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“IDENTITY DANISH MODERN”
TRAMPOLINE HOUSE AND THE PROTOTYPING OF AN INCLUSIVE
DENMARK

by
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*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens
can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.*

-Margaret Mead

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PREFACE: EXPERIENCING TRAMPOLINE HOUSE

The moment I step off the bus, my surroundings are transformed. No longer am I in Copenhagen, Denmark, the city of laid-back Danes. I encounter many *grønthandlere* - fresh grocery stores run by ethnic minorities. Walking down Skyttegade, I am greeted by the Pakistani shop owner who runs the store next to Trampoline House – a greeting that would not be said in other parts of Denmark, a society that teaches one to keep to oneself. Finally, I reach my destination – a plain grey building with big windows, a colorful logo of a trampoline with sun contrasting the dark, windowless door: *Trampoline House*.

- Field Notes, 2014

Upon first entering Trampoline House, I was captivated. The flavorful scent of spicy food lingered in the air, reminding me of my Syrian grandmother's home cooked meals. Members sprawled around the house, laughing and loudly engaged in conversation, taking little heed of my presence except to acknowledge my arrival with curt nods and smiles. That was rare for me in Denmark. As a Muslim American with Syrian and Danish roots who presented in the *hijab* (Islamic headscarf), I was accustomed to the blatant stares and condescending looks I would get on the streets in Copenhagen. Yet when I entered the house, nobody batted an eye.

As I conducted research on the performance of cultural identity and an inclusive Danish identity at Trampoline House, I found myself consciously performing my identities while learning to be open space for myself. My research provided me with a cathartic experience of challenging and learning more about my multiple identities that had confused me for so long. In this way, Trampoline

House was a space of inclusion and acceptance for myself during a time I was in need of such a zone.

The comfort I experienced at the house was unlike that I have felt in other places – especially in Denmark. Due to my divisive identities, I am constantly confronted with the conscious presentation of self. Nonetheless, during the seven months at Trampoline House, my complex identities found a niche: I was able to tap into my multi-faceted identities while simultaneously conducting research on how members went through a process similar to the one I was experiencing. In this way, my time at Trampoline House was transformative, teaching me to accept myself – all while doing my fieldwork at the House. It was fascinating to be surrounded by the Trampoline House community as they strived to re/negotiate Danish identity in the safe space of the House, with the ultimate goal of transforming the greater Danish landscape into an inclusive society: one of warm acceptance and belonging amidst differences.

INTRODUCTION

In Denmark, there's a culture about activities and just having a purpose all the time. If you just sit down in a bench for ten minutes – you should eat an apple or smoke a cigarette, or have something that you are doing or at least planning what you are going to do next or something ... There's not so much street life in Denmark ... I miss this [in] the Danish culture: [just to] stop and look each other in the eyes and ask, "Who are you, what are you doing here?" – the more random and spontaneous meetings. That's something I really appreciate about the Trampoline House.
- Astrid Interview

Trampoline House is a self-described *kulturhus* (culture house) in Copenhagen (Trampoline House 2015). Its stated aim is to “break the isolation that most asylum seekers find themselves in” (Trampoline House 2015) by creating a neutral space of socialization that can launch new lives for immigrants. The House consists of both international and Danish members, all of whom fondly refer to Trampoline House as the “other Denmark” (Astrid Interview): a place of encounter where people of all cultures, religions, and backgrounds are able to come and socialize as a diverse and ideally fluid community (Bauman 2007). Together, they participate in an intertwined cultural identity project that is transformative for all and prototypes a “Danish modern” future of ethnic inclusion.

Cultural Inclusiveness in Denmark: Overview of the Issues

Danish anthropologist Garbi Schmidt argues that while the Danish nation-state itself is opposed to what she terms multiculturalism, this is not necessarily the case on the local level. On the national level, she argues, Danish identity is based on a community of “idealized equality and sameness,” while the local level

stresses a community of “idealized diversity” (Kivisto & Wahlbeck 2013:216). In part due to the multiple perspectives of multiculturalism found on national and local levels, inclusion of immigrants into Danish national identity is highly contested. On the local level, communities seek to maintain a level of cosmopolitanism - that is, an acceptance of a tolerated difference.

In his work on cosmopolitanism, Ulf Hannerz defines cosmopolitanism as an interaction between multiple cultures that provides an opportunity for individuals from different backgrounds to learn from one another (Hannerz 2006:25). Through learning about others, the cosmopolitan “self is constructed in the space where cultures mirror one another” (Hannerz 1990:240). Cosmopolitan citizens - understood by Hannerz as dominant culture cosmopolitans – are able to understand themselves through learning about what they imagine as the other: the culture that is not “like” them. This does not mean that the cosmopolitan citizen does not appreciate other cultures; on the contrary, the cosmopolitan has the “ability to make one’s ways into other cultures and the appreciative openness towards divergent cultural experiences” (Hannerz 2006:13). Encounters between immigrant “users”¹ and Danish members² at the House constantly inform and shape individuals, transforming Danish members and immigrants together into cosmopolitan *citizens* (Hannerz 1990).

¹ At Trampoline House, members have termed the concept “users” to cover all asylum seekers, refugees, and other immigrants who come to the House without legal papers. As this is an emic term at the House, I switch between “users” and “immigrant users” throughout this thesis when discussing the immigrant user member group.

² Danish members include all Danish staff and volunteers.

At the same time, the discourse of cosmopolitan *respect for difference* coexists alongside the argument of integration, which in Denmark more specifically, is approached as a *homogenizing* socio-political process of assimilation. As Marianne Gullestad demonstrates, everyday life in Denmark is a political symbol, which contributes to an “understanding of larger social and cultural processes” (1989:88). In the context of this thesis, everyday practices in Denmark are a means of measuring an individual’s ability to integrate into Danish society – namely, the aptitude of an individual to “become Danish” (Gullestaad 1989; Bruun et al. 2011). This capacity to assimilate is considered imperative for immigrants seeking Danish citizenship. As such, the Danish nation-state has established programs to integrate immigrants into Danish society – which is to say, to transform their loyalty to their ethnic differences.

The efforts of everyday life play into the concept of equality through sameness – a mandate founded in the socialist ideology of the Danish nation-state. This equality is influenced by “social hierarchies [that] take shape through people’s concerns for mastering and conforming with these forms of sociality” (Gullestad 2011:1). Through this, everyday life is a space of contestation where immigrants’ actions become politicized forms of Danish identity.

While immigrants struggle to “learn Danishness,”³ Danish citizens are simultaneously affected by the presence of these minority Danes-in-becoming. In this thesis, I focus on Danes centered in Copenhagen, where Trampoline House is

³ I use the term “Danishness” to define the performance of Danish national identity in everyday life.

positioned as a “prototype” (Corsín Jiménez 2013a) of cultural identity negotiation for all Danes and sees itself as important in this way. From the point of view of members of the House, they are making a new future of inclusiveness: while immigrant users are transformed into “acceptable” Danish citizens, volunteers and staff are also negotiating Danishness through their interaction with the diverse users – coproducing a future in a unique, new form of inclusive Danishness, which I refer to as *Danish modern*.⁴

Citizens “In-Between”: Camp Life

While refugees and asylum seekers wait for their citizenship applications to be processed,⁵ they are assigned to live at asylum centers, which are run by the Danish Red Cross (Danish Refugee Council 2014). Perhaps due to the temporary condition of these asylum centers, users typically refer to them as “camps.”⁶ Camps are typically located two hours outside of Copenhagen (see Figure 7a). While the Danish government provides immigrants living in asylum centers a monthly living stipend of 1,300 DKK (\$250 USD), this stipend is not enough for immigrants to purchase train tickets into the city – a round trip train ticket that can cost as much as 130 DKK (\$26 USD). This physical separation results in an exclusion of immigrant users from mainstream Danish society.

⁴ Corsín Jiménez terms the “right to infrastructure” to discuss a similar phenomenon of renegotiation of social justice by “opening up agential works of infrastructure as a source [of] possibilities *in their own right*” (2014:343).

⁵ Users in the House term this as “waiting for their papers”.

⁶ *Camps* is an emic term used by immigrant users to describe the temporary camp-like living conditions at the centers.

