Dilemmas of youth drinking

Young Muslim women's experiences within the Danish youth alcohol culture.

PhD dissertation

Marie Fjellerup Bærndt

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ONE: INTRODUCTION

I think that alcohol and parties are, well, not dangerous, but I took baby steps toward it. I could not just like, "Wow, now I am partying, I am doing it." I had to figure it out. I really wanted to go to a party. For instance, if some of the people I talked a lot with [in school] had said, "Let's all go," I would probably have gone with them.

Yagmur, 25 years old, started partying and drinking alcohol several years after high school.

My sisters would sometimes say to me, "Think about our mother; think about us." My mother likewise told me to think about my siblings. They are the ones who are affected because we are a collective. Everything I do affects my family. I need to think about my sisters because they might not be able to become engaged or married if people hear that they have a very Danish sister who goes out and drink alcohol and all these things we are not supposed to do. But, yeah, they are both married today, and I have not heard any critique in a while, luckily.

Zainab, 25 years old, argued a lot with her mother about parties when she was younger.

Introduction

In this dissertation, I present my research on young Muslim women and their experiences within the Danish youth alcohol culture. It is based on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 32 young Muslim women between the ages of 16 and 34 (average age was 23), who all have (some) experience with parties and/or being intoxicated. My research is explorative and driven by a curiosity that stems from a combination of two factors: the immediate contradiction between the perceived abstinence of Muslims and the normality with which young Danes consume (large quantities of) alcohol *and* the scarcity of qualitative research on this subject in both a Danish and an international context. Rather than taking this contradiction for granted, this dissertation explores young Muslim women's experiences with drinking alcohol and partying.

The two quotes on the previous page introduce some of the central themes and issues that I have wrestled with in this dissertation. Yagmur turns our attention toward the complexities of drinking alcohol when you have a Muslim background. It is not dangerous, she says; however, drinking is not harmless either. Zainab introduces the important role of the family in the ways she has participated in parties and the drinking of alcohol. The quote shows a sense of possible collective consequences, which never seem to manifest. These two women exemplify how drinking alcohol and partying is not simple for the young women who participated in this project. They provide a feeling of seriousness or the possible consequences of participating in the youth alcohol culture, which is something I have pursued in my work. Furthermore, they point toward how alcohol and partying inhabit contradictions for young Muslim women in Denmark, who have to navigate between the promise of feeling worriless while being concerned, searching for freedom within limits, and feeling a need to be in control while striving to lose control.

The young women who participated in the study all have a Muslim background; however, Islam and religiosity are not central interests for me, nor a focal point for this study. Instead, I focus on Muslim women as a meaningful category, particularly so, because of the political climate in Denmark, where Muslim minorities are particularly targeted and viewed in opposition to the Danish majority. As such, they are a "sociological fact" (Sunier, 2012) because of how Muslims are categorized as Muslims, and consequently, this sociological fact can then be studied meaningfully. The study is interested in the young women's lived experiences with alcohol and parties, and I aim to present *their* viewpoints and *their* stakes

within this alcohol culture. I do so not only because they are largely invisible in Danish and international alcohol research (see e.g., publication no. 1, Bærndt & Kolind, 2021) but also because their voices are generally ignored in Danish society. My focus is on their movement between being on the inside and being on the outside, being included and being excluded, belonging and un-belonging, not to mention the conundrum that many felt caught *between* two worlds simultaneously as they *were* (embodying) both worlds.

My project is placed within the field of youth alcohol cultures. I aspire to widen our perspectives on young people and their use of alcohol by incorporating more diversity. For instance, I lean on research that emphasizes the differences in the drinking practices of young people in Denmark, differences that are often neglected in favor of generalized judgments or a focus on mainstream alcohol culture (Kolind, 2011). Young people's alcohol practices are often lumped together and characterized broadly by being hedonistic (Szmigin et al., 2008), risk-taking (Plant & Plant, 1992), or intoxication- and binge-oriented (Measham & Brain, 2005). By focusing on a group of young people who are largely missing in alcohol research both in Denmark and internationally, the differences between various young people's alcohol practices should stand out more clearly, and the results should apply better to our diverse society. Continuing from this, I hope to contribute with research that can be used as a means to create a more inclusive youth culture, where young people of diverse backgrounds do not feel that they are required to participate in excessive alcohol consumption in order to belong.

Theoretically, the dissertation finds inspiration in both phenomenology and feminist research, as well as in those authors who have successfully bridged the two of them (see for instance, Young, 2005). Particularly, the phenomenological ambition of getting close to the experiences or "lifeworlds" of research participants (Jackson, 2012) is part of my anthropological motivations for doing research. In addition, I find it important to pay attention to the structures of power and inequality present in specific places and contexts. This is especially so if the research aims at changing the world for the better. Therefore, I build on research that acknowledges, addresses, and attributes strength to how different individuals speak from different perspectives. The situatedness of the different kinds of knowledge available from different people is important in this dissertation. Thus, this is a study about young Muslim women and their specific gaze on and experiences within the youth alcohol culture in Denmark.

With these general considerations in mind, this dissertation aims to:

1. Explore young Muslim women's experiences within the Danish youth alcohol culture,
2. Investigate the strategies they make use of to participate, and
3. Analyze how these strategies are informed by identity-related social positions such as gender, age, and ethno-religious background.

Why study young Muslim women and alcohol? This study is inspired by a pilot project conducted at the Centre for Alcohol and Drug Research, Aarhus University, which I carried out in 2015. This project was part of an overall strategy to diversify the research efforts in terms of ethnicity and gender (see Bærndt, Kolind & Søgaard, 2017). I want to emphasize three things from the pilot project, which contributed to the decision to explore the matter further in a PhD study: First, young Muslim women with party experience were less hard to recruit than anticipated. They answered calls for participants on, for example, social media, and when I met them, they were enthusiastically sharing their experiences and lauding that their voices were seen as important in the project. Second, surprisingly many young Muslim women actually had drinking experiences, and even more had considered the dilemmas and challenges that youth drinking posed to their social lives, broadly speaking. Third, interesting results and findings, such as the importance the young women attributed to self-control and the significance of community rumors (Danish: Rygtesamfundet), made me curious about what else might be important for their experiences within the Danish youth drinking culture.

With this as the backdrop, and then adding the fact that particularly young Muslim women (but also many other minorities) are missing in the literature on young people and alcohol, I launched the work resulting in this dissertation.

Presentation of the publications

The three journal articles I published in the course of working on this project comprise the backbone of the dissertation. Below, I will briefly present the three publications and provide a table, which should give the reader an overview of their interconnectedness and how they supplement each other. The descriptions and the table below provide an initial overview of the publications and point toward the different ways in which they contribute to the overall project and research aims. A discussion of how the publications provide a collective argument will follow in the last part (Conclusion) of this dissertation.

Publication 1: M. F. Bærndt & T. Kolind (2021): Drinking and partying among young Muslim women: Exclusion in the context of a normalized youth drinking culture. International Journal of Drug Policy, Vol. 93, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2021.103170.

The first publication centers on how young Muslim women navigate through experiences of exclusion in the Danish youth alcohol culture. An intersectional framework was employed to bring forth the many differences in the group of participants in the data. The intersectional framework also meant that we analyzed data with a particular view on the meaning of the young women's different social positions in situations where they experienced exclusion. We also applied a case study design which was particularly relevant for the analysis because it turned attention to how certain identities became salient at particular moments or within particular contexts.

We found that the youth drinking culture was exclusionary for young Muslim women. Furthermore, the drinking culture actually seemed to enhance exclusion based on ethnicity and religion, regardless of whether the women would drink alcohol or abstain. Second, the youth drinking culture contributed to actualizing gendered ideals within the young women's families and community. They experienced an increased risk of having conflicts with their families around subjects that dealt with drinking and partying. Ultimately, this could call into doubt their experiences of belonging to a local ethno-religious community.

Publication 2: M. F. Bærndt & V. A. Frank (2022): Dilemmas of belonging: Young Muslim women in the Danish youth alcohol culture. Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs, Vol. 40 (1), pp. 22-39, https://doi.org/10.1177/14550725221136350.

The second publication aims to examine how experiences of belonging influence the drinking practices of young Muslim women. As such, this publication takes up a theme in the previous publication and expands our knowledge on that. The publication points toward the literature connecting drinking with a national identity; for instance, Grønkjær et al. (2011) describe how young people drink to be Danish. Belonging as a theoretical tool in this publication is understood as twofold: As sentiments of (national) belonging and as the broader (politicized) discourse on Muslims in Denmark. It draws on Yuval-Davies' (2006) distinction between belonging (as emotional attachment) and the politics of belonging.

We found that the young women attempted to avoid negative comments by toning down being Muslim. In addition, the difficulties of drinking alcohol while being both Muslim and Danish meant that many experienced an 'identity crisis.' One way to reconcile Muslim and Danish identities appeared to be through faith. Those who seemed to succeed were actively

choosing what kind of Muslim they wanted to be. Overall, this publication points toward the many dilemmas young Muslim women face as part of a national youth culture of alcohol intoxication, and it goes further to argue that the dilemmas point to the broader predicaments of these women in Danish society.

Publication 3: M. F. Bærndt (2023): "Then someone takes my picture…" and other disrupted (drinking) stories: Constructing narratives about alcohol and intoxication among young Muslim women in Denmark. Drugs, Habits and Social Policy, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. https://doi.org/10.1108/DHS-09-2022-0032.

With the first article approaching the participants from a rather broad and encompassing perspective and the next continuing from those findings, the third publication aimed at covering an empirical phenomenon in a more concrete and concise manner. Therefore, the third publication centers on storytelling, and it explores the existence of drinking stories among young Muslim women. It takes a point of departure in the debates that followed in the wake of Tutenges & Sandberg's (2013) article on intoxicating stories, which discussed gendered silences and inequalities in drinking stories. I argue that having a double audience (one Muslim, one Danish) affects how narratives about alcohol and intoxication are constructed. I found that the narratives reveal distinct Muslim minority experiences and that the young women's stories seem to include narrative disruptions that were too serious for a drinking story. Lastly, some participants subverted their drinking stories into sober narratives to uphold respectable norms around alcohol. Overall, the difficulties and the seriousness in the young women's stories stood out in this publication, and it added a new layer of understanding the diversity of experiences within the youth alcohol culture in Denmark.

Table 1: Overview of publications

Publication:	Journal and focus/audience:	Purpose and research questions:	Theory:	Methods and Data:	Results:	Contribution to the overall project:
Pub1 **"Drinking and partying among young Muslim women: Exclusion in the context of a normalized youth drinking culture."** **(Bærndt & Kolind, 2021).**	International Journal of Drug Policy Drug use and drug policy in a global context.	How do young Danish Muslim women experience the youth culture of intoxication? How do they navigate through processes of exclusion related to drinking and partying?	Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991; McCall, 2005). Social positions intersect and constitute each other as structuring phenomena. Here, the intersections that are relevant for experiences of exclusion in drink and party contexts.	Interviews Case Study	1. The culture of intoxication is excluding. Enhances exclusion based on ethnicity and religion. 2. The culture of intoxication actualizes gendered social control and increases conflict. 3. Participants' local belonging is called into doubt.	Social exclusion (Self-)control (agency) Identity
Pub2 **"Dilemmas of belonging: Young Muslim women in the Danish youth alcohol culture."** **(Bærndt & Frank, 2022).**	Nordic Journal on Alcohol and Drugs Social science research on alcohol and drugs from a Nordic perspective.	Focus on drinking and partying among young Muslim women in Denmark. How are young Muslim women's drinking practices influenced by belonging?	Belonging (Yuval-Davies, 2006; Jackson, 1995). Belonging understood twofold as both sentiments of (national) belonging and the politics of belonging (including the broader discourse on Muslims in Denmark.	Interviews Life-stories	1. The participants tone down their being Muslim in order to avoid marginalizing attention. 2. Many were torn between their DK and Muslim identities and had experienced an identity crisis. 3. Those who can reconcile their DK and Muslim identities, tend to intentionally construct what kind of Muslim they want to be.	Social exclusion (Self-)control (agency) Identity
Pub3 **""Then someone takes my picture…" and other disrupted (drinking) stories: Constructing narratives about alcohol and intoxication among young Muslim women in Denmark."** **(Bærndt, 2023).**	Drugs, Habits and Social Policy Cultural, social and material contexts of drug use internationally.	Explores the existence of drinking stories among young Muslim women in Denmark. What is the significance of having a *double audience* (one Muslim, one Danish) for the construction of narratives about alcohol and intoxication?	Storytelling (Jackson, 2002) Telling stories is existential and a strategy for actively reworking events in dialogue with one self and an audience. Drinking stories are entertaining and have recurrent themes.	Interviews Field notes	1. Muslim minority experiences that never quite get there in terms of being a drinking story. 2. Disruptions that means the party experiences are never turned into a drinking story – they become the wrong kind of unpleasant. 3. The repulsiveness of alcohol a vehicle behind a transformation of drinking stories into sober identity narratives.	(Self-)control (agency) Identity Abstinence

Outline of the dissertation

The three publications constitute the backbone of this dissertation, and taken together, they provide the main contribution of this dissertation. This contribution is directed toward the existing research on young people and alcohol; however, it also has a more indirect contribution to studies on Muslim minority youth. To introduce the publications and place them within the larger framework, I would like to present the overall thinking and ambitions of the study and account for my process and path toward its finalization. Therefore, the outline of the dissertation consists of the following parts.

   The next and second section (Contextualizing the dissertation) consists of three parts, serving as a state-of-the-art funnel. Firstly, I aim to situate my dissertation within the current developments in qualitative alcohol research concerned with young people. I account for the nature of drinking among young people in Denmark and the meanings ascribed to drinking. Secondly, I provide a context that describes the position of the research participants in society, broadly speaking, with a particular focus on the history of Muslim immigrants and on "the figure of the Muslim woman." Thirdly, I narrow the gaze and account for the sparse literature that deals qualitatively with young minority Muslims (women) within majority youth alcohol cultures. In the third section (Theoretical Framework), I present my theoretical sources of inspiration, where I combine approaches from phenomenology and feminist research in order to come close to the experiences of the study participants while also being attentive to the situatedness of knowledge, agency, and the structures of inequality, that are at stake in the study. Furthermore, I bridge the theoretical tools in the publications to this overall framework. The fourth section (Methodology and Data) continues directly from there, and I present my methodological choices and reflections here. As such, this section is "the path" I have followed and the way I have moved through the dissertation from beginning to end. The fifth section (Conclusion: Changing the emphasis) brings together the findings from each of the publications and illustrates how they fit together and into the broader objectives of my study. This is the last part before the publications themselves.

TWO: CONTEXTUALIZING THE DISSERTATION

I always try to find the one who is the least drunk. But when everyone starts to be too drunk, then you do not want to be there. It is not fun to be sober at a drunk party.

Firouzeh, 24 years old, whose "body is a temple."

I know you can drink moderately and drink one beer for the sake of coziness [hygge]. But most young people drink to get drunk and to have a good time. That is what people connect with alcohol. I would rather read a good book.

Ayaan, 20 years old, who just do not have time for misbehaving

Youth alcohol drinking in Denmark

The young Muslim women who have participated in this study live in a country where alcohol is cherished, enjoyed, and widely consumed—historically and today (Eriksen, 1993). Denmark has a very liberal approach to the drinking of alcohol, and alcohol is valued as a central element of socializing among both adults and young people. Related to policy, the liberty to drink alcohol has been prioritized over prohibitions; individual choice and control have been expected rather than focusing on forming regulations and alcohol policies (Elmeland & Kolind, 2012; Elmeland & Villumsen, 2007). Alcohol consumption in Denmark is thus viewed more as a moral question than as a political matter (Elmeland & Villumsen, 2013).

In the following, I place my dissertation within the literature on youth and alcohol and provide an account of the characteristics of youth alcohol drinking in Denmark. I point toward the importance young people attach to (heavy) drinking and drinking's importance for their experiences of becoming more mature, for being socially included, and for their construction and maintenance of identities and friendships. I discuss the present decline in drinking among young people in light of the presence of minority drinking cultures. Lastly, I provide an account of different approaches to the concept of drinking cultures including my own before I move to the next section, which accounts for the position of young Muslims in research and society.

(Heavy) youth drinking, risk, and liminality

In the lives of young people in Denmark, partying and drinking alcohol are central activities. Despite an increased age of initiation since 1984, young Danes do begin to drink at a younger age compared to young people in other European countries (Järvinen & Room, 2007). At the age of 15, for instance, most young Danes have tried drinking alcohol. They are also more oriented toward getting drunk and consequently drink more at each drinking session, so-called binge drinking (Tolstrup et al. 2019). Thus, they mostly abstain on weekdays but drink heavily during the weekend (Gundelach & Järvinen, 2006). The high levels of alcohol consumption among Danish youth did not receive much attention until the first ESPAD (the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs) study was published in 1995, which placed Danish youth among the heaviest drinkers in Europe (Kolind et al., 2013). Despite a present general decline in youth alcohol consumption in Europe, Danish youth are still among the heaviest drinkers, and they still drink to be drunk (Frank et al. 2020; Herold & Kolind, 2022).

This intoxication-oriented way of drinking among Danish youth resonates with an international consumption pattern among youth, the "new culture of intoxication" (Measham & Brain, 2005), where young people aim to become drunk. The drinking patterns of Danish youth as part of this international tendency (Plant & Plant, 2006; Järvinen & Room, 2007), which can be described and analyzed as "calculated hedonism" (Szmigin et al., 2008), "determined drunkenness" (Measham & Brain, 2005), or a "controlled loss of control" (Measham, 2004). These concepts point to the different ways in which intoxication is viewed as bounded and unbounded at the same time. They aim to convey how young people try to strike a balance between two opposites. Namely, these include experiencing the pleasure of being intoxicated (including letting go and transgressing the everyday normalcy) while also avoiding unnecessary physical and social risks, such as passing out, vomiting, getting a bad reputation, or even being socially excluded in the future (Tutenges & Rod, 2009; Measham, 2004).

The similar configurations of youth drinking across national borders testify to the many global changes in youth culture that have increasingly impacted youth alcohol use. Particularly since the 1990s, young people have experienced an increasing uprooting of social communities and a growing pressure to find new ways of belonging and identifying with each other (Maffesoli, 1996)—for instance, through the consumption of goods such as alcohol (Hunt & Frank, 2016). These national patterns of alcohol consumption describe the general picture of alcohol consumption among young people; however, they do not sufficiently capture the variations and differences between diverse drinking groups, neither in terms of quantities nor the meanings different young people ascribe to the drinking of alcohol.

In light of the above, the drunken youth party can be viewed as a liminal space that is open to transgressions, where it is possible to do things that one could not normally do without being sanctioned (Measham, 2002; Sandberg et al., 2019). A good part of the existing literature on youth and alcohol in this line of thought considers alcohol as a means for young people to transcend childhood and move toward adulthood (see for instance Lalander, 1998; Beccaria & Sande, 2003; Demant & Østergaard, 2007; Demant and Järvinen 2006). The drinking of alcohol here plays a part as an instrument in a classical rite of passage or a liminal phase that defines the coming of age of young people. Beccaria and Sande (2003) pointed to the need to bring up to date the theory of the rite of passage because, among other things, how young people consume alcohol and other drugs has become more rebellious and exploratory, and it is no longer organized by the adults (such as is the case with the priest in confirmation ceremonies). Instead, they suggest the concept of "rite of life projects" where the young

people's initiatives and agency are more evident. Tutenges (2005) argues that the strength of these ritual theories of alcohol consumption is how they take intoxication seriously rather than simplifying the desire for alcohol consumption as a way to relieve pressure or let out steam. However, their weakness lies in the weight that is placed on purpose and usefulness when often there is none. The useless and self-indulgent aspects of intoxication are also central to its attractiveness for young people in Denmark.

Nightlife, ethnic minorities, and private parties

A lot of young people's intoxication-oriented drinking occurs in public within the so-called nighttime economy. The growth of the nighttime economy has been driven by liberal alcohol policies as well as opportunities to profit from selling alcohol and access to nightlife settings and is particularly targeting young people (Chatterton & Hollands, 2002; Hunt & Frank, 2016). Like in other Western cities, the nighttime economy in many Danish cities is characterized by a "metropolitan paradox" (Back, 1996) concerning ethnic minorities. As Søgaard (2017) describes it, the inner-city nightlife in Denmark is today "a globalized urban domain characterized by regular inter-ethnic encounters and cosmopolitan hopes," but at the same time, there is also widespread "cultural racism and exclusion of visible minority youth from bars and nightclubs" (Søgaard, 2017, p. 256). Thus, the nighttime economy is a challenging space for young people to inhabit, particularly for different visible minorities, whether they are minoritized because of their gender, ethnicity, race, or sexual orientation. For instance, mainstream venues, in particular, are (potentially) highly gendered and heteronormatively sexualized spaces, limiting and restraining the actions of particularly young women (Nicholls, 2017; Jensen, 2019, p. 34).

In contrast to the nighttime economy, pre-parties occur in a home before hitting the town. They can function as a way to prepare the young people participating for the more exacting setting of the city nightlife (Barton & Husk, 2014). Additionally, pre-parties can be seen as a strategic choice and a way for young people to feel safer while drinking (Fileborn, 2016). In a Danish context, pre-parties are associated with heavy drinking and a way to keep the costs of buying alcohol down (Østergaard & Andrade, 2014). As a private event, it is more easily controlled, for instance, regarding who can participate. These parties are often gender-divided, which seems to enhance sociability, pleasure, comfort, and safety (Herold & Hunt, 2020). The privacy of pre-parties as well as the tendency to be gender-divided also means that they are experienced as safer, more accessible, and less exclusive than the city nightlife among

young Muslim women, as we showed in the first publication of the dissertation (Bærndt & Kolind, 2021, p. 25).

Up to this point, I have argued that a focus on intoxication characterizes the drinking culture among young people in Denmark; however, it is also mediated by a juggling of risk and pleasure, by feelings of comfortability and safety, which again is connected to questions of identity and the specific location, such as city nightlife versus private parties. In the following, I discuss the drinking culture's meaning for social inclusion, feelings of belonging and the formation of identity, and the making and maintenance of friendships.

Friendship, social bonds, and belonging

In Denmark, drinking alcohol and being intoxicated is not solely about a search for pleasure; it is also an important practice for establishing and maintaining social bonds that go further than the party itself and stretch into everyday life (Tutenges & Rod, 2009). For instance, research focused on the meaning of drinking shows that drinking is also important for the making of friends (Jensen & Hunt, 2020; Niland et al., 2013; MacLean, 2016; Thurnell-Read, 2012), for feelings of belonging (Herold et al. 2020; Bærndt & Frank, 2022), and for ongoing identity work, such as the formation of gender and social class (Measham, 2002; Kolind, 2011; Nicholls, 2019). In the following, I account for alcohol's significance for friendship-making, then belonging, and then alcohol as identity work.

It is interesting to note how the levels of young people's alcohol drinking tend to resemble those of others around them. However, there is no clear answer to the question of why it is so. Rather than a question of "peer pressure" or "contagion," MacLean (2016) argues that alcohol use "functions as a crucible where young adults may enact and affirm their friendships" (MacLean, 2016, p. 93). Alcohol thus becomes the means by which young people find and affirm friendships, which is why their drinking patterns resemble. In addition, young people reinforce their social bonds with friends when they plan and get ready for a night out. Getting ready often includes pre-drinks and regularly takes place with friends of the same gender as themselves (Atkinson & Sumnall, 2019). Being drunk together and sharing the intoxicated pleasurable feelings of being drunk can also stimulate a sense of collectivity and connectedness (Fry, 2011), which can be prolonged through the sharing of drinking stories that can bind a group together (Fjær, 2012; Tutenges & Sandberg, 2013). Bonding over shared drinking stories is, as I argued in the third publication, "a way to celebrate one's sameness with others in a group" (Bærndt, 2023, p. 11).

In this way, a clear link exists between drinking alcohol and being socially integrated, exemplified in the classic description of drinking as "essentially a social act" (Douglas, 1987). The drinking of alcohol (or the lack thereof) even plays a part in people's sense of belonging to a larger community, such as a particular rural area (Herold et al., 2020), a religious community (Bærndt & Frank, 2022) or even a national community (Grønkjær et al., 2011, Thurnell-Read & Monaghan, 2023). As we show in the second publication (Bærndt & Frank, 2022), being part of several communities with contrasting alcohol patterns, for instance, being a young Danish Muslim, drinking alcohol becomes dilemma-filled and may challenge feelings of belonging. As such, alcohol can be "a way of thinking about and feeling the nation" (Thurnell-Read & Monaghan, 2023, p. 224), for instance, when alcohol brands offer new traditions, such as the yearly release of the Christmas beer in Denmark.

Alcohol consumption is also intertwined with young people's ongoing identity work, such as the formation of gender and social class (Measham, 2002; Kolind, 2011; Nicholls, 2019). Several researchers have argued for the existence of complex links between drinking behavior and issues of self and identity among young people. Measham (2002), for instance, opened up for investigating gender as something more than a predictive indicator of people's use of alcohol and other drugs. Instead, she approached use as a social practice through which young people accomplish different forms of gendered identities. Drug and alcohol use can thus be seen as a way of "doing gender." This theoretical framework of "doing gender" is inspired by West & Zimmerman (1987), who emphasized the performance of gender as situated social action. This has been the dominating framework employed in research on youth and gender in the alcohol field (Hunt & Antin, 2019; Measham, 2002). Approaching gender as "a doing" and as situated social action contributed to an upsurge of studies within alcohol studies that engaged with the role of gender in drinking practices, remedying somewhat the neglect of gender in alcohol studies in the past (Ettore, 1997; Eriksen, 1999; Hunt et al. 2015). This has contributed with rootholding how drinking alcohol does not take place in a vacuum outside of society; rather, (gender) norms and (gendered) inequalities inform both drinking habits and drinking experiences (Hunt & Frank, 2016; Hutton et al., 2013). For instance, in the ways that young women seem to be met with contradicting demands when they drink, such as performing a femininity that is respectable and restrained at the same time that it is liberated and sexually available (Griffin et al., 2013; Hutton et al. 2013). Contradictions and dilemmas seem to be brought more forward in research concerned with the role of gender and different minority positions in alcohol research, and thus I consider my contribution to the field as clearly linked and indebted to these studies.

Miller & Carbone-Lopez (2015) argue that the "doing gender" framework has been dominant at the expense of other useful theoretical ways of thinking. They encourage researchers to move beyond "merely 'doing gender' to also investigate 'doing race, class, and place'" (Miller & Carbone-Lopez, 2015, p. 695) within an intersectional framework to study patterns of inequality through the conjunction of multiple identities, such as gender, race, and class. I offer such a perspective in the first publication, which engages directly with intersectionality.

Youth drinking in decline

Since the early 2000s, youth drinking in Europe, Australia, and the US has been in decline (Pennay et al., 2022). The age of onset is increasing (Pape et al., 2018); more young people choose to become non-drinkers, and drinking less has become an increasingly common practice (Frank et al., 2020). However, Danish youth remain among the world's heaviest drinkers and still aim to become intoxicated (Herold & Kolind, 2022). Recently, however, the Danish alcohol culture has begun to be problematized more broadly in society and among decision decision-makers and NGOs, for instance, through discussions of raising the age limit for the purchase of alcohol from 16 to 18 years (Alkohol & Samfund, 2023). The otherwise valued symbolic position of alcohol has begun to attract more negative descriptions of Denmark as having an "oppressive alcohol norm" because people find that abstinence is largely unacceptable in society (Movendi, 2022). It thus seems that it is time for possible changes in Danes' attitude toward the drinking of alcohol (Kraus et al., 2020).

It has been considered whether an explanation for the decline in youth drinking across Western countries has to do with the increase in ethnic and religious minorities, such as Muslims, who are less likely to drink. However, the decline in youth drinking is largest among majority children (Bhattacharya, 2016). As mentioned above, there is a tendency for youth drinking patterns to resemble those of others around them (MacLean, 2016). If the rising number of ethnic minorities means that the majority is more likely to be surrounded by abstinent peers, this may explain why they are less likely to try alcohol (Bhattacharya, 2016, p. 34). In continuation of this, other researchers have suggested that religion as part of a non-drinking identity is mostly accepted among women (Pennay et al, 2022), which suggests that there are limits to the ethnic minority explanation for youth drinking in decline.

The limited research exploring the role of gender in connection with the increase of abstinent and light-drinking youth suggests that gendered norms may be influencing the cultural devaluation of drinking for young men and young women (Frank et al., 2020). This is

in line with research that proposes that youth drinking cultures are becoming increasingly fragmented and that there is now greater variation in how young people use alcohol. For instance, as an element in the ways they construct their gendered identities (Demant & Törronen, 2011). However, the devaluation of drinking happens in different ways for young women and young men. Young women tend to emphasize health, well-being, vulnerability, and responsibility, whereas young men often focus on the exercise of sports as a legitimate reason for abstaining (Frank et al., 2020).

The Danish youth alcohol culture

I operate with the concept of a Danish "youth alcohol culture" (or interchangeable "youth drinking culture") throughout the dissertation. Below, I discuss how similar conceptualizations of drinking among different groups at different levels have materialized in the alcohol field and account for how I approach it myself.

The concept of culture is used widely in both academic and public discourse. In both cases, the term is often implicit, unarticulated, and taken-for-granted. Generally, efforts to define "culture" more broadly have been part of the backbone of fields such as anthropology, where culture is at the heart of the discipline (Tylor, 1871; Geertz, 1973). A central problem about culture is that it easily becomes reified and understood without much nuance as a closed entity with stable content. However, culture conceived of as isolated units without the complexity that follows an influx from other cultures is a convenient, albeit unfitting, way to approach its analysis.

Within the alcohol field, the concept of "drinking cultures" is often used in research; however, what is meant by the term is rarely defined more explicitly (Savic et al., 2016). It often refers to something along the lines of "shared values" and those aspects of social control underpinning and shaping drinking (Rolando et al., 2020). This focus is fruitful, for instance, when comparing how alcohol and drunkenness may assume different cultural positions in different countries (Room & Mäkelä, 2000). Savic et al. (2016) suggest that drinking culture as a concept should extend beyond patterns of drinking that exist within a cultural entity. It should also comprise meanings, values, settings, and places in which drinking occurs, as well as how drinking is controlled or regulated within a society.

