial in improving intervention strategies and ensuring the long-term safety and well-being of these women. Danner suggests that one of the most dangerous times for the woman is when she leaves her boyfriend (Danner, n.d., *Det farligste tidspunkt*). Research studies show that between one-third and half of the femicides were committed in connection with the dissolution of a partnership or when the woman had indicated her desire to leave (Ibid.). This makes me wonder in what danger the act of leaving the perpetrator, seeking refuge in a shelter, and subsequently returning places the woman, thereby potentially exposing her to further danger. And why do the women re-return when they have made the decision to leave once. Therefore, I have chosen a main research question for this thesis: Why do women re-return to domestic violence shelters?

### 3.0 Understanding Domestic Violence Shelter

Within the field of domestic violence shelter (DVS), comprehending the legal frameworks and systems is crucial. In my professional experience, I have encountered the pervasive influence of legal regulations in the DVS domain. A nuanced understanding of legal intricacies is imperative for a comprehensive comprehension of associated issues. It is worth noting that the field of violence is in a constant state of evolution. Consequently, research pursuits within the domain are consistently developing and advancing with time. The nature of research topics in this area is multifaceted and reflects the changing priorities and interests of the public and media's attention. That is of course what I have seen and experienced the past 5 years.

#### 3.1 Danish law

The Penal Code criminalizes various forms of violence, while the Equal Treatment Act prohibits gender-based discrimination. The Service Act outlines provisions for temporary accommodation, forming the foundation for domestic violence shelters. Understanding these laws and their implementation is vital for comprehending the support and protection available to women who have experienced violence. This contextual information sets the stage for exploring the factors contributing to women's re-return to domestic violence shelters in Denmark.

1. The Penal Code (Straffeloven) which criminalizes various forms of violence, including physical violence, sexual violence, and psychological violence.

An example of this could be §242 in The Penal Code (Dansk Elove, n.d:§243).

2. In Denmark we do not have a specific law focusing on violence in relations but according to the The Penal Code there is a specific chapter with violence in family relations, sexual crimes and crimes against life and limbs (Retsinformation, 2021).

3. The Equal Treatment Act (Ligebehandlingsloven) which prohibits discrimination based on gender, including gender-based violence (Retsinformation, 2011).

The laws in Denmark are designed with the purpose of protecting women from violence and prosecuting those who perpetrate it. These laws aim to provide support for women who have experienced violence. For instance, the Service Act in Denmark outlines provisions for temporary accommodation for women who have experienced violence. This provision, outlined in jf. §109 of the Service Act, serves as the foundation for domestic violence shelters in the country (Danske Elove, n.d.:§109). The implementation of such laws reflects the commitment of the Danish municipality to providing support and protection for women who are experiencing violence.

### 3.2 The Social Security Administration

This section provides a short knowledge about The Social Security Administration (SSA) which is important for understanding why women re-return to domestic violence shelters as it explores the field in Denmark. The SSA examines the methods, qualifications, and facilities of shelters in Denmark, it provides insight into the factors that contribute to effective support and protection. Understanding the context and standards set by the SSA is crucial for comprehending the environment in which women seek shelter repeatedly, shedding light on the factors that influence their decision to return to these facilities.

In Denmark we have the Social Security Authority (SSA) who ensure that the domestic violence shelter provides services that are quality-provided by the municipal boards (Retsinformation, 2020:Chapter 1-6). The opening and operation of a DVS in Denmark are subject to oversight and review by the SSA. The SSA conducts regular visits to each DVS to ensure compliance with relevant regulations and standards. To open a DVS, approval



must be obtained from the SSA, which involves a comprehensive evaluation of various factors, including the methods used by the DVS, the professional qualifications of its workers, the target population served, the physical facilities, and the economic viability of the organization. These requirements serve to ensure that DVSs in Denmark operate in a manner that effectively supports and protects women who have experienced violence (Ibid.).

### 3.3 Introduction to a Domestic Violence Shelter and history behind

This section introduces the importance of domestic violence shelters in Denmark for understanding the research question on why women re-return to these shelters. It highlights the establishment of organizations like Danner in response to the need for safe spaces and support for victims of domestic violence. The section also mentions government initiatives and funding to address partner violence and promote gender equality. Additionally, it introduces the SoS project and its scheme, which provides insights into the experiences of individuals transitioning from shelters to independent housing. This background information sets the context for exploring the factors influencing women's return to domestic violence shelters.

Domestic violence is a pervasive problem in many countries around the world, including Denmark. To address this issue, several organizations have been established over the years to provide shelter and support to victims of DV (domestic violence). One such organization is Danner, which founded their shelter in 1978 (Danner, n.d.).

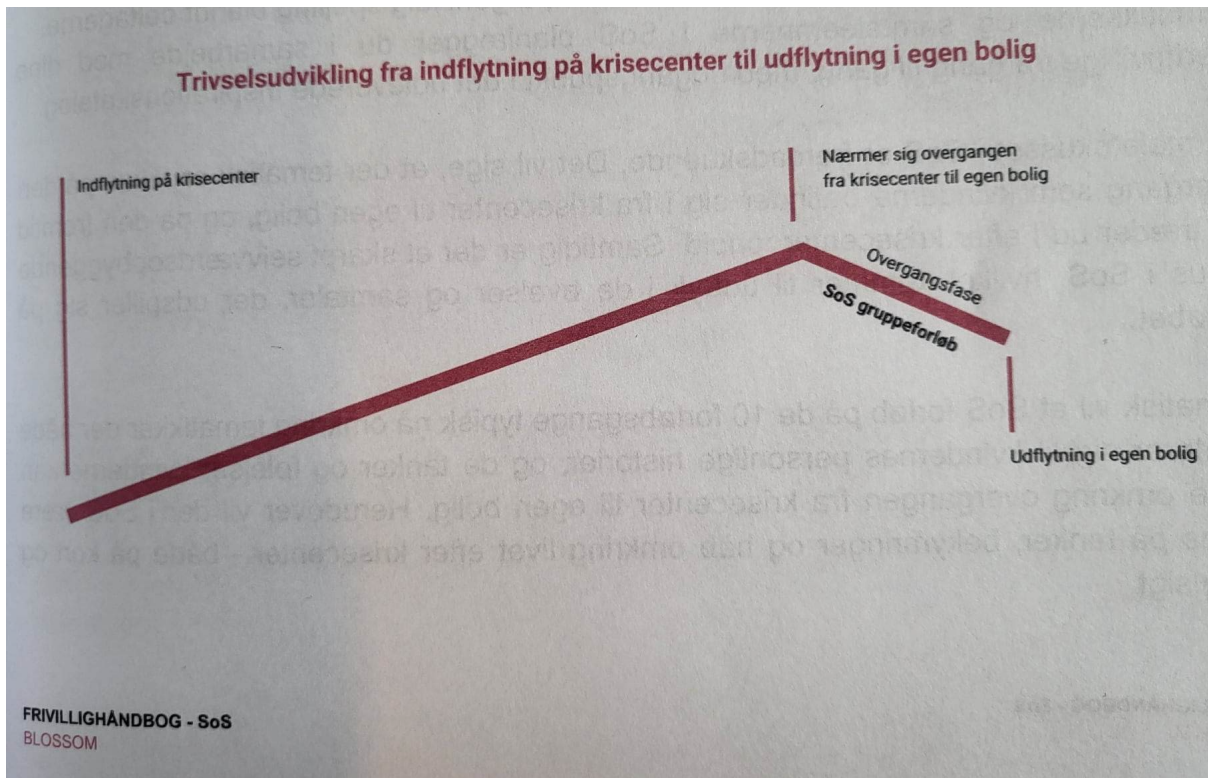
Danner was established in response to the growing need for a safe space for women who were experiencing domestic violence (Ibid.). At the time, there were very few resources available to women in Denmark who were in abusive relationships. The founders of the shelter recognized this gap and set out to create a space where women could find safety, support, and resources to help them escape abusive relationships (Ibid.).

In the early days of the shelter, it was staffed entirely by volunteers, who provided counseling and support to women who came seeking help. Over time, the shelter grew and expanded its services, eventually becoming a professional organization that offers a range of

services to women and children who have experienced domestic violence (Ibid.). Today, there are around 80 shelters in Denmark across the country (Levudenvold, n.d.).

Domestic violence shelters in Denmark can be attributed to the tireless work of its founders and volunteers, as well as the support of the Danish government and the wider community. Some of the government's initiatives can be seen in the latest initiatives to tackle partner violence and partner killings by allocating 136 million DKK towards a range of efforts. This funding will be used to establish and expand support centers for victims of partner violence, to create a new emergency hotline for those in need of immediate assistance, and to strengthen the police and social authorities' efforts to prevent and handle cases of partner violence. Additionally, the funding will support research into the causes and consequences of partner violence and help develop more effective interventions to prevent and address it. These initiatives are part of the Danish government's broader efforts to combat gender-based violence and promote gender equality (Ritzau, 2023).

Through my work in the field of domestic violence, I have encountered a scheme that offers a comprehensive understanding of the developmental trajectory experienced by individuals residing in a Domestic Violence Shelter (DVS). This scheme is derived from the SoS project, in which I am a participating member, set to commence in April 2023. The project, which is volunteer-based, is facilitated by the Blossom organization and represents a novel initiative in this field. This group-based intervention aims to provide a platform for women at Charlottenlund DVS to share their apprehensions and concerns before they transition out of the shelter. It is noteworthy that this scheme does not represent the experiences of all women who have resided in DVS facilities, as some have moved out immediately after arriving or before securing an alternate residence. However, it offers valuable insight into the experiences of women who have completed their full stay at a DVS (Blossom, 2023).



The initial step in the scheme involves the entry to a DVS. (translated from ‘indflytning på krisecenter’). The subsequent phase, as depicted in the scheme, is when women are approaching the transition from the DVS to their own housing (translated from ‘nærmer sig overgangen fra krisecenter til egen bolig’). The phase of transition (translated from ‘overgangsfasen’) which is a phase where the project aims to which is shown by SoS group course (translated from SoS ‘gruppeforløb’). The last phase is moving into their own housing (translated from ‘udflytning i egen bolig’). The phase of transition is crucial according to the project SoS. This scheme will be used in this paper to show the reader visuals on important phases in the stay.

### 3.4 Violence

In 2020 crisis centers, members of the national organization for women crisis centers LOKK (Translated from Danish: Landsorganisation af Kvindekrisecenter) in Denmark reported 10.366 inquiries at the ordinary crisis centers (LOKK Årsberetning, 2020:6). The inquiries were about advice or space inquiries from women who were experiencing violence or inquiries from professionals who were seeking advice. Violence can be seen through different lenses. A traditional way of looking at violence is through a traditional feminist approach. The traditional feminist approach argues that violence is a consequence

of socially constructed and culturally approved gender inequalities (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005:42-43).

Violence is seen in different forms. It is often observed in women who have/are exposed to violence that they are exposed to several forms of violence at the same time (LOKK, n.d.). I have chosen to use LOKK's and the National Board of Social Services' (translated from: socialstyrelsen) definitions of the various forms of violence. LOKK is a member organization for Denmark's domestic violence shelters. Below, the different forms of violence will be elaborated. But firstly I find it important to have a definition on violence in close relationships. I have translated the definition from Danish to English (Socialstyrelsen, 2018A):

*Violence is an act or threat that, regardless of its purpose, can violate another person's integrity or cause fear, pain, or harm to the person, whether they are a child or an adult.*

*Violence can have the same effect on other individuals who witness or overhear the act.*

*The act of violence can be intentional or occur in a moment of passion. It goes beyond the laws and norms of society.*

#### 3.4.1 Physical violence

Physical violence is violence that results in visible physical evidence, such as bruises, wounds, and scratches, as well as causing physical pain. Examples of physical violence include punching, stabbing, choking, and other forms of bodily harm. Physical violence is illegal in Denmark and can result in imprisonment for up to 10 years depending on the severity of the offense. In some cases, physical violence can even lead to death (LOKK, u.å.). Last year 46 women were killed by their partner in 2022 in Denmark (Politikken, 2022).

#### 3.4.2 Psychological violence

Psychological violence is the most widespread form of partner violence. But when that is said, it is also difficult to identify since it is not visible to outsiders. It can manifest in the behavior and changes in the personality of the person subjected to psychological violence. Psychological violence is about controlling and exerting power over one's partner. It is degrading and can make the women doubt themselves. In April 2019, psychological violence

was made illegal (Ibid.). The relatively new law reads as follows (Retsinformation, 2018).

I have translated the above section from Danish to English:

*A person who belongs to or has a close connection to another person's household, or who previously had such a connection to the household, and repeatedly over a period of time exposes the other person to grossly humiliating, harassing or offensive behavior that is capable of improperly controlling the other person, is punishable for psychological violence with a fine or imprisonment for up to 3 years*

### 3.4.3 Sexual violence

The sexual violence is about being forced to one or more sexual acts that one does not want to engage in. This can include rape, forced prostitution, and others (LOKK, n.d.). Here too, a relatively new law has come into effect. The Consent Law (translated from Danish samtykkeloven) came into force in January 2021 and reads as follows: *“For rape, the person who has sexual intercourse with a person who has not consented to it shall be punished with imprisonment for up to 8 years.”* (Retsinformation, 2020).

### 3.4.4 Economically violence

The economic violence is about the other party taking control of the victim's finances. This could, for example, be denying the victim access to their own money, incurring debt in the victim's name, and more including the women or her children's economic situation (LOKK, n.d.).

### 3.4.5 Material violence

Material violence is about destroying the women's things, such as personal belongings, furniture, care or other materials (LOKK, n.d.).

### 3.4.6 Stalking

Stalking is about the victim being monitored to a frightening degree, which the victim experiences as unwanted. Stalking is repetitive and persistent. A single incident may appear innocent, while it is the persistent stalking that creates fear (LOKK, n.d.).

