Fencekeeping Dynamics: Denmark's Repatriation Policy and the Social Construction of Refugees and Immigrants

Masters Thesis

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the paradigm shift in Danish integration policy in 2019, from, through Bacchi's (2009) analytical approach of "What is the problem represented to be." It combines the theoretical frameworks of Gullestad's (2002) Imagined Sameness and Schneider and Ingram's The Social Constructions of the Target Group. The analysis elucidates the shift from integration to repatriation and self-sufficiency in Danish immigration policies and how policymakers rationalize integration strategies based on social constructions of refugees and immigrants, resulting in policies that stigmatize especially Muslims as less deserving of social inclusion and welfare benefits. Additionally, this thesis illustrates the silencing of refugee and immigrant voices and the disregard of integration progress within policy, emphasizing how governmental priorities of self-sufficiency overlook integration achievements. The findings reveal the complex interplay between policy and societal expectations, creating invisible fences for certain refugees and migrants in Denmark. These findings are then further discussed and compared to insights from other literature and scholars.

This thesis contributes to the broader debate on immigration policy, social exclusion, and power dynamics, offering nuanced insights into the challenges faced by refugees and immigrants in Denmark.

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1. Introduction & Research question

Around the world, immigration is gaining attention as numerous countries are having difficulty regulating the flow of individuals at their borders (Szczepanikova & Criekinge, 2018). As a result, countries implement, in some instances similar and in others differing, immigration policies reflecting the social norms and interests of the country (European Migration Network, 2022). This range of strategies brings attention to the ongoing debate regarding the most efficient way to control immigration, while upholding human rights and addressing national security issues. A strategy which is applied by some countries, to encourage refugees to exercise their right to repatriation (Department of Justice, 2024; Government Offices of Sweden, 2023; Københavns Kommune, n.d.). Repatriation is defined by international law as the right to leave and return to their native country: "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country," according to Article 13(2) of *the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UN General Assembly, 1948). This fundamental right of being able to emigrate and return, illustrates the universal right of freedom of movement (UN General Assembly, 1948). As governments navigate the complexity of contemporary immigration, application, and interpretation of the right to repatriation demonstrates the fragile balance between personal freedom and state interests. As a result, the right to voluntarily return is increasingly encouraged in several countries, with some also offering economic support (Department of Justice, 2024; Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, n.d.; Migrationsverket, 2023a), here among Denmark.

Over the last few years, immigration regulations in Denmark have changed significantly, especially regarding repatriation. The aim of integrating refugees, immigrants, and their descendants into Danish society, while preserving social cohesiveness has historically shaped Denmark's immigration policy (Breidahl et al., 2021). Moreover, there has been an apparent shift in favor of encouraging voluntary return in recent years since the paradigm shift in 2019 (Rytter et al., 2023). This paradigm shift introduced amendments to the Aliens Act, the Integration Act, and the Repatriation Act, among others (Rytter et al., 2023). This comprehensive set of legislative changes soon became known as the "paradigm shift" in Danish immigration policy. The law marked a shift from decades of prioritizing the integration of refugees into Danish society to focusing on their self-sufficiency and repatriation (Rytter et al., 2023).

Shortly after the paradigm shift, the Danish government established the Danish Return Agency (DRA), after ending their prior cooperation with the International Organization for Migration's Assisted Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration initiative (IOM UN Migration, n.d.). The Danish government has further implemented targeted initiatives to encourage repatriation, such as financial incentives as well as mandatory conversations with specific immigrant groups (Lovforslag nr. L 215 2020-21). This raises various ethical and practical questions and concerns of what rationales exist for these rules and what impact will these measures have on the people they are intended for.

To fully explore the implication of the new repatriation strategy, we will apply the theories of The Social Constructions of the Target Group by Schneider and Ingram (1993) and Imagined Sameness by Gullestad (2002). These respective theories will help us understand the political rationales behind the paradigm shift and further how the shift can cause implications for refugees, immigrants and their descendants.

To properly structure our research, we will utilize Bacchi's (2009) approach to policy analysis "What is the Problem Represented to be" (WPR). This methodological approach facilitates critical examinations of the repatriation law, enabling us to go beyond superficial understandings of the represented problem.

Through the combination of our theoretical frameworks and methodological approach we will explore the repatriation law around the timeframe of the paradigm shift and its possible impact on refugees and immigrant's integration processes in Denmark.

This leads us to the following **research questions**:

 How does the repatriation law socially construct refugees and immigrants in Denmark, and what are the implications of these constructions following the paradigm shift from integration to repatriation and self-sufficiency?

- *What was the driving political rationale behind this paradigm shift?*

1.2 Context of research

Voluntary repatriation, also called voluntary return, refers to the refugee's right of return to their country of origin *(European Commission, n.d., a)*. Throughout this thesis, we will use the word "repatriation", to refer to voluntary repatriation. Against the backdrop of increasing migration flows and evolving asylum policies, the exploration of voluntary repatriation strategies employed by European nations unveils a complex interplay of political dynamics. Voluntary repatriation has garnered significant attention in recent years amidst increasing migration flows and evolving asylum policies across Europe (Szczepanikova & Criekinge, 2018). This section briefly delves into the repatriation approaches of Ireland, Sweden, Germany, illuminating the diverse strategies.

Ireland

Ireland's repatriation system offers individuals the choice between covering costs themselves or seeking financial and administrative assistance (Department of Justice, 2024). Polakowski & Quinn (2022) outline Ireland's emphasis on voluntary repatriation, facilitated through programs such as AVRR, and Irregular Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration overseen by IOM. In Ireland, an individual can be granted up to € 1200 (approx. 8.953 dkk), and a family can get up to € 2000 (approx. 14.923 dkk) (European Migration Network, 2022). While Ireland provides monetary support, Ireland's approach prioritizes voluntary return over deportation orders (Department of Justice, 2024).

Germany

Since 2017, Germany has assisted persons with poor possibilities of asylum acceptance by offering financial incentives to encourage their voluntary repatriation. Individuals who voluntarily withdraw their asylum petitions are granted € 1200 (approx. 8.953 dkk). Those whose applications are denied, but do not appeal, receive a € 800 (approx. 5968 dkk) reduction (Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, n.d.). Germany's strategy is to prioritize voluntary returns over forced returns, by creating financial incentive for the target group to voluntarily repatriate before their applications have been processed (Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, n.d.). This incentive is strengthened by Germany's StartHilfe programme, which is a reintegration financial supplement, that is solely for individuals that voluntarily repatriate (Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, n.d.).

Sweden

In contrast to Germany, Sweden adopts a targeted approach to repatriation. In Sweden only individuals that voluntarily repatriate to the following countries: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, and Lebanon, amongst others, are eligible to receive financial support (Migrationsverket, 2023a). The support is solely intended to aid the individuals which may face challenges in reestablishing themselves due to security concerns. The authorities can offer up to approx. 73.673 sek (47.933 dkk) for a family (Migrationsverket, 2023a). Sweden is, as of 2023, attempting to increase encouragement to voluntarily repatriate for individuals awaiting asylum status or residency permit by furthering financial incentives and assistance (Government Offices of Sweden, 2023).

Denmark

In the Danish context, it is notable that, in addition to having travel costs, insurance, and school fees among other expenses related to repatriation covered, a single individual can be granted a maximum of 144,900 DKK, and an additional 44,193 DKK per child (Københavns Kommune, n.d.). Which is a significant increase compared to the other countries. In addition, mutual for Ireland, Sweden and Germany is the collaboration with IOM, which ensures that the right support is provided for voluntary repatriates (IOM UN Migration, n.d.). Denmark was previously a part of the collaboration from 2003 to 2017 where they ended their partnership with IOM's Assisted AVR and AVRR department (IOM UN Migration, n.d.). Furthermore, while Ireland, Sweden, and Germany employ varying repatriation strategies, each with its own motivations, they all prioritize voluntary return over deportation orders. While one could argue that Denmark's strategy also entails this, the target group of eligible individuals can imply otherwise. This will be further examined in the analysis.

By contextualizing Denmark's policy shifts with broader societal attitudes towards immigrants and the construction of them, this thesis attempts to unveil the intricate interplay between migration policies and social constructions. The Danish paradigm shift towards prioritizing repatriation and self-sufficiency, meaning not being on welfare benefits, underscores the significance of understanding how perceptions of immigrants as the 'others' shape migration discourse and policy-making processes through targeted policy initiatives.

1.3 Glossary

IOM - International Organization for Migration

AVR - Assisted Voluntary Return

AVRR - Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration

DRA - Danish Return Agency

DNI - Migration and Integration Statistics

2. Theory

2.1 Philosophy of science

To understand how this thesis is formed, this section will consider the epistemological perspectives, namely empiricism and interpretivism. Christopher Lamont (2015) contends that empiricism and interpretivism should not be viewed as two separate and distinct epistemological approaches, but rather as a continuum. This section will therefore examine which of the two epistemological perspectives outlined by Lamont are reflected throughout our research, and which one our thesis reflects the most. However, firstly, this section will present the two epistemological perspectives. Afterwards, how the theories are reflected amongst the epistemological perspectives will be presented, to designate our epistemology. Finally, this section will delve into this thesis' ontological question.

According to Lamont, empiricism (also known as positivism) is founded on the idea that knowledge is derived "through experience and observation" (C. Lamont, 2015). Meaning, that there is an objective truth from which the researcher is distinct, and that hypotheses are falsifiable. (C. Lamont, 2015). Furthermore, Lamont defines interpretivism (also known as post-positivism) as attempting to reveal the assumptions that underlie the empiricist image of the world, implying that this epistemological approach is more focused on social aspects such as identities, ideational factors, and culture (C. Lamont, 2015).

When looking at our epistemological approach, interpretivism allows us to evaluate how various aspects of repatriation law might influence the representation of the problematized target group. Which correlates with the chosen theories of Marianne Gullestad's (2002) Imagined Sameness and Anne Schneider & Helen Ingram's (1993) Social Construction of the

Target Group, who in their respective manners, illustrate how social constructions of individuals or groups interplay with power dynamics. Both call for the examination of the ways in which societal narratives and power structures shape, and are shaped by, social constructions. The combined utilization of the two interpretivist approaches will result in a deeper understanding of the repatriation law. It allows us to delve underneath the surface of the law, by allowing us to examine underlying social processes and power relations. Therefore, taking an interpretivist epistemological perspective allows for a more in-depth examination of the relationship between the repatriation law, social constructions, and power relations. It emphasizes the significance of considering the societal aspects in which this law exists within, to have a more complete understanding of its effects. Our general epistemological considerations means that this thesis uses an inductive reasoning style. According to Alan Bryman (2012), this style of reasoning is when a researcher attempts to elucidate a phenomenon by gathering a particular set of data to examine patterns or themes. Thus, as mentioned earlier, this thesis explores how underlying social constructions influences targeted policies, which simultaneously, indicates power imbalances.

This section will introduce and explain the philosophical underpinnings of social constructivism. Social constructivism illuminates how our perceptions of reality are shaped by social influences, underscoring that what we consider "knowledge" is constructed within social contexts (Riemann, 2023). According to Darin Weinberg (2014) social constructivism is traditionally not attached to philosophical underpinnings, as it is known for rejecting unbalanced notions of knowledge. However, Weinberg argues that social constructivist researchers have been influenced by philosophers such as Emilé Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx among others (Weinberg, 2014). Weinberg furthers this argument by stating that Weber's emphasis on understanding social action from an actor's perspective is significant for establishing subjective meaning as a subject of study within social sciences (Weinberg, 2014). Durkheim, who commonly is associated with positivism, influenced constructionist research by arguing that the system of classification reflected how societies are organized (Weinberg, 2014). In other words, Durkheim contended that classification mirrors societal structure, creating a basis for a relativistic approach. Marx initially illustrated how individuals unknowingly can contribute to their oppression through false consciousness, which later was then expanded on by philosophers such as Antonio Gramsci (Weinberg, 2014). Gramsci's expansion of Marxism argued for how powerful actors influence societal norms by linking

legitimacy of ideas to power structures (Weinberg, 2014). According to Weinberg (2014), this link between societal norms, knowledge, and power has been a significant contribution to constructionist research. In sum, social constructivism does not seek a universal truth or a truth that can be considered objective, rather, it rejects it.

Looking into the ontology, as mentioned above, according to social constructivism there is no objective truth. Everyone's reality is formed from experiences, different contexts and social norms. The ontological question in our study is to identify interests, power, and understandings found in the repatriation law. Meaning, that we will attempt to identify how other's ontological reality intersects with their perception of reality. Thus, an understanding of reality progressively becomes the truth through replications, the truth in question is in this research viewed as an interaction between power and knowledge (Pedersen, 2012). Science frequently plays a prominent role in power struggles because scientific information is widely regarded as more impartial and unbiased. However, according to social constructivism, this cannot be the case because information is never objective (Pedersen 2012). Thereby, the nature of this research is to examine how social constructions - By utilizing the theoretical lenses of Imagined Sameness and Target Group - have influenced the problem representation in the Danish repatriation law. Thereby, we view targeted policies, such as the repatriation law, to be influenced by social constructions made on the target group, because of power imbalances. Which is why it was decided to do a policy analysis that calls for an understanding of underlying power structures, how it can affect individuals and what purpose it attempts to serve in between the lines.

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks

To illustrate how social constructions have influenced the repatriation law, we will apply the theories of Imagined Sameness and The Social Construction of the Target Group as our theoretical lenses, to limit our subjectivity within the research scope, to make sense of our sense of reality within the context of the policy. A theoretical perspective can function as a lens towards understanding and explaining phenomena. It can be defined as a set of assumptions about the world which pervades through the questions asked and how they are answered (Pearce, 2020; Crossman, 2020).

The Imagined Sameness framework provides important concepts and theories towards understanding the social construct of immigrants in the Nordic Countries and thus, Denmark is included. However, Gullestad's (2002) theory does not include how these social constructs matter in policy making. Therefore, this thesis will draw on Schneider & Ingram's theory of the Social Construction of Target Groups and its implication within policy making, to interlink social constructions to the context of policy. In other words, the thesis will apply the theories of Imagined Sameness and The Social Construction of the Target Group as our theoretical lenses, to make light of our sense of reality within the context of the policy.

2.2.1 Social Construction of the Target Group

This following section will explain Schneider & Ingram (1993) and Schneider & Ingram & Deleon's (2007; 2014) theory of the Social Construction of the Target Group. The section will begin with an explanation of the meaning of Social Construction and Target Group. Thereafter, policy design and how the Social Constructions of the Target Group are significant to our theoretical framework will be explained. The section on policy design, will introduce the concepts of *rationales* and *policy tools* which will be implemented throughout the analysis. Lastly, the different kinds of Target Groups based on Schneider & Ingram's (1993) classification will be presented.

According to Schneider & Ingram (1993) the Social Construction of the Target Group is an important but generally overlooked phenomenon in the study of public policy. Explaining that: "*The social construction of target populations refers to the cultural characterizations or popular images of the persons or groups whose behavior and well-being are affected by public policy.*" (Schneider & Ingram, 1993, p.334). Meaning that persons or groups are not just a given, but instead constructed and perceived a certain way from the perspective of policymakers and the public. These social constructions are based on certain assumptions about a particular group created through politics, culture, socialization, history, media, literature, religion etc. (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). While all citizens are supposed to be equal before the law, there is sufficient evidence that they receive dissimilar treatment in public policy (Schneider, Ingram & Deleon, 2007; 2014). This can be explained by how public policymakers generally socially construct groups in either positive or negative terms and consequently distribute benefits or burdens in reflection and perpetuation of these

constructions (Schneider, Ingram & Deleon, 2007).