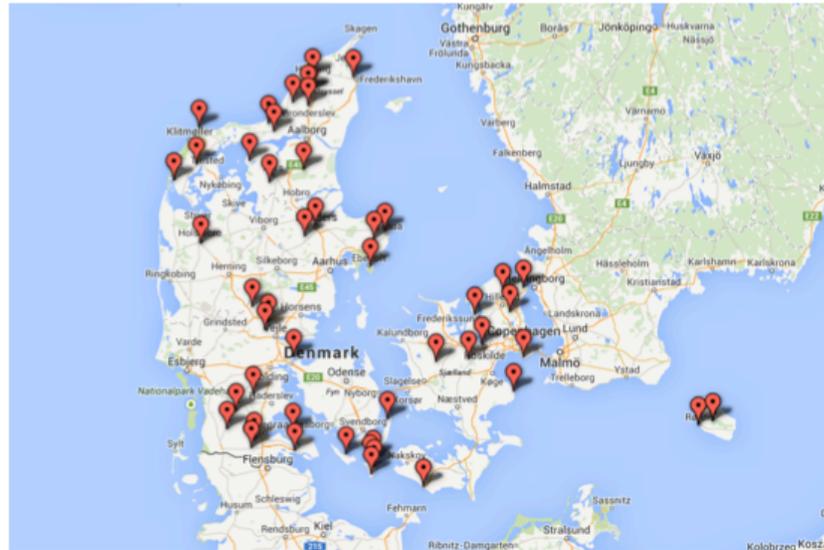


Figure 7a. Map of Asylum Centers in Denmark.
(Trampoline House 2015)

Camps were initially designed for a short stay while immigrants wait for their papers certifying their legal status in Denmark – a wait that take a minimum of six months. In some extreme cases, users will not hear about their decision for six years (Refugees Welcome 2015). All the while, immigrants wait in the camps, unsure of when they will hear about their decision. As camps do not have many activities and are located in rural areas, camp conditions can be detrimental to the mental health of immigrants (see Figure 7b).

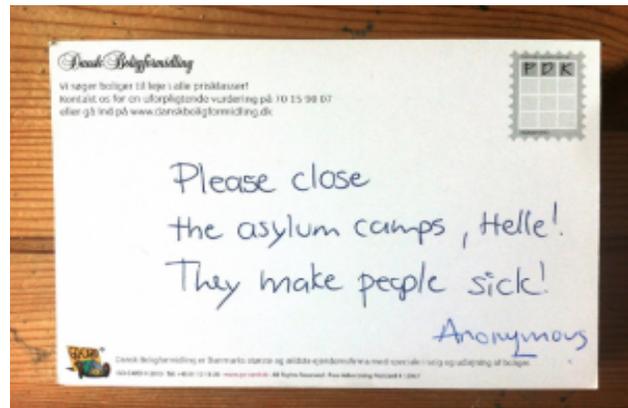


Figure 7b. Postcard to the Prime Minister protesting camp conditions.
(Trampoline House 2015)

According to a study on mental health amongst children living in the Danish asylum centers, the average length of stay at asylum centers increased from 313 days (in 2001) to 927 days (in

2007) (Nielsen et al. 2008). Multiple studies have demonstrated that there is a positive correlation between mental illnesses and the length of time immigrants have resided in asylum centers. Hallas et al. (2007) examined the number of mental health referrals compared to the residence time. Through this study, it was demonstrated that “psychopathology among refugees and asylum seekers is not an inevitable consequence of acute wartime stress but rather reflects the economic, social, and cultural conditions from which they have escaped and into which they are placed” (Hallas et al. 2007:5).

As discussed, there has been an upward trend in the length of time spent at asylum centers – something these asylum centers are not designed for. Because these camps were originally designed for short stays, rooms contain the bare minimum: a simple bed and a wardrobe (see Figure 9b). Anything more is acquired by the resident. Immigrants are assigned rooms to live in and typically have a roommate. While families may flee to Denmark together, it is rare that this is the case – and they are not guaranteed a room together. Kareem, an Iraqi immigrant user at Trampoline House, moved to Denmark a year before his mother joined him. Rather than being placed together, however, he and his mother were in different camps.



Figure 9a. View of Avstrup Asylum Center.
(Suleiman, Ismail [2013]. "Daily Life in Avnstrup." *VisAvis*, Web.)

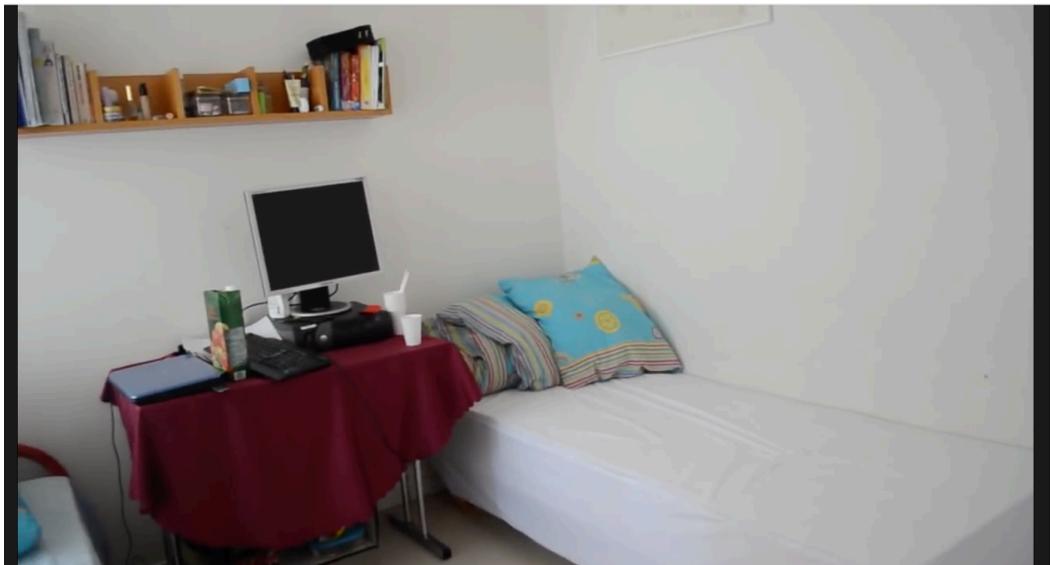


Figure 9b. Screenshot of camp bedroom.
(I AM ASYLUM SEEKER [Inside Sandholm Center] [2012]. Dir. Hala Hisham. Youtube. Youtube.com, 30 May 2012. Web.)

Immigrants living in the camps follow the rules of the center, limiting their autonomy. This is especially demonstrated through the meal distribution at the camps, where immigrants stand in a line as they wait to be served their cafeteria food. Ethnic groups dominate the centers, as immigrants typically build social ties amongst similar cultures. Surprisingly, religion does not play a large factor in social groups; as Dominic MacIver observed about social life at the camps, religious affiliations that may be significant in other situations do not hold the same weight at the camps:

George (a Christian) and Jamal (a Sunni Muslim) sit together perfectly content with Ali (a Shi'a Muslim) and us (miscellaneous) without recrimination or judgement.

-MacIver 2013

While religion does not affect interactions at asylum centers, gender carries a major tension at the camps. My conversations with immigrants continuously stressed the gender discrepancy found within the camps, where women rarely leave their rooms. *VisAvis*, a liberal magazine about asylum policies in Denmark written by asylum seekers and political activists, published an article relaying a discussion at Trampoline House on the isolation women face at the camps:

B: Last Monday there was a woman here who said that it was hard for her to leave her room, because all the time men asked to have sex with her for money.

A: Yes, this happens all the time. That is why we should be careful and take care of ourselves. If a woman has relationships with many men in the camp, all the men would jump on her. So, if you have one man you should stay with him and be nice. Otherwise, you will get problems...

D: There are still many cases like this in the camps. And because the Red Cross can't protect the women they give them closed rooms. At least in Sandholm. So, instead of protecting the women, the Red Cross isolates them even more. If you are afraid, you will just be more isolated and on your own. In this way it becomes your own problem, not a common one.

-Duvå 2013

For women, it is dangerous to leave the bedroom in the male-dominated spheres. I heard about this firsthand from a Syrian refugee who relayed her experience being a woman in the camps:

Women in the camps only account for 20% of the population, a population that is...unable to afford tickets to the city, staying in the camps for weeks on end while waiting to hear [about their papers]. [Informant] spends days in her room, out of fear of sexual assault.