### 3.4.7 Digital violence

This form of violence is a kind of psychological violence that takes place through the use of digital media, that is, online or by other electronic devices. Digital violence can also be linked to some of the other forms of violence. For example, it can be sexual violence, where the sharing of nude pictures online is involved. Digital violence can also be seen in the form of stalking, in connection with the use of GPS, online game forums and others (LOKK, n.d.).

### 3.4.8 Honor Related Violence

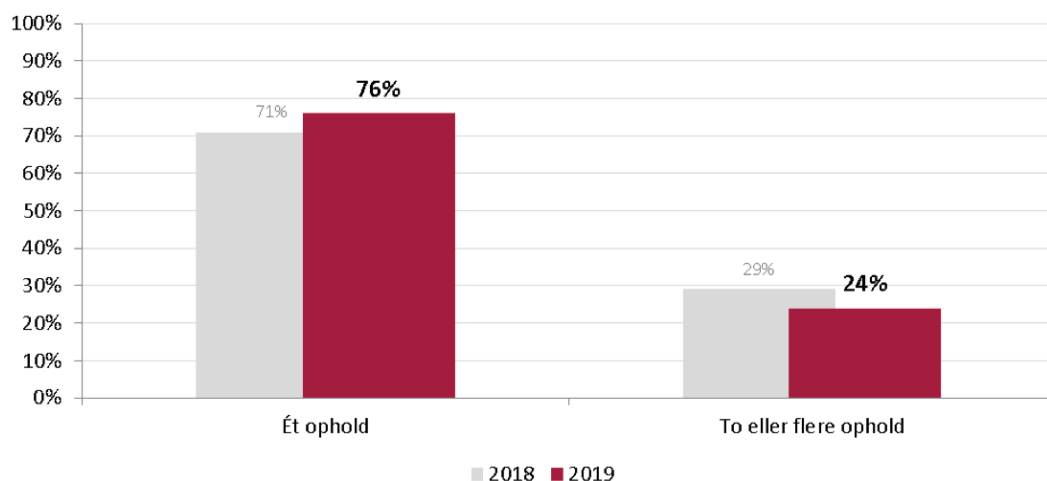
Honor-related violence occurs in ethnic minority families and involves the family's honor as the focal point. This has also been seen in religious communities such as Jehovah Witnesses. Honor-related violence differs in being planned, organized, and partly accepted by social circles - including the family. Honor-related violence involves a wide range of conflicts and issues (Socialstyrelsen, 2018B).

## 3.5 Domestic Violence Shelters

In the upcoming section, the term "ethnicity" will be employed as it aligns with the terminology used in the collected data.

A study made by LOKK (National organization of women's crisis centers) from 2019 showed that 24% had more than one stay at a domestic violence shelter (DVS). Furthermore, 76% had one stay.

**Figur 1.3. Kvindernes krisecenterophold fordelt efter antal ophold på krisecentre i kvindens voksne liv**



LOKK do note that some women might have been at a DVS but might not have opened up about it to a DVS worker (LOOK, 2019:13). The numbers therefore might be unclear to the real-life picture. LOKK further states that the experience that there can be different reasons why women may have had multiple DVS stays. Repeated DVS stay can be due to a woman wanting to give her relationship and the violent man a chance. If he does not stop the violence after she has returned home, the woman may be forced to go to the DVS again.

It can also be the case that after being at the DVS, the woman assesses that it is safer for her to be near the violent man, so she has a better chance of predicting the violence. If the violence escalates, the woman may be forced to go to the crisis center again. Previous year statistics paint a picture of women with multiple stays at a women's crisis center being more vulnerable than women who have a single stay (Ibid.).

VIVE conducted a study that examined the provision of aftercare for women who have left DVSS. In the study they were in contact with five different DVs such as Bornholms DVS, Sønderborg DVS, Herning DVS, Roskilde DVS and Danner DVS. The specific DVS are carefully chosen for the study due to their size and geographical position. VIVE argues that DVSS are scattered throughout Denmark, and in smaller local areas too. The conditions for aftercare work may differ from those in larger cities (VIVE, 2019:38). Aftercare services are a supplementary form of support that some DVSS offer to women.

As per the study, DVSS interviewed contended that the needs of women with Danish ethnic backgrounds differ less from those of women with non-Danish ethnic backgrounds. Specifically, they maintained that Danish women require support that revolves around psychological assistance and assistance with social networking, while non-Danish women need help navigating the Danish system and social networks. However, the research found that the need for aftercare services is consistent across all ethnicities (VIVE, 2019:34-35).

Bornholms DVS explains that the need of law advice is needed both from ethnic Danish women but also “foreigners” (VIVE, 2019:39). The practitioners argue that it is a crucial service that is highly in demand and suggest that the provision of legal representation for women accessing aftercare may be necessary to address significant legal inquiries (Ibid.). At Bornholm DVS every woman is offered after care. The money for the aftercare is applied through fundings (VIVE, 2019:40). Back in 2019 when the study was conducted 11 women were in an aftercare program where 3 of the women were women with other ethnic background than Danish (VIVE, 2019:41). In both Bornholm’s DVS and Sønderborg there

is a similar length of the aftercare program which is that the hours needed depend on the women's need. In Sønderborg 21 women are in the aftercare program where 1 has a different ethnic background than Danish (VIVE, 2019:42).

The aftercare program at Herning DVS is a part of the municipality project. Which means that it differs from Bornholm and Sønderborg due to the financial part of the aftercare depending on the municipality. Roskilde has the same aftercare through the municipality (VIVE, 2019:43-46). The aftercare varies depending on which municipality offers it and how it is designed. Roskilde DVS has more success offering the aftercare than Herning DVS due to its planning of execution (Ibid.).

Danner DVS has their own aftercare project. They develop their aftercare throughout what is needed from the women. Furthermore, they have a specific offer for women with different ethnicities than Danish (VIVE, 2019:47-50).

In summary, the provision of aftercare services for women who have left or are about to leave a DVS can be crucial to help the women not to re-return. The type of assistance required may vary depending on the woman's ethnic background and individual needs. DVSs offer different aftercare programs depending on the municipality or how they are designed, and the provision of legal representation may be necessary to address significant legal inquiries. It is essential to continue studying and improving aftercare services to better support women who have experienced domestic violence. Some DVS do not offer aftercare programs but might be connected to volunteer based NGOs such as Q-værk (Q-værk, n.d.).

## 4.0 Research design

As someone who has worked in the field of domestic violence shelter as a contact person for women and their children, I have had the opportunity to gain first-hand experience and insight into the lives and experiences of those affected by domestic violence. This experience has given me a unique perspective that will influence the way in which I approach my research, particularly as an ethnographer.



Ethnography is a research approach that emphasizes the importance of understanding and interpreting the meanings and experiences of individuals within their social contexts. As an ethnographer, I will seek to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the women who are affected by domestic violence both through their stay at a domestic violence shelter but also through a professional perspective through their outpatient counseling (translated from danish 'ambulant rådgivning', including their perspectives, beliefs, and behaviors, as well as the social contexts that shape their lives (Spradley, J., 1980:54-84).

My work as a contact person in a domestic violence shelter has allowed me to observe the daily routines and interactions of women and children living in a shelter, as well as the interactions between staff members and residents. Through these observations, I have gained insights into the complexities of domestic violence, including the emotional and psychological impact on the women who live at the shelter, the challenges of leaving an abusive relationship, and the ways in which social factors intersect with domestic violence.

As an observer in the field, I have had the opportunity to witness firsthand the various ways in which individuals cope with domestic violence, as well as the challenges they face in seeking help and support. This experience has given me a deep appreciation for the resilience and strength of the women, as well as the importance of providing support and resources to those affected by domestic violence (Ibid.).

In addition to my work at the shelter, I also volunteer with an organization called Blossom, where we facilitate group discussions on various topics related to the experiences of women, including body ideals and financial worries. Through this work, I have had the opportunity to connect with women who have experienced domestic violence, including those who have lived in a domestic violence shelter. Through my work with Blossom, I have seen firsthand how issues such as body ideals and financial worries can be interconnected with domestic violence. As an ethnographer, my analysis will bear the mark of these experiences.

For example, my experiences working with survivors of domestic violence have taught me the importance of recognizing the agency and resilience of survivors, even in the face of traumatic experiences. As a result, my research will seek to explore the ways in which

women who have experienced domestic violence navigate and resist the violence they experience, rather than simply focusing on their victimization.

Being an ethnographic researcher requires an open-minded and non-judgmental approach to understanding the experiences of individuals in a particular cultural context (Spradley, J., 1980:54-84). Hermeneutical circles can be valuable tools in this process, enabling me as a researcher to gain a deep understanding of survivors' experiences of domestic violence and the professionals working with the field of domestic violence shelter. Additionally, participating in groups such as Blossom can provide valuable insights into the experiences of the women and inform future research and interventions within my work at the domestic violence shelter.

## 4.1 Research position

I have been aware of which language I have used throughout this study. Especially when researching about people who have different backgrounds than Danish. Using specific and accurate language is important because I want to avoid perpetuating negative stereotypes and promote understanding and acceptance of diverse communities. As a researcher with a Danish background within this field, it is particularly important to be mindful of the language used to refer to people who have a different background than Danish.

The term 'minority' has a history of being used to marginalize and discriminate against certain groups, and in the context of Denmark, it has often been used to refer to immigrants and their descendants. Using the term 'minority' can create a sense of "otherness" or difference that reinforces divisions between different groups and can perpetuate discrimination. I have therefore chosen to use the phrase 'different background,' instead of using the word 'ethnicity' or 'minority' because I want to acknowledge the diversity that exists within Danish society while avoiding the negative connotations that come with the term 'minority' and 'ethnicity'. I believe that it is a more accurate and respectful way to refer to people who may have a different cultural, linguistic, or religious background than the majority population in Denmark. I have been highly inspired by my fellow colleague who is a PhD student within the field of Domestic Violence. Hanif wrote an article where she writes about her position as a woman with Pakistani background and how this might

affect her studies. Shortly, I have been inspired by Hanif who points out how in an ethnographic study, how it can be a good thing looking like the people you are studying. For Hanif she thought about it as a bad thing in the beginning of her studies. It was important for her to be the researcher Hanif not the brown Muslim researcher (Hanif, B., 2023). The same way around I have to be aware not only in my thesis but also in my work with women at the shelters, that my position as a white atheist might keep me away from some information and trust I might not ever understand. But being aware about this and talking about it with the women and approaching this field with caution I might be able to understand even more by creating trust and being open-minded.

Including the relationship between women with different backgrounds and violence is crucial in my research position, particularly in light of the prevailing discourse in Denmark that perpetuates the idea that women from 'other' cultures than Danish are more likely to accept violence. I have experienced that such assumptions about domestic violence are typically attributed to communities with different backgrounds or lower socioeconomic status, which reflects a tendency towards cultural essentialism and othering of people with another background than Danish.

## 4.2 Bias in research

It has been crucial for me to acknowledge my biases and potential assumptions when writing about a sensitive and complex topic such as domestic violence and women who re-return to domestic violence shelters. As someone who works within the field, it is important to recognize that my experiences and perspectives may influence my research.

I acknowledge that I may have biases that can potentially influence my research. One of these biases could be that I may have preconceived notions about the nature of domestic violence and the experiences of the survivors. For instance, I may have assumed that all survivors of domestic violence are women, or that the abusers are always male. Such assumptions could lead to a narrow understanding of the issue and limit the scope of the research. This bias was something I recognized through my work at the shelter. I had an in-depth conversation with a psychologist at work about the tendency to portray males as always being the abusers and neglecting the possibility that women at the shelters might also exercise violence on their children. Considering this bias, I had to take it into account

when conducting this research, being aware that women living at the shelters are not always the victims.

Another bias I may have encountered is my personal experiences and emotions when working with women. For instance, if I have had personal experiences with domestic violence, it may impact my ability to remain objective and unbiased. Additionally, if I have built close relationships with the women I work with, I may have difficulty separating my emotional attachment from my research. This can lead to over-identification with the participants and potentially affect the results especially when translating and coding the collected interviews. To remain conscious of these biases and avoid falling into their trap, I decided to keep a visible reminder, in the form of a paper, by my side throughout the research process.

Another potential bias to consider is the assumption that all women have the same experiences when they re-return to shelters. It is important to recognize that every woman's experience is unique and shaped by a range of individual and systemic factors. Therefore, it was important to me to have an open mind and a willingness to listen and learn from the stories and experiences of the women and professionals I encountered through primary data and secondary. Which is also why I chose a hermeneutical approach for this research. Additionally, it was beneficial to seek out feedback and critique from other researchers and advocates in the field to ensure that my research is grounded in the experiences of the women and professionals I studied.

### 4.3.0 Hermeneutic

The focus of this section is on the hermeneutic circle in research analysis and empirical reflection. The hermeneutic circle emphasizes the historicity embeddedness of individuals, which cannot be separated from their experiences and perspectives. Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) draws upon the theories of Edmund Husserl to understand the concept of "the traveling" or the perspectives of informants. In hermeneutic philosophy, the empirical data collected is not the sole determining factor of validity and must be viewed in conjunction with the researcher's personal biases. The interplay between personal biases and empirical evidence must be acknowledged in the analysis process. This awareness is crucial to ensure a thorough examination of the research question.

#### 4.3.1 Hermeneutical circle

Throughout my interviews and analysis, I have consistently centered my focus on the hermeneutical circle. I specifically chose to incorporate the hermeneutical circle because it enables a profound understanding of the informants as individuals with lived experiences and how they navigate within the context of these experiences. The hermeneutical circle is basically about what it means to be a human, and emphasizes the historicity of the human, its embeddedness in a temporal and spatial context, from which it cannot be free oneself from (Juul, S., & Bransholm P., K, 2012:121). Edmund Husserl's used phenomenology to develop hermeneutics. Husserl's says that the researcher must put its prejudices in parentheses and focus on what is immediately apparent in order to understand its "pure phenomena" (Ibid.).

Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) draws upon the philosophical theories of Edmund Husserl to investigate the concept of "the traveling" which in the sense of my research refers to the informants. Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) posits that these individuals, as travelers, bring with them their culturally embedded perspectives, which serve as lenses through which they view the world. He asserts that these lenses are inseparable from the individuals and cannot be removed. Even though the individuals themselves may not change, Kvale states that they continuously create new experiences, reflect upon them, and gradually modify their perspectives on the world (Juul, S., & Bransholm P., K, 2012:127).

The hermeneutical circle and its emphasis on the human experience can be helpful in answering the research question on why some women re-return to domestic violence shelters. By focusing on the informants' experiences and their embeddedness in a temporal and spatial context, the hermeneutical circle can reveal underlying factors that contribute to the cycle of violence. Additionally, by following Husserl's approach of setting aside prejudices and focusing on the "pure phenomena," I can gain a deeper understanding of the informants' experiences. Kvale in Juul, S., & Bransholm P., K (2012) uses the concept of "the traveling" further expands on the idea of lenses and how they shape individuals' perspectives on the world, which may shed light on why some women continue to return to shelters despite previous attempts to leave (Juul, S., & Bransholm P., K, 2012:127-140).

In hermeneutic philosophy, the empirical data collected during research is not considered the paramount criterion for evaluating preconceived notions. This is because the empirical data is not solely determined by the researcher's biases, but rather shaped by the questions posed by the researcher. As such, the empirical evidence cannot be considered the definitive or incontrovertible measure of validity. This means that it is not the data itself that represents a prejudice, but rather my own perspective and interpretation of the data (Juul, S., & Bransholm P., K, 2012:127-128). In utilizing the hermeneutic approach in the analysis process, it is imperative to acknowledge the interplay between personal biases and the empirical evidence being incorporated into the analysis. This does not indicate that the empirical data is insignificant in the hermeneutic circle, but rather that the method used should not be considered the final resolution to the research problem under examination (Juul, S., & Bransholm P., K, 2012:135). The above mentioned is a part of the philosophical hermeneutics which is a part of the hermeneutics ontological about the human being. Meaning that, I am a researcher who must be aware of my prejudices, cultural experiences and historical events that might affect the informant (Juul, S., & Bransholm P., K, 2012:145).

In conclusion, the intersection of the hermeneutical circle with ethnographic research highlights the importance of understanding the human experience and the role of social and historical contexts in shaping it. Beside using the hermeneutical circle when creating the analyses, I also used it in the context of my interview guide.

#### 4.4.0 Qualitative study

In my qualitative study, I opted to utilize a semi-structured interview guide as a research method. The design of the interview guide was informed by the principles outlined by Kvale and Brinkmann (2015). Before conducting the interviews, I had to thematize the interviews I wanted to conduct. I chose to do a semi-structured interview (appendix 'Interview Guide for professionals'). The method allows flexibility in adjusting the interview questions, sequence, and structure, enabling the interviewer to better comprehend the informant's views, attitudes, and narratives during the conversation (Ibid.). Additionally, this form of interview is advantageous as it provides an avenue for obtaining accurate interpre-

tations of the informant's meaning using further elaboration questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015:150-159). The answers I'll get from coding the interviews will be my guideline for a further analysis.

I asked myself questions focusing on some sort of clarification on the purpose of the research. What Kvale and Brinkmann call the 'why'. I argue that my 'why' in this research is that I want to contribute to the shelters in understanding that different backgrounds might need different work methods. The 'how' in Kvale and Brinkmann is the acquisition of prior knowledge about the subject that is to be investigated (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015:158).

In order to create a hospitable and amicable atmosphere for my informants, I invited them to the interview location and ensured that refreshments such as coffee, tea, and cake were available. I went to meet the worker from domestic violence shelter Fyn myself to meet the informant in the informant's clinic. Due to the distance my only option to obtain this interview was to go myself. I then discussed the estimated time frame for the interview, obtained consent from the informant, and ensured that they were aware of the option for anonymity. I also allowed the informants to ask questions and clarify any concerns they may have had before starting the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015:183). When the interview was finished, I chose to debrief the informant and gave them the opportunity to ask further questions (Ibid.). The above mentioned is part of the seven phases of interviewing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015:154). I did tell my informant about my experience but did not interfere or correct them throughout the interviews. It was important for me to make them feel heard and that it was their story, experience and narrative that was the main theme.

#### 4.4.1 Coding of interviews

One of my primary empirical data has been the interviews. After collecting the interviews, I transcribed them. I had to translate the interviews with Karen, Marlene and Jane from Danish to English. When translating between these two languages, I had to be mindful of differences in vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and idiomatic expressions that could affect the meaning of the original text. I therefore allowed my informants to read through the transcription to give them the chance if I had misunderstood something.

To ensure that the meaning of the original text was preserved as much as possible, I had to approach the translation process strategically. I relied on my understanding of the two languages and used dictionaries and online translation tools when necessary. However, I was aware of the limitations of these resources, especially when dealing with more complex or nuanced meanings.

Throughout the translation process, I encountered several instances where the meaning of the original text posed a challenge. For example, some Danish expressions had no direct equivalent in English, requiring me to rely on my interpretation of the context to convey the intended meaning. After the transcription I started a coding process. I chose to color code my transcription. This helped me to divide the data into themes and keywords. The color coding was an ongoing process during the research period of the thesis, as new relevant themes and relevant statements for the various themes were seen (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015:261-265).

The process of qualitative data coding involves breaking down and naming relevant parts of qualitative data, such as that collected through interviews. This process is important for working with data, as it makes the overall dataset more manageable. For example, during interviews, large amounts of data are collected, which I transcribed (Jensen, H., 2019, metodeguide). Some of the interviews I transcribed, I was asked to give the informant the transcription so they could go through it. According to the informants some sentences were too sensitive compared to their confidentiality to their clients. Only a few sentences were removed from one of the interviews. I then coded the transcription, so that each relevant statement is given a name. This makes it easier to compare interviews later on (Ibid.).

As a researcher, I find that coding an interview is a powerful tool for analyzing qualitative data. By systematically categorizing and labeling segments of data based on their content, I can identify patterns, themes, and insights that may not be immediately apparent in the raw data. One of the main benefits of coding is that it helps to ensure the reliability and validity of my analysis. By using a transparent and consistent process, I can demonstrate the rigor and consistency of my findings, which increases the credibility of my research (Ibid.).



The coding gave me an overall idea on topics that the informants touched upon. Some of the topics was: Network, Culture, Insecurity, Danish ethnicity, Boundaries, Limited resources, Trauma, Politics, Professional experience, Women who re-return to a domestic violence shelter, Municipality, Work at domestic violence shelter, Isolation, Difference when not having a child, Taboo, recognition, race, gender, shame and much more other themes. I looked deeper into the four interviews I have conducted, and I found similar coding's in each interview. The themes of coding's that were dominating are: community, loneliness, network, isolation, limited resources, and resources. These words were themes mentioned in the interviews and not words I analyzed through sentences.

#### 4.4.2 Secondary data

When addressing the research question, secondary data was utilized in this study. Secondary data is a type of data that is already available and has been gathered by others. The secondary data used in this research consisted of publicly available sources such as textbooks, articles, and reports. Before using this data, a critical source analysis was performed to ensure its validity and relevance. I thought it was important to also use secondary data which I not necessarily did not agree with and was a bit further away from my way of conducting research. Especially the book by Danneskiold-Samsøe, S., Mørck, Y., & Sørensen, B. W. (2011). *Familien betyder alt* [The family means everything]. Was a book I have throughout my work at the shelters seen several times. My main worries are the way they approach women with different backgrounds. In their chapters they divide the women into their nationalities and put them into boxes which I believe is a worry thinking of the specific ideological situation Denmark is moving towards against people with different backgrounds than Danish.

This analysis of the evaluation of the credibility of the sources, the relationships between the senders, and any potential biases that may exist in relation to the secondary data's problem statement. The thesis was created as an iterative process, with the research question and issues being modified and enhanced as new and valuable information was obtained. This approach allowed for the identification of relevant knowledge that could be incorporated into the research as it progressed. This process reflects the study's scientific theoretical foundation, specifically the hermeneutic approach chosen for this project.

In my thesis, I found it helpful to include secondary data for several reasons. Firstly, it expanded the range of sources available, allowing me to draw upon a variety of scholarly articles, reports, and books to develop a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Secondly, incorporating secondary data supported the findings of my study by providing additional evidence and increasing the credibility of my research (Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D., 2021).

In addition to using secondary data, I found it advantageous to read multiple books and articles about the same theory. By doing so, I believe that I gained a more nuanced understanding of the theory as different authors approached it from varying perspectives. Especially when it comes to the main theories of intersectionality and recognition. Reading multiple books also helped me to identify gaps or areas where further research is needed and offered multiple perspectives for me to compare and contrast, leading to a deeper understanding of the theory's complexities (Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D., 2021). Which will be illustrated throughout the analysis.

The secondary data I have found and chosen for this thesis is statistics from different leading actors within the field of domestic violence such as, LOKK (landsorganisationen for krisecentrer), Danner and Levudenvold.

These books will be some of the primary data for this research analysis.

1. Honneth's book 'fight for recognition' as primary data (translated from Danish 'kampen om anerkendelse') which takes Hegel's conceptual framework of a 'struggle for recognition,' the author in translation Arne Jørgensen aims to establish the foundation of a normative theory of society (Honneth, 2006:29-32).
2. Anne Bona's book 'Honneth and Everyday Intercultural (Mis)recognition. Work, Marginalization and Integration' as secondary data. Bona uses the theory of misrecognition and recognition and implies it into her field of migrants from the South Pacific living in Australia. I found this book interesting to use due to its perspectives on Honneth's theory of recognition.
3. Sofie Danneskiold-Samsøe, Yvonne Mørck and Bo Wagner Sørensen (2011) as primary data. They made a study based on Domestic Violence in ethnic minority families. I do find their study interesting and especially because they research within the field of domestic violence and domestic violence shelters. They use the word "ethnicity" and put the

women's "ethnicity" into boxes by creating the titles from where the women they interviewed are from. Furthermore, they do not position themselves in which case their own background might affect their findings. When that is said, I do find their interviews interesting and their findings for my analysis.

## 5.0 Target group delineation

In the upcoming section, the term "ethnicity" will be utilized to acknowledge the specific women I intend to study and their diverse backgrounds, mainly due to the sources described in the reference.

According to a report prepared by the National Board of Social Services (translated from Servicestyrelsen in Danish) in 2015, it is evident that women of non-Danish ethnic origin are overrepresented in Danish domestic violence shelters (DVS) (Rambøll, 2015). I became aware that this group of women faces challenges in their journey towards a life free of violence. Therefore, I have chosen to focus specifically on women with different backgrounds than Danish to delve deeper into these challenges and answer my research question. The aforementioned study shows that approximately 50% of DVS are occupied by women of non-Danish ethnic origin (Ibid.). It is considered particularly relevant to investigate the challenges that make these women specifically overrepresented in Danish DVS and make use of these offers for violence prevention.

In 2007, a report entitled 'Men's Violence against Women' was published, which showed that women and men from ethnic minority backgrounds are overrepresented among both victims and perpetrators of violence (Helweg-Larsen & Kruse, 2007:16). It should be noted that the overrepresentation of ethnic minority women in DVS cannot be seen as a direct reflection of the extent of the problem. This is because women who have other options besides going to a DVS often use those options and therefore never end up in DVS, and thus do not appear in statistics. This is important to be aware of in relation to the data obtained in this thesis

I had to consider another aspect of target group delineation, which pertained to the topic of women with different backgrounds than Danish. Specifically, I had to determine which background to focus on in my research. As a result, I recognized that simplistic notions of

backgrounds would not suffice, and I needed to examine different backgrounds in light of the research I had reviewed while selecting my research topic. Given that violence can be seen through different scopes such as structural forms of oppression and that violence and the women's background are both individual experiences that can be associated with specific backgrounds, I concluded that I needed to take a broad approach when exploring the field of women with different backgrounds.

## 6.0 Theory

In the upcoming section, I will elucidate the theories employed in the analysis to tackle the research question of my thesis. I will draw upon various scholars to expound upon these theories, as well as utilize primary sources from the theorists themselves.

### 6.1 Intersectionality

Intersectionality has been worked on by many different scholars. Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) describe intersectionality as:

*analyzing race, class, and gender as they shape different group experiences also involves issues of power, privilege, and equity. This means more than just knowing the cultures of an array of human groups. It means recognizing and analyzing the hierarchies and systems of domination that permeate society and that systematically exploit and control people* (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005:40).

Meaning that, intersectionality is a theoretical framework that recognizes the complex and interconnected nature of various social identities, such as race, gender and class. Beside these intersections Carastathis further elaborates with sexuality and ability, and how they intersect to shape experiences of oppression and privilege. The concept of intersectionality was first introduced by legal scholar and critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw (Carastathis, A., 2014:304-307). Intersectionality has emerged from the feminist movement in response to the limitations of a single-axis analysis of oppression that focused solely on gender. Crenshaw argued that traditional feminist and anti-racist frameworks often failed to account for the experiences of women of color who faced intersectional forms of discrimination and marginalization. For example, the experiences of a white woman and

a woman of color cannot be compared, as their identities intersect in different ways and thus shape their experiences differently (Ibid.).

According to Davis (2014) intersectionality recognizes that social identities do not exist in isolation, but rather are interconnected and mutually constitutive. This means that individuals can experience multiple forms of marginalization simultaneously, which can compound and exacerbate their experiences of oppression. Intersectionality also highlights the ways in which power operates at the intersection of multiple social identities, and how certain groups are privileged or disadvantaged based on their intersectional identities.