However, in our highly differentiated and global world, it is close to impossible to establish which drinking practices and norms apply to a whole (national) society. Rather, there are likely to be multiple and possibly intertwined cultures that coexist in any given society (Savic et al., 2016; Pennay & Room, 2016). Broad characterizations of societies are thus more

and more incorrect and might instead obscure significant nuances in drinking practices. Increasingly, researchers have begun to think of alcohol cultures not on the macro level, but rather on micro and meso levels; for instance, when they conceptualize "subcultures" (Shildrick & Macdonald, 2006), "counter-cultures" (Kolind, 2011) or "social worlds" (MacLean et al., 2021). Various subcultures or social worlds are seen as relating to each other and effecting the position of alcohol more broadly in society. MacLean et al. (2021), for instance, understand social worlds as loosely bounded groups with members who share commitments, practices, and norms, which arise from interaction and repetition with other members. They argue further that social worlds that comprise the consumption of alcohol are also characterized by the drinking settings, and the kinds of products and technologies used for consumption.

Drinking is regulated by social norms or "symbolic boundaries" between ways of drinking that are socially accepted and those that are not, and these norms can differ tremendously across subcultures or social worlds (Rolando et al., 2014). As such, norms are the building blocks behind patterns of alcohol consumption and they affect behavior through, for instance, sanctions. Furthermore, and quite importantly, norms that govern drinking differ "both according to the social situation – time and place and occasion – and according to the individual status on various social differentiations" (Room, 1975, p. 361), which corresponds nicely to applying an intersectional theoretical framework.

One such social differentiation is age and, for instance, analyzing alcohol in the context of a youth culture (Chatterton & Hollands, 2003) that is approached as embedded within adult drinking norms. As Järvinen & Room (2007) found, the drinking of young people to some extent reflects the context of adult drinking norms in a given country. However, youth drinking has its own particular characteristics. For instance, they suggest the categories "intoxication culture" and "non-intoxication culture" to describe the overall differences between youth drinking across Europe (Järvinen & Room, 2007). The differences between adult and youth drinking cultures stem partly from the "boundary work" young people conduct as an important practice to distance themselves from adult drinking (Rolando et al. 2014).

An important point to make is that in highly differentiated societies, there will be many such micro and meso levels of culture and where, generally, the broader characteristics do not always apply. This means that the drinking culture of a given society may "refer and 'belong' to some parts of the culture much more than to others" (Savic et al., 2016). As Gmel et al. (2007) argued, what is commonly referred to as national drinking culture mostly refers to the drinking patterns of men, which is caused by the predominance of men everywhere in heavier drinking. It is thus important that we critically engage with this tendency to emphasize

experiences of (white, middle-class) young men in alcohol studies and instead aim at broadening the field.

This leads me to the way that I have thought of, and applied, the term "Danish youth alcohol culture" in this dissertation. If I were to zoom in on the alcohol culture of Danish youth, I would approach this culture much in agreement with Savic et al. (2016) who suggest that a drinking culture comprises patterns of drinking, meanings, values, settings, drinking places, and how drinking is controlled or regulated within a society. I even believe that I have covered many of these aspects in the previous sections. However, I also agree with those researchers who question the feasibility of analyzing culture at the level of a whole society in the first place. I employ the term "Danish youth alcohol culture" numerous times throughout the dissertation; however, my research focus is specifically on young Muslim women. Employing the term culture in this context therefore has a different function than being the central object of this study.

First, the Danish youth alcohol culture comes to represent a frame of reference or even an opposite to the young Muslim women's experiences. The nuances, complexities, and contextualized descriptions and analysis of the participants' experiences stand out clearer when the Danish youth alcohol culture represents the backdrop. Second, I understand the experiences of young Muslim women as embedded within the Danish youth alcohol culture, which, for me, sends the important message that I consider the project's participants as part of Danish youth. Danish youth is comprised of many more people than the average young white middle-class male. He is well represented in youth alcohol research, while many minorities are not. This is why I argue that including more diverse young people in research can broaden our understandings of youth and alcohol, to perhaps include more aspects that "belong" to minorities.

In the above, I have shown how drinking alcohol among youth in Denmark is characterized by intoxication, a search for pleasure, and marks a transition from childhood to adulthood. It is connected to issues of belonging, friendship, and identity, and even though there is a decline in youth drinking, drinking alcohol among youth in Denmark is still highly connected to social inclusion, while abstinence is connected to social exclusion. The participants of this study are navigating within and against this youth alcohol culture.

Young Muslims as a category in society and research

In the following, I contextualize the particular circumstances and position in society of the study's research participants. I attend to the broader history of immigrants in Denmark as well as the present position of immigrants, Muslims and Muslim women in Danish society. I also account for my approach to what I call the 'figure of the Muslim woman.' This is done in order to provide the larger context of the dissertation and to enable a better understanding of the young women who are at the center of this study.

Muslims increasingly at the margin in Denmark

Denmark is generally regarded as a mono-cultural nation-state with a relatively homogenous population in terms of ethnicity, language, and religion (Hedetoft, 2006). This perceived ethnic sameness makes people feel connected to each other and to the larger imagined community (Anderson, 1983; Gullestad, 2002). The perception of sameness is linked to the relatively brief Danish history of immigration. The first larger groups of immigrants arrived in Denmark in the 1960s and were so-called 'guest workers' who came to the country because of a labor shortage. Their stay was expected to be temporary, but many settled in Denmark with their families over time rather than return to their countries of origin. They came primarily from Turkey, Pakistan, Morocco, and the former Yugoslavia, and many had Muslim backgrounds (Hervik, 2004). At the time, immigrants were generally not defined in terms of their religion, and Islam was viewed as a neutral aspect of immigrants' culture (Gilliam, 2022). However, since then, the perception of Muslims has changed. Increasingly, Islam is regarded as a significant obstacle to immigrants' integration into Danish society. Particularly after the arrival of new groups of refugees from Bosnia, Lebanon, and Somalia in the 1980s and 1990s, coinciding with the first guest workers losing their jobs because of economic stagnation and restructuring (Hervik, 2004). This contributed to a view of Islam as a source of social problems and a negative aspect of 'foreign culture' (Mørck, 1998). Furthermore, important events such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York as well as the Danish 'Cartoon Crisis' (2005–2006) have accelerated the negative change in discourse regarding Muslims in Denmark and have added a new layer of "securitization" (Rytter & Pedersen, 2013). The security aspect of the discourse on Muslims not only in Denmark but also elsewhere means that all Muslims are viewed as potentially dangerous, and they are constructed as 'insiders-outsiders' who are a possible threat to Danish values from within (Yuval-Davis, 2011). There is also a tendency to hold the individual Muslim

accountable for the actions of others—for instance, terrorists who claim allegiance to Islam (Brubaker, 2013).

The political discourse on immigrants, particularly Muslims, is omnipresent today and takes up space in various public discussions. This transformation within the discourse of immigration from a labor issue into a cultural/religious issue also means that many immigrants today are problematized as a cultural category as Muslims (Yilmaz, 2015). Furthermore, Muslims are increasingly constructed in opposition to being Danish, and rather than being two co-existing aspects of identity, being Danish and being Muslim seem to be identities that either collide or are placed within a hierarchy where Muslims need to 'be relaxed' or 'not make a fuss' in order to be accepted as part of society (Gilliam, 2022). In many ways, Danish national identity is constructed against the 'Other' who is Muslim and less privileged (Yilmaz, 2015).

Within this general Islam critical sentiment in society, many Muslims today are more private about their religion and thus less visible in the public sphere. Trying to blend in and make oneself more invisible is a common minority strategy, which provides them with greater space to navigate (Jeldtoft, 2012; Rytter, 2019) and conforms to a general Danish middle-class value of not sticking out (Faber et al., 2012). However, a central challenge for most immigrants is that they will receive criticism for whatever they do. Rytter (2019, p. 682) has, for instance, described the process of becoming integrated into Danish society as a Sisyphean task, where "they have to keep trying, but enough is never enough."

The figure of the Muslim woman

While Muslims, in general, have become the target of securitization and Othering in the Danish public discourse, it is important to bear in mind how the discourse is also extremely gendered. Muslim women have particular expectations attached to them and a particular gaze on their appearance and actions. Khawaja (2011) describes how the different types of "gazes" on Muslims contribute to the specific strategies they develop to negotiate their Muslim visibility in public. Visibility or even "hypervisibility" is particularly connected to Muslim women who wear a Muslim headscarf, and they often develop strategies that work against being positioned as oppressed and dependent on others (Khawaja, 2011, p. 278).

The intersection between gender, religion, and ethnicity also plays a decisive role in the media's construction of ethnic minorities along stereotypical lines. Immigrant women are constructed as oppressed and, in contrast, to both aggressive immigrant men and ethnic Danish women, who have achieved equality and independence (Andreassen, 2005). Not only

the media but also the public debate more generally often depict Muslim women as more admirable and hard-working than their "derailed criminal brothers" (Essers & Benschop, 2009); however, they are simultaneously victimized and seen as dependent, oppressed, and quiet (Rognlien & Kier-Byfield, 2020). Inhabiting the dual positions of Muslim and woman means that Muslim girls and women are being simultaneously constructed as both highly 'visible' raced subjects and yet also 'invisible' gendered subjects (Mirza, 2013).

There is a global tendency to portray Muslim women as in need of saving (Abu-Lughod, 2002), particularly so from their patriarchal family pattern, and this tabs into a "global white savior paradigm" (Rashid, 2016), where white men need to save brown women from brown men (Spivak, 1988). However, even though the figure of the Muslim woman in this way is constructed as someone in need of saving, she is simultaneously regarded as a key to solving several global challenges, for instance, when specific initiatives to empower and invest in Muslim women are considered as a way to combat terrorism (Rashid, 2016).

Young Muslim women in Denmark are, as in other European countries, often perceived negatively due to their clothing (Andreassen 2005; Korteweg & Yurdakul 2014; Mason-Bish & Zempi 2019). For many critics, the Muslim headscarf symbolizes a negatively perceived patriarchal and authoritarian family pattern that is unsuited to be paired with Danish values (Degn & Søholm, 2011; Khawaja, 2011). Danish values and 'Danish culture' are often framed around the accomplishment of universal values of gender equality and sexual tolerance (Yilmaz, 2015). In the Danish self-understanding, gender equality is a core value, which is self-evidently accomplished. This provides the basis for commenting on other cultures for their lack of gender equality. Therefore, with the increasingly problematizing discourse surrounding Muslims, questions of gender and sexuality have come to the fore, and a central problem with Islam is constructed as its lack of gender equality (Yilmaz, 2015).

Against the background of increasing anti-Muslim sentiments and Othering, and bearing in mind that these phenomena are deeply gendered, it becomes especially important to include and represent Muslim women and girls in research.

Muslims as a sociological fact in this dissertation

Brubaker (2013) distinguishes between Muslim as a 'category of analysis' and a 'category of practice.' Owing to the above-mentioned political attention and (negative) media coverage of Muslims (as a category of analysis) in recent years, the way populations of immigrant origin identify has also shifted massively. People who used to be identified largely through their national origin or socio-economic categories, such as Turks, guest workers, or immigrants, are

increasingly identified and categorized as Muslims (Brubaker, 2013; Yildiz, 2009). This has contributed to a shift in self-identification, whereby more individuals have accepted and assumed Muslim as the 'category of practice' they identify with (Rytter, 2019). Furthermore, Islam may offer distance from one's ethnic background through a discourse of universality, where ethnicity and culture become more irrelevant. For instance, many young women seem to emphasize their Muslim identity rather than their ethnic identity because Islam's universality provides a way to resist restrictions on their behavior that stems from their ethnic community (Essers & Benschop, 2009, p. 417). The sense of a collective community in Islam and feeling connected is at the core of faith for many Muslims. "Believing through belonging" (Galal, 2009, p. 46) as a mode of being religious characterized the relationship to Islam for many participants in this study. Some have only a vague sense of belonging (to a Muslim community), whereas others have a strong sense of belonging. They are thus not particularly visible or vocal about their religion, but rather Muslims in the more "fuzzy structures" (Jeldtoft & Nielsen, 2012, p. 4).

This is the reason why, as I brought up in the introduction, this study is about young Muslim women as a group who possibly have shared interests and experiences, but not a study of their relationship to Islam or their religiousness. Despite the heterogeneity of Muslims, who have different approaches to Islam and ways of being Muslim, they have become a 'sociological fact' through the obsession with the categorization of Muslims as Muslims (Sunier, 2012). As such, this dissertation also engages in the categorization process by adding to the knowledge production of Muslims as a distinct group (Jeldtoft & Nielsen, 2012). However, I aim to put the young women's experiences at the center and work against reifying their Muslim identity as the main explanatory category and work against everything, also drinking experiences, being "about Islam" (Jeldtoft, 2012). I find it particularly important to foreground forces and influences other than culture and religion (Abu-Lughod, 1990) because privileging these two factors tends to neglect and make invisible other positions that are important (Yuval-Davies, 2011). For instance, the young women in my project would frame their parents' involvement in their life in different ways, but altogether most of them had an experience of their parents' being enormously present and informed about many aspects of their existence. This should be part of the considerations in future research on Muslims and drinking rather than a simplified view of the reason as a consequence of Islamic doctrines and the level of religiousness. For example, Casho, who was introduced in the third publication, had her high school party severely interrupted by her brother and her father. Understandably, this affected her relationship with alcohol and parties but was an example of social control, not

religiousness. In this way, I approach 'being Muslim' more as a question of belonging among the participants and less as a question of religion.

In the next part, I account for the scarce literature on Muslim minorities in majority drinking cultures.

Previous research on young Muslims and alcohol

Studies of youth and their use of alcohol and parties usually do not include young people of ethnic minority backgrounds and young Muslims. This is particularly true in a Danish context, where the perspectives of young minorities are often overlooked (Holm et al. 2016; Kolind et al. 2013). This might have to do with the Danish inclination to conflate immigrants with Muslims and the association of Muslims with abstinence (Bærndt & Kolind, 2021). However, some international studies do emphasize how the use of alcohol and other drugs also plays a role in the construction and performance of ethnic identities, for instance, when Moloney et al. (2008) show how young ethnic minorities use drugs and alcohol as a way to distinguish themselves from ethnically similar others (Moloney et al., 2008). Studies such as this demonstrate how ethnicity in alcohol and drug research today is interpreted less as a reified cultural possession to be born with and more as a struggle (social, historical, or political) over meaning and identity (Brubaker, 2002). Perspectives on ethnic identity as fluid and contextually dependent, such as "new ethnicities" (Hall, 1990, Back 1996), have thus moved slowly from social anthropology and sociology and into alcohol and drug studies (Hunt et al., 2017). This provides a much-needed antidote to (particularly epidemiological) approaches, where ethnic minority background previously was often correlated to different scapegoated substances (Reinarman & Levine, 1997). As we argued in the first publication (Bærndt & Kolind, 2021), we also need to be careful when we take for granted the correlation between abstinence and ethnic minorities who have a Muslim identity. There is a considerable research gap to be filled, which is not limited to young Muslim women or a Danish context when it comes to qualitative studies of alcohol culture and ethnic minorities.

In Denmark, young people with Muslim backgrounds generally drink less than the ethnic Danish population. Approximately 10 percent of Danish young people do not drink alcohol, and among young Danish people with a Muslim background, around 70 percent are abstainers (Gundelach & Järvinen, 2006). However, because drinking is stigmatized among many Muslims, it is not unlikely that shadow figures of drinking among Muslims are prevalent (Michalak & Trocki 2006; Dotinga 2005). Thus, both the accuracy of the numbers of Muslims who drink and/or party and the quality of their experiences are underexposed. Below, I will account for the main existing qualitative literature on Muslim minorities who navigate within majority alcohol cultures.

Holm et al. (2016) show how being in control rather than losing control (i.e. controlled loss of control) contributes to experiences of pleasure among minority youth in Denmark. Using a theory of disciplined pleasure and the emic concept of 'being optimum' (my translation), the authors took the first steps in qualitative research concerned with minority youth and alcohol intoxication in a Danish context. This dissertation expands on their findings concerned with self-control. However, being optimum seems to capture better the experiences of young minority men than those of young minority women. 'Being optimum' as a concept does touch on some of the same aspects of partying and drinking as I have found, for instance, when young Muslim women feel the need to be in control—of the party, of intoxication, and of life broadly speaking (Bærndt et al., 2017; Bærndt & Frank, 2022).

Valentine et al.'s (2010) study of British Pakistani Muslims and their experiences with drinking and the night-time economy found that young Muslims who go out have "a sense that the eyes of the community are always on the street." The omnipresent potential surveillance meant that some of the study participants, who would otherwise be tempted to or wanting to drink, described exercising self-discipline. This finding collaborates with research that points to the more gendered ways young Muslim women experience that there is an ever-present threat of becoming the target of gossip in the local community, even with only minor missteps. Drinking alcohol, in particular, is by many young Muslim women associated with severe consequences, such as exclusion from the community and limited marriage prospects (Mirdal, 2006; Bradby, 2007; Waltorp, 2015). Valentine et al. (2010) further found that among those participants, who did not drink, alcohol could generate physical discomfort and emotions of disgust and repulsion. Those who had tasted alcohol described it as unpleasant, and contrary to their majority British counterparts, alcohol was unable to generate feelings of pleasure and relaxation. Furthermore, many young Muslims disliked the power of alcohol, which could change "pleasant, respectable, individuals into loud, out-of-control, child-like figures" (Valentine et al., 2010, p. 12), starkly contrasting with their religious values of modesty and respectability.

Bradby (2007) investigates what dimensions of identity, such as religion, gender, and generation, have on the meaning and consequences of drinking alcohol and smoking tobacco for young Punjabi Asians (Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu) in Glasgow. Generally, she found that drinking was highly gendered for all three religious groups and that female drinking was very much disapproved of. The few young Muslim women in the study who did drink alcohol felt a need to do so in hiding. Furthermore, she found that most participants believed that more drinking was a natural consequence of better integration into Scottish society, and drinking was

thought to increase also in the future, particularly so among women in higher education, where drinking and partying were considered an obligatory part of student life (Bradby, 2007, p. 662). Bradby further found that, particularly among her Muslim participants, drinking could lead to heavenly consequences, such as having prayers being rejected by God, and worldly consequences, including being viewed as a hypocrite and being socially ostracized. Even though the Koran's religious proscriptions on alcohol seem gender-blind, concerns about malicious gossip meant that the young women constrained their comportment more than men did. For instance, they would make sure stories of their substance use would not be repeated by begging or intimidating their friends not to pass anything on to their families (Bradby, 2007, p.666). Community gossip and the fear of sanctions play a part in many young ethnic minorities' sense of responsibility toward their family and community, which again fuel feelings of shame and embarrassment in connection to parties and the drinking of alcohol (Douglass et al., 2022). Gossip and rumors that concerns the drinking of alcohol among Muslims can be damaging; however, gendered differences mean that while harm to women's reputations is almost impossible to erase, young men can compensate for their damaged reputation if their parents hold an honorable position in their local community (Bradby, 2007). These protruding gendered differences also mean that it can be quite fruitful to distinguish between young men and women in research, as I have done; however, this may happen at the expense of the communalities between them.

In a qualitative and explorative study, Douglass et al. (2022) explored alcohol and other drugs-related perceptions and experiences of young people from migrant and ethnic minority backgrounds in Melbourne, Australia. Similar to the above studies, they found that it was important for their participants to be able to control themselves. However, they stressed how they felt pressure because of community gossip and experienced pressure to be perceived as hardworking and productive to be accepted in Australian society. The pressure and felt responsibility to be seen as the "model minority" was felt across multiple settings, such as their study place, their work, and in their home. If they failed, they risked being seen as troublesome (Douglass et al., 2022, pp. 11).

Research has found that it can be very uncomfortable for abstinent Muslim women to participate in events that include alcohol drinking. For instance, Arifeen (2020) found that her participants felt obligated to participate in alcohol networking events at their workplaces. However, this meant they had to do difficult emotional work to be present, and they still felt socially excluded and stigmatized (Arifeen, 2020). In this dissertation, the voices of the abstaining young Muslim women are perhaps less protruding than the voices of those

who drink; however, the above studies are in line with the experiences of my abstinent participants, for instance, Samaneh, who felt physically unwell when someone spilled alcohol on her clothes (Bærndt, 2023).

The last study I would like to include here is concerned with Muslim men and not women. However, it points to some of the experiences of inclusion and exclusion shared by minority Muslims in majority countries. Fletcher & Spracklen (2014) investigates the inclusion and exclusion of British Pakistani Muslims in the ritualized drinking of alcohol that often follows in the wake of amateur cricket matches. Generally, the consumption of alcohol is a fundamental part of the post-match (in-) formalities, and teams are encouraged to bond by drinking together. They show how their participants must accommodate, negotiate, and challenge various forms of inequality and discrimination to avoid being socially excluded. If they decided not to participate after the match, it could have implications for how their teammates would perceive them, which would differ from how abstaining white teammates where perceived. For instance, because of their Muslim background, they would be considered as excluding themselves and establishing self-segregating as a typical Asian behavior (Fletcher & Spracklen, 2014, p. 1318). For some, being abstinent provided them with religious pride, and they dis-identified with the drinking part of their English identity, while others would be present at the bar while drinking non-alcoholic drinks "to optimize their chances of inclusion in white-dominated spaces" (Fletcher & Spracklen, 2014, p. 1321).

In this section (Contextualizing the dissertation), I have aimed at placing my study within the research literature in three ways. First, I accounted for the currents within the literature on youth drinking, which also informed how I approached my study and its possible themes. Secondly, I demonstrated the position of my study participants in research and Danish society because drinking and partying do not happen isolated from the inequalities in society; instead, society's structures are an inherent part of the study. Lastly, I turned toward the few qualitative studies on minority Muslims in majority alcohol cultures, with whom I see a connection or affinity to my project.

In the following section, I will turn toward the theories that have formed my thinking. I elaborate on how I have approached the project through a feminist-phenomenological theoretical framework concerned with the quality of the young women's experiences and how identity-related structures of inequality shape their experiences.

THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We are also bound to seek perspective from those points of view which can never be known in advance, that promise something quite extraordinary, that is, knowledge potent for constructing worlds less organized by axes of domination

Donna Haraway, 1988

Women's point of view is in some sense privileged because, like any subaltern view, it never could pretend that is wasn't a view from somewhere

Lila Abu-Lughod, 1990

Theoretical framework

In this section, I present the main theories that cover the overall framework of the dissertation and have informed my work throughout the publications. In brief, I have taken my point of departure in experience-focused phenomenological and feminist traditions, and I combine insights from researchers such as Jackson (1996), Haraway (1988), Battersby (1998), and Young (2005).

In the previous section, I showed how some of the literature on young people and alcohol linked intoxication to identity or various aspects of identity. For instance, Measham (2002) argues that doing drugs is also a way of doing gender or, when young people drink alcohol, as a way to belong to certain groups, for example, to be Danish (Grønkjær, 2011; Bærndt & Frank, 2022), to be counter-cultural (Kolind, 2011), or even to be purposefully deviant (Tutenges, 2005). As such, alcohol-related practices serve as a means to accomplish aspects of identity, which is a fundamental and important premise of much research in the field. I include myself in this identity-framed alcohol research, particularly so in the second publication (Bærndt & Frank, 2022), where we investigate modes of belonging for young Muslim women engaging with a youth alcohol culture that is intertwined with a Danish identity.

However, the use of alcohol (and other drugs) is also more than a question of accomplishing identity. For instance, consuming alcohol can also be understood as a symbolic act of resistance or power (Miller & Carbone-Lopez, 2015), and intoxication (from alcohol or other drugs) can be interpreted as a liberating action, for instance, when young women seek out pleasure free from everyday constraints (Hutton, 2006; Pini, 2001). Drinking alcohol can convey a relatively simple desire to behave wildly or foolishly, for instance, as a means to tell intoxicated stories (Tutenges & Sandberg, 2013). Therefore, the strategies and conscious actions of individuals are important for me to capture in this study, and I will argue that this goes beyond questions of identity. My aim here is to present and draw on a theoretical framework that allows me to build on the aforementioned research on drinking and identity while also approaching young Muslim women as individuals whose perspectives are significant and whose thoughts and actions express their individual power (their agency). I hope to show this by combining theoretical insights from phenomenology, feminist research, and feminist phenomenology in the following.

Phenomenology and experience

I find inspiration in phenomenology and its insistence on experience as the starting point of knowledge. I believe that important knowledges come from investigating human experience. In this way, I lean on an epistemology of experience in which experience serves as the foundation for knowledge. However, similarly to Hegel's version of experience (Erfahren), I understand experience as epistemically indispensable but never epistemically self-sufficient (Alcoff, 2000). Furthermore, I maintain that human experience already has a layer of interpretation and that, through analysis, the researcher adds another layer of interpretation. This position is inspired by Clifford Geertz's influential statement about anthropology as "not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). Experience and interpretation are central concepts for how I have approached this study and guided how I conduct research.

Phenomenology is the study of phenomena. It is the study of the appearances of things or things as they appear in our experience and the meanings these things have in our experience. According to Jackson (1996, p. 2), "Phenomenology is the scientific study of experience," and it is broadly recognized in phenomenology that phenomena are experienced from a subjective point of view. Thus, researchers who apply phenomenology are concerned with the lived experiences of the people being researched or who are involved with the issue being researched (Kvale, 1996).

The roots of phenomenology can be traced back to Kant and Hegel, but for many, Husserl and Heidegger are regarded as the chief sources of phenomenology in the twentieth century, together with Merleau-Ponty (Groenewald, 2004). Both Husserl and Heidegger explored 'life-worlds' as a concept used to capture an average existence in an ordinary world. The concept of a life-world highlighted the view that individuals live *in* a world, and in this world, they have intersubjective relationships (Jackson, 2012, xii). Furthermore, Heidegger introduced the concept of 'Dasein' ('Being there') to capture how people live in dialogue with the world, while Husserl used the term 'intersubjectivity' to capture "the sense in which we, as individual subjects, live intentionally or in tension with others as well as with a world that comprises techniques, traditions, ideas, and nonhuman things" (Jackson, 2012, p. 5). As such, we are continuously "changing, formed and reformed, in the course of our relationships with others" (Jackson, 2012, p. 5). Intersubjectivity, or the stuff that happens between individuals who are interacting, is a focal point for how I have approached my research as I have been attentive to the intersubjectivity in the data as well as in the interview situations, where I have been an active part or a subject myself. An important aspect of phenomenology is the emphasis

on embodied aspects of experience, often seen as Merleau-Ponty's most important contribution to phenomenology (Alcoff, 2000).

Phenomenology aims at returning to or capturing something concrete. This is also what Husserl expressed when he said we should go 'back to the things themselves.' This is still a point of orientation for many phenomenological researchers, also within the alcohol and intoxication field. For instance, Tutenges (2010), in his dissertation on Danish youth at an international nightlife resort, aimed at going "to the things themselves" through thorough descriptions of phenomena as they are, without contexts. This means putting in brackets the things that we usually apply to contextualize research, such as social class, ethnic background, educational level, and so on (Jackson, 1996, p. 10). The history or background of people or things are thus left behind in order to bring forth and emphasize the things themselves and the experiences of the things themselves.

However, as I am also concerned with inequality and structures of power, bracketing is not part of my toolbox. I believe it unfair to my particular participants if I was to do research that neglected the contexts of their lives, that is, contexts that literally shape and form their experiences of life. Thus, this is where I conclude my classical phenomenological inspirations and turn to feminist researchers who provide context, power, and agency to the theoretical framework. In contrast to the phenomenological ambition of bracketing context, I looked toward theory and methodologies where context was approached as meaningful and loaded with power dynamics. In the following, I account for some of those feminists who provided this to the theoretical framework. I introduce a feminist perspective that expresses both a specific female subjectivity that embraces "the values of the previously devalued side" (Abu-Lughod, 1990, p. 15) and that claims that (particularly some) women are not as free as we/they ought to be (Young, 2005, p. 3).

Subjectivity and situated knowledges

Feminist scholars have rightly criticized phenomenology because the existential subject of experiences is constructed as neutral and universal but emanates from a masculine ideal. For instance, Merleau-Ponty's subject is "masculine, his account of sexuality is patriarchal heterosexuality, and he naturalizes current gender relations" (Alcoff, 2000). Therefore, even though phenomenology as a field has contributed to making (embodied and subjective) experience a theme and a premise for its research vision, there is little or no reference to sexual difference or gender (Young, 2005, p. 4). Feminism, on the contrary, would instead insist on the "partial perspective" (Haraway, 1988) and the "subaltern view" (Abu-Lughod, 1990) as a

key to uncovering more truths or obtaining a feminist objectivity. Haraway argues that a feminist objectivity means acknowledging that knowledges are "situated"; they come from somebody, someone particular, rather than being "a conquering gaze from nowhere, from the unmarked position of Man and White" (Haraway, 1988, p. 581). One of her arguments for situated and embodied knowledges is that they make us accountable for what we learn and then claim. If knowledge is unlocatable, she argues, it is irresponsible because others are then unable to call the knowledge into account (Haraway, 1988, p. 583). Accordingly, Haraway assumes that all scientific knowledge is fundamentally conditional.

Young (2005) is an example of a distinct feminist phenomenologist, combining theories from both existential phenomenology and feminism. She argues that it is a core task to describe embodied being-in-the-world through a direct approach to sexual and gender difference. She explains how existential phenomenology is the most available approach for her because of her aim to write about female embodiment. For instance, building some of her work specifically on the theories of Merleau-Ponty and de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, in Young's description, theorized even consciousness as embodied, and as such, Merleau-Ponty moved phenomenological thinking away from Husserlian quests for transcendental essences toward a conceptualization of being-in-the-world as situated in a body. Embodied location is the premise of all situations and phenomena, and, therefore, Young argues, "The body as lived is always layered with social and historical meaning" (Young, 2005, p. 7). This was also the point made by de Beauvoir, who famously thematized sexual and gendered differences as constitutive of much situated being-in-the-world (2011).