Policy design - rationales and policy tools

Policy identifies the groups of people based on how the group is socially constructed, and whether it is negative or positive (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Meaning that the social construction has a powerful influence on the public makers and thereby their approach, agenda, choices, and hence the *policy design*. The design of policies will further depend on the political power of the target group, political power referring to the amount of influence and visibility in the political agenda (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Accordingly, *rationales* are an important part of the policy design as they serve legitimate policy goals by logically connecting means to ends for the policymaker (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; Schneider, Ingram & Deleon, 2007; Schneider, Ingram & Deleon, 2014). For example, if a target group is positively constructed and has a sufficient amount of political power, policymakers will be more likely to solve problems affecting this group or distribute benefits as it will be rationalized as a positive (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Adding to that, the *policy tools* applied will depend on the rationales of the policy. Policy tools, in other words, the elements of policy, are designed to encourage the target group to follow the policy or take advantage of the opportunities it offers. Policy tools can thereby add benefits or burdens when encouraging certain behavior, for example in the form of economic incentives towards achieving goals or solving problems (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). On this account, Schneider, Ingram & Deleon (2007) highlight the idea that problems are viewed as interpretations of conditions which have been subjectively defined as problematic, demanding some kind of improvement. The problem is thereby seen as a political estimation mostly based on values and rationale (Schneider, Ingram & Deleon, 2007).

The Target Groups and their constructions

To further examine how target groups are constructed, we have included Schneider & Ingram's categorization of the target groups as seen on Figure 1. As it appears, the target groups can be placed within four categories: *advantaged, dependents, contenders, deviant*s. The categories are decided depending on whether the target group is seen by policy makers as having either weak or strong political power, and whether their social construction is positive or negative.

Figure 1: Social Constructions and Political Power: Types of Target Population: advantaged, dependents, contenders, deviants. Illustrating whether they are weak or strong and/or positively or negatively constructed (Schneider & Ingram, 1993, p.336).

As explained, Social Constructions are important in how policymakers design their policy, rationationlize and implement policy tools. The social constructions can, for example, influence reelection strategies when public officials consider both the target group's reaction to a policy and the broader public's perception of whether that group should benefit or lose from it; depending on whether they are negatively or positively constructed. The electoral impact of a policy proposal depends on the target group's power such as voting potential, wealth, their mobilization potential, and on the public's approval, or disapproval, of the policy favoring, or disfavoring, that group (Schneider & Ingram, 1993).

The first target group that will be presented possess the most political power along with a positive construction, the ***advantaged***. As a result of this social construction, this group will have their agendas recognized by policymakers and wield considerable influence (Schneider & Ingram, 1993, p. 335; Schneider, Ingram & Deleon, 2014). The rationale being that their group is considered worthy, deserving and/or contributing to society or the general welfare (Schneider, Ingram & Deleon, 2007). Schneider & Ingram (1993) explains that the beneficial policy for the advantaged groups will be exceeded almost every time including positive rules, spending, and political resources. Again, because of how policymakers see the group as worthy, deserving, and powerful having the resources to mobilize or perhaps withdraw important votes or wealth.

On the opposite side of the advantaged is the **_deviants_**, which are regarded as being in the least favorable position of all the Target Groups, as they are viewed as politically weak and have a negative social construction (Schneider & Ingram, 1993, p.336). In some areas they make up a permanent underclass and are blamed for many of the problems within the society (Schneider, Ingram & Deleon, 2014). Here, the opposite rationale from the advantaged is present, as policymakers view deviants as unworthy, undeserving and/or not contributing to society or the general welfare (Schneider, Ingram & Deleon, 2007). Therefore, policymakers do not have much motivation or perceived social pressure towards providing beneficial policies, as the group has very little power, wealth or support to mobilize. Such motivation or perceived social pressure can be a result of either societal pressure or personal positionality. As a result, the deviants have almost no control over the political agenda and will be the targets of punishment policy (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Historically the politics of punishment has dominated a lot of the politics towards deviants, such as illegal immigrants. Policymakers tend to gain a lot of political capital from punishing those without power or the resources to respond and whom the public find undeserving (Schneider, Ingram & Deleon, 2014). As a result, the extent of burdens put onto deviants will be illogical from the perspective of policy effectiveness and further exceed what is required to achieve effective results (Schneider & Ingram, 1993).

Regarding the **_contenders_**, which are powerful but negatively viewed, several implications are present (Schneider & Ingram, 1993, p.335). As a result of the group's political power, public officials will grant benefits towards the contenders. However, because they are negatively perceived by the public as selfish and untrustworthy, these benefits will be hidden and only be noticed by the members of the group (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; Schneider, Ingram & Deleon, 2014). Policymakers will even push policies upon the contenders whom the public and media might view as burdens but in reality, are not (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). This is because the contenders are powerful and have enough power to disrupt the pressure of burdens, however, not enough power to gain visible benefits because of the negative construction. Additionally, the manner of the policy may depend on the extent of media and public attention. During the times the contenders receive low public attention, policy will tend to be more beneficial with low visibility and with low effectiveness regarding solving problems. Conversely, when the public attention increases, which is likely if an unpopular group is active, policy might become more burdensome for the contenders (Schneider & Ingram, 1993).

The ***dependent*** group is positively constructed but lacks political power (Schneider & Ingram, 1993, p.338; Schneider, Ingram & Deleon, 2014). As a result, officials want it to appear as they are aligned with their interest. However, their lack of political power gives less incentive to direct resources towards them, as they do not have a strong role in the creation of national wealth. As a result, symbolic policies might be used to show concern but without allocating resources or with a receipt of benefits (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; Schneider, Ingram & Deleon, 2014). Policies towards dependents tend to be made in the lower levels of government and the benefits dependents receive, are often passed down by other agents. In turn, dependents have very little control regarding the policy designs (Schneider & Ingram, 1993).

Contested Groups

As explained in the *Introduction,* our target group consists of those affected by the repatriation law and is a consequently wide group. Regarding our research, the target group could be referred to as minorities presented as *contenders* or *deviants*. However, these placements do not necessarily reflect all realities. According to Schneider & Ingram (1993), some might view minorities as oppressed and would argue for policies that are catered towards *dependent* people, or others would portray minorities as undeserving of government help. Political debates may lead to more nuanced distinctions, dividing groups into deserving or undeserving. Schneider & Ingram exemplify this, highlighting immigration policy. Immigration policy would differentiate between illegal aliens, refugees, migrant workers, groups seeking asylum, and highly skilled workers (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). The target group, about Danish integration policies, would possibly place differently depending on the policy and the policymakers' goal. This notion can be referred to as *contested groups* referring to groups which cannot be solely placed within one group (Schneider, Ingram & Deleon, 2014; Kreitzer & Smith, 2018). To properly explore the essence of *contested groups* we will introduce the work of Kreitzer & Smith (2018).

Kreitzer & Smith (2018) undertake a cross-case validation of Schneider & Ingrams theory, by examining the theory, to uncover to what degree high levels of consensus emerge around politically relevant groups. Kreitzer & Smith highlight how Schneider and Ingram themselves, as well as several scholars across disciplines, have provided empirical evidence for the theory's usability. However, they also argue that the evidence has been relying on textual analysis and case studies, and there has not yet been a systematic, cross-case

validation of the categorization of various target groups. They explain that the methods suggested by Schneider and Ingram likely lead to much inconsistency in the categorizing process, especially for highly contentious groups (see also *Limitations* section 4.4). As a result, Kreitzer & Smith conducted a systematic, cross-case validation to investigate the theory's categorization. They found that at first glance most groups would be positioned where they were expected to, such as criminals as deviants, children as dependents, and doctors in the advantaged group. However, Kreitzer & Smith (2018) highlight that some groups were placed notably differently than Schneider, Ingram & Deleon did. As such, several groups' social constructions are clearly agreed on whilst others are more contentious. Some groups that receive consensus on one dimension but lack consensus on the other include veterans, terrorists, and illegal aliens. While society generally agrees that "illegal aliens" have limited political power, there is significant disagreement regarding their level of deservingness, that it could be due to how social constructions may change as circumstances and politics change. This might carry political implications, but the direction of these implications is uncertain (Kreitzer & Smith, 2018). For example, if undocumented immigrants are perceived as deviants, policymakers may enact punitive measures against them with minimal political repercussions. Conversely, if society regards them as dependents, different policy outcomes may emerge. Hence, in those cases where a group borders between two categories, or have consensus on one category but not another, will make outcomes of the policy process for these groups more difficult to predict.

The next section will explain Gullestads Theoretical framework of Imagined Sameness followed by a section of the two theories combined and how they will be applied in the analysis.

2.2.2 Imagined Sameness

The theoretical framework of Imagined Sameness by Marianne Gullestad (2002) serves as a lens on understanding how individuals and groups construct ideas of similarities and differences with others or amongst groups. By utilizing this theoretical framework as a theoretical lens in combination with the theoretical perspective of Schneider and Ingram, will aid the thesis in analyzing the cause and intention of the repatriation law. The following section will examine the theories and concepts which constitute the lens of Imagined Sameness.

Invisible fences

Gullestads (2002) explains Imagined Sameness through the case of Norway, in which she highlights the relationship between egalitarianism, nationalism, and racism, finding it especially interesting in the context of Nordic countries. Through analysis of the immigration debate in Norway, Gullestad's article demonstrates how equality is perceived as "sameness" which maintains the growing ethnification of national identity, resulting in *invisible fences*. Invisible fences refer to how social order often is maintained through unrecognized boundaries (Gullestads, 2002, p.51, 55). Invisible fences therefore describe the often subtle social boundaries which exist within society especially in egalitarian countries, such as Norway. Gullestad describes the boundaries not as physical but constructed through cultural norm and everyday practices which creates systems of inclusion and exclusion. These boundaries are often not visible but influence integration by marginalizing those who do not conform to dominant cultural expectations. For example, immigrants can experience invisible fences hindering them in fully participating in society which in turn can affect other opportunities in their life (Gullestads, 2002) .

As mentioned in *Context of research* section 1.2, the context of our research is within Denmark. However, Gullestad (2002) also draws parallels to the rest of the Nordic countries throughout her article, highlighting the similarities between the countries including similar welfare states, culture etc. Accordingly, we deem her interpretations to be relevant and applicable in the Danish context with an applied skepticism towards certain very contextualized empirical observations or examples, some which have been excluded.

Gullestad (2002) highlights that egalitarian individualism often can be explained as a characteristic of the western world. However, a special emphasis on this can be found in the Nordic countries. Gullestad (2002) explains that this need to feel the same to be equal is particularly strong in the Nordic countries. Tocqueville (1969) has proposed that the idea "*(...)of equality easily leads to a search for identity, in other words to the idea that people have to feel that they are more or less the same in order to be of equal value*" (Tocqueville, 1969 cited in Gullestad, 2002, p.46). Gullestad (2002) highlights the value of the concept *likeness* (sameness) in Norwegian is a translation of 'equality'. This implies that people that do not execute likeness, do not fit in and can become a threat to peace. This can come forward through *avoidance,* meaning that differences are disguised in this way by avoiding persons who are considered 'too different' for whatever reason, and by downplaying them in

social interactions with those who are not regarded as compatible (Gullestad, 2002).

Host-guest relation

Gullestad (2002) also suggests the concept of the *host-guest relation.* Gullestad finds the question about being included in the "we" or "us" especially interesting. The we and us are implying those who "built" the "culture" and the immigrants taking advantage. Gullestads explains that the metaphor of a host-guest relationship often is applied to immigration in Norway and other European countries (Gullestad, 2002). According to Gullestad (2006), as a response to such factors as immigration and globalization, the idea of national identity has been reinforced. In this process *culture* has become increasingly important as it is important "*to feel secure in one's own culture*" (Gullestad, 2006, p.191.). This notion of culture also accompanies the expansion of the "foreign" and "strange" culture in regards to immigrants from non-western countries implying differences between "us" and "them", with their culture being alien and ours close and familiar (Gullestad, 2006, p.191.). This view on immigrants can thereby be seen as a host receiving guests in his home (Gullestad, 2002). Gullestad (2002) highlights this metaphor by pointing out the consequences for the distribution of power. The host has rights to control the resources of the home and to decide the rules of the visit and can decide when they believe the guest does not conform or is grateful. A guest can't provoke the host with the fear of losing their hospitality. The host provides "freedom" and material welfare, and the guest is expected to adopt the values of the host country: "*If the Muslims do not become 'like us', they had better return home*" (Gullestad, 2002, p.54). The minorities are therefore expected to learn and appreciate majority traditions and basic values; however the majority people do not feel the obligation to be interested in what immigrants bring with them. This dynamic creates a hierarchical relationship between the two groups in which the majority has the high point (Gullestad, 2002).

Overall, Gullestad's theoretical framework of Imagined Sameness offers a nuanced understanding of how individuals and societies navigate diversity and construct social identities. It sheds light on the complex processes through which people negotiate belonging, inclusion, and exclusion in multicultural contexts, while also acknowledging the role of power and social dynamics in shaping these processes.

2.2.3 Imagined Sameness & The Social Construction of the Target Group

The theoretical frameworks will be implemented variably in the analysis to elucidate how social constructions can affect the creation of policies in Denmark. Throughout the analysis, the most recurring concepts will be host-guest relations, invisible fences, target group, and policy rationales. Host-guest relations and invisible fences will be applied to showcase if and how notions of securitizing the welfare structure can result in the construction of a particular target group to implement a rationale for exclusionary policy. Target group and policy rationales will be applied regarding how policymakers view immigrants as a target group and implement policy accordingly.

3. Literature review

A literature review involves utilizing existing knowledge to explore a research question accomplished through a thorough examination of the literature within the subject (Aarhus Universitet, n.d.). Regarding exploring the research question further, the section seeks to highlight how the notion of integration has been discussed by scholars. Furthermore, the literature review will explore the notion of integration regarding the contemporary context of our case. Therefore, this section will, through selected scholars, explore the concepts of belonging, 'us' and 'them' or majority and minority, political discourse and the welfare state among others.

The presented notions in this literature will further be applied throughout the analysis in providing relevant insight into certain phenomena and discussions. In the end of this literature review, a short discussion of how this thesis contributes to the presented research scope.

To start off, this section will delve into a conceptualization of belonging and cohesion. Alsmark, Kallehave, and Moldenhawer (2007) discuss integration regarding how the intricate relationship between migration and belonging creates challenges for the Scandinavian welfare state. They highlight that belonging and cohesion are central aspects of migration that are continually negotiated and contested. As immigrant communities become more multiethnic and multireligious, new approaches are needed to manage diverse forms of social and cultural diversity and ambiguity. This is particularly challenging in Scandinavia, as it affects the organizational structures of welfare states and presents significant difficulties for

institutions responsible for maintaining the state's economic, cultural, and social cohesion (Alsmark, Kallehave, & Moldenhawer, 2007)

Sharing the notion, Mikkel Rytter (2019), provides a recent insight into the concept of integration within the context of Denmark. He draws on several authors, here among Gullestad's notion of "invisible fences", in his examination of "social imaginary". He explores the asymmetrical relationship between majorities and minorities in Denmark, illustrating the paradox of integration being desirable but also impossible (Rytter, 2019). Rytter (2019) includes the perspective of sociologist Morten Ejrnæs, who states that the meaning of integration is 'exceptionally unclear' (Ejrnæs 2002 in Rytter, 2019, p.681). In other words, Integration can refer to anything such as social integration into neighborhoods or educational institutions, or perhaps economic integration meaning participation in the labor market. In Danish discourse integration can therefore refer to both the 'means' - the process of getting integrated or the 'ends' - the absolute integration (Rytter, 2019, p.682.). Rytter explains that the concept of integration being unclear is not meaningless but quite the opposite, because integration can refer to either the means or the ends; it makes it more flexible and effective in Danish discourse when someone from the majority wants to do something to the minority (Rytter, 2019).

In this regard Sjørslev's (2011) examination of political discourse, concerning integration, entering the public debate and its implications, provides a further elucidation of the concept. She explains that integration is not a neutral concept as it is a highly politicized field, as the meaning differs according to changing attitudes and is further deeply grounded in cultural ideas. Integration as a concept has thereby played a big part in Danish politics. The need to integrate immigrants in Denmark has been used in election programs before, for example by Venstre, the liberal party, in coalition with the Konservative, the conservatives party, and supported by Dansk Folkeparti, the national conservative party in 2001, as an argument towards strengthening policies towards foreigners. In some instances, the debates contain strong anti-Islamic rhetoric describing muslims in highly derogatory terms (Sjørslev, 2011, p.80). Sjørslev(2011) highlights the author Azar (2001) and how he refers to the discourse of 'real' Swedishness (or in our instance Danishness) as a form of metaracism or multiculturalism (Azar, 2001 cited in Sjørslev, 2011, p.85.). Thus, immigrants have learned that becoming one of "us", and thereby being fully integrated, never can be determined by the immigrant.Instead they are decided by the majority, in which they wish to be integrated into

(Sjørslev, 2011). In this sense Azar describes how the immigrant cannot win as the decision to draw the line between us and them always is decided by the majority (Azar, 2001 cited in Sjørslev, 2011, p.85.).

