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Integration from a grassroots-perspective:
A study of the social life of the Danish Red Cross's
integration groups.



Anna Maria Mårtensson

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Summary

This thesis focuses on the Danish Red Cross and its integration groups in Denmark. It had as its purpose to examine the social interaction between immigrants and volunteers within the framework of voluntary integration groups. More specifically it was my wish to illustrate how integration is interpreted and played out in praxis at a grassroots level.

In recent years integration has become a “lay-men’s” term, commonly adopting to the political version of integration and moving away from previous associations that thought of integration as general mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion affecting all members of a society. Integration has become a term associated to the process of integrating immigrants, who are seen as a threatening element to the otherwise perceived homogeneity of the Danish population. Although officially the term integration implies a) to learn the Danish language, b) to gain an education or employment and c) to learn about Danish society, it has been criticized to use an assimilation approach to integration, where it is expected that immigrants should adapt to similar or same norms as those of the mainstream population. There has thus been a tendency to operate with different versions of integration, where the stated does not necessarily correspond to what is practiced.

It is a general assumption that voluntary work can be used advantageously as an extension to the social welfare work of the government. Including citizens in the solution of social problems is seen to anticipate a stronger and enhanced cohesion of the local community. Furthermore, the interaction between the volunteers and the users of the voluntary services is said to foster the establishment of valuable social networks. This idea is reminiscent to the belief that integration is a process involving social interaction.

Through asking the volunteers about their expectations towards their participation in the integration groups, it was possible to reveal the volunteers’ conceptions and understandings of integration and how these influenced the premises for the social interaction between the volunteers and immigrants. I found that the fact that the voluntary work targeted immigrants had a negative outcome on the generally regarded positive effect of engaging voluntary work in the help of social problems. The associations made to the category of immigrants had a major influence on the types of context the activities were filled with. Most of the interaction was influenced

by an educational aspect related to the volunteers' perception that immigrants were lacking the right cultural background that would make it possible for them to become integrated in Denmark. Therefore the volunteers' felt that it was their role to teach the immigrants how best to behave in a Danish context. The volunteers' sentiments revealed strong tendencies of a cultural hierarchy, where the Danish culture was regarded as superior to that of the immigrants' culture.

The life situations of both immigrants and volunteers influenced the parties' motivations for participating in the integration groups. Unexpectedly, the volunteers' own position as elderly and retired made them vulnerable to being pushed to the periphery of the society. Their participation in the integration groups however, ensured their own continued integration to society as active and valuable members to society.

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CHAPTER 1. Introduction

Background & Presentation of Topic

Denmark has a population of almost 5.5 million people, of which around 450.000, or 8.4%, are immigrants¹ and descendants of immigrants from non-western countries (The Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs, 2006). Regardless of this comparably small number of people, immigrants' presence in Denmark has gained increasing importance since the 1980s, and has figured prominently in both the public debate and Danish politics. It is in particular immigrants' ability, or perceived lack thereof, to integrate into a Danish context that has been in the spotlight.

Immigrants' different cultural backgrounds are regarded as a threat to the relative homogenous Danish society and welfare. The public's focus on immigrant "problems" has motivated alternate governments into political action (Hervik and Rytter 2004: 134). Integration politics have undergone a number of changes and in 2004 a new integration law was put into practice. Tougher rules relating to welfare benefits, compulsory Danish language and introductory programs, which a migrant has to attend if he or she is to receive welfare benefits and is not in work, individual strategy plans and contracts, designed to get the immigrant into work, are all features designed to help Denmark's foreigners become integrated at a quicker pace. The overall mission was to get the immigrant economically self-sufficient, whilst adapting to the Danish society's way of life.

In recent years there has been rising interest in getting immigrants' social needs looked after with the help of voluntary organizations. Voluntary organizations are expected to provide support to, and be an extension of, the public sector (Villadsen, Gruber and Bengtsson 1998). The interaction between volunteer and the users of the voluntary services, are perceived to foster the establishment of valuable social networks. These networks are expected to promote local fellowship, and including citizens in the solution of social problems is seen to anticipate a stronger and enhanced cohesion of the local community (Hansen 2000). Municipalities have recently been given larger economic support, to fund their cooperation with a number of voluntary organizations. Of all the various forms of voluntary work endorsed by

¹ For the purpose of this study the term "immigrants" will be used as a general label for resident foreigners, non-white and non-western migrants and refugees from post-socialist and developing countries.

municipalities, those which focus on working with immigrants have experienced the largest increase. This trend is in line with the increasing importance the topic of integration has assumed in Danish politics and society.

Immigrants in Denmark have been identified as a category with particular needs and problems. Their foreignness is regarded as a threatening element to the otherwise perceived homogeneity of the Danish population. Immigrants' different cultural backgrounds are regarded as incompatible with Danish values and norms. The only way immigrants can achieve integration is by adapting to the norms prescribed to them by Danes. As part of the majority in Denmark, Danes have the right to define what these norms are. What has become clear, is that for most of Danish society, to become integrated immigrants have to become as similar as possible to the Danes. This involves not only speaking the Danish language fluently, but also adapting to the values and norms the Danes perceive themselves to operate under.

Such an expectation of integration is different from the expectation presented by the government. Officially the goals of integration are: to learn the Danish language, to gain an education or employment and to learn about Danish society. A number of scholars have reported the tendency of the government to use an assimilation approach to integration. That is, rather than involving a two-way process, where both immigrant and Dane adapt to one another, it is expected that immigrants will adapt to similar norms as those of the mainstream Danish population. There has thus been a tendency to operate with different versions of integration, where the written instructions do not necessarily correspond to what is practiced. One of the ways of explaining how such a deviation is possible, is that integration has become such a widely used concept. It is used by lay-men and politicians, media and academics and what it actually is meant to imply, is up to the user to decide. Herzfeld and Cohen have argued that integration has become a symbol, because its meaning is so fluid and ambiguous that individuals and groups can fill this "empty container" with the kind of meaning that best suits their experience and ideology (Herzfeld; Cohen in Iversen 2001: 30). Another way of explaining the wide differences of what the term "integration" means, is by way of seeing it as a grammar. A grammar is here to be understood as a way that describes structural relations that underlie modes of thinking. That is, each way of using the term "integration" can be related to various mechanisms, which form part of the reality for various groups and levels within

society. Each grammar separately has various connotations, which can include both discrimination and racist tendencies, but their encompassment as part of a larger whole overshadows such negative connotations.

The Danish Red Cross's integration groups have been involved in integration work since 1996. Before that, most of their work with immigrants was restricted to running asylum centers for immigrants in Denmark. The Danish Red Cross receives monetary funding from the government for its integration work. The activities the integration groups offer, such as, for example, helping immigrants with the Danish language, teaching them how to ride a bicycle or learning about Danish values and norms through interaction with Danes, are compatible with the government's integration demands. They are meant to provide the immigrants with skills that enable them to become self-sufficient, as well as learning more about the Danish society through their interaction with the Danish volunteers.

It was my purpose for this study to unravel *how conceptions of integration are interpreted and practiced in the social interaction between volunteers and immigrants within the arena of the Danish Red Cross's integration groups*. I also wanted to see *what kind of expectations the volunteers and immigrants had of the integration groups and how these affect their interaction*, as well as looking at *what kind of conceptions immigrants and volunteers had of each other and how these affected their interaction*. The study was based upon 5 months of fieldwork (August to December 2006) that took place around the outskirts of Copenhagen, where I followed three different integration groups and their activities.

Anthropological background

In anthropology, Shore and Wright (1997) have argued that the voluntary engagement of social responsibility becomes an expression of political leadership technique. Shore and Wright argue, that when citizens carry out the responsibility of the government, they risk internalizing the particular norms and values of that government, which becomes decisive for their thoughts, emotions and actions (Shore and Wright 1997: 9). The positive outcomes often associated with voluntary work can therefore be compromised. Shore and Wright also mention that the internalization process can be an expression, not only of political leadership technique, but also of the volunteers' beliefs of what forms the cohesive glue of the nation-state. Others, such as sociologist John Wilson, have argued, that voluntarism can also function as a counterweight

against a political leadership technique. People have many motivations for signing up for voluntary work and it can also be an expression of dissatisfaction (Wilson 2000). The volunteers can have a lack of faith that others do a good job and engage in voluntary work with the belief that they can do a better job (Wilson 2000: 225). Volunteers can also have other reasons for joining voluntary work, connected to their own social position in relation to society. By trying to understand the motivation that lies behind both the volunteers' and the immigrants' participation in the integration groups, I want to contribute to a deeper understanding of how the informants' interpretation of integration is related to the values and norms prevalent in Danish society. The activities' connection to the political agenda provided a good opportunity to observe how the objective of integration was interpreted and carried out by lay people in praxis. It also provided information on whether or not it is possible to notice a presence of political leadership technique in the interaction between volunteers and immigrants.

Research, which has focused on integration, has also been afflicted by the concept's increasing popularity and usage, and a distinction between a political and analytical integration agenda has been necessary. In short, the political agenda refers to specific projects set in a definite historical and social context. The analytical agenda on the other hand evolves around the broader social processes of exclusion and inclusion (Olwig and Pærregaard 2007: 7-8). Most of the definitions of integration used in Denmark today are related to that of integration as a political agenda. My study unravels how the political agenda of integration becomes evident in the volunteers' interaction with immigrants. Integration is seen as a concept related to immigrants specifically, and as a necessary transformation for making it possible for immigrants to live in Denmark successfully. Immigrants are expected to undergo a number of changes, which the activities of the integration groups reflect. However, by also using integration as an analytical concept, it was possible for me to detect mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that not only affect immigrants, but also the volunteers. In their participation in the integration groups, the volunteers kept other categorizations, that they would otherwise fall under, such as being elderly or retired, at bay and ensured their own status as insiders of society.

Many studies on integration have focused on a structural, institutional approach to integration. Anthropologist Ann Belinda Preis (1998) has emphasized how integration is created through interaction between people and the social praxis

that takes place between them (Preis 1996: 228). By focusing on the structural aspect of integration this element of interaction tends to be neglected. This study takes interaction between the volunteers and immigrants as its starting point and therefore contributes to a detailed description of how integrations is practiced on the grassroots level.

Studies of organizations and voluntary associations point towards a strong presence of a sameness-ideal (Anderson 2002, Salamon 1992). People congregate around interests and/or values that they have in common, where inequalities are put aside in favour of their similarities. Voluntary associations have been regarded as a kind of neutral space, where the individual's role and position in the public realm is played down in order to create a common framework for social interaction. This kind of interaction, where inequalities and class differences are reduced and instead make space for a realm of equality and sameness, forms a particular kind of interaction, which is regarded as the ideal one (Anderson 2002: 79). This type of interaction has been described as an essential part of Scandinavian culture (Salamon 1992, Gullestad 1991). The integration groups' constellation of immigrant and volunteer in many ways challenged this perception of equality. The groups' organizational form was not subject to the ideal form of voluntary associations described above, but instead they were characterized by an educational intent, tied to the categorization of what being an immigrant implied. This effected an inequality in the relationship between volunteer and immigrant, and which was impossible to disguise in the interaction between them. The categorization of immigrant was too important in the interaction between immigrants and volunteers and in the purpose of the groups, to allow this matter to be disregarded as they entered the sphere of the voluntary groups.

Social science studies that have concerned themselves with integration have looked at how family, children and sport can function as an extension of, or contributing factor to, integration (Anderson 2002, Boeskov & Ilkjær 2005, Olwig 2003, Schmidt 2002). Anthropological research has also focused on immigrants' social praxis and how this is constructed, changed and further developed through interaction with others (Gardner 2002, Gilliam, Olwig and Valentin 2005, Hervik 2004, Hervik and Rytter 2004, Predelli 2004, Prieur 2004, Rytter 2006, Schierup 1986). The Danish Red Cross's integration groups have as their objective to promote and support integration. This direct correlation to integration provides good opportunities to observe how this objective is interpreted and executed in praxis. My

fieldwork will be able to contribute to the creation of knowledge around the kinds of integration-processes that flourish amongst volunteers and immigrants. The study will also unveil some of the expectations and perceptions tied to the social praxis of integration.

There is a need for more qualitative studies that look not only at the formality of the structural issues concerned with the voluntary sector, but also the inter-relational side of it. What shape does the interaction between people in the voluntary sector take and how do the historical values and meanings fit into people's understanding and lives today? This study is concerned with the link between the impact of policy applications and the kinds of internal life the voluntary groups offer. Anthropological methods provide an excellent tool for this kind of research. By confining this study within the field of the civic sector, which so far has drawn mainly sociological studies, as well as the topic of integration, where most of the anthropological research has focused on either a specific ethnic group, or the interaction between, for example, social workers and immigrants, I hope to contribute with a new perspective, based upon interaction.

The Red Cross

There are 185 Red Cross, and Red Crescent organizations around the world, which are part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, the world's largest independent humanitarian organization. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is made up of three components:

- The International Committee of the Red Cross
- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- 185 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world.

In most countries around the world, there is a National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society. Each Society has a responsibility to help vulnerable people within its own borders and to work in conjunction with the Movement to protect and support those in crisis worldwide.

In 1876, the Association for the Sick and Wounded during times of War was established. In the early years the association's main objective was to act as a helping tool for the army and educate nurses for its hospitals. It also offered first aid courses to the police, forest-workers and others with particularly dangerous jobs. The

Association changed name and in 1917 the bases for the first local sections and the country wide span of voluntary networks was founded. The Danish Red Cross is a democratic organization, which today has 250 local societies and around 78,000 members. Their activities have grown widely, ranging from sewing clubs, integration groups, visiting lonely elderly and running second-hand shops to support networks for children whose parents are in jail as well as their national and international aid work.

Every second year representatives from the local Red Cross branches meet for a representative meeting, which is the highest decision-making authority within the Danish Red Cross. In between those meetings, a Danish Red Cross board takes care of the Danish Red Cross leadership. The integration groups were established in 1996 and in 2004 54 integration groups were scattered all over Denmark, with around 830 volunteers and over 4000 users. Three consultants service these groups and are employed through the Danish Red Cross. They help establish new groups, serve as a link between new volunteers and immigrants, the headquarters and the local societies, try to help solve problems should the groups experience any, organize events and serve as a general support centre. The groups' specific goals are:

- to participate in the formation of local networks
- to provide human kindness
- further the dialogue between Danes and immigrants and volunteers
- increase Danes' knowledge of immigrants and foreign cultures
- participate in generating a positive integration in Denmark.

The groups themselves often get in contact with immigrants through language schools, the municipality, social workers or via acquaintances.

The groups each have their own autonomy and are free to choose what kind of activities they want to arrange. However, the most common activities include homework assistance, learning how to ride a bicycle², social gatherings, excursions and contact families. Most of the volunteers were over 55 years old and almost all were on some form of retirement benefits.

² Bicycling is an integral part of Danish society. After cars, it is the most used form of transportation to and from work (Danmarks Statistik, 2004:1). It has become increasingly important to know how to ride a bicycle for immigrants, as a form of transportation not only to and from, but also in work.

The integration groups

I had been in sporadic contact with the Danish Red Cross integration-consultants for almost a year by the time I started my fieldwork. I had originally contacted them, as it was my wish to base my project on something which could be of benefit and interest not only to the academic world, but also to those outside it. I had followed one integration group since January 2006, in order to better identify and fine-tune my research questions. This group, and two others, provided the framework of my study. The three integration-groups were located in communities that had both similar demographics and number of immigrants. The groups were picked according to their accessibility, number of activities and users as well as that they catered for adults (many of the groups focused on children). All were about an hour's travel from my apartment in inner Copenhagen. The groups' activities involved homework/language tuition, bicycle training, events/outings/excursions, gymnastics and sewing. Each group provided a slightly different approach towards how the activities were set up, mainly dependent upon the accessibility they had to locations, monetary funds and the acquirement of gadgets, such as for example bicycles, but also on the goals, wishes and resources of the volunteers³. Most met regularly every week at the same location, but some also organized specific activities every second month or so, such as going bowling or arranging sightseeing excursions. Some of the activities were run by only one individual, such as the gymnastics and sewing groups, the bicycle training involved two, sometimes three volunteers and the more social-, and homework-orientated groups and events varied in number of volunteers but rarely had less than four volunteers attending⁴. The disparity in organizational formats, but also the volunteers' personalities meant that the atmosphere between the groups varied. Despite this variation however, I have not separated them from one another in my analysis. I found that the interaction between volunteer and immigrants was influenced by the same markers and conceptions, regardless of the groups' format and constitution and therefore chose to put them together as part of my overall analyses.

³ For a more extensive description of what the groups specialized in, refer to Appendix I.

⁴ For more a more detailed description of the groups' activities, size and timetable please see Appendix I and II.

Contact

It was relatively easy to establish contact with the volunteers and somewhat more difficult with the immigrants. This was related to the attendance variation between volunteers and immigrants. Whereas volunteers would come regularly every week, the attendance of the immigrants fluctuated widely. Some came regularly over a number of weeks but would not appear again, others would turn up once every few weeks, some came only once and for various reasons were not seen again. This was further complicated by the fact that some of the activities were scheduled at the same time in the week and I therefore had to divide my time between the groups. I started my fieldwork by visiting each of the clashing groups every second week, but found that it was more efficient to divide my fieldwork time in two and visit one group for a number of weeks and then do the same with the other. This made it easier to get a sense of continuity and allowed me to follow up on events that had happened the previous week and on the types of relationship that were established. It also meant that I became more of a regular feature of the groups, which had a number of benefits. Firstly it meant that the novelty factor wore off, that is that the volunteers focused less on the fact that I was present and more on the work at hand. Secondly it provided me with a better base from which to start my interviews, as I became more acquainted with the people involved.

Methods

“In scientific ethnography, putting the observer in the picture requires that we know such items as where and when and why the observer was in the field, who the informants were, what language was used, and what events – such as a personal illness, emotional stress, or the actions of hostile authorities – took place that might have affected the research.”

(Harris 1999: 58)

Different ways of gathering information have been used to obtain the data I analyze in this thesis. Using various methods to ensure a more reliable and trustworthy representation of data is also known as method-triangulation (Yin in Habermann 2001: 141). One can understand method-triangulation as a way to “clarify meaning by identifying ways the phenomenon is being seen” (Stake in Habermann 2001: 141). In this instance I have used interviews, participant observation, diary books, informal conversations and literature review to highlight various aspects of the same questions.

