

'Hygge racism':

*”noget som man nok bruger mere
end man tænker over”*

A qualitative study of well-intentioned racism

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to add to the body of knowledge on racisms in Denmark with the hope that further conceptual developments on 'hygge racism' can be made. In order to achieve this general aim, I analyse 'hygge racism' based on chosen concepts that show how it is reproduced and normalised in Denmark, thus dealing with it on structural and cultural levels, while also showing how it is a discursive act of 'doing' racism, thereby adding the personal level to the analysis.

The thesis is grounded on theories of power by Foucault and Reed, Pease's work on various forms of (intersecting) privileges and culture as hegemonic. Also incorporated is Durkheim's sacred/profane dualism and, to a smaller degree, discourse studies (Teun van Dijk). It is a qualitative study for which I have conducted 9 semi-structured interviews to find out how hygge as a Danish cultural phenomenon influences instances of racism on a daily basis. I thus found that 'hygge racism' is reproduced and normalised through a hegemonic Danish culture that shapes how people understand and negotiate 'hygge racism' and shape the discursive ways of 'doing' racism.

In brief, the thesis firstly provides an introductory section that grounds that thesis, after which accounts of and discussions on theory and methods follow. The analysis is then divided into two main sections, the former a more structural and cultural approach, whereas the latter is mainly discursive and personal. In the end a discussion and conclusion section wraps up the thesis and suggests future research.

Key words: racism, hygge, Denmark, forms of power, normalisation, privileges.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

An imperative aspect of the expressions of racisms in Denmark can be linked to its history as a colonial empire that lost vast amounts of land due to the outbreak of wars, which gradually allowed for an early national identity to form in Danish consciousness (Bergmann 2017:37). Denmark consisted of Norway, Finland, Scania in southern Sweden, Schleswig-Holstein, (currently) Scottish islands as well as Ghana, the West Indies and parts of India until the empire began to shrink between the mid-1600s and 2009, Greenland being the last to gain self-governance (Bergmann 2017:36-38; 41-42; Jensen 2015:441-442). The loss of Schleswig-Holstein in 1864 hit especially hard and Danes “*took an inward turn*” to gain a sense of meaning from within (Bergmann 2017:42). It was in that process the national identity was strengthened. Throughout Denmark’s history of colonisation the most influential figures in creating a particular national identity have been Grundtvig, H. C. Andersen and Kierkegaard, whom instilled a sense of pride and contentment with being Danish while simultaneously framing what it constituted (Bergmann 2017:39-40).

Additionally, the general ignorance of Denmark’s grim history as colonisers and as the world’s 7th largest slave nation also reinforced ideas of Danish identity (Neye 2016). This has been swept under the rug or dealt with by “*holding on to a narrative of Scandinavian humanitarianism, exceptionalism, and benevolent civilising mission [...]*” (Jensen 2015:445), and thus affected how Danes perceive themselves, their role in history and in a globalised world (Olwig 2003:208-209; 214-215; Neye 2016). This lack of nuanced depiction of the harsh reality in the colonies have supported ideas of Danes being “[...] *freedom loving, egalitarian and tolerant people who place equality, welfare and fairness before grandeur, might and honour*” (Olwig 2003:215). Danish cultural identity is then based on imaginaries of our doings in the world that is partly shaped by a self-serving approach to history (Olwig 2003:214-215; 217-219; Bergmann 2017:33-34).

Events in the 20th century that have impacted our national identity in relation to self-perception and the development of racism can be put within three themes: (i) the political actions or changes, (ii) actual or perceived crises and (iii) “the blindfold solution” to racism and discrimination.

The political changes that took place during and after the world wars, as well as the rise of “charismatic leaders” in politics who reproduced covertly racist discourses, helped shape the nationalist movements and xenophobic sentiments that are seen today, both in the media and

directly in the policies that are made (Bergmann 2017:52; 55-57; Mikkelsen 2017:21; 41). These changes increasingly normalises hostile remarks and actions and has made the fundamentally xenophobic Dansk Folkeparti (DF) more legitimate and accepted than previously (Mikkelsen 2017:21).

The perceived or actual crises are the exogenous events that took place at different points in time and furthered the xenophobic agenda, like the 1973 oil crisis that hit Denmark particularly hard, surges of refugees and immigrants as well as the 9/11 attacks (Bergmann 2017:51; 55). These put a strain on the will to welcome more people in, which furthered the political agenda of DF.

Lastly, the “blindfold solution” to racism was to completely silence and ignore the colonial past and prevalence of covert and structural racisms in Denmark, which instead paved the way for viewing racism as an individual belief in a biological reality of a hierarchy of “races” that ranks whiteness as ultimately superior (Danbolt 2017:108; Jensen, Weibel & Vitus 2017:56). Therefore, racisms that are expressed in the forms of children’s literature, representations of commodities such as candy or coffee and ‘hygge racism’ on micro-level interactions are ignored and pinpointing the racism inherent in those representations are dismissed: *“By pointing to the problem, one gets framed as the producer of the problem, and thus one becomes the problem.”* (Danbolt 2017:108).

Consequently, four themes have laid the foundation for ‘hygge racism’, and other racisms, to become normalised in Danish society: (i) the post-colonial reality, (ii) the elements and construction of the national cultural identity, (iii) the political climate, and (iv) the blindfold solution to racisms in Denmark.

1.2. Purpose

The overall purpose with this study is to add to the body of literature that engages with racism in Denmark by examining ‘hygge racism’. More concretely, it is the purpose to suggest a broad but capturing definition which can be debated and studied further with the hope of getting a better idea of how racisms are expressed and function in Denmark. Secondly, it is the purpose to show how ‘hygge racism’ is influenced by structural, cultural and historical realities in Denmark but also the individual acts in the form of ‘doing racism’ that reproduce privileges and unequal social and power relations.

‘Hygge racism’ is not currently an academic term, but rather something I came across when reading online debates articles and blog posts that had an anti-racist outset. None of these defined ‘hygge racism’, which spiked my interest in the subject and eventually led to this thesis. As such, ‘hygge racism’ is not well-known in Denmark; its emergence and application are therefore still sporadic and more present in various forms of online debates. The thesis functions as an initial exploration of the term, how it can be expressed/acted out and its relation to other theoretical concepts. It will be defined further in the theories section on page 11.

1.3. Research questions and limitations

In this thesis I take a mainly structural approach to the study of ‘hygge racism’, as I find that to be the foundational ground upon which agency and resistance to social norms take place. Even though we have the agency to challenge ‘hygge racism’, even though people’s experiences are varied and their responses to it can be contradictory, we are still formed by multiple structural systems that lay the foundation for our understanding of and agency in the world, like sexism (Rehder & Willumsen 2010:10). That being said, one of the limitations of the study is indeed the less-than-desired amount of focus on individual agency, cognitive processes and the construction of identity. Additionally, I have had to limit the study further by leaving out the particular discursive methods people use to negotiate ‘hygge racism’, its use in online articles and debates for anti-racism purposes, as well as inter-personal and group communication which could otherwise have been interesting to investigate due to the social nature of matter. I attempt to answer the following questions:

- 1) What function do the concepts of power, hegemony, privilege and culture have in the reproduction and normalisation of ‘hygge racism’?
- 2) How is ‘hygge racism’ a way of ‘doing racism’? How does the interviewees’ construction of themselves and others in relation to ‘hygge racism’ support or challenge this ‘doing’?

1.4. Previous Research

I have found no previous research on the topic ‘hygge racism’ but did find material that deals with different aspects of the topic. In this section I will account for research I have come across, the majority of it to a smaller or larger degree used in the thesis.

Denmark's history as colonisers is getting more academic attention that takes critical stances on the participation in and lack of knowledge of this history; it deals with e.g. the human exhibitions in Copenhagen (Andreasen & Henningsen 2011) and selected parts of Denmark's history that are relevant for the analysis of the rise of Danish and Scandinavian nationalism (Bergmann 2017). It also deals with the specific colonialism in the Nordic and Southern regions (Jensen 2015), and in relation to different forms of racism in Denmark (Rasmussen 2004; Danbolt 2017).

However, works on racism were less commonly found in a specific Danish context than that of xenophobia and nationalism, which may be due to the more explicit nature of the latter, whereas the former functions covertly and goes unrecognised by the majority. However, the two concepts were also dealt with in the same works on their development and meanings (Rasmussen 2004; Hervik 2015). Other topics in relation to racisms especially focus on structural realities like power, hegemony and privilege (Crenshaw & Roskos-Ewoldsen 1999; van Dijk 2008; Wieviorka 1995; Pease 2010; Rehder & Willumsen 2010). These works emphasise the embeddedness and invisibility of power in everyday relations, how racism, privilege and hegemony affect our behaviour, what and who are constructed as 'deviants' and how this affects anti-racism. Other focus has been on discourse (Wetherell & Potter 1992; Whitehead 2017; Jensen, Weibel & Vitus 2017), also in relation to power (van Dijk 2008; Guerin 2003) and research (Gunaratnam 2003). The topics range from particular word use of categorisations and 'othering', how it reproduces and normalises social relations of inequality, racist talk and whiteness as the norm from which everything else is measured. Other focus lies on jokes and humour, as well as the similar structure of sexism.

Hygge has received a lot of attention lately with many books and online articles published on the Danish lifestyle and culture of hygge, covering both positive and negative aspects. Research has also laid its investigative gaze on this, in relation to the law of Jante (Janteloven), sociality and from a middle-class perspective (Linnet 2011; Beltagui & Schmidt 2017; Jenkins 2011)

Consequently, research on topics like racism and hygge is varied and plentiful; while there will certainly be aspects that I have not been able to cover in this short account there is still a lack on specific racisms in Denmark like 'hygge racism'.

1.5. Positioning

The aspects I have chosen to focus on in this thesis are contingent on my position in society as a white woman in my 20ies, who has grown up in a middle-class home on the countryside while also having had the opportunity to live, study and/or work in England, South Africa and Sweden. The experiences I have gained and the (unearned) privileges I have shape my perception of questions such as ‘hygge racism’. In addition, it has also affected whether or not I have participated, ignored/accepted or challenged it when it has occurred (Madison 2005:7). Similarly, realising past mistakes of actively participating in ‘hygge racism’ has influenced my stance on the matter.

2. Theory section

The theoretical framework for this thesis has been placed within social constructivism and post-structuralism due to the fluid nature of ‘hygge racism’. The concepts I rely on are used to analyse ‘hygge racism’ as a specifically Danish phenomenon influenced by history and the understanding of Danish culture. After providing definitions of key terms, I will account for these concepts, their application and end with a critical discussion.

2.1. Definitions

2.1.1. Hygge

Hygge is considered a very Danish and takes place when people socialise together or are alone. It is both physical and mental, a mood or feeling shared by those around you or felt when you are alone. It is a particular calm, stress-free and stimulating state of being in the particular situation; in social interactions it happens when people are having fun, talking and joking together and at ease, when alone it is a state of being content. In this thesis I deal with the social aspect of hygge; its functions and its role in social interactions. When defining it, Linnet (2011:22-24) focuses on words like “*comfort and joy*”, that it is “*a safe, low-key, intimate form of socialization*” with people you enjoy being with and who will participate in maintaining the mood without making themselves centre of attention or bringing up “*thorny topics or divisive issues*”. Hygge is mainly understood positively but can also be associated with negative traits like social control, shying away from necessary conflicts and exclusion of those who transgress its norms (Linnet 2011:31; 33; Jenkins 2011:xiv).