- Field Notes, May 3

Due to the dangers of being a woman at these camps, I was unable to arrange a visit to actually observe camp conditions in real life. I was advised many times by Danes and immigrants alike not to go alone for my own safety. Information about the camps is based on knowledge gained through conversations and presentations by Trampoline House's partnering organization Refugees Welcome, a humanitarian organization providing legal counseling to refugees while educating the public about the conditions of asylum seekers in Denmark (Refugees Welcome 2015).

Trampoline House: Safe Space for Transition

Trampoline House aims to work against this exclusion by performing as a "house for refugees and other residents of Denmark working together for a just and humane refugee and asylum policy" (Trampoline House 2015). Immigrants living

in the camps are shut out from the rest of society due in part to the spatial distance of the camps from populated Danish cities, as well as their lack of knowledge about Danish culture and language. The founders of Trampoline House understand the conditions of the asylum centers as a “state of exception” (Agamben 2005)⁷ from the rules and laws that apply to Danish citizens. Through this, some individuals are systematically repressed as they are placed outside of public protection (i.e. the exception).

In a reaction to the refugee’s state of exception as regards to Danish norms, Trampoline House was founded in hopes of creating a parallel community to the Danish society where all members have equal rights, thereby working as a microcosm of the Danish society. As Morten, the Executive Director, describes, the House is “an exception to the exception” (Morten Interview). While from the outside Trampoline House appears to be an exception to assimilated Danish society, Trampoline House concurrently understands itself as a prototype of an inclusive Danishness.

The Trampoline House community consists of three main groups who together comprise its “members”: paid staff, all of whom are Danish; volunteers,⁸ who are both Danish and internationals, and are typically (though not

⁷ Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben coins the concept of the “state of exception” and how sovereign power can override public government power during some times of conflict (Agamben 2005).

⁸ “Volunteers” are individuals who donate their time to the House to help run different activities [i.e. language classes, meal preparation], and typically also come to the House to socialize when not volunteering. I will use volunteers to refer to Danish and Western individuals in Denmark.

always) students; and immigrant users,⁹ who come from non-Western countries and the majority of whom are Muslim. The house holds daily activities geared towards all members, while specifically recruiting immigrant users to participate by purchasing round-trip tickets to Trampoline House and back to the camps. Through this, Trampoline House performs as a zone of escape from camp life. In this thesis, I delve into the variety of ways that members utilize and envision themselves as contributing to the House.

While for Danish members, the House can be an escape from secular Danishness, for immigrant users, Trampoline House is a zone of escape from their everyday lives at the asylum centers while learning Danishness from Danish members – ideally “speeding up” integration into Danish society and reducing the stress on immigrants in the process. It is this very difference of usage that I seek to investigate through this thesis. Against integrationist models that focus exclusively on immigrant socialization and identity (e.g. Maja Hojer Bruun [2011], Marianne Holm Pederson [2012], and Marianne Gullestaad [1989]), this thesis argues that identity-making at Trampoline House is transformative for all members – Danish and immigrant alike, as seen from the point of view of its members.

⁹ Users can be asylum seekers or refugees waiting to hear about their legal status while living in mandated asylum centers, as well as undocumented citizens residing in Denmark. I will develop this later in the chapter.

On another level, Trampoline House seeks to prototype¹⁰ an alternative to assimilation by making a "safe house" for identity negotiation that performs the value of inclusiveness against the dominant culture value of assimilation. It creates a "safe stage" (Goffman 1959) and "safe space" for identity experimentation by volunteers and immigrant users alike, with the guidance of its governing staff. I argue that the Trampoline House works performatively as an intermediary place¹¹ of new encounter and interactions between members who might not otherwise get the opportunity to learn about otherness.¹² While it has no ties to the Danish government, Trampoline House operationalizes the project of inclusion by creating a zone for naturalizing exchanges with diverse members of the House. At the same time, Trampoline House allows Danish members to get to know immigrant users from different backgrounds – something that does not happen in the camps. Through the diverse stories that come together in Trampoline House, there emerges what I term a *Danish design* for cultural translation demonstrating a workable paradox: that by structuring a “third place”

¹⁰ I borrow Corsín Jiménez’s term prototype to understand Trampoline House as a place where “social and material components retrofit each other as being in mutual suspension” (Corsín Jiménez 2014:343).

¹¹ In this thesis, I refer to Trampoline House as a “place,” based on Doreen Massey’s argument that a place “not only brings together local and global influences, multiple cultures and identities, but it also contains historical influences which shape its present, as do its plans and potential for the future” (Buchanan 2009:63). I elaborate on this in Chapter II: Siting Trampoline House.

¹² This idea is similar to Elijah Anderson’s concept of cosmopolitan canopies, which “allow people of different backgrounds the chance to slow down and [test] stereotypes and prejudices [while acknowledging] the other” (Anderson 2004:25).

(Oldenburg 2000) for productively slowing down entry into dominant Danish culture, acceptance into that culture and society is effectively sped up.¹³

Through the conceptualization of everyday Danishness, immigrants are systematically rejected from the Danish society based on their non-Danish cultural practices and morals. These immigrants are construed as “not Danish enough” to be Danish, thereby excluding immigrants from Danish national identity. Trampoline House attempts to counteract this construct by providing a space for Danes and immigrants to meet and understand each other outside everyday Danish society, thereby performing as an escape zone from Danishness. Simultaneously, immigrant users are taught secular, everyday Danishness through different encounters with Danish members at the House. As I have been suggesting, this is one among the many paradoxes that constitute Trampoline House as a distinctively performative space of cultural translation.

In order to understand the importance of Trampoline House for immigrant users, as well as within the greater Danish landscape, it is imperative to understand the political and material realities of an immigrant user’s life. Immigrant users can be refugees, asylum seekers, or undocumented citizens residing in Denmark without any official papers allowing them to live in the country. Asylum seekers and refugees are legally documented in the country. While asylum seekers may identify as refugees, their claims have not been

¹³ This is similar to Corsín Jiménez’s term, the “right to infrastructure” – namely, a means of escaping “the human–nonhuman and epistemology–ontology dichotomies altogether by opening up the agential work of infrastructures as a source (an open source) of possibilities *in their own right*” (Corsín Jiménez 2014:343). In this case, Trampoline House is an open source prototype of possibilities for an inclusive Denmark.

confirmed – much unlike refugees, who are recognized as moving to another country as a way to escape harsh living conditions (UNHCR 2015). Hence, immigrant users at the House do not include immigrants coming to Denmark for careers; rather, there are often special circumstances that have pushed these individuals to move to Denmark. During my period of fieldwork, all immigrant users were from non-Western countries and were in Denmark to escape their country's dangerous conditions; while some came from war-torn countries such as Syria, others left their country due to safety issues based on their sexual orientation. As such, reasons for leaving and coming to Denmark are varied.

As the majority of immigrant users at the House are refugees and asylum seekers, I focus on the lives of these immigrant users as they relate to other members in the wider context of Denmark to understand both the cultural and social connotations of Trampoline House.

A Physical Tour of Trampoline House

When members walk through the doors of Trampoline House, the physical environment shifts dramatically, marking the moment. Continuing on through the foyer and in through the second set of doors, the House opens into a wide floor space, boasting colorful walls of green, blue, and red. To the right of this space, temporary walls separate spaces for provisional classrooms and a children's area, which is rarely occupied by youth, except during the weekly Women's Club. A bar is located on the far wall, where low-cost alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks

are served during Friday Dinners. Relegated to a corner are the supplies for the tailoring and haircuts, a station that is set up whenever necessary.

A counter marks a barrier between the larger common area and the kitchen – an area enclosed by walls – where dishes clack as the kitchen crew prepares the

day’s meal. The hallway with the kitchen’s entrance is crowded, due to the proximity of the staff’s office, a small space constantly filled with members greeting staff. Further down the hall, two bathrooms stand next to a classroom. Due to the bright green walls, the classroom is referred to as the “Green

Room,” and is furnished with

donated red chairs surrounding a table (see Figure 17a). A whiteboard hangs on the far wall, forever smudged with marker from the overuse it has had to bear. To the left of the classroom, a locked closet stands – the key to which is privy only to staff members. Inside lies a fireproof safe that carries spare cash and the expensive train tickets that coax users to the House.