A number of scholars have written on the applicability of the various types of information gathering, especially within a qualitative method analysis (Kvale 1994, Taylor 1984, Sanjek 1990). As Kvale states, method-triangulation concerns asking as many different questions about your data-material as possible, in order for a multiple and varied understanding to emerge (Kvale 1994: 238). In line with what Taylor argues, by for example combining interviews and participant observation, I was able to cross-check the correlation between spontaneous statements offered by informants with their responses to the interview questions I gave them (Taylor 1984: 140). This in turn gave me an opportunity to ascertain the validity of not only my own observations, but also the informants' own understanding of their behavior. I also asked members of the first and second group to write a diary over a period of two weeks. More specifically, I asked them to detail what other activities they were involved in, what they felt they gained from participating in those activities and to give a general outline of their daily routine. From this information I was hoping to gain a deeper understanding of their day-to-day lives. Just as Sanjek claims the written text from my informants provided me with a comparison to what I had previously recorded from interviews, spontaneous statements and observations (Sanjek 1990: 107). Informal conversations along the way added to more detailed background information about my informants and further provided me with insight into various aspects of the informants' lives and convictions. Lastly, a literature review helped establish the larger framework that contextualized my data. All in all, my data consists of 241 typed and 40 handwritten pages of participant observation field notes, 34 interviews (of which 7 were not recorded), 6 informant diary books and Danish Red Cross literary material, such as the organization's handbook and information leaflets.

Regardless of how well I have tried to avert my own beliefs and understandings from the data, the final account is my thematization of reality. I have selected certain types of citations, when perhaps others could have been used, or chosen particular conversations and events as typical rather than others. Furthermore, the diversity and specificity of the groups, the volunteers and the immigrants have at times given way to a general account of events to illustrate a particular point. Nevertheless I have tried to let the voices, events and stories of my informants be the ones to present the account of how integration was interpreted by them. In the end it was their beliefs, words and actions that influenced the interaction between volunteer

and immigrant. It has been my work to connect their stories into a larger and valid representation of their reality. By sharing my concerns and methodological reflections, I hope to have provided the reader with a better position to judge and understand the outcome of my analyses.

Interviews

As I mentioned above, the attendance of the immigrants at the organized activities was varied and mainly low in numbers. As I started to organize interviews, the varied attendances became problematic because many appointments were cancelled, fell through or were delayed, when informants failed to turn up. In order to avoid such setbacks I decided to ask people to talk to me on the same day I saw them, during or after the activity they were partaking in. The experience of listening to some of my interviews, made me aware that the settings of the interviews affected their length and style. The interviews I held at informants' homes were consistently longer, more relaxed and covered more personal issues than those held at the "make-do" locations. That said, the latter presented themselves as the only alternative and still provided valuable and useful data that was to the point and direct. I did not use a formal questionnaire during my interviews, but had a set agenda of what kind of information I wanted to obtain from them. This provided a more relaxed and informal interview setting, which generally contributed to the open responses the informants gave me. Nevertheless a few of the immigrants did not want to be audio-taped and in those cases I did not take down notes until after the interview was finished, as their consent and trust seemed fragile and the informants were anxious and/or nervous. Some of the latter confided that being approached about an interview gave them unpleasant memories of the endless interviews they had had to go through upon arrival in Denmark. Others told me that they did not want to be recorded because they were embarrassed about their self-perceived poor Danish language skills. The informal and relaxed conduct of the interviews was particularly helpful in those cases and seemed to avert any nervousness and skepticism rather quickly.

Disposition

In this chapter I have presented background information and the topic of this paper, the two areas of the voluntary sector and the integration area within which the

study is placed and given an outline of different methodological practices I have used to obtain the analyses represented in this thesis.

Chapter 2 looks at the role of the voluntary sector in a historical and present context, and its placement within the welfare state of Denmark. This more overall and structural account is followed by a closer look at what types of connotations the voluntary sector has been associated with. Drawing on anthropological and sociological studies concepts such as sameness within the realm of the voluntary sector and the regional ethnography itself are presented.

Chapter 3 introduces the area of integration. The evolvement of integration as a political agenda versus an analytical tool is here discussed. I also look at the changes the term “integration” as a word has undergone, from referring to general processes that concerns every individual of society to its referral and association with immigrants in Denmark today. Seen as problematic and culturally different, it has become the government’s role to come up with a solution model of how best to integrate immigrants into the Danish society.

In extension of the government’s role as welfare provider for its citizens, the voluntary sector has often been involved in the government’s solution models. Chapter 4 takes a closer look at the kind of influence this can have over the volunteers’ own understanding of integration. The chapter is also concerned with the kinds of interpretations the volunteers and immigrants present on a concept such as integration. I here distinguish between their understanding of integration at a more ideological level from that of its practical application and explain this through the theory of grammars, where an all-encompassing concept such as integration can have other meanings attached to it that distort and hide characteristics such as discrimination and superiority.

Chapter 5 takes a closer look at descriptions of positions and categories such as immigrant and volunteer that are given in Denmark and how this influences their mutual understanding and the interaction between them. I argue that the characteristics and demands attributed to that of being an immigrant obstruct some of the benefits the voluntary sector has been associated with, such as forming social networks and friendships.

Chapter 6 looks at the motivational grounds for participating in voluntary work. This is done first on a more general, overall level and then focuses more specifically on the participation of volunteer and immigrant in the integration

activities. The motivations vary between volunteer and immigrant and therefore their expectations for their meetings are not always matched, resulting in frustration and misunderstandings. Most of the volunteers are elderly and on some form of retirement scheme. Chapter 6 also looks at the effect this has on their position as part of the Danish society. I argue that by keeping active by engaging themselves with voluntary work, the volunteers also find a way of keeping themselves integrated within society. Integration is thus not only a concept related to that of being an immigrant, but a concern to all citizens of a nation.

Chapter 7 sums up the various topics presented in the above chapters and discusses their impact upon each other.

CHAPTER 2. Voluntary Sector

The Danish Red Cross is a voluntary organization and as such falls under the general sub-headings of the voluntary sector and non-profit organization. Much has been written about the voluntary sector and an increased interest the government has taken in the sector has further enhanced its position as an important service provider. Discussion and debate concerning the concept of civil society has appeared in a large segment of literature. Most of the research found on voluntary organizations and work has a sociological, historical or socio-political science background. The material varies in regards to content, but is largely related to the form and shape of the associations⁵, their possibilities and role in today's and yesterday's society as well as the effect volunteer work has been known to extend to its members and the community at large. Most often civil society is seen as one of three major segments of a democratic society – the civil- market- and government sectors. The civil society is historically seen as very influential in shaping both the United States and Europe as we know them today. In order to understand the field I have been engaged in, I will draw upon some of the sociological, historical and socio-political science studies that have concerned themselves with the field. There are also a number of anthropological studies that have given a political, ethnical and organizational account of the sector and which have presented a more detailed account of the voluntary sector's role and shape. In the account that follows I will discuss what is entailed in the services and work of the voluntary sector and the theories around its function and values for the society in general, drawing upon mainly sociological descriptions. They have been included to provide the reader with a deeper understanding for the larger framework the study is inscribed in.

⁵ Voluntary associations are one form of non-profit organisations. As such, they are distinguished from governments, businesses, and families by the substantial presence of voluntary altruism, according to Smith (2000). Voluntary associations differ from other nonprofits by having the associational form of organization, which involves a membership, elected leaders, and significant democracy in determining basic priorities.

The voluntary sector

It is almost impossible to talk about the voluntary sector without involving the John Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project⁶, one of the largest projects undertaken globally about the impact and possibilities entailed in the nonprofit sector. The study's participants in Denmark are tied to the Voluntary Research Study (*Frivillighedsundersøgelsen*) and comprise a number of scientists, all of whom share a political- or social science background. The combined expertise of the researchers on the topic of voluntary work makes their papers an excellent source for the presentation of the voluntary sector. Political scientist and specialist in voluntary work Bjarne Ibsen and senior researcher on voluntary work and associations Ulla Habermann have described the voluntary sector as those activities and organization-forms that are neither formal/public nor commercial/private and that don't come under the heading of the family. Voluntary work is the unpaid work someone does for others than herself and her closest family. It can be carried out in all sectors of society such as those concerned with sport, culture and housing, or social and health areas. Most of the voluntary work takes place as part of, or within, a voluntary association (Ibsen and Habermann 2005: 3). In their report "Den frivillige sektor" (2006) Bjarne Ibsen, Torben Fridberg and Thomas Boje further describe the nonprofit, or voluntary sector, with the help of the following five characteristics:

1. FORMALIZED ORGANIZATION

This entails that the entity is part of an "institutionalized reality".

2. INDEPENDENT FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The organization should not be controlled by the public sector and must be separated from the latter, in other words it has to be private. (This does not, however, prevent the organizations from performing services for the public sector or indeed being financed by it)

3. NONPROFIT

The organizations primary goal should not be to generate profit, neither directly nor indirectly, nor should the organizations be driven by commercial goals and considerations.

⁶ The Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project (2005) is a systematic effort to analyze the scope, structure, financing, and role of the private nonprofit sector in a cross-section of countries around the world in order to improve the knowledge and enrich the theoretical understanding of this sector, and to provide a sounder basis for both public and private action towards it.

4. SELF-GOVERNED

The organization should be self-governed. In other words the organization should not be controlled by other organizations, but have the opportunity to decide over its own affairs.

5. VOLUNTARISM

Participation within the organization should be voluntary, in other words membership or participation is voluntary-based and voluntary, unpaid work is carried out in the organization.

(Boje, Fridberg and Ibsen 2006)

The report goes on to delineate the definition into three organizational types that are appropriate for a Danish context, i.e. the association, the self-governed institution and the public good foundation. They all have in common that they are funded on a private juridical foundation, they are not run for profit and they have an autonomous management committee. Their differences are expressed through the tasks they typically involve themselves with, their decision-making organs as well as the way the management is structured. The Danish Red Cross has a voluntary association form. According to Smith (2000), the voluntary associations are distinguished from governments, businesses, and families by the substantial presence of voluntary altruism. Voluntary associations differ from other nonprofit structures by having the associational form of organization, which involves a membership, elected leaders, and significant democracy in determining basic priorities, all of which can be found in the organizational structure of the Danish Red Cross.

The voluntary sector is also considered as having a pioneering role, as it to a larger degree than the public sector, can allow itself even an unsuccessful trial. It therefore frequently involves an innovative, project-developing or project-initiating aspect in its work (Hestetun and Onarheim 1990: 33). The Danish Red Cross integration work involves all three of these aspects. Firstly, it is an extension to the governments' existing integration programs, such as the language school and into-work programs (project-developing). Secondly, the integration groups are new to the Danish Red Cross's previously more traditional working areas (project-initiators). Finally, some of the activities such as bicycle courses are pioneering activities within the integration sector (innovative).

Anthropological contributions

There are a number of anthropological contributions towards the voluntary sector. Political anthropology has engaged itself with this topic and in an attempt to explain the broad dimensions of the term civil society, Chris Hann (1996) presents three usages, a) civil society as social groups and organizations that through opposition can counter-balance the state, b) an analytical term of social science with concrete references and c) a distinctive vision of a desirable social order. In a book by Shore and Wright (1997) the politicization of the sector is discussed. Their focus is on the political and power aspect present within the voluntary sector. They argue that because the sector is used as an extension to look after some of the responsibilities of the welfare state, the voluntary engagement and social responsibility the volunteers take on in their work becomes a form of political leadership technique. By this they mean that the citizens (in this case the volunteers), internalize and are attributed with particular norms and values that become ruling for their thoughts, emotions and actions.

Other anthropological studies have focused on the topic of ethnic voluntary associations. They have looked into the internal life of these voluntary organizations and their importance for the members' identity formation, but also what their participation means in relation to their larger engagement with the society they live in. (Such as whether or not participation in their own ethnic voluntary organizations also means an increased involvement and furthering of participation in the democratic process of the society they live in). Ethnic minorities participation in the voluntary organization has also been highlighted as being important in getting access to and meeting people who are in a similar situation to oneself, in order for example for youths to get a stronger argumentative basis to stand on when dealing with generational and traditional issues with their parents (Mørck 1998). Along the same line, in an extensive comparative study Carl-Ulrik Schierup's (1986) study on Vlachs, a Romanian-speaking minority in Serbia, looks at their transition to Denmark and Sweden and describes the different experiences the two groups underwent. He looks at what kind of possibilities and impact the various types of organizational groups had upon the identity of the Vlachs located in Sweden and Denmark respectively. He shows that the deviations between the Vlachic mens' experiences in Sweden and Denmark didn't depend so much on a different mentality and tradition on behalf of

Swedish and Danish workers, but rather upon the difference in the types of demands that the various technological prerequisites and forms of organization of the regular work the men attended, meant for the communication between people and people's control over their environment.

Sally Anderson in her study on the impact of participation of children in voluntary sports associations (2002), has found a high degree of socialization and civilizing aspect within the associations' form and history. Her study does not specifically focus on an ethnic minority, but rather the organizational form and life of the voluntary sports associations themselves. Similarly, Karen Lisa Goldschmidt Salamon (1992) brought the larger Scandinavian regional ethnographic concept of sameness (*lighed*) into the realm of the voluntary associations by including the concept of unity (*enighed*).

Historical Background

In another of the reports provided by the Danish members of the John Hopkins Comparative Non-Profit Organization Study, Bjarne Ibsen and Ulla Habermann, two of the leading researches on the topic of voluntary organizations in Denmark, have provided a detailed historical account of the voluntary organizations in Denmark (Ibsen and Habermann, 2005). The account that follows is a summary of their interpretation of historical events in Denmark. They relate the beginning of the voluntary sector in Denmark to three factors: The introduction of the democratic constitution, the arising folk movements and the creation of the welfare state. Where the democratic constitution can be seen to have served as the actual foundation of the voluntary sector, the folk movements gave it life and meaning and the welfare state defined its division of work.

As Denmark became a constitutional monarchy in 1849 people were free to form organizations and congregations. Even though various forms of organizations did exist before then as well (especially under the auspices of the church), it was only really with the transition from the traditional feudal- to the modern class society that one started talking about a voluntary sector. The social structure changed, new needs arose that had to be taken care of by new associations and a division between public and private sectors all made it necessary and possible to coordinate new forms of interest- and self-helping groups. The voluntary associations were founded and spread

across almost all sectors of society: political party associations, interest-based organizations, union associations, economic associations, philanthropic associations, sports and religious associations.

From the mid 1800s several folk movements such as the workers- peasant-religious- sports- and abstemious movements strongly influenced the values and traditions of the associations. They had as their goal to try to solve some of the problems that the new social order brought with it and had an enormous political influence as both democratic partner and opponent. The associations of today still enjoy large membership numbers, a sign of their continuing importance in the political landscape. Alongside these movements, but standing somewhat separate from them are the philanthropic movements. They can be divided between charities and self-help organizations. Charities saw their main goal as supporting the poor and needy financially but also raising them morally. The self-governed organizations focused on specific groups such as children or handicapped but also built insurance-like organizations and co-operations. Both charities and self-help organizations have been somewhat superseded by the formation of the welfare state and what was seen as its responsibility.

One of the 20th Century's largest projects, the formation of the welfare state, has provided a form of welfare identity that over the years has influenced the relationship between state and the voluntary sector. The state has had the principal responsibility for its citizens' welfare, so that the complementary role of the voluntary sector has been overshadowed. The voluntary sector has however developed parallel and in tune with the rest of society and has been in constant dialogue with the welfare state. The development has gone from charity and enlightenment to fights for particular interests and protection of citizens' rights. It has not always been easy for the voluntary sector to find its role in the zone between public and civic sectors. Especially so since the state has once again taken a renewed interest in the extended services and benefits provided by the voluntary sector and the benefits that can be derived from a closer relationship between the two.

Shift in voluntary organizations' shape

Another prominent figure in the field of voluntary associations, Norwegian sociologist Håkon Lorentzen (2001), has written about some of the changes the civic

society has undergone. He argues that there has been a noticeable shift in the way people participate in voluntary associations. Instead of being long-term or life-long members of one association and strongly connected to the association's moral values, volunteers today are more goal-orientated with a shorter period of engagement and they are less likely to have strong bonds to the association's value-system. Contrary to what many believe however, today's age of individualization has not meant that fewer people are engaged in volunteer work, but it has seen a change in the type of volunteer work. The volunteers' involvement is more activity orientated, that is they pursue what they find interesting at the time, which explains a higher transition frequency (Christensen and Isen 2001: 147-157).

Voluntary work itself has become more specialized and activity-orientated and reasons for joining an association have undergone a number of alterations. Lorentzen explains this transition through the modernization of society in general. The general individualization effect modern society is experiencing also filters through to the social engagement in voluntary organizations and their work (Lorentzen 2001). As was mentioned above, the changes voluntary associations have undergone was and is largely influenced by the changes society in general is affected by. Around 1900, when many voluntary associations first started, much of their work was divided into two sections – the public and individually orientated associations. The associations devoted to the public were marked by philanthropic motives – wanting to do good for groups of people less fortunate than the donators whereas associations devoted to the public-enlightenment aimed to enculturate and promote the behavior of good citizens by giving meaning and purpose to life through which they also supported the nations cultural and national identity. Much of the earlier philanthropic work has become associated with rather negative connotations due to their connection with mercy and pity rather than equality of the people the volunteers were trying to help. The individually orientated associations were engaged in for example building better housing estates and providing insurance and garden-allotments. The overall motives can be summed up in the following way: to do good for others without personal benefits. Egoism and personal gain did not count as legitimate motives. The personal contribution should be characterized by sympathy and mercy. The gains to society were distinguished through ideas of wholeness and love for the community, motivated by the ideal of the good citizen. Today's engagement is distinct from this in that sympathy and mercy have been replaced by a more personal profit interest. A more

balanced sentiment characterizes the voluntary work of today. It has become legitimate to want something out of the work one engages in. Spending time with other people, rather than just doing good for others has become a highly motivating factor in engaging people in voluntary work. It is in the continuous endeavour to attain the good life that motivational factors can be found today rather than in striving for the education of good citizens.

Such tendencies were also noticeable in the volunteers of the Danish Red Cross integration activities. Few of the volunteers had been members of the organization before they joined the group, some still had not signed up as members, even though they were participating in the work of the Danish Red Cross. This did not necessarily signal a lack of belief in and support for the work the Danish Red Cross accomplished, or its ethical and moral values, but rather signified the volunteers' goal-driven perspective towards their own involvement with their work. The volunteers joined the activity because of their engagement for the cause at hand, namely the integration of immigrants, with little regard as to who ran the activity. It was their involvement in that cause that motivated them in joining the Danish Red Cross integration activity group. If the integration work had been under the control of another organization, they would have joined that organization instead.

Voluntary organizations as an extension of welfare services

Several scholars have pointed towards a trend that voluntary organizations have become an extension to the public sector's responsibilities in the welfare of their citizens (Villadsen et al. 1998, Christensen and Molin 1995). The number of reports and inquiries made on the voluntary sector as of late can be seen as a further indication of the increasing interest the public sector has shown towards the civil societies (SFI). The positioning of the voluntary sector as a service provider for some of the state's responsibilities has not gone unmarked and has come under criticism by a number of academics involved in the area. One argument, presented by political anthropologists Cris Shore and Susan Wright (1997), asserts that by taking on responsibilities of the state, the voluntary organizations risk reflecting the governmental line and policies and their role as a counter-weight and independent source of democratic organization is put under pressure. It is what Shore and Wright have described as a form of political leadership-technique and which Filip Wijkström

has further explained as a state where citizens are both “given” and internalize certain norms and values that govern their thoughts, feelings and actions (Wijkström 2001: 132). Wijkström goes on to say that the more professional role that is expected of the organizations in taking on certain aspects of the government’s welfare services can be transferred to the volunteers, and thus hinder the democratic and social network effect the associations have normally been attributed with.