The articles chosen by Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) which will be one of the main secondary sources in this paper's analysis. It is important to mention that they focus on **race**, **gender** and **class** and class are the one which are least developed in their article. I am aware that the one without the other intersections will not provide women who have experienced violence's and looking at their different backgrounds the kinds of social change and personal for safety and growth in the communal levels and individuals. In this research the main topic is women with different backgrounds, and I found it important to involve intersectionality's of race, gender and class due to the potentials of annihilating a groups intersections and downplaying the role of social class affect the women (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005:45). The reason why I think intersectionality is an important theory to answer my research question is due to its understanding on the topic of domestic violence in Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) called 'diverse communities'. When doing analysis in the field of women with different backgrounds the treatment of the differences within these fields must not "*erase the need to look at structural power*", otherwise it will undercut the need for the social changes it might require (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005:45).

The provisional concept of intersectionality connects contemporary politics with postmodern theory by identifying how race and gender intersect. This concept challenges the assumption that race and gender are inherently distinct categories by tracing their intersections. The intention is to propose a methodology that disrupts the inclination to view race and gender as mutually exclusive (Carastathis, A. 2016:105). Although this analysis primarily examines the intersections of race, class, and gender.

Lastly, it is important to mention that when using intersectionality, it is not about applying the intersections as Hill Collins mentions in Carastathis, A.'s book “: *Many approach intersectionality as if it is already defined and thus ignore the points of convergence and contradiction that characterize scholarship that claims to be informed by intersectionality*” (Carastathis, A. 2016:106). Collins suggests that some people treat intersectionality as if it is already a fully developed and defined concept, without acknowledging the complexity and diversity of scholarship that claims to be informed by intersectionality. In other words, Collins points out that there are many different interpretations and approaches to intersectionality within academic scholarship, and it is important to recognize the points of convergence and contradiction between these different perspectives. By acknowledging these differences, I can engage in more nuanced and productive discussions about how intersectionality can be applied to different social and political contexts. In the case of my chosen methodology and research question I will mostly focus on the social context.

## 6.2 Recognition

Axel Honneth is a prominent philosopher who has developed a recognition theory that emphasizes the importance of social relations and the recognition of individuals by others. Honneth argues that recognition is a fundamental human need that is essential for our development as individuals and for the functioning of society (Honneth, A., 2006).

Honneth's recognition theory is based on the idea that there are three spheres of recognition, which he refers to as the spheres of love, rights, and solidarity. These three spheres are interdependent and interact with each other to form a comprehensive theory of recognition (Honneth, A., 2006).

The sphere of 'love' is concerned with the recognition of our emotional needs and desires by others. This includes the need for intimacy, care, and empathy, which are essential for our psychological well-being. In this sphere, recognition takes the form of mutual emotional attunement, whereby individuals recognize and respond to each other's emotional states (Honneth, A., 2006:94-158).

The sphere of rights is concerned with the recognition of our individuality and autonomy by society. This includes the recognition of our legal rights and freedoms, such as the right to vote, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion. In this sphere, recognition takes the

form of equal treatment under the law, respect for our individual differences, and the protection of our basic human rights (Honneth, A., 2006:188-190).

The sphere of solidarity is concerned with the recognition of our social worth and contribution to society by others. This includes the recognition of our skills, abilities, and achievements, as well as our contribution to the common good. In this sphere, recognition takes the form of social esteem, whereby individuals are recognized and valued for their contributions to society (Honneth, A., 2006:290-300). The failure to recognize individuals in one sphere can lead to the failure to recognize them in another sphere, and ultimately, to a breakdown in social relations and the functioning of society which Honneth calls misrecognition (Honneth, 2006:101-156).

Honneth's recognition theory has been influential in a range of fields, including social and political philosophy, psychology, and sociology. It has been used to analyze various social and political phenomena, such as the struggle for civil rights, the importance of social welfare programs, and the role of emotions in social life (Honneth, 2006:5-11). According to Honneth, whether a society can be deemed solidary hinges on its ability to incorporate the varying value horizons, accomplishments, and competencies of its citizens (Ibid.).

Scholar Bona A., (2018) focuses on the concept of recognition among Australian workers. Bona's insights on the interconnectedness of work and recognition make her a valuable choice for my research, as I aim to explore how these factors influence women's decisions to re-return to a domestic violence shelter. By incorporating Bona's perspectives, this study delves into the intricate relationship between recognition, work, and the patterns of returning to a shelter, shedding light on the underlying dynamics when living at the shelter.

Using recognition as a theoretical concept in this research is not only about social critique. Merely pointing out problematic social issues based on intuition alone is insufficient. Honneth believes it's essential to establish a clear methodological justification strategy to ensure that his critique of society's unequal conditions is well-founded (Honneth, 2006:5). When an individual is either not acknowledged or fails to receive emotional attention, cognitive respect, and social esteem, they run the risk of losing the positive self-relationship that is essential to their personal growth (Honneth, 2006:11).

## 7.0 Presentation of primary data

In the following sections I will present the informants I manage to conduct semi-structured interviews with and a short introduction to the organizations they represent.

### 7.1 Domestic Violence Shelter Fyn

Through a LinkedIn post, I was able to establish contact with an informant whom I had not previously encountered prior to commencing this research. Jane Magaard was one of the first informants I interviewed. Jane works at domestic violence shelter Fyn (KriseCenter Fyn, n.d.) where according to their website they use the method of systematic narrative therapy approach specifically focusing on trauma. Furthermore, according to their website these main methods help them to focus on the complexity of intercultural family dynamics among women with different backgrounds, including negative social control, forced marriages, honor-related conflicts, divorces, and child cases (Ibid.). At domestic violence shelter Fyn they are a §109 offer with rooms for the women to bring their children (Danske Elove, n.d.:§109). Jane is a psychotherapist at domestic violence shelter Fyn. She has worked there for around 11 months. She visits the domestic violence shelter Fyn to have a group therapy meeting one time per week. Beside the group therapy she offers at the shelter she also has individual therapy at domestic violence shelter Fyn. She has a private clinic beside her work at domestic violence shelter Fyn.

### 7.2 Charlottenlund Domestic Violence Shelter

I have myself worked at Charlottenlund domestic violence shelter (DVS) and made contact with the founder of Charlottenlund DVS. I know Rita and we have worked together for around a year. Knowing my informant beforehand forced me to make clear professional rules between Rita and me when conducting the interview and before.

Charlottenlund DVS is a §109 offer meaning that it is for women and there is room for children. Their method they use for working with the woman is mainly psychoeducation (Charlottenlund Krisecenter, 2021:12). They offer a broad variety of professionals at Charlottenlund DVS such as social workers and pedagogues.

Rita has a broad experience within the field of domestic violence. She started Charlottenlund domestic violence shelter in summer 2021. Rita is educated as a social worker with a



master degree within international relation and development - refugee studies, from Aalborg University.

### 7.3 Medusa

Marlene is educated as a social worker and works at Medusa as a coordinator, Communications Officer & Social Work Advisor at The Medusa association. I found the Medusa Association by asking around in my network in the field. I emailed the association and got an answer from Marlene. Marlene has worked at Medusa for years. Medusa is a thirteen-year-old association. They have their organization at Holbæk domestic violence shelter. They do cooperate with Holbæk domestic violence shelter (DVS) in the sense where they spar professionally in the work with the women. Medusa offers emergency advocacy. The difference between Medusa and a DVS is that they are a hotline and not a shelter. They offer group therapy for the women who are inspected for their therapy (Et Liv Uden Vold, n.d.). The inspection is one of many of Marlene's roles.

### 7.4 Danner

Danner is a domestic violence shelter but also a big player within the field of domestic violence. They offer housing for women who have experienced violence and their children. Furthermore, they have an emergency hotline beside housing options. Through research and documentation, Danner's knowledge center works to create new knowledge about violence against women. They use this knowledge to create public and political awareness about the need for change, so that no woman should ever experience violence in intimate relationships. They work to create respectful norms and up-to-date legislation that gives women access to the same rights as men (Danner, n.d.). Karen Lauritsen is the Head of Consultancy at their advocacy and outpatient department (translated from Danish 'ambulant'). Karen is Head of their outpatient department, aftercare program and their 'Tell it to someone' (translated from 'sig det til nogle'). Furthermore, Karen is also a leader at their 'Tell it to someone migrant' (translated from 'sig det til nogle migrant') (Andreasen M., 2020).

## 8.0 Analysis

Based on the collected empirical data, theory, and through the transcription process of the four interviews, as previously mentioned have derived to contribute to answering the thesis main research question. Each analyzed part will be marked with a heading to facilitate the process. The theories intersectionality and recognition are theories that will be used throughout the analysis. There will be crossovers between intersectionality and recognition throughout the chapters. In the analysis, Jane, Rita, Marlene, and Karen will be referred to by their names.

The thesis research question is answered by delving into the professionals' experiences of working with the women who have or are experiencing domestic violence in their respective services. As their services Danner, Charlottenlund domestic violence shelter, Medusa, and domestic violence shelter Fyn play a crucial role in this regard, their experiences and expertise are also relevant to include in order to answer and map the challenges that women with different backgrounds may face, and what differences there may or may not be when working at a domestic violence shelter.

### 8.1 Working with the women

The four organizations employ distinct approaches when working with women yet share the intentions of being inclusive of women from diverse backgrounds. However, the organizations differ in their engagement with women across various phases, including prior to entering a domestic violence shelter (DVS) during residency at a DVS, post-residency at a DVS, and even when the women are unaware of their abusive relationships. The experiences of which backgrounds Marlene, Karen, Rita and Jane meet in their work varies.

Marlene mentioned:

*Now I haven't done statistics at the shelter, so of course I should be careful about what I say, but I have done statistics over here, and there it's a large, by far the largest part of ethnically Danish women, who come to you more. It's just my own, what can I say, it's not something I have any evidence for. You can take it with a grain of salt. One of the thoughts I could have is that ethnic Danish women might have a different network or a different cul-*

*ture in their family, so now the idea is that they might be better able to handle it on an outpatient basis.*

Marlene's citation about women with Danish background potentially being better able to handle abuse on an outpatient basis (translated from Danish 'ambulant rådgivning') could potentially relate to the sphere of love. Love, as a sphere of recognition, is concerned with valuing individuals for their unique characteristics and fostering a sense of belonging and connection within a community (Honneth, A., 2006:132-133). Marlene suggests that Danish women may have a different network within their families, which enables them to handle abuse better. This suggests that they might have greater access to love and support from their community (Ibid.).

The sphere of rights may also be relevant in this context. Rights, as a sphere of recognition, is concerned with recognizing and protecting the legal and moral rights of individuals. Taking Marlene's citation, it could be argued that women with Danish background may have greater access to legal and social protections that allow them to seek help for abuse and receive support on an outpatient basis (Honneth, A., 2006:128-129).

The sphere of solidarity is also relevant. Solidarity, as a sphere of recognition, is concerned with recognizing and valuing the shared experiences and struggles of individuals within a community. Marlene's citation about the potential differences in network among women with Danish background and women with another background than Danish, could suggest a shared experience of greater access to social support, which could foster a sense of solidarity and collective resilience in the face of abuse (Honneth, A., 2006:188-190).

Marlene's citation about women with Danish background potentially being better able to handle domestic violence on an outpatient basis due to their different network in their family highlights the importance of considering intersectionality when addressing issues related to domestic violence. Marlene's experience shows that the largest group of women who seek help at Medusa have a Danish, which implies that women from other backgrounds are less likely to seek help at Medusa. This phenomenon may be due to the intersecting factors of race, class, and gender (Crenshaw, K., 1991:1245-1249). In the case of the citation Marlene's observation may reflect the ways in which women's experiences of

gender-based violence are shaped by their race and class. Women from marginalized communities, such as women of color or low-income women, may face unique barriers to seeking help when experiencing gender-based violence. These barriers can include language barriers, lack of access to transportation or resources, fear of deportation, and distrust of law enforcement. In contrast, women from more privileged backgrounds may have greater access to resources, such as social networks, financial resources, and cultural capital, that enable them to seek help more easily (Ibid.). As a social worker, I have had the privilege of meeting and assisting women from various backgrounds who have faced domestic violence. In my encounters, I have observed that women from different communities, including women of color and those with limited financial means, often encounter challenges in seeking help. Language barriers frequently impede effective communication and understanding, while limited access to transportation and resources can hinder their ability to escape abusive situations or access necessary support services. Additionally, there is often a deep-rooted fear of deportation among immigrant women, which further complicates their willingness to seek assistance. This fear is something I have met especially when the woman has a child.

The informants have different approaches when it comes to women with different backgrounds. Some of the informants recognize the difference that might be when working with different kinds of women with different backgrounds. As seen above it is also different how often they approach women with a different background than Danish. Karen explains that *“Violence does not discriminate, many people think that the violence experienced by minority women, or what we call migrant women, is very different. In some ways it is, but in other ways it is not.”*. In this sentence Karen says that some might discriminate due to their background and the experienced violence. I do want to share my experience thinking of this citation and how my experience of using words such as ‘migrant women’ and ‘minority’ in the context of women who experience violence. I experienced a confusion from my informants in which way the words are used in the correct way. I experience that in my own work and how my colleagues stop talking about the women’s background but focus on the individual and their needs. In a way I do consider this as a positive movement on the other hand it can create (mis)recognition and forget the needs that may lie within the specific cultural aspect and identity (Honneth, A., 2006:191-192).