2.1.2. “Race”, Racisms and ethnicities

The way we talk about “race”, racism and ethnicities in various contexts differ culturally and temporally; previously, it was acceptable to use “race” as a biological fact, which in Denmark has

been replaced with ethnicity, that “refers to cultural and religious difference and kinship” (Gunaratnam 2003:4; Hervik 2015:23-33; Augoustinos 2009:43). As such, officially we do not differentiate between people based on their “races” but their ethnicity or culture, though the two function as two sides of the same coin (Gunaratnam 2003:4-5). It is imperative to note that the application of ethnicity e.g. by using the term “being of another ethnic background/having another ethnic heritage than Danish”¹ is a substitute to distinguishing between biological “races”, since it is an essentialist perception of people as culturally fixed and distinct from each other (Rasmussen 2004:7). Instead, ethnicity and “race” ought to be seen as contextual, social constructs that function as tools to understand current inequalities as well as complex and ever-changing “interactions between social processes and individual experience” (Gunaratnam 2003:8). For this reason, I put the concepts “race”, “ethnic Danes” and other constructions in citation marks to highlight that it is not the believed-to-be-real categories I use, but rather to acknowledge their applicability in understanding present-day social, cultural and structural relations (Gunaratnam 2003:4; 9; 31-32; Andersen 2014:24-25).

I use racism in plural since there are different forms, functions and expressions of racism (Augoustinos 2009:43). There is the biological racism based on “race science” that categorised people into different hierarchical positions, placing the white man at the top of the hierarchy (Hervik 2015:23-33); though still to some degree present today, it is an unaccepted type of racism that cannot explain its current forms in Denmark (Rasmussen 2004:3).

A newer form of racism which is more present in Denmark is neo-racism². This is based on the idea of ‘cultural groups’ and ethnicities as fixed, different and whose boundaries are impossible to cross; thus, immigrants and refugees coming to Denmark are considered too culturally different to be ‘integrated’ (Jensen, Weibel & Vitus 2017:52-53). It is “racism without races” and the superiority of the majority culture (ibid.). Similarly, Wieviorka (1995:38-39) argues that there are four levels of racisms in society that gradually move from the individual to the institutional. In the beginning it is “minor and disjointed”, incoherent and individual, but slowly becomes explicit and legitimised to a point where racism becomes political, sparks debates, mobilises the public and discriminatory practices become socially acceptable to demand. Lastly, the state becomes a racist machinery that only functions by and serves to maintain inequality and racism – think Apartheid (Wieviorka

¹ “anden etnisk baggrund/herkomst”

² “Nyracisme”

1995:39). Thus, at the first level an expression of racism may be racist jokes, where the function is to strengthen the group bond, whereas on the last level, racism functions as a hierarchal system that actively discriminates.

I will argue for racism as a system that structures everyone, as Rehder & Willumsen (2010:10-11) discuss; racism is thereby all-encompassing and distributes privileges and positions in society along the lines of “race” and ethnicity, as well as other intersecting identity markers – as such, it is not only people who are subjected to racism that are structured by it but also the “unmarked”, white, “ethnic Danes” who are the majority, those that are not (necessarily) negatively affected by it (Rehder & Willumsen 2010:10). It is a fundamental part of everyday life whether we see and accept it or not, and racism can therefore be seen as “*prejudice plus power*” which, as Pease (2010:110) argues, makes it possible for only white people to be racist in predominantly white societies like Denmark, since only they benefit from institutionalised racism. Van Dijk (2008:103) furthermore finds that racism in individuals takes place socially and cognitively, the former being “social practices of discrimination” and the latter a “mental basis” that functions as the foundation for acts.

2.1.3. ‘Hygge racism’

My definition has been under continuous development, shaped by both interviewees’ and the literature that helped me identify key concepts. I believe the definition can be expanded to cover more aspects of the socially accepted and well-intended racism, but I chose to emphasise the ‘hyggelige’ social interactions due to space limitations and keeping the content focused.

‘Hygge racism’ is when someone says something racist (often based on stereotypes and assumed cultural/ethnic differences) in a social, ‘hyggelig’ context with the purpose to lift the spirits, make people laugh or say something sweet/nice – thus, the racist comment/joke etc. is meant to be received as something positive and not (necessarily) as something serious as both the ‘hyggelige’ situation and intention behind the said is positive. This positive intention is as such regarded as more important than how the ‘hygge racist’ comment/joke etc. is received and perceived which can be both very hurtful and negative. Ways to break with ‘hygge’/the good mood e.g. by pointing out the racist nature of the said is met with attempts to defend and legitimise the racism.

This suggested definition could also be related to research on concepts like ‘everyday racism’ and other forms of inter-subjective, covert racisms, but this I will not investigate further in this thesis.

2.1.4. Discourse

My use of ‘discourse’ in the thesis is taken from van Dijk’s *Discourse & Power* (2008:104), where he defines it as: “*a specific communicative event, in general, and a written or oral form of verbal interaction or language use, in particular.*” and within this power is inherent (van Dijk 2008:42-64). It thus covers different types of discourse, e.g. racist or political discourse, wherein information is shared and power reproduced – whether by slurs, jokes, etc

2.2. Concepts

2.2.1. Cultural Hegemony

Hegemony is used in relation to Danish culture as the foundation upon which phenomena like ‘hygge racism’ is practiced and understood. The concept was developed by Gramsci and constitutes “*the intellectual and moral leadership*” of a dominant social group within society whose reality is reproduced “*by moulding personal convictions into a replica of prevailing norms.*” (Femia 2011:24) The people that shape discourses without losing out in any way are the ones with the power to define what is okay and what is not, they decide what is racist, ‘hygge racist’ or none of the above, or rather they make use of the “*common social-moral language*” (Femia 2011:24). Thus, hegemony lies with the group that sees through their interests and how they perceive reality (Crenshaw & Roskos-Ewoldsen 1999:277). This makes it possible to ignore personal stories and arguments against e.g. ‘hygge racism’ and continue down the same line because one has tools of legitimisation to use which are widely available and culturally accepted. Thus, certain discourses and narratives are allowed in spite of their inherent racism. Also, hegemony relies on consent and the success of shaping attitudes through various institutions in a manner ensuring that people perceive the world in a desired way (Femia 2011:24). Cultural hegemony is thus the normalisation, reproduction and interpretation of the world through the dominant social groups’ culture.

2.2.2. Privilege

To understand ‘hygge racism’, I used Pease’s (2010) work on intersecting privileges and oppressions. Pease (2010) deals with different forms of privileges, how they are reproduced as a way of ‘doing’ in the world, and the fact that these privileges are normalised and naturalised; especially relevant for this thesis is his chapter on whiteness as the basis from which everything else is constructed as e.g. deviant or exotic etc. (Pease 2010:108-127). It is essential to keep in mind the intersecting histories, experiences of privileges and oppressions (whether conscious or not) shaping our lives, since our position in the world affects our readiness to realise, acknowledge and resist the

privileges we may have, or oppositely ensuring that they be continually upheld (Pease 2010; Neye 2016). Though the thesis is not as intersectional as wished for, the findings should still be seen in the light of this. I engage with the role of normalisation, discourses and actions as main drivers of legitimising ‘hygge racism’ since the privileges following being white, “ethnic Danes”, as well as other intersecting factors, influence how we perceive the world (Pease 2010).

2.2.3. Power as productive, discursive, relational and performative

I apply different forms of power; (i) Foucault’s theorising on power as productive is imperative to understand the meaning of norms, punishment and social stratification (Hörnqvist 2012). (ii) Reed (2013) proposes a theory of power based on social relations, discourse and performance.

Productive power distributes privileges according to norms which positions them within a social hierarchy – the more people conform to society’s norms, the more privileged and powerful they will be; thus, people will be ‘punished’ until they conform (which they also have a desire to do since it will make them feel good about it) which is also a way of measuring power relations (Hörnqvist 2012:60-63). Furthermore, power produces things like actions, discourses and knowledge and thus decides what acts, discourses and knowledge are normal or deviant (Hörnqvist 2012:64-65). Normalisation and conformity are especially relevant for analysing ‘hygge racism’ (Butler 2004).

‘Hygge racism’ can be analysed using Reed’s (2013:203) three dimensions of power since it is a discursive act between people who have a relation to each other, and it is performative as it *may* stimulate expectations or actions based on what takes place during the event. While Reed’s theory of power necessarily includes all three aspects and can be applied to the case of ‘hygge racism’, I have chosen to leave out the performative dimension. This is because the interviews could not properly recreate ‘hygge racism’ as performative (Reed 2013:201-204).

The relational and discursive dimensions of power are actions; they function as ways of doing in the world dependent on the social positions that people inhabit (Reed 2013:206). Relational power is based on the social positions people occupy within a structure, where the powerful actors have the ability to “*achieve their intentions over [and] against the will of others, and generally possess the ability to direct social life, often to their advantage*” (Reed 2013:203). Discursive power is “[...] *diffuse and can often work best when it hides its workings and appears not to be an exercise of power.*” and as such it is easy to overlook the most mundane and normalised discursive practices as

fields of power (Reed 2013:200; 203). ‘Hygge racism’ as discursive and relational is vital for understanding its different expressions and the analytical levels it can be approached from.

2.2.4. The sacred and profane

Due to the social and ritualised nature of ‘hygge racism’, it can be analysed with the help of Durkheim (2008:170-171; 313-314) who argued that religion is a symbolic reality of social life, and that the purpose of religion is to strengthen the collective’s bond to society. This is where the sacred/profane dualism comes into the picture; the two are states of being, the former inherent in all rituals, as *“anything at all, can be sacred”* (Durkheim 2008:36), and the latter is the everyday life that is always separate from and a threat to the sacred – these states are not like positive/negative, which are both emotions though of opposite forms, but rather share no characteristics, they are completely heterogeneous and incompatible (Durkheim 2008:37-40; 228-229). To transform from the profane to the sacred state rites are necessary; rites function as “rules of conduct” that serve to protect the sacred (Durkheim 2008:37-40). Since the two are separate, Jenkins (2011:115-116) argues that ‘routinisation of charisma’, as coined by Weber, can explain hygge as a ritual meant to strengthen and protect the sacred communal spirit³ from the profane, the regular (Linnet 2011; Beltagui & Schmidt 2017).

2.3. Discussion on theory

The concepts and theories inevitably makes the analysis a very structural one, which could have been weighed up by a greater focus on discourse studies and/or agency as a form of ‘doing’ racism or resistance (van Dijk 2008, Gunaratnam 2003; Rehder & Willumsen 2010; Guerin 2003). Still, these concepts are fundamental for understanding the covert and *“un-visible”* (Ralph Ellison’s term for *“presences that people refuse to see”* in Danbolt 2017:106) ways in which racisms function in Denmark and how a practice like ‘hygge racism’ becomes socially acceptable and normalised (Wetherell & Potter 1992; Jensen, Weibel & Vitus 2017; Wieviorka 1995; Hervik 2015; Rasmussen 2004). These theories and concepts create a solid foundation for analysing the empirics, as they can explain the embeddedness of culture, privileges and positions in society in our understanding of the world, as well as the contradictive and complex nature of experience and cognitions.

³ “Fællesskabsfølelse”

3. Methods section

In this section I will deal with the chosen method and discussions regarding its applicability, ethics and implementation, as well as more practical aspects of the gathering and analysis of the data.