According to Rytter (2019), integration is a component in the state's attempt to control and regulate the muslim immigrants of Denmark. As Muslims and Islam are being constructed as the opposite of Danishness, it is presented in public and political discourse as a "threat" to democracy, human rights, gender equality or freedom of speech - which are considered as central for Danish values and the welfare state. In this sense, integration promotes specific imaginaries of culture, race, and belonging that often disqualify Muslim immigrants and cast them as inferior and suspect (Rytter, 2019). Furthermore, the concept of integration is embedded in everyday discourse as a positive word, meaning integration is good and beneficial for society and that without integration society is in danger (Sjørslev, 2011).

The notion of the "society" being in danger leads us to our next author, Jöhncke (2011), who explores the complication when homogeneous welfare societies meet increasing migration. According to Jöhncke (2011), the Scandinavian welfare model stands out as one of the most extensive regarding policies which view the national population, toward which the state has obligations (Jöhncke, p.31). Until a few decades ago the population of Denmark was very homogeneous in terms of language, religion, and ethnic origin, this situation has changed due to increased immigration and international mobility. Consequently, a new form of political argument has begun with "who is it really the welfare state is supposed to provide for?" (Jöhncke, 2011, p.45.). Now that ethnic minorities have legitimate claims to welfare benefits, the notion of "the people" changes, Jöhncke therefore asks how "the people" can be defined now (Jöhncke, 2011, p.45.). Jöhncke further elucidates this development with the concept of a 'dual crisis' in European welfare states. He describes how evolving economic structures and policies lead to increased social exclusion, and when combined with shifting notions of nationhood and citizenship, this results in racialized exclusion. Jöhncke also highlights the problematic way in which the universalist welfare state tends to solve integration issues. Here, he refers to how the welfare system in Denmark has regarded the very status of being a refugee or immigrant, especially those from non-western countries, as a social problem itself. This has led to focus upon people's problems or incapacities instead of finding other solutions, turning people into clients of the welfare bureaucracy (Jöhncke (2011).

Rytter (2019) also explores the implication of the meeting between welfare and immigration, introducing the term welfare reciprocity. The scenario of welfare reciprocity is explained by Rytter as the mutual moral obligation to give, receive, and reciprocate gifts. According to Rytter, welfare functions as a gigantic mutual insurance scheme, where paying taxes becomes the proof of one's real contribution to society. Within this scheme lies the debate on whether migrants and refugees are entitled to the "insurance" such as welfare benefits, as the argument sounds, they have not contributed enough. According to Rytter, this rationale ignores unemployed Danes receiving support and the immigrants who have been working and paying taxes for decades. In relation to this Rytter introduces the term "Negative reciprocity", referring to the suspicion towards someone receiving resources that he or she is not entitled to, through cheating, stealing, or other kinds of amoral behavior. Rytter explains how these 'social imaginaries' regarding the minority can illuminate on how the majorities view the world and what they fear to lose by immigration (Rytter, 2019)

In regard to the last notion, this thesis will, complementary to the theoretical frameworks, apply the explanation of the different concepts examined in this literature review through our analysis. This literature review has provided further insights into the multifaceted concept of integration within the context of the research scope. By delving into the work of Alsmark, Kallehave, and Moldenhawer (2007), the challenges with migration, belonging, and social cohesion in multicultural societies have been highlighted. Rytter's (2019) examination of the paradoxical process of integration in Denmark further illuminates this. Unpacking further, Sjørslev (2011) contends that integration, as a term, has been utilized to fuel anti-Islamic rhetoric. Lastly, Jöhncke's (2011) examination of the Scandinavian welfare state's responses to increasing migration has caused a somewhat harmful intersection of welfare state ideals and national identity, which according to Jöhncke, can cause racialized exclusion from society.

In sum, this literature review provides thorough insight to existing literature exploring integration. This thesis' contribution to the literature will therefore build on the presented literature in combination with our theoretical frameworks in an aim to deepen the understanding of integration in Danish contemporary contexts, namely, the repatriation law.

4. Method

In determining our scope of research, it was imperative to select a case that would enable us to delve into the intricate dynamics of immigration policy and its societal implications, particularly within the context of the Danish repatriation law. Consequently, our thesis centers on analyzing the Danish repatriation law through Gullestad's (2002) Imagined Sameness, and Schneider & Ingram's (1993) Social Construction of the Target Group. To answer this question, the thesis will utilize Carol Bacchi's (2009) What is the Problem Represented to be? (WPR). To explain this thesis' methodology, this section will therefore explain our analytical strategy and our structural utilization of WPR, and how it correlates with our theoretical choices. Next, our data collection strategy will be explained. Lastly, methodological limitations will be discussed by addressing shortcomings in our analytical strategy and data collection.

4.1 What is the Problem Represented to be?

What is the Problem Represented to Be? (WPR), is a framework for policy analysis developed by Carol Bacchi, intended to critically investigate and reflect on how policies formulate and frame problems (Carol Bacchi, 2012). The WPR examines institutionally and culturally reinforced interpretative and conceptual frameworks, or in other words, discourses, within a policy (Bacchi, 2012). Bacchi emphasizes the significance of identifying the conceptual schemes that influence our impressions of problems and events. Meaning that, to fully comprehend a policy's underlying scheme, one must identify how events are perceived by others, essentially, how their reality is shaped.

Malte Riemann (2023) illuminates how WPR provides researchers with an approach of studying policy that opens a method of investigation into areas that are rarely addressed in other approaches. It further provides a framework for examining gaps and silences in policy debate by asking what remains unproblematized in certain representations (Riemann, 2023). This aspect is essentially why WPR is a relevant method, in combination with our choice of theories. As Riemann (2023) points out, the method provides space and foundation for considering how an issue has become problematized, through the relations of power involved in the discursive framing of problems and their emerging solutions (Riemann, 2023). The relations of power and the discursive framing being explored to an extent through Gullestad's

(2002) Imagined Sameness, and further investigated through the Social Construction of the Target Group.

4.2 Analytical strategy

 Regarding structuring our analysis we will apply the following formulated questions found in Bacchi's (2012, p.22) WPR:

A. *"What's the 'problem' represented to be in a specific policy or policy proposal?"*

B. *"What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the "problem"?"*

C. *"How has this representation of the "problem" come about?"*

D. *"What is left unproblematic in this problem representation?"*

E. *"What effects are produced by this representation of the "problem"?"*

F. *"How/where has this representation of the "problem" been produced, disseminated, and defended?"*

The analytical structure of this research project will be based upon the order of these questions. This structure provides a critical methodological tool which can be applied in policy analysis (Riemann, M. 2023; Bacchi, 2023a). The WPR approach argues that policies contain implicit representations of the problems they wish to solve. The approach is a method that facilitates critical examinations of these implicit problems within policy, to analyze how the "problem" is represented by asking an array of questions (Riemann, M. 2023; Bacchi, 2023b). Fundamental to Bacchi's methodology is understanding that policies are socially produced via problematization processes, rather than being objective. Instead of assuming that there is a problem in a clear-cut, objective form, WPR asks, "What's the problem represented to be?" to compel academics to examine the rhetorical techniques and discursive methods used to define and frame policy challenges.

The thesis will utilize WPR to analyze how repatriation is portrayed in the policy discourse, looking at the language, stories, and symbolic representations that sway public opinion toward repatriation legislation. We want to highlight underlying power dynamics, ideological biases, and discriminatory practices that influence the development of the repatriation policy by analyzing the discursive production of the issue.

Although the thesis utilizes Bacchi's analytical methods and insights, it will not exclusively draw on her conceptual framework or wider theoretical presumptions. Rather, we use WPR as a versatile analytical framework to enhance our more general theoretical framework of Imagined Sameness and the Social Construction of the Target Group.

As mentioned above, Bacchi (2012) presents six different questions which are asked towards uncovering what the problem is presented to be. The first question, A:*"What's the 'problem' represented to be in a specific policy or policy proposal?"(Bacchi, 2012, p.22).* This question is asked to identify what the implicit problem is, in a specific policy. This section will identify the overall goal of the policy, which simultaneously indicates what the problem is represented to be. In answering this question, we will remain on a surface level. This is due to our understanding of the question being rather introductory and will serve as a natural introduction to the policy itself.

The second question, B:*"What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the 'problem'?"(Bacchi, 2012, p.22).* This question is asked to identify and analyze the specific representation of the problem. According to Osbourne (1997) "policy cannot get to work without first problematizing its territory" (Osbourne, 1997 cited in Bacchi, 2023b). Meaning that, policy is a product of problematizing an area and concurrently governing it. Problematizing, therefore, serves as a useful starting point for reflecting upon the processes of governance and to understand the presuppositions or assumptions the policymakers have about the problematized target group.

The third question, C: *"how has this representation of the 'problem' come about?"*(Bacchi, 2012, p.22). The aim of this question is to recognize the conditions which have allowed the representation of the problem to take shape and obtain significance (Bacchi, 2012). To answer this question, a historical context of a particular political shift in Danish politics will be included, namely the paradigm shift in immigration policy in 2019. To delimit the historical timespan, we found that the paradigm shift, not only reflects a significant change but, can lead us to much relevant data that can highlight how the problem representation has come about. Furthermore, as Bacchi's WPR calls for a discourse analysis, this question will be answered with a particular focus on the paradigm shift from 'integration' to 'self-sufficiency and repatriation'.

The fourth question, D: *"What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the 'problem' be thought about differently?"*(Bacchi, 2012, p.22). The aim of this question is to highlight which narratives are prevalent in the shaping of the representation. To answer these questions, this section will examine potential silencing of narratives within the context of the repatriation law. Furthermore, the section will attempt to demonstrate how other actors have attempted to combat the policy, to illustrate which silences are made, and how the problem can be thought about differently. In this question, we will highlight indications of which narratives are promoted within the context of the paradigm shift, as a natural bridging from question three. We found this necessary to thoroughly understand which power dynamics are at play.

The fifth question, E: *"What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'? Discursive effects, subjectification effects, lived effects"*(Bacchi, 2012, p.22*)*. The goal of this question is to identify the effects of the specific representations of the problem, so it can be critically assessed (Bacchi, 2012). Here, the section will draw on data that may present lived experiences, as effects of the discourse surrounding repatriation and the subjectification of the word itself and examine the policy effect. We found it necessary to examine whether initiatives and policy regulations on repatriation have, in fact, been effective and affected the targeted group.

The last question, F: "How*/where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been (or could it be) questioned, disrupted and replaced? How could it be questioned, disrupted and replaced?"*(Bacchi, 2012, p.22)*.* The aim of this question is to present and examine statements, articles, or other sources that either criticizes or defends the repatriation law. To answer these questions, the section will firstly present criticism of the paradigm shift made by actors, such as civil society organizations. Thereafter, the analysis section will delve into political statements that defends the problem representation. Notably, this section will not examine how the problem representation has been produced, as this will be addressed in C: *"how has this representation of the 'problem' come about?"*.

Throughout the analysis, we will implement Gullestad's (2002) theoretical lens of Imagined Sameness and Scheider and Ingram's theory of the Social Construction of the Target Group (1993) when answering the question presented in the section above. We will implement the

theoretical framework in varying degrees determined by the question. As some of the questions ask for describing analysis rather than examination of aspects in the policy, the lens will be applied accordingly.

4.2.1 WPR correlation to theoretical framework

Through our theoretical framework and WPR structure, we can draw attention to the way social issues are framed and debated. Illuminating the underlying power structures that influence the formulation of public policy. Our ambition is that the theoretical framework will increase our understanding of the complicated relationships between citizenship, migration and belonging in modern society.

This can underline the importance of accounting for such aspects when researching policy. This means that the thesis will adopt Carol Bacchi's WPR as an analytical framework rather than a theoretical framework. Instead of putting out a predetermined set of theoretical claims, WPR offers a methodological framework for dissecting the ways in which policy challenges are identified, comprehended, and dealt with situations. To examine the underlying presumptions, power dynamics, and normative commitments ingrained in the discourse around repatriation law in Denmark, we utilize WPR as an analytical tool. We cannot solely claim that Bacchi's theoretical underpinnings will not be present throughout our analysis - As we believe this is not possible, as the wording of the questions and what they attempt to highlight, are embedded in theory. However, due to Bacchi (2012) sharing a social constructivist philosophical understanding, we find it possible to implement WPR in combination with Gullestad (2002) and Scheider & Ingram's (1993) theories. Consequently, enabling us to illustrate how social constructs may interplay in policy making.

Fundamentally, WPR challenges ideas of policies being objective, arguing that pre-existing ideologies and discourses influence social constructions. In other words, the representation of a problem in policies can alter the perception of certain groups and thereby influence society's perception of the problem. Accordingly, Bachhi (2012) urges researchers to critically examine underlying assumptions. By utilizing WPR we will examine the Danish repatriation law and contexts related to it, such as the paradigm shift of 2019, to reveal the power structures and discourses that produces the represented problem in the law, enabling us to go beyond superficial understandings of the represented problem.

4.3 Data collection

Before our research truly began, we decided to investigate the Danish repatriation law as our initial interest and knowledge of this law became the starting point of this research paper. Succinctly, the ambition was to understand the reason behind this law and its implications. As mentioned, we chose to structure our analysis based on the approach of *What is the Problem Represented to be (WPR)*, by Carol Bacchi (2012). Our research is based on desk research, where we utilize the WPR tool to structure the data collection. The first step, regarding the data collection, was to search, identify and choose as much relevant empirical data as possible, which could provide us with enough knowledge for us to utilize the analytical approach, with the aim of answering Bacchi's (2012) questions. We mainly used academic databases to streamline our data collecting method, since they offer academic materials that have undergone peer review. Through a review of the literature, we were able to construct an overview of the existing theoretical body of work within our specific field of interest. It was important for us to showcase that, although Marianne Gullestad's Imagined Sameness can for some be considered outdated, it is still very relevant within this field of research and still applicable in more contemporary contexts.

Regarding the primary data, we will examine the Danish repatriation law and data related to the law. To answer the questions, our analysis' structure will be based on, we found it necessary to find secondary data to provide further insights into context related aspects. As Bacchi's questions call for analysis of data relevant to the policy, but not the policy itself. For example, the following questions: C: *how has this representation of the 'problem' come about?* and F:*"How/where has this representation of the "problem" been produced, disseminated, and defended?* To effectively answer these questions, we will gather secondary qualitative data from academic journals, government reports, relevant legal documents, and statements made by relevant actors, such as ministers, involved with the policy making and its practice. Our overall data collection strategy will therefore be to access government reports and documents to gain insights into the development and implementation of the repatriation law. In addition, gathering data from policy briefs issued by organizational bodies will be included in the strategy, to aid us in understanding how the problem representation can and has been questioned. Overall, we will implement a wide array of data to illustrate context to the repatriation law, as WPR calls for a wider background and context related analysis.

As presented earlier, this thesis uses a wide array of sources which will all be utilized in a similar manner. More precisely, every source is used in a qualitative way, which means that - we have acquired materials that will let us conduct in-depth analysis of our case. It should be emphasized, nonetheless, that the qualitative approach does not imply that sources with quantitative data have not been selected; rather, as we are conducting a research based on social constructions, numeral data would be less significant when carrying out our analysis. Therefore, we have not prioritized such data while collecting data. However, in the last analysis section: 'E:*What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'? Discursive effects, subjectification effects, lived effects'*, we will draw on numeral data to underscore whether the paradigm shift has influenced refugees and immigrant's integration. To ensure the data validity, we have cross referenced between Integrations Barometer (Migration and Integration Statistics) and Danmarks Statistik (Statistics Denmark).

4.4 Limitations

In terms of limitations to our methodological approach, a primary concern while delimiting the scope and settling the case, was how we would mitigate bias. Despite utilizing multiple theoretical lenses and acknowledging that we will work interpretivist throughout our research, our interpretations of data are subject to personal biases. It is inherent in our research question, that we believe the voluntary repatriation law likely includes discourses that pertain to unbalanced power dynamics. This, of course, will interfere with the analysis and ultimately affect the findings. To mitigate this, we have stated our epistemological and ontological approaches, in hopes of underlining that we do not seek to make our findings generalizable, rather, we seek to showcase how social constructions affect policies.