Misrecognition, also called disrespect, does threaten a person's self-confidence and physical integrity (Bona, A., 2018:41). In this case, when not recognizing the differences that violence and different backgrounds might differ from each other, this could lead to threatening of the women's self-confidence and physical integrity (Ibid.). Karen explains:

*Violence is about control and it goes as far as it works. It means that violence looks the way it works for her, but what it does to the individual is the same. Violence affects her psychologically, and this is the same for all women who experience violence, regardless of their background or what they wear, eat, or how they look or talk.*

Karen's statement highlights the concept of misrecognition by Honneth in the context of violence against women. Misrecognition refers to a situation where an individual's needs or experiences are not adequately recognized or valued by the workers. Karen's citation highlights that violence against women occurs regardless of their background. Her statement challenges the misrecognition of women's experiences of violence based on individual differences (Honneth, A., 2006:16-17).

By stating that violence is about control, Karen highlights the power dynamics that exist in abusive relationships, where the abuser attempts to exert control over the victim. This control extends beyond physical violence and affects the victim psychologically, causing emotional distress and trauma which Honneth also calls for 'the crime' (Honneth, A., 2006:138-140). As someone who has worked in the field of domestic violence for five years and currently works at a shelter, Karen's statement about the universality of the psychological effects of violence resonates strongly with my own experience. I have seen firsthand the devastating impact of domestic violence on women of all backgrounds, and how it can leave lasting scars on their mental health and well-being. In my work at the shelter, I have witnessed how important it is for survivors of domestic violence to be recognized and valued as individuals with their own needs and desires.

Marlene recognizes their work in the organization of Medusa might have a lack of knowledge when it comes to women with different backgrounds: "(..)So it's not to say that there is any difference, I don't know anything about that. It may also be that we are not good enough at communicating our offer in the right way." Marlene struggles to see the differences with women from different backgrounds. The citation highlights the importance of intersectionality in understanding the experiences of women who experience

violence. Marlene acknowledges that there may be differences in how women from different backgrounds experience violence, which is a core principle of intersectionality (Crenshaw, C., 1991:1241-1299). This recognition challenges the idea of universal experiences of violence and emphasizes that experiences are shaped by the intersections of race, class, and gender (Ibid.). Moreover, Marlene acknowledges that the organization Medusa may not be communicating their offer in the right way, which also speaks to the importance of intersectionality in service provision.

The professionals interviewed shared different perspectives on the engagement with women from diverse backgrounds. Marlene recognized the possibility of women with Danish background having different networks, which may enable them to handle the situation on an outpatient basis (translated from Danish 'ambulant rådgivning'). On the other hand, Karen emphasized that violence affects women psychologically, regardless of their background or appearance.

In the sense of recognition, the development of self-confidence and the protection of physical integrity. Failure to recognize the experiences of women from diverse backgrounds can lead to threats to their self-confidence and physical integrity, which can perpetuate the cycle of violence. Therefore, recognition of the differences in the experiences of women from diverse backgrounds is critical in the work of domestic violence support organizations. Women who might not get their recognition creates their own recognition which Honneth calls for 'resistance culture' (translated from Danish 'modstandskultur') (Honneth, A., 2006:22).

Karen's argument highlights the need to prioritize the experiences of the women over their background. This recognition of the intersectionality of race and gender is essential in ensuring that the needs and experiences of all women who experience violence are understood and addressed by support organizations.

I can relate to Marlene's recognition that the organization may have a lack of knowledge when it comes to working with women from diverse backgrounds. I understand the importance of continually improving our understanding of cultural differences and the need to communicate our support in the right way. I have worked in an organization where women felt that they were not fully respected due to their background. Meaning that they

would rather have a contact person who has the same background as themselves than Danish background. Which also highlights the ‘resistance culture’ (Honneth, A., 2006:22).

In summary, the citations suggest that recognition of differences in women with different backgrounds is essential in the work with domestic violence support organizations. The professionals interviewed recognize the importance of this recognition in providing effective support for women from diverse backgrounds but acknowledge that some of the informants need more knowledge and recognition regarding women and their different backgrounds.

## 8.2 Liberation towards independence

Jane talks about how the women have contact with the perpetrator during their stay *“(..)And also if they are in contact with the perpetrator which I really don’t think they should have. But some women need to be in contact with the perpetrator due to their shared kids.”* Jane here talks about the women who have contact with the perpetrator due to their shared kids but also women who have contact with the perpetrator due to the bond they might still have. Jane further explains *“If they don’t cut the connection to the perpetrator the perpetrator will convince them to go back to.”*

Looking at recognition and the sphere of love, in Jane’s citation we see that she talks about pathological cases and how it disrupts the intersubjective relationship when one of the subjects breaks free from the relationship (Honneth, 2006:246-247). What is interesting in the context of the above-mentioned citations from Jane is that the content details of this genetic explanation, but rather that its basic subject, relational disorders, can be measured through the categories of mutual recognition. For if we assume the idea of a failed reciprocity. Meaning that, it is not the specific details of how it happened, but rather that the relational problems that result can be measured through the ways people recognize and interact with each other. This is important because if there is a problem with how people are relating to each other, it can lead to further difficulties down the road (Ibid.). The woman leaving the perpetrator does it due to an experienced violence and therefore moves to a domestic violence shelter. What is interesting is that the woman breaks up the relationship but during her stay she has contact with the perpetrator. In this case it is women without

children. Looking at 'liberation towards independence' which must be carried by an emotional trust in the stability of the shared attention. One will not be able to recognize the beloved person's independence if one does not have an emotional security that he and she will maintain their affection after having become independent (Honneth, 2006:249). Every love relationship, whether it is between parents and children, friends, or lovers, is bound to prerequisites that the individual does not have control over, namely sympathy and attraction (Ibid.).

One of the challenges I have faced in recent years is the increasing use of online platforms by perpetrators to communicate with their victims. It has become a common tactic for abusers to use social media, email, and other messaging apps to intimidate, harass, and manipulate their partners. This has created additional difficulties for us as professionals at the domestic violence shelter to help the women to not return to the perpetrator.

Through my experience, I have seen firsthand how online communication a significant obstacle in the recovery process of the women can be. Often, women who have left their abusive partners receive messages from them, promising to change or even apologize for their past behavior. They might say things like, "I can't live without you" or "I promise to be better this time." These messages can be difficult to ignore, especially when they come from someone who they used to love and trust. It can be a struggle for the women to resist the temptation to respond, leading them to return to the perpetrator.

Moreover, abusers can use online platforms to monitor their victims and keep track of their whereabouts. They might use GPS tracking apps to know their partners' locations or hack into their social media accounts to gather personal information. This can create a sense of constant fear and insecurity for the women, making it difficult for them to move on from the abusive relationship. Love, as a form of recognition, is a vital part of human development and identity formation (Honneth, 2006:103-117). In the sphere of love, I have seen women seek recognition from what used to be their intimate partners, which allowed them to feel valued and accepted for who they are (Ibid.). Or what they believe is a kind of recognition. This recognition can create a sense of self-confidence and self-esteem that is necessary for healthy social relationships (Honneth, 2006:388). However, in cases of domestic violence, love can also become a source of power imbalance, manipulation, and abuse (Honneth, 2006:304-319). The perpetrator may use their love for the victim to



control them, creating a sense of dependency that is difficult to break especially when having that online connection. Similarly, the victim may feel trapped by their love for the perpetrator, struggling to reconcile their feelings with the reality of the abuse. When it comes to online communication, the perpetrator may use their love for the women to lure them back into the abusive relationship. They might send messages that play on the woman's emotions, promising to change or apologizing for their past behavior. The women, in turn, may struggle to resist these messages, as their love for the perpetrator may make them feel guilty for leaving or hopeful that things will be different this time. Which is what I have been told from women I have worked with.

In my experience as a social worker at a domestic violence shelter, I have seen women who return to their abusers struggle with recognizing the unhealthy dynamics of their relationship due to their emotional attachment and the belief that their abuser truly loves them. Despite experiencing abuse and violence, they may still hold onto the hope that their abuser will change or that they can fix the relationship. This highlights the complexity of the sphere of love and how they can easily be manipulated into what they believe is an abusive relationship. In the context of domestic violence, however, the emotional trust and shared attention necessary for recognition may be disrupted by violence and abuse, leading to difficulties in recognizing and maintaining healthy relationships (Honneth, A., 2006: 218-300).

In this sense, the sphere of love is essential to understanding the motivations and experiences of women who return to their abusers. Women who have experienced domestic violence may struggle to trust others and feel emotionally secure in relationships, making it difficult for them to recognize and maintain healthy relationships. Without emotional security and stability, the women may feel a sense of attachment to their abusers and seek to return to the relationship, even if it is not in their best interest (Honneth, A., 2006:272-277). Which they women have told me is not in their best interest.

Furthermore, the issue of women having contact with their abusers during their stay in domestic violence shelters can also be analyzed through the sphere of rights. Women who have contact with their abusers may be doing so because of shared custody of children or because they feel pressured by their abuser. However, this contact may also be due to a lack of recognition of their right to safety and autonomy. The denial of one's rights can

threaten their social integrity and self-respect, leading to damage of their autonomy and moral citizenship (Honneth, 2006:94-132). Making it hard to create a new life after a stay at a domestic violence shelter.

### 8.3 Symptoms and recognition

In the interview conducted with the informant Karen we talked about her experience with women who re-returned to a domestic violence shelter. Karen stated that *“We can see that when we measure it, 7 out of 10 who move into the domestic violence shelters have PTSD symptoms, and we can see that 3 out of 10 still have them when they move out”*. Karen reveals that women who move into domestic violence shelters often have PTSD symptoms and may still experience them even after they leave.

Karen highlights the prevalence of PTSD symptoms among women in domestic violence shelters, which can further exacerbate the sense of isolation and lack of recognition. The trauma of abuse can have a profound impact on an individual's ability to trust others and form meaningful relationships, which aligns with Honneth's theory of solidarity (Honneth, 2006:304-319). Furthermore, when examining the concept of recognition, I have observed a lack of knowledge among the workers at domestic violence shelters regarding the specific treatment required for trauma-related conditions. Typically, the workers at these shelters have backgrounds in social work, pedagogy, sociology, or leadership. However, addressing conditions like Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) necessitates the involvement of psychologists or professionals with specialized training in the treatment system. In my experience at the shelter, it is important to acknowledge that while we cannot provide direct treatment, we can still play a crucial role in helping these women navigate the Danish social system and facilitate the establishment of supportive networks.

In summary, the trauma of abuse can hinder trust and relationship formation, as explained in Honneth's theory. Additionally, the lack of specific treatment knowledge among shelter workers highlights the need for specialized professionals in addressing conditions like PTSD. Despite this limitation, the shelter can still support the women by assisting them in navigating the social system and fostering network connections.

To address the cycle of abuse, it is essential to recognize the importance of social recognition and support for survivors of domestic violence. This includes providing access to

mental health services, legal protection, and social services that can help survivors rebuild their lives and regain a sense of agency and self-worth (Honneth, 2006:304-319).

My experience as a social worker working at a domestic violence shelter has highlighted the relevance of Honneth's theory of recognition and the three spheres in understanding and addressing the challenges faced by women in these situations. In particular, I have seen how the denial of women's rights can threaten their social integrity and self-respect, as Honneth argues. For example, I have worked with women who have been denied access to their legal rights such as protection orders or custody of their children, which has further undermined their sense of agency and self-worth (Honneth, A., 2006:304-321).

Finally, I have seen how the sphere of solidarity is crucial in recognizing the broader social and systemic factors that contribute to domestic violence and limit women's options for safety and healing. For example, many of the women I have worked with have faced intersecting forms of discrimination and oppression based on their race, class, or immigration status. By working in partnership with other organizations and advocacy groups, we have sought to amplify these women's voices and advocate for changes in policies and practices that perpetuate violence (Bona, A., 2018:41-42).

Karen explains

*When we talk about legal regulations, it is a big concern, especially at national meetings. We want to work towards ensuring that those who are victims of violence can be sure that the services they receive are the same at a high level to ensure that those who have experienced violence can feel safe. It's not just about resources; it's more about where the different domestic violence shelters are located and what they offer based on the needs they see. The length of time spent in a domestic violence shelter depends on the shelter, so there are different services offered.*

Karen highlights the importance of legal regulations in ensuring that victims of violence receive high-quality services that are consistent across different shelters. In recognizing the need for such regulations, Karen's statement reflects the concept of recognition. In Karen's citation, she emphasizes the importance of ensuring that victims of violence receive the same high-quality services regardless of where they are located. This reflects a desire to recognize the inherent worth of these individuals and to ensure that they receive

the support and resources they need to feel safe. Additionally, Karen's statement highlights the sphere of rights as a means of ensuring that individuals are treated fairly and equitably (Honneth, 2006:173-213). The sphere of rights refers to the legal protections and entitlements that individuals have, which serve to safeguard their dignity and autonomy (Ibid.). Karen's statement underscores the importance of legal regulations in establishing a sphere of rights for women who have experienced violence, which would protect them from further harm and ensure that they receive the resources they need to recover. Overall, Karen's statement demonstrates a recognition of the importance of legal regulations and the sphere of rights in protecting and supporting victims of violence (Honneth, 2006:218-255).

As a social worker, I have had the opportunity to work with many women who have experienced violence and are navigating the legal system in search of help and support. In my work, I have found that the concepts of recognition and the sphere of rights are essential in helping these women to receive the resources and support they need (Ibid.).

Through my work, I have advised women on their legal rights and helped them to navigate the complex legal system. By doing so, I have sought to establish a sphere of rights for these women, which would protect them from further harm and ensure that they are treated fairly and equitably (Honneth, 2006:218-255).

Moreover, I have emphasized the importance of recognition in my work with these women. By acknowledging their inherent worth and treating them with dignity and respect, I have sought to empower them and give them the confidence they need to navigate the legal system effectively (Honneth, 2006:218-255). This recognition has been essential in building trust with these women and helping them to feel safe and supported throughout the process. In the event of failure, social workers must engage in a process of reflection and evaluation to identify the potential causes and develop strategies for addressing them. This process may involve reviewing their practice and approach, considering whether the approach was appropriate for the client's needs and circumstances, and evaluating the social worker's role in the process.

