'Being' and 'Becoming' a Welfare Citizen

in the Danish *Folkeskole*

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of

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by

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Abstract for 'Being' and 'Becoming' a Welfare Citizen in the Danish Folkeskole

This thesis is an ethnographic investigation into the 'bringing about' of the Danish welfare citizen as observed through everyday values and practices in the Danish *folkeskole*. The thesis takes as its starting point the notion of *dannelse*, which is the 'holistic formation of social human beings who can manage their own lives, who know how to behave properly in society, and how to fit in with each other' (Jenkins 2011:187) and *hygge* (cosiness), as the primary frameworks through which Danishness can be understood.

While trying to unravel what these values/practices are and how they were expressed and inculcated in the everyday lived reality at the Danish *folkeskole*, I observed the importance of several other key concepts, including *lighed* (equality as expressed through sameness), and *medborgerskab* (co-citizenship). This thesis will attempt to understand the importance of these concepts in relation to wider Danish society, and as defining features on the 'citizenship-journey' that the Danish *folkeskole* in this thesis represents.

I will argue that the Danish *folkeskole* to some degree exemplifies a 'playpen of democracy' (Korsgaard 2008) as it exists as a liminal sphere, both in terms of providing a space in which students can practice 'being' and 'becoming' welfare citizens, but more crucially also as a space in-between the public and the private sphere, a home-away-from-home. This is achieved through notions of *hygge* to provide the safe and bounded space that is necessary to secure a conducive learning environment in which students can obtain a shared ideological understanding of the world, and hence an equal starting point.

Finally, my thesis will focus on the interaction between and value connotations of concepts such as diversity, difference, individuality, inequality and heterogeneity. I am principally interested in demonstrating how these exist in a dynamic relationship with concepts such as equality, similarity, homogeneity and a sense of 'we/us' as Danish, and subsequently as democratic welfare citizens.

Content

Acknowledgements

Maps

By Skolen is situated roughly 10km south-west of central Copenhagen, Denmark (at the mark A):
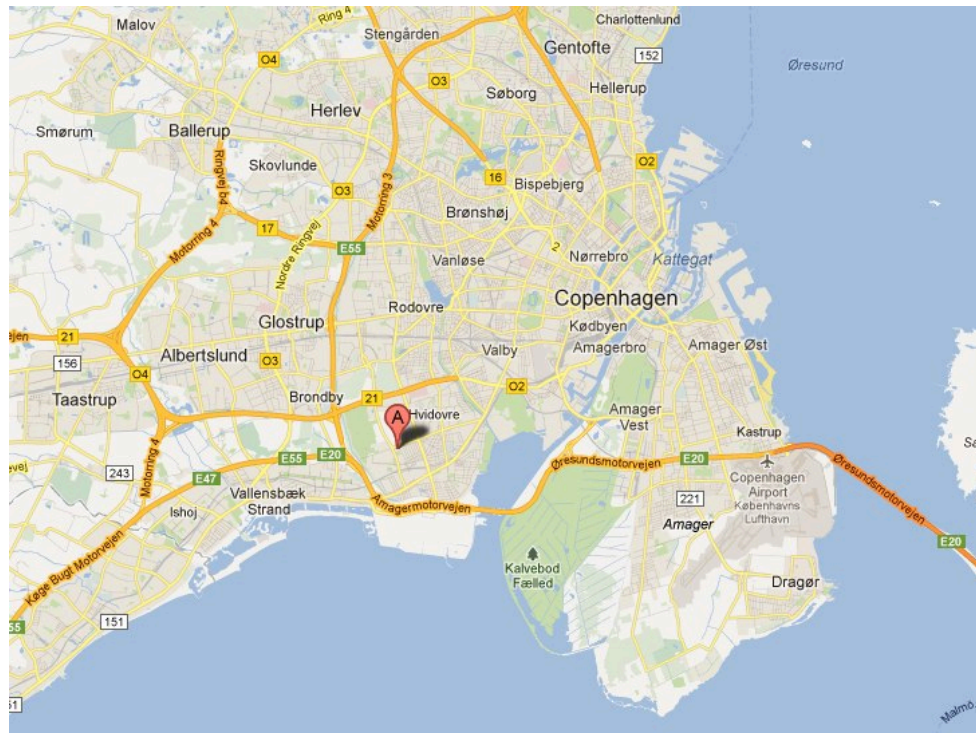
The premises of the school is separated into four main buildings surrounding the playground area:
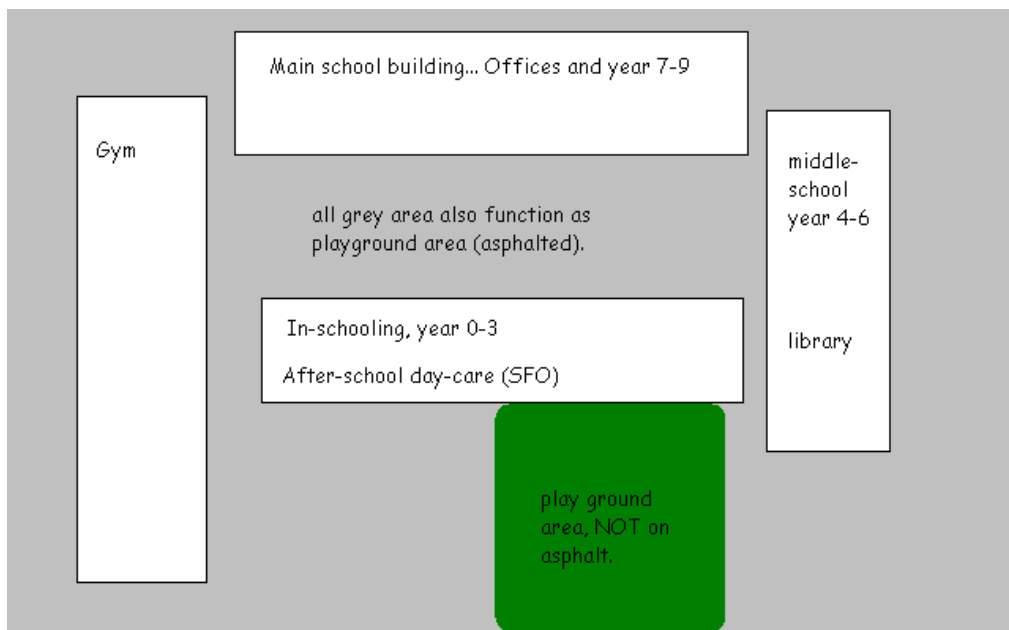
Guide to School and Classes

- By Skolen consists of 545 students divided across 10 year-groups, with two to four classes in each year group (depending on the size of that year-group). Each class is denoted by a letter X, Y, Z, and W.

- The school is further separated into four departments, and a year 0, which is an introductory year to schooling:

  - Year 0 – students aged 5-7
  - In-schooling Year 1-3 – students aged 6-10
  - Middle-school Year 4-6 – students aged 9-13
  - Out-schooling Year 7-9 – students aged 12-16

I followed the school during the last half year of the schooling year 2008/2009 and during the first half year in the schooling year 2009/2010:

- *From January 2009 – June 2009, I followed:*

Year 9.Z during their last half year at the school – Class Teacher Sanne.

- *From January 2009 – January 2010, I followed:*

Year 2.X/after summer holidays 3.X – Class teacher Mette.

Year 6.Z/after summer holidays 7.Z – Class teacher Ana/after summer holidays Sanne.

- *From August 2009 – January 2010, I followed:*

Year 0.Y during their first half year at the school – Class teacher Karen and Teacher assistant Dorte.

Glossary

Ansvar - Responsibility

Behovsudsættelse - Delaying needs

Borgermorale - Citizen morality

Børnehave - Kindergarten

Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitet - The Danish Department for Education, Aarhus University.

Dannebrog - The name of the Danish flag.

Dannelse – The 'holistic formation of social human beings who can manage their own lives, who know how to behave properly in society, and how to fit in with each other' (Jenkins 2011:187)

Det offentlige - The public with connotations of the public sector.

Duks - Teacher's helper

Elevråd – Student Council

Folkeoplysning – People's Enlightenment

Folkeskole – 'People's School', the Danish state school

Forskellighed - Difference

Fritidshjem – 'Sparetime Home', after school daycare institution for school-aged children, (age 5-11).

Fællesskab – Community with strong connotations of togetherness.

Grundlov – The Danish constitution.

Hygge – 'Cosiness', atmosphere of closeness, informality, and warmth.

Jantelov – Fictional Law based on Aksel Sandemose's novel '*En flygtning krydser sit spor*' (1933), e.g. 'do not think you are someone', 'do not stick out'.

Julefrokost – 'Christmas Lunch', traditional event during the month of December, celebrated with friends, family, colleagues etc.

Klassemøde – Class Meeting, weekly meeting for the class, following a special set of rules for how to verbally communicate (substituted the class's hour, during my last six months of fieldwork).

Klassens Time – Class's Hour, a weekly meeting, which, as the name suggests, is an hour dedicated to the class, in which class welfare is informally discussed.

Lighed – equality (as expressed through sameness)

Ligeværd - Equal worth

Ligestilling - Equal status (particularly in the context of gender)

Ligeberettigelse - Equal rights

Mangfoldighed - Diversity

Medborger – Co-citizen, everyday word for citizenship, with connotations of 'active citizenship'.

Nyde – Enjoy/Get

Nærvær - Closeness

Offentlige rum – The public space

Offentligheden – The public sphere

Opdragelse – Raising (social/moral education).

Perker – Denigrating term for someone with an ethnic background other than Danish (non-western).

Pligt - Duty

Pæredansk – 'Danish as a pear', meaning as Danish as it gets.

Rettighed (ret) – Rights (right)

Samfund - Society

Sammenhængskraft – 'cohesive power', used in terms of holding society together.

Social arv – Social heritage

Statsborger – Citizen (as in having a Danish passport)

Tak – Thank you

Terapisme – 'Therapisme', child-focused pedagogical strategy used to merge the experiences of the home and school.

Uddannelse – Education (academic)

Udlændinge - Foreigner

Ulighed - Inequality

Velfærd - Welfare

Yde – Give/provide/work

Chapter I: Introduction

> Ana, class teacher year 6.Z: '*We are creating people in the
> Danish folkeskole, people who have to be able to interact in
> and with society*'

> Tanja, science teacher, middle-school: '*The most important is
> not what they learn, but how they learn it. It is not important
> to know a lot of things, but it is important to know how to
> locate knowledge and how to engage with it critically.*'

The Danish word for education is *uddannelse.* This is a word that literally translates into the 'bringing about' of *dannelse.* In his work on Danish society, Richard Jenkins points out that *dannelse* is the moral thread running through the entire formal socialisation process in Denmark (2011:188). He defines it as the 'holistic formation of social human beings who can manage their own lives, who know how to behave properly in society, and how to fit in with each other' (*Ibid.* 187). As such, *uddannelse,* or education, is concerned with more than just academic education, as the above quotes also allude to; it is concerned with the creation of a homogeneous citizenry, in which everyone is an individual, but where no one stands out.

This thesis is an ethnographic examination of the bringing about of the 'welfare citizen', as observed through the implementation of specific pedagogical processes played out in the everyday setting of the Danish *folkeskole* (the Danish state school), rather than a focus on curricular content. Specific focus is on the values and practices observed*,* which were explicitly articulated as being directly important to the Danish welfare state.

An example of such values includes the notion of *lighed* or 'equality' as expressed through sameness (Gullestad 1984, 1989, 1992), where the citizen is at once an individual managing his or her own life and simultaneously 'fitting in' with the other citizens. In Denmark, my informants would rarely describe themselves as welfare citizens. Instead, citizenship was discussed primarily in terms of *medborgerskab*, co-citizenship, and hence is more a status that exists in interplay *with* other citizens, than an individual status. The co-citizen embodies notions of the active citizen, as it is

concerned with deliberative democracy, the democratic form in which participation in democratic debates is treasured above the actual practice of voting. Co-citizenship is concerned also with upholding an equilibrium balance between rights and duties. As such it is equally attentive to the duties of the state to provide certain services to the citizens (their rights) as it is with the citizens in turn fulfilling their duties towards the state. While co-citizen was the term favoured by my research subjects, and it indeed does overlap with the notion of the welfare citizen, I will continue to use the latter to signify the overall understanding of the Danish citizen. This is done both to remind the reader, that it is the pedagogical practices within the educational system of the *welfare state*, which is under scrutiny, but also because the term 'welfare citizen' embodies more fully all three notions of citizenship as defined by Marshall (1950), Kymlicka and Norman (1994), and Carens (2000): the civilian, political, and the social citizenship. To some extent this thesis can be seen as an exploration of 'civil enculturation' as discussed by Schiffauer *et al.* (2004), meaning 'the process by which an individual acquires the mental representations and patterns of behaviour required to function as a member of a culture, (…) taking place as part of the process of (…) education' (Rhum 1997). 'Civil enculturation' is relevant also as it views citizenship as a competence rather than a status, i.e. a shift in focus from 'who you are' to 'how one does' (Schiffauer 2004:3). Schiffauer et. al. discuss 'civil enculturation' as consisting of three primary elements: civil culture, civic culture, and national imaginary, and elements of these will be further investigated in Chapters V and VI. The notion of 'civil enculturation' is therefore helpful as it presents an elaboration of Marshall's 'social citizenship' (*Ibid*:10), but it does not fully embody the entire concept of citizenship.

The welfare citizen in general, could be considered a citizen attuned to redistribution in favour of decreasing inequality. This is, however, a reductionist definition, of what is, and must be, an inherently under-defined concept in order to allow it to embody the mass of the Danish citizenry. In view of this, each chapter, and my thesis as a whole, can be read as providing an overview of some of the most prevalent values, ways of interacting, and practices of the welfare citizen.

As I suggest in the chapters that follow, in order to facilitate an environment in which the 'bringing about' of such citizens can take place, the *folkeskole* must remain a *hyggelig* space in which the student feels comfortable and safe. *Hygge* is a culturally

specific practice and value, infused by elements of cosiness and acting within a 'middle range'. It is a celebration of the in-between, the fitting-in (i.e. being 'equal') and, as I will argue, an expression of the dominance of the middle-class as a socio-cultural group.

Hygge is further the primary framework through which Danishness can be understood, as it embodies and underpins all other themes investigated in this thesis. To uphold a *hyggelig* atmosphere at the school, and to allow the school, and classroom to become a 'home-outside-the-home', or an 'alternative family' (Jenkins 2011), the boundary between the home (the private) and the school (the public) must be blurred. The close-knit relationship between the public and the private figures centrally in this thesis, and I will argue that this relationship is important to the wider project of the welfare state, whose main purpose is also to give the students an equal starting point from the premise of '*bekæmpe den negative social arv',* or fighting negative social heritage.

Throughout the thesis I will refer to the *Danish folkeskole* as the 'playpen of democracy' (Korsgaard 2008), as it exists in a kind of liminal state, representing an arena in which the students can practice becoming welfare citizens with, to paraphrase Durkheim (1925), an inclination towards social life. Thus, I view the Danish *folkeskole* as a space in which the child is simultaneously *being* a welfare citizen, as they consume a welfare good - namely education – and *becoming* a welfare citizen, as they learn appropriate ways of being a citizen in the Danish welfare state.

In this thesis Durkheim has been placed at a theoretical pinnacle in terms of understanding how the Danish *folkeskole* can be seen as an environment conducive to the development of a strong, prosperous nation. Durkheim's theory of moral education (1925) illuminates the Danish context in which I also observed a need to create a homogeneous nation, through presenting particular ways of thinking about the world and being in the world.

Influenced by Durkheim, a wide range of social scientists have explored the school as a site for both reproduction and exploitation of dominant social values, and as a social field in which the individual is more of a passive recipient than an active participant in shaping his or her perspective of the world (Eckert 1989, Althusser 1971, Gulløv and

Bundgaard 2006). While this study will incorporate some of this research, the specific focus will be on how core egalitarian values of the welfare state – such as deliberative democracy, the close public/private relationship, and an understanding of *lighed* in terms of sameness and 'equality of worth' - are inculcated within the school setting, and how these values are understood and come to be widely accepted and reproduced by young Danish citizens. To discuss the process of socialisation and the reproduction of cultural/political ideologies and values, I draw particularly on Bourdieu (1970; 1972) and his theories of the habitus, social fields, accumulation and valuation of capital, and not least 'symbolic violence'. While his theories are based on a French socio-economic class-based heritage (which are particularly different to the Danish heritage), they still provide helpful tools to think about and discuss socio-cultural (re)production in the Danish context.

This thesis is also concerned with how a popular imagination of a 'homogeneous population', such as the Danish citizenry, is created. I observed that the strong focus on equality, both in terms of 'sameness' and in monetary terms, produced a strong sense of 'us', which in turn emphasised the idea of a homogeneous 'us' versus 'them'. This tendency can be viewed in terms of nationalism, and in this case I argue that Danish nationalism is, in everyday practices, primarily what I define as an 'inclusionary nationalism', meaning that it is based on notions of 'everyone should really have it like us'.

In the course of my observations, one theme continuously presented itself, which was that of 'difference', and particularly 'ethnic difference'. While I had, for reasons outlined in Chapter IV, decided not to focus on 'ethnicity', it inevitably became part of my observations. Fredrik Barth (1969) has suggested that it is at the boundaries of any cultural group that one can truly obtain an understanding of the group itself. As will be demonstrated later on, my ethnography strongly suggests that this is indeed the case. Subsequently one of the overarching strands of investigation in this thesis became to clarify the relationship between, and implication of, the welfare state and/for diversity.

This thesis places itself within a growing body of literature on the anthropology of education in relation to citizenship (Levinson 2005, Ladson-Billing 2004, Anderson, Gulløv and Valentin 2011), as it investigates the role of the school in the process of the

'bringing about' of the citizen. Combining original fieldwork with existing analytical frameworks, I attempt to observe this process in view of maintaining and producing welfare sentiments. My ethnographic data point towards a very strong correlation between 'what happens in the school' and 'what happens in the welfare state' at large. This particular focus on the welfare state, and its relation to the educational institutions, is one that has received no previous attention in the anthropological literature. It is thus my hope that this research will not only add to an existing body of knowledge, but furthermore extend the avenues along which educational research can be conducted.

While the focus of this thesis is the Danish schooling context, my analysis and emphasis on the specific everyday enacted concept of *hygge* more broadly, suggests that other studies in schooling contexts and/or of citizenship, may similarly benefit from including the everyday details, even when these immediately present themselves as banal and unimportant. Para-phrasing Jenkins (2011), it is often the under-defined everyday understandings and taken-for-granted activities that allow us to interact more or less seamlessly with each other, as it is these that give us the greatest understanding of the marrow of a culture.

Finally, this research aspires to contribute to a growing body of literature in which the child is viewed as an active participant in shaping his/her own identity (Froerer 2007; Amit-Talai and Wullf 1995; Evans 2006). The hypothesis is that while the school plays an important role in disseminating these values and expectations, the child takes an active role in negotiating them as part of his/her set of beliefs and dispositions concerning his/her role as a citizen-in-the-making.

Consequently, I believe that my thesis will make a significant contribution towards anthropological knowledge, as it speaks not only to an anthropology of education, but also to an anthropology of the state, childhood, and Scandinavian culture more broadly.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Anthropology of Education

'The anthropology of education sits at the crossroads of anthropology as a discipline, schooling as a professional field, and education as a perennial human endeavour.'

- Levinson and Pollock (2011:1)

Such begins Levinson and Pollock's A *Companion to the Anthropology of Education*, perhaps the most recent, in an increasing number of readers on that very topic. Considering the increased amount of publications and conferences on the topic of anthropology of education, this thesis, if read as an ethnography of schooling in Denmark, places itself in this growing sub-discipline of anthropology. I say *if* because it can be difficult to distinguish between 'educational anthropology' and 'anthropology at large'. This is the case, as most daily interaction and cultural practices can be understood in view of 'learning processes'. Educational anthropologists could (and have, as I will show below) approach most topics of ethnographic interest, in view of how these are learnt, or how knowledge about them is transmitted.

What makes 'anthropology of education' a distinct sub-discipline, however, is that it contributes to a larger tradition of ethnographic studies of societies, by specifically focusing on knowledge transmission, enculturation, socialisation, and how power is 'taught and challenged in schools as cultural sites' (Levinson and Pollock 2011:2). These are also the topics at the focus of this thesis, as I will try to unravel how (and which) welfare values are inculcated and taught in the Danish *folkeskole,* and how the students in turn receive and understand these. What ultimately identifies my research as particularly concerned with the anthropology of education is that it is predominantly set in a schooling environment. This irrevocably suggests that issues such as how, what, and why we learn, will be at the focus in this thesis. It is also for this reason that the first section of this literature review will engage with this particular sub-discipline.

The British and the American school of anthropology
Anthropology at large has developed in parallel strands, not only between the US and the UK, but also in Asia, continental Europe, and the rest of the world. In this section I

wish predominantly to focus on the differences between the American and the British traditions in anthropology, as the first can be seen as the dominating discourse (in an international perspective) and the latter is the tradition in which I have been trained (but do not necessarily confine myself to).

The American tradition of an anthropology of schooling can be traced back to the 1950's and 60's most noticeably with Margaret Mead's *The School in American Culture* (1951), the establishment of the *Council of Anthropology and Education* (1968) and the journal *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* (1970) and later a wide range of readers on the topic, most recently Levinson and Pollock (2011) and Anderson-Levitt (2011). Originally it developed with a focus on acculturation, minority communities, and was highly influenced by other social sciences – particularly cultural psychology, as for example seen in Spindler and Spindler's studies (1971; 1994; 2008).

The development of a British anthropology of education is on the other hand more difficult to trace. While early anthropologists were concerned with education, they were so more within a holistic perspective, rather than as an independent discipline (Malinowski 1936; Fortes 1938; Firth 1936). The closest we get to an anthropology of education being established in the UK is with Max Gluckman's appointment to Manchester University, and his subsequent promotion of not only anthropology 'at home', but also within the school settings. In 1962, the then combined departments of sociology and anthropology developed a research project focused on the study of schools as 'social systems' (Mills 2011), and from this project came several of what we may think of as Britain's first educational ethnographies, amongst others: Colin Lacey's *Hightown Grammar* (1970), and David Hargreaves' *Social Relations in Secondary School* (1967). Both of these were focusing on the under-performance of the British working class, streaming within the school system, and the general failure of schools to live up to their founding ideals (i.e. meritocracy, equality of opportunity etc.). Thus the British school of anthropology of education was established under heavy influence from Marxism and theorising of class (Mills 2011).

Despite their different focuses, the British and the American schools of the anthropology of education share a perspective from which they observe schooling as

primarily concerned with differences, as expressed through ethnicity/race in the US (e.g. MacLeod 1987; Jacob and Jordan 1993) or class in the UK (e.g. Willis 1977; Evans 2004), and identity (in terms of social membership) (e.g. Eckert 1989; Amit-Talai 1995). These, in turn, are all concerned with 'learning orientation in relation to school performance or failure' (Levinson 2005:330).

Today, these two traditions have drawn closer together, presumably as a consequence of a closer academic collaboration across the Atlantic[1]. To a greater extent anthropologists are also looking to other traditions, such as the continental European, Asian, and South American explorations into schooling from an ethnographic point of view. It is the argument of Levinson (2005; 2005b; 2011) and Ladson-Billings (2004) that we now see an increased engagement, across the UK-US divide (and even further), on new focus-areas, for instance on the notion of citizenship (and again, it is within this growing sub-discipline that this thesis can be situated).

Anthropology of Education – beyond the differences
The anthropology of education, however, is not purely an American *or* British subject of interest. Anderson-Levitt (2011) argues that the largest concentration of anthropologists of education in any one institution is for instance located at the Danish department of education. In Denmark it is not called 'anthropology of education', but rather (as also in Germany) 'pedagogical anthropology'. There are two primary reasons for this. First, the Danish word for education, *uddannelse* is linked to the meaning of the word *dannelse* (both as discussed in introduction)*,* which will be discussed throughout this thesis, and hence embodies meanings other than 'just' education. Secondly, pedagogy, in the Danish meaning, comes closer to the English 'education' as it connotes 'moral, social, and cultural formation of the educated person' (Anderson, Gulløv and Valentin 2011).

Notwithstanding the distinctions within these translations, all anthropologies of education appear to be concerned with some general processes taking place in the

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[1] My own training, while received in the UK, is reflective of these differences being ironed out, as I have only thought about the different British and American antecedents for the anthropology of education when specifically asked to in the context of providing historical overview, such as for example this one.

course of learning, processes which I will also be making references to in this thesis. Harrington (1982:329) initially proposes that 'cultural transmission' is one such process. Harrington defines it as 'the means by which and the forms through which values and attendant behaviour are taught within the specific content of the societal, cultural, or group value system' (*Ibid.*) In the idea of cultural transmission rests the idea of enculturation, which can be seen as the transmission of culture from one generation to the next, and/or acculturation, which is rather the change in culture one must adjust to within a lifetime. The idea of cultural transmission, like traditional notions of socialisation, has been criticised as proposing a rather static top-down theory, in which only elders transmit uni-directional knowledge to the child (student). In reality, this kind of socialisation process is much more dynamic – where one generation is not the replica of the last, and young people are not merely 'empty vessels waiting to be filled'. Instead, socialisation is concerned with individuals who become 'members of particular groups, learning which actions and beliefs are acceptable (or possible), how to perceive reality, and change aspects of it' (Mehan 1980, paraphrased in Harrington 1982:330) From this perspective, we arrive then at the way in which this thesis also will view socialisation, i.e. as a dynamic process through which individuals learn to structure reality in a way that helps them make sense of their environment – and to behave appropriately according to what is expected of them (Lancy 1980).

General themes and tensions in the Anthropology of Education

Levinson and Pollock (2011) identify a range of tensions that have come to characterise the anthropology of education. In this section, I will outline each of them, and briefly discuss how my research copes with this tension. Firstly, they point out that schooling is only a subset of the education that takes place throughout everyday life. In a Danish context, educational institutions are a significant subset of everyday life. Bearing this in mind, I spent a predominant amount of my time in the school, but occasionally I had the chance also to socialise outside of the school – and this will be evident in the discussions to follow. Secondly, they stress that educational anthropologists must be careful not to oversimplify when observing 'groups' in the schooling environment (such as classifying economic classes, ethnic groups, peer groups, or similar). This is an aspect of which I have been very conscious in my study. Thus I chose to observe 'students', rather than students as identified on the basis of

their ethnic and/or socio-economic background. Thirdly, Levinson and Pollock (2011) argue that any anthropologist must decide whether it is possible to focus attention on various aspects, or if attention should be distributed evenly. During my fieldwork and later writing stages, I took a holistic approach. Lastly, there is the question of whether education can be seen as 'development' or as 'domination'. By this Levinson and Pollock mean that the 'personal/social development and superordinate domination are interwoven in complex ways in national education systems.' (*Ibid.* 7). Similarly the ethnography for this thesis will show how education can both enforce cultural continuity *and* promote cultural change.

Further to the tensions outlined above, Levinson and Pollock go on to identify some contemporary sub-categories within the anthropology of education. Amongst the most prolific of these in relation to my thesis is the growing discourse of the relationship between political order, subjectivity, and educational processes as expressed through studies on nationalism, citizenship, and civil society. My research can be situated firmly within this emerging field of study as it is focused on processes concerning children as 'being' and 'becoming' welfare citizens in the Danish *folkeskole*.

The Educational Institutions in the Danish welfare state
At the outset of writing this thesis, there were no publications, at least known to this author, which engaged specifically with the role of Danish educational institutions in the Danish welfare state. A few months prior to the submission of this thesis however, *Civiliserende Institutioner. En bog om opdragelse, omgangsformer og distinktion* (civilising institutions, a book concerning *opdragelse,* social interactions and distinctions), an edited volume by Laura Gilliam and Eva Gulløv (2012), was published in Denmark. This is a testament, perhaps, to the growing interest in the relationship between educational processes and civil society, as outlined above by Levinson and Pollock (2011). In this section it is therefore relevant to place my research in view of, or in contrast to, the main thesis of this particular publication.

Gilliam and Gulløv introduce their volume, similar to the introduction of this thesis, by stating that *opdragelse* in a welfare society is a matter both for society, and for the state (2012:9). Basing their research on Norbert Elias' concept of the 'civilising process', *Civiliserende Institutioner* focus on those values, which can be seen as

conveying 'civility'. Other authors too have engaged with the processes through which children, or students, become members of a specific civil culture. For example, Schiffauer *et al*. (2004) engages with what they coin 'civil enculturation'. Gilliam and Gulløv, focusing on one aspect of Schiffauer *et al*.'s theory, liken the acquiring of 'norms of civility' to the concept of *dannelse* as discussed by Richard Jenkins (2011), a concept I too engage with as a primary tenet of the educational processes in the Danish *folkeskole*. While *dannelse,* as discussed by Jenkins (2011), may be considered as civic culture, 'the dominant style of civility' without which 'it is virtually impossible to engage in effective civic participation' (Schiffauer *et al.* 2004:8), it remains just *one* part of the 'civil enculturation' argument. Moreover, and as outlined in my introduction, the 'civil enculturation' theory is in itself just one aspect of citizenship as defined by Marshall (1950). To be precise it is an elaboration on his concept of the 'social citizenship'. (Schiffauer *et al.* 2004: 10).

Gilliam and Gulløv's volume too seeks to go beyond the 'norms of civility', but from a definitively different perspective than this thesis. Through facilitating Elias' civilising concept, they seek instead to focus on more general relationships between behaviour, distinctions, and dominance, which they observe as the core of the civilising process (Gilliam and Gulløv 2012:10). Consequently, they decisively abandon theories of enculturation, socialisation, *dannelse,* and disciplining to focus instead on the distinction and dominance related aspects of *opdragelse* (*Ibid*. 10), i.e. how pedagogical strategies exemplify social dominance and marginalisation in a wide range of educational institutions (ranging from nurseries to *folkeskolen*).

While I too briefly allude to Elias' theory of the 'civilising process' later in this thesis, I have decisively chosen not to embrace the theory fully. Similar to Bourdieu's and Althusser's reproduction theories, Elias' 'civilising process' proposes that we are first and foremost creatures of the social structures that surrounds us. As will be further outlined later in this chapter, this thesis attempts to distance itself from general social stratification theories, particularly as these are often articulated in terms of economic classes, or a structural understanding of the world, which this thesis, for reasons outlined in Chapter V, does not find appropriate in discussing the Danish context.

Having said this, Gilliam and Gulløv's volume (2012) does engage with some parallel issues to those I will present in this thesis, for example as they discuss the role of institutionalisation in the welfare state in view of the 'ownership' of the child. However, as with most aspects investigated, our paths diverge as we approach the core of these practices. Gilliam and Gulløv (2012) are concerned primarily with aspects of the institution as related to categorising children as belonging to certain social groups - sex, class, ethnicity, religion - and the subsequent mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion. In contrast, while not disregarding that such distinctions exist, I attempt to identify the overarching thematic areas in which students encountered these distinctions.

Another topic, within which our different approaches are particularly vivid, is that of egalitarianism. Gilliam and Gulløv recognise that Scandinavian societies are characterised by a great degree of equality, and indeed emphasise that 'being equal' is a defining norm of civility. In doing so they - similar to this thesis - draw on Marianne Gullestad's understanding of Scandinavian *lighed* as related less to rights and economic equality, and more to sameness and social recognisability (Gilliam and Gulløv 2012:30). At the same time they maintain that in the face of egalitarianism, social distinctions still persist, as they merely become more refined in their expression (*Ibid*.). This thesis supports Gilliam and Gulløv's findings in suggesting that it is exactly within the focus on equality that differences are emphasised, and that social distinctions are bound to persist in an egalitarian individualist society. However, as this thesis engages more closely with how ideas of equality are played out in daily interactions (see particularly Chapter IX) 'being equal' cannot be viewed as an absolute 'norm of civility'. Instead of directly civilising the students towards a final understanding of 'equality', I observed that the students would encounter equalising strategies to a lesser and lesser extent, as they acquired an overarching understanding of the principles of egalitarianism. Sally Anderson, in her work on 'the class', articulates it as learning to 'fit-in and stick-out, without permanently breaking the smooth surface of the group' (2000:250, my translation). Structures of society almost certainly influence the inter-personal relations we are part of, and not least how we enact these appropriately - particularly in an intensive institutionalised Danish schooling-context. I will show in this thesis, however, that rather than a straight-forward civilising

trajectory, part of the role of the Danish folkeskole is to encourage the students, through 'guided socialisation', to find their own understanding of, and to reach these 'norms of civility' themselves. Indeed if they do not independently articulate these norms, they cannot be considered 'successfully civilised'.

In conclusion, Gilliam and Gulløv's volume offers an enlightening collection of essays along a wide range of parameters (I will be referring to the original studies on which *Civiliserende Institutioner* is based in chapters to come). Furthermore their studies are relevant for this thesis insofar as they portray investigations of educational institutions *in* the welfare state. The research for this thesis, however, differs in the approach taken to observe this relationship, both in view of the main theoretical framework it is conducted within, and as this study concerns the relationship *between* educational institutions and a welfare state as a particular socio-political entity. Furthermore, this thesis focuses particularly on *folkeskolen*, and not the full range of educational institutions available in Denmark, as it discusses the values and practices which, during the course of one year's observations, were consistently observed as integral to becoming a successful welfare citizen. In that perspective, Gilliam and Gulløv's volume concerns more the civilising into adults in general, whereas my research focuses on the preparation to participate in the specific political entity of the Danish welfare state. Subsequently, and as alluded to above, I follow a more topical approach as I discuss the specific values and practices that my data suggested were consistently enacted in relation to what we may define as the 'political entity' of the welfare state.

Childhood

> 'And the folklorist and anthropologist can, without travelling a mile from his door, examine a thriving unselfconscious culture (…) which is as unnoticed by the sophisticated world, and quite as little affected by it, as is the culture of some dwindling aboriginal tribe living out its helpless existence in the hinterland of a native reserve'
>
> - Opie and Opie on the culture of 'childhood' (1959:2)

Anthropological engagements with the concept of 'childhood' and with children as subjects have changed significantly throughout the last 50 years. Children are no longer thought of as unaware of themselves, neither as individuals nor as a social

category: furthermore, children no longer go unnoticed in society[2]. Through technological and socio-economic development the child rarely is unaffected by the media and institutionalised world. Despite no longer rendered completely helpless, children are, however, still at the mercy of adult perceptions and reasoning concerning who they are, and not least whom they can be.

During a meeting with the headmaster of By Skolen, Søren, he emphasised that at the school they did not speak of children, but of students. To him it was important to keep this distance, in order to make it clear that the school was a space of learning rather than a playground. Out of respect for this distinction, I too will speak of students at By Skolen, rather than children. Nonetheless the individuals at the focus of this thesis and my fieldwork are still strictly speaking 'children' and actors peripheral or central to children's everyday lives. This section will therefore consider theories of 'the child' and 'childhood' as distinct social categories.

'Child' as process, category, and agent

Anthropology has not traditionally been directed towards children; rather some of the first ethnographic studies conducted were primarily focused on kinship (amongst others: Boas 1916; Malinowski 1922; and Mead 1928). But children were necessarily part of these[3]. Children were viewed primarily in terms of their position in intra- and inter-generational relationships and through the socialisation process by which they posed an essential aspect of the continued existence of the observed culture (Olwig and Gulløv 2003:6). The American school of culture and personality, as expressed through Margaret Mead's (1928) study of the Samoan child 'coming of age', is an excellent example of this. Mead argued that education and upbringing is a cultural process, in which a person is transformed into a full member of a specific human society, sharing with other members a specific human culture (Mead 1970:1). Hence Mead focused primarily on the process of transfer from childhood to adulthood itself, rather than on the child as an independent category or individual capable of making his or her own sense of the world.

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[2] Here I am primarily referring to children in a western context.
[3] Similarly to how we saw education being *part of* traditional anthropological studies.

As my ethnography will show, there was a strong tendency in the Danish *folkeskole* to adopt a more child-oriented approach. While the school was still essentially viewed as a civilising or socialising project, the child was considered to be an independent person making sense of his or her surroundings. The connection between socialisation theory and the perspective of the 'child' came about in the 1970's when 'children' and 'childhood' were acknowledged as distinct social categories, involved in independent meaning-creating processes (Hardman 1973). In 1975 in Denmark, a school reform was carried out introducing new pedagogical strategies, particularly exemplified by the interest in the point of view of the 'children' and the inclusion of 'children's voices'. 'Childhood' was, as discussed by James and Prout (1990:4), beginning to be seen as a specific cultural and historical institution, and the 'child' as an independent social position, which should not be separated from other social factors such as gender, class and ethnicity.

Viewing children as a separate category, however, does not suggest a monolithic social group. Rather, 'children' experience a variety of childhoods, not just in terms of differences between themselves and the adults, but even more so amongst their peers. Acknowledging this, Bluebond-Langner and Korbin argue that rather than privileging children's voices above all others', it would be more productive to integrate children into a 'multivocal and multiperspective' view of culture and society (2007:242).

The ethnographic approach to 'childhood' suggests that children do not merely participate in social interactions as 'children', but as individual social actors and agents. Children do not just 'take over identities'; they create identities through their interactions, and create values and meanings in relation to the material, social and cultural resources available to them. This is evident in the ethnographic studies of anthropologists such as Willis (1977) Eckert (1989) Evans (2006), Gulløv (1998, 2006), Kusserow (2004), Froerer (2007) Levinson (1996) and Toren (1993, 1999) - all of whom discuss how children negotiate the expectations of their surrounding environment as expressed through formal institutions, the family, their peers, and in relation to material and socio-economic possibilities. If every interaction with the surrounding social and physical environment creates meaning, then the study of children is

necessarily a study that focuses on the creation of meanings. Gulløv (1998:53) argues that the creation of meanings must always be both a collective and individual process: collective because values are inherent in institutions, and individualised through individual negotiation. In a sense it is a socialisation theory, not from the point of view of 'children' as a category, but from the perspective of the individual child. It is this point of view, in which children do not just reproduce the meanings of their elders (Toren 1993:468-469) that I wish to emphasise in this thesis.

Children's bodies

Another significant marker of child identity is that of rapid bodily change. Allison James (2000:24) argues that to 'grow up' is to 'grow out of' the body of the child, and that the welfare and discipline of the body is absolutely essential to the future success of the nation. The time during the process of 'finishing the body' is, according to James, particularly revealing in terms of how meaning is created, and what meanings are embodied. Although I understand human socialisation and bodily development as a continuous process throughout life, I agree with James that the years of childhood are particularly potent in terms of observing how values of the surrounding society are negotiated and embodied to become part of the future society.

Linking this to the 'civilising process' (Elias 1939), in the context of the Danish welfare state, we will observe an extensive focus on the bodily control of children and their ability to verbalise their opinions rather than communicate them through body language. These abilities are learned through socialisation in day care institutions and schools, and Shilling (in James 2000:23) argues that the body of the child is 'unfinished' and only completed through this process of socialisation. This conceptualisation of the child as inherently 'needing or lacking' is reflected in Nigel Thomas's (2005) 'deficit model', which he bases on Woodhead's observation that 'X need Y, for Z to follow' (Woodhead 1997:66). Or in other words, a child needs Y, in order to achieve Z, and according to Thomas, what is interesting to study is both what Z is, but also why it is desirable (Thomas 2005:12). In the Danish context Y could be substituted for a certain social ability or a certain kind of capital, to achieve Z, which is presumed to be the kind of welfare citizen ideals that are desirable to preserve the welfare state. In this thesis I will investigate what the social abilities needed to achieve the welfare ideal are, particularly in relation to the socialisation of the child.

Emile Durkheim and Morality

'Society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity; education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing in the child, from the beginning, the essential similarities that collective life demand'

- Durkheim (2000:61)

As argued in the above section, children need to be socialised in order to become 'good' adult citizens, and the institution responsible for this in the modern Danish welfare state is primarily the Danish *folkeskole*, about which we will hear more below. This relationship between education and the transmission of ideology is one that has been investigated by many scholars in the social sciences. Emile Durkheim, for instance, was one of the first sociologists to explore the connection between the two in his *Moral Education* (1925), and his observations regarding the connection between a successful nation and moral socialisation in the educational system will be the focus of this section. Moreover, it is a topic, which is at the core of all my main chapters, but is particularly pervasive in my chapter on 'rights and duties' (Chapter VIII).

Durkheim has had a profound influence on all the social sciences, perhaps most notably for suggesting that society could be studied as a 'social fact' with an objective existence independent of the people living in it (Durkheim 1895). Thus 'every individual is born into a society which is already organized, and which thereby moulds his personal development' (Durkheim (1895) in Giddens 1978:36). According to Durkheim, an individual can only act on this existing reality if they have learned to understand it, and this is where education becomes important – to educate children in order to allow them to interact, not only with their peers, but also in society in an appropriate fashion. Amongst Durkheim's many legacies, and most importantly for this thesis, is his absorption with the sources and nature of moral authority, or in other words: the moral education.

Emile Durkheim

Moral systems, and the study of morality, was at the core of all Durkheim's writings, and in the following section I will briefly sum up a few points, and attempt to highlight their relevance to this thesis – before moving on to describe in more detail his post-humously published *Moral Education* (1925).

In *The Division of Labour* (1893) Durkheim addressed theories that had earlier suggested that morality was an a priori category. Instead he argued that we must empirically study the 'various forms of moral code that exist in different societies' (Giddens 1978:21), or in other words that we should take into account cross-cultural differences observed around the world, and hence reconsider the assumption of a-priori categories of reason. Thus Durkheim argued that moral categories are socially determined. This is similar to how he would later view education: arguing that there is no such thing as an 'ideal education', i.e. education as 'abstracted from conditions of time and space' (Durkheim 2000:57). Education (as morality) has to be specific to the context in which it exists, as 'the context' will otherwise not be able to maintain itself (more on this below). Consequently that which is deemed 'morally appropriate' will differ from one society to the next. This is an important observation in terms of the research at hand, as Durkheim essentially suggests that moral facts are dynamic and changing with society (as we will also see in Chapter VIII).

Most significant for this thesis is, however, his discussion of morality in his *Moral Education* (1925). Here Durkheim elaborated even further on his notion of morality, as he argued that it consists primarily of three factors: discipline, attachment to society and autonomy.

Discipline is, to a certain extent, akin to Aristotle's Virtue Ethics, in which the correct moral response always exists as a mean between two extremes. Here, it is presumed that an enlightened individual will recognise the 'socially appropriate response' within the range of possibilities presented. According to Durkheim, for a person to be moral, he must limit the range of possibilities within which he can acceptably behave. Hence *discipline* establishes around 'each person an imaginary wall' (Durkheim 1962 [1925]:42).

Furthermore, for discipline to have authority over the individual, it must have a supra-individual element. For many scholars before Durkheim, this element was assumed to be God. Durkheim, however, argued that God was nothing but a projection of *society* itself. The supra-individual element, to which morality was inevitably bound, was thus

the structures of society, or in other words the *attachment to society*. In Durkheim's (*Ibid.* 60) words, 'the domain of the moral begins where the domain of the social begins'. Further to placing society as the supra-individual element, Durkheim stood in opposition to earlier thinkers, such as Kant, as he replaced 'reason' with 'society' as the ultimate authority. While Durkheim acknowledged that every individual belongs to multiple societies, each with its own morality, he also acknowledged that a hierarchy exists within these societies. At the pinnacle of these he placed the political society, the nation, which possesses the highest moral value of all human social life forms (*Ibid.* 79).

The last factor, *autonomy*, dictates that an act can only be moral if it is performed freely without coercion; that the individual exercises 'moral reflectivity' by choosing to 'act according to that moral law which he recognises as having ultimate authority and thus worthy of respect' (Durkheim 1961 [1925] as paraphrased in Zigon 2008:36).

It can be questioned whether 'moral reflectivity', as discussed by Durkheim, can be considered an 'insurer of autonomy' or 'expression of freedom of choice'. Instead I would suggest that it is linked more to discipline, through which the individual must learn to identify appropriate conduct (the ranges within which one can appropriately interact) according to the society he/she is participating in. From this perspective, discipline, and hence 'moral reflectivity', is related more to restraint (as one is restricting the range within which to act) or even to the process of being civilised, in which case 'moral reflectivity' is something to be learned, rather than 'chosen'. Durkheim acknowledges this too, as he argues that there are in any society certain norms, ideas, and practices which one may call the 'basis of the national spirit' – these are based around 'ideas of human nature, on the respective importance of different faculties, on right and duty, on society, on the individual [...] etc.' (Durkheim 2000:60). The object of education, according to Durkheim, is to fix these in our minds. Again morality is not something that exists a priori, or which the individual can choose – rather, as with any social facts (as seen above), the student must *learn* about it, in order to interact with the already existing society.

As will be discussed in Chapter VII, the Danish *folkeskole* represents a significant proportion of the daily life of a vast majority of Danish children. Subsequently, the school has a significant role in the socialisation of the Danish citizen, and is therefore an ideal arena from which to observe how an idea of morality and 'appropriate citizenship' is transmitted. This is because, according to Durkheim, it acts as a moral agent of the nation, whose primary function it is to link the child to the society and to teach him or her, through discipline (or the understanding of appropriate behaviour and responses), to know and love his/her nation. As alluded to above, it is only through understanding the reasons of a specific 'morality', that the individual could truly be said to be making something resembling free choices, and hence not be constrained to merely acting accordingly.

Durkheim (1961 [1925]:148) argued that in the small society of the school classroom, discipline *is* the morality; hence the school represents the vehicle that produces a national morality on a micro-level that is to be replicated in larger society later. It follows that students are moulded in schools to become citizens with an inclination towards social life. These will come to form a relatively homogeneous organic collective, which is essential for the well-being of not only the individual, but also for the success of civilisation in general (*Ibid*. 233). The morals taught in the schooling context are necessarily, and following Durkheim's line of thought, culturally specific. Moreover, they are dependent on the nation, which they must 'learn to know and love' (*Ibid.* 79).

Becoming a welfare citizen must thus also be intrinsically linked with learning morality, and the argument of this thesis is that this learning process takes place primarily in the Danish *folkeskole*, as it is an institution in which 82% of all Danish citizens spend a minimum of 9-10 years of their lives (aged 6-16). Placing the totality of children in the school for a period of this length ideally restricts the possibility of the parents transmitting their own moral codes unquestioned to the child. As the transmission is instead largely institutionalised, and the 'know-how embedded in the ruling ideology' (to use an expression favoured by Althusser 1972) is transmitted to the student, the school plays a critical role in determining which moral codes, i.e. values, norms, and modes of behaviour are appropriate. As this thesis argues, such values include

egalitarianism (Chapter IX), norms of appropriate 'rights and duties' (Chapter VIII), and modes of behaviour such as *hygge* (Chapter VI) - all of which are part of constituting the range within which it is considered 'appropriate to act'.

Following this line of thought, I construe morality to be a critical element that underpins the topics I am investigating throughout this thesis.

Anthropology of morality in education

Further to the anthropology of morality as a distinct field of research (a brief outline of the anthropology of morality can be found in Appendix A), morality is a strong and persistent theme in the anthropology of education, particularly as this has increasingly engaged with the notion of citizenship and/or nationalism in the schooling context. The link between the anthropology of education, morality, and the nation can be seen as a natural consequence of Durkheim's engagement with the area. This growing discourse can be observed across a UK/US divide and in a variety of cultural contexts. Froerer (2007), Benei (2005; 2008), Kumar (2001), and Ghosh (1995) all engage with how morality is transmitted (more or less successfully) in Indian schooling contexts, primarily through the use of bodily discipline. Similarly Luykx (1999) in a Bolivian context, Chun (2005) in Taiwan, and Starrett (1998) and Mitchell (1988) in an Egyptian context, all engage with morality from a similar premise, where the relationship between discipline and morality is at the focus.

Taking Froerer's study as an example, we see that there appeared to be a general acknowledgement amongst the teachers that 'disciplining the body allows for the disciplining of the mind' (2007:1048). Her study in a Hindu nationalist primary school in a central Indian industrial city, engaged with physical disciplining as a way of transmitting moral understandings. This study, however, shows us that the importance and respect given to discipline by the students was not related to moral education, but rather to the avoidance of corporal punishment (*Ibid.* 1046)

In other contexts, physical discipline is rarely or never used, and other forms of discipline are observed. For example, Levinson's (1998) study of the ESF, a Mexican Secondaria, shows that disciplining is a highly verbal interaction. In his study, he observes morality as expressed through 'recurrent and thematically interlinked

gestures and statements about teacher's conduct' (1998:47). Levinson argues that these statements tell us something about perceptions of what constitutes good and bad behaviour. The most prevalent negative terms in the moral discourse of the ESF was 'Despotism' (as also mentioned above), which was when the teachers excessively imposed their own authority over the students in a manner which did not respect student autonomy (*Ibid*. 55).

Benei (2008), working in a western Indian primary school, discusses (amongst other things) the role of language in disciplining and creating 'good citizens'. She argues that 'language does not only encode embodied emotions; it also forms the basis for the socialization of morality, that is, the social sanctioning or rejection of actions (one's own and others')' (*Ibid.* 89). She also suggests that students learn to make sense of a moral order through interaction with others – and that notions of morality are in this sense negotiated through 'linguistically […] mediated understandings of daily life and events, providing bearings for one's place in the world, both as an individual and as part of a collective' (*Ibid*.). Thus, disciplining through language is as relevant as corporal disciplining in creating the range of actions, within which one can appropriately interact.

My own fieldwork was also concerned with verbal more than physical disciplining. While the students had to learn how to discipline their bodies in order to participate appropriately, it was not a matter of the teachers corporeally disciplining them in order to teach this. Disciplining, whether related to bodily or other behaviour, was consistently given verbally.

Considering the above discussion of morality in the anthropological literature, and thinking about my own ethnographic observations, it appears that morality can never be studied as a singular concept, but must be viewed in continuous and dynamic development with its environment. In other words, what exactly morality *is,* and *how* it is expressed, will change according to the context in which it is observed. It is the premise of this thesis that the development of any social concept will be particularly evident throughout the years of learning, and the concept of morality, as observed for example through ideas of 'rights and duties', is a theme that came out continuously in

my fieldwork. Furthermore, I have reached the conclusion that morality must necessarily exist in a space between the definitions offered above, and this will be made clearer in the ethnography in the remainder of this thesis. It is at once the thin layer stretching over the collected practices and beliefs we may call culture, following the Durkheimian notion of morality as culture; but it is also to be found in specific areas of cultural practice. Hence, that which is considered right and wrong, moral or immoral can be approached from many angles (as also shown in the great variation of education-related ethnographies). In other words, to propose a full list of 'appropriate morally accepted behaviour' in a Danish schooling context (or indeed any cultural context) is not only reductionist, but also impossible. In this I must follow Jarett Zigon's (2008) suggestion that morality, rather than presenting a parcel of fixed value-interpretations, represents a 'range of possibilities'. This range of more or less appropriate behaviour will necessarily be dependent on the contexts and communities in which the participant attempts to enter at any given time.

Social Reproduction

"It is not even possible to talk about the political dimension in education; it is political throughout."

- Paulo Friere (cited in Luykx 1999:123)

Durkheim to some extent viewed the school as a place for cultural transmission and the inculcation of consensual values of the society (as seen above). During the 1970's Louis Althusser (1971) and particularly Pierre Bourdieu (1970; 1972) instead introduced an understanding of the school as potentially perpetuating social inequalities, rather than offering a meritocratic 'levelling mechanism'. Thus, social reproduction theories 'emerge to explain how schools served to *reproduce* rather than transform existing structural inequalities' (Levinson, Foley and Holland 1996:5). This section will evaluate the role of the school in the social and cultural production and transmission of ideologies and values by considering some of the most widely used social scientific theories applied within sociology and the anthropology of education, and in view of contemporary ethnographic studies of social (re)production.

Louis Althusser

Louis Althusser (1971) perceived the school to be an educational ideological apparatus of the state in which people are reproduced to fit the system. He envisaged the state itself as a machine of repression enabling the ruling class to ensure its domination (Althusser 1971:92). Althusser suggested that the monopoly of the school as an institution that educates children has come to be taken for granted by most parents. As such the school is the main centre for reproducing ideology, as it has access to the totality of children every day for many years, drumming into them a 'certain amount of know-how embedded in the ruling ideology' (1971:104). In this process, he argues, the school thus produces children who satisfactorily fulfil whatever role they are ejected from school into society to fulfil (*Ibid.* 105).

I am discussing Althusser briefly here, as his theoretical view of the education system has influenced a wide range of the social scientists working within education (whether to counter or support his argument). One such study is that of Paul Willis (1977), who discussed the strategies employed by two very different groups of working class students in Birmingham, England. On the one hand were the 'ear'oles', the conforming students investing their time in the formal sector, expecting it to pay off in a distant future. On the other hand were the 'lads', claiming time for themselves and actively defining their immediate identity by resisting the structure of formal education, creating a 'counter school culture' (Willis 1977:29). Willis argued that the 'lads' imported values from their immediate environment to shape the 'counter school culture' (i.e. defending oneself, masculinity, quick thought, low expectations and solidarity with the group). Meanwhile, the 'ear'oles' adapted values from the middle-class culture (i.e. equality, individualism and meritocracy), which the 'lads' so fiercely resisted. Willis called this rejection of the school an 'opportunity costed assessment' (*Ibid.* 126).

In Willis's study the cost of conforming for the 'lads' was the loss of the immediate satisfaction of having a 'laff' (*Ibid.* 14). Conforming only paid off in a limited possibility of a distant and unrealistic social upward mobility, and the incentive to conform was therefore insignificant. Consequently, conformism only held logic for the individual student, as some did succeed in further education. But for the working class as a

whole, the 'lads'' rejection of the formal institution's promises was perhaps a more realistic assessment of the working class situation. To conform was, according to Willis, 'to give up all possibilities of independence and creation for nothing but an illusory idea of classlessness' (*Ibid.* 128). As such Willis' study in part rejected Althusser's theory, as Willis suggested that the working class 'lads' were not just 'reproduced' to enter a certain place in society, but rather they actively resisted the formal structures, making up their own value systems. At the same time, however, the 'lads' did ultimately end up where Althusser predicted they would, as their counter-culture did not acknowledge the 'cultural capital' of the middle-class, and hence the 'lads' did not acquire skills to leave their social background behind, and enter different social strata. Consequently, Willis' study ends up both opposing and supporting Althusser's theory.

Where Althusser's theory was predominantly focused on the reproduction of economic inequality, Bourdieu introduced another perspective, which was that of the reproduction of social and cultural inequality. It was mentioned above that the school not only reproduces an ideology, but furthermore inculcates the students with the appropriate skills necessary to engage with fellow citizens. This particular aspect of schooling is one that Bourdieu has dealt with extensively, and one that is expressed through his theories of the school as a social field in which diverse kinds of habitus meet and collide, and a mixture of capitals is employed and acquired.

Pierre Bourdieu

According to Bourdieu the 'social field' is the objective world in which humans interact. These fields are governed by overarching principles and their own orthodoxy (i.e. ways of doing things, rules, assumptions and beliefs). No field ever exists in isolation, but rather as a field within fields (for instance the social field of the Danish *folkeskole* school lies within the social field of the Danish welfare state). The notion of the fields, however, cannot be fully understood without considering the concept of habitus. Habitus, according to Bourdieu, is the embodiment of past social and cultural experiences and exists in an inherent and constantly developing relationship with the field (Bourdieu in Wacquant 1989:44). In other words the habitus and the field are interlocked, as they are mutually constitutive. In Bourdieu's own words the habitus is 'the durable installed generative principle of regulated improvisation, [which] produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective

conditions of the production of their generative principle, while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in the situation, as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus.' (Bourdieu 1977 [1972]:78). Rephrased, I understand Bourdieu to be saying that the habitus, or sum of one's past experiences, structures the way the social field is perceived, but is at the same time transformed as the individual engages with new fields. The habitus therefore determines how various groups of students will perceive and subsequently engage with their learning environment, while the school, as a social field on its own, simultaneously adds to the bulk of experiences and thereby transforms the habitus of that individual. Bourdieu in this sense proposes a circular relationship between structures and practices. Habitus embodies both agency and constraint, as it is both 'regulating improvisation' and being altered by the potential opportunities presented by the social field.

Since the habitus is the social inheritance, the habits and dispositions of the person, it determines what Grenfell and James (1998) call the 'subjective expectations of objective probabilities' (*Ibid.* 14). In other words it shapes an idea of who it is appropriate to become. The school has certain formal expectations of what these 'objective probabilities' are, while the individual may have other expectations. Further to this, the social field of the school consists of multiple layers of other fields. As such, the individual child must negotiate his/her habitus in regards to what habits and dispositions are appropriate from the point of view of teachers, peers, family, the media etc.

Gillian Evans' study emphasises this aspect as she focuses on the multiple roles that the students must take into consideration as they enter the classroom. Tom, one of Evans' primary subjects, is a ten-year-old disruptive boy in year five. At home, in the two-bedroom flat his family lives in, he is a 'mommy's boy' (2006:68). However, as he enters the street he becomes very aware of his appearance 'givin' it large', becoming a big man on the streets (2006:76), and experiencing, what is required for him to participate appropriately to develop his masculinity and reputation. As he enters the school he experiences a third set of expectations of how to participate. While he is surrounded by the physical boundaries of the school, he is still also surrounded by his

peers, and their experiences of what he *is*, and *can* be. These 'psychological' boundaries lead to Tom choosing not to participate in the formal education. The social implications of him participating in school would be that his status would change from tough boy on the street, to novice in the schooling community, leaving him vulnerable.

Thus students find themselves having to move more or less seamlessly between various social fields, with varying expectations of how to appropriately interact. The ability to move between different modes of participation defines the success of the learner, and in a schooling context in can be observed as necessary in terms of 'learning to learn', an ability, which has been discussed as a specific middle-class phenomenon (Bateson in Levy 1975:271). Evans (2006) suggests that schools in this way come to represent and embody middle-class values, legitimising their particular way of being in the world (*Ibid*. 32). 'Learning to learn' as a pedagogical strategy, can hence be seen as grounded in middle-class values - facilitating middle-class children's movement through the school system.

Bourdieu proposes, much like Willis (1977) and Evans (2006), that some individuals will in this way enter the educational system with 'the wrong educational decoders' or what he calls an unequal distribution of capital. Some students may already possess the relevant forms of capital (or educational decoders), while others may not and hence be disadvantaged. Bourdieu identifies three main forms of capital: *social capital*, which are social relationships or membership of groups; *economic capital*, such as monetary wealth; and lastly *cultural capital*, which itself can be divided into three states. The embodied state is characterised by one's accent, bodily disposition and way of learning; the objectified state is in the form of cultural goods such as art, literature and music; and the institutional state is the recognition and affiliation to academic institutions (Halsey et. al. 1997). Most importantly to the research of this thesis, and the study of social reproduction in schools in general, is the cultural capital. This refers to the 'kind of symbolic credit which one acquires through learning to embody and enact signs of social standing' (Levinson, Foley and Holland 1996:6). This 'credit' can be understood in terms of valued competences or character traits (as we shall see in later chapters, these may, in a Danish context, be appropriate understandings of *hygge,* 'equality of worth', navigating the close public/private relationship etc.)

The different kinds of capital possessed by and available to the students necessarily all overlap, interfere and to a certain extent determine the availability and attainability of each other. One's understanding and acquisition of these, moreover, determine one's success in relation to attaining or reproducing the desired social order. Cultural capital may for instance be converted into economic capital. This is because cultural capital is the capital that makes one aware of how to appropriately interact in society, building networks, getting a job etc. Thus students with the right kind of cultural capital may attain higher positions in society, in turn legitimising the very kind of cultural capital they value and so forth. It is thus Bourdieu and Passeron's (1970) argument that the school system reproduce the stock of cultural capital of those who are already of high social standing, as it will acknowledge some cultural capital as more valuable than other – and hence also reproduce cultural inequality.

This process of schooling, in which some students already at the outset are more likely than others to succeed, imposes what Bourdieu and Passeron call 'symbolic violence' on those students who are not equipped with the appropriate capital, i.e. don't have the 'right' background (habitus). Bourdieu (1972) as such use the theory of 'symbolic violence' to explain the cultural and social domination of one class over another occurring unconsciously through everyday practices. In Jenkins' words, this is 'the imposition of systems of symbolism and meaning (i.e. culture) upon groups or classes in such a way that they are experienced as legitimate' (2003:104). Following Bourdieu's line of thought, the process through which 'symbolic violence' is successful in making whatever values it propagates appear as legitimate is termed 'misrecognition' (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977 [1970]): xxii). When people accept the values transmitted to them through the 'pedagogical actions' as legitimate (i.e. when they acknowledge that particular kind of capital as valuable), they reproduce the power structures that originally shaped these values.

Discussion of Social reproduction theory

While both Willis' and other studies (Macleod 1987; Evans 2006) ultimately support Althusser's claim discussed at the beginning of this section – i.e. that students are ejected from the school to whatever position in society they were meant for - I find it troubling to accept that the working class culture, or any culture indeed, should be defined solely in opposition to a hegemonic culture. This assumption seems to remove

initiative and agency from the members of that culture, and reduces the minority (or oppressed) culture to being merely a reversed reflection of the middle-class culture. While the issue of social reproduction will be at the core of most of my main chapters, Chapter IX will engage more specifically with the suggestion that inequalities are reproduced in the schooling system.

Moreover, since Althusser and Bourdieu's engagement with social reproduction, institutions other than 'class' - for instance gender and ethnicity - have become widely accepted as having an impact on life choices. For example in Chapter V, I will discuss how class dynamics in the Danish context did not emerge, during industrialisation, in a comparable way to the rest of Europe. Marianne Gullestad (1989), conducting anthropological research amongst Norwegian middle-class women, argues that in a Scandinavian context, it is not as interesting, or relevant at least, to discuss culture in terms of the workings of Marxist economic classes. Similarly, Linnet (2011:25) also discusses this 'in-between', middle-class worldview, which is a pervasive in Scandinavian societies. Class is - and this has been observed by other writers on Scandinavian culture as well (see Gullestad 1989; 1992; Knudsen 1996) - 'a highly embarrassing, unsettling subject' (Linnet 2011:25)[4]. Hence it may not be useful to view the middle-class as 'a class' in the sense that Bourdieu does (as influenced by his French socio-historic heritage). Rather, it may be more accurate to view contemporary Danish society more in terms of various social groups competing over the value systems, i.e. a society composed of 'social classes', rather than 'economic classes' (this will be discussed further in the chapters to follow, particularly Chapter V).

Where the ruling ideology in Althusser's work was considered capitalism, one could suggest that the ruling ideology in the Danish Social Democratic welfare state is the middle-class - if not in an economic sense, then almost certainly in an imaginary sense (I will argue this point in several chapters, taking into consideration the definition of *lighed* 'equality' in Chapter IX, and also how *hygge* can be viewed as a demonstration of the Scandinavian focus on the in-between, or the middle, in Chapter VI). The 'new'

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[4] The fact that it is embarrassing and unsettling does automatically, and on its own, render 'class' superfluous – but taken together with the general socio-economic development in Denmark, it tells us a bit about its significance and relevance, as in opposition to the French/British use and history of the term.

rule of the middle-class is not solely a Danish phenomenon; a lot of ethnographic studies carried out throughout the last couple of decades in other western contexts have shown the same trend of middle-class ideology being transmitted to the students in the 'ideological educational apparatus' (e.g. Willis 1977; Eckert 1989; Evans 2006; Levinson 1998; Kusserow 2004; Macleod 1987; Laraeu 2002 etc.).

A last point for discussion is that the values, with which Bourdieu is extensively preoccupied, typically reflect his structuralist, and hence highly deterministic approach, in which the reproduction of inequalities and social stratification is at the centre. The social reproduction theory relies on 'highly schematic and deterministic models of structure and culture, as well as simplistic models of the state and its supposed use of schools as instruments of control.' (Levinson, Foley and Holland 1996: 7). In this thesis, I will show how concepts and practices, which could potentially be understood in view of 'symbolic violence', or social reproduction, should not necessarily always be seen as such (for example in Chapter VI, concerning the use of *hygge*).

In sum, Bourdieu's notions of social field, habitus, capital and symbolic violence are all concepts that transformed the study of education and are furthermore concepts that can easily be adapted to fit various contexts with differing value systems. My thesis will henceforth continue to draw on these as they help us to speak about the role of education in the Danish welfare state.

The Egalitarian Welfare State, Diversity, and Nationalism

As this thesis will be investigating how and if the welfare state, through its most prevalent institution, the school, (re)produces the values, morals, and ethics necessary for its own survival, it is crucial to also investigate the overarching framework within which the individual must negotiate these values, morals, and ethics, i.e. the state.

David Miller (2003:19) has stated that today we are all creatures of the state, but that this is a very recent phenomenon. Ernest Gellner agreed as he suggested that the state (or nation), as a politically centralised unit, was only taken for granted in the moral-political climate following the industrial revolution (Gellner 1983:4-5). He argued that the history of the state can be divided into three stages: the pre-agrarian,

characterised by smaller tribal 'institutions'; the agrarian, in which many agrarian communities developed state-like institutions to observe agricultural surpluses; and lastly the industrial stage in which the absence of a state is unthinkable. In this sense the political authority of states was 'woven into the social fabric in such a way that its existence seemed relatively uncontroversial' (Miller 2003:20). The same could perhaps be said for democracy, and the following is a brief account of the development of the democratic state.

Democracy and the Democratic State
Democracy comes from the Greek 'Demokratia', which is a conglomeration of Demos, meaning 'people'[5] and Kratos, meaning 'power'. 'Demokratia' is first used in ancient Greek city-states, for instance Athens, approximately 500BC. This description in itself, however, does not tell us much about democracy, for what is power and who are the people in this context? Democracy in the ancient Hellenic sense was only for the adult, male, free person, and hence a sizeable proportion of the population was excluded.

Perhaps we know most about democracy in its infancy from its most critical voices, Socrates, and later, his student Plato. Without going into too much depth, both of these philosophers were strongly against the general accessibility to the senate – rather, those who would make decisions on behalf of everyone, should be qualified (for more on early Hellenic thinking – and democracy in general - see Ober 2008; Dahl 1989; Dahl, Shapiro and Cheibub 2003).

For various reasons democracy did not spread, let alone sustain in early Greece, and history does not suggest that it becomes of profound importance again until the emergence of the enlightenment thinkers (an overview of enlightenment thinking on democracy, outlining some of the ideas and concepts important for the further development of democracy in the western context, can be found in Appendix B). The revolutions and thoughts of enlightenment years over time lead to mass democratisation is the west. The most significant events leading to this were the signing of the 'Declaration of Independence' in 1776 in the United States of America and 'The French Revolution' in 1789. Much later these thoughts were also part of the

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[5] Not to confuse with *demos*, as used in the Danish schooling context, to denote political and ideological principles and understandings.

birth of the Danish constitution *Grundloven* and the abolishment of absolute monarchy in 1849.

A defining feature of democracy, whether deliberative, representative, totalitarian, or minimal, is that it is considered a frame of action, rather than an ideological idea. Some of the repeated factors are 'freedom' and 'equality before the law'. Democracy furthermore alludes to an equality amongst participants, at the level of the collective decision making process. Arjun Appadurai (2002) for example speaks of 'deep democracy' in the context of his research in Mumbai, to signify a kind of democracy 'without borders', or in other words, democracy as an inclusive framework.

For a country such as Denmark, which defines itself in terms of its egalitarianism in both economic and cultural terms, democracy is consequently absolutely embedded in its self-understanding (more on this in Chapter V).

The Welfare State

Shortly after the adoption of the Danish constitution, the concept of the welfare state began its journey in 1883, as the contemporary German government introduced basic public health insurance. Since then welfare states and models have developed and evolved rapidly. Today we have four primary welfare models: the Beveridge-model, in which only those experiencing financial hardship are supported (UK); the Bismarck-model, where only those who are attached to the labour market will benefit (Germany); the subsidiary-model, where the family relations and immediate networks are responsible for each other (Southern Europe); and the Scandinavian model, which is the one discussed in this thesis. In this model, the social benefits are available equally to all the citizens of the welfare state. Consequently all students get the same student benefit from the age of 18, irrespective of the income of their families. Moreover all families get the same child benefits, and once the Danish citizen reaches retirement age, regardless of their employment history, they receive the same public retirement benefits. Particular to the Danish welfare state is that it is based on the Marxist slogan *'from each according to his ability – to each according to his needs',* as everybody contributes through a progressive tax system, and everyone receives some measure of benefits according to their needs. All of this in the interest of providing equal opportunities, and an egalitarian society.

Multiculturalism and the Welfare State

While egalitarianism is rarely mentioned as a premise for the smooth functioning of a nation state, homogeneity has indeed been so (amongst others: Durkheim 1925; Gellner 1983; and Anderson 1983). As I will show in this thesis, egalitarianism and homogeneity are closely linked in the Danish imagination (see particularly Chapter IX). In this thesis I am interested in exploring whether the egalitarian welfare state (and imagined homogeneous entity) poses an obstacle to the pluralistic society. This discussion is relevant in relation to my ethnography, exactly because this showed i) that there is a great degree of 'imagined' homogeneity within the Danish population, or at least an emphasis on 'we *should* all be the same' and ii) because I found that it was often at the boundaries of this 'Danishness' that Danishness itself became visible (see also Barth 1969 on the importance of boundary maintenance in Chapter X). Thus the link between the 'us' together with a strong national feeling *and* the existence of the welfare state are of significant importance to a larger discussion of the 'becoming' of welfare citizens.

A similar relationship between 'equality' (as expressed through sameness, see Chapter IX) and 'differences' was peripherally at the focus of Sally Anderson's short-term fieldwork in a Danish *folkeskole* in the mid-1990's. Here she investigated the role of the 'class' as a cultural practice, discussing it as a space in which democratic ideals, social solidarity, and egalitarianism could be practiced (Anderson 2000:20). Anderson's study, amongst others, wanted to approach an understanding of how Danish students learn to know, pronounce, and exercise social differences, and how moral understandings are created in view of the egalitarian structured society of Denmark. While her overall focus differed from my own, she too found that the idea and practice of equality is inextricably linked to the pronunciation of differences, and she quotes Kapferer as he states that in egalitarian societies 'similarity and difference ideally reduce to a single principle whereby the one is a manifestation of the other' (Kapferer 1988:17). In view of her classroom studies, Anderson argues that 'a basic aspect of group-creation is that it creates and maintains boundaries for closeness and distance and thereby creates distinctions based on social closeness or lack of same.' (Anderson 2000:239 – my translation). My suggestion in this thesis is that *folkeskolen*, through cultural practices such as 'the class' and others creates a very strong sense of an egalitarian, or homogenous, 'us', and that this in turn has implications for diversity.

This link, albeit from a political scientific discourse, and with a reversed hypothesis, has been investigated also by other authors, for example Kymlicka and Banting (2006), who examined whether immigration, and subsequently heterogeneity, poses a threat to the redistributional welfare state.

Kymlicka and Banting argue that a viable welfare state is one that 'commits substantial resources to health care, income transfers, and social services'; that 'depends on achieving and maintaining a high level of solidarity among citizens'; and that in turn 'rests on feelings of commonality among citizens' (2006:282). In the post-industrial welfare state, economic equality is primarily a product of redistribution, and in a following section it will be shown that the Danish welfare state is the 'most equal' country in the world, both in terms of income distribution and in terms of redistribution. Combining this with the wealth of social services that the Danish welfare state provides, Denmark could hence be taken as a prime example of a welfare state, in view of Kymlicka and Banting's definition.

Kymlicka and Banting (*Ibid.*), moreover, argue that national solidarity and trust are essential to uphold the welfare state and hence hypothesize that there would be a trade-off between diversity (as expressed through immigration) and the welfare state. They propose that this would take shape primarily along two parameters: first because it is difficult to generate national solidarity and trust across ethnic lines; and secondly that recognising ethnic groups and employing multicultural policies (MCP's), conflict with redistribution (*Ibid*. 288). The trade-off is suggested, as redistribution is a *de-differentiating* strategy, striving for economic equality between the citizens. In contrast, MCP's are rather *differentiating* as they draw the attention of the citizens towards the differences between them and 'the others', rather than focus on the similarities (Fraser in Kymlicka and Banting 2006:289), and hence undermine national solidarity.

Kymlicka and Banting's research (2006:290-293) revealed that there was *no* statistical connection between diversity in the population and the level of public spending. Still, I would argue, that my hypothesis - that the more redistribution a society performs, the less heterogeneity it will accept - should also be tested. Sensitive questions, such as how and through what processes trust is created, and along which lines it is organised,

should perhaps not be tested alone on the basis of statistical figures (as Kymlicka and Banting relies on), but rather through long term empirical observations, such as ethnography.