3.1. Choice of method

Due to the very subjective and complex nature of the topic, I chose to do a qualitative study of ‘hygge racism’ by conducting semi-structured interviews; this allowed me to focus on the individuals whose thought patterns and ways of ascribing the topic and my questions meaning are constituted within a cultural whole (Denscombe 1998:234-235). In other words, the qualitative approach allowed me to deal with ‘hygge racism’ in a manner that sought to understand interviewees’ experiences, explanations and constructions of reality (Gunaratnam 2003:110). These narrated, subjective realities of “race”, racism and ethnicity furthermore opened up for a structural understanding of ‘hygge racism’.

3.2. Sample

Finding people to participate was done by hanging up posters⁴ and by using relevant ‘gate openers’ with access to people from various backgrounds. Since participants were found relatively quickly with help of the ‘gate openers’ (family members and friends) who sent out the invitations to people in their network and/or had them extend those invitations beyond that network made the posters superfluous. I met with people from the Copenhagen, Roskilde and Ejby areas, who had various backgrounds, ages and experiences in terms of work and personal lives, though to some degree had similar opinions⁵. This can be explained by the ways the invitations were spread by the ‘gate openers’, as it did result in some sort of ‘accidental snowballing method’ which is one problematic aspect of it. The snowballing method is a way for the researcher to be introduced to potential interviewees with the help from existing participants, which is positive in the sense that these participants, and in my case also my ‘gate openers’, may know people who are interesting and useful for the study – oppositely, it can be downside because these people decide who the researcher is introduced to (Ryen 2004:83). However, I would still argue that the outcome has been successful since all of the interviewees reflected on different aspects that challenged me in a constructive manner. After the potential interviewees expressed their interest, I sent out a lay summary (Madison 2005:23-25) explaining who I was, the initial purpose and content of the study

⁴ See appendix D

⁵ For more information about the interviewees, see appendix A

as well as information regarding anonymity, contact information etc. Based on this, they could make their final decision on whether or not they wanted to participate. In terms of ethics and protecting their interests, I provided as much information as possible regarding the purpose of the study, provided fake names, asked for consent to use specific quotes in the analysis and let them know that they could always contact me with questions or comments if necessary (Denscombe 1998:193-198). This was to ensure anonymity, transparency and to avoid misinterpretation.

3.3. Empirics and analysis

The interviews I conducted were semi-structured and a mixture of the forms personal narrative and topical (Madison 2005:26); the former is focused on the interviewees experiences, opinions and how they express these, whereas the latter is opinions on a particular issue or topic, which in this case was ‘hygge racism’ (ibid.). As such, it is a hermeneutic approach to dealing with the empirics, an interpretation of their understanding of the world as they have come to see it based on the social, cultural and historical framework within which they have lived (Zimmerman 2015). However, since I am not basing my study solely on the interpretation of the interviewees’ experiences but rather mainly include structural elements it is more of a structural hermeneutics approach.

Throughout the 9 interviews I used a guide as support and to help narrow the focus; towards the end of conducting interviews I became more aware of the questions that worked and what did not, which made it more structured. The questions that I posed were inspired by Gunaratnam (2003), in relation to subjective meanings and the social construction of “race”, Pease (2010) in terms of detecting privilege by e.g. asking about representation, and Madison (2005:26-30) who deals with models and question formulations, e.g. descriptive or opinion/value questions etc.

The analysis of the empirics has been a process of constantly engaging and becoming confident with the transcribed interview material, referring back to literature already read and seeking new information. I categorised clusters of the transcribed material to use with the theoretical concepts and carefully made sure not to press the theory on to the empirics (Madison 2005:36-37). This categorisation was based on the topic of conversation, e.g. on hygge or racisms, which made it easier to spot relevant material; but it is also a result of my own interpretation of the interviewees’ responses and what I have understood to be important to highlight or leave out (Denscombe 1998:323). The interviewee quotes used in the thesis function as the basis for analysis and as support for theoretical arguments, respectively.

3.4. Methods discussion

For my particular topic, the qualitative, semi-structured interview seemed the most sensible choice due to the aforementioned subjective, complex and contextual realities that cannot be conveyed quantitatively. Though the research question developed throughout the work, it was from the beginning qualitative due to the subjective and discursive focus. Also, the unstructured interview would require more experience with designing and conducting interviews than what I have had the chance of doing as a bachelor's student, while oppositely the structured interview would pose limitations in the sense that there would be less room for reflection, contextualisation and probing.

4. ANALYSIS

I will engage with different themes concerning 'hygge racism' in the two sections "Hegemonic Culture, Privilege & Power" and "Doing racism", showing how chosen concepts reproduce and normalise 'hygge racism', and how identity constructions and negotiations are ways to 'do' racism.

4.1. Hegemonic Culture, Privilege & Power

For 'hygge racism' to take place there must be something prevalent in Danish society and culture that legitimises it. I will argue that this legitimisation in inter-subjective interactions is negotiated according to peoples' values, experiences of the world and how they interpret it which are shaped by culture and history. 'Hygge racism' is legitimised in social interactions because these interactions acquire meaning through Danish culture and values. The following arguments will be grounded in theories of privilege, hegemony and power.

4.1.1. Hegemonic culture

Danish culture can be understood as a dominant ideology that shapes our understanding and interpretation of the world, based on Gramsci's conceptualisation of hegemony (Crenshaw & Roskos-Ewoldsen 1999:276). Therefore, actions and utterances are evaluated within this framework of understanding, including how 'hygge racism' is experienced, perceived and eventually challenged or justified. Danish culture is normalised and idealised by actors or groups like politicians who prescribe the correct way of being a member of society and make legislations based on these ideas (Jensen, Weibel & Vitus 2017:63-65). More covertly, "*institutions and `state apparatuses` such as the media and education system*" (Wetherell & Potter 1992:60) mould people into the existing pattern of normalised behaviour and opinions (Femia 2011:24). For instance, by covertly indoctrinating certain ideas of the importance and fixed nature of culture and what is

considered to be Danish in the schools, it will in more or less conscious ways be accepted and justified, while that which is considered deviant is subject to devaluation and punishment in the form of e.g. ‘othering’ (Jensen, Wiebel & Vitus 2017:62-65; Hörnqvist 2012:82-83).

4.1.2. Hegemonic Hygge

One could argue that hygge is a ritualised act that protects sacred social situations and also a hegemonic ideology, as it is an inherent part of Danish culture that informs the way we socialise together. As according to Durkheim’s (2008) sacred/profane dualism, hygge thereby strengthens the communal feeling⁶ in a group and functions as a protection of its sacredness (Durkheim 2008:36-40). It is meant to prevent any disturbances from happening. However, as Jenkins (2011:115-116) has argued, this dualism does not quite fit the everyday-experiences of hygge since hygge is not an extraordinary experience of “mystery or enthusiasm”, but rather a normalised and toned down experience of the uplifted communal feeling (“routinisation of charisma”, Jenkins 2011:116). Hygge as a social and cultural phenomenon thus happens regularly and is a part of everyday life but nonetheless remains sacred and ritualised:

Hygge is: “[...] to be together.. but I can also hygge alone with a book and a cup of coffee and some music, easily.. it’s just that you feel that ‘ahh’ now I’m sitting here and I don’t have to do anything before I get up. That’s hygge and [when] I am with someone, it is the togetherness, friendship.” (Grethe, 44)⁷

This statement shows a lot of the elements that hygge consists of and is a great representation of the general explanations from the interviews: it is mainly social but not necessarily always so, and it is a physical and mental state of being that is devoid of stress, tension and unpleasantness. It is inherent in mundane experiences such as enjoying a book or meeting friends for beer or ‘kaffe og kage’⁸, but the main point is that it is something enjoyable that should be maintained, and that it happens regularly without (necessarily) being a large scale, special occasion (Linnet 2011:22-23).

As mentioned above, hygge is hegemonic because it shapes how we understand and evaluate social interactions; what people say and why they say it is meant as a form of maintaining the good mood, social relationships and the communal feeling⁹ or as an *attempt to become included* in those things (Beltagui & Schmidt 2017:415-416; Linnet 2011:24; 29-30; Guerin 2003:30; 34). Interactions

⁶ “fællesskabet”

⁷ For Danish quote, see appendix B, no. 1

⁸ “Coffee and cake”

⁹ “Fællesskabet”

perceived as hyggelige will therefore be evaluated based on whether people invoke trust and are inclusive, if there is a similarity of opinions, and generally a good feeling in the moment:

It is not hyggeligt: “[...] when you are sitting on sticks the whole evening¹⁰ and just (makes sound of discomfort) and think, well, that was those ten seconds, that took about twenty seconds before they went by, umm.. and just not feeling nice or relaxed.. If it is because of something opinion-wise because you are just very different from everyone else or if it simply is because you are in some sort of academic circle where they only know how to speak of this piece of art that you yourself just think is a red line and a green line- arh and you can’t participate in the conversation, then you’re just at the completely wrong place. (Karen, 50)¹¹

Like Beltagui & Schmidt (2017) and Linnet (2011) have found, hygge is not *only* a positive experience, due to its inherently dualist elements like inclusivity/exclusivity, sameness/sticking out and pleasant/tense mood. As Karen described above, inclusiveness is imperative in hyggelige, social situations and exemplifies it with sitting in an academic circle that excludes those who cannot talk about art – in that way, hygge enforces sameness and thus functions as a type of social control by rewarding those who fit in (can talk about art) while those who deviate (does not care about/like art) are punished, e.g. by feeling bored or excluded (Linnet 2011:33; Beltagui & Schmidt 2017:406-407). Additionally, those that deviate from the sameness by attracting attention to themselves or rising above everyone else are also frowned upon (Linnet 2011:24):

“[...] sometimes you can spend time with people and they talk and talk but they never ask about me [...] it’s hygge when it’s reciprocal that it’s not just one-way, pouring water out of your ears¹² and hear how happy I am because I’m divorced [...]” (Grethe, 44)¹³

In accordance with the darker side of hygge as a method of social control is the fictional law of Jante, as it too strives for sameness and conformity through the 10 commandments that in each their way let people know that they are not more special, clever etc. than anyone else, and simultaneously legitimises the ridicule and exclusion of those that deviate from this sameness (Beltagui & Schmidt 2017:407-408). Thus, creating tension, taking over the conversation or starting uncomfortable discussions that emphasize the heterogeneity of opinions amongst the company are frowned upon and discouraged – harmony is key, even if it means avoiding necessary confrontation or discussion (Beltagui & Schmidt 2017:416; Linnet 2011:33). This begs the question of what happens in

¹⁰ Sitting on sticks: being uncomfortable and hyper-aware of the situation.

¹¹ For Danish quote, see appendix B, no. 2

¹² ‘Pouring water out of your ears’: it means to speak without any meaningful content.

¹³ For Danish quote, see appendix B, no. 3

situations where the participation in *hygge*, e.g. in the shape of joking or telling stories, takes a racist turn? The perfect reaction is to accept it, laugh at it or generally do nothing about it, since challenging the inherent racism would be standing out from the group and, arguably, thinking you are better than others because you take the anti-racist, moral high ground that raises you up above the rest (Beltagui & Schmidt 2017:407).