More specifically, Mathilde, as an ethnic Danish person, gave insights into Danish cultural norms and values, whilst Emek, a Turkish second-generation immigrant, contributed knowledge about immigrant experiences and discrimination in Denmark. Although these various backgrounds contributed to the study, we acknowledge that inherent biases exist. Furthermore, Emek has formerly decided to not get dual citizenship, to avoid becoming a part of the policy's target group. We do embrace that there are some ways that can be an advantage, thus, we have insights. However, we do acknowledge that this can taint our interpretations.

In relation to Bacchi's WPR, the framework has some disadvantages. The discursive and interpretive elements that constitute policy analysis, are naturally emphasized by the WPR framework, may cause it to overlook more structural or significant problems that have an impact on policy outcomes. In addition, while WPR is a great tool for analyzing and dissecting policy representations, it does not provide much direction for advancements or recommendations. Although it recognizes and criticizes the framing of problems, it may not always offer a clear route for legislative change or workable solutions to the problems it highlights. Lastly, WPR offers a flexible tool for policy analysis, but how it is utilized might vary greatly depending on the situation. Without considerable modification, the findings from using WPR in one policy environment could not be easily transferred to another. The wider applicability and generalizability of the findings may be constrained by the heavy reliance on context.

5. Analysis

The analysis aims to shed light on issues within Danish integration. However, since Danish integration issues are broad and complex, the focus will be on the context of the repatriation law. To understand this topic, it is essential to comprehend the repatriation law, including its creation and purpose. Thus, as outlined in the methodology section 'Analysis Strategy', Bacchi's WPR approach will be employed to structure this section.

5.1 A: "What's the 'problem' represented to be in a specific policy or policy proposal?"

In this first question our intention is to fully introduce repatriation. Consequently, this first section will frame repatriation in the Danish setting.

The Danish repatriation law

To answer the first question, we must understand how the repatriation law is presented and catered towards. Retsinformation (2014), which is the official Danish access point to the public state-legislations, states that Danish law defines repatriation according to the regular international meaning of the term (Retsinformation, 2014). The International Law of Voluntary Repatriation is defined as follows; The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 Article 13.2 UDHR gives everyone the right "*to return to his country*" (UNCHR, n.d.,

p.1). This right was further incorporated into Article 12.4 of the International Covenant on Civil and political Rights "*No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country*" (UNCHR, n.d., p.1). International law further ensures the international protection of refugees owed by the states, by reaffirming the voluntary aspect of the law by guaranteeing non-refoulement (UNCHR, n.d., p.1). Non-refoulement refering to: *In the global context, a core principle of international refugee and human rights law that prohibits States from returning individuals to a country where there is a real risk of being subjected to persecution, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or any other human rights violation. (European Commission, n.d., b).* Furthermore, the European Commission refers to repatriation as "The personal right of a refugee or a prisoner of war to return to their country of nationality under specific conditions laid down in various international instruments and human rights instruments as well as in customary international law." *(European Commission, n.d., a).* A further guideline set by the UNHCR explains that*: "Repatriation must be voluntary (a free and informed decision), and should take place under conditions of safety and dignity."* This statement is also present at the European Commision: *"The returns have to take place in conditions of safety, dignity and security" (European Commission, n.d., b)*

According to Retsinformation (2014) the goal of the repatriation law is to provide people with the best possible foundation for deciding whether they want to repatriate and further strengthen the individual preconditions and opportunities to repatriate (Retsinformation, 2014). Defining repatriation as "*Repatriation is understood in this law as peoples voluntary return to their homeland or previous country of residence, with the objective of taking permanent residence"* (Translated from Danish) (LBK nr 1023 af 02/10/2019).

Who can repatriate
In regards to who the repatriation law refers to, the target group changes depending on the country. In the Danish context, according to Chapter 1, § 3 in the proclamation of the Repatriation Act, the repatriations law applies to refugees, etc., family-reunified foreigners with refugees, etc., other family-reunified foreigners (LBK nr 1023 af 02/10/2019). The law also covers foreigners who have been granted residence permits in Denmark under rules that applied before the udlændingeloven (Aliens Act) of 1983, or who are born in this country as descendants of these, as well as foreigners with residence permits under the law of temporary residence permits for persons who have assisted Danish authorities in Afghanistan. Additionally, the repatriation law provides some Danish citizens carrying dual citizenship

outside the Nordic, EU and EEA countries, who wish to repatriate to the home country or latest country of residency, with the opportunity to receive support for repatriation with the conditions that they surrender their danish citizenship (LBK nr 1023 af 02/10/2019).

Compared to other countries, the addition of offering repatriation to Danish citizens with dual citizenship seems unique to Denmark. Despite extensive research on several state websites, we were unable to find a definition of the target group for repatriation that includes persons holding dual citizenship on other states' official websites. For example looking at Sweden (Migrationsverket, 2023b. ; Migrationsverket, 2023c), Norway (UDI, n.d., a ; UDI, n.d., b), Ireland (Department of Justice, 2024) and Germany (Return, n.d.), we found no mention of persons with dual-citizenship being eligible for repatriation. The Danish decision to expand the target group to include those with dual citizenship came in March 2019 (Det Nationale Integrationsbarometer, n.d., a), around the same time as the paradigm shift. As a result Danish citizens with a dual citizenship in a country outside Nordic and EU member countries and countries within the European Economic Area (EEA), are eligible to repatriate under the financial incitement scheme (Hjemrejsestyrelsen, n.d.).

According to the guidance on the Repatriation Act (VEJ nr 9695 af 04/07/2019, 2.0):

"The purpose of the Repatriation Act is to provide individuals with the best possible basis for considering and potentially deciding on repatriation as well as to support repatriation financially. Additionally, the Act aims to enhance the individual's conditions and opportunities for repatriation." (Translated from Danish)

"The repatriation effort should be seen in conjunction with the integration efforts provided to newly arrived individuals. A successful integration process, where a person has maintained their agency, responsibility, and engagement in work, education, and leisure, forms a good foundation for returning to their homeland or a previous country of residence. Repatriation can also be a favorable alternative for individuals residing in Denmark who are poorly integrated into Danish society, offering them the possibility of establishing a better life in their homeland or previous country of residence." (Translated from Danish)
(VEJ nr 9695 af 04/07/2019, 2.0).

Similar definition is also found on Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriets (n.d.) website.

Consequently, the Danish repatriation law suggests an alternative to those who aren't well integrated, in which repatriation is suggested as a favorable solution for those who are not well integrated.

5.2 B: "What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the 'problem?"

This question aims to identify and analyze specific representations of problems. As outlined by Bacchi (2009) in *Methodology* section 4.1, policy is created by problematizing an area and concurrently governing it. Therefore, it is important to understand the presuppositions or assumptions policymakers have about integration issues and what they aim to govern. In this question, we will provide an overview of how the problem of integration has been framed, drawing on data leading up to the paradigm shift.

Measuring successful integration

Firstly, we want to understand how successful integration is measured, to underline what areas are problematized. According to the Danish Migration and Integration Statistics (DNI), there are nine areas in which successful integration is measured, It further appears on their website that they focus on immigrants and descendants of non-Western origin, mentioning that previous analysis show that this target group faces the greatest challenges when it comes to integration (Det Nationale Integrationsbarometer, n.d., b).

The first and second areas out of the nine, are focused upon ensuring that more immigrants and descendants are working and obtaining education, especially higher education. The third area refers to Danish language skills, in which special attention should be centered on ensuring that immigrants learn the Danish language. The fourth focus area is active citizenship, meaning that immigrants and descendants need to feel included and participate in Danish society. The fifth is focused upon more equal treatment of immigrants and their descendants meaning they should experience less discrimination. The sixth is self-determination. Meaning that fewer young immigrants and descendants should feel limited in their self-determination, and not be obligated to act against their own interest because of

family influence. The seventh area focuses on self-sufficiency, with the goal of fewer immigrants and descendants being on welfare-benefits. The eight that fewer vulnerable neighborhoods should exist, including parallel societies. The ninth and last area refers to crime, ensuring that fewer immigrants and descendants should be involved in criminality.

Consequently, these nine areas also indicate how policymakers measure integration, and consequently, what they measure as unsuccessful integration. In an article by Jyllands-Posten (2017a), various political parties responded to the question: "What is the biggest challenge regarding integration?".

The political spokesperson for the Socialdemokraterne **(S)** (Social Democrats), Nicolai Wammen, answered that many new Danes are doing well, but he also discerned parallel societies as a depiction of areas where people do not wish to be a part of Denmark. He additionally problematized social control of girls, gang conflicts, increasing radicalization and that too few women are working.

The party leader of the Radikale Venstre **(RV)** (Danish Social Liberal Party), Morten Østergaard, stated that among other things, the need to fight to get refugees into education and work from day one, achieve better integration, more equality, and reduce social control.

The group leader of the Det Konservative Folkeparti **(K)** (Conservative People's Party), Mette Abildgaard, mentioned the importance of accepting Danish culture, laws, and regulations if the wish is to reside in Denmark, and that too few immigrants become a part of Danish culture and an active part of society. In this context, she noted that unfortunately there are parts of Denmark where "our" shared values are not the norm, which has become a challenge.

The party leader of Nye Borgerlige **(D)** (The New Right), Pernille Vermund, stated that integration is a personal responsibility, not a public task, as it is now. She mentioned, among other things, that more people are on welfare due to poor education or lack of willingness to work. She also mentioned that Danish culture is under pressure referring to immigration.

The party leader of Dansk Folkeparti **(DF)** (Danish People's Party), Kristian Thulesen Dahl, stated that the challenge is, that too many immigrants, especially from muslim countries, have

shown to be difficult to integrate because they do not wish to let go of a culture, which very much contrasts Danish values. If integration is to succeed, it will need an effort from the immigrants. They must genuinely want to embrace Denmark – otherwise, integration will not happen.

Liberal Alliance's **(LA)** party leader, Anders Samuelsen, explained the importance of ensuring refugees become a part of the labor market to ensure integration into Danish society. He also remarked that it's problematic when too many people are permitted to rely solely on social welfare benefits to support themselves.

Socialistisk Folkeparti's **(SF)** (Socialist People's Party) party leader, Pia Olsen Dyhr, explained the biggest challenges as social control. Parallel societies and gang conflicts.

The political spokesperson for Venstre **(V)** (The Liberal Party of Denmark), Jakob Ellemann-Jensen, responded by noting the biggest challenges as being parallel societies and everything that follows. Explaining that it is a huge problem, if some areas are isolated from the danish society, in which every day life involves criminal activity, welfare benefits, and social control.

The political spokesperson for Enhedslisten **(E)** (The Red/Green Alliance), Pernille Skipper, explained the importance of helping refugees into the labor market and fighting social control. She noted that more resources are needed to tackle these issues.

The political leader of Alternativet **(A)** (The Alternative), Uffe Elbæk, explained that a more holistic focus is needed, in regard to family life and well-being, and that an overly narrow focus on employment might harm families' stability and well-being, being counterproductive to integration (Jyllands-Posten, 2017a).

Overall, the recurring themes among the political opinions on integration challenges were; integration of immigrants into the labor market, too many immigrants collecting welfare-benefits, presence of parallel societies and the importance of embracing Danish culture. These thematics correspond to several of the nine criteria presented by DNI, in which successful integration is measured, meaning that according to politicians these criteria are not fulfilled. These areas are, therefore, the aspects that policymakers are attempting to govern

and protect. Regarding the target group, DNI refers to immigrants and descendants with non-western origin as the focus areas of successful integration. Regarding the interview with the different political parties, the Danish People's Party (DF) are the only ones that associate immigration challenges to immigrants being mostly from Muslim countries. However, despite other party members not referring to immigrants as Muslims in this example, does not imply that Muslims are not the target group. Muslims are frequently framed by media and policymakers as being the group who are not well-integrated, some examples include spokesperson Nasar Khadar (K) describing that he sees more immigrants perceiving themselves in opposition to society. He calls for Muslims in Denmark to assimilate as Jewish people have done by not demanding special treatment (Jyllands-Posten, 2017b).

Religion as an integration challenge
In an interview, the now prime minister of Denmark, Mette Frederiksen (S), explains that religion hinders integration. Referring to Muslims in Denmark who, according to her, do not respect the Danish legal system and operate according to their own rules. She further explains that there are women today who are not part of the workforce because their religion dictates them not to, and that many young girls are subject to massive social control (DR, 2017).

A political negotiation session initiated by Marie Krarup (DF) and Martin Henriksen (DF) towards the minister for Immigration and Integration, Inger Støjberg (V), held December 5, 2018; presented Muslims as the target group (F 19 Om integration af muslimer, 2018-19). Marie Krarup (DF) asked a question to the Minister of Immigration and Integration, Inger Støjberg (V), how the minister thinks the integration is going, regarding immigrants from muslim countries, compared to other countries, and what ambition the government holds concerning them. Inger Støjberg (V) answered that the target group of non-western origin is mostly people from muslim countries and who the challenges revolve around. Explaining that the challenges are not about Germans, Americans or English people coming to Denmark, as this group quickly becomes part of the labor market, are self-sufficient and values a, so-called, Danish way (F 19 Om integration af muslimer, 2018-19).

Mattias Tesfaye (S) also commented on the debate, including an anecdote in which he mentions asking a young guy whether he felt more Danish or Turkish, to which he answered he felt mostly Muslim. Mattias Tesfaye explains that this statement worries him, because securing a belonging to "the danishness" is important, to prevent parallel societies. He further

states that more young people do not feel Danish and that it is "catastrophic". Mads Fuglede (V) also stated that it is especially immigrants or refugees from Muslim countries who possess different values than "us". Joachim B. Olsen (LA) explained that the share of people involved in the labor market is much lower among Muslims, that they do much worse in the education system and that their crime rate is much higher. He further states a multicultural society could be a success were it not for immigration from Muslim countries, thereby Denmark should not accept more immigrants from Muslim countries, if there are such big challenges with integrating "these" (F 19 Om integration af muslimer, 2018-19). Additionally, in February 2024 a proposal for a parliamentary resolution was suggested (and declined) by several party members from DF: "to abolish the official acknowledgment of the Islamic Religious community" (Translated from Danish). Further illustrating that policymakers see the Muslim religion as not compatible with Denmark (Forslag nr. B 110 2023-24).

Applying our theoretical framework, Schneider and Ingram (1993) explain how social constructions are based on certain assumptions about a particular group, which can be shaped by factors such as culture and religion (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). An essential aspect of Danish policymakers' focus on Muslim integration is the data concerning the extent to which Muslims are assimilating into Danish society. For example, there is a distinction between immigrants from MENAPT (Middle Eastern, North African, Pakistani, Afghani and Turkish) countries along with other non-Western countries, compared to those from Western countries. Assumably, the MENAPT countries are predominantly Muslim. Immigrants from MENAPT and other non-Western countries are generally seen as having weaker connections to the labor market and higher education (Danmarks Statistik, 2023; Det Nationale Integrationsbarometer, 2024b). According to Schneider & Ingram some of the most important motivations for elected officials is to produce public policies which will assist them in their reflection and further will be effective in tackling widely acknowledged public problems (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Consequently, politicians base their rationale in the importance of integration efforts in reducing the disparities between these groups. These gaps will be examined further in *Analysis* section E, to understand the significance of the issue.