In the case of Denmark, *DF* (*Dansk Folkeparti,* 'The Danish People's Party') is a public manifestation of the fear for this trade-off. On most of *DF*'s policy points they do not differ significantly from the Social Democrats (who represents the traditional 'worker's party' in the Danish political arena, and are popularly thought of as the founders of the welfare state), except one: their immigration policies. *DF* has gained wide support in the population for advocating (amongst others) tighter immigration laws, stronger boundaries, and less influx of refugees. They have done so using a very harsh rhetoric, in which one of their core arguments is exactly that the multicultural society is incompatible with the welfare state. That immigration is a pervasive fear in the population is reflected in the amount of votes *DF* have received at recent elections, 13,9% at the election 2007, and similarly 12.3% at the 2011 elections - making them the third largest party in *Folketinget* (the Danish parliament).

For the purpose of this thesis, the question of the 'multicultural welfare state' is an interesting debate to engage with, as it draws our attentions towards one explanation for why there is a significant focus on *lighed,* i.e. equality as expressed through sameness in the Danish society, and hence it is a discussion to which I will return in view of my ethnography in Chapter IX.

Nationalism

The imagination of the homogeneous state plays into broader notions of nationalism. Therefore the last section in this overview of the democratic state and the welfare state will be concerned with the nation – and more specifically nationalism. While this section will not attempt to provide a great theoretical exploration into the various theories concerning nationalism, it will provide a short overview of some of the predominant theories (such as Gellner 1983, Anderson 1983; Eriksen 1993 and others). By extension, this section will predominantly focus on nationalism as expressed in the everyday Danish context.

Jenkins (1997) argues that nationalism is often perceived of as a historically specific phenomenon with its roots in the modern industrial state. Most contemporary social scientists working with the concept of nationalism would indeed claim that before the 18th century, people largely did not perceive of themselves in terms of their national identity (Anderson 1983, Gellner 1983, Smith 1986, Nairn 1977 and Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Rather, people were united in terms of their allegiance to the king, and everyday life was structured according to the smaller regional areas run largely by the aristocracy (Banks 1996:125). In this social/historical context, identity would instead be shaped along lines of genealogy and religious affiliation. According to Gellner (1983:11), it was not in the interest of the agrarian community to facilitate a sense of homogeneity, as this could theoretically propose a challenge to the power of the ruling elite.

Ernest Gellner in his *Nations and Nationalism* (1983) highlights the relationship between industrialism and education. Industrialism, due to the need for occupational and social mobility, facilitated a move from a non-literate 'low' culture to a highly cultivated, literate, and specialised 'high' culture that thus required an educational system making this possible (Gellner 1983:32-35). The common education required for such a project in turn created and demanded a similar culture. Gellner draws on the British historian Elie Kedourie, as he suggests that it is not nationalism imposing homogeneity; rather it is 'that a homogeneity imposed by objective, inescapable imperative eventually appears on the surface in the form of nationalism' (*Ibid*.39). In other words, Gellner argued that it is 'the objective need for homogeneity which is reflected in nationalism' (*Ibid*. 46).

As such the 'national feeling', is discussed as a cultivated, rather than natural and instinctive feeling. Benedict Anderson (1983) elaborated on this discussion by arguing that not only is nationalism a modern phenomenon, but that the perceived homogeneity constituting it is highly imagined. Amongst other factors and processes, Anderson highlights the influence of the printing press in creating a symbolic understanding of 'we are all the same', as news stories theoretically propose an understanding of 'that story could have happened to me' or in Anderson's own words, an 'experience of interchangeability' (1991 [1983]:56). This is similar to the hypothesis

proposed by Kymlicka and Banting outlined above, which is that the welfare state is built on a premise of redistribution through national solidarity and trust.

As such, nationalism can be seen as a cultivated project with its roots in modernity. By extension, Hobsbawm (1992), while agreeing that nationalism is a modern product, made comparisons with ethnicity, which express a more primordial and authentic identity. Hobsbawm argued that ethnicity become something which nationalists can fill into their 'empty containers of nationalism' (1992:4) to create meaning. As such, Hobsbawm argued that nationalism can be seen as a project that is separate from ethnicity, only insofar as it employs ethnicity to 'invent traditions' (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) in order to maintain a sense of authenticity.

Nationalism as State-Ideology vs Everyday

At the 1995 Warwick Debates on nationalism, Smith criticises Gellner's, Anderson's and Hobsbawm's straightforward correlation between the industrial state and the emergence of nationalism, arguing that nationalism should also be observed in view of 'the persistence of ethnic ties and cultural sentiments in many parts of the world, and their continuing significance for large numbers of people[6].' Smith (1986) furthermore opposed the notion of the national feeling as cultivated in the context purely of the modern nation state, arguing that nationalism is based on real and pre-existing ethnic traditions and symbols, passed on from the adult to the child.

Based on long-standing symbols of the Danish state, such as the Danish flag (called *Dannebrog*)[7] and the monarchy (which is the oldest in the world), one might argue that elements of national identity were a feature for centuries before the advent of the industrial state in Denmark. In this view, the 'cultivated view' of nationalism appears limited in the Danish context. Further to this, there is evidence that *Dannebrog* was not merely an invented symbol for the elite. In 1834, King Frederik VI (1784-1839) introduced a ban for the general public against use of the flag to stop the general population from using it to celebrate private occasions[8]. It was in the opinion of the then King Frederik VI that this everyday practice watered down the significant effect of

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[6] http://www2.lse.ac.uk/researchAndExpertise/units/gellner/Warwick.html
[7] The *Dannebrog* is apparently the oldest flag in the world (see Jenkins 2011:131). Legends tell that it fell from the sky in 1219 during a battle against Estonia.
[8] The need for a ban strongly suggests that the use of *Dannebrog* was already the norm by 1834.

the flag. Flagging for the general public was, however, legalised already again in 1854 by King Frederik VII (1848-1868). If flagging can indeed be combined with a notion of national identity, then this identity was not a product of the industrial revolution, as this this did not take place in Denmark until the years 1870-1914 (Kuhle 1989:109).

In short, the ideology of nationalism can, according to scholars like Gellner (1983) and Anderson (1983), be seen as a product of industrialism and the increasing need for a homogeneous citizenry. At the same time, these scholars have been criticised for ignoring the already existing national ties, such as (in the Danish context) *Dannebrog* and loyalty to the monarchy. These ties suggest that a national identity is perhaps more than a result of economic structures, but also, as Smith (1986; 1995) suggested, based on longstanding ethnic symbols and traditions.

Whether or not nationalism is primordial or created with the advent of industrialism is perhaps less important than how it is lived out in everyday contexts – if at all. Thus to achieve a deeper understanding of Danish nationalism(s) it is important to gain an understanding of how ideas of the nation are expressed in everyday life.

Everyday Nationalism

Jenkins argues that 'nationalism as exemplified by the state' and 'national identity as an expression of everyday nationness' do not necessarily exist in a mutual constitutive relationship. 'National identity can exist in the absence of nationalism; nationalism without some everyday sense of the nation is, however, unthinkable' (2011:17). Most significantly, Jenkins argues that everyday civil society is what produces our understanding of the nation, essentially making national identities a product of everyday observations (Jenkins 1997:15)

In relation to this, Linde Laursen (1993) argues that routines of everyday life are not seen as cultural phenomena. These routines are, however, exactly what sets 'us' apart from 'them' in everyday life. Linde Laursen discusses the example of dishwashing as a measure of distinction between Swedish and Danish people – a way in which both countries categorise 'proper behaviour'. In this thesis I will attempt to show something similar: that everyday behaviour, for example *hygge* (which will be discussed in Chapter VI), is important in the national self-understanding.

Other writers on nationalism have also observed the distinction between 'state' and 'everyday' nationalism. For example, Thomas Hylland Eriksen (1993b) distinguished between 'formal nationalism', as connected to the demands of the modern state, and 'informal nationalism', as identified in informal collective events and daily life of civil society (Eriksen 1993b:1). According to Eriksen these two kinds of nationalism may both compliment and oppose each other (*Ibid.* 2). In other words, Eriksen argues that nationalism is both an ideology tailored to fit the modern social organisation *and* an emotional everyday ideology.

Eriksen's arguments are based on research carried out in Mauritius and Trinidad, both of which are post-colonial 'created' communities, in contrast to 'Denmark', which has a long history as a nation. Nonetheless Eriksen makes some interesting observations regarding the different ways in which formal and informal nationalisms may develop in interplay with each other. Most relevant of these (to the Danish context) is the case of German nationalism, which, according to Eriksen, existed before the nation itself did (similar to how many Danes may view 'Danishness' as 'primordial', rather than created in response to a modern post-industrial state). Another example discussed by Eriksen, which is perhaps more relevant, is how the Finnish informal nationalism is non-distinct from the formal Finnish nationalism due to a high degree of homogeneity (*Ibid*. 21).

Jenkins too discusses this relationship between state and vernacular nationalism, arguing that in a Danish context a strong state and civil society have evolved side by side. According to Jenkins (1997; 2011), the most evident symbol of this is the Danish flag, *Dannebrog*. This is discussed both in its capacity as an official symbol of the Danish state and monarchy, and as an informal and everyday symbol in the home, school and civil life. In this sense, *Dannebrog* illustrates again the close-knit relationship between the public and the private, and points towards the notion, dismissed by Jenkins (2011) above, that the state and everyday-ideology of nationalism *does* exist in a dynamic and mutually constitutive relationship after all. This dynamic interaction within which *Dannebrog* becomes a symbol means that in the Danish context (as in the Finnish) 'it becomes difficult to know where the state and civil society begin and end' (Jenkins 1997:161). This subject of the overlap or close-knit relationship

between the public and the private will be the focus in Chapter VII.

Flagways (literally 'ways of using the flag') were also the focus of Billig's (1995) theory of banal nationalism. He argued that the routine flying of flags reminded citizens of 'their nation, of their place in it, and of its place in the world' (Jenkins 2011:16). 'Daily, the nation is indicated, or 'flagged' in the lives of its citizenry' (Billig 1995:6). As such 'flags' become the unnoticed everyday symbol of nationalism – a 'banal' nationalism.

In much the same way, Jenkins (1997:161; 2011:130-151) discusses the Danish flagways as one of the primary examples of everyday nationalism in Denmark. As he notes, while this too is an everyday activity in Danish society (and at the Danish *folkeskole*), it is not necessarily banal. Instead it is exactly the routine, everyday practices which often defines the national identity, and essentially is 'the very marrow of our selfhood' (Jenkins 2011:141). In other words, everyday nationalism in Denmark can be seen to encompass more than what Linde Laursen (1993) discusses as trivialities: notions of deliberate democracy and equality are both everyday enacted aspects of Danish life, but hardly constitute trivialities.

In this section, I have provided a brief overview of how the democratic welfare state, from a historic point of view, came into existence – and also how this is related to ideas of 'equality', 'homogeneity' and not least 'nationalism'. As I present my ethnography in the chapters that follow, it will become clearer how the notion of democracy, equality, and nationalism are linked in everyday interactions, and how these together appear to form part of the foundation for the Danish welfare state, not least in interplay with some of the other factors I will be discussing, such as the public/private relationship, rights and duties, and not least *hygge*.

Recap

This chapter has discussed the theoretical underpinnings of my research project in relation to how these inform my ethnographic findings. Initially I placed my thesis within the growing body of educational studies focused on citizenship – as it is ultimately the relationship between the welfare state and the Danish educational system that is the focus of this thesis. I then discussed 'children' as social subjects and agents as individual in their own rights, similar to any other subject I might study, but

at the same time as a particularly fertile category through which to observe the creation of meanings. I also explained that the headmaster consistently preferred to call the children 'students', and declared that I will follow his example, as 'student' - rather than child – signifies exactly what I wish to focus on, the individual as a learner. In the third section, I discussed education, in view of Durkheim (1925), as a process through which a homogeneous citizenry is created, primarily through the learning of 'appropriate moral understandings'. Taking into account also how morality has been engaged with an anthropology of education, I concluded that morality is ultimately concerned with learning to identify the 'appropriate range of possible actions' in order for the citizen to participate successfully in society at large. I continued by discussing the extent to which the socialisation process, in view of Althusser (1972) and Bourdieu (1970; 1972), is always a case of reproduction. Lastly, I discussed whether the emphasis on homogeneity is related to economic structures of the welfare state, such that a high level of redistribution is related to the extent to which national solidarity must be based on an idea of 'sameness'.

It is in the context of the above theoretical debates that I will demonstrate the relationship between the Danish *folkeskole* and the welfare state at large, as I try to unravel the 'being' and 'becoming' of the Danish welfare citizen.

Thesis Structure:

In the following chapter I will situate my study in view of the geographical and socio-historical underpinnings of Denmark. I will then describe my methodological considerations and challenges experienced during my fieldwork. Following this, my ethnographically-grounded analysis will unfold in the course of six main chapters:

Chapter V examines democracy as it is being 'played (out)' in everyday formalised interactions. I will follow the process of democratic engagement from the weekly 'Class's Hour', the monthly 'Student Council', and the quarterly 'School Board'. I will furthermore show how the deliberative democratic tradition is linked to an understanding of everyone as of 'equal worth'. In extension of this I will engage with the notion of the co-citizenship, as this concept permeates the following chapters, and is to some extent a concept that can be used interchangeably with the notion of the welfare citizen.

Chapter VI is concerned with the notion of *hygge*. As a deeply valued traditional concept in Danish culture, *hygge* can be described as something like cosiness, but with undertones of camaraderie, egalitarianism and well-being. As we shall see, this characteristic penetrates nearly every aspect of teaching and learning appropriate social interaction, and general ideas about the democratic process, equality, and the school as a 'homey' space.

Chapter VII will provide an insight into the role of the school as an agent, or a kind of social arena in which the children are betwixt and between spaces and spheres – the public and the private. While not mutually exclusive, the two realms rather seem to exist in a constant dynamic exchange, which is both supported and resisted by teachers and students. As the school mimics aspects of both the private and the public, it exists not only in-between, but almost in a sphere beyond these. This makes the school a powerful space in which to observe how values and ideas are being generated, and allows the children to exist simultaneously as 'being' and 'becoming' welfare citizens.

In Chapter VIII, I will discuss how citizen morality is being shaped and transmitted in a Danish *folkeskole*, with specific focus on this process as it is expressed in terms of ideas of duties and rights. Both concepts are essential to the existence of the welfare state and as such allow me to explore a 'morality of the welfare citizen' in the process of 'being' and 'becoming'. In view of my ethnographic data, I will discuss the extent to which a 'duty-oriented culture', upon which the welfare state was presumably founded, has changed to a 'rights-oriented culture'.

The link between homogeneity and equality is explored in Chapter IX. In my ethnography the two concepts exist in a dynamic and inter-dependent relationship. A democratic welfare state must necessarily be built on the premise of shared ideological understandings, and this in turn depends on, and makes possible the economic equality in which Danes take great pride. While equality as expressed in terms of 'sameness' is a highly cultural construct, even one that is imagined, it is not, to borrow from Jenkins (2011), imaginary. Equality is of immense importance, and this chapter attempts to unravel exactly what equality is in the Danish context.

To achieve 'true equality' (social, economic or cultural), one must first identify the differences to be muted. This in turn presupposes that inequality already exists. The streamlined, egalitarian school system will, in the aid of creating equal opportunities, identify characteristics that are 'not equal', and hence right and wrong ways of being diverse. Subsequently, the process carries the danger of emphasising the very differences it sets out to eradicate. This came out strongly in my fieldwork, particularly in the context of ethnicity, and will be at the focus of my penultimate Chapter, Chapter X.

Finally, in Chapter XI, I review my main themes, as they have been presented throughout this thesis, to assess the extent to which the Danish *folkeskole* does indeed provide a space in which the student is 'being' and 'becoming' a welfare citizen.

Chapter III: Background

The Danish welfare state

Denmark was once a colonial power, whose kingdom spread far beyond the boundaries we see today. However since the 17th century, provinces in Sweden, Norway, and the West Indies have been lost, Iceland has been granted independence, and the Faroe Islands and Greenland have been granted home rule. Today, Denmark has become a small country with a population just below 5.5m, an area covering less than 44.000km' and consequently with a rather specific cultural and social development

Due to a relatively homogeneous development, the Danish welfare state is often considered, primarily by its population, as something quite distinct to other welfare models. Research published on other welfare systems is met with scepticism because (exempting other Scandinavian countries) Danish people find it hard to believe that other countries have functioning welfare states (Ploug *et al*. 2004:15). If they had welfare systems - the thinking goes - they wouldn't have homeless people, families struggling to make ends meet, and high levels of crime. These problems exist in Denmark too, but are ignored in everyday imaginations, as they do not fit with an imagined understanding of Denmark as 'equal'- an imagination that will be at the fore of many of my investigations in this thesis.

There are many and various definitions of what exactly a welfare state is. Christiansen and Petersen (2004:144) suggest that there are two main categories of definitions, the narrow and the broad. The narrow definition focuses on the legislative perspective, and observes the welfare state as a legal framework. The broad definition observes the welfare state not only in terms of the rights it grants, but also at how 'state activities are interlocked with the market's and the family's role in social provision' (Esping-Andersen in Christiansen and Petersen 2004:144). Due to the nature of my research, this thesis will discuss the welfare state from the perspective of a broad definition, encapsulating the expression of the social organisation in the welfare state as a whole.

To understand and situate this study it is necessary to briefly examine some of the antecedents that underpin the ideas and history of the Danish welfare state, particularly as related to the topics I will be investigating in the following chapters. This history can be divided into three periods: the 19th century, the interwar period, and the post WWII period (some of which will be further explored in Chapter III). I will begin this brief historic overview in 1849, when the Danish King, Frederik VII (1848-1863) abolished absolute monarchy and the Constitution of Denmark was drafted and signed.

Denmark was at the time dominated by classical liberals and social conservatives[9]. Both groups organised private philanthropic organisations, not only because of ethical considerations but, perhaps more importantly, for the purpose of keeping the working class happy, content, and away from the growing left-wing environment. The conservatives, however, were in favour of expanding the state to take over some of these philanthropic institutions, because state-provision from their point of view would secure a harmonious development of society (Christiansen and Petersen 2004:147).

The classical liberals disagreed based on observations made of the obligatory state-run saving schemes observed in the German Bismarck model[10]. Firstly, they feared that not everyone, particularly not the agricultural working class (who were the dominating part of the 19th century Danish population) would be able to afford to make such savings. Secondly, they argued that this model, by forcing people to invest in the welfare schemes, would remove independence and freedom of action from the population (Kærgård 2004:55). Instead the Danish welfare state had to include measures of reciprocity to ensure the continued independence of the citizen (as we shall see throughout this thesis, independence and equality are both particularly valued attributes in the Danish context). The solution was to create a taxation system in which nearly everybody contributed, and the people who needed the financial help the most benefited. As such both the level of contribution and reciprocity was included in the Danish model. This relationship between the state and the citizens, in terms of

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[9] Classical liberalism as connected to ideas of for example Adam Smith and John Locke.
[10] The German welfare model

giving and taking, will be examined further in Chapter VIII, as I discuss notions of 'rights and duties'.

For the purpose of this thesis, it is moreover important to understand another premise for the Danish welfare state, which is the Danish political consensus-seeking culture. This culture does not exist only at the level of policy making, but also in everyday Danish society. Negotiating and compromising, even if just agreeing to disagree, is an important trait in Danish culture, and is one that has been mentioned by many social scientists observing Danes (Jenkins 2011; Linnet 2011; Knudsen 1996; Osborn *et al.* 2003). Anne Knudsen, Danish anthropologist and news-editor (1996:23), comments that Danish people have to agree to preserve an illusion of social harmony – 'us'. Sally Anderson expands by noting that in agreeing, you are essentially transforming differences to *lighed,* equality as expressed through sameness (2000:180). It is essential to understand that almost every reform or policy change in the history of Denmark, and certainly all of those that have been important, have been chosen by a wide political consensus. Christiansen and Petersen (2004:159) argue that it is indeed the stability created through these compromises that forms the essential premise for the Danish welfare state.

As I will show in Chapter V, 19th century Denmark was dominated by independent agricultural producers with a strong tradition for organising co-operatives. Following the industrial revolution, the tendency of forming co-operatives prevailed throughout other crafts, subsequently many and various unions were established as a counterbalance to the private capital powers (Lykketoft 2006:7). The tradition of coming together in unions, while also maintaining a high degree of independence (in other words, the reciprocal relationship discussed above), continued to characterise the expression of the welfare state throughout its history.

In 1901, the parliamentary system was invoked[11]. This meant that the social democrats (although at this time, still a minority) began to have influence on the policies passed. The first social democratic government was not elected until 1924, and since then a series of reforms were conducted throughout the interwar period. The biggest of these

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[11] 'Parliamentary system' in Denmark means that the elected government must have majority in the chamber to pass policies.

was *Kanslergadeforliget* in 1933[12]. Many people argue that this particular reform is *the* birth of the welfare state in Denmark. The most important feature of the 1933 reform was that it was a coalition across the parliament, and that it instated full rights to recipients of welfare benefits[13]. It was a reform, very influenced by new currents in European economic theory. It was in a sense a practical expression of Keynesian principles, which have been the financial basis of Danish social policies ever since. Keynes proposed that at times of crisis the state should inject money into society to encourage consumption, production and employment. In real terms it meant that financial benefits became a right, rather than a 'gift of mercy'. Keynes himself, however, did not publish 'General Theory' until 1936. This again shows that the welfare state has not developed in the face of various political contests, but rather followed general developments in society, whether political, agricultural, or economic.

Welfare benefits were fundamentally changed from being only for the 'needy' to being for everyone during the post WWII period starting with *folkepensionen* (*equal* retirement benefit for *everyone*) being introduced in 1956. This period was furthermore characterised by an expansion of the state, which took on responsibilities that had been expected previously to be fulfilled by the family and local community, such as healthcare, extended unemployment benefits, and a new school reform (this change in the responsibilities from the local towards the state is at the core of the discussion in Chapter VIII).

The growth of the welfare state was also the object of many criticisms along the way. For instance, the classical liberal critique was concerned with the growing public sector and the interference of the state in personal life; the Church criticised the state for offering *salvation* without the Christian god; and lastly the left wing criticised it as part of the capitalist system, and a defence against the radicalisation of the working class (Christensen and Petersen 2004:152)[14]. In a sense, and borrowing from the well-known Marxist observation, the welfare state was the new 'opium of the people'; it offered salvation and kept the population content and hence 'controlled'. In the political

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[12] Named such as 'Kanslergade' was the private residence of then premier minister, Thorvald Stauning, and where the reform was debated, and accepted.
[13] Earlier they had for example not been allowed to vote.
[14] Which was, as shown above, the initial intention.

debate the welfare state was presented as the golden path, a third direction, away from communism, and away from ultra-liberalism. Today people rarely criticise the welfare state, and hardly anyone can imagine a Denmark without it. As much as the welfare system is considered Danish, Denmark is a welfare state.

The present welfare state is seen as a system that makes the modern society capable of meeting the social challenges of a global, market-oriented society. It is what Lykketoft has called a 'capitalist welfare state' – where market powers are 'humanised' through creating a strong framework providing equal opportunities and more safety than the free market alone can provide (Lykketoft 2006:7)[15]. It smooths out uneven distribution of social problems that cannot be reduced to the behaviour and responsibility of the individual (Ploug *et al*. 2004:21). Moreover, it is based on solidarity between and across different groups in society in the expectation that everyone is essentially 'the same' (as will be explored in Chapter IX). Furthermore, it is based on a reciprocal relationship in which everyone gives and receives from the welfare state, and as such engage in a mutually constitutive relationship in which both the collective and the individual are at the centre. While welfare benefits are no longer considered a 'gift of mercy', but rather a 'right', the welfare state simultaneously depends on the notion that everyone will always do his or her best to remain independent.

In this thesis I will attempt to investigate the extent to which these premises of the welfare state are being produced or impaired through the process of schooling, and furthermore whether other sentiments, such as the creation of a social category of 'us' as a welfare community, is created in this process.

History of the Danish Folkeskole

The Danish *folkeskole* is the public/or state school of Denmark[16], and is known to be the place where all students, regardless of cultural and/or socio-economic background, meet. It is an arena in which all students are supposed to be given equal opportunities, and when the student leaves *folkeskolen* at age 15/16, they should preferably share a

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[15] Mogens Lykketoft has been a member of parliament since 1981, holding various ministries (tax, finance and foreign) and since 2011, he has been the 'speaker' of the parliament (foreman for the parliament, amongst others running the debates).
[16] In the sense of being provided for free by the state.

common ground of understanding society and appropriate ways of acting within society. They should also possess the ability to locate knowledge, whilst interpreting and analysing this in an independent fashion. *Folkeskolen* is often dubbed 'the playpen of democracy', as it is here the students meet their 'co-citizens' for the first time (the notion of co-citizens, or *medborgere,* carries connotations of 'active citizenship, and will be further explored in Chapter V). It is also here where students can interact with each other in a safe, close-knit community, in order to ideally practice the skills necessary to become full adult co-citizens of the welfare state in later life.

According to the Danish Ministry for Education, the percentage of children going to the Danish *folkeskole* has been stable at around 80% for at least a decade[17], with the remaining 20% attending private schools, *friskoler,* or *efterskoler* (of which *friskoler* holds the predominant share)[18]. This means that *folkeskolen* constitutes a space in which a predominant proportion of Danish youth and childhood is lived and experienced.

The Danish *folkeskole* covers 10 years of obligatory schooling from year 0 to year 9. The average Danish pupil will enter year 0 aged six, and will subsequently stay in the same class, of up to 25 students, throughout all 10 years of schooling. This is done with the intent of creating a close-knit, safe learning environment. In Sally Anderson's work, she suggests that the class is, throughout the 10 year of schooling, the most important social frame of reference for the student, and she defines the class as an 'institutionally structured territory […] designed with the purpose of providing the students with a home base in the big school-world' (2000:166).

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[17] http://www.uvm.dk/Service/Statistik/Statistik-om-folkeskolen-og-frie-skoler/Statistik-om-elever-i-folkeskolen-og-frie-skoler/~/media/UVM/Filer/Stat/PDF12/120323%20Elevtal%20i%20grundskolen%202010_11.ashx pp.2

[18] *Friskoler* are still 80% state-funded, but more parent-led than the *folkeskole.* They 'are all-ability state-funded schools set up in response to what local people say they want and need in order to improve education for children in their community' (recently also introduced in England, following the Scandinavian model – see: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/freeschools).

After year 0, which is an introductory class, *folkeskolen* is separated into three departments: in-schooling (year 1-3), middle-school (year 4-6) and out-schooling (year 7-9).

In year 0, the class will have only one teacher (and at By Skolen, a teacher assistant). In subsequent years they will have a class teacher who teaches a majority of the subjects (including Danish), a secondary teacher, who will teach maths and mostly sciences and P.E., and a few other teachers doing classes such as arts, home-education, history, or similar. This group of teachers may follow the class throughout their schooling years, but more often than not the 'teacher-group' is changed as the students move from in-schooling to middle-school to out-schooling[19].

Rather than having subject-specific classrooms, each class has *their own* classroom, between which the teachers move from one lesson to the next. The class can decorate their classroom to their liking and can bring in additional furniture and fittings if they like. The classroom is supposed to be 'homey' and *hyggeligt*, a space in which the students feel comfortable and safe (more on this in Chapter VI). Furthermore there is a strong emphasis on creating equal opportunities, and reaching an understanding of the importance of *lighed* equality as expressed through 'sameness'. The latter will be at the core of all the chapters to follow, but will be explicitly articulated in Chapter IX.

Historical antecedents

The history of schooling in Denmark can be examined from various perspectives: the pedagogical, political, legislative, social-economic, religious, etc. In this very brief outline we will consider only the main narrative and structures surrounding the development of the Danish school *folkeskolen,* or 'the people's school'[20].

The school reform of 1814 forms the basis of the school in Denmark as we see it today. The reform defined schooling as a social task, and education from the age of 6 until

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[19] Usually teachers specialise in teaching two different subjects at a specific level, for instance in-schooling. But some teachers prefer to stay with their class throughout their entire schooling.

[20] For more on the history of the Danish *folkeskole*, see Chapter 2 in '*civiliserende institutioner*' (Gilliam and Gulløv 2012).

Christian 'confirmation' at age 14 was made compulsory. The school was initially part-time, so children could help with work at harvest, or at factories after/before school, depending on whether they lived in rural or urban areas (Larsen 1989:40). During the years preceding World War II, the structure of the school slowly came to resemble that of the school as we know it today. The school reform of 1958 introduced a 5+3 years of schooling system: the first 5 years of education was received at the same school; this finished with an exam, which determined whether the student continued in ordinary 8th, 9th and 10th grade, or the more academic 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade (Larsen 1989:50). The structure of the school today is similar, except that the school now has 10 obligatory years instead of 8, which are followed by the possibility of various 3-year further education courses[21].

The post WWII period in Denmark was accompanied by great economic and technological developments and an expanded welfare state. As wealth and prosperity flourished, children and young people were recognised to be independent categories and individuals, whose understandings and perspectives of the world were acknowledged[22]. A whole new consumer industry was built around them and this affected their social relationships, not only to their families, but also to the school. Up through the 1950's and 1960's, the increased state engagement in all aspects of society therefore also led to more focus on this new group of citizens (Nørgaard 2005:23). In 1975 a new school reform was ready, which took into account the new social and economic developments, and which was furthermore very influenced by the contemporary popular pedagogical reforms and child-focused ideas.

The pedagogical reform of 1975 is an example of the Danish political consensus-seeking culture. I mention the 1975 reform here, because this was the last major reform of the *folkeskole,* and thus the contemporary *folkeskole* is to a great extent a product of it. The reform introduced the child-focused pedagogy into *folkeskolen*, and furthermore the emphasis, that *folkeskolen* is ultimately concerned with the creation of democratic citizens (Thejsen 2009:16). The reform is furthermore significant as it was implemented in co-operation between the Social Democrats (the worker's party),

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[21] For example, academic, business or technical school.
[22] The recognition of 'children' as a social category was discussed in an earlier section.

and *Venstre* (the classical liberal party). The reform was hence adapted to contain elements of both parties' ideologies. *Venstre* was for example allowed to keep the final exam in year 9, despite the Social Democrats propagating for an exam-free school. The Social Democratic idea was to keep *folkeskolen* as a non-judging, neutral institution in which results would not hinder students from pursuing further education, and consequently 'breaking lines of social heritage'. Just as *Venstre* was, however, allowed to keep the exam, the Social Democrats in return introduced elements phasing out differentiated teaching, something *Venstre* perceived as integral to their notions of 'free choice' above equality[23].

The fact that the school reform ultimately changed the pedagogical effort to be more child-focused is expressed in many of its sections. For instance, in section 2 of the reform, it states that: the planning of the teaching should be conducted in cooperation between the teachers and students; the students should practice their ability to independently value and decide; and all aspect of the student's personality development should be stimulated, i.e. the intellectual, emotional, physical, and social development[24]. The pedagogical trend of the time, incorporated in the reform, taught that it was important for the student to realise that hard work and competence alone, though important values, would not necessarily provide a fulfilling life[25]. In this, the reform was fundamentally different from its predecessors, as it focused more on the development of the person, the 'social education', or *opdragelse*, than it did on transmitting academic knowledge.

The 1975 reform is, as mentioned, important because many of its ideologies and pedagogical practices still thrive in *folkeskolen*. The focus on social education above academic education is visible in my ethnography. It is also reflected in recent PISA tests, (Programme for International Student Assessment for the OECD)[26], which have shown that although Denmark has the most expensive schools in the world (spending

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[23] See http://projekter.aau.dk/projekter/fbspretrieve/6140297/Speciale-Dansk+skolepolitik1958til1975.doc, pp.80
[24] (*Ibid*. 6)
[25] The definition of a fulfilling life was however not defined, as it was up to the individual student to define what that was for that individual.
[26] In this thesis I will refer to results from the 2009 PISA tests, i.e. the tests made during my fieldwork, the statistics can be found on: http://stats.oecd.org/PISA2009Profiles/#

more than 8% of the total GDP[27]), they are far from the top in regards to academic performance[28]. Between 2001 and 2009 Denmark was below the OECD average performance charter (and still is, though it has improved somewhat).

These findings, however, only caused minor ripples within the political arena. The reason for this, according to Raahauge (2005), is that the function of the schools in the Danish welfare state is still less concerned with transmitting knowledge than it is with creating democratic 'welfare citizens'. The president of the Union of Teachers in Denmark, Anders Bondo Christensen, in a newspaper interview (2004), stated that 'focus on the value-sets of the Danish *folkeskole*, such as democracy and freedom of thought, should be penetrating everything in the school, from P.E. to the class's hour' (Quoted in Raahauge 2005:106). In *folkeskolen's* purpose statement (section 1, part 3) it states something quite similar, and hardly mentions anything about academic goals[29].

Folkeskolen today

Today the teachers' union's policy-programme states that *folkeskolen* has an absolutely defining role in 'the development of Danish democracy, the transmission and development of culture and attitudes, socialising and development of common values'[30].

Presently, and throughout the last few years, however, there have been an increasing group of schools and teachers who are not of the 1975 'school of thought'. These are slowly re-introducing differentiated teaching within the unified class and also increasing the focus on the academic content. This point of view is also reflected in the teachers' union's policy programme, as they acknowledge that the modern *folkeskole* is a 'showdown with the idea that it is contrary to provide good academic qualification, and where the students are simultaneously developed into *dannede* democratic citizens.'[31] This point of view, moreover, was strongly articulated by the headmaster at

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[27] http://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/bagtal/2002/2002-10-07-Dumme-elever.aspx
[28] The 2009 results showed that on a scale including all countries participating in the OECD study, and showing the mean score of all students, Danish students came 44th in reading, 34th in math and 52nd in science.
[29] This statement can be found translated in its entirety in Appendix D.
[30] http://www.dlf.org/danmarks+l%C3%A6rerforening+mener/aktuel+politik/f%C3%A6llesskabets+skole
[31] http://www.dlf.org/danmarks+l%C3%A6rerforening+mener/aktuel+politik/vores+skole

By Skolen, Søren, who actively encouraged the teachers to incorporate both perspectives at By Skolen. The child-focused social education was indeed visible also in my ethnography, but furthermore it was evident that some teachers were beginning to focus increasingly on the academic programme. This was particularly noticeable during a discussion in the in-schooling department, which is presented in Chapter V.

Avedøre and By Skolen: a brief history

Avedøre is an area in the regional council of Hvidovre on the western outskirts of Copenhagen in Denmark. Archaeological findings trace Avedøre's history back to 2500 BC. The area remained largely agricultural until the mid-1950's, and farming remained an important part of the infra-structure and socio-cultural composition of the area until the last farm closed in 1997. Today Avedøre is predominantly known for Avedøre Stationsby, a social housing project built between 1972 and 1982. Roughly 15,000 people live in Avedøre (out of a total population of 50.000 who live in Hvidovre).

This section will provide a brief overview of the history of Avedøre (as told through the archives of the local suburban museum of the area)[32]. I will base my short narrative along a storyline of how By Skolen came to be. As such I start in 1781, when the first By Skole was opened. Schooling had been sporadically available since the late 17th century, as provided by the church, when in 1720, King Frederik IV (1699-1730) opened 240 schools across the country. Avedøre, however, did not receive their own school until 1781 when the farmers, aided by financial assistance from the King's treasury, built their own. The first By Skole was functional for 106 years, and the building still stands in Avedøre (although it is no longer in use as a school).

During the mid-to-late 19th Century, the agricultural business in Avedøre was slowly transformed to horticulture to meet the needs for more food from the fast expanding, neighbouring Copenhagen. Avedøre was still predominantly a small agricultural society, but rapid urbanisation was beginning to influence the villages in the Copenhagen catchment area. This development, combined with the 1814 school reform discussed above, led to the first By Skole being moved to new buildings in

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1887. This school existed until 1929, when the effects of the socio-economic developments in Denmark at large began to deeply change the landscape of Avedøre.

Throughout the 1920's, more and more of the old farms were transformed into horticultural centres and hence subdivided into smaller plots of land. With this development, a new group of residents arrived. These were predominantly unskilled labourers 'escaping' from dire housing conditions in the city. Through saving up, they were able to afford a small plot of land on which to build their own houses. This new demographic influenced the political structure of Avedøre, which had previously been dominated by the farmers and family dynasties who had lived in the area for centuries. In 1929, the first local social democratic organisation was formed – and this has provided the dominant political discourse in the area ever since.

The growth in population, moreover, meant that by 1929, the school, once again, had to move to new buildings. The third By Skole was larger and catered to a wider area than the immediate Avedøre, and throughout the years in which it was in service, the Danish school system began to resemble the one we see today to a larger and larger extent. In 1954, yet another subdivision of land took place, as great stretches of agricultural area was transformed into a detached housing-area aimed towards the booming middle-class that followed the end of WWII. Again the demographic change of the area led to the need for new school grounds, and the By Skole, at which I conducted my fieldwork, was built in 1956.

The latest development of the area that has influenced By Skolen, and which I mentioned at the beginning of this section as the main characteristic of the area today, was the building of Avedøre Stationsby in 1972-1982. In everyday speech the area is called 'Bymuren' and this is also how I will call it in this thesis. Bymuren was a product of the planning-policies that characterised much of the 1960's and 70's political thinking. The 'new' city was structured such that a 10m high wall (composed of flats) enclosed an area of 1km^2. Within this area, there are lower detached houses, schools, a library, shopping facilities, no traffic (only bikes and pedestrians), and green recreational areas. The purpose was to give it the atmosphere of a small self-sufficient provincial town. By building this from scratch, leaving no old buildings or infra-

structure, the intention was that the new residents would arrive at a place without history or heritage, and as such could themselves 'start from scratch'. But as an economic crisis during the 1970's unfolded, the regional council placed more and more families in the area with low-income backgrounds. Furthermore, with the labour immigration starting in the 1970's, Bymuren moreover experienced a high influx of non-Danish speaking and unskilled labourers (primarily of Turkish heritage) moving in. As part of By Skolen's catchment area lies in Bymuren, the development of this social housing has significantly influenced the day-to-day life at the school, and this will also be reflected in my observations.

Recap

In this section I have situated my thesis in socio-historic and geographical terms. I have expanded on the specific developments in the foundation of the Danish welfare state, as these are significant in relation to the underpinnings on which my ethnographic observations rest in the remaining chapters. I have focused on issues related to my main themes, such as equality and the development of understandings of rights and duties. Moreover I have engaged with the creation of the Danish *folkeskole*, particularly in view of the 1975 reform, which is fundamental to the contemporary *folkeskole* that I observed, as it laid the foundations for a child-oriented style of teaching.

The following chapter will situate my thesis in view of my role as an ethnographer, as I will discuss my methodological considerations and challenges.

Chapter IV: Methodology

"Ditte is an anthropologist, she is here to study the tribe that is By Skolen, I hope you will welcome her, and I look forward to seeing what she finds out about the exotic Avedøre!"

- Søren, headmaster at By Skolen, introducing me to the teachers.

9th January 2009

I have often wondered why ethnography is not an apprentice-based course in which the budding ethnographer has a chance to follow an experienced ethnographer in the field, to observe, to do, and to learn. Ethnography is in every aspect a matter of 'learning by doing', yet most of us (postgraduate students) are thrust into the field – largely inexperienced in using the skills and research methods about which we have often read so much. Unaccompanied, and mostly without a clear sense of what precisely we are trying to achieve (or indeed supposed to be striving towards), we approach our informants – many of whom reject us due to our inability to articulate in clear prose *what* exactly it is we want to research, and more importantly, due to our indistinct plans, *how* to do this inarticulate research (devoted as we are to both grounded theory and participant-lead research). If we do however, contrary to most of my peers' testimonies, have an idea of *what* to do, and *how* to do it, this is often put to shame in the meeting with 'reality'. Instead we slowly fumble our way to an understanding of both our primary research tool, participant observation, and not least an idea of what exactly it is we want to observe.

My ordeal was no different than anyone else's, but at the same time entirely unique. Perhaps this is the reason ethnography is not, after all, an apprentice-based study. Ultimately no amount of accompanying an expert ethnographer in the field could prepare us for what awaits in our own fieldwork – and we are confined to 'learning by doing' – not alone – but in constant engagement with our informants and research subjects.

In this chapter I will begin by outlining my motivations for choosing the area, topic, and particular field that I did, followed by a description of how I gained access at the school, started my fieldwork, and built relationships of trust with the students. I will then briefly discuss how my role as an insider/outsider influenced my ethnography, discuss some of the ethical issues raised by the research, before concluding the chapter by considering the return to the academic world – and the continued attachment between the ethnographer and the field.

Why Welfare States, Why schools and Why Denmark?

I am myself Danish, both in terms of my citizenship and my ethnic background. I grew up with my mother and older sister in a middle-sized provincial town called Næstved (approximately 40,000 inhabitants). Geographically situated only a one-hour train-ride south of Copenhagen, perceptually this town was *a lot* further away. Thus I too have been in *folkeskolen* and have both positive and negative memories of this (of which the first by far outnumber the latter). I lived in Denmark until I was 19 years old, when I moved to Manchester, UK, to live and study, and have been living in the UK for roughly eight years by now (2012). In this section I will briefly outline how I came to go back to a Danish *folkeskole,* with an interest in the 'welfare state'.

During the early summer of 2008 I took a summer job at 'Greens Analyse Institut', a polling institute in central Copenhagen. One of my first polling jobs was to call up people and ask them a series of questions in regards to their political opinions. Amongst others, I would ask them whether they would prefer to decrease taxes, if this resulted in increasing levels of inequality, or if they would rather increase taxes, and lower inequality. From the hundreds of people I spoke to, and the results of the poll, it was evident that a significant number of people would prefer the second option. I remember finding it curious that a population, which at the time had the lowest level of inequality *and* the highest level of taxation in the world (see Chapter IX), still *wanted* to pay more in tax in order to decrease the inequality even further. Having lived in the UK for four years at the time, I knew that this was not the norm in international contexts, and hence I decided I wanted to reach a deeper understanding of *why* there appeared to be such a disposition in favour of redistribution and equality in Denmark. As I had already engaged deeply with the anthropology of education through my Master of Research at Brunel University, and as I was on course to begin a

PhD project concerning citizenship in the Danish *Folkeskole*, it appeared natural that the topic should be: the 'being' and 'becoming' of *welfare* citizens, i.e. citizens attuned to redistribution in favour of decreasing inequality.

The anthropology of education was a sub-discipline that I was fortunate enough to discover already during my undergraduate years. I had initially been attracted to the study of anthropology at large, by the promise of studying the processes through which people come to act according to certain premises; thus my excitement when I discovered the anthropology of education. To me it represents the essence of anthropological studies, as it engages with notions of identity formation from the very outset of this process (whether this occurs in childhood or adulthood, in formal or informal learning). This is because any process can essentially be viewed as a learning process – and the anthropology of education is concerned exactly with *how* we learn, *what* we learn, and not least *why* we learn precisely that.

The reason I chose to go *home* to do fieldwork was linked also to how I came to write about the welfare state. After having moved to England as a teenager, I, four years later, found that I had come to change my perspective on a lot of understandings and practices previously taken-for-granted – the summer job in Denmark taking polls on various issues, of both everyday and political importance, consolidated this. Thus I found myself in what I perceived of as an ideal insider/outsider position, and hoping, from this unique perspective, to be able to contribute to anthropological debates on both schooling, citizenship, and Scandinavia.

Choosing a field, academically and geographically

Having settled on Denmark as the area, the welfare citizen as the topic and the school as my focus-area, I faced the next, and perhaps most important challenge: *which* specific school or fieldsite to enter. The lack of literature on this particular aspect would seem to suggest that this is an obvious and straightforward exercise. Locating the fieldsite can, however, be one of the most crucial and determining parts of the ethnographic research. The process of choosing a particular fieldsite is the point at which the anthropologist first displays bias. We want to find a site that will most likely give us information about a certain topic, and the social, economic and cultural environments of various areas are determining factors taken into consideration.

Initially I picked an urban area of Copenhagen, Nørrebro, as my primary site for observation. I got a part-time job in an after-school club in the area, moved into a flat in the neighbourhood, and was participating in local school-meetings while deciding which schools to approach. Then one day I encountered a group of young girls who changed the direction of my research quite profoundly.

Nørrebro is characterised by a lot of murals from the late 1960's and 70's, and I wanted to capture the contrast between the old socialist Nørrebro and the new multicultural Nørrebro by going on a photo-safari to take some pictures illustrating this vibrant community. I did not have to go far away from my flat, before the first mural presented itself. On a neighbouring building a mural depicting a tall, blonde, blue eyed, naked woman holding two equally blonde babies in her arms was painted across the entire side of the building standing 5m wide and 10m tall. In front of the mural three girls wearing headscarves were playing. Ideally I wanted to take pictures of the girls, but before asking them, I played around with my camera, trying to get the right light-exposure. The girls asked me why I was taking pictures, and I began to explain to them that I was interested in the local area, and the people living there. I also told them that I was considering going into a school, to see what they were like in Nørrebro, and I asked them which school they went to. One of the girls answered: "*Yesterday someone came by who wanted to talk to us as well*". Another girl added: "*Yeah, and there are always people in our class observing us as well*". I talked to them a bit about this before asking if I could take their photo. The first girl again replied: "*Someone actually asked me that last week, so I asked my dad, and he said no*!" At this point, I cancelled my photo-safari and went home to think about what I had just been told.

A few days later, I looked into some Danish studies on schooling (at Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitet, The Department of Education, Aarhus University), and realised how overrepresented Nørrebro was in terms of research. Nørrebro was dominated by families of ethnic backgrounds other than Danish (approximately 80%), ethnic Danish families on welfare support and left-wing academics. I had chosen this area in the hope that an environment, which was not dominated by mainstream middle-class families, would exemplify middle-class welfare values being (re)produced in the school. But I suddenly realised how over-represented ethnic minorities were, and how underrepresented the actual middle-class was in studies of transmitting and

re(producing) these middle-class values[33]. I thought that this was rather peculiar, and decided that my study should not be another study on ethnic minorities in Denmark. Instead I returned to what had originally intrigued me: the taken-for-granted notions in the 'average' Danish understanding, particularly as these relate to notions of the Welfare State. Thus I found myself looking for a new field.

During my Masters degree, I had been doing a short-term observation exercise for a course in ethnographic research. Through pure convenience, this had been conducted at my niece's school, By Skolen. While there I had been intrigued by the constitution of the school in socio-economic and cultural terms. By Skolen is, as mentioned in the previous chapter located between two main housing areas: one comprising of mainly middle-class detached family houses, the other primarily composed of first, second and third generation immigrants and/or refugees, but also a large group of people with an ethnic Danish background. The latter area is primarily made up of social housing, similar to the English council estates. Hence, By Skolen is a melting pot of some of the most vivid groups that presently exist in Danish society. I realised that this school, if it would grant me access again, would make an ideal site for observing the transmission and negotiation of welfare values (not to mention, *what* welfare values are). While, I had considered doing fieldwork for my research at the school before, I had always pushed the idea aside, due to my niece attending the school. In the end, and as I will show below, the family ties to the area ended up being more of a strength than a limitation, and one that allowed me to experience the area in a different light.

Gaining Access

Having decided both on my topic *and* my fieldsite, all that was left to do was gaining access. I first contacted the headmaster, Søren, of By Skolen via email in the middle of October 2008, thanking him for the time I had been allowed to spend at the school the previous winter, and outlining what my current project was about. As a week passed without any response, I called his office on several occasions, but Søren was always out, in meetings, or otherwise occupied. As November approached, I travelled to London to do my upgrade viva, and upon my return, I once more began calling the school regularly. Every time the secretary informed me that she would leave a note for

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[33] These studies are still under-represented, but a growing body is emerging, e.g. Gilliam and Gulløv 2012 as discussed above, and Gulløv and Valentine 2011.

Søren, but still I did not receive a reply. I was beginning to feel rather intrusive and impolite when I reached the end of November, still unsuccessful in obtaining contact. I decided to send a last email, this time an open email addressed to the school office, and attaching the original email, asking for them to forward it to the appropriate authority at the school. I was anxious as I pressed 'send', having read through the email innumerable times to make sure it came across at my very politest.

Two days later, Søren finally answered my email, apologising sincerely that he had not returned my calls or answered my emails before, and proposed to meet with me three days later to discuss my project in greater detail. I was beyond excited, and prepared my presentation of my 'indistinct plans for *how* to do this inarticulate research', as referred to above. In my head I went through 10 different ways of explaining participant research in phrasing that did not entail 'I will be hanging out with the students and teachers', and also how to justify not having a clear list of research objectives, hypotheses etc.

The meeting took place on the 2nd of December 2008, six weeks after my initial attempt to get in touch with the school. Søren was surprisingly knowledgeable about anthropology, and I did not have to defend my grounded theory and participant lead research methods as vigorously as I had prepared to do. Instead, Søren, being enthusiastic about my project, suggested books for me to read, and ideas I might want to incorporate in my research. We discussed topics such as institutionalisation, the concept of childhood and welfare, integration and the extensive bureaucracy the school had to adhere to. As the meeting came to an end, we agreed for him to find three classes for me to follow, and that I could begin fieldwork immediately after the Christmas break. The following is an extract from my first day of fieldwork, 5th of January 2009:

> It is an early frosty morning in the beginning of January, and I have gotten up at 6am to bike the 11km out of central Copenhagen to get to By Skolen.
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> When I arrive, the headmaster is standing at the entrance greeting children and parents alike [something I would come

to find out he did, not only after a holiday – but whenever time allowed him to do so]. Confused, he notices my arrival. I hadn't heard from the headmaster since our meeting on the 2nd of December, and from past experience I had deducted that the best thing to do would be to show up in person, and if nonetheless, make an appointment with him face-to-face. It turned out he has in fact forgotten everything about fieldwork! He promises to look into it during that week, and I bike, disappointedly, back to Copenhagen. Later that same day I receive an email. He has found three classes, and would like for me to come back for one last meeting before beginning fieldwork.

7th of January 2009:

I am to meet with the headmaster at 8.30, but as I arrive to the school at 8.25, he is busy in another meeting, for at least another hour, I am told. I decide to greet the opportunity of familiarising myself with the surrounding neighbourhood, and take a long walk. When I come back an hour later, his meeting has concluded and he invites me into the office. He has chosen three classes: 2.X, 6.Z and 9.Z.

He says he already spoke to one teacher, the class-teacher of year 2.X, and that we will go to the library to meet her. I immediately take a liking to Mette, the year 2.X Class-teacher. After introducing us, Søren leaves us to talk and discuss how to go about my observations.

Mette is tall (taller than me at 1.79cm), she is immaculately dressed, with bright red lips, long, very dark brown hair pulled back in a tight ponytail, and a presence which is immediately felt. Her voice is strong (I later find out that she performs with an amateur-opera company), as she straightforwardly ask me questions, and best of all, she has no hesitations about

accommodating me in her class. We decide that I will begin my
fieldwork two days later, as this is a day when the class will
meet her for the first two lessons, and she can introduce me.

I bike back to Copenhagen, in contrast to the previous bike-ride,
I am now feeling absolutely exhilarated, FINALLY, nearly three
months after initiating communication with the school, I am to
begin my fieldwork!

Starting Fieldwork

I met with the class teacher Mette in the teacher's room, and we walked down to year
2.X's classroom together. The students had already heard about me, and were excited
about meeting me. I introduced myself and explained to them what I would be doing
in their class for the following year. I told them that I was just 'going to hang out' with
them to see what it is like to be a student in the Danish *folkeskole*, and that I was really
looking forward to getting to know them. The students asked me a few questions, such
as did I have a boyfriend, did I have younger siblings, did I know such and such
student/teacher, and what was it like to live in England, before getting their books out,
and beginning the lesson. After having introduced myself to the children, I wondered
where to position myself. I remember thinking that if I sat down in the front I would
represent a foreign object worth investigating for the students, rather than the
present/not-present ethnographer I aspired to be. If I, on the other hand, sat towards
the back of the classroom, there was a chance that the students might instead turn
around and be completely disturbed by my presence. I finally decided to pull a chair to
the side and accepted what I already knew: that it is impossible as an ethnographer to
remain neutral or unseen – particularly in this classroom where all the furniture was
size 8-years-old, making me look (or at least feel) like Gulliver in Lilliput.

A lot of theories have been proposed to explain the relationship between the observer
and the observed. Kirsten Haastrup, for example, speaks of both the ethnographer and
the subject as the 'multiple presences' of 'infinite layers' (in Mason 2002:2). The
presence of me and the students, as the bricolaged entities we are, is bound to aid
what she calls the 'ongoing construction of identities' (*Ibid*.).

However, before I lose myself further in anthropological theoretical abstraction, I will also acknowledge another fact, which is that the students seemed to embrace my presence very rapidly, and most of the time, my experience was that the person left the most affected by the fieldwork was I. A theoretical point I did however find worth remembering while continuing my observations, was that the world, as described by the ethnographer, is 'not the world of the unmediated other – but the world between ourselves and the other' (Mason 2002:3).

Thus I tried to remain aware that what I observed was bound to be influenced by my years of studying anthropological thought, my own schooling background, but also my obliviousness to certain cultural practices that were as innate to me as the subjects I observed performing them. One such practice was that of *hygge*. During my fieldwork I did not *notice* it, and it was not until I returned to Brunel University, and began presenting papers at the weekly research seminars, that my colleagues asked me: 'What is this *hygge* of which you are constantly writing?' As will be shown in Chapter VI, I subsequently realised that the culturally specific practice and value '*hygge'* had penetrated nearly everything that I had indeed observed. *Hygge* in this sense came to also illustrate an important methodological ethnographic point, which is that it is often not until we create some distance to what we have studied that we truly understand what exactly we have seen.

After observing year 2.X for an entire week, I moved on to observe both year 6.Z and 9.Z for a week, respectively (although occasionally dropping by year 2.X, both to keep familiar with them, but also as they constantly would come up to me during recess and ask me to join them in their classes – something all 'my' classes would do throughout my fieldwork). After the first three weeks, I agreed with the three class teachers (and the other teachers involved with the classes) that I was allowed to move freely between the classes in whatever way it fitted my interests. Søren even had a key and magnetic fob made for me, allowing me access to all areas of the school in and outside of their opening hours.

Another issue, with which I was presented during these first three weeks, and throughout my fieldwork, was my authority/age identity. School, as a formal institution, normally has quite clearly demarcated boundaries between 'teacher' and

'student' (adult and child)[34]. And it soon became clear to me that the students were undecided as to which group I belonged. The (mis)understanding of my age and identity by year 2.X, for example, became clear to me one day during a game in which the students had to guess 'who they were', in this example, Simon had to guess that he was Tanja (one of his classmates):

Simon: "*Is it a boy?*" – the class answers : "*Nooo*"

Simon: "*Is it a girl?*" – "*Yes*"

Simon: "*Is it a teenager?*" – "*Yes*"

Simon: "*Is it Ditte?*" – "*No…*"

The students in year 2.X continuously considered me as one of the older students, they knew I was kind of grown up, but because I would always make jokes, play around with them, and also as I was myself still a student (even if at a university), they could not quite reconcile with the idea of me as a grown-up – and would even laugh when it was suggested that I was indeed an adult.

In Year 9.Z I experienced something similar when the class was looking for someone to supervise their 'end-of-year party'. The owners of the venue they were renting for the purpose had required that at least five adults would be present at the party. During one of their last class's hours, year 9.Z were discussing this issue, as they were finding it difficult to find enough adults who were *not* their parents (i.e. older siblings, cousins etc.). After a lengthy discussion, one of the students suddenly realised: "*Ditte is already coming to the party, she is over 18, I guess that she count as an adult?*". Some of the other students laugh, and the girl in charge of hiring the venue pointed out that it had to be 'real' adults.

During the whole year of observing the four classes I found myself betwixt and between any real roles – I was young enough – (24 years old and youthful both in appearance and style of interaction) not to be considered completely adult and far too old to be considered a peer. For the teachers I held a similar position: I am both a friend and a researcher – and not-a-teacher and someone studying teaching-

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[34] That these boundaries are less rigid in the Danish *folkeskole* will become clearer in both Chapter VI and Chapter VII.

mechanisms. Whereas Mary Douglas (1966) would perhaps have suggested this would make me 'dangerous' as I would in this sense be 'matter out of place', someone outside of pre-existing categories, I experienced that this position was a positive one, allowing me to move more or less seamlessly between the different roles I had to fulfil. This was related also to the relationships I formed (and the way in which I formed them) with the students and teachers at By Skolen.

Building relationships of trust

Ethnographic research is very much defined by the relationship of trust the ethnographer builds with the subjects of his or her research. Subsequently one of the greatest challenges of fieldwork is for the ethnographer to become a successful participant in the researched community. In many senses we as ethnographers are in this perspective like learners ourselves, as we approach a community we have to learn legitimate forms of participation (Lave and Wenger 1991). If unsuccessful in decoding proper modes of participation, this is bound to influence the way the subjects see the ethnographer, and subsequently influence the data. Since the subjects are typically as interested to find out about the ethnographer, as the ethnographer is to investigate the subjects, right or wrong kinds of participation will to a great extent influence the data produced. What the subjects find out about the ethnographer, and subsequently how they locate them in their social world, will determine the kinds of interactions they will allow the fieldworker to participate in (Goward 1984:100).

My story of how I came to be a trusted character at the school is fourfold. Trust and 'being liked' was based on different criterions in the main arenas in which I participated: year 2.X, 6.Z, 9.Z and amongst the teachers.

Year 2.X (later 3.X) were immediately very welcoming to me, the students without complications accepted that I was 'just there'. Throughout the year certain events or activities, however, brought me continuously closer to the students. For instance, when they got beanbags for the classroom, they were quickly converted to the 'anthropologist's sanctuary' in the back of the classroom, from where I would take my notes. It became a standing joke that Mette and other teachers would make references to 'the sleeping anthropologist in the beanbags'. Whenever the students had a break in the lesson, they would come to the back of the classroom and play or chat with me 'hanging out in the beanbags', having a *hyggelig* time. My role with the

students (considering that they were the age of my niece, who many of them also knew) was that of the 'funny and cosy aunt'.

In regards to the actual note taking, Judith Oakley, in a research seminar at Brunel, told of how she would run to the bathroom to take notes on pieces of toilet paper during her fieldwork[35]. Amongst my colleagues too there exists a consensus that the notebook is an uncomfortable and disruptive object, an obstacle to the free flow of conversation. In contrast, I quickly found my notebook to be a useful tool in my relationship with the students. I would carry it with me everywhere, if in more informal interactions outside of school, such as parties or similar, I would instead carry a pocketsize notebook. The reason my notebook did not become an obstacle was that I did not try to hide it. Instead, I invited the students to read passages now and again, and also encouraged them to write their own interpretations of lessons. The younger students made drawings for me in the book, and I made cartoons for them.

 Another avenue through which I developed my relationship with year 2.X, the younger students, was '*mælkesnittemanden*' (based on a lunch snack, called *mælkesnitter,* hence literally the '*mælkesnitte*-man'), for whom I had the students develop storylines, making it into an entire series, typically based on what we had been doing throughout the day. My relationship with year 2.X also developed, as the teachers were good at involving me in the lessons, using me as a 'prop', rather than as a teacher assistant. They furthermore invited me along to all their excursions and extra-curricular activities. As such I participated in theatre trips, informal class-dinners with the students' families, and a three-day cabin trip, but also more formal events, such as the biannual school-home conversations (see Chapter VII).

The way in which I got to know the students in year 6.Z was necessarily different. Initially I found it difficult to get close with the students as we primarily shared a joking relationship, rather than one of trust. But one very specific occasion, roughly two months after entering the school, changed our relationship. I joined the students for their class's hour, knowing that the focus this day would be on sexual education. I had been looking forward to this lesson, because I taught sexual education as a youth-to-

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[35] Judith Oakley at Brunel University, November 2007

youth lecturer and on a weekly TV-show before moving to England[36]. But the teacher never showed up. I called the office, and it turned out she had gone home ill, and by mistake no supply teacher had been called in. The students in year 6.Z had found out from older students that I used to do the TV-programme[37], and asked if I could do the lesson instead? I agreed to do it, but on the condition that it would be absolutely informal, as I did not want to be telling them off or acting as their teacher[38]. The students agreed, and were so engulfed by our conversations that we ran over time (normally the students would be quick to leave after the last lesson of the day). After this lesson we shared something special – and the students opened up to me in a completely new way. They confided in me their gossip of the teachers and each other, and asked me to be friends with them on Facebook.

Initially I was very concerned with whether or not to befriend any of my subjects, teachers and students alike, on Facebook. This social utility has obtained unprecedented success in Denmark. From a population of roughly 5.5million people, 1.8 million Danish people had a Facebook profile, which was the highest user-frequency anywhere in the world[39]. I ultimately decided to use Facebook in my favour, as it provided an extra gateway into the life of my subjects. Judith Oakley[40] emphasised the importance of both listening and speaking to one's subjects, to make interviews reciprocal, rather than one-sided cultural transmissions. In much the same way, I acknowledged, that to gain the trust of my subjects, our relationship too should be reciprocal, and Facebook was one avenue through which to achieve this, as accepting my subjects as 'friends' meant that they too could follow my life outside of the school.

I found that the older the students were the more difficult it was to build a close relationship, but I also found that once a relationship was formed, it tended to get much deeper and trusting than with the younger students. In the case of year 9.Z I

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[36] I was part of a TV youth-programme called 'Rundfunk' on TV2, which was aired every weekday during 2003/2004.
[37] They were themselves too young to have watched the show.
[38] And furthermore on the condition that everything we discussed would not leave the classroom (this was a regular precaution that youth-to-youth lecturers always used to make the discussions more confidential).
[39] http://www.denmark.net/blogs/janne/denmark-worlds-top-facebook-user-266939.html figure from 2009.
[40] Again at the before mentioned research seminar, in November 2007 at Brunel University.

primarily interacted with the quieter students in the class to begin with. The 'cool' students went 'somewhere else' to hang out whenever they got the chance, and I did not know where. Approximately 6 weeks into the fieldwork, some of the students began a discussion concerning drugs, drinking, and smoking during a break. It was clear that quite a few of the students left the school ground during breaks to smoke, and I also knew already that a lot of them drank alcohol during the weekends and even smoked cannabis sometimes[41]. During the conversation, they turned their attention to me and asked me, if I did any of these? I decided to be honest with them, and told them of some experiences I had myself – and also that I used to smoke a bit when I was younger, and occasionally still did so at parties. Later in the day, they had a spare lesson[42], and some of the 'cool' students asked me if I wanted to go to the shop with them and buy cigarettes. I decided on the way to the shop to buy a packet of cigarettes, and from that day on I often joined the year 8 and 9 outside the school premises in the smoking area during recess. These recesses became my main access to the lives of the students in year 9. Even those of the students who did not smoke would still come and hang out with the students that did. A side effect of accessing the students in this manner was that I started smoking again, but at the time, it seemed to be a small price to pay to be included in their community. However, I also noticed that this relationship was moving me away from some of the other students, with whom I had previously engaged. It was simply impossible to be an insider to all the already strictly defined communities that I found in year 9. Whilst one kind of social behaviour was acceptable in one group, this behaviour was absolutely unacceptable to another group, and as such inclusion in one group sometimes lead to exclusion of another. While I was not a student, this nonetheless affected my standing with the students. As an anthropologist I had to find a way of navigating the different social settings, and although I believe this was one of my strengths, and I did manage to keep a good relationship with all the groups, it was ultimately relationships which none the less left me stranded on the periphery of all the various accepted modes of participation in the different groups.

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[41] http://droginfo.com/pdf/hashsamtalen.pdf recent statistics show that 23% of all year 9's in Denmark have tried smoking cannabis.

[42] In year 9, the students do not always get a supply teacher, if their teacher is ill, instead they sometimes have 'lessons off'.

The teachers' lounge was the last social arena in which I had to navigate my presence. During my first week of fieldwork, I was following year 2.X, thus it was only natural that I would follow Mette to the teachers' lounge during lunch break. She introduced me to 'her table', which I came to find out was the 'gossip' table, consisting of 8 female and one male teacher, all from in- or out-schooling classes. They were incredibly kind to me, but it did not take long before their immediate interest in me subsided for some story along the lines of: 'you would not believe what just happened...' During my second week I was following year 6.Z, and hence I followed their class teacher, Ana, to the teachers' lounge for lunch. As I sat down next to her, at her table, 'the serious' table, consisting primarily of middle- and out-schooling teachers, the teachers at the 'gossip' table looked my way, before one yelled out: "*Ditte, what are you doing over there, come back to your table*"[43]. Not wanting to offend anyone, I walked across the lounge, and sat down at 'my' table. Throughout my fieldwork, I wanted to move to another table, just to see what their lunchtime discussions revolved around, but I found it impossible to change my seat, once it had been established. While I found it difficult to get close with teachers at other tables, I was very quickly accepted and incorporated at the 'gossip' table, and my social interactions with this table went (and goes) beyond those at the school.

Insider/Outsider

I was, as mentioned in the beginning, very hesitant about doing fieldwork at home, particularly as my niece attended the school at which I conducted my fieldwork. In the beginning I was quite conscious not to talk to her or hang out with her at the school. As the fieldwork progressed, however, it seemed natural that the teachers and students would find out that she was my niece, and similar to picking a seat in the classroom, it turned out to be entirely unproblematic. When doing fieldwork 'at home', near family and friends, these social relations cannot help but become part of the framework that surrounds the field, and thereby affect the outcome of the research. At the outset of my fieldwork, my sister, Louise, her partner and my two nieces lived in the middle-class housing area on one side of the school. Two months after starting fieldwork, Louise left her partner and was assigned a flat by the social

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[43] Other tables included 'the pretty young blonde and trendy' teachers, the 'old' teachers, the 'headmaster's' table (where everyone from the school office was sitting). The supply teachers sat in the couch area behind the kitchen.

services in the area on the other side of the school, an area I had earlier considered to be 'socially deprived', due to its 'council estate' status. She and my nieces' moving profoundly influenced my view of the area, and not least my access to the students living there.

But it was not just my social relations affecting my view of the area; my activities as an ethnographer also influenced my social relations in turn. For example, Louise experienced how people would associate to her in relation to my role as an anthropologist. Louise told me that one day as she was walking her dog, a group of older, second generation immigrant boys had yelled out at her: "*Hey, you*", "*Yeah, you with the dog*". She had not responded, but instead picked up her pace, feeling intimidated, after hearing stories of violent and criminal immigrant gangs harassing Avedøre. The boy continued his yelling: "*Hey, guys, do you see that girl over there…? You better respect her, that's Ditte's big sister!*" The boy was Amir, a boy who after a mistrustful start to our relationship, came to be one of my primary informants. Amir was a student in year 9.Z of ethnic Turkish origin. When I first came to the class he would quiz me extensively: where did I come from? What was I doing there? I answered the best I could, and his follow-up question was rationally enough: "*Who pays you to do this?*" I explained to him that I was fortunate enough to be on a scholarship from my university in London. He laughed at me: "*Yeah right, and how much does the regional council pay you? I know they are already spying on me… who do you have to report to*". Amir quite frankly found it very difficult to believe that a university in London would pay for me to sit in the beanbags of his classroom taking notes, and I told him very straightforwardly that I did not blame him. Gradually, and particularly as he met my niece, and as my family moved into the stairwell next to his, he came to trust me – and I knew he was keeping an eye out for both of my nieces in the estate area. Other students too would find out how they were related to some of the other families living in the same house as my sister and nieces – and in that sense we almost built up a kinship pattern of how we were 'related outside of school'. This status of 'being one of them', part of 'Bymuren', meant that I was increasingly accepted amongst the students who lived in that area themselves, and also allowed greater access to their lives.

Re-discovering my research questions

When we first enter the field we must consider the extent to which the theory should be brought into the field to explain what is going on, or whether theory should rather be grounded in the observations gathered in the field (Grenfell and James 1998:9). While theory purports to explain reality, it does not always explain what actually occurs; it is for this purpose that the ethnographer has fieldwork. As I entered the field, the theoretical considerations of my upgrade viva, while inevitably forming part of my frame of reference, did not shape what I experienced or recorded in my field notes. Rather my research aims became increasingly vague during my fieldwork, and I found myself recording everything that for one reason or another appeared to be important. As I approached the end of my research I had, however, identified certain themes as important. By the time this happened, I had already established a close relationship with my subjects, and hence formal or even semi-structured interviews appeared to me entirely out-of-place and awkward. Instead I paid particular attention to the contexts in which my topics organically arose, determined that if they were indeed relevant themes, then they would spontaneously arise whether I forced it or not.

Ethical issues

There were necessarily some aspects of my fieldwork that should be addressed in view of their ethical implications for the data I have collected. Of particular concern is what Adler and Adler (1987) label: The Membership Role[44].

The peripheral, active, and complete membership roles all involve the researcher acting as an insider to the community studied, and being recognised by those studied as a fellow member. The various degrees of membership determine the extent to which the researcher becomes, and is considered, an insider, and I will argue that these roles exist in-flux as a consequence of constantly changing situational opportunities and limitations. Adler and Adler propose that 'the membership roles'

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[44] Adler and Adler's membership roles should not be confused with Lave and Wenger's theory of legitimate peripheral participation (1991), which I refer to elsewhere in this thesis (Chapter V). Instead each of their described membership roles, can be approached also through the idea of moving from a peripheral engagement with that role to a more central understanding of how to participate appropriately within that role.

approach to field research calls on us as researchers to integrate and use our multiple roles in gathering data in the same naturally occurring way we do in our everyday lives.' And that only 'by drawing on our complex and multifaceted human selves [...] we get closer to the member's behaviour' (1987:86).

My membership role significantly changed character depending on the specific sub-groups I was attempting to enter, and it particularly influenced my positioning in relation to teachers and students alike. In the following sections, I will discuss some of the ethical issues that my membership roles raised in three specific contexts.

Familial ties to the school

While this was touched upon above, I will elaborate further here, as this aspect undoubtedly affected the membership roles I was allowed to take on. My niece was six-years-old when I began my fieldwork, and she was attending year 1.B. For the first six months of my fieldwork, I followed year 2.X, 6.Z, and 9.Z. In year 9, I experienced my familial relation to the local area, particularly as my sister moved to Bymuren, to be an advantage. None of the students knew my family, but the fact that I was not just an outside academic, but rather a 'complete member', at least along kinship lines and in terms of geographical proximity, appeared to aid their acceptance of me. In year 6.Z it was never relevant that my niece was at the school; being between the ages of 12 and 14, the students were largely occupied with other issues than my family relationships, and they were furthermore entering an age where 'play' was increasingly substituted for 'hanging out'. Hence, the extent to which they would be socialising with younger students was limited. In year 2.X my niece's presence had the most direct effect on my membership role. Many of the students knew of my niece and went to the same *fritidshjem* (sparetime home) as she did. However, social interactions in the younger classes, also outside of the school, are often strongly defined by gender, class (e.g. 2.X), and not least year-group. Hence their knowledge of her was largely peripheral. Rather than it being the students' understanding of who I could be in relation to them, which was influenced, it was the way in which I carved out my own role, which was influenced by my relationship to my niece. As outlined above, my role became that of the cosy, if not slightly silly, aunt, which is identical to the role I have with my niece.

While none of the teachers I observed were familiar with my niece[45], I did occasionally socialise with some of my niece's teachers. However, my niece would rarely, if ever, be the topic of conversation, as she was not a troublemaker and got along well with her classmates. Lastly, my niece herself quickly got used to my being around as an everyday thing. She would occasionally approach me for a hug, or to let the other students know our relationship, but most of the time she appeared to have an underlying understanding (better than mine, to be frank) that we could hang out when we got home. This was best signified when I found her one-day, crying outside her classroom due to some minor disagreement with another girl. While I immediately felt protective, and wanted to comfort her, she had not even considered running over to me, as she would have done, had something similar happened outside of school.

Rigging of the election

In Chapter V, I will discuss the elections for chairman at the first student council of the year. I played an active role in collecting the votes, and was surprised to find that Lars, a seven-year-old student from year 1, won the position as vice-chairman. When discussing the outcome of the election with the teacher in charge of the student council, I faced the dilemma of whether to support Lars (and the students) in his victory, or the teacher in his practical assessment that Lars could not possible hold the job, as it entailed duties not appropriate for a seven-year-old. I ultimately agreed with the teacher that we should ignore Lars' victory. While in an everyday context I found myself a member of both the teachers' and students' communities, I could not ignore my own rationalising, and Lars, who further to his young age, also suffered from a chronic disease, could not have participated in the required meetings, nor have put together the proposals and suggestions for the school board. Hence my action, and not only in this situation, was based not on my membership role, but on 'my own self'. According to Adler and Adler (1987) the position of staying 'oneself' is usually a privilege enjoyed only by the complete membership role (CMR), as one is not required to pretend to fit a predetermined role.