However, the argument for engaging with the embodied or situated character of knowledge is not only that the female perspective has been neglected in the past, that a new perspective *might* be interesting, or that women are not as free as we ought to be. It is not an argument of "partiality for its own sake but, rather, for the sake of the connections and unexpected openings situated knowledges make possible" (Haraway, 1988, p. 590). The objective is better interpretations and better research that fits the world it deals with better. This is also pursued by Battersby (1998), who suggests that reflecting on the (existential) qualities of female bodies helps challenge common assumptions in much theory. An example could be assumptions about selves as being independent of one another and seeing individuals as having a rational core detached from the possible pains of their body. When we instead take female experiences and embodiment as a starting point, we find that individuals live in a body and that there are inevitable dependencies between self and other. This is what produces power inequalities (Battersby, 1998, p. 8). These inequalities may be impossible to eradicate, but they

should at least be acknowledged so that "each of us is to receive due respect" (Young, 2005, p. 5). I am attentive to how experiences as "lived and felt in the flesh" (Young, 2005, p. 7) are not always at the forefront of my interview material, but I have pursued embodied descriptions when they were available from my participants. For instance, in the third publication on drinking stories, Samaneh describes her experience of being 'soaked in alcohol,' which was a transgressive embodied experience. How her experience was "the wrong kind of unpleasant" (Fleetwood, 2014, p. 351), if it was to be transformed into a drinking story, reveals how (embodied) inequalities are also reproduced in a drinking context.

Below, I go through the theoretical tools I have applied in each of the publications and relate them to this overall theoretical framework of a feminist phenomenology.

Intersectionality, belonging, and storytelling within a feminist phenomenological framework

The first publication in the dissertation (Bærndt & Kolind, 2021) rests on an intersectional case study approach (see McCall, 2005) and is informed by an attentiveness to the intersections of social positions (Crenshaw, 1991). Particularly in focus are those intersections that matter most in the participants' experiences of being excluded in drinking and party contexts. Intersectionality emphasizes the intersection between different categories such as gender, class, ethnicity, and race, and argues that we cannot understand these in isolation but need to account for what happens at the intersection in a non-additive way (Davis & Zarkov, 2017; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Staunæs, 2003).

Intersectionality is originally a (Black) feminist concept formulated by Crenshaw (1991) with the explicit ambition of pointing towards other important areas of inequality than gender alone or race alone. She was building on those before her, who had discussed how, for instance, marginalized Black women's experiences seemed to disappear through a one-dimensional focus on gender or race (see, for instance, Davis, 1981; Lorde, 2017/1984; Collins, 1991). Crenshaw (1991) emphasized the importance of *experience* in her argument concerning domestic violence towards women of color. These women had specific experiences and were shaped by the particular intersections of their social identities (see also: Jensen & Elg, 2010). Their experiences and knowledges were thus *situated* and, as such, intersectionality is part of the development of feminists' claims similar to the ones I discussed in the previous section. Intersectionality and the importance of the social positioning of individuals was my tool in the first publication to capture the situated knowledges of my informants. Ultimately, this was necessary for me in order to challenge (masculine) hegemony and its claims of objectivity

(Haraway, 1988), or, in other words, for me to expand on our knowledge about youth drinking. Furthermore, with phenomenology as "the scientific study of experience" (Jackson, 1996) and the centrality of experience to the origins of intersectionality, intersectionality as a tool also served as a way for me to remain attentive to experience.

Embodied aspects of experience, as mentioned earlier, is an important aspect of phenomenology and perhaps the most important contribution of Merleu-Ponty. As Young (2005) describes it, Merleau-Ponty "took the revolutionary step of theorizing consciousness itself as embodied. The subject who constitutes a world is always an embodied subject" (Young 2005:9). Embodied individual experience is what Merleu-Ponty refers to as "the phenomenological world," which is not pure being or being without power inequality, but rather where "the paths of my various experiences intersect" (Merleu-Ponty cited in Jensen & Elg, 2010). Thus, in Merleu-Ponty's reasoning, embodied experience is necessarily intersectional.

The first publication rests on an *intra-categorical* approach to complexity in intersectional analysis as formulated by McCall (2005). She offers three different but related approaches to intersectional analysis, the other two being *anti-categorical* and *inter-categorical*. As its starting point, intra-categorical complexity examines marginalized social and intersectional identities. To some extent, it is critical of using categories, thus resembling the central characteristic of the anti-categorical approach. However, at the same time, it acknowledges "the stable and even durable relationships that social categories represent" (McCall, 2005:1774). The intra-categorical approach emphasizes the social construction of identities such as ethnicity and gender. As such, this approach sees the critique and deconstruction of social identities or categories as a possible force for social change. While conducting the analysis for the first publication, it was important to us that we avoided reinforcing marginalizing stereotypes of Muslim women and instead aimed to contextualize the differences between the participants. The intra-categorical approach helped us focus the analysis on the differences between the young women in the study. In contrast, an inter-categorical approach would focus on the differences between groups, such as between young Muslim women and young ethnic Danes, which would generate different but also valuable results. One disadvantage of choosing this approach is that "the Danish youth drinking culture" comes across as less nuanced and complex as compared to the group of participants (see also p. 20 on the Danish youth drinking culture).

The second publication (Bærndt & Frank, 2022) employs theoretical thinking about belonging. More specifically, it engages with Yuval-Davis's distinction between

belonging as emotional attachment and belonging as the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006). The aim was, through a focus on drinking and partying among young Muslim women in Denmark, to examine how the drinking practices of young Muslim women are influenced by belonging. Theoretically, this publication follows directly in line with the first publication. Several scholars work from the premise of the link between intersectionality and belonging (see e.g. Mirza, 2013; Lane, 2015), for instance, in thinking about belonging as a question of who is included and who is excluded (Christensen, 2009, p. 22). Similarly, Yuval-Davis consider intersectionality as vital for conducting an analysis of belonging. (2006, p. 200). The starting point is her analytical division of the notion of belonging (as emotional attachment, not the politics) into three different analytical levels, all of which need to be considered in analysis: social locations, identifications and emotional attachments, and ethical and political values.

Social locations concerns the point that people are said to belong to particular categories, e.g. gender, race, class, or nation, or even a particular age group, kinship group, or a certain profession. What are described in these situations are social and economic locations, which have particular implications stemming from grids of power relations in society. This is where Yuval-Davis underscores the importance of intersectional analysis. However, I will argue, this approach to intersectionality is concerned more with the surface, the outer location, than with *embodied intersectionality* (Jensen & Elg, 2010). In this sense, the analytical level of social locations should not be mistaken for the level where belonging refers to identifications and emotional investments.

Identifications and emotional attachment considers identity as constructed in narratives or, more specifically, "in the stories people tell themselves and others about who they are (and who they are not)" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 202). Such stories may not all be about belonging to certain groups or communities, however, as they often relate to how individuals see themselves and how they are perceived by others within common groups or communities. However, the way we construct belonging in these narratives "cannot and should not be seen as merely cognitive stories" (2006, p. 202). The narratives also reflect emotional investments and desire for attachments. For instance, investing oneself in a place (local or national), makes the place mean something, and makes it possible for people to feel as if they belong (Basso, 1996). Emotions and attachments are of the body and these *embodied experiences* constitute, in the words of Merleau-Ponty, a "phenomenological world" (Merleau-Ponty cited in Jensen & Elg, 2010).

Lastly, Yuval-Davis (2006) points to ethical and political values as a level that begins to connect belonging with the politics of belonging. Here, she argues that belonging is

more than social locations and constructions of identities and emotional attachments, because it is also about the ways these are valued and judged. This level thus concerns the fact that we live in a social world where we have *intersubjective* relationships with each other (Jackson, 2012, xii). Being valued and judged has to do with the "tensions" that come to life between humans (Jackson, 2012, p. 5).

Belonging as a theoretical tool to unbox some of the things at stake for young Muslim women within the youth drinking culture was, in this way, helpful in order to widen my theoretical links to feminist phenomenology through an emphasis on intersubjectivity and embodied experience. Particularly helpful was the division between belonging (as comprising all the above levels) and the politics of belonging (which in the publication is linked particularly to public discourse on Muslims in Denmark). This distinction seemed to move belonging, in the context of alcohol and parties, towards the (intersubjective) negotiation between the participants' Muslim and Danish identities. Embodying these two positions was inevitably dilemma-filled, as this publication found.

The third publication rests partly on the thinking of Jackson, namely his work on storytelling (2002), and partly on narrative analyses of drinking stories (for instance, Workman, 2001; Sandberg et al., 2019; Tutenges & Rod, 2009). Specifically, I explore the telling of drinking stories among young Muslim women in Denmark through an investigation of the significance of having a double audience (one Muslim, one Danish), for the way they construct their narratives. Narratives are personal stories that help us to make sense of the social world and they play a part in constituting our social identities. Relatedly, storytelling is about finding agency, taking control, and displaying an identity (Jackson, 2002). In this sense, narratives are intricately intertwined with *experience* (Fleetwood, 2016).

The publication takes its point of departure in a broader feminist response to an article written by Tutenges & Sandberg (2013), which, broadly speaking, challenges the "unmarked position of Man and White," as Haraway encouraged. The unmarked position in this context took the form of gendered silences, where some respondents' obvious sexism and aggressive masculinity in the drinking stories were not commented on by the authors. In response, Fleetwood (2013) argued that gendered silences and absences are an inherent part of drinking stories and, therefore, it is important to pay attention to the process by which the narratives are constructed. This argument suggests the presence of power relations between storyteller and audience that imply a politics of experience (Jackson, 2002). "For every story that sees the light of day, untold others remain in the shadows, censored or suppressed" (Jackson, 2002, p.). Therefore, this publication looks into the processes of how the participants

construct their narratives in order to point toward the silences and absences that are always part of storytelling.

The theoretical tool in this publication, I will argue, has a more pronounced focus on *agency* compared to the two previous ones; for instance, through the narrative point that telling stories is a way to gain "a sense of agency" (Jackson, 2002). This is particularly apparent in the case where tragic or traumatic events are being recounted. Through the telling of these stories, the storyteller "no longer lives those events in passivity" but is now actively reworking them and making it possible to process and come to terms with the events (Jackson, 2002, pp. 14–15). However, as Fleetwood argues, most people do not have any "investment in narrating victimhood" (2014, p. 351); for instance, through the retelling of events that were victimizing and transgressive. Such events are more difficult to transform into a story-worthy tale. Among the participants whose voices were included in this final publication, there were women who were in a tight spot. They had some difficult and unpleasant stories to tell, but they were also very much aware that young Muslim women are constructed as helpless victims all of the time. They risked reinforcing these particular stereotypes through their narratives, which could ultimately become a possible source for others to marginalize and suppress them. In this sense, agency also lies within the silences, when silence is chosen in order to avoid marginalization. This is a theoretical point I find important and it somewhat challenges Jackson's existential claim that storytelling is a way to regain agency.

In this section, I have accounted for the overall theoretical framework of a feminist phenomenology within which this study is placed. I have pointed toward the importance I contribute to experience and situated knowledges of the ways in which we get to know things about the world. Lastly, I have shown how I see the links and the bridges between the more concrete theoretical tools (intersectionality, belonging, and storytelling) and the overall framework of feminist phenomenology. In the next section, I turn to this study's methodological choices and actions as another step toward making the dissertation and myself accountable for the constructed knowledge.

FOUR: METHODOLOGY AND DATA

I think that the more research you conduct about this subject, the more you will find girls with the same attitude as me. Where they say that it is okay to drink alcohol, even though you are a Muslim.

Ashna, 18 years old, who was unsure about her participation in her high school graduation party because of alcohol

I am interested in providing a different picture. That is why I wanted to participate in this project. That was my main consideration.

Dilnaz, 22 years old, who wants to write stories

Methodology and data

From a feminist phenomenological perspective, knowledge about the world, I will argue, comes from studying experience and the way experience is situated. Rather than aiming at getting insight into an objective (positivist) truth, the knowledge I have sought is unapologetically partial. As such, bearing experience and situatedness in mind, this section picks up where the previous section left off. Here, I turn toward the concrete path I have walked to complete the study. I account for my own research process, and I describe the methods I have made use of to get to know things about the world. I describe the choices, selections, and deselections I have made throughout the project and what my different choices have meant for the data I have collected and the knowledge I have produced. I reflect on how I have approached studying young Muslim women and their experiences with alcohol and parties, as well as how they have responded to being research subjects. I also attempt to bring forward the "hurly-burly and nitty-gritty" (Sanjek, 1990) process of organizing and coding the data and what this has meant for my analysis and findings.

I have been exploratory from the outset, which has meant that I have been *broadly* interested in the role of alcohol and parties in my participants' lives. Therefore, I included contexts other than parties in my research focus. For instance, I found that my participants' dilemmas in alcohol and party settings were also evident in other contexts, which meant that I pursued subjects such as self-control and rumors as experienced by the participants broadly in life. Hence, my overall findings in this project also point to the broader life circumstances of these women rather than a narrower interpretation of intoxication among young Muslim women. Rather than bracketing context and life circumstances, I have included and enlarged my research participants' broader life situations and pointed toward significant power imbalances. This was accomplished in the first publication (Bærndt & Kolind, 2021), through the theoretical application of intersectionality, which is meant to shed light on context and inequality, and in the second publication (Bærndt & Frank, 2022), where the background section serves to contextualize the position young Muslim women have in Danish society more broadly. The exploratory and phenomenological nature of the research means that gaining a better understanding of the participants' experiences with youth alcohol culture has been prioritized over conclusive results.

Interviews as the primary method

The aim of phenomenological research is to describe, understand, and interpret the meanings of experiences of human life. A phenomenologically inspired methodology, thus, tends to direct questions toward individuals' experiences of particular situations or contexts, for instance, minority experiences of the youth alcohol culture in Denmark. Research on young Muslim women and the recreational use of alcohol is an underexposed area, and new and unknown research areas usually benefit from being approached through a phenomenological exploratory research design, including the conduction of semi-structured in-depth qualitative interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Groenewald, 2004). Another valuable method would have been fieldwork, which could have enabled more embodied nightlife data; however, as described below, fieldwork was complicated by the subject's sensitivity. Less structured interviews are a great way to learn how people understand their world and their lives and to get to know them because, through the interview, the researcher can discover and find meaning in the things "people themselves tell about their lived world" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. xvii). As I aim to explore people's lifeworlds (Jackson, 2012) and capture "rich descriptions" (Groenewald, 2004, p. 6) of the participants' experiences while maintaining a broad, contextualized, and explorative outlook, I decided on semi-structured interviews as the method of investigation. I follow the phenomenological idea that "it is possible, on the basis of qualitative, highly contextual and 'storied' interviews, to say something qualified about the study participants' experiences of their lived everyday lives" (Herold, 2015, p. 66).

I found the interviews appropriate for exploring my research questions centered on experiences of being a minority within a majority setting of alcohol and parties. The suitability was evident in how the accounts were detailed, and almost all participants could easily give further nuance to their stories if probed. The participants would easily shift between being very subjective and telling stories from their point of view and intentionally describing events from a bird's-eye view, explaining or elaborating phenomena more from the outside, for instance, discussing political views on themes such as alcohol age limits or Muslim immigration. The young women were surprisingly happy or even eager to participate. Most of them had given the subject much thought prior to the interview, and many expressed how they found it truly important that more researchers would find the subject interesting. Perhaps most importantly, they expressed a hope that more researchers would investigate youth themes from the point of view of young Muslim women, as they felt overlooked.

From the outset of the project, I had an ambition of doing *some* fieldwork and participating in parties alongside the young women in my project. At the same time, I knew

that my subject was touchy or even difficult for many young Muslims, and I did not know how easy or difficult recruiting the young women would be. Therefore, I began the project very open to different ways of generating data. I decided that interviews would be my main method, but I would ask the participants about the possibility of joining them for a night out or being present at a private party. Along the way, though, I learned that fieldwork was difficult to accomplish. Most of the women did not go out that often and would thus forget about me in the meantime or see it as too much of a hassle to bring me along. Moreover, the participants were not a specific group of young women I could follow; they were individuals to be studied separately. I would need a lot of time if I were to follow just a handful of the participants in their alcohol and party contexts, which are not necessarily present in everyday life. Another strategy I considered briefly was to be present in nightlife settings such as clubs and bars and approach possible participants (see for instance Bøhling, 2015, p. 35). However, I had a few experiences with "street recruiting" from an earlier project and knew that it was uncomfortable for the possible participants to be "profiled" as Muslim women on the basis of their looks exclusively. Halfway through my data gathering, I decided to focus my energy on the interviews alone. Furthermore, the interviews were rich and detailed and provided ample material for analysis.

By the end of the project, I found that prioritizing interview data was the right choice. This had to do with the fact that the subject of alcohol and parties for most of the women was very delicate and sensitive. As I have shown throughout the publications, balancing the many dilemmas, overcoming having a double audience, and being particularly vulnerable to exclusion meant that the young women felt a need to be in control. Therefore, they found it more appealing to articulate their experiences in a one-to-one context. The eventual consequences of talking were simply easier to asses than they would have been in a more informal fieldwork conversation. As such, it became clearer to me when gathering data that fieldwork (or an emphasis on group or focus group interviews) could hinder many conversations on the more emotional issues that being Muslim and drinking and partying might incite. As an interviewer, I was more of a trusted outsider (O'Reilly, 2005) with whom they could share stories—sometimes stories that had not been shared before (Bærndt, 2022).

Another reason to prioritize individual interviews was that the young women are often problematized in public discourse, for instance, when they are seen as quiet and submissive (Rognlien & Kier-Byfield, 2020) or even oppressed by a patriarchal family pattern (Yilmaz, 2015). As Jansen (2015) argues, the interview situation can offer social positions that are different from how the young women are positioned in their daily lives. An interview makes

it easier to frame the project as more open-ended, and when the aim, thus, is not to gain knowledge about an objective truth or to describe participants categorically, it becomes easier for the participant to speak about and describe "the variety and diversity of life" (Jansen, 2015, p. 27).

Following from the above, I focused mostly on individual interviews. However, I maintained my explorative approach, which included following the participants' lead. If they suggested bringing a friend to the interview, I would agree and see where that would take the project. More than not, these interviews were more humorous and contributed with warm and amusing stories and data. Therefore, I have 20 individual interviews, four interviews with two participants, and one interview with a group of four friends. Characterizing all of the group interviews was the trust and confidentiality that seemed to be in place between the participants, as they were friends and "partners in crime" when it came to their approach to drinking and partying. The group interviews contributed with more discussions about the moral positions of the participants, for instance, whether or not they considered it appropriate to drink alcohol and wear a headscarf. They also made it clear to me that only certain trusted friends were part of discussions about alcohol, usually friends who had shared experiences of going out.

The knowledge obtained through interviews I consider co-constructed in the "intersubjectivity" (Jackson, 2012, p. 5) between interviewer and interviewee rather than an "unearthing" of knowledge buried within the interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 18). This was particularly clear in the third publication, about drinking stories, where the data used included the field notes (see below) written after the interviews describing the atmosphere and my rapport with the participants. I was one of several "audiences" for telling drinking stories among young Muslim women, which clarified how knowledge was constructed in the space between us (Bærndt, 2022).

Recruitment

The 32 young Muslim women who participated in my project were recruited through different channels to include various social groups. I began with my network and reached out to colleagues who had contacts with young ethnic minority youth. Some of them were involved in different voluntary organizations and could either participate or lead me on to other possible participants. I also made use of social media. For example, I posted my call for participants in specific youth groups on Facebook that many young ethnic minority women followed. I contacted educational institutions in some of the larger cities in Denmark, for instance, schools

for social work, where I expected there would be a larger number of ethnic minority women, and had them post my call for participants in the appropriate space of their intranet.

Researchers investigating the lives of Muslim women are regularly seen to draw on a recruitment strategy of snowballing (e.g. Arifeen, 2020; Essers & Benschop, 2009), and to some extent, I had expected to do the same. Snowballing is a method of increasing the number of participants by asking one participant to recommend others for interviewing. It has some similarities with the "gatekeeper" in some anthropological literature (O'Reilly, 2005, p. 42), where someone with formal or informal authority to access a site, location, or people can open doors (or close them) for the researcher. It turned out, however, that the young women who agreed to participate and happily contributed to the project by being interviewed viewed alcohol and parties among Muslims as a delicate subject. Therefore, they would participate but usually not reveal to friends or family that they had participated; consequently, they could not help me with snowballing as a recruitment strategy. Thus, the project benefitted from thinking about variety in recruitment strategies.

The young women who have participated in the project have all volunteered and have contacted me by mail or phone after reading my call for participants, after which we would arrange for the interview to take place. The interviews were conducted at my office, at my home, at their home, at cafes, libraries, or other public venues, depending on what was most convenient for the women. The fact that they have volunteered means that I have avoided the pitfall of having participants persuaded, for instance, if they participated because they were part of a certain organization or felt obliged to participate (Jensen, 2012).

My inclusion criteria for participating in the project were for the young women to have a Muslim background and have experiences with alcohol and/or parties. In this way, I was looking for a broad or diverse group of Muslim women rather than, for instance, a specific ethnic group such as Danish-Turkish women or Danish-Afghan women. I aimed at a diverse group of participants because I was particularly interested in how the category of the Muslim woman is constructed and problematized in Danish society (Rognlien & Kier-Byfield, 2020) and what this circumstance meant for their experiences with alcohol and parties and because I was interested in different ways to be a young Muslim woman in Denmark. Deciding on an explorative approach also informed my choice to not recruit on the background of fulfilling specific alcohol-themed requirements, such as having been drinking within the last month or drinking at least so and so much at the last drinking session. Instead, I was interested in the variety of the meaning of alcohol and parties in the participants' lives.

The necessary amount of participants or data in qualitative research is often expressed in the term "saturation." Saturation can be seen as the point in the data-gathering process where collecting new interview data seems only to repeat what has previously been discovered. Ensuring saturation is regarded differently depending on research traditions and how research questions are posed. In phenomenological studies, for example, long interviews with up to 10 people are often regarded as sufficient (Groenewald 2004, p. 5). From the outset, I knew that an analytical framework of intersectionality would inspire one of my publications (see Bærndt & Kolind, 2021). This meant that I had an eye for the diversity of the different social positions and groupings within the group of participants. I expected that I would need more than 10 interviews to account for these positions in a meaningful way. For instance, to be able to say something about both the women who would drink (17 women) and those who were abstinent (15 women), those who wore a Muslim headscarf (8 women), and those who did not (24 women), I would need a certain number of each. This meant that some of the subjects covered in the interviews would find saturation after just 10 interviews, while other themes would keep becoming nuanced as more interviews were conducted. Beyond these reflections, I considered what might be the position of journals that would want to publish my articles. I found that within the alcohol and drugs field, regarding qualitative interview studies, many studies would have between 15 and 40 participants. After conducting interviews with 32 young women, I found that the themes I initially had decided on had reached a saturation point, and I felt safe in terms of not closing any publication doors with the number of participants.

Participants

As I have mentioned in the publications, the women in my study were all quite well-educated. Fourteen of the women were studying or had studied at a university, fourteen were studying or had studied in a professional bachelor's degree program, and four were attending lower or higher secondary school and were aiming for university degrees. This is noteworthy when taking into account that the young women volunteered to participate in the project and because the inclusion criteria did not deselect anyone in terms of educational criteria. Only eight of the women were recruited through educational institutions, so this hardly explains it. Instead, it might suggest a connection between having experiences with alcohol and parties and the level of education. The connection may be related to the normalization of alcohol consumption in many parts of the Danish educational system, such as Friday bars (Elmeland & Villumsen, 2010), combined with the rising number of immigrant descendants, particularly women, taking a higher education (Rytter, 2019). Perhaps the explanation is more complex, for instance,

including (educational) competencies such as being articulate and comfortable participating in an interview, or even, whether or not the women generally feel they have a voice in Danish society. These factors may help explain why this project's participants are so well-educated. It seemed a central errand among the participants to add nuances to the discourse on Muslims in Denmark, which, as I have shown in the publications, is generally negative. However, an implication of my recruitment strategy is that I have included mostly young women, who are relatively well off in terms of educational, social, and economic factors, while the most invisible and marginalized young Muslim women in Denmark are less represented.

Among the participants who drink alcohol (17), about half of them started drinking alcohol when they were well into their 20s. This is in contrast to ethnic Danes, where the majority have tried to be intoxicated by the age of 15 (Tolstrup et al, 2019). I would suggest that parents' involvement (for good or bad) in young people's and children's lives is the main cause. Parents can have an enormous influence on the consumption of alcohol among young people (Elmeland & Kolind, 2012; Østergaard et al., 2018). This is also evident in the "Icelandic model," which has succeeded in considerably reducing the alcohol intake as well as the age of initiation to alcohol among Icelandic youth. The "Icelandic model" includes initiatives ranging from leisure activities and social environments to parental involvement and parental monitoring of their kids' whereabouts (Arnarsson et al, 2018). The young women in my project would frame their parents' involvement in their life in different ways, but altogether most of them had an experience of their parents' being very present and informed about many aspects of their lives.

Table 2: Participants:

Pseudonym	Age	Background	Born in	Alcohol consumption	Profession	Head scarf
1. Yagmur	25	Turkish	DK	Yes	Educational and culture studies	Used to
2. Zainab	25	Iraqi	Iraq	Yes	Social worker student	No
3. Esma	21	Bosnian	DK	Yes	Social worker student	No
4. Aysel	32	Afghan	Afghanistan	No	Social worker student	Yes
5. Arezo	24	Afghan	Afghanistan	No	Social worker student	No
6. Rasha	23	Syrian/Iraqi	DK	Yes	Nursing student	No
7. Karoline	22	Danish (convert)	DK	Yes before, now no	Social worker student	No
8. Samaneh	20	Afghan	Afghanistan	No	Social worker student	Yes
9. Naida	34	Bosnian	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Yes	Social worker student	No
10. Firouzeh	24	Afghan	Afghanistan	No	Social worker student	No
11. Naeemah	16	Palestinian	DK	Yes	State school	No
12. Telaya	26	Afghan	Afghanistan	Yes	Social and health care assistant	No
13. Sahar	18	Afghan	DK	Yes	Upper secondary school	Used to
14. Ayaan	20	Somali	DK	No	Public health student	Yes
15. Casho	23	Somali	DK	No (tasted once)	Public health student	Yes
16. Burcu	29	Turkish	DK	Yes	Social worker	No
17. Dilnaz	22	Kurdish	DK	No (tasted once)	Public health student	No
18. Besjana	21	Kosovo-Albanian	DK	Yes	Student of business economics	No
19. Sila Nur	24	Turkish	DK	No	Social work student	No
20. Jamillah	29	Palestinian	DK	Yes	Medical student	Used to
21. Bazif	20	Lebanese	Lebanon	Yes	Applied for studying to be an interpreter	No
22. Abir	20	Palestine	DK	No	Medical student	Yes
23. Areen	21	Palestine	DK	No	Medical student	Yes
24. Fatema	26	Morocco-Iraqi	DK	Yes	Culture, communication and globalization	No
25. Tirana	28	Kosovo-Albanian	DK	Yes	Pedagogue	No
26. Ashna	18	Kurdish	DK	No (tasted once)	Upper secondary school	No
27. Iman	21	Somali	DK	No	Student of business economics	Yes
28. Leyla	21	Somali	Somalia	No	Medical student	No
29. Awira	21	Kurdish	DK	Yes	Industrial medical student	No
30. Soraya	22	Somali	Somalia	No	Health technology	Yes
31. Taraneh	26	Iranian	DK	Yes	Spanish and media studies	No
32. Esra	24	Turkish	DK	Yes	Student teacher	No

Positionality

Positionality refers to the position of the researcher within a study and the reflections about the meaning and consequences of this for the findings. The position of the researcher is both something decided on (for instance, taking the role of a student during fieldwork) and something given (for instance, the color of one's skin or one's social class). In qualitative research and research involving interviews, such as this one, positionality includes trying to understand what is at stake in the relationship between interviewer and interviewee. The knowledge produced here is indisputably situated (Haraway, 1988), and here I aim to account for the significance of this for the findings.

Jensen (2012) argues that a way to understand the relations and interactions between researcher and researched is to approach it as relations between intersectional social positions. For instance, I am a woman and was in my early thirties at the time of the interviews. I belong to the ethnic (White) majority and have a middle-class and urban background. With every position influencing the other, my social positions, taken together, were always in relation to the social positions of the young women I interviewed, and every position was decisive for the options available to me as a researcher, for instance, for the kind of questions, I could ask and the kind of things I would be told (Wadel, 1991, p. 45). I believe that I had things in common with the participants that contributed to making the interviews comfortable and with participants seemingly at ease and quite talkative, namely being women, urban, and well-educated. This does not mean, though, that the differences between us were unmade. Our interaction was also founded on an asymmetrical power relationship, where I was part of the majority population, and they were part of the minority. I will give an example of this asymmetry below. Furthermore, as a researcher, I could (and would) ultimately be the one with the power to define the issues; I considered what was at stake for them in this particular context (Jeldtoft, 2012). Our commonalities, however, meant that the expectations of the interview, from the participants and I, were largely aligned: We understood the situation and what was expected of us, and, speaking for myself, I mostly felt recognized and understood by the participants.

The social positions of both the interviewer and interviewee are not written in stone but can be negotiated or resisted in the interaction, for instance, through dis-identification (Skeggs, 2002) or by being visible in situations where interviews proceed in unexpected ways, including uncomfortable or awkward ways. A few interviews were not as smooth as the main part. For instance, I was talking to one young woman who seemed quite reluctant to participate,

even though she had volunteered and contacted me. She decided to remain fully anonymous and never confided her name. It may have been fear of recognition that made her reluctant and even a bit contrarian, but she also seemed to resist any of my presumptions. I think the power asymmetry that is present in all interviews was apparent to me in this particular one and was only strengthened by my majority position contrasted with her minority position. The researcher always has power over the research and is the one who decides "which approaches to be taken, which questions to ask, how to interpret the data, and how to represent the researched group in writing" (Jensen, 2012, p. 116). One way to resist my authority is to remain quiet, question my questions or my ability to uphold confidentiality. This particular participant never withdrew her participation in the project, but there were parts of the interview that she asked me not to use. I interpreted her self-censorship as a protection measure and a negotiation of the power balance. No other participants wished to withdraw their interview or parts of it.