If a social worker fails to provide appropriate support and advice to women experiencing violence, it can have a significant impact on their recognition within the sphere of rights.

Women who are victims of violence have a right to access support services and legal protections that safeguard their autonomy and dignity. If a social worker fails to recognize and uphold these rights, it can undermine the trust and confidence that women have in the social work profession and the support services available to them (Honneth, 2006:255-294).

Moreover, if a woman does not receive adequate support and advice, it may increase the likelihood of her returning to a domestic violence shelter. This is because without proper support, women may not have the knowledge or resources to escape the abusive situation or access the necessary legal protections. This can create a sense of hopelessness and frustration, which can cause women to return to abusive situations as they may feel they have no other options. Therefore, it is essential for social workers to prioritize their clients' recognition within the sphere of rights by providing appropriate support and advice. This includes ensuring that clients are aware of their legal rights and protections, providing access to resources and support networks, and creating a safe and supportive environment for clients to share their experiences (Ibid.).

Jane explains “(..)The women will therefore not keep me as a therapist due to the law that requires it is a psychologist not a psychotherapist as me.” In this context, Jane talks about how the women who have stayed at the domestic violence shelter are not offered through the law to keep Jane as a therapist. Jane then further explains

*It would be great if the women would continue the therapy session with me. What the workers do is that they apply through the municipality and sometimes it is successful that the women will get me through the municipality but mostly not.*

Jane's experience highlights the challenges that women in domestic violence shelters face when it comes to accessing mental health support. According to Jane, the law requires that a psychologist, rather than a psychotherapist, provides mental health services to victims of domestic violence. This means that Jane, as a psychotherapist, is not able to continue working with the women who have stayed at the domestic violence shelter.

Jane's suggestion that the women could continue their therapy sessions with her is an important recognition of their needs within the sphere of rights and recognition. Women who have experienced domestic violence have a right to access mental health services that meet their individual needs and preferences. By acknowledging the importance of continuing

therapy with a trusted provider, Jane is demonstrating a commitment to recognizing the autonomy and dignity of the women she serves (Honneth, 2006:259-381).

However, Jane also highlights the limitations of the current system in ensuring that women have access to the mental health support they need. Even when workers apply for funding through the municipality to support the women in accessing psychotherapy, it is not always successful. This suggests that there are systemic barriers to recognizing the rights of women who have experienced domestic violence within the sphere of rights and in this case the mental health services (Honneth, 2006:14-15).

Jane explains,

*For example one woman I had in therapy through the domestic violence shelter she had never talked about a rape she experienced. And she told me that she will never talk to anyone else but me about the rape. I have a woman who comes here individually after the domestic violence shelter stay. She comes monthly. It requires that the women need money to visit me individually after their stay.*

This is not only a moral or political issue but also a social issue. Which erodes their cultural contributions (Bona, A., 2018:41-42). Looking at the experience of women who have been raped in the field of domestic violence shelter it is important to highlight the absolute loss of recognition and the individuals experience to the world lacks of trust (Honneth, 2006:304-321). Looking at the intersections of gender, race, and class identities can all impact a woman's ability to access and receive mental health services. For example, gender-based violence disproportionately affects women and femmes, leading to increased rates of trauma and mental health concerns. However, women of color and low-income women may face additional challenges in accessing care. For example, women of color may face discrimination and stigma within the mental health system, which can make them less likely to seek out services or receive adequate care when they do seek it. Low-income women may face practical barriers to accessing care, such as a lack of transportation or financial resources to pay for services (Crenshaw K., 1991:1245-1250).

## 8.4 Individual and collective integration

Work in the context of individual integration and collective integration. Individual integrational work is where work is the central aspect of identity, everyday life, and subjective well-being (Bona, A., 2018:107-109). Collective work is the basis of Western democracies in which the economical, citizenship responsibility, contribution and social utility are intertwined (Ibid). In this regard, Honneth observes that the subject attaches their social identity to their working role (Ibid.). This is interesting looking at Rita's citation:

*Economically, we have a majority that are working, but there are also others that are not employed. So, it is always a worry like all of us when we don't have enough money. Yeah. Yeah. And then how it's going to be when I move out and I'm alone and I haven't found a job yet.*

In the case of the women living at Charlottenlund domestic violence shelter, Rita talks about women who are working and those who are not while living at the shelter. It is through work where mental and self-realization appear to have a positive impact in subjects' life (Bona, A., 2018:108). Rita further talks about the women who worry if they will not manage to find a job before moving out. Recognition and work go hand in hand through the principle of achievement. It is not only through the recognition of getting paid for a job it is also the social commons created through labor. It is a major vector for building self-esteem (Bona, A., 2018:111).

Jane then talks about “*Some of them do not have any network beside the women they meet at the domestic violence shelter.*” Some women coming to domestic violence shelter Fyn have not had any network due to the violent relationship they are coming from. Or their network was built with the perpetrator. I have seen women who had to leave all their network and rebuild their life.

Furthermore, looking at Bona (2018) implications of Honneth's theory recognition to the context of work, highlighting the significance of work in individual and collective integration. Looking at the women's social identity might be attached to their working role, and how work can contribute to their mental and self-realization, and overall self-esteem. Rita's account of the women at Charlottenlund domestic violence shelter worrying about their economic status and employment prospects further highlights the importance of work in a person's life. Recognition and work go hand in hand, and the recognition of being paid

for a job and the social commons created through labor can contribute positively to a person's self-esteem (Bona, A., 2018:105-117). As an individual who has observed women re-returning to domestic violence shelters, I recognize that the section I have written sheds light on the significance of work and recognition in their lives. Their social identity, tied to their working role, and the positive impact of work on their mental well-being, self-realization, and self-esteem become even more crucial for these women. Their concerns about economic status and employment prospects are amplified. Through work, recognition, and support, we can empower these women, boost their self-worth, and potentially facilitate their transition out of abusive situations. The importance of building a social network is emphasized, particularly for women who have experienced violence and may not have had a network prior to their stay at the domestic violence shelter. Building a network can be a significant factor in a person's overall well-being and can contribute to their social integration and recognition (Ibid.).

Talking about network, Danneskiold-Samsøe et al. (2011) highlights the issues of control and limited agency for Tamilian women in Denmark. This lack of agency is reflected in their upbringing, which emphasizes the importance of being a good wife, maintaining a positive reputation, and prioritizing physical appearance (Ibid.). The authors suggest that the reluctance of Tamilian women to participate in the study can be attributed to a fear of rumors and social repercussions (Ibid.). This issue of rumors is also highlighted by Rita in her work at Charlottenlund domestic violence shelter, where women may be afraid that their abusers will find out where they are staying. Tamilian women may experience a lack of recognition of their agency and rights in their society. They may be denied access to the spheres of love, rights, and solidarity due to traditional gender roles and the caste system, which limit their opportunities to seek help and escape from abusive relationships (Bona, A., 2018:105-117).

No matter which backgrounds the women have, in my experience I have seen women bringing their children in every age at the shelter. Jane talks about how important it is to involve the kids in their work at domestic violence shelter Fyn:

*I think it is good to involve the kids. Creative spaces where the adults and children are involved are important. Something that really hits the women are the scars that the children have coming from these experiences of violence. Getting the help to pick up the kids mentally.*



At domestic violence shelter Fyn, women are permitted to bring their children along, whereas certain other shelters do not allow this, based on their targeted audience. For instance, youth-oriented domestic violence shelters may not permit children living there (UngKrisecenter, n.d.). Jane states how important it is to help the children. It is not only the women who have experienced the violence but also the children. Jane further states that the women living at domestic violence shelter Fyn, know the scars the children have experienced. Moreover, based on my observations at my work at the shelter, I have witnessed the challenges faced by children living in Denmark who navigate the intersection between Danish cultural norms at school and their mother's religious practices. These children also encounter issues related to socializing with peers who come from Danish backgrounds, which can further complicate matters. For instance, I have encountered situations where some children only consume halal meat and refrain from other types of meat. It is crucial for the shelter staff to be aware of this practice in order to avoid excluding these children from activities that involve cooking meat. Unfortunately, there was an instance where I inadvertently forgot to purchase halal meat, resulting in the family feeling even more excluded, as they were the only ones with a different background at the shelter during that period. Therefore, it is not solely the responsibility of the women and children to interact with each other; the shelter staff also bear the responsibility of ensuring that these families feel included. Failing to do so may unintentionally reinforce the feeling that their own homes are no different from the abusive environment they sought refuge from. It emphasizes the importance of creating an environment where care, empathy, and emotional support are central to the healing process. While maintaining professionalism, I believe throughout my experience that it is crucial for staff to demonstrate a genuine sense of care that aligns with the sphere of love (Honneth, 2006:210-230).

In the sphere of love states how important the recognition of love is in the phase of children. It states that the early interaction experiences of the child have a psychological significance and supplemented the organization of the libidinal drives with the emotional relationship to other individuals as the second component in the maturation process (Honneth, 2006: 229). It is the early years where the child's emotional attachments are based on an ability that is developed in early childhood (Honneth, 2006: 230). Drawing inspiration from the concept of the sphere of love, it becomes evident how crucial it is to recognize

and nurture love during the children's stay at the domestic violence shelter. Honneth highlights the psychological importance of early interactions in a child's development, emphasizing the significance of emotional relationships with others. These formative years lay the foundation for the child's emotional attachments, which are cultivated through their growing abilities during early childhood. Therefore, within the shelter, staff members play a vital role in providing a supportive and loving environment that allows children to establish healthy emotional connections. By acknowledging the importance of love and creating opportunities for positive interactions, the staff can contribute to the children's emotional well-being and overall development. The interaction between mother and child is an especially complex process, in which both parties mutually acquire an ability for shared experiences of emotions and sensations (Honneth, 2006:228). Furthermore, the child's needs and the moms are very addicted to each other. This is a sort of symbiosis (Ibid.). The needs of physical love in the way the child wants it, is important in the start phase of a baby's life (Honneth, 2006:232-233). Women who have experienced violence in their childhood makes it difficult to create a significant foundation. Meaning that, it is more difficult for a child to create a secure foundation of meaningful experiences when there is repeated violence in their childhood. This means that the child cannot rely on safe, life-giving, and valuable things and events that would guide their actions and view of the world. Instead of forming attachments to the world through secure individuals and experiences that provide direction, a child growing up in violent environments must attach themselves to those who break them down (Holmgren, A. 2019: 133).

Jane then further talks about her experiences at domestic violence shelter Fyn:

*Some women may think "what if my baby cries, do they think I am a bad mother?" or "will the workers write about me in their journal?". All these thoughts go through them and all the insecurity is daily life for them.*

The women experience a worry when having the children at the domestic violence shelter. They worry if the workers there are watching their mother skills. Rita said that "(..) but she felt isolated and she, and let's start with women with no children. I think there can be a slight difference." Rita talks about how there might be a difference for women who have children and the ones who do not. In this context, we talked about how lonely some of the women might feel at the beginning of their stay at the shelter. Rita states that women with kids might not be that lonely compared to women with no children.

In the context of domestic violence shelters, the love sphere is particularly relevant. Children who live with their mothers at domestic violence shelters may have experienced trauma and disruption to their early attachment relationships, which can impact their emotional development and ability to form healthy relationships in the future. By allowing children to live with their mothers in a safe and supportive environment, domestic violence shelters can help to support the love sphere and promote healthy emotional development for children who have experienced violence and trauma. Furthermore, by involving children in activities and providing resources for mental health support, domestic violence shelters can help to recognize and support the emotional needs of both mothers and children.

Being in a violent relationship can have severe consequences for the victim's mental and physical health. The victim may experience anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and feelings of helplessness and hopelessness (Campbell et al., 2002). The abuse may cause physical injuries, such as bruises, broken bones, and internal injuries. In severe cases, it may lead to death. The women may also experience economical violence, where the abuser controls their access to money and resources, leaving them financially dependent and vulnerable.

Domestic violence is a severe issue that affects not only the victim but also their children. It is essential to provide support and resources to victims of domestic violence to help them leave the abusive relationship and heal from their trauma. Organizations like domestic violence shelters play a crucial role in supporting victims of domestic violence and their children.

## 8.5 Women with different backgrounds

This section will direct its attention towards the experiences of the informants with regard to women abuse, highlighting the role of gender, race and class from the theory of intersectionality and recognition into the informants and secondary data perceptions and examining how it can impact their re-return to a domestic violence shelter. In the following pages the abbreviation of DVS and DV will be used meaning domestic violence shelter and domestic violence. Beside the informants I will also include the book *The family means everything* (translated from Danish: *Familien betyder alt*). The authors interviewed

40 women with backgrounds from Middle Eastern countries, Eastern European countries, Sri Lanka and two women with Danish background (Danneskiold-Samsøe et al., 2011:46). The use of ethnicity will be used throughout this section due to the sources I have chosen. It is important that the reader looks at chapter 4.1 called *research position*. To be aware that I do distance myself to the word ethnicity and its potential meaning. Further elaboration will be considered in the analysis. Firstly, Karen's talks about:

*Violence is about control and it goes as far as it works. It means that violence looks the way it works for her, but what it does to the individual is the same. Violence affects her psychologically, and this is the same for all women who experience violence, regardless of their background or what they wear, eat, or how they look or talk.*

Karen talks about how violence affects women psychologically regardless of their background or appearance, which aligns with recognition theory, which emphasizes the importance of recognizing the inherent value and dignity of all individuals. This includes recognizing the agency and rights of Tamilian women, who may face additional challenges in seeking help and escaping from domestic violence due to social factors (Bona, A., 2018:105-117). Highlighting the ways in which race intersects with other identities to shape experiences of discrimination and oppression. However, recognition emphasizes the importance of recognizing the inherent value and dignity of all individuals, regardless of their background or appearance. For Tamilian women in Denmark, recognizing their agency and rights is crucial in providing effective support and assistance for those experiencing domestic violence (Crenshaw, K., 1991:1245-1250).