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[45] My niece was a student in year 1.B, and the one teacher I observed, teaching in the in-schooling department, was teaching only A-classes.

The avenues, along which I could be considered a complete member, were primarily due to my upbringing in Denmark (although in a very different setting, to the one I studied), my native language being Danish, and my having gone to a Danish *folkeskole* ten years prior to my research. These are certainly significant factors speaking in favour of my CMR, and they have without a doubt influenced my collection of data in both beneficial and limiting ways. I will, however, agree with Adler and Adler (1987) when they argue that: 'while researchers may sacrifice some detachment [on account of being complete members], the depth of data gathered via this role is a valuable compensation.' (*Ibid*. 81).

On the other hand, there are also aspects speaking against my being a 'complete member'. For example a key-characteristic of the CMR is that the researcher has already incorporated 'the essential features and implications of the settings they are studying into their worldview' (Adler and Adler 1987:72). In opposition to this statement, I was, after spending some years abroad, puzzled by the Danish worldview. That I was not a complete member was furthermore emphasised by my having to enter the setting as a peripheral member, gaining the permission of a gatekeeper (the headmaster), and for some time being tested as to assess my trustworthiness (see for example Amir above).

Supply teaching at neighbouring schools
For the last few months of my fieldwork, I worked at neighbouring schools as a supply teacher. I did this for two primary reasons: first because I needed the extra income, before moving back to London; and secondly, because it gave me the opportunity to gain a quick, albeit superficial, perspective of the differences and similarities between By Skolen and other schools. As I had at this point already established a strong rapport with teachers and students alike, and had defined my membership role as primarily social, and secondly as a researcher, my 'extra-curricular activities' did not influence my role amongst the teachers and students at By Skolen. While I observed interesting trends and events at the neighbouring schools, I never engaged with these as part of my research, and hence I never took on a dedicated membership role at these schools.

Ethical and methodological issues arising from working with children
As discussed in the literature review, this research explicitly focuses on the perspectives of 'children' and actors peripheral or central to children's everyday

lives[46]. Children, as individuals in their own right, are embedded in social relations and particular environments as they choose and resist certain values, morals, ethics, and ways of being in the world. I have throughout my fieldwork approached the children (students), as I did any other informants, with the greatest sensitivity, confidentiality, and curiosity. The methods through which I observed and engaged with them were primarily determined by *their* actions, interests and hobbies, rather than a pre-determined set of research tools. Bluebond-Langner and Korbin argue that as we study children, we must 'confront the messiness and untidiness of social reality, not reduce it' (2007:245). To allow the research to reflect the points being made by the students rather than the researcher, me, I believed it was important not to force interactions with them, and rather allow the research to move forward at its own pace.

There were certain ethical considerations when using children as my primary informants. Firstly there is the issue of informed consent, and whether this should be obtained with parents, the gatekeepers at the school, or whether the child should be granted enough autonomy to be able to provide consent on their own behalf. I have been following the official Brunel ethical guidelines by obtaining informed parental/guardian consent if the child (student) was below the age of 16. However, I also believed it was very important to obtain the consent of the students themselves, as with any other subject with whom I engaged.

In regards to classroom observation, I initially received consent from the headmaster, who subsequently introduced me to the relevant teachers, whose consent I also acquired. At this stage I distributed letters to the relevant parents, asking them to contact me if they required any extra information, or if they in any way or at any stage felt curious or uncomfortable with any aspects of my research[47].

In order to maintain confidentiality, I have ensured that my thesis secures the anonymity of all students. It should not be possible for any outsider to identify any of the subjects, and where possible I have tried to disguise their identity for insiders as well.

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[46] In the thesis at large, I will not be discussing 'children', but rather 'students' for reasons outlined in the literature review.
[47] See appendix H

Leaving the field – Quitting the fags

While I did quit smoking, I never really did 'leave the field'. Throughout my writing-up I have visited the school, and some of the teachers have visited me in London. I daily read the Facebook status-updates of the students I followed, and sometimes they leave a comment when I update mine.

It is impossible, or it was for me, not to become attached to the field and the subjects in it while doing fieldwork. In the same way it is important for the researcher to keep in mind that the subjects themselves become attached to the researcher, while not letting these bonds get in the way of producing sound data. In other words, the friendships an anthropologist bases with his/her informants, could in my case not just remain shallow pretence on my behalf; and to some extent, my friendship with these teachers will only be liberated by the fact that I finally finish writing about them.

In relation to the discussion of doing fieldwork at home, I believe that a good piece of research will always leave the ethnographer with a feeling of being 'home' in the field, and a certain measure of ambivalence having to write about those social networks to which the ethnographer to a certain extent have found him/herself to be an insider of. But I also believe that it is within this ambivalence that the strength of ethnography is to be found.

Chapter V: Democracy

'Denmark is world champion in democracy'

Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Prime Minister of Denmark, 2nd Oct 2007[48]

At the opening of the Danish parliament in 2007, the Danish Prime Minister proudly proclaimed that Denmark could add yet another world championship to its collection. Fogh Rasmussen made this statement on the basis of a (then recent) World Bank investigation of 'Worldwide Governance Indicators' (see graph below). While none of the six main indicators specifically mentioned democracy, Denmark scored 100% in one crucial area – 'voice and accountability' - and continued to score such throughout my fieldwork.
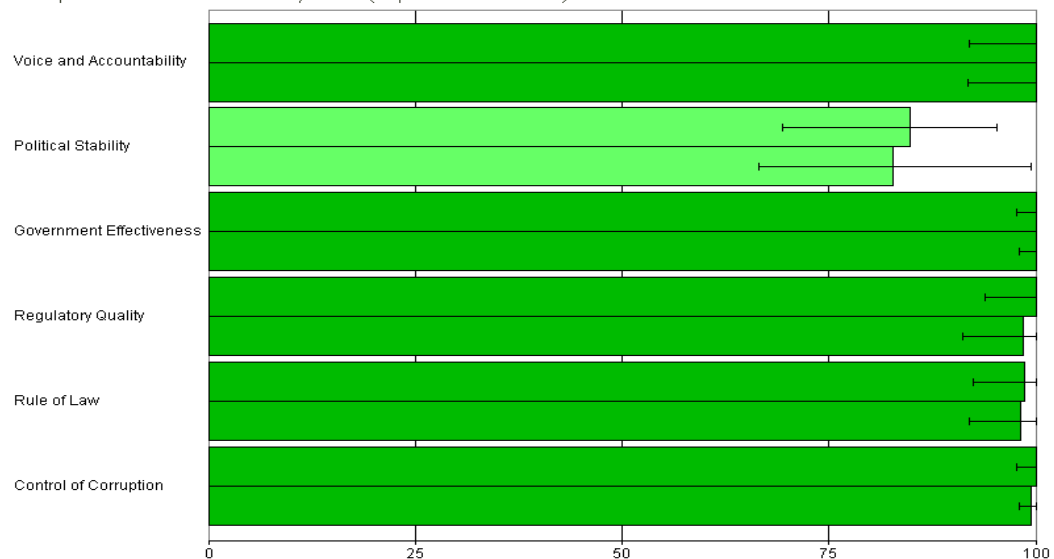
Country's Percentil Rank (0-100) indicating rank of country among all countries in the world. 0 corresponds to lowest rank and 100 correspond to highest rank[49] (I have selected 2006, as this was the year Fogh Rasmussen was referring to and 2009, the year in which I conducted fieldwork in Denmark).

While statistics such as these may not tell an ethnographer much about everyday life, they can provide an important guideline for understanding wider cultural tendencies. In this case, I would suggest that it was specifically the emphasis in the premier

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[48] http://www.stm.dk/_p_7565.html
[49] http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/sc_chart.asp#

minister's speech on 'voice and accountability' that was of great importance. Voice and Accountability is defined by the World Bank as 'capturing perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media'[50]. It is relevant to note that the Muhammad drawings had been published two years previous to the speech[51], and in this context Prime Minister Fogh Rasmussen had sternly refused to meet with, and apologise to, any of the representatives from Muslims groups offended by the drawings. His reason for this refusal stemmed from the ideology that freedom of speech is inviolable, and the general consensus that a government may never interfere in the writings of media (unless directly inciting to violence). One could hypothesise that Fogh Rasmussen emphasised Denmark's high(est) level of freedom of speech to show Danes and the world; here was a principle of democracy, which more than any other, defines the meaning of Danish democracy.

This chapter will investigate not only the meaning of Danish democracy, but also, more importantly, how democracy is experienced and lived in an everyday context. While statistics, such as those cited above, are useful as they offer immediate, 'rational' and 'accessible' data, anthropological fieldwork can provide an 'elucidation of cultural frameworks of meaning' (Levinson, 2005:336). To this end, this chapter provides us with an insight into the kind of everyday phenomena that gives rise to understandings of democracy. In other words, anthropology ideally offers an understanding of 'why statistics show the results they do', 'what the questions the statistics ask actually mean', and perhaps more importantly, 'what is understood by the subjects answering them'. In this chapter, I am particularly concerned with meanings and ideas related to 'what is freedom of speech' or 'what is democracy/trust/law'.

Further to unravelling these meanings, this chapter, and the thesis at large, serves a greater purpose: engaging with issues so far overlooked in the anthropology of education, namely democracy and citizenship. Levinson (2005) discovered that over a 20-year period (1984-2004), the 'Anthropology of Education Quarterly', the foremost Anthropology of Education journal, had not a single mention of 'citizenship', and that

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[50] http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/faq.htm#1
[51] A brief overview of the Muhammad case can be found in Appendix C.

'democracy' did not appear until 1992, after which it appeared only five times in the subsequent 13 years[52]. In a related point, Paley (2002) notes that, 'more often than not, anthropological observations on democracy are couched in other frameworks and embedded in other discussions' (2002:470). Levinson suggests that this oversight is due to a preoccupation with cultural differences and their relationship to performance and failure[53]. He states, 'It is not enough to theorize such conflict in terms of racial or cultural difference. What is at stake is the very definition of democratic citizenship and the way that political participation gets constructed locally' (2005:334). This insight is particularly applicable in the Danish context. I observed that the school, from a formal point of view, had an explicit focus on the political premise of citizenship, aiming to create a shared ideological understanding of the world. My study, however, branches out from Levinson's, as I found that these understandings were necessarily interlinked with cultural differences (this issue will be explored further in Chapter X), which often determined how *democracy* comes to be understood. In view of Schiffauer *et al.'s* (2004) 'civil enculturation' theory (as discussed in the literature review), the practice of democracy can furthermore be understood as civic culture and civility. Democracy, from this perspective, becomes the dominant style of civility, without which 'it is virtually impossible to engage in effective civic participation.' (*Ibid*. 8).

Before I proceed with my analysis, it is important to note that, as I undertook fieldwork in a Danish suburban school, I observed democracy as it was played out through everyday informal occasions in the classroom, whether during the class's hour, the student council, parent's meetings or the school council. This is not to suggest that democracy ends then and there; rather that it is this - the local, school-based level of democracy - that I wish to focus on in this chapter. Subsequently, and following Durkheim, I observed the school as a 'microcosm of the nation' (Durkheim 1925), i.e. as a space mirroring the complicated structure and processes of a society, allowing one to simultaneously understand these and attain an idea of how they come to be (see literature review for discussion on Durkheim). Furthermore, drawing on Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP), I will examine students' explorations of democracy in terms of becoming legitimate and appropriate,

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[52] A quick search in AEQ's catalogue shows a slight increase in these figures (Ultimo 2011)

[53] The issue of anthropology and its preoccupation with studies of reproduction of social inequalities is an issue I will also investigate in Chapter IX.

participants in the democratic processes of the Danish welfare state. In doing so, I hope to elucidate a deeper understanding of how these local processes play into a larger understanding of democracy.

Democracy the Danish way

> 'Vi stemmer om det!'
>
> 'We will vote about it'

The Danish word for voting, *stemme*, precisely illustrates the deeper cultural meaning of democracy in a Danish context. The word *stemme* has several meanings. Firstly as a noun, it can mean: 'a voice' or 'a vote'. As a verb, it can mean: 'to tune/balance/tally', 'to be correct' or 'to vote'. I will suggest that all of these meanings drawn together tell us something about the perception of democracy in a Danish context. Letting one's voice be heard through the democratic process, and thereby reaching a shared consensus are important cultural practices and events in everyday Danish life, in and beyond the schooling context. Negotiating and compromising in general conversation and political debates alike, even if just agreeing to disagree, are important traits in Danish culture, noted by a number of social scientists (e.g. Knudsen 1996; Jensen 2002 and Jenkins 2011).

In this section, I argue that the historical processes by which democracy was introduced to Denmark underpin the specific expression of democracy described above and observed during my fieldwork. Thus I begin by giving an overview of key events in this process: enlightenment-thinking, agricultural reforms, freedom of the press, abolishment of absolute monarchy, the decrease in Danish territory, co-operations, unions and not least the foundation of the Danish Welfare State. In the following section I situate *folkeskolen* within this context.

As I discussed previously, the foundations of modern western democracy can be seen in ancient Hellenic and later political-philosophical thinking (see literature review). However, it was during the Enlightenment particularly, that the roles of the state, democracy, and the citizen were more fully explored and not least practiced. Early Enlightenment work in Denmark reflected that of English, French, and particularly

German thinking. Karen Wren (2001) has suggested that most of Danish history has in fact been dominated both socially and culturally by the influence of Germany. Two (native) thinkers, however, deserve to be highlighted: firstly, Ludvig Holberg (1684 - 1754), a Danish/Norwegian writer[54], and later, and more importantly, Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872). Holberg was predominantly a playwright, with an explicit aim of educating the population in political and philosophical thought. To communicate these ideas to the general population his plays were mostly comedies. His most famous comedy, 'The Pewterer turned politician' (1722), is a comment on why the general public should not be allowed to participate in the political debates. As such he places himself in the Socratic tradition, arguing for deliberative democracy (i.e. reaching consensus through debate), but only by those that are 'qualified'. Holberg's view mirrors those of early 18th Century Denmark, in which (representative) democracy was most often considered in a negative light. The negative anthropology ('homo homini lupus') advocated by Thomas Hobbes during the 17th century was reflected in a view of democracy as associated with ochlocracy, i.e. the rule of majority and their narrow-minded, self-interested attentions (Hoelzl and Ward 2006:112).

In the last half of the 18th Century, the atmosphere in Denmark was, however, beginning to change (in parallel to the sentiments in most of Europe and also the USA, e.g. the French Revolution and the American Declaration of Independence[55]). In 1755, arguably the first example of 'freedom of speech' was experienced as the King, Frederik V, encouraged all Danish citizens to participate in the debates concerning the financial situation and agricultural crisis. All contributions were printed, uncensored, in '*Danmarks og Norges Oeconomiske Magazin*'. This magazine, which was published until 1764, had a great impact on the structural development of Denmark, as it eventually laid the foundation for the important agricultural reforms of 1784 (Bisgaard, 1902:16). These reforms were essential to the development of democracy, as they released the farmers from adscription to the manors, and created a large mobile middle-class (albeit, still leaving the small holders without influence or rights)[56]. During his 55-year reign, King Frederik VI (1784-1839, grandson of Frederik V), over saw these

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[54] Norway was under Danish rule between 1536 – 1814.
[55] http://www.denstoredanske.dk/Samfund,_jura_og_politik/Samfund/Moderne_demokrati_og_konstitutionelt_monarki/demokrati
[56] http://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/ophaevelse-af-stavnsbaandet-1788-1800/

agricultural reforms, and the rural middle and upper-class population did not have course for revolt. However, the small holders were living in increasingly dire conditions. With the death of King Frederik VI in 1839, the farmers finally began uniting towards the goal of overthrowing the monarchy (which was no longer as favourable towards the agricultural middle-class). By the 21st March 1848, the rural and urban movements in opposition to the monarchy organised and 10,000 men marched towards parliament. They were met on the doorstep by King Frederik VII (son of Frederik V, reigning from 1848-1863) who peacefully declared that the government had already been dissolved and for the future he would act only as constitutional monarch.

The constitution of Denmark, *Grundloven,* was finally signed on the 5th June in 1849[57]. Parliament was then separated into two houses, *Landstinget* and *Folketinget*. These are comparable to the House of Lords and House of Commons in Britain, in Denmark, however, these were constitutionally bound from the beginning to exercise equal influence and power.

Parallel to these events, Denmark lost most of its territory outside of the actual nation state. By 1867, Denmark had lost Norway, Slesvig and Holstein in Northern Germany. A general consensus in the Danish population developed; firstly that Denmark should remain neutral in international disputes, and secondly, that Denmark should henceforth be focused on the national development of land, agriculture and on the education of the people.

In the same period, the rapid industrialisation of neighbouring countries led to an increased wealth and hence an increased demand for processed foods, such as butter and bacon. Farming thus remained the most important export for Denmark, which did not experience industrialisation in the way that England and some continental European countries did. Danish farmers, in response to, and in order to meet the increasing agricultural demand, organised into co-operatives to maximise output and profit. Bacon and butter are, as such, important for the development of 'Danish democracy', and later the Danish Welfare State, as these products required

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[57] To signify the importance of this event, the 5th of June, *Grundlovsdag* is a national holiday in Denmark.

increasingly advanced technology. These were often unaffordable to the individual farmer, and subsequently co-operatives became increasingly important in the Danish community[58]. The co-operative spirit spread to other aspects of life. In 1814 it had already been part of establishing *folkeskolen*, as we will see below, but more importantly the tendency to pool resources and join in organisations prevailed throughout other crafts. Unions too were established in urban settings to counter-balance the private capital powers (Lykketoft 2006:7).

Thus, as Jenkins (2011: 44) has discussed, the modern Danish state came into existence in a dynamic interplay between the rural popular social movements advancing *folkeoplysning,* enlightenment of the people[59], and the urban social democracy movement emphasising the collective organisation of the labour movement. With co-operatives in the rural areas and strong unions in the urban areas, parallel with the development and expansion of technology, Denmark experienced a rapid growth in wealth and living standards. This in turn led to a population boom, followed by unemployment and disease as a result of overcrowded residential areas and bad sanitary conditions. These ills were eased in the early 1890's by the establishment of unemployment and sickness benefits.

As mentioned in the discussion of Holberg, many philosophers viewed it as important that deliberative democracy was restricted to those qualified to wield such power. Until 1915, only law-abiding men above the age of 23 and with a considerable income were allowed to vote and stand as candidates for the parliament. In 1915, however, women and servants were granted the right to vote as well and also the right to stand as candidates for Folketinget, and in the following election, the first four women were elected.

The more recent events leading to the establishment of the modern welfare state, was discussed in Chapter III. To briefly recap; the USA stock market crash of 1929 hit continental Europe in the 1930's, and Denmark too was influenced. Once again unemployment levels soared and this led to *Kanslergadeforliget* in 1933. This was a

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[58] The co-operative 'zeitgeist' can be viewed in contrast to the increasing class divisions in England, whose riches were the implicit reason for the need of co-operatives in Denmark.
[59] Consisting of notions of self-help, community and liberal education.

major social reform based on a coalition across the parliament, and it is often thought of as the foundation of the Danish Democratic Welfare State.

In this section, I have discussed the historic development towards a welfare state democracy, showing also how this came about in a dynamic interplay between the individual and the collective (as further discussed in Chapter VII). Before examining how my ethnography conveyed an explicit emphasis on democracy - and in view of Durkheim's notion of the importance of the educational environment in the procurement of a successful nation - the following section will be concerned with the role of *folkeskolen* and how this is interlinked with the notion of democracy.

Democracy and the school

‘We don't suggest a connection between democracy and education. We insist on it.’

The Danish Minister of Education (Mahony 1998:308)

Democracy is tightly interwoven with *folkeskolen*, and equally, the school is tightly connected to ideas of democracy. This section will look at how these two exist in a dynamic relationship, and bring our understanding of Danish democracy up to the present day.

The Danish *folkeskole* was founded in 1814 as part of *folkeoplysningen*, the Danish ‘Enlightenment of the people’[60], whose greatest advocate in a Danish context was Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig[61]. This Danish theologian, philosopher and educationalist of the early 19th century is the undisputed father of the popular enlightenment culture and what would become the Danish *folkeskole*. Grundtvig envisioned that education should be universal. It should teach them ‘the essentials’ and make them free, self-sufficient, independent, and focus on the development of the whole person: mind, body and feelings. The Grundtvigian ideals fostered a distinct culture of organisations, communal meeting houses, and independent adult folk high schools, and ultimately laid the foundation for the Danish *dannelses-skole* (i.e. holistic

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[60] In the rest of this chapter I will follow the example of Richard Jenkins (2011) and refer to this as the ‘popular enlightenment’.
[61] More on the history of the Danish *folkeskole* in Chapter III

school) system, which focuses on the whole individual. or what is also defined by the German term 'Bildungschule', focusing on the development of the entire individual.

Similarly to Grundtvig, the early 20th century American educational reformist John Dewey later argued that school and the existence of the democratic society were interdependent of each other. And further, still in line with Grundtvig, that education was an instrument for promoting both the physic and moral development of the individual (Dewey 1916). Dewey argued that the school should provide the opportunity to escape limitations of social groups, by letting the student come into contact with the broader environment. While it is highly disputable that this has been successful in the American context (e.g. Bowles and Gintis 1976, Eckert 1989, Lareau 2002), there seems to be a general consensus in Denmark that this is still the purpose of the Danish *folkeskole*. Thus it is often described as a meeting place where all citizens, regardless of cultural and/or socio-economic background, meet. *Folkeskolen* has indeed been dubbed 'the playpen of democracy' (Korsgaard 2008): an arena in which all students are given equal opportunities, a shared common ground from which to understand society, appropriate ways of acting within society, and the ability to gather and process knowledge independently and analytically.

Another essential figure in Danish democracy and schooling is Hans Harald ('Hal') Koch. In 1945 he published his most influential work, '*Hvad er Demokrati*' ('What is Democracy'), which laid the foundation for how citizenship and democracy are understood in Denmark, and how it is taught in *folkeskolen.* Having observed the totalitarian democracies of the Nazis, Hal Koch structured his book as a response to the misuses of democracy he had witnessed during WWII. He argued that democracy is not only about electing representatives; more importantly, it is about discussions and conversations through which consensus and agreement can be reached (1945:32). Elections should only be used as a measure to reach an understanding of how far the discussion has come. As such, Hal Koch's democracy is a version of deliberative democracy[62], and his views come to underpin the importance of what is known as 'Danish democracy', *dannelse* and ideas of *medborgerskab*.

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[62] And one which reflects the work of Benedict Spinoza (1677), who was one of the forerunners of the idea of deliberative democracy before representative democracy (more on this in Appendix B).

Jenkins defines *dannelse* as an ideology of the 'holistic formation of social human beings who can manage their own lives, who know how to behave properly in society, and who know how to fit in with each other' (2011:187). This ideology runs through schooling and the entire institutionalisation system. As Jenkins points out, it is the moral thread running through the entire formal socialisation process in Denmark (2011:188). To further understand the importance of *dannelse* in the Danish school system, one need to look no further than to the word for formal education, *uddannelse*, meaning bringing out *dannelse*.

To have a democratic society built on the deliberative tradition, it is necessary to have citizens who are actively engaged in the democratic process. Consequently, it became the role of the school to educate *dannede demokratiske medbogere*, i.e. holistic democratic co-citizens. In Danish there are two words for citizen, *Statsborger* and *Medborger*, each with different meanings attached to them. But both of these words are commonly translated into English as 'citizen'. This is because the word *citizen* can be defined along three different parameters in the English language (Marshall 1950; Cohen 1999; Kymlicka and Norman 1994; Carens 2000). These include civilian citizenship, as legal status, defined by civil, political and social rights; political citizenship, as political agents, actively participating in a society's political institutions; and social citizenship, as membership in a political community that furnishes a distinct source of identity.

Roughly speaking, a *statsborger* is a combination of the civilian and social citizenship, while *medborger* refers to the active political citizen. Further to this, the *medborgerskab* (co-citizenship) has connotations of fellowship, inclusiveness, and similarity, as *med* directly translates into 'with', and as such also includes notions of social citizenship. In a deliberative welfare democracy, all citizens must be of the latter category, *medborger*. In Denmark it is the role of *folkeskolen* not simply to transmit academic knowledge, but moreover to help create a society composed by and of co-citizens. In other words to create 'people' is viewed as a community task (Lillelund, 2005:25). Again, in this case we see how Durkheim's notion of the school, as a microcosm of the nation in which students learn to exist within, and together with other citizens, and with the primary goal of creating a strong (read: homogeneous) nation, plays into the everyday setting of the Danish educational system.

While I was carrying out ethnographic research in By Skolen, the school had a *medborgerskabs-uge* (co-citizenship week)[63]. Prior to the week, at the teachers' monthly 'pedagogical workshop day', a teacher-turned-textbook-author presented his latest book on the theme of *medborgerskab* in the Danish *folkeskole*. The presentation continuously emphasised the Danish *folkeskole* as a meeting place, an institution whose most important job is to avoid producing 'social illiterates'. In order to do this, the school must incorporate 'co-citizenship-pedagogies'. The author defined co-citizenship as a condition to which you belong or through which you perceive the world. A co-citizen is a person who knows his/her rights and duties and takes responsibility for the *fællesskab* ('community', with strong connotations of solidarity, togetherness, and having in common with) that the person is a part of. The community can be based on *ethnos*, i.e. culture, religion, nationality, and traditions or *demos* i.e. political principles, values, norms, and manners. For the school to create *sammenhængskraft* (power of coherence/connection) the democratic co-citizenship pedagogies in the school must focus on the *demos* rather than the *ethnos*. The author emphasised that the core of introducing co-citizenship to the students is to teach them how some social and/or cultural problems can be solved politically (democratically) and provide them with an understanding of the school (and society) as a shared space controlled by fundamental values, principles and purposes[64]. The theme of the co-citizenship week clearly highlighted that the democratic community is one in which the students must learn to participate appropriately. Before proceeding to look at how my ethnography illustrated this process, it is necessary to briefly engage with an overview of Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of peripheral participation. This is with the aim of gaining a clearer understanding and a general theoretical framework through which to understand the classroom and school as a microcosm of the nation (to draw on Durkheim), or a 'playpen' in which the students can practice being and becoming democratic co-citizens.

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[63] Once a year, the school would have one week where a particular theme would span across the entire school; this year the theme was *medborgerskab*

[64] There are necessarily certain tensions involved in separating the 'political' from the 'cultural', these will be discussed in a later section of this chapter, and again in Chapter X.

Legitimate Peripheral Participation

Both Paley (2002) and Levinson (2005) have suggested that democracy is rarely studied on its own, meaning ethnographically it 'is written at the edges of the discourse, sighting its limits and boundaries, its instabilities and temporal fluctuations, the places where it emerges out of another discourse, or just as fluidly is subsumed into a different one.' (Paley, 2002:486) In my fieldwork, too, democracy was always happening in the context of something; however it was rarely at the edges of participation. More often than not, it was at the very centre of whatever practice I was observing. This will become clear when I present my ethnographic discussion below.

Becoming a democratic co-citizen could be compared to becoming fully knowledgeable participants of a certain 'community of practice', in this case the community of the Danish Welfare State. To understand this process I have arranged the following section of ethnographic examples in view of the theoretical framework of 'Legitimate Peripheral Participation' (LPP), as presented by Lave and Wenger in 1991.

LPP is a characteristic of the process of learning as a situated activity - learning in context rather than out of context (e.g. in a formal classroom situation). Lave and Wenger argued that their model for understanding learning as a practice was not intended for analysing formal learning (1991:39-41). Still, they suggest that rethinking schooling in terms of LPP could be a fruitful exercise. Following this, and in relation to my own fieldwork, while learning to be democratic co-citizens was something I observed primarily within the framework of the school, it was still a practice in which students needed to become fully appropriate participants. Furthermore, learning democracy was often a situated activity, as students would be required to deliberate, participate, and vote.

LPP, furthermore, removes learning from 'inside the head' to learning as taking place through co-participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991:13). As novices we participate along the periphery of a given community of practice and we slowly accommodate to the specific form that participation in that community demands. Simultaneously, we become more skilled at the participation required to move toward the centre of participation in that community, and increasingly participate in relationships within

that community. Similarly as the individual deciphers how to make use of democratic processes, he/she is likely to refer, rely, encourage, and participate in this process to take place more frequently. One is successful in one's learning when full participation is granted, and the person has learned to understand his or her own social position in relation to other members.

Margaret Mead phrased it in slightly different terms: education is a cultural process, in which a person is transformed into a full member of a specific human society, sharing with other members a specific human culture (Mead 1942-43:633). What differentiates Mead's suggestion from that of Lave and Wenger is that the latter suggest that humans interact in multiple participatory communities at the same time, and that different participation schemes are applied to different social situations. As such, the success of the learner is not based on successful participation in one community, but rather the learner's ability to move between modes of co-participation. While the learner will necessarily be moving between various communities of practice, this does not necessarily render these communities as mutually distinct – or even just distinct – from one another. Rather these communities are more likely to be overlapping and hence requiring the participant to not only move *between* communities, but also participate *simultaneously* and correctly in these.

Most people interact in multiple participatory communities at the same time, and different participation schemes need to be applied to different social situations. Subsequently, the most important feature, to obtain for a learner, is the ability to move between modes of co-participation, or in other words to reveal and understand the transparency of any learning situation to be able to move effortless between these. As a participant becomes more experienced, learning itself becomes something to learn. This could also be seen in *folkeskolen,* which was focused more on *dannelse,* learning to participate as appropriate democratic *medborger,* than on building a readily available knowledge bank – in other words it was focused on learning to learn.

In short, LPP learning is viewed as something taking place continuously throughout life, whenever a subject is introduced to a new community or unknown situation. In the context of learning to be a democratic co-citizen, the concept of LPP can be useful in

explaining how the students acquire an understanding of how to act appropriately. It furthermore allows us to focus on who the student is expected to become in the community, in order to successfully move towards the centre of practice - in this case the practice of democracy in the community of the Danish welfare state. The following section has been structured to show how everyday democracy is played out at the Danish *folkeskole*. But it has also been structured to show the multiple communities of democratic practice that one comes across in the space of the school as participation becomes continuously deeper.

Everyday Democracy

Bearing in mind the preceding discussion about democracy, I will, in the remaining half of this chapter, draw on my fieldwork to illustrate how democracy emerged vividly throughout my research, sometimes just under the surface, sometimes straightforwardly taught. The following will be a journey from the informal examples during lessons, the Class's Hour, Student Council, Teacher's meetings, Parent's meetings, School Board meetings and Regional Council meeting. Each instance shows a different aspect of democracy as it has been discussed in the previous sections, as well as conveying a story of what democracy is, how it is understood, and not least how it is lived, in the Danish context.

My first example comes from *medborgerskabsugen*, which was briefly described above. During this week, the out-schooling classes (year 7-9), had to pick between 5 different workshops, which they would join throughout the week. Some of the themes of the workshops were:

- 'Active Democracy': learning how to demonstrate. The workshop ended with an organised demonstration at the school for cleaner toilets, incorporating slogans, banners, and speeches.
- 'By Skolen Constitution': Writing a constitution for the school. At the end of the week, the students from this workshop performed their constitution as a rap.
- 'Democracy and Tolerance': How to secure a free and open society. This workshop ended with a short play, in which the students illustrated the differences between a totalitarian society and a democratic society.

During the week I dropped in and out of the latter workshop, which was composed of a group of approximately 30 year 7-9 students (aged 13-16). The following is a discussion that the students had after watching a short film, concerning the right to vote for people with severe learning difficulties. The discussion illustrates that not only were democratic ideals not straightforwardly transferred to the students, they were also questioned – much in the same way that they have been since Socrates was first concerned with aspects of democracy.

The film followed a group of young people from some foreign countries, as they hitchhiked around Denmark making observations on various issues concerned with democracy. In the discussed part of the film, they visited a home for people with severe learning difficulties - both to see how they lived, but also to observe the wide range of rights they had, and opportunities to control their own lives, for instance by voting at parliamentary elections.

> Girl 1: "*I think it is good they have the right to vote, it's not their fault that they are handicapped*"
> John: "*I don't think they should be allowed to vote, they can't relate to politics*" (a few boys agree)
> Nina: "*They are above 18, they have the right to vote… they are 'of age'*"
> John: "*But the brain should function to a certain degree, I mean if they are physically handicapped, sure they can vote – but not if they are retarded*"
> Boy 1: "*The reason you can vote when you are 18 years old, is because you are of age, you are an adult – those people in the film, they are not grown-ups*"
> Teacher: "*I was talking to Ditte* [me] *about how taking away the right to vote is the same as declaring them incapable, like not real people!*"
> Boy 2: "*I think it is ok that they vote, there are so few of them exercising that right anyways*"

Boy 3: "*Otherwise they may not feel like real people*"

Teacher: "*But are you sure they can feel it?*"

Boy 2: "*I have been with my mom to work* [who worked at a care centre]… *they are pretty 'gone'* [not fully there], *but they can feel things*"

Signe: "*I think if they can do those things we saw, like biking, playing piano and stuff, then they can vote as well*"

Fie: "*I know a lot of grown-ups who don't think either*"

Group of Girls: "*Yeah, what about alcoholics and drug-addicts*"

Boy 1: "*Ok, so if you are medium-'gone', then you can't vote*"

Teacher: "*But who will determine that?*"

John: "*That could be those people at the institute, they are there in their every-day and are experts*"

Fie: "*Everybody should be able to vote – we are all humans*"

John: "*Yeah, but you shouldn't just vote, you have to be able to orientate politically*"

Girl: "*That guy we met yesterday – he could vote*"

Teacher: "*Yes, but he was spastic* [sighs] *– you have to make a distinction… physical handicap is not the same as a mental handicap*".

At this point another teacher breaks the discussion, and they begin showing the next film clip, which is about democracy in the home.

The discussions that students had in the out-schooling, as observed above, does not differ significantly from the ones I observed in the middle-school (year 4-6, aged 9-13). In the following account, I observe a group of middle-school students watching the same film clip…

Teacher 2: "*We should be proud that we treat everyone equally, but what do you think, should they be allowed to vote?*"

> Boy: "*No, imagine if there was a majority of mentally handicapped people and that they just voted without really thinking about it*"
>
> Teacher 2: "*But that is not going to happen, and then you could go even further and argue that people who are not interested in politics – should they be allowed to vote?*"
>
> Boy: "*well…*"
>
> Teacher: "*But you have the right to believe whatever you like*"

Back in the teacher's lounge during recess, the teachers were shocked that so many students were of the opinion that some people should not be allowed to vote. The teachers explained the students' views on the matter in terms of their lack of education: that they had evidently not yet learned the 'right' way of democracy.

I, however, experienced the students as very well informed on democracy, and used to participating in smaller deliberative and democratic processes. If there was indeed a lack, as suggested by the teachers, it was therefore not in education, as in knowledge, but rather education as in *dannelse*, or the holistic understanding of the *correct* use and understanding of the democratic process.

To illustrate my own understanding of the students as *not* lacking knowledge on the topic of democratic terminology and practice, one need only look to the wide range of examples presented in the remainder of this chapter. It was visible, for example, during the week leading up to the *medborgerskabsuge*. The class teacher of year 6.Z (age 12-13) mentioned that she would be allowed to decide if the students themselves would be allowed to choose their workshops, or if she would do it for them. In response to this Sebastian commented: "*How related is it to 'co-citizenship' if the teacher decides if you can choose democratically or if it should be determined via teacher-dictatorship?*"

It was not rare that the banter between teachers and pupils in class concerned the rights of one or the other to make decisions. Often these discussions brought up issues such as rights, democracy, and not least, freedom of speech. This signalled that, while always done with a joking attitude, these students were very well informed of these ideals – and had an awareness of when and how to use them in their own favour. Hence, it was not a lack of knowledge that determined the students' peculiar

(according to the teachers) view of who should be allowed to vote.

Perhaps one reason why it did not appear logical to the student that the people they observed in the film should be allowed to vote was more to do with their own disenfranchisement - i.e. the students were not allowed to vote (until they turn 18), despite their extensive knowledge of the democratic process - than it was to do with removing other people's rights to vote. Hence, while the students observed that they needed to become adult, i.e. go through the educational system in order to become proficient citizens with the right to vote, the people they observed in the film clip, had not been able to go through the same educational system, so how could they be qualified? What the students perhaps did not consider was that it was not the knowledge that they were themselves lacking, but rather the *dannelse*, the understanding that in a Danish welfare democracy 'we are all of equal worth' (this notion of equality will be discussed in Chapter IX).

That students were, however, proficient in the deliberative democratic process was, as mentioned above, visible throughout my fieldwork. Further to occasional theme-weeks and/or workshops, democracy was practiced in everyday situations, for instance in the weekly hour designated to class welfare – the class's hour.

Class's Hour

Students' observations of democracy often differed from that of the teacher, and they were quick to use democracy for their own purposes. This often happened during *Klassens Time* 'the Class's Hour', which occurred weekly. As the name signifies, it was an hour which belonged to the class, and in which they could decide the content. Often this time was dedicated to particular issues concerning the welfare of the class. These issues were often addressed in the beginning of each individual lesson as well, and concerned things that had happened during the preceding weekend, day or even just the last recess. The class's hour was, however, a full lesson dedicated to discussing larger issues of welfare, such as sexual education, bullying, health, student council meetings, etc. Further to this, the class's hour was an informal forum in which the students could raise their own issues, and in the younger classes, half of the lesson would typically be devoted to games. In Sally Anderson's study, a teacher commenting

on the school-reform of 1993, in which the class's hour was made non-obligatory and converted into a Danish class, remarked that the class's hour was in any case just a lesson in which the students 'ate cake and played democracy' (2000:101). Her observations quite accurately reflect those of my fieldwork, since both cake-eating, as a *hyggelig* activity (Chapter VI) and democracy were exactly what the class's hour entailed. All of the classes I observed continued to allocate time every week to the class's hour, despite it not being obligatory for the previous 16 years. This suggests that perhaps those two practices - specifically, *hygge* (as exemplified through cake-eating) and democracy - are of great social significance.

During one class's hour in year 6.Z, Søren raised an issue concerning setting up some guidelines for playing football during recess. The students stayed seated at their regular tables during the discussion, and the conversation flowed freely – although Ana (their class teacher) would direct the conversation by pointing to the student whose turn it was to speak.

> Søren: "*Right now it's the one who has the ball who decides if anyone outside of the class can join in the game, or sometimes we vote about it.*"

> Ana (Their class teacher): "*I don't think that voting is always a good thing, you should probably abandon that, imagine if you asked to join, and the others voted for you not to... A good solution could be, one recess only the class, another recess everyone would be welcome to join in – not just the one who 'has the ball' will get to decide*"

> [General disagreement and mumbling in the class, some want everybody to always be allowed to join in, some really don't care]

> John: "*It is difficult to put a timeframe for when someone can join the game*'

Someone else yells out: "*It can't be too difficult to just switch the teams a round a bit*"

Christian: "*I'm not necessarily saying we should vote, but there should be an inclination towards someone joining, someone in the end has to make the decision, who can join, who can't... What if the ball just went around between those in the class who play? Or if for instance, Michael has the ball* [the best footballer in the class*], and we think he is doing well, then he can just keep it*"

The ball had slowly become synonymous with power, who held the ball, also held the power in the class, and I noticed how Michael had not added anything to the conversation yet

Ana's suggestion: "*how many players on each team is ideal?' (5) okay, then during the first recess, it is just the class, and during the second recess, anyone can join, but with a maximum of 5 players on each team?*"

Christian: "*What if there were only 4 players on each team in the recess only for the class, and there was someone from another class who wanted to join... Are we then bound by the rules?*"

Ana: "*No, of course not, I mean if you need players, you can take in some from the other classes, but you should pick someone from your own class first, and never more than 5 per team!*"

[the class decided to take a vote on the topic]

> Ana: *"Everybody has one vote, everybody who cares should vote"*

> Option I: (Ana's suggestion) up to 5 players per team, one
> recess only class   0
> Option II: up to 5 players per team   3
> Option III: Whoever has the ball, decides (taking turns)   9

Ana was going to make the list for who had the ball and when. She was not happy with the result, but could not argue against it as the class was so clearly in favour of that option, when they voted.

As illustrated in the preceding ethnography, during the class's hour, the students were using the framework of deliberative democracy, when no clear consensus could be reached (at least between the teacher and the students) they voted. As soon as the vote had been administered, the teacher had to accept the result – those were the rules of democracy. Osborn *et al*. (2003) experienced a similar emphasis on negotiation over dominance in their observations of the Danish everyday educational setting. They argue that the power-neutral relationship between the teacher and the students is a result of underlying values of empiricism, i.e. the focus on developing the whole child through learning by doing and a simultaneous emphasis on individualism. This approach reflects Rogoff's (1993) 'guided participation' theory as it allows the students more autonomy and opportunities to find out for themselves, and emphasises that learning is a social act in which individuals share their thoughts (Osborn *et al*. 2003:112-115). In other words, the students experience that co-citizenship itself is not only the product of learning, but is also inherent to the actual process of learning.

The reason why there was only one ball per class was that the students had to learn to share with each other, and learn to organise sharing[65]. Furthermore, this was also the

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[65] The issue of 'the ball' is not limited to my fieldwork. Sally Anderson too observes this as a returning dilemma in all the classes she observed. While she views the discussions concerning the ball more in view of gender-roles, she also reaches the conclusion that it is ultimately the one who has the ball, who

reason why the teacher did not provide a solution straight away, nor force her solution through, once she made a suggestion. It appeared to be an important part of *dannelse* and *medborgerskab* to understand how to debate with each other and how to reach a consensus. And perhaps the reason why the best footballer in the class, Michael, did not participate in the discussion was because he somehow knew what would happen following the meeting. For the first few weeks, the students followed the list of 'who has the ball' that their class teacher had hung up inside the classroom. No matter who had the ball during recess, they would however, nearly always ask Michael what to do, when someone asked if they could join the game. After the first few weeks, it was established that Michael would simply always 'have the ball'.

The discussion illustrates that while the students were actively using the deliberative democratic tradition as a platform from which to discuss and reach an agreement of how to deal with everyday situations – they still did so in their own particular way. This could be observed from the fact that the students did not (yet) follow the rules set out by their own democracy. This adaptation of the democratic process perhaps suggests that the students were not yet full participants of that particular community of practice (the practice of democracy). Rather they were still creating their own structures and systems for how to use (or not use) democracy. The idea of the *folkeskole* as a 'playpen' in which students may practice being and becoming welfare citizens (as alluded to in the beginning of this chapter) reflects this process in which the students 'play around' with the concept of democracy, moving from a periphery of practicing democracy - towards a central idea of how and when it is appropriate and useful to employ this practice. On the other hand, the discussion above may also simply illustrate the democratic process at large, in which democratically elected leaders do not always live up to their pre-election campaigns, nor that democratically elected compromises always elicit the presumed consequences (if they even get employed). Similarly, the 'rule of who has the ball' was employed only shortly, and for the short time that it was employed, it did not change the way in which the football matches were run (or more significantly by whom). Seen in this light, the discussion may also reflect the flexibility of democracy in that once a solution has been voted for,

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gets to decide, choose the teams, and in a manner of speaking gets to negotiate friendships (2000:143;186).

it does not necessarily make it fixed to the extent that it is immutable. Instead the chosen solution adapts to how it is most conveniently employed in everyday situations – here, it was most convenient that Michael always 'had the ball', because he was a good footballer – he would make fair, and hence equal, teams (the significance of how students were selected for physical activities and its relation to maintaining equality will be discussed further in Chapter IX).

The class's hour was not the only forum in which the students practiced democracy. Once a month, representatives from the various classes at the school would participate in bigger meetings, the 'Student Council' in which it was not the welfare of the individual classes, which were at the focus, but rather the welfare of the school at large.

The Student Council

Elevrådet, the Student Council, was another arena in which the students were encouraged to practice their democratic skills. *Elevrådet* has been a compulsory part of the Danish *folkeskole* since the mid 1970's, and is a forum through which the students can voice their opinions and present these to the school board at their monthly meetings.

At the beginning of each new school year, every class, from kindergarten class to year 9, had to elect two students to represent them at the student council meetings. Some classes treated this occasion with diligence, while others adopted a more relaxed attitude towards the process. In some classes a number of students wanted to stand for representative, and an actual election-process with speeches and ballot votes would take place. In other classes it was not quite so popular; students had to be coerced into participating and standing for candidate[66]. Some classes chose one boy and one girl to represent them, but again even this varied from class to class, as others chose not to employ gender-quotations.

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[66] Sometimes this is due to the particular dynamics of the students in that class, sometimes due to specific teachers taking less of an interest in the student council.

Once the candidates had been elected, the teacher responsible for the student council called the first meeting. At this meeting the teacher took charge, but as the year progressed, he or she dropped into the background, and eventually did not participate in the meetings at all, leaving the running of the council to the council itself.

The following is an extract from my fieldnotes regarding the first student council meeting at By Skolen in 2009.

> It takes a while for the meeting to properly begin, as a lot of students haven't heard or have forgotten about the meeting and have to be gathered via the school speakers. After 20 minutes, everyone has arrived and Hassan, the teacher in charge of facilitating the student council, attempts to introduce its purpose. The students, however, seem not to be interested; they want to get straight to business and talk about the holes in the courtyard asphalt, and the lack of cleaning in the toilets[67]. Hassan again tries to inform the students that in today's meeting, the most important thing is to discuss what a student council is and to elect a *formand*, chairman.

> Student from year 7: "*We should be part of solving problems!*"
> Student, year 6: "*There are some things we have succeeded in, but also many things that the teachers have decided – things we don't agree with!*"
> Hassan: "*What could be better*"
> Faisal (student of Somali background, approximately 13 years old): "*I haven't spoken to the little kids yet... I am not here for myself, I'm doing this for everyone else*" [some of the older students are suppressing their laughter, as Faisal is stating this with clear sarcasm]

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[67] Hassan is an arts teacher (originally from Turkey), and although he is well-liked and passionate about the student council, the students find it difficult to understand him, as his Danish skills are somewhat lacking.

Hassan (with disbelief): "*So it has nothing to do with getting out of classes?'... 'Why continue to go to these meetings, if we don't always succeed? What we can do and want to do will be discussed later! Right now I want to talk about what a student council is!*"

Girl in year 9: "*Well, it's to do with not letting the teachers decide everything.*"

Hassan: "*You have to elect two people who will be your representatives and decision-makers in the highest of places.*"

Faisal: "*You mean Søren or what?*" [Søren was the headmaster of the school]

Hassan: "*Yes, Søren and the school board – they meet in the evenings on your behalf.*"

Faisal continues to comment on everything (he clearly wants to be chairman)

Marie, year 9: "*You don't have to make a comment on everything Faisal*"

Hassan, ignores Faisal and explains: "*Its a bit like in the regional council... a little democratic institution in the student council – the chairman must be able to delegate the work in the council, check up on various things – like in the regional council... you too have a responsibility that this school is good! You shouldn't just say, 'Hassan says'... you should ask WHY, learn to make an argument! The teachers have the overarching responsibility for the education being good – but you too have a responsibility for this, you are allowed to say something. It is YOU who in the future will be making all of the decisions. You start your political life in the student council.*"

Lars, year 1: "*Could we talk about something else soon? Like the courtyard?*"

At this point Hassan started the election process and the students standing for president explained their reasons for doing so, e.g.:

Alexander 7.A: "*I want to hear what everyone has to say, to listen and help, come up with new ideas…*"

Faisal whispers aloud: "*Vote for me and I will give you candy during the next recess!*"

Lars 1.A: "*Because I want to!*"

Hassan: "*Do you think you can manage?*"

Lars: "*YES*"

Marie 9.A: "*I think our last president was really* dygtig [capable and talented], *I would like to see if I can do the job equally well*"

Malene 9.A: "*I want to bring our discussions to the school board, take responsibility*"

A few students commented that the elections were taking too long, Kazim yelled out: "*it is not as if they are going to be prime minister!*"

I helped with the election, and they placed me in the hallway to collect the votes. Each class had one vote (the two representatives had to agree). One class after the other came to the hallway and cast their vote with me. Most of students did not remember the names of the students who were standing as candidates, and would vote according to their appearance, e.g. the 'girl with the black shirt', or the 'boy who said he would give us candy' etc. Most of the younger students voted for Lars, because they knew him. A few of the older students also voted for him as a joke. What nobody expected was that Lars came out with the second highest amount of votes, essentially winning the position as vice-chairman.

I called Hassan to the hallway to give him the results. Lars could not really be a chairman; he was only 7 years old, and the job, further to leading the actual student council, entailed going to the school board meetings late in the evenings once a month. Hassan announced that Marie has won the chairman-ship and that both Malene and Alexander would be vice-chairmen, as it was a tie between them. The students were audible disappointed that Lars did not get a post, and so was Lars himself. I told him he was really close to winning and that I was sure he would be

chairman when he grew older. I felt excessively bad about having participated in 'rigging' the election – what kind of democracy was this really?

In a way, Lars not being allowed to take up his earned seat as vice-chairman plays into the episode during *medborgerskabsugen*, where it was debated who could, and could not vote. And I wonder if the same teachers who expressed their frustrations to me in the teacher's lounge would also declare that, by removing Lars' right to his position in the council, he was not 'a real student'.

The student council continuously brought out a lot of the key aspects in my thesis: ideas of democracy, citizenship, equality, ethnicity and also *hygge* (which will be at the focus in the following chapter). In this meeting, I observed how Hassan was trying to engage the students in a conversation of what the student council should be. I later find out that a neighbouring school had had a student-led reform of the student council, removing it from the idea of class-representatives and towards a more open structure in which everyone can run for student council, incorporating election campaigns and yearly school elections in which the student council and chairman was selected[68]. Hassan himself, however, could not suggest these kinds of reforms to the students – the student council was theirs, and they had to run it. As such, Hassan was in a sense standing at the middle of this participatory community, but the students were not necessarily interested in moving towards the centre, or at least the centre that he represented. The students were less concerned with the format of the meeting, and more concerned with getting things done. This could perhaps be related to the fact that it was after all a council, and not a board, meaning that the decisions they did make in the council, would only serve as advice to the school board, and not necessarily change anything.

Another aspect, which came up during this student council meeting, was that of being 'qualified for democracy', as in knowing how and when to participate in the debate. While Faisal might be funny, he was acting inappropriately in terms of becoming a representative, and nobody voted for him as chairman. Hassan suggested that he was

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[68] In other words, a political system, which more closely resembles the 'real' political system outside of the school.

only there to get out of lessons, which again suggested that Faisal was not interested in participating appropriately. But there were also other factors at play. Faisal was supposed to be 'the jester' (while he was not a student in any of the classes I observed, I often saw him performing various pranks during recess, and he was furthermore a well known student amongst the teachers for always making 'funny comments' during classes); his friends expected him to make these comments, so even if he wanted to participate 'appropriately' in the student council, he was also faced with simultaneously participating appropriately in the community of his friends. Consequently, Faisal had to participate in at least two 'communities of practice', each of which had different expectations of who it was appropriate for him to be and become. If Faisal was indeed interested in being active in the student council, he would have to learn how to co-participate in these communities. As such his periphery and centre was different to that perceived by Hassan, or for instance Marie, who - used to being the serious, responsible girl - was seamlessly participating appropriately in this context.

Departmental meeting

At other student council meetings, I generally experienced a lot of deliberation, but surprisingly never a single vote after the election of the chairman. This pattern of staying clear of actual voting was something I also observed in the majority of other formal meetings at the school, and the following extract from a departmental meeting exemplifies why this might be the case.

At this departmental meeting in the in-schooling (year 0-3), the teachers discussed everything from shared activities between the classes, to problems with individual children. The relevant discussion occurred halfway through the meeting, as the teachers brought up the issue of *fællessang* (communal singing)[69].

> Mette (Danish teacher): "*Everyone should be able to fit in a weekly 20 min*" (of all in-schooling children singing together in the morning)

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[69] As opposed to actual music-lessons, which are already installed in a one-hour-a-week-lesson (further to the suggested communal singing).

Sofie (math teacher): "*I don't see how music is good for maths, if I have to take out 20% of the time...*"

Julie and Mette (both Danish teachers): "*But it has been proven that music is good for learning!*"

Sofie and David (both PE and maths teacher): "*Well, in that case, we might as well say everybody should go for a weekly 20min run?*"

Tina: "*Come on! There's a lot of music in maths*"

Sofie: "*Not in my lessons*"

Charlotte (the supply teacher): "*Could we not make it voluntary?*"

Julie (who is acting as chair for this meeting): "*Now we make a decision*"

Sofie: "*If we agree to do this, I will take it up with the management*" [She is getting visibly angry]

[By now the close-knit teacher group had divided into two groupings: for and against]

David: "*It's like singing in Bakken[70] its lovely, but you are not always in Bakken... There are simply too many other social things we have to cover, and there is already not enough focus on the academic side of things.*"

Birgit: "*Ok, how about the first Friday every month?*"

Charlotte: "*That's stingy*"

Sofie: "*Are you saying I am stingy?*"

Charlotte: "*I'm just trying to say that it is a shame if it is only one Friday a month*" [very emotional, upset, tears in her eyes]

Karen + Tina: "*You have to think about the social aspect of being able to sit down properly... don't you remember the brain scientist who visited us[71]... he spoke of all the positive influences of music!*"

[The teachers began to reach an agreement...]

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[70] Amusement park
[71] At their monthly school pedagogic seminar

Sonja: "*Ok, well then the first Friday is compulsory and the remainder voluntary.*"

Laura: "*I think we have reached a fair compromise here... perhaps a transition phase*"

Sofie: "*I just think that you turn it a bit, we are sitting here as math-teachers, and we have just 5 lessons a week... we are not in the same situation as Danish teachers*" [Who have more lessons every week]

Tina: "*Now I think that you are turning it around... its not about 'so long as it is not my subject losing out'*"

[Some of the teachers who have not been actively involved in the debate start murmuring that the chair of the meeting has to stop this discussion.]

Julie (again): "*NOW we make a decision...*"

The debate runs out, no decision is made...

Daniella: "*Lets all have a* tudekiks" – [a 'cry biscuit' – meaning something along the lines of – 'stop whining, lets have a biscuit']

Daniella's sarcastic comment eases the atmosphere, and the teachers move on to a new topic...

The structure of this debate resembled very closely what I often experienced in the student council and elsewhere in smaller councils and boards. Making decisions, i.e. voting, was often delayed until there was a sense that people generally agreed. If this atmosphere of consensus did not arrive, then voting would often not take place, and the discussion would continue at a later meeting, when the participants had had time to think. The issue of *fællessang* (communal singing) was something the teachers felt very strongly about. The science teachers felt that their teaching could not cope with yet another *dannelse* project, and threatened to take it to the management, should their academic programme be further encroached upon. Meanwhile, other teachers believed that singing together was truly something important, which would benefit the entire education of the students, to the extent that leaving it out would be almost detrimental to the child's potential development. Because this was a topic the

teachers fell very passionate about– it was impossible to reach a consensus. The conclusion of the discussion with a sarcastic remark re-installed harmony, whereas a vote would have emphasised the divide between the teachers and their ideological convictions[72].

School board

The above example illustrated that retaining harmony is one reason why Denmark is a deliberative democracy. Previously in this chapter, it was discussed that to have a deliberative democracy, active co-citizens are necessary. *Folkeskolen* offers another avenue in which to create such individuals, not just in terms of making students democratic co-citizens, but also in terms of offering a space in which the parents can participate - the school board.

By Skolen consisted of 600 students, and as the first school board meeting of the year was open to all the parents, one can assume that there could be up to 1200 parents wanting to participate in such a meeting. The meeting had been moved from the teacher's lounge to the gymnastics hall to allow space for approximately 400 parents. Before the meeting everyone agreed that it was probably a pretty good estimate that a third of the parents would choose to participate (after all the class parents' meetings were just after the school board meeting, and these were 'compulsory' for the parents to attend). However, only 50 parents showed up, most of them in couples, and ten of them were already in the school board. This meant that out of 600 students, a maximum of 50 students were represented via their parents, a meagre 8% of the parent body.

I thought of Fogh Rasmussen's statement of Denmark as world champions of democracy, and came to the conclusion that the parents from this school were probably just not part of that statistic. Levinson observes that recent scholarship has pointed out how we have moved further and further away from *citizenship* (2005:337)

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[72] Throughout this thesis, I will attempt to communicate a clearer understanding of why it is considered important to retain this illusion of harmony.

towards Idiocy, or *idiotes* - the Greek term for people who fail to exercise their political intelligence (Miller, 2003:48); Parker (2005) calls this separation and self-centeredness.

At the meeting, Søren, the headmaster, applauded those of the parents who had shown up. He argued that the school board was not just about values; it was about principles – the democratic conversation. He said that it was founded in the idea that the best argument wins, and that it was of utmost importance to have this space to make sure the headmaster would not end up as a 'Sun King' (reference to King Louis XIV). Søren's understanding of what makes a good leader was very much in line with Pat Mahony's comparison of school leadership and democratic processes in the Danish and the English school system. Mahony found that in England, parents strongly associated effective leadership with 'assertive and strong leadership', whereas in Denmark the parents would expect that good headmasters would be 'co-operative and collaborative' (1998:311).

At the meeting Søren continued to talk about the importance of the parents' involvement with the school board.

> Søren: *"… And what is more important than your children and their education? You are role models; you should be a part of the democratic process... Otherwise we will end up with a society where no one wants to participate! (…) You may ask yourself – is it not just some kind of pseudo-democracy, but I definitely DO NOT think this is the case! You can get far with a constructive debate!"*

Denmark, world champions in democracy?

I started this chapter with Anders Fogh Rasmussen's bold statement, that 'Denmark is world champion in democracy'. I have illuminated the idea of democracy, both from a historical point of view, but also as lived in everyday life at the *folkeskole*. The remainder of this thesis will further illuminate the practice of democracy and perhaps give us an indication of whether or not the Danish *folkeskole* is successful in producing democratic welfare citizens.

We discussed how the Danish *folkeskole* could be seen as a 'playpen of democracy' in which students can practice being and becoming democratic welfare co-citizens. As an overarching theoretical framework for this, I discussed this process in relation to Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of 'communities of practice' (which in this example may be the democratic welfare state) and 'legitimate peripheral participation' through which the students, as they become more knowledgeable and decipher the appropriate modes for co-participation move toward the centre of practice (both in terms of participation, and understanding). Hence, we followed the students' engagement with the concept of democracy from the discussions during everyday lessons (during the co-citizenship week), to the deliberations during class's hour, and the elections in the Student Council. The examples served to show how the students were introduced to a deliberative democratic tradition, in which the co-citizen is expected to participate actively and in respect of his fellow co-citizens. This deliberative tradition was also visible in the meetings of the teachers – where the discussion on communal singing illuminated the importance of reaching a consensus, rather than merely a majority decision. Lastly, we briefly saw how Søren, the headmaster, emphasised the importance of the democratic conversation – however to an audience, who represented less than 10% of the parent body. There appears to be a marked difference between the engagement of the school, and the engagement of the parents, when it comes to taking an active role in what we may call the local level of democracy (which is what this particular chapter has predominantly discussed). The question subsequently remains, is Denmark a 'world champion in democracy'?

In 2010 another report came out, 'The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study', which focused on year 8's (i.e. 14 year olds) from 38 countries[73]. The report showed Denmark in shared first place with Finland when it came to democracy and co-citizenship. In the report it furthermore stated that the Danish teachers and students experienced *folkeskolen* as an open and anti-authoritarian school environment with strong democratic ideals for how to co-participate. Jens Bruun (2010), researcher at the Danish Institute for Education, and in charge of the collection of Danish data,

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[73]http://www.dpu.dk/aktuelt/nyheder/nyhedsvisning/artikel/danske_skoleelever_er_verdensmestre_i_demokrati/

suggested that the results were due to traditional ideals of egalitarianism and participation providing a good social climate.

Significantly the report furthermore pointed out that, while immigrants do not perform as well (in terms of democracy) as their classmates with an ethnic Danish background, they do perform better than immigrants in other countries, even better than natives in other countries. Bruun argued that the success of Denmark in the report was primarily due to a school culture in which the children were not merely taught 'how' to act and fit into society. In *folkeskolen*, the students were taught to reflect and ask 'why' – and the why is at the very core of democracy[74]. Bruun concluded: 'The results are unique and reflect that democracy is a way of life in Denmark'[75].

From an anthropological point of view, the statement that someone could be a world champion in democracy is not very useful. This is firstly because of the mass of contending conceptions of what democracy is. But it is also because the way citizens enact it, actively and/or passively, varies just as much as the definitions. While this chapter has provided a glimpse into the way that democracy is practised and lived in everyday life at the *folkeskole,* this thesis as a whole aims to provide a better understanding of what democracy and citizenship mean in a broader Danish context, by taking into account the many aspects that are necessarily deeply connected to these. The following chapters will as such follow up on many of the issues brought to the fore in this chapter, namely equality, ethnicity, morality, public/private discourses, along with the thread that connects all of these: *hygge*, which will be considered next.

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[74] The 'why' above the 'how' also came out strongly in my fieldwork.
[75] http://www.dpu.dk/aktuelt/nyheder/nyhedsvisning/artikel/danske_skoleelever_er_verdensmestre_i_demokrati/

Chapter VI: *Hygge*

"Nu skal vi jo heller ikke glemme at hygge os" or
"Now, we mustn't forget to stay cosy"

In the last chapter we saw how democracy is part and parcel of what Danes consider to be characteristic of the Danish social and political universe. In this chapter we will investigate another cultural trait of Denmark and Danishness. This is the concept of *hygge*, a trait which came to penetrate nearly every aspect of my ethnographic observations in the Danish *folkeskole,* whether through teaching appropriate conduct and/or general ideas, or in terms of understanding "Danishness" in general.

The Danish concept of *hygge* has often been identified as one of the key characteristics of Danish culture with a clear correlation to the cultural historical narrative of Denmark (Hansen 1980; Jenkins 2011; Reddy 1992; Linnet 2011; Knudsen 1996; and Berdichevsky 2011). But further to social scientists viewing *hygge* as an important cultural concept, it has been observed that Danes themselves will often identify this specific cultural trait as essential to what it means to be Danish - to the extent that the very concept of *hygge* in itself is said to shed light on the essence of the Danish soul (Boye 2009).

In order to be considered a conducive learning environment in the Danish context, the *folkeskole* itself must be experienced as familiar and *hyggelig*. But furthermore, if *hygge* is indeed part of a wider cultural historical narrative of Denmark, and if it is an important understanding of how to appropriately interact, then *hygge* as a social practice is important in the socialisation of the student into a successful citizen, and hence a strong nation.

The fact that *hygge* is an important social practice in terms of what it means to be a Danish citizen, will be illuminated by the different cultural analytical frameworks through which *hygge* will be discussed in this chapter. Approaching the notion of *hygge* from the perspective of a multidimensional framework allows me to understand

the many facets of how it exists in the everyday interactions, sometimes in a relationship with nationalism, as shown through Michael Billig's (1995) framework of 'banal nationalism', which is concerned with what he calls 'the ideological habits of the everyday'. My ethnography will show that *hygge* is one such 'habit', taken for granted in everyday situations. I will argue that it is exactly this taken-for-granted-ness which makes it a powerful concept, and in view of 'banal nationalism' - along with other cultural analytical frameworks investigated throughout the chapter, such as 'the synthetic image' (Needham 1978), 'interiority' (Linnet 2011; forthcoming) which propose a creation of boundaries through a celebration of in-between-ness, and 'cultural intimacy' (Herzfeld 2005) - it tells us much about Denmark and Danes.

From an etymological point of view, we can observe that the word *hygge* originates in the Old Norse *Huggja (*thought, mind, and courage). The contemporary Danish word *hygge*, was however borrowed from Norwegian in the late 18[76] century. During this time, *Hygge* meant to console, to encourage, and was an expression of general well-being (Levisen 2010; Hansen 1980; Boye 2009). While Norwegians still have the word *hygge* in their vocabulary, they have today more or less replaced it with *koseligt*, and in Sweden they have the expression *mysigt* to designate a similar phenomenon. Both of these terms carry the meaning of homeness, warmth, and well-being (and hence are similar to the Danish use of *hygge)*. However, in general it is agreed that *hygge* (or the comparable expression) is most important to Danes as the word is used much more frequently, embodies more meanings, and – as we shall see in the ethnography that follows - is more actively cherished as explicitly Danish by the native population[77].

The Danish *hygge* has no direct translation into English, as it embodies a range of meanings and associations. The American anthropologist Judith F. Hansen (1980:58) suggests that notions of comfort, cosiness, cheerfulness and friendliness all play into the meaning of *hygge*. Linnet (Forthcoming:172) suggests that *hygge* can roughly be translated into a sense of "cosy tranquil togetherness". In my fieldwork at a Danish *folkeskole*, and from observations of Danish society at large[78], I have observed *hygge*

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[76] While Norway was still part of the Danish kingdom.
[77] Stephen M. Borish mentions that this is indeed the case in Norway at least (1991:276).
[78] Here I am thinking not only of the one year spent doing fieldwork, but refer also to my own origins and my memories of Danish society throughout my childhood and teenage years.

as being essentially either a style of social interaction, an atmosphere and/or a state of being. It can be observed both in terms of its meaning as a verb, 'to *hygge'* and as an adjective, "to be/or to have it *hyggeligt*'. Consequently a location, a person, meetings and events can equally be '*hyggelige*'. In terms of *folkeskolen*, the classroom and most interactions within the school *should* furthermore be *hyggelige*.

Hygge in a cultural analytical framework

Much literature and poetry has discussed this culture-specific characteristic, and general social studies concerned with Denmark and Danes have all mentioned *hygge* as a specific cultural trait. It is therefore curious that only in recent years, and still rarely, social scientific research has been conducted placing *hygge* at the centre of various Danish phenomena[79].

While this chapter will not provide any final reason, nor evidence for why this is the case, I will suggest that it may be due to the status of *hygge* as a less defined concept. *Hygge* is indeed an abstract concept, and a full theoretical understanding of the phenomenon is consequently difficult to achieve.

Heidi Boye (2009:96) argues that *hygge* is a construction based in the Danish cultural universe; among Danes, there is a common understanding of the phenomenon, making each individual capable of assessing whether a situation is *hyggelig* or not. McCracken (1989), Pennartz (1999), and Linnet (2011) have all noticed that *hygge,* and notions similar to *hygge* in other cultural contexts *homeyness* (In Canada) and *gezelligheid* (In the Netherlands) are in all cultural contexts easy to identify, however, subjects can never quite explain *why* something is *hyggeligt (*more on these notions in a later section). As such *hygge* is identified as distinctively Danish, and part of what it means to be Danish – and it is as a lived concept taken for granted by the Danish population in any and most everyday situations (Reddy 1992; Hansen 1980; Linnet 2011 and Jenkins 2011). On the other hand, most people render *hygge* insignificant in terms of its capability to say something profound and meaningful about 'Danishness'.

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[79] At the moment of writing, I have only been able to locate one author who has published specifically on the subject, the marketing anthropologist Jeppe Trolle Linnet (2011), who writes about *hygge* in the context of consumption. And through personal communication with Linnet, I have gained access to two other recent Danish theses: Heidi Boye 2009, who writes about the meaning of *hygge* in relation to food consumption; and Carsten Levisen 2011, a linguist researching the social linguistic meaning of some generally accepted keywords in Danish studies, amongst other *hygge*.

This is true in academia as well. Following a recent talk I did at The Danish School of Education, a fellow Danish academic commented that, not everyone finds Denmark or the Danish *folkeskole hyggelig*, and that the whole concept is meaningless and too undefined as a category for interpretation of 'Danishness'.

Indeed, elements of what one Danish person may find *hyggelig* another might dismiss as the opposite. So for instance, while everyone agrees that eating together with close friends is generally *hyggeligt,* They do not necessarily agree on **what** it is *hyggeligt* to eat, **how** it is *hyggeligt* to eat, or **where** it is *hyggeligt* to eat. In this thesis it is exactly this degree of abstractedness, lack of definition, and the idea 'that not everyone find the same things *hyggelige'* that leads me to perceive of this concept as particularly potent to understanding the deeper cultural dynamics at play in how the Danish *folkeskole* and Danish society at large is structured.

This understanding of *hygge*, led me to consider it in terms of Needham's (1978) 'Synthetic Image'. Galt (1982) discusses the Synthetic Image as a concept that allows one to observe a 'cluster of "disparate phenomena" grouped together under a regularly occurring, empirically observable label' (Galt 1982:669). Galt speaks of the 'evil eye' as an example of a synthetic image – the idea of the 'evil eye' is widespread throughout the Circum-Mediterranean area. For instance two fishermen, one from Sicily, and one from Tunisia may meet on the open sea and discuss the evil eye as a broad metaphor explaining the cause of ill fortune. Though both understand what each other is referring to, they may not agree on the specifics of what exactly constitutes this evil eye. As such synthetic images persist through time and space due to their stimulation of the human cultural imagination, allowing the image to be integrated through whatever modification is needed for a particular culture to receive them. Galt calls this kind of integration the 'construction of a synthetic image' (*Ibid*.). For the image to persist, there must however be some kind of primary factors (or building blocks) from which the image is composed. These must have qualities of simplicity and immediacy that will 'capture the imagination' (*Ibid.*).

In a Danish context I believe that *hygge* is such a synthetic image. It consist of some primary building blocks, i.e. warmth, well-being, and cosiness, but these may in turn be further interpreted and integrated disparately into various cultural/social contexts. However, not everything can, or should necessarily be placed in *one* cultural analytical

framework, and just as *hygge* from both an etymological and social point of view embodies a wide range of meanings, no one analytical framework will be identified in this chapter to explain and understand this phenomenon. The analytical frameworks alluded to in this chapter will subsequently all be of the same inclusive character as the 'synthetic image' – because this is exactly what *hygge* is: vague, everyday, generally acknowledged, and under-defined - and hence, I suggest, very powerful.

I will let my ethnography guide the following section, with the purpose of unpacking what *hygge* is (or can be). I will then explore various cultural analytical frameworks, such as 'social competence', 'interiority', and 'banal nationalism' - to illuminate the deeper meanings of this concept as we encounter it in various contexts. All of this will be with the purpose of showing how *hygge* is indeed a key characteristic of Danish culture, a determinant of understanding appropriate participation in the Danish community, and not least a characteristic which is widely played out in the context of the Danish *folkeskole*. In other words, and as mentioned above, I will observe *hygge* as a social practice which is important in the socialisation of students into successful citizens, and hence a strong nation.

Christmas as the epitome of hygge

That Christmas represents the greatest concentration of *hygge* in the general Danish mentality has been noted in many social scientific accounts of Denmark and Danes, previous to this one (amongst others: Hansen 1980; Linnet 2009; Borish 1991; Levisen 2011). December is the darkest month of the year, and it is not unusual for the sun to stay absent for days. However December is also *lysenes fest* the 'festival of lights'; Hansen (1980:69) suggests that the celebration of light serves as an 'antidote to the depressing gloom of the season'. Stephen Borish (1991:264) has indeed suggested that the very definition of *hygge* is closely related to festivity. I will however agree more with Anne Knudsen (1996) who rather claims that festivities, such as Christmas, serve as the epitome of *hygge*. Perhaps it is not necessarily the festive aspect alone that makes the month of December the peak of *hygge*; other important factors, which are also mentioned by these authors, include 'light', oral consumption, as in food and alcohol, and not least *nærvær*, 'closeness'.

The following is an ethnographic account of Christmas as an expression of *hygge*. The purpose is both to illustrate the points made above and to provide a holistic ethnographic illustration of *hygge*, before exploring the concept further in terms of various cultural analytical frameworks.

Christmas in folkeskolen

> It was a cold winter morning in the suburbs of Copenhagen, Denmark. Christmas was approaching, and it was on this, the second to last school day of the term, that I entered By Skolen for the first time, roughly a year before beginning my fieldwork for this thesis[80].
>
> Outside it was pitch-black darkness, the sun wouldn't rise for another two hours, it was 7.45am on the 21st of December 2007, the shortest day of the year *Vintersolhverv* (solstice), or as the Vikings called it *Jol*[81]. After this day the longest night of the year would follow, and then slowly the days would expand by roughly three minutes per day.
>
> It was a relief to enter the warm in-schooling department coming from the cold Danish winter weather. I had been given the opportunity to follow year 1.C and their class teacher Heidi in the days leading up to the Christmas holidays. Entering the classroom, I found myself momentarily blinded, "*come in*," answered Heidi, "*it's not because we can't afford electricity, it's just that we find it 'hyggeligere' in these December mornings to begin the day by candlelight*".