Stimulation is everywhere: members sprawl across the mismatched couches, talking about their week. The leisurely socialization of members at the



Figure 17a.
Female members in the Green Room.
 (Trampoline House 2015)

House is
 “completely
 different than
 [Danish] norms ...
 At Trampoline
 House, people just
 meet there to hang
 out and be
 together”
 (Astrid



Figure 18a.
Danish members drinking coffee and tea.
 (Trampoline House 2015)

Interview). A savory smell floats from the kitchen, where pots and pans clash as the Kitchen Crew begins assembling the daily meal. Coffee and tea sits out on the counter, and members help themselves as they settle into the House (see Figures 18a and 18b).



Figure 18b. Members socializing in the main room.
 (Trampoline House 2015)

In *Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Economy*, Arjun Appadurai (1990) defines five unique “scapes” which define how people envision the world that contains them. One such scape is the “ethnoscape,” which focuses on the movement of people around the world across cultures, as distinct from the world as a static collection of cultures (Appadurai 1990:7). Denmark has evolved to become such an ethnoscape. In 2013, it was estimated that there were over 17,000 refugee and asylum seekers who immigrated to Denmark (UNHCR 2014). These immigrants struggle to be accepted into the Danish national community, a community rooted in a homogenous ethnic background or social ability.

Methodology

I first heard about Trampoline House while looking for integration programs in Denmark. While other integration programs met once a week in varying locations, Trampoline House stood out due to the physical space as a free standing building, which was not found in other programs. Along with this, Trampoline House’s mission as a *kulturhus* resonated in its emphasis on reciprocity-based knowledge exchange. Further, my own position as both a Danish citizen and identifiably Muslim student who lives in the United States embodied the ideal of social mobility that the House sought to achieve, while challenging any notion of assimilation as producing a visibly homogenous community.

Overview

During my period of fieldwork in spring 2014, there were 79 active¹⁴ immigrant users from a diverse range of countries, including Syria, Eritrea, and Sudan (Goll 2014). The majority of users were male, due in part to the higher amount of male immigrants as well as the dangers female users faced when traveling to Trampoline House; consequently, my interlocutors among the users were primarily male. Simultaneously, there were 55 active volunteers from Denmark, different parts of the United States, and Australia, as well as other locations.

I began volunteering at the House as a cleaner on Tuesdays from 12-2, tidying the House in anticipation of the day. Typically after cleaning, I would sit in the common area with the cleaning coordinator, conversing with members while drinking a cup of coffee. Normally, I would stay until after the House Meeting – a weekly meeting in which all members are encouraged to join to discuss current issues at the House. I also participated in a couple Friday Dinners and Saturday Women’s Club gatherings, in order to gain a perspective of the different days at the House.

Along with participant observation, I did a vast amount of archival research surrounding immigration to Denmark, especially how the Danish political system understands Danish immigrants. This also helped me stay informed about topics relevant for immigrant users, which helped me connect with users during my encounters and, later, while interviewing users.

¹⁴ I define active members as users or volunteers who come to Trampoline House at least once a week to work, take classes, or socialize.

In order to allow members to be comfortable speaking to me, I conducted interviews in a variety of settings. While Danish members typically felt most at ease to speak about the House at external coffee shops, immigrant user interviews were held at Trampoline House, where immigrant users were comfortable enough in the familiar environment to speak to me. In all, I conducted 5 (1 female, 4 male) immigrant user interviews, 6 (5 female, 1 male) volunteer interviews, and 2 (1 female, 1 male) staff interviews. Interviews were semi-structured and were recorded, after which I transcribed each interview. All interviews were held in English, though at times participants spoke in Danish or Arabic. Because I am fluent in Danish and can understand Arabic, I was able to translate between languages when needed. Throughout this paper, I have used my own translation; hence, while I denote the translated phrases, I do not cite any translation source. For the sake of fluency in this paper, I only denote when I translate from Arabic; otherwise, the language of origin can be assumed to be Danish.

During my time in Denmark, I lived with my extended family – first- and second- generation Danes with Syrian roots. Through my stay, I was able to gain a more in-depth perspective on how it is to live as an immigrant in Denmark, despite being born and raised in Copenhagen. Though my family moved to Denmark under different circumstances, the experiences of discrimination and wary sentiments towards the Danish government were similar. This allowed me to understand the struggles of immigrant users, while also providing me with the experiences needed to relate and, ultimately, have users trust me sooner.

Complexities of Subject Positioning

Initially, members approached me with ambivalence, unsure how to make sense of me. Erving Goffman argues in *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) that the self is a conscious performance consisting of a variety of elements. One important aspect is what Goffman terms the “personal front,” which is marked by “items we most intimately identify with the performer himself and that we naturally expect will follow the performer” (1959:24). The front includes racial characteristics, clothing, and gender amongst other characteristics, and can influence how the audience¹⁵ interacts with the performer. Self-presenting as a white-passing American with a Syrian and Danish background, visually different than the other volunteers due to the fact that I wore the *hijab* (Islamic headscarf), as well as Western style outfits. Initially, male users with Muslim or Arab backgrounds approached me timidly, as though an invisible barrier stood between us, limiting my access to these users. This paradox is well studied in anthropology; for example, Lila Abu-Lughod described this same complication during her ethnography in Egypt, where she was assumed to share the “fundamental identity as Muslim” and had difficulty connecting with male participants (Abu-Lughod 1989:143).

Similarly to Abu-Lughod (1989), the hesitance of male users in approaching me was in part due to a respect towards Muslim women. As a male user from Somalia later explained, “Muslim women are my sisters, they must be

¹⁵The audience being those around the performer, who are observing the performer.

respected. Some of them don't talk to men, so I don't want to force them to talk to me" (Field Notes, April 22). This hesitance based on my visual appearance continued for a month until Nora, a young woman and key member of the Arabic-speaking group, explained how her father used to make her wear hijab but when he left Denmark:

"I was free!" ... I tell her that I don't think hijab is that important, and she begins to act more open towards me, telling me that there's so much more, and that it's "important to have God within."
- Field Notes, April 22

It was only when I distinctly confronted my physical appearance by discussing hijab as much more complex than simply a covering that I was initially included into the Arabic-speaking group. However, being a female with Danish citizenship also resulted in awkward encounters with male users, who would continuously make advances towards me while testing my religious views. Most adamant of my admirers was Basam:

Basam seems increasingly interested in me, asking about my family: "I would love to meet your family, and talk to your father."
- Field Notes, April 25

By asking to talk to my father, Basam alluded to Syrian customs of talking to a girl's father to ask for her hand in marriage, but also pointed to a key difference from Abu-Lugod's introduction; namely, that a male member of my family did not accompany me to give my study his blessings, nor to implicitly communicate his protection. This situation created openings to approaches that actually yielded some interesting knowledge. On multiple other occasions, male users would invite me to their homes under the premise of "having a cup of tea" after telling me that

they did not think sleeping around was a “big deal” (Field Notes, April 25). I continuously turned down these flirtations with laughter while reassuring users that I did not judge them for whatever actions they were seemingly rationalizing to me. Users would continuously approach me about their religious views and mishaps, perhaps to gain a reaction from me. During one dinner, I found myself discussing *Ramadan* (the required month of fasting in Islam) with Basam and Osman:

Basam says [in Arabic], “I don’t fast here, it’s really too hard to do. I haven’t fasted since I left Syria! Do you fast?” ... Osman tells me that he normally does fast, “but here it’s hard ... everywhere you look, there are girls with shorts on and that makes you break your fast! You just have to have a lot of control.”

- Field Notes, June 11

On multiple occasions, users discussed their religious perspectives with me, as though they were testing how I would react to their comments. As such, I was constantly hyper-aware of how I reacted to users’ stories, ensuring that I presented myself as open to their views. Through continuously working to be included within these groups, I was included within the Arabic-speaking group – a group that placed me as an Arab Muslim facing similar struggles of adjusting my religion to Western ways and values.

For Danish members, my breakthrough occurred early on when the volunteer coordinator, Tone, introduced me informally to members. Because Tone is held in great esteem at the House due to her being one of the three initial founders, Danish members began to socialize with me.