It is not so simple to navigate these types of situations and it is thus becomes a question of negotiation: what is worth to justify or ignore? The things that influence (in)action can be anything from unawareness of the inherent racism, judging it to be mild, innocent and maybe funny, due to good intentions and thus okay to ignore or because of “*judgemental and narrow-minded and hidebound*”¹⁴ (Grethe, 44) people that are impossible to influence. It is also important to highlight that personality influences such negotiations as some may be more comfortable with discussions and/or more secure in their opinions than others. Still, interviewees generally agreed that the boundary between ‘*hygge racism*’ (when considered non-harmful) and going too far is difficult to define but that intention, context and company shape it:

”[...] I think intentions that is a good word, a key concept, because I guess it is about what people meant with what they said, umm.. I think there are a lot [of people] who might get into trouble because of something they didn’t mean” (Claus, 26)

”I could never make a black joke or gay joke if there is someone present that I know is one of those things.. but on the other hand, we have two wonderful substitute teachers [...] they are not practicing Muslims so in their company you can make those kinds of jokes, because the mood it right for it [...] she just thinks it’s really, really funny and she’s very little pretentious so there’s nothing about her feeling offended by it, so in those cases you can do it, yes” (Grethe, 44)¹⁵

I will return to the problematic regarding intentions later, but it is interesting to keep it in mind when discussing the typical Danish sense of humour which is considered to be “*smearing one or several people [...] when we [Danes] are going to have a laugh, we preferably need someone to laugh at, not something to laugh at*” (Lars, 54, his emphasis)¹⁶. This form of humour includes ‘*hygge racism*’ as culturally legitimised and acceptable because it is in line with prevailing norms. Thus, *hyggelige* situations allow racism to occur (potentially) unhindered and thus to be reproduced and normalised.

¹⁴ “*fordømmende og snæversynde[de] og forstokke[de]*”

¹⁵ For Danish quote, see appendix B, no. 4-5

¹⁶ “*tilsvinende over for en eller flere andre [...] når vi [danskere] skal grine, så skal vi helst have en at grine af, vi skal ikke noget at grine af*” (Lars 54, hans eftertryk)

In sum, hygge functions as (i) a ritualised act that prescribes a particular form of behaviour and (ii) as part of the hegemonic, Danish culture that shapes how we understand social situations as Danes. Hygge can thus allow for racism to happen unhindered, though negotiations of how to respond in the specific situations vary contextually and are e.g. legitimised due to good intentions.

4.1.3. My truth is your truth: hegemonic discourses as weapons of mass-reproduction

Even though hygge can reproduce ‘hygge racism’, hegemonic discourses that (i) favour cultural norms and values, and (ii) prove societal silencing of racism and ignorance of colonial history also matter for this reproduction and normalisation to take place.

The practicing and protection of the Danish sense of humour, ridicule of political correctness and support for freedom of speech in relation to racisms can function as disavowals or legitimisations of racism as Danbolt (2017:107-109) has argued in his study; he finds that racism is justified with Danish traditions and values, while anti-racism and political correctness are constructed as evil perils that must be countered as they pose a threat to traditions and customs. Danbolt (2017:106) further links this to Danes’ lack of knowledge of their colonial history and the silencing on issues of racism that has made the degrading representations of minorities on commodities such as Cirkel Kaffe and Skipper Mix¹⁷ (before it was changed) “un-visible”. This ability to ignore harmful representations and shape the discourse on the ‘accused’ racism is a privilege, which I will return to. In that sense, the hegemonic discourses that shape public debates are informed by the dominant cultural norms and legitimise actions or utterings that are in alignment with them. ‘Hygge racism’ is an example of a majority’s ability to legitimise and define what is acceptable and/or funny since it has become reproduced and normalised in ‘hyggelige’ situations. Thus, it is more acceptable to allow racist comments, jokes and the like without it receiving condemnation, than it is to object to the experienced ‘hygge racism’ as it will be met with excuses or denials of racism (van Dijk 2008:123-124). Yet, while “*social discourses can have effects upon experience [they] can also be questioned and contradicted by experience*” (Gunaratnam 2003:7); as such, discourses matter in the construction of (the majority’s) reality and idea of the acceptable, funny or normal, but individual experiences also influence how these discourses are interpreted and potentially contradicted.

As mentioned earlier, the interviewees found that boundaries vary contextually and there are no clear outlines for what and when something is okay; their definitions of freedom of speech, Danish

¹⁷ For explanation, see appendix C

humour etc. therefore form the basis upon which it is decided where the boundary is to be drawn, and thus these values are the foundation upon which ‘hygge racism’ is reproduced and normalised. For instance, Karen supports freedom of speech without limits because everyone should be entitled to have and speak their opinions, even the ‘wrong’ ones, as discussion is the only way to inform and change someone’s mind. She also stated:

“I think that’s what’s going to separate us Danes from a lot of other places, this dark sense of humour and having fun about it and our freedom of speech, um.. and that’s probably where people don’t understand that the Muhammed-drawings for example, why we actually thought that was a great sense of humour, um, because we could have done the same thing next week, make the same drawings about our own queen or Anders Fogh¹⁸ [...]”¹⁹ (Karen, 50)

The focus is egalitarian in some sense; *everyone* is the potential next target of a joke. But what happens when the joke as a discursive tool reinforces and legitimises racism by claiming the priority of culture? When some of those made fun of are already marginalised and discriminated in society and made butt of the joke because of their difference (religion, skin colour etc.)? Even though everyone in principle can stand up for themselves and can argue for their opinions, it does not take into account the unequal power relations between social groups such as white, “ethnic Danes” and e.g. Muslims or brown people (van Dijk 2008:39-40). As such, one can consider ‘hygge racism’ a discursive form of power, since it is based on hegemonic norms that normalise and naturalise certain stereotypes and “shape certain kinds of subjects”, whether these are people of the majority or minorities since racisms shape everyone, only differently (Reed 2013:203).

In brief, I argue that dominant discourses serving to protect e.g. the Danish sense of humour and freedom of speech (i) reproduce harmful norms where ‘hygge racism’ is justified, thus enforcing existing privileges and power relations, and (ii) that these are discursive forms of power.

4.1.4. The privileges of a white, “ethnic Dane”

Privilege is a key concept in the analysis of ‘hygge racism’ in Denmark, because many of the things that are said and done daily, such as ‘hygge racism’, go by unnoticed and are therefore not consciously recognised as being problematic; it is thus possible to proclaim being open-minded, tolerant and prejudice-free, but white people in Denmark still benefit from their skin colour (Pease

¹⁸ Danish Prime Minister from 2001 to 2009.

¹⁹ For Danish quote, see appendix B, no. 6

2010:111). These benefits make it possible to go through society unmarked and not having to reflect on the privilege(s) they have (Pease 2010:115). Being a white “ethnic Dane” in Denmark means constituting a normalised standard, to be associated with positive cultural traits, not having to name or identify oneself in “racial” terms because past experiences haven’t required reflection on it (Pease 2010:113; 120). Their representation everywhere in culture and politics is also self-evident:

“[...] I haven’t thought about that, so I guess that would be a yes. Because, had there been a skewedness I guess you would have thought about it [...]” (Karen, 50, on whether she feels represented in media, politics and culture)²⁰

More importantly though, unnoticed privileges shape how we interpret cases of ‘hygge racism’ which makes it possible to laugh at it and ignore it without suffering the consequences personally (Pease 2010:120). This ability is not only a privilege, but also witnesses of power embedded in social relations and discourse; power then comes into the picture when we reproduce the existing structures, privileges and hierarchies through our utterances and actions (Pease 2010:120-121).

The discussion necessarily needs to include an intersectional perspective, since our different identities (sexuality, gender, ethnicity, able-ness, age, ‘class’, etc.) intersect in as many ways as there are people in the world, which according to Pease (2010:21) demands studying privileges and oppressions on the personal, cultural and structural levels. For instance, a white, “ethnic Danish” woman may be involuntarily fumbled on every year at the office Christmas Party and due to the “glass ceiling” not see her income increase as steadily as her husband, but her ‘Danishness’²¹ is never questioned, making her a part of an “us”. Thus, she faces oppression on the personal and structural levels due to her gender, but her skin colour and nationality ensures that she can go through airports without being randomly stopped and on the streets without experiencing xenophobic attacks. Similarly, an Italian immigrant male who identifies as homosexual and works as a carpenter would face other problems and benefits that shape his interpretation of the world.

In relation to this, by regularly carrying out acts of ‘hygge racism’, and other forms of everyday practices of e.g. racism, ‘othering’, etc., we “do white dominance” and reproduce our privileges (Pease 2010:120). Whiteness is something that is performed in everyday activities like ‘hygge

²⁰ For Danish quote, see appendix B, no. 7

²¹ “Danskhed”

racism’, but it can also be challenged by actively working against those very structures and regular practices that reinforces it in society (ibid.). I will deal more with this ‘doing’ in the next section.

4.1.5. ‘Hygge racism’ and the reproduction of power

‘Hygge racism’ can function as a way to reproduce the power embedded in social relations, but is dependent on the position one inhabits in society (Reed 2013:203); the better positioned someone is, the more likely they are to reinforce their position by the use of ‘hygge racism’. Thus, while the white, ethnic majority as individuals on a low-key everyday basis can strengthen their normalised and thus privileged positions as white, “ethnic Danes” with the use of ‘hygge racism’ (Pease 2010:9; 113), it makes sense to study elites since they have access to and actual influence over e.g. discourses produced in media, politics etc. which are platforms that “*direct social life, often to their advantage*” (Reed 2013:203; van Dijk 2008:13-14).

As mentioned earlier, ‘hygge racism’, as a part of the typically Danish sense of humour is considered the norm that is acceptable to uphold while challenging it can lead to being “socially punished” with e.g. correctives glances, statements or even silence (Hörnqvist 2012:82-83). Thus, every time ‘hygge racism’ is carried out and accepted by the participants who laugh at it, it “rewards” those people with a good feeling which thus increases the chance that it will happen again; that is the way productive power works – it regulates people by always situating and evaluating them based on the social norms (whether it is related to gender, racism, sexuality etc.) thereby making people feel good about behaving in what has been constructed as the ‘correct’ way in hyggelige situations, and oppositely “punished” and subjected to corrective behaviour when deviating from these norms (Hörnqvist 2012:86-87; Butler 2004:41-42). This is again affected by context and company, which for instance can explain why Lisbeth turns away and shut down when someone from her community group of 10 people says something she considers racist, or Ali who uses humour to challenge the people that say something ‘hygge racist’²²; the racist woman at Lisbeth’s community group may not be challenged due to the normative guidelines for behaviour in such groups, whereas Ali thinks it necessary to challenge people *in the right way* which proves that power relations and norms are not always rigid but there is space for resistance. That being said, Anna found that Danish humour and ‘hygge racism’ may be more present than realised:

²² For more on Lisbeth and Ali, see appendix A

“[...] that’s just how we are in some way, I think, I haven’t thought about it that much. But I just think, really, yeah, it’s something that you just sort of participate in because that’s how the culture about it is”
“Well, it’s again very much what our humour is founded on, hygge racism. Umm, something that you probably use more than you think about it” (Anna, 23)²³

The Danish sense of humour, of which ‘hygge racism’ is a part, is just inherent in our culture; therefore, the sense of entitlement to engage in ‘hygge racism’ is founded on cultural values and reproduces the existing power relations that continuously privileges the majority, which I return to. In sum, power is relative and productive which reinforce existing social relations and norms.