Moving on, the assumption among some Danish policymakers is that Muslims do not integrate well into Danish society, due to their religion and values. As explained in *Theory* section 2.2, policy identifies the groups of people, based on the construction and, whether it is

negative or positive, policymakers will construct and implement policy accordingly (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Consequently, the Danish policymakers have constructed the Muslim target groups negatively, and therefore must implement policies to prevent unsuccessful integration. This debate of the target group leads to a theoretical point, regarding how political debates may bring about more nuanced distinctions, dividing groups into deserving or undeserving, which is often the case in immigration policy (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). It is clear from the rhetoric used, especially by Inger Støjberg (V) who distinguishes between groups of immigrants as the "Germans, Americans or English" and the Muslims. Here, she implies clear positive connotations to the prior group putting them in the *deserving* category and places Muslims in the *undeserving* category. These substantiations could argue that Muslims could be placed in the *deviants* group. Not only do they get negatively constructed but they are also framed as not contributing to society, by not being part of the labor market or accepting the "danishness". As examined in *Theory* section 2.2, Gullestad (2002) states that the idea of people feeling the need to be the same to be equal, is significantly present in the Nordic countries. Gullestad (2002) also includes the possible significance of religion, or more specifically the interplay between Islam and Christianity. The idea of this sameness and kinship constitutes the "us" of the "moral Christian" perspective. According to Gullestad, the fear of transformation of society into a Muslim state has a big impact on the debate of sovereignty (Gullestad, 2002). Gullestad's idea is that the Nordic countries "fear" muslim religion, or culture, gaining too much power in society. According to Gullestad (2006), "culture" now replaces "race" in the rhetoric among the political right with the discourse surrounding cultural differences. These differences are often depicted as irreconcilable, often arguing the view that different groups should live separately, each where they 'belong'. In the instances where this view is connected to institutional power, it may be a basis for discrimination and exclusion (Gullestad, 2006).

Furthermore, the effort to address some of the integration challenges are also present in the paradigm shift in 2019. The paradigm shift included amendments to several laws, including specifically the Immigration Act, the Integration Act, the Act on Active Social Policy, the Repatriation Act, the Municipal and Regional Election Act, among others (Lovforslag nr. L 140 2018-19). In regard to the Immigration Act, the wording in § 7 and § 8 is changed to indicate that residence permits are granted for the purpose of temporary residence. Furthermore, integration programs and integration benefits were renamed to self-sufficiency and repatriation benefits, and to transition benefits (Lovforslag nr. L 140 2018-19).

Additionally, the final bill also included paragraphs regarding integration efforts, in accordance with the fundamental values and norms of Danish society (LOV nr. 174 af 27/02/2019). These efforts are stated to be achieved by, firstly: The foreigner's responsibility for their own integration. Secondly, ensuring that newly arrived foreigners have the opportunity to participate on an equal footing with other citizens in the political, economic, occupational, social, religious, and cultural life of society. Thirdly, contributing to newly arrived foreigners becoming self-sufficient as quickly as possible through employment. Fourthly, an understanding of the fundamental values and norms of Danish society to each foreigner (LOV nr. 174 af 27/02/2019).

The paradigm shift thereby enforced the concept of repatriation by making it a central part of the integration effort. It further places the responsibility of successful integration on the immigrant by putting emphasis on self-sufficiency and being understanding of Danish values and norms. This law was voted in favor by S, DF, V, LA, and K. Those who voted against were E, A, RV, and SF (Lovforslag nr. L 140 2018-19). This shows how some policymakers might view the paradigm shift as potentially helping integration challenges. This paradigm shift illustrates a clear push towards letting refugees know that they are only in Denmark temporarily if they do not accept Danish norms and values. When applying the theoretical framework, one can argue that the emphasis and strengthening of the repatriation law further enforce the notion of the host-guest relation, suggested by Gullestad (2002). Repatriation could be interpreted as making it even more difficult for the "guests" to become a part of Denmark. To further comprehend this shift, the following section will delve into events that led to this.

5.3 C: "How has this representation of the 'problem' come about?"

In continuation of the addressed integration issues and problem representation, WPR asks for a wider context based analysis that examines "How has this representation of the 'problem' come about?". Therefore, this section will examine the events that have allowed the representation to assume dominance. This section will firstly link Denmark's termination of its collaboration with IOM's AVRR initiative to the paradigm shift of 2019, in order to highlight the significance and broader motivation behind this shift. Furthermore, this section examines the establishment of DRA as a response to the paradigm shift that emphasizes the

government's commitment to prioritizing repatriation as a key component of its integration strategy. The establishment of DRA will also function as the link between the ending of the collaboration and the paradigm shift. Thereafter, the section will delve into the paradigm shift itself, and lastly, present and analyze the 2021 regulation of the repatriation law, that entailed municipal guidance duty.

Ending collaboration with IOM's AVRR initiative
This section will examine Denmark's decision to end its collaboration with the IOM's AVRR initiative in 2017. This decision serves, in this analysis, as a catalyst for exploring Denmark's broader paradigm shift in its approach to voluntary repatriation.

The termination of Denmark's partnership with the IOM's AVRR initiative can call for questioning relating to the promotion of voluntary repatriation among rejected asylum seekers. Despite Denmark's previous collaboration with IOM in facilitating voluntary returns, the rationale behind this policy shift remains underexplored, highlighting a gap in scholarly research. For the sake of transparency, we did reach out to IOM's office in Denmark in hopes of it leading up to some sources on why Denmark decided to end its collaboration. (See Appendix 1) IOM Denmark responded by stating that it might have been in relation to the establishment of the Danish Return Agency (DRA).

In investigating this, reading into the IOM's own definition of what makes a migrant - which is stated to be eligible for receiving AVRR aid - is that a "migrant" in IOM context refers to people moving from their usual place of residency, domestically or internationally, temporarily or permanently, for different reasons (IOM, n.d.). Through this definition, one could argue that this might present a controversy between Denmark and IOM's approach to voluntary repatriation. As the target group for voluntary repatriation in Denmark include individuals with dual citizenship. As mentioned in *Analysis* section B, the Danish target group entails individuals with dual citizenship. This presents a potential controversy between IOM's definition and the Danish repatriation law, thus, in the Danish context an immigrant does not refer to people moving from their usual place of residency. In other words, the Danish repatriation law also targets, amongst others, people born and/or raised in Denmark. Therefore, one could argue that Denmark's decision to end the collaboration with the AVRR initiative may have been prompted by concerns pertaining to AVRR's lack of correlation with its migration policies and goals. Such inconsistencies could potentially lead to

challenges for Danish policymakers when implementing policies, which in turn could weaken the voluntary repatriation policy's process in praxis, affecting the policy's objectives. Therefore, one can view the establishment of DRA as an alternative to hinder said inconsistencies.

Paradigm Shift

The DRA was established in 2020, and was a part of a decision made in September 2019, to transfer responsibility for tasks related to immigration to the Ministry of Immigration and Integration (Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet, 2022). Before, it was handled by multiple agencies, the Ministry of Justice, and the police (Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet, 2022). Thereby, making it relevant looking into the political climate in Denmark from 2017, where the collaboration ended, until the establishment of DRA. In other words, one can delve into Denmark's paradigm shift in 2019, which was discussed in early 2018, to explore that particular political change and strategy.

Rytter et al. (2023) explains the phrase "integration" was deleted from the Aliens Act and replaced with "repatriation and self-sufficiency" to underline the political goal of relocating refugees to their home countries as quickly as possible, after the paradigm shift. It is, furthermore, stated that several experts claimed that the paradigm shift was a continuation of the developments that occurred during the refugee crisis in 2015 (Rytter et al., 2023). In addition, is it stated that the DRA was then established under the Immigration and Integration Ministry, to ensure logistics and effectivize repatriation processes (Rytter et al., 2023). Moreover, Rytter (2023) argues that ideals of the welfare state and being a 'monocultural' country has for a long-time encapsulated the national identity politics. This national identity was challenged by immigrants, ultimately questioning the "National Order of Things" (Malkki 1992 cited in Rytter 2023). The concept of the "National Order of Things" refers to a sedentarist metaphysics that roots individuals in soil, which is challenged by newcomers, who are then viewed as liminal beings. In other words, refugees and immigrants are within the 'National Order of Things' viewed as un-rooted people, that threatens the national order (Lisa Malkki, 1992). This has caused, amongst other things, several statistics that continuously measure the integration of immigrants, their descendants and 3rd generation descendants under categories such as 'criminality', 'employment', and 'education' (Det Nationale Integrationsbarometer, n.d., c). Meaning, that one could argue that such sedentarist views of individuals are manifested through monitoring, that may cause exclusionary practices. Thus,

the measurement of the aforementioned groups can stipulate a liminal existence of these individuals which, in turn, can be viewed as a reflection of the state's concerns for stability. Moreover, Rytter (2023) takes a grammatical approach to the construction of the national identity and measurement of immigrants and their descendant's integration. This shift was utilized into a more constant strategy to discourage immigrants and their descendants from becoming a part of society. Meaning, that such grammatical connotations become a security measure, utilized by the government, to reinforce societal boundaries in maintaining national identity (Rytter, 2023).

As shortly mentioned above, this change of wording from "integration" to "repatriation and self-sufficiency" was presented by politician Inger Støjberg (V) in parliament in 2019, as a part of a financial agreement between the then governing parties; V, LA, and K, and the supporting party DF (Lovforslag nr. L 140 2018-19). In relation to the presentation of this, the former front person of Radikale Venstre (RV), Sofie Carsten Nielsen, asked the Minister for Immigration and Integration at that time, Inger Støjberg (V) through a public correspondence if the proposal meant that there would be focus on deporting well-integrated refugees and if this meant that immigrants that have shown that they want to stay in Denmark can potentially be deported (Støjberg & Fabricius, 2019). The former minister, in sum, replied by stating that the bill highlights a new approach that emphasizes that refugee's presence in Denmark is temporary and that the fundamental position, is that refugees should return to their home countries when they no longer require protection, along with their families (Støjberg & Fabricius, 2019). Voluntary repatriation, thereby, went from being an alternative to being the goal, thus, pertaining to Gullestad's notion of 'avoidance'. According to Gullestad (2002), the notion of avoidance is manifested through practices of downplaying individuals that are considered 'too different'. This shift also symbolizes a significant reinforcement in host-guest relations. As mentioned in the theoretical chapter, the host, in this instance the formerly elected government, exercises their right to control and implement rules concerning the guests visiting. Furthermore, Gullestad sets-forth a notion amongst nordic countries based on 'integrate or return home' (Gullestad, 2002). She does so by arguing that if a refugee or immigrant fails to comply with the host's regulations, they can be categorized as an intruder. This categorization, according to Gullestad, sets a notion of "home" being a metaphor for nation, which creates an invisible fence between home or nation, and the outside world or foreign visitors (Gullestad, 2002).

As the paradigm shift brought along repatriation as a goal, it established a boundary between the nation and foreign visitors. Which, as suggested by Sofie Carsten Nielsen (RV), as presented above, could cause a well-integrated refugee being positioned in a temporary status in Denmark, despite showing interest in staying and contributing to Danish society (Lovforslag nr. L 215 2020-21). This shift, additionally, reflects a broader shift in power between the host and guest. The framing from integration to repatriation, stipulates a depiction of temporariness amongst individuals targeted by the law, regardless of their contributions to society - Which inevitably is a result of assortment of control by the government. Nonetheless, in this context, the positioning of refugees and immigrants in society is more dependent on the host's policies and less on their actions or efforts to integrate - This, in turn, could affect incentive to integrate amongst targeted individuals.

Municipal guidance duty

To increase the number of individuals voluntarily repatriating, the Social Democratic government presented a regulation to the repatriation law in 2021. The former minister of immigration and integration, Mattias Tesfaye (S), presented a regulation on municipal guidance duty in regards to repatriation (Lovforslag nr. L 215 2020-21). The regulation aimed to encompass 8,500 eligible individuals, who had resided in Denmark for an extended period without employment, receiving financial assistance for at least one and a half years within the past three years. (Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet, 2021). The regulation would entail that every individual, included in that target group, would be obliged to report to their local municipality every two years, being subjected to a conversation on voluntary repatriation (Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet, 2021).

In relation to this regulation, Tesfaye stated the following:

"We will have to be more honest and direct. Some immigrants have been on cash benefits for a long time. They have never succeeded in becoming part of society. Perhaps it would be better for everyone if they returned home to their own country.
I am therefore pleased that we are now introducing a dedicated return home conversation, where we can talk about the possibility of returning home voluntarily with financial support from Danish society." (Translated from Danish)
(Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet, 2021).

This regulation caused a more specific targeting of eligible individuals. By targeting unemployed individuals, the policy regulation attempted to further the economic incentives of the repatriation law. As mentioned in *Analysis* section B, this targeting reflects the underlying reproduction of imagined sameness, as it reinforces the idea that self-sufficiency is akin to belonging in Danish society. The addressed "they" in the quote have therefore not succeeded in becoming a part of society, thus, it is depicted in a manner where a belonging individual would be employed. This notion of the working individual being a belonging individual is not a new phenomenon, as a functioning welfare state is based on tax-funding. Alsmark, Kallehave, and Moldenhawer (2007), states that such phenomena of the intricate relationship between integration and belonging, stipulates a challenge (See section 'Literature Review'). They argue that this stipulation affects organizational structures in welfare states and presents significant difficulties in maintaining the state's economic cohesion. Furthermore, in Marianne Gullestad's case study on Norway, she argues that ideas of who is included in "we" in Norway stems from who was a part of constructing, building, and contributing to the 'welfare state' in a manner where it has been conceptualized to encapsulate imagined sameness beyond ethnicity (Gullestad, 2002).

Furthermore, Koefoed (2015) argues that Denmark, which is often seen as a peaceful and cohesive nation, has for a long time prided itself on solidarity, reinforced by its welfare state. He furthermore states that, that particular image has been tested by a shift towards a security-focused state, changes in public services and in political and economic power, that has culminated in discussion about national belonging based on a threat of the 'others' (Koefoed, 2015). Thereby, participation in society is closely associated with the welfare state, which is emphasized as a collective effort achieved through taxation. Meaning, the welfare state has become a concept that views welfare as a community built on engagement and solidarity Where an important aspect of the said engagement and solidarity is expressed through employment and taxation.

As displayed in the quote by Tesfaye (S), this regulation illustrates how ideals of the welfare state allow this representation to come about. The motivation to regulate the repatriation strategy is based on who is contributing to the welfare state and who is not. As presented in the Literature review, Rytter (2021) contends that welfare functions as an insurance scheme, where the economic contribution made by an individual reflects their contribution to society overall (Rytter, 2021). This scheme lays grounds for determining which groups in society are

entitled to welfare benefits and vice-versa. This link of financial support and voluntary repatriation also reinforces the idea of self-sufficiency as a condition of belonging, which simultaneously, normalizes a notion that belonging, and inclusion are only possible within the boundaries of one's own country. This logic, according to Rytter (2021), fails to consider immigrants who have been working and paying taxes for decades, as well as jobless Danes who are getting welfare benefits. Notions, as expressed by Tesfaye (S), stipulates a distrust towards people receiving benefits, particularly if they are a part of the targeted group. Jöhncke (2011) extends this by highlighting how such arguments fuel a form of political debate surrounding who the welfare state should aid and benefit. Thus, refugees and immigrants, namely ethnic minorities, now have claims to such benefits, the idea of the Danish core citizens becomes regulated to secure the welfare state and, in turn, exclude individuals. Jöhncke (2011) calls this a 'dual crisis' in welfare states, where evolving economic structures and policies, combined with shifting notions of citizenship and national identity, results in racialized exclusion.

Taking departure from Denmark's decision in 2017 to end its collaboration with IOM's AVRR initiative, this section has shed light on ethical considerations and underlying motives surrounding voluntary repatriation. Furthermore, it draws a link to how changes in Danish migration policies, more specifically, the paradigm shift in 2019 can be linked to the end of the collaboration. To underline this, the establishment of the Danish Return Agency (DRA) in 2020 is presented as a response to the paradigm shift in Denmark's approach to migration, reflecting a broader trend in identity politics related to the welfare state. The shift from "integration" to "repatriation and self-sufficiency" emphasizes a significant change in Denmark's repatriation strategy. Moreover, the 2021 regulation on municipal guidance duty, presented by the Social Democratic government, signified a more targeted effort to encourage voluntary repatriation among unemployed eligible individuals - aligning with ideals of belonging within Danish context, based on Gullestad's conceptualization of Imagined Sameness. This section underscores how the complex interplay of political shifts, identity construction, and welfare state ideals in shaping representations of the 'problem'.

5.4 D: "What is left unproblematic in this problem representation?"

Continuing the structure of WPR, this section will examine 'What is left unproblematic in this problem representation?'. This calls for an analysis of potential loss of voices and

looking into what knowledge is ignored and not talked about. Therefore, this section will, by drawing on findings from the sections above, delve into which voices that are silenced and how that, simultaneously, illustrates power dynamics.