The interview guide

I conducted the interviews using a semi-structured guide (see appendix) with open-ended questions that were divided into three main sections: an opening section with intro questions about the participant's present life, friends, relationships, and everyday life. This served as background information and a relaxed way to get to know the participant. This part also worked as an introduction for the participants, so they could feel comfortable enough to share their experiences for the rest of the interview. I then continued to the second and primary section about the role of alcohol and parties in the participant's life, both the previous and the present. Here, I also focused on different contexts that might be relevant, for instance, parties in connection with school/studying and going out and to family parties. The last section returned to some of the information provided at the beginning of the interview and expanded to get more knowledge about the participant's religious identity, upbringing, relationship with parents, and thoughts about the future. Each of these three main sections had clusters of questions connected to separate themes. All themes were covered in all interviews; however, I wrote many different but related questions in each section in order for me to be able to approach the theme depending on what I found appropriate in each interview. For instance, when asking about the participants' friendships, the interview guide included both of the following questions: "How do you like spending time with your friends?" and "Where do you typically go with your friends?" It was unnecessary for me to pose both questions because of their similarity, but it was an easy way for me to customize the questions for each participant. Furthermore, it was a strategy of mine and a way to avoid getting stuck or losing my thread in the middle of the interview.

The phenomenological life-story interview inspired the interview guide (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This followed from an ambition to capture in the interviews how the young women's perspectives and experiences with alcohol might have changed over time (see also Atkinson, 1998). I approached the interviews as a way to organize their experiences of alcohol and parties into life chapters, just like a book (McAdams, 1993). Concretely, I took the second and most fundamental part of my interview guide and went through the questions several times but with different experiences as the point of departure. To exemplify, I began my questions centered on alcohol and parties with their experiences in the last years of lower secondary school (when the women were about 14-15 years old) and ended with the role of alcohol in their present work or study life. In this way, I attempted to learn about their experiences with alcohol, parties, and the significance of alcohol in different stages of their lives.

At the beginning of each interview, I described for the participant(s) what my focus was, what I was going to use the interview for, and how long I expected the interview to take. I also underlined how they could always retract their participation and withdraw their interview, and they should only answer questions they were comfortable answering. I also introduced my research interests and myself. After this introduction and description of the practicalities, I would turn on the recorder after the participant had given their oral consent. Later, a few student assistants and I would transcribe the interviews.

I attempted to use a variety of questions and interview techniques, such as probing and showing knowledge about the participants, to obtain thick/rich descriptions. In the first interviews, I would follow my guide relatively chronologically and skip only those parts that did not seem relevant for the individual participant; for instance, questions about being drunk or feeling intoxicated were left out in interviews with those who were abstinent. I would redirect the participant if she strayed too much from the most important context touching on alcohol and parties. Overall, the questions were directed toward their experiences, feelings, beliefs, and convictions

I followed the interview guide more rigorously in the first interviews, whereas I would follow up on things I had learned in the first interviews in the later interviews. This was one way for me to check whether I had come across a central theme, which more participants would find relevant, or if it were a one-off narrative, mostly relevant to one individual. For instance, I would purposely use the phrase, "I talked to someone else, and they described how [x phenomena]; do you recognize this?"

At the end of the interview, the participants received a gift card for their participation. As soon as possible after the interview, I would also write a few (½–1 page) field notes or face sheets, where I described how I had experienced the meeting, the conversation, the participant, and my sense of rapport with the participant.

The interview situation

I tried to make the interviews as comfortable and pleasant as possible to provide an atmosphere of trust and openness. For instance, I conducted the interviews in a variety of places depending on what the participant felt most relaxed about. Therefore, some took place in my office, cafes, my home, the participant's home, libraries, and educational institutions. A few times, it made sense to take a walk with the participant before the interview, for instance, meeting up at one place and walking together to a designated location, for instance, a certain café with a quiet sound level. This afforded us a more informal talk and was a good way to get to know each other, explain the project in more detail, or other things that came up in that situation. Often, I would remember a few details from the walk, which I would return to in the interview and then ask the participant to expand on that subject.

The participants were quite forthcoming and easy to talk with. There were only the two exceptions I mentioned, the one who was cautious about being identified and the one telling quite sensitive stories for the first time. Otherwise, we would easily bond over coffee, take a cigarette break together, discuss politics, how to approach an exam, or our expectations for maternity leave (I was visibly pregnant during some of the interviews). I would also receive many curious questions about my experiences with drinking and being intoxicated, and a few would even pose some very curious questions about things such as having a boyfriend and about sex. I took these instances and questions as indications that things were going right.

Organizing and coding the data

The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and before the analysis, all participants were given pseudonyms. Then, before commencing coding the interview data, the first thing I did was to create a word document with all the transcribed interviews and the according field notes or face sheets. I then read the transcripts in their entirety several times. I was trying to immerse myself in the details, trying to get a sense of the interviews as a whole (Sanjek, 1990, p. 391). Before I conducted any interviews, I had some topics and themes in which I was particularly interested. They were part of my thinking and became an integral part of how I organized and coded the interviews. For instance, I had a theoretical interest in intersectionality as well as an

ambition to write at least one article with an intersectional framework. This meant that intersectional identity positions such as gender, religion, and ethnicity played a part in how I read and organized the data from the outset.

After reading the material several times, taking notes, and thinking about the topics I found interesting and significant, all interviews were coded in the text analysis software Nvivo 11. To exemplify how this program worked out, I would decide to have a main code centered on "the party" because I had many descriptions of how my participants had experienced parties. I would then mark all the text bits that revolved around parties and place them in this code. This would provide me with a document with all the data that dealt with party-related stories. Later, I would reread my main codes and organize them into subcodes, such as self-control, drinking stories, community, and intoxication. Thus, I followed an inductive approach to coding, where I derived the codes/themes from the data (rather than the opposite) (Silverman, 2001). The second and third publications were actually the products of a focus on the subcodes of drinking stories and belonging/community.

From the above, it should be clear how my research process, like most qualitative research processes, was not linear, where I moved from project proposal to data gathering to theory and ended with publication and this dissertation. Rather, it was a "research cycle" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 23) or a "runddans" (literally a "round dance" or "dancing around" (Wadel, 1991)), where the choice of theory effects the methods which effects the data which again effects the theory. As such, the topic under investigation, as well as the methods used, were allowed to develop depending on the concrete data and findings that were gathered (Barth, 1981).

Ethical considerations

The participants in the project are all described under pseudonyms. The descriptions, information, and quotes included in the publications and here have been anonymized, so that very distinct and personal information is not possible to connect with concrete individuals. In two concrete cases, one mentioned above, I have added another layer of anonymity. The first case was the interview with the participant who was extremely nervous about being recognized, as her family was locally well-known and recognizable. We agreed that she never told me her actual name and asked me to leave out a few details about places and locations. She was thus anonymous from the beginning. The second case was an interview with a young woman who seemed very nervous. She spoke very softly, almost inaudibly, and in the beginning, she would go silent and laugh nervously as soon as the recorder was on. She suffered from violence and

social control in her family to the extent that she risked a lot by participating in the interview. I decided to take a short break with a turned-off recorder, where I repeated and made sure she understood that we could cancel the interview, and if we continued, she would always have the prerogative to withdraw her interview from the project at any time. I also informed her of places she could contact if she needed qualified counseling and even urged her to do so. We continued the interview after this, and furthermore, we have been in contact a few times in the last couple of years. She is now in a better place than when the interview took place.

At the beginning of each interview, the participants were informed about the project and how I intended to use their data. The participants gave their oral informed consent to be in the project. They did not sign a consent form because I preferred to keep as few written accords of their names as possible due to the sensitive matter of the project (for some of the young women). Instead, I offered a statement of anonymity (see appendix) where I declared always to uphold their anonymity in the project.

FIVE: CONCLUSION
A CHANGE IN EMPHASIS

Conclusion: A change in emphasis

In this dissertation, I have presented my research on young Muslim women within the Danish youth alcohol culture. Before continuing to my three publications that form the backbone of the study, I wish to recapitulate and comment more broadly on the collective contribution of my research. I would like to explain how I see the interrelation between the publications and how they contribute to the overall research questions and the field of alcohol research.

In the first section (Introduction), I introduced the dissertation. I began with the data and introduced some of the issues that have been central in the publications through quotes from two participants. The quotes highlighted the young women's drinking dilemmas and the complicatedness of navigating the space between their Muslim affiliations and their Danish youth life. I touched on my approach to the young Muslim women as research subjects, who require reflections on how they became a meaningful category to study, and I also emphasized how their voices are often neglected. I introduced my research questions and shortly presented the three publications. In the second section (Contextualizing the dissertation), I situated my research through a state-of-the-art funnel. I began with the current developments in qualitative research concerned with young people and alcohol. I argued that this research has also paved the way for research with a more pronounced focus on diversity. I went on to contextualize the predicament of the research participants through an account of the history and position of young ethnic minorities in Denmark, focusing on Muslims and what I term "the figure of the Muslim woman." Lastly, as the narrow end of my state-of-the-art funnel, I accounted for those studies that resemble mine in terms of engaging with minority Muslims in majority drinking cultures. In the third section (Theory), I demonstrated how all three publications draw on a larger theoretical way of thinking about experience and situatedness, drawing on phenomenology and feminist thinking, such as Jackson (1996) and Haraway (1988). Furthermore, I clarified how the theoretical frameworks in each publication were carefully selected to explicate what I found to be the most pressing issues in the data and to be able to display in-depth insights into the experiences of young Muslim women. In the fourth section (Methodology and Data), I turned to the concrete elements of the study and how I have gone about it. I provided insights into my research process and clarified how conducting interviews has provided me with a certain kind of data. I generally aimed at covering what my methodological choices have meant for the knowledge I have generated about young Muslim women who find themselves within a youth alcohol culture in Denmark. This fifth section

(Conclusion) sums up my overall academic contribution before the last section, which contains the three publications.

The aim of the dissertation has been to explore young Muslim women's experiences within the Danish youth alcohol culture and their identity-related strategies for being able to participate. With a feminist phenomenological theoretical approach, I have aimed at capturing the participants' lived experiences while being attentive to both their individual power (agency) and the social structures that might obstruct or hinder this power. By centering the experiences of young Muslim women, I have sought to understand drinking and partying among young people from a new and fresh perspective. An ambition with all three publications has been to glimpse into possible new aspects of the Danish youth alcohol culture by exploring the experiences of young Muslim women. The three publications are all concerned with this twofold objective: to explore the research questions from different angles and add new perspectives and aspects to the field. The publications apply different theoretical tools to accomplish this. The tools (intersectionality, belonging, and storytelling, respectively) were chosen as a way to operationalize the overall theoretical framework of a feminist phenomenology and as a way to best unfold what I found to be the most significant topics and concerns in the data.

A central output of this dissertation is its substantial contribution, particularly through the three publications, to a gap in the research literature on youth and alcohol regarding young Muslims in general and young Muslim women in particular. Together with only a few other qualitative studies that deal specifically with young minority Muslims within majority drinking cultures, a platform is increasingly materializing from where more researchers can engage in further studies. Themes such as community gossip (Douglass et al. 2022), self-discipline (Valentine et al. 2010), being optimum (Holm et al. 2016), gender inequalities (Bradby, 2007), family responsibility (ibid.), pressure to be the "model minority" (Douglass et al. 2022), and negotiating inclusion/exclusion (Arifeen, 2020; Fletcher & Spracklen, 2014) characterize this concrete research field. I build my research on these findings, and particularly through the publications, I add more nuances and new understandings. For instance, we expand our knowledge on inclusion and exclusion in alcohol contexts through an intersectional analysis that incorporates the consequences of community gossip (Bærndt & Kolind, 2021). We develop these insights further through an analysis of belonging, which also operates with the difficulties of living up to society's impossible demands on minority Muslims (Bærndt & Frank, 2022). Lastly, I provide an analysis of drinking stories that underscores how having a double audience fuels pressures to be in control, be a "model minority," and be caught in these

webs of inclusion and exclusion (Bærndt, 2023). Lastly, I would like to underscore how this dissertation is unique in its exclusive focus on young Muslim women.

When we focus our attention on the overall research questions, the *research answers* I have arrived at are not exactly straightforward, clear-cut, or in any way comparable to "positivists truths" (Haraway, 1988). Rather than arriving at unambiguous results, I consider my contribution to the field as a matter of changing the emphasis on the knowledge available about youth drinking in Denmark. I argue that when we include and represent diverse people in our research, we arrive at better interpretations that match the diversity of society better, and, in so doing, we change the possible results and the possible courses for future research. To me, the research results are more a question of adjusting knowledge or changing the emphasis than a question of reinventing the wheel.

There is a duality in young people's experiences of drinking alcohol that sometimes seems almost self-contradictory. This is implied in various concepts from the alcohol literature, for example, "controlled loss of control" or when central concepts are placed or analyzed as opposites, such as "pleasure" versus "risk." This duality is also manifest in my contribution to the field and is part of the reason why my contribution can be seen as an adjustment or a change in emphasis in knowledge on young people and the use of alcohol. I want to underscore that changing the emphasis does not mean erasing anything. For instance, when I discuss how the emphasis in my study has changed from social inclusion to social exclusion below, I do not suggest that all Muslim women feel socially excluded in drinking contexts. For some women, inclusion is at the forefront, while for others, exclusion is what characterizes their experiences. Overall, though, the emphasis is on exclusion.

Below, concluding this dissertation, I account for four themes, where I find that the contributions in the publications change considerably the emphasis in our knowledge on youth drinking. I show how the findings in each publication support this overall contribution and shortly discuss how the publications complement each other. Table 1 (p. 11) presented in the Introduction might be useful for the reader here. It provides an overview of the publications and the last column includes these four themes, as well as the primary links from the findings in the publications to these overall contributions of the study.

Social exclusion

In the first publication, we established how positive connotations, such as social inclusion and pleasure, are linked with the drinking of alcohol, while abstinence is linked with negative connotations, such as social exclusion. As such, the alcohol culture is excluding to those who

do not drink alcohol. However, we took this argument further in our findings, which suggested that not only is the youth culture of intoxication excluding, it also enhances exclusion based on ethnicity and religion. Our findings suggested that this was true regardless of whether the young women in the study would drink alcohol or be abstinent. Furthermore, the drinking of alcohol would also jeopardize the young women's relationship with their local ethno-religious community, which points to a new arena of social exclusion in a youth drinking context. Thus, the findings suggest that there is more to the excluding nature of drinking alcohol among young people than is often brought forward—thus changing the emphasis from inclusion to exclusion. In this way, the findings place themselves closer to studies of abstinence, despite only a fraction of the study participants being abstinent, which is noteworthy. The second publication provides more context to this angle by accounting for how Muslims, in general, are Othered in Danish society. The young women worked hard to be included in different alcohol use settings, for instance, by toning down their Muslim identity. Being socially included was even the reason many participants were taking part in the first place. These two publications, thus, provide different but related perspectives on the risk of social exclusion for young Muslim women within the youth alcohol culture. They complement each other, with the first publication including aspects of social control in the young women's community, while the second publication raises the view to include the position of young Muslim women in Danish society more generally.

(Self-) control

In contrast to the widespread focus on young people's deliberate drunkenness, it seemed that a willingness to expose oneself to risk through intentionally losing control was not prevalent in this study. If we turn to Measham & Brain's (2005) "controlled loss of control" concept, it appears that research on Danish youth engaging with control is mostly tilted toward different ways of losing control, for instance, in drinking stories characterized by events that are out of control (Tutenges & Rod, 2009) or connecting unbounded (un-controlled) alcohol consumption with a classed counterculture (Kolind, 2011). In this study, the young women's stories would instead move their emphasis toward being in control or exercising different levels of self-control (broadly in life, but specifically so in relation to alcohol). For instance, when the young women expressed how a lack of control was associated with severe consequences, which was particularly evident in the third publication on drinking stories that were interrupted with possible consequences. As such, these kinds of experiences are not necessarily unique to young Muslim women. There are parallels to be drawn to research on the gendered meanings of

intoxication. For instance, Griffin et al. (2013) argue that young women have an "impossible space to occupy" in terms of performing a respectable drinking femininity. Similarly, Tokle et al. (2023) suggest that young women find it more pressing to be in control of their intoxication and have safety strategies in order to avoid sexualized risk situations. However, for the young Muslim women in this study, their desire to be in control was not only formed by the drinking setting itself but also opened up for broader discussions of social control in their communities AND the racialized demands they faced in Danish society in general. The importance of being in control was also evident in the participants' preference for private parties over public nighttime venues, which was related to the "eyes in the night" and the accompanying gossip and sanctions accounted for in the first publication.

Related to this theme of control, I would like to add a comment on agency. In the first publication on exclusion, we positioned our use of intersectionality among those who employ intersectionality to study dynamic processes of doing. We underlined how intersectionality should be accompanied by an orientation toward agency. For instance, our findings pointed toward how the young Muslim women had quite complex and different experiences within the youth alcohol culture, and we argued that this testified to their individual power (agency) and their ability to maneuver strategically, even to the extent that they in some situations were able to avoid exclusion. Furthermore, in the second publication on belonging, we found that drinking alcohol for many was difficult to reconcile with a Muslim identity. However, the women who most easily managed to reconcile their Danish and Muslim identities tended to intentionally (with agency) construct what kind of Muslim they wanted to be.

Identity

Overall, qualitative research on young people and alcohol has been slow to acknowledge how minority positions (such as gender, race, and class) actively shape the experiences of young people engaged in drinking and partying (Hunt and Antin, 2019). However, part of my contribution is to point toward some of the difficulties that exist for young Muslim women regarding identity construction as part of the normalized youth alcohol culture in Denmark. For instance, in the second publication on belonging, we demonstrated how it is difficult to drink alcohol when you are both Muslim and Danish because these two identities are constructed as opposites and because drinking alcohol is intertwined with not only personal identifications but also part of a broader national identity. We found examples of young women experiencing what they termed an identity crisis, and generally, a larger contribution of the dissertation is this change in emphasis from identity construction (through e.g. the consumption of alcohol)

to identity crisis. Drinking alcohol for these young women is not an unproblematic way of "doing" their identities; instead, it is a possible vehicle behind personal crises. In relation to this, the same publication shows how several young women tone down their being Muslim to avoid marginalizing attention. Thus, the intricate feelings of belonging that are shaped by the different party contexts are more in focus in this publication, compared to the first publication on exclusion. Identity was also investigated in the first publication; however, here, we focused on identity as social positions and their intersections in moments of exclusion. I will argue that the strength of this publication lies in its broader approach to both the young women and the research field of youth and alcohol. Lastly, the second publication builds on and adds to research suggesting that constructing Muslim and Danish identities as opposites plays a constitutive role in the ways that the borders between ethnic Danes and minority Muslims seem increasingly harder or impossible to overcome (Simonsen, 2018), also in youth alcohol settings. The third publication follows up on this matter through its conceptualization of "audiences" and how the telling of drinking stories depends on the intended listeners.

Abstinence and moderation

I found that the participants in this study were not as oriented toward heavy intoxication as their ethnic majority peers. They tended to focus more on fitting in and being in control of their intoxication. Many connected drunkenness to dreaded sanctions or imagined consequences, while moderation and an attentive eye to their surroundings provided them with a possible space for pleasure. However, being abstinent was also a major driving force behind the increased risk of being excluded from parties and the social sphere of peers, which we demonstrated in the first publication. The third publication is the one most directly engaging in the stories of abstinent participants. This allowed the dissertation to include an analysis of how alcohol is sometimes experienced as repulsive. The repulsiveness could turn alcohol into a vehicle, transforming the drinking stories into sober identity narratives.

The global decline in alcohol consumption among young people and the increasing interest in young people's moderation or abstinence is increasingly a theme in the research literature (Atkinson et al. 2023; Frank et al. 2020; Nicholls & Conroy, 2021; Caluzzi et al. 2021; Caluzzi et al. 2022; Pennay et al. 2018), and this converges somewhat with my findings. In this sense, this dissertation adds to this literature and provides knowledge about some young people who disagree with the imperative to drink. Furthermore, when the emphasis is changed in this way from heavy drinking to moderation, it also provides a space from which to normalize moderation and non-drinking as possible trajectories for young people in

Denmark. As I mentioned in the beginning, I hope my research results can be put to use, for instance, by professionals working closely with young people (such as teachers, educators, and social workers), who may use the knowledge I have generated here to create a more inclusive youth culture, a youth culture where no one is required to participate in excessive alcohol consumption in order to belong and be included. It seems the timing is right for a change, as the alcohol culture is increasingly up for debate among young people and society in general.

The young women who participated in my study have contributed invaluable food for thought about the Danish youth alcohol culture. Through talking about their experiences with drinking alcohol and partying, they have brought the weight away from the innocent, playful "timeout" aspects of the youth alcohol culture and instead demonstrated how inequality is also (re-)produced in this context. Emphasis has changed in several contexts, for instance, from social inclusion to social exclusion, from identity construction to identity crisis, from friendships to family, from pleasure to consequences, from nighttime economy to private parties, from loss of control to (self-)control, and from heavy drinking to moderation or abstinence. Taken together, the publications demonstrate a variety of ways in which the participants view, act, and think about the youth alcohol culture and their position within it, as well as their position in society more broadly.

SIX: THE PUBLICATIONS

Publication 1:

M. F. Bærndt & T. Kolind (2021):

Drinking and partying among young Muslim women: Exclusion in the context of a normalized youth drinking culture.

International Journal of Drug Policy, Vol. 93,

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2021.103170.

Publication 2:

M. F. Bærndt & V. A. Frank (2022):

Dilemmas of belonging: Young Muslim women in the Danish youth alcohol culture.

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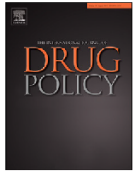
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Research Paper

Drinking and partying among young Muslim women: Exclusion in the context of a normalized youth drinking culture

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ABSTRACT

Background and aims: Danish youth drinking culture is characterized by a very high level of alcohol consumption and a focus on intoxication. Young people with Muslim backgrounds drink markedly less, but their experiences with drinking and partying have been overlooked in research concerned with youth drinking. The aim of this paper is to investigate how young Danish Muslim women experience being part of a youth culture of intoxication and how they navigate through processes of exclusion related to drinking and partying. Special attention is paid to the intersections of different social positions relevant to these processes of exclusion in drinking and partying contexts.

Methods: Twenty-five in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with 32 young Danish Muslim women (mean age 23 years) residing mainly in big cities and surrounding areas. An intersectional case study design approach was applied to investigate how certain identities become salient at particular moments or within particular contexts.

Results: The Danish normalized youth culture of intoxication had various consequences for our participants, of which two stand out. First, this culture of intoxication was excluding for young Muslim women and, furthermore, seemed to enhance exclusion based on ethnicity and religion, regardless of whether our participants drank alcohol or abstained. Second, the culture of intoxication actualized gendered ideals within the young women's families, and the potential for conflicts pertaining to drinking and partying could call into doubt their experiences of belonging to a local ethno-religious community.

Discussion: Due to the Danish normalized youth culture of intoxication, young Muslim women are at risk of several exclusions: exclusion from central Danish youth contexts and, potentially, from their religious and cultural roots. We discuss the importance of including agency and strategic manoeuvring in intersectional approaches because these contribute to a better understanding of the complexity found in the results and, furthermore, they help to avoid the pitfalls of determinism and essentialism in studies of minorities. We also discuss how binge drinking prevention initiatives could focus not only on health warnings but also on the social consequences of exclusion.

Introduction

In a European context, Danish young people have a very high level of alcohol consumption, and the drinking style is predominantly intoxication-oriented (Järvinen & Room, 2007; Krauss et al., 2016). Research focused on the meaning of young Danes' drinking and partying shows that these practices are highly important for ongoing identity work, for instance, when it comes to friendship-making and sexual experiences, and for the formation of gender identity and social class (Demant & Østergaard, 2007; Järvinen & Gundelach, 2007; Jensen, 2019; Kolind, 2011). In fact, drinking has been

shown to be necessary for social integration in a Danish youth context (Frederiksen, Bakke, & Dalum, 2012).

The link between social integration and drinking and partying has been widely documented in the international literature, with studies showing that these practices are often connected to pleasure, enjoyment, and sociability (Duff, 2008; Heath, 2000; Hunt, Frank, Kolind, Thom, & Hunt, 2016). Drinking is "essentially a social act" (Douglas, 1987) in more than one sense: drinking practices play a part in the formation of social relations and hierarchies, and people may drink in order to become more sociable (Niland, Lyons, Goodwin, & Hutton, 2013). For instance, when young people experience the bodily pleasure of being

drunk, it can stimulate a sense of collectivity (Fry, 2011), or when they plan and get ready for a night out, social bonds among friends are re-inforced (Atkinson & Sumnall, 2019; Szmigin et al., 2008), also in a gendered way (Herold & Hunt, 2020). Even the aftermath of a drinking session is social, since drinking can generate drinking stories that are told and retold among friends, binding the group together (Fjær, 2012; Griffin, Bengry-Howell, Hackley, Mistral, & Szmigin, 2009; Tutenges & Sandbjerg, 2013). The consumption of alcohol, thus, can contribute to the sustaining of practices that bond an individual to a group (Measham & Brain, 2005; Thurnell-Read, Kolind, Thom, & Hunt, 2016).

As drinking in this way is closely linked to sociality, it may come as no surprise that in countries where the vast majority of young peo-ple drink large amounts of alcohol with a focus on becoming intoxi-cated, such as, for instance, in the UK, Australia, and in Denmark, young people who drink moderately or abstain often risk social marginaliza-tion (Frank, Herold, Schrøder, Bjønness, & Hunt, 2020; Nicholls, 2019; Parder, 2018). Regardless of their reasons for abstaining, young people are often asked to justify their choice not to drink alcohol and, conse-quently, many young people perceive drinking as a necessity for feel-ing included at parties (Advocat & Lindsay, 2015; Frank et al., 2020; Frederiksen et al., 2012; Järvinen & Gundelach, 2007). In this way, drinking alcohol is connected to social inclusion, while abstinence is connected to social exclusion.

A group often associated with abstinence is people with Muslim backgrounds. In Denmark, young people with Muslim backgrounds gen-erally drink less than the ethnic Danish population. Approximately 10% of Danish young people do not drink alcohol, and among young Danish people with a Muslim background, around 70% are abstain-ers (Gundelach & Järvinen, 2006). Likewise, studies from other Nordic countries have found that young Muslim women have significantly lower rates of drug and alcohol use than ethnic majority young peo-ple (Bergengen & Larsen, 2008; Johnson & Svensson, 2020; Øia, 2013; Skrowny, 2005).

The Muslim population in Denmark, which constitutes 5.5% of the total population of approximately six million (Danmarks Kristensen, 2020; Statistik, 2020), is not inexperienced with social exclu-sion. Public and political debates on the presence of immigrants (espe-cially Muslims) have been increasingly tense and at times even racialized and Islamophobic (Hervik, 2019; Suhr & Sinclair, 2016). For instance, since 9/11, Muslims have been regarded as a potential enemy within society (Rytter & Pedersen, 2014). They have been met with increasing demands to 'integrate' better in the society (Olwig & Pærregaard, 2011; Rytter, 2019), and particularly the voices of younger generations of Muslims in Denmark have been silenced or disregarded (Hervik, 2011; Kühle, Pedersen, & Rytter, 2011; Matthiesen, 2015). Moreover, young Muslim women are, as in other European countries, often perceived negatively due to their clothing (Andreassen, Degn, & Søholm, 2011; Korteweg & Yurdakul, 2014; Mason-Bish & Zempi, 2019). For many Islam-critics, and also some Danish feminists, the headscarf in particu-lar is a symbol of a patriarchal and authoritarian family pattern seen as incompatible with Danish values (Khawaja, Pedersen, & Rytter, 2011).

In addition to such exclusion from the majority society, some young Muslim women also encounter a high degree of social control from their local ethnic communities, which can turn into exclusion if resisted. Fe-male sexuality, in particular, is often highly controlled, as women are typically perceived to embody important cultural values of decency and to symbolize cultural continuity (Gregoriou, 2013; Mørck, 1998; Prieur, 2002). Such social control is, for instance, seen in Valentine, Hol-loway and Jayne (2010) study of British Pakistani Muslims and their experiences with drinking and the night-time economy. When these young Muslims go out, there is "a sense that the eyes of the commu-nity are always on the street". Furthermore, research has shown that young Muslim women can easily become the target of gossip in the local community and, especially, that drinking alcohol might lead to exclu-sion and sanctions against the individual (Bradby, 2007; Mirdal, 2006; Waltorp, 2015).

In sum, young ethnic minority Muslim women living in countries with a highly dominating youth drinking culture may experience several exclusions: exclusion from the larger society based on negative stereo-types of Muslims; exclusion from mainstream youth social settings dom-inated by intoxication; and exclusion from their own ethnic communi-ties if they challenge local cultural values of abstinence and decent femininity.

Based on these predicaments, we call for more attention to minority groups in alcohol research, such as young Muslim women, who are usu-ally not regarded as a drinking population. As others have argued, alco-hol and drugs research focusing on ethnic or religious identity has often contributed to the association of certain drugs with certain ethnic minor-ity groups (Hunt, Kolind, & Antin, 2017; Nordgren, 2018; Reinarman & Levine, 1997). It contributes to making invisible those who use another drug, or use a drug in a different way, than what is associated with their ethnic or religious background. We propose that *a lack of research* also perpetuates a link between certain groups and their drug consump-tion. By not studying young Muslim women and their use of alcohol, researchers continue the association of Muslims with abstinence. This association needs to be explored and challenged in all its complexity, for instance, by employing a more flexible understanding of abstinence, which includes both long-term and situational abstinence (Frank et al., 2020; Parder, 2018). Furthermore, it is not unlikely that shadow fig-ures of drinking among Muslims are prevalent, as drinking is highly stigmatized among many Muslims. Researchers have thus encountered certain methodological problems that complicate the study of substance use among Muslims, e.g., nonresponse or a reluctance to report alcohol use (Dotinga, 2005; Michalak & Trocki, 2006).

This paper explores how young Muslim women navigate being part of a normalized youth drinking culture while, at the same time, practic-ing and negotiating a Muslim identity where abstinence is often cher-ished. Our aim is to examine our research participants' experiences of drinking and partying by focusing on processes of exclusion highlighted by the women themselves. To this end, we utilize an intersectional ap-proach that is particularly sensitive to the various dimensions of exclu-sion (including marginalization, discrimination and suppression). Inter-sectionality brings the different social positions of our participants into focus and, in this way, contributes to nuanced and contextualized ex-planations of processes of exclusion.

Theory: intersectionality

Intersectionality, originally a feminist concept coined by Crenshaw (1991), is used to analyze how not only gender but also other social positions or inequalities are important areas of investigation. Black scholars (see, for instance, Davis, 1981; Lorde, 2017/1984; Collins, 1991) have long argued that a one-dimensional focus on gender or race glosses over the experiences of marginalized groups, such as Black women. Such a focus implicitly takes White middle-class women as the exemplary victims of sexism and Black men as the exemplary victims of racism (Prins, 2006). Similarly, the young Muslim women in this study would fall between two stools, with a feminist approach neglecting the meaning of their ethno-religious background and an ethnicity approach neglecting the gendered nature of their experiences.