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[80] The first visit to By Skolen was in the context of a short-term ethnographic research assignment in the course of my Masters.

[81] The Danish word for Christmas is *jul*, and this comes from the Vikings' celebrations of the return of the sun. It has also been suggested that the actual celebration of the birth of Jesus, was placed on the 24th of December to make it more appealing to people celebrating solstice.

Light, in the context of *hygge* was a repeated theme - particularly during Christmas. Further to the candlelit mornings that I experienced on my first visit to the school, December would be characterised by the lighting of candles. There would be the lighting of the calendar-candle, which could be found in every classroom, the teachers' lounge, and school office. The calendar-candle counted the days left until Christmas by allowing one to follow the progress of December by following the numbers of the side of the candle, as they were slowly melted away. Other than the daily lighting of the candle in the classroom, there was the weekly lighting of Advent candles. In the in-schooling department, a decoration with four large candles was displayed in the in-schooling assembly area. Each candle illustrated one of the four Advent Sundays leading up to Christmas. Every Friday before Advent, the in-schooling met in the assembly area and lit one, two, three, or four of these candles, depending how far along in December they were. During these meetings, the students sang Christmas songs, and a teacher would read a story aloud to them[82].

Through my own observations, and those of other anthropologists, for example Hansen (1980) and Linnet (2011), it is evident that light can be facilitated as a primary aid through which to visualise some of the meanings of *hygge*. While this chapter is using Christmas and December as the primary ethnographic example of *hygge,* this is not the only time of year in which Danes like to light a candle. According to Linnet (forthcoming:198), Danish people are the largest consumers of candle lights in the world with a 3.5kg consumption per person, per year on average.

The significance of candlelight is multifaceted, and together constitutes part of what is needed to create a *hyggelig* situation. First of all, to truly create *hygge,* notions of both darkness and light are important in establishing just the right balance of not too bright, not too dark. As such a fully lit classroom is not automatically *hyggeligt*, while a candlelit classroom is. The candle or fireplace, as the centre of attention, draws people to sit closely to each other, get warm, obviates loud speaking or big movements and gives a sense of a safe and bounded centre. Linnet (2011:34) argues that subdued

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[82] The last chapter drew attention to an in-schooling meeting at which the teachers were discussing the extent to which these 'in-schooling assemblies' should be held. During the month of December, the weekly singing and story-telling session during the second lesson on Fridays, was however beyond debate.

lighting both encourages private conversation, but simultaneously limits intensity, as the candle allows the person to direct his/her gaze towards the flame. The flickering light of the flame provides at once an illusion of closeness and distance. Hansen (1980) argues that the focus on 'a little light' is a direct allusion to the characteristic of both Danish society in general and *hygge* in particular, as it shows that 'moderation again defines the desirable range' (*Ibid*. 69). This notion of moderation, and its link to egalitarianism is one that will be explored further in the next section, and also more substantively in a later chapter.

The entire month of December is full of various rituals and traditions, which underpin the idea of *hygge*. For the purpose of this thesis, however, it is impossible to cover them all. As such I have chosen to briefly outline a few of these traditions, and cover one - the Christmas Lunch - in more detail.

The arrival of Christmas

To signify the coming of Christmas, there is no teaching on the 1st of December, and the entire school day is devoted to making Christmas decorations to display in the classrooms, in order to make the rooms really *hyggelige.* I started my day with 0.Y, as they were listening to Christmas music and eating *pebernødder*, a traditional Christmas biscuit. Their class-teacher had brought in various templates for decorations – primarily *nisser* (Christmas elves, or Santa's helpers), angels, hearts and stars. When I joined 3.X after the first two lessons, I observed that they were doing much the same. Their class-teacher had however decided to do their Christmas decorations together with 1.A, as the class teachers of these two classes were very close friends. Every time I left one class to go join another, the students would ask me to stay with them, because it was so *hyggeligt* to have me around. In a sense I experienced that I had become part of the classes I observed, and for these *hyggelige* occasions, everyone must be present to maximise the *hygge* that closeness with your own group brings. To cause minimal disruption, I consequently moved between the classes during their breaks – and after the lunch break, I joined year 7.Z to help them finish their decorations.

For some of the students, a highlight of the day was when, at the end of the day, a committee of students from the student council observed the various classrooms and announced a winner for 'best decorations' (the prize being *æbleskiver* for the whole class, traditional Danish Christmas cakes, similar to donuts). The year 7's were very competitive, and really wanted to win the prize. Hence they decorated their classroom quite elaborately, including a Christmas tree donated by one of the parents[83], and a lot of students were making decorations for the tree. In general, year 7.Z's decorations were elaboratate and inventive. For instance they asked me to make a gigantic *nisse* for their wall, and it ended up being a *nisse*-couple, whom we decided to decorate further as *nisse*-Britney Spears and *nisse*-Justin Timberlake (two famous popstars). The class did not sit down together to make the decorations as I had observed in the other two classes, but had instead spread into smaller groups – and it was evident that their teacher thought of the day as a bit of a waste of school-time. She did, however, participate in the decorating, and furthermore did so with a good mood – after all, it was *hyggeligt* to decorate the classroom, and to celebrate that it was now December. Despite their efforts, year 7.Z did not win the competition, and as I checked my Facebook in the evening (my use of Facebook is discussed in Chapter IV), I could tell that a lot of the students had spent the afternoon brooding over why they did not win, as they 'obviously' deserved to do so. The reason that the students thought they should have won was that they had filled their entire classroom with decorations, including fancy and expensive ones. What the students in their competitive eagerness had, however, forgotten was that the 'best decorated classroom' was not determined on the basis of the bulk of decorations. The selecting committee emphasised that the winners of the decoration competition, was not merely based on the quantity and quality of the decorations – but rather on how *hyggelig* the classroom was.

Again the idea of moderation came out strongly. A *hyggelig* classroom was not too much, or too little, but just the right amount of decorations. It was not loud and competitive like year 7.Z, but rather simple and uncluttered. The fact that the competition in itself was not supposed to be important, was made evident by the fact that the price was *æbleskiver*, a relatively low value prize, both in monetary terms and

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[83] The Danish Christmas tree is a live pine tree, which, to be considered beautiful, must be at least the height of a man. These trees can easily cost around £50-60.

social terms (as most of the students would have been eating candy and Christmas cakes throughout the day anyway).

Everyday Rituals

The 1st December signifies the beginning of Christmas, but there are also certain rituals, in the forms of everyday events, leading up to Christmas, which a majority of the Danish population will follow. Most of these events are repeated both in the homes of the students and at the school, and in this section I will outline some of the most significant of these events.

Further to the lighting of candles mentioned above, a more country-specific tradition of Denmark, is that most children will get a small present everyday from the 1st to the 24th of December, and a slightly bigger present on the Advent Sundays[84]. This ritual of gift giving during December is repeated in *folkeskolen*. In both 0.Y and 3.X (along with most of the other in-schooling and middle-school classes) all students will bring one present for the 1st of December, usually the teacher will have specified a price range for the present (£2), to make sure that everyone gets 'similar' presents, at least in terms of monetary value. These presents are then placed either on a string along the wall, in the windowpane, or in a big bag. Every day during December one or two students get to pick one present. This is a hugely popular activity, particularly amongst the children of an ethnic origin other than Danish and children from families who are often categorised as 'socially deprived'. Often their families do not practice the same traditions as the majority Danish middle-class families, and this is particularly evident in a month such as December.

The most important everyday aspect of Christmas is however, the Christmas calendar TV-show. A Christmas calendar show is similar to an Advent calendar, in the sense that a new episode is aired every night from the 1st to the 24th of December. Along with the TV-show is a paper calendar, where every door opened portrays an image corresponding to the episode shown on TV that night. Ever since the beginning in the 1960's all profits have been donated to child-related projects in the developing

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[84] Some families choose to give presents only on Advent Sundays (mostly for older children).

world[85]. The Christmas Calendar TV-shows are in the shape of a well-produced drama, following a clear narrative, almost always related to *nisser* and most of them with clear educational focus on morals and values. A majority of these shows are filled with songs, and every one of them has a specific soundtrack produced for that show, which will always be in the top10 radio hit lists.

One such song is from 'Alletiders Jul' (The Greatest Christmas) – and the chorus goes as follows:

Når man er flere der har det rart
på samme tid det samme sted
i ro og fred
så mærker man en lille smule lykke
bar' et lille stykke
åh, det er hygge

"When people are with others, feeling good
at the same time in the same place
undisturbed and in peace
then they feel a tiny bit of happiness (lykke)
just a little piece / oh, that's *hygge*" [86]

The emphasis on *hygge*, also in *folkeskolen* means that a lot of 'first lessons of the day' are spent discussing what the children got as calendar presents and what happened on last night's episode of the Christmas calendar show on TV. While both of these activities were meant to be *hyggelige,* they excluded the children who did not get these presents and/or who did not watch the TV-show. As such, something that was meant to be *hyggeligt* could end up marginalising children who were already in a

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[85] Since the 1990's, both the chocolate and TV-calendar concepts have been elaborated, and further to these, there are now scratch card calendars and adults Christmas calendar TV-shows on late at night as well.

[86] Chorus lyrics from Martin Miehe-Renard's *Hygge* (1994) – translation Levisen 2011:90. This particular show follows a young hiphop *nisse* called Pyrus in his search for how Christmas has developed throughout time.

minority, and thereby peripherally positioned in the classroom. At the same time, engaging in these practices in class was an active attempt at including these children. For instance some classes showed the Christmas show in the classroom or read aloud from a similar kind of book with one chapter per day. This was usually done while the students were eating their lunches, and often it was done by candlelight only.

One morning I entered the classroom of O.B, much in the same fashion as two years before (described above). All the children were sitting in the *hyggehjørne,* the *hygge-snug*. The lights were off, except from a string of fairy lights. Karen, their class-teacher, had been reading aloud from a Christmas-calendar book – and now it was time for Viktor (who had received a present on the previous day) to pick a name from the bowl. The students held their breath in anticipation, Viktor read Yasmin's name and she excitedly jumped up to get her present. Yasmin's parents have a limited Danish vocabulary, and are practicing Muslims. Therefore Yasmin did not participate when the class discussed the Christmas calendar, nor did she get 'calendar presents' at home. As she rapidly opened her present revealing its content, a pink Hello Kitty book, she let out a gasp of excitement. Throughout the rest of the day she treated the book with the greatest care, and took every opportunity to have a little peek at it during the lessons (the issue of ethnic diversity, also in terms of traditions, will be explored further in Chapter X).

Julefrokost

A major tradition in December, is the *julefrokost*, the 'Christmas Lunch'. Every workplace, sports club, organisation and family will have a Christmas lunch in the weeks leading up to Christmas, and as such the weekends soon fill up with these 'lunches'. Regardless of whether it is with family, friends, work, or organisations, a Christmas lunch is a very traditional affair, and follows a rigid set of rules regarding food, drinks, and to a certain extent, games.

First the seafood is served; shrimps, tuna-mousse, plaice fillets - pickled, smoked, curried, and fried herring – along with specific accompaniment. Then the meat; beef medallions, pork chops, *frikadeller* (meatballs), roast beef, pork-liver-spread, and sausages together with selected salads, caramelised potatoes, and rye bread. Lastly, there will be cheese, fruit salads and rice pudding. With this feast comes an abundance of Danish Christmas beer (which is darker and sweeter than the normal lager), and

strong *snaps*, a strong and clean spirit – believed to aid the digestion of fatty foods. Christmas lunches have a reputation for being excessively *hyggelige*, a time at which one interacts with colleagues in relaxed and informal surroundings, where old friends catch up or when extended families enjoy traditions practised over generations.

While other studies have touched only briefly upon the concept of *hygge,* they all discuss the importance of food as a significant ingredient in procuring a *hyggelig* situation. Hansen (1980:63) writes that while elements of *hygge* depend on the context, it is often related to 'satisfaction of oral appetites'. Boye (2009) and Linnet (forthcoming:181) take this a step further and discusses how particularly unhealthy foods, such as snacks, candy, and cake accompany *hygge*[87]. Often, it is an abundance of these foods that makes it *hyggeligt* – '*Der skal ikke mangle noget'* (nothing should be missing). Saying 'no thank you' when offered food in a *hyggelig* situation is considered impolite, and ruins the idea of *hygge*, as it suggests self-obsession or self-control, and hence withdrawal from friendly, relaxed, and informal sociality. Further to this, there is a general agreement that *hygge* is fundamentally not unhealthy 'It is after all not just the body being treated, it is the mind too' (Boye 2009:235 – my translation). As such *hygge* in itself is considered mentally healthy, while only the social expectation of over-indulgence is unhealthy.

For instance, the class's hour, which was discussed in the previous chapter, would often begin with a slice of cake. It had been a long-standing tradition that students took turns to bring in cake every week for this meeting, Recently year groups' focus on health had led to some classes changing the cake list to a fruit list. For instance, in year 6.Z every second week was cake-week and every other week, fruit-week (this had been decided by the parents at one of the bi-annual parents' meetings). However, the days on which fruit was served were never considered as *hyggelige* as the days with cake, and some teachers wouldn't even think of switching cake for fruit[88]. The fact that cake was more cosy than fruit, could also be seen in the way the students and teachers would make a point of informing me whenever they had cake at their class-meeting (or

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[87] This is also noticed by Boye 2009, who furthermore states that while food adds to the atmosphere of *hygge*, *hygge* does not depend of the presence of food (*Ibid*. 211)
[88] I discuss with some of the teachers, that if health is a problem, it will most likely not be the weekly slice of cake during the class's hour, which is the main cause for unhealthiness.

for instance if one of the students, as tradition dictates, were handing out birthday candy). As mentioned in the methodological chapter, my role at the school, particularly for year 3.C, was embedded in ideas of *hygge*. Hence it was a standing joke, that I would get very upset if I missed out on cake or candy.

Oral consumption is then one of the only aspects of *hygge* which seem not to be marked by the idea of moderation so strongly characterising all other aspects of *hygge* - at least in terms of quantity. In terms of quality, however, it is expected that the served food is neither too fancy, nor too crude. Linnet (2010) calls it 'tea lights, lasagne and a cheap Bordeaux'. *Hygge* must never become pretentious, the meal should not be at the centre of attention, the centre must always be the togetherness, the 'now'.

Again the school mimicked wider traditions. The in-schooling classes I was following arranged a Christmas-breakfast morning for parents, students and teachers, and in Chapter IX I will also discuss the Christmas-breakfast I had with year 7.Z to mark the end of the year. Further to the breakfasts, the year 3's had arranged a big 'traditional' Christmas lunch, just for the students and their teachers. The lessons surrounding their lunchtime break three days before the Christmas holiday were used for the event. Everybody had to bring one dish, which, when put together, would produce one big buffet. There was no coordination of who-brings-what from the teachers. Firstly, because it was anticipated that the food the students would bring would be food they would themselves want to eat, and secondly, I experienced it as a sign of an expectancy that parents would be aware of what it was appropriate to bring.
The students were excited about the Christmas lunch days before the event, discussing the food they would bring, how much they would bring etc.

On the actual day of the Christmas lunch, the students were sent to the courtyard while the classrooms were arranged. One classroom was used for the buffet, and two others were decorated for the students to sit down and eat. One of the teachers had bought red and green decoration to stick into the trays of the food, signalling whether they were halal (allowed) or haram (forbidden) in relation to Islamic belief (this was necessary as most traditional Danish Christmas foods is made from pork). As such the Muslim children had to stay away from everything with a red decoration (again, the

issue of ethnicity is discussed further in Chapter X). In the courtyard the students were getting impatient, peeking in through the windows. When everything was ready, the students were made to stand in two rows before being allowed to enter the buffet. Three or four children were let in at the time, the Muslim students first, so they could be certain to get food from the halal trays.

While the teachers were making the buffet ready, I noticed another aspect of the meaning of food in relation to *hygge.* The teachers found it very amusing that one of the students had brought pizzas, not in any sense a traditional dish for a Christmas buffet. It was clear that the pizzas were out of place – that they signified something else, but the teachers still just shrugged their shoulders and made them ready at the buffet. Linnet (Forthcoming:190) suggests that homemade food is a symbolic practice through which people *do* their homes (an aspect I shall return to in a following section). Homemade food marks a sphere as warm, personal, and caring - in opposition to non-homey environments, such as the market and mass-produced foods. Again I will argue that this is not as straightforward as it seems. For instance, pizza is by a majority of people considered a very *hyggelig* thing to eat. As a matter of fact, I have never been to another country in which there are as many pizzerias as I found in Denmark[89]. To have a 'pizza-night' is inherently *hyggeligt*. Firstly, buying ready-made food frees time and space to do what is most important in *hygge*, i.e. being together and enjoying the moment. Secondly, pizzerias in Denmark are small family owned businesses – and as such, a pizza comes close to having the same homemade qualities as food made within the home.

Maurice Bloch discusses how some food can be seen to be 'super-conductors of social consubstantiality' (Bloch 1999:143). Commensality, the act of eating together and coming together 'as one', or in the Danish context, feeling togetherness, is one of the most powerful operators of social processes (*Ibid*. 133). Drawing on his long-term fieldwork amongst the Zafimaniry in Madagascar, Bloch suggests that some foods have higher significance, and hence higher social value if they aid in binding people together. The Danish Christmas lunch is to a certain extent an act of commensality, as

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[89] For instance I know that in Hvidovre, the regional area in which I conducted my fieldwork, there are around 30 pizzerias catering to a total population of 49.300.

it binds together the participators – partially through the food they consume (or at least the values these foods represents). However, in contrast to Bloch's study among the Zafimaniry, my study in the Danish *folkeskole* shows that food is not locked in rigid categories, always conveying the same meaning.

As the students enter the 'buffet', the pizza is the first dish to be finished – and we realise that it was Ozlem who brought the pizza. Ozlem's uncle has a pizzeria, and as such, she too has brought 'homemade' food. Again, we can see that what is *hyggeligt* can be interpreted to mean different things in different contexts. Firstly, pizza is not immediately *hyggeligt* in a Christmas lunch context, as it signifies 'matter out of place' (Douglas 1966). It is not assumed to be 'homemade', and hence does not carry the symbolism of caring, intimacy, and warmth that is so essential for Christmas. Outside of a Christmas lunch context, pizza can however be considered *hyggeligt* as it allows a family to focus on the 'togetherness', rather than the cooking. Furthermore pizza is not a straightforward example of non-*homeyness*, firstly as nearly all pizzerias in Denmark are family owned, secondly, in the case of the Christmas lunch – it was 'homemade'.

After the lunch, the students were once again sent into the courtyard, while the teachers cleaned up. One of the teachers noticed how some of the dishes had hardly been touched, and said "*lets just throw it out, it's a pity to send it home, it might upset the parent, now that they made the effort*". Food is only a potent *hygge* symbol in so far as it is an element of *hygge*. Hence after the *hygge* 'ceremony', the food can easily be discarded. Another aspect was that the teachers, while acknowledging that it was a waste of food, agreed that it would be even more of a taboo to send the food home. In a sense, it would be a signal that this particular version of *homeyness,* was not as potent as the others and hence not consumed.

Hygge as etiquette and as cultural capital
Stephen Borish (1991:276) characterises *hygge* as a social competence, allowing a person to interact with peers in appropriate ways. Complete and positive participation and attention is required, and the person is participator and audience alike. In order to succeed in this endeavour there must be an evenness in flow, a 'kind of back and forth dance' of involvement. Joking, mild teasing, story telling, and patience are absolutely

required qualities. These were all factors that I observed being adhered to, both during Christmas, and in most everyday teaching-settings. For instance the first word that the class-teacher explained to the year 0.Y's on their first day of school was *behovsudsættelse* (postponement of needs). Learning to raise their hand and wait their turn were important skills, moreover students were expected to be patient with each other, to participate in class activities and to show that they were actively listening by facing the board.

In the literature review and the last chapter I discussed the role of the school as a socialising and/or civilising institution, and a place in which appropriate and correct participation is transmitted to the students and where the school can be observed as equipping students with the appropriate skills necessary to engage more or less seamlessly with fellow citizens. As also mentioned in the literature review, Pierre Bourdieu's ideas and theories concerning these skills, as pronounced through his theory of capital, are illuminating in the Danish context - even if class-related theories are in a Danish context slightly problematic, taking into consideration that 'class dynamics' did not emerge, during industrialisation, in a comparable way to the rest of Europe (as outlined in the previous chapter and the literature review). Considered ethnographically, then, it may not be useful to view the middle-class as 'a class' in the sense that Bourdieu does (as influenced by his French socio-historic heritage). Rather, it may be more accurate to view contemporary Danish society more in terms of various social groups competing over the value systems, i.e. a society composed of 'social classes', rather than 'economic classes'. This was discussed in the previous chapter too, when the historic underpinnings of the Danish development towards democracy was considered. Here we saw that instead of an increasingly class-divided society, Denmark (while economic classes certainly did exist) developed more towards a tradition of co-operatives and strong labour unions, than could said to be the case in for example France and England (where much class-focused theory originates)[90].

 Thus, while Bourdieu's theories cannot be straightforwardly be applied to the Danish context, notions of capital and the legitimisation of the 'dominant symbolic' are still

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[90] The issue of 'classes' and groups viewed in terms of economic and/or social status, is a topic which will be further investigated in Chapter IX.

relevant. As such, I will suggest that the 'dominant symbolic' is the middle-class, which, through the exercise of *hygge*, reproduces celebrated forms of 'capital', such as egalitarianism. Linnet indeed argues that *hyggelig* sociality is what Danes do 'when they practice egalitarian social patterns in their everyday lives' (2009:22). Linnet (2011; 2009; forthcoming), Hansen (1980), and Jenkins (2011), amongst others, have all commented that what is particular about Danish sociality, and *hygge* especially, is the immediate idealisation of the in-between. In this sense, it is perhaps possible to argue that *hygge* as a facilitator of cultural capital, a social competence or knowledge of etiquette, is more concerned with legitimising the dominance of the middle-class, and egalitarian ideologies, than it is related to upward mobility aspirations.

This is in opposition to Bourdieu's focus on the accumulation and legitimisation of capital in terms of the reproduction of inequalities and the striving towards upper classes. As mentioned above, Bourdieu's theories are still useful when observing that social groupings are still very relevant. As observed in some of the Christmas praxes in the Danish *folkeskole*, *hygge* can also act as a vehicle for social control when it becomes 'a symbolic vehicle for people's criticisms of other people's way of life.' (*Ibid*. 29) and subsequently when it establishes its own hierarchy of attitudes. In most Western countries, equality is taken to mean primarily 'equality of opportunity', particularly in a schooling context. In Scandinavia, however, Gullestad (1992:185) suggests that equality should be linked more to sameness (more on this in Chapter IX). Hence, equality is concerned also with understanding *hygge* in similar ways, which is essential to the concept of *hygge* in itself, as this is concerned with egalitarian togetherness and closeness.

From Bourdieu's point of view, the dominant class will attempt to ensure their domination by reproducing their own values and privileges through the formal institutions. Presupposing that all behaviour is to a certain extent symbolic, and following Bourdieu's general line of argument (as discussed in the literature review), the exercise of *hygge* can perhaps be seen then as 'symbolic violence'. This essentially suggests that the practice of *hygge* is a taken-for-granted everyday enacted cultural practice idealising the in-between, and egalitarian values (as expressed through sameness). Hence, it could be said to be idealising the value set of the majority, the

social class in power, who in a Danish context, as mentioned, can be seen as the middle-class.

The values, with which Bourdieu is extensively preoccupied typically reflect his structuralist, and hence highly deterministic approach, in which the reproduction of inequalities and social stratification is at the centre. Such a perspective is not supported by what *hygge* has been observed to represent so far in this chapter. For example, when discussing Christmas, we saw how the use of candles exemplified the meaning of *hygge* as being related to *nærvær* (closeness), safety, familiarity and peacefulness. As I will discuss below, it is furthermore related to keeping an informal and friendly tone in discussions (as seen in the student council) and limiting the distance in power-relationships, as for example shown in the close teacher-student relationship. Perhaps not all taken-for-granted practices should be interpreted in view of being potential tools for oppression and stratification. Rather than a tool for stratification, *hygge* can be seen as a tool for inclusion or even removal of hierarchy. Thus *hygge* could be merely what it pretends to be, a cosy atmosphere (as explored in the next section) or a value used to disguise cultural 'flaws' (as discussed in a later section), and not a concept prone to resistance and/or a tool for repression (although more on *hygge* in view of ethnic minorities can be found in Chapter X).

I will suggest that *hygge* comes closer to the idea of a collective representation (Durkheim 1912), than a class-specific ideology and/or value. During my research, I observed that *hygge* was used actively in many contexts, with the aim to include everyone, and to provide equal opportunities and sameness (in terms of equality of worth) to all the students. The notion and discussion of hygge as a form of cultural capital, and as a facilitator of equality and/or social hierarchy, will be explored further in the chapter on ethnicity and also in the chapter on egalitarianism. For now I turn to different cultural analytical framework, in order to expand on the understanding of *hygge* in terms of its qualities also as an atmosphere.

Hygge as 'dwelling, interiority, and atmosphere'
Linnet (2011; forthcoming) is the first scholar to have presented and published a theoretical framework through which to observe and understand *hygge*. He suggests

that *hygge* is closely linked with notions of the home, and with notions of atmosphere: 'A place is a total phenomenon, which cannot be reduced to its individual parts without losing its qualitative character. That character is *atmosphere*' (forthcoming:171). According to Linnet, *hygge* is seen as requiring spontaneous mutual involvement and sympathy – a shared orientation towards the here and now. It is defined as being devoid of status competition and allowing one to relax and 'be oneself', while interacting in a friendly, safe, inclusive, good-humoured way, and to be without conflicts or demands (*Ibid*. 172). Further to this Linnet suggest that 'any material or immaterial element is supposed to accompany and support the social, rather than take centre stage.' (*Ibid*. 185). It is as such when the social, spatial, and symbolic forms of interiority interact in a network dynamic, that a *hyggelig* atmosphere arises.

Linnet's point is exemplified in the meanings attached to the Danish word for atmosphere - *stemning*. A positive *stemning* can be related to the many meanings of *stemme* described in the last chapter. Here we established that *stemme* can mean various things in various contexts. For instance 'a voice', 'to vote', 'to tune' and/or 'to be accurate'. In much the same way *stemning* is used to designate atmosphere, and a *hyggelig* atmosphere can be found when things are *just* right, in tune, and the conversation is flowing freely (though not too freely). Linnet (forthcoming) facilitates Heidegger's (1971) term 'dwelling' to describe this perspective of the social flow of *hygge*. He argues that Heidegger writes of dwelling as a gentle attitude or sense of 'moderations that lets people and things come forth in their own way' (*Ibid*. 201). In this sense it is quite similar to that which a positive *stemning* allows in a Danish context. If we think once again about the various rituals during Christmas, such as the Christmas lunch, we see that the stage is set – but only to the extent that people can still fill it with their own interaction. Linnet suggests that the Danish *hygge* may in reality be little else than a particular cultural variant of a universal human ability to create zones for dwelling (*Ibid.* 202).

To allow us to view *hygge* in a wider context, Linnet places it in a theoretical framework of interiority, arguing that *hygge* is most often related to the family and the home. To support his argument he draws on two other pieces of ethnography - that of

Paul J. J. Pennartz (1999) on the Dutch concept of *gezelligheid*, and Grant McCracken's (1989) work on *homeyness* in Canada. Both of these authors have written on how spatial features of 'the dwelling contribute to the experience of atmosphere' (Pennartz 1999:95). Pennartz suggests that atmosphere is a double-sided process, where the atmosphere of a room works on an individual, while simultaneously the individual projects his/her mood on the room. Pennartz is concerned with atmosphere as understood in terms of the Dutch *gezelligheid*, which is similar to the Danish *hygge*. In his study people could often answer where in the house it was cosy, or what time of day was cosy – but never quite formulate why, again highlighting the taken for granted-ness of everyday experiences. Some of the aspects considered cosy were the size the of room, communicating with each other, coming home from work, playing games, and watching TV. McCracken too observed that his subjects 'know *homeyness* when they see it' but they do not always 'have a clear idea of how it is accomplished' (McCracken 1989:170). They then describe *homeyness* and *gezelligheid* in terms of their 'symbolic property', observing the 'meaning and logic that gives a physical property its cultural significance.' (*Ibid.*)

Pennartz' and McCracken's accounts of *gezelligheid* and *homeyness* reflect many of the features of *hygge,* i.e. the use of candles, cosy nooks, food items and various decorations. However, for me, their accounts do not fully embody the meaning of *hygge.* The physical features of the house alone, and the mood of the inhabitants is not all there is to *hygge*.

Linnet agrees, refering to Merleau-Ponty's understanding of atmosphere, he argues that *hygge* (or atmosphere) is not 'inserted in a pre-existing locus of space; it organises a space of planes and fields about itself' (Forthcoming:203). As such *hygge* is not necessarily related to the home, even if it facilitates and catalyses homey sentiments - it rather exists in interplay with interiority. Linnet's use of interiority should consequently be understood as being spatially present somewhere – as in identification and placement; 'The word 'in' points not to space, but to familiarity.' (*Ibid*. 172).

Heidi Boye (2009) observed that in her focus groups there was a significant agreement in what *hygge* meant, despite the individual differences and diverse social

backgrounds of her research participants. She suggests that this homogeneous perception of *hygge* should be found in *hygge's* characteristic as a social practice anchored in Danish culture as an institutionalized phenomenon (as also shown in the Christmas ethnography from above) (*Ibid*. 205). As such *hygge* may be associated with interiority, but it is so as a social practice, which is often transmitted in a schooling context. This was particularly visible in *folkeskolen,* as it mimicked the home to provide a caring and safe learning environment.

Hygge in the classroom

Hygge is indeed important in the classroom context. After allocating new seating arrangements in the classroom of year 7.Z, Sanne (their class teacher) makes the following announcement:

> Sanne (class teacher of year 7.Z): "*We have been talking about how the way that you are sitting in particular groups right now, is not just for the sake of* hygge*, but also so that you can learn to work together and know each other better.*
> *[…] It is important to learn to distinguish between when it is* hyggeligt *and when we have to work and learn, although, if we can* hygge *at the same time as working – then that is good!*"

Osborn *et al*. have argued that classrooms are 'amphitheatres of social action where performances of social and cultural drama are played out on a daily basis.' (2003:102), and moreover that classroom practices are reflections of overarching national values. It indeed appears inevitable that core social values informing a society become embodied historically into the particular educational traditions (*Ibid.* 206) [91]. In a Danish context, as also argued by Sally Anderson (2000), the classroom is arguably such an embodiment.

The Danish classroom is supposed to be a home-away-from-home, and this is expressed and reflected in many aspects of how *folkeskolen* is both physically and

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[91] An example of such a link will be explored in chapter IX, in view of Grundtvig, *dannelse,* and the classroom.

socially located in the Danish landscape. First of all, rather than having subject-specific classrooms, the classes have their own classrooms, between which the teachers move from one lesson to the next. The class can decorate their classroom to their liking, and can bring in additional furniture and fittings if they like[92].

The classroom also mimics *homeyness* by, for instance, having large beanbags at the back of the classroom where you can go have a break from the strain of concentrating during the lessons. Other examples include the younger students changing their outside shoes for slippers before entering the classroom, or older students bringing snacks and drinks into the classroom during their lessons. Furthermore, the relationship between the students and teachers is also supposed to be *hyggelig*, as the teachers, while representing authority to a certain extent, are still not distant authoritarian figures, but attempt to keep a relatively power-neutral friendly relationship with the students[93].

There are multiple ways in which this egalitarian relationship can be observed. Firstly, through the dress code, which is casual and not supposed to differ from what the teacher would wear at home or when socialising with friends. Secondly, by the way students and teachers will call each other by their first names. Thirdly, it is not uncommon for students (and their parents) to call the teacher on their private phone numbers outside of school hours to discuss any concerns they may have. Feeling safe, comfortable, and familiar are key aspects of *hygge*, and hence the relationship one has with the teacher. Sally Anderson too suggests that the teachers have a 'natural authority' rather than being authoritarian, and that this relationship is based on longstanding, close relationships with his/her students, in which mutual respect and dialogue between students and teachers as equals are at the centre (2000:193).

In other words, the classroom and class-teacher allow a close-knit community to arise, in which the members are considered equal. By not exercising teacher-authority directly, but rather facilitating it through the use of their relationship with the

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[92] Sally Anderson too observes that the decorations are an important part of making the classroom feel like 'the place the students live' (2000:103).

[93] Anderson (2000:55;155) observed that the teachers would also act as an alternative family, often discussing 'their children', and 'their classroom' as a space in which they could feel at home. The relationship I observed in my fieldwork was not quite as close, although it would not be unusual to hear the phrase 'my children' or 'Mette's children', when talking about specific classes.

students, the teachers can avoid potential conflicts, and this, according to Anderson, makes space for the *hyggelige* (2000:175).

The understanding of what it is to be *hyggelig* from one classroom to the next differs, and as an anthropologist, it was essential to quickly and swiftly determine what was deemed *hyggeligt* in the particular classroom observed in order to engage appropriately (as also discussed in Chapter IV). For instance my interactions with the year 2's were defined by the massive beanbags in the back of their classroom. This quickly became 'the anthropologist's sanctuary' and whenever there was a natural break during the day, the students would join me for '*hygge* in the beanbags'. As such, my role in the class quickly became that of 'the cosy aunt' or *hyggetante*, and that label stuck with me for the entire year that I observed this class.

As *folkeskolen* focuses more on producing 'learners', rather than 'learning' in itself (as discussed in the previous chapter), the emphasis on presenting learning as a pleasant experience is significant in the Danish school system. One day, a month after beginning fieldwork, I was having lunch with some of the teachers, as we were discussing teaching in the different departments of the school. An out-schooling teacher was expressing her concern with the attitude of the older students:

> Leise: "*I don't know if I can deal with the out-schooling anymore, I think I need to start teaching middle-school – otherwise I will have to do these exams every third year!*"

> Hanne: "*Its similar to being in the in-schooling, a new class every third year who must be introduced to schooling*"

> Me:"*Do you think it is easier in the middle-school because they have already been introduced into the system, and yet it's still not serious business?*"

> Leise: "*Yes, because that's the problem! The older students don't understand that it is serious business – and for many of*

them, they realise it too late! You know, they are used to learning always being fun and hygge*, and knowledge being something you gain while playing.*"

I explain to her that I have observed this tendency amongst the smaller classes, and have been looking forward to begin observing the older classes, to see if there is a difference in how they learn.

Leise: "*The problem is that they are so spoiled, they are not used to fighting for anything – or even doing anything slightly uncomfortable, for example to do homework! Some parents won't even study with their children, because the children cry and struggle with their homework, and that's a role the parents won't take on.*"

Me: "*Do you think that is because parents work so much and leave their children in institutions for so long, that the limited time they do have with their children, they want to be* hyggelig*, quality time?*"

Leise: "*Absolutely, but you can't do this (folds her hands into a cup) with the child for their entire lives. I don't feel that it is independent young people we send into society.*"

Hanne: "*I follow you completely on that.*"

Hanne and Leise agreeing: "*The students expect that everything is served to them, the personal involvement is kept to a minimum, and the parents think that if the student is not doing well, then it must be the fault of the teacher!*"

We continue to discuss the extent to which the same thing is going on in the welfare state at large. When should the state

leave the citizen to fend for him/herself, when should it aid in carrying the citizen through hard times? In other words, when is it a service and when is it a disservice? And is this lack of placing demands on the students and the citizens a product of wanting to keep a nice and *hyggelig* atmosphere, not having to be the tough parent, but rather focus on the quality time?

I was surprised to find that the teachers were having these thoughts about the role of *hygge* and the parallels we were making to society at large. In everyday speech it was very rare for anyone to ever criticise both the welfare state, and particularly the notion of *hygge (*as also noticed by Hansen 1980). Looking back at our conversation that day in the teachers' lounge, I realised that too much *hygge* was not *hygge* – and perhaps it was subsequently the lack of *real hygge* that they were criticising. After all a key characteristic of *hygge* is moderation. If thinking about this in the context of the Christmas celebrations, I remember clearly the teacher's frustrations with not having enough time in December to actually teach. It also resonates with the meeting discussed in the last chapter, in which the teachers had to discuss whether or not to sing every Friday morning, one of the teachers expressed it very clearly: "What is supposed to be *hyggeligt* just becomes 'let's get this over with'".

The notion of *hygge* as an appropriate way to interact with the students was also an aspect I had to cope with in my own role with the students. As mentioned, I managed to become the 'cosy aunt' that the students would enjoy hanging out with. Similar to how the parents' need for quality time was discussed above, the following example illustrates that the way in which I engaged with the students, reflected my own desire to keep things *hyggelige* and avoid conflict:

One day after having had to tell off an older student for having crossed my personal boundaries, I was quite distressed in the teacher's courtyard; Leise approached me, and asked me why telling off a student upset me so. I explained that I did not want to be seen as an authority or a teacher authority telling off the students, that I really wanted to try and keep up the *hyggelige*

i.e. non-hierarchical and easy-going relationship I had built. She
asked me:

*"Ditte, if you really want to be friends with these kids, then
think about it, what kinds of friends do you have – friends who
never argue or tell you their opinion, or friends who are not
afraid to tell you how they feel?"*

From that day on, I began to be more honest and less timid in
my interactions with the students – after all, I was an authority,
if none-the-less due to my age and level of education. And the
warm relationship I had with the students did not change for
this reason.

The boundary between acting as a friend and acting as an ethnographer was slim, and
often overlapped – as did the role for the teachers, as they too had to represent both
an authority, but also someone close to whom the students would confide. The school
itself exists in a space between the public and the private (as will be discussed in the
following chapter) and the ethnographic section describing the rituals of Christmas
above, was full of examples of the school mimicking *homeyness*, or as Linnet would call
it 'interiority'. Nonetheless, *hygge* played into the school arena in other ways than
through student-teacher interactions and physical surroundings.

The student council, which was more thoroughly described in the previous chapter,
and which is student-led, was also penetrated with ideas of *hygge* as the appropriate
way to interact. During one of the first student-councils I participated in, the students
were discussing having a party at the school:

Tom, Boy in Year 2: *"There should be beers for the parents near
the playground, because that is were we will be hanging out –
and a hotdog stand as well"*
Achmed, Somali boy year 6: *"Maybe for once we could try
something different than hotdogs, like a shawarma stand?"*

Tom: "*I think we should have a hotdog stand*"

Ali, Somali boy year 8: "*You and the sausages.*"

Achmed: "*I'm telling you, shawarma!*"

[Some general discussion follows, and later in the meeting, Lars, who is Tom's classmate return to the sausage discussion]

Lars: "*What about the sausages?*"

Ali: "*Would you shut up with the hotdog stand?*"

Fie: "*Adjust the tone*"

Ali: "*Ok, well, don't say it anymore or something.*"

Fie: "*Say you're sorry, in this room we speak nicely, these meetings are supposed to be* hyggelige"

Ali: "*Ok, I'm sorry*"

Fie: "*Another point on the agenda is the kiosk, what do you think about it?*"

Achmed: "*It's bad food, there's ham in all of it*"

Several Ethnic Danish students: "*It's alright, pretty good, but a bit boring.*"

Achmed: "*There's nothing for Muslims*"

Fie: "*Well, there is chicken, tuna, eggs, pasta-salads…*"

Achmed: "*Who knows* [some of the other boys of different ethnic heritages join him] *you never know what they put in it, ham or something…*"

Fie: "*Aargh* (sighing), *just shut up…*"

Ali: "*Hey, speak nicely!*"

Achmed: "*And then there is all the food being stolen!*"

Year 1 student: "*Are we done soon?*"

Ali: "*I wouldn't mind for the meeting to keep going into the next lesson… I have a German-test*"

(The bell goes and the meeting ends, it lasted 45min)

The student council exemplifies how democratic meetings must be *hyggelige,* and that this has implications for what kind of language can be used, but also what can be discussed. The example shows that there is an expectation that everyone understands what it is and when a situation is *hyggelig*, but that this is not necessarily the case, or otherwise that this notion is resisted. The example also shows how *hygge* becomes a cultural way of engaging properly. While the resistance towards the traditional Danish concept of *hygge*, i.e. sausages and beer, is subtle, and only visible through the boys' continuous insistence on having a shawarma stand, it is still significant. It highlights how small cultural institutions that are taken-for-granted by the ethnic Danish population, and which are initially implemented to create *hyggelige* and hence inclusive moments, in essence ends up excluding a lot of students, who are already marginalised due their ethnic heritage being other than Danish (to be discussed further in Chapter X).

Hygge as cultural intimacy and banal nationalism

In the introduction to this chapter, *hygge* was discussed briefly as a synthetic image, i.e. an easily recognisable symbol, and hence a symbol with which a majority of the Danish population identify – but simultaneously a symbol with scope for each individual to 'personalise' it.

Jenkins (2011) has argued that the most powerful collective symbols are under-, rather than over-specified. The meaning of shared symbols must be vague to allow a wide range of Danes to identify with them (*Ibid.* 144). Similarly collective identities (and/or images) need not be consistent, as they can be said to be imprecise condensations of many different meanings and points of views. This allows us to identify with each other, without paying too close attention and allow people to be the same, while doing quite different things OR to do quite similar things, while being quite different (*Ibid*. 112). Everyday life and taken-for-granted behaviour is important in making the human-world fit together. Not thinking about it allows us to process trivia without

interrupting important stuff in life, and according to Jenkins, this trivia is exactly the marrow of selfhood (*Ibid*. 141).

Along similar lines, Michael Billig speaks of banal nationalism (1995), everyday nationalism or the trivialisation of nationality. He discusses these as 'patterns of social life becom[ing] habitual or routine' (*Ibid*. 42). Billig primarily discusses sports and flags as examples of this. In a Danish context, however, I propose that *hygge* could be seen as an example of banal nationalism. Here is a concept, which by the ethnic Danish population is taken absolutely for granted in any and most everyday situations (see Reddy 1992, Hansen 1980, Linnet 2011 and Jenkins 2011); simultaneously *hygge* is considered insignificant by most people, including academics. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, a fellow Danish academic pointed out to me, that *hygge* is perhaps too undefined as a category for interpretation of 'Danishness'. However, I would argue it is exactly because it is under-defined that I wish to study it, in light of the observation that the most powerful collective symbols often are. As 'banal nationalism' is concerned precisely with the ideological habits of the everyday, I want to suggest that *hygge* is so to speak the 'flag hanging unnoticed on the public building' (Billig, 1995:8). It resembles the flag in the way that people revere the notion of *hygge* as particularly Danish (Linnet, 2011, Jenkins, 2011), mention it continuously, when asked to make lists of 'what it means to be Danish' (Jenkins, 2011), and simultaneously don't reflect on it in everyday lived reality. Furthermore, the recognition 'that not everyone finds the Danish school *hyggelig'*, and specific instances in which it is negotiated, contested or accepted, offer an insight into relationships within *folkeskolen*, and the rest of this thesis will attempt to illustrate these.

If *hygge* is a case of interiority, it is defined in opposition to an 'outside'. In this sense, a key feature of *hygge* becomes its boundary-making propensities. If this observation, in turn, is combined with the idea of egalitarian participation within those boundaries, and the use of candlelight to illustrate a clear centre of attention, and a close-knit community – then the idea of *hygge* can subsequently be seen as saying more about Denmark and Danes than being merely a kind of social interaction[94].

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[94] The more specific suggestions of what this might be will become clearer in the course of the following chapters.

To emphasise why the banal, in this case *hygge,* is essentially anything but banal, one might also draw on *hygge,* understood as an illustration of the third element of Schiffauer et al.'s (2004) 'civil enculturation', the dominant national self-representation, or the national imaginary. Schiffauer *et al.,* similar to Billig, argue that 'nationalism may be mundane, but civil enculturation into a nation-state imaginary is anything but banal' and that those values and/or practices which seem banal on the surface, are often deeply elaborated and highly sophisticated processes of civil enculturation, i.e. learning how to engage and to function as a member of a specific culture (*Ibid.* 9).

This leads me to the last cultural framework through which I want to analyse *hygge* is that of cultural intimacy, as suggested by Herzfeld (2005). Cultural intimacy, Herzfeld suggests, is the means by which people ground and make sense of abstract and symbolic cosmology, in this case the nation-state, at a more intimate level. In doing so, he criticises Anderson (1983) and Gellner's (1983) concepts of nationalism (as seen in the literature review), arguing their analysis ignores the everyday experience that would legitimise the existence of an imagined community. Instead, Herzfeld argues that nationalism must be based on everyday life, symbolism, commensality, family, and friendship (*Ibid.* 6). By cultural intimacy Herzfeld as such speaks of the ethnography that can often be dismissed as anecdotal (*Ibid.* 11). He subsequently argues, that if these issues were not to be taken seriously by anthropologists - the researchers of 'everyday-ness' - then who would? According to Herzfeld, cultural intimacy is 'the recognition of those aspects of a cultural identity that are considered a source of external embarrassment, but that nevertheless provide insiders with their assurance of common sociality (…)' Cultural intimacy is, then, above all, 'familiarity with perceived social flaws' (*Ibid.* 9).

To make this clearer, what Herzfeld essentially suggests is that in order to pre-empt any attacks on national dignity, a population will adopt traits, which externally may be perceived of as weaknesses, and transform these into 'strengths', or traits upon which they pride themselves. The example Herzfeld uses to illustrate this process is the local understanding in Sicily of the Mafiosi as a 'moral response to domination by the manifestly corrupt Italian state' (*Ibid.* 17).

While *hygge* may not immediately appear to be a cultural trait that Danes need to be embarrassed about, I wanted to conclude this chapter by drawing a reference also to Richard Jenkins' work on the paradoxes of Danish life. Jenkins (2011), similarly to Herzfeld, argues that it is through practised realities that the abstraction of the nation state is linked to the everyday world – making the imagined community something other than imaginary (*Ibid.* 295). We have seen in this chapter that *hygge* is a predominant factor in understanding why Danes emphasise being in-between – and while Jenkins himself does not discuss cultural intimacy, he does suggest that perhaps one reason why Danes keep telling themselves the story of egalitarianism *and* behave as if its true, is in order to make them feel better than they are – to make a virtue out of bland ordinariness and modesty of ambitions (*Ibid.* 298). From this perspective, *hygge* becomes a factor of cultural intimacy, as it transforms the in-between, the moderation, which from the outside may be perceived of as a weakness, into a strength – a cultural trait in which Danes take great pride.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how *hygge* is a powerful, culturally specific concept through which to observe Danishness. I have done so by drawing on various cultural analytical frameworks. I discussed *hygge* as a synthetic image - where *hygge* as under-defined allows for a wide range of people to associate with it. I proceeded then to 'set the scene', by showing how *hygge* penetrated many of the my ethnographic observations. I particularly focused on Christmas, which could be seen as an epitome of *hygge*, providing an understanding of how exactly *hygge* was expressed in everyday situations e.g. in terms of food, candle lights and appropriate social conduct (as also illustrated by the student council example).

This led me to investigate *hygge* in view of social competence and/or cultural capital and hence discuss whether it could be perceived of as a form of 'symbolic violence'. Following Bourdieu's argument of all 'pedagogical action' as value-laden, I suggested that if *hygge* could indeed be seen as 'symbolic violence', then the practice of this value should tell us something about the structure of Danish society. This is because values propagated by the 'pedagogical actions' during the process of 'symbolic violence', according to Bourdieu (1972), serve to reinforce the powers in place. In this

chapter I have suggested that *hygge* idealises the in-between, and this may indeed serve to support the power of the 'middle-class', and in extension the Danish welfare state, which stresses economic and social equality, or sameness as its main features.

I continued to observe other cultural frameworks through which to understand *hygge*. For example Linnet's (2011; Forthcoming) understanding of *hygge* as interiority in view of Heidegger's theory of dwelling. Linnet points out that *hygge* is perhaps not as culturally specific as it may immediately appear, and that other countries have similar expressions implicating *homeyness*. However, he argues that *hygge* is more than a sense of home, and more a kind of atmosphere, where 'in' points not to the space of the home, but rather towards familiarity.

The notion of *hygge* as part of what created *homeyness* and familiarity in the school was also discussed, both in terms of the physical properties of the classroom, the relationship between the students and teachers, and also in terms of how I, as an ethnographer, came to be trusted and part of the classes I was observing.

To sum up the chapter, the last section came full circle as we observed *hygge* as 'banal nationalism' and as 'cultural intimacy'– arguing that *hygge* is indeed an under-defined symbol (a synthetic image), and also one which is widely practiced and taken-for-granted. The theory of 'banal nationalism' (Billig 1995) explains that it is exactly these symbols, which are 'everyday ideological habits' that are powerful, as they say a lot about what it means to 'be Danish'. Herzfeld elaborated by commenting that sometimes these values, which a population claim to be particular for their nation, are values which may otherwise be thought of as cause for embarrassment. As such I ended this chapter by arguing that if *hygge* is such a value, then it may have been adopted as a treasured characteristic to hide for the fact that Denmark is indeed characterised by moderation, by being in-between – and not sticking out (as will be discussed in Chapter IX).

In this chapter I have not attempted to bring any final conclusions to the use and understanding of *hygge;* neither is this my aim in the following chapters. Indeed I am not sure that it is possible to draw categorical conclusions. Instead, I have attempted

to give a broad view of what *hygge* is and can be in a schooling (and wider) context. Throughout the remainder of this thesis, *hygge* will come to play a part in all the topics I will be investigating. Initially it is important in understanding the overlap between the public and the private, and as shown in this chapter the classroom as a home-away-from-home is already an illuminating example of this relationship. Following this, *hygge* will also be discussed in view of morality, egalitarianism, and ethnicity, just as these have also be viewed in connection to *hygge*.

Chapter VII: Understanding the public/private relationship

This thesis at large can be read as a citizenship-journey in which core values and understandings of what it means to be a Danish welfare citizen are explored. From this perspective the Danish *folkeskole* is viewed as a microcosm of the nation, illuminating and illustrating taken-for-granted understandings and rules for social interaction. These are observed as they simultaneously 'are' and 'come into being' in interplay between the students, their teachers, and not least, the home and the school.

In the previous chapter we saw how *hygge* reflects the idea of *homeyness*, as a familiar, safe, warm, free, and bounded environment. We also saw how the school replicates *hyggelige* rituals normally enacted within the home, or what we may call the private sphere, particularly during Christmas.

It is widely accepted that the Danish *folkeskole* must remain familiar and *hyggelig* to provide a conducive learning environment. As shown in the previous chapter *hygge* is part of a wider cultural historical narrative of Denmark, and important to understandings of how to appropriately interact. Thus *hygge,* as a social practice, is important to the socialisation of the student into a successful citizen, and hence a strong nation. Linnet (2009) emphasised that *hygge* is not necessarily related literally to the home, even if it facilitates and catalyses homey sentiments. Rather, it is related to creating a homey atmosphere of familiarity. Hence for *folkeskolen* to create the ideal and successful citizenry it is necessary to mimic *homeyness*; and this, more often than not, results in a close relationship between what we may call the public and the private sphere.

Understanding and placing oneself appropriately within a public/private relationship is part of becoming a successful Danish citizen. And I suggest that the binding link both in shaping this understanding and in creating an almost seamless transition between the public and the private is *folkeskolen*. This chapter will investigate how the school illuminates the public-private relationship, initially building on some of the observations from the previous chapter, in which we observed the school as

essentially a 'homey space' situated in the public. It will be argued that in order to create the 'good citizen', it is necessary for the school to act as a space in-between the public and the private, as the notion of the 'good citizen' is particularly concerned with inner values and ways of understanding the world. Consequently the school must provide the safe and bounded space in order for the students to develop into such citizens.

Before engaging further with how the public and the private overlap in a Danish *folkeskole* context, we need to define what exactly is meant by 'public' and 'private'. This is the purpose of the following section. I will then go on to look at schooling and educational institutions in Denmark at large and in view of specific aspects in and of the Danish *folkeskole*.

'The public' and 'the private'

There are many competing discourses as to what exactly constitutes public space, the public sphere, and the public sector; in Danish these can roughly be translated into *det offentlige rum*, *offentligheden,* and *det offentlige* (respectively). This section will discuss and distinguish between these in view of the Danish context.

Det offentlige rum (the public space)

A generally acknowledged definition of the public space, *det offentlige rum*, is one that everyone can access. The notion of the public space can be traced back to the Greek agora as a 'place of citizenship, an open space where public affairs and legal disputes were conducted, and it was also a market place, a place of pleasurable jostling, where citizens' bodies, words, actions, and produce were all literally on mutual display, and where judgements, decision, and bargains were made' (Hartley 1992:29-30). The word 'public' in itself comes from the Greek word for an adult male, any of which could freely enter the agora[95]. The notion of the public space can be contrasted with the private space, which is instead restricted, as one person or a limited group of people can determine who is able to access the space.

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[95] Hence excluding women, slaves and foreigners.

The Danish *folkeskole* falls in-between these two quite rudimentary definitions. It is evident that it is a public space, in the sense that all children have the right to schooling. Furthermore, it is provided for free to all citizens. Still, not everyone is allowed freely and immediately to enter the physical space that is the school.

The definition becomes more complicated as we further approach the idea of the 'public' in terms of sphere and sector, as these are not straightforwardly translatable between Danish and English. In English, people will often tend to use 'the public' as short for the 'public sphere', whereas in Danish there are two separate, if similar, words separating the meanings of either sector or sphere.

Offentligheden (the public sphere)
The 'public sphere', *offentligheden,* can be explored in terms of the German *offentlichkeit* as discussed by Jürgen Habermas. He sees the public sphere as the 'realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed' (Habermas 1964:49). In the view of Habermas, the state and the public are two separate entities competing with each other. The public sphere represents the institution of actively participating individuals, who in a sense act as mediators between society and the state. By this Habermas suggests that the public sphere is a field, which mediates the demands of the masses to the 'social welfare state mass democracy' (*Ibid.* 54).

He goes on to argue that in the social welfare state (such as Denmark), the public sphere is being weakened, as its critical functions are paradoxically eroded while fundamental rights are continuously extended. This development is catalysed as the welfare state merges with society and consequently squeezes out the public sphere. In other words, the merger of the state and society transforms the public sphere from being a site of critical engagement with the state - to being a site of self-interested contestation for the resources of the state (Habermas 1989)[96].

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[96] For a critique of Habermas, see Calhoun 1992 and 1993

While Habermas' use of the term public (in terms of the public sphere) is not the one used for this chapter, his observations concerning the merger of the state and society remain relevant, not only for this chapter, but more specifically for the following chapter, where I consider the notions of rights and duties. In the present chapter I will discuss the role of *folkeskolen*, as I observed something resembling a merger, or perhaps rather a seamless transition, being expressed in By Skolen in 2009.

The offentlige (the public sector)

The third translation of 'the public' into Danish is the *offentlige*. When looking up both *offentlighed* and *offentlige*, any dictionary will translate these into English only as 'the public', but the two words have very different meanings in the Danish language. Hence when I discuss 'the public' in this chapter, I will do so in terms of *det offentlige*. The public (*det offentlige)* in this sense carries meanings of the public sector, and can embody not only the state, but also state institutions and state employees.

For the remainder of this chapter, the public will be defined in terms of the 'public sector' – signifying the state, and its ideology, at large. The private, in turn, will be considered purely in terms of the home and the dispositions of the individual (hence not in terms of the private sector). Lastly, we will observe *folkeskolen* as it represents a space/sphere in-between the private and the public, continuously mimicking aspects of both these arenas.

The intersection between the public and the private is necessarily not very clear-cut in the lived experience of everyday life in the Danish *folkeskole*; rather the two interact, overlap, and exist in a close-knit, dynamic relationship. This does not always imply the existence of tensions or contradictions; rather, it suggests a constant dynamic exchange, in which both teachers and students are actors contributing to and/or resisting this movement – often with *hygge* as the main mediator.

Having established an understanding of 'the public', *det offentlige* from a Danish perspective, I want to turn the gaze to a parallel discussion, which is that of the relationship between the 'individual' (as an allusion to the private) and the ' collective' (as an allusion to the public). I want to discuss this relationship, as its constitution in

the Danish context may be able to tell us something significant also about the close-knit relationship between the public and the private**.**

Individual vs. Collective?

The Norwegian anthropologist Marianne Gullestad (1989; 1992), who has published extensively on Scandinavian culture (particularly in the Norwegian context), argues that these cultures are highly individualistic, and that this can sometimes appear puzzling to outsiders when observed in relation to the very strong sense of collectivism emphasised by the Scandinavian welfare states. To get a deeper understanding of what Gullestad means, it might make sense to consider how she defines collectivism and individualism in the Scandinavian context.

Firstly, Gullestad argues that the strong relationship between the individual and the *samfund* (i.e. community understood as a conglomeration of the state, public sector, and public sphere – my definition) and *fællesskab* (togetherness), depend on a strong idea of equality as expressed through sameness. In terms of social interactions, this emphasises that being able to act as if one 'fits in' or 'is alike' are treasured social abilities (something we have already observed in previous chapters, and will be at the focus in Chapter IX).

Secondly, individualism can, just like equality, be defined along many parameters (both negative and positive). Gullestad argues that in the Scandinavian context, it should be defined in terms of independence and freedom (and to this I will add freedom of expression) – particularly self-reliance and self-sufficiency. Consequently, according to Gullestad (1992:199) collectivism (the strong sense of togetherness based on sameness as expressed through 'equality of worth') and individuality (freedom of expression and independency) are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Following this she suggests that Scandinavia is characterised by an 'egalitarian individualism' - where each person is at the ideological focus, but where people at the same time must be similar in order to feel equal (Gullestad 1989; 1992). As a result, Gullestad argues that Scandinavian culture should be viewed neither as individualistic nor collectivistic, but rather, their interrelatedness should be investigated. She even

goes as far as to propose that it is not analytically interesting to discuss the individual, without embedding this in social relations (and vice versa) (Gullestad 1992:184).

A potent example illuminating this perspective of 'egalitarian individualism' is the stubborn non-existence of school uniforms in the Danish schools. Amongst the general population in Denmark it is unthinkable that uniforms should be introduced, and it is rarely - if ever - discussed seriously in the school and in the media. As one teacher commented:

> "*Uniform means 'uniform', so if the job of the school is to create*
> *'uniform' students, then school-uniforms are an excellent idea-*
> *but, disregarding North Korea and similar places, it can hardly*
> *be the aim for a school to make the students unidirectional.*"

Uniforms are considered fascist, anonymous and hence impersonal – the very opposite of what the Danish *folkeskole* is trying to achieve with its ideologies, pedagogical strategies, and tools of *terapisme* ('therapisme', which we will hear about below) in relation to notions of egalitarianism, school as home, *hygge*, and individualism (freedom of expression).

Uniforms might make everyone look the same and hence play into the ideal of egalitarianism; but they would also remove the essence of students being independent, unique individuals with freedom of expression. In a Danish context it is not argued that everyone is equal in every aspect, but rather that everyone is of equal worth as humans. In this respect, they should share the same ideological base in democracy and understand social rules for interaction, such as *hygge*.

The general culture of the Danish labour market reflects the lack of uniforms in the school system, as most workplaces do not require the employees to adhere to a certain dress code (as one might observe in England or the US). This all ties in with the focus on individuality in Denmark (freedom of expression and independency) or what

we may call the liberal aspect[97], which emphasises space for everyone and individual choice.

In June 2008, just as I had arrived in Denmark to begin my fieldwork, I participated in an annual conference for the Centre of Political Studies in Copenhagen, where one of the main speakers, a prominent businessman, Asger Aamund, made the following observation:

"Denmark is a liberal-socialist state – liberal in the sense that you are free to make as much money as you please... socialist in the sense that the state is allowed to take as much of that money as it pleases"

This suggests that you are free to do a lot in Danish society, but at the same time, this freedom comes at the price of allowing the state to intervene into your private affairs (such as your economy)*.* Perhaps in a similar way, students are free to wear whatever clothes they want in school, but the school in turn is free to intrude into other, more private areas of a more social character in order to 're-produce' the ideal Dane, and even to have meetings, such as the school/home conversation (which we will hear more about in this chapter), where the student's progress towards this goal is evaluated. Both the 'economic intervention' in society at large, and the 'social intervention' at the school are, however, framed as necessary to uphold the structure allowing the freedom to make money/wear one's own clothes in the first place. Only by contributing to the *fællesskab*, making this strong, can Danes have truly a free society.

This combination can be seen in other aspects of society as well. For instance Denmark is very liberal in terms of personal freedoms, such as smoking, drinking, freedom of speech, demonstrations and sex. However, it can be considered as quite non-liberal in

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97 'Liberal' in this chapter should be understood as willing to respect or accept behaviour or opinions different from one's own; open to new ideas and favourable to or respectful of individual rights and freedoms (http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/liberal?q=liberal).

financial terms, due to high taxes on both labour and a range of behavioural

modification taxes (*adfærdsregulerende beskatning)* on certain products and services.

One of the objectives of this chapter is to consider Gullestad's idea of the

interrelatedness of the individual and the collective in order to illustrate how the two

are not, in a Scandinavian context, mutually exclusive. Rather they exist, similarly to

the private and the public, in dynamic interplay. For now, I turn to a discussion of this

overlap in the wider context of the Danish state, in order to further illuminate how the

individual and the collective – and the private and the public – exist in a close-knit

relationship.

Danes, part of the state

Hans Magnus Enzensberger (1989), political philosopher and poet, suggested that the

Scandinavian social democratic welfare state is the only one to have made the citizen

feel like an integrated component of the state apparatus rather than one that is in

opposition to it. Osborn *et al*. too have observed that the Danish system at large can

be understood as excessively concerned with the integration of individuals into the

community (2003:220). On the surface, they argue, the 'collectivist agenda of social

integration', or what they also coin the 'communitarian tradition', to some extent even

appears to inhibit the expression of individual agency (*Ibid.*)

That Danes learn in a school context that they are part of the state can be seen also in

the notion of co-citizenship, as discussed in Chapter V. Rather than citizenship being an

individual status, merely signifying the membership to a certain state, the idea of 'co-

citizenship' is that one is together with someone else, everyone else. This notion of co-

citizenship supports Enzensberger's observations of the political entanglement of the

state and the individual.

From a statistical point of view, it also seems that the public is very much connected

with the private. For instance the number of people receiving full-time benefits is more

than 800,000, not including pensioners (over 1million) and students (receiving student

benefits, nearly 190,000)[98]. In total, more than 2million people depend entirely on welfare benefits; in Danish this is termed, *afhængige af det offentlige*, or 'dependant on the public'. This represents 36% of the population (from a total population of just over 5.5mil). Further to this, more than 750,000 people work in the public sector[99]. This makes the proportion directly or indirectly dependent on 'the public' a total of 49.9%.

As stated in the democracy chapter, statistics such as these may not tell an ethnographer much about people's everyday life, but they can still provide an important guideline for understanding wider cultural tendencies. In this case, the above statistics point towards a very close relationship between the public and the private in economic terms. It illustrates that in a Danish context, it is normal to have at least one family member working in the public sector, and even more normal to have family members who are wholly dependant on some kind of welfare benefit. Further to this, almost every adult citizen in Denmark is entitled to some kind of benefit. For instance, child benefits are given automatically regardless of income.

Teachers themselves are excellent examples of *det offentlige,* simultaneously representing a category separate to 'the people', and a category embodied by 'the people'. In other words, they represent 'the public', but are simultaneously private citizens*.* Because the teachers engage with the students and their colleagues in a way that upholds the *hygge* (as described in the previous chapter), they hence become an embodiment of the seamless public/private transition.

Other authors working in Scandinavian contexts have also observed the blurry line between the public and the private. In a Danish context, Richard Jenkins (2011:168-169) discussed the 'state-next-door' as the good neighbour, and even described Denmark as a 'mild and benign totalitarianism of Scandinavian welfare-state democracy, the soft tyranny of a benignly watchful and inclusive community' (*Ibid.*

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[98] All the exact numbers can be accessed via http://www.statistikbanken.dk/statbank5a/default.asp?w=1280. In the following calculations the exact figures (rather than the rounded down figures in the text) were used to achieve exact percentages.
[99] This number is based on full-time hired employment, meaning that what in the statistics may look like one full-time employee, may just as well represent two part-time employees. As such the real figure is most likely significantly higher.

200-201). The purpose of this chapter is to observe the role of the school in this public/private relationship, and the following two sections will discuss the role of *institutionalisering*[100] ('institutionalisation') in view of both theory and ethnography.

Institutionalisering

Institutions, and more specifically schools, are one of the most obvious links between the public and the private. This is true from at least two perspectives i) the symbolic perspective, in which the school acts as a liminal phase between being a child and an independent adult, entering society[101]; and ii) from the socialisation perspective, which sees the school as intrinsic to the 'civilising process' that transforms students (and the parents, as we will see below) into good citizens. The latter is the one with which this chapter and thesis is primarily concerned. As the general topic of institutionalisation (understood as socialisation in institutions) was discussed extensively in the literature review of this thesis, this section will merely sum up the main points covered, and those relevant to this chapter.

The school has often been discussed as being the single most influential institution in any modern democratic state. This observation has been made by numerous theorists including Durkheim (1925), Bourdieu and Passeron (1970), Luykx (1999), and Levinson *et al.* (1996; 2000 and 2011), to name a few. Rousseau (1762) argued that without a well-educated citizenry, democracy would be doomed to fail. If we consider the emphasis placed on democracy in the Danish welfare state (see Chapter V) then it could be stipulated that the role of the educational system in the Danish welfare state is essential to the creation of democratic welfare citizens and hence the existence of the welfare state.

Emile Durkheim was the first sociologist to explore the connection between education and the transmission of national ideology in his *Moral Education* (1925). Here he

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[100] *Institutionalisering,* or institutionalisation, is the preferred way to call the time which children spend in daycare/schools or similar (but could also be used in any other context including institutions, e.g. old age care home).

[101] I will not elaborate further on this perspective, but other studies have been conducted where the school is viewed as a liminal phase, as creating communitas and as ultimately re-enforcing the social structure. See Turner (1969) and Gennep (1977) for more on ritual symbolism, and Amit-Talei (2002), Conroy (2004) and McLaren (1987) for school studies observing schools as liminal.

argued that children are moulded in schools to become citizens with an inclination towards social life, and come to form a relatively homogeneous organic collective. Furthermore this is essential for the well being of not only the individual but also success of civilisation in general (1961 [1925]:233).

McDonough and Feinberg argue along the same lines that public education in the modern democratic welfare state has been 'legitimised as the institution that would build a liberal and democratic industrial nation state by developing the surplus loyalty required to cement the particularistic and diverse religious and cultural components of a nation state together' (2003:1). This surplus loyalty, or what Durkheim calls the 'love of the nation' and inclination towards social life, can only be created if a particular ideology or way of thinking about, not only one self, but also the surrounding world is to a certain extent transmitted to the future citizenry - the students.

Bearing these ideas in mind, *folkeskolen* can be considered as an environment in which not only social subjects, conducive to the maintenance of social order, are created through discipline and the transmission of a state-based ideology, but one in which individuals, who further to developing themselves, develop the skills to engage with fellow citizens in the process of democracy.

The main ideology transmitted to students in a Danish schooling context is *dannelse*. This is most strongly reflected in the actual translation of education to Danish: *uddannelse*, literally meaning, 'bringing out *dannelse*[102]'. The concept of *dannelse* was discussed at greater length in the introduction to this thesis, but also in relation to democracy and *medborgerskab* in Chapter V. In short it can be said to be the 'cultivation of individuals who do not stand out'. Again we see at the essence of the very purpose of education, the idea that the school is not just an 'apparatus of the state' (Althusser 1972), but also, in Jenkins' (2011:188) words, a process that creates an 'alternative extended family'. Jenkins too noticed that the childcare system is the keystone to the Danish welfare state. He commented that 'being Danish means being numbered, named, cared for and monitored' (Jenkins 2011:171), not just by family and friends, but significantly also by the welfare state. To illustrate, I heard the mayor of

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[102] There are two words for education in the Danish language, and I will return to this aspect later.

Hvidovre (the larger area in which Avedøre is situated) at a citizenship meeting, discussing recent troubles with some youth-related crime, announce that:

"Avedøres børn er vores børn."
(The children of Avedøre, are our children)

Jenkins heard a similar phrase from the municipal director of education of the area in which he conducted his fieldwork (Skive, Jylland) that the role of the public was 'holding a child's hand, holding the hand of *every* child' (original emphasis, Jenkins 2011:201).

The notion of the government holding the hand of every child signifies exactly this overlap in terms of the role of the school and the role of the family in 'educating' and 'caring' for the child – and it highlights the important role that educational institutions have in the Danish context.

Institutionalisering in Denmark
Institutionalisation is relatively pervasive in Danish society (as also observed by other anthropologists, primarily those coming from an outside perspective, e.g. Jenkins 2011 and Reddy 1992). At the age of two, a predominant part of all Danish children are institutionalised, as less than three per cent of parents decide to stay at home with their children after the end of maternity/paternity leave (Winkel-Holm 2005:74). Thus the institutional setting is one in which the average Danish child spends a predominant part of their childhood and youth.

The child typically begins in the nursery or with a day-care minder[103] when he or she is approximately one year of age, and stay there until the age of three. They then attend *børnehaver,* literally meaning 'children's gardens' (kindergartens), from the age of three to six. On a typical day the children may play games (inside and outside), go on excursions, cook, do sports, and/or attend creative workshops. Children start in

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[103] The regional council typically hires the day-care minder. She/he will take care of up to 5 children in their own homes. Most Danes will have very pronounced preferences to send their child either to the nursery or the day-care minder.

folkeskolen at the age of six, and the first year is, as mentioned in Chapter III, an introductory year where the child is slowly introduced to the life as a student. During in-schooling years, year 0-3 (age six-nine), most children go to a *fritidshjem,* a 'spare time home'. This is a predominantly after-school institution, but the child can usually go there before the school opens in the morning. As such, the institutionalised day for a school-aged child generally begins at 7am in the spare time home, or at 8am when the first lesson begins at school, and ends when the parents pick up the children around 4 -5pm.

In a Danish context, institutionalisation is first and foremost an important prerequisite in providing equal opportunities and hence in maintaining an equal society (which will be discussed further in Chapter IX). For this reason, institutional costs are heavily subsidised according to income and number of siblings[104]. It is furthermore often taken for granted that an institutional upbringing is the best and healthiest way for a child to grow up. One day I overheard a conversation in the teachers' lounge concerning the use of *børnehaver* and *fritidshjem*. At the time, there had been some debates in the media focused on whether or not institutional care should be compulsory. I remember thinking that it was a curious debate to have, since the vast majority (97%) of children were already institutionalised, but simultaneously I found myself recognising the general apprehension that this tendency would marginalise the three per cent who were not. During a lunch break, the teachers were casually discussing the pros and cons of the suggestion, agreeing that institutionalisation, both before entering the school (*børnehave*), and during in-schooling years (*fritidshjem*), was incredibly important - primarily for the welfare of the child. However they did not agree on whether or not it should be made compulsory. As the teachers were discussing the disadvantages of not being in an institution, particularly in terms of how this would give you an unequal starting-point, one of the younger teachers, Mette, who was not afraid to voice her often opposing points of view, joined the discussion. Mette passionately declared that she believed institutionalisation was overrated. She pointed out the benefits of having the option of going home after school and spending more

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[104] The *børnehave* costs app £200/month, the *fritidshjem* app. £50/month. Parents only pay the full price if their household income is above £50,000/year. Institutions are free if the income is below £16,000 (http://www.kk.dk/Borger/PasningOgSkolegang/Boernepasning/FAQOmBoernepasning/PriserOgTilskud.aspx).

time with the parents. She argued that if one of the parents chose to stay at home, it should definitely not be compulsory to send the child to an institution. Her point of view was met with avid resistance. Another teacher quickly pointed out that the child would be disadvantaged, and that *"it is important for the child to learn how to play with other children"*. Mette replied that no one in her family had gone to a *fritidshjem*, and that none of her siblings had suffered from this socially. She pointed out that it was possible, for instance, to bring a friend home after school instead.

As I observed the debate, it was evident that what was being discussed was slightly more complicated. The teachers found it difficult to relate to Mette's story as it was inconceivable that Danish families still existed where the mother would stay at home for the purpose of caring for the child.