Along with my visual appearance, my identity as a Muslim American with Arab and Danish roots played a role in my linguistic positioning. Danish volunteers found me approachable due to my fluency in English and I was commonly met with pleasant surprise when they learned that I spoke Danish. Immigrant users, on the other hand, greeted me skeptically despite our abilities to speak English and were hesitant to make conversation with me. My big break came when I stepped outside my comfort zone and struggled to speak Arabic in hopes that I would be included by one of the major user groups – the Arabic-speaking users. While sitting with one of the Arabic-speaking groups, I was approached by a Syrian Kurd:

Basam asks Kareem, an Iraqi user with whom I am talking to, who I am and where I was from in Arabic, assuming that I do not speak Arabic. I respond in Arabic, clarifying that I am Syrian and Danish, living in the United States though I do speak much Arabic. Basam is taken aback. After this, the group around me begins to include me, switching languages and working with each other to include everyone in the group.

- Field Notes, April 22

From this point forth, I was accepted by the Arabic-speaking group, included in conversations and saved seats by the various users. Though my Arabic is far from fluent, my attempts to learn Arabic signaled a struggle similar to that of the users' struggle to learn Danish – as well as an interest in communication.

Intimate Detachment

In overview, it became apparent that my linguistic positioning provided me with a unique experience of the House. While I was not a user, I had a similar background to the Arab and Muslim majority users due to my identity as a Syrian

in diaspora, my Muslim upbringing and unacquaintedness with Danish cultural norms. At the same time, I shared a Danish identity with the Danish members, due to my Danish origins, fluency in the language, and my Western identity, as well as my role as a volunteer. I was, in fact, a detached individual; in-between users and Danish members with my Danish, Syrian, and American identities (see Figure 26a).

This position placed me on a different path, an intersection between the two distinct groups and worldviews, allowing me an *intimate detachment* from all actors. While I came from a background that intersected with the background of users and Danish members (allowing me to understand both member groups as a participant

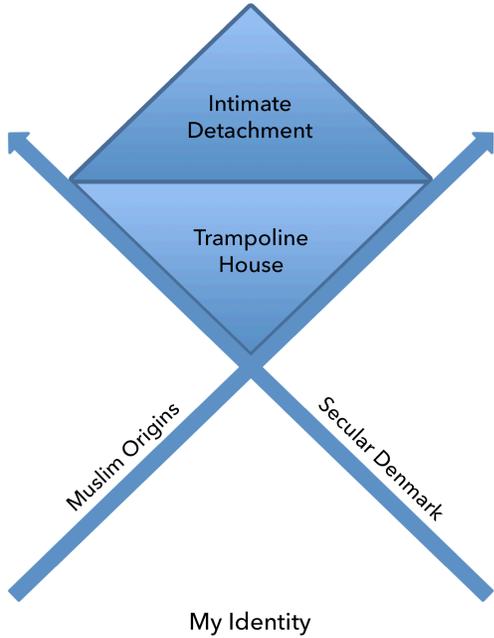


Figure 26a. Demonstration of positioning.

moving between both categories), I was simultaneously in a position that allowed me to view the House as a detached researcher (Dewalt, Dewalt & Wayland 1998).

Chapter Overview

I have suggested that members who participate in Trampoline House are transforming the space, and themselves, into prototypes of a new Danishness. With staff as guides, volunteers create specific positions for themselves as teachers or cleaners who are open to new knowledge of immigrant users, and vice versa. Some volunteers – and I am one – are inspired to deepen their engagement with Danish immigrant issues. At the same time, users may be inspired to take up *praktik* (internships), enrolling in activities offered by the House, and in the process learning more deeply about Danish culture. In short, Danishness is *learned and transformed* at Trampoline House on many levels.

From this approach, Trampoline House can be understood to perform a dynamic “third place” of Danishness for members who actively participate in the House. On one level, the house can be seen as an installation site for crafting a “fluid” (Bauman 2013) inter-ethnic community; on another level, it offers a space for rehearsing a future that is mobility-friendly in social terms for all. In short, as a community always in the making which extends to Danish volunteers and staff who are themselves multi-sited citizens, and who are often in transition in their own lives, the House is an experiment in a new *Danish modernness for an unstable future*.

I begin this thesis with an overview of the history of immigration to Denmark, focusing on how the concept of “Danishness” first arose and what role Trampoline House has in the process of integration to Denmark. I then go on to analyze Trampoline House as a “third place” in the Danish landscape. Through understanding the Trampoline House as a site on inclusion, I move to how the House is envisioned by Danish staff and volunteers, as well as users. Following this, I examine community making in Trampoline House through the weekly Friday dinner. It is during the preparation and consumption of this meal that the intersectionality between Danish and cultural identities is made explicit. Lastly, I conclude by focusing on language in the House. Due to the diverse members in the House, language plays a pertinent role in bridging across difference to create understanding. Trampoline House has a unique method to include the multi-lingual members of the House, crafting a form of *Trampoline House English* to *include* members and *work across* difference. Overall, my aim is to assess the inclusion performed at Trampoline House as a possible model of inclusion for Denmark that continuously shapes and informs individuals.

CHAPTER I: RE/IMAGINING DANISHNESS AND THE PRODUCTION OF “DANISH MODERN”

The Danish state, Sune Laegaard states, makes no distinction between the different types of immigrants¹⁶ into Denmark (Kivisto & Wahlbeck 2013). Non-Western migrants to Denmark are grouped as immigrants, “by which it is meant that they should be seen as strangers seeking to become members of Danish society” (Kivisto & Wahlbeck 2013:181). Prior to the 21st century, immigration to Denmark was fairly uncontested. Immigrants during this time were typically from Eastern Europe and were not seen as drastically different than Danes (Hedetoft 2006). In the 1960s, an influx of immigrants from Turkey, Pakistan, and other non-Western countries migrated to Denmark to work (BBC 2005; Hedetoft 2006). These immigrants were greeted with negative attitudes, envisioned as the antithesis to Danishness: unable to integrate into the Danish society.

In this chapter, I begin by presenting the media rhetoric surrounding non-European immigrants to Denmark as a threat to Danish national identity. Danish media is an ideal case of understanding anti-immigrant sentiments, due to the attitudes within Danish society that are explicitly expressed there. Following this, I examine the formulation of Danish national identity. This provides a map to understanding the processes in which immigrants are excluded from Danish identity. I then move on to considering how Trampoline House aims to counteract

¹⁶ For the fluidity of the language found in Danish politics, in this thesis, I switch between the political term of “immigrant users” and emic term “users” when referring to include refugees, asylum seekers, legal immigrants, and immigrants without legal papers to Denmark.

the exclusion of immigrants by performing as a space of inclusion. Through understanding Trampoline House as testing a zone of inter-ethnic encounters and acceptance, I come to understand the re-imagination of Danishness as an inclusive Danish modern.

Immigrants in the Media: Extraordinary Politics

In 1997, popular tabloid magazine *Ekstra Bladet* launched a campaign entitled “The Strangers,” appealing to the Danish population to save Danish culture and society from immigrants who were viewed as having a culture and religion not compatible with Denmark (Hervik 2011). The campaign against immigrants was framed as a cultural issue, as immigrants were envisioned as “strangers who brought with them a culture that usually did not fit” (Hervik 2011:60). One article headline was about Ali, a Somali Muslim immigrant. Ali is portrayed as taking advantage of the Danish system by getting welfare payments while resisting Danishness – in this case, he was critiqued for his inability to “do Danishness” in his everyday life (Hervik 2011:59). In this way, an “us-versus-them” dichotomy was created between “authentic” Danes and immigrants, who were envisioned as completely unlike Danes.

Ekstra Bladet’s campaign had a major impact in shaping anti-immigrant sentiments in Denmark, and was used as a political tool by the right-wing political Danish People’s Party (*DPP*). DPP continued to establish negative sentiments towards immigrants under the pretense of protecting the “voice of the ordinary people” (Hervik 2011:63). As a result of the rising tensions, the Danish

government unsuccessfully attempted to limit immigration from non-Western countries (Jensen et al. 2012).