4.2. ‘Doing’ Racism

In this section I will argue that ‘hygge racism’ is ‘done’ in various ways, sometimes contradictory to otherwise tolerant and critical opinions, by being justified, denied or because people have constructed themselves, ‘others’ and racisms in a particular manner. As such, there are numerous methods of ‘doing hygge racism’ which may or may not be “un-visible”.

‘Hygge racism’ is also a discursive dimension of racism and arguably a form of “doing racism” as according to Butler (2004:1-3); though it is not consciously or willingly acted out in a constant, uninterrupted manner, the way that racisms structure our lives as actors and as beneficiaries of privileges and the discrimination of others, arguably becomes a way of ‘doing’ racisms since we are never un-structured or unaffected – ‘hygge racism’ is but one aspect of this structure (Rehder & Willumsen 2010:10-12).

4.2.1. “I’m not a racist, but...” How intention, denials and a sense of entitlement is to ‘do’ racism

None wants to be thought of as racist. *“It’s ugly, it’s misanthropic, it’s against your whole upbringing with the Christian and du have to love your neighbour [...] you don’t want to appear as someone that is selfish and ‘I only think about myself’”* (Grethe, 44)²⁴ That simple attitude is arguably fundamental in analysing racisms; what racist discourse is denied because it is ‘ugly’, what is constructed as non-racist entitlement and why? But also: how is it ‘doing’ racism?

²³ For Danish quote, see appendix B, no. 8

²⁴“Det er grim[t], det er menneskefjendsk, det er imod hele ens opdragelse med det kristne og du skal elske din næste[...].”

Denying racism is a way to construct reality according to held beliefs about the world and through which the reproduction of racism and cultural hegemony, within which racism functions, is done (van Dijk 2008:130; 131-132). These denials take many forms and can function as a defence as well as to disarm the ‘accuser of racism’ e.g. by saying it was a joke or the intention wasn’t negative, which is difficult to disprove (van Dijk 2008:124-125). In the Danish context, Danbolt (2017:107) finds that these types of denials also transfer the blame back to the accuser in different ways, e.g. by stating that the person(s) that challenged the comment or the joke is/are being overly politically correct which, as mentioned briefly earlier, is almost considered a mortal sin. Thus, the racism that occurs can be toned down, written off as innocent or in other ways lessen the seriousness of the situation (van Dijk 2008:126). This mitigation of racism was the most common form of denial the interviewees talked about (though more in-between-the-lines), but ‘reversed racism’ was also used:

“In most of the cases I have experienced they say, ‘ah, nonsense, it was just a joke’. You know, try to brush it off and sort of say ‘it wasn’t my fault that it turned out that way.. that was not what I meant, what I said”” On the n-word: “yes, they’re criminalising us who use the word.. So maybe they are the reversed racists in actual fact because they say that we can’t use that word... which is a part of my language... which is still in my dictionaries.” (Lars, 54)²⁵

Thus, denials also have elements of intentionality or entitlement; Lars found that people’s intentions were often put forward as a defence and moreover that in his own networks (hygge) racism would be ignored if it was assumed to be due to good intentions. Also, his opinion of the neutrality of the n-word also witnesses of an intention that is not founded on negative assumptions of black people, but rather that he doesn’t see the negative connotations of the word. That the word is a part of Danish language and still written in dictionaries are furthermore used to support the entitlement to say the n-word. The problem regarding the use of this word also needs to be put into a generational and historical context, since it was once a regular, referential term, but as times have changed our use of words needs to change concurrently (Neye 2016). Thus, using the n-word has to be understood contextually – who uses it, when and for what reason, and understand what norms and experiences lay behind the surface. It is also imperative to respect that “*ord kommer med en historie så derfor er det vigtigt at minoriteter selv får lov til at bestemme hvilke ord de vil kaldes.*”²⁶ (Neye 2016). The continued use of the word exemplifies the privilege and normalised position white

²⁵ For Danish quote, see appendix B, no. 9

²⁶ “words come with a history and therefore it is important that minorities get to decide what words they want to be called themselves”

people hold since they can use it non-stop in spite of calls to stop it (Neye 2016). This ‘entitlement racism’ is to ‘do’ racism since it indirectly functions as an attempt to maintain privileges and the right to decide what is okay – thus reinforcing the structuring system. The relational dimension of power impacts the degree to which it is true, as peoples’ positions vary and successful resistance is possible (Reed 2013).

Intention is a key aspect of justifying ‘hygge racism’ and constructing a non-racist version of reality; when someone defend themselves by arguing that a joke was just a joke and not meant to be harmful, it washes away the negativity and responsibility normally attached to such actions, spoken or not (van Dijk 2008:124-125). It also means that the person no longer can be claimed to be a bad person, and rather follows that good intentions means people have “good attitudes” which justifies both the act and the person (van Dijk 2008:125). Again, context is important, as implicit and explicit intentions of racism may be to uphold a nice atmosphere or similar. Børge exemplifies:

“[...] that is also why I think that some hygge racists maybe get offended that some person has taken their joke, which is meant lovingly or in good faith, as something negative because then you sort of offend me because I mean it in a nice way, so why are you sitting there and attacking me for having made a funny joke” (Børge, 27)²⁷

The explicit intention behind ‘hygge racism’ may be positive, but it still functions as a reproduction of privilege and power; as van Dijk (2008:102) states, words aren’t just words, they are imperative for “*the reproduction of contemporary racism*” – and ultimately a way of ‘doing’ racism.

4.2.2. The construction of innocence and bigotry: are we ‘doing’ or challenging racism?

People’s experiences of ‘hygge racism’ were constructed as mild and innocent with good intentions and thus they served as ‘doing’ racism, though unintentionally. The examples range from jokes in the Friday bar²⁸ before the weekend in the teacher’s lounge (Grethe), as a result of alcohol consumption at get-togethers (Ali), as a funny story (Claus), or at the work place (Lars)²⁹. It mainly happens in the form of narratives or jokes, which serve to maintain a good mood or become part of the sociality (Guerin 2003:34-35). ‘Hygge racism’ is thus not an explicit racism that seeks to maintain differences, but rather a covert form that through the constant legitimisation and claims of

²⁷ For Danish quote, see appendix B, no.10

²⁸ “Fredagsbaren”; sometimes an actual bar for e.g. students, but in this case it is just a casual beer after work.

²⁹ For more on the interviewees, see appendix A

innocence, entitlement and intention maintains unequal social power relations that ensures the hegemony of the white, “ethnic” majority (van Dijk 2008:131-132).

The distinction between racism/’hygge racism’ for some of the interviewees functioned as a justification of ‘hygge racism’; I asked how they would define racism and what thoughts they’d had about ‘hygge racism’; the responses varied a lot and racism was said to be due to cultural and/or biological prejudices, fear of “otherness” etc., whereas ‘hygge racism’ was related to Danishness³⁰, prejudices or “soft” racism (non-biological racism). Though there was some inconsistency and uncertainty when giving exact explanations, the two concepts were still placed in each their end of a scale, though not necessarily intentionally. Lisbeth argued the following about racism:

“[...] because it’s maybe something- something we all are when we stand in front of something foreign and so what I almost said, right, and in that way racism maybe becomes okay in a way [...] it’s very natural [...] both for Africans and Danes.. and of course you have some ingrown thoughts about that colour or what they eat or something, you have to admit it and then it goes both ways” (Lisbeth, 72)³¹

Racism is thus considered to be a potential within everyone, which according to Lisbeth makes it okay, since it is due to personal experiences; if a person has never left Denmark or does not interact with diverse people, then racism is understandable. Prejudice is thus viewed as an “error” in personality (Wieviorka 1995:46). Yet, defining racism as mainly biological and individual neglects the unequal privileges and oppressions experienced by white and brown people respectively; even though prejudice goes both ways only white people benefit from it structurally and culturally, only white people have had the ‘upper hand’ historically and it thus ignores how racisms have developed and are expressed in Denmark (Wieviorka 1995:46; Rasmussen 2004; Hervik 2015). Prejudice comes in a variety of forms which function as ways to construct realities and legitimise racism, for instance based on the idea of the superiority of one’s own cultural heritage or truths about particular people due to social problems, such as stating that immigrants are criminals/feeds off of the welfare system etc., or by legitimising subtle racism (Wieviorka 1995:46-53). The definition of racisms then affected views on ‘hygge racism’; it would not necessarily be seen as downright racist, since ‘hygge racism’ isn’t due to lack of exposure to those constructed as foreign or because of a dislike towards people based on ideas of “white superiority” – which additionally doesn’t threaten the self-perception of a tolerant Denmark. As such, the definitions of racism and ‘hygge racism’ allowed

³⁰ “Danskhed”

³¹ For Danish quote, see appendix B, no. 11

interviewees to justify or distance themselves from certain forms of racism but always within contextual boundaries and with the will to challenge and discuss these things. Thus, the justification also functions as ‘doing’ racism since it wasn’t (always) constructed as wrong.

In sum, ‘doing’ racism very easily happens unintentionally in the way it is defined and understood, and therefore it is imperative to understand how racisms function, are expressed and reproduced in order to challenge this (unintentional) ‘doing’ racisms.

4.2.3. ‘Othering’

Categorising people can be a tricky business and there is a fine line between depicting reality and to deviate groups of people. Some of the interviewees expressed difficulty with navigating the categories in which people are put, while also being concerned with the outward image of themselves; in other words, there was a need to label ‘others’ in order to explain past experiences, but also a desire not to do so in an insensitive or intolerant manner:

”[...] well, we don’t really have that many refugees here at the school or whatever the correct description is, students with another ethnic background or what do you say these days (laughs)” (Grethe, 44)

”[...] It’s kind of stupid, but people know what you mean when you say- use the wrong words, I don’t like using them myself but- ehm I think it’s- I don’t necessarily think that you should say immigrant or that you should say black or say... Muslim um I think that you should say what they are, if you come from Turkey you are a Turk, if you come from Germany you are a German, right” (Line, 25)³²

While being aware of and sometimes distancing themselves from the negative ‘them and us’ discourses, interviewees’ neutral or positive depictions still drew on methods of ‘othering’ by e.g. using words like culture, values or “*pæredanskere*”³³ (Ali, 45). It thus cannot lose its negative connotations even though the intention is to start a constructive dialogue (Rytter 2018:2). However, the “us” group never has to truly worry about this, since the embedded meanings in the “us” are positive or neutral; as opposed to “those” that are culturally different from “us”:

On what Danish values are: “[...] freedom, freedom of speech, something with equality [...] equal and as soon as those things are off balance, well um.. then you are very culturally different, um, in my eyes, but it’s not more different than maybe *we* are the culturally very different freed very different [...]”

³² For Danish quotes, see appendix A, no. 12-13

³³ “Pear Danish” (direct translation) which means as Danish as can be

“[...] but it is just too easy to say they- just because there happens to be ten from this box here that stand out, and then all of a sudden everyone in this box is just like those ten, no they are not.. Umm.. So we just have to remember that, yeah, they are different clothes-wise, looks-wise and that’s that. But it’s not those things that we should be looking at, we should look at other things” (Karen, 50, her emphasis)³⁴

Karen talked about the lack of understanding of the people that are discriminated against, e.g. young people in the night life, and her use of the ‘them and us’ is thus needed for the discussion on problems with expressions of xenophobia in Danish society. In relation to this, Gunaratnam (2003:31) talks of the ‘treacherous bind’, relating to the way people make use of (harmful) categories such as ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ which are “*not good to think with*” as it reinforces fixed notions of differences while it also implying that any explicit focus on differences based on these categories often are seen as racist (Gunaratnam 2003:7-8). While these concepts are necessary to depict socio-economic realities, it must also be done in a manner that shows awareness of their essentialist notions since social categories of “race” and ethnicity are “*social constructs, relational and socially located*” and influenced by the ongoing, intersecting identities, experiences and contextual power structures (ibid.).