Jenkins argues, that one reason why institutionalisation has become so prevalent in the Danish society is in part due to it being a practical manifestation of a 'cherished principle of equality for women' (Jenkins 2011:171). Revisiting the general points of the discussion of the teachers, in view of the importance of feminism, it is interesting that they consistently point out that it is for the benefit of the child, that he/she should be institutionalised. From a historical point of view, the institutions were a product of the 'liberation' of women, as institutions 'allowed' them to enter the labour market. Today of course, women's contribution to the household, and (via tax) to the welfare state, is indispensible – but even more important, women are today expected to be independent and to (want to) fulfil their potential. Motherhood is not a 'potential' worth pursuing on its own, and hence it was evident that the teachers found it strange that one of Mette's parents had chosen to stay at home to take care of their children.

Perhaps a woman's choice not to utilize the offer of the institution is doubly significant. Not only is it a sign of distrust towards the dominant ideology and process of proper socialisation, in which equal opportunities are meant to be created; it is in a sense a failure to fulfil her potential, and hence to contribute both to society as a successful citizen but also, from both an economic and social perspective, to contribute fully to the running of an inclusive and expensive welfare state.

There is another element to this discussion. Predominantly, the three per cent who don't receive 'proper socialisation' in an institutional context are from immigrant families. In the course of my fieldwork, I overheard many teachers expressing that it is this group of children who need the institutionalisation the most. During the first few months in the year 0 class, I observed, one of the girls, Yasmin (whose parents came from Pakistan), who had not been to a *børnehave* before starting school, and did not go to a *fritidshjem* after school. This was evident in many aspects of her behaviour. Most importantly she suffered from a very limited knowledge of the Danish language, which continued to be a problem for her throughout the six months I observed her classroom. Secondly, she had not deciphered the rules for appropriate social interaction, which Gulløv (2007) defines as self-control, physical restraint, patience, ability to communicate verbally and similar, and hence found it very difficult to acquire playmates. These two factors - language and understanding appropriate social interaction - are essential in being well integrated into the community, or the 'alternative family' that is the school class. Since a student will typically stay in the same class throughout their ten years of schooling, the way in which they enter this class is important for their social wellbeing.

As I will illustrate in this chapter, the political and economic environment in Denmark are reflected in the entanglement of the public and the private in *folkeskolen*. In this respect, it could be argued that the school acts as a microcosm of the larger society (following a Durkheimian line of thought)- whether in terms of reflecting the general overlap in society, or in preparing student for the state of the society they are about to enter.

Opdragelse vs. uddannelse?

The tension arising from the question of who is responsible for the social and/or academic education emerged vividly in my fieldwork from a very early stage. A year prior to beginning my long-term fieldwork at By Skolen, I visited the school for a short-term observation exercise. During this exercise I noticed several issues, which seemed at the time to be significant factors in what I then dubbed 'the Danish school culture'.

One such issue was that of extra-curricular homework classes, directed towards bi-lingual students, i.e. students with an ethnic background other than Danish[105]. At the time I was interested primarily in why these classes were offered to this particular group of students, and not students who may struggle with their homework for reasons other than language barriers. However in hindsight, having lived and been at the school for more than a year on a daily basis, I noticed a different issue at play when going through my field notes, and that was the issue of drawing a line between the public and the private sphere. A conversation with the teacher of the homework class emphasised this issue, which came to be significant in much of my subsequent data-collection.

I will illustrate with an extract of my field notes from one of my first days at the school.

> While other children go home or more often to their
> *fritidshjem*, once a week the bi-lingual students go to an extra-
> curricular homework class. For the bi-lingual students, this is an
> opportunity to do their homework in a very informal setting.
> The adult present is not necessarily a teacher, but may be a
> pedagogue or a teaching assistant working part-time. The
> students are allowed to bring music to the lesson, and can chat
> while doing their work.

> After the homework class, the teacher running it on this
> particular day asks me what I am doing fieldwork on, and we
> discuss why I am more generally interested in the anthropology
> of education. We discuss the Danish school system for a while,
> and the teacher mentions that while helping these students
> with their homework, what they really need is possibly
> something quite different – for example lunch, closeness,
> positive experiences, etc. We discuss that of course there needs
> to be a boundary for what schools should take responsibility for,

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[105] In this extract, I will refer to these students as bi-lingual, as this was the term used by the teachers to signify students with an ethnic background other than Danish.

but that these factors are essential for the students' well being, and therefore also for their ability to learn. We remain unresolved on the matter of whether or not the school should then intervene in these areas – as it is these that influence the ability of learning the most.

The discussion illustrates a prevalent idea in the Danish welfare society: that it is the role of the school to not only educate in respect to academic topics, but, as Durkheim suggested, also in respect to morals, nationality and discipline. To do so, the state must secure the general well-being of the student. The school, however, has limited means and rights to do so. One of the purposes of this chapter is to look at examples of when the school does interfere in the well-being of the student, but also when it does not, for example in providing lunch (as mentioned by the teacher above, and discussed again in a later section).

The dean of the Danish Pedagogical University, Lars Qvortrup (2010), has argued that where in German there is the word 'erziehung' and in English the word 'education', Danes have both *uddannelse* (which has been discussed both earlier in this thesis, but also above), signifying education as received in a formal environment, and *opdragelse,* which refers to upbringing and nurturing, in the sense of social education, or learning appropriate manners. This separation, he argues, is essential to the increasing conflict between the school and the home, within debates about educational responsibility. In theory the school expects the child to enter the school with a certain set of understandings of what is right and wrong, i.e. decoders for determining appropriate behaviour[106]. This way of thinking about education necessarily creates associations to Bourdieu's discussion of capital and habitus (as discussed in the literature review). Hence, while my study was not focused on traditional class-differences, it did concern itself with differences amongst various social groups. As the middle-class ideology is the norm in a Danish context, it is also this that comes to characterise the official pedagogical strategies employed within the institutional context. Bourdieu in an interview with Wacquant (1989:43) argued: 'when habitus encounters a world of which it is the product, it finds itself "as a fish in the water", it does not feel the weight

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[106] Something I have discussed earlier as a pillar of *folkeskolen* to 'not create social illiterates'.

of the water and takes the world about itself for granted'. As discussed above, the school expect the students to arrive at the school with the appropriate decoders, or to follow Bourdieu's line of thought, habitus. However, the students arrive with very different 'habitus', and hence Bourdieu's argument is that those students with a middle-class background (habitus) will associate and identify with the pedagogical techniques at the school more easily, than students with a different background. This is also what Luykx (again discussed in the literature review) talked about as a 'hidden curriculum', where the structuring of classroom activities were in 'ways that seem natural but are in fact culturally determined'. (1999:xxxiii).

Similarly, the German sociologist, Norbert Elias (1939), proposed the idea of a 'civilizing process'. On a macro level, this idea can be viewed as the evolutionary development of human beings towards civilisation, and on a micro level, it is the development of the savage child into a civilised citizen. The civilising process is the development in which the child learns appropriate modes of behaviour according to specific social contexts. Just as Qvortrup suggested that *folkeskolen* must both *uddanne* and *opdrage.* Gulløv (2007:20) similarly discusses how civilisation of citizens has become an institutional responsibility. To achieve respect and be acknowledged as a successful Danish citizen, it is necessary to be fluent in the social distinctions for proper behaviour as defined by Gulløv (*Ibid.*) in the above section.

In a welfare state where differences are underplayed (see particularly Chapter IX), one social distinction to acquire is to learn how to move in and out of what Lave and Wenger (1991) call 'multiple participatory communities' at the same time (as explained in Chapter V), while assessing what modes of participation are appropriate at any given time (so as not to appear 'different'). As such, Lave and Wenger suggest that the success of the learner depends on their ability to move between modes of co-participation, i.e. to observe the transparency of various learning contexts. Bateson (1972:167-170) refers to this as 'deutero-learning' or secondary learning, i.e. learning to learn. He argues that secondary learning is a specific western phenomenon, and also a dominant technique required in formal institutions such as the school, if one is to succeed. Levy (1975:271) elaborates that it is furthermore a trait of the middle-class, and that these child rearing strategies facilitate middle-class children's

movement through the school system, and give, as Paul Willis (1977) mentioned, children from different social backgrounds 'wrong educational decoders' to begin with. In Gillian Evans' (2006) study as well, she argues that the school she observed, as a formal institution, came to represent and embody middle-class values, legitimising a particular way of being in the world (2006:32).

In an everyday context, I observed that there was a very fine - if not blurry - line between where the 'social' education stopped, and the 'academic' education began, and it is this space that this chapter wishes to investigate. Consider the following example on By Skolen's homepage[107], where the headmaster, Søren, has uploaded a letter to the parents, outlining the school's view on social conduct:

> "Children and adults can have very different perceptions of what negative behaviour is, and what it is not.
>
> Most children have the necessary social abilities when they start school.
>
> But in a school with hundreds of people, who must interact with each other in a relatively limited space, it can, for some students, be difficult to cope with unclear norms and rules.
>
> When students, staff and parents know the rules of the school and know what is expected from them, there will be a good foundation for promoting a good school experience for the students.
>
> Rules and social abilities will be taught using the same methods as all other academic learning, such as reading, writing and calculating.

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[107] http://www.avedoereskole.dk/Infoweb/Designskabelon8/Rammeside.asp?Action=&Side=&Klasse=&Id=&Startside=&ForumID=

I wish everyone good experiences in the work with the good

conduct and the social abilities."

As a school defines what 'good conduct and social abilities' or an appropriate 'social'
education is, it necessarily produces an insider and an outsider group: that is, a group
that is readily available to receive formal schooling, and a group that will necessarily be
marginalised - where not only the children, but also the parents are perceived as
needing to be schooled in what 'appropriate social education' is, i.e. *opdragelse*.
However, one could also suggest that the school 'merely' identifies some values and
ways of interactions that are needed if the students are to become successful citizens.
Citizens who are able to participate and contribute appropriately in the 'limited space'
of the school, and later the larger community of the welfare state - hence create the
strong nation as discussed by Durkheim (1925). In either case, socialisation in the
Danish *folkeskole* context, as shown through Søren's letter to the parents, appears to
be an overt social responsibility, illustrating that the official Danish way of socialising a
child into being a Danish citizen is deliberate, rather than wholly embedded in a
'hidden curriculum'.

The discussion regarding *opdragelse* and *uddannelse* illustrates a significant overlap in
the understanding of whose responsibility it is to 'raise' the children, the school (as
alluding to the public) or the parents (as alluding to the private). The children, in this
sense, become an embodiment of the close-knit relationship between the public and
the private, as they appear to be equally the responsibility – at least in terms of their
holistic development – of the home, and of the school.

Socialisation of parents – the school/home conversation
This pedagogical project, encompassing not only children but also their parents, could
be clearly observed during the bi-annual school/home conversations. These meetings
illustrate the tangible overlap between the social and academic education (*uddannelse*
and *opdragelse*), and also that parents respond very differently to these meetings, and
have differing understandings of their purpose.

Twice a year, parents come into school with their child and talk to the teachers about their child's progress. The teacher will sit at one side of the table and the student will usually sit between his/her parents on the other side. I remember from my own schooling years how daunting these meetings were. Since there is no grading in the Danish school system before year 8, and none that counts before the end of year 9, these meetings are the closest that students come to an official evaluation of their abilities. I remember from my own meetings as a *folkeskole*-student, that I often left them feeling quite happy and proud that my academic performance was above average. My parents, however (while also proud), would often have a serious chat with me afterwards, as my social skills in terms of sitting still, waiting my turn to speak, and generally complying with the teacher's instructions, were quite below average.

At By Skolen, the children did not participate in the first school-home conversation in year 0, as this was a kind of introductory discussion of the children's general suitability for schooling. For all following meetings, however, they would be present.

The first meeting I attended was with Philip's parents (of ethnic Serbian descent), who had the first timeslot to see Karen and her teaching assistant Dorte. It was the first parent/teacher meeting of the year for the year 0's arranged roughly a month after they had started school. Karen talked about Philip's general lack of concentration, but commented that he seemed to be fine with receiving instructions, good at making friends and happy with school.

> Karen: "*He finds it difficult to concentrate, but that is OK,*
> *everything is still new, so that is normal. What he does do is*
> *good, but his focus really is lacking a bit…*
> *Do you read to him? It would be very good if you could start*
> *reading to him – now I noticed that you weren't at the collective*
> *parents' meeting, I will give you the minutes of what we*
> *discussed there.*"
> Dad: "*Oh, we completely forgot about that, there have been so*
> *many meetings and things to attend in the beginning of the*
> *year.*"

> Karen and Dorte: *"We also wanted to discuss bedtimes… When does Philip go to bed?"*
>
> Parents: *"Well, we want to see him as much as possible, and the sun is up for so long in Denmark this time of year. Usually he has a nap when he comes home from school and he goes to bed around 22."*
>
> Karen and Dorte: *"That is a bit worrying! It's a bit late, and he will not be able to focus properly at school!"*

In this example the parents did not contradict the teachers, nor did they ask any confrontational questions about Philip's behaviour, or how the teachers were dealing with it, nor did they offer suggestions for how the teachers could keep his focus. The interesting aspect in this context was that they did not ask or demand anything from the teachers, but rather took the submissive role and readily accepted the authority of the teachers.

In another meeting, this time in relation to a child called David (whose parents are from Iran), the father expressed that he was not necessarily in agreement with what was being said.

> Karen begins the meeting: *"David is a sweet kid, but he has a lot of energy, it is difficult for him to do what he has to, but it is clear that he really wants to."*

I noticed that Karen was very careful with how she was phrasing her criticism. To begin with I thought it was because David's parents did not speak Danish very well – but as the conversation unfolded, I found out there were more factors (Karen had also been teaching his older brother, and therefore had prior knowledge of the family).

> Karen: *"It is very important that he is praised sometimes (*looks at the father*) but that is something you have to practice."*
>
> Dad: *"I don't want him to sit next to Anders!"* [Anders has had to re-sit year 0, as he has had trouble adjusting to the socially

appropriate conduct, i.e. he is very disruptive during lessons, and his games are often physically violent]

Karen explains that as long as they are inside the classroom, that is not a problem, it is during recess that the structure is more fragile. If it turns out that they *"can't play properly, we will find new playmates for them"*

The dad ask why some children have to do the kindergarten class twice (like Anders) and Karen explains that they need to learn to listen to their teachers, to not be naughty or physical if they get angry, for example the other day David had tripped some other students on purpose.

His parents both laugh…

Karen (hesitant, not finding it amusing) *"These are the kinds of social game rules that one has to learn"*

Dad: *"Well, if you have any trouble with him, just tell him you will tell his dad!"*

Karen: *"And then what happens?"*

The dad attempts to evade the question, and in the end the mum answers.

Mum: *"He doesn't talk to him"*

Karen: *"You shouldn't ignore him"*

Dad: *"When he speaks in a bad way to his mum, I don't speak to him for an hour"*

Karen: *"So you don't speak to him at all for an hour?"*

Dad: *"sometimes for a day"*

Karen (in a neutral, but kind tone of voice): *"You know there have been heavy books written about that- that doesn't work! Do you think that works, because it doesn't – you have to talk to him!"*

Dad: *"I ignore him, but only when he makes big mistakes… otherwise he doesn't always understand"*

Karen: *"So what about listening to what mum says? I remember that his big brother had a big problem with that! It is very*

important to respect women! There are a lot of women in the

Danish folkeskole*" (she smiles and continues) "I think today,*

you should go home and say something nice to David"

They say goodbye, and shake hands – the dad says to Karen

"You have a very strong handshake, what does your husband

say about that?"

Both Philip and David come from families with an ethnic background other than Danish[108], and both families in these instances are clearly being educated by the teachers in how to socially educate/socialise their children, and in the last instance, even how to communicate with their children. This is not considered denigrating in any way, as it is important to have these spaces where the parents and teachers can talk 'freely' with each other. However, from the father's last comment particularly, we see that he is very much aware of Karen's authority, and to a certain extent he challenges it by asking into her private life and affairs, just as she has just interfered in his family's private life.

In the previous section, I discussed Jenkins' account of the views of the municipal director of education. This same director went on to say that it is important that every child has a 'school father' and a 'school mother'; and that the relationship between the teacher and the parents must be positive, because this relationship signifies and underpins the continuity of the school as an 'alternative family' (Jenkins 2011:188). It is for such reasons that teachers intrude into the private sphere. As we saw above, they attempt to do so very carefully by using a soft voice, joking a bit and, importantly, employing an open body language. Osborn *et al.* too discuss the emphasis on the affective dimension of the teacher's role, and explain it in view of the focus on the development of 'the whole child' (2003:208), or in other words the overarching *dannelse* ideology. The teacher prioritises the 'cohesion of the group and its ability to work together both academically and socially through building up close relationships in the classroom and with families' (*Ibid.* 209) in order to create a comfortable, *hyggelig* framework in which 'the whole child' can develop.

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[108] The issue of ethnicity will be discussed in a separate chapter.

Before placing the above examples in further theoretical frameworks, we will observe two contrasting examples to the above where the meeting unfolds very differently:

> Minna's mother (ethnic Danish background) arrives on time, and initiates the conversation immediately. "*Minna is a very solid girl, but sometimes small things can throw her off – you can't do anything about it, but it passes very quickly… she is very good at contact with other people, but she has a problem with authority. I don't know if that is the norm for 6-year old girls in Denmark* [said in a proud voice, this is clearly a positive attribute]*– I hope it is just something she has with her parents. I think she has bought into the idea about authority in the school.*"
> Dorte and Karen: "*We don't have any problems at all, we can tell that sometimes she disagrees, but she does as she is told*"
> The mother continues to talk about Minna, her strengths and weaknesses, how the family is structured, what her interests are. Karen and Dorte hardly say anything during the meeting.

At the following meeting (still in year 0.Y):

> Viktoria's parents (ethnic Danish background) enter the classroom, and much like Minna's mother before them, they immediately take charge and begin talking about their daughter.
> "*Viktoria is so very social, therefore she is so tired when she comes home, because really - she can be quite vulnerable as well. She has a reputation for being very embracing, for her there are no rules in relations. We have always emphasised the tolerant attitude.*" And continues: "*She wants to go with the flow, whereas Therese* [her best friend from pre-school, who is also in the class] *goes her own ways. We would like for them to*

be separated a bit – she needs to get 'more hair on her chest',

we want her to be more assertive."

Karen: "*Maybe that is not easy when you're still so young, it will*

probably come during her school time"

Parents: "*It is important that she learns* rummelighed [space for

everyone] *and tolerance… you have to play with everyone. We*

know she can be a bit of a drama queen, but you know what it is

like, the first child, it is all a bit touch and go."

Karen: *"Well, it might be that she bangs the door at home, but*

that doesn't happen over here"

Dad: "N*o, she does follow the rules"*

Mother (smiling): "*Well, she is amazing, but of course you have*

*already 'written that in bold' (*noticed this*)".*

The last two families were middle-class families of an academic, ethnic Danish
background; they appeared to know that they could place a demand on the school. It
has been discussed that Danish middle-class parents engage with the school in this
fashion, because they know they paid for it through taxes, and hence perceive the
school as a product of consumption, and as with all other products, it was their right to
check it for quality, and exchange it if they found it did not live up to their standards
(Qvortrup 2010; Knudsen 2010). It was evident from these meetings that for these
particular parents, the school was an institution that should accommodate to their
child, rather than the other way around. Usually, this assertive attitude of the parents
did not pose a problem, because these children were not considered disruptive, and
had had the 'right social upbringing', therefore knowing appropriate modes of
participation. Simultaneously, the teachers seemed to recognise the social capital of
these parents, as they, in the conversations I observed, did not put the same amount of
pressure or demands on them.

In the literature review, I discussed Bourdieu's theory of habitus (as alluded to above),
and the role of social and cultural capital in the reproduction of inequality (discussed
also in the previous chapter). Again we can draw a comparison to Bourdieu's (1972)
theory of 'symbolic violence' to explain the cultural and social domination of one class

over another (or in my study, one social group over another) occurring unconsciously through everyday practices. Bourdieu (1977 [1972]:17) argued that the reason educational institutions perpetuate social inequalities is because the pedagogic culture a school transmits is shaped by the dominant culture, i.e. there is no 'culturally free' pedagogical action. Even education that appears as 'liberal' is still inherently value-laden; in fact Bourdieu argues that it is often this 'soft approach', which is the 'only effective way of exercising the power of symbolic violence' (*Ibid.*). Following this line of argument, the liberal approach of the Danish educational system, should be the most successful at exercising 'symbolic violence', meaning that those with no previous socialisation in dominant forms of cultural capital would be at a serious disadvantage[109].

Other ethnographers in the Danish educational institutions have argued along similar lines, for instance Gulløv and Bundgaard (2006) who conducted ethnography in a *børnehave* in Denmark. Through observations of interaction between the children and their pedagogues, they identified the cultural beliefs and values that structured these daily socialisation practices (*Ibid.* 146). One social distinction, or mode of behaviour, that Gulløv and Bundgaard observed in the *børnehave*, and which was also predominant in my ethnography, was 'verbal articulation and openness'. This ability was legitimised as the 'norm' and considered a key competence in Denmark. Like the school/home conversations, Gulløv and Bundgaard (*Ibid.* 147) found that the pedagogical project was often expanded from being 'merely' a concern for the child to including the entire family. The pedagogues in their study observed that families of different ethnic backgrounds did not train their children in 'verbal communication' and values such as 'equality' (*Ibid.* 148). Subsequently the pedagogues would often require consultations with the parents where they explained how to communicate effectively with their children. The emphasis on verbal articulation and openness as a key competence and mode of behaviour has also been discussed in view of *terapisme* (*'therapisme'), a pedagogical strategy discussed particularly by Raahauge (2005) and Thejsen (1997).

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[109] Why this may not be the case, will be further explored in Chapter IX.

Therapisme and/or 'verbal articulation'

Ideally 'therapisme' is a pedagogical strategy that encourages the students to share their experiences of the world with the small institutional community of the class (or other institution). A consequence, however, is the emphasis on some parts of the narrative, and the muting of other parts in order to fit the 'norm' and hence teach what it is appropriate to talk about. As such it is both a strategy suggesting that there should be no fundamental differences between learning in school - and the values, morals, and ethics that are inculcated in the home (Raahauge 2005) - but furthermore it is an approach which focuses on the experience of the student. Raahauge (*Ibid.* 106) argues that the role of the Danish *folkeskole* today is more focused on the creation of the socially competent person, than it is on transmitting academic knowledge (something which has also been discussed previously in this thesis). 'Therapisme' reflects this role, as this too is focused on the perspective of the student (even if it is so in order to mute differences in the individual narratives – in order to provide equal starting points). Thejsen (1997[110]), editor-in-chief for the Danish Teacher's union's monthly magazine 1987-2010, even suggested that the increased focus on 'therapy-above-training', meant that the 'emotional contentment of the individual is the most important' in contemporary education, as the focus is increasingly centred on the bringing-out of the person and the academic content is falling to the background (this also reflects the conversation with Leise in the previous chapter, where she complained that the students did not appreciate and understand that the school could not always be fun and *hygge* - that sometimes they had to work hard).

It has been argued that education which prioritises the experiences of the child does not encourage him/her to break away from *den negative sociale arv, '*negative social heritage'[111]. Hence 'therapisme', as a tool to break down the boundary between the home and the school (the private and the public) in order to challenge negative social heritage, often ends up instead emphasising and reproducing this (Raahauge 2005; Knudsen 1996).

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[110] http://www.ernaeringogsundhed.dk/25964/-selvcentreret
[111] As described in the literature review, the most important role of the Danish *folkeskole* is to 'break the negative social heritage', i.e. give students an 'equal' (the same) starting point.

'Therapisme' as a focus on verbal articulation and openness, reflects also Gullestad's (1989, 1992) argument from the beginning of this chapter, that Scandinavia is a society characterised by an egalitarian individualism, meaning that each person is at the ideological focus, but at the same time as emphasising 'sameness' in order to feel equal. In other words, the private sphere is at the pinnacle, as it is brought into the classroom - but it is also highly influenced by the public, as this subsequently defines what an appropriate private sphere may look like.

The emphasis on verbal articulation, openness, and 'therapisme' can be seen all over *folkeskolen;* I have already discussed student councils and class's hour in an earlier chapter, and the school/home conversations above. But there were also more subtle, everyday situations, in which it was played out. For example whenever the students came back after the weekend, they were encouraged to share what they had been doing with the class. As seen in the example narrated below, it was not uncommon for the younger classes to spend a predominant part of their first lesson doing this[112].

When I joined the year 0.Y halfway through the day just after their autumn break, they were still telling stories of what they had been doing over the holidays.

> Marcus had been to Tivoli (amusement garden in central Copenhagen).
> Felicia and Casper to Legoland (again an amusement park) - all typical holiday activities that were not further commented upon, other than 'who did you go with', 'was it fun' etc.
> Anders's story was a bit different, as he told us that he had seen his father, and spent time with the father's new girlfriend,
> Anders: "Det var totalt grineren*"* (it was totally a right 'Laf')
> Karen (class teacher): "*Is this the language you use at your dad's?*"
> Anders (continues without taking notice of Karen's comment): "*We played that her dog was a police dog, and then it would drag me across the floor, it was totally crazy.*"

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[112] Sally Anderson too observed that each school day, if not every lesson, would begin with this kind of small talk (2000:61-62).

Karen (with a bit of a sigh): "*Well have you had a* hyggelig *time? Was it nice to come back home to mum? Do you think she had been missing you?*"

Meanwhile Mads had been staring out of the window…

Karen: "*Mads! Are you listening? During school time we learn to listen to each other*".

Anders stayed predominantly with his mum since his parents had split up. While the mum was not considered the most responsible parent (the teachers recall her failure to pick up Anders at school when he was ill, because she was out shopping) she was considered much more so than his dad, whom Anders would see only rarely. The pedagogical practice of 'therapisme', as we see in the above example, where students were encouraged to verbally articulate and share their holiday activities, essentially encourages the merger of school-time and spare time, as the students involved the class in their spare time activities. Through the teacher's corrections, and emphasis, on parts of the narrative it is corrected to fit the 'norm'. In this particular example, Karen firstly corrected Anders's language, by making the suggestion that he was not properly articulating his experience, and that if he was allowed to speak like that at his dad's, then this was wrong. Secondly, Karen ignored the wild games he had been playing, and instead drew attention towards going back to mum – to having a *hyggelig* time – trying to get Anders's story to, at least partially, fit the 'norm'.

As the teachers attempted to minimise the differences in the narratives, the child's social heritage was, however, continuously reiterated and reinforced[113]. This was initially because the experiences going on outside the institutional framework were not homogeneous, and social/cultural differences were therefore reinforced through the narrative and experiences of the child (as for example not all students had gone to Tivoli or Legoland). To return to Gulløv and Bundgaard (2006), they too observed that within the emphasis on verbal articulation, both the articulation in itself and what was articulated, had to fit into a predetermined set of what was considered 'normal' (Gulløv and Bundgaard 2006); this is what the above example also showed us.

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[113] The aspect of minimising difference to promote the ideology of equality (as in 'sameness') is at the focus of Chapter X.

The emphasis on verbal articulation - which is also reflected in the practice of the tradition of deliberative democracy (as discussed in Chapter V) - openness, and 'therapisme' was illustrated in this chapter through the examples of the school/home conversations and discussions of spare time activities in the everyday context. All of these illuminate the pervasive and close relationship between the public/private. A relationship, which not only overlaps, as one sphere interferes into the other, but almost comes to exist as in a seamless transition. In reality, of course, the transition is not seamless, as all the students do not fit into pre-existing categories – and hence, what I have shown above, is that the narratives must be moulded to fit these, to be equal – the 'same'.

The fact that the school was however increasingly aware of a (perhaps too) close, if not overlapping, relationship between the public and the private, was evident, not just from Leise's statements in the previous chapter, but also from Søren's purpose statement for the school. In this he writes:

> 'The difference between the school's 'space for learning' and the private everyday life has become indistinct. Some students expect that education is centred around them, that everything should appeal to their interests, emotions and desires, and that it should immediately be of use in their everyday life. But according to our understanding, the school should be a different kind of space, consciously separated from the outside everyday life. Our goal is to make the students aware that they are in a school, this means that, we as professionals, sometimes have to have more solidarity with the future of the students, than with their present.'[114]

Søren's point of view reflects a different stream from the mainstream pedagogical thinking in Denmark – a stream that is moving away from the reform pedagogical model (characterised by the focus on the development of the whole individual)

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[114] Søren's purpose statement can be found in Appendix F.

towards a more academic model, with a clear focus on the actual acquisition of knowledge (Christiansen 2008). This movement is also reflected in recent discussions concerning *folkeskolen* on a political level, as recent PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) tests have shown Denmark to have one of the most expensive school systems, but also a lower than average academic performance[115].

If, however, we bring the discussion back to the school/home conversations, and the reality of what I observed in everyday contexts, it is clear that this way of thinking is not implemented, or has at least not won the support of the teachers (perhaps with the exception of Leise, and a few other teachers at the school). As a matter of fact, as also discussed in the literature review, these results have not even caused much controversy. This is because, as discussed throughout this thesis, the role of *folkeskolen* is not primarily to teach facts and transmit knowledge, but rather to create *dannede medborgere*. These are citizens who will understand the rules and social codes for appropriate participation and interaction within society.

Do we have a deal then?

One of the social codes that middle-class ethnic Danish parents have 'broken' is that of subtle contract negotiation. Lars Qvortrup, dean of the Danish Department for Education and Hanne Knudsen, in her recent PhD (2010), argue that the Danish welfare state is moving from being a rights/duties-welfare state towards being a contractual/agreement state, and that this development can most vividly be seen in the school. This can be illustrated in the school/home conversations, as exemplified through the *har vi en aftale* 'do we have a deal?' (A saying signifying that the student is part of the decision-making, rather than 'merely' following rules)[116].

Halfway through my fieldwork, I was allowed to sit in on another school-home conversation, this time in year 3.X (aged 9-10). This was slightly different to the previous meetings described above, as the students this time participated in the

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[115]The PISA results for 2009 can be found on:
http://www.pisa.oecd.org/document/61/0,3746,en_32252351_32235731_46567613_1_1_1_1,00.html.
These were also discussed in the literature review.
[116] As observed also by Anderson (2000:180-182).

meeting. In this context I have chosen to focus on a topic that ended with a 'do we have a deal then?'

Over some time there had been problems with one of the girls, Tanja, being very dominant in shaping social relations amongst the girls. As Tanja and her parents were scheduled for the last meeting of the day, the teachers had built a strategy to get as many of the girls as possible to say something about the situation, so they could confront Tanja with the issue.

> Mette (Class teacher): *"Amna, how do you think things are going, with friends for instance?"*
> Amna: *"It's difficult sometimes, because Tanja decides everything, and Sanne just always follows her, and sometimes they don't include me"*

The teachers did not investigate further, they knew what was going on; they just needed Amna to mention it. For the rest of the consultation, they discussed how Amna was doing academically. Her mother was very proud of her, and was visibly touched when talking about the positive things and about Amna's progress.

The next girl was Ozlem, and she too, commented that when it came to the social aspects in the class, Tanja was too dominant, and always wanted to decide everything (Ozlem had observed this even though she mostly played with the boys). The next two meetings were with Ida, and later Anna. They were not asked about the situation because they played only with each other. Instead the teachers discussed with the parents that perhaps they should play with the other children more, as they could sometimes get lonely if the other was ill or absent from school.

When Pernille arrived next, the teachers tried to ask her about the same issue, but Pernille did not really want to discuss friends, she said: *"I don't really think about these kinds of things"*. While this was what Pernille says, I had observed otherwise. Pernille was a new girl in the class, and she appeared to still be navigating between the already defined social groups – as such I had observed her struggling quite a bit to be included

in the games of the other children – particularly she had been ignored by Tanja. When Pernille stated that it was not an issue, it was visibly annoying Mette and Sofie, who would have liked some more examples for when Tanja and her parents came in for the following meeting – but Pernille still maintained that it was not.

Finally, Tanja and her mother arrived at the meeting.

> Mette: *"Tanja, we have been talking to the other girls, and there seems to be a problem with you being too bossy! We simply don't have room for that. We know you want Sanne to yourself, but sometimes you have to include some of the other children as well.*
> Mother: *"We have discussed this at home"* [To Tanja]: *"Think about it, what if it was you who didn't get to play with the other children?"*
> Tanja denies everything, arguing that it is not just her, but after some pressure from the teachers, she admits that she does prefer to play in smaller groups of 2-3.
> Tanja (in an asking tone): *"But I don't think there is anything wrong with that?"*
> Mette: *"But it also has to do with the way in which you reject the others, how they perceive it when you say no."*

They continued to discuss it back and forth for a while, and ended up coming to an agreement in which Tanja promised to sometimes include some of the other students, while still sometimes only playing with Sanne...

> Mette: *"Do we have a deal then?"*
> Tanja: *"I guess so…"*

The example of Tanja shows us how there is an emphasis not only on how to act appropriately amongst peers, but also on including her actively in 'improving' this behaviour. The 'conflict resolution education' is another pedagogical strategy, in which

the students must learn that conflicts are best solved through the deliberative (democratic) model, of discussions and the reaching of compromises. It is as such also an important part of maintaining a *hyggelig* atmosphere and simultaneously part of learning to verbalise needs, wants, problems, and conflicts in an appropriate manner. It is a strategy, which when employed by the teachers, ideally facilitates an understanding in the students regarding their own role in changing the situation.

The above example also illustrates that in a close knit community, such as the class, the teachers cannot only deal with the academic education, but must also look at the social elements. As the children spend a majority of their waking hours in institutions, primarily the school, *opdragelse* cannot be left only to the home.

It is also for this reason that the Danish school is a *dannelses-skole*: an educational system that focuses not only on the academic education of the child, but on the education of the whole individual. So when the teachers cross the boundary between the private and the public, it appears to be with the intention that all students should, as far as possible, be offered the same opportunities and leave the school with similar a similar amount of social and cultural capital (to use the expressions of Bourdieu – although 'social skills and understandings' may be more accurate terms).

The packed lunch

While the school is very much expected to interfere in social education, *opdragelse*, there are also aspects into which the school does not interfere. Sometimes the obvious absence of intervention, or the silences - for instance the things that never came up in conversation, or the things that anthropologists do not see, but would have expected to see - can tell us a lot about a certain social/cultural arena.

In the case of *folkeskolen* in Denmark, two things were visibly missing when considering the transition, or even intrusion of the public into the private. And these were uniforms, as discussed above, and school-supplied lunch. It is the latter that I will discuss in the following example, which illustrates what may initially appear as a contradiction to not only a close public/private relationship, but also to an egalitarian ideology - particularly one based on extensive redistribution (such as in a welfare state). As I hope to demonstrate, however, based in part on how the public/private

relationship is defined, understood, and lived in the everyday Danish schooling context, this is not a contradiction.

In all Danish *folkeskoler*, children are expected to bring packed lunches to school, and most classes will have a fridge in which to keep the food during the day. While the students did have the option of pre-ordering sandwiches the night before (after which a company would deliver the food for the following day's lunch break), hardly anyone would use this offer… mostly because it was very overpriced. On a normal day of fieldwork observations, I would not think about 'lunch' as a particularly interesting social activity to observe (other than in terms of what I didn't observe, i.e. a school canteen), but on one specific occasion the lack of a packed lunch made 'lunches at large' become especially visible to me.

During *medborgerskabs uge*, (the co-citizenship week), the children in year 2.X and 3.X (aged 8-10) were working on the topic of child labour (this example will be further discussed in the following chapter). On the first day they were made to watch a movie on children working with fireworks in a factory, under harsh conditions and below minimum wages. After watching the film, I overheard a few of the students as they exited the classroom and went out to the courtyard for the short recess (10 min)

> Tanja and Sanne: "*I just don't want to eat my recess-snack, because I am thinking about child-labour.*"
> As they return from recess, they ask questions about the movie…
> Julie, the class-teacher (to Tanja and Sanne): "*Why wouldn't you eat during recess?*"
> Girls: "*Because we felt bad about eating when they don't have anything at all.*"
> Julie: "*Yeah but that doesn't make it better at all, does it? As Mette and I said, the reason we are showing you this, is not to make you feel bad… or for that matter feel super grateful about being Danish – because everyone should really "have it like us"*.

I found myself wondering what it actually meant to 'have it like us', knowing that it was exactly this state of being I was trying to unravel, or at least what the popular imagination of 'being like us' was.

After a long discussion about the movie, which I will not go into for the purpose of this chapter, the longer recess was approaching (50min). Before going into the courtyard, the students had 20min to eat their packed lunches in the classroom. Everybody got their lunches out, either from the class's fridge or from their backpacks, and quickly the smell of sausage, liver pate, and other typical Danish lunch favourites spread across the classroom. Ramyar was sitting right in front of me, he was not eating:

> DSS: "*Aren't you having anything to eat*?"
> Ramyar: "*No, I'm not hungry*"
> Julie overhears our conversation, to Ramyar; "*Aren't you hungry*?"
> Ramyar: "*No*"

After a little while it turned out that he didn't have any food with him. Ramyar came from a resource-strained family, not just in financial terms, but also, as his family did not speak Danish very well and hence particularly in terms of social and cultural capital (Ramyar's family came from Pakistan). On this occasion, one of the other boys gave him his apple.

As we have seen, it was viewed as important for the students to learn about responsibility towards each other, not just within the class, school or welfare state, but also towards global society (e.g. as they were learning about child labour). At the same time the school still struggled to deal with the socially and economically deprived students within its own realm; without overtly pointing out the differences between the students (which we will engage with in more detail in Chapter X). Ramyar's lack of a packed of lunch, and the conscious choice of the Danish *folkeskole* not to intervene, by for instance providing lunch to the children, highlights this dissonance.

To a certain extent it could be argued that Ramyar did **not** '*have it like us*', at least in economic terms. This begs the question of why the school has no hesitation in interfering in the social education (*opdragelse)*, as seen for example with the school-home conversation, but does not provide school-lunch, which is a much more evident and pervasive social marker displayed on a daily basis. School food is, similar to uniforms, not an option seriously debated in either the media, or amongst the teachers – packed lunches are in other words taken-for-granted. This is peculiar, as for instance Sweden - a country with which Denmark is most often compared – does not have uniforms either, but *does* have school lunches.

Based on my fieldwork, I will argue that there are two primary reasons for the lack of school food. Firstly, it is linked to the idea of equality, expressed in the phrase 'we are all the same/we should all be the same' (which will be discussed in much greater detail in Chapter IX). The persistent focus on equality would necessarily mean that if there was a school canteen, everybody should be offered food equally. A canteen option would not be allowed to point out differences by handing out food vouchers or similar, in that way making it visible who can afford, who cannot. Since food is a basic good, which everyone in a successful egalitarian welfare state should be able to afford, having to 'hand out food' in the school could be considered as a public sector not doing its job properly. Consequently, a healthy packed 'lunch' is considered something everyone can theoretically afford to make (and hence *should* make).

In this sense, the packed lunch almost becomes a symbol of the middle-class ideology, which is the dominant egalitarian, we 'are all the same' ethos, but also - as argued by Gullestad and her theory of the egalitarian individualism – the ethos 'we should be able to take care of ourselves', i.e. be independent from *det offentlige*. As such the packed lunch plays on illusions of the imagined middle-class society, where equilibrium is maintained between the role of the individual and the intervention of the public. To sum up, canteen-lunches would suggest that everyone cannot bring a packed lunch, and hence that 'we are not the same' (not equal, as expressed through sameness) and that 'we cannot take care of ourselves' (not independent) and hence go against the ideal of an egalitarian individualistic welfare state.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, packed lunches are home-made; this means that they are *hyggelige*. As discussed in the last chapter, *hygge* plays into many, if not most, aspects at the school (and Danish society at large). It was found particularly in connection to food, which subsequently came to be illustrative of the topics I am focusing on in this thesis on several occasions. Uniforms and mass-produced canteen food would make the school impersonal, 'not *hyggelig*', and hence threaten the home-outside-the-home ethos that is necessary to create a safe and conducive work environment. Sally Anderson experiences in her fieldwork that the packed lunch is important along other parameters as well, as she observes the students sharing, swapping, and asking for other students' food as part of the negotiations that create reciprocal closeness between the students within the space of the class (2000:185).

Further to some of the other reasons I have outlined above, I believe that these are the most essential reasons why school-provided lunches and uniforms have not, and will probably not, be introduced in the Danish *folkeskole.*

In the previous chapter we discussed the importance of homemade food. Linnet (forthcoming: 190) suggested that food is a symbolic practice through which people *do* their homes, as homemade food marks a sphere as warm, personal, caring, and in opposition to non-homey environments, such as the market and mass produced foods. In a sense, one could argue that homemade food almost represents an element of the person or *home* in which it was created (similar to how the *hau* view the essence of the person as embedded in the gift, Mauss 1924). When the student unwraps and consumes his/her packed lunch, it is essentially as if unwrapping a piece of home in the classroom. Maurice Bloch (1999) - and as noted in the previous chapter – also discussed how commensality, or the act of eating together and coming together 'as one' (in the Danish context, *nærvær* - the feeling of togetherness/closeness), is one of the most powerful operators of social processes (*Ibid.* 133). In other words when the students (ideally) all sit together in the classroom, each of them with their homemade lunches, they share a moment of commensality, and simultaneously the packed lunch can be seen as bringing the home all the way into the classroom – and in turn facilitating *homeyness* in the school.

Observed from the perspective of an imagined egalitarianism and particularly when taking into account the importance of *hygge*, packed lunches then become not an aspect in contrast to a close public/private relationship, but rather a facilitator of this relationship. Simultaneously it reflects Gullestad's definition of the interplay between the individualistic (independence) and the collective (we are all the same). In other words, it emphasises that the welfare state is there to help everyone stay/become equal, but that one should not depend on the welfare state.

Conclusion – or does the seamless transition exist unchallenged?
This chapter has outlined the relationship between the public and the private as illuminated through some of the practices in the Danish *folkeskole*. The public was defined in view of *det offentlige*, as a conglomeration of the public sector - as expressed by the state, state institutions, and employees – as well as through its ideology at large. The private, on the other hand, was considered purely in terms of the home and the dispositions of the individual.

Further to this we saw how the general relationship between the individual and the collective in Scandinavia (as discussed by Gullestad 1989; 1992) informs the close relationship between the public/private, while still allowing a fair share of individualism, as expressed for instance through the absences of school-uniforms. In other words, there is a strong focus on the individual, but an individual who must fit into the 'norms' of Danish society. Some of these norms are explored in this chapter, not to mention thesis at large, such as 'equality', 'verbal articulation/*therapisme*', 'deliberative democracy', '*hygge*', and in the following chapter an appropriate understanding of 'citizenship in terms of rights and duties'.

Throughout this chapter it was observed how *folkeskolen* represented a space/sphere in-between the public/private, carrying notions of both, but even more so continuously mimicking aspects of both these arenas. This could be seen for example through the facilitation of *hygge* in the classroom, which plays an important role in enabling a close-knit public/private relationship by transforming the school into a homey place. To some extent, it could be argued that *hygge* even facilitated a seamless transition from the private into the public and vice versa – although the

school/home conversations, and everyday use of verbal articulation and 'therapisme' showed us that this transition is not always seamless.

The Danish word for education in itself illuminates the role of the school as in-between, as it must engage with both *uddannelse* and *opdragelse*, academic and social education alike – and particularly as the teachers involve and educate the parents (in the school/home conversations), or are in turn educated by the parents who are already appropriately socially equipped.

The school-home conversations furthermore showed that parents from minority backgrounds (whether ethnic or socio-culturally determined), engaged very differently to how the ethnic Danish middle-class parents did. For the purpose of this chapter, I deliberately chose to show four families, illustrating two different points of the spectrum.

Where the teachers would clearly educate the families with minority backgrounds in appropriate social skills, the power-relationship - between the teachers (the public) and the parents (the private) - was reversed in the case of the parents with an ethnic Danish middle-class background. They had understood the appropriate form of communication, and took charge of these meetings – acting, so to speak, as 'a fish in the water'.

Most families, however, were somewhere in-between these two points. The teachers provided some comments, and the parents provided the teachers with their own observations and understandings of their children. Nonetheless, it is very clear at these meetings, which parents have translated and understood the appropriate 'educational decoders' (Willis 1977), and which have not.

To sum up, *folkeskolen* is intrinsically a space between the public and the private; it is a space in which the child is a student being socialised into being a good citizen. Since being a good citizen in a Danish context is concerned with inner values and ways of understanding the world, and interacting appropriately within it, the school has to intrude into the private sphere, sometimes also to socialise the parents. At the same

time the school is required and expected to act as an 'alternative extended family', and to provide the safe and bounded space that is necessary to secure a conducive learning environment. In that sense it could be argued that it is not only the public intervening in the private, but equally, the private sphere reaching into the public, expecting this to provide a homey space for the students.

This chapter has touched upon the aspect of responsibilities, in terms of 'who is responsible' for the child. This is an aspect which will also be incorporated in the following chapter as I elaborate on the issue of responsibilities in view of 'rights and duties' at large.

Chapter VIII: Rights and Duties

The previous chapters have discussed democracy, *hygge,* and the close-knit relationship of the private and the public. Within all of these discussions, the issue of 'rights and duties' plays an important role, and it is this I focus on in this chapter The following example, from my ethnography, plays into all the themes of the thesis so far, and particularly sets the stage for the broader issues that will be considered in this chapter.

Oatmeal

It was the short 15-minute recess on a grey and cold spring morning at By Skolen. I was sitting in the teachers' lounge, absent-mindedly discussing a TV-show that had aired the previous night, when Søren, the headmaster, called for the teachers' attention.

> Søren: "*I would just like to inform you, that from today on, the year 9's* [age 15-16] *have taken the initiative to serve oatmeal in the short recess – this means that some of the year 9's will take turns serving the oatmeal in front of the gym-building. Initially we are using paper bowls, but over time, the students should bring their own bowls.*"
>
> Leise (teacher): "*How long is this going to run for? And who is going to clean up the mess in the courtyard* [the area in which all the students go for recess] *that will inevitably follow?*"
>
> Søren: "*The plan is to run the scheme until summer, when the year 9 leaves, then we will assess if it has been a success, and whether the new year 9's want to continue it – we don't want to have anything to do with it, but have agreed to pay for the oatmeal.*"
>
> Knud (teacher): "*I'm not sure that this is a great idea, will the parents not come to expect of us that we should provide breakfast – so if we do it now, then they will complain, once we're not doing it?*"

Søren: *"Time will tell, but for now, I think it's a great initiative for those of the students, who have not received breakfast at home – this will help their ability to learn."*

The above example of the provision of oatmeal, and some of the teachers' reactions to this, picks up on a theme explored in the previous chapter, namely how far (and in which areas) the school should take its responsibilities and aid in external and extra-curricular issues for the benefit of readying the students for learning. The example also plays into the other themes covered, such as democracy (discussed in Chapter V). The provision of oatmeal to students was a year 9 initiative, which was originally discussed in the student council. Additionally, the example resonates with the issue of *hygge* covered in Chapter VI. For instance, eating in itself is *hyggeligt*, particularly when everyone is eating *the same thing*. Most pertinently for this chapter, this example inspires another question: who determines appropriate needs, and when do these needs become rights? It is these questions that will be at the centre of the discussion in this chapter.

Overview of the chapter

As discussed in the literature review, the study of citizenship represents a consolidation of the parallel concerns with class (in the British tradition, Willis 1977; Evans 2006) and race and ethnicity (in the American tradition, MacLeod 1987; Jacob and Jordan 1993). My research, and thesis at large, can be situated firmly within this emerging field of study (as discussed by Levinson 2005; Ladson-Billings 2004), given its primary focus on the link between the Danish *folkeskole* and the students as being and becoming Danish welfare citizens. This chapter too is concerned with citizenship, and inherent in this notion is the idea of citizen morality, *borgermorale*.

The argument of this chapter is that the issue of rights and duties is intrinsic to what it means to be a Danish welfare citizen. This is so both in terms of the relationship between the citizen and the state, as discussed in the previous chapter, and in the way the issue of rights and duties is prevalent in everyday life and in the context of the school. Unsurprisingly, then, these notions emerged strongly throughout my fieldwork in many different variations and contexts. In tandem with the kind of themes

examined in other chapters, I hope to further illustrate how citizens are brought into being in the Danish schooling context, particularly in view of values and interactions pertinent to the Danish welfare state.

The chapter will begin with a theoretical outline of 'rights and duties' in view of these as expressions of citizen morality. Drawing from my ethnography, I will then discuss how 'moral education' is expressed in the Danish *folkeskole.* I will particularly discuss the incongruities between student perceptions of 'rights and duties' compared to teachers', as the students learned how to express these appropriately. The chapter will furthermore engage with the larger debates in Danish society – most significantly in view of the Danish historian, Henrik Jensen's observation that there has been a change from a duties-oriented towards a rights-oriented society (2002). In the last sections I will argue that my ethnography does not necessarily support Jensen's observations, but rather suggests that what *has* changed is the understanding of 'rights and duties' – mainly in terms of which rights and duties are relevant to discuss. The chapter will conclude that the shift is perhaps more along lines of making the notions of 'rights' explicit and moving away from local, towards a global and individual understandings particularly of duties.

The Playground

'*If you are going to write about 'rights and duties' in the Danish Folkeskole, then you must write about 'the playground'.*'

Mette, teacher at By Skolen

During my time at By Skolen a new playground was built on the side of the courtyard (the recess area). In several ways the story of the playground illustrates many of the themes of this research, and is hence an example that will be mentioned in other contexts throughout the thesis. In this chapter, it will be used to illuminate the practice of 'rights and duties' in the Danish *folkeskole*.

A few times a week, during the lunch break, the headmaster, Søren, would make announcements in the teachers' lounge concerning various issues of the daily life at the school, such as well-being (e.g. the announcement made concerning the provision

of oatmeal), physical maintenance of the school (i.e. that such and such classroom couldn't be used), or issues to do with particular students or student groups.

During my time at the school, a re-occurring theme would be the progress of the new playground. Søren took great pride in this project; for him it signified a wide array of things. Firstly, the playground was a student council initiative (the student council was discussed in Chapter V). This ideally meant that a student had raised a wish for a new playground in the student council meeting. Subsequently the student representatives would have voiced this wish to the school board, who would have then voted in favour of the initiative and begun the search for funding.

Secondly, the actual layout of the playground – the theme – was one that Søren would emphasise from time to time, not just during his 'lunchtime updates', but also when I would meet him in his office to discuss my work. The playground was what he coined an '*yde før man kan nyde*' playground, which means that 'you must *yde*, before you can *nyde*'. *Yde* meaning something along the lines of 'to give', provide, and work in an enduring sense with strong connotations of duty; *nyde* translates into enjoying and receiving.

This means that it was a playground with which the students would have to engage physically and creatively to get any profit and fun in return. For instance, the slide was not a regular slide, but rather consisted of two pipes running parallel towards the ground. By placing one leg on either side, but still holding yourself up, you would then be able to slide down, as on a regular slide. The students came up with many other versions of how to use this particular ride in the playground, using just one pipe, lying perpendicular across them, heads first etc. The essence of all their usage was that they needed to think it up themselves and make an effort physically to make it work.

That the playground was important to Søren, to the extent that it came to have an air of 'his legacy' left to the school[117], was evident not just through his regular updates on its construction. When the playground was ready for use, there was a *rejsegilde*, i.e. an

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[117]Søren is retiring in the summer 2012.

opening ceremony to celebrate its completion (which will be discussed further in Chapter X). This event was on a rather large scale, with food and drinks being served to the whole school, and a lesson even being suspended.

I have drawn on the example of the playground as it can be seen as a physical display of two issues that are relevant to my thesis, and to this chapter in particular: 'democracy' and 'rights and duties'. In terms of the democratic process, a need was expressed by students, and the need was subsequently evaluated by the authorities and declared legitimate. It was established that the students had a right to get a new playground, and that the school would hence provide them with this right. Secondly, this issue illustrates how the concept of *yde* is directly related to *nyde*. In this respect, the playground represented a range of aspects in relation to a rights/duties continuum, incorporating both notions of giving and receiving.

As with most of my fieldwork, however, this example is not as straightforward as the above outline suggests. When I arrived at By Skolen, the construction of the playground was already under-way. As such I do not *actually know* how it came to be, and can only rely on the discussions of students and teachers. During my observations in the student council throughout the year I was at the school, I did not at any point hear the students mention 'the playground' as something they had suggested. Rather, what I did experience was that the headmaster and the facilitator of the student council meetings[118] were very keen on emphasising the role of the student council in getting the new playground. In other words, while I cannot know the exact role that the student council actually played in this process, there was a certain sense (amongst the teachers as well) that Søren was over-emphasising the role of the student council, perhaps to make it seem that they had accomplished something, and that their voice was being heard. Additionally, one could argue that any playground, or space in general, constitutes an area which children will approach creatively, using their own bodies and whatever props available to achieve 'fun'.

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[118]The facilitator was a teacher, who would arrange the first meeting of the student council, and then subsequently take a more passive role – e.g. not even participating in the actual meeting, as these were to be student-led.

Regardless of these criticisms, however, what I want to highlight in this example is that themes concerning the importance and extent of the student council's influence, along with the 'rights and duties' of the students in general, were themes being *explicitly* discussed and emphasised throughout my fieldwork. This is an issue to which I will return later in this chapter.

'Rights and Duties' as an aspect of *borgermorale* (citizen morality) in the welfare state

All the chapters have will continue to be focused on the creation of citizens in the Danish schooling context, particularly in view of values and interactions pertinent to the Danish welfare state. Such values include: democracy, *hygge*, public/private relationship, egalitarianism, ethnicity, and 'rights and duties'.

As I argue below, the understandings of these values, as experienced and articulated throughout my fieldwork, are to some extent illustrative of the range of moral frameworks that are inculcated and practised in the microcosm that is the Danish *folkeskole*. For instance, the way in which the students are taught moral behaviour, as expressed through rights and duties, is often informed by *hygge* (Chapter VI), by notions of the democratic conversation, deliberative democracy (Chapter V), and by an underlying understanding of the public/private relationship (Chapter VII).

This chapter will engage more closely with these practices in terms of how notions of morality are being shaped, transmitted and received in a Danish *folkeskole.* I am principally concerned with examining how morality becomes part of the formation of appropriate social relations in the Danish welfare state, and hence how morality constitutes part of the journey towards becoming a successful Danish welfare citizen.

Levinson's (1998) work reflects this theme, as he observes how morality is articulated in the Mexican ESF (Escuela Secondaria Federal). Instead of 'rights and duties' he observed how the popularity of teachers in the school could be seen as an expression of student moral discourses. A *good* teacher would be someone who recognised student autonomy and 'rights', while a bad teacher would display 'despotism', by imposing his/her own authority over the students in a manner that did not respect

student autonomy (*Ibid.* 55). Such observations relate to Levinson's broader concern with how moral discourses of 'good and bad' and student autonomy had changed, as informed by 'historical changes in local social relations and recently emergent cultural conceptions of 'rights'' (*Ibid.* 45). Similarly, as I argue in this chapter, the notion of rights and duties must be understood not only as an expression of morality, but also as informed by historical changes in social relations. 'Rights and duties' themselves imply morality, as the study of morality has traditionally been focused on that which one should do, or ought to do (one's duties). This is reflected in much of the anthropological literature on moralities, some of which was discussed in the literature review (e.g. Edel and Edel 1968; Heintz 2009; Howell 1997 and Zigon 2008)[119].

In the welfare state context, I suggest that the rights of the citizen will often equate with the duties of the state, and vice versa. In other words, the rights of the citizen can arguably be seen to constitute the moral obligation of the state towards the citizen, while the duties of the citizen constitute the latter's moral obligation towards the state. As an extension of this, in this thesis I argue that the obligation of the school (as a representative of the state) is to provide the students with their fundamental right to an education, while students have a moral duty towards society to fulfil their academic potential, and to use this to contribute to society at large.

From this point of departure, the investigation of 'rights and duties' in the Danish welfare state will allow me to explore an aspect of the 'morality of the welfare citizen', as it is 'being' and 'becoming' in the Danish *folkeskole.* As this exploration unfolds, we will be able to see how the Danish *folkeskole* can be seen as a kind of 'moral compass to the citizenship journey'[120]. To reach a more substantive understanding of the importance of moral socialisation in the schooling context, the following section will briefly sum up Durkheim's theories on the connection between a strong nation and a strong shared morality, and not least how these are obtained in the classroom as a microcosm of the nation (which were more substantively discussed in the literature review).

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[119] See also Appendix A
[120] A phrase suggested by Adam Connelly (personal correspondence November 2012).

Durkheim and Morality

As seen in the literature review, Durkheim (1925) argued that morality is dependent on three factors: discipline (the ability of the individual to identify the correct moral response by limiting the range of possibilities within which he/she can acceptably behave), attachment to society, and autonomy (indicating that an act can only be moral if the individual exercises 'moral reflectivity' i.e. act freely according to the law he/she has accepted as worthy of respect). In this sense, 'moral reflectivity' is perhaps linked more to discipline, than autonomy, as it is through discipline that the individual learn to identify appropriate behaviour according to the society he/she is participating in. Thus discipline, and 'moral reflectivity', is related to restraint (as one is restricting the range within which to act) or rather to the process of being civilised, in which case 'moral reflectivity' is something to be *learned*, rather than *chosen*. Education as such, according to Durkheim, acts as a moral agent of the nation, whose primary function it is to link the child to the society and to teach him or her, through discipline (as defined above), to know and love his/her nation.

Similar to Durkheim, the contemporary anthropologist, Jarett Zigon (2008), also focuses on the topic of morality as a cultural analytical framework (this model, along with a more substantive overview of the anthropology of morality can be found in Appendix A). Zigon argues that part of being an institution is claiming truth or 'rightness' of a particular kind of morality, and that interacting with them usually means adhering to them to some extent (Zigon 2008:163). This proposition suggests not only that students should ideally agree with the moral ideology – in this chapter the concepts of rights and duties - that *folkeskolen* propagates, but also implies that students are fully aware of the moral ideology being transmitted (the following ethnography will discuss the extent to which this was the case at By Skolen). Zigon, moreover, discusses 'morality as embodied dispositions', which is the 'everyday way of being in the world' (*Ibid.* 164). This is visible only when one stops to consider how to appropriately act morally. In Durkheimian terms, it can be compared to a conscious moment of 'moral reflectivity', a moment when the morality presented, by for instance the institution (the school), does not smoothly fit with the beliefs of the students - or when the beliefs fit, but these are unanticipated. Both of these instances

will be visible in the ethnographic examples to follow. Essentially, Zigon argues (similar to Aristotle, Durkheim 1925, Edel and Edel 1968 and also contemporary social scientists, such as Howell 1997) that a 'range of moralities' exists, and that it is at the edges of this range that the coming-into-being of this very range is visible. This chapter explores the coming-into-being of the notions of 'rights and duties', as an expression of citizen morality in the welfare state.

The following example immediately seems to present a discrepancy between the institutional morality and the morality of the students, in terms of how 'rights and duties' are understood differently. At the same time it also presents a moment of embodied dispositions being challenged, as the students debate the theme 'Christiania' in very different terms than how they would approach and use the actual physical location in their everyday lives.

Christiania…

Christiania is an island situated in the middle of Copenhagen. It was originally an abandoned military complex, which a few hippies occupied in 1971. Since the state never reclaimed it, a 'parallel society' arose based on values of sustainability, meditation, arts, and free cannabis trading. The community was supposed to be a 'free space' for all those who did not fit the mould for mainstream society. Today those who live on this island have their own laws and regulations. For instance it is 'legal', or at least not regulated by official authorities, to purchase cannabis and similar drugs there (whereas 'hard' drugs, such as cocaine, ecstasy and heroin are strictly prohibited), dogs run freely, there are no private property rights, and they have their own school, kindergarten etc. It is, however, still not absolutely autonomous, as residents still depend on state-subsidies, and since 1994, they have had to pay regular taxes as well. In 2004, the then-government of Denmark (conservative/classical liberal) began a 'normalisation' transformation of Christiania, and this process was still under-way during my fieldwork in 2009[121]. After a high court ruling in 2011, declaring that

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[121]There are many suggestions as to why it appeared important to the then-government to 'normalize' Christiania. The most accepted were that everyone are equal under the law, and hence should pay rent according to market-mechanisms, follow drug regulations etc. Another, more cynical, explanation, is

Christiania is ultimately the property of the state, it has now been agreed that Christiania will attempt to buy itself free from the state, by issuing 'people's shares' at 100 kroner (£10) a piece. At the current moment (2012) they have reached just under 10mil Danish Kroner (dkr) out of the total 78mil dkr required, and it is unclear if the new government (Socialist/Social Democrat) will pursue the matter of 'normalisation' further should they not reach their final target.

It is against this backdrop that Christiania remained a popular hang-out spot for some of the students in the out-schooling (age 13-16) at By Skolen. A considerable number of the students went there on their weekends to buy cannabis[122] or just to hang-out and listen to live music.

During co-citizenship week (which was discussed in Chapter V) the students in the out-schooling were shown a film on Danish society as experienced by a group of six young people from various other cultural backgrounds as they hitch-hiked their way through Denmark. In the film clip I want to discuss here, the topic was 'parallel societies in Denmark', such as 'Christiania'. In the film, the six young people comment that Christiania is not really a 'parallel society'. Firstly, it is supported by the state, in terms of financial benefits to the institutions, access to water and electricity etc.; and secondly, most of the people living there are on unemployment benefits.

After the film clip, the students had a chance to debate what they have just watched:

Boy: "*Christiania, you know, I think it is ok if they stick to the law.*"
Girl: "*But they don't, they sell drugs there.*"
Signe: "*They should at least pay for their own water and electricity!*"
Christian (teacher): "*It's not the only place you can buy drugs though… you could also buy that in* sønderskideballe" (slang for provincial Denmark).

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that Christiania is situated in a popular and central part of Copenhagen, making the actual land very valuable in terms of selling it off to real estate developers.

[122]In Chapter IV, p.77 I mentioned how the smoking of cannabis is relatively accepted amongst young people in Denmark; 23% of all young people in year 9 have tried smoking cannabis.
http://droginfo.com/pdf/hashsamtalen.pdf

Erkan: "*They are isolating themselves from society, making their own rules.*"

Christian: "*Do you not think you would be welcomed?*"

Students: "*Yeah…*"

Boy: "*It's good that you can make your own society!*"

Girl: "*But… society creates democracy… so if you bail out, should the benefits still count for you?*"

Fie: "*I think we should have room for everyone, but do they have to dawdle all day long, they could work in society and just live at Christiania!*"

Christian: "*Wait a minute - That you live in Christiania doesn't mean that you're a bum! Maybe you just want to live in an exciting location, instead of the lame boring yellow house I live in…*"

Signe: "*I don't think it is OK that they are not working.*"

Christian: "*But what about unemployment, it's rising, what are they supposed to do?*"

Girl: "*If they want to separate themselves from society, then they need to deserve it, I mean – They shouldn't be a weight on our society and they should pay themselves towards the new society.*"

Christian: "*I think a majority in the population think it is OK, it's only the government who don't think it is OK - they are moralising.*"

If we assume that the point of view of the teacher, an authority-figure in the institution of the Danish *folkeskole,* to some extent represents the institutional morality, then the above discussion is an example of how this is not necessarily shared by those who participate in the institution, i.e. the students. At the same time, however, we see that the teacher's point of view does not reflect that of the government, but rather that the point of view of the students seems immediately to do so. Thus, Zigon's model as discussed above does not fully explain or account for the complex reality I observed in the schooling context.

It appears that the students are primarily concerned with the fact that the residents at Christiania are not appearing to be doing 'their duties' as citizens and hence should not receive the corresponding rights from the state. The students seem to be focusing on what is best expressed by the Danish proverb, which is understood as one of the primary tenets –and a founding moral understanding -of the Danish welfare state:

'Gør din Pligt – og kræv din Ret'
'Do your duty – and demand your right'

In these terms the above discussion could immediately also be viewed as illustrating an instance of successful socialisation. The students have understood what it means to be a 'good citizen' in terms of the official ideology of the then-government, as they have deciphered the importance of performing one's duties towards society, before enjoying the rights that society extends to you in return.

However, this is not something they have learned from their teacher, who evidently does not (straight-forwardly) share the official ideology. By taking into account further discussions on this topic, we may see that other things too are taking place.
For example, when the teacher watches the movie, he sees a moral dilemma concerning the right for Christiania, an alternative community, to exist. The students, on the other hand, have all grown up taking Christiania for granted. Moreover, I know of a considerable number of the students who go to Christiania on a regular basis. It is possible that they do not see this aspect as a moral dilemma at all. Signe, who actively engaged in the discussion above, was one of the students in year 9.Z with whom I engaged the most. Often, when hanging-out in front of the school smoking during recess or a lesson off, she would talk about her weekends, past or future, many of which had been or would be spent in Christiania.

During the film discussion outlined above, I was surprised to hear her taking the stance that she did. I immediately understood her argument to be similar to how Christian, the teacher, articulated it: as an argument against the existence of an alternative community. As I transcribed my notes, however, it became clear to me that the students did not comment on the actual legitimacy of the existence of Christiania. Instead the students appeared to be focusing on the individual level of rights and duties, as in the rights of *Christianitter* (people who live on Christiania), to depend on a society they do not contribute to.

Thus we can see that the students and the teacher are not necessarily disagreeing, but rather debating at two different levels, or two different 'ranges of appropriate behaviour': the individual and the collective.

That such a division exists was clear in other examples as well. For example, in the ethnography presented in Chapter V, I discussed a similar discussion - whether or not people with severe learning difficulties should have the right to vote. We saw that the students were largely shocked that these individuals had the right to vote, as one student expressed it *"How can he vote, when he cannot even ride a bike properly?"* The teachers in turn expressed their shock about the students' responses, to me during the lunch break in the teachers' lounge, as they commented on how this particular right was fundamental to the Danish tradition of liberal tolerance, that everyone is of equal worth as a person. The discussion on the right to vote bears a resemblance to the one above, as we saw the teachers concerned with larger moral questions related to collective rights and how these reflect on Denmark, while the students were pre-occupied with the democratic rights of citizens, who essentially, in their point of view, were not capable of contributing to the political debate. That there is a shift in what is considered the relevant moral debate is also made visible in the later examples presented in this chapter, and I will make this clearer in below.

For now, it is important to note that all of these examples demonstrate that the school context is not one of immediate straightforward cultural transmission. Rather what happens in the Danish *folkeskole* appears to be significantly more complicated. This may be due to the school as a *dannelse*-project, i.e. what has been discussed previously as an emphasis on creating an independent *whole* person, academic, moral, physical, and social (Chapter I, II and V). Implied in this is the notion that the student should not passively receive appropriate moral understandings, but instead actively arrive at these through independent engagement with their class-comrades and teachers.

The students are aware of this project. This awareness was made visible during a verbal presentation in the subject 'English', where Erik and Amir, two year 9 students had chosen to present on 'the difference between a Danish and an American school

system'. One of the primary points the students presented (other than the financial perspective) was that the Danish school is very focused on creating analytical and independent students. Erik and Amir expressed it in the following way (direct extract from their notes):

"There is a lot of differences by going to school in USA compared to Denmark. Fore example is it much more concentrated about marks, even from the first classes, as you need good marks to get to the next grade. It's also much more concentrated about facts and learning by heart, where we in Denmark is learning to think self, be responsible, and be independent. In USA [...] it's also more quiet in the lessons, and there is more discipline [SIC]

As such, Erik and Amir are suggesting that what is special about the Danish school is that the Danish students learn to *think* for themselves, be *responsible*, and be *independent*. Part of the process by which students learn to do this is embedded in the moral socialisation process, and this process will be discussed in the following section.

Moral Socialisation

Theories of socialisation were discussed to a greater extent in the literature review, in regards to the anthropology of education, reproduction theories and childhood studies at large. To sum up, socialisation theory can be said to be the most actively used theoretical concept concerning children. Western institutions have particularly embraced the theory, as it is easily transferred into practical pedagogical programmes (Gulløv 1998:39). Socialisation theory is rooted in the Freudian tradition, where universalistic theories suggest that every individual passes through the same stages of development. Each stage indicates greater independence and competence in understanding morals, values, and appropriate ways of being necessary for social coherence. Barbara Rogoff (1993) explained socialisation as 'guided participation', to explain how the child from very early on participates and interacts with his/her surroundings with guidance from their elders. It is through this guidance that the child acquires the understandings and moral values of its surroundings and consequently produces and reproduces the moral and cognitive order.

The focus on socialisation theories in this chapter (and the thesis at large) is more a reflection of the institutional practices I observed, than of my own thoughts regarding the childhood journey. As discussed in the literature review, I do not perceive of the student as empty vessels waiting to be filled-up or as passive recipients of 'cultural stuff' transmitted during formal or informal education. Rather the student is a complex individual with his/her own motivations and biological potential. As such my general approach is concerned with the perspectives, experiences, and strategies of the individual child. I acknowledge, however, that these cannot be observed without taking into consideration the particular framework, i.e. the socialising or civilising school, within which new meanings are created, adopted, and adapted.

Moral socialisation, i.e. how culturally specific moral systems are transmitted, is something with which I am particularly concerned throughout this thesis, and am exploring in this chapter as expressed through different perceptions of 'rights and duties'. The theoretical framework for understanding moral socialisation as proposed by Fung and Smith (2010) is useful in understanding the processes and the context within which socialisation in the Danish *folkeskole* occurs. Fung and Smith (*Ibid.* 263) argue that there are four key dimensions in the moral socialisation process, where particular sociocultural variation can be observed.

The first includes what is considered to be *the desirable moral values*, which can be identified as those observed through 'repeated performance of actions that entail a particular virtue or vice' (Mahmood 2005:137). In a Danish context, these include egalitarianism (as will be investigated further in the following chapter), 'rights and duties', *hygge,* and the understanding of an appropriate private/public relationship. All of these appeared to be important moral understandings and values necessary to acquire in order to grow into a successful Danish Citizen.

Another key dimension is the extent to which such *values are socialisable*, i.e. the extent to which certain moral values are perceived of as being either acquirable or innate (Fung and Smith 2010:265). This is related to the specific cultural ideas concerning the process of teaching and learning. To illustrate this dimension, Fung and Smith draw on Rydström's (2001) work on ideas of morality in Vietnam. Here Rydström

suggests that morality first and foremost is a gendered subject. For boys, their development into moral beings is predominantly a matter of maturation - i.e. innate. For girls, however, morality is something that they must acquire through observations and instructions from elder females - i.e. through socialisation.

In a Danish context I observed a far-ranging institutional system in which most children would spend a predominant part of their waking hours from their toddler-years until their late teenage years[123]. This intensive socialisation suggests that the Danish understanding of morality is inextricably related to the school's role in the moral socialisation of the child. This is reflected in the primary aims of *folkeskolen,* which is to break chains of 'negative social heritage'. This is articulated as one of the key points for the further development of *folkeskolen* in government manifestos. For example, the manifesto of the government in power during my fieldwork - elected in 2005 - states that:

 "*The government will prepare a programme for fighting negative social heritage […] All children should have the opportunity for a positive start"*[124]

This debate is also evident in the media and various publications concerning schools and policies (Olsen 2007; Knudsen 1996).

The third dimension concerns the *social actors:* those authorised to bring about moral socialisation. According to Fung and Smith (2010), such actors must necessarily be determined by cultural-specific perceptions of social relationships. In a Danish schooling context such perceptions are highly influenced by the public/private relationship. Hence it is the combined responsibility of the home and the school to provide moral socialisation. This was also reflected in the previous chapter, when

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[123] In the previous chapter I discussed how such a system is presumably both a result of a high public demand for institutionalisation (as women entered the labour market, and are unlikely to leave it again) and an active implementation from a state attempting to create an egalitarian population (again this was discussed in the previous chapter; ideas of 'equal opportunities' and 'sameness' will be explored further in the following chapter).

[124]http://www.stm.dk/publikationer/reggrund05/index.htm#Fornyelse_af_folkeskolen_

discussing the Danish translation of education into both *uddannelse* (academic education) and *opdragelse* (social education).

The last dimension is the *techniques and strategies* used to achieve socialisation, or the interactions in and through which moral socialisation occur. For instance in a Danish *folkeskole*, the 'class meeting' was recognised as a tool to teach appropriate interaction, as the students would learn to communicate with each other in a respectful and responsible fashion.

In sum, and following Fung and Smith (2010), the Danish cultural context is focused on moral values informed by notions of egalitarianism, rights and duties, *hygge,* and the democratic conversation. These values are largely perceived of as acquirable through socialisation (and this is reflected by the extensive socialisation in the name of creating equal opportunities); the socialisation agents are both the school (institution) and the home, who in a joint and (preferably) shared effort should pass the above-mentioned moral values on to the(ir) children (as also alluded to in the previous chapter). The ethnography below is illustrative of the kind of strategies used in processes of moral socialisation.