Voluntary associations are seen as good promoters of democracy due to their democratic structure, where each member has equal opportunity to participate in the decision-making processes. Furthermore, the changes and decisions made are normally effected by a bottom up strategy, rather than a top down one. Most of the decision-making structure of voluntary associations is built up in such a way that each segment is an independent unit and although they obey the rules of the organization, they are largely free to structure their work in the way they regard as most suitable. As organizations grow in size and members, an administrative sector of mostly paid and professional staff have to be employed. Most often such a professional administration heavily influences the outcome of decisions made by the volunteers, as it has the advantage of having great insight into the ongoings of the association and experience in matters of what generally works. Therefore the volunteers also tend to listen to the advice given by the professionals. It is this structure which Wijkström, Shore and Wright argue allows the government to exert influence over the volunteers. The demands put upon the voluntary organization become more professional as they take on the role of social service provider, which influences both the kind of work the volunteers are engaged in and the way the work of the volunteers is structured. The professional administration exerts its influence in a more goal orientated and direct way than has previously been the case.

In regards to the social network effect, voluntary associations are seen to exert a positive effect in the creation of social networks, especially when their work is directed towards groups of people, who are regarded as standing somewhat outside mainstream society. Through their association with the volunteers, those people are given a chance to meet people outside of their own vulnerable group and can in this way become more engaged in and find a way to participate in the society around them. The more professional role volunteers are asked to fulfill, when performing the work of the government, does not necessarily allow the creation of friendships as easily as previously.

Whereas previously voluntary organizations were given state support purely because they existed, they get funding today depending on what they do. Preferably the organizations should produce some kind of service that directly alleviates the work of the municipalities and the state (Wijkström 2001: 133). This is problematic, for as Lorentzen argues, there is reason to believe that the more dependent a voluntary activity is on the economic support of the state, the more it will be influenced by the state's goals and ideals. This is an unfortunate situation, as the economic dependency often happens on account of those ideals and organizational structure that give voluntary organizations their individuality (Lorentzen 1995: 210-211). The function of the voluntary organizations as a democratic movement and one that produces "voices" and opinions can be compromised by such a trend.

Governmental influence over the Danish Red Cross

The Danish government's increased focus on voluntary work with its ability to help carry out part of the government's responsibilities has meant increased funds for work that supports and effects a smoother integration. The Danish Red Cross as well as the Danish Red Cross's integration sections were able to apply for funds from the local council and the government's section §115. This section was especially set up to ensure a better cooperation between municipalities and voluntary organizations. Of the voluntary activities that are given financial support, work that focuses on integration is the largest and fastest growing segment. In order to be considered for this funding the activities must however be in accordance with the government's interpretation of what furthers integration. For example the government commissioned a consulting firm to make a report on the integration effort of the Danish Red Cross and three other voluntary organizations that were receiving government funds. One of the recommendations made regarding the work of the Danish Red Cross in the report was that:

*"The voluntary integration work should to a higher degree offer **individual and goal orientated activities**, that, for example, are geared towards integration in the workforce, in the educational system and in the voluntary associational life."*
(original emphasis, my translation).

(Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration 2004: 3)

This recommendation confirms a wish to have a direct line of influence over how integration is interpreted within the civil society (at least the fraction that receives government sponsorship for volunteer work). It suggests that the civil society is not independent, but rather an extension of the government's own ideology and policies.

Even though there are strong arguments to support the latter, it does not necessarily mean that governmental policy influences the work of the voluntary associations all the way down to grassroots level. The integration activity groups can at the highest levels be seen as an extension of the government's cohesive integration plan, but the groups' partial autonomy also needs to be recognised. Each group is in theory free to pursue any type of activity it deems suitable for successful integration. The Danish Red Cross consultants can however, and often do, help to initialize, set up and provide ideas for newly established groups. During this phase it can be argued that the consultants', and hence the government's, aspirations can influence the types of activity the groups choose to focus on. On the other hand, once the groups are established and administer themselves, they are in no way restrained by any recommendations the Danish Red Cross's administrative staff might offer. There is little the Danish Red Cross consultants can do to influence the **personal** interaction that takes place between volunteer and immigrant. The interaction between volunteer and immigrant does not necessarily follow the organizations rules, but the volunteers own logic. Disciplinary action relating to inappropriate conduct is rarely taken and it is up to the individual volunteer to interact with the immigrant in the way that they regard as appropriate. There is a large variation in the extent to which volunteers involve themselves in their work with the immigrants. Some involve themselves greatly in the private lives of the immigrants whilst others focus on meeting the immigrants only during the time of the activity. As sociologist Anders La Cour (2005: 11-13) argues, the voluntary organization can therefore not bind their services to any particular way of appropriation. The volunteers' autonomy in their interaction with the immigrants means that the voluntary organization's answerability as service providers to, for example, the municipality or government is questionable.

Voluntary work as a sign of dissatisfaction

Voluntarism can also function as a balance against a political leadership technique. American sociologist John Wilson argues that volunteers have various motives for

carrying out voluntary work and it can be an expression of dissatisfaction with the government's own efforts to solve various problems (Wilson 2000). The volunteers can have a lack of trust that others (the state) do a good job and this in turn motivates them to become involved in voluntary work (Oliver in Wilson 2000: 225). The extent of this in a Scandinavian context can however be questioned, as voluntary organizations historically have not held the same oppositional position they have had and still hold in other European countries. The civil society in Scandinavia has featured as a part of or an extension of the state rather than as an oppositional force. According to some historians and sociologists this can be related all the way back to how the feudal system was abolished in the Scandinavian countries (Sørensen and Stråth 1997). The feudal system was established and based upon a strong politically empowered peasant estate with equality at its very core (Trädgårdh in Sørensen and Stråth 1997: 260)⁷. This circumstance has made oppositional force rather superfluous. Nevertheless the volunteers in my study mentioned their dissatisfaction with the government as part of their motivational grounds for joining the integration groups. The volunteers expressed deep sympathy for the immigrants and their situation in Denmark and were often appalled at the government's lack of ability to handle their presence. It was this circumstance, which compelled the volunteers to take matters into their own hands and join the integration groups.

Organizational life and integration

The Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI) found that there is a general perception that voluntary work is especially well suited to help with the task of integration (Christensen and Christensen 2006). They argue that voluntary work is not institutionalized in the way other state channels that offer integration are, such as language schools, into-work programs or social workers. Instead, ideally, the voluntary organizations have the opportunity to provide a meeting ground where both partners meet on free and equal terms. Others such as political scientists and sociologist Wollebæk, Selle and Lorentzen (2000), who all have written extensively on the topic of the civic sector in Norway, support this line of thought and argue that participation in the voluntary sector creates a positive circle, where volunteers and

⁷ Denmark for example, is the only country in the world that voluntarily and without bloodshed abolished its feudal system.

users of the voluntary services gain increasing knowledge, a broader social network, a boost in self-esteem and a possibility for self-realization. Political scientist Robert Putnam in his influential book *Making Democracy Work. Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (1993) has argued that participation in voluntary associations promotes social capital. He defines social capital as something which is established through social relations and which has a tendency to increase society's effectivity. By building bridges through getting to know one another, establishing trust, networks and norms, social cohesion is enhanced and friction reduced. When people congregate of their own free will in order to do something together, the social capital of a society increases (Putnam 1993: 167). This does not however automatically mean that organizations become a spawning ground for social networks across ethnic and social backgrounds. Some factors embedded in voluntary associations can impede such an outcome and will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Equality

In the sociological and anthropological field of voluntarism, it is generally accepted that participation in a voluntary association socializes members to particular codes and ways of being that are found within the civic sector (Liden 2001: 161).

The anthropological studies of voluntary and social work by Sally Anderson (2002) and Karen Lisa Goldschmidt Salamon (1992) indicate a strong presence of thoughts of equality within the voluntary associations. They argue that people within voluntary associations tend to focus on common interests and/or values and put aside any inequalities to enhance their sameness and equality. Accordingly, the voluntary association becomes a place where roles and positions held by the individuals in the outside world are put aside, to give way to a common form of social interaction. This observation has long been connected to voluntarism. One of the first generation of German sociologists, Georg Simmel, likewise contended that association work is a form of being together, where inequalities are hidden or pushed aside for the larger ideal of equality. There are however those that oppose such ideas and historian Lars Trädgårdh for example maintains that inequality is at the core of the proposed equality of civil society (Trädgårdh 1997: 259). He argues that the inequalities inherent in the bourgeois civil society are transposed to voluntary work and it takes the form of volunteers being demeaning towards the recipients of the aid. Others, such

as sociologist Charles Tilly, have argued adamantly that there is an underlying inequality as part of the categorization of people in society in general, women/men, black/white, insiders/outsideers, which is also visible in the voluntary sector. No matter how hard one tries to hide these inequalities by for example renaming categories (in the case of the Danish Red Cross, calling immigrants “users”), or establishing new groups to conceal inequalities, they continue to exist. In particular when the work is related to immigrants, the asymmetry between volunteer/immigrant is embedded in the relationship of helper/receiver (Tilly in Habermann, 2001: 299-307).

Sameness

Several anthropologists have described how equality and the acceptance or rejection of one’s behavior is largely related to the principle of *sameness* that has been determined as one of the key operative anthropological norms within a Nordic context (Gullestad 1991, Salomon 1992, Gopal 2000). Anthropologists Marianne Lien, Hilde Liden and Halvard Vike have in their book *Likhetens Paradokser: Antropologiske undersøkelser i det moderne Norge* (2001), described the principle of sameness as a way of experiencing social reality and people’s strategies for coping with this reality. They argue that sameness is something, which can be either emphasized or downplayed in the meeting with others. Most people however, and perhaps to a larger degree in a Nordic context than in other regions, avoid confrontations that emphasize each other’s differences. It is therefore possible that people experience sameness as a reality, even though their lives can encompass large differences. Sameness is appropriated as a regulating principle and the foundation for welfare political institutions, but also as a leading principle for social interaction, equality and equal rights (Lien, Liden and Vike 2001). Immigrants are not necessarily granted equal treatment, as their culturally different background deviates from the otherwise “accepted” norms. They first have to be educated to abide by the correct cultural codes, but as the definition of the latter can be changed intermittently by the people who see themselves as the “natives” of the country, their attainment is hard, if not impossible, to achieve. It is difficult for immigrants to attain the acceptance of the “natives”, as there are no set levels or norms the immigrants have to achieve in order to be regarded as the “same” and therefore equal. They might learn the language, but not attain the right level of fluency, or adapt to some traditions, but still also celebrate

their own. What it is they have to achieve in order to be regarded as the same is opaque, as there is no real accepted norm, just the belief that there is one. Immigrants are thus likely to continue being treated as different and as outsiders.

That immigrants are to be treated differently also becomes visible in the goals and ideas the volunteers had for the integration activity groups. Rather than including the immigrants in already existing programs within the Danish Red Cross, separate activity groups were set up with a particular form and function. This action indicates that immigrants are seen as a group different from other users of volunteer groups and challenges the idea of voluntary associations as particularly suitable for social networking. When it comes to the treatment of social problem groups such as drug abusers and the mentally ill for example, the activities are not as activity specific as they are with immigrants. The activity in itself is seen as less influential on the users re-integration into society, instead the focus is placed on the interaction that takes place between people (Villadsen 1998: 120). This disparity between social problem groups, such as drug abusers, mentally ill or handicapped, and immigrants, suggests that immigrants are even more disadvantaged than other social problem groups⁸. Their cultural divergence sets them apart and brings fourth other solution strategies than those applicable to other social problem groups. As one of the committee foremen replied when I asked him why the immigrants couldn't have joined the already existing programs the Danish Red Cross offered:

“Yes but that is something else. The regular sewing club sits and makes children's clothes, knits or crochets. Some have a sewing machine at home where they sew dresses. I mean, our sewing activity for immigrants, that is a form of education, where we thought that some immigrants would want to come and learn how to sew or do needlework or find one thing or another, but it was an education!”

“This here with the integration group is something more goal-orientated. In the language cafe we sit with the immigrants and the goal is to practice their Danish. Whereas the other [Danish Red Cross] activities [that are not part of the integration activity groups], well, there the focus is not on learning the Danish language. ...In our groups, however, we demand that the immigrants speak Danish even amongst each other.”

⁸ Furthermore, the very suggestion that immigrants are seen to belong to the category of social problem groups suggests their difference and hence separation from the rest of the Danish society.

The practice of determining activities according to the user-group, undermines the principles of equality and sameness that are inherent in the voluntary sector and society in general. Many associations are characterized by a perception of equality, similarity and conformity. Should disagreements not be resolved, the easiest solution is simply to establish a new association with like-minded people⁹. This allows the feeling of sameness and equality to be unremittingly reinforced and the association becomes a place for like-minded people (Salamon 1992). In practice this translates to that many decisions in the organizational realm are consensus-orientated, with most disagreements being cleared and resolved before even entering the actual decision realm. Similarly in the Nordic voluntary sector, new membership recruitment and projects are often divided into separate sub-sections of an organization, as was the case with the integration activities.

In short

One can therefore question the value of emphasizing the voluntary sector as particularly well suited for providing integration services. At least for providing services that are aimed at equality regardless of differences. There are both positive and negative aspects involved in using a voluntary approach. There is much to say about the positive outcome of creating social capital, such as Putman described it. According to his description social capital is created almost regardless of what the aims are in the execution of the activities. The partaking in voluntary work itself stimulates a positive effect for society. However the experience of the concerned individuals and the opportunities given to, in particular, the users of the services provided by the volunteers, will affect the formers' perception of their status within society. Especially if the contact with the volunteers is one of the few encounters that for example immigrants have with Danes. The outcome of their interaction therefore depends on the practices that the groups themselves engage in. In order to establish the norms and standards the Danish Red Cross integration activity groups I followed operated under, it was necessary to first define the meaning of the notion of integration. Its interpretation will affect the purpose and meaning of the integration

⁹ This was also confirmed by my informants, some of who had previously participated in another integration group. After some disagreements as to how the program should be run however, many of them decided to start their own group instead.

activity groups and, as a result, affect the outcome of the interaction between volunteer and immigrant.

CHAPTER 3. INTEGRATION

As well as the voluntary sector, the study is also placed within the realm of integration. Integration has a vital role as a key concept in this study. The many different usages and meanings that are attributed to the notion of integration however, make research in this area tricky. It is used as an analytical research tool, but also as a political agenda. This chapter will summarize a variety of different interpretations and agendas associated with integration, as well as its historical modification and usage in Denmark today.

Many types of interpretations

Integration has become a notion almost exclusively associated with immigrants and their settling into a new country. Even though a limitation has occurred in its usage, integration still entails a variety of definitions and meanings. Its familiar and widespread usage incorporates a spectrum of interpretations. The common man on the street might not think of the same thing as the academic or the politician, when the word integration is mentioned. The various social sciences do not either necessarily agree on one definition of what integration represents, yet they all use integration either as a phenomenon, an analytical concept or a description of general social behavior. Such a wide spectrum of use and interpretations has made it problematic to use as an analytical concept. As an analytical concept it should be possible to be used comparatively, but as for example Inge Sjørsløv has shown, integration is not given the same meaning and purpose in Brasil, as it is in Denmark (Sjørsløv 2007). This creates difficulties when trying to evaluate, analyze and compare various studies with one another. As social scientists Herzfeld and Cohen have pointed out, integration has become symbolic in character. It can be filled with any meaning the narrator deems most suitable at the time (Herzfeld; Cohen in Iversen 2001). For example, integration is the overall term that describes the three quite different types of integration strategies of assimilation, integration and segregation. In a paper published for AMID (Academy for Migration Studies in Denmark), social scientist Ruth Emerek describes assimilation as the process whereby the minority group by force or voluntarily becomes like the majority group. Integration is depicted as a process where minority-, and majority groups both adapt to each other - a kind of melting-pot integration -

where a multi-cultural society is formed on the basis of the diversity of ethnic cultures. Segregation, on the other hand, is portrayed as a circumstance where minority- and majority groups are forced to, or voluntarily, live apart (Emerek 2003: 5). Emerek goes on to describe different types of integration interpretations, amongst others that depicted by Charlotte Hamburger. She is used as an example to represent a sociological aspect of integration, where researchers separate between two types of integration:

- **SYSTEM-INTEGRATION:** the mutual process between ethnic groups and the system, which concerns itself mainly with the civil, social and political rights, as well as the minority's economic and social placement in society.
- **SOCIAL-INTEGRATION:** the mutual process between the society's minority groups and the majority, which concerns itself with the majority's and minority's understanding of and behavior towards each other on an organizational and individual level.

According to Hamburger the two are interlinked. One cannot expect a social integration unless the systemic one is in place. System integration includes the state's acceptance and behavior towards its immigrants as citizens. Even if a formal system integration policy is in place, this still does not ensure a smooth social integration. Different educational background, access to social networks and discrimination can hinder a successful social integration regardless of what formal policies are in place (Hamburger in Emerek 2003).

Even though the integration concept is in praxis entwined with values of hierarchical structures, the political agenda and the public discourse, it is problematic to use as an analytical tool. Sjørølev still argues that it is possible to theorize about the politicization of the concept and how it is used in praxis. Also, even though integration does not have the same meaning for different parties, it is still possible to compare what kind of mechanisms form the basis for exclusion and inclusion in a society. Such mechanisms are often built upon fundamental and slow-changing conceptions of cultural identity and foreignness (Sjørølev 2007: 142). It is through the unravelling and closer examination of such conceptions that I can explain the specific meaning integration has gained in Denmark.

Integration and anthropology

Integration within anthropology, according to anthropologists Karen Fog Olwig and Karsten Pærregaard (2007), has previously referred to any of the many and varied processes involved with social inclusion and exclusion that any member of society undergoes. It has described a continuous, ongoing social process, which was an integral part of forming, shaping and re-inventing society at large. Integration focused on the relationship between the individual and society, how the interaction between the two is effected and formed and how their relationship in turn shapes social patterns and structures. Integration has also depicted how abnormalities or deviations from the norm can challenge but also reinforce, patterns of cohesion and belonging.