Due to the increased sentiment and societal shift in perceptions of immigrants, immigrants were met with disdain – which would eventually lead to the re-formation of immigration policy in Denmark in 1999. Known as the Integration Act of 1999, this law was enacted under the pretense of enabling immigrants to “become productive citizens on equal terms with the Danes” by cutting certain benefits and strengthening the criteria for immigrants to “become” Danish (Hervik 2011:69). Immigration in Denmark is a form of “extraordinary politics,” as the “very identity of the state of the people is at stake” (Kivisto & Wahlbeck 2013:190).

The dichotomy between Danes and immigrants was further emphasized in November 2001, when Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen (a right-wing politician) launched a “culture war (*kulturkamp*) or debate of the cultural values of Danish society” (Hervik 2011:170). The *kulturkamp* was strongly against immigrants who were viewed as resisting secular Danishness. More specifically, these immigrants in question were majority Muslim. According to Statistics Denmark, in 2004 there were 350,000 immigrants to Denmark. Of this, 270,000 were Muslim, a religion that is continuously portrayed negatively within Danish politics and media (BBC 2005). Orla Borg, a well-known writer for *Jyllands-Posten* (a popular right-wing newspaper) published articles discussing Islam as a threat to Danish identity. Borg noted that the “ideological dichotomy between

Danes and the visibly different non-Western [immigrants] is presented as dangerous, since these differences are unbridgeable” (Hervik 2011:138). This further elaborates the idea that (specifically) Muslim immigrants to Denmark are too different to be integrated and are a threat to Danishness.

Perhaps best to demonstrate the continuous struggle of acceptance for Muslims in Denmark is the Cartoon Controversy of 2005. On September 30, *Jyllands-Posten* published a

short article by controversial journalist Flemming Rose (2005). Entitled “Muhammeds ansigt” (Muhammad’s Face), the article depicts twelve

cartoons of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad – a sacred figure who is typically not portrayed in any way, due to religious

rulings (see Figure 32a).¹⁷ The center text within the article describes the incompatibility of Muslims with the Danish society:

The modern, secular society is rejected by some Muslims. They demand a special position, insisting on special consideration of



Figure 32a: One-page article published in Jyllands-Post
(Rose, Flemming [2005]. “Muhammeds Ansigt.” Digital image. Wikipedia.com. Jyllands-Posten. Web.)

¹⁷ Amidst much internal and external debate, I have included the comic in this thesis.

their own religious feelings. It is incompatible with secular democracy and freedom of speech, where you must be ready to put up with insults, mockery and ridicule. It is certainly not always agreeable and pleasant to look at, and it does not mean that religious feelings at all costs should be made fun, but it is secondary in this context.

It is thus not surprising that people in totalitarian societies [i.e. Muslim societies] are in prison for telling jokes or depicting dictators critical. ... In Denmark, it has not gone that far, but the examples show that we are entering on a slippery slope where no one can predict what self-censorship will end.

- Rose 2005

Claimed by supporters as an act of free speech, the article's drawings of the Prophet Muhammad were provocative (see Figure 32a): one caricature features the Prophet as wearing a bomb as a turban, reinforcing the association of Muslims as violent (top right in Figure 32a). Another image depicts a cartoonist, leaning over a drawing of the Prophet while nervously working on the cartoon (bottom right of Figure 32a) – perhaps a critique of the hesitance of cartoonists when asked to draw cartoons for the piece.

Global reactions to the piece were immediate and long lasting as protestors gathered to picket against the publication. Some protestors went as far as to perpetuate the image of violent Muslims depicted in media: in Britain, for example, a young man dressed himself in a suicide bomber's jacket (Bowcott 2006). Other protestors carried signs calling for a boycott against Denmark (see Figure 34a), while more extreme protestors called for violent repercussions for the cartoonists (see Figure 34b).



Figure 34a. Protests calling for boycott of Danish products.
(Abdullah, Khaled [2006]. Protests against Jyllands-Posten. Digital image. Reuters. Web.)



Figure 34b. Violent protest in London.
(Langsdon, Ian [2007]. Muslims Protest in London after the Publication of Cartoons. Digital image. The Guardian. The Guardian. Web.)

The responses continued to reinforce the stereotypes portrayed in Danish media of Muslims as violent – a stereotype supporting the need for the support of a kulturkamp in Denmark. As Heiko Henkel writes,

The solicitation and publication of the Muhammad cartoons was part of a long and carefully orchestrated campaign by the conservative *Jyllands-Posten* (also known in Denmark as *Jyllands-Pesten* – the plague from Jutland), in which it backed the centreright Venstre party of Prime Minister Fogh Rasmussen in its successful bid for power in 2001. Central to Venstre’s campaign, aside from its neoliberal economic agenda, was the promise to tackle the problem of foreigners who refused to ‘integrate’ into Danish society.

- Henkel 2006:3

Flemming Rose, the author of the publication, acknowledges that out of 40 artists asked to contribute to the article, only 12 artists were willing to do so. This demonstrates that the drawings were much more than simply a statement of free speech. Rather, Rose challenged artists to participate in this controversy perhaps (as Henkel demonstrates) as part of a larger agenda at play. The cartoon controversy, scholar Anders Linde-Laursen argues, is the “continuation of a century old schism in Danish society [of the] tensions between [advocating] processes of modernity” (Linde-Laursen 2007:265). Along with this, the crisis was an arena for the reinforcement of Danish national identity through the continuous efforts of exclusion for the Muslim immigrant incompatible with Danishness.

Nationalism & Danish Identity: Secular Danishness and Sociability

Nationalism, Benedict Anderson argues, is not the natural awakening of nations; rather, it is an unnatural construction formed from the imagined political community of citizens within the nation-state (Anderson 1991). As scholars have noted, Denmark was previously the epitome of 18th century cosmopolitanism, where anyone was able to live “regardless of place of birth and language” (Brincker 2003:409). Amidst tense politics and economics in the late-19th century, Denmark evolved into a nationalistic country focused on differences within Danish borders (Brincker 2003; Ostergaard 2004). This renegotiated form of nationalism was premised on an imaginary of Denmark as an exclusive nation-state, where other cultures were recognized, but expected to be in their respective locations – i.e. not within Danish borders (Hervik 2011; Nassri 2012). In this reimagined version of nationalism, culture is based on geographical distance. The closer a country is in comparison to Denmark, the more similarities there are likely to be (Rennison 2009). For example, Germans are envisioned as closer to Danishness than Somalis. Through this new definition of Danish national identity, non-European immigrants were understood as coming from a culture too different to be immediately accepted as Danish.

Most notably, Danish philosopher (amongst other titles) Nikolaj Fredrik Grundtvig explicitly formulated a “true Danish identity” (Ostergaard 2004:38) through ascribing a “close relationship to language, the common people, and Christianity [thereby envisioning] the Danish people to be a chosen people”

(Brincker 2003:415). Grundtvig helped mold a conservative “imagined community” (Anderson 1991) of Danes based on the exclusion of all those who are not “Danish enough” (Brincker 2003). As a result, Danish identity became intertwined with the “profane ordinariness of everyday life” (Jenkins 2012:115).

It is the concept of secular Danishness¹⁸ that I focus on, as I examine Danishness as a tool that prohibits immigrant users from being Danish while simultaneously reinforcing a specific Danish national identity. Through the rhetoric of secular Danishness, right-wing political parties in Denmark are able to exclude immigrants from Danish identity. Right-wing politician Anders Fogh Rasmussen spoke of inclusion in Denmark as based in value politics: namely, “what is accepted and expected as right and valuable in society [especially in the case of] attitudes and values” (Kivisto & Wahlbeck 2013:177). Through value politics, immigrants who do not directly align with established Danish values and norms are viewed as a threat to Danish identity and must be “limited, constrained and managed through restrictive immigration laws” (Kivisto & Wahlbeck 2013:177). This limitation implies that all immigrants carry values inferior to Danish values, corroborating the oppositional positioning of “Danes-versus-others.”