Class Meeting - a right to be heard, a duty to listen.
The concept of *klassemødet,* the 'class meeting' replaced the 'class's hour' during the final five months of my fieldwork (the class's hour was described in Chapter V). The class meeting was introduced as an experimental focus area and new pedagogical tool and strategy. While the class meeting was usually referred to as a tool by the teachers, it also represented a strategy, as it was goal-oriented and consciously employed towards achieving this goal (making it less open-ended than the word 'tool' would suggest).

The purpose statement in the manual for how to conduct these meetings states that further to developing the social competences of the individual student, the class meeting would give the students a sense of shared *responsibility* towards each other and the collective community (Høiby *et al.* 2008). The well-being created through these meetings was considered (by the authors of the manual, and the teachers

implementing the style of the class meeting even before it became obligatory) as a fundamental premise to develop, expand and exploit the learning potential of the individual student and to support the class as a community. Well-being and academic performance in this sense came to be regarded as two sides of the same story.

Hence the class meeting was introduced to the school to teach the students of their responsibility towards the class community, so they could learn how to participate appropriately through a deliberative democratic conversation (see Chapter V). According to this particular pedagogical strategy, learning how to communicate was essential in learning how to raise issues of rights and duties in an appropriate fashion. On another level, it was also related to the right of being heard, the right to express one's thoughts and opinions without interruption – and at the same time it was explicitly concerned with one's duty towards the collective to listen and to receive criticism and praise.

Julie was one of the teachers who had been using the class meeting actively even before it was implemented as a replacement for the class's hour. I observed one of her classes before the rest of the school applied this pedagogical strategy. Julie's class was well trained in using the physical frame and particular language required for these meetings. Initially the students would each take their chair and form a large circle in the middle of the room, placing themselves according to the allocated seating-plan (boy-girl) while chatting amongst themselves. When everybody was seated, they went quiet and the meeting began. The students would raise their hands and wait for Julie to look at them and allow them to speak. The formula for raising their concerns about issues to do with class welfare, particularly any personal issues, whether positive or negative was:

'I would like to say something to X (look at X). I think it is...
'Therefore I would like it if you could' **or** 'Would you please not do that again' **or**
'Thank you for doing that, you can keep doing that.'
X then had to answer 'yes' or 'no'.
No explanation as in 'it is because' was allowed at this point.

Instead, if X wished to clarify his/her actions, X would have to put up his/her hand and wait for his/her turn.

The formula for how the students would appropriately communicate during the class meeting is known as non-violent communication, or 'Giraffe-language'. The American psychologist Marshall Rosenberg (1999)[125] developed this style of communication and considers it a 'language of compassion', because to be compassionate is 'to be equal, one with another, as with oneself'. This language is represented by giraffes due to their large hearts (compassionate), forward pointing ears (active listening), and long necks (not scared to put one's neck on the line).

Thus the use of 'giraffe language' reflects how issues of the democratic conversation, rights and duties (towards the community, other individuals, and oneself), and egalitarianism are intrinsically interlinked. The purpose of the class meeting is explicitly to learn how to listen to others, and express one's own feelings and opinions, while simultaneously learning that everyone's opinion and feelings are of equal worth.

This method of communication was not used throughout the curriculum at By Skolen, nor was it implemented at other schools I visited in the area. Indeed I experienced many teachers who did not implement it happily, but rather experienced the meeting as a weekly event to 'get over with'. I did, however, experience the method being sincerely discussed and considered in many, if not most, educational contexts (such as schools and day care institutions). Further to teachers discussing the instruction manuals given to the them at By Skolen, from which they learned to conduct the class meeting using this kind of language, I had, during my time searching for an appropriate field site, worked in a *fritidshjem*, a sparetime-home or after school club. Here all the pedagogues (including myself) were required to take a course in 'Giraffe language'. I was also aware of courses in this kind of communication being made available in most other child-care institutions – even if it did not lead to an active implementation in the schools/institutions. This signifies that even if the actual form of the 'giraffe language' was not unquestionably adopted – the values which it represented - right to be heard,

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[125] Initially during a community-project in the 1960s, followed by the establishment of the centre for non-violent communication in 1984 and finally a publication in 1999.

duty to listen, equal worth - or in other words 'a democratic conversation', were values important in the moral socialisation process in Danish educational institutions.

As I suggested above, the four dimensions of moral socialisation as formulated by Fung and Smith (2010) help to provide a fuller understanding of the Danish *folkeskole*. Firstly, outlining the four dimensions requires us to establish which moral values are desirable, in terms of which were most persistently observed (e.g. the issue of rights and duties). More importantly however, and using the example of rights and duties, it is concerned not only with *what* you give and get, but *how*. We see that in a Danish context, moral socialisation is essential in the institution (even if this is the space in which an individual spends a predominant part of his/her childhood/adolescents) – and more importantly that the moral values of the institution and the home should be in harmony (see previous chapter). Lastly, the techniques of moral socialisation were important, and here we saw how verbalisation of 'a need', not only in the class meeting via 'giraffe language', but also the student council (as described in Chapter V), is of utmost importance.

Before concluding this section, it is important to return to the statement at the beginning of the section, which was concerned with not viewing children merely as passive recipients of a certain cultural ideological understanding of what 'rights and duties' or indeed morality entail. The wider institutional framework to some extent speaks in favour of the socialisation theory, as an extensive institutionalisation is assumed to help students 'become equal' by eliminating negative social heritage. The extent to which this effort is successful is, however, questionable. The last section of this chapter will deal with the issue of children as active recipients who adopt and adapt understandings of what appropriate 'rights and duties' are.

Duties-oriented-towards-rights-oriented culture?

As we have seen above and in earlier chapters, it is through class meetings, student councils, and week-long workshops (the co-citizenship week, discussed below) that students are given an understanding of how to appropriately communicate their rights and duties. However, the discussion of 'rights and duties' and the way citizens

approach these at large has also become a prevalent discussion in the media and the political arena.

At the time of writing (spring 2012), the Danish Social Democrats (who, since my fieldwork, have taken office), were publishing a new political initiative in preparation for their annual political congress where they would formulate a new political programme[126]. In this they state that

'The Danes are better at demanding their rights than they are fulfilling their duties'

This appeared to be partially reflected in my general fieldwork, where I observed what I initially perceived of as a very strong emphasis on the notion of 'rights'. Similarly, it reflects the views of Henrik Jensen (2002), as he talks about a shift in expectations from a 'duty-oriented' culture towards a 'rights-oriented' culture (I will return to this point below). This was particularly illustrated during *medborgerskabsuge* (the co-citizenship week).

The idea of *medborgerskab* was inherently deeply intertwined with the idea of 'rights'. As such some of the workshops the students could engage with during the co-citizenship week included activities such as: making a 'By Skolen students' rights declaration', familiarising themselves with the general rights as a citizen of Denmark, children's rights, and not least discuss the United Nations declaration of human rights. In the middle-school, eight out of ten of the workshops the students could choose from included the word 'rights' in their title, whereas none referred to the concept of duties (and/or responsibilities). In the out-schooling, two out of the three workshops available were concerned with rights. The first workshop, as mentioned, consisted of writing the 'declaration of By Skolen students' rights'; another concerned active democracy and learning to demonstrate for one's rights, while the last one focused on tolerance and an open society. Again, none of the abstracts describing the purpose of the workshops mentioned the word duty. Equally, during the week I participated in a large number of the workshops and none of the observations I made, neither during

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[126]http://politiken.dk/politik/ECE1565143/erhvervsliv-stoetter-s-opgoer-med-velfaerd/

the week, nor at the final presentation, seemed to have any immediate links to the concept of duties. As I revisited my field notes, however, it became clear to me that duties were nonetheless represented in the various workshops, however more often in the form of responsibilities, and this is something I will return to at the end of the following section.

Thus the observations I made could immediately be seen to support the suggestion that the Danish welfare state culture is one that is moving from a 'duty-oriented' towards a 'rights-oriented' culture. This suggestion will be explored further in the following section in view of Habermas (1989), Jensen (2002; 2006; 2007) and a discussion based on my ethnography.

Habermas and Jensen on the extension of rights

In the previous chapter we engaged briefly with Habermas in terms of his views on the merger of the welfare state with society, consequently squeezing out the public sphere (which in Habermas' view represents the institution of participating individuals who act as mediators between society and the state). This would happen with the inevitable extension of rights that a social welfare state entails. As a consequence the public sphere would change from being a site of critical engagement with the state to being a site of self-interested contestation for the resources of the state (Habermas 1989)[127].

Habermas (1989) argued that the reason for this is firstly that the commercial mass media turns a critical public into a passive consuming public. Secondly, as the welfare state merges with society, similarly to what we observed in the previous chapter, the school appears to seamlessly pick up where the private ends. This overlap, or merger, consequently squeezes out the public sphere – as the 'private' and the 'public' becomes overlapping entities.

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[127]For a critique of Habermas, see Calhoun (1992, 1993).

In terms of rights and duties, this essentially means that the 'social welfare state mass democracy' (Habermas 1964:54) becomes less and less involved with critical engagement (the democratic conversation, or duty to listen and participate in general society) and more and more concerned with mediating 'the demands of the mass' (*Ibid*).

Henrik Jensen (2002; 2006; 2007) suggests that something along similar lines has happened in Denmark: there seems to have been a movement from a 'duty-oriented culture' to a 'rights-oriented culture'. He argues that the high civic morality, which initially legitimised the welfare state in Denmark, no longer exists. This civic morality was based on a shared history of Christianity, class solidarity, a rural cooperative tradition, a strong sense of 'us' following the German occupation, and not least cold war anxiety (Jensen 2002:1). During the period the Danish welfare state was founded (see Chapter III) there was a certain amount of responsibility entailed in being part of it Today, however, Jensen (2002) argues that civic morality has been worn down with the development of a new culture, the welfare state culture. This culture is a result of the state having assumed responsibility for still larger areas of social life, undermining traditional institutions such as the family. What is left in such a society is the individual and a big, abstract, but very present state. The state cannot reproduce the cultural and moral sentiments that originally legitimised it on its own, and subsequently a new culture based on what the welfare state *can provide* is created. This culture is characterised by less citizen commitment to assuming responsibility and more expectations on behalf of the citizen, making them a client more than a citizen of the welfare state (Jensen 2002). Jensen appears to be saying that it is at the point of the loss of the concept of duties, or in other words, of the loss of the reciprocal relationship with the welfare state, that the citizen becomes, as Habermas (1989) argued, passive consumers in self-interested contestation for the resources of the state.

A new welfare state culture?
The question remains however, if it is at all relevant that the original moral values upon which the welfare state was founded, should continue to exist, or if they are indeed even required for the continued existence of the contemporary welfare state.

In this section I will argue that the latter is not necessarily the case. Signe Howell (1997) in her work on the 'Ethnography of Moralities' proposes that morality can be compared to Bourdieu's idea of the habitus, as the relationship of moral values and practices is such that values will change and adapt through actual choices and practices, and simultaneously they inform and shape those choices and practices (Howell 1997:4). Similarly, Monica Heintz (2009) in her work on the 'Anthropology of Moralities' elaborates on this by stating that norms shape the values that shape the norms or, that 'the existence of a norm is not the proof of the existence or endorsement of the value that has initially generated it' (2009:4). This is reflected in what Henrik Jensen (2002) argues, when he states that the existence of the welfare state, with all the rights (and duties) it entails, is not the proof of the existence of the original principles on which the welfare state was built.

This was furthermore reflected in my fieldwork in the above example of Christiania, where we saw that socialisation of morality was not necessarily as straightforward as, for instance, earlier more universalist theorists (e.g) would have it seem. Thus communicating moral understandings to the students becomes not just a case of passive acceptance or active resistance, but can be anything in-between as well as something beyond. In other words, the debate relevant to the students may be relevant in completely different terms to those of the teacher/adult.

In extension to this, the question arises whether the original values of the so-called 'duty-oriented' society are essential to the existence of the welfare state, as it exists today. Hence, it is important to study what the current morals are, as we study the intricate relationship between the habitus and the environment/individual. The field between innate acquisition and social learning, not only morality, but also moral values, is the field in which the ethnographer exists - the world between practice and meaning, if at all the two can be separated.

In sum, Habermas and Jensen both suggest that a welfare state does not reproduce the sentiments upon which it was originally founded. Rather as the welfare state is focused on fulfilling the rights of its citizens, these in turn become increasingly preoccupied with demanding more rights, and less concerned with the duties, which

constituted the foundation of the welfare state. In extension of this, I drew on Howell's and Heintz's general discussions of morality in ethnography, to show that Habermas's and Jensen's observations are not necessarily exclusive to the welfare state. Howell and Heintz argue that the relationship of moral values (e.g. rights and duties) and practices both inform and shape each other. Hence the existence of a practice (such as the welfare state) is not necessarily related to the original values (understandings of rights and duties) upon which it was founded.

The development towards a culture with larger emphasis on 'rights' is not necessarily explicitly linked to the welfare state, as both Habermas and Jensen suggested above. Levinson too observed a similar development in the Mexican school context, linking this kind of development more to the influx of media and general 'proliferation of so-called liberal and modern discourses on education and child rearing…' (Levinson 1998:64). I will expand on this further below.

It is important to note that Jensen's observations of a move from a duty-oriented towards a rights-oriented society or welfare state culture did not consistently reflect the observations I made. In this chapter I argue that the welfare state is *still* based on notions of *both* 'rights' and 'duties', but that these values may express themselves differently to how they did at the moment of which the welfare state was founded.

The fact that duties were still relevant could be observed in the everyday context of the Danish *folkeskole,* where references to duties still presented themselves, even if these were not always as obviously pronounced as the emphasis on rights. The playground, which was discussed above, was one example. Another was the weekly class meeting, which could be considered both a 'duty' and a 'right', in which the students must participate and where the very style of communication was penetrated by a sense of responsibility towards the community of the class. A third was seen in the student council (discussed in Chapter V). More explicitly, there was a class's *duks* (a kind of 'teacher's helper', no direct translation available). This was a role assigned to one or two students in the class for one week at a time (randomly taking turns). The role included duties of getting milk for the recess break, helping the teacher hand out

papers during class and sweeping the floor, wiping the blackboard, closing the windows and emptying the garbage bags at the end of every school day.

My observations during the co-citizenship week also reflected the notion and importance of duties – albeit perhaps from a perspective overlooked by Jensen. Based on the examples emphasised above, below, and elsewhere in this thesis, I suggest that rather than a move from a duty-towards-rights-based culture, as argued by Jensen, the practices and understandings of what it means to be a welfare state citizen have changed.

Duties as responsibility, and rights as explicitly articulated

The founding values of the welfare state, as expressed through the traditional sayings such as: 'do your duty, demand your right' or 'the strongest shoulders carry the heaviest load', along with practices such as re-distribution, may have all been more or less taken for granted or at least intuitively expected at the time of the founding of the welfare state. At least this is what Jensen seems to be arguing, when he describes the duty-oriented culture of the 1950s and 60s. Further to Jensen, other authors, and political analysts have engaged with this phenomenon, e.g. Mikael Bonde Nielsen (2005:156-177) and Ole Birk Olesen (2007). These discussions, which concern 'the loss of a duty-oriented culture', are however more focused on what we may call a 'local level' of duties and rights. Thus they argue that traditional duties of the family and local community (for example unemployment benefits, day care institutions etc.) are now the responsibility of the state. This results in individuals only concerned with their own rights in relation to this.

At this point, I want to briefly clarify my overlapping use of 'duty' and 'responsibility'. Duty can be viewed in similar terms to Aristotle and Kant's morality, which proposed that that which you 'ought' to do is an inherent, cognitively hard-wired. Responsibility, on the other hand, as argued by the Danish sociologist Jean Fischer (2008), is a bit more vague, and is related more to that which we choose to do. To a certain extent, 'responsibility' becomes more of a political-ideologically determined concept[128]. Thus

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[128]http://www.information.dk/160160

in the Danish context, there is a clear indication that 'duty' is something unpleasant, that which one has to do, while responsibility is that which the citizen has chosen to do. In the schooling context I rarely heard the word *pligt* (duty). Rather the curriculum and purpose statement of the Danish *folkeskole* is full of references to *ansvar* (responsibility). For instance one of the tenets in the purpose statement is that the students have '*ansvar for egen læring'* (responsibility for one's own learning). In the articles and books referred to above (Jensen 2002; Bonde-Nielsen 2005 and Birk-Olesen 2007), the notion of duties and responsibilities is approached interchangeably. Implicit is the idea that the notion of 'responsibility' has more positive connotations, as this has become the duty that we *choose* to fulfil. This emphasis on free choice has consequently eroded the notion of duties, or that which we *must* take responsibility for.

Returning to the notion of individuals as only (or primarily) concerned with their rights, we can see that anthropologists in a range of cultural contexts have also observed an increasing emphasis on the focus of rights over the last 20-30 years, particularly in terms of students' rights in the schooling context (see Levinson 1998; White 1993; Fornas and Bolin 1995). Levinson (1998:76-77) discusses the Mexican student's sense of *derechos* (rights) in view of historical changes emphasising particularly the expansion of secondary schooling, the decreasing authority of the patriarchal church, and the rise of more dialogical parental practices in the 1970's. He argues that these - combined with a general expansion of youth-oriented mass culture, the influence of the media, and an increase in consumer commodities directed particularly towards 'teenagers' - have increased the autonomous youth culture, which is concerned particularly with youth rights.

Similarly White (1993), in her comparative study of youth culture in the US and Japan, traces the links between changes in education and how young people perceive of themselves. She particularly identifies the 1920's progressive education movement (or what I refer to in the literature review and Chapter III as the 'reform-pedagogical movement'), where the ambivalence of adult direction is first addressed. Slowly the notion of guidance, rather than indoctrination was introduced, as adult direction was

still considered important, but simultaneously could not stand in the way of creativity and spontaneous learning experiences (1993:38). All of these streams in educational culture led to a schooling system focused more on individualism and freedom, and an emphasis on rights over responsibilities (*Ibid.* and Levinson 1998:77-78).

Returning to my own fieldwork, I cannot make any direct observations verifying how the Danish welfare state culture might have existed in the 1950s and 1960s in a school context. I can, however, draw attention to how some of the teachers at the school, along with elder members of my own family, have spoken about the school when they attended it. Perhaps more reliably, I can also highlight the changing purpose statements of the Danish *folkeskole* from that time to the present.

My own parents, and a minority of the teachers at the school where I conducted my fieldwork, went to school during the 1950s and 1960s. In their reflections, they noted that the divide between the 'public' and the 'private' was much greater then. For instance, teachers were addressed by their last names and were distant authority figures throughout all schooling years (in contrast to the contemporary *folkeskole* context, described in the previous chapter). More importantly, in relation to this chapter, the political sphere was kept absolutely separate from the 'academic' sphere. A co-citizenship week would simply be unimaginable, and not an area in which the school should interfere.

These memories are reflected in two of the biggest reforms of the Danish *folkeskole*, the first made in 1958 and the second in 1975 (these are both discussed in Chapter III). One of the biggest changes between the two purpose statements was the inclusion of the responsibility of educating students towards democracy, i.e. the inclusion of a political element in 1975.

My observations show that the practices in the Danish *folkeskole* and the contemporary formulation of the purpose statement (which can be found translated to English in Appendix D) indicate that the 'new' welfare state culture, as expressed through the democratic conversation, private/public relationship, and egalitarianism (as in sameness), is now an articulated cultural practice, and one which is approached

through guided participation. The very existence of a 'co-citizenship week', the student council, the class's hour (and later meeting), and various other cross-disciplinary projects concerned with democracy and global responsibilities, illustrates that the welfare culture is indeed an explicitly articulated practice.

While the notion of 'rights' *is* explicitly articulated in the Danish *folkeskole* and in this sense supports Jensen's (and others') observations, I will argue that the explicit attention to 'rights' does not automatically render the existence of 'duties' superfluous. Rather, in my fieldwork the two presented themselves as two sides of the same coin. Instead of a change from duties-towards-rights, my fieldwork indicates that the understandings of rights and duties have instead changed along other parameters, for instance as the welfare values has become more explicitly articulated. In the following section, and supported by the subsequent fieldwork, I will, however, argue that they have changed along other parameters too.

A shift from the local – towards the global and individual
Many of the examples already alluded to (and those that will be highlighted throughout this thesis) seem to reflect an understanding of rights and duties as being particularly pertinent and immediately practised in the context of what I will call *individual* and *global* rights and duties. These global rights and duties were often expressed in terms of responsibility towards those parts of the world that do not 'enjoy' the same standard of living as in the western world; these will be discussed in the following section.

By individual duties, I am referring to those discussed in the Christiania example above, or the example of the right to vote for people with severe learning difficulties (discussed in Chapter V). In both of these examples the students expressed a clear and verbal interest in the rights (and duties) at an individual level, i.e. how the individual qualifies for certain rights.

While the emphasis today appears to be on the individual and the global, this does not automatically mean that local concepts of rights and duties have been 'lost'. Rather my fieldwork suggests that they now co-exist with new perspectives on what rights and

duties can mean, and which of these it is considered important to discuss. At the same time, following Levinson, there has been an expansion in the emphasis on rights, as compared to duties. This does not mean that the sense of duties has been entirely lost, but perhaps rather changed focus. When Jensen (2002), Bonde-Nielsen (2005) and Birk-Olesen (2007) discussed the loss of duties (at what I defined as the local level), they argued that these had been lost as the state increasingly assumed responsibility over them. My fieldwork, however, showed that the local level of duties, as in those duties/responsibilities one has towards his/her immediate community, were not ignored in the schooling context.

An everyday example of this can be observed in the role of the *duks,* which is concerned with the duties of the individual student towards the immediate (or local) well-being of the small community of the class. Another example can be observed in the implementation of the class meeting facilitates, whether challenged or unchallenged, in which an emphasis is placed on the importance of a strong community built on rights, duties, and respect for others. Hence, I propose instead that the duties have not been 'lost', but rather the emphasis has shifted towards the individual level and the global level.

The following example illustrates the focus on global responsibilities in the context of an in-schooling workshop during the co-citizenship week. This particular example suggests that the many rights an individual in Danish society enjoys, appears to be related to a sense of responsibility towards the parts of global community which do not enjoy the same level of living standards, as expressed by one of the teachers in 'everyone should really have it like us'. I will suggest that this connection is linked to a (perhaps imagined) Scandinavian perception of internal homogeneity and equality (as will be discussed in the following chapter), which subsequently shifts the focus towards greater inequalities (such as that between 'developed' and 'developing countries'). Hence the emphasis on global rights and duties illuminates a certain striving towards a socially defined equilibrium, which to a greater extent has already been achieved in the Danish context (as compared to the gap between Denmark and a 'developing' country).

Children's labour

It is co-citizenship week, and in the in-schooling department, most of the classes have paired up and will focus on one topic for the entire week. Year 2.X (aged 8-9), which I am following, have teamed up with year 3.X (aged 9-10). Mette and Julie, their class-teachers, have interpreted the theme of the week as global responsibility and co-citizenship across boundaries in a globalising world. In their own words, they 'just want the children to think about their position in society vis-à-vis children in other parts of the world'. The theme they have chosen is 'child-labour'.

In the very first lesson Monday morning, both classes meet in 3.X's classroom.

> Mette: "*Is it free to go to school in Denmark, or do you know how much it costs?*"
> Boy (year 3): "*I don't really worry about that*" (children laughing)
> Hanne (year 3): "*But is it not because our parents pay taxes that it is free?*"
> Mette: "*You could say that*"
> "*Now… I want you to close your eyes, we are going into an airplane and after flying we step out and arrive in Africa, Uganda*"
> "*In Uganda it costs 380kr* [£40] *for one year of schooling – is that a lot*?"
> Children: "*Noooo*"
> Boy: "*You couldn't even get a playstation-game for that kind of money!*"
> Julie: "*But if you are a farmer, and you have 10 children – then it is 3.800kr* [£400] *a year.*" (the children appreciate that this would be a lot of money)
> Mette: "H*ow many years of schooling could your collection of computer games buy?*"

"Actually, do you remember talking about how bad the sound is in this classroom? – In Uganda, there might be 50 kids in a classroom."

Hanne: *"Is the classroom not bigger then?"*

Anne: *"No, quite the contrary, and they don't have CD-players, pillows, beanbags, fridges etc. If we removed everything but the chairs, tables and blackboards, then it might roughly resemble…"*

After some general discussion, the teacher, Julie talks about how, when parents can't afford to send their children to school, they may send them to work instead. Even though the UN Convention on the Rights of Children says that children are not allowed to work with dangerous things, it still happens.

Girl: *"Why do the children work, and not the adults?"*

Julie: *"Adults work as well, but children don't complain and they have smaller hands, which is good for some work – also they don't get paid as much - the girl you are going to see in this movie, she gets up at 3 in the morning to get the bus to work, a fireworks factory, and she doesn't get off work until 7 in the evening. She only has two days off a year and she makes just 5kr [50p] a day!"*

"How much do you pay for a rocket at new years?"

Girl: *"200dkr [£20]"*

Mette: *"Why do you think we are telling you about this? Is it so that you can sit here and be happy about being in Denmark?"*

The students think about this and some come up with following answers:

Girl: *"So that we can help them."*

Another student: *"So we know how they are doing."*

Another student: *"So that we know it, and that one should be happy with what we've got."*

The teachers do not provide a conclusive answer, while I am present, as to why it is necessary for the students to learn about this, or in other words, why it is not about learning to be happy to be Danish.

The teachers start the documentary, which tells the story of a fireworks-factory employing children for dangerous and hazardous labour. The film crew follows a few of the children working in the factory, talks to their family members and finally confronts the factory owner (who however refuses to be filmed). During the movie the children are silent. Looking at the cassette for the film I can tell that the documentary is intended for an older audience (years 5 and 6, aged 11-13). Julie and Mette have however judged that these particular two classes would be able to discuss and analyse the film despite their much younger age. As the film ends, they go straight to recess – they will discuss the film in the class after recess (the following example was also referred to in the previous chapter).

> Leopold (to another boy): "*I know what I am going to play in recess, child-labour, and I will be the boss.*"
>
> Tanja and Sanne: "*I just don't want to eat my recess-snack, because I am thinking about child-labour.*"

As they return from recess, they begin to ask questions about the film.

> Julie (to Tanja and Sanne): "*Why wouldn't you eat during recess?*"
> Girls: "*Because we felt bad about eating when they don't have anything at all.*"
> Julie: "*Yeah but that doesn't make it better at all, does it? Mette and I have talked about, that the reason we are showing you this, is not to make you feel bad… or for that matter feel super grateful about being Danish – because everyone should really 'have it like us'*".

> Julie: "*What do you think about the parents, are they stupid for sending their children to work*?"
>
> Tanja: "*No, because if they didn't have to, they probably wouldn't do it.*"

As the above examples have shown us, even if the teachers explicitly say that it is not the point of the discussion to show the students that they should be 'grateful about being Danish' or even happy to 'have it like us', this may still be the outcome. The film and discussion shows the students, that having 'it like us' is a privilege, and that it is one not shared by children in other places around the world. The teachers are trying to make sense of the massive social differences in terms that the students are familiar with, for instance by calculating in the currency of computer games and other terms the students can relate to. The teachers are not explicitly telling the students how they should be feeling about global inequality; as mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is important that the students themselves reach the conclusion that it is unjust. But they are leading the discussion, or 'guiding the participation' (Rogoff 1993) towards that realisation. Tanja and Sanne's comments are a good example of how well the teachers have accomplished this goal on the first day of the 'child-labour week'.

The match factory

On the third day of the workshop, the teachers decided to give the students an idea of what child-labour *actually* feels like.

> I return to year 2.X and 3.X, where the teachers have created a match factory in year 2.X's classroom, having emptied the room of chairs, tables etc. On the door is a sign reading '*Legal factory – everybody is over 14 years old and gets paid well*'. I enter the factory as an inspector; Julie and Mette are the bosses. The 42 children are sitting absolutely still on the floor and wrap matches in big bundles. Julie and Mette keep a balance sheet of the wages of the children, they get one wage per match pile they

make (to the random requirements of the bosses) and can lose wages by being disobedient.

For example: *"You talk too much, we are going to cut your wages"* or *"You have done nicely, come up to the boss and sit on the chair, have a cookie"*

The student then goes quietly to the front of the room, where he/she sits on a chair facing the other 'workers' while eating a cookie, and then returns to his/her workstation.

Rewards could be: one wage, a cookie, applause, appraisal, a table and chair to work at or lying on the couch for a few minutes etc. Punishments could be: starting over, losing a wage, stand on one leg, looking at a spot on the wall, privileges withdrawn etc.

The bosses walk around observing, talk about how 'hard' it is to be the boss, drink coffee, lie down on the couch and read aloud from magazines, kick the children's match piles and have them do it over, telling them not to be so messy, talk harshly to the children, say that children smell and are stupid etc.

Some of the instances I observed:

 - A student was being given the reward of a cookie for the second time.

Cattie: *"But I already had a cookie?"*

Julie: *"Yes, but if you are good then you can be rewarded several times, even though somebody may not have been rewarded at all."*

 - Leopold: *"Can I please have some more string? The ones I have are not very good!"*

Mette: *"Are you saying anything in our factory is bad?"*

Leopold: *"No… no"*

- Girl: "*Can I go to the toilet?*"

Mette: "*WHAT?*" – Girl repeats

Julie: "*NO, I heard you, not while you are working – I don't even understand how you can ask that question (take a sip from her coffee)… and by the way, nobody is allowed to drink during work… delicious coffee by the way, wouldn't you say so Mette?*"

During recess, I talked to Julie about how scary it is that the children were so adaptive, and submissive – no questions, no opposition – the situation reminded us of the film 'The Wave'[129]. A lot of their obedient behaviour was spontaneous, for example, in the way that they returned to the workstation immediately after being rewarded, without being asked. Mette and Julie had thought some of the students might rebel, but so far they had all played along.

In the last lesson of the day I returned to years 2 and 3. They were evaluating how working in the factory had been. Before their last recess, their gathered wages were paid out in caramels. One boy didn't have any wages left, and didn't get any caramels. The other children wanted to give him some, but he said: "*I don't deserve them*" – he was still sad after recess, but still refused to accept any caramels.

Hanne: "*I think it has been scary to see how some people live everyday – it wasn't very nice.*"

Julie: "*What was different?*"

Hanne: "*You were kicking at our stuff and weren't being nice.*"

Mette: "*When I kicked those matches I could tell you thought I was a stupid bitch* [dum kælling], *I have never seen you looking at me like that before – why didn't you say something to me?*"

Sune: "*You said that we couldn't speak.*"

Mette: "*But do you always do what I tell you to?*"

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[129]The Wave is a film based on the experiment conducted by an American high school teacher, in which his students were slowly lulled into following a fascist regime.

Julie: "*Mette and I had discussed, that maybe some of you would revolt, maybe Jonathan or Leopold… Even Rasmus, who we all know can get really angry, didn't do anything.*"

Signe: "*Down there they don't dare to say anything either – because then they will be hit and lose money.*"

Leyla: "*I didn't dare say anything, maybe it could get worse… but inside I thought – now it is enough.*"

Mette: "*We clapped a lot at you Cattie, and praised you and gave you cookies… how did you feel about that?*"

Cattie: "*It wasn't very nice.*"

Mette: "So *when you got cookies it wasn't very nice, because the others didn't have any?*"

The class all agree…

Sune: "*I didn't think it was too bad.*"

Julie: "*But we did praise you a lot, was that nice when the others weren't praised*?"

Sune: "*No… I guess not.*"

Initially the kids were generally OK with being praised. Only when teacher's questioned whether it *really* made them feel good when other classmates were not praised, did they change their mind. To a certain extent, the teachers seemed to be verbalising these feelings for them, and it was difficult to distinguish the morals of the teachers, from the morals of the students. The ideal notion of guided participation, as articulated by Rogoff (1993), which I have argued that the Danish school system reflects, proposes that the children should be led towards finding out these morals on their own accord. This is supported by the apparently seamless transmission of morals from the teachers towards the students. However, the following discussion demonstrates that the children did not mindlessly follow the instructions of the bosses.

> Mette: "*It was so interesting that nobody asked any questions –
> you just sat there collecting the matches into bundles – and then
> we told you take them apart and do it again… And you just did
> it.*"
>
> Kasper: "*In the end I couldn't be bothered any more, I didn't
> count the matches, and I broke two of them!*"
>
> Thomas: "*I just wanted to take the cookies from the other
> students!*"
>
> Amna and Pernille set a plan in motion, instead of taking apart
> the bundles and redoing them, they would put the strings back
> on, when the 'bosses' weren't looking. It turns out that quite a
> few of the students did that, i.e. nobody revolted, but many bent
> the system, and made the best from it.

This example illustrate that the shift Henrik Jensen discussed in terms of a move from a duties-towards-rights-oriented culture, does not appear to be a shift *away* from a notion of duties, but rather *towards* a different notion of duties, which incorporates the wider world, the global community.

This is illustrated in a range of ways. Firstly, the co-citizenship week, which essentially was concerned with learning about what it means to be a 'good citizen', was interpreted in terms of 'global responsibilities'. The teachers never explicitly articulated their intentions with this particular theme of the workshop. This, however, emerged when they asked the students if they thought the reason they showed them this film, and had them work in a 'match factory', was so they could 'sit here and be happy about being in Denmark' and again later when they added that 'everyone should really have it like us'. The closest they came to explicitly stating their purpose was to announce that it was to help the students understand their position in global society vis-à-vis others. The two highlighted statements, that 'we should be happy' and 'everyone should have it like us', clearly indicate that the position of the students is one of privilege, and that there is a significant difference between 'us' and 'them' (I discuss this at greater length in the following two chapters)

After the debate concerning child labour, some of the students were very affected. Tanja and Sanne, for example, did not even want to eat their recess snacks. Other students, like Leopold, who suggested that the children 'play' child labour, appeared less affected (although this too could be a coping strategy, as the existing literature suggests that 'play' also says something very significant about reality, see amongst others: Roberts and Sutton-Smith 1962; Lancy and Tindall 1996; Fajans 1997; and Chick 2010). From the initial theoretical engagement with the topic, the teacher elaborated by introducing a physical engagement, so that the students not only *knew*, but also *felt* what child labour entails.

Regardless of the intentions of the teachers, the example ultimately did communicate to the students (and rather successfully) that they *should* be happy to 'have it like us', and that everyone really *should* have it as such. Significantly, the teachers did not appear to be indoctrinating this moral understanding to the students, but rather actively guiding them towards this realisation. Thus the example led the students' attention towards the great inequality that exists between 'their world' and the outside. The students themselves responded that what they had learnt meant that they 'should do something', in other words that there was a duty, or a responsibility linked to having many rights (such as going to school 'for free') towards those who were perceived as having less.

At this stage, I want to return to Durkheim's notion that the school is a microcosm of the nation. In the democracy chapter school was discussed as a 'playpen', a space in which the student can 'practice' at being and becoming members of Danish society. This is also why the school acts more as a moral compass, which guides the students, rather than as a moral instructor on the journey the individual student - embedded in the class community - must make towards becoming a successful citizen. Levinson also argues that according to the teacher's discourse, the students in the Mexican ESF are 'half-formed citizens, not worthy of full rights, and in need of close guidance and instruction' (1998:48). Similarly in my study, students cannot fully be considered citizens; first and foremost because they are not of age, i.e. they are not yet allowed to vote (the age for voting is 18 in Denmark). This is the most significant activity of the

democratic welfare citizen, only paralleled with the active involvement in the political debates, and as such the students cannot be considered as 'full citizens'.

Conclusion

The ethnography in this chapter has been concerned with those spaces where the students can practice morality, particularly as expressed through ideas of 'rights and duties' both as being and becoming citizens. I have shown how an anthropology of education is intrinsically concerned with notions of citizenship, in this chapter expressed in terms of rights and duties, or what one might call *borgermorale*, citizen morality. I have consequently attempted to illustrate some aspects of how citizens are 'being' and 'guided into being' in the Danish schooling context, particularly in view of how 'rights and duties' are values and interactions pertinent to the Danish welfare state.

I began the chapter with a discussion of how needs can be translated into rights. This occurs through a democratic process, such as the one that plays out within the student council. This was also illustrated in relation to the oatmeal discussion in the teacher's lounge, and the construction of the new playground. The chapter then proceeded to discuss in greater detail Durkheim's understanding of 'moral education' in terms of disciplining and teaching the students how to interact appropriately in larger society. Similarly, Zigon's discussion of an anthropology of morality concluded that moral socialisation is first and foremost concerned with creating a range of appropriate actions – thereby building on a long-standing tradition within the philosophy and sociology of morality, originally initiated by Kant.

The discussion concerning Christiania, however, showed that moral socialisation is not a straightforward practice, as neither the point of view of the teacher necessarily reflects that of the state; nor is it straightforward in terms of the students receiving 'moral transmission' from the teacher. In this particular example it was clear that the students and the teacher were discussing morality, as expressed through rights and duties, at two different levels. As such, while they immediately appeared to disagree, this was not necessarily the case.

The following section then discussed in greater detail moral socialisation as it emerges in the Danish context, particularly in relation to learning appropriate rights and duties. It was established that moral socialisation is first and foremost a practice, which should be viewed more in terms of 'guiding' than 'indoctrination'. Secondly, moral disciplining is a verbal action more than a physical punishment, as also exemplified through the discussion of the class meeting.

The second half of this chapter focused more specifically on the proposed transformation or movement in Danish society, as outlined by Danish historian, Henrik Jensen, from a duties-oriented towards a rights-oriented society. I discussed how my ethnography both supported and challenged this alleged transformation: while a clearer and more explicitly articulated emphasis on the concept of rights (as also observed in other fieldwork, Levinson 1998; White 1993) can be observed, the issue of duties was still visible - although often expressed in terms of responsibility rather than duties. In other words, my ethnographic data suggest that rights and duties are inherently inseparable. The playground was a physical everyday example of this, as the students would simultaneously *yde* and *nyde*; similarly the discussion of Christiania, showed a clear connection between the duties of the citizens, as strongly related to the rights of the citizen.

Subsequently, my fieldwork suggests that instead of a move from duties-towards-rights-oriented culture, what *has* changed is the very understanding of 'rights and duties'. The penultimate section engaged with one of these 'new understandings of duties' as it discussed the responsibility of the 'developed world' towards the 'developing world', taking the understanding of responsibilities to a global level. In other words, there was a sense in which 'having many rights' was directly linked with a responsibility towards those who were perceived of as having less. As such we saw the attention being drawn towards the greater inequality between 'us' and 'them', rather than observing inequalities within the nation, not to mention the classroom. This may be linked to a popular imagination of a homogeneous Denmark (at least in economic terms) and this will be the focus of the next chapter.

Rights and duties in this 'new understanding' can be seen as an exercise towards creating a kind of equilibrium where the rights of some, are levelled out by a corresponding level of duties (or at least an increased sense of duties). This exercise was also illustrated by the 'playground' example, where the students had to *yde* (give), before they could *nyde* (enjoy) - in this sense upholding an equal balance between 'giving' and 'taking'.

The importance of equality, egalitarianism, and the upholding of an equilibrium, has been visible throughout most of this thesis: as deliberative democracy emphasised the importance of listening to everyone's opinion; as *hygge* idealised the range of moderation; as the public/private relation existed in close interaction; and in this chapter, as rights and duties were inextricably linked through the focus on minimising inequalities.

In the following chapter I will elaborate further on this notion of equality in an attempt to get closer to an understanding of *what exactly* equality *is* and *implies* in the Danish context.

Chapter IX: Egalitarianism

First law of Jante: 'Du skal ikke tro, du er noget'

'You must not think you are something', egalitarianism in Denmark

In 1933 the Danish author Aksel Sandemose published his satirical novel '*En flygtning krydser sit spor*' (A refugee crosses his trail). The novel takes place in a small fictional town called Jante and follows the life of a young man as he grows up and experiences the ten laws of Jante – *Janteloven* ('the Jantelaw' of which the first law, and title of this chapter, is the most famous). Sandemose explained that while the physical location of the novel was provincial Denmark, the characters and their actions were based on general interaction between people.

The gist of the ten laws is that you should not think that you are anything special or that you are better than anyone else. As such it alludes to a mentality, which rather than acknowledging individual effort, places emphasis on the collective while criticising those who stand out (primarily as self-professed achievers). In a more positive light, it is an ideology proposing that everyone is of equal worth, and that no one should promote oneself as being different in any way (positive or negative).

This notion of 'not standing out' was an issue that I continuously observed in the Danish schooling context during my fieldwork, both in terms of valuing 'correct' ways of standing out i.e., when celebrating 'diversity' (as discussed further in the following chapter) - and in terms of minimising differences, i.e. providing equal opportunities. In this thesis, we have already investigated this inclination towards egalitarianism, which can be found in the interplay with democracy; in view of the culturally specific practice of *hygge;* as the purpose of a close-knit public/private relationship; and in terms of gaining an understanding of appropriate rights and duties.

Standing out in itself was, however, not necessarily regarded as a negative thing; for instance having high ambitions was not frowned upon. Sally Anderson argues that Danish students indeed learn both how to fit in and to stick out, without breaking the

'smooth surface of the group' (2000:250). That if they want to *'være nogen'* (be somebody), it must take place within a group's already accepted parameters and only be inexplicitly articulated (*Ibid*.) What was frowned upon was standing out in terms of believing that these ambitions - fulfilled or yet to be fulfilled - would make one a better or more valuable person in comparison to others. In this sense equality, or *lighed* as it is called in Danish, is more about equality of worth[130].

The aspects of 'equality of worth', along with 'equality of opportunity', are the focus in this chapter. Notions of *lighed* embody connotations of equality and homogeneity, both of which I observed throughout my fieldwork; in classrooms, the teachers' lounge, the playground, and outside of the school alike. The very first meeting between the school and the students in year 0 (age 6) highlights one of the more palpable ways in which this ideology of 'not standing out' was transmitted:

> Class 0.Y has for the first time entered their classroom, where they will be spending the entire first year of school in the company of their class-teacher, Karen and her pedagogue-assistant, Dorte.
>
> Karen: "*Now everyone has been given one of these* [she holds up a red folder], *this is a postal-folder*."
>
> She continues to explain to the students the purpose of the folder. Meanwhile, Andrea, a new student, has unpacked her own folder from her brand new schoolbag.
>
> Andrea: "*Look, I already have one*"
>
> She proudly displays a colourful folder with her favourite Disney character.
>
> Karen: "Y*es, but in this class we all have the same folder, so that one you can use for something at home, now put it back in the bag.*"

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[130] I will return to the definition of *lighed* in the next section.

The above was one of many 'equalising strategies' that I observed in the fieldwork leading to this thesis, and some of these will be discussed in this chapter. By 'equalising strategy', I refer to pedagogical practices, tools, and strategies that clearly convey sentiments of 'we are all/should all be equal, or the same'. Throughout the in-schooling years, I observed an abundance of these very clear and straightforward 'equalising strategies' or suggestions that no one should stand out. But as the students progressed through the schooling years, these processes became subtler, or even non-existent. In relation to the above example, I observed that this particular practice of identical folders was slowly phased out as students proceeded through schooling. By the time the students reached the out-schooling (age 13-16), they would be allowed to use their own folders and notebooks for all their courses. This is in contrast to what I observed above in the early years of schooling, where it was emphasised by the teacher that no one stands out to begin with, particularly on that very first day of school. In this chapter, I will suggest that this is related to an idea of the students having 'cracked the social code', in terms of having understood what appropriate egalitarian behaviour is, and therefore no longer requiring the explicit everyday focus on this issue.

In previous chapters, and particularly Chapter III, I have discussed the Danish *folkeskole* as an arena in which all students are given equal opportunities, a shared common ground of understanding society, appropriate ways of acting within society, and an ability of locating knowledge, whilst interpreting and analysing this in an independent fashion. This holistic approach to education is a product of the Danish *folkeskole* being a *dannelses-skole*, a school system that focuses on creating the complete individual. The *dannelse*-ideology was explored in the democracy chapter, and will be briefly discussed in a later section below, but to sum up, it can be said to be an ideology of the 'holistic formation of social human beings who can manage their own lives, who know how to behave properly in society, and who know how to fit in with each other' (Jenkins 2011:187). Jenkins suggests that this ideology is the consistent moral thread that runs through schooling and the entire institutionalisation system in Denmark. This thesis has already discussed some of the shared understandings of society that the school teaches students in order to make 'complete individuals': democracy, *hygge,* the public/private relationship and 'rights and duties'. This chapter will discuss another facet of the values that students are equipped with before entering the welfare state,

namely ideas of equality and homogeneity. I am particularly interested in how these are implicitly and explicitly transmitted and played out during everyday (inter)actions in the Danish *folkeskole*. The following chapter will then focus on diversity and differences in order to gain an understanding of what it means to be 'not equal'.

At this point it is important to emphasise that I will not be focusing on inequality in view of monetary or 'class' perspectives (although these are sometimes implied), and I will discuss the reasons for this below. Thus, I begin this chapter with an examination of the term *lighed* (equality), both as an absolute and relative notion (i.e. monetary and social) and in relation to its opposite, *ulighed*, or inequality.

Following a discussion of the idea of the *Jantelov* as a self-proclaimed cornerstone of Danish culture[131], the chapter will then discuss the social reproduction of a dominant cultural idea of 'we should all be equal' or even 'we are all equal'. I will look at how this notion has come about in a historic perspective, through the use of *dannelse*. I will also examine how notions of *lighed* exist in wider society and particularly how this is present in school, from the very first meeting in kindergarten class, at which the students are presented with identical folders, to the very last day at the school, at their graduation-ceremony.

When considering the notion of *lighed* in *folkeskolen*, this chapter will focus on 'equalising strategies'. I will show how the need to incorporate equalising mechanisms in the daily educational strategies become less pronounced as the students get older, as the egalitarian practices move from being explicitly articulated to being implicitly expected.

This chapter aims to illustrate yet another foundation of the Danish welfare state, as it investigates the importance of equality in everyday Danish society, particularly as it is expressed through the microcosm of the school. Furthermore, it attempts to observe the extent to which Denmark can truly be said to be an 'equal' society. While this chapter will not make any definitive conclusions, it will consider the extent to which the Danish *folkeskole* succeeds at socialising students in terms of producing or

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[131] I make this generalist statement on the basis of not only my own childhood growing up in Denmark and my recent ethnographic studies, but also through reference to the prominence it is awarded by other ethnographers observing Denmark (e.g. Jenkins 2011; Knudsen 1996).

maintaining egalitarian structures. Consequently the notion of 'Denmark as *actually* being equal' is perhaps less important if my ethnography shows that Denmark is represented, or *imagined,* within popular culture as being equal (Anderson 1983).

Lighed

During one week in the spring of 2009, the entire school abandoned their normal timetable and instead focused on the theme of co-citizenship (as also discussed in previous chapters). The students in year 9 had been watching a documentary concerning roles in the home, and had to discuss their immediate reactions:

> Girl: *"I don't see how this feeds into democracy?"*
> Boy: *"It's about equality."*
> Fie: *"It is to do with democracy; we are all contributing to society, it is gender equality."*
> Christian (teacher): *"What do you mean?"*
> Fie: *"Equality is often measured in economic terms, but I think it is also to do with having the same rights."*

In Danish society at large there seemed to be little differentiation in everyday terminology between homogeneity (sameness) and equality (as in monetary terms), as both of these were generally referred to as *lighed*. Further to the terminological integration, there was a sense in which the two concepts existed in a dynamic and interdependent relationship in the everyday Danish reality, or at least imagined reality (Anderson 1983). For instance, it appeared completely impossible to imagine a democratic welfare state without equality (in an economic sense): democracy itself, as discussed in Chapter V, must necessarily be built on the premise of shared ideological understandings (homogeneity), which in turn depends on and makes possible the economic equality in which Danes take great pride.

As noted above, in this chapter we will be observing equality more in terms of homogeneity or sameness, than in terms of economic equality, even if the two are likely to exist as interacting and interdependent forces. This is because my fieldwork,

just as in the above example, emphasised that it was exactly in terms of homogeneity, as an expression of social and cultural sameness, that *lighed* was often discussed.

When looking up the English word 'equality' as it is translated into Danish, we get *lighed*; however, *lighed* translates back into English as 'similarity'. This simple translation exercise illuminates the meaning that equality takes in a Danish context – and for the remainder of this chapter, I will therefore use equality in view of this double-translation.

Gullestad (1992) argues that in a UK and USA context, equality often takes the meaning of 'equality of opportunity'. In a Scandinavian context, however, it means something more along lines of 'similarity in the process of social life as well as similar results' (*Ibid.* 185) and is used primarily in three understandings: *Ligevaerd* (equal worth), *Ligestilling* (equal status, particularly in the context of gender), and *Ligeberettigelse* (equal rights). In other words, Gullestad argues that equality in Scandinavia 'implies a considerable emphasis of being and doing the same' (*Ibid*). This definition of equality allows people to continue believing in a high degree of homogeneity, as it simultaneously allows Danes to be the same and do quite different things, *or* to do the same things, while being quite different (Jenkins 2011:112)[132].

In Sally Anderson's study, a teacher commented that the more homogenous a class was, the better, or stronger, the class would be (2000:117). Osborn *et al.*, on the other hand, showed that while 'the class' as a cultural practice did have the highest structural continuity in the Danish school system (as compared for example to France and England), it also had the highest level of heterogeneity within the class, in terms of academic abilities and social backgrounds (2003:104). In my studies, I found that the school was indeed emphasised at the meeting place for all students, the playpen of democracy (see Chapter V). The emphasis on the importance of heterogeneity within *folkeskolen* can be explained by the specific understanding of *lighed* in Denmark, i.e. equality as expressed through sameness or equality of worth. Osborn *et al.* argue that it is exactly the 'Danish and French values concerning egalitarianism and equal entitlement [which] underpinned the lack of selection and the stronger heterogeneity

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[132] Similarly to *hygge* is an under-defined concept.

in the Danish and French concept of the 'class'' (Osborn *et al.* 2003:122). Subsequently it could be argued that while the Danish class experiences high heterogeneity, objectively speaking (in terms of social backgrounds and academic abilities), the purpose of this heterogeneity is to emphasise the value of sameness, as expressed through equality of worth.

Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter VII, we see that the Scandinavian notions of 'equality' do not conflict with notions of individuality, particularly as these are expressed in terms of independence. Gullestad argues that the 'idea of equality as sameness is not incompatible with a very pronounced individualism' (1989:85). Following this she suggests that Scandinavia is characterised by an egalitarian individualism - where each person is at the ideological focus, but where people at the same time must be similar in order to feel equal (Gullestad 1989; 1992; 2002). In terms of social interactions, this emphasis on being able to act as if one 'fits in' or 'is alike' is a treasured social ability. We have already heard about these abilities being practised in daily classroom interactions, and in this chapter we will be looking more closely at how these social abilities are acquired in the Danish *folkeskole.*

Before engaging ethnographically with the pursuit of *lighed* in a schooling context, I will delineate notions of absolute and relative ideas of equality as held and understood in popular Danish culture. Absolute equality is measured independently from social factors, focusing only on simple, cross-comparative universal parameters; the relative view of equality is more concerned with the living standards of the area observed, and as such comes closer to ideals of homogeneity, which suggest cultural sameness. In the following section I will outline the case for why I found the relative measure for equality to be the most relevant to my ethnography, and subsequently why I find it more pertinent to discuss my fieldwork in view of social groups, rather than economic classes.

Absolute and Relative notions of 'equality'

The opposite of '*lighed*' is '*ulighed*'. To get a deeper sense of what *lighed* means, I found it helpful to observe views of what *ulighed* entails, with the intention that it is often at the boundaries of cultural concepts that one acquires a fuller view of what is

meant by one idea or another.

Gullestad (1992) suggests that the definition of '*ulighed*' is often formulated in terms of social class, economic class (mentioned in previous chapters as a taboo topic in the Scandinavian context), prestige, political power, ethnic background, religious orientation, etc., and that it has strong connotations of hierarchical subordination. Often the concept of inequality or *ulighed* can be, and is, linked to the notion of 'poverty'. Although this is a distinct category, it will, for the purpose of this chapter and the understanding of the Danish context, be helpful to look at how poverty is defined in the Danish welfare state (most often in relation to inequality)[133]. But the discussion of this term will also serve to illuminate why this chapter will not be focusing on the economic perspective, but rather on the relative, or social, perspective of equality/inequality.

I will initiate this discussion using the following quote, which started a pervasive political debate concerning whether poverty exists in Denmark. The quote was taken from a Facebook status update of Olympic winning athlete and libertarian member of parliament in Denmark, Joachim B. Olsen, October 2011[134]:

> 'It is ridicule towards the millions of starving people across the
> world to discuss poverty in Denmark – you should be ashamed!
> I get furious when I hear the left wing using this kind of
> manipulating rhetoric. If there are people in Denmark who
> cannot afford Christmas, then it is their own fault. [sic]'

The above statement was made in response to the newly elected (2011) left wing government's suggestion of providing extra Christmas help to people living in poverty in Denmark[135]. The debate is not new. Denmark prides itself on being egalitarian in all and every aspect of society. Hence a suggestion of the existence of poverty leads to one of two political responses: either severe indignation that this has been allowed to

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[133] For the purpose of this chapter, I will not provide any closer discussion of the concept of 'poverty' as this has been thoroughly explored elsewhere, particularly in the development discourse (for a general introduction, see Allen and Thomas 2000). Still, I recognise that this is a distinct term, ripe with its own set of multiple meanings.

[134] As discussed in Chapter IV, Facebook is a very popular social media in Denmark – illustrated amongst others by having the world's highest user frequency. Facebook is used not only for social networking, but also very much for political campaigning and sharing of articles.

[135] The following three links are to articles concerning this, coming from the three major newspapers in Denmark: http://politiken.dk/politik/ECE1434796/joachim-b-olsen-jeg-braekker-mig-over-systemet/ http://www.b.dk/nationalt/staten-giver-tre-millioner-til-julehjaelp http://jp.dk/indland/indland_politik/article2590861.ece

occur, or, as Joachim B. Olsen above, a strict denial that poverty should even be possible in Denmark. Both responses, however, share one characteristic: they both portray a taken-for-granted notion that economic poverty should not exist in a Danish context. This is likely to be related to the fact that Denmark is the country with the highest benefit schemes and levels of redistribution in the world, and according to OECD figures of 2010, the 'most equal' in terms of both distribution of wealth and the lowest percentage of people in 'low-income' jobs (i.e. jobs which pay below 50% of the average income)[136].

Both of these political responses can be seen as legitimate, depending on whether poverty is viewed in absolute or relative terms. When viewed in absolute terms, one could reasonably claim that poverty should not theoretically be possible in the Danish Welfare State. If viewed in relative terms, however, then poverty is connected to a different parameter - that of inequality – and it is in relation to this latter perspective that poverty is most often discussed in a Danish context.

Seebohm Rowntree (1901; 1941 and 1951) laid the foundation for a relative, rather than absolute concept of poverty, arguing that a single, invariant, and unchanging definition of poverty would not do justice to the variable social reality people exist in. More recently, Beteille (2003: 4456) argued along the same lines, that social factors must be included in studies of poverty and inequality, as otherwise such studies would be rendered incomplete. Amongst the factors he suggested to be studied were security of livelihood, disconnection from family, health, and a chronic sense of loss and deprivation. In a Danish context these social factors, such as disconnectedness from the family, do not necessarily go hand in hand with economic prosperity and/or poverty. More importantly, my fieldwork pointed out that the very notion of 'disconnectedness' can mean different things to different (groups of) people.
The school at which I conducted my primary fieldwork was, as mentioned in Chapter III, situated in-between a middle-class detached housing area and an area of social housing comparable to a British council estate, called 'Bymuren'. Halfway through my

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[136] According to the Gini-coefficient where the value of '0' demonstrated perfect equality, and '1' is perfect inequality. In 2009, during my fieldwork Denmark's Gini-coefficient was 0.232, the lowest of all OECD countries. Recent OECD figures shows that this has now changed, with a Gini-coefficient of 0.248 –Denmark is now (2012) the second-most equal country
http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?QueryId=26068.

fieldwork, and as mentioned in Chapter IV, my older sister, Louise, who had been living in the detached houses, split from her partner and moved with her two daughters to 'Bymuren'. Ultimately this changed my view of the estate - from the assumption that it was quite narrowly composed of immigrants and families of ethnic Danish background on state benefits, to seeing the greater diversity at play.

After Louise's move, we would often discuss the issue of children playing in the courtyard at late hours, sometimes very young children, and seemingly without supervision. While I recalled my sister and I growing up on a similar estate, with a single mum, and also being allowed to play outside unsupervised, my nieces were not allowed to do anything similar. What little playtime they had was always supervised, as were most other middle-class children's 'free time'. One night, as I was returning to my sister's flat in 'Bymuren' after a party with the year 9's, I ran into Amir and a group of his friends. Amir was one of the boys who I observed in year 9, and he too had been at the party. Amir is a 'second generation immigrant' of Turkish descent, and after a rocky start to our relationship (see Chapter IV), he and I had established a good connection. We sat down and began talking about this and that, the party we had both left 'early' (it was around 2am) and after a while he started pointing out the flats of his family members. After pointing out ten or so flats in the immediate area, he talked about how nice it was to always have someone just around the corner, and how safe it was for the children to play outside – there was always an aunt, cousin or uncle around. My reactions to his comments were twofold. Firstly, it explained why I had seen so many young children playing 'alone' in the playground. But I immediately asked him if it was not claustrophobic to always have family around – to which Amir just laughed and shook his head.

At a later point, I discovered that Amir, too, had very strong ideas about what it meant to be Danish, in terms of loneliness and disconnectedness from the family. During an exam, Amir was analysing an advertisement displaying a woman lying in a bathtub with a bottle of champagne, some tulips and a couple of candles (this advertisement can be found in Appendix G). While I, and as it turned out the teacher and invigilator, interpreted the picture as signalling 'me-time', luxury, *hygge,* etc., Amir's understanding was very different. He did not see *hygge*, he saw loneliness and laziness. After all, the person was alone, inactive and drinking alcohol in the middle of the day– how could that possibly be *hyggeligt*? He argued that Danish children are

spoiled until they are 18, after which the parents don't really care. Instead the Danes can "*just get money from the state*" and lie in their bathtubs all day (the entire transcript of this exam can be found in the following chapter, where this example is discussed more extensively). Amir's perception of what signified disconnectedness is undoubtedly different from that of the majority, ethnic Danish, middle-class in Denmark. The view of what makes something *hyggeligt* is therefore not homogeneous, and what a non-middle-class family may need, in order to make their lives relatively more 'equal' and *hyggelige* is not straight-forward. I return to this discussion in the following chapter.

In other contexts, I also heard a somewhat different notion of disconnection to families being discussed, for instance in the teachers' lounge. Here it was noted how sad it was that children were allowed to 'just roam the streets', no one to look after them, similarly to the conversations I would have with my sister. In this case it was the family of, for instance, Amir, which was considered to be disconnected, as they were not 'properly' looking after their children.

Annette Laraeu (2002, 2003), in her study of American middle-class and lower class families, also considers this aspect of disconnection from the family. In an article from The New York Times, 20th December 2003, she discussed the sympathy that the middle-class would feel towards lower classes, who could not afford the same kind of Christmas as the middle-class themselves. In relation to this observation, Laraeu (2003) suggests that the concept of 'caring' in the middle-class family is overwhelmingly focused around a concerted cultivation of their children, i.e. scheduled hobbies and extra-curricular activities, often to the extent that very little time is left for these children to negotiate their own, if any, spare time. This, she argues, results in a disconnection with their families immediately beyond that of the nuclear family. Meanwhile, the lower class families she observed would advance what she calls natural growth, meaning that the child would be left to its own accord for great periods of time, having time to bond with family members outside of parents and siblings. This was also due to the fact that lower class families tend to live near to each other. As such, at Christmas time, the middle-class child may very well receive an abundance of presents and delicious foods, but on the other side of town, the child of lower class

status will instead be surrounded by a large family he/she actually knows.

Hence ideas of disconnectedness, as a parameter to point out relative inequality, are highly dependent on the perspective from which they are being observed. One cannot with full authority claim that one certain social fact is either the characteristic of equality or inequality, without simultaneously looking at what that social fact means in a specific social context.

To sum up, equality and inequality are highly cultural constructs, but while they are perhaps 'imagined', they are not, to borrow the words from Richard Jenkins (2011), necessarily imaginary. The discussion of what constitutes poverty was included here to show firstly that an absolute notion of (monetary) poverty is less relevant in the context where I did my fieldwork; and secondly that notions of relative poverty are strongly connected to the way in which *lighed*, or equality, is defined in a Danish context as 'sameness': in other words, socially rather than monetarily.

For the remainder of this chapter, equality will be observed in view of its Danish meaning – *lighed* – as this has connotations of 'sameness', or 'equality of worth', as outlined throughout the above discussions. Equality, in view of these understandings, is of immense importance in the Danish context, and the following sections will attempt to unravel further what and how exactly equality is being lived and practiced.

Historical antecedents of the *dannelses* school

This section will attempt to place the chapter in a wider cultural-historic context. The Danish theologian, philosopher, and educationalist of the early 19th century, Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig, was the facilitator for the Danish *folkeskole* and the *dannelse* ideology. Grundtvig envisioned that education should be for all people. It should make them free, self-sufficient, and independent, and focus on the development of the whole person: mind, body and feelings (Bugge 1968).

The Grundvigian theme could be articulated, as Jenkins suggests (2011), in the following terms, that 'everyone is an individual and must be tolerated and encouraged as such, but at the same time no one must stand out from the group' (*Ibid.* 201). Hence *janteloven,* discussed at the beginning of this chapter, is a direct extension of the

Grundtvigian ideology. Furthermore, the Grundtvigian view of life forms the basis of what would become the *dannelses-skole*: a school based on the holistic pedagogic strategy, which simultaneously focuses on the development of the individual, and the ability to fit in with the collective. Considering these definitions, it is evident that the concepts of *lighed, jantelov,* and *dannelse* are to a great extent similar – and all significantly based on the views articulated by Grundtvig in the 19th Century. It is perhaps also in Grundtvig's thoughts that we may find the root of the specific structure of the class and class-teacher, the creation of the school as a home-away-from-home. Grundtvig argued that the seed of national identity lay in the home with the family, and he viewed Denmark at large as a *folkehjem*, a home of the people (Anderson 2000: 251). It is perhaps therefore not peculiar that the *dannelses-skole* should emulate the space of the home. As a family, we are allowed to be different, but are essentially the same, within a natural, non-articulated hierarchy (*Ibid*. 247). Another link between Grundtvig, the *dannelses-skole,* and the classroom as a *hyggeligt* and homey space is articulated by Osborn *et al.*, when they discuss individualism and empiricism, i.e. learning from sensory experience as a 'whole person', as being the dominant pedagogical practices and values of the Danish school system. When the class is understood as a group of individuals, and learning is thought to involve 'the whole person', the classroom ideally should be decorated as 'their' space, adapting to the students as people, according to their tastes, and comforts (Osborn *et al.* 2003:106-107).

During my fieldwork, I participated in a debate at a national think tank in Denmark, where the Danish Minister of Education, Bertel Haarder[137], was giving a presentation on the importance of Grundtvig to the Danish way of thinking. After a lively presentation on the topic, I had the chance to talk to him for a few minutes, and I asked him if he could provide me with some examples of how the thoughts of Grundtvig were visible and practised in the contemporary Danish *folkeskole*. He answered by re-iterating that the entire Danish school system, the *dannelses-skole*, and the way it expresses itself in a Danish context, is directly linked to the Grundtvigian way of thinking. I continued then to ask him if the way this expresses itself is through

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[137] Bertel Haarder has been a member of the Danish Parliament since 1975 and was Minister of Education from 1982-1993 and again from 2005-2010. Other important posts held include: minister for refugees, immigrants, and integration 2001-2005.

teaching 'the essentials' (which is what Grundtvig proposed the Danish school should do), and whether these are abilities such as social literacy, interpretation, and analysis (some of the values I experienced as most explicitly taught in the Danish *folkeskole*). Furthermore, how can one determine what 'the essential' is? To this he responded:

"Grundtvig was essentially against Rousseau's idea, that the person could be stripped from culture and leave behind the 'real person', the good person. He emphasised that culture is very essential for the person. That each individual stands on the shoulders of his/her ancestors. This is why the 'culture canon' is of such great importance. 'The essential' is not negotiable, not individually defined. 'The essential' are the big feelings, e.g. Shakespeare. Teaching 'the essential' is teaching a way of extracting social competences from the essential values."

I deduced several meanings from his somewhat convoluted answer. Firstly, that culture was something Bertel Haarder viewed as inherited from ones' ancestors, and secondly that this culture is of immense importance for the individual. The culture consists of some 'essentials' that are non-negotiable – and as such culture is not perceived of as individual family-traditions, but rather as the big cultural structures of Danish society.

To help the citizens achieve an understanding of the 'essentials', the government had introduced the 'culture canon' (in 2000), which is a compilation of literature, arts, and music, which all Danish children must be familiarised with during their time in *folkeskolen*. From these great texts, values for appropriate social competences should subsequently be extracted. In other words, the longest serving minister of education in Danish history suggests that it is now (since 2000) explicitly the role of the state to help transmit the appropriate cultural understandings needed to become a socially literate person - a 'successful citizen', so to speak.

The 'essentials' of the Danish culture were, according to Grundtvig, an understanding that individual freedom and diversity alike hinge on (self)control and the explicit acceptance of being similar to everyone else. And it is these understandings that I observed in my fieldwork.

Similar to Grundtvig, the early 20th century American educational reformist John
Dewey (1916), suggested that education was an instrument for promoting both the
psychic and moral development of the individual. Further to this he argued that the
school should provide the opportunity to escape limitations of social groups by letting
the student come into contact with the broader environment (*Ibid.*). While it is highly
disputable that this has been successful in the American context (e.g. Bowles and
Gintis 1976; Eckert 1989; Lareau 2002), there seems to be a general consensus in
Denmark that this is still the purpose of the Danish *folkeskole*. It is subsequently often
emphasised as a both meeting place where all citizens, regardless of cultural and/or
socio-economic background, come together, and as an arena in which all students are
given equal opportunities, a shared common ground of understanding society, and an
understanding of appropriate ways of acting within society.

Everyday equality

Although Denmark may appear from the outside and from the perspective of
demographic analysis to be highly homogeneous, the reality is not quite as
straightforward. This point has been made by a number of anthropologists working in
Denmark (Knudsen 1996; Jenkins 2006, 2011; Gulløv and Bundgaard 2006, 2008;
Anderson 2000), and has also been discussed in previous chapters. While internal
differences may be more subtle, it does not render them less important, particularly in
a country with a strong, popular imagination of homogeneity. In this section I want to
provide a broader view of equality in an everyday Danish context, a sociological
perspective so to speak, drawing on *hygge*, the use of 'thank you' and some other
generalist observations.

In an everyday Danish context, interacting 'at eye-level', or on equal terms, is of
immense importance. Hansen (1980) and Jenkins (2011) both discuss this importance
of getting on socially and sociably with each other as equals. As Jenkins argues, this is
'an ideological complex of enormous continuing significance in Denmark' (*Ibid.* 95).

The everyday practices of egalitarianism are a different category of 'equalising
strategies', as these are not limited to the schooling context and not explicitly

pedagogical (although they may also be used in this sense, and some of these have indeed been explored in previous chapters, e.g. *hygge*). They are significant to conveying an understanding of what equality enacted means in a Danish context, as they do not wane over a lifespan, but rather remain consistently re-enacted and hence powerful practices in everyday Danish life.

Hygge

In Chapter VI, the notion of *hygge* was discussed, particularly in terms of *hyggelig* sociality as what Danes do 'when they practice egalitarian social patterns in their everyday lives' (Linnet 2011:22). Linnet (2011, 2009, forthcoming), Hansen (1980) and Jenkins (2011), amongst others, have all commented that what is particular about Danish sociality, and *hygge* especially, is the immediate idealisation of the in-between. This was observable in terms of the importance of light, as not too bright and not too dark – but exactly enough to allow each other to stay close and to not see every detail (that may distinguish one from another). It could also be seen in terms of food, which again was supposed to be nice, but not too nice, or the decoration-competition for Christmas at By Skolen, where the classrooms had to be *hyggelige*, meaning having just the right amount of decorations.

In his article on *hygge* Linnet (2011:25) discusses how this 'in-between', middle-class worldview, appears to be pervasive at all social levels in Scandinavian societies. This is also observed by Gullestad in her 'Kitchen-Table Society' (1984), where she describes how her informants, young women from the Western Norwegian village of Bremnes, see themselves, first and foremost as '*alminnelige folk*', or 'ordinary folks' (1987 [1984]:61). Gullestad (1984) herself describes them as something similar to working class (although she also discusses how class, in an economic sense, is complicated in the Scandinavian context, where social group or status group may be a more accurate description). Gullestad suggests, in this as well as later publications, that Scandinavian people will be most likely to describe themselves in this way, as average or ordinary.

In my study I too observed that class was something rarely referred to; at least I never heard anyone discuss it – particularly not the students. Linnet also found that class was 'a highly embarrassing, unsettling subject' (Linnet 2011). This need to stay bounded in

the middle could be said to be reflected in the understanding of what is *hyggeligt*. The constant repetition of this practice, as seen in Chapter VI, could subsequently be seen - as Linnet phrased it – as an everyday performance of equality.

Equality is then linked primarily to notions of sameness in the Scandinavian context and hence also with understanding *hygge* in similar ways. While a majority of Danes may identify 'what is *hyggeligt*' in similar terms, this understanding becomes more complicated when including ethnic minorities who perceive of this culturally specific concept in significantly different terms[138]. I will probe this issue further in the following chapter.

If viewing *hygge* as a kind of social competence, or as form of cultural capital, then the consistent repetition and expectation of correct performance in not only the *folkeskole,* but the larger society as well, can be seen as what Bourdieu called 'symbolic violence' (see Chapter VI). Linnet (2011) similarly argued that *hygge* can be observed as an instrument for social control when it becomes 'a symbolic vehicle for people's criticisms of other people's way of life' (Linnet 2011: 29) and when it then establishes its own hierarchy of attitudes. Hence, while *hygge* ideally serves to bring about an atmosphere of sameness, its use can also be observed as concerned with legitimising the dominance of the majority 'middle-class' or in-between, and thereby the egalitarian ideologies this represents.

This was visible in some of the cases discussed in Chapter VI, where *hygge* appeared to be a kind of cultural capital generally taken for granted, without much reflection upon how this knowledge had come about. Exactly for this reason, a majority of Danes would not recognise the definition of *hygge* as a class (or social group)-specific ideology and/or value. And in a predominant proportion of the observations made throughout my fieldwork in a Danish *folkeskole, hygge* was used actively in most contexts to attempt to include everyone, and to provide equal opportunities and sameness to all the students. As alluded above, through Amir's exam situation, this was however not always successful (and this particular aspect of how minority social

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[138] Thereby not arguing that socio-economic minorities might not also perceive of this in different terms, but this particular aspect will not be at the focus in this thesis.

groups illuminate other sides to practices considered egalitarian and homogeneous will be explored further in the next chapter).

Tak

To further understand the notion of a popular imagination of an equal Denmark, this section will engage with Richard Jenkins' (2011:40-46) discussion of the paramount importance and deeper cultural meaning of the word *tak,* or 'thank you'. Jenkins argues that in Danish, one can say *tak* in many ways, and that furthermore one *must* say *tak* in a great variety of social situations. Examples include after eating together, one will say *Tak for maden* (thank you for the food); when meeting again after a short period of time, people will thank each other for the times spent together previously *Tak for sidst* (thank you for last time). It is not uncommon to use the expression 1000 *tak*, a thousand thanks, or to reciprocate any thanks uttered with a *selv tak* or *tak i lige made* (Thanks yourself)!

Jenkins reflects on his process of learning to say *tak* in a range of situations (*Ibid.* 42-43), coming from the English culture in which it is more common to say 'please'. He suggests that the English 'please' is in most instances replaced with *tak*. For example: 'Yes, please', with *Ja tak,* (yes, thank you) or 'can I please have a cup of coffee' with *en kop kaffe, tak* (A cup of coffee, thank you).