Integration today still involves all of the above processes but no longer automatically refers to the more abstract social processes of inclusion and exclusion that affect all people in society. Olwig and Pærregaard (2007) continue to say, that the process of integration has come to refer more broadly to a political agenda that targets a select group of people, namely immigrants. It is the action involved with and measures taken to ensure the successful integration of immigrants. Sentiments of what shapes the nation, people's boundaries and beliefs of what symbolizes their culture and keeps others separated from it and a typecasting of the immigrants are all embedded in the numerous criteria placed on immigrants in order to achieve integration. The immigrants' presence forms part of a new cohesion, a unit against which the cohesive majority can be pitched and measured and has created a formation of new units of insiders and outsiders.

Ever since the idea of the nation state arose, in the 18th and 19th Century, it has been regarded as a natural entity, which demarcates one people from another¹⁰. As anthropologist Liisa Malkki (1992) has argued, people are thus seen to naturally belong to one particular nation, sealed with the granting of citizenship. Malkki's work focused on refugees, but can easily be transferred to immigrants. People, who for various reasons choose to leave "their" nation and move to another, are regarded as "matter out of place". They are not seen as naturally belonging to the foreign nation they have ended up in (Malkki, 1992). Such sentiments endure, regardless of the large

¹⁰ Ideas of a nation are formed around beliefs of cultural homogeneity, brought about by a common language and ethnicity. The actual idea of the nation state arose in the 18th and 19th Century as a way of keeping order in an increasingly more complex social structure that arose with the onset of industrialization (Rytter 2007: 63).

movement of people the onset of globalization has brought with it. Immigrants and refugees continue to be regarded as an awkward and threatening element to the “natural” order of the nation state and the foreigners’ presence brings with it a fear of loss of cohesion and order in the nation-state. As Koopmans et al. (2005) have described it: *“When all things are mixed and new elements are brought into the nation-state, what glue do you have to hold society together?”*

In the political world, immigrants are often depicted as a threatening element to the cohesion of the nation. It is the immigrants’ foreignness and difference, which is regarded as a disturbing threat to the nation’s homogeneity. In today’s globalized world, it has become more difficult to form borders and order based on citizenship of one cohesive, homogenous mass. Nevertheless people are still operating within the structure of nation-states. Issues of immigration have risen above those of unemployment and social welfare and have come to figure strongly in politics (Koopmans et al. 2005). Immigrants have to be taught a particular way of how to best fit into their newly adopted home in order to maintain the order of the nation - it is not enough to acquire citizenship (Koopmans et al. 2005). Out of this situation, a whole polity of integration strategies have arisen.

Immigration in Denmark

Before looking more closely at Denmark’s current integration policies, an account of Denmark’s most recent immigration history helps to provide a better understanding of the context they are placed within. Anthropologists Peter Hervik (2004, 2002, 1999) and Jonathan Schwartz (1990, 1985) have both concerned themselves with the changes in the way immigrants have been regarded in Denmark. Their studies offer a helpful guide to the development and sequence of events that have formed the integration policies we witness today. The following is a combined summary of their work.

In line with many other European countries at the time, Denmark received numerous foreigners during the large migration of workers in the 1960/70s. Integration figured in the public debate but did not as yet refer primarily to the integration of foreigners. The Danish majority mostly welcomed the influx of migrants from areas as varied as the Balkans, Middle East, Pakistan and North Africa, regarding their presence as something positive. Their manpower was appreciated,

employment was plentiful and the foreign workers were seen to contribute to and help build a stronger Denmark. The foreign workers were called guestworkers, which implied a given status as guests. As “guests” they were expected to leave and return to their countries of origin after having completed their work-period in Denmark. They were further expected to behave as grateful guests, thankful for being welcomed and allowed to come and work in Denmark. Danes were seen as doing the “guests” a favour in letting them come and work, which in turn gave Danes a position of power.

In the 1970s and 1980s the economic situation in Denmark changed. Employment became scarce and Danes found themselves out of work. The “guests” were no longer extended a warm welcome but were instead expected to hold true to their unspoken terms for being in Denmark and leave the country now their services were no longer needed. Instead many of the immigrants had settled down and built a life for themselves in Denmark. Many had already brought, others wanted to bring, their families into the country. The guestworkers’ decision to stay was by some perceived as a broken promise of the terms and conditions through which they had gained entry into the country. As Jonathan Schwartz interprets it, a formerly kindly inclined host-population became provoked and felt betrayed and their previous fairly positive attitudes shifted towards more negatively charged ones (Schwartz 1990).

In the 1980s and 90s, an increasing number of refugees entered the country and pressure mounted to politically organize and structure the presence of the “foreign element”. The negatively charged sentiments primarily focused on the immigrants’ difficulties in adapting to their new home. In particular, the immigrants’ cultural background and identity was perceived as a hindrance to a smooth integration. In 2001 an integration ministry was set up, new regulations and policies were introduced to further integration, voluntary integration programs were supported and considerable monetary funds were set aside for the purpose of integration. A political agenda for a specific target group had arisen.

Integration policy

The Danish government’s integration policy has three goals: a) to ensure that newly arrived foreigners gain equal participation as other citizens in society’s political, economic, work-related, social, religious and cultural life. b) to ensure that newly arrived foreigners quickly become self-reliant through employment, and c) to provide

the individual foreigner with an understanding of the Danish society's formative values and norms (Ministeriet for Flygtninge Indvandrere og Integration 2006: 6).

In her article on integration, Ruth Emerek (2003) mentions that the Danish government's integration plan is influenced by an economic approach toward integration. Social integration is overshadowed by demands and goals of participation in the workforce and education, so as to allow immigrants to be economically independent. Whether immigrants participate on a par with Danes, whether work opportunities are equal or they are over-represented in a particular field of work is secondary to this primary goal. In addition, immigrants are frequently depicted as a social problem and an economic threat to the welfare state. This becomes an even more pressing argument when the numbers of immigrants participating in the workforce are low. Rather than viewing workforce participation figures as a reflection of the conditions and opportunities given to immigrants, it is regarded as a problem innate to the immigrants themselves.

Problem integrating innate in immigrant

Anthropologist Peter Hervik has written extensively on immigrants in the Danish context. He argues that it is a common misconception that it is difficult for immigrants to integrate into the Danish society because they have a culturally different background. It is a common belief amongst the Danish majority that people are born with a particular culture, skin color and religion. Cultural diversity is perceived as something you are born into and cannot change. This innateness of cultural difference is in turn perceived as the explanation for why immigrants cannot become integrated into a Danish context. The understanding of culture as innate within the immigrant, fosters an understanding of integration as a question of attaining cultural similarity (Hervik 2004: 249). The more culturally different the immigrants are perceived to be, the more difficult their integration into Danish society is expected to be. Any difficulties in integrating are therefore blamed on the immigrants, rather than perhaps also being considered as a reflection upon the kind of opportunities they are given (Hervik 1999, 2000)¹¹.

¹¹ In Denmark the Muslim culture has been identified as being especially incommensurate with Danish values and lifestyle. Islam is seen as a fanatic religion, which supports all kinds of non-acceptable norms such as criminality, terrorism and the suppression of women (Jensen 2007: 173).

Anthropologist Steffen Jøhncke (2007) offers a supplementary explanation for why immigrants are seen as so culturally different, that they have a hard time becoming integrated into Danish society. His explanation rests on the structure of the Danish welfare state. He argues that the welfare state has been built on an idea of sameness amongst all Danes, where all of Denmark's population is seen as a naturally existing "whole". He goes on to say that this idea has in the past been pretty accurate, with most speaking the same language and sharing the same ethnicity. This nationalistic homogeneity is regarded as the foundation for the establishment of the welfare state and as a necessary element to achieve political and economical integration (Jøhncke 2007). The welfare state builds on the idea that all contribute to the welfare of each other, a socialistic project set on the idea of sameness and equality. It is this "glue" of togetherness and sameness, that is threatened by the arrival of immigrants. With their arrival, it is no longer possible to use the same conditions and terminologies for togetherness. However, the structural mechanisms are embedded so deeply in the system that it becomes difficult to change the way inclusion and exclusion mechanisms are treated and regarded. This, Jøhncke concludes, explains why the immigrants' ethnicity and difference is held responsible for any kind of problems they might experience in becoming integrated into Danish society.

The explanations offered by Hervik and Jøhncke fit into other anthropological discussions on culture presented by Verena Stolcke (1995), Lutz and Abu-Lughod (1990) and Gerd Baumann (1996). Verena Stolcke has pointed to a new form of racism, which she describes as a form of cultural fundamentalism. She argues that cultures are being hierarchically structured, where some are seen as being better than, and above others. Rather than associating thoughts of racism with phenotypes, this new form of racism specifically targets the immigrants' cultures (Stolcke 1995). In order to make an arrangement of cultures possible, one must have a ground perception of culture as something reifiable.

Abu-Lughod and Lutz have explained this interpretation of culture in the following very appropriate way:

For many, ... the term (culture) seems to connote a certain coherence, uniformity and timelessness in the meaning systems of a given group, and to operate rather like the earlier concept of 'race' in identifying fundamentally different, essentialized, and homogenous social units (as when we speak about 'a culture'). Because of these associations, ... (it) falsely fixes the boundaries between groups in an absolute and artificial way.

(Lutz in Abu-Lughod 1990: 9)

The reification of culture, as Gerd Baumann (1996) has called it, becomes problematic, when used as a way to segregate people from various backgrounds. When using it in such a way, one forgets that people constantly evolve and transform their culture. It is formed through the interaction between people and is not a stagnant thing, which stays put within a particular boundary.

Baumann also points out that the role cultural differences are given is decided within a majority-minority realm, where the majority has the necessary power to define at what point an ethnic minority “fits in” (Bauman 1996: 136). Peter Hervik and Mikkel Rytter (2004) have drawn attention to such a power-relation in Denmark. It is regarded as the majority’s responsibility to integrate its immigrants, and this in turn also brings with it the actual control of the process. The majority therefore has the power to change and select the criteria for what it means to be integrated into Danish society and the majority’s position and right is not questioned (Hervik and Rytter 2004: 150). This power relation lies latent within the integration concept, but is rarely brought up in the political debate on integration. Hervik and Rytter further argue that the power relation between majority and minority negatively influences aspects of mutuality between the two. Immigrants’ opinions are not counted and validated as being equal to that of Danes. They conclude that as long as such an inequality is part of any integration process, a successful integration will remain an unattainable goal - it is built upon wrongful premises.

The category of immigrant

It is also possible to see the selection of a particular treatment for immigrants as part of a general categorization process that the formation of any society undergoes. Categorization is a process, whereby differences between people are given importance to make it possible to divide and categorize them. A categorization process is a constructed, not a natural process. It is also a social process that involves an aspect of power, where different participants fight for the domination of their definition of a phenomenon to be accepted as valid.

Anthropologist Katrine Schepelern Johansen joins the argument that immigrants in Denmark have been identified as a group with particular needs (Johansen 2007: 158). Their classification has been connected to that of being problematic and in the welfare state it is seen as the government's job to find a solution by this problem. The category of immigrant gains a specific institutional context to which all immigrants are assigned. Typecasting people as problematic contributes to putting people in a framework within which they are given only limited room for movement. It does not account for the numerous differences and aspects of individuality that affect the complexity of human life. This approach has been described as a social technology by anthropologists Jøhncke, Svendsen and Whyte (2004). They argue that the state subscribes to a solution model and that this serves to hold down, keep and handle those people it has been selected for. Accordingly, immigrants' inherent status as different and problematic allows them little room for movement in the institutional/political framework they find themselves in (Jøhncke, Svendsen & Whyte 2004).

The actual process of categorization thus also involves a stigmatization. This idea was already raised by one of the grandfathers of sociology, Georg Simmel (1964). He reasoned that in order to understand society, it was necessary to have categories that were deviations of the norm. 100 years ago, one such deviation was represented by the poor. Simmel went on to argue that society's aid to the poor was also a way of keeping the poor in the same position they were in. Helping the poor was a way of avoiding the danger and threat that the poor represented to society. At the same time, being the helper, gave a position of power that served to divide the poor from their helpers. Therefore, the actual help was not one purely motivated by doing good, but also served to keep the categories of society in tact (1964).

The integration groups and their activities form part of the government's solution model strategy to solve the problem the immigrants' presence represents. The integration groups have a goal to help a specific target group. Following Simmel's argument, this specificity in turn divides the helpers and the helped into two different categories. One party is already integrated, the other has to be helped to be integrated. The helpers are seen as part of society, whereas the immigrants are classified as outsiders – at least before having participated in the integration groups' program. By participating in the volunteer work, the volunteers gain a valuable position as insiders of society. Other categories that they might also fall under, such as being elderly or retired, which can otherwise push them to the peripheries of society, are set aside in favor of their identity as integration group volunteers. The integration groups thus serve to uphold and obtain a multitude of divisions and categorizations for the parties involved.

CHAPTER 4. VOLUNTARY WORK & INTEGRATION

Social approach in the form of voluntary work

The government's recent funding of voluntary work with a focus on integration can be seen as an acknowledgment of the significance of including a social approach in their integration tactic. As was discussed in chapter three, a social integration focuses on the interaction between the majority and minority on an individual or organizational level, rather than on a structural level. Again, the division between a structural- and social integration is mainly used in the field of sociology. For the purpose of this study, it is a useful tool for understanding why the government has enlisted the help of voluntary associations for its integration work.

In their work for SFI, sociologists Kaspar Villadsen, Thomas Gruber and Steen Bengtsson (1998) argue that a social approach recognizes that social networks and relationships help in the integration process. A social approach is not only employed in relation to immigrants and foreigners but is used with the fraction of people who, for various reasons, are regarded as outsiders to, or abnormalities of, society. The work done by Villadsen, Gruber and Bengtsson discusses its use on drug abusers, mentally ill, alcoholics and handicapped. By participating in the services provided by voluntary associations, these target groups gained new social networks, which provided valuable social contacts. Their new networks helped them establish a sense of normality and social worth, which in turn assisted their integration (back) into society (Villadsen 1998:16). In Villadsen's, Gruber's and Bengtsson's work the emphasis was not on what kind of activities the voluntary organizations provided but rather that social interaction between volunteers and users took place. A social approach therefore seems to be a good way to integrate immigrants, who, as was discussed in Chapter three, are also assigned into the category of a group outside of society, with particular problems related to their category. The government's choice to include the help of voluntary associations in their integration work therefore seemed well founded.

In order for the social approach of the government to work, people need to be regarded and respected as equals. If people are to be integrated into society, they need to be given the chance to participate on a par with the rest of society. As was discussed in chapter three, immigrants are given a status as problematic due to their

culturally different background. Only by becoming the “same” as Danes can they become integrated, but this can be difficult to achieve, as the majority can keep changing the requirements of what this “sameness” entails. In order for the social approach of the government to succeed therefore, it is important that the volunteers view immigrants as people outside of their assigned roles.

At first glance it seemed as though the volunteers had a very different view towards immigrants than the one Hervik, Rytter and Jøhncke discussed in relation to the Danish society. Many of the volunteers mentioned that it was their dissatisfaction with the lack of provision for immigrants that made them join the volunteer groups. The volunteers mentioned that they did not like the way the Danish government treated immigrants, nor the way media described them. Their frustration and dissatisfaction at both the media and the government, but also of their own peers, would thus signal their deviation from the general picture depicted by Hervik, Rytter and Jøhncke. This would then imply that the volunteers did not regard the immigrants as a separate group with specific problems related to their innate cultural differences, nor that it should be necessary for immigrants to attain levels of cultural sameness in order to become integrated. The social approach looked as though it could indeed be a useful and successful tool.

On closer examination however, it became clear that many of the volunteers’ opinions were very similar, if not identical, to the ideas presented by Hervik, Rytter and Jøhncke on the Danish society. As for the volunteers’ frustration and dissatisfaction with the government, it was mostly related to the government’s tough immigration policies rather than their integration policies. The volunteers operated with an indistinct separation between the two, which at times made it difficult to discern which one of the two they were talking about. Closer observation and discussions were necessary to clarify, which of the two the volunteers had in mind. Their dissatisfaction with the government, was also a frustration at the lack of initiative the government showed in helping the immigrant with the integration process. It did not necessarily relate to a disagreement in their understanding of what integration should entail. The success of a social approach and its positive network effect can thus be questioned in the case of the integration work provided by the volunteers of the Danish Red Cross integration groups. A more detailed account of what the interaction between immigrant and volunteer entailed is discussed in a later section.

Politicization of the voluntary sector

As was discussed in Chapter 2, one of the trademarks of voluntary organizations is their autonomy. Cris Shore and Susan Wright (1997) however, questioned this autonomy and talked of the politicization of the voluntary sector. They argued that when the voluntary sector was used as an extension of the state's welfare services the volunteers' thoughts and actions became closely tied to the norms and values represented in the political sector. Shore and Wright go as far as to say that the volunteers undergo a form of political leadership technique (Shore and Wright 1997).

The Danish Red Cross's three integration group consultants hold a position, which allows them to convey the directives and goals of the integration groups to the local sectors. Apart from the overall objectives of the groups (to participate in the formation of local networks, provide human kindness, further the dialogue between Danes/volunteers and immigrants, increase the volunteers knowledge of immigrants and foreign cultures, organize and generate a positive integration in Denmark) the consultants also give more direct advice, in the form of suggesting what activities the groups should provide and how to best set those up. They also organize events and weekends, through which they hope to provide information for the volunteers that will influence the volunteers' work with, and attitudes towards, the immigrants. What they convey to the groups is therefore important, as they seem to have influence over the groups' activity structure and ways of how best to interact with the immigrants.

When the government involves itself with the voluntary sector, the voluntary organization provides a service for the government, for which they receive governmental funding. The integration consultants handle some of those funds, for which they in turn have to show results. The Danish Red Cross also receives guidelines for the particular type of work they receive funding for. In this way, the government seems to have a direct influence over what type of activities the volunteers should provide and it would be the consultants' role to ensure that the activities the groups provide follow the recommendations given by the government's ministry.

During the course of my fieldwork, I found that the consultants were very open minded towards what types of activities they recommended and wanted to provide. It was instead the volunteers, who were often set upon very specific goals and ideas of their objectives for the integration activity, which matched those of the

government's and where an economic approach towards immigrant integration became apparent. The consultants also mentioned their frustration in trying to convey a different representation of the immigrants than the ones many of the volunteers were operating with. The consultants were trying to influence the volunteers in a way which deviated from the representation, and treatment of the immigrants, as described by Hervik, Rytter and Jøhncke. Their frustration was vented towards their lack of success in influencing the volunteers towards what they saw as a more positive and equal evaluation of the immigrants. Furthermore, the integration groups did not receive any, or much funding through the consultants. Funds came from the groups' local Danish Red Cross sections, or as a result of their own application for the government's pool of funds provided through §115. The volunteers were therefore not dependent upon the consultants financially.

The politicization of the voluntary sector by means of involving voluntary organizations in the work of the government's welfare services can therefore be questioned. In the case of the Danish Red Cross, the integration consultants, who had the most direct line of contact with the government's integration ministry and the volunteers, did not contribute to conveying the political stance of the government on integration and immigrants. The compatibility of the volunteers' objectives for the activities and those of the government was therefore not related to the latter's employment of the Danish Red Cross's services.