Danneskiold-Samsøe et al., (2011) interviewed women with ethnicities from: Turkey, Israel, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and North Africa. In the analysis I will use the term 'women from Middle Eastern Countries' as a shared term. Danneskiold-Samsøe et al., (2011) points out that the main experiences violence are the ones where honor plays a big role also noted as *Honor Related Violence* (chapter 3.4.8 in this research). When the women breaks from the violence Danneskiold-Samsøe et al., (2011) notes that their limitations from family support are limited. Some of the women they interviewed use the word honor and some do not mention the word of honor (Danneskiold-Samsøe et al., 2011:48-49).

The informant, who is called Meryam with Turkish background, got a phone call from her husband when she was on her way to the DVS and he said “*You have to come home. You are my honor!*” (Ibid.). Another case is Emine who grew up in Denmark and her parents are from Turkey. Her family supported her in going to the DVS but was worried how much she would tell the staff who worked at the DVS. In this case it is more the rumors the family worries about and the family's reputation (Ibid.). The informants Danneskiold-Samsøe et al., (2011) from the Middle Eastern countries have to think about religions such as Muslims and one with Hindu beliefs and one who is a Christian. Not saying that they practice the religious beliefs but have to have in their minds that their families and/or spouses might practice these religions. This is important to mention due to the laws that might follow with the Islamic beliefs. Beside the Danish Law the women have to think about Sharia too (Danneskiold-Samsøe et al., 2011:49).

Dupont and Sokoloff (2005) seek to investigate ‘culturally diverse communities’ and women who have experienced violence. In their case their studies are made in the U.S. They seek to investigate the intersections of race, class and gender and how oppression and inequality overlaps. Dupont and Sokoloff argue that these structural intersections are the root causes for domestic violence. Dupont and Sokoloff (2005) see this more as a unique struggle that represents each group. Looking at the issue of DV against women no matter which ethnicities, it has often been seen through a traditional feminist approach. However, this approach has for some scholars been criticized since it gives white middle class women the chance to speak out and not women with different ethnicities others than white (Dupont & Sokoloff, 2005:41). Domestic violence affects everyone no matter class, religion or race (Ibid.). According to Dupont and Sokoloff as cited in Richie (2000) “*Poor women of color are most likely to be in both dangerous intimate relationships and dangerous social positions*”. Danneskiold-Samsøe et. al. (2011) argues that it is women from the lower class who actually reach out for a stay at a DVS. They further argue that it does not matter how much money you have or where you live, every woman can experience violence. The question is if the women have resources to go to something like a beach house and stay there or a network they use (Danneskiold-Samsøe et. al.,2011:171). Marlene explains that in her work at Medusa

*It could be, and it could also be that perhaps one accepts that in some families it's difficult to move in with a sister. Or to their friend or mother, because in their culture, they don't see it as violent or accept something potentially different than what may be accepted in Danish culture. Therefore, it can be a bit easier for us to see many of our women borrowing a summer house from family, moving out, or living at home with their parents or at a friend's house, for example.*

In the context of the quote from Dupont and Sokoloff (2005) and Marlene's statement, intersectionality shows the understanding of how gender, race, and class intersect to produce different experiences of violence against women. For example, Marlene's comment highlights how cultural practices can impact women's ability to escape violent situations. Marlene suggests that some women may not feel safe moving in with family members or friends because of cultural norms that normalize violence against women. This is where the intersectionality of race and gender comes into play. In some cultures, women are expected to submit to the authority of men, which can lead to the normalization of violence against them. This normalization of violence is perpetuated by cultural norms and practices that prioritize men's power and control over women's autonomy and safety. Which is something I have been told in my work with the women at the shelters. Moreover, the intersectionality of race and gender can also play a role in how women experience violence. For example, women of color may experience violence differently than white women due to the added layer of racism. They may be subjected to stereotypes and discrimination that exacerbate their vulnerability to violence, and they may face additional barriers to accessing resources and support to escape violent situations (Carastathis, A., 2016:119). Women from low-income backgrounds may face greater barriers to leaving violent relationships due to financial constraints. They may not have the resources to afford housing, legal representation, or transportation to escape a violent situation. In addition, they may be more likely to experience violence in the first place due to the structural inequalities that perpetuate poverty and social exclusion (Crenshaw, K., 1991:1245-1250).

Returning to Dupont and Sokoloff's argument, they highlight how cultural practices can be used to justify violence against women, which can lead to moral relativism. Moral relativism refers to the idea that what is considered right or wrong is relative to the culture or society in which it occurs. This can lead to cultural practices being used to justify violence

against women, even when it is a violation of human rights (Dupont & Sokoloff, 2005). Based on my experience as a social worker at a domestic violence shelter, I have witnessed firsthand the impact of cultural practices on justifying violence against women. Dupont and Sokoloff's argument resonates strongly in this context. The concept of moral relativism becomes apparent, where the perception of right and wrong is subjective to the culture or society in which it prevails.

In Medusa 90% of the women they receive calls from have Danish background. Another interesting citation is the one where Marlene explains that "*Danish women at the shelter where the men are directors, doctors, or lawyers, and they have been subjected to grotesquely severe violence.*" In this case Marlene explains that they have women who reach out to them who are in the middle and/or upper class which leads to the sociocultural aspect of why women re-return to a domestic violence shelter. Taking Marlene's citation and looking at the women's backgrounds, culture has an important role in this context. Culture is an individual choice and for some women it is not a choice but they have to follow along. Dupont and Sokoloff (2005) as cited in Yoshihama (1999) argues that "*What is considered domestic violence or a specific meaning a woman may give to her partner's act is partly based on the interviewee's viewpoint shaped by her sociocultural background.*" She uses an example of how turning a table in Japan can be considered abuse which questions the role the women have in the family (Dupont & Sokoloff, 2005: 42). The example of turning a table in Japan being considered abuse highlights how cultural norms and practices can impact the ways in which domestic violence is perceived and understood. However, it is important to recognize that these cultural norms and practices are shaped by multiple dimensions of identity, including race, gender, and class. For example, women from different racial and backgrounds in Japan may have different experiences of domestic violence due to the added layer of racism and discrimination (Ibid.). Culture can be used to justify violence against women, which can have a negative impact on women's rights and wellbeing. Suggesting that cultural practices are sometimes used to defend violence against women, which can lead to moral relativism, where violence is justified on cultural grounds, even though it is a violation of human rights.

Moreover, the authors suggest that culture is often wrongly used as a protective factor for women who experience domestic violence. This perpetuates the idea that cultural practices

are neutral, rather than acknowledging that they can be harmful and must be scrutinized (Dupont & Sokoloff, 2005: 42).

Cultural practices should not be used to excuse or justify violence against women. Rather, they should be examined critically to determine whether they promote or hinder women's rights and well-being. In this way, we can avoid using cultural relativism as an excuse for violence and instead work towards creating a society that respects the rights of all individuals, regardless of their cultural background (Ibid.). Some women might even use culture as an excuse for the violence the perpetrator is doing. In the interview with Rita she mentions her experience meeting this with taboo and shame *“Depending on their background, it is considered, that I can allow myself to say, it's considered a taboo to be, you know, it's a bit of a, there's shame in it and so on.”* Rita further elaborates with:

*Usually people have common friends with her partner, she has common friends and network and so on. And it so happens that in some cultures, or should, I don't know if it's cultures or whether it's religion or, but definitely in whatever, you know, conditions, people, systems they have, you know, then the woman would miss that. And the problem is too, the challenge was always that for the woman to get in touch with that network they had, first of all, should be, you know, it appeared should be ashamed.*

The citation from my informant, Rita, reinforces the idea that cultural and social networks can impact a woman's ability to seek help and support when experiencing domestic violence. As Rita suggests, some women may be hesitant to reach out for help because of the shame associated with their culture or religion. I have experienced how taboo and shame makes the work at the shelter even harder due to the destruction it comes with it mentally.

The citation from Rita, reinforces the idea that social networks and norms can impact a woman's ability to seek help and support when experiencing domestic violence. As Rita suggests, some women may be hesitant to reach out for help because of the shame associated with their societal norms or values. It highlights the importance of examining the impact of societal norms and values on women's experiences of violence and their ability to seek help and support. The intersection of class and gender is also evident in Rita's experience at the domestic violence shelter. Her comment about the anonymity of the shelter and the fear of rumors getting back to a spouse highlights the economic and social vulnerabil-



ity of the women staying there. Women from working-class backgrounds may face additional barriers to accessing resources and support, which could make them more likely to return to a domestic violence shelter.

Danneskiold-Samsøe et. al. (2011) interviewed two women named Punida and Divani with backgrounds from Tamil in Sri Lanka. The women focus on honor in their interviews and the importance of keeping a good reputation. They talk about the fear of gossip (Danneskiold-Samsøe et. al. 2011:51). Punida grew up in a smaller village in Denmark with parents with refugee background. The Tamil town her parents grew up in was small and everyone knew each other and kept an eye on each other. Punida was allowed to have a few friends who were girls from the higher caste system. Punida describes her life as an open prison with strict regulations on the clothing she was wearing and behavior. She was often called a “hooker” if she was home later than 8pm (Ibid.). Her family believed in hierarchy in age. Meaning that, elderly men were allowed to hit younger women. Punida therefore experienced violence when she was growing up. She threatened her parents by telling the municipality how her life was at home. Her family then thought of this as a threat and decided to be even more violent to her. She then fled to a domestic violence shelter (Danneskiold-Samsøe et. al. 2011:52).

The aforementioned individual named Divani shares a similar upbringing to other women with the same name, in that they both faced familial apprehension towards gossip. This apprehension was so great for Divani that she refrained from confiding in anyone about the domestic violence she endured throughout her 25-year marriage. Her family arranged her marriage without extensive knowledge of her spouse, who threatened her with death for seeking an education. Her husband even brought a knife to bed at night, instilling a sense of fear in Divani and preventing her from sleeping soundly. Divani notes that it is uncommon to encounter women of Tamil descent who have not been subjected to spousal abuse (Ibid.). Divani chose to leave her spouse after she gave birth to her first child. Within the Tamil community, there were rumors circulating that this individual had become too “Danish” in her behavior. As a result, she felt compelled to leave her spouse and sought refuge in a domestic violence shelter. After a brief period, she relocated to a separate city from her spouse and obtained her own apartment. Her spouse occasionally visits her to spend time with their child whom they share custody of (Ibid.). Danneskiold-Samsøe et. al. (2011) mentions how rare that specific situation is. Out of the 40 interviews conducted,

only one individual chose to remain in the shared living arrangement with their spouse, while the spouse moved out. Danneskiold-Samsøe et al. (2011) highlights that studies indicate that in Tamilian culture, women are expected to primarily fulfill domestic duties within the household. Deviating from these expectations, particularly by demonstrating impurity or infidelity in a marriage, carries significant repercussions not only for the individual woman but also for the family as a whole (Danneskiold-Samsøe et al. 2011:52-53). If the rumors come around that a Tamilian woman is not living with her husband, no one wants to come near the “bad women” (Ibid.).

The interviews with Punida and Divani highlight the intersection of class and gender in their experiences of domestic violence and social control. Punida grew up in a working-class family with a refugee background, while Divani's family arranged her marriage to a man she didn't know well. Their experiences of violence and social control were shaped by their social class backgrounds and the expectations of their community. Working-class women like Punida face challenges when it comes to domestic violence, as they may have fewer financial resources to leave abusive situations and may be more socially isolated. Punida's experience of being called a "hooker" for being out past 8 pm suggests that her community may have had stricter social norms around women's behavior, which could have contributed to her sense of confinement and social isolation.

Similarly, Divani's arranged marriage and lack of education suggest that her family may have had more traditional views on women's roles and value in society. Her decision to leave her spouse and seek refuge in a domestic violence shelter shows her resilience and agency, despite the social and economic barriers she faced. I have myself experienced these examples in my work at the shelters. Especially at the shelter I worked at called Rosenly specialized domestic violence shelter. At this shelter the target group was women who had experienced honor related violence. These shelters are specialized due to the specific target group and its specialized needs. The specialized needs are something like security and a deep understanding in patriarchy and norms within these different backgrounds.

Danneskiold-Samsøe et al. (2011) draws on the cases of Punida and Divani to suggest that controlling women, particularly in terms of their sexuality, remains a significant issue within Tamilian culture in Denmark. Additionally, the caste system governs the permissi-

ble partners for women in marriage. Tamilian women's upbringing is centered on preparing them to be good wives, maintain a positive reputation, and prioritize physical appearance. The authors argue that the reluctance of Tamilian women to participate in the study (only two women agreed to be interviewed) can be attributed to a fear of rumors and social repercussions.

Rita experiences similar issues related to rumors in her professional work at the domestic violence shelter “(..)And secondly, they, because when you live in a shelter, in most cases, it is anonymous. I mean, they are under protection. So, they were always worried if the rumor, if the message will get to the husband (..)”. Looking at the differences in the context of race in intersectionality, it is interesting to look at differences of a Tamilian woman living at a domestic violence shelter and in which sense they are more likely to re-return to a domestic violence shelter compared to a ethnic Danish woman. There are a few aspects when looking at the intersection of race. Especially in the context of rumors and how this affects not only the women but also her family for a Tamilian woman.

It is important to acknowledge that race intersects with other identities, such as gender and culture, to shape experiences of discrimination and oppression. In the case of Punida and Divani, their Tamilian ethnicity is a key factor that shapes their experiences of domestic violence and the challenges they face when seeking help and support (Crenshaw, K., 1991:1245-1250).