The obvious and extensive use of *tak* was one of the cultural, not so subtle, ways of interaction that I, being Danish myself, never *noticed* during my fieldwork. However, as soon as I encountered Jenkins' observation of the word, I remembered how difficult I myself found learning to say 'please' when I first moved to an English speaking country[139]. My English-speaking friends would often poke fun at me for being rude in shops and other places where this kind of social interaction was taken for granted. When I revisited my field notes and re-created everyday social interactions, however, it became absolutely vivid that the use of *tak* is very dominant in the Danish language, and also in everyday interactions in the Danish *folkeskole*. These formalities, which Danes (and evidently myself) take for granted, are absolutely obligatory in performing

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[139] As part of an exchange programme at a High School in Melbourne, Australia, when I was 17 years old.

correct social interaction. They are long-established and deep-rooted characteristics of Danish patterns of politeness (Jenkins 2011:43).

Further to the examples mentioned by Jenkins (2011), which also included *tak for en hyggelig aften,* (thank you for a cosy night) after visiting friends or family, I noticed *tak* being used extensively also in a Danish schooling context. When a teacher called for the attention of the students, for instance, she/he would normally say something along the lines of: *Må jeg bede om jeres opmærksomhed, tak!,* (may I ask for your attention, thank you!). If someone was handing out candy or cake for a birthday celebration (as it is the norm to do in Danish society, also once you enter the labour market), no one would be allowed to eat until the giver said *vær'så god* (be so friendly, meaning 'you may begin') and the students would reply *tak!* At the end of the day the teachers and students alike would say *tak for idag* (thank you for today). When the parents arrived at meetings or 'school-home conversations' they would say *tak fordi vi måtte komme* (thank you, because we were allowed to come) if the teachers had not already said *Tak fordi I kunne komme* (thank you, because you could come). The party who had not initiated the *tak*, would proceed to say *jamen det var så lidt* (But, that was so little) or *selv tak* (as mentioned above).

Jenkins (*Ibid.*) suggests that this form of communication, based on reciprocal exchange of 'thank yous', reflects several deeper cultural meanings in the progression of the Danish social democratic welfare state. First of all, there is a certain measure of egalitarianism involved, as both parties thank each other. Secondly, the notion of thanking suggests a certain amount of equality in that social relationship.

Jenkins links the notion of mutual gratefulness to the development and creation of the Danish nation state (*Ibid.* 40-46). He discusses how the modern Danish state comes into existence in a dynamic interplay between two simultaneous cultural movements. The first was the rural popular social movement propagating *folkeoplysning* (enlightenment of the people) as led by Grundtvig, which consists of notions of self-help, community, and liberal education. The second was the urban social democracy, which emphasised the collective organisation of the labour movement (as discussed in Chapter III and V). Today this interplay defines Danish society (as also reflected in the

individual/collective discussion by Gullestad (1989,1992) in Chapter VII). The social, political and economic history of Denmark means that the foundation of Danish society lies in collective decision making and the pooling of resources, and in the peculiar ideology and attitude of 'we should all be the same' and simultaneously 'you are the maker of your own happiness' (*Ibid.* 45). According to Jenkins, this foundation also produces a sense of mutual gratefulness where the *tak* after an exchange, instead of the 'please' before an exchange, shows a courtesy, most appropriate between equals – and he argues that in this sense it is the epitome of everyday social democracy. He expands this observation by arguing that the continuing high public value placed on co-operation, equality and homogeneity (some of the key-values of the social democrats) in turn legitimises the Danish welfare system with very high levels of redistribution, and hence a high level of economic equality.

Named and Numbered

The quest for equality begins much sooner than when the child learns correct forms of social and verbal interaction, and before it is first placed in an institutional context. As soon as the new-born citizen of Denmark enters the world he/she must be registered within two days of birth, after which the child will be assigned a Central Personal Registration (CPR) number. The next task is picking a name for the child. This, however, is not a straightforward and private matter; the appropriate state authority must approve the name. In the case of name giving, this is the local church-clerk or minister. The regulation of first names is based on preventing parents from naming their children something that may be of disadvantage to their later life, such as a brand or cooperation name, a nickname, or famous/notorious names, such as 'Jesus' or 'Hitler'.

The regulations concerning names were first introduced in 1828 to bring order to surnames. Traditionally in Danish society, the son of Jens Adamsen would be called Adam Jensen, and his son in turn Jens Adamsen and so forth ('sen' being the spoken equivalent to the written *søn* or 'son').

According to Jenkins (2011:164) this kind of regulation is indeed in place to protect children from 'sticking out' and exposing them to ridicule from their peers, and this is also the general consensus I experienced in my fieldwork. Many times I overheard

teachers whisper, *hvad er det for et navn* (what kind of name is that) or *det skal vi lige vænne os til* (that we will have to get used to) often in connection with *det er også synd* (that is a shame), and as such with the distinct undertones of, 'why would you want to name your child something different?' Hence, from the moment of birth, 'sticking out' is made taboo, or in any case strongly discouraged by the state. The regulation of something as everyday and at the same time formal as one's first name is a potent example of a system favouring a certain amount of homogeneity in every detail of its execution[140].

After being numbered and named at birth, it is time for the child to be cared for. As discussed in Chapter VII, when discussing the public/private relationship, we saw that this task is one for both the family and the state, as embodied through educational and caring institutions. Subsequently, socialisation plays a significant role in developing the egalitarian welfare citizen, both in relation to the explicit, pedagogical strategies (such as the 'equalising strategies'), but also the more implicit structures of (and events at) the school. The following section will elaborate on the process of socialisation in view of notions related to the 'civilising process'.

Socialising equality using equalising strategies

In the beginning of this chapter, the example of identical folders was discussed as the teacher used this to illustrate to the children that 'here' (in the school) 'we are all equal' and that 'no one should stand out'. I discussed this as an 'equalising strategy', and this section will support the argument that students slowly begin enacting these strategies in their own ways, yet still within an egalitarian understanding, as they begin to understand the social rules by which they must play. This can be observed as the explicit 'equalising strategies' are rolled back, when the students grow older, more knowledgeable, and hence embody and perform correct equalising behaviour.

The social rules, or sets of appropriate interactions that this chapter is concerned with are those related to *lighed,* which are particularly exemplified as equality in terms of sameness. 'Equalising strategies' were most clearly expressed during in-schooling

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[140] One could argue that other countries too may have name regulations, but in no other countries do the rulings regarding names go as far back as in Denmark.

years, as the students were still getting used to 'what it means to be in *folkeskolen'*. For instance as in the below example, during a Danish lesson in year 2.X:

> David has finished his exercises first, and raises his hand; Mette
> (their class teacher) looks up: *"Yes?"*
> Adam: *"I have finished."*
> Mette: *"What are you allowed to do then?"*
> Adam: *"Make a drawing!"*
> Mette: *"You don't have to say you are done, I will be correcting
> all the exercises at the same time at home anyway!"*

This was a typical situation in all the classrooms I visited, where the students were eager to show their teachers and class comrades that they had finished... first! And the response from the teacher was a reward - the time and permission to draw - and a reprimand - don't think you're better than anyone else; all exercises will be marked together.

While an element of competition remained throughout the schooling years, it became less common that someone would proclaim 'I am done'. Instead students would help each other to finish, or sometimes they would ask if there were any other assignments they could do. Most of the time, however, the students would just relax when they finished their exercises – mostly by talking to each other, sometimes by drawing or reading a book.

Explicit examples of 'equalising strategies' were not strictly confined to the in-schooling as portrayed in the last two examples; they were also to be found throughout middle-schooling – and sometimes even more vividly, as the students (aged 11-13) became aware of the purpose of the exercises, and either resisted and re-shaped them, or sympathised with them, and hence re-enacted them (as we will see further down). The following example took place during a gym-lesson in year 6.Z:

> The girls are being separated into teams for a quick relay
> before the end of the lesson. In order to divide the teams, the

teacher chooses one girl, Mirna, to stand with her back towards the rest of the girls. Meanwhile another girl, Mette is walking around pointing to someone and asking, "*where should she go?*" and then Mirna will point to one side or the other, and in the end two teams have been randomly created.

The way in which the girls were divided into teams was the preferred way of dividing teams for gymnastic purposes at By Skolen and can be seen as yet another example of an 'equalising strategy'. Furthermore, it is a vivid display of the underplaying of differences combined with the *Jantelov* notion that 'you are not better than anyone else'. Learning to be someone who does not 'stand out' is part of the strong tradition of *dannelse* in the Danish *folkeskole*, as discussed above. The notion of *dannelse* can furthermore be understood in view of Durkheim's (1925) notion of the school, whose role it is to discipline the student in order to make them part of a homogeneous population, in terms of shared understandings – such as 'we are all the same'.

Dannelse can also be seen as part and parcel of a 'civilising process', a process discussed by Norbert Elias (1939). Elias argued that at the macro level, the 'civilising process' is the evolutionary development of human beings towards civilisation. Similar to Durkheim, who suggested that the classroom is a microcosm of the nation, Elias argued that at the micro level, the civilising process is the development of the savage child into a civilised citizen.

In the Danish context, where the public and private spheres overlap and interact more or less seamlessly, as discussed in Chapter VII, the civilising of citizens has to a great extent become an institutional responsibility, a point that has also been raised by other anthropologists (e.g. Knudsen 1996; Gulløv 2007). The civilising process is thus most evidently observed in a schooling context where the child learns appropriate modes of behaviour according to specific social contexts. In this sense, *dannelse* can be seen as an expression of this 'civilising process' in the Danish context.

Gulløv and Bundgaard (2006) also conducted research on the civilising processes in a *børnehave* (kindergarten) in Denmark (this study was also alluded to in Chapter VII).

The objective was that the observations of interaction between these pre-schoolers and their pedagogues would confer something about the cultural beliefs and values, which structure the daily socialisation practices (*Ibid.* 146). Similar studies (Willis 1977, Eckert 1989 and Evans 2006) also found that to achieve respect in relation to being a successful citizen it was necessary to be fluent in the social distinctions for proper behaviour (Gulløv and Bundgaard 2006). In the Danish education-institutional context these social distinctions included democracy, non-violent communication (as discussed above) and also what is/is not *hyggeligt*. The social distinction, or mode of behaviour, that Gulløv and Bundgaard observed emerging most strongly in the *børnehave*, and which also came out in many aspects of my fieldwork, was 'awareness of equality', as in similarity or homogeneity.

That Scandinavian social interactions are characterised by a kind of stressing of similarities and underplaying of differences has been highlighted repeatedly (Knudsen 1996, Gulløv 2007, Gullestad 1992, Anderson 2000). The example of the division into gym-teams, and of year 2.X, where it is not 'better' to finish first, showed exactly how there was an active attempt at muting any signs of difference, positive and negative.

However, as the students became older, they began to get increasingly annoyed with the way in which the gym-teams were divided. What was intended as a 'fair' way of dividing the students into groups, more often than not, ended up being very unfair, as 'the best players' sometimes co-incidentally ended up in the same team. As a consequence the school, rather than eliminating differences, would sometimes point them out, by adopting this 'equalising strategy'. Hence when the students got older, and they began to notice that the teams were 'not fair', and expressed this point of view, they were increasingly allowed to form their own teams – and most often did so with a high awareness of how the teams would most fairly be divided.

Both the example with the folders in the beginning of this chapter, and the examples above, show that as the students achieve an increased understanding of what equality means, in terms of equality of worth, they are allowed to simultaneously acknowledge and express individual differences, as they will now follow the social codes presented to them (at least during formal activities at the school).

Another example of this was when the students were given new seats in their classrooms. During in-schooling and middle-schooling, the teachers would always allocate seats to the students, and the following is an observation of a class's hour in which Ana, the class teacher of year 6.Z, was announcing the new seats to the students:

> Ana: *"Before we begin, I would like us all to have a booing round and a YES round, in that way we will not need to do that when I call out the seats. It is not nice if someone boos when they are told to sit next to you is it? And it is not fair to yell out YES either! Now, let us have a booing round:*
> Everyone: *"BOOOOOO"*
> Ana: *"And now lets have a YES round:"*
> Everyone: *"YES"*
> Ana: *"Good, now I will call out the seats, there will be no reactions, just pick up your bags and move to your new seats."*

The allocation of seats, and the way in which Ana prepared the students, was yet another 'equalising strategy'. In this case the students learned that they should not directly display a preference for someone over others; everyone was equally good class-comrades. This is important, not just in terms of keeping an image of 'equality of worth', but also to uphold the close-knit community, the home-outside-of-home feeling that the classroom ideally provides.

Again, what can be observed is that when the students get older, they are increasingly allowed to pick their own seats in the classroom, and not necessarily have these allocated. This is, however, only allowed insofar as the students are capable of acting appropriately within this freedom. As such, a pre-requisite for free seating is that there is no bullying, and that the class works well during lessons.

The above section, and the discussion of various 'equalising strategies', may seem to suggest that what happens in the Danish *folkeskole* is straightforward social reproduction, at least in terms of transmitting egalitarian rules of social interaction on

to the students. This understanding would be based on the observation of the students as slowly allowed to act freely within the accepted social boundaries at the school, as they get older and understand and acknowledge these boundaries, and hence re-produce them.

Many previous studies of formal education have indeed focused on other, supposedly equal-oriented school systems, which in their pursuit to provide students with equal opportunities, either ended up not succeeding, or, as the ethnography pointed out, did not seem to be the intention to begin with (e.g. Willis 1977, MacLeod 1987, Eckert 1989 and Evans 2006 amongst others). The following section, which engages with ideas of social reproduction, will assist us in further understanding the preceding ethnography[141].

Social re-production

Throughout this thesis, education has been discussed as the primary institution for reproducing ideas, values and ways of being in, and understanding, the world. The thesis has placed at the pinnacle of this debate the idea, long ago articulated by Durkheim, that schools are centrally important vehicles through which children are moulded to become citizens with an inclination towards social life: citizens who will form relatively homogeneous collectives, which are essential for the well being of not just the individual, but also the success and prosperity of the nation at large (Durkheim 1961 [1925]:233).

McDonough and Feinberg (2003) have argued along the same lines that public education in the modern democratic welfare state has been 'legitimised as the institution that would build a liberal and democratic industrial nation state by developing the surplus loyalty required to cement the particularistic and diverse religious and cultural components of a nation state together' (*Ibid.* 1). This surplus loyalty, or what Durkheim calls the 'love of the nation' and inclination towards social life, can only be created if a particular ideology or way of thinking about the self and the surrounding world, is to a certain extent transmitted to the future citizenry, the

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[141] These theories have been explored to a greater extent in the literature review.

students. This chapter has so far suggested that one of the key notions being (re)produced in the Danish *folkeskole*, both in terms of morals, appropriate interaction and ways of understanding the surrounding world, is homogeneity, or what in Denmark appears to be cherished above all else as *lighed*, sameness and 'equality of worth'.

Many previous studies have looked at how students resist social reproduction in schools, and/or have focused on the extent to which inequality is being reproduced by education, even when it proclaims to do the opposite, i.e. provide equal opportunities. Bowles and Gintis (1976) go as far as to compare the campaigns of the 1850s 'go west' to the land of dreams and opportunity, with the later ethos of 'go to college'. However, just like the American dream was no genuine prospect for a significant number of people seeking it, perhaps not even a dream – but rather a hallucination (Macleod 2009 [1987]:4), the education system often presents the same unfulfilled expectations. Once the worker stepped off the boat, or the student left school, he/she realised that the very social constraints they attempted to escape were still in place.

Similarly Anne Knudsen (1996) suggests that the Danish *folkeskole* does not prepare its students for the inequality they will encounter once they enter 'real society'. In the labour-market, even in a self-professed egalitarian Denmark, there is presumably no one helping you to make fair teams, or telling you that if you are not good at math, you are probably good at something else (as I repeatedly heard teachers point out to some students). Subsequently, if social re-production takes place, and if Danish society at large is not equal, then the students who successfully decode the egalitarian game rules may be at a disadvantage, if they expect those rules to apply outside of the school grounds. In the next section I will return to this observation to assess the extent to which my fieldwork showed anything concerning such a divergence between school and society, and subsequently whether the 'equalising strategies' focused on a kind of equality that was not available in society.

Before entering this discussion, I will summarise some of the important theoretical and ethnographic perspectives that are linked to ideas of social reproduction in a schooling context (most of which were covered in the literature review).

Most importantly for this chapter, Louis Althusser's (1972) theory of the school as an ideological state apparatus dealt with the reproduction/maintenance of certain ideologies/structures in society, as did Durkheim's (1925) and later Bourdieu's (1970; 1972) theories of schools, ideology, and class structures. All three considered the school as an environment in which social subjects, conducive to the maintenance of social order, are created through discipline and the transmission of an ideology to the students about themselves and the world surrounding them. In Bourdieu and Althusser's work, educational institutions are furthermore viewed as shaped by the ruling class, i.e. the capitalists, who will control the production of citizens to fit the system. In the Danish Social Democratic welfare state one could argue that the ruling class is instead the middle-class - if not in an economic sense, then almost certainly in an imaginary sense (taking into consideration the above section on the definition of *lighed* and also how *hygge* can be viewed as a demonstration of the Scandinavian focus on the in-between). The rule of the middle-class is not solely a Danish phenomenon; a lot of ethnographic studies carried out throughout the last couple of decades in other western contexts have shown the same trend of middle-class ideology being transmitted to the students in the 'ideological educational apparatus' (e.g. Willis 1977; Eckert 1989; Evans 2006; Levinson 1998; Kusserow 2004; Macleod 1987; Laraeu 2002 etc.)

While both Willis's and other studies (Macleods 1987; Evans 2006) support Althusser's claim that students are ejected from the school to whatever position in society they were meant for - I find it troubling to accept that the working class culture, or any culture indeed, should be defined solely in opposition to a hegemonic culture. This assumption seems to remove initiative and agency from the members of that culture, and reduces the minority (or oppressed) culture to being merely a reversed reflection of the middle-class culture. Hence the next section will critically re-visit the idea of social reproduction in the context of my ethnography.

Social Reproduction Re-visited
As a premise (and as mentioned in Chapter III), the Danish *folkeskole* works from an explicit strategy to provide all students with equal opportunities. This is done in part through the kind of homogenising processes described above. However, the modern

democratic welfare state must also prepare the student to be an autonomous being, willing to take responsibility and initiative for his/her own learning. Consequently the school sometimes offers a confusing set of directions as to how it is appropriate to behave. The ethnography outlined below, which describes a particular and traditional game of dice played in year 7.Z, is an illustrative example of how values of equality may smoothly coexist with a simultaneous competitiveness in terms of gaining goods for oneself. The dice game is traditionally played after the Danish Christmas lunch (which was discussed in Chapter VI). After participants finish eating at these events, families and organisations may practice different rituals, but it is my experience that a majority of all Danish Christmas lunches will incorporate this very particular game of dice[142].

> On the last day of school before the Christmas break, the school had yet another *hyggedag* (day of *hygge*). And as I had already been having breakfast with my other two primary classes of observation, year 0.Y and year 3.C (and their parents) on previous days (and furthermore participated in the year 3.C Christmas lunch, as discussed in Chapter VI), I had promised year 7.Z that I would spend the entire day with them.

> We had agreed that I would bring in breakfast for the class, as nobody had made the initiative to arrange anything similar to what I had participated in in year 0.Y and 3.C. During the breakfast, there was a joking tone, particularly on the topic of the homemade bread that I had baked, which truly was quite horrible and stone-like. After clearing the plates, presents for the dice game (everyone had brought at least one) were placed at the middle of the table.

> People would then begin rolling the dice and every time someone gets a 6, they can choose a present from the table. By the time all the presents have been distributed, part two of the game begins, and an alarm clock is

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[142] I base this observation on two factors: my own experiences of Danish Christmas lunches in both professional and private contexts, and more importantly in relation to my fieldwork, on the fact that no teachers or students expressed any surprise at playing the game at their Christmas lunches, and that everyone had prior knowledge of the game (even if the specific rules may have differed).

set to countdown (nobody knows for how long). For the remainder of time, you are supposed to steal presents from each other. Usually one present will become attractive, and otherwise people try to steal from someone with many presents.

Settling on the rules in year 7.Z was, however, a more complicated task, as most families will have added their own particular rules to the game. While all the students agreed on the format of rolling a dice, and winning presents at the throw of a six, there were different ideas of how exactly to play the game. We ended up settling on a combination of rules:

First the game would proceed as described above and when the timer went off, the first two parts of the game would be over. If someone at this point had not got a present, they would be allowed to get one from someone, who had won more than one (the 'redistribution rule', or 'socialist version', as the teachers and I dubbed it). Then if the student *wanted* to, they could bet their one present and join the capitalist version of the game, in which there would be no redistribution at the end, but instead the possibility to win many presents, however at the risk of getting none!

Most of the students decided to continue the game, after the first part – and this part of the game was much more emotional, as people 'can risk' not having any presents at the end– or potentially winning them all! That the game was at this point more emotional was illustrated by the tone of voices being louder, sometimes even screaming for the presents they wanted (when hitting a six), the increased laughter, and displays of anxiety (such as rushing with the dice, resulting in it being dropped on the floor).

At this point in the game there are certain new dynamics at play. For instance, it was considered bad gamesmanship to 'steal' a present from someone with only one present – but there were exceptions to this.

Firstly, if someone accumulated a great amount of presents, he/she became the target, as everyone else would try to strip them of all their presents. Secondly, you may steal the last present from someone as a 'joke' or *if* a person has only one present, but it was 'the popular present' (as mentioned above).

The game of dice is usually played towards the end of a Christmas lunch. It is a symbol of an even measure of order and disorder, as the rules are always made clear at the beginning of the game, but within those boundaries the participants are free to participate as they please. While there are certain expectations for what constitutes appropriate social interaction during the game, i.e. how to appropriately steal someone's presents, these can be broken – because it is, at the end of the day, 'just a game'. In this sense social relationships are tested, as the game exists in a space between high and low intensity. It is a game with low stake investment, but it is none-the-less a game in which people will still get very emotionally involved.

On a larger and more symbolic level, the game portrays some of the elements of how Danish society is constructed at large. At the start of the game, everybody has equal opportunities, as all the participants are equal before the dice, but similar to 'real life', the outcome is not always egalitarian. In a sense the game is then a small-scale enactment of the dynamics at play both in *folkeskolen* and in society at large, when Danes 'pretend' to be equal, but in reality know this is not the case in every aspect.

Before the game started, the students had agreed that at the end of part two of the game that the presents would be redistributed, such that everybody had at least one. Hence everyone would have taken the same amount out of the game as they had put in, i.e. one present. More importantly, everyone would have been included and part of 'playing the game', just as everyone should be made to feel that they are part of the class-community or, later, the welfare state. At this point the students 'are all equal', and they then have the choice of whether they want to continue or not, risking their equality, so to speak. Most of the students decide to continue, and while the third part of the game - 'the capitalist version' - initially appears to show that the students are

not interested in reproducing egalitarian structures, the way in which they play during this third part shows that they do.

This can be seen by observing the underlying rules of good gamesmanship, to try to avoid stealing from someone with just one present. The two things that legitimise stealing from someone with just one present are, for instance, if they have the very present that not just you, but the group, find the most attractive, or if that person has had a lot of presents. The last aspect is interesting in two ways. Firstly, a person who has had many presents is considered greedy, and hence must be 'punished' – therefore it is legitimate to strip them completely of presents; secondly, the person who has many presents will not actually have those necessarily due to greediness, but rather due to luck of the dice. I remember playing this game as I grew up, both at the Christmas lunches of my family, my friends and with colleagues – and I remember, and recognised in the students that day in year 7.Z, how it was initially fun to be lucky, and steal presents, but if the luck continued, and one got visibly more presents than others, it was rather uncomfortable. At this point people would often apologise at having to 'steal' someone's present, *Jeg kan jo ikke gøre for det* (but, I cannot help it). I also observed this attitude amongst the students, even if it was in some cases also displayed as a joking exaggerated greediness. Furthermore, luck is not related to ability; therefore it is only fair that the community (the class) then exposes the 'lucky' player to some forced misfortune (i.e. all students ganging up on the lucky player to steal the presents back).

The above example creates various parallels to the Danish society at large, in terms of the idea of every citizen starting out as equal, and then through various chances they perform differently – but this does not challenge their equality of worth – as no one is better or worth more than the next. Just as Danish society redistributes goods fairly between its citizens, so are the presents fairly divided between the participants of the dice game. And even if the students chose to continue the capitalist version of the game, they still played by the overarching rules of keeping a certain degree of equality. While the example is yet another illustration of how students adopt and adapt the 'equalising strategies', it also begs the question discussed in the previous section by Knudsen (1996), Bowles and Gintis (1976), Willis (1978) and others: what happens if

the students are subsequently ejected into a world that is not as equal as their equalising strategies have prepared them for? And it is this aspect that this last section will be discussing, as we once again return to theories of social reproduction.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1970) along with other social scientists (Evans 2006; Willis 1977; and Macleod 1987) have viewed the habitus as very determined by the class of which one is a member. While I do not entirely dismiss the influence of one's physical surroundings and cultural upbringing, I think that the individual must be accredited with more agency in the development of the habitus. In the previous chapter, I showed, for example, how Barbara Rogoff's (1993) understanding of socialisation as 'guided participation' was pertinent in the Danish *folkeskole*, and that it is through this guidance that the child acquires the understandings and moral values of its surroundings and consequently produces and reproduces a moral and cognitive order. Thus Rogoff proposes a theory of socialisation that takes the agency of the student more into account. After all it is the individual who is engaging with various social fields, and determining what factors are incorporated to his/her habitus, even if the perceptions of those factors are pre-determined by one's present habitus. Only if the role of the individual is *limited* compared to the role of the environment, or if the role of the individual *already fits the mould* of the environment, should the welfare state institutions be relatively successful in shaping the welfare citizens in a country such as Denmark, where a majority of the most important socialisation years are spent in public institutions.

Bradley A. Levinson (1996) suggests, in his fieldwork of a rural Mexican secondary school, that the individual child does indeed possess a certain amount of agency in negotiating the ideology presented to him/her by the formal educational institutions. In his ethnographic study Levinson also appropriates discourses of equality and the construction of the space of the school as a microcosm of the nation. He argues that in the rural Mexican setting, schooling does not only represent a set of new tools, skills, and social networks, but also a new social identity. The students at the Escuela Secondaria Federal (ESF) all identify themselves as 'middle-class', despite differing ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds (1996:215). Those entering the school from less privileged backgrounds often have to juggle this new identity simultaneously with their

traditional identity, and the chores/jobs that are necessary for the survival and well-being of their families. Levinson's study, however, differs from other studies, which are primarily concerned with the imposition of categories upon children. His research is focused on how students themselves come to acquire or reject the 'schooled identity': an identity which, similarly to that of the Danish institution discussed by Gulløv and Bundgaard (2006), not only provides the primary means with which one can break structures of 'negative social heritage', but simultaneously reinforces social heritage.

Levinson argues that the process through which the students elaborate on or contest the schooled identity helps us to understand how state schools' intervention in local social relations succeeds or fails in bringing together socio-cultural differences to shape a hegemonic project (1996:229). According to Levinson, it is through individual negotiations, guided by social, economic, and cultural surroundings, that students come to accept, reject, or attempt to modify the kind of schooled identity that is not only necessary for the completion of the secondary school, but also for the possible attainment of social status and membership of the middle-class community.

Ethnographic investigations of schools have tended to view formal education as comprised of institutions that supposedly intend to be liberating measures installed in the face of great social and economic inequality, but often ultimately end up being repressive institutions as their structure does not allow students to identify with and make sense of the school in any valuable way (such as Willis 1977; Macleod 1987; Evans 2006).

I would propose that there is a sense in which this is not the case in the view of the welfare state of Denmark that my ethnography represents. Rather than being either a liberating or repressive institution, the Danish *folkeskole* appeared to be a tool for *maintaining* equality and an egalitarian society at large. I base this on the non-resisted 'equalising strategies' described throughout this chapter, but also on observations of what people take for granted in the Danish school system, and what the Lads (in Willis 1977) and Hallway Hangers (in Macleod 1987) in particular did not.

Richard Jenkins (2011:159) has argued that being Danish, and Danishness in itself, is defined by those practices that are taken-for-granted, and most of the practices in the Danish *folkeskole* appeared to be. As discussed in Chapter VII, a vast majority of all parents accept that their child will be in institutional care for a predominant part of their upbringing. It is indeed taken for granted that this is the best and healthiest way for a child to grow up.

To illustrate this point, we may usefully refer back to an example that was discussed in Chapter VII. This example involves a conversation I overheard one day in the teachers' lounge concerning the use of *børnehaver* and *fritidshjem* (pre-school and after-school care). The contemporary debate in the media had been focused on whether or not institutional care should be compulsory (an interesting debate, considering that a majority, more than 90%, already have their children in institutions). Most of the teachers agreed that institutionalisation was incredibly important, primarily for the welfare of the child. One teacher however expressed her concern, arguing that it was not necessary if one parent was in the home. This point of view was met with clear resistance; another teacher was quick to point out that the child would be disadvantaged:

> "*It is important for the child to acquire social skills, to learn how to play with other children*".

More importantly, however, it was inconceivable that Danish families should exist where the mother would stay at home. In this conversation, I would like to draw the attention of the reader towards the fact that it is not compulsory school being debated in this example, but rather making compulsory institutional time outside of school, and that this extensive institutionalisation was being passionately defended[143].

For the 'Halllway Hangers' in Macleod's study (1987), the 'Lads' in Willis' study (1977) and working class boys in Gillian Evans' study (2006), school was a kind of 'matter out

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[143] The unmentioned factor in this discussion was ethnicity. Considering the high institutionalisation percentage, it is assumed that the group of Danes who did not embrace this form of institutionalisation would be the group with an ethnic background other than Danish – the group that was also considered to be the most in need for this institutionalisation (this will be discussed on the following chapter).

of place'. It represented neither a sensible nor reasonable activity, nor did it offer any realistic future prospects. As a result, the boys in all of these studies either resisted the ideology actively, or conformed and were ultimately disappointed when they entered a society that did not offer them the opportunities they had been promised through the meritocratic value system at the school.

For the Danish family however (and here I am discussing the family with an ethnic Danish background, as ethnic differences will be explored further in the next chapter), the school appears to be meaningful. I base this on the observations of students adopting and adapting the 'equalising strategies' and on the ever-important silences that one experiences throughout fieldwork: the things that we do not observe, but that we had perhaps expected to observe, such as resistance.

The fact that the school is criticised so little as an institution, and that most of its practices are taken for granted and not generally resisted, signifies that the school, at least in terms of its egalitarian structure, appears not to be matter out of place. For it not to be matter out of place, it must fit in neatly with the categories and practices already accepted in society. The cultural ideology that the school represents – which for the Hallway Hangers and Lads seemed so oppressive[144] - appears not to be considered so by the bulk of the Danish society.

Osborn *et al*.'s studies support these findings as they state that 'despite the influences of cultural filters that students brought into the process of schooling from their individual family backgrounds, students' perception nevertheless seemed to resonate fairly closely with the particular emphases of the goals of the national systems.' (2003:211). They found that in the Danish school system, the students appeared to 'share a sense of solidarity and commonality with other students regardless of their social background and attainment level' (*Ibid.*) Furthermore, of the countries studied, Denmark, France, and England, the Danish students were least likely to want to leave school as soon as possible, or to understand school as getting in the way of their lives (*Ibid.*).

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[144] Or at least to the scholar observing it.

The ethnography throughout this thesis has suggested, that the cultural ideology traded in the Danish *folkeskole* is that of egalitarianism. The finding of no or little resistance from students subsequently suggests that this school-based ideology may be similar to the ideology the student enters with, and hence the ideology adhered to by his/her parents. It is not for this thesis to propose any final conclusions or broad sweeping statements concerning Danish society at large. If, however, the logic followed by other studies of social reproduction - in terms of what resistance signifies - is also applied to this research, then one might imagine that a great deal of egalitarianism already exists in Denmark (even if only imaginary). In this case the school would not need to push this ideology onto its students - the ideology would be expected; or, as mentioned above, perhaps *the student already fit the mould*, and hence resistance would be limited.

When discussing Gilliam and Gulløv's *civiliserende Institutioner* in the literature review, it was suggested that egalitarianism could be understood as a 'norm of civility'. According to Schiffauer *et al.* (2004:5), civility or civic culture, is *not* about conforming and/or rejecting a certain value, rather it is concerned with learning to argue within an accepted framework (as discussed also in Chapter V), and in this chapter, the framework is the overarching understanding of *lighed.*

The use of identical folders, the separation into gym teams, the allocations of seats, the way in which the students communicate during class's hour and in the student council and, to some extent, the dice game: all of these are examples that illustrate how there is initially a strong focus on 'not standing out' and 'fitting in'. As the students progress through the school system, we see that this focus changes. The students decipher the educational decoders and they learn to play by the rules – at least during school time. And they appear to do so without any marked resistance. Even when they do express resistance by not *adopting* the 'equalising strategies' - for instance as they get fed up with the way of dividing the gym teams, or when they decide to continue the dice game - they still *adapt* new ways of social interactions. But such interactions are still characterised by an egalitarian understanding.

This, however, does not mean that there is no resistance to the formal institution that the school represents amongst the students; but this resistance must be separated from the ideology the school transmits. As such the students might resist the image of being a good student by smoking, drinking, taking drugs, wearing black clothes, dyeing their hair, and using 'bad' language, but this does not necessarily mean that they resist the overarching ideology of equality: of treating each other equally by not letting anyone 'stick out'. The following example illustrates this point:

On one of the first summer days of 2009, a group of students were sitting at the school entrance, smoking. They were discussing the end of year awards ceremony, what awards to give to whom, etc. The end of year ceremony was an entirely student-organised event by and for the year 9's to mark the end of ten years of schooling. The primary purpose of the event was to present students and teachers (associated with the year 9's) with awards for various things – funny titles, serious titles, and prestigious and less prestigious ones[145]:

> Girl: "*We need to come up with some more awards, like something different!*"
> Another girl: "*Yeah, and we need to skip some of them... there are like, so many people we don't talk to, but that doesn't mean we can only give awards to us, we should also give awards to the others.*"

The girls are in charge of a student-initiated end-of-year award show. They are part of the larger group who smokes, drinks, and parties. 'The other' students are considered peripheral, but evidently not unimportant. While the girls struggle to come up with awards they can give to the less 'known' students, they none-the-less find it important to do so. In many ways these girls are not conforming to the idea of 'the ideal student', as they both smoke and drink, but at the same time they are acknowledging the importance of the ideology - that no one should be left out, no one should be different. In this sense the students become more than individuals *fitting the mould*; they are making selective acknowledgements of the egalitarian structure and ideals

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[145] The event will also be discussed in the following chapter.

proposed to them. By the time the students leave the school, there is a sense that everyone is included in the community that the school represents. As I had the opportunity to participate in most of the end-of-year parties, I got a sense that no one should be left out – but at the same time, this was only to a certain extent.

The award-show still had 'most popular girl' (which of course went to Fie, who was pretty, smart and funny), but she received the reward with a shrug, and a 'that's no big deal attitude'. As such she perhaps won this award because she indeed did play by the rules: she accepted that she stands out, but at the same time that this does not make her different – or at least that this is definitely not something she would brag about.

Just as Fie is awarded by being good at playing by the rules, good at 'pretending to be equal', Denmark and Danes perceive of themselves very much in terms of *lighed,* and I hope this chapter (and thesis at large) has shown that the notion of equality plays into most social interactions, in school and society alike. But just like Fie is still awarded 'the most popular' girl, Danes do hesitate to be proud and even to 'brag' about being the 'most equal' country in the world either. As noted in the previous chapter, for example, a teacher commented that:

"Everybody should really have it like us"

As such being equal is only a label that is adhered to within the collective that is the Danish society – and in this sense the *folkeskole* has been successful in creating the organic, homogeneous collective that Durkheim (1925) said was necessary for the prosperous nation.

So is Denmark 'Equal'?

Denmark may be equal in economic terms and until fairly recently also in ethnic terms[146]. Hence it may appear also very socially and culturally homogeneous from the outside, as the two concepts, equality and homogeneity, are closely linked in the everyday popular imagination.

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[146] Immigration only began throughout the end of the 1970's, and has furthermore been very slow since 2000, when a right wing government came into power.

All of these structures and understandings of 'equalising strategies', however, hinge on one important factor: that the students are equipped with the right social competences to navigate and exploit them. We saw in the beginning of this chapter how equality in a Danish context is defined in terms of *lighed*, or sameness. Since a predominant number of Danes would define themselves as in-between – and even emphasise this aspect in most spheres of life (for instance through the use of *hygge) -* it could be argued that the middle-class essentially *is lighed*. If the middle-class ideology is the ruling one, then the dominant ideology in a Danish context must be equality. In this case, and following the traditional socialisation theories, the middle-class students would subsequently already possess the 'right' educational decoders or necessary forms of capital and in a sense therefore already be 'equal'.

While it is not for this thesis to finally determine whether or not Denmark is fundamentally 'equal', I have suggested that there is a certain sense in which the egalitarian pedagogies in *folkeskolen* were not resisted. School itself could be resisted, but the egalitarian ideology was at large smoothly transmitted to the students who figured in my ethnography, and who subsequently made sense of this in their own terms. What one might further investigate in follow-up fieldwork is, if *folkeskolen* is indeed successful in transmitting an image (or imagination) of an egalitarian world, then is this the real world that the students will meet once they leave *folkeskolen*?

I have, however, also tried to show in this chapter, that perceptions of equality, in terms of sameness, are not necessarily clear-cut in the Danish context. Instead ideas of sameness or 'equality of worth' thrive side-by-side with notions of a pronounced individualism. In *folkeskolen*, and in Danish society, Danes know that they are, as individuals, very different – some are surgeons, some are working at the checkout in the supermarket – but while they do not *do* the same, they are (at least ideally) worth the same. The media places great emphasis on including everyone in the public debate – on stressing equal worth as a human being, and equal worth in terms of life experiences. Hence as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the *jantelov* allows one to have high aspirations and *do* something different, as long as one does not think that this makes one better, or as long as one doesn't flaunt it or stick out.

Hence, as also suggested above, the students are not socialised into believing that everyone is the same, in terms of what they do, and can do – but rather that everyone is the same in terms of being of 'equal worth'– and hence everyone's point of view is important in the Danish deliberative democratic debate.

To sum up this chapter, I will conclude with the words of Hans (the class teacher of year 9.Z) at the year 9's graduation ceremony in June 2009, where it is customary for the class teachers to give a short speech.

Hans goes to the front, so that he stands in front of all the students, their parents and their teachers. He picks out three pieces of string from his pocket:

> "*You came to this school with different prerequisites, you were different lengths of string*" (he holds up the three different lengths pieces of string to signify this)
>
> "*But then you went through so much, folkeskolen*" (he crams the three pieces of string between his hands, twisting them)
>
> "*And today… you have come equally far*" (he holds up the three pieces of string again, now they are 'magically' equal lengths)
>
> "*Equal starting points …*"

Chapter X: Diversity

'Look at a single drop of ditch water, you'll see thousands of strange little creatures,
such as you couldn't imagine living in a drop of water.'

- Hans Christian Andersen *The drop of water* 1861.

The previous chapter discussed processes of homogenisation and implicit and explicit transmissions of ideas of equality in a Danish context. We saw that equality is often defined in terms of 'sameness', and that a great deal of (imagined) homogeneity does exist. But even a country the size of a raindrop on a world map will surely be heterogeneous once one observes it more closely. As such, this chapter will turn the focus to the other side of the coin: ideas of diversity and difference. While my thesis at large is concerned with the 'popular imaginations' (Anderson 1983) and practices of Danishness in relation to the welfare state, it was often in the context of 'difference' (or diversity) that these were made visible. These differences, in turn, were most vividly observable through ethnicity, which will be given particular attention in this chapter.

Having decided that through my observations I would attempt to produce a snapshot of 'being' and 'becoming' a welfare citizen in Denmark, I was from the outset intrigued by processes of both differentiation and homogenisation. I quickly realised that these were both (and often simultaneously) taking place. Both of these are crucial to the organisation of the Danish welfare state because it is built not only on sentiments of equal opportunities and 'equality of worth' (see previous chapter), but also on creating *dannede* individuals (as described in previous chapters) who will be able to take care of themselves and contribute to society. In terms of schooling, this means providing a shared ideological understanding of the world and an equal starting point.

The streamlined, egalitarian school system facilitates the process within which equal opportunities are created and where characteristics of inequality are identified. This process, I suggest, relates to an attempt to erase those characteristics that are 'not equal' and subsequently to identify right and wrong ways of being diverse. This

emerges strongly in my ethnography, both in regards to broader ideas that revolve around nationalism, stereotypes, ethnicity, and ways of learning; but also in more banal contexts, such as bed times, play and not least *hygge*. As noted in the previous chapter, the latter makes it possible to appreciate and celebrate diversity, while still actively minimizing differences. Gullestad addresses this conundrum, when she discusses that 'in many ways the ideal of sameness produces a solution (demands for sameness) to a problem it has itself contributed to creating.' (2002:59). The previous chapter suggested that 'equalising strategies' are largely adopted and adapted by the majority ethnic Danish students, this chapter explores the situations where the focus on sameness or 'equality of worth' holds the possibility of undermining diversity and emphasising the differences it set out to eradicate.

This chapter will take as its point of departure the discussion first outlined in the literature review, which concerns the relationship between a high level of redistribution and the perceived need for a homogeneous culture, or in other words the implication of the welfare state for diversity. Having observed the emphasis on sameness and equality of worth, not only in the previous chapter, but throughout this thesis, I will attempt here to come closer to an understanding of whether the ideology underpinning the statement 'everyone should really have it like us' (and be like us) is or is not compatible with diversity, or at least of how diversity exists in such a context.

This discussion relates to theories of nationalism, in which a population will to some extent 'imagine' itself to be a homogeneous entity, separable from other nations (Anderson 1983). The emphasis on equality and sameness was expressed in many ways in the Danish context (e.g. in relation to the importance of correct verbal articulation, ambitions, and pride in terms of *Janteloven*). One factor, however, that repeatedly drew attention to 'differences' in the context of the practices I observed, can be understood primarily in terms of ethnicity. It is this particular aspect of difference that will be the focus of this chapter, as I investigate how ethnic diversity exists within an 'imagined' egalitarian (as expressed through an emphasis on 'sameness') *folkeskole* context. After a discussion of nationalism, ethnicity and some ethnographic us/them stereotyping examples, I will briefly look at how *hygge* in some instances allows a simultaneous celebration of diversity *and* minimising of differences,

before finally returning to the discussion concerning the relationship between the welfare state and diversity to conclude this chapter.

To set the scene I will begin by outlining an everyday scenario played out in the context of *Gymnastik* (Physical Education), as this illustrates how ideas of differences and diversity interact in a complex, overlapping, dynamic relationship in everyday situations.

Bederum or baderum?

Physical Education, or P.E., is an obligatory part of the curriculum taught throughout the 10 years in *folkeskolen*. Through P.E., students are made familiar not only with the basic national sports and physical activities, but also with their bodies, both individually and in relation to other bodies, balance, etc. Diet is also an important part of this knowledge of the body, but this is a course on its own, covered in *hjemkundskab* (knowledge of the home, primarily cooking and table manners).

P.E. took place once a week, during a double period, i.e. 1 hour and 30 minutes. The students themselves did not consider P.E. as a real subject, but more in terms of games, fun and *hygge*. For instance, as I began my fieldwork, I often heard the students ask me *"Are you going to follow us in all our classes… even P.E.?"*

The issue of diversity and difference emerged strongly after P.E. lessons, when the students had to shower. In kindergarten class (age 6), it was not uncommon for the children (boys and girls) to shower all together. During the in-schooling years (age 6-8) the children still showered in the same room, but taking turns, either the boys first or the girls. During the rest of the school years, they did P.E. in a bigger sports hall, and boys and girls had separate shower rooms. At the school I primarily observed, showering was not optional. Only if a child had a special reason, particularly girls as they reached their teenage years, could they be allowed to shower before everyone else.

In the case of children of ethnic backgrounds other than Danish, this posed a conflict. Many children were not allowed, due to their cultural and religious background, to

shower naked or together with other children, especially those of a different gender[147]. The situation placed the teachers in a quandary. On the one hand, he/she should treat all the children equally: everybody had to shower, no exceptions. On the other hand, in celebration of diversity, this cultural difference should be tolerated and the child should be allowed not to shower. However, the latter solution would very evidently point out differences – not only that this child did not have to shower, but also throughout the day, as this particular child may smell/look different than the other children.

As By Skolen had implemented a policy that all students, regardless of reasons, should shower, the teacher did not have to deal with this particular tension of cultural diversity/difference. Still, the example was discussed amongst the teachers as a prime example of dilemma's related to 'tolerance' in an everyday situation. On one occasion I heard a teacher discussing it as '*bederum eller baderum*' (prayer room or shower room), suggesting that it was necessary to choose one or the other: diversity and difference _or_ homogeneity and equality.

This kind of quandary, in which the teacher momentarily found him or herself in everyday situations, could be viewed in terms of what Billig (1988) discussed as ideological dilemmas. These arise when the 'intellectual ideology' – the system of political, religious, and philosophical thinking – collides with the 'lived ideology', which is our social pattern of everyday thinking. It is at this moment that our everyday becomes something more than taken-for-granted, and instead something consciously evaluated. In this example, the 'intellectual ideology' could be said to be the celebration of 'sameness' as expressed through 'equality of worth'. Essentially, the notion that we are all the same, in terms of being of equal value as individuals. The 'lived ideology' does not differ from this in theory – but in the lived reality, it can be difficult to assess whether to celebrate sameness, as in equal treatment of all students – or sameness, as in all culturally determined needs must be recognised as of 'equal worth'. Thus this could also be thought of in terms of Durkheim's 'moral reflectivity'

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[147] While I, for reasons mentioned below, did not observe this particular issue at By Skolen. I heard from teachers at other schools, how some children were allowed to shower in separate rooms due to this reason, or would shower wearing bathing suits.

(as discussed in Chapter VIII) – as it is the point at which, one stop to think about and reflect on the action he or she is about to perform. This moment, I would argue, is not unusual in educational settings. Teachers must constantly negotiate their ideal conceptions of education in the everyday situation and this was particularly evident in the context of ethnicity, a subject to which I return below.

Welfare/Diversity trade off?

In the literature review, it was discussed whether immigration, and subsequently heterogeneity, poses a threat to the welfare state (In view of the success of the Danish People's Party and as researched by Kymlicka and Banting 2006). In this chapter I will re-visit the notion of a perceived necessity for homogeneity by turning this argument around and exploring whether the welfare state, as an imagined homogeneous entity, poses an obstacle to the pluralistic society.

I showed in the previous chapter how the inclusion of everyone and the creation of an imagined homogeneity, or the idea that 'we are all the same', are all important in the schooling context. Many scholars have indeed also mentioned homogeneity as a necessary premise for the smooth functioning of a nation state (amongst others Durkheim 1925; Gellner 1983; and Anderson 1983). Further to the social scientists mentioned here, political and philosophical scientists too have argued that homogeneity is essential to the nation, particularly in relation to the premise of the social democratic welfare state, often expressed in terms of national selfishness and strict physical boundaries (Lillelund 2005; Kymlicka and Banting 2006).

Whereas 'homogeneity' is considered essential to the success of the nation, economic equality is rarely mentioned as a premise. However, it is explicitly suggested in Danish politics that being equal (in financial terms) is a premise for sharing homogeneous morals, values and views of the world (as discussed in the previous chapter). In many senses the welfare state in Denmark has come to be synonymous with economic equality. At the elections in 2007, for example, the opposition (Social Democrats) used the following slogan for their election campaign: '*velfærd eller skattelettelser?*' (welfare or tax relief?), indicating that if taxes were to be decreased then economic inequality would rise, and that this would be incompatible with welfare. It was,

however, a different topic linked more to issues of homogeneity (cultural sameness)–
namely, tight immigration policies - that secured the classical-liberal then government
its re-election for three consecutive periods (2000-2011).

The relationship between economic equality as enabled through extensive
redistribution – the welfare state – and a perceived necessity for homogeneity has
been a consistent theme throughout this thesis. This was demonstrated, for example,
in the discussion of the meaning of *hygge* in relation to idealising the in-between; in
the close relationship between the public and the private as fostering a strong sense of
'us', rather than state versus citizens; in how issues of 'right and duties' emphasise a
responsibility towards those in the world who do 'not have it like the Danes'; and lastly
- and more explicitly - in terms of 'equality' (as expressed through sameness) and
diversity (as expressed through ethnicity).

Kymlicka and Banting (2006:284) argue that as a consequence of the re-
distribution/welfare trade-off, the social democrats of Europe in particular have had to
face a trade-off between sustaining their agenda of redistribution and supporting their
reputation as tolerant by embracing multiculturalism. In much the same way, this
chapter will show how the teachers at By Skolen had to do something similar on a day-
to-day basis by coming to terms with the idea of differentiation and tolerance – or by
minimising differences while also celebrating diversities. The ethnography for this
thesis suggests that there is indeed a strong attempt to include everyone in society
(i.e. creating an image of a homogeneous society) – but that this inclusion rests on the
adoption (rather than adaption) of what is considered 'Danish values'. As such the
celebration of diversity is manifested in such a way that the differences celebrated
become part of the whole, and so do not stand out. This seems to be one way of
homogenising the school body: by teaching the students that 'everyone is of equal
worth' or the same.

In the following section, I will look at how nationalism in the Danish context is an
expression of the importance of 'having it like us', or the perceived need for cultural
sameness, in terms of 'everybody should really be the same'. I will not attempt to
provide an extensive theoretical exploration into the various theories concerning

nationalism (this was to some extent covered in the literature review). Instead I will focus predominantly on nationalism as expressed in the Danish context, and particularly on how it is practised in and embedded within the schooling environment.

Nationalism

In the course of my ethnography, I did not come across any situation in which nationalism was explicitly taught in the school setting. However, I did observe how nationalism was expressed in the school through practices such as *hygge* - 'keeping it cosy' or 'democracy'. While not particularly Danish concepts, 'cosiness' and 'democracy' could be considered culturally specific in terms of the particular way in which they were practised in the Danish context. In this regard, the school becomes a powerful social arena from which to observe how ideas of national identity and values, more broadly, are inculcated. In other words, just as the school should not always be seen as a tool in which citizens are produced, nationalism is not always a concept that should be seen in direct relationship with the state. Instead, it can be seen as a product of everyday interactions – such as those observed in the course of fieldwork for this thesis. Relevant here are theories of everyday nationalism, such as banal nationalism (Billig 1995), the nationalisation of trivialities (Linde Laursen 1993), and formal/informal nationalism (Banks 1996), all of which were discussed in the literature review.

Along similar lines, Borneman (1992) suggests that one can distinguish between two kinds of nationalism: a nationalism as a public ideology of identification with the state, and 'nationness' as a sense of being a particular kind of person, living a particular kind of life appropriate to the particular state of which one is a member. It was through the latter, 'nationness', that nationalism emerged in my ethnography. This was expressed in two notable ways.

The first, which I term a 'relative articulation of nationalism' or an 'inclusive' approach, can be illustrated in two examples: by Fie (year 9), who commented during a Danish lesson: '*Der skal være plads til alle*' (there must be space for everyone); and by Julie (class teacher, year 3.X), who, along with other teachers, discussed global responsibilities with the students during co-citizenship week (see Chapter VIII). In this

explanation, she stated that '*alle burde egentlig have det som os*' (everybody should really 'have it like us'). These kinds of inclusive perspectives can also be expressed in terms of ideas of equality as 'sameness' - that tolerating each other's differences as of equal worth (relativity) is what makes us equal.

The second kind of nationalism I observed is what I term an 'absolute articulation of nationalism', or an 'exclusionary' approach. This is best illustrated by the Danish People's Party's slogans: 'Denmark is for Danes', 'Danes built the country', 'Danes pay for the country', 'Danes *are* the country'. It can also be illustrated through the Danish proverb: '*skik følge, eller land fly*' (follow the tradition, or leave the country). From this point of view, it is directly articulated that we must be the same and interact appropriately, i.e. according to the same norms (absolute standards).

The two kinds of everyday nationalism that my fieldwork revealed could also be divided in terms of what I observed at the school amongst students and particularly teachers (the inclusive approach) and debates broadcast in the media (the exclusionary approach, an example of which can be found in Appendix E). Here, I am not suggesting that the exclusionary version was not present amongst the general population; it was just less visible in my fieldwork. Jenkins (2011) too elaborates on the marked difference between the tone in the political rhetoric, and amongst people themselves (2010:294), arguing, in line with my observations, that everyday conflict between different ethnic groups, i.e. inter-ethnic conflict, was rare, while the tone in the public debate was very harsh.

Ultimately, both approaches end up valuing the particular kind of equality that Danish people subscribe to: one that demands a shared ideological understanding of the social world. Crudely put, the inclusive approach invites 'others' to participate (appropriately) while the exclusionary approach proposes that only by participating appropriately, can one join the community.

To sum-up, schools no-longer present simplistic nationalist imaginaries, but rather what appear at first glance to be subtle universal values of democratic participation,

and egalitarianism[148]. Gullestad (2002), similar to my conclusion in the previous chapter, proposes that 'sameness cannot always be observed but is, rather, *a style* that focuses on sameness' (*Ibid.* 47 my emphasis). Egalitarianism, or imagined sameness, is then implicitly expressed through the 'fitting together' and the 'sharing of same ideas' (such as democracy and co-citizenship).

Akin to the inclusive approach to nationalism described above, Schiffauer *et al.* (2004) discuss the shift in 'emphasis from an ethno-national content to civil-cultural methods.' (*Ibid.* 12-13), and the subsequent understanding of 'legitimate political participation', as concerned with 'how one does', rather than 'who you are'. Gullestad, however, reminds us that an 'equality conceived as sameness ('imagined sameness') [still] underpins a growing ethnification of national identity' (2002:45). Along the same lines, Van Dijk, Solomos, Wrench and Back maintains that the 'how one does' is also a subtle form of discrimination, which, while 'no longer explicitly founded on pseudo-biological reasoning', is 'still racist' (in Hervik 2004b:263), a kind of racism which Gullestad (2002) and Hervik (2004a; 2004b; 2012) refers to as 'new racism', and which I refer to as an expression of xenophobia.

In tandem with this discussion, and before further elaborating on the idea of 'new racism', Jenkins, in *Rethinking Ethnicity* (1997), describes Danish nationalism just before the creation of the Danish People's Party. 'On the face of it', he writes, 'there is no nationalism in Denmark' (*Ibid*. 155). The lack of nationalist movements in Scandinavia, he argues, is due to a Nordic political style of conflict avoidance and the promotion of consensus (as also discussed in Chapter III). However, he also noted that Danes, in everyday situations, are fiercely proud of being Danish. They fly their flags and celebrate the fact that Denmark is a small country. This has been called Lilliput-chauvinism: 'we know we are the best, therefore we don't have to brag about it' (Østergård, in Jenkins 1997:157). Following this, Jenkins suggests that a defining feature of Danish nationalism is its refusal to acknowledge itself as such, similar to how Solomos and Wrench (in Hervik 2004b:247) argue that a defining character of 'new racism' is that it presents itself as an 'ideological struggle around the expression of a racism that often claims not to be racism' (1993:8).

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[148] Gilliam and Gulløv (2012) too reflect on this when they argue that in the face of egalitarianism, social distinctions have not disappeared, they have merely become more refined in their expression.

Hervik (2004a; 2004b), and Gullestad (2002) prior to him, have both suggested that racism in Scandinavian societies does not follow the trajectory of traditional, biological racism; instead they discuss 'new racism', the core of which is a 'shift of rhetoric from race to a focus on culture' (Hervik 2004a:151). Discriminating on grounds of 'who you are' (biological racism) would directly challenge the imaginary egalitarianism (Hervik 2004a; 2004b), however, discriminating on basis of 'how one does' is instead accepted as criticising individuals for not playing by the rules of the imaginary egalitarianism. To illustrate, one of Hervik's informers pointed out: 'If you are different, then that is what creates your problems' (2004b:261). Danes don't consider themselves inherently racist, rather it is the non-compliance of their 'guests', i.e. the display of foreign cultural markers, which makes explicit to 'the tense Danish eyes' (*Ibid*. 260), those differences the egalitarian Danish consensus culture attempts to ignore.

While Hervik makes a convincing argument that a popular imagination of Danes as 'hosts' and others as 'guests' was pervasive in the end-1990's (2004:262; 2012; noted also by Gullestad 2002:54), this imagination was never mentioned, nor even implicitly suggested in any conversations, lessons, or social interactions at By Skolen. The difference between my studies of a Danish folkeskole in 2009 and Hervik's interviews with adult participants in the 1990's suggests that a change in the Danish mentality between generations, and within a ten-year period, has taken place. Another factor that seemed to have changed was the focus on 'natural worlds' (2004:256): that others should go home, 'where they belong'. Instead I experienced a consistent focus on 'everyone should really have it like us'. Gullestad indirectly offers an explanation for this development, as she suggests that 'the younger one is, and the more one identifies with urban life, the more likely one is to welcome 'europeanization', 'globalization', and 'diversity' as positive challenges' (2002:58).

In Jenkins' later publication on Denmark (2011), he elaborates on the topic. For example, one of the themes that emerged in discussions about Danish nationalism that Jenkins (2011:228) had with 128 students was what one of his subjects called '*klaphat* nationalism'. A *klaphat* is a red/white cap with hands on top which claps when one pulls the attached string, and which Danes wear at national sporting events, particularly football. Supporters who wear this sort of paraphernalia are known as *roligans* rather than 'hooligans' – *rolig* meaning 'calm'. Jenkins defines *klaphat*

nationalism as invoking the 'possibility of a jolly and benign patriotism' (*Ibid.* 229), not dissimilar to what I have defined as an 'inclusive approach'.

In my fieldwork, I observed that nationalism was primarily focused on doing things the 'Danish way'. As such both the inclusive and exclusionary nationalism was defined in terms of 'the best way is the Danish way'. This was illustrated in my conversations with Søren, the headmaster at By Skolen. At one of our first meetings, when discussing the terms for my field research at the school, Søren told me that a researcher from 'Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitet' (the Department of Education of Aarhus University) had ten years earlier done her PhD based partially on short-term fieldwork at the school. It became clear to me that one reason why Søren had, perhaps, been hesitant in granting me full access, was because of this thesis. Søren declared heatedly that: "*She portrayed us as if we were some sort of Nazis*", and he elaborated by saying that what goes on at the school is education, and that in Denmark this included sending responsible young people into Danish society, as well as academic preparation. He told me that 'they' (people with an ethnic background other than Danish) sometimes had a different view of childhood, and not least 'learning'. That 'they' did not always understand that the student has to sit down and study to become a doctor – that 'they' in some instances thought they could just decide that this was what they wanted to do, and did not understand that learning was a process. The woman who had done her fieldwork at By Skolen, previous to me, had interpreted the struggle of the school to make the parents and students understand 'the Danish way of learning' as racist and intolerant – and this was visibly upsetting to Søren[149].

In the teachers' lounge I also discussed this thesis with the teachers, some of whom told me how the PhD student had not portrayed an accurate picture of Avedøre, and how she was '*stuck in her academic bubble*' and did not take account of their reality (teachers' or students'). One of the teachers articulated it like this: "*They have come to Denmark, they will live in a Danish society, we try to prepare them for that… in other words… give them equal opportunities – that means not treating them differently…*"

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[149] While I do not agree with this particular PhD student, I am not saying that one could not argue that Søren's classification of 'they' and 'their' presumed notions/ideas of learning and aspiration could be viewed as racist, or possibly ignorant.

Perhaps if I had spent less time at By Skolen, I would have reached similar conclusions to those of this PhD student, but as I spent an entire year, every day, amongst the teachers and the students, my understandings were different. The inclusive approach of nationalism, described above, might be immediately interpreted as racist, if one did not have an idea of the underlying intentions, and the dynamic everyday exchanges between a generalised 'us' and 'them'. Instead I will suggest, again similar to one of Jenkins' informants (2011:263), that Danish nationalism is mildly 'xenophobic' rather than racist[150]. This brings me back to Gullestad's and Hervik's discussion of what they coined 'new racism' and its relationship to egalitarianism, both in relationship to ignoring differences and maintaining an imaginary sameness, and in providing equal opportunities to all students. While Hervik does not make this completely clear, it appears to me that 'new racism', with its focus on culture, instead of biological race, is in an expression of or at least part of an egalitarian xenophobic discourse in Scandinavia.

To me, it appeared that Danes feared that a *fremmed* ('foreign') culture may ruin the *hygge* and 'equality' if the differences it represented were categorised and/or included and made part of the 'known culture'. Hence, while stereotyping was common (as we will see below), some of these were also real everyday occurrences and events, which teachers and students had to confront and make sense of. This creation of a generalised 'us/them' not only occurred from the perspective of Danes towards 'others' (even if others in terms of ethnicity will henceforth be at the focus of this chapter), but also between different ethnic minorities, from some minorities towards Danes and amongst Danes themselves (according to style of clothes, music listened to, or geographical origin).

The discussion of nationalism necessarily leads us to think about 'them', or the ones who are not 'us'. In my fieldwork I continuously observed that appropriate understanding of what it means to be a welfare citizen presented themselves in relation to ethnicity. From the outset of my fieldwork I perceived the concept of ethnicity to be more of an analytical tool created by social scientists, than a useful

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[150] I use xenophobic here as an expression of the fear of the unknown, predominantly as expressed through *fremmed kultur* 'unknown (foreign) cultures'.

category denoting identity and differences in a Danish context. However, I soon realised that ignoring questions of ethnicity, in the context of Danish schooling, would be to portray an artificial scenario and would not do justice to my field.

Ethnicity

'Ethnicity is a term that half-heartedly aspires to describe phenomena that involve everybody, and that nevertheless has settled in the vocabulary as a marker of strangeness and unfamiliarity'
(Chapman, McDonald and Tonkin 1989:16)

Ethnicity has been an important subject of anthropological research for many years (for example, Gluckman 1958; Barth 1969; Handelman 1977; Eriksen 1993 and Banks 1996). In this section, I do not wish to give a conclusive and chronological narrative of how the study of ethnicity has developed or how it has been facilitated in social science. The focus of this thesis is not the experiences of ethnic minorities in a Danish schooling context, on whom such studies are, in any case, abundant (see amongst others Anderson 2004, 2007; Gilliam 2008, 2009, 2010; Gilliam, Olwig and Valentin 2005; Gulløv and Bundgaard 2006, 2008; Gulløv 2010; Moldenhawer 1999, 2001,2004 and Olwig 2011). In relation to my own thesis, ethnicity was only *one* marker of difference, which came to illuminate some of the taken-for-granted practices that may otherwise have been ignored as irrelevant and banal, for example *hygge*. Nonetheless, it is important to give a brief overview of the concept and its analytical importance in relation to ideas of difference and sameness.

A study of ethnicity: Fredrik Barth

Since the publication of Fredrik Barth's 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Culture Difference' in 1969, there has been an explosion in studies of ethnicity, particularly in the 1970s and 80s. Although Barth is not the first to consider ethnicity (the Manchester School and Max Gluckman preceded him), he is generally acknowledged in the literature to have kicked off the debate in modern social anthropology (Eriksen 1993; Banks 1996, among others). Many post-Barthian studies of ethnicity are furthermore heavily influenced by Barth's ideas, whether substantively

engaging with them through criticism (Cohen 1974; Handelman 1977) and/or elaborating on them (Jenkins 1997; 2011). Consequently, this section focuses primarily on Barth's pioneering discussion of 'ethnicity'. I am particularly concerned to show how my observations on the overlap of the public and private, along with other aspects discussed in previous chapters, such as equality and democratic ideals, appear to be reflected in Barth's boundary maintenance theory.

By drawing on his own fieldwork amongst the Pathans (Pashtuns) in the Swat district of Pakistan, and their interaction with neighbouring tribes and cultural groups (primarily the Baluch), Barth argued that what should be at the fore in analysing ethnic groups was the maintenance of boundaries, because ethnicity necessarily always exists in relation to (or is distinguished by) something else (Barth 1969:11 and 15-16). Similarly, in this chapter I am engaging with diversity (as expressed through ethnicity), as it was at the boundary of the taken-for-granted middle-class ethnic Danish 'culture' that practices illuminating this very culture became particularly visible.

Barth also acknowledged that many groups would still focus on the content of ethnicity and furthermore display this as the ultimate feature required for inclusion and exclusion of members. Subsequently, he distinguished two such features: the diacritical markers (what I will call 'visible markers'), and basic value orientations (Barth 1969:14). In my own ethnography, I have shown how in the Danish schooling context there was an explicit focus on the expression of *demos*, i.e. the political understanding of the world, rather than *ethnos*, i.e. cultural differences (see Chapter V). I suggested that the purpose of avoiding a focus on *ethnos* (Barth's 'visible markers') was that this would emphasise differences, whereas a focus on *demos*, (Barth's 'value orientations') would offer the students the possibility of a shared ideological understanding of the world, through which it would be possible for the school to offer true *lighed* (equality as defined in terms of sameness).

Moreover, Barth showed how an internal imagination of homogeneity was often allowed to persist despite a heterogeneous reality – in part due to the focus on the maintenance of boundaries. Despite the internal diversity of the Pathans, for example, the practice of 'doing Pashto' was still relatively narrowly defined. However in reality,

the practice of 'doing Pashto' was played out and judged differently, according to the external circumstances in which the Pathans found themselves (*Ibid.* 119-123). This essentially allowed them to think of themselves as quite similar, while doing quite different things (to paraphrase Jenkins 2011).

In a similar way, many of the ethnicity studies that have been conducted in Danish schooling contexts (as referred to above) have also viewed the 'ethnic minority' as a category on its own, rather than as the diverse entity that it is. This can be compared to how Danes perceive of themselves as a homogeneous unit, while in reality they too are a heterogeneous category – a view that was also reflected amongst the students and teachers in my fieldwork.

To illustrate, one day I observed the year 6's watching a movie about Vollsmose, an area near Odense, the third largest city in Denmark, with a majority of inhabitants with non-Danish ethnic backgrounds.

> Martin (the teacher): "*Is it a good idea that they should all live together like that*?"
> Girl: "*Maybe they feel it is more like home, where they came from, if they all live together?*"
> Martin: "*Yes, that is probably right.*"

> Later in the discussion another boy points out the following: "*But… you know… with all the wars going on, causing them to come here, and then when they get here, they get all mixed up – that can't be good?*" The student seemed to be acknowledging that 'the foreigners' do not all come from the same place, but may be a combination of immigrants, refugees, from various geographical areas etc.

> Martin seemed to misunderstand (or perhaps ignore) the comment and continued to talk about why it was good to have more cultures, in terms of food and music for example. He didn't seem to understand why some Danish people were scared of the multi-cultural society.

The boy then tries to re-iterate that his point was that the people put together in social estates by *det offentlige* (the public) have perhaps been at war with each other, that *they* are not 'the same'.

Martin: *"You are of course allowed to believe what you want, but personally I think that it is a really bad idea to put all these people together, they should be spread all over society."*

As this vignette suggests, 'these people' are clearly thought of more in terms of their 'being foreign' than their individual ethnic identities (or other identities for that matter). In general, ethnic identities in a Danish context could and were often crudely divided into two segments: people with an ethnic Danish background, and people with an ethnic background other than Danish.

This division seemed to exist across ethnic backgrounds, even though my fieldwork suggested that the reality was necessarily much more complicated. During the last few months of my fieldwork, for example, I worked part-time as a supply teacher at a school 200m down the road from my primary field of study. One day I overheard a group of students discussing their 'ethnic identities' in terms of 'which group they belonged to':

Boy (12 years old): *"I'm a perker, but my dad is not – he eats pork and everything"*

(laughing)

Perker is a denigrating word used to signify people with non-Danish (and non-western) ethnic heritage[151]. The largest groups of immigrants in a Danish context are pre-dominantly Muslim[152]. *Perker* is therefore often also associated with Islam and the Middle East – but this is no longer the primary determining factor[153]. During my fieldwork I observed how the use of *perker* had changed its meaning significantly from

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[151] *Perker* is believed to be a contraction of the word *perser* (Persian) and *tyrker* (Turkish).
[152] http://www.dst.dk/pukora/epub/Nyt/2012/NR062.pdf
[153] Richard Jenkins (2011) too observed the use of *perker* in his fieldwork, and translated its connotations to be similar to *paki*, as used in the English vocabulary.

when I was a student at a provincial Danish *folkeskole* in the 1990s to when I carried out my fieldwork two decades later in a suburban context. In the provincial 1990s, *perker* was considered to be very inappropriate, and was used primarily as a racist slur, signifying someone non-white. It was used predominantly by ethnic white Danes towards the (then) predominantly Turkish second generation immigrants. During the 1990s a new wave of foreigners arrived with the wars in the Balkans and in Somalia, and with their arrival the meaning of *perker* came to embody the meaning suggested above, as non-Danish/non-western heritage.

As I found in the course of my fieldwork between 2009-2010, students used *perker* extensively, on a daily basis. Students, particularly with an ethnic heritage other than Danish, would use it most; often it was announced with a certain pride: "*I am a perker!*" Students with an ethnic Danish background had to be more careful in their use of the term, primarily in terms of calling someone with a non-Danish background *perker* (as only good friends could legitimately call each other so). When ethnic Danish students (or teachers) would say *perker,* it was rarely, if ever, used in a negative tone, but rather in a joking tone.

An ethnic Danish person, however, could also be a *perker*. For instance, some of the awards given at the year 9's leaving award ceremony (a student-led event, also discussed in the previous chapter) were for 'gangsta of the year' (which went to Amir, self-proclaimed *perker* of Turkish descent, the largest immigrant group in Denmark). But there was also an award entitled 'the plastic-*perker* of the year', given to Signe, an ethnic-Danish girl who was very street savvy. It was clearly an attractive award to win, and Signe was loudly applauded when she received the award. Being a *perker* and being a 'gangsta' were related, signifying a way to carry oneself in and outside of school, along with street smarts, autonomy, coolness and a 'see if I care' tough attitude.

In short, *perker* had gone from being a category ascribed to a particular non-ethnic Danish group to also being an identity actively appropriated by students with an ethnic

background other than Danish[154]. Hence in the use of *perker* one can observe how the meaning of this category has been transformed over a decade (from the mid-1990's to 2009), from being an extremely denigrating term used by ethnic Danes to distinguish people with a different ethnic background, to being a classification in which young people of ethnic backgrounds other than Danish take pride and use actively to carve out an appropriate identity for themselves.

The above discussion reflects another parameter identified by Barth that is useful in providing a comparative perspective to my ethnography. In his studies he observed that the critical difference between the Pathans and the Baluch lay in their different political structures (Barth 1969:124), which meant that the membership of the Baluch tribe was guarded primarily through political values (submission to chiefs), while birth primarily guarded the entry to the Pathan tribe (patriarchal 'egalitarian councils') (*Ibid.* 125).

In this respect, comparisons can be made between the Baluch identity and 'Danish identity', and the Pathan identity and '*perker* identity'[155]. For example, a Baluch could never become Pathan. Similarly, Signe (who we discussed above in the award show) could not be a 'true' *perker*, even if she fully lived up to the particular 'code of life'. Signe is of ethnic Danish descent. She is blonde and blue-eyed, and hence she can only become a 'plastic-*perker*', an artificial – or 'wanna-be' *perker*.

For the Baluch, the boundary for inclusion was defined more along lines of political submission, or 'value orientations'. Similarly the boundary for 'being Danish' – or being a co-citizen - was first and foremost concerned strongly with notions of *Demos*, as discussed above. Hence while a 'Danish' girl (Signe) could never become a 'true' *perker,* Amina, whom we will meet later on in this chapter, was considered *pæredansk* ('Danish as a pear', an everyday term signifying as Danish as it gets), even though her parents were of Turkish descent. This was because Amina acted like a Dane: she was not overtly religious, she wore make-up, she would consume alcohol at parties, and

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[154] Although it is uncertain whether the category of *perker* would be used outside of the meeting with Danes (something which I, due to my ethnic Danish background, could not find out).
[155] In so far as *perker* can be acknowledged as a category of identity or distinction that refers to (traditionally derogatorily) an ethnic belonging other than Danish, and which in recent years has been actively appropriated by this ethnic group.

she participated verbally in class (adding to the deliberative democratic conversation – see Chapter V). Similarly Ersin, a language teacher who had immigrated to Denmark with his parents as a child, was considered more Danish than Turkish. As one of the teachers (of Danish descent) argued: "*He eats pork and drinks beer, what more does it take?*"[156]

In Barth's work, there is one last parameter that informs my ethnography. This is related to identifying an appropriate level of interaction across ethnic boundaries. Barth argued that boundaries are equally important both in identifying fellow members 'playing the same game' and in identifying strangers with whom one will assume a limitation of shared understandings (Barth 1969:15). When identifying 'others' the range of interactions would subsequently be restricted to areas of shared interests. For instance, ethnic groups in contact would find agreements in codes and values (i.e. not the visible markers), which need not 'extend beyond that which is relevant to the social situations in which they interact' (*Ibid.* 16). The reason that the areas of interaction were limited would be to insulate parts of a culture from confrontation and modification (which were assumed to take place, were these areas of interaction more extensive).