Another type of ‘othering’ that occurred can be related to the “culture discourse”; it is a narrative of progressiveness and open-minded thought on and respect for cultural ‘others’ (Wetherell & Potter 1992:134-135), while simultaneously racism is constructed as a “moral lapse” (ibid.). Or, as the interviewees mainly argued, racism as caused by lack of experience and knowledge which adds context for understanding ‘the mind of the racist’ while also creating distance from themselves. This is related to van Dijk’s (2008:122) “double-strategy”; the “positive self-presentation” and concurrent “negative other-presentation”, as it is created between ‘Us, the enlightened non-racists’ and ‘Those that make mistakes/don’t know better’; while this is a slight exaggeration of the ‘othering’ in the interviews, more of Weber’s ‘ideal type’ than real categories, it is still noteworthy. By distancing themselves from ‘hygge racists’ who ‘cross the line’ they partly construct their identity based on believed differences (Wetherell & Potter 1992:44; 76-78). In relation to ‘hygge racism’, this ‘othering’ as a construction of oneself in opposition to other people and/or their actions is imperative to understand why people choose to accept/laugh, ignore or challenge something. If it is considered plain racist due to the “*judgemental and narrow-minded and hidebound*”³⁵ (Grethe,

³⁴ For Danish quote, see appendix A no. 14

³⁵ “fordømmende og snæversyne[de] og forstokke[de]”

44) person or comment/joke, or more of “*the rough ‘hygge racism’*”³⁶ (Claus, 26) that crosses a line but is not easily defined, there will be a different reaction to it than if it is collectively accepted – or, if the conforming power of hygge legitimises it. Having a reference point to distance oneself from made it easier to justify what was considered okay, whether or not it was based on recipients’ seemingly positive response, because none around would be offended etc.

Consequently, these different forms of discursive tools are ways of ‘doing’ racism since they either function to legitimise an ‘innocent’ form of racism or by continuing to use harmful categories for even positive, constructive or neutral conversations, etc. It is again worth noting that resistance to or participation in categorisations or hegemonic discourses was contradictory.

To summarise the analysis, a structural understanding of ‘hygge racism’ is needed, since Denmark’s history and culture shape people’s understanding of the world and thus ‘hygge racism’. I showed how hygge as a hegemonic cultural phenomenon has shaped how interactions and responses to ‘hygge racism’ are interpreted. Moreover, ‘hygge racism’ is a form of ‘doing’ racism which has been reproduced and normalised in society, that again reproduces the power embedded in privileges and social relations and normalises Danish culture and white, “ethnic Danes’” perceived entitlement to say and joke how they wish. Though my focus has been very structural, it is vital not to ignore the personal experiences and possibilities for resistance and challenging ‘hygge racism’.

5. Discussion and conclusion

In this thesis I have suggested a definition of ‘hygge racism’ as a contextual, inter-subjective phenomenon that is socially and culturally normalised and often argued to be done due to good intentions, and thereby also legitimate, no matter how it is actually received. Its discursive and relational nature makes it embedded with power and ultimately a form of ‘doing’ racism.

Since there are several levels, varieties and functions of racisms and numerous ways in which these are expressed or “un-visible”, it makes sense to talk of racism in plural. When defining it in the beginning, I referred to Rehder & Willumsen (2010) who argue that it is a system that structures everyone, which is relevant when discussing ‘hygge racism’ in relation to other systems of structure like gender, sexuality etc. that all work along the lines of culture, privileges, normalisation and

³⁶ “den hårde hyggeracisme”

deviance. This thesis could as easily have been about ‘hygge sexism’ as it could ‘hygge racism’ due to the similarity in their structures and persistence in society. As such, it is interesting to see how different majority groups (whether men, white people or heterosexuals, etc.) joke and speak of the others (women, transgendered, brown people or homosexuals, etc.), how privileges are used as instruments of maintaining position, and how intersectionality affects such analyses; for instance, Eastern European workers are subject to different types of jokes than e.g. immigrants from the Middle East and thus there are similarities in how different groups are talked and joked about. Similarly interesting is how such behaviour and discourses are types of zero-sum games; the fear of losing out on a privilege or perceived right while the ‘other’ gains it. In that sense, ‘hygge racism/sexism/...’ can be seen as a fight between social groups where the winner gains/maintains the right to act how they want.

I found that ‘hygge racism’ is largely shaped by Danish history and culture, especially in terms of self-perceptions and particular characteristics like hygge; hygge shape how we evaluate interactions and how justifications of or distancing from experiences of ‘hygge racism’ are negotiated and can determine whether or not people will act. Thus, more structural issues of social control, conformity, normalised actions and utterances and privileges that can make cases of racism “un-visible” play vital roles in maintaining status quo, thereby privileging the majority of white, “ethnic Danes”.

Though personal experiences also play a vital role in whether ‘hygge racism’ is resisted or not, this thesis has not been very agency-oriented. However, in the second section on “‘Doing’ Racism” I showed how interviewees constructed themselves and others in different ways, thereby either supporting or resisting the structuring system of racism – this happened both unintentionally and in attempts to make critical remarks about problematic discourses in Denmark, as well as in giving examples of denials of racisms, intentionality and entitlement.

A question that the reader might have asked themselves is whether ‘hygge racism’ really is particularly Danish and not just a regular phenomenon put into a Danish context? The experiences related in this thesis could take place anywhere, since racist humour, comments and stories made in order to gain/maintain a particular mood more or less are universal methods. The same goes for concepts like ‘everyday racism’ which is not culturally specified. Thus, had this thesis had less of a structural approach to the topic, one might argue that ‘hygge racism’ is not very Danish at all but

rather due to group identifications. However, since ‘hygge’ is a Danish concept, a way of understanding social relations, social control and a product of our history, the meaning of ‘hygge racism’ differs from other places and in different languages. Since a structural and cultural analytical approach to ‘hygge racism’ affects the result, what does it mean when we frame it within a perspective of e.g. globalisation as a threat to Denmark and all things Danish?

As such, I would make three suggestions for future research; (i) to what extent culture is an explanatory factor for very specific types of racisms and what roles community and group identifications play in the inter-subjective expressions of racisms. (ii) Performance as power – since I did not deal with ‘hygge racism’ as an observed phenomenon but rather based on experiences and explanations of interviewees, future research could extend the geographical reach and length of the study, thus gathering data on the researchers’ encounters of ‘hygge racism’ as a performance with visible, causal effects. (iii) I would suggest continuous development on concepts like ‘hygge racism’ to gain clarity of what it actually constitutes, how it is influenced by cultural and social norms not to mention resisted. Conceptual clarity is essential for research but also for general debates, as the simplified, edible and sometimes self-serving narratives on racism in the media reproduces harmful discourse on the matter of not only racisms, but also sexism, homophobia, etc.

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7. Appendix Section

7.1. Appendix A – Positioning of interviewees

As stated in the methods section, I conducted 9 semi-structured interviews in Copenhagen, Roskilde and Ejby. However, Grethe (44) and Karen (50) are originally from Jutland, where Ali (45) has also lived after he came to Denmark from Afghanistan 15 years ago. Ali (45) is also the only participant who is not constructed as an “ethnic Dane”, which has affected the material I was able to gather and therefore also my analysis. This is partly due to the way my interviewees were found, as I had no strategy for diversification; this was intentional, since I wanted the ‘random’ selection of interviewees shape the study.

The interviewees were all very interested in the topic and willing to share their opinions and annoyances with either xenophobia in Denmark, racist relatives, friends, co-workers or strangers who engage in what I have categorised as ‘hygge racism’. Many of the interviewees have a background with travelling beyond Europe; Lisbeth (72), a pensioner and educated architect, spent 7-8 years in Zambia and Mozambique respectively which has shaped her interest in other people, cultures and languages, while Karen (50) went on an exchange in South America, Grethe (44) has travelled a lot to e.g. Kenya, Tanzania and Thailand with her family while Lars (54) during his time as a sailor went to many different countries. Anna (23) has also spent 3 months doing an internship in South Africa, which has affected her perception of conversations on “race” and racisms. More often than not, the interviewees did not have a tertiary education, and worked as a teacher (Grethe, 44; Claus, 26, studies to become a teacher), shop manager (Ali, 45), physiotherapist (Anna, 23), in communications (Børge, 27) or sales & marketing (Line, 25), within aviation management (Karen, 50) and as a driver for Falck (Lars, 54). They have thus had plenty and various types of experiences, but all roughly estimated to be (upper) middle-class and, except for Ali (45), white “ethnic Danes”. As mentioned briefly in the analysis, the interviewees generally found themselves represented in media and politically (based on gender, opinions, skin colour etc.), and when asked if they had ever been questioned on their nationality all, again except for Ali (45), replied in the negative; when abroad they were usually thought to be Dutch, German, from another Scandinavian country or English. As such, they were assumed to be Northern European due to appearance and language. Finally, ages range between 23 and 72, half of the interviewees in their 20ies (Anna, Line, Claus and Børge), while the other half is between 45 and 72 (Ali, Karen, Lars and Lisbeth). I thus managed to get a wide variety of opinions and experiences that can be explained by generation.

7.2. Appendix B – Original quotes from interviewees in Danish

- 1) “[...] at være sammen.. men jeg kan også godt hygge mig alene med en bog og en kop kaffe og noget musik, det kan jeg sagtens.. det er bare at man føler den der ”ahh” nu sidder jeg her og jeg skal ikke noget før jeg rejser mig. Det er hygge og jeg er sammen med nogen, det er samværet, venskab.”³⁷ (Grethe, 44)
- 2) “[...] hvor man skal sidde på pinde hele aftenen og bare (laver lyd af ubehag) og tænker nå, der gik sørme de ti sekunder, det tog godt nok tyve sekunder inden de var gået, øhh.. og bare ikke har det hverken rart eller afslappet.. Om det er noget holdningsmæssigt fordi man bare er meget anderledes end alle de andre eller om det er simpelt hen fordi man er ude i en eller anden akademiker kreds hvor de kun kan tale om det her kunstværk som man egentlig selv bare synes det er rød streg og en grøn streg- øøv, det kan man slet ikke tale med om, så man er bare havnet det helt forkerte sted.” (Karen, 50)
- 3) “[...] nogle gange kan man være sammen med folk og de fortæller og fortæller, men de spørger sgu aldrig til mig [...] det er hygge når det er gensidigt at det ikke bare er envejs at hælde vand ud af ørerne og nu skal du høre hvor lykkelig jeg er fordi jeg er blevet skilt [...]” (Grethe, 44)
- 4) “[...]jeg synes intentioner det er et godt ord, et kernebegreb, for det handler vel om hvad folk mente med det de sagde, øhm.. jeg tror der er rigtig mange der kan komme galt afsted med noget som egentlig ikke var deres mening.” (Claus, 26)
- 5) “jeg kunne aldrig finde på at lave en sort joke eller en bøsse joke hvis der sidder nogen som jeg ved er det... men på den anden side, vi har to skønne vikarer [...]de er ikke praktiserende muslimer, så der kan man godt tillade sig at sige sådan nogle jokes, fordi der er stemningen til det og [...] hun synes bare det er rigtig, rigtig sjovt og hun er meget lidt selvhøjtidelig så der er ikke noget med at hun føler sig stødt, så der kan man faktisk også godt gøre det, ja..” (Grethe, 44)