As examined in the previous section, the target group gets depicted as difficult to integrate and further undeserving of help such as welfare benefits. This is illuminated through the shift from integration to repatriation and self-sufficiency stipulating a depiction of all refugee and migrants' stay as temporary. This positioning potentially discourages integration efforts among the targeted individuals and further places them in a position of powerlessness potentially causing loss of voice among the target group (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). To explore further, we will examine which voices are prioritized, which are marginalized, and the power dynamics these priorities reveal.

One can maybe expect that a policy serves government interests, and that the narratives of the government dominate discussions, that can overshadow voices of targeted individuals. Therefore, government officials are presumably the primary voices heard, including policymakers and legislators, thus, they produce the policies and shape the implementation. In addition, their ideals shape the narrative - which in this case emphasizes national security and immigration control (See section 'How has this representation of the 'problem' come about?).

Marginalized voices
In terms of marginalized voices, the target group can arguably be stated as being overlooked. In the policy package itself, there are no indications of Muslim's perspectives being involved. Which, again, is expected, despite this policy may have the most direct influence on them and their daily lives. This can reflect general underrepresentation in debates relating to issues of migration (Nine Civil Society Organizations, 2022). To combat this, nine civil society organizations came together, some including Danish Refugee Council, Amnesty International, and Red Barnet, among others, to advocate for legislative changes to provide a more dignified and sustainable solution (Nine Civil Society Organizations, 2022). The organizations express concerns of the impact of amendments to the Aliens Act since 2015, which have reduced the rights of some refugees without sufficient justification. This is a reflection that not only immigrants and refugees' voices are marginalized, but also actors campaigning for immigrants' and refugees' rights, struggle to be heard among the narratives

promoted by the government. The narratives promoted by the government in the voluntary repatriation law, and in the quote by Tesfaye (S), does explicitly express that migrants and refugees should not stay permanently. This representation is, as mentioned in *Analysis* section C, rooted in ideals of the welfare state intersected with Gullestad's Imagined Sameness. According to Gullestad, the welfare state is based on homogeneity, with membership tightly related to labor force participation and communal economic endeavor (Gullestad, 2002). In addition, this aligns with Schneider and Ingram's (1993) theory as the homogeneity intersects with refugee and immigrant's underrepresentation in the policy. Thus, Schneider and Ingram (1993) argue that negatively constructed and powerless groups' voices are silenced in policy debates, which simultaneously results in a lack of needs being addressed in policies. In addition, the advocacy by The Nine Civil Society Organizations illustrates a strive to influence policies to include narratives of the negatively constructed group.

This negative depiction can obscure and marginalize cultural and ethnic aspects. By emphasizing economic contribution as a criterion for belonging, the strategy illustrates that individuals who do not meet this are less deserving of inclusion. Policymakers miss a potential complex character of identification and belonging, which include cultural and ethnic components that go beyond economic aspects. Furthermore, it reproduces a narrative that portrays immigrants and refugees as guests rather than potential long-term members of society. This argument is consistent with Gullestad's (2002) concept of a "monocultural" national identity, in which integration attempts are viewed as fitting into a predetermined national mold, in other words a full assimilation. Such a viewpoint silences the cultural and ethnic contributions that immigrants and refugees make. This, furthermore, correlates with Rytter's (2019) statement in terms of host-guest relations, the Danish population, whose narrative is expressed through the government, is setting the rules for refugees and immigrants, as hosts. This statement can cause a further discussion on power dynamics, however, it is more notable to examine how permanent this power dynamic, and thus, position as a guest amongst immigrants and refugees are. The 'monocultural' national identity, by Gullestad (2002), stresses that integration processes in the Nordic countries call for processes that pertain towards assimilation. Rytter (2019) illustrates this by explaining how immigrants, particularly those of Muslim origin, attempt to integrate into Danish society by conforming to the 'invisible fences' set by their hosts. Despite attempts, integration remains out of reach due to new restrictions emerging, reflecting an expectation of assimilation into the 'monoculture' (Rytter 2019).

The establishment of the Danish Return Agency (DRA) and the following regulation on repatriation, as mentioned in *Analysis* section C, demonstrates this restricted emphasis. Policies that require interactions with long-term jobless immigrants, perpetuate the notion that economic self-sufficiency is the major indicator of an individual's contribution to society. This approach fails to account for other aspects that may hinder immigrants from reaching self-sufficiency, and it ignores their cultural and social contributions. As mentioned in the literature review, Mikkel Rytter (2019) draws on various writers, including Gullestad's concept of "invisible fences," in describing the scenarios of "welfare reciprocity," where he investigates the unequal relationship between the majority versus minorities in Denmark, demonstrating the contradiction of integration being both desirable and unattainable. Furthermore, Rytter emphasizes how the story of "welfare reciprocity" places immigrants in a precarious position, in which they are expected to contribute economically to the welfare state, while being viewed as burdens. This creates a conundrum in which immigrants are caught between reaching self-sufficiency and the realities of structural inequality that limit their options. The dichotomy is that immigrants are expected to assimilate and contribute, yet policy narratives make this more difficult to achieve. Drawing on Schneider and Ingram's (1993) theory, this demonstrates how negative constructions, thus, immigrants and refugees are categorized as deviants, impact policy making. As immigrants and refugees are valued through their economic contributions, and if they do not fit into strict criteria, they become marginalized by policies that prioritize repatriation rather than integration. This reproduces power dynamics that favors the government and policymakers' narratives, thus, continuously silencing refugees and immigrants. The effects of these silences will be explored in *Analysis* section E.

In conclusion, this section of the analysis reveals a complex interplay between power dynamics and structural inequality. The change from integration to repatriation and self-sufficiency, by drawing on Schneider and Ingram (1993), illustrates a representation of immigrant and refugees as deviant individuals. This representation stipulates a construction of them as less deserving of inclusion, thus, creating an invisible hence. The silencing created by this representation is exacerbated by prioritization of the government and policymakers' narratives, which overlooks the target group's voices. Despite criticism by civil society organizations to amplify the overlooked voices, the narrative by the government and policymakers remains homogenous, ignoring the contributions of immigrants and refugees.

The particular emphasis on economic contributions as a criterion for societal inclusion silences the target group's experiences which, in turn, reproduces exclusionary narratives.

5.5 E. "What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?"

This section will explore the effects produced by the paradigm shift and further how it impacts immigrants and their descendants.

The design and choice of policy depends on the social construction of the target group and the amount of political power they have (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). In this case the social construct surrounding the target group can clearly be seen as the "guest". Policymaker's rationale for the policy design would, therefore, be based on policymakers' notion of the target group as not being "Danish". Thereby, as not being entitled to the same political power or being deserving of other benefits. Mattias Tesfaye (S) put forward a statement regarding the paradigm shift, disclaiming that people - meaning refugees - will be met with a more honest message, that it is a temporary stay they will have in Denmark (TV2, 2019). Thereby, emphasizing that newcomers are not to be welcomed into society. Inger Støjberg (V) put forward a similar statement following the paradigm shift explaining that 'we' need more refugees to return when they no longer need the protection of Denmark. She further states *"It has always been, that the day peace arrives in one's homeland, you travel home and rebuild your country. However, you can ascertain that nine out of ten have stayed in Denmark and this is completely unsustainable"* (TV2, 2019, translated from danish). She elaborates*: "It is unsustainable if we have to protect those who need our protection and also have to keep those who do not need our protection anymore"*. (TV2, 2019, translated from danish). The policy message of the host-guest relation can clearly be derived from these statements. In her characterization of the target group and her rationale of the policy, Inger Støjberg makes a clear connotation that the target group, the expressed "them", being in Denmark is not sustainable. This characterization directs attention towards the purpose of policy being to send "them"- the guest - home. She further legitimizes her rationale by saying that the guests do not need 'our' protection anymore, implying that they have no need to stay in Denmark (TV2, 2019).

Effects on employment

Reiermann & Andersen (2020) explores the aftermath of the paradigm shift in their article

"Færre flygtninge kommer i job efter paradigmeskiftet" (Less refugees get employed following the paradigm shift). Reiermann & Andersen explains that the goal with the controversial paradigm shift, was sending more refugees back to their country of origin, however, a year later it doesn't seem the paradigm shift has aided in sending more refugees home. They further argue that the shift seems to have contributed to lower employment (Reiermann & Andersen, 2020) However, this notion does not correspond with the data we have found, which will be presented below. Nevertheless, Reiermann & Andersen was not alone in this presumption following the paradigm shift. The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and Bredgaard & Ravn, who are respectively professor and postdoc at the Center for Arbejdsmarkedsforskning (Center for labor-market research) at Aalborg University, had similar concerns published. DRC (2020) concern waswhether the paradigm shift could decrease refugees' motivation in applying for jobs and education.

On this matter, DRC highlighted international research pointing to the negative side of the temporality of refugees' stay, meaning that refugees will be less likely to educate themselves or invest in their stay when they are fearing having to return. Furthermore, the expected temporality of refugees' stay could alter the companies and employers' enticement towards hiring refugees as the hiring of refugees requires a lot of resources (DRC, 2020). DRC credits this notion to an investigation made by Bredgaard & Ravn showing that every fourth cooperation will be more reluctant to hire refugees because of the paradigm shift (DRC, 2020). Bredgaard & Ravn (2019) also elaborate on their own investigation of how corporations view the paradigm shift by presenting statements by corporations that believe that the paradigm shift counteracts integration into the labor market. Bredgaard & Ravn (2019) contemplate the paradox between the new discourse and how the employment-oriented integration effort seems to be working better than ever and many employers having trouble finding the necessary labourforce (Bredgaard & Ravn, 2019). This notion of how the paradigm shift may impact refugees' integration into the labor market can be further explored by utilizing data from Danmarks Statistik (Statistics Denmark) and DNI. .

As Figure 2 illustrates there has been an overall steady increase in occupation across all measured groups, with the only exception being around 2020, during the covid-19 pandemic. Especially immigrants from non-western countries have seen a very high increase in occupation during the span between 2012-2022
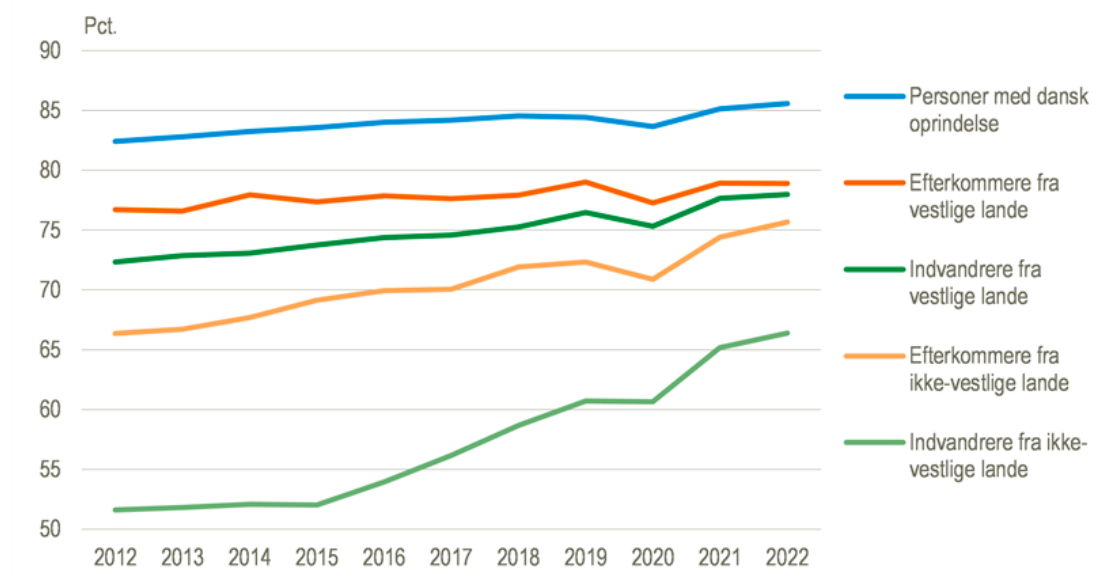
Figure 2: The occupation-frequency in percentage, between the ages 30-59-years olds, between 2012-2022. The part of the population presumed to be the most active in the labourforce. Blue: native danes. Orange: descendants from western countries. Green: Immigrants from western countries. Yellow: decendants from non-western countries. Light green: Immigrants from non-western countries (Danmarks Statistik, 2023)

The same result of increase in occupation across groups could be found in the statistics at DNI (Det Nationale Integrationsbarometer, 2024a). According to a statement from 2022 from The Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration, the number of non-western immigrants and descendants who are in employment are among record numbers, based on numbers from 2021. Additionally, the increase among the non-western is higher than the increase among ethnic Danes or people of western origin (Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet, 2022).

Effects on education

To further investigate the effects, we also decided to explore the activity regarding education, to observe whether any noticeable difference could be found following the paradigm shift. Again, we were surprised to see no noticeable effect, following the paradigm shift, regarding the number of immigrants and descendants educating themselves, see Figure 3 and 4 below.
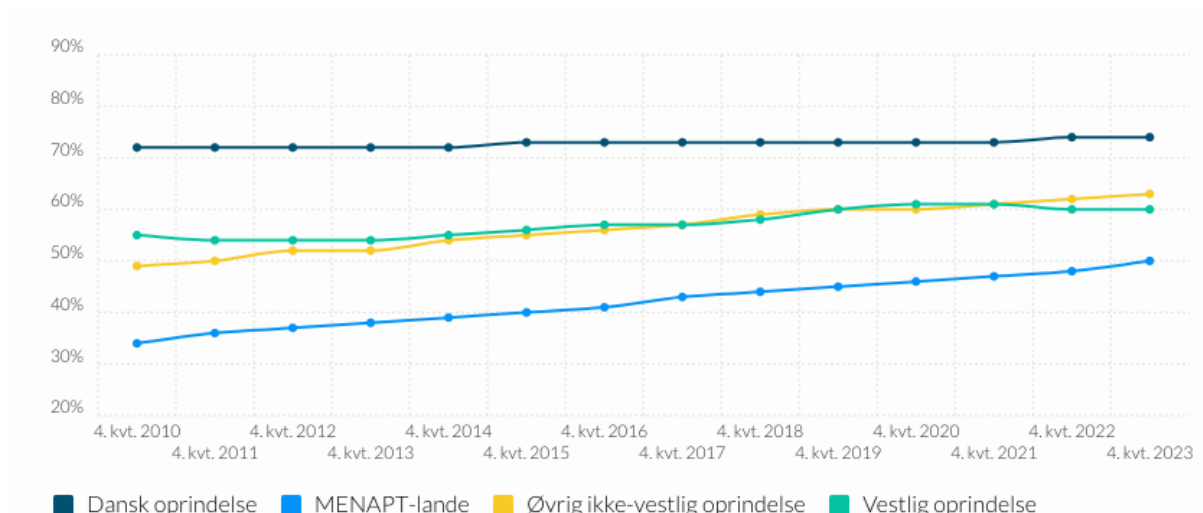
Figure 3: The percentage of men between the ages of 25 to 39, who have completed vocational education and training between 2010-2023. Dark blue: native danes. Blue: Middle Eastern, North African, Afghan, Pakistani, Turkish descendants (MENAPT). Orange: other non-western descendants. Green: western descendants. (Det Nationale Integrationsbarometer, 2024b).
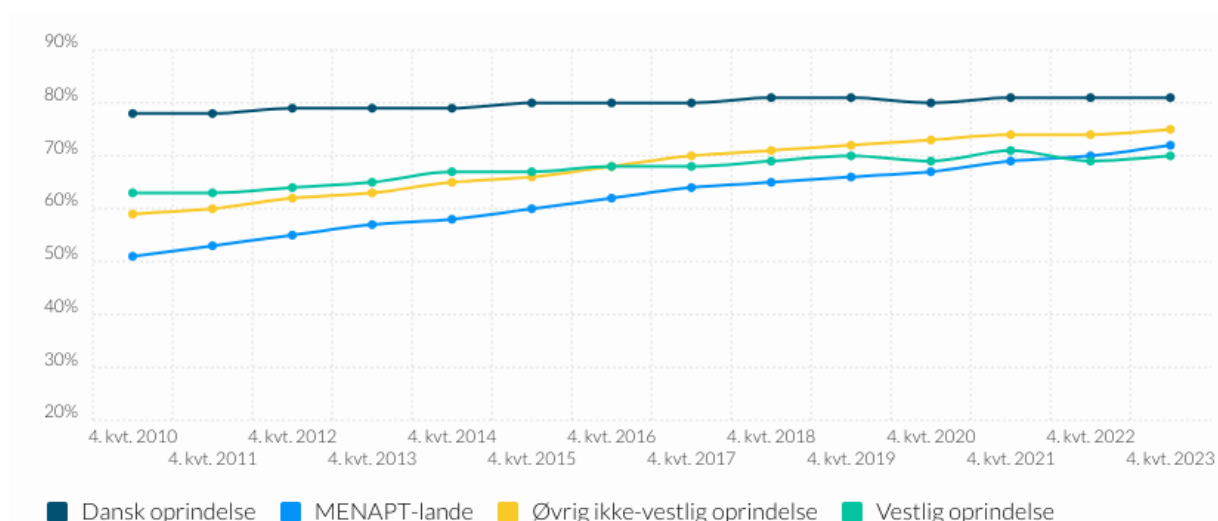

Figure 4: The percentage of women between the ages of 25 to 39, who have completed vocational education and training between 2010-2023. Dark blue: native danes. Blue: Middle Eastern, North African, Afghan, Pakistani, Turkish descendants (MENAPT). Orange: other non-western descendants. Green: western descendants. (Det Nationale Integrationsbarometer, 2024b).