Compared to white Danish women, Tamilian women in Denmark may face additional challenges in seeking help and escaping from abusive relationships due to cultural and social factors. For example, the caste system and traditional gender roles in Tamilian culture may restrict the permissible partners for women in marriage and limit their options for seeking help. Additionally, Tamilian women may face stigmatization and shame within their community if they leave their spouse or seek help for domestic violence, as they risk being labeled as "bad women" and losing their social status.

Moreover, Tamilian women may also experience racism and discrimination within mainstream Danish society, which can further complicate their experiences of domestic violence and seeking help. Racism and discrimination can make it more difficult for Tamilian women to access resources and services, as they may face language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and a lack of awareness about their unique needs and experiences. Rita's

experience working at Charlottenlund shelter sheds light on the intersection of race and gender in the context of domestic violence. As she explains, “(..) *And secondly, they, because when you live in a shelter, in most cases, it is anonymous. I mean, they are under protection. So, they were always worried if the rumor, if the message will get to the husband (..)*”. This fear of rumors and potential consequences highlights the unique challenges faced by Tamilian women in Danish society. Despite the anonymity provided by a DVS, Tamilian women may still face repercussions from their community if rumors about their situation reach their husband or others in their community. This fear can make it difficult for Tamilian women to seek help and leave abusive situations, further perpetuating the cycle of violence.

In contrast, women with Danish background may not face the same level of scrutiny and consequences from their community for seeking help and leaving abusive relationships. This highlights the intersection of race and gender in the context of domestic violence and the unique challenges faced by women from different cultural backgrounds. Understanding these differences is crucial for developing effective interventions and support systems for survivors of domestic violence from diverse backgrounds.

The fear of rumors and social repercussions is a significant concern for Tamilian women, as their culture places a high value on reputation and maintaining a positive image. This fear may make them more likely to return to a DVS if they feel their safety is at risk, as they may not have as many resources or support networks outside of the shelter. As Rita mentioned in her interview, Tamilian women at a DVS may be more worried about rumors reaching their abuser, which could further jeopardize their safety.

On the other hand, women with Danish background may not face the same cultural pressures or fears of social stigma, which may make them more likely to seek support from other sources, such as friends or family, rather than returning to a DVS. Additionally, they may have greater access to resources such as financial stability or legal aid, which could help them leave an abusive situation permanently. However, it is important to note that each individual's experiences and circumstances are unique, and intersectionality involves considering the multiple intersecting factors that contribute to their experiences and outcomes. The issue of domestic violence is complex, and it is compounded for immigrant women who rely on their partners for legal status information. This power dynamic often

makes women with other backgrounds than Danish more vulnerable to spousal violence. Even if a woman is a permanent resident, she may continue to suffer abuse under the threat of deportation by her husband. This threat can be especially effective in silencing women who have no independent access to information, including those who are economically disadvantaged. The intersectionality of race, gender, and class in this context means that immigrant women who experience domestic violence may face multiple barriers to accessing resources and support. For instance, they may not have the language skills or knowledge of the legal system to seek help, and they may also face financial obstacles. This can result in women returning to domestic violence shelters multiple times as they struggle to break free from the cycle of abuse (Crenshaw, K, 1991: 1248). Beside the interview with Rita, I also want to draw attention to the interview with Jane who talks about resources. Jane mentions “*Some of them do not have any network beside the women they meet at the shelter.*” Meaning that, some of the women do not have any network due to their new startup in their life. In my observations at the specialized shelter for survivors of honor-related violence, I have witnessed how women forge their own support networks within the shelter. Remarkably, even after transitioning out of the shelter, they continue to maintain and rely on these self-created networks. This phenomenon demonstrates the vital importance of fostering connections and solidarity among survivors. By cultivating these networks, women can find ongoing support, understanding, and empowerment as they navigate the challenges of their post-shelter lives.

The women Danneskiold-Samsøe et al. (2011) interviewed were all four married to men with Middle Eastern background. Danneskiold-Samsøe et al. (2011) explains that these women experience similar issues with honor related violence as women with Middle Eastern Ethnicity. A woman from Romania named Delia explains that her boyfriend would decide which clothing she would wear also if she was allowed to wear make-up. Delia would then ask her boyfriend as a joke if she should wear a scarf around her head. He would tell her no but she should not show her body to anyone.

In contrast, white women with Danish background may face different challenges in seeking help for domestic violence, but they may not face the same cultural and social barriers such as Tamilian women. Danish women may have greater access to resources and services, but they may still face stigma and shame for leaving their spouse or seeking help for domestic violence. In my experience I have seen how this language barrier carries a lot of

difficulties working with the women at the shelters. Based on my experience working at the shelter, the frequent need for interpreters during meetings with women who do not understand Danish or English presents numerous challenges. Ensuring the clarity and accuracy of translations adds complexity, and the additional cost incurred by the shelter further compounds the issues. I have personally witnessed the implications of these language barriers, which hinder effective communication and place further work on both the staff and the shelter's resources.

## 9.0 Conclusion

The research of which women who re-return has investigated the professionals' perspectives which highlights the significance of recognizing and addressing the experiences of women from diverse backgrounds in the context of domestic violence support organizations. The professionals interviewed provided insights into the potential differences in how women from different backgrounds engage with domestic violence shelters and how their experiences may vary depending on the women's background. Marlene's observation about women with Danish backgrounds potentially being better able to handle abuse on an outpatient basis suggests the influence of cultural networks and support systems. This observation underscores the importance of considering intersectionality and the various factors that shape women's experiences of violence, including race, class, and gender.

Karen's statement challenges the misrecognition of women's experiences of violence based on individual differences. By emphasizing that violence is about control and its psychological impact, Karen highlights the universality of the psychological effects of abuse regardless of background or appearance and the same goes for Jane. This recognition of the shared experiences of women who experience violence emphasizes the need for support organizations to value and prioritize the needs and experiences of all survivors.

Furthermore, Marlene's acknowledgment of a potential lack of knowledge and communication regarding women from diverse backgrounds underscores the importance of continuous learning and improvement within domestic violence support organizations. By recognizing the significance of intersectionality and the unique needs and experiences of women from different backgrounds, organizations can ensure that their services are accessible, relevant, and effective for all women who seek help.

Women returning to domestic violence shelters can be attributed to the complex interplay of emotional attachment, manipulation, recognition, and rights. The belief in the abuser's love and the difficulty in recognizing unhealthy dynamics contribute to their return. Online communication intensifies the challenge, with abusers using social media to intimidate and manipulate the women. Especially women who share their kids with the abuser are especially vulnerable for re-returning. Additionally, women who have contact with their abusers during their stay, without having shared children, reflects a lack of recognition of their right to safety and autonomy.

The research sheds light on the complex factors contributing to women's re-return to domestic violence shelters. Work emerges as a crucial aspect of individual and collective integration, impacting mental well-being and self-realization. Economic concerns and the need for employment before leaving the shelter highlight the significance of recognition through work and its contribution to self-esteem. Building social networks is also crucial for women who lack support systems due to their abusive relationships. Additionally, this research highlights the challenges faced by Tamilian, Romanian and Middle Eastern women, such as limited agency, traditional gender roles, and the fear of social repercussions.

The experiences of women returning to domestic violence shelters are influenced by multiple intersecting factors, including gender, race, and class. I have through my analysis revealed that norms, practices, and societal expectations play a significant role in women's need to re-return to a domestic violence shelter. The concept of intersectionality helps understand how these factors intersect and contribute to women's experiences of violence and their ability to seek help and support. Cultural practices can both justify and perpetuate violence against women, while societal norms and values can create barriers for women who have lived at a domestic violence shelter once. Additionally, the intersectionality of race, gender, and class highlights the specific challenges faced by women of color and those from low-income backgrounds, including additional barriers to accessing resources and support. Addressing domestic violence requires a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics and structural inequalities that contribute to violence against women.

## 10.0 Perspectives

In this chapter, I will explore different perspectives on the topic of which women re-return to a domestic violence shelter. Through an analysis of existing theories and empirical research, I aim to shed light on the ways in which these perspectives can deepen my understanding of women's experiences of domestic violence. I will shortly give a perspective in this section on how different perspectives can offer insights into the research field of my chosen topic.

In the context of my research question on women's re-return to a domestic violence shelter and the use of Honneth's three spheres, it's worth looking at Nancy Fraser who has offered a critical perspective on Honneth's theory of recognition.

Fraser argues that Honneth's theory is overly focused on the interpersonal level of recognition and fails to fully address the broader structural and institutional factors that contribute to social injustice. According to Fraser, recognition cannot be understood in isolation from the distribution of resources and power in society. She contends that recognition struggles must be linked to struggles for redistribution and political representation to achieve meaningful social change (Fraser, N., 2001:21-42).

When examining women re-returning to domestic violence shelters, I have thought about how social stigma and its impact on individuals' help-seeking behaviors and which perspective this could have given my research. Erving Goffman's concept of stigma offers a valuable perspective in understanding the experiences of women from diverse backgrounds, who may face challenges and forms of social stigma (Goffman, E., 2009). It would be intriguing to investigate how a stigma affects the women's experiences within the shelter and how it shapes the interactions between the workers and the women would be an interesting theoretical research approach. According to Goffman, stigma refers to the discrediting attributes or characteristics that individuals possess, leading to their devaluation and in some cases exclusion from the larger society. In the context of domestic violence, women who seek support from shelters may encounter various stigmatizing factors, including cultural stereotypes, prejudices, and societal norms that perpetuate victim-blaming attitudes. Furthermore, professionals may even stigmatize the women without being aware of it (Ibid.).



For women with different backgrounds, such as Tamilian and Middle Eastern women, their identities can intersect with the stigma associated with domestic violence. Cultural norms, expectations, and gender roles within their respective communities may contribute to additional layers of stigma and barriers to seeking help. The fear of judgment, rejection, or community backlash can prevent these women from leaving abusive relationships or seeking support when they do re-return to domestic violence shelters (Ibid.). Moreover, cultural factors such as language barriers, lack of culturally sensitive services, and limited knowledge about available resources can further exacerbate the stigma and hinder these women from accessing the assistance they need. The interplay between different backgrounds and stigmatized experiences of domestic violence creates a complex dynamic that potentially can influence women's decision-making processes and their likelihood of re-returning to shelters (Ibid.).

I have learned through my experience that we have three knowledge departments that have established the framework for what we commonly refer to as the "violence expertise field," such as Danner, Levudenvold and LOKK. Among other things, they have defined the types of violence that professionals can employ in their work at the shelters. Which I describe in my research in chapter 3.4 in this research. Tools such as the Circle of Security, the violence cycle, and conversation guides for discussing experienced violence, both for adults and children, have been developed. There is even a conversation guide for what is referred to in the violence expertise field as the "perpetrator." Personally, I am certified in conducting risk assessments for what we refer to in the violence expertise language as "violence victims" - in other words, the individuals residing in the shelters. Looking at this, it would be interesting to create a discourse analysis on the language which is created and involve the women themselves on how they experience these tools. Furthermore, using a poststructuralist approach into the historical and power field of violence and how this has affected how the shelters work today.

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## Appendix

### Interview Guide for professionals

*Semi-Structured Interview Guide: Exploring the why do women re-return to Domestic Violence Shelters*

#### Introduction:

- Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the interview.
- Explain that the interview is confidential and that the responses will be used for research purposes. May I record the interview? If yes, explain the purpose of this.
- Obtain informed consent from the informant

#### Section 1: Background and Professional Experience

- Ask about the informant's professional background and experience working with women in domestic violence shelters.
- Ask about the informant's current role and responsibilities within the shelter.

#### Section 2: Understanding of Women Who Re-Return to Domestic Violence Shelters

- Ask the informant to describe their understanding of the phenomenon of women who re-return to domestic violence shelters.

- Ask about the factors that contribute to women re-returning to domestic violence shelters.
- Ask about any patterns or trends that the informant has observed among women who re-return to shelters.

### Section 3: Interventions and Support for Women Who Re-Return

- Ask about the interventions and support that are offered to women who re-return to domestic violence shelters.
- Ask about the effectiveness of these interventions and support in addressing the needs of women who re-return.
- Ask about any challenges that the informant has encountered in providing interventions and support to women who re-return to shelters.

### Section 4: Reflections and Recommendations

- Ask the informant to reflect on their experiences working with women who re-return to domestic violence shelters.
- Ask about any recommendations that the informant has for improving the support and interventions offered to these women.
- Ask if the method chosen at the DVS works no matter the background of the women.
- Ask about any changes that the informant would like to see in the current system of addressing differences in backgrounds in the DVS.

### Conclusion:

- Thank the informant for their time and participation in the interview.
- Explain the next steps in the research process.
- Provide the informant with a summary of their responses if desired.



## Consent given to the informants

**Purpose:** The purpose of this research study is to explore the experiences of women who re-return to domestic violence shelters. Your participation in this study is voluntary and will involve a semi-structured interview.

**Confidentiality:** All information collected during the interview will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes. Your responses will be recorded and transcribed for analysis. The transcriptions will be kept confidential and will only be accessible to the researcher.

**Duration:** The interview is expected to last approximately one hour.

**Compensation:** You will not receive any compensation for participating in this study.

**Risks and Benefits:** There are no known risks associated with participating in this study. The benefits of participating in this study include contributing to the understanding of women's experiences with re-returning to domestic violence shelters and potentially improving the support and interventions offered to these women.

**Withdrawal:** You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw, any information that has been collected will be destroyed.

**Contact Information:** If you have any questions about the study or would like to receive a summary of the results, please contact the researcher at [inserted my information].

**Consent:** I have read and understand the information provided in this informed consent proposal. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

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[Participant Signature]

Date: [Insert Date]