³⁷ For translation, see appendix A, no. 1

- 6) “det er nok det jeg tror der kommer til at udskille os danskere fra mange andre steder, den sorte humor og det at gøre grin med det og vores ytringsfrihed, øhm.. og det er jo nok der hvor man ikke forstår at Muhammed-tegningerne for eksempel hvorfor vi faktisk syntes at det var fed humor, øh, fordi vi kunne have fundet på i næste uge at lave de samme tegninger om vores egen dronning, eller Anders Fogh [...]” (Karen, 50)
- 7) “[...] det har jeg ikke tænkt over, så det må jo være et ja. Fordi hvis der havde været en skævvridning, så havde man vel tænkt over det [...]” (Karen, 50)
- 8) “[...] det er jo bare sådan vi er på en eller anden måde, tænker jeg, det har jeg ikke tænkt så meget over. Men jeg tænker egentlig bare, ja, det er noget man følger lidt med i, fordi det er sådan kulturen er omkring det”
 “jamen det er meget igen det vores humor bunder i, hyggeracisme. Øhm, noget som man nok bruger mere end man tænker over det [...]” (Anna, 23)
- 9) “langt de fleste tilfælde jeg har oplevet der siger de ej pjat, det var bare for sjov. Altså prøver at slå det af og et eller andet sige, det var ikke min skyld det var sådan.. det var ikke det jeg mente som jeg sagde...”
 On the n-word: “ja, de kriminaliserer os der bruger ordet... Så de er måske modsatte racister i virkeligheden, fordi de siger at vi ikke må sige det vi vil sige... som er en del af mit sprog.. som stadigvæk står i mine ordbøger.”(Lars, 54)
- 10) “[...] det er også derfor jeg tror at nogle hyggeracister jo måske blive stødt over at en anden person har taget deres joke der er ment kærligt eller i god tro som noget negativt fordi så støder du jo et eller andet sted mig, jeg mener det jo kærlig[t], hvorfor sidder du på den måde og angriber mig for at have lavet en sjov joke.” (Børge, 27)
- 11) “[...] for det måske noget- noget vi alle sammen er når vi står over for noget fremmed and so what havde nær sagt, ikke, og på den måde bliver racisme på en eller anden måde okay [...] det er meget naturligt [...] både for afrikanere og for danskere.. og selvfølgelig har man da nogle indgroede tanker om den farve eller det de spiser eller et eller andet, det må man jo indrømme og så går det begge veje” (Lisbeth, 72)

- 12) “[...] altså vi har jo ikke ret mange flygtninge her på skolen eller hvad er det den korrekte beskrivelse er det elever med anden etnisk baggrund eller hvad siger man nu om dage (griner)” (Grethe, 44)
- 13) “[...] det er lidt dumt, men folk ved godt hvad man mener når man siger- bruger de forkerte ord, dem er jeg ikke selv til men-ehm jeg synes det er- jeg synes ikke nødvendigvis at man skal sige indvandrere eller man skal sige sort eller man skal sige.. muslim øhm jeg synes man skal sige hvad de er, hvis man kommer fra Tyrkiet så er man tyrker hvis man kommer fra Tyskland så er man tysker ikke, altså” (Line, 26)
- 14) “[...] frihed, ytringsfrihed, noget ligestilling [...] lige så snart der er en skævbalance i det, jamen øh.. så er man meget kulturelt anderledes, øhh, i mine øjne, men det er man jo ikke andet end at vi måske er de kulturelt meget anderledes frigjorte meget anderledes [...]”
 “[...] men det er bare for nemt at sige dem- fordi der nu engang er ti ovre fra den her boks der skiller sig ud, og så er de alle sammen lige pludselig nede i denne her boks bare lige som de ti, nej det er de ikke. Øhm.. Så det skal vi bare huske på at, ja, de skiller sig ud tøjmessigt, udseendemæssigt, og sådan er det. Men det er ikke det vi skal kigge på, altså, vi skal kigge på nogle andre ting.” (Karen, 50)

7.3. Appendix C – explanations of words/phenomenon/commodities

- Cirkel Kaffe – a coffee brand depicting an African woman from the period of colonialism on the bags of coffee; the image of this enslaved woman thus functions as a form of brand recognition and association with pleasure.
- Skipper Mix – bag of licorise where the pieces of candy themselves were demeaning depictions of Africans, e.g. with a bone through the nose, with large lips etc.

7.4. Appendix D – Invitation to interview participation

VIL DU DELTAGE I ET INTERVIEW OM RACISME

Jeg hedder Maja og skriver i øjeblikket min bacheloropgave i sociologi om begrebet ”hyggeracisme”. Debatten om racisme i Danmark og hvordan den kommer til udtryk, dukker fra tid til anden op både offentligt via medier og privat i vores omgang med andre. Selve opgaven fokuserer derfor på hvordan vi i Danmark snakker om emnet i forskellige relationer og kontekster, så derfor har jeg brug for nogle skønne mennesker der har lyst til at snakke og reflektere omkring netop dette!

Har du lyst til at høre mere, eller er du allerede frisk på at sætte dit præg på opgaven, så skriv til mig på: **sgel5mbl@student.lu.se**

Husk, al information du giver bliver anonymiseret, og du har mulighed for at gennemlæse de citater jeg udvælger, før de endeligt tages i brug.

Interviews udføres løbende imellem d. 26. marts-22. april, men kontakt mig hvis et andet tidspunkt passer bedre. Jeg udsender uddybende information om både opgave og interviewets gang til deltagerne.

Håber at vi ses, Maja



7.5. Appendix E – Lay Summary

Hej med dig!

Først og fremmest vil jeg gerne sige mange tak fordi du har valgt at deltage i et interview om hyggeracisme. Denne introduktion er skrevet til dig som deltager, så du kan få et dybere indblik i hvad der kommer til at ske, hvilke temaer der vil blive berørt, dine rettigheder ift. anonymitet, o.a.

Jeg går på Lunds Universitet i Sverige, og skal nu til at skrive min bacheloropgave i sociologi, så formålet med disse interviews er altså at indsamle empiri (datamateriale), som jeg kan analysere og diskutere ud fra til mit projekt. Det er min intention at du som deltager også får noget ud af det, så der er plads til at du kan reflektere om emner du synes er vigtige at belyse, og du er velkommen til at kommentere på temaerne og stille spørgsmål både før og efter selve interviewsne (kontaktinformation findes nederst i dokumentet). Jeg håber meget på, at du vil gøre dig lidt tanker ud fra det jeg har skrevet her, så du føler dig mere forberedt på og tryk ved at svare på mine spørgsmål.

Men hvad handler studiet så helt præcis om?

Min opgave kommer til at handle om begrebet ”hyggeracisme”, som, på trods af at have floreret lidt i medierne de sidste par år, ikke har vundet fæste i den generelle samfundsdebat. Min interesse ligger henholdsvis i hvordan man kan definere hyggeracisme, og hvordan det kommer til udtryk i Danmark; med andre ord, tager vi egentlig udgangspunkt i det samme når vi snakker om racisme? Hvad indebærer det egentlig og hvilke faktorer påvirker vores forståelse af det? Hvordan snakker vi om det med andre, hvornår tier vi og hvad har vores nationalitet og ”hygge” egentlig med det at gøre? Dette er bare nogle af de spørgsmål jeg har gjort mig, og der kommer helt sikker flere til over de næste par uger under selve udarbejdelsen af opgaven. Det skal derfor også gøres klart at mit fokus for opgaven ikke er 100 % fastlagt endnu, da bl.a. jeres svar kommer til at påvirke den.

Kort sagt er de overordnede temaer følgende, men jeres oplevelser og tanker vil påvirke hvor fokus ligger mest, da alle interviews er forskellige fra hinanden:

- Dine egne definitioner af centrale begreber (f.eks. racisme og hygge).
- Racisme i den danske kontekst: Hvordan oplever du at racisme kommer til udtryk i Danmark i offentlige såvel som private fora? Hvilken rolle spiller danskhed og danske værdier for hvordan racisme udøves?
- Dine egne oplevelser: Hvad har du tænkt, følt og oplevet tidligere? Er der noget der skiller sig ud?
- Cases: Jeg vil give nogle både fiktive og virkelige eksempler på bl.a. noget som har været til debat offentligt, hverdagshændelser o.a. som jeg beder jer om at forholde jer til.

Hvad kan du forvente af selve interviewets forløb?

Som skrevet i opslaget, så kommer interviewsne til at foregå imellem mandag d. 26. marts og søndag d. 22. april. Jeg vil tage højde for hvornår du har mest tid imellem hænderne til at udføre disse interviews, da de kan tage op til 2 timer. Det kan lyde som skræmmende meget tid at sætte af, men tidshorizonten er sat så du har tid til at reflektere, skifte retning og snakke om noget du kan være kommet i tanke om, osv. Det kan selvfølgelig også være en enkelt time eller 1½, jeg vil dog gøre opmærksom på at jo kortere interviewet er, jo større chance er der for at jeg må afbryde, skifte emner hurtigt, samt vende tilbage over mail for at følge op på noget du har sagt under interviewet. Men ingen grund til stress, vi kan altid aftale nærmere ud fra dine muligheder. Sted vil også blive afklaret, når jeg har fundet ud af hvem og hvor mange der kan deltage. Der vil dog både være mulighed for at jeg tager ud for at møde dig, men også at du kan komme til mig i Valby (hvor der vil blive sørget for lidt til at fugte ganen og mætte mavsens).

Vi starter roligt ud med ”nemme” spørgsmål, hvor du får mulighed for at præsentere og snakke om dig selv, samt nævne nogle ord om hvorfor du havde lyst til at deltage og hvad dine forventninger til interviewet er. Jeg vil både dreje samtalen i en bestemt retning ved at stille forberedte spørgsmål, men også lade dig få mulighed for at reflektere over aspekter som lige netop DU synes er vigtige. Du har sikkert en grund til at deltage i dette interview, så hvis du har noget bestemt på hjerte, noget du har funderet over eller kunne tænke dig at udforske i sikre omgivelser, så skal du være velkommen til at bringe det på banen. Jeg vil løbende stille uddybende spørgsmål og lave de førnævnte cases, men alt kommer til at være med udgangspunkt i dig. Vi er alle blevet formet af og er samtidig med til at forme samfundet, så vores meninger og tanker er influeret af vores omgivelser, hvordan vi er vokset op osv. Derfor er selv den måde vi opfatter og snakker om racisme influeret af tidligere oplevelser, og det er dét udgangspunkt jeg har i interviewsne; du skal med andre ord vide at jeg ikke er der for at dømme hvad der er rigtigt eller forkert, men for at få et indblik i hvilke oplevelser du har haft og hvordan du tolker dem.

Til slut vil der også være mulighed for at reflektere over interviewet. Jeg må igen pointere at jeg måske vil få brug for at kontakte dig efter interviewet, f.eks. af behov for uddybende forklaring.