In their research on citizenship, globalization scholars Holston and Appadurai discuss the reaction of nation-states to unwanted immigrants. Some nation-states attempt to make citizenship more exclusive by “dismantle[ing]

¹⁸ For the purpose of this paper, I use the term “secular” to explain the everyday actions of activities that are associated with Danishness, an identity that is viewed as sacred.

public spaces and services [to] keep the undesired out” (Holston & Appadurai 1999:5). In the past, Denmark had a lenient immigration management, allowing immigrants full welfare benefits prior to receiving citizenship. However, with the uptick of non-Western immigrants, views towards immigration politics drastically shifted. Negative stereotypes portrayed non-Western immigrants as lazy, taking advantage of state welfare benefits without contributing to the society. In efforts to counter the perceived abuse of the welfare system, the then-conservative government advocated for a stricter immigration management through the Integration Act of 1999. This act decreased welfare benefits of new immigrants and required immigrants to enter the workforce immediately. This had two main effects: forcing immigrants to join in the workforce; and making Denmark “less attractive [for] other would-be immigrants,” with the ultimate end goal of lessening the number of immigrants to Denmark (Kivisto 2013:180). The Integration Act had a drastic impact on the politics of immigration management in Denmark, while limiting Danish citizenship unless applicants fulfilled specific criteria.

Along with the reinvention of immigration management in Denmark, certain criteria were created to require immigrants to integrate into Danishness in order to be nationally recognized as Danish. Immigrants were expected to speak Danish almost fluently and understand Danish norms and values. The Integration Act of 1999 also required a three-year integration program for immigrants who were approved for Danish citizenship – a program that occurs even today.

Through this program, immigrants are placed in municipalities, typically in the Danish county, where they are expected to “develop social relations with [ethnic Danes and be] integrated into mainstream Danish society” (Larsen 2011:143). The pretense of this program is that by living in ethnically Danish neighborhoods, immigrants will become accustomed to secular Danishness as they “follow local customs, values and understandings in order to win social acceptance and inclusion” (Larsen 2011:144).

This is similar to Georg Simmel’s argument of sociability, in which social norms become “purpose[ful] and carry value” (Bruun 2011:76). In the case of Denmark, social norms are part of a secular Danish identity. Many scholars on integration in Denmark discuss secular Danishness through activities such as dishwashing (Linde-Larson 1993), maintaining the lawn (Larson 2011), and even everyday modes of transportation¹⁹ (Røde Kors 2014). Danishness is “reproduced [on] a daily basis through ordinary and repetitive everyday practices” (Daugbjerg 2011:250), reinforcing clear-cut boundaries of Danish identity in order to “form the bases for a highly concrete perception of national affiliation” (Linde-Laursen 1993:288).

The integration of immigrants through these governmental programs results in immigrants consciously acknowledging their behaviors, attitudes, and presented norms. This is not unlike Goffman’s concept of *performance*. Goffman discusses performance as the “activity of an individual which occurs during a

¹⁹ Biking is highly encouraged in Danish society and is viewed as part of Danish identity. The Danish Red Cross has created integration programs structured to teach immigrants how to bike.

period marked by his continuous present before ... observers” (Goffman 1959:22). Most relevant to this discussion, Goffman presents the concepts of the front (the performance being acted) and the setting (the location of the act), and dramatic realization (a dramatic act highlighting the performer’s activity). In the case of integration programs, the immigrant performer acts as an integrated Dane (the front) when out in public (the setting) by consciously staging everyday acts of Danishness (the dramatic realization). However, although the performer may *act* in this way does not mean that the performer *believes* their act. While the immigrant may consciously perform as a Dane in public, it will continue to be a conscious act. Further, the space itself is performative: its very physical structure and spatialized routines make a “safe passage” and cultural negotiation habitual.

For example, to urge immigrant users to leave their camps and come to Trampoline House, the House has established *praktik* (internships), in which users sign up for weekly activities at the House. In exchange for participating at the House, users are provided with up to two round trip train tickets from their asylum center to the House, allowing immigrant users the opportunity to visit Copenhagen afterwards, a benefit that many immigrant users utilize. As the House works to urge immigrant users out of the camps and distract them from their stressful wait for an answer, Trampoline House is designed to be an escape for immigrant users while teaching them practical Danishness.

As a social process and political project, integration into Danishness is based on an acquisition of social norms and regulations that are perceived as

Danish (Larson 2011; Jöhncke 2011; Krøjer & Sjørslev 2011). Due to the complex history of Danish identity, immigrants are viewed as “*loosely attached*” to Danish culture and society (Anderson 2003) and potential threats to “true” Danish culture and community (Buch-Anderson 2008; Kivisto & Wahlbeck 2013). While immigrants continue to be viewed as belonging to another country, the Danish government continues integration efforts of immigrants under the pretext of transforming these individuals into Danes. The results of this are double sided, as successful integration efforts does not necessarily result in immigrants’ inclusion into Danish society.

Trampoline House: Inclusion as an Encounter

The conception of Trampoline House emerged from two workshops that took place from January to March 2009. These workshops were the inspiration of three socially engaged artists who founded the Asylum Dialogue Tank, a talk-based think tank working to listen to the concerns of users living in camps. Morton, one of the three founders, elaborated:

When we were finished with the Asylum Dialogue Tank [after] three months, it was a rollercoaster. We started off three people [with] an idea and then we invited 20 people to the first workshop [14 Danes and 7 users]. The second workshop was 55 people [35 users and 20 Danes] because people heard about it and wanted to join ... We opened up a small test site for Trampoline House in a gallery. It was only two weeks but at the end of two weeks, we had a list of 170 people who wanted to volunteer in a permanent Trampoline House.

It was so crazy because I ... was standing in front of that crowd when [the temporary Trampoline] House was closing down and I was inspired by their expectation. I told them that we have to change this country and that Trampoline House would do it. I really felt that there was so much power; it's like sitting on a volcano. Something is rumbling under us and if we learn how to serve then it can really take us for a ride. So that is why we decided to start something permanent - both because we felt that the timing was right but also because the need for such platform was so evident and you could not disbelieve the asylum seekers now that we got to know so many of them. They knew how tough the situation in the camps are ... we felt that we had created a model that was extremely efficient and was so much fun that we took it and ran with it.

- Morten Interview

In November 2010, a permanent Trampoline House was officially opened in Nørrebro, Copenhagen, after receiving funding from Oak Foundation Denmark, a foundation that supports “exclusively social projects in Denmark” (Oak Foundation 2015).

As a member-driven house, Trampoline House invites everyone – members and non-members alike – to participate in activities, such as cleaning the house, cooking dinner, or taking one of the various classes (see Figure 43a). While the House differs depending on the activities that are occurring, one thing stays the same: the daily meals prepared by users in the kitchen praktik. Every day, members gather in the House to share a meal, conversing with one another as they enjoy the food that has been prepared.

Monday Closed	Tuesday 1–7 pm	Wednesday 1–7 pm	Thursday Closed	Friday 1–11 pm	Saturday 2–6 pm	Sunday Closed
	Cleaning (1–3 pm)	Cleaning (1–3 pm)		Cleaning (1–3 pm)		
	Shopping & Cooking (1–7 pm)	Shopping & Cooking (1–7 pm)		Shopping & Cooking (1–6 pm)	Women's Club (2–6 pm)	
	Computer (2–3 pm)	English (3–4 pm)		Staff meeting (2–3:30 pm)	– Welcome (2–2:30 pm)	
	English (2–3 pm)	Practice/Internship Information (3–5 pm)		English (3–4 pm)	– 30 min. exercise (2:30–3 pm)	
	Radio Kipanga (2–4 pm)	Radio Kipanga (3–5 pm)		Radio Kipanga (3–5 pm)	– Activity of the day (3–5 pm)	
	Danish (3–4 pm)	Child Care (3–6 pm)		Hair Salon (3–6 pm)	– Dinner (5–6 pm)	
	Child Care (3–6 pm)	Danish (4–5 pm)		Help & Information Café (3–6 pm)		
	Legal Counseling (4–7 pm)	visAvis hours (even weeks, 4–6 pm)		Bible Class in Farsi (4–5 pm)		
	House meeting (4:15–5:30 pm)	Arabic (beginners) (5–6 pm)		Arabic (advanced) (5–6 pm)		
	Counseling for New Residents (5–7 pm)	Legal Counseling (5–7 pm)		Child Care (5–8 pm)		

Figure 43a. Weekly schedule of activities.
(Trampoline House 2015)

Membership at Trampoline House is open to any individual who wants to be involved with the House. For volunteers, membership costs 50 DKK (\$10 USD),²⁰ as well as a weekly shift volunteering at the House in one of the various roles (which can entail babysitting, cooking, cleaning, or administrative work). Typically, volunteers are able to become coordinators of certain tasks. Immigrant users, on the other hand, also pay a yearly fee of 50 DKK (\$10 USD)²¹ and are given round trip train tickets to Trampoline House twice a week. Both times, they must be checked off as having attended Trampoline House's programs, one of which must be a shift that they have previously been assigned, which can range from working in the kitchen, teaching a class on a skill they have, or cleaning the

²⁰ Since August 2014, the membership price has risen.