Theory and practice, 2 different things

It was most important to understand the volunteers' conception of integration, as their understanding of the term would affect the interaction between the volunteers and immigrants. In their position as facilitators they were at liberty to control what the activities should involve and how these were going to be carried out. Their interpretation was thus a vital part of my study. Just as with integration in general, there was not one identical interpretation of integration that all the volunteers espoused. There was also, what I will choose to refer to, as a deviation as to what integration meant to the volunteers in praxis and in theory.

On a practical level there were enough convergent opinions on what integration included to warrant a fairly general description of what it meant for the volunteers. Immigrants should:

- obtain a good command of the Danish language
- be acquainted with Danes and
- take an interest in the Danish society

On an ideological or theoretical level however, descriptions varied more widely amongst the volunteers. Some mentioned that integration was a two-way process, where both majority and minority groups accept and adapt to each other's different lifestyles and culture. Others in turn offered the opposite viewpoint and believed immigrants had to get rid of all their cultural heritage, forget it, throw it away and replace it with the Danish way of living. All agreed that immigrants had to adapt to, and learn about Danish culture. None believed that immigrants should have their own segregated or parallel way of living.

Many volunteers hesitated and seemed unsure of what to say when I asked them about what integration meant to them. They seemed to hold an idea of integration as a political and ideological concept and thus separate from their own involvement in the matter, which was seen as a practical affair, and not one necessarily corresponding to the larger ideology of integration. Instead of discussing integration from a theoretical perspective therefore, it was easier for them to talk about their direct involvement, their goals and objectives for the integration activities. Through conversing with them about their goals, it was then possible to extract indirectly what they thought of integration and what it meant for them in praxis. The practical aspect of integration in turn, allowed me to specify more clearly what integration meant to the volunteers as a concept. This was further elucidated in my observations of, and conversations with, the volunteers.

The above methods uncovered various deviations. Volunteers who had previously described integration as a two-way process, where both parties had to adapt to one another, could, when observed in interaction with immigrants, or in conversation, display the version of integration known as assimilation. In reality many of the volunteers operated with an understanding that the immigrants had to adapt to the Danish standards of what was accepted and what was not. The Danes on the other hand did not have to change their lifestyle, as theirs was regarded as the more "correct" way of living. Such arguments were indeed reminiscent of Verena Stolcke's hierarchy of cultures (1995). And just as Herzfeld argued, the volunteers adapted a version of integration that was most applicable at the time, showing the symbolic character of integration (Herzfeld in Bruhn 2001).

Theory of Grammar

Inger Sjørnslev (2004) has described a theory of “grammars”, which can help describe the various uses the volunteers applied to the concept of integration. In her article, Sjørnslev talks about grammars within the two national contexts of Brazil and Denmark. She uses the grammars to serve to identify and analyze those structural relations that underlie modes of thinking in the two countries respectively (Sjørnslev 2004). She proposes that grammars coexist, intersect and sometimes counterbalance one another and may work to hide conflicts and to “lie” about reality. For instance, various grammars form part of multiple inclusion and exclusion mechanisms, which still all together form part of the overall grammar of a country. Each grammar separately has various connotations and can also apply to different groups and levels within society. Yet their encompassment as part of a larger whole serves to dilute differences and conflicts, which their multiple applicability implies.

As was discussed in Chapter 3, integration, too, can expose various underlying concepts, ideas and structures of inclusion and exclusion mechanisms in Denmark. The immigrants can for example serve to illustrate the difference between who is part of society and who is recognized as a group outside of society. As Hervik (2004) argued, the category of immigrant implies a status as problematic and as abnormal to society. Furthermore, immigrants’ culturally different background implies that it will be all but impossible for them to become Danes. At the same time immigrants are supposed to be helped into society through the process of integration, an indication of the welfare state’s responsibility to help all members of society. Immigrants are thus included as responsibilities of the state and members thereof. Yet their chances of becoming Danes are slim (and the criteria for what this means can be shifted strategically by the dominant group). The strategic shift of properties of what it entails to become Danish, thus also ensures the immigrants continued status as immigrant and therefore as an outsider to society. These are just some examples that illustrate the range of applicability the term integration has. The various implications of what integration entails can therefore include conflicts, such as discrimination and cultural fundamentalism, without affecting the version of integration as a two-way process, where both majority and minority should likewise adapt to one another. Consequently, the volunteers can operate with different interpretations of integration, without necessarily realizing the aspect of conflict this practice involves.

What did integration mean to the immigrants?

The operation of various types of integration, ultimately affects the immigrants. Asking them what their understanding of integration implied thus also helped to clarify and illuminate the various types of demands that were put upon them.

At first most of the immigrants adapted a similar ideological viewpoint as to what integration should entail as the volunteers had expressed. They saw employment, or being somehow active in society, as a prominent part of what it meant to be integrated. Furthermore, and similarly to the volunteers, the immigrants too had some trouble articulating what integration meant to them. In my research I also found deviations between what integration should mean and what it did entail in practice. There were also differences as to how much thought the topic had warranted for the individual immigrant. Whilst for some it seemed to have merited considerable trouble and thought, others hardly related it as an issue that concerned them:

“To integrate is to, how do you say it...to integrate yourself in doing something. Hear it a lot in Denmark, but my mind is not there. Thought it was for those who have come to Denmark for the first time, if you are new in Denmark, you understand me? Then they want you to find something to do, either you take some education or learn something to help you do something, to find a job. That is what I think and how I understand it.”

In my interviews with the immigrants it became more obvious that the immigrants' own interpretation of what integration should be, mattered little. During the interviews and conversations it became apparent that according to the immigrants it was the Danish majority who set the standards for what integration truly involved. As one of the immigrants expressed it:

“To integrate is to be integrated in the Danish society. I am not integrated, because I don't work. That is very important. And I should have Danish friends and Danish neighbors whom I can ask about things. But [those I know] we are not friends because we don't visit each other.”

The immigrants also expressed the idea that their integration implied demands that were not necessarily attainable or realistic. The demands they experienced were

related to their “non-appropriate” cultural background and identity rather than their achievement of language or attainment of work. For example, differences in their hair/skin color were mentioned, as were matters such as wearing a veil or eating habits.

“Integration is first language, then work. Integration is not only that you eat pork or drink [alcohol]. That is not integration...Doesn’t matter, some are vegetarians, some are not...I mean how, eh, of course if I live in Denmark, I can’t isolate myself in my apartment, not talk to Danes, after a while you become crazy. You should live just like the society. It is better you go to work, you talk to Danes, you get to know each other better. Integration from my point of view is like that.”

“My children are integrated, but not me totally, because they only have black skin but are Danish inside. I [wear a] veil, probably that is why I am not fully integrated.”

Regardless of the last informant’s social and economic status, it was the cultural marker of the veil that was identified as a hindrance to her own integration. After I mentioned that I didn’t think wearing a veil made a difference as to whether or not you were integrated, the woman consented and confided that she didn’t really think so either. This comment startled me. It indicated that she operated with different accounts, or standards, of integration. One, which seemed to include a more official viewpoint of what she was expected to think, the other what she truly believed integration should imply. At the time of the interview the woman had resided in Denmark for a number of years. It is possible that she had adapted to the version of integration she had experienced in practice, rather than any ideological or political interpretation of integration. Her story describes the operation of different sets of integration demands, one which includes cultural markers, such as choice of dress, as significant to immigrants’ status of being integrated or not. This is a different version from the integration requirements espoused by both government and volunteers, which include having work, proficient language skills and a sound understanding of Danish society.

A deviation between demands of what integration entailed, also surfaced when I probed further and asked the immigrants if they thought they themselves were integrated. Even those immigrants who had work, associated with Danes and spoke

the language in various degrees of fluency did not see themselves as entirely integrated. Various reasons were given for this. Some felt that because they were from another culture they themselves could never completely be integrated. In their interpretation that would entail becoming and behaving completely like a Dane, a goal they did not deem possible, nor necessarily desirable. When I asked one informant what it would take for her to become fully (100%) integrated, she commented:

“Don’t know how that would be possible. I think my [country she came from] background is still the largest one in my thoughts. I grew up and was educated there, have lived in Denmark for 4 years, but regardless of what I have learnt and experienced, I am still [nationality of country she was from].”

Rather than perceiving integration as a two-way adaptation, or the economic self-sufficiency the government talks of, she believed that it was her cultural and national background, which stopped her from being integrated. It was not possible for her to become fully integrated, as that would imply becoming completely Danish. This strongly indicates that the official integration strategy necessitated other demands in praxis than it did in theory. It was the practical demands the immigrants experienced that set the standard for their interpretation of what integration meant. So apart from official and ideological requirements of what it entailed to be integrated, other cultural matters and markers were taken into consideration, when it came to determine the status of one’s integration.

The work of sociologist Richard Jenkins (2006) can be used to further describe and further explain why the immigrant would use various interpretations of integration. Jenkins has written about the social identity that forms part of a categorical classification. He argues that identity is never exclusively based upon our own conception of ourselves, but is also a product of the public’s conception (Jenkins 2006: 44). The interaction with others becomes a measurement of where in the social geography we place each other. Body presentation and one’s use of language are considered part of the indicators that are used in this process. Jenkins further differentiates between ‘nominal identification’ and ‘actual identification’ (Ibid: 111). Whereas the first refers to the category attributed by others, the latter describes one’s own experience and relevance of the nominal identification in praxis. The two informants’ statements exemplify how the nominal identification has become part of

their description of themselves. This correlates to how identity can become a question of what definition is the dominant one. In the above cases, it is obviously the dominant group, comprised of Danes, which decides what is entailed in the process of integration. The immigrants have then adapted to the version of integration the majority operates with. As Jenkins noted: not all possess the ability to defy the power of categorization.

Become like me: Danishness

It has been discussed how one of the demands of integration in Denmark is to become like Danes. Its achievement necessitates that the dominant group knows how “Danishness” is defined. There are diverging ideas about what Danishness entails and everyone does not have the same criteria. The volunteers had a number of ideas of what it entailed to become integrated, many of which became apparent in the volunteers’ interaction with the immigrants, or conversations about them. For the volunteers, “Danishness” signified a number of criteria, such as being liberal (freethinking), dressing appropriately or speaking the language fluently.

To be free

During the interviews with the volunteers, it became evident that one of the criteria for becoming integrated was that of being “free”. This was presented in a number of ways, such as driving a car or riding a bicycle, i.e. a freedom of movement, but also how emancipated the immigrants were in regards to equality between the sexes, which was also represented by their way of dressing. This parallel between integration and “freedom” or liberalism, was expressed by one of the volunteers in the following way:

“I would say that she [referring to an immigrant she visits] is more liberated [now] and that [this] is a way to integration. She even took her socks and stockings off when we went to the beach. Yep, she did. She has become more free like that.”

During the interview with the volunteer, she had been asked what integration entailed for her, whether there were any particular things that made a person integrated or not and whether or not any of the immigrants she knew through the Danish Red Cross were integrated. She mentioned that she had been spending quite some time with one

particular family, a woman and her children, which she had been visiting for a while and which she thought had become more integrated since she met them. The volunteer spent most of her time with the woman of the family and her reason for arguing that she was more integrated now was that the woman had become more emancipated since they had started spending time together. Apart from that the woman did not meet many of the other criteria of being integrated. Her language proficiency was very limited and she was not in work. Her health was poor, as were her chances of getting work. The volunteer however, did highlight the woman's brother's family as an example of a well integrated family. When I asked her why she thought they were well integrated, she answered:

“The woman is working. She taught English in [country of origin], and now works in childcare. She is a free, stylish woman. She drives and things like that. The brother, he has had pizzerias for a number of years. He is an engineer. But he has shown a lot of initiative to get started. Now he has a bad back and goes to language school. He wants to become a Danish citizen. Goes to Danish level three, but has a hard time with his pronunciation. I find that many from [the family's country of origin] have problems with their pronunciation. Very interesting in that kind of way.”

The volunteer continued the conversation by talking about the family's children, what school grade they go to, that for the children it is the fact that they are getting an education that signifies most of their integration process and that the girls were generally better than the boys in doing their homework. She then explained that she understood why the boys didn't necessarily continue coming to homework classes. They were enjoying their freedom and their liberty of travelling freely.

The volunteer's continued references to how the immigrants had become freer, were free or were enjoying the freedom they had acquired with their move to Denmark, demonstrate how freedom and liberalism had become one of the indicators of being integrated. It also signified a difference between the immigrants' and the volunteer's culture, where liberalism featured as one of the cultural markers, which made Danish culture seem better than that of the immigrants', exemplifying what Stolcke (1995) has called cultural fundamentalism and which places cultures within a hierarchy of civilization.

The Headscarf

The headscarf, or whether or not a woman was veiled, was also a cultural marker the volunteers used to indicate an immigrant's level of integration. Some volunteers perceived the headscarf as a cultural marker that represented non-Danish behaviour and thus as an impediment towards their integration into Danish society. Once again divergent opinions existed. At first glance it seemed to matter little to the volunteers whether or not the immigrant women were veiled or not. Little mention was made of their way of dressing and it seemed not to affect the way the volunteers interacted with the women. After some time however, it became clear that this was not the case and that being veiled was by many of the volunteers seen as a symbol of submission and obedience. It was seen as contrary to, and conflicted with, what was regarded as the liberal Danish values of freedom of choice and especially equality between the sexes. True integration would accordingly entail that the women cast away their headscarves and adapted to the Danish way of dressing more freely.

During one of my regular visits to one of the integration groups, one of the volunteers came to me and showed me a picture from the front page of a newspaper. The picture displayed a group of women, who were all veiled and dressed in the black Abaya¹². The picture was taken from somewhere in the Middle East. The volunteer was seemingly upset and asked me what the first thing was that came to my mind when I saw the picture. As I am quite accustomed to travelling in the Middle East I had no immediate reaction to the picture, except perhaps for thinking how it would be used in the Danish newspaper I was looking at. Obviously disappointed with my answer, the volunteer said how disgusted she was by the picture and how it made her infuriated to see women dressed like this. She found it extremely demeaning and upsetting and abhorred the way women had to comply to this way of dressing, at the bidding of their husbands.

Clearly, the fact that the women in the picture were veiled was considered wrong by this volunteer. The volunteer's strong negative reaction suggested that her norms and values for what was considered acceptable were characterized by traits such as emancipation, freedom and liberty. The veiled women's deviation from such traits and the oppression the women's wearing of a veil signified to the volunteer, was not acceptable to her.

¹² A thin, loose black garment which covers the women's bodies and is worn outside their clothes, meant to hide any contours and body shapes.

According to anthropologist Tina Jensen (2007), the veil is seen as a symbol for the fundamental aspect of Islam. Islam is regarded as having a demeaning attitude towards its women and its values are not seen as being compatible with that of being Danish. Jensen argues that being Danish is strongly connected to the foundation of Lutheran Protestantism, which accommodates an understanding of religion as a private matter. It should be practiced and kept in the private sphere. Religion is not a matter to be displayed publicly (Jensen 2007: 174). The public display of Muslim religiosity that veiling represents, is interpreted as un-Danish and hence as a barrier towards the immigrants' integration. Anthropologist Kusum Gopal (2000) has further noted that there is a divergence between Muslims with an Arab background and those from other countries. In her paper she explains that Muslims from an Arabic background are regarded as being even further removed from the ideals of being Danish than other Muslims. Much in the way Stolcke argues, Gopal similarly contends that cultural differences between Danes and Arabic Muslims are considered to be so vast, that they are impossible to bridge. Arabic Muslims will never be able to adapt to the Danish values and norms, a necessity if they are to become Danes. Gopal maintains that some of the incompatibility between Arabic Muslims and Danes is symbolized by their difference in dress, such as wearing a veil. A Muslim woman from the Balkan who wore European clothes was not seen as being as oppressed, as a woman from the Middle East who was veiled (Gopal 2000: 37).

Divorce – a showcase for freedom

For some of the volunteers, divorce was considered as yet another symbol of freedom and hence Danishness. If immigrant women divorced it was often described as a positive act by the volunteers. It was interpreted as a sign of strength and independence and therefore an indication of better integrated women. Gopal has highlighted characteristics such as strength, equality and independence as particularly Danish values. She notes that from the earliest of ages men and women in Denmark are taught that they are equal, have the same rights as one another and are judged and evaluated according to the same principles. It is their symmetry rather than their difference that is emphasized (Gopal 2000: 31).

In all of the above cases, it was the women's level of freedom which was judged as one of the indicators of whether or not they were integrated. It is in itself

interesting to note that it seems as though the immigrant women came to represent most of the values and norms that were different from the Danish values and norms. The men were not given the same attention. The further the immigrant women were from the characteristics described by Gopal, the further the women were regarded from being integrated. The women who were, in the eyes of the volunteer, the furthest away from the ideals of independence, equality and strength, such as those dressed in the Abaya on the front cover of the newspaper, were that far removed from what was considered “right”, that the volunteer went so far as to describe them as disgusting. It made her sick just looking at them. It was not the only time I heard such vehemence in the volunteers’ descriptions. Underlying their intensity and forcefulness was their conviction that they were right. It implied that the volunteers segregated their culture from that of the immigrants. It also illustrated how they put cultures into various places, hierarchically ranking them, where the Danish culture was accorded hierarchically higher status than those of the immigrants. The symbolic value of pinpointing women as representatives for the values and norms of immigrant culture is noteworthy, but unfortunately not possible to discuss at length in this paper.

Summary

The examples showcase how the volunteers’ two-way description of integration in reality entailed a strong level of assimilation tendencies. The immigrants had to adapt to the same standards as the volunteers operated with. It was not just a question of attaining work, language and an understanding of Danish values and norms, the attributes that volunteers first offered when I asked them what integration meant to them. In practice the volunteers’ understanding of integration involved a ranking system of cultures, where the Danish culture gained a higher status than those of the immigrants. Therefore, according to the volunteers, it was also in the immigrants’ own interest to adapt to the Danish culture, as it involved a climb towards a better way of living. This was expressed through sentiments of freedom, such as freedom of movement and freedom of dress, as well as being free to be able to take out a divorce. The discrepancy between what the volunteers first said and what was practiced highlights a difficulty in using the voluntary organization as a tool for the government’s social integration approach.

There was no direct politicization of the voluntary organization from the Danish Red Cross integration consultants. However, this is not to say that the volunteers were not affected by a form of politicization in their interaction with the immigrants. Their voluntary engagement became a form of executing a particular job for the society. As such, the relationship between immigrants and volunteers was affected by the volunteers' thoughts of what their work to integrate immigrants, implied. Their relationship was also affected by what the category of "immigrant" signified. The relationship was affected by a level of inequality, due to the connotations of what being an immigrant in Denmark implied.