Intersectional approaches see the various social positions of indi-viduals, such as gender and ethno-religious background, as not just additive. Rather, they are positions that intersect and constitute each other as fundamental structuring phenomena (Davis & Zarkov, 2017; Staunæs, 2003; Yuval-Davis, 2006). To exemplify, the experience of be-ing a woman is different depending on whether she is part of a minority or part of a majority, poor or rich, young or old.

In this article, we lean on these understandings of intersectional-ity in order to analyze the ways in which different social positions in-tersect and become important for experiences of exclusion in drinking and partying contexts. In addition, we apply what McCall (2005) refers to as an intra-categorical complexity approach to intersectionality.

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Complexity is at the heart of intersectionality, as the lived experiences of multiple dimensions of oppression demand that they are all adequately accounted for. The more dimensions included in the analysis, the more complex it becomes. The intra-categorical complexity approach focuses our analysis on the differences that exist between the young women in the study; this is in contrast to, for example, an inter-categorical approach, where the differences between groups are of interest. Rather than running the risk of reinforcing marginalizing stereotypes of Muslim women, we aim to contextualize the differences between our participants. In an intra-categorical complexity approach, the primary unit of analysis is typically either a single social group at a neglected point of intersection or a particular social setting—or both. In our analysis, the experience of being Muslim women in a White majority society is the "neglected point of intersection," and the "particular social setting" is that of drinking and partying.

On a general level, our understanding emphasizes how identities are not stable but performed (Butler, 1990), and they emerge in interactions—they are "situated accomplishments" (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

Finally, our analysis is inspired by intersectionality researchers who argue for the incorporation of relevant empirical positions into the analysis as a supplement to the "classical" positions of gender, ethnicity, and age (Kofoed, 2008; Søndergaard, 2005; Staunæs, 2003). We do so in order to capture analytically not only the positions we are aware of beforehand but also the positions that are "recognized locally and that operate in local contexts" (Kofoed, 2008:426). For instance, our analysis points to the importance of incorporating education, place of residence, and migration history as significant positions that carry meaning in drinking and partying contexts.

Methods and data

Interviews and recruitment

The analysis builds on 25 in-depth qualitative interviews (of which four were group interviews) with 32 young Muslim women (aged 15 to 34 years, mean age 23 years) living across Denmark, mainly in bigger cities. The interviews lasted 1 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours and were conducted between 2015 and 2018. The interviews were held in various settings, depending on the research participants' requests for discretion: in the homes of the women, in the home or office of the interviewer, or in public spaces, such as cafes and libraries. Participants received a gift card for their participation.

We employed various recruitment strategies, including using recruitment posters (online and in educational settings), chain referrals, and personal networks. Our recruitment targeted young women with a Muslim background, who would be interested in talking about their party practices and experiences. Consequently, we have mostly, but not exclusively, interviewed young women who do party. Thus, the findings from this study cannot be generalized to the broader Muslim population in Denmark but, rather, concern the group of young Muslim women who participates in parties. The young women were difficult to recruit because showing an interest in drinking and partying on their part could be problematic. Hence, they refrained from "liking" or sharing posts on Facebook and did not tell (certain) friends and family members about their participation in the project. Nevertheless, once they were part of the interview situation, the young women enthusiastically involved us in their lives and their experiences. In this study, we focus on drinking and partying (and not, for instance, drinking alone), as we aim to contribute to research concerned with intoxication and youth culture, and, in the Danish context, intoxication and partying are central.

All interviews were conducted by the first author, who is female and in her early thirties. Although she is White and has a middle-class background, the fact she is also a young woman made it possible to create the trusting and intimate atmosphere that characterized most of the interviews. The participants were generally talkative and some expressed

that they found the project "important" because of its focus on young Muslim women, whom they felt were often overlooked, and in terms of its engagement with the dilemmas of young Muslim women who party.

The interview guide was inspired by life-story interviews. Therefore, we focused on the different "chapters" in our participants' lives where partying seemed significant. The interviews usually began with the years in lower secondary school (when parties gained importance for the first time) and ended with the participants' current educational or work context and the sociality (for instance, concerning parties and alcohol) of that context. In this way, we sought to capture the research participants' first experiences with parties as well as how their participation in parties progressed over time. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim before being edited for confidentiality.

Participants

Thirteen ethnicities were represented in the data, mirroring the largest ethnic Muslim groups in Denmark (Jacobsen, 2018): Afghan (6), Somali (5), Turkish (4), Palestinian (4), Bosnian (2), Iraqi (2), Kurdish (2), Kosovo-Albanian (2), Moroccan (1), Iranian (1), Lebanese (1), Syrian (1), and ethnic Danish convert (1). Twenty-two participants were born in Denmark, and the rest immigrated to Denmark at a very young age. Their histories of migration varied greatly. Some of the young women were children or grandchildren of guest workers, some were children of refugees, and some had experienced war and were refugees themselves. Eight participants wore a Muslim headscarf, and three additional participants used to wear one when they were younger. Seventeen participants were active drinkers and were regularly intoxicated, while another three had tasted alcohol on one or more occasions. The remaining 12 women had never drunk alcohol but were still occasionally partygoers. The women were all generally well educated. Fourteen of the women were studying or had studied at university, 14 were studying or had studied in a professional bachelor's degree programme, and four were attending lower or higher secondary school. A central concern among our participants was the generally negative discourse surrounding immigrants and Muslims in Denmark. Participation in parties was, for several participants, both a question of countering stereotypes and having a good time. Although our research participants had different experiences with drinking and partying, all were able to reflect on the themes at length. Being a young Muslim woman in a normalized youth drinking culture was, for many, a conflict-ridden endeavour, which induced caution and generated reflection.

Case study

Our intersectionality-inspired and complexity-oriented methodology makes use of a case study approach. Case studies are effective ways of researching how intersecting social positions are experienced by individuals in their everyday life (McCall, 2005). Case studies allow one to investigate intersectionality through individuals' accounts of the ways they identify with or distance themselves from others, as well as the ways certain identities become salient at particular moments or within particular contexts (Valentine, 2007). Moreover, the cases provide the reader with contextualized and nuanced perspectives on the complex reality of the participants' lives (Flyvebjerg, 2010; Yin, 2014).

Our objective was to represent the complexity in our data in order to gain most from an intersectionality approach. We explored complexity both in the contextualized knowledge of single participants and in the internal differences between all our participants.

The text analysis software Nvivo 11 was used firstly to organize the data into overall themes and sub-themes, particularly pertaining to codes of alcohol use, party participation, identity and belonging, the meaning of gender, and religion. Here we found that the experience of exclusion was a significant theme in the data and decided to pursue this further. Therefore, as a second step, the codes were re-read and analysed with a specific focus on the different social positions of the participants

that came to matter in their stories of exclusion. Here we found that ethno-religious background, gender, educational backgrounds, family migration histories, and places of residence were most important. Third, we selected three research participants who embodied the variety of social positions that were actualized in the stories of exclusion. As such, they were selected because they illustrate the range of experiences in the whole sample (see also: Bjønness, 2019) and, in this way, can be seen as paradigmatic (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, the following analysis builds on three cases: Sila Nur, Jamilah, and Yara. These three cases exemplify the 'typical narratives' (Bryman, 2012) of drinking, partying, and inclusion/exclusion identified throughout the interviews.

Results

Our results section investigates how the young women experience exclusion in drinking and partying contexts by focusing on their different social positions in specific settings. First, we focus on how the young Muslim women are positioned in relation to their friends and peers in the context of a normalized youth drinking culture. Second, we investigate the significance of the women's families and ethno-religious communities for their experiences with drinking and partying.

"We want more of your kind": Young Muslim women and exclusion in the context of a normalized drinking culture

Most of our participants experienced a growing divide between themselves and their ethnic Danish friends during the time when parties and drinking became central in ethnic Danish young people's lives - around the age of 15. This growing divide is a dominant theme in the narratives and demonstrates how the normalization of partying and drinking among Danish young people can have consequences for young Muslim women.

Looking back on her teenage years in lower secondary school, Sila Nur (24 years old, Turkish background, social work student) described the division between herself and her ethnic Danish classmates as a result of her own withdrawal and also the exclusion by her classmates. Sila Nur did not drink alcohol; however, she enjoyed the atmosphere at the private parties arranged by her classmates, and she recalled having good times talking with her intoxicated friends. Nevertheless, as she stated:

I felt that it went downhill when the parties started. Or, it did not go downhill, but I withdrew at some point. I think it started around seventh grade [when she was 14 years old].

As Sila Nur gradually chose to stay away from parties, she also experienced how her classmates stopped inviting her. Even though she probably would have chosen not to come, she was surprised, angry, and sad not to be invited: "I was so upset. Why don't they say it [that there is a party] to me? Have I started to be left out?"

This process of exclusion was hard to accept for Sila Nur, who had been popular in her class as well as outgoing and talkative. She felt that the exclusion she experienced had consequences for her personality, as she recalled a change from being popular and extroverted to becoming isolated and introverted. Sila Nur's case shows how drinking among young people is closely linked to socializing and friendship in Denmark, and, as such, her experiences accord with other abstinent young people's experiences, characterized by the sensation that "to be without alcohol is to feel alone among friends" (Niland et al., 2013:534). In contrast to Sila Nur's experience, Telaya (26 years old, Afghan background, social and health care assistant) revealed how, in her teens, becoming popular played a big part in her motivation to participate in parties and become intoxicated: "I started going out, and already that first time, I just received so much attention, and that gave me the biggest confidence boost ever." For both Sila Nur and Telaya, then, drinking alcohol and partying were decisive in whether or not they felt included in youth life, though they chose dissimilar strategies.

Despite feeling excluded, Sila Nur tried to socialize and be open to new friends when she started in upper secondary school. In Danish upper secondary schools, parties are of central importance for socializing and experiences of belonging, a fact of which Sila Nur was well aware:

When I started in gymnasium [upper secondary school], I actually participated [in parties] in the beginning. I wanted to show them, you know, it is a new class, and they don't know what I am like. I always thought about how <u>not</u> to prejudice them against me and make them say, "Oh, she is Muslim, and that's why she can't do this and that."

Sila Nur's strategy of participating in parties in order to combat prejudice was found in the experiences of 10 other research participants, all of whom were non-drinkers like Sila Nur. Generally, they wished to demonstrate to their non-Muslim classmates that Muslims are not what existing stereotypes depict. As we see from Sila Nur's reflections, her position as a Muslim was of little importance for her inclusion in the class until parties and drinking became central for her peers. Thus, her abstinence and her religious minority position intersected and reinforced each other as excluding mechanisms in this specific context, despite her active efforts to work against this exclusion.

In contrast to Sila Nur, Jamilah (29 years old, Palestinian background, medical student) never felt socially integrated in lower secondary school. She even recalled experiencing discrimination from both classmates and teachers. Nevertheless, she noticed the effect youth parties had on the social cohesion of her class, and, in this way, the parties added to her feeling of being an outsider:

They had so much shit to talk about with each other on Mondays [after the weekend parties], while we [the ethnic minorities in the class] were just sitting there.

Jamilah wore a headscarf in the last years of lower secondary school and felt excluded because of it. This exclusion was intensified when parties became important for her peers. In her late teens, Jamilah was married for a short time. The marriage was arranged by her parents with Jamilah's reluctant acceptance. Her husband turned out to be very violent and controlling, and they divorced. This experience created an emotional distance between Jamilah and her family. She began questioning her religious and cultural values, and she stopped wearing a headscarf. She also made new ethnic Danish friends at her new school in a new city:

I then chose to continue my HF [Higher Preparatory Examination Course] in [a larger city]. Here, I was introduced to new people and a new world, and here, I heard the word "booze" for the first time. I did not know it (laughing). In [the larger city], Danes and immigrants are more integrated [than in the town where she grew up]. I also got Danish friends. I actually did not have that before when I lived in [the town]—I was too different.

Jamilah's first experience of feeling integrated in Danish society and having ethnic Danish friends coincided with her move to a bigger city, her openness towards drinking alcohol, and her rejection of the Islamic headscarf. Her Muslim identity and especially her abstinence had contributed to a feeling of exclusion and being "too different." For Jamilah, therefore, it was a relief to feel included in the lives of her peers, especially in the context of feeling alienated from her family. This feeling of inclusion and belonging also meant that she was increasingly receptive to drinking and partying because these activities were common among her new friends.

Jamilah recalled that the first time she went to a party was when a female friend invited her to a birthday party where both boys and girls were attending. At first, Jamilah declined the invitation because she was unaccustomed to socializing at mixed gender events and immediately heard her mother's warning in the back of her head, which made her imagination wander:

I imagined an orgy. Like a porn orgy had just begun because I had always been brainwashed thinking the worst if boys participated […].

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I imagined that the girls would be raped and killed. And then they would be beaten by their parents (laughter) because they had been raped.

Eventually, however, her friends convinced her to attend the party by assuring her that her parents or brothers would never know about it, and, to her surprise, Jamilah found that she was enjoying herself:

It was the best birthday ever. Good food, cosiness [hygge], dancing, and fun. That is where it all started, where I thought, "Ok, I can mingle with boys and girls and have fun." That was my first experience, but like without alcohol. Being at a birthday that included boys was dangerous enough for me.

Jamilah's experience of exclusion began earlier than Sila Nur's and had to do with the intersection of her then-visible social identity as a Muslim (wearing a headscarf) and her abstinence (this experience of exclusion is mirrored in the experiences of the other 10 research participants who also wore a headscarf in lower secondary school). When parties became important for Jamilah's classmates around eighth grade, her feeling of exclusion intensified. Combined with how her parents imagined Danish youth life and the way they leaned on gendered social control (having their daughter married at a young age), the distance to the majority society was insurmountable. Her broken marriage and the subsequent distancing from her religious and cultural background made possible Jamilah's decision to study elsewhere and, hence, her openness towards partying and drinking alcohol. This was key to her experience of feeling included in her peer group. It is not unreasonable to interpret Jamilah's alcohol use as a "symbolic act of resistance" against both social control and social exclusion (Anderson, 2008; Miller & Carbone-Lopez, 2015).

Yara (23 years old, Syrian and Iraqi background, nursing student) started drinking and partying in lower secondary school (age 15), thus diverging from both Sila Nur and Jamilah. She felt comfortable in school and easily made friends with her classmates. Interestingly, in her class, pupils with ethnic minority backgrounds did not party with their ethnic Danish classmates even though the class, according to Yara, was well integrated and even though some ethnic minority students did drink alcohol. Instead, Yara partied with a group of friends from outside of school with ethnic minority backgrounds like herself:

We actually got ready at my place every time, in the presence of my parents. I usually invited three to four home, and we would always get a bottle of alcohol from my parents. We would drink and get ready and then go out.

Among our research participants, Yara stood out as one of the few who drank alcohol with the approval of, and even in the presence of, her parents. Several other participants also drank alcohol and partied without significant concern about their parents' reaction, but they described how this reflected their parents' indifference rather than their approval. Yara also revealed how Danes are always curious to know how she manages to be Muslim and to drink alcohol, even though she herself does not experience this as a contradiction. Her ability to drink (like a Dane) and also be Muslim usually results in Danes commenting enthusiastically and Yara being annoyed:

They [ethnic Danes] typically say, "Oh, we want more of your kind," like, really, they say that. That is such a standard thing to say for Danes.

In this section, we have seen how the increasing importance of parties among ethnic Danish young people contributes in various ways to the young Muslim women's experiences of exclusion. For all our participants, regardless of whether or not they abstain, it seemed as if their otherness became more pronounced as parties and drinking gained importance. Sila Nur actively tried to challenge prejudices about Muslim women, but the intersection of her abstinence and her Muslim background seemed to contribute to her exclusion. Jamilah "resisted" both

stereotyping from her peers and social control from her family by abandoning the headscarf, changing her place of residence, and drinking alcohol, but this was ultimately a consequence of the same intersectional exclusions experienced by Sila Nur. Yara illustrates how Muslim women are damned if they do (drink), and damned if they don't (drink). She was still deemed "other" as a young Muslim woman who drinks and parties, though her exclusion was experienced more moderately. Thus, gender, place of residence, abstinence, and ethno-religious background are intersections that were actualized for our participants in the particular social setting that is the initial years of the youth drinking culture. Abstinence and ethno-religious background in particular intersect and produce experiences of strong exclusion for some in this context.

"They don't care about their religion": Family and community influence on Muslim women's drinking and party experiences

This section explores how our participants' families and local ethno-religious communities influence the young women's party and drinking experiences. This setting, more than the previous, brings cultural values, religion and gender to the foreground as significant intersections with experiences of drinking and partying.

In the interviews, gender was particularly salient when the young women talked about their upbringings and their relationships to their parents. In particular, the young women told how they were often subject to much stricter rules than boys, for instance, their brothers. As Jamilah summed up:

There are certain things that a girl should do, and there are certain things that boys – no, actually, boys can do anything they want. That is how it is. There are no consequences.

Our participants mentioned things such as not being home late, doing housework, taking care of younger siblings, letting their parents know where they are at all times and having sex before marriage as examples of differential treatment between Muslim girls and boys. Most of our participants experienced the gendered inequalities within their families as unfair. Some outspokenly negotiated inequality at home, while others accepted it as part of the state of affairs.

Jamilah's strategy for countering the gendered social control in her family included both negotiation and acceptance. As mentioned, Jamilah had a conflictual relationship with her family, which meant that she secretly found community elsewhere while still attempting to come across as a well-behaved young Muslim woman at home. She described it as leading a double life. Jamilah's family was large and also had close ties to a larger Palestinian network in Denmark. Her family was particularly concerned with the reputation of their daughters. Consequently, Jamilah was careful not to be seen by "the wrong people" when she partied (e.g. those from the Palestinian community, who would tell her family).

It took a long time to learn to hide it well enough [...]. I was afraid all the time. I had to be really careful so that the news wouldn't reach my parents [...]. For example, I would tell the bouncer who was perker (derogative term for immigrant background, but slang among immigrants themselves), "If you ever see me out, you don't know me" (laughter).

The level of gendered social control in Jamilah's family was high and contributed to Jamilah's anxieties and her need to feel in control, particularly so in the context of drinking and partying. In other words, gender and ethno-religious background intersected for Jamilah in ways that influenced her experiences with partying. The existing gender inequalities in Jamilah's family became even clearer to her when she secretly started partying. For instance, when she felt the need to lie directly to her parents because she knew her actions were particularly unacceptable for a young woman.

Compared to when she was younger, some changes in Jamilah's life gave her more room to manoeuvre vis-à-vis her parents. First, she was studying medicine, a profession that her family perceived as particularly prestigious. Consequently, she could go to a party but tell her parents

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that she was participating in study-relevant activities, and they accepted it without further questions. Second, social media and mobile phones can be liberating for young Muslim women struggling with unwanted social control (Waltorp, 2015). The combination of education and technology made it possible for Jamilah to participate in parties without her parents' knowledge and to build a relationship with her boyfriend, whose existence was unknown to her family:

> I am usually [saying that I am] working at the hospital or I am spending the night at a [friend's house]. My friend has these conference calls. If my mum calls me and I do not answer it, she will call my friend. My friend will be like, "She is just in the toilet, two seconds." Then she will call me, and she can do it in a way where the three of us are all in the conversation, but my mum thinks that I am at my friend's place [...]. It really saved my ass that new technology.

In addition, Jamilah was careful to take pictures of herself busy working at the hospital or taking classes. So, if she was going out or spending the night at her boyfriend's house and her parents were suspicious, she had innocuous pictures ready to show them. Education and technology, thus, were important intersections actualized in Jamilah's life. They seemed to work against the gendered inequalities that were triggered by her participation in parties and intoxication.

Taking a step closer to the act of drinking and partying in itself, the significance of family and community for that experience is also worth exploring. For instance, Jamilah still vividly remembered the first time she was drunk:

> I had too much. I was sick, and I had a feeling that everything was swimming before my eyes and that just made it worse. I was ashamed. I was like, "Oh no. There are immigrants here; they have seen me. I am usually always the good girl. I have always been the good girl." It was like really a burden, but also a burden that was lifted from my shoulders. Because now I was like, "Fuck it. I have done it. Let the consequences come."

The social control in Jamilah's family and community meant that Jamilah was anxious and afraid because she felt she had crossed a line and everybody could see it. Her family and her community had a very real presence in her first drinking experience (and in the drinking experiences to come). She had already been let down by her family in connection with her past marriage, and she expected serious repercussions ranging from violence to a new forced marriage if anyone found her drunk and partying.

Jamilah was navigating within a cultural setting of which she herself was very critical. She was particularly critical of the social control of young women and the general disparity between the sexes, which she found hypocritical. However, she still accepted some of the restrictions set up for her by her family and the larger community because she did not want to damage her family's reputation or put herself in danger.

Sila Nur described her family and community as less controlling and more lenient than Jamilah's. Interestingly, her story also differed from our other research participants' stories, as the roles were swapped, and the lenient rules applied to Sila Nur but not to her older brother:

> I think it is because of my mother. She knows what it is like to be a girl who wants to party and to have friends who are boys, and she did not want me to experience it as she did. She always says, "Yes" to me and "No" to my brother [...] "You know what you are doing. Boys are different from girls. They do not think about what they are doing."

Though the rule-setting of Sila Nur's parents was different from our other research participants' parents, her mother's reasoning resembles what many participants experienced at home, namely that girls are (or should be) trustworthy, rational, and well behaved, while boys do not consider the consequences of their actions and often make wrong choices (see also: Prieur, 2002).

For Sila Nur, gender intersected with her party experiences, but in quite a different way than for Jamilah. This had to do with the migration story of Sila Nur's family. Sila Nur's mother was born in Denmark, and her experience of growing up as a young Turkish Muslim woman in Denmark influenced Sila Nur's upbringing. Especially, Sila Nur's mother wanted her daughter to experience more freedom than she had experienced herself. We see here how migration stories carry significant meaning (Christensen, Norheim, & Knudsen, 2017), and they potentially intersect with other positions, such as gender in this specific instance. For most other participants, e.g. Jamilah whose mother came to Denmark as an adult, there was a larger divide between parent and daughter caused by immigration (Prieur, 2002). Very few of our participants experienced the same support as Sila Nur received from her mother in the context of attending parties.

Gossip was a recurring theme when our participants discussed the social control they saw in their otherwise cherished communities. Sila Nur grew up in a small suburb. She believed that there was only minimal gossip in her local ethnic community, which made her feel safe from comments about her participation in parties:

> No one knew that I was going out [hence, no gossip in her community]. It is not like I haven't been open about it or haven't talked about it. I could even take pictures [at parties, for social media]. I don't think it would have been the same if I had lived in the city.

Sila Nur explained that her life in the suburban ethnic community was free from too many "eyes of the community," and this would have been different had she lived in the city, where the Turkish community is much larger. Geography or place of residence affected our participants' experiences with parties (see also Törrönen, Rolando, & Beccaria, 2017; Valentine, 2007) and their place of residence could either strengthen or weaken their possibility for participation. Sila Nur elaborated on the kind of gossip that might be spread about Turkish girls in the city:

> The Turks know all the Turks. We pretty much know who people are. And if you know that this group of girls participates in parties, then [people say that] they [...] don't care about their religion and culture.

Being labelled as someone who does not care about religion or culture could be detrimental for our research participants' feeling of belonging to their ethnic group, for the ways their family is perceived, and for their marriage options within the ethnic group. Hence, the different attachments of our research participants' families to their local ethnic communities gave rise to divergent levels of social control. This had consequences for the young women's potential engagement in drinking and partying, as many of the women attached greater importance to family loyalty than to parties.

When it comes to social control, our research participants had quite different preconditions. Yara explained how her parents, who have a lenient attitude towards drinking and partying, do not take part in the network of their ethnic community: "No, they do not talk to anyone from their own culture, not at all. So they have no gossip to share." However, gossip and being held accountable as a Muslim woman do not only matter for the participants' parents and their generation. As the following example shows, peers and friends are also important when trying to bridge a Muslim identity and a youth life with drinking and partying. Yara once went out with her friends wearing a necklace inscribed with the Arabic word "Allah." Yara loved it, but her friends, who were also Muslims and partying, were indignant because she was wearing a godly symbol while drinking and behaving in an ungodly manner (see also: Bucerius, 2013). The situation created a heated discussion, and Yara was surprised to find that her view that it is acceptable to support the Muslim faith and still love to party was outvoted. Her friends argued that it is better to separate your wrongdoings (drinking and partying) from your religious doings, and, therefore, Yara should leave her necklace at home (see also: Dotinga, 2005, who found the view among Muslims that praying while intoxicated was forbidden). Families and

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communities had a powerful influence on whether our participants partied and how they partied – for instance, whether they only participated in private parties or not, and whether they could wear their favourite jewellery or not.

As demonstrated in this section, drinking and partying actualize not only exclusion from the ethnic majority youth culture, they also amplify existing gendered inequalities within the participants' families and local ethnic communities. In fact, participation in parties contributes to the gender inequalities within the local ethnic communities, and secrecy and double-dealing are common strategies for young Muslim women who party. In this way, the social positions of being both Muslim and a woman exaggerate each other and make participation in parties cumbersome. However, other positions are important to include in the analysis as well. Sila Nur exemplifies how different family migration stories activate different cultural schemes of interpretation. Likewise, different places can hold contradictory meanings for individuals. For Sila Nur, the larger city was imagined as a place of gossip and constraints, while, for Jamilah, it was associated with new ways of social integration and belonging. Moreover, Jamilah's story illustrates how factors such as choice of education and mobile phone skills intersect with ethno-religious background and gender as well and can lead to greater independence for women who are subject to a high level of social control.

Again, we see that there is no straightforward way to disaggregate these components of personal and group identity. Rather, we must locate drinking and partying within these intersecting strands of identity.

Discussion

Our study has analyzed processes of exclusion related to drinking and partying among young Muslim women in a country dominated by a youth culture of intoxication. We have focused on the intersection of the specific social positions actualized in our participants' experiences of exclusion in a youth drinking context: primarily, gender, ethno-religious background, education, place of residence, and migration history. We have found that our participants were at risk of exclusion in several arenas and that the various social positions listed above would most often contribute to but sometimes actually reduce their experiences of exclusion.

Especially, two things are central in our understanding of intersectionality and hence for our conclusions. First, the complexity in complex identities should be upheld in the analysis and not reduced to single components, such as, for instance, gender alone. Hence, it is the interconnectedness of positions that we find important, contrary to an additive approach, where positions are examined individually. Second, positions should also include positions that are "recognized locally and that operate in local contexts" (Kofoed, 2008:426). For instance, in our analysis, we showed how the cultural value of specific educations and individual migration histories affected experiences with drinking and partying. In this sense, we position ourselves among those intersectionality researchers who employ intersectionality to study a "process of doing" (Staunæs, 2003) rather than to foreground political and structural inequalities (Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013:796–797). Intersectionality studies' origin in activist politics emphasized the translating of the experiences of women, and Black women in particular, into concrete policy demands (Crenshaw, 1989). Hence, intersectionality research primarily aimed at criticising power and structural suppression rather than studying identities and social positions of difference in their own right. As Sing (2015) points out, something is lost in such a focus away from identity: namely, the attentiveness to positive subjectivity and agency. Social positions, such as religious or cultural background, can definitely be the source of exclusion, but just as importantly, they can also be the source of pride, community and other positive and affirming aspects of identity. Furthermore, a too narrow focus on suppressive power structures might essentialize identities, that is, "the boundedness of identity becomes overconflated and rigid even when multiple axes of identity are considered" (Dhamoon, 2011:233). In this view, there is "a tendency to

understand subjects as determined by social systems, which again makes it difficult to comprehend complexity and ambiguity at a subject level" (Staunæs, 2003).

These theoretical precautions are key in our understanding and analysis of young Muslim women's experiences with drinking alcohol and partying. Even though our study has identified how the processes of exclusion originate from both the culture of intoxication and the Muslim communities themselves, we have also exemplified, through our case studies, that our research participants had quite complex and different experiences. In our understanding, this testifies to the agency and strategic maneuvering of our participants. They are in some circumstances and to a certain extent able to avoid exclusion by being strategic, which follows from the above argument that social positions are not necessarily determinant, though they are of high importance. Thus, our focus on the dynamics of both structures of exclusion and the agency and strategic maneuvering of the young women showed that our participants were not always doubly excluded, though that might have appeared to have been the case if the analysis had solely taken into consideration their social positions.

Conducting alcohol research that deals with the experiences of minorities means opening up new understandings of parties and intoxication. For instance, we saw how our participants were not as oriented towards binge drinking and heavy intoxication as their Danish peers. Rather, they tended to focus more on fitting in, controlling their intoxication and their pleasure, and being attentive to prying eyes in their surroundings (see also: Bærndt et al., 2017). This might also be the case for other minorities within the Danish youth culture, and we suggest that future studies include a focus on other ethnic and cultural minorities. For instance, compared to young Muslim women, young Muslim men face fewer issues related to social control but encounter different problems, including rejections at the doors of nightclubs (May, 2014). Future studies could explore how this situation affects participation in youth life.

In addition, more research focusing on groups with low drinking rates, such as young Danish Muslims, could potentially contribute to bringing positive public attention to young people who drink moderately (Nicholls, 2019). This, in turn, might also work against the processes of exclusion of moderate drinkers or abstainers in a Danish youth drinking context. Young people are generally not very susceptible to health warnings related to binge drinking (e.g., violence, accidents, and long-term implications for cognitive functions (Critchlow et al., 2019; Koff, Swanson, & Moreno, 2011; Stock, Vallentin-Holbech, & Rasmussen, 2016)). Therefore, in addition to a focus on the health risks of excessive drinking, we suggest that young people are also made aware that their drinking culture risks excluding some of their friends and classmates. Hopefully, this can contribute to a more inclusive youth culture, where young Muslims (and other minorities) do not feel that participation in an excessive alcohol culture is a requirement for social inclusion.

Declarations of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest.