In contrast to the scenario observed by Barth, my ethnography shows how certain routine, everyday, and inescapable interactions across the private/public divide were extensive in the Danish schooling context. Such social interactions included the school-home conversations, and the process of making the classroom feel like a home-away-from-home or an 'alternative extended family' (discussed in Chapter VII; cf. Jenkins 2011:188). These were so pervasive that it was very difficult to identify areas in which these were *not* essential in the project of creating 'equality'. I have shown, for example, that the overlap between the home and the school, while in the aid of providing equal opportunities, sometimes ended up pointing out differences and marginalising groups not socialised in 'appropriate participation' – most vividly observed in terms of ethnicity.

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[156] These examples highlight also that *ethnos* and *demos* cannot easily be separated. Taking on the 'Danish identity' implied not only associating with 'value orientations', but also adopting 'visible markers' such as eating pork and drinking alcohol.

When a teacher crosses the boundary between the public and the private, i.e. the consensus of how to socially educate one's child and how the parents choose to bring up their children (*opdragelse*), it was however, with the intention that all students should, as far as possible, be offered the same educational and social opportunities. That is, they should be 'equal'. Consequently, appropriate interaction was needed (or even expected) in a majority of social situations, and cultural groups were not allowed to isolate themselves to avoid conflicts.

Returning once more to the example of the shower after P.E., we see how this was a social situation in which the school and home, through the embodiment of the student, were overlapping social spaces. If the school did not have existing guidelines (as By Skolen did) regarding whether or not students must shower, then there would be no conflict. But it also becomes clear in the example of the school-home conversations, in which we observed a tangible overlap between the social and academic education (*uddannelse* and *opdragelse*). There, the pedagogical project was being expanded to include both social and academic skills, not only for the children, but also for their parents (e.g. illustrated by Philip and David's school-home conversations in Chapter VII).

Discussion of Barth's transactional model

Barth's model has been criticised for suggesting that ethnic identities can be 'transacted' and exchanged in a free market sense, with agents picking and choosing which identity to belong to. Rarely is any case that simple, and as Banks suggests, the wider political environment must also be taken into account (Banks 1996:16). However, when Barth suggests that the Pathans sometimes adopt the Baluch identity by, in his own words, changing 'their label so as to avoid the costs of failure' (*Ibid.*133), they do so in order to uphold their personal autonomy and to legitimise a certain external situation in which the Baluch are the dominant ethnicity. Hence it could also be taken to signify that it is exactly the wider political environment that influences the choices (voluntary or coerced) that the individual makes. Barth's 'transactional model' thus does not necessarily suggest that individuals straightforwardly 'shop-around' for ethnicities, but rather that they come to belong and be defined in terms of certain identities exactly *in relation to* the environment in which they live.

Similarly, my ethnography showed that in the schooling environment 'being a *perker*' (as a self-ascribed identity) was not much different from choosing to identify with other 'youth cultures', e.g., being a hip-hopper, punker or *poptøs* (into pop-music) – (see Eckert 1989; Amit-Talei and Wullf 1995 and Fornas and Bolin 1995 for more on youth cultures and categorisations). The defining difference between these kinds of identities and *perker*, however, is that the latter carries connotations of anti-Danishness, in the sense that it is a product of an artificial separation between non-Danish and ethnic Danish (artificial insofar as the identity can be seen as constructed). My ethnography illustrated that to some extent, *perker* has developed from being a collective identity ascribed to a heterogeneous group of individuals, whose only common feature was *not* being Danish, to also being an identity that young people can actively subscribe to.

Comparing this with Paul Willis's (1977) famous study of the working class 'lads' in an English secondary school (which has been mentioned in previous chapters as well), we see that the 'lads' too embraced the identity that the wider community ascribed to them. Just as the 'lads' did not buy into the prospects offered to them through schooling, as they recognised that their hopes would not be rewarded, so the self-proclaimed *perkere*, whether Plastic/Danish or non-Danish, choose an identity that does not buy into a system from which they assume they will already be excluded.

Notwithstanding the above discussion, it is important to reiterate that ethnicity was not at the centre of my field research. One reason was because I suggest that one can choose to view ethnicity as simply one identity amongst others. Handelman (1977) too questioned the relationship between ethnicity and other identities, arguing that that 'individuals may be categorised in different ways in different situations' (cited in Jenkins 1997:21). As such ethnicity is not necessarily the category through which any individual primarily identifies him or herself, and different environments may encourage different identifications.

Barth himself specifically argued that the environmental circumstances and cultural traditions could be separated and observed (Barth 1969:13). This tendency towards

rigid categorisation is also evident in his separation between the visible markers and basic value orientations[157]. Handelman (1977), in opposition, and in line with my own observations, argues that the cultural content and ethnic boundaries 'mutually modify and support one another' (Handelman 1977: 200), thereby dismissing the dichotomy between the cultural (content) and social (organisation).

With that in mind, I did find the emphasis on observing the boundaries between ethnicities convincing, because it is necessarily through interactions with others that a 'self' is informed – and hence it is at the edges of a community that differences are most vividly observable.

Us/Them

Despite various criticisms, I take Barth's studies to be helpful in having established a tradition that encourages us to understand ethnicity more in terms of its fluidity than its rigidity, and in emphasising that ethnicity exists not as a separate entity, but in interaction with other ethnic groups. Barth's theory supports a focus on the interaction (the boundary maintenance) rather than the group characteristics, and makes us aware that a group may not exist outside the context of another group. Subsequently, a discussion of diversity, with focus on the transactions at the boundaries, would be incomplete without an exploration into an 'us/them' debate.

The following discussion, which I had with Amir, illuminates some of the ways in which 'us/them' categories emerged in my fieldwork:

Amir (joking): "*Look Ditte, I did this test on Facebook, it shows that I am 99.9% Danish – that will make them* [the police] *relax*!" Amir may have made this statement in a joking tone, but at the same time, it said a lot about what he expected (or wanted) 'official Denmark' to think about him. Often he would hint at petty criminal activities that he and his groups of friends were undertaking when we were talking, and often I got the feeling that he did so both to test our 'friendship', but also to portray himself as a certain kind of character... 'a gangsta'', similar to the award he was given at the

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[157] As I will show below, these factors were not separate in my ethnography, but rather mutually constitutive.

end of year show. But Amir embodied many roles. While he was a 'gangsta', he was also a second-generation immigrant, a big brother and a cousin as well – and he was good at playing with the younger students during recess and including them in the older students' football matches. At the same time, Amir was as proud of his Turkish ancestry as he was of being from 2650 (the postcode for Avedøre, which was often painted with graffiti on many of the buildings in the estate-area).

During a lesson one day, the year 9.Z were taken to the computer-room to do some online research. I sat next to Amir, as he was showing me 'stuff' on his Facebook page (like pictures, comments and the Danish-ness test, which he kept taking until he got a satisfactory result (99.9%), which he then posted on his Facebook wall). He showed me videos from the Turkish village his extended family lives in, and talked about how nice it was there, that the entire family went every summer. He discussed how children could play freely in the entire area, how there were no cars, no criminals etc. On several other occasions I overheard other students talking about going back to the Turkish village their parents had come from – all of them reminiscing about the beauty, safety and general wonders of 'their' own village. I asked Amir, if he would consider moving there when he grew older – a suggestion to which he only laughed, and said: "*what would I do there?*" He continued to show me films of *Vollsmose* (discussed above) and *Gellerup Parken* (a similar area outside of Aarhus, the second largest city in Denmark), interspersed with clips of war. The movie clips he showed me on YouTube all portrayed either Danish police being made fun of, or American soldiers committing what appeared to be horrible acts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In a way Amir seemed to be creating a direct correlation between the Danish authorities and American soldiers – much the same as he identified himself and 2650 with *Gellerup Parken* and *Vollsmose*. The two latter mentioned areas are notorious for being run by immigrant gangs, and the police to a certain extent leave the areas alone, as long as no one is physically harmed. I asked him how he felt about Nørrebro, an area of central Copenhagen, also with a high percentage of immigrants, particularly in the area called 'Mjølner Parken'*,* which is often compared to 'Vollsmose' and 'Gellerup Parken'. I thought to myself that if he idolised the other two areas, he probably also liked 'the local version'. Moreover, and as I lived in 'Nørrebro' during my fieldwork, it

could have presented yet another avenue through which we could connect. Amir, however, smiled at my suggestion – and shook his head… *"No… We are the A-Line"*, I asked him, what that meant. *"The A-Line with the train, you know – Brøndby Strand, Sjælør, Albertslund and Ishøj – NOT Nørrebro!"* (Nørrebro is part of central Copenhagen, whereas the areas Amir mentions are part of what we might call 'the outskirts of Copenhagen').

The above was outlined in order to demonstrate that 'us/them' categories are necessarily complicated and ambiguous[158]. In terms of ethnicity and belonging, Amir operated along an 'us' as Turkish, 'us' as from the particular village his family comes from, 'us' as immigrants in Denmark, 'us' as the suburbs along a certain train-line, and 'us' as 2650 – Avedøre! Furthermore, my conversations with Amir illustrate that ethnic identity, or indeed any identity that the students may take on is highly situational. That this was the case will be made clearer during the following section.

Pæredansk or perker?

In my fieldwork, social or ethnic identity (and not least understandings and meanings of identities) appeared to be adopted and adapted differently according to the social context in which the students and/or teachers found themselves. Gluckman (1958), conducting studies of the relationships between the Zulu and the white Europeans in Northern Zululand, argued that particular relationships between two groups would always be influenced by the situational factors surrounding that relationship. In other words, there is no homogeneous, monolithic identity or ethnicity, but rather a number of identities that may manifest themselves depending on the situation (Banks 1996:27).

That this is indeed the case was made explicit during my observations at the school, and particularly in the context of a game known as the 'Hannah Montana Game'. During the game a student was asked to go outside the door, while the other students

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[158] A more extensive theoretical debate on 'us/them' categorisations can be divided into three primary points of views: the primordial, arguing that the making of social categories in general is an inherent conceptual predisposition (Hirschfeld 1988); the social proposing that people come to acquire a sense of belonging to a particular community through a process of political socialisation (Hengst 1997); and an interactionist approach suggesting that all cognition is inherently social and an 'outcome of interacting, interdependent processes' (Phylactou and Toren 1990:145).

picked a name for him/her. It had to be someone everyone knew, e.g. a famous person, teacher or classmate. Once a name was decided upon, the student was called back into the classroom and placed under the blackboard (where the name was then written above the student's head, so that he/she could not see it). The student then started asking questions to find out whom the person was. The following exchange will illustrate:

> Amina is selected to go outside, and while she is in the hallway, her classmates decide that she has to guess that she is 'Fat Yassin' from the next-door classroom (Fat Yassin is a well-liked boy, also year 9, somewhat overweight, and of Turkish descent).
>
> Amina: "*Am I a girl?*"
>
> Class: "*No!*"
>
> "*Am I a real person?*"
>
> Class: "*Yes!*"
>
> "*Am I Danish?*"
>
> Class: "*Yes...*"
>
> They continue with a lot of other questions, is he from By Skolen etc.... as she can't guess who 'she is', she is offered some clues...
>
> Erik: "*You are refugee!*"
>
> Amina: "*Didn't you just say I was Danish?*"
>
> Jesper: "*Yeah, but you know... like you are!*"
>
> Fie: "*Okay, like, Amina is* pæredansk [Danish as a Pear – as Danish as it gets]*"
>
> Amina: "*You could have bloody told me!*"
>
> She gets one more clue
>
> Peter: "*You're 150kg worth of whale blubber!*"
>
> And then she immediately guesses that 'she is' Yassin!

In this instance Amina must guess that she is Yassin, who is categorised in terms of his gender, his area-identity, his ethnicity (which is ambivalent) and not least his body shape. Furthermore, the example shows that Danes lump together all 'others' into one group. In this example, Amina is a 'refugee'; in others she is an 'immigrant', while for

her best friend Fie, she is *pæredansk*. Officially, Amina is Danish, with an ethnic Turkish immigrant background, but in everyday situations, this is rarely the specific identity ascribed to her.

To expand on this, it has been argued that the more distant groups are from one another, socially/geographically, 'the greater the tendency to regard them as an undifferentiated category and place them under a general rubric' (Banks 1996:30). Another example where this could be observed was during a lunch break with year 6.Z.

> They are reading aloud from a book, which mentions 'I am an ethnic Dane' (the author is Danish).
> The teacher asks the class: "W*hat does it mean to be 'ethnic Danish'?*"
> Students: "*That is when you are not 100% Danish*"
> Teacher: "*That is exactly right*"

It is situations such as these, where an anthropologist may find it difficult not to interfere, that 'ethnic', no matter in which context, has a specific meaning in a Danish context. So while in a Danish context there exists multiple ways in which to call everyone 'not Danish', and where the use of 'ethnic Danish' signifies 'them', throughout my thesis I have used the anthropological understanding of the terms and signify 'them' as those with an ethnic background other than Danish (e.g. from Turkey, Somalia) and the term 'ethnic Danish' as signifying those with an ethnic Danish background (i.e. as having parents with Danish descent).

In the larger Danish context, everyone with an ethnicity other than Danish will in a political debate straightforwardly be called '*Udlændinge'* ('foreigners'), as in '*udlændingepolitik', or* 'foreigner policies'. But this term is rarely employed in the general media context; in any newspaper article, online news source or even televised news broadcast, 'they' will often be referred to as '*etnikere'*, 'ethnics' or 'people with ethnic background'. In a school context 'they' are called 'bi-lingual' by the teachers and administration, while the students themselves primarily use *udlænding* or *perker*. The latter, as noted above, is only used during informal activities and between friends; if used in any other context than a joking one, it can be considered extremely offensive.

Anthropological vs. Native Theory

Thomas Hylland Eriksen writes about the complicated relationship between

anthropological theory, native theory, and social organisation, arguing that ethnicity is created when the anthropologist poses a question concerning it. While informants themselves may very well be concerned with ethnicity - and even call it by the same name – the concepts used by the anthropologist may still not cover the 'natives' understanding of how the world is constituted (Eriksen 1993:16).

One such concept of ethnicity is that of G. Carter Bentley (1987), who draws on Bourdieu's idea of the habitus as the locus of ethnic identification. According to Bentley, it is through a shared experience of the world that members of a group identify themselves as having a common identity, as it is our acquired habitus, as influenced by the external environment (the objective conditions), which structures our experiences and simultaneously structures and re-creates the habitus itself (*Ibid.* 28). In this sense, Bentley agrees with Eriksen when he points out that ethnicity, rather than a static and isolated homogeneous unit, is more like everything else an anthropologists may study: a concept necessarily in flux, processual, ambiguous and complex (Eriksen 1993:9).

While my subjects might not be thinking of ethnicity and identity in terms of Bourdieu and habitus, it seemed evident that much everyday interaction could be explained in terms of this. This is particularly evident in the example of the 'co-citizenship week', discussed in Chapter V. To recapitulate, the Danish *folkeskole* has been partially founded on the idea of an active separation of the *demos*, i.e. political principles, values, norms and manners, and the *ethnos*, i.e. culture, religion, nationality and traditions. This is done to avoid the tension that a multicultural approach may create (as also alluded to above). The prevailing idea is that cultural plurality can only be held together by a shared ideological understanding of the world, or what Feinberg and McDonough (2003) call the 'surplus loyalty to the nation', and what Durkheim (1925) discusses as the 'love of the nation'. It is argued that a cultural foundation would emphasise diversity or difference, while the Demos-oriented education theoretically provides an equal starting point, and as such is in line with the over-arching ideology of the Danish Welfare State. The Danish professor of Educational studies, Ove Korsgaard, argues that 'It is a golden rule, that a multicultural and multi-religious society must find

its foundation in something other than culture and religion'[159] in order for *folkeskolen* to remain an institution providing economic and social equality. In reality, however, the focus on maintaining equality often leads to a subsequent process of social homogenisation, as equal opportunities do not just stem from equal access to academic education *uddannelse*, but as much from social education *opdragelse* (as also seen in the school-home conversations discussed above and in Chapter VII).

During my fieldwork I observed that the everyday lived experience of the students and teachers alike did not reflect this theoretical and pedagogical separation of the two domains, *ethnos* and *demos*. Rather the two seemed to exist in a dynamic (although sometimes also fraught) relationship. I observed that there was a lack of recognition within official understanding that what makes '*appropriate demos'* would necessarily rely on deep national and cultural knowledge and understandings. Consequently a number of practices were considered 'neutral' from cultural influences. One of these practices is, as mentioned many times throughout this thesis, *hygge*, and this will also be discussed in this chapter. The lack of focus on the *ethnos* was, however, still very visible in the everyday life at school - perhaps best illustrated by the fact that teachers would often not know the exact ethnic background of the students in their class (as I found out when trying to confirm the ethnicity of some of the students referred to in this thesis). In general, I too had struggled to identify these backgrounds, as ethnicity was neither something discussed in the classrooms, nor amongst the students themselves (and furthermore, not something one could legitimately ask about – as it would draw attention towards 'differences'). If ethnicity was indeed discussed, it was in terms of 'them' as a homogeneous group, and not in view of 'their' individual geographical background (e.g. Turkey, Somali, Serbia) or social-political status (e.g. refugee/immigrant). As such, cultural differences were not openly discussed, and hence this allowed for a certain amount of stereotyping to exist.

Stereotyping

> "*Det er koldt idag, så kommer indvandrerne ikke ud"*…
>
> '*It is cold today, the immigrants don't come out*'.

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[159] http://www.information.dk/161436

According to Thomas Hylland Eriksen (1993:24), stereotyping helps individuals create order in a complicated social universe by providing a cognitive map of the social world around them. In the ethnography for this thesis, we have already observed the tendency to create us/them categories from the point of view of both the majority and minority groups. In this section we will look at how these categories are expressed in terms of stereotyping – considering particularly Eriksen's understanding of these as tools to create a sense of order in situations, which may otherwise be confusing. To illustrate, we will consider two examples in which stereotyping was employed during my fieldwork.

Alongside my fieldwork, I was involved with some volunteer work for the Danish Red Cross in Avedøre. It was during one of their homework workshops on a cold, snowy afternoon in February, that one of the other volunteer homework helpers made the opening statement of this section. In it simple criteria were presented: 'it is cold', which was attached to 'kinds of people' (immigrants) and their action 'won't come out'.

While it was correct that when it rained or snowed, no one showed up for the workshop, the conclusion that the behaviour was connected to immigrants was rather premature. This particular workshop was directed towards immigrant children, but it is doubtful that the situation would have been much different had it been a workshop for children with ethnic Danish background. As such the statement is not wrong, but it does not embody the full truth either. At the most it gives the workshop volunteers an immediate understanding and explanation for why no one is showing up.

A second point to make about stereotyping is that it goes in both directions: from a majority ethnic group towards the minority, as shown with the above statement, but also from the minority towards the majority. Eriksen argues that this can be related to making sense of privileges and differences. For instance, negative stereotyping towards the dominant group can alleviate feelings of powerlessness (Eriksen 1993:24). The following example, which has also been referred to in previous chapters, shows how stereotyping can be played out in a schooling context.

It is early June, and it is not an everyday situation. The students in year 9.A are having their final oral Danish language exams. Three weeks earlier they have been assigned their topic and have had time during classes to produce a synopsis, explaining what they will talk about in regards to this topic. They have also been given another text to reflect upon the primary text. Amir was assigned an advertisement for Velux roof windows (which can be found in Appendix G). The picture shows a lady lying in a bathtub. Next to the tub is a bottle of champagne, some tulips and some candles. The room is lit up by the window, through which you can see the blue sky.

The following is an extract of what I experience at his exam.

> Amir comes into the exam room and politely says hello to the invigilator and his Danish teacher. He then sits down at the table, clothed with a green tablecloth (as tradition dictates in Denmark[160]). He introduces the topic, and his advertisement.

> Throughout the exam Amir struggles with finding the right words, as he is not used to the formal tone of an exam situation. Instead of bright colours, he will say something along the lines of lightly colours. Instead of champagne, he sees wine and instead of tulips, he sees roses.

> Every time he makes a mistake the invigilator stops him and corrects him. At some points she asks questions to get him to elaborate. The words she uses are however rather old-fashioned, and Amir, not being used to hearing this kind of language, does not understand her questions.

> As the exam proceeds, he is getting increasingly tense – I am sitting at a desk behind him, and can see that he is clenching his fists behind his chair. Sometimes his teacher will repeat the question in a

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[160] Green being the colour of hope.

way that makes Amir understand, and at these points he relaxes his
hands a bit.

Finally they finish talking about the actual picture, and begin
discussing the symbolism of it. While I, and as it turns out the
teacher and invigilator, would interpret the picture as signalling,
'me-time', luxury, cosiness etc. Amir's understanding is very
different. He argues that the image is a symbol of Danish laziness.
He talks about the fact that it is the middle of the day, and still,
there she is lying in the bathtub. The invigilator tries to get him to
change track, but Amir continues, "*yeah, it is because Danish people
don't have to do anything, they just get money from the state*".

The invigilator suggests that this is not related to the advertisement.
Amir continues to talk about Danish people as being lonely: *"Until
they are 18, they are spoiled and overprotected, then as soon as
they turn 18 they just…"* (he shakes his hands in their air to signify
'who cares'). *"Then they can just lie in their bathtubs and drink red
wine"*.

Amir gets a 02, the equivalent of an E, and the invigilator explains that it is due to his
lack of sense of details. Outside of the exam room I talk to him for a while. He is visibly
upset with his grade, and his face has a 'Why did I even bother' look to it. "*It's lame
that they care so much about details",* he tells me. As I was writing this, I contacted his
Danish teacher, asking her if she remembered anything further to what I described.
She replied within a few hours, saying that she only remembered that his presentation
had been "*a bit messy, and yes… the invigilator wasn't too nice*".

The above example embodies many other meanings and understandings. Amir does
have a stereotypical view of Danes as lazy. Similar to how the volunteer at the
homework workshop also held stereotypes, although concerning immigrants. Neither
of the two stereotypes is necessarily entirely incorrect. What they show us, however,
is that stereotyping exists in both directions (as also suggested by Eriksen) from the

majority towards the minority, and vice versa. The exam example also highlights a number of other issues as well. Firstly, I observed the invigilator getting increasingly assertive as she listens to Amir's language, which has many grammatical errors and is accented. Sometimes, when he can't find the right words, he also uses his body language. I wonder if this already opposes her to his interpretation of the picture.

Amir did make some grave mistakes, such as confusing the producer of the advertisement (thinking it is for bathroom furniture, rather than windows) and having trouble with his language, and his grade in this sense reflected his performance. However, as I had the chance to observe most of the other exams that day, I knew that these factors did not necessarily have this consequence for other, primarily ethnic Danish, students, whose messed-up words and incorrect facts were ascribed to and excused by nervousness.

Lastly, Amir's interpretation of the picture illuminates some deeper meanings and understandings that neither the teacher, invigilator (or I) had seen that might tell us a lot about 'Danish' culture and values taken-for-granted. Most significantly, Amir doesn't see *hygge;* he sees loneliness and laziness.

Hygge
The latter issue picks up on an essential and very important factor in Danish Social life, namely *hygge*. In Chapter VII, we saw how *hygge* could be used to facilitate a home-away from-home feeling in the Danish *folkeskole,* essentially enabling the close-knit relationship between the public and the private. The public/private relationship, coupled with Barth's theory of boundary maintenance, would immediately suggest that a certain amount of tension should arise in the Danish *folkeskole*, as boundaries are not maintained (and hence cultures are not isolated from confrontation and subsequent modification – see above), but rather broken down, or exceeded. Hence, the strategy of celebrating diversity (*mangfoldighed)* and simultaneously actively eradicating differences (*forskellighed)* may be assumed to cause tension or conflict in the everyday lives of Danish students and teachers in the Danish *folkeskole*. However, I propose that it is not necessarily experienced as a conflict, in part due to the culturally specific concept of *hygge*.

Simultaneously I suggest that the very use of this concept, as it is integrated and embodied in Danish society, becomes a concept viable for resistance or negotiations for those *not* considered to be part of a Danish middle-class welfare citizenry. *Hygge* in this sense becomes a concept, which to a certain extent disguises and legitimises specific Danish cultural ideas and ideologies in relation to minimising differences, by making these appear to be common sense and seemingly inclusive strategies. To paraphrase Paul Willis (1977), these can then be seen as cultural concepts emphasising differences amongst those not equipped with the appropriate educational decoders to decipher or make use of them (as for instance was made clear through Amir's exam). *Hygge* is definitively a product of cultural understandings; but it also structures the way in which the political norms and values are experienced and enacted. Hence the *demos* and *ethnos* as discussed above are not separate spheres; what is considered *demos,* i.e. political values and understandings, is necessarily informed by *ethnos*, as for instance was illustrated in many of the previous discussions of *hygge*.

In Chapter VI, *hygge* was discussed as 'Banal Nationalism' (Billig 1995), a theory concerned with the ideological habits of the everyday. The taken-for-granted understandings (or ideological habits) are powerful because they structure everyday interactions, and are, to borrow an expression from Richard Jenkins (2011:141), the 'marrow of national selfhood'. Furthermore, it is exactly because of the very notion 'that not everyone finds the Danish school *hyggelig'* (as proclaimed by an academic colleague in Denmark), that it becomes an interesting taken-for-granted activity to observe. This culturally specific idea is negotiated, resisted and accepted, and these instances reflect aspects of both inter-socio-economic and particularly inter-ethnic relationships.

Hygge is, however, also an example of how Danes cope with diversity in a culture that emphasises sameness. The observations I made during my fieldwork in a Danish *folkeskole* can be explored to understand how *hygge* both allowed for the muting of differences and the celebration of diversity – often at the same time. Often these processes happened at the same time, and always within the cultural practice of *hygge.* Hence these measures were not perceived of as undermining, but rather as expanding the opportunities for the student to achieve equal opportunities through appropriate participation. This dynamic process is also reflected in the simultaneous attempt to both individualise and homogenise the student population (whether

successful or not), subsequently raising the question of the extent to which an egalitarian welfare state is synonymous with a perceived necessity of a homogeneous population (a question to which I will return in the final section of this chapter).

Some examples in which *hygge* was evidently used to disguise differences, but inevitable ended up making them obvious, was whenever food was involved. For instance at a the Danish Christmas Lunch for year 3's (discussed in Chapter VI), when halal food was served with green umbrellas and haram food with red umbrellas, the teacher explained that the colours signified '*stop, don't eat this*', or '*go ahead, this is safe to eat*', thus making explicit the fact that some children eat differently 'part of the party'. Or when the school celebrated the opening of their new playground in the Danish traditional way of serving hotdogs, the Muslim children had the option of having hotdogs with chicken sausages, instead of the traditional Danish pork-sausage. In this way it was possible to maintain an atmosphere of *hygge* even if the children had different preferences, based on different cultural/religious backgrounds[161]. The teachers and administration at By Skolen did not experience these measures as pointing out differences, but rather discussed them as inclusive strategies. Buying chicken sausages, or putting red/green umbrellas in the food at parties was meant to help facilitate a *hyggelig* atmosphere by including and involving all the students (whilst also recognising and respecting their cultural diversity), thereby allowing an imagined homogeneous student body to persist. That the atmosphere of *hygge*, however, was fragile and could easily be compromised was evident in several instances. Firstly, at the Christmas party, the Muslim students were allowed to enter the buffet first, to make sure they would have access to the halal food (with green umbrellas), meaning that the ethnic Danish students would not necessarily have the chance to taste these dishes, had they run out by the time they accessed the buffet. I experienced this kind of arrangement on several occasions. Often, while queuing, some of the students with an ethnic Danish background commented that it was unfair; that they too preferred some dishes above others. In these instances, the inclusive strategy of keeping it *hyggeligt*, by recognising and accommodating diversity, resulted in amplifying differences between the students instead. In a similar example, this time at the playground, the ethnic Danish students

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[161] It could perhaps be argued that chicken sausage hotdogs for everyone would more adequately live up to both the *hygge* and *ligheds* ideology. However, exchanging the traditional pork hotdog with one made of chicken, would not maintain *hygge* as it would vividly point out cultural differences (eating pork is a main characteristic of Danishness by Danes as defined both by Jenkins 2011, and Hervik 2004b; 2012).

were not allowed to have chicken sausages, as that would mean there would not be enough of these special sausages to go round. Again I overheard some of the ethnic Danish students expressing that they would have preferred to have a chicken sausage too. Many asked for them as well, but were told that the chicken sausages were only for the Muslim students. Further to this, it turned out that the school had still underestimated how many students would require chicken sausages, and although only Muslim children were served these, the school ran out of them before everyone had been served. As the students were served in the order of the youngest students first, it meant that none of the year 9 Muslim students had a hotdog.

Another example in which the use of *hygge* disguised tensions arising from differences and allowed for some kind of celebration of diversity occurred approximately a year after leaving the field. Ever since leaving the field, I have been keeping in touch with both students and teachers via Facebook (as discussed Chapter IV). One day I noticed one of the teacher's status update on her Facebook profile, (which was also illustrative of this teachers tireless effort in integration issues outside of the school):

> Julie: *I bow over in the dust for the bilingual mothers in my class…*
>
> *will put my thoughts and hearts into doing something for them…*
>
> *they are an enormous unused resource!*

To explain further what she meant by this comment, she added that she had been to a meeting that day with a mother who had been insecure due to her limited Danish skills. Julie and her colleague had encouraged her to continue and the meeting had been successful. She also mentioned another mother coming into the meeting, just before going to her cleaning job.

> *They are both thankful, eager, love their children and really want*
>
> *to cooperate – but they have shitty men… I'm thinking a few*
>
> *afternoons in the school kitchen with them, where we can talk*
>
> *and cook together… give them some tools to make their*
>
> *children's everyday better… […]*
>
> *And not least give them confidence that THEY can do it… THEY*
>
> *are the ones carrying the home… and hell they should exploit*
>
> *that!!!*

In this example, Julie is celebrating diversity, but from her own cultural value orientations (to

use Barth's terminology). These particular bilingual women are distinguished because they live up to the Danish feminist ideology of 'Do It Yourself'. They *can do* without their men. At the same time, the statement is very stereotypical, as it suggests a trip to the school kitchen for all the bilingual mothers. It could furthermore be considered denigrating, as it has underlying tones of 'we will teach them how to make their children happy'. This is not the intended interpretation, however. Julie was one of the teachers most concerned with the welfare of children and families struggling to make ends meet, and she would engage in a wide range of extra curricular work to ensure that equal opportunities were offered to these children. By stating her comment in general *hyggelig* terminology, trying to keep it witty, blaming (or perhaps even insulting) the men (and hence patriarchal structures), and offering to do something generally acknowledged as *hyggeligt* (cooking), all these tensions were, according to Julie and her colleagues at least, at once wiped away.

Conclusion: the welfare/diversity trade-off re-visited

Avoidance of conflict through the use of humour and *hygge* are typical traits of 'Danishness' and the Danish political arena (Jenkins 2011, Knudsen 1996). They allow a sense of (imagined) agreement to exist between people, and hence aid in the avoidance of differentiation. It is exactly this 'imagined' homogeneity that this chapter has been concerned with, and I have illustrated how this exists in interplay with a 'reality of diversity'. To summarise and conclude this chapter, I would like to re-visit my discussion of whether the welfare state, as an imagined homogeneous entity, poses an obstacle to a diverse society.

Throughout this chapter I have shown how differences do exist, but also how there are active attempts at muting these, predominantly through processes of inclusion rather than exclusion. But I have also shown that through processes of inclusion it is then expected that these differences will no longer be emphasised. Similarly, Kymlicka and Banting's study shows that Denmark has very few implemented Multicultural Policies, or 'MCP's' (2006:295), which are policies concerned with active inclusion of minorities (for example by positive discrimination). This makes sense in view of my ethnography, as the premise of MCP's is that they celebrate difference by emphasising it, while the Danish context celebrates diversity, in terms of respecting, allowing and including it (and hence muting it).

Perhaps By Skolen, however, should not be taken as representative for the whole of Danish society. By Skolen had implemented a strategy of creating a 'we are all students from By Skolen' identity: the students were encouraged not to think of themselves in terms of their differences, but rather their similarities. However, I also had the chance to work as a supply teacher at neighbouring schools, particularly Bakke Skolen, which was situated 200m down the street. My first visit to this school coincided with the celebration of the school's 'birthday'. For this event the students sang the 'school's song', whose lyrics went: At 'Bakke Skolen we are strong because we are different'… and 'Our diversity is our strength'. As such the approaches taken to the issue of diversity are not as straightforward as my fieldwork may suggest (keeping in mind, however, that Bakke Skolen was not an exemplary model of a Danish school either, an observation I base on my general fieldwork and supply teaching at the schools in the area of which I visited 9 out of the 10)[162a + b].

In this chapter I have shown that the focus on an 'equality of worth' sometimes carries the possibility of undermining diversity. I discussed this process in view of nationalism, which I argued exists in two separate understandings in the Danish context: one as inclusionary, and one as exclusionary. I have also suggested that both understandings emphasise that Danes, regardless of their ethnic background, must be 'equal', as they must (or at least *should*) 'have it like us'. Hence pedagogical practices, such as that found at By Skolen strive towards a degree of homogeneity in society. Rather than racist, such a pedagogical agenda can perhaps be understood as mildly 'xenophobic' to the extent that other ethnic group-cultures and/or practices may threaten the *hygge* of Denmark, which is based exactly on ideas of 'sameness'.

My ethnography has also shown that the attempt to break down the boundary between us/them in the Danish school system, for instance by actively minimising

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[162a]Furthermore Bakke Skolen will be closed down during the summer of 2012, while By Skolen will be expanded to take in some of the students from Bakke Skolen.

[15b] It is likely that even an extensive comparative ethnography covering a number of different schools (which, at this point in my research career was impossible to undertake), would not have shed any more light on how representative one might be compared to another.

differences, facilitating a close-knit public/private relationship and often through the use of *hygge,* unintentionally ended up emphasising the differences it set out to eradicate. I have suggested that a focus on 'sameness' as 'equality of worth' necessarily highlights differences in an active attempt to mute them. This was demonstrated by the chicken sausages and green/red umbrellas placed in the food; it was also illustrated in relation to the PhD thesis referred to by Søren – which understood this homogenisation process, exactly as differentiating and even as racist (if not fascist and Nazi). That differences are indeed very visible in an everyday context was evident from the use of *perker* and the various discussions I have highlighted throughout this chapter, in which stereotypical ideas about the 'other' have been portrayed.

While Kymlicka and Banting (2006) end up dismissing their original re-distribution/diversity trade-off hypothesis based on the statistical evidence later found (as discussed in the literature review), this kind of trade-off does appear to exist in the everyday reality portrayed by my ethnography. However, while this appears to facilitate a Danish welfare state ideology of 'sameness', it is also problematic in terms of dealing with a pluralistic community in which not everyone *is* the same. The ethnography for this chapter (and the previous one) has indicated that while tolerance towards diversity was high amongst the teachers and the students alike in everyday situations, the notion of 'we should all be the same' was stronger.

To conclude, I want to take us back to By Skolen, on a summer day, only days away from the holiday. A student from year 9 had brought a boom-blaster into the courtyard during recess. From it loud music filled the courtyard with traditional Turkish music – and a group of students of ethnic Turkish descent had taken over the small football court. They were dancing 'Horon', a traditional Turkish dance, where the dancers form a long line (or in this case circle) linking arms at the shoulders, sometimes clapping to the beat. A lot of other students grouped around them watching, and the students dancing encouraged them to join-in. After a few minutes, 40 or 50 students were dancing – Somali, Turkish, Danish, some of the teachers came outside too. The headmaster came up to me, smiling, and said "*Look, this is true multiculturalism,*

everybody together", he laughed, looked at the sun, and continued: "*Make sure you also write about this in your thesis*" and walked back to his office.

Chapter XI: Conclusion

> Sanne, Class teacher year 9.Z: "*I remember Jack coming into school one day wearing a t-shirt with the statement: 'Don't let school get in the way of your education'….'Society did chose the school for you, but today you enter society and carve out your own path, pick your own education*"

> - Excerpt from Sanne's speech to year 9.Z at their graduation

The graduation of the year 9's took place halfway through my fieldwork, and as tradition dictates, the teachers and students had made speeches for each other to mark the end of ten years together. Sanne's comment emphasises the fact that *folkeskolen* is an obligatory institution through which nearly all Danish citizens pass on their journey towards becoming full citizens. As *folkeskolen* ends the students are allowed, for the first time, to choose their own paths in society – with the expectation that they have throughout their years in *folkeskolen* adopted and/or adapted some of the notions of what it means to act and be an appropriate citizen.

Throughout this thesis I have discussed different practices and values as these repeatedly presented themselves in my ethnographic data. I have linked these to the concept of the welfare state, trying to unravel the extent to which one can say that the Danish *folkeskole* attempts to produce citizens, and furthermore the extent to which these can be said to be welfare citizens. My thesis has been structured to reflect the values and practices that most prevalently appeared through my ethnographic material. This conclusion too will sum up the preceding chapters, revisiting the larger analytical themes of each chapter, as these were made visible in light of my ethnographic examples, before finally drawing these together to show how they connect to my primary concern in this thesis: the 'being' and 'becoming' of welfare citizens in the Danish *folkeskole.*

Re-visiting the chapters, rights and duties

I began this thesis by placing my research within the growing body of educational studies focused on citizenship, and proceeded to further engage with these in relation to how they have informed my ethnographic findings. I have particularly discussed education in view of Durkheim (1925) as a process through which a homogeneous citizenry is created, primarily through the learning of 'appropriate moral understandings'. This issue of morality was at the fore of Chapter VIII, as I explored the relationship between 'rights and duties'.

In that chapter I observed the 'creation' of appropriate moral understandings in relation to a proposed transformation or movement in Danish society, as outlined by Danish historian, Henrik Jensen (2002), from a duties-oriented towards a rights-oriented society. I discussed how my ethnography both supported and challenged this alleged transformation. Instead of a move from duties-towards-rights-oriented culture, for example, what *did* indeed appear to have changed was the very understanding of 'rights and duties'.

One of these 'new understandings of duties' was related to the notion in which 'having many rights' was directly linked with a responsibility towards those who were perceived as having fewer. This was evident during *medborgerskabsugen* 'citizenship week', where a predominant number of teachers in the in-schooling department decided to focus on child-labour as an example of co-citizenship responsibilities. Rights and duties in this 'new understanding' could be seen as an exercise towards creating a kind of equilibrium, where the rights of some are levelled out by a corresponding level of duties. This exercise was also illustrated by the 'playground' example, where the students had to *yde* (give), before they could *nyde* (enjoy) - in this sense upholding an equal balance between 'giving' and 'taking'. Further to the global dimension, I showed also that the students were to a greater extent focused on the individual level of rights and duties. This was particularly evident in the discussion of Christiania, which highlighted a clear connection between the duties of the citizen as related to the rights of the citizen.

My observations also supported Jensen's hypothesis, as I noted a much stronger focus on 'rights' than I did on 'duties'. This, I argue, is related to the rights-discourse being increasingly articulated through the contemporary child-focused pedagogic strategies.

At the same time, the understanding of duties has indeed changed since the foundation of the welfare state, exactly in tandem with the welfare state's assumption of responsibilities in an increasing number of areas related to the immediate everyday lives of people. This would explain why duties are now increasingly focused around the 'global' and the 'individual', rather than the 'local'. It does not indicate that duties are no longer present in the Danish *folkeskole,* rather that they are being viewed from a new perspective.

Equality - Lighed

In the literature review I also discussed the extent to which the socialisation process, in view of Althusser (1972) and Bourdieu (1970; 1972), is necessarily a case of reproduction. I showed that many earlier studies on this topic have indeed engaged with educational institutions as oppressive institutions, reproducing structures of inequality. Instead, I tried to demonstrate (particularly in Chapter IX) that the Danish cultural ideology transmitted in the schooling system is based along lines of both individualism *and* egalitarianism.

In order for the students to acquire the right 'educational decoders' (Willis 1977) to prepare them to live and act in a society based on 'egalitarian individualism' (Gullestad 1989, 1992), the school is fundamentally based on 'bringing about' *dannelse,* the 'holistic formation of social human beings who can manage their own lives, who know how to behave properly in society, and how to fit in with each other' (Jenkins 2011:187). Part of *uddannelse* (education) was subsequently the practices of what I termed 'equalising strategies'. I observed how, during in-schooling years, these practices were very visible in the daily life at the school. As the students slowly adopted and adapted these strategies on their own accord, however, these 'equalising strategies' were slowly phased out. Moreover, as I noted in the chapter, I did not observe any clear situations in which the egalitarian pedagogies in *folkeskolen* were resisted. And while it is not for this thesis to finally determine whether or not Denmark is fundamentally 'equal', the lack of resistance to these strategies could suggest one of two things (following the logic of previous socialisation studies, where forms of resistance are often interpreted as representing something significant about society): either that the students already possessed the appropriate 'educational decoders' as they entered the school (i.e. that Denmark is already largely 'equal') *and/or* that the

school is successful in transmitting this egalitarian ideology. Thereby I did not suggest that other practices were not resisted, and this was largely at the focus of Chapter X, which considered the extent to which the emphasis on 'equality as sameness' (or homogeneity) is related to economic structures of the welfare state, such that a high level of redistribution is dependent on a national solidarity that is based precisely on an idea of 'sameness'.

Diversity

In Chapter X, I subsequently engaged with the notion of whether the focus on equality in the Danish Welfare state is compatible with a pluralist society, explored in view of ethnicity as a marker of difference. Firstly I demonstrated that the focus on an 'equality of worth' sometimes carries the possibility of undermining diversity. I discussed this in view of nationalism, which I argued exists in two separate understandings in the Danish context: what I called the 'inclusionary' and the 'exclusionary'. Both of these understandings essentially emphasise that all citizens, regardless of their ethnic background, must be 'equal', as they must (or at least *should*) 'have it like us'. Hence pedagogical practices, such as those I observed at By Skolen, strive towards a degree of homogeneity in society.

The notion of ' we are all the same' is particularly based on shared ideological understandings of the world. In both Chapters V and X I discussed why the focus is primarily on the *demos*, the political understandings, over the *ethnos,* the cultural background. I argued that there was a general understanding that a focus on *ethnos* implied an emphasis on differences, whereas the focus on becoming co-citizens implied an emphasis on an area in which everyone could (theoretically) be 'equal'. In other words, the notion of co-citizen allows, to some extent, for the attention on the individual to be upheld, but only insofar as that individual will 'fit-in'. Said another way, it allows for the citizens to be quite different, so long as they share the same ideological understanding of the world. As such, the notion of co-citizenship is in line with the overarching ideology of *dannelse*, and is subsequently not merely citizenship as a status, but rather a condition to which one belongs or through which one perceives the world. In order to truly become equal, it is hence important to become co-citizens.

In the conclusion for Chapter V, I showed that recent research on citizenship and democracy amongst students aged 14 across 38 countries found that out of all the countries tested, the immigrant population in Denmark did not only perform 'better' than immigrants in other countries, they performed better than nationals in a range of other countries too. Again, I am not suggesting that resistance does not take place in the Danish *folkeskole* (Chapter X showed that elements of resistance do indeed take place); rather I suggest that the co-citizen project, as articulated through values of egalitarianism and practices such as democracy, largely appears to be successfully transmitted to the citizenry-in-the-making.

Democracy

In Chapter V, I engaged with the idea of democracy, both from a historical point of view, and as lived and practiced in everyday life at the *folkeskole*. I mentioned how *folkeskolen* could be seen as a 'playpen of democracy' (Korsgaard 2008) in which students can practice being and becoming democratic welfare co-citizens. As a theoretical framework to understand this process, I proposed Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of 'communities of practice' and 'legitimate peripheral participation', which can be applied to my own observations of the way in which the students, as they become more knowledgeable and decipher the appropriate modes for co-participation, move toward becoming Danish co-citizens. (similar to what I showed in regards to 'equalisation strategies' in Chapter IX).

While Chapter V alluded to the dominance of deliberative democracy, it was not at all uncommon to hear students say: "*Let's vote about it*" during recess, during classes, and outside of school. What I intended to highlight was the fact that these votes were rarely conducted without a comprehensive debate concerning the pros and cons in regard to what was being voted about. This was clear in the ethnography presented, where the discussions were always more important than the actual vote (and sometimes even the outcome of the vote). I linked the emphasis placed on deliberative democracy to the notion, elaborated further on in Chapter IX that each individual is of equal worth, and hence that everyone must be heard. My ethnography

supported this by, for example, showing that in the student council, students of all ages participated (almost) equally in the democratic debates[163].

I also showed how *hygge* was to some extent integral to the practice of deliberative democracy, as it was important to keep an informal and easy tone during the debates. For instance when the teachers during the in-schooling meeting found it difficult to reach an agreement, and tensions began to rise, a teacher quickly provided a sarcastic remark to ease the atmosphere, essentially allowing the *hygge* back in the meeting. This reflects the larger political consensus culture, which has defined the founding of the welfare state, and every subsequent important reform passed in parliament (as discussed in the background chapter). It is not desirable to stand out, or to be different from one another. Thus when discussions required to perform deliberative democracy began to bring out differences, *hygge* was often employed to iron these out. This was also visible in the student council meeting, where Fie reminded a boy that "*these meetings are supposed to be hyggelige*". In order to aid the feeling of cosiness and *hygge*, the school had to create an atmosphere of a home-away-from-home, and this plays strongly into the public/private relationship.

Public/Private

Chapter VII demonstrated that *folkeskolen* is intrinsically a space between the public and the private, where the student is being socialised into being a good citizen. Since being a good citizen in a Danish context is concerned with sharing ideological understandings and ways of being in the world, the school must closely engage with the private sphere, to make sure that the values propagated at home harmonise with those presented at the school. Sometimes this process, as demonstrated at the school/home conversations, involves also some degree of socialisation of the parents. All of this is performed in order to provide the students with an 'equal starting point' from which they can enter society.

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[163]Here I am referring to Jens from year 1, who was after all too young to take on the post of vice-chairman (according to the teacher running the elections).

At the same time the school is required and expected to act as an 'alternative extended family', and to provide the safe and bounded space that is necessary to secure a conducive learning environment. In that sense it could be argued that the interaction between the home (the private) and the school (the public) is a dynamic back and forth movement, rather than the oppression of one over the other.

The fact that the school provides a homey space for the students could be seen for example through the facilitation of *hygge* in the classroom. To some extent, it could be argued that *hygge* was the defining characteristic, making possible the seamless transition from the private into the public, and vice versa.

Hygge

In Chapter VI, I showed how *hygge* itself must be placed in a multi-dimensional framework, as it is at once an elusive and defining concept in Danish culture. Analysing *hygge* through a plethora of cultural analytical frameworks allowed me to approach it simultaneously as an atmosphere, a value, a practice, and a way of socially interacting. Many of these 'states of *hygge'* were illustrated in the Christmas ethnography, which was included in order to provide the reader with a feeling of *what exactly hygge is*.

Due to *hygge* being definitively under-defined, everyday, and omnipresent, its importance to Danish culture at large is often neglected as banal. *Hygge* then becomes the 'flag hanging unnoticed on the public building' (Billig, 1995:8). In Chapter VI, I argued instead that it says much more about Danes, and in my thesis it has become the closest concept to explaining all the parallel themes explored.

For example, Linnet (2011, forthcoming) shows how *hygge* is irrevocably tied to an idealisation of the in-between and to moderation. Combining this with Herzfeld's theory concerning 'cultural intimacy', I showed that *hygge,* as viewed from this theoretical perspective, could be seen as legitimising the 'in-betweenness' of Danish culture, transforming this feature, which in itself is no positive asset into a cultural trait of which to take pride. In turn, and in view of Herzfeld, I argue that this process makes a concept, such as *hygge*, a particular Danish phenomenon.

In sum, I have argued that *hygge* is the primary framework through which Danishness can be understood, and throughout this thesis it has embodied and underpinned all other themes investigated. First and foremost it is fundamental to the creation of a homey atmosphere at the school and in the classroom. This atmosphere, in turn, is what makes it possible for the school to actively attempt to 'fight negative social heritage' – or, in other words, to mute differences, while presenting a shared ideological understanding of the world, based on the *demos,* rather than the *ethnos*. As this understanding is inculcated in the students, and they move closer towards a 'centre of participation', the school slowly removes the 'equalisation strategies' and to a greater and greater extent allow the students to adopt and adapt these egalitarian and democratic practices. At last they are finally, as Sanne stated above, allowed to enter society, and to carve out their own path.

McLaughlin and Juceviciene have argued that since education is inherently value-laden the question is not '*whether* it should be based on, and should transmit, values, but *which* values should be invoked' (1997:24). In this thesis I have shown that the values invoked in the Danish *folkeskole,* are those of equality as expressed through 'sameness', individualism, and not least *hygge*.

I have shown that it is these values which above all else define the Danish welfare state, and my ethnography has shown that *folkeskolen* is a powerful social arena through which to observe the 'being' and 'becoming' of the welfare citizen.

Appendices

Appendix A - Anthropology of Moralities

The study of morality was traditionally the territory of philosophers, but particularly since Durkheim's (1925) engagement with the concept it has become increasingly popular amongst social scientists as well. Developmental psychology, for instance, engaged (and engages) profoundly and extensively with the development of morality in children. Jean Piaget, with his publication *The moral judgement of the child* (1932) and Lawrence Kohlberg's 'Stages of Moral Development' (1958) both engage with theories of a universal development in relation to morality and the age of the child. As such, they are both theories based on the notion of morality as something children come to understand as they pass through various developmental stages. These stages are universal in both their expression and sequence through which they must be passed, and hence underpinned by universal models, which do not take account of cultural and/or individual differences to the same degree that anthropology or sociology models do.

Marcel Mauss (1938), Alfred R. Radcliffe Brown (1940) and Meyer Fortes (1945) were some of the earliest anthropologists to engage with issues related to morality (primarily in connection to religion). Mauss (1938) discussed the 'Personne Morale', elaborating on the social concept of the person in terms of jural *rights* and moral *responsibilities*. Radcliffe-Brown (1940) later picked up on the notion of the 'Personne Morale', as he developed his concept of the 'Social personality', in which he views the concept of the individual as constituted by two parts. One part was the biological organism; the other part was a complex of social relationships. In later work, Meyer Fortes (1945) too speaks of the 'inner' and the 'socially' formed person. In his work concerning the Tallensi, he reached the conclusion that morality was an intrinsic part of the *concept* of 'a person' as it represented a domain in which the psychological and the social – the inner and the outer - were inseparably fused.

In contrast to Mauss, Radcliffe Brown, and Fortes, Edel and Edel (1968) studied morality as a separate dimension (and were the first anthropologists to do so). They argued that: '… to anthropologists morality has, perhaps, seemed more a dimension or

aspect of living than a separate department with institutions of its own […] Apart from education, it is hard to find common institutional forms peculiarly dedicated to it.' (1968: 7). When reading Edel and Edel, however, one may find it difficult to clearly distinguish between what they discuss as 'ethics' and 'morality'. While the two terms are certainly distinct concepts, with morality being the one at focus here, Zigon [2008:3] argues that the overlap displayed in Edel and Edel's work may be accepted, if one views the etymological origins of the terms. 'Ethics' come from the Greek 'ethos', which means a way of life, custom and habit. Morality comes from the Latin 'mas', which is a direct translation of 'ethos'. Subsequently for the purpose at hand, I will not enter into a more profound debate of the differences between the two, but rather observe how Edel and Edel's research discusses the core expressions of morality and link these to specific cultural contexts.

Essentially they distinguished between two definitions of the term: *ethics wide*, which is morality as 'part and parcel of the whole field of human endeavour' (Edel and Edel 1968:8) (and which resembles Durkheim's definition of morality – see in Chapter VIII), and *ethics narrow*, which is the idea of obligation and duty in relation to the well-being of others. Here, what 'ought to be', and furthermore an understanding of what constitutes the 'ought to be', depends on the specific worldview of a certain cultural context (Edel and Edel 1968: 9-10).

Despite Edel and Edel's engagement with the concept of morality, it was not until recent years that defined anthropology of moralities began to emerge.
In the remainder of this section I will briefly discuss this emerging field, particularly its relevance in relation to the school, rights, and duties. Of the contemporary anthropologists specifically focusing on the topic of morality as a cultural analytical framework, Jarett Zigon (2008) is perhaps the most prominent. Similarly to Durkheim, he defines morality along three parameters: institutional morality, public discourse, and embodied dispositions.

Zigon argues that part of being an institution is claiming truth or 'rightness' of a particular kind of morality. While various institutions will have differing powers of propagating their visions, interacting with them usually means adhering to them to

some extent (*Ibid.* 163). This proposition suggests not only that students should ideally agree with the moral ideology - the concepts of rights and duties - that *folkeskolen* propagates, but also implies that students are fully aware of the moral ideology being transmitted (the ethnography in Chapter VIII, will discuss the extent to which this was the case at By Skolen).

Zigon's 'institutional morality' is often viewed in relation to the 'public discourse of morality' (which is a kind of public articulation of moral beliefs). The two exist in everyday dialogical interactions – i.e. in constant dialogue with each other as they simultaneously support or legitimise each other and undermine or subvert each other. In a sense, the public discourse could be said to be that which is not directly articulated by an institution, such as the school, but instead by the media, arts, parental teaching etc. (*Ibid.* 162). The last factor is 'morality as embodied dispositions', which, as Zigon notes, 'is one's everyday way of being in the world' (*Ibid.* 164). It is visible only when one stops to consider how to appropriately act morally. In Durkheimian terms, it can be compared to a conscious moment of 'moral reflectivity', a moment when the morality presented, by for instance the institution (the school), does not smoothly fit with the beliefs of the students - or when the beliefs fit, but these are unanticipated. Both of these instances will be visible in the ethnographic examples found in Chapter VIII.

Essentially, Zigon argues (similar to Aristotle, Durkheim 1925, Edel and Edel 1968 and also contemporary social scientists, such as Signe Howell 1997) that a 'range of moralities' exists, and that it is at the edges of this range that the coming-into-being of this very range is visible. In general this thesis will discuss several instances of the coming-into-being of the different notions and concepts, for instance in Chapter VIII, where notions of 'rights and duties', as an expression of citizen morality in the welfare state, will be discussed.

Appendix B - The Democratic State - Enlightenment

This section will investigate different theories of the state, as these have been discussed by pertinent political philosophers, during enlightenment, and particularly in relation to democracy, since the two institutions/concepts in most modern western contexts, and definitively in the Danish Welfare state context, are inextricable.

Thomas Hobbes is the political philosopher known for disseminating the concept of the state, and particularly for coining the phenomenon of the 'social contract'. He recognised social order as created by the people, and hence changeable by the people, and this became important for later thinkers of democracy. Hobbes' idea of the 'negative anthropology'[164] is an expression of his belief that people are fundamentally selfish and self-preserving. Hence Hobbes propagated that there was a need for the individual to enter into a social contract, between himself and a more superior body of authority than the individuals themselves, i.e. the Leviathan or commonwealth[165]. Only this all-powerful entity could protect the single individual against other individuals. The Leviathan, however, did not need to be elected by the people, as a matter of fact this was considered undesirable, exactly due to the 'negative anthropology' of the people.

The second great thinker to take into account, when observing the historical antecedents of western democracy, is Benedict Spinoza. His primary contribution to philosophy was his defence of democracy as the best regime available[166]. In contrast to Hobbes, Spinoza believed that democracy was the most rational as well as the most natural regime. Rational in the sense that a large collectivity of individuals is less subject to irrational and destructive passions than a single all-powerful ruler. Moreover also natural in the sense that democracy most closely resembles the 'freedom nature bestows on every person' (Ward 2009:55). Further to this, Spinoza argued in favour of deliberative democracy, i.e. reaching consensus through debate.

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[164] That the natural condition of as summed up through the latin: 'homo homini lupus' (man is a war of each man against the other).

[165] Hobbes' idea of the state as Leviathan can be further explored in his magnum opus, of the same name Leviathan (1651)

[166] His most direct work on the matter of democracy *Tractatus Politicus* was published posthumously in 1677.

Where deliberative democracy was not possible, it should be representative, i.e. decisions made by the officials elected by the population.

Around the same time as Spinoza, John Locke presented an alternate idea to Hobbes concerning citizen morality and the social contract[167]. While he supported the Hobbesian idea of a social contract theory to the extent that a government was useful in settling conflicts in a civil way, he limited the power of the government to protect private property. He thought that replacing the presumed insecurity of the 'natural condition' by an all-powerful entity, able to dispose of the subject's lives and possessions was going from bad to worse (Miller, 2003:37).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau shared Hobbes' idea of a social contract[168], but he attempted to neutralise the hierarchical elements within the contract by suggesting both a depersonalisation of the concept of 'sovereignty' and a twofold structure in which the nature of the social contract is simultaneously interpersonal and supra-personal (Hoelzl and Ward 2006:125). This two-dimensional structure came about as Rousseau argued that people could engage with the state in two ways: as passive members, subject to the law, and as active citizens subject to *and* makers of these laws. These persons were connected through a network of individual contracts, the interpersonal nature, and formed the political body. The state was then the legal framework within which these people lived and acted, while the 'sovereign' was the collective social body, the common will of the political body, which transcended the interpersonal and became supra-personal, more than the sum of its parts. This redefinition of the citizen's engagement with the state was an attempt to try and find a balance between the autonomous freedom, which was relinquished to the state when accepting the contract, and the external authority that the state became once this surrender was completed. Rousseau argued that the sovereign was not external so long as it was the result of the common will. In this sense Rousseau was arguing that the will of the individual would always be the will of the state, and approached what some may call a totalitarian democracy. One would give up some of his personal freedom to form the collective, but still only obey himself as he was himself part of that collective.

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[167] John Locke, Two Treatises of Government (1689).
[168] Formulated in his Social Contract (1762)

Adam Smith argued in opposition to Hobbes, that man has a natural tendency to cooperate and follow certain moral guidelines[169]. Smith was very interested in the mechanisms that makes people act the way they do, and rather than abstract theories, he was a believer in empirical observations. Therefore he was also in opposition to Rousseau, as he was not a proponent of the social contract theory, which he saw as built on abstract principles. While institutions certainly had an influence on the behaviour and principles of people, the will of the institutions and the people would never harmonise, as Rousseau had suggested they would. According to Smith, a state would never be able to foresee the actions and incentives of every single individual, therefore the state should, as a starting point, not interfere in society (Kurrild-Klitgaard 2006).

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[169] Smith, however, does not acknowledge a fundamental good/bad nature of human behaviour. Rather he argues that human behaviour seems to be motivated primarily by three things. Personal gain, passion and sympathy, in various contexts they can come to play various roles.

Appendix C – Muhammad Drawings

'Muhammed's Face' printed in Jyllands Posten 30.september 2005

The Muhammad drawings, as shown above, were first published on the 30th September 2005. For the purpose of this thesis, I will only provide a brief overview; more information can be found in Eide, Kunelius and Phillips (2008) and Rothstein and Rothstein (2006), amongst many other publications on the topic.

The drawings were published in conjunction with an article as a response to the troubles the author, Kåre Bluitgen, had encountered in hiring an illustrator for his book: '*The Quran and the Prophet Muhammad's life'.* The illustrators asked had declined the job, on the basis of fearing the reactions in the Muslim part of the population, and making references to the, then-recent, murder of Theo Van Gogh, the Dutch filmmaker.

Flemming Rose, editor of the Danish newspaper '*Jyllands Posten*', decided to write an article on this topic, asking 40 illustrators to contribute, out of whom only 12 did (the drawings shown above).

The drawings incited violent outbursts in most of the Arab world, and demonstrations in front of Danish embassies around the world. Throughout the entire spectacle, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Prime Minister of Denmark, refused to get involved – due to the reason that 'freedom of speech' is inviolable.

On the 11th October 2005, 11 Arabic ambassadors wrote a letter to Fogh Rasmussen, asking him for a meeting, in order to request sanctions towards Jyllands Posten, and to request a formal apology to the Muslim population around the world. It is this particular incident that I draw attention to in Chapter V, as Fogh Rasmussen continued to refuse to engage with the case, and even refused to meet with the Arabic ambassadors, arguing that he could and did not want to influence the freedom of speech.

On the 29th of December 2005, Fogh Rasmussen had still to make any comments on the matter, and this led to the Arab League officially criticising the Danish government. In many Arab countries, this led to bans against Danish products.

In a poll conducted in January 2006, 79% of Danes agreed that Fogh Rasmussen should not get involved in the case. But 58% at the same time expressed understanding of the Muslim frustrations, even if they still defended the constitutional right of Jyllands Posten to publish the drawings.

http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2006/01/28/062331.htm

Appendix D - The Aims of the Folkeskole

1. *(1)* The *folkeskole* shall - in cooperation with the parents - further the pupils' acquisition of knowledge, skills, working methods and ways of expressing themselves and thus contribute to the all-round personal development of the individual pupil.

(2) The *folkeskole* shall endeavour to create such opportunities for experience, industry and absorption that the pupils develop awareness, imagination and an urge to learn, so that they acquire confidence in their own possibilities and a background for committing themselves and taking action.

(3) The *folkeskole* shall familiarise the pupils with Danish culture and contribute to their understanding of other cultures and of man's interaction with nature. The school shall prepare the pupils for participation, joint responsibility, rights and duties in a society based on freedom and democracy. The teaching of the school and its daily life must therefore build on intellectual freedom, equality and democracy.

2. *(1)* The *folkeskole* is a municipal matter. It shall be the responsibility of the municipal council to ensure all children in the municipality free education in the *folkeskole*. The municipal council shall lay down the targets and framework of the activities of the schools within the provisions of this Act, cf. section 40.

(2) The individual school shall within the given framework be responsible for the quality of the teaching in accordance with the aims laid down for the *folkeskole*, cf. section 1, and it shall itself make decisions in relation to the planning and organisation of the teaching.

(3) Pupils and parents shall cooperate with the school with a view to meeting the aims of the *folkeskole*.

(http://eng.uvm.dk/publications/laws/folkeskole.htm?menuid=2010)

Appendix E – Example of exclusionary approach

While I predominantly experienced the relative, i.e. inclusive approach in my day-to-day fieldwork, the absolute, i.e. exclusive approach was very vivid in the political debate. During the 2011 elections in Denmark, as I was writing these very lines, a close friend in Copenhagen called me on Skype to discuss the election debates. She mentioned that *Radikale Venstre*, an 'immigration friendly', liberal centre-party had put a whole page ad in a national newspaper. It read:

Photo: http://www.flickr.com/photos/deradikale/5707261490/in/photostream/

"We trust.

In foreigners too."

The next day, the Danish People's Party (DF) put this ad in the paper:

Photo: http://avisen.dk/pia-k-muntrer-sig-over-egen-provokation_151508.aspx

"We trust."

"Especially Danes."

These ads are meant as enlightening examples of the exclusionary nationalist tone in Danish politics. The latter party, DF, is the third largest party in Denmark, and is a prominent example of the '*skik følge eller land fly*' rhetoric discussed in Chapter X.

Appendix F – Søren's and The School Board's Purpose Statement For By Skolen

Pædagogisk profil og målsætning for By Skolen

By Skolens undervisning, og øvrige virksomhed, skal tage udgangspunkt i såvel fællesskabet som det enkelte barn.

Skolens virksomhed skal give kundskaber samt udvikle kompetencer og kreativitet.

Klar struktur og *god anderledeshed* skal være rammen om elevernes læreprocesser.

By Skolen ønsker at være tydelig med hensyn til tilbud og forventninger, for herved at frigøre ressourcer hos eleverne til fordybelse og selvstændighed.

By Skolen ønsker at være en skole, som siger, hvad den mener, og mener, hvad den siger i en skolehverdag præget af gensidig respekt.

Vedtaget af skolebestyrelsen 16. december 2004

Den gode anderledeshed

I mange år har uddannelsesinstitutioner bestræbt sig på at nærme sig eleverne via hverdagseksempler og en efterligning af det praktiske virkelige liv. Samtidig frigjorde man sig fra autoriteter og indførte friere omgangsformer. Der har været meget godt i dette, men når man gør regnskabet op for 30 – 40 års skoleudvikling, kan man se, at det har haft nogle utilsigtede konsekvenser.

Forskellen på skolens læringsrum og det private hverdagsliv er blevet utydelig. Nogle elever forventer derfor, at undervisningen handler om dem, at alt skal være noget, der appellerer til deres interesser, følelser og lyst, og at det umiddelbart kan anvendes i deres hverdagsliv. Men skolen bør efter vor opfattelse være et anderledes rum, bevidst afskærmet fra hverdagslivet udenfor. Vort mål er at gøre eleverne bevidste om at de går i skole; så på visse punkter er vi som professionelle nødt til at være mere solidariske med deres fremtid end med deres nutid.
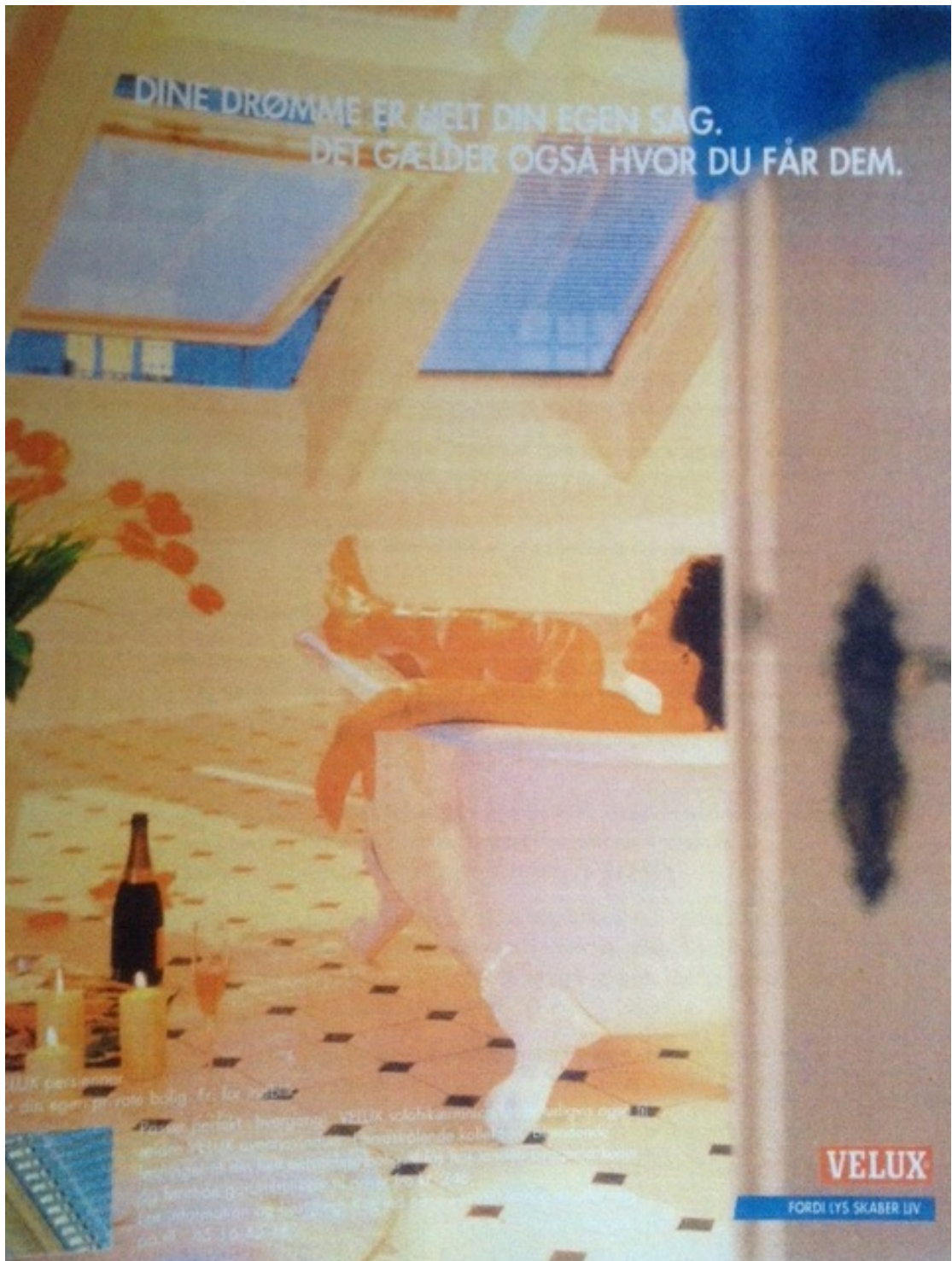
Vore elevers skolegang finder sted på den moderne tids vilkår. Det betyder at de, i et

samfund i forandring, skal danne deres identitet uden særlig støtte i faste holdepunkter i en ydre social struktur. Vor påstand er derfor, at mange af dagens unge er 'undersstrukturerede', og i virkeligheden længes efter en fast og klar struktur, gennemskuelige krav og lærere, som på den ene side tør udfordre og sætte grænser, og på den anden side er klare til at yde den nødvendige nærhed og anerkendelse, der opmuntrer til fornyet indsats. Skolegangen vil i perioder være frustrerende, men også tilsvarende givende. Udbytte kræver indsats. Men frustrationsrobustheden, den realistiske bedømmelse af eget aktuelle standpunkt, vil gradvis øges i det daglige samspil med voksne, der stiller sig til rådighed med individuel, faglig vejledning.

Alt dette kalder på en tydelighed fra skolens side - den gode anderledeshed - som vil få vore elever til at vokse med opgaverne. Den gode anderledeshed må i øvrigt også kunne ses i indretning og udsmykning, så skolen får sin egen stil og ikke fremtræder rodet og nedslidt.

http://www.avedoereskole.dk/Infoweb/Designskabelon8/Rammeside.asp?Action=&Side=&Klasse=&Id=&Startside=&ForumID=

Appendix H – Letter to the parents of year 0.Y

Kære forældre i 0.Y

Mit navn er Ditte Strunge Sass, jeg er antropolog og følger, udover jeres børn, to andre klasser på By Skolen – 3.X og 7.Z og sidste år fulgte jeg også en 9.klasse.

Jeg ved, at der har været nogle spørgsmål i den sammenhæng, og har derfor skrevet dette lille brev til orientering.

Først lidt om mig og min baggrund:

Jeg er født og opvokset i Næstved, og flyttede umiddelbart efter min studentereksamen til England for at læse på universitetet der.

Jeg fik min Bachelor i 'Antropologi og Religionsvidenskab' fra Manchester University i 2007. Derefter gik jeg i gang med min Masters (som er tilsvarende en Kandidat) i 'Social Antropologi' på Brunel University i London. Den blev jeg færdig med sidste efterår, og nu er jeg i gang med en PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) ved samme universitet.

Min teoretiske baggrund er meget fokuseret på den rolle en skole spiller i at formidle et politisk budskab, og i denne sammenhæng fokuserer jeg på hvordan velfærdsværdier, f.eks. ligestilling/lighed og omfordeling bliver præsenteret og modtaget i folkeskolen.

Efter et halvt år i "virkeligheden" på By Skolen er der dog dukket mange andre emner op, ligesom at det med velfærdsstaten lidt er røget i baggrunden.

Når jeg sidder i klassen observerer jeg al adfærd, både lærernes og elevernes… og min egen for den sags skyld, derhjemme skriver jeg så notaterne ind på computeren og måske en tanke eller ide forbundet med disse. På nuværende tidspunkt analyserer jeg ikke videre på materialet, i det at jeg har to år til dette arbejde når jeg flytter tilbage til London efter juleferien.

Alle samtaler og oplysninger jeg måtte få af jer, jeres børn eller lærere, behandles med største fortrolighed. Derfor vil alle navne og stedbetegnelser også blive ændret når mit færdige materiale udgives (hvilket i øvrigt vil være på engelsk og i England).

I er selvfølgelig altid velkomne til at stille spørgsmål, både personligt og via mail

dittesass@hotmail.com

Derudover håber jeg, at jeg må deltage i skole/hjem samtalen på tirsdag, hvor i også har mulighed for at stille flere spørgsmål (jeg har naturligvis forståelse for, hvis i ønsker, at denne samtale skal foregå uden min deltagelse).

Mange venlige hilsener

Ditte

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