CHAPTER 5. POSITIONS AND CATEGORIES

It has previously been mentioned that one of the ways to achieve integration in a Danish context is by means of attaining cultural similarity (Hervik and Rytter 2004: 149). At the same time that this was put forward, it was also discussed how it was difficult for immigrants to achieve this sameness, as requirements for what it meant to become “the same”, could be incessantly changed by the dominant group. Whenever the excluded have fulfilled a criteria, new demands are presented, and a no win situation is often the result (Røgilds in Sjørølev 2004). In the interaction between the volunteers and immigrants, such sentiments were detected. The volunteers operated with an understanding that they needed to help the immigrant become integrated, by showing them what it entailed to live in the Danish society. There was an educational element present in their interaction, linked to the volunteers’ understanding of what it meant to be an immigrant. Furthermore, interlinked with their understanding of what it meant to be an immigrant were expectations of how they should behave.

Enculturation

The ideas the volunteers’ expressed were reminiscent of what American anthropologist Melville Herskovits has referred to as enculturation (1948, 1972):

The aspects of the learning experience which mark off man from other creatures, and by means of which, initially, and in later life, he achieves competence in his culture, may be called enculturation. This is in essence a process of conscious or unconscious conditioning, exercised within the limits sanctioned by a given body of custom.

(Herskovits 1948: 39)

Even though Herskovits refers to the enculturation process of people that are born into one particular culture, rather than joining it at a later stage of life, some of his thoughts and ideas can still be useful whilst talking about the volunteers and their thoughts on immigrants’ integration processes. Certainly, the objectives the volunteers mentioned for the integration groups, were part of their conscious strategy of including the immigrants into their culture. They included specific thoughts on what it entailed to live in a Danish society and thus what criteria the immigrants had

to fulfill in order to achieve their integration, such as learning the Danish language, acquiring a sound knowledge of the Danes' way of life and being active. It became clear, however, that the volunteers demanded that immigrants become adapted to the same norms as they themselves had. Thus, and I argue, generally unconsciously, the volunteers demanded that immigrants' acquired a standard of sameness. Much in the same way children unconsciously learn how to behave and conform to the cultural patterns of the society they find themselves in, so do immigrants have to be taught how to behave in their new surroundings. Herskovits (1948) believed that the enculturation process for children contained automatic conditioning and the internalization of cultural patterns. It was only in adult life that a more reflexive and creative attitude and behavior opened up the possibility for change. According to Herskovits' way of thinking then, the volunteers' demands of the immigrants that they become "Danish", involves the same level of enculturation to that of pre-adults. Immigrants are not given the freedom of evaluating and reflecting upon the alternative possibilities that Herskovits attributed to adults. Instead they have to adhere to the particular course staked out for them and they have no choice in the matter. It can therefore be argued that the volunteers do not accord immigrants with a status equal to themselves as adults but rather one in which they are treated much like children, who have to be taught how best to behave according to the standards expected of them. Anthropologist Margaret Mead, who, just like Herskovits' followed in the footsteps of one of the pioneers of American anthropology, Franz Boas, has similarly defined children born into society as cultureless. Throughout their childhood however, they would be taught the ways of their culture. This process can be compared to what immigrants are expected to go through as they are becoming integrated. Just like children, immigrants too had to be brought up to the "correct" way of being and adapt to a lifestyle and culture that was considered Danish. The immigrants' own cultural background was not considered useful or valid within a Danish realm. Instead they had to adapt to new standards of behavioral codes. Although most volunteers would put into practice these ideas implicitly in their interaction with immigrants, one of the volunteers (and he was the only one), voiced his thoughts on the matter rather explicitly:

"They [the immigrants] have to remove as many of their original cultural traits as possible and adapt to the Danish ones instead."

“... Yes, but you see, it is the environment. I mean at the moment it is the Danes that decide how society is shaped and that is why it is very important that immigrants are aware of, that if they insist on being different, they will never become integrated in the Danish society. They will always be regarded as foreigners. And they can't live like that in the Danish society. If that's the case they might just as well go back home to their own country. You can be that tough on them.”

The volunteers have the key

Kusum Gopal has argued that the key for an acculturation process is interaction. An individual cannot be expected to know how to behave straight away in a new environment, but rather has to be taught how to do so (Gopal 2000: 33). The presence of an educational element in the interaction between immigrant and volunteer could not be mistaken and was verified both in my observations and interviews with the volunteers. The following statements not only illustrate the educational characteristic of the volunteers' interaction with the immigrants, but also their position as cultural bearers:

“... We [Danes] are [part of] the mother-country and therefore we offer our help [to the immigrants]. We really want to help them so much, for example by practicing the Danish language [with them] and teaching them more about our society.”

The example used before in Chapter 2 also serves well to illustrate the educational element that is referred to in this section:

*“... I mean our sewing activity for immigrants, that is a form of **education**, where we thought that some immigrants would want to come and **learn** how to sew or do needlework but it was an **education!**” (my highlight)*

The Danish language: a touchy subject

The volunteers were part of the dominant group of society. This was illustrated in the volunteers' understanding that it was they who decided when an immigrant was integrated or not. One of the requirements that all of the volunteers had mentioned as necessary for an immigrant to become integrated was a proficiency in the Danish language. For this purpose all three local sections I followed, offered their assistance

in the form of homework/language training. By observing their work, it soon became apparent how difficult it was for the immigrants to achieve a level of competency in the Danish language that the volunteers deemed competent enough.

Visiting one of the groups, I had had a long conversation with one of the immigrants who had attended this particular Danish Red Cross integration group for a number of years. We chatted about many things, amongst them the topic of Danish (language). The woman told me how she practiced Danish every day, with her colleagues at work, but also when she socialized with her friends. Many of her friends had a different background from hers and so Danish was their natural choice for communication. She was happy with her proficiency and told me proudly that she had had no mistakes in the dictations she took while she attended language school. Coincidentally, as I was sitting with the volunteers later that day after all the immigrants had left, they started talking about that particular woman's Danish skills. They were complaining about how she, as well as another woman who had been attending the group for a similar amount of time, were not so good in Danish and really should continue their education in the Danish language (with them). One volunteer mentioned that it was difficult to get the immigrants to attain a higher level of proficiency after they had been in the country for a long period of time. Even though both women got by, in the eyes of the volunteers they didn't speak the language competently enough. It was difficult to get them to learn more, but according to the volunteers that was what they needed to do; to keep practising both their pronunciation and reading ability. The volunteers then went on to discuss how they could structure the women's time at the group in such a way that they would get started on something (language-wise) and were not left "hanging by themselves".

During the same occasion, another of the volunteers vented her frustration over how one of the women wanted to learn a third language - English, when she couldn't even speak Danish properly! She found that extremely upsetting. In an interview I held with the volunteer at a later point of time, she mentioned that if the immigrant woman asked her for help with her English homework, she would not know what to say or do. She firmly believed it was wrong for her to learn English when she clearly could not even speak Danish competently. On the one hand she did recognise that it might be easier for the immigrant woman to pronounce English correctly rather than Danish. Nevertheless, she insisted that she did not want to help

the woman with her English homework. For her it was a matter of it just not being right.

Both cases demonstrate that the volunteers hold a number of expectations of what is considered to be “good enough” language skills. It is not acceptable just to understand and speak Danish. The volunteers from the above example still agreed that the immigrant women “got by” with their language skills. It was just not evaluated as being good enough. Their behaviour implies much of the attainment of sameness that Hervik and Rytter (2004) have described. Immigrants had to achieve a level of proficiency the level of which, the volunteers decided. As the example with the woman who had no mistakes in her dictation exams illustrates, it is not up to her to decide whether or not she is adept enough. The volunteers did not recognize and undermined the immigrant’s own judgment. Some even go so far as to avoid helping the immigrants should they follow their own decisions, as was the case with the woman who wanted to learn English. This illustrates the volunteers’ position as insiders, or members of the dominant group in society and puts immigrants as outsiders of society. Firstly, they are not regarded as members of the dominant group and are therefore not regarded to have the necessary know-how or skill to make decisions of what is regarded best for them. This again characterises mechanisms of sameness, and of the categorization process. Those who do not fulfil necessary requirements are not considered equals. The cases also show that the dominant group can, and do change the criteria for what is demanded of the immigrants. The volunteers’ and immigrants’ positions illustrate a strong aspect of power and the difficulty of achieving equality, when it is built upon the premises of attaining cultural similarity. The volunteers’ demands that immigrants should learn better Danish, also involves a categorization process, which maintains immigrants’ position as outsiders. As immigrants did not yet fulfill one of the requirements of being integrated, they remained fixed in their position as immigrants and outsiders.

To become integrated requires continued learning!

Another norm that immigrants were evaluated by was their willingness to learn. Immigrants were expected to be interested in and willing to become, integrated and therefore they were also expected to be interested in fulfilling the criteria of what this implied, such as for example, striving to improve their Danish. When immigrants did

not however, express interest in improving their Danish skills, as in the above example, they did not adhere to the volunteers' understanding of how they should behave as immigrants. Just as with unruly children, immigrants' failure to, for example, turn up at the groups was interpreted as a lack of interest in what was best for them. Some of the volunteers' thoughts on the matter:

"I think it is a bit sad [that no immigrants are attending], because I am sure there are many [who could benefit from coming to the groups]. I hear it myself when I am around. There are many who would benefit from coming and practicing their Danish with us. I still meet many people who definitely would benefit from being able to practice their Danish, so I think it is a bit sad and a bit annoying that there aren't more who respond to our offer."

"It can really irritate me, when you count on there being 20 [people coming] and only 10 show up. It is difficult that they [the immigrants] can't keep appointments. That really takes some of the joy from us. ...It is fine that they take their cousins with them, that's ok, but that they don't come, that I think, I mean aaaaah! So disappointing to be honest."

I suggest that the volunteers' frustration at immigrants' poor attendance, or unwillingness to learn, is a sign of their dissatisfaction with immigrants' failure to act in accordance with what is expected of them. They are not following the behavior that is expected of them as members of the category "immigrants".

Another example illustrates the point further. One day when I arrived at one of the activity groups, I met one of the volunteers outside the entrance. I asked him how he was doing and he told me that he was not particularly happy with how things were going (meaning the Danish Red Cross group). He said, *"I can't understand it, it's such a good offer [the volunteer group]. Why don't they [the immigrants] make use of it? Especially now that they have a test on the 15th."* The volunteer's statement illustrates a number of issues. His incomprehension of why they don't make use of the group's offer implies a conviction that the immigrants need to do more to become integrated. As was discussed above, a large part of immigrants' ability to become integrated is their competency of the Danish language. The volunteer's confidence that what the group had to offer was such a "good offer", demonstrates the idea that the group also has the solution to what the immigrants need to do in order to become better integrated in

Denmark. The fact that the volunteer is frustrated that the immigrants don't make use of the group's offer, automatically implies that there is something the immigrants need to fix that they are not taking care of when they are not coming to the group. The immigrants are therefore also neglecting what the volunteer regarded to be part of their responsibility as immigrants living in Denmark.

Steffen Jøhncke has argued that in a highly differentiated society, the individual's position is not given, but is in constant need of reinforcement. Inclusion is not a societal responsibility, but a process related to only a few other people. It is the individual's responsibility him/herself to see to it that they are integrated (Jøhncke 2007: 44). The immigrants' perceived lack of interest can therefore also be interpreted as a neglect of their role as citizens, as they do not adhere to the Danes' perception of what it entails to be a good immigrant within Denmark. The volunteers' understanding that their offer was one, which was useful and applicable for the immigrants, also illustrates the volunteers' firm belief that they were able to offer help to a group, who in their mind, needed help. The volunteers had the "know-how" of what immigrants had to do to become integrated and the latter's perceived disinterest was interpreted as rude and as a lack of respect, especially as the volunteers went out of their way to help them. If Jøhncke's argument is pursued, then the volunteers took on a social responsibility that they needn't fulfill. They went out of their way to help the immigrants in their integration process. I suggest that the latter's negative response was thus also interpreted as an insolence to the personal involvement of the volunteers. Additionally, following in the argument of Verena Stolcke's hierarchy of civilisations (1995), the immigrants' interpreted indifference was also a rejection of being integrated into a **better** culture. Some of these sentiments were expressed in the following way:

"I see a lot of women up there in the shopping centre and they don't do anything and could definitely come to our activity. That would be good for them."

"(I) think that those that stop coming to us could always do more, if nothing else, in order to get to know something about the society. Some have been here a long time and can speak the language somewhat, but [they] don't know about what happens in the Danish society".

The volunteers show a level of confidence that they know what is in the immigrants' best interest to do. One can also sense the disappointment and discontentment the volunteers feel, when immigrants fail to address the issues and demands that are placed upon them. Behavior that did not involve incessant learning and work towards becoming more Danish was not in line with the volunteers' perception of how immigrants should behave.

Gratitude shapes behavior

It is also possible to detect an expectation of gratefulness in the volunteers' representation of what being an immigrant implied. The gratefulness is not unlike that which Hervik identified during the period when many guest-workers came to Denmark and were expected to be grateful towards the majority for letting them come and work in their country. Sociologist Helmuth Berking (1999) has written on the sociology of giving. He believes that gratitude after having received a form of exchange can express itself in an asymmetrical power balance. The giver becomes morally superior and receives the right to influence the receivers' future behavior. Regardless of whether or not the immigrants feel a level of gratefulness, it does not stop the volunteers from thinking that they should be grateful, and therefore comply and behave according to the standards expected of them. Expectations of gratitude can thus also help explain the higher moral position the volunteers had towards the immigrants.

As for the immigrants, most, if not all, were very appreciative of the services the volunteers provided for them. They were thankful that the volunteers were there to help them with many types of problems, from writing job applications to working with their pronunciation and teaching them about the Danish society. Scholars such as Simmel (1983), Berking (1999) and Lorentzen, Andersen and Brekke (1995) have all argued that gratefulness can shape and influence the interaction between the giver and the receiver of help. Lorentzen, Andersen and Brekke (1995) have in their book "Ansvar for Andre" discussed what discourses are involved in the giving and receiving of help. Their study incorporates broad analyzes of the work of various voluntary organizations i.e. administration centers for a large range of voluntary services. The services cover most types of voluntary work, such as humanitarian work, youth, social, health and aged care work. The researchers noted how asking for

help or being in the position of receiving help can be, and for many of their informants was, associated with that of being weak and a less able person (Lorentzen et al. 1995: 75). Their informants, the users of the services, were in a position where they needed help from the volunteers. The users of the volunteers' services perceived themselves as being in a position of indebtedness and this made it difficult for them to put demands on the relationship with the volunteers (Lorentzen et al. 1995: 78&93). They did not feel that their relationship was one characterized by equality. Simmel (1983), just as Berkings (1999), refers to the inequality in a giving/receiving relationship. He argues, that if a person cannot give back the equivalent of what they have received, they become indebted. Simmel went so far as to argue that this is the reason why we sometimes do not want to receive and accept certain gifts. We are aware that it is not only an object we are receiving, but an object which implies indebtedness (Simmel 1983 [1907]: 212-4). Furthermore, Simmel implies how if a person gives a certain gift, such as wisdom, the only thing the other can respond with, is a kind of gratitude that can compromise the actual way of being of that person (Simmel, 1983 [1907]: 216).

Judging from these studies, it would therefore seem reasonable that the immigrants feel a certain amount of gratitude towards the volunteers and that this in turn influences their behavior with the volunteers. During my time with the immigrants I found that, although many were very happy for the services the volunteers provided and indeed thankful for their time, it did not seem as if feelings of gratitude influenced the immigrants' behavior towards the volunteers.

How did the immigrants view the activity groups?

Many immigrants came to the groups in order to get help with the specific activities the groups offered. They wanted to improve their Danish, learn how to ride a bicycle, exercise in a safe and women's only environment and, in the case of the day trips and events, have some fun and experience something different. When asked what they thought about the groups, the immigrants were generally very positive about the opportunity the volunteers offered them. Even though many had been in the country for many years, some stated that it was the first close contact they had had with Danes. They were very happy to get to know some Danes and thought that the volunteers were doing a great job. They were grateful for the volunteers' time and

willingness to come and help them and to many it came as a big surprise that the volunteers were there voluntarily and did not get paid for their services. After some time, however, immigrants vented their own frustrations over the contact they had with the volunteers. Much of this was related to their own conception of what the volunteers' role as providers of a service implied.

One of the immigrants, who had been coming to the group for years, mentioned during our interview, that she was at times quite frustrated with the volunteers. She always came to the group for a purpose, she was in need of help and wanted to practice specific things that she had thought of. Yet it was not always that she got to do the things she set out to do. She continued to explain that sometimes she came to the group and didn't feel as though she learned anything. It was dependent on the day. Sometimes somebody would help her, other times everybody was busy. If the latter was the case, all she would do was sit there, something she definitely experienced as a waste of time. I asked her if she had ever mentioned any of this to the volunteers: *"No, I do not say anything to them. If they want to help me, and feel like it, they will, but I do not want to say anything to them about it. Perhaps I should..."* she adds, *"but sometimes everybody is busy, sometimes more people come who need help. So that's why I cannot get help."* But on a day like today, I suggest, when nobody but her has been at the activity and she still didn't get any help, couldn't she have asked the volunteers for help? I propose that perhaps the volunteers too are waiting for her to say something. When neither of them says anything, couldn't they both be waiting for the other party to initialize conversation? *"Yes, perhaps,"* she said, *"but they [the volunteers] are here to help us. They come here and their purpose for coming here is to help us. [It is therefore] them who should be active, they should ask. That's what I think. Because they started this group with the purpose of helping foreigners learn Danish. They want to help and therefore they should be the initiators. Do you know what I mean? Not just meet and stuff like that. They come here, therefore they should help us. Why would they otherwise make this group if it weren't to help foreigners? If they aren't active and don't say anything, what's the point?"*

The immigrant's expectations of what the volunteers were there to do were clearly expressed in her statements. It was the volunteers who had started the group and who had done so with a particular purpose in mind. In the eyes of the immigrant, this purpose was related purely to them (the volunteers) helping her (the immigrant) with her Danish. When the volunteers did not actively pursue this goal, by for

example, asking her if she wanted or needed their help, they did not in her mind fulfill their role as facilitators of the activity. From her point of view it was not up to her, as a foreigner, to ask the volunteers for help. Instead she perceived the volunteers and their activity group to be there for her benefit. Therefore she should not have to ask the volunteers for help. It should already be clear, just by her coming there, that she was indeed in need of their help. She was not interested in coming to the group for any other purpose than to receive their help. This shows, that similarly to the volunteers, the immigrants, too, had their own conception of what the volunteers were there to do. It also illustrates that even though the immigrant was grateful for the service the volunteers provided, this did not affect her behavior towards the volunteers. Instead the roles each of the two parties assumed within the realm of the integration groups made gratefulness unnecessary. Each party was there to fulfill a purpose and goal, and both were equally important. Neither would be given much meaning without the other. When the volunteers did not live up to their role as service providers, the immigrants' attendance was a waste of time, just as the volunteers became frustrated when immigrants did not fulfill their role and did not, for example, attend the groups.