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Research report

Dilemmas of belonging: Young Muslim women in the Danish youth alcohol culture

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Abstract
Aim: Focusing on drinking and partying among young Muslim women in Denmark, our aim was to examine how the drinking practices of young Muslim women are influenced by belonging, understood as sentiments of (national) belonging as well as the broader (politicised) discourse on Muslims in Denmark. **Methods and data:** Based on 32 qualitative in-depth interviews with young Muslim women, this paper explores their drinking practices as situated in a national youth culture highly influenced by alcohol intoxication. We draw on Nira Yuval-Davies' (2006) distinction between belonging (as emotional attachment) and the politics of belonging. **Findings:** We found that the young women attempt to avoid negative comments based on stereotypes of Muslims and their drinking, by toning down being a Muslim. In addition, we showed how the difficulties of drinking alcohol while being both Muslim and Danish leads to several of the young women experiencing an 'identity crisis'. Lastly, we found that a way for the studied women to reconcile Muslim and Danish identities is through faith, namely through actively choosing what kind of Muslim they want to be. **Conclusion:** Being part of a national youth culture of alcohol intoxication is inevitably dilemma-filled for the study's participants and they are challenged in their belonging. We argue that these dilemmas do not stand alone, but rather point to the broader predicaments of these women in Danish society.

Keywords
alcohol, belonging, Denmark, young muslim women, youth

Whereas qualitative research on drinking among young people is extensive, the literature is somewhat tilted towards dealing with the situation of white middle-class young people. Ethnic minority youth, for instance, take a more marginal position (for exceptions, see Douglass et al., 2022; Kosnick, 2018; Valentine et al., 2010). Consequently, youth alcohol studies have mainly studied and explained the lives of white middle-class youth, not all youth. In an attempt to contribute to the redressing of this circumstance, our focus in this article is on youthful drinking and partying among young Muslim women in Denmark.

Much similar to other Western countries, such as the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, drinking alcohol is an unambiguous part of life, and particularly youth life, in Denmark. Despite a global trend where young people's drinking has been in decline since the early 2000s (Kraus et al., 2020; Pennay et al., 2015), even in Denmark (Frank et al., 2020), alcohol use is still a widespread Danish social activity among young people. Danish youth drinking is strongly related to processes of inclusion and exclusion (Herold & Kolind, 2022). Generally, drinking in Denmark is both accepted and expected, and it is legitimate to drink in many different social contexts (Elmeland, 1996; Grønkjær et al., 2011). Denmark has, therefore, also been described as a 'wet' alcohol culture, characterised by high per-capita consumption and more liberal drinking norms, including drinking to intoxication, contrary to 'dry' alcohol cultures characterised by low per-capita consumption (Room & Mäkelä, 2000). Danish adolescents have also, for a long time, had one of the highest consumption rates in Europe (Krauss et al., 2016). 92% of young Danes aged 18–24 years drink alcohol and often to intoxication (Sundhedsstyrelsen, 2015: Tholstrup et al., 2019). Alcohol use and intoxication are thus widely accepted and it takes up a valued and central position at parties and pre-parties alike and across gender identifications (Herold & Hunt, 2020).

Partying and alcohol intoxication thus inhabit a large proportion of young people's time, attention and interests and are an (almost) inevitable part of youth life in Denmark (Andrade & Järvinen, 2021). Therefore, researchers have also emphasised that the cultural norm of drinking to intoxication in Denmark puts a certain pressure to drink on young people who participate in parties (Grønkjær et al., 2011; Østergaard et al., 2018). However, this pressure to drink is not (solely) about 'group' or 'peer pressure' where some youngsters almost force the hand of others to drink. Rather, the alcohol intake of Danish youngsters is first and foremost about community and about finding ways to participate and contribute to this community (Frank et al., 2021). In Denmark, as has been reported in most cultures, alcohol consumption is a social act that, through reciprocity, facilitates the development and maintenance of social bonds (Douglas, 1987; Thurnell-Read, 2012; Tutenges & Sandbjerg, 2013), and contributes to the creation of identities and engendering 'community' (e.g., Chatterton & Hollands, 2002). In other words, alcohol consumption among young people is (also) about friendship, sociality and identity formation (cf. MacLean, 2016; Thurnell-Read, 2016). Belonging and drinking are tied together, as drinking is a way to consolidate in-group solidarity (Thurnell-Read, 2016) and enable processes of both social inclusion and social exclusion (Bærndt & Kolind, 2021; Herold & Kolind, 2022). Consequently, abstainers and light drinkers are minority trajectories in Denmark (Andrade & Järvinen, 2021; Frank et al., 2020). Danish population surveys among young ethnic Danes (aged 18–24 years) found that only 8% can be defined as non-drinkers based on alcohol use in the past year (Sundhedsstyrelsen, 2015). This is, however, very different if we look at ethnic minority youth. Among young Danish Muslims, approximately 70% are non-drinkers (Gundelach & Järvinen, 2006). In addition, studies from other Nordic countries have shown that young Muslim women particularly

have significantly lower levels of consumption of both drugs and alcohol than young people with ethnic majority backgrounds (Bergengen & Larsen, 2008; Johnson & Svensson, 2021; Øia, 2013; Skrowny, 2005).

Alcohol consumption is considered *haram* (i.e., forbidden) in the Koran. Even though there is variety in the interpretation of this proscription and the strictness to be upheld, most Muslims would agree that alcohol is forbidden in the Koran (Michalak & Trocki, 2006). Alcohol, thus, is not regarded compatible with being a faithful Muslim, and, therefore, the view of alcohol consumption among Muslims is generally quite critical – with among Muslims in Denmark (Mirdal, 2006). Abstaining is, for many Muslims, so tied to Islam that the drinking of alcohol can generate doubt about your Muslim identity and belonging to a Muslim community, for both the individual and their surroundings (Bradby, 2007; Valentine et al., 2010). Regarding gender differences, Hannah Bradby (2007) shows that even though the religious proscriptions concerning alcohol are formally gender blind, concerns about reputation and future marriage options mean that women's behaviour is considerably more contained and controlled than men's. Therefore, Muslim women in particular risk becoming the focus of malicious gossip, becoming excluded from certain Muslim communities or subjected to stricter social control (Bradby, 2007; Kosnick, 2018; Waltorp, 2015). As the first author has also shown elsewhere (Bærndt & Kolind, 2021), the youth culture of drinking in Denmark has the potential to actualise gender inequality (within their families) for those young Muslim women who wish to participate. The potentiality for conflicts in this regard increases the level of secrecy and dishonesty and, ultimately, this contributes negatively to the young women's feelings of belonging to an ethno-religious community. The focus in the first author's previous work was on the processes of exclusion in a party context and emphasised how the young women risked standing outside of both mainstream youth culture and their religious community. In

this article instead, our aim is to explore further the intricate feelings of belonging as they are shaped within a party context.

As we have illustrated, belonging is very much intertwined with alcohol consumption, and individuals can use alcohol or abstinence as a clear identity marker in their social life. Here, we would like to emphasise the relationship between drinking and a broader national community (Grønkjær et al., 2011). We will explore how young Muslim women in Denmark are challenged in their sense of belonging between being Danish and being Muslim within a party context. We will do so on the basis that the degree of acceptance of drinking and expectation to drink in Denmark reveals the existence of a national identity that is interwoven with alcohol. As such, the (heavy) consumption of alcohol is tied to being Danish and a way to 'do' your Danishness is to drink (Grønkjær et al., 2011; Simonsen, 2017). This means that your identity as a Dane (and your ability to have fun) is questioned if you do *not* drink. The relationship between drinking and being Danish adds a certain expectation to young people's conduct, especially young people with connections and relations to other cultures, religions or countries, as most ethnic minority youth have. Muslim minority youth can thus be caught in-between two different sets of expectations, norms and values: to be Danish is to drink; to be Muslim is to be abstinent. In this article, we explore how 32 young Muslim women have different ways of finding their place within Danish youth alcohol culture and manoeuvring the very different sets of expectations.

In the following, we will first provide a background section on Muslims in the Danish public discourse. We then provide an analytical framework of belonging and a section about our data and methods. Lastly, we analyse the narratives of the young women through three sections that delve into the relationship between drinking and belonging, before concluding the article.

Background: How Muslims became 'the other' in Denmark

Out of the Danish population of about 5.5 million people, 825,080 people are immigrants or are descendants of immigrants, which corresponds to about 14% of the Danish population (integrationsbarometer.dk). An estimate of the number of Muslims in Denmark is 306,000 or about 5.3% of the Danish population (Jacobsen, 2022). The public discourse on Islam and Muslims has changed in recent decades, and today Islam and being Muslim have, in many ways, become the opposite of being Danish. Rather than being two compatible aspects of identity, they seem to either clash or be placed within a hierarchy where Muslims need to 'be relaxed' or 'not make a fuss' in order to be accepted as part of society (Gilliam, 2022).

Since the first groups of Muslim immigrants, the so called 'guest workers', from primarily Turkey, Pakistan and the former Yugoslavia, arrived in Denmark in the 1960s, the discourse on Islam has shifted: from being a (neutral) aspect of immigrants' culture to being a (cultural) barrier to the immigrants' integration into Danish society. Immigrants were generally not defined in terms of their religion, but as 'foreign workers' who were temporarily in the country because of a labour shortage (Gilliam, 2022). Over time, however, many settled in Denmark with their families rather than return to their countries of origin. When new groups of refugees from Bosnia, Lebanon and Somalia arrived in the 1980s and 1990s, Islam began to be mentioned as a source of the immigrants' social problems and 'foreign culture' (Mørck, 1998). Immigration has, in this way, transformed from being a labour issue into being a cultural/religious issue, and immigrants who were originally characterised through class (as workers) have turned into a cultural category (as Muslims) (Yilmaz, 2015).

Two events in particular contributed to the change in discourse regarding immigrants in

Denmark: the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York and the Danish 'Cartoon Crisis' (2005–2006). Since 9/11, the American 'war on terror' quickly became a worldwide effort, especially since other terror attacks were carried out in Paris, London and Berlin as well as in Copenhagen in Denmark. The 'Cartoon Crisis' began with the publishing of 12 cartoons of the prophet Muhammed in a Danish newspaper, which initiated a domestic political debate about the relationship between freedom of speech and the consideration of religious minorities. According to the Koran, it is forbidden to worship false gods and therefore images of the prophet are not allowed. The cartoons were considered an immense offence towards the global Muslim community and escalated into an extensive foreign policy crisis for Denmark, including boycotts, riots and violent attacks in some Muslim countries (Sinclair, 2021). These events have contributed to the fact that, today, Islam in public discourses in Denmark is often portrayed as a dangerous religion and Muslims have come to be a national security threat and a threat to Danish values. Following on from this, the individual Muslim has come to represent not just him- or herself, but Islam as a global religious community (Rytter & Pedersen, 2014; Simonsen, 2016). Thus, the subject of immigrants and criticism aimed towards Muslims are today ubiquitous in public political discourse and Muslims have increasingly become the 'Other' against which Danish national identity is constructed (Yilmaz, 2015). This process of Othering (a concept originally formulated by Spivak (1985)) means that the imagined Danish community is constructed in contrast to the less privileged and less powerful Muslim community. The public discourse in Denmark is thus characterised by an essentialist dichotomy between 'Us and Them', the Danes and the Muslims (Hervik, 2004).

This process of Othering is, however, not 'just' a descriptive or discursive one, it also plays out as very concrete political decisions and actions with concrete implications. For

instance, the rhetoric around 'ghettos' or, rather, the problematisation of neighbourhoods with a concentration of ethnic minorities (particularly with a Muslim background) have taken hold in both the Danish media and in Danish politics. Concentrations of ethnic minorities have become a sign post of lacking social cohesion and are often termed 'parallel societies', i.e., not integrated into the overall Danish society (Fallov & Birk, 2021). Several political strategies have been implemented in order to combat the perceived threat of 'parallel societies', for instance by tearing down social housing in 'ghetto' areas and allocating ethnic minority youth and children in schools and day care services (see also Frandsen & Hansen, 2020).

As we shall see in the analysis, our participants in this study experienced these discursive as well as tangible processes of Othering as infringing on their lives, in the sense that they were confronted with their being different on a daily basis and some even had to move from their homes because of aggressive 'ghetto' politics. Being Muslim is thus problematised in Danish society and is positioned as the diametrical opposite of being Danish.

Furthermore, turning our attention specifically towards young Muslim women, gendered stereotypes and expectations have also increased. For instance, the Muslim headscarf is mostly perceived negatively and as a symbol of a patriarchal and authoritarian family pattern seen as incompatible with Danish values (Degn & Søholm, 2011; Khawaja, 2011). One such Danish value is gender equality. Gender equality is, in the Danish self-understanding, a core value and something that has been fought to obtain and is not compromised. This means that with the increasingly problematising discourse surrounding Muslims, the subjects of gender and sexuality have moved into focus, and criticism of Islam is often oriented towards its lack of gender equality (Yilmaz, 2015). Following from the 'patriarchal family pattern', young Muslim women in Denmark are typically regarded as oppressed (to different degrees), and are expected to be

quiet, calm and not allowed to do much, as well as be afraid to do certain things (Rognlien & Kier-Byfield, 2020). They are likely to be seen as diligent and competent in school or at their studies but are rarely expected to take part in social arrangements, particularly parties where alcohol is served.

To sum up, while Muslims in general have become the Other against which Danes can be defined in public discourse, the discourse is also extremely gendered and Muslim women have particular expectations attached to them, especially when they do what is not expected from them – such as being in public spaces or participating in social arrangements or even parties.

Analytical framework

From the literature laid out in the introduction, it is apparent that practices of alcohol consumption include notions of (national/religious) identity and belonging. This was also evident in our data through the accounts of the young Muslim women interviewed. Consequently, practices of alcohol consumption influence how young Muslim women participate in youth life in Denmark more broadly, since these practices have an influence on their possible senses of belonging in everyday life.

For that reason, we here employ belonging as an analytical concept with inspiration from Nira Yuval-Davies (2006), who underscores the interplay and dynamic between belonging and political projects of belonging. Leaning on these aspects of belonging, we are able to analyse the young women's accounts of the complexities of belonging within the party context; complexities that sometimes embrace, sometimes reject the possibility of being Muslim and being Danish simultaneously.

First, Yuval-Davies (2006) makes an analytical distinction between belonging and the politics of belonging. Whereas belonging 'is about emotional attachment' and the way we feel 'at home' in certain places (see also Jackson, 1995), the politics of belonging is the 'dirty

work of boundary maintenance'. We will begin with the latter.

The boundaries in need of maintenance in this context, are those that separate the world into 'us' and 'them' – for instance, when 'we' have freedom and women's rights whereas 'they' have a dominating patriarchy and suppress women, as we mentioned in the previous section on the othering of Muslims in Denmark. The politics of belonging is thus a dimension of belonging that deals with who is included and who is excluded (Yuval-Davies, 2006; see also Antonsich, 2010). It comprises specific political projects 'aimed at constructing belonging in particular ways to particular collectivities' (Yuval-Davies, 2006). To construct belonging speaks into Anderson's (1983) view of nation-states and national identity as 'imagined communities'. Furthermore, national identity in the Nordic countries is also informed by an 'imagined sameness' based on the notion that 'people have to feel that they are more or less the same in order to be of equal value' (Gullestad, 2002).

A central theme of the politics of belonging is the question of who belongs and who does not. For instance, what is the minimum requirement for signifying (national) belonging in terms of origin, culture or normative behaviour? (Yuval-Davies, 2006). This is, in Denmark, obvious in the public preoccupation with defining Danishness (Holmberg, 2000), or in the mandatory handshake required at the naturalisation ceremony in order to become a Danish citizen. Critics see this rule as a way to target Muslims (who, for religious reasons, may be reluctant to shake hands across sexes), whereas supporters see it as an inherently Danish thing to do (Oxlund, 2020). Thus, the boundaries of the community of belonging may be maintained and reproduced through the politics of belonging, but it is also challenged and contested by others – and is thus an ongoing dynamic process (Yuval-Davies, 2006).

The politics of belonging thus stand outside the individual, whereas belonging itself happens within the individual. Belonging is about emotional attachment, a personal sense of feeling at home in a place and about feeling safe and secure (Yuval-Davies, 2006; see also Antonsich, 2010 and Jackson, 1995). To belong is not only a question of place or location; it is also about being connected to a group of people and is thus characterised by strong social bonds and is a dynamic process. (Jackson, 1995). One aspect of belonging is, following on from before, about identifications and emotional attachments, and in this way, belonging can be 'an act of self-identification or identification by others' (Yuval-Davies, 2006). Identities and constructions of belonging are, for instance, visible in the stories people tell about themselves and about others. However, belonging 'cannot and should not be seen merely as cognitive stories' because they also 'reflect emotional investments and desire for attachment' (Yuval-Davies, 2006). This desire for attachment also means that once an attachment is threatened and people feel less secure, constructions of belonging become more central. The process of the othering of Muslims in Denmark thus might provide a context where a secure feeling of belonging becomes essential for the wellbeing of our participants.

Methods and data

The analysis at hand is based on interview data from the study 'Young Muslim women and the Danish youth alcohol culture'[1] These data consist of qualitative in-depth interviews with 32 young Muslim women aged 16–34 years (mean age 23 years), conducted between November 2016 and August 2017. The first author carried out both recruitment of and interviews with the young women and they lasted 1–2.5 hours. The participants received a gift card for their participation. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and lastly anonymised before the analysis. The study has been registered to the Danish Data Protection Agency.

In the interviews, our main intention was to explore the young women's experiences with alcohol and parties in a broad sense, but with

the aim of capturing developments and changes over time. Therefore, the interviewer took her inspiration from life-story interviews (Atkinson, 1998) and concentrated in particular on those 'chapters' in the participants' lives where alcohol and parties carried a certain importance. Most interviews, then, began with a focus on the last years of lower secondary school (when the women were aged about 14–15 years), because alcohol (and parties) here was crucial for the feeling of community in school for the first time (Järvinen & Østergaard, 2009). The interviewer then pursued those educational and job-related contexts, where the participants extended their experiences with alcohol and parties. In this way, the interviewer aimed at capturing both the first experiences of partying and/or drinking and how these developed over time for the participants.

The young women came from different parts of Denmark, though mainly from the larger cities and the surrounding areas. The women were recruited through notices on intranet channels at educational institutions, postings in specific youth forums on Facebook and through the first author's own network from previous recruitment among ethnic minorities. Inclusion criteria for participation in the project included 'having experiences with alcohol and/or parties' and 'having a Muslim background'. Except for one (ethnic Danish convert), all the young women had ethnic minority backgrounds, and two participants had parents with dissimilar origins (Iraqi/Syrian & Iraqi/Lebanese). The participants thus had various ethnic backgrounds (13 ethnicities in total), roughly corresponding to those ethnic groups that are most numerous among Muslims in Danish society (Jacobsen, 2022).

Among the participants, there were children and grandchildren of so-called guest workers, children of refugees and a few who had themselves come to Denmark as refugees. Of the 32 young women, 22 were born in Denmark while the rest had arrived while they were small children. Eight women wore a Muslim headscarf and another three used to wear a headscarf when they were younger but had since chosen to take it off. Seventeen participants were regularly intoxicated at parties, while another three had tried out alcohol on one or more occasions. The last 12 women had never consumed alcohol, but they still participated regularly in parties where other people were intoxicated. The findings do not speak for the Muslim minority in Denmark generally, but instead deal with the views of those young Muslim women who drink alcohol and/or party.

The women were all well-educated; about half of them were studying or had studied at university and the other half studied or had studied a professional bachelor's degree. For some of the women, it was problematic to show an interest in alcohol and parties and therefore they refrained from 'liking' notices on Facebook and they would often not tell others about the project or their participation in it. In the interview situation, though, the young women were eager to talk about their lives and experiences and they found the project and the focus on Muslim women important. The first author, who carried out all interviews, is an ethnic majority Dane, who at the time of the interviews was in her early 30s. Gender, age and the level of education here seemed to contribute to creating a room with openness, where alcohol and parties were less sensitive subjects than, for instance, situations marked by social control. Still, the inherent power imbalance between the participants and the interviewer (Jensen, 2012, p. 116), meant that many women resisted a victimised position in terms of social control and instead accentuated their own agency.

The first author carried out a small pilot project in 2015 that has informed the research questions. Furthermore, the project was exploratory from the outset, which meant having a flexible approach to the interview guide, adjusting it along the way and for each participant. All interviews were transcribed and coded in the text analysis software Nvivo

11. We followed an inductive approach to coding and thus derived our codes from the data. First, the interviews were organised into key themes (main codes). Thereafter, these were reread and organised into subthemes (subcodes). Themes included, for example, intoxication, party participation, identity and belonging.

Results

The following analysis is divided into three sections. First, we investigate how the young women react to negative and stereotypical attitudes concerning their alcohol consumption, by ethnic Danes, and how they may avoid those negative experiences through certain behaviours. Second, we unfold how being part of two different, often contradictory sets of expectations and norms towards alcohol results in a felt 'identity crisis' for many of the participating young women. Third, we investigate how some of the young women succeed in reconciling their Muslim identity with the youth alcohol culture through their more individualised and spiritual ways of believing in Islam.

Common to these three sections is our exploration of the ways in which the young women's experiences with alcohol and parties are unmistakably entangled in feelings and expressions of belonging/un-belonging.

Belonging: Toning down being a Muslim

Many of the interviewed young women would tell stories that circled around the possible reactions from ethnic Danes that might arise, for themselves or other Muslim women, if they were drinking alcohol and/or partying while explicitly expressing their Muslim identity at the same time. These reactions were often articulated with roots in adverse stereotypes, as is evident in Zainab's (25-year-old, Iraqi background, social work student) account of drinking alcohol together with friends at a Friday bar at her educational institution. She

explains how another student approaches her and asks her: 'But are you not a Muslim? You are not allowed to drink, are you?' and she continues to explain what these kinds of stereotypes do to her:

> I was like, 'what are you talking about? Why can't I drink?' [...]. I was just thinking, what kind of fucked up prejudice is that? Come on, you can see that I am sitting here drinking? Which means that I *can* drink. [...]. I hear that occasionally and then I feel like I have to explain and sometimes even defend it. But I like to provide a different picture of how life is for some [Muslims] and I like to discuss and sometimes make people know a bit more.

Zainab reacts strongly to the suggestion that 'she is not allowed to drink', which is in line with the perception of Muslim women subjected to the whims of Muslim men. Although she is enjoying a cosy time with her fellow students and is obviously participating in the drinking culture of Danish youth, she is still confronted with and forced to deal with the stereotypical and negative discourse that surrounds Muslims in Denmark. Thus, this discourse is not constricted to the world of politics but becomes part of how Danes might talk to and approach Muslims in everyday situations, such as a Muslim woman drinking alcohol. Through these stereotypical comments, it is taken for granted that Zainab is doing something wrong. Consequently, she feels obligated to defend the fact that she drinks alcohol and is participating in the drinking culture of Danish youth – or, ultimately, she is defending her belonging there as a fellow Dane.

Like Zainab, a few of our participants took up the discussion about Muslims and alcohol, and in some situations even tried to challenge ethnic Danes' stereotypical views on this. For most of our participants, though, they instead focused on toning down being a Muslim in party contexts, in order to avoid reactions and discussions of that kind. However, their experiences seem to overlap, since the focal point here

is how ethnic Danes find it hard to fathom the combination of Islam and alcohol. Thus, they assume that the young women do not drink, because they are Muslims, or even that they are not allowed to drink. In order to handle these expectations and avoid too many questions and confrontational comments as the one Zainab got, several of our participants explained how they downplayed their Muslim background. For instance, as expressed by Naeemah (16 years old, Palestinian background, lower secondary school):

> I have quite a lot of friends who take off their headscarf at parties because they find it inappropriate to wear a scarf and drink alcohol. Because then you are expressing a religious symbol at the same time as you are doing something that goes against the religion. I am carrying the hand of Fatima, but no one notices because it is not a religious symbol in the same way [...]. If people ask me where it is from, I tell them that it is an heirloom.

Naeemah does not wear a headscarf herself but is very aware of the strong connotations people perceive when seeing a headscarf. The scarf is unmistakably Muslim in its visibility and recognisability (Korteweg & Yurdakul, 2014), while the hand of Fatima is less identifiable, at least for non-Muslims. Naeemah emphasises that the feeling of doing something inappropriate is the main reason why her friends take off their scarf. These feelings are fuelled by confrontational comments as the one above. Instead, wearing a discrete Muslim symbol that is easy to explain without mentioning Islam reveals how Naeemah herself inventively avoids too many questions. It seems to be a choice between being required to explain how she reconciles drinking and being Muslim on the one hand and reducing what could identify her as Muslim on the other hand.

Aysel's (32 years old, Afghan background, social work student) accounts are also about navigating being a Muslim while partying and

drinking alcohol. She recounts the time where she went to boarding school and she thrived socially and attended parties. When a friend of hers asked her to come to Buddy Holly (a well-known discotheque), she first refused: 'I can't, I am wearing a headscarf?' Her friend suggested that she wear a beanie.

> I said 'yeah, I am going to try that'. And it was cold, so I was wearing a roll neck jumper underneath [and a beanie covering my hair] and I looked like a boy. That was the year I was away from my family and I wanted to try things on my own terms [...] I was a bit more of a rebel back then.

Aysel has never touched alcohol, but she enthusiastically explains how her friends were very loyal and ordered fancy but alcohol-free drinks for her. Aysel had an experience of being included and taken seriously by her friends. It was possible for her to positively negotiate her own way of partying because she was at boarding school and thus away from her family, who would not have agreed on the ethics of partying even though she remained abstinent. Like Naeemah, Aysel navigates partying by downplaying her Muslim background, while still not abandoning it.

Zainab, Naeemah and Aysel have different approaches to participating in parties and/or drinking alcohol. Zainab and Naeemah clearly want to be able to participate in the alcohol culture of Danish youth, but where Zainab confronts Danes and their perceptions of Muslim women and goes into discussions about it, Naeemah tones down her Muslim identity. Aysel, on the other hand, wants to be with her friends and party, but without drinking alcohol, and finds a less visible alternative to the head scarf to cover her hair. The approaches by Naeemah and Aysel are followed by several of our participants who wish to avoid being asked too many questions. It is also noteworthy that these approaches are oftentimes mentioned as the approach of our participants' 'friends' rather than themselves (as is the case with

Naeemah), which possibly indicates that it is a normal approach but an approach that is hurtful because they feel they must lie about their ethnic heritage rather than be proud of it. We will explore this further in the next section, where the young women's stories centre on the difficulties of embodying both a Muslim and a Danish identity.

Un-belonging: Identity crisis

Navigating between two worlds – their family and Muslim community on the one hand and their ethnic Danish friends and the alcohol culture of Danish youth on the other hand – without choosing one over the other, but instead actively insisting on belonging to both worlds, often activated feelings of unease and discomfort in the young women. Our participants especially emphasised that this happened when the expectations to them were too diverse or too contradictory. Even though they tried, as we saw above, it was immensely challenging for many of our participants to merge their Muslim identity with a youth identity where drinking and partying was central and linked with being Danish. Both identities were meaningful and important to the participants and part of who they were. This was exactly what was at stake for Rasha (23 years old, Syrian background, nurse student) and for Samina (26 years old, Afghan background, social and health care assistant student):

> Rasha: When I was in tenth grade I was like 'well, I am not a Muslim' because you must be a good Muslim. You must be like this and that, and I was not. I did not feel I was Muslim if I was drinking and partying.

> Samina: The older I get, the more sceptical I get about it [Islam]. Well, I always think that I will believe that there is a god. But I am starting to question some things. I do not practise, I drink alcohol, I go out, I have sex outside of marriage, and I have eaten pork. So how much Muslim am I?

This juggling was, for many of the participants, not easy and they struggled to find a proper way of combining them or integrate the two contradictory identities. Rasha continues, for example, to explain how she had a friend, who taught her that: 'even though you make mistakes, you should not say that you are not Muslim. Of course, you are still Muslim, but then you just must look at your mistakes and like work on them. Just because you do things you are not supposed to do, it should not make you less of a Muslim.' What Rasha is taught by her friend is, however, that drinking is a 'mistake', something she is 'not supposed to do'. She is not taught that both sides are part of who she is – belonging to a Muslim community and at the same time being a young Dane in a youth culture where alcohol plays an important part – and that both sides can be practised by her simultaneously. These experiences of a split between aspects of their identity were of such degree that several of the young women spoke of periods of their youth life characterised by a marked 'identity crisis'. Esra (24 years old, Turkish background, social work student), for example, says:

> I have been missing a lot in my earlier life. At one time, I think I even had like an identity crisis. I could not figure out who I was as a person. I sort of lacked someone with whom I could identify.

Similarly, as explained by Ashna (18 years old, Iraqi background, upper secondary school):

> Ashna: I used to [think that I am Danish], but I think I have been told by so many people that I am not Danish, so I am just, I am in the middle of a crisis. I have two cultures that I am merging. Where I say 'well I am Danish and I am also Iraqi' but at the same time, I cannot do that, I feel so torn. I cannot be one thing or the other, but I am both in some way.

Like Esra and Ashna, several of the participants talked about having an identity crisis to

various extents or characterised in different yet similar ways. For instance, the feeling that their Muslim identity and their Danish identity were mutually excluding but at the same time very much embodied in themselves, gave way to feelings of lacking clear or comfortable belonging. This uncertain belonging is central to the experiences of 'identity crisis' and to the lack of wellbeing of these young women. The importance of having someone to identify with was also a common theme among the participants, particularly so while they were in their identity-formative years in upper secondary school.

For some of the participants, for example Amal (21 years old, Palestinian background, medical student), these contradictory norms and values were too hard, and she choose to opt out of the drinking culture of Danish youth altogether:

> I was at an introduction party at school, but as soon as they brought out the beers, I went home. Like, a beer for you, not for me [laughter]. I was not used to it, and I just think it smells so awful [laughter]. It is just a strange place, where I do not fit in.

Similar to Amal, a few of our participants chose to opt out of the Danish culture of alcohol after having participated a few times. Rather than jeopardise their safe and secure Muslim belonging by participating in parties, these young women followed an understanding of alcohol as *haram*. Generally, the stories of those who do not drink indicated a dislike of alcohol because it would change pleasant individuals into unpredictable, dangerous persons, which was in opposition to the women's expectations to Muslim respectability. We thus found a tendency similar to what Valentine et al. (2010) observed: rather than alcohol being like 'social glue' or contributing to young people constructing 'social bonds' (as alcohol usually does in a Danish youth context), it has the 'reverse impact' on Muslims who are abstinent, namely

'generating emotions of disgust and repulsion' (Valentine et al., 2010, p. 12).