As it appears across all the listed Figures above (2, 3, 4), the paradigm shift has, despite the worry from some experts and NGO's, not had any visible impact on the integration of refugees into the labor market or education. Schneider, Ingram & Deleon (2014) explains that some policy tools policymakers implement, in some cases, can be largely rhetorical or hortatory. Meaning, they might try to strongly encourage or persuade people to do certain things. For example, some policies might claim the legislation will either benefit or discipline certain groups but contains no enforcements or even finances in some cases (Schneider, Ingram & Deleon, 2014). Drawing on this statement, the paradigm shift can be viewed as an

attempt to change the discourse surrounding integration, to rationalize repatriation, however, it does not seem that the discourse causes any measurable effects. Nevertheless, the paradigm shift might cause other effects.

Social Effects

In 2020 Dansk Socialrådgiverforening (Danish Socialworker Association) published the reflection from a social worker, whom is also the staff representative, from a jobcentre in Copenhagen, commenting on the effect of the paradigm shift in regards to repatriation (Dansk Socialrådgiverforening, 2020). She explained that she feels evil when asking, for the tenth time, if 'they' want to go home. She recalls one of the responses she received from one of her citizens, "Where do you want me to travel? I am born in Denmark?" (translated from danish). His parents were born in Jordan, but he was born in Denmark, has a Danish girlfriend, a son, and no family in Jordan. The social worker explains that she meets him every two months and must guide him about repatriation every time. She furtherly explains that she is obligated to ask, after politicians decided to introduce systematic guidance-duty in regard to repatriation in 2018, as mentioned in *Analysis* section C. She continues by stating that many citizens get upset and break down, becoming fearful that they will be sent away. She views it as paradoxical, that her job is trying to activate citizens toward employment or education, and then having to end with an offer of money to travel back (Dansk Socialrådgiverforening, 2020).

The same issue is presented in the news outlet 'Information', with the title "Okay, okay, you are born in Denmark- but wouldn't you like to travel back to your native country" (translated from Danish) (Information, 2020). Here, two social workers, along with the inclusion of anecdotes from other colleagues, proclaim how some people get offended, angry, worried, and even scared when asked about repatriation. They continue by stating that they find the policy absurd and causing serious consequences, as the question instigates insecurity and anxiety amongst people (Information, 2020).

Policy efficiency

These statements from social workers illustrate that the paradigm shift might create some noticeable effects for some immigrants and caseworkers, despite it not being measurable. In this context, we wanted to examine whether the paradigm shift might cause more immigrants to repatriate. Figure 5 below, illustrates the amount of repatriation cases from 2013-2023,

based on the data from DRC (2024).

2013	393
2014	320
2015	323
2016	301
2017	341
2018	360
2019	502
2020	348
2021	426
2022	322
2023	309

Figure 5: The year and the total amount of people who repatriated in Denmark, constructed based on data available from DRC (DRC, 2024).

As seen on Figure 5, the amount of repatriation had a noticeable increase during 2019, at the time of the paradigm shift. While this increase could be attributed to the insistence by policymakers and caseworkers encouraging repatriation, an important consideration is that since 2019, it has been possible for Syrians to repatriate, making them the largest group of immigrants voluntarily repatriating (Kristeligt Dagblad, 2023). However, this is now changing. In 2022 only 51 Syrians repatriated, whereas the year before the amount was three times as high. This was possibly caused by a larger group of Syrians regretting repatriating, partly because they did not receive the amount of money that they thought they were (Kristeligt Dagblad, 2023). Since 2019, around 440 Syrians have agreed to repatriate with financial support, in some cases up to 200,000 DKK. However, according to the Danish Immigration Service, 50 Syrians regretted this decision in 2022, compared to 32 who had regretted it in the previous three years combined. According to Kaare Dybvad Bek (S), the reason could be a result of challenges with having dispersed some part of the repatriation support. These challenges arise because of a combination of international sanctions and money laundering rules against Syria, making it difficult to transfer the second rate of the

repatriation support. Ultimately resulting in several Syrians regretting that they repatriated (Kristeligt Dagblad, 2023). However, the interest has not disappeared, as many Syrians are interested in repatriation when the challenge of the payment has been solved (Kristeligt Dagblad, 2023). In this sense, economic policy tools do seem to have an effect on whether some people agree to accept the repatriation offer. Nevertheless, despite the increase due to the possibility for Syrians to repatriate with economic support, the overall increase in repatriation does not seem to continue, at least within the limited timeframe. Therefore, the question is why so few choose to repatriate, seen in the light of increasing pressure and further the opportunity of financial aid.

According to Schneider, Ingram & Deleon (2007), research has supported the argument that rationales found in policy design are linked to the choice of policy tools to the Social Construction of the Target Group. This link, however, often means less effective policies as the problem definition is too focused on how the target group is socially constructed. The close linking of policy tools to rationales has implications for the effectiveness of public policy (Schneider, Ingram & Deleon, 2007). Richardsen (2004) concludes that insertion of negative social constructions into a debate, will result in policy with the least possible effect on the problem solved (Richardsen, 2004 cited in Schneider, Ingram & Deleon, 2007). This notion is interesting to include, as the repatriation law and paradigm shift does not seem to be very effective so far, in ensuring more refugees, immigrants, and their descendants to repatriate.

Subjectification of refugees and immigrants
Nevertheless, a potential effect of the political discourse can be explored through Schneider, Ingram, & Deleon (2007). They explain that policy design that targets negatively constructed groups often leads to further marginalization, and reduced political activity among those group members. They contend that, when a group is successfully negatively constructed and the perception is embedded in law, a lasting negative social memory tends to persist. Even if such a target group achieves policy victories that promote more positive images, these changes are not necessarily secure. In an often contentious political environment, negative discourse can resurface, potentially erasing the positive gains made by groups such as dependents or deviants (Schneider, Ingram, & Deleon, 2007). Andersen, Larsen & Møller (2009) contextualize this notion to Denmark, by stating that the Danish perception of

immigration is very dependent on the public discourse as many Danes are not directly in contact with immigrants or their descendants (Andersen, Larsen & Møller, 2009).

According to an investigation made by Danmarks Videnscenter for Integration (Danish National Centre for Integration) and Mandagmorgen (News agency), three out of four Danes believe that integration is going significantly worse than the actual figures indicate. For example, despite the fact that crime rates among young men with non-Western backgrounds are decreasing, the vast majority believe it is skyrocketing (mandagmorgen, 2021). Danes also underestimate the amount of immigrants who are employed and in education, as well as how many support gender equality and democracy. Additionally, Danes believe that there are twice as many non-Western immigrants in the country as there actually are (mandagmorgen, 2021). Further challenges can arise as a result of the negative tones in the public debate (Moestrup et al., 2017). More than 1/3 of all approximately 280.000 muslims in Denmark feel looked down upon because of the discourse related to their religious identity. Muslims further report on feeling discriminated against, with 33 percent having trouble finding work and 32 percent experiencing their appearance being addressed negatively because it links them to Islam. This causes social marginalization, as also explored in *Analysis* section D. The impact of this can be that some Muslims might isolate themselves from the rest of society and remain within their own communities. This contradicts Danish society's goal of integrating migrants and their descendants, potentially hindering integration efforts (Moestrup, et. al., 2017). Politicians bear a lot of the responsibility for how Muslims experience the worsening perception of them and their religion (Moestrup et. al., 2017).

Sharing this view is Bilal Itani, who debates how xenophobia is spurred on by politicians and the media, in a debate article for Altinget (Itani, 2023). Itani explains how problems can be tracked back through the public negative and stigmatizing discourse led on by politicians and media, creating an environment where Islamophobia and xenophobia is not just tolerated but encouraged. He elaborates that it has resulted in an increasing divide between citizens, fostering a culture of suspicion and marginalization of Danish Muslims (Itani, 2023). This divide also further perpetuates the notion of us and them or the host-guest relation. This relationship of host-guest further places the Danish population above the immigrants in a permanently superior and privileged position (Rytter, 2019). This is exemplified by some Muslim isolating themselves or being discriminated against, placing them in an inferior position. In continuation Mustafa Topal's (2017) debate article in Information, highlights

how he, as a refugee living in Denmark for more that 20 years, still is unsure of what is expected of him. Topal explains that the word integration almost "makes him nauseous" as it is a confusing term getting abused by politicians. He further explains how he does not know when he has done enough to be well-integrated (Topal, 2017).

In this section, we have explored some of the effects following the paradigm shift. While measurable effects on target groups' involvement in the labor market, education, or the number of people repatriating were not evident, other effects were found. The heavy discursive focus on problematizing the lack of integration among Muslims, rather than highlighting the lack of integration initiatives, arguably creates a problematic representation of Muslims as guests, manifesting as feelings of stigmatization among some Muslims.

The next section will further delve into how the paradigm shift has been criticized and defended.

5.6 F: "How/where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated and defended?"

As established in the previous analysis sections, the negative depictions of immigrants and refugees, stipulates a narrative that makes them less deserving of welfare state goods, permanent stay, and becoming a part of the society. This is particularly expressed through the shift from the discourse of integration to self-sufficiency and repatriation.

Criticism

This problem representation has been challenged by Rytter et al. (2023), who argues that the shift to self-sufficiency and repatriation has divided the public on whether the paradigm shift represented a real policy shift or was purely symbolic. Furthermore, Rytter et al. (2023) discuss the originality of the paradigm shift, stating that it is rather a continuation of changes brought along by the 2015 refugee crisis.

A significant criticism comes from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in a report from 2022 the following is stated:

 "UNHCR also regrets the adoption in 2019 of a package of legislative changes known as the

so-called "paradigm shift" which places a disproportionate emphasis on the
"temporariness" of asylum and thereby risks unsettling persons with strong protection needs
and hindering their quick and supported integration into the Danish society (...)"
(UNHCR, 2022).

For a number of reasons, the UNHCR's critique of Denmark's immigration laws is very noteworthy. First of all, it originates from a widely regarded authority on human rights and refugee protection, which gives the issues presented a lot of weight. The primary objective of the UNHCR is to guarantee the safety and welfare of refugees around the globe. The organization bases its evaluations on a wealth of knowledge and global legal structures, including the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol (UNHCR, n.d.). The UNHCR's statement draws attention to the problematic focus on the temporary nature of stay in Denmark, which can jeopardize refugees and immigrant's chances for stability and integration (UNHCR, 2022). The UNHCR's critique also highlights the wider implications for international standards and human rights (UNHCR, 2022). It is possible to see the focus on temporary safety over integration as a departure from the commitments made under international law to defend the rights and dignity of refugees.

The UNHCR's critique has significance because it has the capacity to spark advocacy and policy change. Human rights activists, civil society organizations, and other interested parties may become more vocal in favor of reevaluating Denmark's immigration laws due to the UNHCR's credible voice. It may also be a very effective technique for changing public perception and bringing attention to how these policies affect the target group.

Defense
On the other side, in terms of policy documents or political statements that have contributed to the shaping of the problem representation, Danish political parties and government representatives have defended the policy change from integration to self-sufficiency and repatriation by citing worries about immigration and national security (see Analysis section C). They present the strategy as a means of preserving Danish society's cultural cohesiveness and economic stability, emphasizing the necessity of placing the wellbeing of the country and its residents first, as seen in *Analysis* section C. This argument is mostly shaped by representing immigrants and refugees as a danger to the welfare state and thus national identity. The government's narrative is, thereby, reinforced and the process of repatriation is

institutionalized by the development of organizations such as the DRA. The problem representation as it is currently portrayed as can, furtherly, be viewed as the result of the paradigm shift and, thereby, changes in the strategy that has caused, amongst other things, Denmark's 2017 decision to stop working with the IOM's AVRR program. In addition, to further highlight the financial benefits of the repatriation policy, the government decided to introduce the new regulation on municipal guidance obligation in 2021 with the goal of promoting voluntary repatriation among unemployed refugees and immigrants (Lovforslag nr. L 215 2020-21). The government's narrative that self-sufficiency is a prerequisite for membership in Danish society is reflected in this targeting. This stipulates Gullestad's (2002) invisible fences, thus, these fences are set-up to make it more difficult for immigrants and refugees to obtain inclusion in the Danish society.

In addition, as illustrated in *Analysis* section E, according to Inger Støjberg (V), Denmark cannot afford to keep protecting refugees who, accordingly, are no longer in need of it. To keep Denmark's resources available for those who truly need them, she emphasized that refugees should return home when it is safe to do so. This serves as a prime example of how politicians have framed the issue around national identity and security by utilizing worries about immigration and refugees. Politicians are attempting to win over the people by presenting the policy change as a national security initiative. This reorientation has been significantly impacted by the Danish welfare state's emphasis on economic contribution as a condition for belonging. Statements made by the former ministers for immigration and integration, Inger Støjberg (V) and Mattias Tesfaye (S) (see *Analysis* section C), have had a significant role in defending the paradigm shift. As their statements have contributed to the normalization of the concept of repatriation by presenting the policy change as important towards protecting the welfare state. Ultimately, this debate seeks to balance national interests with refugee protection and integration. The policy shift is not just about immigration control but also redefining membership and integration within the welfare state.

6. Discussion

Based on the summary of our analytical findings in the previous section, this section will discuss and interpret those findings. Followed by a thorough comparison with contemporary insights from scholars. These insights will additionally be discussed to signify how our

findings correlate to other existing literature. Thereafter, we will discuss the theoretical and practical implications of our research, illustrating the relevance of our research. In this regard, an acknowledgement of the research paper's limitations, and how the limitations may have impacted findings, will be discussed. Finally, we will consider the generalizability of our research and ideas for future research.

Patterns and themes along the data findings

In regards to the findings of this research project, several recurring themes seemed to be present along the analysis. As the analysis illustrated, the word integration was changed to repatriation and self-sufficiency. In this regard, repatriation is viewed and further framed, by some policymakers, as being a critical part of the overall integration effort. Consequently, as the *Analysis* section A additionally illustrates, repatriation is also referred to as a solution for those who are well integrated, seemingly contradicting the purpose of the policy. Thereby, it was illustrated that repatriation went from being an alternative to being the goal. As illustrated in *Analysis* section C, this notion was challenged by Sofie Carsten Nielsen (RV) who openly asked the minister for immigration and integration, Inger Støjberg (V), if the proposal meant that they would focus on deporting well-integrated refugees. Where Inger Støjberg (V) answered that the approach emphasizes that refugee's presence in Denmark is temporary (Støjberg & Fabricius, 2019). This example provides a clear indication of the overall theme of our findings, illustrating that, concurrent to the paradigm shift, even well-integrated refugees are not welcome to stay permanently in Denmark and are merely temporary guests.

The statement further illuminates another recurring pattern of invisible fences. In other words, new criteria are consistently getting implemented for immigrants to meet. Even when these criteria, such as self-sufficiency, is the prioritized strategy. As shown in *Analysis* section E, the continuous notion of a good integration process being equal to becoming a part of the labor force and acquiring education to ultimately demonstrate self-sufficiency, falls short. Contrarily quantitative data, from Statistics Denmark and DNI, show that immigrants and refugees are meeting more of the integration criteria, despite the depiction made by politicians.