How used are you to receiving help?

Another explanation for the immigrants' relative lack of indebtedness is by means of their tolerance for receiving help. In the study by Lorentzen, Andersen and Brekke (1995) they also noted how the users of the voluntary services had different levels of tolerance when it came to accepting help from others. For example, they found that people who were blind or visually impaired did not find it as difficult to accept help from others, as other users of the voluntary services did. Lorentzen, Andersen and Brekke (1995) found that the handicap of blind and visually impaired people had made it necessary for them to accept help from others over a long period of time. This in turn had made them less susceptible to feelings of indebtedness, as they were used to receiving help (Lorentzen et al. 1995: 85).

In Denmark, immigrants similarly, are often used to receiving help. They are involved in a web of different social welfare services, designed to help them gain their independence and self-sufficiency, but often with the adverse affect of making them very dependent upon that help. Anthropologist Ann Belinda Preis (1998) has

criticized the kind of services immigrants are provided with, as it entraps them in a process where one “into work” program relieves the next. Instead of making immigrants self-sufficient contributors to society, the constant help they are provided with keeps them in a position of welfare clients (Preis 1998). It is thus possible to argue, that the web of different help services immigrants are involved with, also make them more susceptible towards receiving help. The fact that most immigrants are accustomed to receiving help both from voluntary and governmental institutions upon and after their arrival in Denmark can thus also help to explain a relative lack of indebtedness towards the volunteers.

Different realms, same rationality

It would seem as if the roles both volunteers and immigrants ascribed to each other inhibit the formation of the social networks that the voluntary work has been attributed with.

In his study on voluntary work, Håkon Lorentzen has argued that each realm has its particular set of rationality. The latter is not however necessarily given or decided by one party or the other. Instead Lorentzen quotes Foucault, who sees power as a flexible, constantly evolving relationship between the parties involved (Lorentzen 1995). In voluntary work, Lorentzen then argues, the relationship between volunteers and users of the voluntary services can change over time. In the beginning of the relationship, it might be more influenced by feelings of indebtedness and inequality. Over time, as the relationship develops, this can be replaced by an equality between partners, where both come to regard the other as a friend. Lorentzen also highlights that the various roles that volunteer and user assume, are dependent upon the nature of the voluntary work. In voluntary groups where the focus lay on the activities, rather than the help provided, or the problem the user had, social contact and development of friendship were foremost in the relationship between volunteer and user (Ibid).

In the Danish Red Cross integration groups, the focus was on the activity, but the activity was so closely related to the fact that one of the parties was an immigrant, that few relationships could be considered true friendships. Even in those cases where immigrant and volunteer described their relationship as one of friendship, their positions as Dane/immigrant or volunteer/immigrant, overshadowed any other. This was brought to the forefront when some of the volunteers organized a social activity

outside of the group. The activities they talked of were often, in some way or another, related to the fact that it was either about immigrants or related to the topic of immigration. For example, going to a play at the theatre or seeing a movie, which could otherwise be described as a part of any friendship, was compromised by the fact that the film or play revolved around for example, wearing a veil, or was a documentary about a woman's life in Afghanistan. The fact that the activities were chosen according to their educational character overshadowed the social aspect of the activity itself. Furthermore, if, for example, the volunteers wanted to bring an immigrant "friend" to an activity not related being an immigrant, such as going to a concert, or an excursion, it was instead interpreted as an education in Danish values and norms. In this way none of the activities were purely social activities in themselves. They were instead chosen with a direct objective related to the fact that the "friend" was an immigrant. The functional role of the voluntary work transcends the activities not only within the formal integration group but also in the activities played outside of the group. The networks formed within the voluntary association can thus be described to have a functional, rather than a friendship/social character.

Oprah

Lorentzen goes on to say that even those relationships that were regarded as friendship by both volunteer and user were, on closer inspection, more friendship-like. The volunteer still had more power or was in a position to decide where to go, what to do and when, ultimately reinforcing the asymmetric relationship between volunteer and participant (Lorentzen et al. 1995: 92). This held true with the volunteers and immigrants I studied as well. Even in those cases where both volunteer and immigrant described their relationship as one which had over time grown into a friendship, it was, on closer inspection more friendship-like. Their role as facilitators and users, Danes and immigrants was too overpowering and hindered the formation of true friendship. This was especially noticeable in what the immigrants felt they could ask the volunteers. Even for those volunteers and immigrants who met outside of the groups and had known each other over a long period of time, it was possible to observe reservation.

In another case, one of the immigrant woman expressed that she would never ask any of the volunteers about how they did certain things at home, for fear that she

would insult them or say the wrong thing. When I asked her how she then learnt about the Danish lifestyle/society, she responded: “TV”. She watched Oprah and Dr. Phil and that is where she learnt about all those things she felt she could not ask the volunteers about. It seemed to matter little that she had known the volunteers for many years, even lived together with two of them and still saw those volunteers outside of the framework of the integration activity group. She still did not feel that she was friends with the volunteers in the way that she felt free to ask how they live their lives and how “western culture” was practiced by them. The fact that she watched TV shows in order to learn about how life was lived in Denmark, shows that she had not got to know the volunteers well enough to know how they lived their lives. Furthermore, her fear of insulting the volunteers or saying the wrong thing expresses an asymmetric relationship, where the volunteers were in a more powerful position than the immigrant. It elucidated that the role of volunteer/user, Dane/immigrant or majority/minority transcended every aspect of the relationship between them. The roles connected to being an immigrant/volunteer were embedded in the relationship regardless of which arena they met in. The social networks associated with voluntary work do not automatically involve friendship. It does not matter what arena volunteer and user meet in, but rather what the roles of volunteer and immigrant entail.

Friendship between the volunteers

The difficulty in establishing friendships from voluntary associations is not only noticeable between immigrant and volunteer, but also between volunteer and volunteer. Ulla Habermann (2001) offers an analysis of friendship, where she regards friendship derived from voluntary work as somewhat different to other friendships. It does not evolve “naturally” and even though the volunteers might find the common interest of their work engaging and binding, this alone does not necessarily equal close friendship. Habermann argues that the volunteers’ relationship with other volunteers is one influenced by a working-relationship. Their relationship is defined by their position as volunteers and resembles an acquaintance rather than a friendship (Habermann 2001: 290). In my own study this held true as well. The volunteers described the activity as being a catapult for meeting similarly minded people. This did not mean, however, that deep friendships evolved out of their participation. The

relationships amongst the volunteers can best be compared to working relationships, where being dedicated to the same cause, supporting each other in good and bad times and meeting regularly gave meaning and purpose to the volunteers' life. It contributed to making their lives useful and allowed them to be active, but did not necessarily lead into deep and long-lasting friendships. Some of the volunteers saw each other outside of the groups, but when they did, it was almost always related to their common interest i.e. integration and immigrants, just as in the example from above.

CHAPTER 6. Motivation

The volunteers' and immigrants' motivations also influenced their expectations of what the integration groups should provide for them. At times the immigrants' and volunteers' diverging motivations would result in dissatisfaction and frustration for both the parties involved. Their expectations were closely tied to what each felt the other should contribute to and was connected to the role each party played.

Immigrants were very focused on attaining a particular skill they lacked, whereas the volunteers often had a broader range of reasons for coming to the group. What these latter entailed can to some degree also be explained by the volunteers' own life situations.

What motivates the volunteers to join a voluntary group?

What motivates volunteers to participate in the integration activities? Ulla Habermann (2001) has written extensively on motivations for joining voluntary work and in her book "En Postmoderne Helgen? – om motiver til frivillighed" she lists value, learning and identity as the highest motivations for participating in voluntary activities.

Habermann elaborates by saying that "value" is an expression of a persons' belief in the cause; "Learning" on the other hand is to be understood as the individual's wish for self-evolvement and "Identity" stands for meaning, day-to-day living and fellowship: to be active and useful (Habermann 2001: 188, 280)¹³. Habermann goes on to outline the top ten reasons for becoming a volunteer:

1. It is important to help others (value)
2. I want to help those who have it worse than me (value)
3. I feel empathy for people who have it difficult (value)
4. I feel that as a volunteer I can be of use (identity)
5. I learn to socialize with many different (types) of people (learning)
6. Voluntary work gives me a new outlook on many things (learning)
7. I have the opportunity to do something for a cause which I am engaged in (value/cause)
8. Voluntary work makes me more happy with myself (identity)
9. I have the opportunity to learn something about the cause I work for (learning)

¹³ It is interesting to note that being active and useful are two significant contributors to a persons' feeling of being a part of society.

10. Through voluntary work I get to know my own strength and weaknesses better (learning)

(Habermann 2001: 195-6)

When asked, the volunteers at the Danish Red Cross mentioned similar reasons for joining the voluntary integration work as those Habermann referred to. The volunteers wanted to make a difference in the ongoing public debate on immigrants and integration (value), learn about foreign countries and cultures (learning), to be part of a social event where one could meet similar-minded people to oneself (identity), as well as finding something useful to do after they had retired (identity). Most of the volunteers' motivations were related to the volunteers' own identity, as well as their desire to learn something new. This pattern is also in accordance with the alternatives Habermann describes, such as joining voluntary associations as a way of finding new friends and networks, finding that you can be useful, a way of expanding and developing yourself and as a surrogate for work. The rewards the volunteers get can thus be described as fulfilling a social, emotional and intellectual void (Habermann 1990: 97).

What motivates the immigrants to join a voluntary group?

As for the immigrants, most of their reasons for coming to the group were related to the specific skills the activities could teach them. If I asked immigrants attending the bicycle classes, why they came to the group, they would say that they came to the activity in order to learn how to ride a bike. The immigrants attending the language classes would similarly say that they came in order to improve on, and learn the Danish language. They joined the gymnastic class in order to get fit and improve their health. The immigrants did not mention that they came to the group in order to socialize with Danes, learn about the Danish culture or meet people. This did not, however, mean that they did not value meeting new people, learning new things or having something to go to. Some would also mention these "extra benefits" that came with attending the groups, in a positive manner, but their main goal for coming was the specific task the activity set out to do.

Take for example Caroline, an immigrant woman who had attended one of the integration groups for an extended period of time (over 3 years). She told me that she came to each activity group with a plan of what she wanted to achieve during that

meeting. Socializing was not part of her plan, even though one could argue that this too, would have been a way of learning and practicing her Danish. Instead, it was the specificity of what it was she had selected for that day's session that she saw as her motivation for coming to the group:

Me: *“So every time you come here [to the group], you always have a specific goal in mind?”*

Caroline: *“Yes, every time I come here, I have planned something. I have lots of other things to do, so if I come here and don't get anything done, I think it's a waste of time. If I have homework to do, I would like to get that homework done. That is why I come here [to the group]”.*

The fact that Caroline is a busy woman, with a family of her own and a job, further strengthens her motivation for coming purely in order to get something done. Her time is valuable to her and she therefore does not feel that she can afford to come to the group “just to socialize”. In our interview she pointed to the difference between her own life situation and that of the volunteers’.

“It is different for them [the volunteers]. They have the time [to socialize]. They don't work anymore. They want to come and talk. But we [immigrants], can't do that. [We] have children to take care of and work, we do not have the time like they do. On the weekends we also have to do private things and relax, so that we get energy for work again. So that's why we can't compare ourselves to them. They are pensioners...they don't have anything to do. So they come here voluntarily, to talk and have a good time etc. We don't have that time.”

More immigrants, than just Caroline, brought up the fact that the life situation between volunteer and immigrant was different and that most of the volunteers were elderly and most were retired. Especially some of the younger immigrants mentioned that the fact that the volunteers were elderly meant that they had to be treated with respect. They did not feel that they could always talk to the volunteers freely about some of the things that were going on in their lives, due to the age barrier. When I asked them if they thought they would have had a more open relationship with the volunteers, if they would have been younger, they said yes. They thought they would have more in common and could share more with volunteers their own age. This also impacted on the immigrants' motivation for coming to the group. The fact that the

volunteers were older than themselves and mainly retired, contributed to the fact that their relationship was mainly a “professional” one rather than one of friendship. The immigrants joined the activities to get something specific done, such as getting help with their homework, a job application or some other practical help. They were not so interested in socializing with the volunteers, as they did not think they had that much in common with them, due to their age difference, but also due to their different life situation. Many of the immigrants had many things to see to. They were fathers and mothers, had children to take care of, many had a job to go to and studied on top of this. They lacked the time to be able to come to the groups only to socialize, even if they would have liked to do so. Their busy schedules made it difficult for them to have the time to come to the groups. If they then did take the time to attend the groups, they felt the pressure to make the most of coming there and learning as much as possible in the little time they were there for. Therefore they were more intent on studying and learning the task the group set out to do, rather than socializing. The immigrants’ and volunteers’ different life situations, as well as their age, were therefore a part of why their motivations for coming to the groups varied.

This was further illustrated by one of the volunteers, who expressed her happiness after talking to Caroline during one of the group’s meetings. The two women had been socializing with each other, chatting and catching up. The volunteer was elated and very happy to have talked to Caroline and mentioned this in an interview we had at a later point of time. She described the occasion as special, because it meant that she went from the group and had, as she expressed it: *“gotten something out of that day’s meeting”*. The two women clearly evaluated the group’s usefulness from two different sets of objectives. Whereas Caroline felt that she was a busy woman who wanted to “get things done”, the volunteer came to the group in order to socialize, have something to do, interact with immigrants and learn about the immigrants’ culture. One can see the misunderstanding such deviations in why they each attended the group can cause. For Caroline, her meeting with the volunteers was one of frustration, when she did not get to do the things she came there to do. The volunteer, however, saw the fact that they talked to each other and socialized, as part of the groups’ purpose and her reason for coming to the group. She, and the other volunteers, argued that by listening and hopefully joining the discussions they had, the immigrants and volunteers could learn more about each other, which was one of the educational motivations they had mentioned for joining the groups.

Valuable knowledge

Many of the volunteers mentioned that they found it exciting and thought-provoking to meet immigrants. The stories they were told and the knowledge they gained about other cultures was stimulating and fascinating. This new knowledge ensured that the volunteers did not feel that their life-long learning stagnated now they were retired but instead continued. Their interaction with the immigrants gave them insight into aspects of being an immigrant that could not be found in the daily newspapers. Some of the things they heard and learned they related back to their acquaintances and families. This put them in a position of being a kind of “integration ambassador”, often communicating a different side of things to their friends and families. But it also ensured that they had something to contribute when they met their friends and families. They could relate back to them what they had experienced throughout the week, something which might not have been the case if they had not joined the groups¹⁴. The acquirement of knowledge and stories seemed, for many volunteers, to play a vital part in their motivation for joining the groups. It was in particular the differences between the volunteers’ culture and that of the immigrants’ that fascinated many of the volunteers: The openness and curiosity of some of the Middle Eastern women, who related details from their intimate bedroom life, descriptions of flights and journeys from the immigrants’ home country to Denmark, what their lives used to be like before they arrived in Denmark, the relationships between wife/husband/mother-in-law, their customs, their food and dress. As one volunteer put it:

“I get so many experiences from what they tell me...I just get completely blown away...I get so much out of our interaction that I can lie awake at night and just think about what they have told me. That makes me so happy and I lie there and think: Shit that was fun!”

Another volunteer said:

“It is so exciting! My family is almost sick and tired of me, because I don’t talk about anything else! I tell every person I meet about all the interesting things I have learned from my participation in the integration group. I always have something to talk about and feel that I can contribute to a discussion. Furthermore, I can contribute with a

¹⁴ As they related the stories back to friends and family, however, the volunteers maintained the anonymity of the immigrants by not revealing their names.

somewhat different experience and one, most people do not know about. That is a really nice feeling.”

Both of the above volunteers are very involved in several volunteer groups, all of which focus on immigrants. They are two of the few volunteers that are married and live with their spouse. Their work with the integration groups is what keeps them occupied throughout the week, and both are very intent on getting as much out of their meeting with the immigrants as possible. This includes learning as much as possible about the other, and having discussions with the immigrants is one of their favorite pastimes.

The groups signified a place where the volunteers offered their help and knowledge, and gained new knowledge, but without necessarily becoming too personally engaged. Hereby I don't mean to say that the volunteers did not engage themselves and extend their help to arenas outside of the integration groups. Nevertheless, this did not mean that they wanted to start friendships with the immigrants. The volunteers regarded their involvement in the integration groups as one marked by professionalism. But their “profession” allowed them to gain a valuable position in regards to other members of society. They were not mainly retired or without work, with little to tell. Their involvement with the integration groups allowed them to be active and keep learning about things, many in their surroundings did not know about. The volunteers' motivations thus also communicate something about their own position within society.

Who are the volunteers?

Out of the 18 volunteers I studied, only one was in full-time work and one was working part-time. The remaining 16 were retired or on some form of retirement scheme. 6 were single and 10 were married. True to the general trend in social voluntary work, there were more volunteers who were women than men. Also, and in line with statistics on the matter, the few men who participated were organized around those activities that were more sports-orientated, such as the bicycle groups (Habermann 2001: 170-173). The age group of the volunteers was in accordance with other profile studies of volunteers, with most of those engaged in social voluntary work, being elderly (>60 years) and retired (Habermann 2001: 173-176). Several reasons can account for the rather high percentage of participants from a higher age

group. Firstly, if the volunteers had children, they would most likely not be living with their parents anymore, giving the parents more time to participate in voluntary work. Secondly, especially those women who have previously been working in a “caring” profession, still feel that they would like to keep “caring” for someone and something and want to continue with some form of social work (Habermann 2001). Thirdly, by being active, it is possible to keep the stigma of being elderly at bay. Studies concerned with the elderly, show that there is an idea that being elderly means being inactive (Blaakilde et al. 1998, Kramhøft 2005). This idea is related to the degeneration of the body that happens with old age. Hence as long as a person keeps being active, they are not considered old. This then can also help to explain the desire to continue with some form of activity when one gets older.

Stigmatized

The study of elderly, gerontology, has often been criticized for portraying elderly in a negative and far too general way. Recent studies are, much in the same way as immigration studies, trying to nuance this picture and change the rather negative connotations of being old. Elderly can, just as immigrants, be regarded as part of a marginal group of society. Sociologist Erving Goffman has pointed out three reasons people are stigmatized for: either due to a physical deformity, a characteristic deviation, or a deviation related to race, religion or nationality (Goffmann 1963: 5). There are other descriptions that can, and should be, added to Goffman’s categorization, such as a person’s gender and, as the present discussion indicates, age. However, Goffman’s understanding of stigma is useful, when talking about both elderly and immigrants. Goffman writes that the actual process of defining and categorizing a group as marginal, simultaneously makes them less worth than others. They are no longer considered as fully accepted human beings (Ibid). One can therefore argue, that the volunteers and the immigrants are in the same boat. Both are regarded as marginal groups of society with neither being full members of society.