Opting out, though, was only relevant for a few participants and here we focus on those young Muslim women who wrestle with integrating their Muslim identity with the youth culture of alcohol. In the next section, therefore, we focus on individual interpretations of Islam as a way to accomplish belonging to both worlds.

Reconciling being a young Muslim woman who parties

For many of the women in the study, going out and drinking alcohol was, as we saw above, often hard to reconcile with their Muslim background. The proscription against alcohol in the Koran is widely accepted in the young women's families. As the first author has described in detail elsewhere, drinking alcohol and partying therefore often created conflicts with parents and since the young women participated anyway, their narratives were also filled with how they lied and kept it secret from their parents (Bærndt & Kolind, 2021). This was not easy for the young women, who also reported having a (heavy) guilty conscience and how this affected their sense of self and their feelings of belonging (Bærndt & Kolind, 2021). Finding a way to be at ease with personifying the identity of a drinking Muslim was a central theme in the narratives. One way the young women dealt with this seemingly unsolvable problem was in their interpretation of their faith and locating their own place in Islam. Abir (18 years old, Palestinian background, upper secondary school student), for example, says:

> I respect my parents' view of life, but I also do not think they can put themselves in my shoes [...]. I just think they would have trouble accepting that I believe in something very different. I think they are still hoping that one day I might progress [laughter] [...]. They will

always have that hope [that I will become a really good Muslim girl].

By saying that her parents cannot 'put themselves in my shoes', Abir refers not only to her believing in a different form of Islam, but also to the fact that her parents did not grow up in Denmark and have not experienced the drinking culture of Danish youth and how this is part of being Danish for young people today. In terms of belief, like Abir, several of the young women emphasised that they had their own individual interpretation of Islam, often insisting on a more spiritual reading of the Koran, and on separating the religious from all the 'cultural stuff', including not drinking alcohol. Sahar (19 years old, Afghan background, social and healthcare assistant student) explains it like this:

I remember that in the beginning I would get a pit in my stomach [when going out drinking], but now I have just figured out that it is not like the orthodoxy of Islam that I believe in or the kind of Muslim that I want to be. [...] I believe that in the end, if you can look yourself in the eyes and testify that you have been good towards your neighbour, then you will get to the craziest paradise. It will not be a glass of white wine that decides [whether you get to paradise].

Sahar has found a way to accomplish belonging through her beliefs and the way in which she herself defines her Muslim identity. She no longer has a pit in her stomach when she drinks and parties, because she instead values her self-perception as someone who treats others nicely. Similarly, Samina explains that she approaches both Islam and Danishness as a source of cultural 'stuff' from which she can select those aspects that are meaningful to her:

The good stuff from Islam, I take that to heart and the stuff I do not like, the very traditional stuff, I say bye-bye to that. The same goes for

the Danish stuff. I do not eat pork and I have begun drinking a bit [...]. I have discovered partying, going out and enjoying myself. Things that are normal here in Denmark but have not been normal to [me].

These young women thus describe the ways in which they are different from their parents' generation and, in particular, they underscore how they are actively considering and choosing what kind of individual, what kind of Muslim, they want to be. The understanding of Muslim women as someone acted upon, someone subjected to a Muslim patriarchy is actively counteracted in these stories. Furthermore, belonging in these last quotes, becomes less problematised, at least from the perspective of the women, but possibly also from the perspective of ethnic Danish youth. For instance, in this line of reasoning, Gilliam (2022) argues that when Muslim pupils in the Danish primary school are perceived as 'relaxed' and being religious 'without a fuss', they are more easily accepted. This conditional inclusion is based on almost equating 'relaxed religiosity' to being a 'moderate Muslim', who practices religion in the same way as the majority of Danes and does not hinder the majority-defined harmony (Gilliam, 2022). What the above narratives do not tell us is whether this reconciling of being Muslim and drinking is perceived or accepted by the young women's family and Muslim community. It is a way for the young Muslim women to belong to and find their place within the drinking culture of Danish youth, but perhaps it does not provide them with the belonging they strive for in their Muslim community. That discussion goes further than the scope of this article; however, closing our results section, we would like to provide a final example of reconciling a Muslim identity with drinking alcohol that could support this claim. Being Muslim in a way where drinking alcohol is not problematic or endangering feelings of belonging was also expressed in narratives describing the unwritten rules of a private party and the arrangements around it. For instance, as described by Sahar:

Yes, everybody [at school] drinks, regardless of whether they are Muslims or not. But it is not allowed to take Snapchats or pictures or anything. Because we have an open relationship with each other, because what we do [drink and party] we do together, and it should not get out in public – even though everybody else is doing it too.

This testifies to a form of solidarity among those who participate in the party, as well as a shared frame of reference (Eriksen, 2007). Similar to this last example, Douglass et al. (2022) show how young ethnic minorities in Australia, who have friends where alcohol use is common, describe how their friendship groups are a safe space, providing comfort and no judgement. Privacy, here, is a consideration for those, perhaps young Muslim women in particular, who wish to drink and party discretely and without the awareness or eyes of their Muslim community. The rule of not taking pictures was repeated in several interviews, and were mirrored in the difficulties for these young women of getting acceptance from their family (and Muslim community) to party and drink alcohol (for details, see Bærndt & Kolind, 2021).

Discussion

In this article, we have explored some of the issues that typically arise for young Muslim women who drink alcohol and party in Denmark. Specifically, we have explored national belonging as being entangled in the drinking practices of these women, through an analysis where we underscore both the meaning of belonging as emotional attachment and belonging as part of a (politicised) public discourse. One point of departure for doing so was the very specific circumstances for these young women, in terms of drinking as belonging, because they are both part of a national youth culture highly influenced by drinking and partying and part of a Muslim community, where abstaining is the ideal.

We found that the young women seek to avoid negative comments based on stereotypes of Muslims by toning down their Muslim identity and Muslim markers such as the headscarf. We illustrated how troubles of being both Muslim and Danish pushes several of the young women through an 'identity crisis' and we found that those of the young women, who succeed in reconciling their Muslim and their Danish identities, tend to focus on spirituality rather than doctrine – thus intentionally constructing what kind of Muslim they want to be.

On a more general level, we argued that being a young Muslim woman who drinks alcohol in Denmark is inevitably dilemma-filled. There is no way to avoid these dilemmas, because drinking practices are entangled in the processes of identity formation and national belonging to an extent, where the negative public discourse on Muslims as well as the construction of Danes as the opposite of Muslims seeps into the common conversations of young people who drink and party. Thus, drinking practices become one way of expressing belonging as emotional attachment as well as constructing belonging as a national identity.

When drinking alcohol becomes part of a national identity, it entails that people who question other's drinking behaviour also question their belonging. Furthermore, it would seem that the young women in our study are questioned regardless of their (drinking) choices. If they drink, it is 'oh, do you drink?' and if they do not it is. 'oh, you don't drink?' (see also Koefoed & Simonsen, 2012). As such, there is no solution; it is only dilemma-filled to insist on reconciling a Muslim identity and the drinking of alcohol (and reconciling a Danish identity). It is a particular dilemma in Denmark because of the dominating alcohol youth culture, but that does not mean that there are no other dilemmas. Rather, we argue that there are several dilemmas for these young women and they have certain overlaps to the ones we have identified. For instance, other researchers have found dilemmas that stem from the multiple complicities in which young

Muslims are engaged, such as dividing their loyalty between their families, their religion and the society of which they are a part (Suhr, 2015). In addition, some dilemmas spring from young Muslims women's attempts to challenge restrictive gender norms, through a discursive distinction between 'real' Islam and 'misguided' ethno-cultural traditions (Liebmann & Galal, 2020).

Situating our findings within the literature that deals with young people of immigrant backgrounds in Denmark and the Nordic countries, we see that our results are in line with those of others, who emphasise the existence of (cultural) borders that seem increasingly sharply drawn and almost impossible to transcend (Simonsen, 2018). As such, the movement during the last 30 years has been from a focus on the mixture of identities towards an increasing split between identities. Hyphenated or creolised identities (which were often emphasised in the 1990s), for instance, are the product of a process by which elements of different cultures and ethnicities are blended together and contributed to the creation of new cultures (Eriksen, 1994; Hannerz, 1992). In continuation of this, we find researchers accentuating the hyphen between cultures, meaning you can be both – for instance, when young people are described as Turkish-Danish (Mørck, 1998; 2000). Since then, more researchers have focused on the borders between minority immigrant groups and the Nordic majority. Gullestad (2002), for example, describes the 'invisible fences' (Gullestad, 2002) that become an obstacle to existence between Norwegians and immigrants/ Muslims because of the perceived sameness of people of Norwegian descent. Perhaps the invisible fences are becoming more visible and tangible – this seems the case when researchers describe the present as characterised by sharply drawn borders that are impossible to overcome (Simonsen, 2018). Thus, the sharply drawn border is actually in contrast to earlier writings on immigrants and their descendants and testifies to a change in public discourse, such as the othering of Muslims in Danish society, as we described in the beginning.

On this basis, we argue that the lived youth experience of young Muslim women is different from that of young ethnic Danes. The young women we talked to reflected enormously on their own position in society, their feelings of belonging and the ways in which they could possibly participate in the youth culture of alcohol without compromising themselves and their values. They would always be one step ahead, considering calmly what dilemmas might surface in different situations and given different choices. As such, young Muslim women have to continuously negotiate their being and their identity as embodying cultures that are both co-existing and have sharply drawn borders. The dilemmas of the young Muslim women participating in the youth culture of alcohol are thus qualitatively different from that of young ethnic Danes. In this way, a focus on counterintuitive minority groups (such as perceived abstinent Muslims) within a youth culture of drinking, such as the Danish one, expands our knowledge about that culture.

As there are very few studies in this area, we wanted to be exploratory in our approach. Interviews seemed appropriate for this end. Furthermore, using interviews, we were able to take seriously the fact that these young women are often stripped of voice and agency, and provide that to them (to the extent that citations and certain author angles can do that). Using interviews also pointed to the themes the participants found most pressing, including the difficulties of belonging and politicised discussions about Muslims more broadly. In the future, we hope to see more research in this area; for instance, through projects with a more pronounced focus on embodied perspectives on Muslim intoxication and pleasure, and research investigating the internal differences between Muslim women through a focus on their various ethnic and class backgrounds.

Declaration of conflicting interests

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"Then someone takes my picture…" and other disrupted (drinking) stories: constructing narratives about alcohol and intoxication among young Muslim women in Denmark

Marie Fjellerup Bærndt

Abstract

Purpose – *This paper aims to explore the existence of drinking stories among young Muslim women in Denmark. More specifically, the author investigates the significance of having a double audience (one Muslim, one Danish) for the construction of narratives about alcohol and intoxication.*

Design/methodology/approach – *The paper draws on qualitative data from semi-structured in-depth interviews with 32 young Muslim women (average age 23 years) and uses the analytical concept of storytelling.*

Findings – *Firstly, the narratives are qualitatively different from majority narratives, revealing distinct Muslim minority experiences. Secondly, the stories are disrupted in more serious ways than majority drinking stories. Lastly, for some young women, there is no wriggle room, and rather than being part of stories of intoxication, they subvert the drinking story into sober narratives to uphold respectable norms around alcohol while being both Muslim and Danish.*

Originality/value – *This research is unique in its focus on alcohol and parties among Muslim minority youth in a white-majority country. The narratives would usually be overlooked in a drinking story context because of the association between Muslims and abstinence and because the drinking story literature originates from a narrower focus on young white men's experiences. Including more ethnic, religious and gender-diverse minorities in future research on drinking stories will challenge our knowledge in the field and add much-needed nuances.*

Keywords *Drinking stories, Young muslim women, Alcohol, Storytelling, Narratives, Minorities*

Paper type *Research paper*

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Introduction

Young people in Denmark drink a lot of alcohol compared to young people elsewhere. They have one of the highest consumption rates in Europe and an unmistakable focus on becoming intoxicated (Krauss *et al.*, 2016; Tolstrup *et al.*, 2019). Alcohol is present in young people's ways of socializing and being together, and young Danes – young men as well as women – are expected to participate in numerous contexts characterized by intoxication (Grønkjær *et al.*, 2011; Frank *et al.*, 2020). The drinking of alcohol is intertwined with the formation of identity, gender and friendship (Herold and Hunt, 2020; MacLean, 2016), and it assists in the development and consolidation of social bonds, playing a part in the creation of various communities (Thurnell-Read, 2016) as well as people's sense of belonging to a community (Herold *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, youthful drinking enables social processes,

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including creative and inventive constructions such as drinking stories. The telling of drinking stories among young Muslim women in Denmark is the subject of this article.

Against the backdrop of the already dilemma-filled everyday lives of a Muslim minority youth, who are pulled in different directions by different actors (Bærndt and Frank, 2022; Fallov and Birk, 2020; Khawaja, 2011), this article explores what happens when investigating drinking stories from a different perspective than that of young majority men. Young white men have been the main characters in much research so far – with a few exceptions that center women and the meaning of gender (Cullen, 2011; Sheehan and Ridge, 2001; Griffin *et al.*, 2009; Killingsworth, 2006). These exceptions focus on majority women (in terms of ethnic background and sexual orientation), whereas this article explores the construction of narratives about alcohol and intoxication among a group of minority women, namely, young Muslim women.

Drinking stories can be seen as narrative representations of certain drinking behaviors, and these behaviors become meaningful through the telling of drinking stories. As such, drinking stories have been shown as a constitutive force in the construction of social reality (Workman, 2001), as scripts for behavior, for instance, teaching boys how to be men (Vaynman *et al.*, 2020), and more generally, as a phenomenon that validates or facilitates (sometimes problematic) behavior (Fleetwood, 2014). Drinking stories can also be a way to work on trauma and investigate taboos (Tutenges and Rod, 2009; Vaynman *et al.*, 2020).

Drinking stories, like other narrative genres, tend to have some regularities. Sandberg *et al.* (2019) show how certain themes are recurrent, for instance, stories about clumsiness, accidents, vomit, urine, nudity, sex, lawbreaking and pranks. Transgressions, thus, are central in the storytelling process, providing them with a characteristic feature: They are meant to entertain. The ability to entertain through the telling of drinking stories is an important theme in the literature on young people and drinking, not only in Denmark but also elsewhere (Lojdová, 2020; Fjær, 2012; Pyörälä, 1995; Sheehan and Ridge, 2001; Workman, 2001). As Workman (2001) argued in a study among a fraternity of college students in the USA, some stories promoted drunkenness or drunken performances as a form of entertainment, where "the audience played a crucial role by celebrating comic drunken action" (Workman, 2001, p. 433). Similarly, Tutenges and Rod (2009) explored the role of laughter among young people telling drinking stories, where the narrators "do not try to conceal their own mishaps; they put them out in the open so that everybody can have a good laugh" (Tutenges and Rod, 2009, p. 361). Laughter, they argue, is deeply social and ambivalent in the sense that you never know whether people laugh *at* you or *with* you – or in a combination.

In addition, drinking stories have been described as a way to cope with events and to process what has happened. For instance, telling stories the day after a party can support the transformation of negative emotions into positive ones (Fjær, 2012). Similarly, young women who participate in risky drunken events causing harm or negative experiences tend to filter the events "through the 'good story'" (Sheehan and Ridge, 2001, p. 347). Jensen and Hunt (2020) explore this further through their concept of "the sociality of consent", arguing that friends can help prevent sexual regret by being the audience of drinking stories about sexual encounters. However, they also found that friends might encourage a more humorous (entertaining) approach to stories, which may hide issues of sexual consent.

Telling stories is thus a predicament of social life; it is existential and a vital human strategy. To put back together events through telling a story "is to no longer live those events in passivity, but to actively rework them, both in dialogue with others and within one's own imagination" (Jackson, 2002, pp. 14–15). When events are told and re-told, they are evaluated by the storyteller and the audience alike (Tutenges and Rod, 2009). However, even though social life in this way can be organized and given meaning through the telling

of stories, "not all of social life is incorporated into personal narratives" (Fleetwood, 2014, p. 351). It is important to remain attentive towards what is absent and silenced in drinking stories. Fleetwood emphasizes this in her contribution to a broader feminist response to Tutenges and Sandberg's (2013) article about drinking stories among Danish youth at a beach resort in Bulgaria. Several researchers took notice of the gendered silences in the authors' work, where some respondents' obvious sexism and aggressive masculinity in the drinking stories were left without comments. Fleetwood argues that gendered silences and absences are part of the discourse of drinking stories, and, therefore, it is important to pay attention to the process by which the narratives are constructed. She exemplifies with an ethnographic description of an unpleasant encounter at a bar. "This is not a 'drinking story'", she says, "something happened at the bar, but it failed to become a story at the time" (Fleetwood, 2014, p. 351). It failed as a drinking story because, among other things, it was the "wrong kind of unpleasant" and because she had "little investment in narrating victimhood" (Fleetwood, 2014). Generally, young women's drinking is often more contested (compared to young men's), and they are fully aware of this. Consequently, young women might have more difficulties articulating their experiences with alcohol and intoxication "outside of their drinking group" (Sheehan and Ridge, 2001). What is deemed story-worthy is not the same for everyone but is dependent on gendered, ethnic and religious inequalities, which means that some experiences are only story-worthy from certain points of view. Therefore, the audience plays a crucial role in shaping and producing an emergent story. The storyteller is bound by the necessity of creating a self that might be "tellable" and legitimate within a given context (Cullen, 2011, p. 131).

This analysis aims to contribute to the literature on drinking stories and the position of alcohol in young people's lives by leaning on these understandings of drinking stories and their limits. I argue that to (successfully) share a drinking story, you must share values or speak from a social position similar to that of your audience. As such, the audience is important to how a drinking story is narrated, and a certain audience affects what is told and what is left out (silenced). Young Muslim women in Denmark speak from a dissimilar social position to the majority of Danish youth. Therefore, the basis for alternative drinking narratives is in place, yet so is the enhanced possibility of things being left out. The analysis approaches narratives openly. As such, coherency or specific elements are not required to be present in the stories for them to "count" as narratives. Instead, what is possible to narrate to different audiences is foregrounded, coherent or not.

Recent research on Muslim women and youth drinking culture in Denmark has demonstrated that they face several dilemmas because they belong to a normalized youth drinking culture and a community where abstinence is mostly cherished (Bærndt and Kolind, 2021; Bærndt and Frank, 2022). They are navigating contrasting expectations and facing challenges within their friends' and peers' arena and at family and community levels. For instance, they work actively to avoid negative stereotypes of Muslims in youth drinking contexts by toning down being a Muslim. Furthermore, despite what many describe as having an identity crisis caused by their surroundings' failure to acknowledge how their Muslim and Danish identities coexist, many do find ways to reconcile these identities (Bærndt and Kolind, 2021; Bærndt and Frank, 2022). However, the drinking culture still seems to be excluding for young Muslim women, regardless of whether they drink alcohol. Furthermore, the drinking culture can actualize gendered social control within the young women's families, and thus, the potential for conflicts at both friends and family levels is increased (Bærndt and Kolind, 2021).

This article explores the construction of drinking stories among young Muslim women in Denmark. Finding analytical inspiration from Jackson (2002) and his conceptualization of storytelling, the emphasis is shifted from the product (the drinking stories) to the process (of telling the stories), with the aim of capturing some of the possible silences and absences that are at stake in the stories.

Methods and data

This analysis is based on interview data and field notes from my PhD study, *Young Muslim women and the Danish youth alcohol culture*. The interviews are qualitative, in-depth and semi-structured, featuring 32 young Muslim women aged 16–34 (average age 23 years). They were conducted in 2016–2017 and lasted one to two and a half hours. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and before the analysis, all names were anonymized. After the interview, all participants received a gift card in appreciation of their participation. Furthermore, I made one to two pages of field notes after each interview, where I added information about the atmosphere, my connection with the participant and other things that would not be captured in the recording. These field notes were included in the later coding process. The project has been explorative, and this has led me to follow the lead of the participants. Therefore, when they suggested bringing a friend to the interview, I would agree and see where that would take the project (Groenewald, 2004). Five interviews are thus group interviews with two or more participants.

I recruited the participants through notices on intranet channels at various educational institutions, posting in specific girls' forums on social media and personal networking. The participants were to fulfil two inclusion criteria to participate in the project: "have experiences with alcohol and/or parties" and "have a Muslim background". Knowing that alcohol can be a sensitive issue, I decided that this way of recruiting, where the participants would contact me and not the other way around, would avoid some ethical dilemmas (Jensen, 2012). I followed the young women's requests for privacy and conducted the interviews where they saw it best – for instance, at the office, in cafés or in libraries. Several participants were discrete about their views on alcohol when among their peers, but in the interview situation, they enthusiastically voiced their experiences. They found the project's focus on Muslim women important. Being an ethnic majority woman myself meant that I was conceived of as an outsider to some participants, which may have influenced the results. For instance, there is a chance that certain themes and stories were left out or "silenced" because of the majority audience I represented. For other participants, my position may instead have provided them with a neutral audience, which generated stories that would have been invisible in other contexts (Jensen, 2012). However, the atmosphere in the majority of the interviews was very relaxed, and the participants were talkative. My interpretation was that the things we had in common, such as our level of education and being young women, took the foreground in this situation. Furthermore, the participants were experienced with connecting with different audiences, as evidenced in the results.

The young women came mostly from larger cities and their surrounding areas. The women were all well-educated; about half of them were studying or had studied at a university, and the other half were studying or had studied for a professional bachelor's degree. Among the participants were children and grandchildren of guest workers who arrived in Denmark in the late 1960s due to a labor shortage (primarily from Turkey, Pakistan and the former Yugoslavia). The participants also included children of refugees and a few who had themselves come to Denmark as refugees. In total, 22 of the 32 young women were born in Denmark, while the rest had arrived while they were small kids. They had 13 different ethnic backgrounds, roughly corresponding to the largest ethnic groups among Muslims in Denmark (Jacobsen, 2022). Eight women wore a Muslim headscarf, and another three used to wear a headscarf when they were younger but had since chosen to take it off. A total of 17 participants were regularly intoxicated at parties, while another 3 had tried out alcohol on one or more occasions. The last 12 women had never consumed alcohol but still participated or used to participate in parties where other people were intoxicated. A few had experienced feeling physically uncomfortable being near alcohol and drunken people.

All interviews and field notes were transcribed and coded in the text analysis software Nvivo 11 as part of a thematic analysis, where the themes evolved from the data. This approach was appropriately flexible and made it possible to attend closely to the various contexts,

which was important for the development of the analysis in this paper. As a first step, the interviews were organized into larger key themes (main codes). Thereafter, these were reread and organized into subthemes (subcodes). Key themes included, for instance, intoxication, identity and belonging. Drinking stories became a subtheme in the coding process, and this article is the product of this particular thematic. The Danish Data Protection Agency and the Graduate School of Social Science, Aarhus University, have approved the project.

Results

The following analysis focuses on *how* young Muslim women tell stories about drinking and partying. How the stories are told, more than the stories themselves is explored. Furthermore, the significance of the feedback and responses the storytellers receive is discussed because this again affects how the stories are told and whether or not they will be told in the future.

The analysis investigates what happens to drinking stories when told by someone with a double audience. A double audience here refers to the predicament of young Muslim women who are navigating between two worlds in various ways and to different degrees. Namely, their youth lives (where alcohol is a central feature) and their family lives (where abstinence for many is a central Muslim value). Hence, the young women embody two positions often constructed as mutually exclusive (Danish and Muslim). They are constantly aware of their double audience and know that their stories cannot be told the same way to all. Consequently, the analysis pays particular attention to the process by which the narratives are constructed.

Muslim minority experiences: "we ended up in the parking lot, and then we kiss"

The stories in this section have a broad sense of audience. They have been shared several times before and resemble classical drinking stories: They are entertaining and transgressive, and some even center on a classical theme of sex. However, certain characteristics of the stories and the storytelling make these stories stand out as part of specific Muslim minority experiences. These young women generally have more laidback families, with parents and extended families being less strict about parties and alcohol (as well as, e.g. ways to dress, staying out late and hanging out with boys).

In the following, we have Naida (34 years old, Bosnian background, social work student), who describes a fun and eventful night out with her friends:

> Once I was kidnapped (laughing)! In Copenhagen from a discotheque [...]. There were ten foreign guys, and they thought that my friends and I were really gorgeous. When the discotheque closed, they just did not understand that we did not want to keep going. They took a woman each and carried her on their shoulders into a car and then they drove off. (I: No?). Yeah, it was just a situation where "wow, I am suddenly at a private party with ten guys, what are we doing here?" (laughing). They just took us. They do not understand a no.

The atmosphere was cheerful and relaxed during the interview with Naida. She was sitting on the table in her small kitchen, smoking cigarettes and telling stories about herself and growing up in Denmark with her parents and her extended family still in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Naida is proud of both her ethnic background and her childhood in a deprived neighborhood, where troubles regarding crime and drugs were prevalent. She presents herself as tough and successful to the interviewer. The story is entertaining and transgressive in a way where the interviewer has to ask if she was afraid in the situation, to know whether to laugh or be outraged on Naida's behalf. Naida replies:

> No, they were nice guys! That is not it. They just don't accept a woman's no [...]. It was all good fun (laughing) [...]. I think I grew up with all these things so there is not really anything that frightens me.

Naida depicts a situation where she and her friends are not in control. Instead, "ten foreign guys" decide to take charge of the situation, and they "do not understand a no." Being powerless like this, or otherwise "being arrested, stuck immobilized or trapped in a situation" is often what characterizes tragedy (Jackson, 2002, p. 182). Somehow, Naida makes the listener understand that she could get out of the situation if she wanted to. It avoids becoming a tragic story because of how Naida successfully presents herself as tough and familiar with handling "foreign guys." To tell this story is a way for Naida to entertain and present to the interviewer (and herself) who she is. Finally, how the story deals with a specific "minority problem, namely "foreign guys" who "do not understand a no," sets it apart from the usually more colorblind majority stories. Ethnic minority men in Denmark are often constructed as "sexually dangerous" (Jensen, 2011, p. 67) and having a "dangerously high libido" (Andreassen, 2005, p. 215). In contrast, Naida is able to construct these young men as less dangerous or threatening because of how she easily navigates in their presence.

The following story is told in a group interview with four close friends who party and smoke cigarettes together. In the group, Awira (21 years old, Kurdish background, Industrial medicine student) is the one who is most experienced with being intoxicated:

> My friend and I went to a party (laughing). I had not eaten all day, so of course, I was all gone [very drunk]. This is where I thought: "Okay, it might get dangerous, this thing about not having sex". I remember I had a lot to drink, and I was outside vomiting down on all fours. Then somehow, I was out walking with a guy from the party [. . .]. At some point, we ended up in the parking lot, and then we kiss, and I was thinking, "wow, if I do not stop now, we won't stop." Then I remembered: "Oh, his girlfriend is at the party," So we stopped. That is the first time I felt the limit.

This narrative is told in an interview setting that was cozy, loud (five people present), and private, both in the sense of taking place in two of the interviewees' shared flat and in the sense that the four young women shared many details from their lives. Awira is known among her girlfriends as someone who goes to parties and drinks alcohol. She also claims some coolness from her ability to drink and be intoxicated as her friends recognize Awira's willingness to put herself at risk. Within this friend group, she is also the one who has less at stake in terms of being caught or seen drinking. Her family (her mother) knows about partying and drinking. The "only" thing she has been asked to be mindful of is her virginity. Not having sex before marriage is important to both Awira's family and her friend group. If she did have sex at a party, this group of friends would most likely not be the audience where that story was possible to tell. This story is an example of a story that works with several audiences. The guy's girlfriend's presence at the party makes the possibility of sex a no-go for both majority and minority youth. Like Naida's story, the narrative centers on the specific qualities of ethnic minority experiences. For Naida, it was the ability to deal with transgressive ethnic minority men, and for Awira, it was the importance of keeping her virginity.

Lastly, we have Samira (26 years old, Afghan background, social/health-care work student). This interview took place at a coffee bar with Samira and her younger sister (18 years old). The pair were very outgoing, talking loudly and not shy to talk about more private or sensitive subjects. Samira explains how she was living out her wild side through partying:

> I have always been like a wild person, like, I know how to roll a joint. When I started drinking alcohol, I was just even more so [wild] and that is how it started. I remember how mom has been standing there calling while I just left because I needed to go to a party: "Please don't go" (laughing and cannot finish her sentence because of laughing).

Telling a story about being "wild" and able "to roll a joint" is meant for an audience who understands Samira and will not sanction or marginalize her because of it, for instance, her ethnic majority friends and peers. As such, she positions herself as part of the youth culture

where drinking and partying are both valued and unavoidable. She "needs" to go to a party and finds it amusing when her mother begs her not to go. She asserts to the audience, the interviewer, that she is not passive towards her parents' decisions. Thus, it plays into the widespread assumption that young Muslim women are not "allowed" to drink. Here, she takes control of her own life, and regardless of her mother's request, she actively decides to party. The story implies that it is important to her to demonstrate that she is not just a subject being acted upon, but she is in control.

Nevertheless, the story also becomes a story of transgression exactly because of the interaction between Samira and her mother. Other young Muslim women would find it deeply inappropriate or harmful to disobey their parents, and the interviewer knows this, which is why the story seems surprisingly transgressive, despite the sisters' laughing.

The narratives in this section deal with events and issues that arise in the context of parties and intoxication, but in terms of being drinking stories, it would seem that they never quite get there. The stories are disrupted exactly because the storytellers need to have a double audience in mind. They deal with Muslim minority experiences, but the disruptiveness points towards the difficulty of the stories being recognized as such because majority young people speak from a less divided perspective.

The wrong kind of unpleasant: "I knew I was in deep trouble"

The stories in this section are not for everyone to hear. For these women, having a double audience had more severe consequences. The norms of one audience were incompatible with the norms of the other, and these women were even familiar with sanctions from their families if they overstepped boundaries. The following stories are entertaining but are dramatically interrupted at some point.