Anonymitet:

Selvom interviewet bliver optaget, skal du vide at jeg ikke deler materialet, personoplysninger eller noget der kan pege i din retning med nogen anden. Igen vil jeg understrege at jeg ikke er ude på at hænge nogen ud, eller dømme deltagers holdninger og refleksioner. Du skal derfor ikke føle at du er nødt til at holde noget tilbage, af bekymring for at det kan spores tilbage til dig. Du får desuden et fiktivt navn som yderligere kommer til at dække over din identitet. Dog skal det siges, at opgaven kommer til at være offentligt tilgængelig, så der er selvfølgelig mulighed for at dine venner og familie kan genkende dig, hvis de læser den. Du får dog mulighed for at gennemlæse de citater jeg ellers udvælger, så hvis du har brug for at trække

noget tilbage, slette navne eller andet genkendeligt, så er der mulighed for det. Desuden kan jeg sende hele bacheloropgaven til dig efter den er færdiggjort, hvis der er interesse for det.

Derudover er der kun at sige tak for opmærksomheden, jeg glæder mig rigtig meget til en interessant og forhåbentlig gensidigt lærerig samtale!

Alt det bedste, Maja Black.

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7.6. Appendix F – Interview Guide

The interview guide was used more loosely in the beginning and in the end became more structured; at the first interviews I would jump more between questions or make varieties from what I originally wrote, if it fit the situation. Towards the end I had become more confident with interviewing and which questions worked the best, which meant that I stuck more to the flow and phrasing in the guide. I would still jump a bit around if the situation demanded it.

BEGYNDELSE – HVEM ER DU?

- Hvilke tanker har du gjort dig om interviewet? Hvad tænkte du da du læste opslaget? Hvad forventer du af interviewet?
- Hvis du skulle lave en ”karikatur” af din personlighed – altså lave en overdrivelse af din egen person, hvordan ville du så være?
- Hvordan ser en helt normal uge ud for dig? (arbejde, fritidsinteresser, børn, venner, osv.)
 - Spørg ind til hvad vedkommende kan lide ved sit arbejde? Hvis du skulle liste nogle enkelte værdier som du værdsætter, hvad skulle de være? Hvorfor lige disse værdier?
 - Arbejde: Hvilket arbejde laver du? Har I en ”code of conduct” (chikane, diskriminering osv.) på jeres arbejdsplads som er kendt? Hvis ja, bliver den fulgt? Hvis nej, hvad kan man referere til ift. ens rettigheder (lovgivning eller andet?).
- Når du er i en gruppe, hvilken slags person er du så? Tager du ansvar for at gøre stemningen hyggelig, kører du lidt med strømmen, skifter det fra tid til anden, osv.?
- Synes du det er nemt at sige dine holdninger når du er i en gruppe af venner/kolleger/familie? Hvad holder dig fra/får dig til at sige noget i diskussioner?

- Når du er i en gruppe og der diskuteres et vilkårligt emne; hvordan får det dig til at føle når du møder stærk modstand imod din holdning? Har du oplevet at sådan en oplevelse af stærk modstand har holdt dig fra at sige/diskutere den samme ting igen?
- Hvis du skal ud og se en udstilling, høre et foredrag eller andre kulturelle oplevelser (din definition af dette), hvad vil du så hyppigst tage ind for at se? Afspejler det sig i dine interesser? Er der nogle oplevelser som du ikke gør nu som du gerne ville begynde på?
- Hvis du skulle til Afrika, Asien, Sydamerika eller Mellemøsten, hvilket eller hvilke lande vil du gerne besøge?
- Nu tager vi en lille case: Du rejser rundt alene i [svar fra forrige spørgsmål eller lign.]. Du får muligheden for at se forskellige områder, så du befinder dig altså ikke kun på hotellet med alle de andre turister, du kommer også ud og oplever nogle gange at være den eneste hvide person. F.eks. er du blevet inviteret med til en afslappet familiefest i et fattigere område af en tour guide som er vokset op der. Han/hun vil gerne vise dig hvordan der er, introducere dig til nogle venner, familie osv. I møder op, og der spilles musik, der er en tyk duft af grillet kød i luften, og det er dejlig varmt. Da du træder indenfor i hjemmet med din nye ven, finder du ud af at du er den eneste hvide person der. Folk kigger nysgerrigt på dig og vil gerne tage billeder/selfies med dig. – Hvad er dine umiddelbare tanker om den situation? Hvordan tror du at du ville føle/tænke i situationen? Har du nogensinde prøvet at være den eneste hvide person? Ville du have tænkt/følt anderledes hvis du havde været af det modsatte køn? (hvis du opfatter dig som passe inden for den binære ramme)

OFFENTLIG DEBAT OG EGNE OPLVELSER/HOLDNINGER

- Når du ser nyheder eller læser en artikel fra en avis eller på sociale medier, hvad handler de mest om? Altså; hvilke emner finder du interessante? Plejer du at skrive nogle kommentarer? Hvem snakker du om det med og i hvilke sammenhænge?
- Hvor stor en chance oplever du at der er for at dine holdninger, folk med nogenlunde din baggrund, dit køn og din hudfarve er repræsenteret i offentlige medier og kulturelt?
- Hvordan oplever du at der snakkes om f.eks. ligestilling, integration osv.? Stemmer det overens med dine egne holdninger?

KULTUR

- Hvordan er du dansk? Er der nogensinde nogle som har betvivlet dig når du siger du er dansk?
- Hvilke tanker/følelser dukker op når jeg siger dansk kultur og danske værdier?
- Hvad associerer du kultur generelt med?
- Kan du beskrive hvordan du oplever samfundsdebatter om kultur i Danmark?
- Hvordan påvirker kultur mennesker?
- Hvad er det der gør at mennesker har forskellige kulturer? Kan du beskrive hvilke forskelle der har størst betydning?
- Hvordan oplever du at folk snakker om kultur og hudfarve kombineret?
- Oplever du at den måde der snakkes om mennesker som bliver kategoriseret som indvandrere, flygtninge, muslimer i dine daglige samtaler er en god refleksion af samfundsdebatten generelt? Hvordan ville du forklare forskellen imellem de grupper?
- Hvordan ville du definere eller forklare hygge til andre som ikke ved hvad det er?
- Hvad laver du hvis du personligt skulle hygge dig? Hvad er det modsatte af hygge?
- Hvornår brydes hyggestemningen og hvordan plejer det at ske? Hvordan bliver stemningen iblandt folk når hyggen er blevet brudt? Hvordan kommer man tilbage til at hygge efter hyggestemningen først er blevet brudt?
- Hvad er dansk humor? Hvorfor er det sjovt? Min idé om dansk humor er at man gør grin med visse grupper og kører meget på stereotyper om disse grupper. Hvad synes du om at dansk humor, efter min definition, er et kulturelt og legitimt fænomen når det egentlig går ud på at træde på andre?

(HYGGE)RACISME

- Hvordan ville du definere racisme?
- Hvilke tanker har du gjort dig om hyggeracisme? Ved du hvad det er eller hvad kan du forestille dig at det er?
- I hvilke forbindelser plejer du at snakke om racisme?
- Hvordan oplever du situationer hvor der snakkes om racisme? Hvad føler og tænker du? Hvordan opfører andre sig?
- Hvis du sidder og hygger med familie, venner, kollegaer eller i andre kredse og der lige pludselig er en som siger noget racistisk/stereotypisk; oplever du hyppigst at der grines af det eller det accepteres som noget der er okay at sige, eller at folk påpeger at det er

racistisk/stereotypisk og hyggestemningen bliver brudt? Hvordan får det dig til at føle i de situationer?

- Er alle stereotyper dårlige/onde? Hvor synes du grænsen går? Er det okay at lave jokes som er baseret på racistiske stereotyper? Hvad med sexistiske stereotyper? Hvorfor synes du at grænsen går der?
- Når du er i en gruppe hvor racisme bliver samtale emne: hvad oplever du at fokuset er på mest? Ofre? Racister? Selve ytringerne eller handlinger som er racistiske?
- Hvordan oplever du at folk reagerer når de bliver fortalt at de har sagt noget racistisk eller noget som ikke er okay at sige? Hvorfor tror du folk reagerer som de gør?
- Hvordan snakker du om racisme med børn, eller hvordan kan du forestille dig at du ville snakke om det?
- Hvornår er man racist? Kan man sige racistiske ting uden at være racist?
- Kan du sætte ord på hvad du synes om politisk korrekthed? Hvad med i relation til at sige en racistisk joke, bruge n-ordet eller gøre grin med e.g. jøder eller folk som på en eller anden måde bliver kategoriseret som indvandrere? Er det anderledes med kvinder, ældre mennesker, folk der er handicappede, osv.? Hvorfor? (Hvad synes du om brugen af n-ordet generelt?)
- Hvad synes du om ytringsfrihed? Igen; hvor går grænsen? Hvorfor?
- Hvem er med til at bestemme hvad der er okay og hvad der ikke er okay at gøre/sige?
- Hvordan har du det med at navigere rundt i hvad du synes der er rigtigt og forkert at sige eller gøre – er det nemt eller svært eller hvordan påvirker det dig?
- Case: en ung mand var til barnedåb hvor et barn græd og han holdt den og den stoppede og så sagde forældrene at det måtte være fordi han var en chokolademand. Hvad tænker du om udtryk som chokolademand der menes måske sødt og positivt men stadig er en måde at udstille vedkommendes hudfarve?
- Kan du fortælle om episoder hvor folk har brugt ord eller vendinger af samme slags?
- Du får lov til at læse min definition på hyggeracisme, og ud fra denne: hvad er dine umiddelbare tanker? Ud fra den definition og det vi har snakket om; har du oplevet situationer med hyggeracisme?
- Hvilke tanker har du gjort dig om Pippi og det at der står at hendes far er en n-konge? Hvilke grunde tror du der er for at ændre ordet?

- Case: Forestil dig at B (barn) er ude at lege på en legeplads. Lige pludselig dukker nogle andre børn op og begynder at drille B, men B kan ikke sige fra på en måde som gør at de holder op. I rigtig lang tid efterfølgende fortsætter B med at blive mobbet og drillet af de andre børn, indtil en dag hvor B siger: ”hold op! Jeg synes ikke det er sjovt at blive mobbet, jeg bryder mig ikke om at I gør det her! Lad være med det.” I en ideel verden ville mobberne reagere med at undskylde og aldrig gøre det igen. B får dog i stedet til svar: ”det var ikke vores intention at mobbe dig, vi mente det slet ikke på den måde. Det er jo bare for sjov, nu skal du ikke være så sart og tage det personligt.” Nu vil jeg gerne afspille en lille optagelse, og du må gerne have dette lille eksempel i baghovedet når jeg spiller den (N-ordet der gør ondt; Sylvesters historie). Efter at have hørt det her, så kan man godt, hvis man skal være lidt overfladisk, sammenligne det at bruge n-ordet med grov mobning. Hvad er dine umiddelbare tanker om Sylvesters historie? Sylvester har været udsat for hyggeracisme og det der er værre, fordi de mennesker han er stødt på, ikke har respekteret at han ikke ville kaldes n-ordet og fortsatte med at fortælle racistiske jokes osv. Jeg kan sagtens forestille mig at der er mange i Danmark der går og har det som Sylvester, så efter du har hørt denne her historie, er det stadig okay at lave hyggeracistiske jokes/udtalelser osv.? Hvorfor?

AFSLUTNING

- Nogle af de ting jeg har spurgt om; har det været svært at sætte ord på, eller har du haft en meget god idé om definitioner, dine holdninger osv. fra start?
- Er der nogle aspekter som du synes jeg ikke har berørt men er vigtige at få med?
- Er der andet du gerne vil sige eller kommentere på til slut?