The analysis also illustrated that there is consensus among several political parties that Muslims constitute the target group, when referring to integration challenges. Indicating that

it is not refugees and immigrants who are the issue, rather it is Muslim refugees and immigrants. As explored, by drawing on Schneider and Ingram, the definition of immigrants is a contested term, as it depends on the type of migrant, the country of origin, context, and other impacts, this target group can be constructed accordingly. However, as the analytical findings also illustrated, Muslim refugees and immigrants in Denmark could arguably be constructed as deviants. This argument is not solely based on how policymakers discuss this group in negative terms and as undeserving, but also how Muslim voices are marginalized, and thereby, deemed powerless in the political debate.

The rationale, expressed through the powerful voice, behind the paradigm shift is an effort to address the numerous integration challenges present in Denmark, as illustrated by the data in *Analysis* section E. This data shows that immigrants from non-Western and MENAPT countries lag behind those from Western countries, indicating a significant issue that justifies efforts to minimize this gap. However, the analysis suggests that the rationale for addressing integration issues disproportionately targets Muslims. This stigmatization creates several problems. As explained by Schneider, Ingram, and Deleon (2007), policies based on negative social constructions often fail because they focus too much on how a group is perceived rather than on creating effective solutions. Policymakers may view Muslims as deviants who do not want to integrate into Danish society, leading to repatriation policies. However, this perception does not necessarily reflect reality. As shown in *Analysis* section E, many Muslims strive to integrate but are continuously relegated to the status of guests. Immigrants are thereby subjected to constant reminders from social workers and politicians on the opportunity to repatriate. This perpetuates the notion that they are not "Danish enough" and still must face invisible fences, regardless of how long they have stayed in the country or their contributions to the welfare state. These reminders are particularly interesting when compared to the guidelines set by UNHCR and the European Commission (see also *Analysis* section A), which state that repatriation must occur under conditions of security, safety, and dignity. One could argue that treating immigrants with dignity is compromised through the persistent implication that they do not belong in the country where they currently live. Furthermore, UNHCR stresses that the paradigm shift hinders what could have been a supported integration into Danish society, by emphasizing the temporariness of refugee and immigrant's stay (UNHCR, 2022).

Unexpected results and new insights

Moving on from the general identified themes, we will have a short discussion on a particular unexpected finding; the impact following the paradigm shift, or rather the lack of. As analyzed in section E, after the paradigm shift, concerns were shared regarding the impact it could potentially have on the integration of refugees and immigrants. These concerns were especially in regards to migrants' involvement in the labor force, as the arguments stated that the shift could not only impact employers' incentive to hire migrants but also refugee and immigrant's motivation to start working, if there is a fear of repatriation. We, initially, were also of the conviction that the paradigm shift would have measurable effects already, that indicates negative impacts. However, we were surprised to find data showing that the paradigm shift seemingly has had no negative impact on the surprisingly steady increase amongst migrants involved in both the labor force and education. We were also surprised to see no noticeable difference in the amount of people who repatriated, except for a small increase in year. An important element in regards to this result is of course the time frame. As the paradigm shift was implemented in 2019, long term effects may not be visible yet. Further, as the analysis in section E illustrates, some Syrian refugees want to repatriate but are not able to receive the full financial help, due to challenges in transmitting the second rate of the repatriation help due to a combination of international sanctions and money laundering regulations against Syria. Which showed that the policy tool of financial incitement does, in fact, impact the target group.

Utilizing existing knowledge in regard to our research
We will now delve into insights from other scholars, mostly from those mentioned in the literature review, in regards to our research. Starting off, we will utilize some of the insight of Jöhncke (2011) who highlighted the problematic ways in which the universalist welfare state, including Denmark's, tends to solve integration issues as social issues. Explaining how it leads to focus on people's problems or incapacities, instead of finding other solutions (Jöhncke, 2011). This insight is also present in how policymakers depict the target group. As they, as explained earlier, put the connotation on Muslims; that they are not capable of integrating, not finding solutions to ensure proper integration. Instead, they give up on this group by encouraging them to repatriate, thus, not having to deal with the issue. Jöhncke (2011) also explains evolving economic structures and policies, combined with shifting notions of nationhood and citizenship, lead to increased social exclusion. This particular notion of nationhood and citizenship, reproduces a structural negative construction which can strengthen social exclusion argumentations. The discourse by policymakers - placing

emphasis on "us" and "them" - further alienates refugees and immigrants and excludes them from being a part of Denmark by categorizing them as the 'others'. Jöhncke (2011) explains how Danes express concern in regard to the future of the welfare state, asking *"why are immigrants entitled to the benefits of a Danish Welfare system they have not (yet) contributed too"* (p.46). This example also corresponds to Rytters (2019) notion of the welfare state as an "insurance scheme", determining which groups in society are entitled to welfare benefits and vice-versa (Rytters, 2019) This theme is also present in how policymakers constructs and address integration, by emphasizing the importance of immigrants not being on welfare benefits, or making the link with being on welfare benefits for an extended time correlates to migrants not succeeding in becoming a part of society. This is further strengthened by the paradigm shift, where the name of integration benefits was changed to self-sufficiency and repatriation benefits. This interprets immigrants as being undeserving of welfare benefits, which are expressed to be solely reserved for ethnic Danes. This exclusion from the benefits of the welfare state stipulates a notion of welfare exceptionalism, where one has to earn the benefits - Yet, how can one earn such benefits if unreachable criterias are put in force? Additionally, the shift stipulates a notion of, one either assimilates, and thus, integrates, or repatriates.

According to Lodovici, Drufuca & Galea (2019), reducing the number of migrants and asylum seekers is one of the main reasons Denmark is moving toward repatriation. This goal is frequently put forward in terms of reducing expenses and alleviating the welfare state of some of its burdens. The repatriation push is an indication of larger societal and political changes in Denmark, as increasing focus on social cohesion and national identity is reflected in tighter immigration laws (Lodovici, Drufuca & Galea, 2019). This is noticeable from the language employed, as it portrays repatriation as a means of upholding societal stability and Danish values (Rytter, 2023). This strategy, meanwhile, has also come under fire for stigmatizing immigrants and depicting them as a burden to the welfare state (Rytter, 2019).

A further discussion point is how discourse on integration can refer to both the 'means', the process of getting integrated or the 'ends', the absolute integration (Rytter, 2019, p.682.). Further elaborating that the lack of clarity is not meaningless, as it makes the concept more flexible and effective in Danish discourse, when the majority wants to discuss the minority (Rytter, 2019). Moreover Sjørslev (2011) asks if it is possible to exclude through the ideology

of integration, elaborating, whether efforts toward integration of citizens of non-Danish ethnicity, especially muslims, can cause exclusion instead, while still upholding the positive connotations of integration (Sjørslev, 2011). Rytter and Sjørslev bring interesting insights in regards to how repatriation efforts are defined. The definition, referring to the repatriation effort, in conjunction with the integration efforts provided to newly arrived individuals. Further stating that a successful integration process, where a person has maintained their agency, responsibility, and engagement in work, education, and leisure, forms a good foundation for returning to their homeland or a previous country of residence (see also *Analysis* section A). The definition clearly embraces repatriation as a part of the successful integration, thus instigating exclusion instead of inclusion. Sjørslev (2011) further explains that integration has become politicized and therefore carries heavy connotations suggesting highly unrecognized ideas and values (Sjørslev, 2011). This points us to Gullestad's notion of invisible fences, because how can immigrants reach the point of being integrated well enough, when unrecognized ideas and values are implemented through the process.

Further discussion related to repatriation, is based on how 'voluntary' voluntary repatriation is. Financial incentives for repatriation may put pressure on people to leave Denmark and go back to their country of origin, even when they would rather stay. Critics contend that these actions could be coercive and undermine the return's voluntary character (Rytter, 2023; Webber, 2011; Koch, 2013). Webber (2011) critically assess assisted voluntary return initiatives, by illustrating a perspective on related ethical issues. Webber's article provides insight on underlying motives behind repatriation policy, highlighting government goals in cost-cutting measures and lowering the number of asylum seekers and migrants. Similarly, Koch (2013) discusses how 'voluntary', voluntary repatriation is. Koch argues that, while AVRR initiatives make it easier for rejected asylum applicants and 'illegal' migrants to return to their country of origin through support, such initiatives have been criticized for missing true voluntariness. According to Koch, The IOM recognizes that for some people, AVRR may be the sole option to forced repatriation, with some governments utilizing the fear of deportation to encourage participation in AVRR programs (Koch 2013). Agreeing with Webber and Koch, Kalir (2017) adds onto the criticism by stating that individuals involved in implementing AVRR initiatives that the program is rooted in free choice (Kalir, 2017). Stipulating an interesting notion of how voluntary 'voluntary repatriation is in reality. Thus, when establishing various initiatives and incitements to promote repatriation, the

extensiveness of these depicts an ethical debate where 'voluntary' can arguably be exchanged to 'coerced'.

Limitations

Our analysis illustrates how the problem representation in Denmark has evolved with a focus on the paradigm shift. However, while it has proven insightful to focus on that as a particular event that shifted the problem representation, it can also pose a significant limitation to our findings. The thesis might overlook other significant historical events and earlier policy changes that have influenced contemporary views towards immigrants and refugees. This could have potentially given the analysis valuable perspectives and data on how historical constructions and problem representations have impacted present-day policies. In addition, widening the timeframe of changes in policies could present further elements leading up to the paradigm shift and how it is interpreted by politicians. A thorough historical analysis may have revealed political maneuvering and adjustments that illustrate political rationale behind protection of the welfare state. This could also cause our thesis to fall short on attitudinal changes amongst the public.

An expression of this shortcoming can be seen in analysis sections C and D. It is noted that a particular power dynamic can be expected given Denmark's representative democracy. Analyzing the government's agenda-setting before the paradigm shift could have reflected the discourse used by politicians to address voters' concerns about immigration. Politicians' framing of immigration issues significantly influences public voting behavior. Therefore, a historical examination could potentially reveal how immigration has been portrayed as a threat, issue, or benefit by various political actors leading up to elections. In particular, the power dynamics under a representative democracy are intriguing, as politicians must cater to voter preferences to secure votes. Consequently, this power dynamic operates in both directions. An analysis of public opinion would have enabled us to more thoroughly examine the power dynamic beyond the government and the target group.

Moreover, we found that during the negotiations of the Finance Act for 2019 the Danish People's Party triumphed in negotiating their way to the paradigm shift. (TV2, 2018). The Danish political environment involves coalitions amongst parties, where compromise is required. Understanding how this particular coalition affected immigration policy and the incitement for the government to let the Danish People's Party get their way during the

negotiations, could also have aided the thesis in examining silences and power dynamics, particularly in analysis section D.

In terms of our data collection, our reliance on secondary data does present a limitation, as it does affect the overall interpretations of data. In hindsight, we do believe the combination of primary and secondary data would have aided our analysis tremendously. Because we are limited to available secondary data, it would have added more depth to the analysis. An addition of primary data collected through surveys, interviews, and direct observations would have strengthened our overall insight into the research scope. For example, interviews with policymakers and questionnaires for the public or immigrants would provide more contextualized and recent data. Especially in regard to the thesis' theoretical framework, as it would have granted the research a deepened insight into why and how policymakers make targeted policies.

Theoretical implications

In terms of specific theoretical implications, as explained in our theoretical section, within the context of our research, it would be possible to place the target group differently. Because there is varying ways they can be constructed ethnic minorities depending on assumptions created through politics, culture, and religion among other factors. Thereby, challenging how the target group can be positioned within our context. However, identified patterns pointed to a possible construction of the target group as deviants, as mentioned throughout the analysis. This was especially expressed by how policymakers construct Muslims as being a group who do not contribute to society or the general welfare, and are therefore viewed as undeserving.

Inevitably our personal biases have impacted our study overall. While conducting our research, especially with focus on personal biases and our interpretations of the research question, we attempted to discuss our individual interpretations and find the middle ground for interpretation. We share fundamental ideological beliefs, that does call for criticism of the exclusion of immigrants and refugees. While having different backgrounds did aid us in challenging each other's interpretations, yet, our shared ideological belief is heavily reflected in our interpretations of the research question and the utilized data, and ultimately in our findings.

Generalizability and future research

Despite this research purely focusing on Denmark's repatriation strategy, our findings can be applicable to other nations with comparable political settings. Several factors, such as the paradigm shift , and thereby, the emphasis on self-sufficiency as a criteria for belonging, can be seen in other Western democracies, such as Finland (France 24, 2023) and Sweden (Regeringskansliet, 2023). Also, the paradigm shift may be used to forecast future adjustment in countries, such as Sweden and Finland, that are facing similar issues. Furthermore, within the scope of Gullestad, the Swedish case becomes particularly applicable, due to similar state structures based on social welfare. Thus, researchers in Sweden experiencing comparable adjustment in immigration policy, can find the Danish context representative of a larger political trend. However, as mentioned in section 3 Methodology, we were aware that WPR is very context and policy reliant. Meaning that the strong dependence on context, will affect the overall generalizability. While our findings can contribute to literature that criticizes the political narrative in Denmark related to refugees and immigrants, the specific policy does make it less applicable to other cases.

In terms of future research, based on our presented limitations, multiple options arise. Firstly, conducting a detailed historical examination of Danish immigration policies and public attitudes toward immigrants and refugees in recent decades. This will assist to contextualize the recent paradigm shift and give insights into how historical events and actions have influenced the policies. This can be done by utilizing archival research, historical policy analysis, and public opinion polls to track changes throughout a longer time frame. Secondly, conducting a comparative analysis of countries with similar policies or similar paradigm shifts, such as Sweden, would offer a broader illustration on how national identity affects immigration policy. To conduct this comparative analysis, one could examine each country's respective policies and case studies, to uncover patterns and characteristics. Thirdly, an investigation on how politicians and mainstream media frame immigration issues and how this framing impacts public views and policy making. This could be carried out by analysis of political speeches, news articles, and public opinion pieces på investigate the framing of immigration issues. Fourth, an analysis of how political parties, government institutions, and civil society organizations influence immigration policy making. Understanding the interplay of these, can aid in understanding how actors influence policy decisions. In this case, qualitative data would come in handy, in the form of interviews with policy makers. In addition, examinations of policy deliberation would aid the study as well.

7. Conclusion

This research project has highlighted the interplay between social constructions and policies, illustrating how the Danish repatriation law stems from securitizing ideals tied to the welfare state and Danish values. It has demonstrated the implications of Denmark's political paradigm shift, changing from integration to self-sufficiency and repatriation, thus emphasizing how repatriation went from being an alternative to integration, to becoming the end goal.

Using our theoretical frameworks, we have analyzed the implications of this paradigm shift. We found that immigrants from non-Western and MENAPT countries, particularly Muslims, are negatively constructed in political discourse as being at odds with the Danish way of life. This negative construction creates a distinction between "real Danes" and "guests," exemplified by the host-guest relationship notion. This relationship has been a part of political discourse, amplifying experiences of stigmatization and marginalization among refugees and immigrants.

This stigmatization is evident in the blaming of Muslims for integration problems, portraying them as deviants and undeserving of welfare benefits. This construct places Muslims in an uneven power dynamic where the host sets criteria that they cannot challenge, further marginalizing their voices. Thus, the paradigm shift creates another invisible fence.

Even though the emphasis of this thesis is Denmark's repatriation policy, other nations with comparable political environments can benefit from our results. Similar trends, such as the adoption of self-sufficiency as a condition for citizenship, are observed in other countries, like Sweden and Finland. This change may also aid in predicting upcoming changes in these nations that have shown similar problem representations. Particularly significant is Sweden, whose welfare-based state structure is comparable to Denmark.

In conclusion, the repatriation law socially constructs, predominantly Muslim refugees and immigrants in Denmark, as inherently incompatible with Danish values and norms. This is particularly evident in the discourse surrounding the paradigm shift. Concurrently, the political rationale behind this shift is rooted in the protection of the welfare state. This rationale creates a division between those deemed deserving and undeserving, attempting to safeguard Danish values and norms tied to the ideal of the welfare state.

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