Asra (29 years old, Palestinian background, medical student) values parties and intoxication but keeps this part of her life hidden from her family, who would find it deeply inappropriate and sanction her accordingly. Asra was well into her twenties the first time she drank alcohol, which is in contrast to the age of initiation in Denmark, which is about 15 years old (Järvinen and Østergaard, 2009). The interview was conducted at a lunch café, and Asra was very outgoing, talkative and happily sharing her experiences. In the following, she tells the story of a big party at a shisha (water pipe) café three years ago, when alcohol was still relatively new for Asra:

> It is a really great party. We drink a little too much and I start dancing with my friends. The whole party is dancing and [my friends] lift me up [on a table]. I am wearing a long dress, but apparently, it has come up. It is not because it is [. . .] It is like a little above my knee, so it is not like [. . .]. You cannot see anything, but it is just short at the time, right? I am up there dancing, and then someone apparently takes my picture, sends it to my brother, and says: "Is that not your sister?" So that put a damper [on my wish to party]. It simply ruined too much.

The story conveys pleasure and fun turning into something unpleasant. Asra is enjoying herself and having fun with her friends, dancing and feeling intoxicated until someone taking a picture disrupts the whole situation. To understand Asra and the reasons why this "ruined too much," it is necessary to know the position from where Asra speaks. She comes from a family where drinking alcohol is unacceptable and where the virtue of young women is closely monitored, for instance, by one of her three brothers. Asra clearly understands the possible consequences of overstepping the boundaries in her family; she has a cousin who has been on a prolonged family visit in Lebanon and was married shortly in her teens (and divorced quickly, only because her ex-husband was violent). Taking a picture of Asra dancing on a table at a party is far from innocent, and ill intentions seem evident when the picture is sent to her brother with a text. This "put a damper" on her party spirit and made her feel afraid of what her family might do. They were quite angry, and she had to explain

herself. They only let her "off the hook" because they never realized that she had been drinking alcohol.

In addition, it is interesting to see how almost half of the above citation deals with the length of her dress. It seems important to her that the interviewer, as the story's audience, does not question her decency. Telling this story makes it possible for Asra to negotiate her conceptions of modesty and autonomy, which is particularly challenging for her as she navigates her family and youth life as two separate audiences. Finally, Asra has shared her story many times with her friends, who are ethnically mixed and drink and party themselves, indicating that they recognize Asra's situation. Her story is not for family members at all, and it is only for those ethnic majorities familiar with the constraints and social control that exist for some young Muslim women. For women such as Asra, it is particularly important to have a certain control over who the audience of a story might be.

Similarly, Casho (23 years old, from Somalia, public health student) has trouble navigating between her two audiences because their norms are very much conflicting. This interview occurred in the privacy of the interviewer's home, and Casho was nervous, timid and silent. It was necessary to restart the interview after a short break where the interviewer focused on creating trust, small talking and making tea. After a while, the conversation flowed more easily, and Casho then shared a story she had not shared with anyone before, about a party in upper secondary school, where Casho's twin brother found out she was participating and told their parents:

> I had like 24 calls from them during the party. I was so afraid of going home because I just knew that someone close to me had told them. I really thought I was going to die, and I went to the toilet, and I got really sick and felt like vomiting [. . .] I just started crying, and I could not tell it to anyone because no one had a Muslim background, and they would not understand. [. . .]. My family kept calling me on the phone, and then my [twin] brother texted me: "Come outside," [. . .] I just ran to the toilet and rearranged my scarf, and tried to remove my lipstick. I did not manage to do it because they just kept calling me, and I considered throwing my phone in the toilet because they just kept calling and calling. I knew I was in deep trouble.

Eventually, Casho just grabbed her things, quickly said goodbye to her friends and went outside, where her brother and father were waiting. The interviewer probes further into the story:

I: You felt like just running away?

Casho: Yes (nervous laughter)

I: How angry was your father?

Casho: Very. Not just a little; he was very, very angry.

I: Was he violent?

Casho: Yeah, like [. . .] Yeah.

This last part of the interview is included to get a sense of the cautiousness and seriousness with which Casho told the story. She was possibly working on the trauma while telling the story and clearly stated the problem of having a double audience in the citation. She could not tell anyone at the party because "they would not understand". The interviewer became the audience because she took up a hyphen position, where she would understand both ethnic majority and ethnic minority points of view. Furthermore, I will argue that it would seem that Casho was "ready" to tell her story when she actively decided to sign up for her participation in the project.

The narrative above is not a drinking story. It is "too serious" as well as "the wrong kind of unpleasant", as Fleetwood (2014, p. 351) argues, and therefore it does not fit with the

drinking story genre. The self that Casho means to convey in the story has not been "tellable" (Cullen, 2011, p. 131) before, and Casho has most likely been alone with her experience up until this moment. Through telling the story for the first time, she "no longer lives those events in passivity" but is now actively reworking them (Jackson, 2002, pp. 14–15). I suggest that Casho's storytelling was part of a course of events where she made it possible for herself to process and come to terms with the events. Her present situation is that she has left her family and is now living at a secret address, with the hope of future reconciliation.

Most people do not have any "investment in narrating victimhood" (Fleetwood, 2014, p. 351), which means that events that victimize and transgress are more difficult to transform into a story-worthy tale. I will suggest that young women, such as Asra and Casho, may have even more difficulties because they are very much aware that young Muslim women are constructed as helpless victims all of the time, and they risk reinforcing this stereotype. Not only is it difficult to accommodate different audiences, but for some of these young women, their narratives also become a possible source for others to marginalize and suppress them.

Transformation to a sober narrative: "it just smelled so awful"

This section focuses on young women who are abstinent. Firstly, we have Samaneh (20 years old, Afghan background, social work student). The interview flowed easily, and Samaneh found it important to share her stories. She had experienced a few parties with peers who had been intoxicated, including the following example, where they were celebrating high school graduation: "There was nothing funny about this party. Not anything that I liked. It was just like a giant sports hall with loud music. Students who vomited and alcohol that was just everywhere".

Samaneh's negative sentiments were conveyed in the tone of her voice while she was telling the story. The music was too loud, the students too drunk, and the students getting sick underlined how the party felt overwhelming and icky. Samaneh distanced herself clearly from her intoxicated peers. She continued, telling the story with tempo and ease that suggested she had shared the story before:

> Well, I was there for the first two hours, and we were just sitting down and eating. Then they all got drunk, and that is when someone spilt alcohol [on me], a whole bottle. I got it on my clothes, and it just smelled so awful. I went to the restrooms to wash it off, and I totally panicked and just thought: "Oh no, what if I get home and my mother can smell it, and then all the other clothes get the smell onto them because it will be washed in the washing machine". Like I got these weird thoughts. I walked home crying.

Samaneh's experience was not funny and was not transformed into something harmless or amusing through storytelling. Instead, it was a story that was the "wrong kind of unpleasant" (Fleetwood, 2014, p. 351). The story might not be a drinking story as such, but it is a narrative about alcohol and partying. It conveys information about the values and agency Samaneh attributes to alcohol and about her identity. Samaneh's experience of the party, from her sober minority position, is that it is unusual and transgressive. She turns the events into a story to come to terms with her experiences. The main disruptive force in the story is alcohol, and thus, it seems that agency in the story is positioned outside of Samaneh. She is the one being acted upon (Jackson, 2002), and she has no control, even to the extent that she has no control over her thoughts, which got "really weird". There is a sense in the story that Samaneh is afraid she might become complicit in the wrongness of drinking alcohol because the alcohol might taint other clothes.

Through storytelling, Samaneh transforms her participation in the party into something that actively contributes to her identity as a non-drinker. The story explains, particularly to an audience of others with Muslim backgrounds, why she prefers to keep her distance from

alcohol and intoxicated people. Furthermore, the story affirms her being Muslim and virtuous (adhering to the call for abstinence in the Koran).

Similarly, Abir (21 years old, Palestinian background, medical student) explains how it is unpleasant to be near people who are intoxicated: "It is really uncomfortable. You never really know, what they might do, when they are drunk. It is very unpredictable, and [I just feel like] I would like to get out of there." Abir continues with a story about her and one of her Danish friends. They were sitting on a bus on their way home from work when a drunk man approached them and started conversing. Abir feels threatened because he is drunk, and it is evening, while her friend finds the situation amusing. Once more, agency is placed outside of the narrator and inside the alcohol or the person drinking alcohol. This makes both Samaneh and Abir feel unsafe, vulnerable and in unknown territory.

These last two stories are examples of two young women who do not share norms on alcohol and parties with the majority, nor with the women in the previous sections. They find alcohol and intoxication repulsive. The repulsiveness becomes a vehicle for telling a sober narrative that backs up their identity as sober Muslim women. These stories are appropriate to tell a Muslim audience, whereas their ethnic majority peers will probably hear this story as weird and sensitive. This exposes the dominance of a youth culture of intoxication, where alternative (counter) stories of abstinence seem out of place. When ethnic majority youth are the intended audience, there is less room for telling abstinent stories. Therefore, these young women negate what a drinking story is and transform theirs into sober narratives that confirm their identity. Drawing a parallel to Killingsworth's (2006) study of drinking stories among mothers in a playgroup, where he found that the women used drinking stories of their former selves as a way to portray autonomy as well as respectable, abstaining norms around alcohol use. Similarly, these last stories seem to portray, through their transformation to sober narratives, respectable abstaining young Muslim women. Tutenges and Sandberg (2013) found that drinking alcohol might generate drinking stories, but the telling of drinking stories can also motivate the use of alcohol. Similarly, storytelling can motivate abstinence.

Conclusion

This article has explored the existence of drinking stories among young Muslim women in Denmark. Rather than a focus on the stories themselves, the analysis has found inspiration in Jackson's (2002) concept of storytelling, turning attention towards the process by which the narratives were constructed. This included the important and defining role different audiences have because one aim was to investigate the implications of having a *double audience* for the construction of narratives about alcohol and intoxication. A double audience refers to the predicament of the participants, who embody two worlds that are often constructed as mutually exclusive: their Muslim and Danish identities. For instance, Muslims are associated with abstinence, while Danish youth are associated with heavy drinking.

The analysis showed how different audiences shaped the drinking narratives and how the audiences made certain stories possible and other stories impossible. This caused the participants' narratives to be qualitatively different from majority narratives because they represented distinct Muslim minority experiences, also when the audience was primarily ethnic majority Danes. Furthermore, the narratives were disrupted in various ways and had difficulties taking the form of a drinking story, as they are usually described in the literature. Consider, for example, when the disruptions were more serious and the "wrong kind of unpleasant" compared with ethnic majority drinking stories. The seriousness of the stories also meant that the young women sometimes found themselves in the role of a victim, a role they had no interest in taking. Rather than storytelling victimhood, many events never turned into stories, or the stories told contained significant absences or silences. Lastly, the article pointed to the construction of subverted drinking narratives. For some of the young women, there was no wriggle room, and rather than being part of stories of intoxication, their stories

transformed into sober narratives contributing to upholding respectable norms around alcohol in relation to their selves.

The participants were conscious of their double audience, and their storytelling was often a continuous balancing act where they directed the right details to the proper audience. For instance, as a tangible example, one participant had two calendars and two phones to control which narratives (some about alcohol, but not all) were presented for which audiences. Tutenges and Sandberg (2013) argue that listeners of a drinking story do not need all the details of events to understand what is being said because "listeners are familiar with similar stories". However, this argument does not apply to everyone indiscriminately. The stories shared by the women here were not for everyone to hear, and any listener would not be able to understand what was being said, let alone provide meaningful judgements or emotional feedback. Storytellers and listeners must have some level of shared references or recognizability for the stories to be heard and exist as a drinking story's social phenomena. To bond over the telling of drinking stories is also a way to celebrate one's sameness with others in a group. "Story-worthy" events hold different consequences for different people, and inequalities stemming from, for instance, gender or religious background influence which drinking stories actually come to life (Cullen, 2011).

The focus on alcohol and intoxication among Muslim minority youth in a white-majority country is absent in the literature. These young women's narratives are thus overlooked in the literature on drinking stories. Possibly because of the association of Muslims with abstinence and because the drinking story literature has a narrower focus on young majority men's experiences. Suppose we expand the cast of characters by including more women in general but also more gender-diverse, ethnic and religious minorities. In that case, we may discover more complexity in drinking stories and add desired nuance, for instance, by showing how some events never turn into (drinking) stories because of, for example, gendered and/or religious inequalities.

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Appendixes

Interview guide

Declaration of anonymity

Co-author statements

Interview guide

Translated from Danish by the author. It reflects the overall questions that were largely covered in all interviews, as well as the information that was shared before commencing on the actual conversation/interview. I never asked all questions. I wrote the guide with many questions to choose from in order to cover the various subjects and avoid getting stuck or lose my thread.

Introduction to the project

This project is about young Danish women with Muslim backgrounds and how they participate in parties and how they relate to alcohol. I am interested in both gender and ethnicity, which is why I have questions that go beyond participation in parties, but also deals with your background, your family and your everyday life. Generally, I am very curious and I would like to learn something about you and about how the world looks from your perspective – and I am very grateful that you wanted to participate.

Practicalities

I am going to use the interview for my PhD project, which is a three years long research project, which results in a larger dissertation, including academic journal articles. The interview might be used in these things. I would like to emphasize that everything you say is confidential and I will provide you with a pseudonym, so that your name is not part of any publications. I would like to record our conversation if that is all right with you? Remember, you may always retract you participation and let me know if there are things you do not wish to talk about or questions you do not like to answer.

1. Intro: Present life, friends and interests

Okay, let us start slowly so I can get to know you a bit. Maybe you will begin by telling me your name and your age? And then something about where you live and what you do?

Background

- Where did you go to school?
- What do you do now? School, work? How do you like it?
- What does a typical day look for you?
- How about your free time, what do you do then?
- Do you play any sports? Or take lessons in something?
- Do you volunteer? Are you a member of any organizations?
- How about other hobbies – is there anything that you enjoy doing? Anything you are enthusiastic about?

- What do you see yourself doing in the future?
- Where do you live? Who lives with you?
- What is the ethnic background of your parent? Where were you born?
- What do your parents do for a living? What kind of educations do they have?
- How old are your parents? Where and how did they grow up?
- Do you have siblings? How old are they? What do they do? Are you close?
- How much family do you have in Denmark? And elsewhere? Are you close?
- What do you like to do with your family?

Friends

I would also like to know something about your friends and what you do together with your friends. Perhaps you can also tell me something about how you understand the differences between your friends and your family.

- In which different contexts have you found your friends? From where do you know them?
- If you think about those friends you are really close with. How many do you have?
- How do you like spending time with your friends?
- If you look back at the last time you hung out with a friend, what did you do? It would be nice with a lot of details from beginning to end.
- Where do you typically go with your friends? Do you go to the city center sometimes?
- Are you friends with both girls and boys? Is there any difference? In what you talk about or what you do?
- Do you use different friends for different things? Any problems that are particularly good to discuss with your friends?
- Do you gossip? What is fun to gossip about?
- How about girls nights? What do you do? Clothes? Make-up? Headscarf?
- Do you have someone who is particularly important for you? In what ways is the person important?

Relationships and love

The next questions are about being in relationships and about love life. I am interested in the various perspectives all participants have in their thoughts about being in a relationship, dating and marriage.

- Are you in a romantic relationship? Have you been before?
- How did you meet them?
- Do you like the idea of having a partner?
- How do you find a partner?
- What is dating for you?
- Do you think about love?

- How do you imagine your love life in the future? Would you like to become married? Why?/Why not?
- What are your thoughts on sex before marriage?

2. Alcohol and parties

The next questions are about where you are in life and about the role of alcohol and parties. So if we begin with lower secondary school and continue through your study life and your present life?

School, study or work contexts

- What was it like going to school? Did you like it? What did you like the best? What were you best at? Any particular subjects?
- Was there a feeling of solidarity or community in your class? Where there any groupings?
- What was the overall ethnic composition in your school? What do you think this meant for your experiences?
- What kind of activities did you do with your classmates? In the recess or outside school?
- Are there any parties at your school? Do you attend the parties? What are they like?
- Do people drink alcohol at those parties? Is anyone drunk? What are they like?
- Can you describe the last party for me? As many details as possible? Where did you meet up? Who was present? When did you meet?
- What do you think about the parties? Are they fun? Why? Why not?
- Is anything changed/moved at school when there is a party? Is there a bar?
- How about a dancefloor? Do people dance? Do you dance? Who do you dance with?
- Do people flirt at these parties? Do you flirt? How do you flirt?
- When there has been a party, is it something that people talk about? Before? The week after? Do people tell drinking stories? Do you have a nice drinking story? Or an awkward story? Or something gossipy about a party? Who talks about the parties?

Alcohol and parties

Alright, now we have talked about a lot of different things but are also closing in on stuff about parties and alcoholo. I would like to go even more into that, so here are some more questions:

- Have you tried drinking alcohol? Why? Why not?
- Can you describe for me the contexts of your drinking?
- Have you been around other people or friends while they where drinking alcohol?
- How old were you the first time you tried drinking alcohol?
- How old where you the first time you where present while other's drank alcohol?
- How did you like it? What did it do to you? What did it do to them?
- What do you like about the drinking of alcohol? What do you dislike?

- Can you tell me, in more details, about the last time you were drinking? What was the occasion? How did the evening proceed?
- Are there some contexts where you prefer to drink alcohol? Are there some contexts where you rather not drink alcohol?
- How about your parents, do they drink alcohol?
- How do your parents feel about you going to parties and drinking alcohol? How about you siblings?
- Do you have friends who drink? What do you think they are like when they drink alcohol?
- More generally, what happens to people when they drink alcohol? How do you feel about intoxications? Yours and others'?
- If I say that immigrants and particularly Muslims do not drink alcohol, what do you say? Is it something you have given any thought previously?
- Do you think that there are differences in the way that ethnic Danish young people and ethnic minority young people alcohol?
- Do you see any positive effects of drinking? Is there anything you become better at when you drink alcohol?
- How about negative effects about drinking? Anything you become worse at?
- Do you sometimes hang out with friends or school friends or colleagues who drink?
- What is it like for you to be around when people drink alcohol?
- If you do not drink, do you get any questions about that?
- Can you feel pressured to drink alcohol? In what situations do you feel pressured? How do you feel about that?
- In your experience, is there any differences in terms of what happens to girls when they drink and what happens to boys when they drink? What do you think about that?
- Most young people drink a lot of alcohol in many different occasions. What do you think about that? Have you given that any thought? For instance, in terms of community or solidarity, can it be a good thing? For instance in a school or study context?

Going out

- Do you sometimes go out? Go clubbing? Do you like going out? Where do you go to when you go out?
- What usually happens on a night out? Can you describe a usual night out for me? With all the details?
- Who do you go out with? Do they drink alcohol? Do they use any other drugs? Do you?
- Do you like to dance when you go out?
- Is anyone keeping an eye on you when you go out? Does anyone look out for you? For instance, do you make arrangements with your friends about seeing each other home?
- How about gossip? Do you and your friends gossip about other people who are going out? Have you ever experienced that someone else was gossiping about you? How do you feel about gossiping?
- Do you have a nice story about going out? Something fun that happened on a night out?

Family parties

- Do you throw family parties in your family? What are they like? Can you give me an example of a typical family party?
- Can you describe for me, with as many details as you like, the last family party you attended? Where was it held? How many guests? How long did it last? Who did you mostly spend your time with?
- What kind of clothing do you feel most comfortable wearing at such a family party? Would it be ok to wear a low-necked dress?
- Do you like family parties?
- Does anyone drink alcohol at these parties? Why not?
- Is there dancing? Who dances? Who do they dance with? Do you dance?
- Is it possible to flirt at a family party?
- Do people gossip after a family party?

3. Concluding: Background and upbringing

Religious identity and parents

- Can you describe your background for me? Where do you or your parents come from?
- What does having that background mean to you?
- Do you feel Danish? Do you feel (ethnic minority background)? Do you feel Muslim?
- What major differences, in your experience, do you think there is between being young ethnic Danish majority and young ethnic minority?
- Is there something that is less possible for you because of your background?
- Have you experienced racism? What thoughts have you given those experiences? How where you made to feel?
- Would you describe yourself as religious? As a believer? What is your relationship to your Muslim background?
- What does the Muslim headscarf mean to you? Why do you/do you not wear it?
- Do you pray? When did you start praying? How do you begin, is there something that you need to learn? For instance, certain citations or certain moves? How do you feel when you pray?
- Are you close with your parents? What do you think was important for them when raising you and your siblings?
- Do you discuss the rules of your home with your parents? How do you like the rules?
- What kind of rules do your parents have about alcohol and parties? How do they feel about you participating in parties?
- Do your parents know or talk to the parents of your friends? Are they aligned in their view on parties and alcohol?

Future

- How do you see your life in five years?
- Do you know if your parents have certain expectations to you in that regard?
- Have you thought about whether you would wish do get married? How about having children?

- Have you thought about the upbringing of your kids? What would you do differently from your own upbringing? What would you like to do in the same way as your parents? What is a good upbringing?
- What kind of partner would you like? What kind of values are important in a partner?
- Is it possible to find a partner at a party?
- How did your parents find each other?
- I think I have been through most of my questions. Is there something you would like to ask me? Is there anything that you thought I would ask about but I did not? Did my questions make you think about something in particular?

Thank you! Repeat information about pseudonyms and the possibility to withdraw their interview.

Declaration of anonymity

21. december 2017

Til

I forbindelse med din deltagelse i forskningsprojektet "Unge dansk-muslimske kvinder og unges fest og- alkoholkultur", modtager du hermed en erklæring om at din anonymitet i projektet vil blive opretholdt.

Med venlig hilsen

Marie Fjellerup Bærndt
PhD. Studerende og dataansvarlig.

CENTRE FOR ALCOHOL AND DRUG RESEARCH
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
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Summary

Dilemmas of Youth Drinking: Young Muslim women's experiences within the Danish youth alcohol culture

In this dissertation, I explore young Muslim women's experiences within the Danish youth alcohol culture. More specifically, I focus on the ways in which they navigate the alcohol culture, what strategies they make use of, and how these strategies are informed by identity-related social positions such as gender, age, and ethno-religious background. I pursue these subjects in different ways in the three publications that form the backbone of this dissertation. The three publications have been written with an ambition to be explorative, to be guided by the data (let the young women's own experiences suggest the agenda), and to contribute with knowledge that fits a clear gap in the literature. The three publications investigate experiences of exclusion (publication 1), dilemmas of belonging (publication 2), and the formation of drinking stories (publication 3), respectively. All of this was brought about within the context of a youth drinking culture and from the perspective of young Muslim women. Through a focus on a group of young people, who are largely missing in alcohol research, my hope is to accentuate the differences between young people, their alcohol practices, and their experiences in order to contribute with results that underscore the importance of social positions and the inequalities that may be an inherent part of these. In the first section of the dissertation (Introduction), I introduce some of the themes in the data that I have wrestled with in the course of the dissertation. For instance, there is an undertone of seriousness in the accounts of the young women and even of possible sanctions or consequences for those who participate in parties and alcohol drinking. Furthermore, the young women pointed toward the way that alcohol and partying inhabit contradictions for them: They navigate troubled waters of inclusion and exclusion, belonging and un-belonging, storytelling, and disruptions. In this section, I also point out how I have approached young Muslim women, not as a religious group, but rather as young people whom it makes sense to study because they share the predicament of being categorized (and stigmatized) together. In the second section (Contextualizing the dissertation), I focus on the existing research and the current developments in qualitative alcohol research concerned with young people that have paved the way for my dissertation. For instance, the literature on young people and the different ways of doing identities, socializing, and creating and maintaining social bonds through the drinking of alcohol. In the second part of this section, I provide a context for how to understand the broader predicament of the young women who participated in the project. I account for the history and the position of young ethnic minorities in Denmark and the particularities of being young, Muslim, and female, and I connect with the sparse literature that investigates young ethnic minorities within majority drinking cultures. In the third section (Theoretical framework), I demonstrate how all three publications draw on a larger theoretical way of thinking that draws on phenomenology and feminism, particularly the phenomenological ambition of getting close to the experiences of research participants and the feminist orientation toward contextualized structures of power and inequality. I demonstrate how I aim to contribute to research, where different perspectives are addressed, and where knowledge production is endorsed with strength, exactly because it is situated and partial. I finally show how the theoretical tools in the publications were carefully selected to display in-depth insights into the experiences of young Muslim women from a feminist phenomenology angle. In the fourth section (Methodology and data), I present the concrete elements of the study, and I describe my research process. The dissertation is based on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 32 young Muslim women between the ages of 16 and 34 years old (average age was 23 years old), who all have (some) experience with parties and/or being intoxicated. In the fifth section (Conclusion: A change in emphasis), I sum up and present the shared contribution of the three publications and the dissertation overall. I emphasize that my explorative approach and feminist phenomenological framework did not call for unambiguous results. Instead, I understand my contribution to the field as a change in emphasis on our knowledge of youth drinking in Denmark. I exemplify this change in four particular ways: from social inclusion to social exclusion, from loss of control to high levels of self-control, from identity construction to identity crisis, and lastly, from heavy drinking to abstinence or moderation. The dissertation demonstrates various ways in which the participants view, act, and think about the youth alcohol culture and their position within it, and their position in society more broadly. It moves the emphasis away from the innocent and playful aspects of the youth alcohol culture and instead demonstrates how inequality is also reproduced in this context.

Resume

Unge drikkedilemmaer: Unge muslimske kvinders oplevelser i den danske ungdomsalkoholkultur.

I denne afhandling udforsker jeg unge muslimske kvinders oplevelser i den danske ungdomsalkoholkultur. Mere specifikt fokuserer jeg på deres måder at navigerer på i alkoholkulturen, hvilke strategier de gør brug af, og hvordan disse strategier er informerede af identitetsrelaterede sociale positioner såsom køn, alder og etnisk-religiøs baggrund. Jeg forfølger disse emner på forskellige måder i de tre publikationer, som danner afhandlingens rygrad. De tre publikationer er alle skrevet med en ambition om at være udforskende, lade data guide (lade de unge kvinders egne oplevelser styre agendaen) og om at bidrage med viden, der passer ned i et åbenlyst videnshul i litteraturen. De tre publikationer undersøger henholdsvis oplevelser med eksklusion (første publikation), tilhørsdilemmaer (anden publikation) og dannelsen af drukhistorier (tredje publikation), alt sammen inden for konteksten af en ungdomsdrikkekultur og fra unge muslimske kvinders perspektiv. Ved at fokusere på en gruppe af unge mennesker, som stort set mangler i alkoholforskningen, håber jeg at unge menneskers forskelligheder træder frem, f.eks. i deres alkoholpraksisser og i deres drikkeoplevelser. Således kan jeg bidrage med resultater, der understreger betydningen af sociale positioner samt de uligheder, der kan være en iboende del af dem. I første del af afhandlingen (introduktionen) introducerer jeg nogle af de temaer, jeg har arbejdet med i løbet af afhandlingen. For eksempel er der en undertone af alvor i de unge kvinders beretninger, samt en fornemmelse af at det muligvis har konsekvenser at deltage i fester og indtage alkohol. De unge kvinder pegede selv på at alkohol og fester var modsætningsfyldte for dem: De måtte navigere, nogle gange turbulent, mellem inklusion og eksklusion, tilhør og ikke-tilhør, fortællinger og afbrydelser. I denne del peger jeg også på, hvordan jeg har grebet de unge muslimske kvinder an, ikke som en religiøs gruppe, men snarere som en gruppe unge mennesker det giver mening at undersøge, fordi de deler den udfordring og livssituation det er at blive kategoriseret (og stigmatiseret) som unge muslimske kvinder. I anden del af afhandlingen (kontekstualisering) fokuserer jeg på den eksisterende forskning og på de landvindinger i kvalitativ alkohol forskning, der beskæftiger sig med unge mennesker, og som denne afhandling blandt andet bygger på. For eksempel ser jeg på den litteratur, der undersøger unge mennesker og deres forskellige måder at gøre identiteter på, socialisere og danne og vedligeholde sociale bånd på ved at drikke alkohol. Jeg beskriver desuden hvordan, man kan forstå den bredere samfundsmæssige kontekst, som de unge kvinder i projektet generelt navigerer indenfor. Jeg giver et oprids af historien om unge etniske minoriteter i Danmark samt deres position i samfundet, med et særligt fokus på det at være ung, kvinde og muslim. Jeg knytter det yderligere med den sparsomme litteratur, der undersøger unge etniske minoriteter i majoritetsdrikkekulturer. I tredje del (teori) demonstrerer jeg, hvordan alle tre publikationer trækker på en større teoretisk ramme, der knytter fænomenologi og feministisk teori. Særligt trækker jeg på den fænomenologiske ambition om at komme tæt på forskningsdeltageres oplevelser, samt den feministiske orientering mod ulighedsskabende magtstrukturer. Jeg viser, hvordan jeg ønsker at bidrage med forskning, der adresserer forskellige perspektiver og som anskuer skabelsen af situeret og partiel viden som særlig stærk. I dette afsnit viser jeg desuden, hvordan de forskellige teoretiske værktøjer i publikationerne er nøje udvalgt, således at de kan demonstrere dybe indsigter i unge muslimske kvinders oplevelser i alkoholkulturen fra en feministisk fænomenologisk vinkel. I fjerde del (metode og data) præsenterer jeg de konkrete elementer i mit studie, og jeg beskriver min forskningsproces. Afhandlingen er baseret på dybdegående og semistrukturerede interviews med 32 unge muslimske kvinder, der var mellem 16 og 34 år gamle (gennemsnitsalderen var 23 år). De havde alle erfaringer, i større eller mindre grad, med fester og/eller det at være beruset. I femte del (konklusion) opsummerer jeg og præsenterer det samlede bidrag fra afhandlingen og de tre publikationer. Jeg understreger, hvordan min eksplorative tilgang, mine forskningsspørgsmål, samt min feministisk fænomenologiske teoretiske ramme ikke kaldte på utvetydige resultater. I stedet forstår jeg mit bidrag til feltet som en ændring af vægten i den viden vi har om unges alkoholindtag i Danmark. Jeg eksemplificerer denne vægtændring ved at fremhæve fire specifikke steder, hvor jeg ser den i mit bidrag. Nemlig når vægten ændres fra social inklusion til social eksklusion, fra tab af kontrol til høje niveauer af selvkontrol, fra identitetsdannelse til identitetskrise og sidst, fra tung druk til afholdenhed eller moderation. Afhandlingen demonstrerer alt i alt forskellige måder hvorpå de deltagende ser, handler og tænker på ungdomsalkoholkulturen og deres position deri samt deres position i samfundet mere bredt. Den flytter vægten væk fra de uskyldige og legesyge aspekter, der også findes i ungdomsalkoholkulturen, og demonstrerer i stedet hvordan ulighed også reproduceres i denne sammenhæng.

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