Anne Leonora Blaakilde, who has a Master’s Degree in folklore and rhetoric and has done research with elderly for many years, argues that the category “elderly” is not nuanced enough. Instead, society operates with one major representation of what being elderly entails. Rather than contributing to the general good of society, the elderly are regarded as a burden and encumbrance to society and their surrounding.

Mostly this viewpoint is related to the tendency to see becoming elderly as synonymous with becoming less able. The body's general deterioration is the major reason for the elderly's marginalization (Blaakilde 1998:11-14). In addition, Blaakilde describes a scenario where the elderly are constantly moved further outside, towards the periphery of society, as new generations emerge. The family looks towards the center (= the children), and the farther away the link from the newborns is, the farther into the periphery the elder generation is pushed. Blaakilde describes a situation, where the knowledge possessed by the elderly steadily diminishes in value and is no longer regarded as relevant. In an age where modernity, flexibility and youth are idolized, the elderly lose their status and respect as knowledge-bearers.

“What one still knows, no longer gives any status, so one has to learn to live without any larger influence in one's environment” (Rasmussen in Blaakilde 1998: 184).

Similarly, in the working world, becoming elderly or being elderly is often equated with that of being useless (Blaakilde, 1998: 16). Negative connotations such as being inflexible, traditional and unable to change and learn new things, further stigmatize the elderly as incompetent, unimaginative and troublesome. Again, much in the same way as the category of being an immigrant has become synonymous with that of being problematic and a burden to the welfare state, the category of being elderly has negative connotations. Neither immigrant nor elderly are seen as having the right social expertise and characteristics that allow them to participate as fully valued members of society.

Active as an antivenin to marginalization

However, there are certain aspects of being elderly which keep the stigma of age at bay. For example, as long as one is being active, one is rarely seen as “old”. Sociologist Karen Kramhøft, has written about the myth of being old. In her study she argues that there is a distinct difference between that of chronological age, and “being old”. A person is first regarded as “truly old”, when he or she is no longer able to be physically and mentally active (Kramhøft 2005). Voluntary work can thus have a positive effect on the elderly's identity and self-esteem. As useful contributors to society, their marginalization is kept at bay. The volunteers' involvement in the

integration activity can thus serve its own purpose in keeping the volunteers integrated, and as fully valued members of society.

The volunteers, who were part of the Danish Red Cross study, certainly fit this depiction. Their participation in voluntary work seemed in many ways to be a surrogate for work. It filled a void they had not experienced whilst they were still part of the workforce. When a person retires, loses a spouse or becomes unemployed, his or her own identity as part of society is challenged. Ulla Habermann has written about the role voluntary work has in providing an identity for volunteers, and how the latter's involvement in voluntary work can have an integrating effect for the volunteers. By participating and becoming involved in voluntary work, the volunteers find an alternative avenue and a way of still being associated with a societal and communal identity (Habermann 2001: 280). One volunteer touched upon this when she talked about another volunteer's involvement with the integration group: *"...you know, she wasn't as engaged in this work before, when her husband was still alive. Now she is much more active than she was before."* The changing life situation of the volunteers, can thus offer another explanation as to why the volunteers wish to involve themselves in voluntary work. The fact that they participate in the volunteer work, as an alternative to work, or to fill their own time with something meaningful, also helps explain why many of the volunteers had a professional, rather than a friendship relation to the immigrants.

As useful contributors to society, the volunteers' own marginalization is kept at bay. By engaging in a pressing social issue the volunteers' desire to do something good is accomplished. But they also take on a role as someone who addresses an important issue in Danish society and the volunteers gain recognition as contributing members to society. Furthermore, the insight the volunteers gain into the immigrants' lives, fulfills not only the volunteers' desire to learn something new, it also gives them an important role as "experts" on the issue. A leverage they could then use, in order to uphold a status of not only being knowledgeable, but also up-to-date people.

Summary

The social relationship between immigrant and volunteer is therefore not only decided by the role they are given as immigrant/Dane or volunteer/user but also the volunteers' and immigrants' motivations for coming to the integration groups. The

creation of social networks marked by friendship, that voluntary work has been associated with, is not to be taken for granted. The volunteers' and immigrants' different reasons for participating in voluntary work, hinders the formation of relations marked by friendship. Instead, both volunteer and immigrant have a professional attitude to the integration groups. Much of the professional attitude is related to the respective life situation of both volunteer and immigrant. The immigrants were often very busy, with families to look after, studies to pursue and a job to look after. Their time was limited and therefore it was important for them to make the most of their time at the group. As for the volunteers, most were elderly and retired and by being active their life gained meaning and was filled with a purpose. They still regarded themselves as useful and valuable citizens, which gave them access to a societal identity. This kept their marginalization, associated with that of becoming elderly and retired, at bay. The role and function of the voluntary groups was therefore not only to integrate immigrants. It also fulfilled an important function in keeping the volunteers integrated.

CHAPTER 7. DISCUSSION

The motivations the volunteers had for joining the integration groups are in line with a general trend within the civil sector, that has seen a move away from lifelong membership of one organization, towards joining an organization with specific activity based groups for a shorter time span. There is also a tendency to join as much for personal benefits, and therefore joining groups that cater to particular groups or activities. The good Samaritan who wants to see to the needs of others can still be detected, but there is a general move towards being more open about wanting to gain other things from voluntary work, then just to do something good for others. In line with the individualization of society in general, where people are more focused on personal gain, so too, the voluntary sector is affected by the volunteers' change of motivations for joining their organizations. That volunteers join with a specific desire to fulfill certain wishes of their own, impacts on the kind of relationship that is established between volunteer and user of the services provided. In this study, for example, the volunteers' showed an interest in learning more about immigrants, which made them very interested in hearing more about the immigrants' life stories and experiences. This in itself is nothing remarkable, however the immigrants came to the groups in order to get help with very specific skills. If these were not fulfilled, they left the groups in frustration. Most of the differences between immigrants' and volunteers' purposes for coming to the groups, were related to their life situations. Whereas most of the volunteers were retired, the immigrants had families, studies, work, or a combination of these, to attend to. Naturally, this impacted upon the time volunteers and immigrants felt they could spend at the groups. In the end, the volunteers' engagement in the voluntary work also affected their own integration in society.

If integration is understood as mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, it affects all members of society. The volunteers' involvement in the integration groups ensured their status as contributing members of society. They engaged in a topic, which was discussed in the newspapers on a daily basis, and which occupied the government to such a degree, that it mirrored a party's popularity in parliament. Integration of immigrants, rather than any other member of society, had a large public profile and was seen as important for the continued welfare of Denmark. In the

volunteers' voluntary work, they therefore fulfilled an important role for the society's good. Their involvement in the integration field gave them a special status, which distinguished them from other categorizations they might otherwise fall under such as being pensioners and elderly. On a personal level, their voluntary work also ensured that the volunteers had first-hand information of immigrants, which they could share with both family and friends and gave them something to contribute with in a pressing issue in Denmark. Their knowledge was thus still up to date and valid, rather than being regarded as out of date and old fashioned, which is otherwise often how a person's knowledge is viewed as they get older. Furthermore, the fact that the volunteers' kept active also pushed their status as being "old" aside.

The voluntary work the volunteers engaged in entailed integrating immigrants. In line with the government's tendency to involve the civil sector in ensuring parts of the government's social commitments, they were thus doing a "job" for the government. The governments' interpretation and the public debate, of what integration should include, were mirrored in the volunteers' own understanding of what immigrants had to do, in order to become integrated. This hindered the formation of social networks between volunteers and immigrants, which are otherwise regarded as the major benefit of involving the civil sector in the government's social commitments, as their relationship was one characterized by professionalism. The fact that the volunteers fulfilled a part of the governments' public service, meant a politicization of their work. The volunteers regarded it as the immigrants' job to come to the groups in order to fulfill their commitment as immigrants in Denmark. This, as well as the volunteers' own motivations for joining the voluntary groups, affected the relationship between volunteer and immigrant.

Instead of establishing groups, where the activity is not related to what the category of the user implies, which is regarded to foster social networks based on friendship, the integration groups' activities were selected with the specific target group in mind. Each activity, be it learning to ride a bicycle, learning the Danish language or teaching immigrants about the Danish society, was related to how the immigrants could best be integrated in Denmark. On the surface, the activities were thus targeted towards getting the immigrants into work and making them self-sufficient, as well as learning about Danish values and norms, just as the official government's integration strategy states. On closer inspection, these strategies implied the expectation for the immigrant to become similar to, or like the Danes. Within

anthropology, the region of Scandinavia has been linked to concepts of sameness and equality, which implies that in order to become accepted, one has to be the same as the rest of society. It was also reflected in the volunteers' interaction with the immigrants, who were expected to adopt the same values and norms as those the Danes operated with. The integration groups' main purpose was therefore to educate the immigrants. An educational aspect implies that the recipient is supposed to get better at, or learn something and therefore achieve more knowledge. The cultural background of the immigrants was not regarded as of equal value to the values and norms of the Danish cultural background. It was possible to detect a hierarchy of cultures, where the Danish culture was regarded as superior to others. Problems that were associated with being an immigrant, were regarded as innate in the immigrants. The way to achieve integration involved becoming similar to, or the same as Danes. This hierarchy of cultures also impacted upon the interaction between volunteer and immigrant, as the volunteers took on a role as enculturators, where they regarded it as part of their job to educate the immigrants.

It was possible to detect a divergence between volunteers' stated and practiced thoughts on integration. Whereas most had described integration as a two-way process, where both immigrant and Dane adapt to one another, in practice their interpretation of integration resembled rather a version where it was up to the immigrant to become as similar, as it was possible, to the Danes. Only then would they be regarded as integrated. However, determinations and demands of what it entailed to become integrated would constantly change as immigrants achieved, for example, one level of Danish. Immigrants were expected to be willing to stay on a continuous learning curve going never fully reaching the same status as the volunteers. Part of this can be explained through the perception that culture is innate, and reified. It is therefore close to impossible to become completely integrated.

There is a tendency to operate with different expectations of what integration entails, and part of why this is possible is the many concepts integration is associated with. The volunteers' version of integration implied the same as the political agenda. It had moved away from interpretations of integration as mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion related to all members of society, but instead related specifically to what it implied to be an immigrant in Denmark. The categorization of immigrant was one tied to being problematic, and in need of education to achieve a better way of life. However, on closer inspection, the volunteers' engagement in the integration groups

still came back to representing integration as a mechanism that can be related to all members of a society, as the volunteers' work simultaneously ensured their own integration into society. The interaction between volunteer and immigrant mirrored the reflections of both volunteers' and immigrants' perceptions of each other, their life situation and the forum of the voluntary work they were participating in.

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APPENDIX I

The groups

ACTIVITIES

	Homework/ language Tuition	Bicycle Training	Events/outings/Ex cursions	Gymnastics	Sewing
Group 1	X	X	X		
Group 2	X	X		X	X
Group 3	X	X	X		

TIMETABLE

	Homework/ language Tuition	Bicycle Training	Events/outings/Ex cursions	Gymnastics	Sewing
Group 1	Sundays	Sundays	Varied		
Group 2	Mondays	Wednesdays		Wednesdays	Tuesdays
Group 3	Depending on agreement	Tuesdays & Wednesdays	1-2 every two months		

VOLUNTEERS

	Homework/ language Tuition	Bicycle Training	Events/outings/Ex cursions	Gymnastics	Sewing
Group 1	Core group of 6 volunteers, 3-4 extra				
Group 2	Core group of 3, 2 extra	2		1	1
Group 3	3	1 activity leader who came both days and 2 helpers, one tue, one wed	4 activity leaders		

It is quite difficult to put a number to how many immigrants followed the activities because their attendance fluctuated so much. Some came regularly over a number of weeks but would not appear again. Others would turn up once every few weeks while

others would turn up only once and then not come again. I tried to convey this in the table below.

IMMIGRANTS

	Homework/ language Tuition	Bicycle Training	Events/outings/Ex cursions	Gymnastics	Sewing
Group 1	Between 0-5 attended each time; about 14 individuals passed through during the duration of my fieldwork		0-1 attended during the time of my fieldwork		
Group 2	With the exception of two times, where 2 people came, no people attended this activity during the time of my fieldwork	Between 0-5 attended each time; around 10 individuals participated throughout the duration of my fieldwork		Between 0-8 attended each time; around 11 individuals participated throughout the duration of my fieldwork	2 people showed up twice throughout the duration of my fieldwork
Group 3	3 families were involved in this activity	Between 0-3 attended each time, 5 individuals passed through this activity while I was with the group	Between 30-50 attended the three events the group organized during my fieldwork		

APPENDIX II

The first group

I followed this group from January 2006 to December 2007. The group met every Sunday at the same venue, a two-story building used by both the Danish Red Cross and the local pensioners association. The downstairs of the house comprised a fairly large room with one big long table, as well as a few single tables scattered around the room. There were also a few couches. The décor was from the 70s, with an off-green colour on the table-tops and bright green course material on the couches. Upstairs was a small kitchen and a bathroom. The volunteer who would arrive first would usually start making coffee and tea for the rest of the group. Some of the volunteers would often bring fresh bread, cookies or cakes that would be served for morning tea half-way through the group's activities.

The group can best be described as a social interaction group, with focus on helping immigrants with their language and general questions about the Danish society. Bikes were however also available, in case some of the immigrants wanted to learn how to ride a bicycle. Occasionally the volunteers would attend theatre shows, music performances or lectures together that were related to the topic of immigration or integration.

Most of the volunteers participated in several integration activities and also volunteered at the local Danish for Immigrants school, where they offered homework assistance to the immigrants after their Danish classes. Some of the volunteers also met immigrants outside of the groups and would help immigrants with their homework or other private issues. I participated in all of the activities the volunteers attended, except for the private meetings.

The second group

The second group had four separate locations for the four activities they offered: the language café ("sprogstuen"), gymnastics, sewing club and bicycle training. The activity leaders would generally meet once a month to discuss and update each other on what had been happening in their respective groups.

The language café was held at the local community's offices, where the group had managed to get access to a room, just by the entrance to the offices. The outside of the place was fairly inconspicuous, a low brick building in the middle of suburbia

but once inside it was nicely refurbished, painted in light colours and had a modern interior. The group had access to coffee and tea making facilities and the first volunteer to arrive would make coffee for the others. Unfortunately, the language café did not provide many opportunities to observe any interaction between volunteers and immigrants. Even though the group had made every effort they could think of in getting immigrants to use their offer, only two visitors came to the group in the four months I was in contact with them. There were generally two sometimes three volunteers who would attend this Monday activity. If no immigrants showed up the volunteers had a chat and a coffee and then left.

The sewing group did not start until the end of September 2006 and was held twice a month after that. This activity was also held at facilities provided by the local municipality. The building was an annex of a local school and provided a venue for many different groups and associations. It had a number of different rooms that could be used for conferences or small gatherings and one large room which was furnished with a number of sitting groups, tables and chairs. It was in the latter that the sewing group held their activity. The activity was poorly attended and I only came to the first two of the group's meetings, where the volunteer and myself were the only two attendees. I did not go to any more meetings as by the time some people had started coming to the group I had started following the third group's bicycle training which occurred concurrently. I did however, keep in telephone communication with the activity leader and found out that the activity was cancelled only a short time after it started due to poor health of the activity leader.

The bicycle training and gymnastics were the two best-attended activities of the group. Both activities were held at the same time, so initially I switched between going to the bicycle training and the gymnastics every second week. However, after Ramadan (which was held in October) I divided the remainder of my time in the field into two blocks, where I came to the bicycle training for the first block and the gymnastics for the second one. This method gave me a more continuous follow-up and made it easier to try and arrange interview appointments and follow the progress of both skills and relationships between volunteers and users.

The gymnastics was located at a sports complex. The room for the activity was located at the very end of the complex through a hallway and down some stairs and upon finally arriving at the correct room, it was surprising how bright and light the room was. The room was usually used for wrestling classes and the floor was

padded with green foam. At the start of each session the woman in charge of the class drew the curtains to shield any outsiders from being able to have a look inside. The class was for immigrant women only most of who were Muslims and no men were allowed to join the class. I participated in the gymnastics, as it would have been awkward to stand on the side and observe, even more so because classes were fairly small (between 1 and 8 people). I was able to talk to the immigrants in between exercises, before and after class and on the bus home.

The bicycle training was held at a hall that was used by youths as a skateboarding, roller-blading and bike-riding venue. The Danish Red Cross group had an agreement with the municipality that they could use the hall once a week for the purpose of their bicycle training. It was a fairly large hall and had various shapes and sizes of wooden ramps in it that the immigrants wanting to learn how to ride a bike had to navigate around. It was also a cold venue during autumn and winter, with the same temperature inside as it was outside. Two volunteers ran the activity, the activity leader and his assistant. It would have been awkward for me to pretend to learn how to ride a bicycle as I already knew how to do so, therefore I stood along one side of the hall and observed the class for most of the sessions. I talked to the volunteers when they were not instructing and with the immigrants when they were not practicing.

The third group

The third group had one specific location for their bicycle training, the rest of their activities were carried out either at the volunteers' own homes, the local Danish for Immigrants school or involved going on excursions, such as for example going bowling or visiting the parliamentary buildings of Copenhagen.

The bicycle training was held in very nice surroundings owned by the municipality and designed specifically for teaching children traffic awareness. It had small tarmac paths and came complete with traffic signs and even had a traffic light that could be switched on and off. The Danish Red Cross group borrowed these facilities twice a week and also had access to a small building where they held their coffee breaks. It was run by two men, the activity leader and his assistant and no amount of rain or snow would hinder them from running the activity.

Just like the second group, the third group's activity leaders would also generally meet once a month to discuss and update each other on what had been happening in their respective activities, as well as organize new events together.

The Head Office

I also spent time at the Danish Red Cross's head office. I observed general staff meetings, congregations of the national sector and the integration consultants' team meetings. Spending time at the head office made it easier for me to learn about upcoming events which could be of relevance to my research. At times I followed the consultants to meetings they had with integration groups or participated in events the consultants were invited to, such as an integration seminar organized by the social service ministry. The consultants also organized courses and seminars for the volunteers, which I attended on several occasions and which gave me an opportunity to talk to members of integration groups from across the country. Overall, the time spent at the head office provided an opportunity to gain more insight into the administration of the Danish Red Cross.

The Local Sections

I also attended some of the group's local section's meetings, where all the activity leaders of the local section would participate. In these settings I would observe and take notes, some I recorded. They were held at various locations and varied in their formality. The conversations, briefings and discussions at these gatherings gave me further insight into my informants' approaches to their role as an integration group and their placement within the larger organization of the Danish Red Cross. It also revealed how the decision-making processes worked in practice.