²¹ Membership fees for users were dropped in August 2014.

house, amongst others. Non-members can also participate in Trampoline House's activities; it was quite common for Danes to visit the House on Friday nights for the communal Friday Dinner, the highlight of the week in which a large meal is cooked and shared with the entire House.

Danish Modern

The discussion of Trampoline House as a public space away from public space and a place of experimental identity-negotiation is important to understanding the gravitas of Trampoline House for the creation of a Danish modern identity. Holston and Appadurai argue, "modern urban public signifies both the defamiliarizing enormity of national citizenship and the exhilaration of its liberties" (1999:3). While this may threaten citizenship based on sameness, it creates new understandings of modern citizenship as a global process. Trampoline House is a space where members are able to test and mold this new Danish modern: a Danishness that intersects with the global world. Astrid, a Danish volunteer, describes Trampoline House as unlike other places in Denmark in these terms:

[Trampoline House is] like a hole in the Danish atmosphere and it really, really feels good in a way. I feel like I can...be way more free, though I know that there are some other norms in the House, they are just crossing over each other all the time.

-Astrid Interview

As a "hole in the Danish atmosphere," Trampoline House serves as a prototype of *spacialized performance* and an *open space* to understand other members on equal terms – something not commonly found in other Danish spheres.

As a volunteer at the House, Astrid envisions herself as participating in a “different Denmark” – one that is open to cultural differences:

I think I find something in the Trampoline House that I don't find other places in Denmark, which is something that is completely different than other norms, as we also talked about before, that there's not so much street life in Denmark. When people are hanging out in the streets without having a purpose, like just being there and talking about anything. So at Trampoline House, people just meet there to hang out and be together.

In many other places in the world [there is a street life]. For instance, in Colombia, I was travelling there last summer, and it was really normal that somebody just put a chair in the middle of the street and just was sitting. Just watching what was going on or looking at people, didn't say anything generally ... the more random and spontaneous meetings...that's something I really appreciate about the Trampoline House.

- Astrid Interview

Astrid comes to Trampoline House as a way to escape secular Danish society; one that Astrid believes frowns upon leisurely socializing in the public sphere and closes off opportunities to understand others' spiritual beliefs and cultural values. For Astrid, Trampoline House is an alternative public space where Danishness can be renegotiated. The House envisions itself as a break from Danish society: a middle ground where secular Denmark intersects with other more religiously inflected cultures.

As Danish volunteer Maria experiences, the House is a place of inclusion and intersectionality of cultures, where all aspects of one's identity are welcome and are not viewed as conflicting (see Figure 44a). In fact, it was normal to see a Muslim user at the House praying in the corner, further demonstrating the inclusion found at the House. Religious practices are woven throughout

Trampoline House as part of the normalized identity of the house. Rather than focus explicitly on religion throughout this thesis, I examine the house as a whole. I revisit religious identity in Chapter IV, which focuses on meal preparation as a time when religious practices are performed and negotiated.

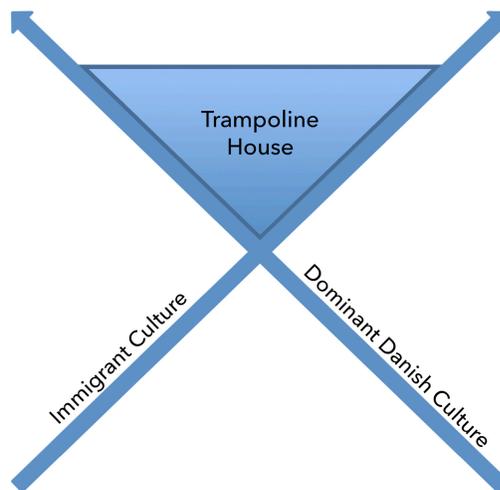


Figure 46a. Intersectionality at Trampoline House.

This is illustrated in Figure 46a as the intersection between Dominant Danish Culture and Immigrant Culture. It is within this space (the blue triangle signifying Trampoline House) that Danish modern is formed. Danish modern combines Danish norms with diverse other norms to create a place away from place that incorporates and includes all members of society, regardless of religious or secular status. Danish modern is a society of inclusiveness, of opposition to the Danish society that excludes based on a hierarchy of non-Western values. Danish volunteer Astrid reasons:

The House creates an opportunity of making something new that is not exactly defined by the usual terms and norms and ways of acting and looking and all this.

-Astrid Interview

Trampoline House is a space of encounter – a prototype in which members are able to reassess Danish identity and inclusion in a neutral space.

In the next chapter, I engage Trampoline House as a physical space and as a transformative space. I then examine the house within the broader geographical landscape of Denmark to understand the context in which users and members interact on a daily basis and how the House aims to shape members' interactions within the wider landscape.

CHAPTER II: SITING TRAMPOLINE HOUSE

Trampoline House attempts to establish a user presence in the greater Danish landscape by drawing users to the House and into the city. In this way, Trampoline House tries to contest the spacialization users living in the camps are faced with: by paying for users' round-trip train tickets to the House, Trampoline House hopes to establish user presence in inter-ethnic Nørrebro. Ultimately, the House aims to instill users with agency to open space for themselves in what I term as *Main Street Copenhagen*, where users are not a visible population. Through Trampoline House, users have the opportunity to gain a *temporary sense of belonging* in the House that may then transfer into the greater Danish society.

In order to understand Trampoline House as a transformative site, I examine, as included earlier, the House as a public “third space,” but also as a “third place.” In this chapter, I begin by understanding the place of users in Copenhagen, and how Trampoline House aims to empower users to claim space. I then move to how Trampoline House works as a bridge for users to *step into* Danish society, both within the spatial limits of the House as well as within the greater context. Following this, I discuss the concepts of space and place, and discuss the impact of the House's location in the multi-ethnic neighborhood in Nørrebro. Through examining the place of users in these contexts, Danishness (as is typically understood) is renegotiated.

Main Street Copenhagen

Danish national identity finds its place through an ethnic sameness, excluding non-ethnic individuals by limiting access of users to the public sphere – as well as from Danish members of society who understand their identity from a nationalistic viewpoint. As previously mentioned, users typically live in camps up to an hour away by train – a ticket that they cannot afford on the minimal living stipend they are provided with. This works to systematically exclude immigrant users from the Danish society by limiting their access to physical public space.

Copenhagen is divided into different neighborhoods (see Figure 49a), each of which carry certain connotations.



Figure 49a: Neighborhood Map of Copenhagen
(Akatu [2011]. Copenhagen Neighborhoods. Digital image. Akatu. Akatu.org. Web.)

These neighborhoods are divided in many different ways; while some are known to be for higher socio-economic classes, neighborhoods such as Nørrebro are noted for the high diversity of Arab, Turkish, and South-Asian residents (Kivisto & Wahlbeck 2013:197). For this section, I focus on what I understand as Main Street Copenhagen – namely, the most populated areas of Copenhagen surrounding Nørrebro.

In her work on “multiethnic Copenhagen,” anthropologist Garbi Schmidt traces diversity in Copenhagen as rooted in a respect insofar as there is a “respect and loyalty from its citizens” (Kivisto & Wahlbeck 2013:205). Right-wing politicians argue that ethnic enclaves threaten social cohesion in Denmark and, as a result, Danish national identity. Ironically, asylum centers are placed outside of Copenhagen where users have difficulty getting to the city. Morten explains immigrant users as “exceptions” to Danish society, who are systematically excluded from Main Street Copenhagen:

[In Copenhagen, users] are outcasts (shunned) from society ... they don't even have rights so they have to stay in camps. Or they have limited rights.

- Morten Interview

Unlike Nørrebro (where Trampoline House is located), what I am calling Main Street Copenhagen does not have a visible presence of immigrants. This is due partly to the distance of camps to Copenhagen – an obstacle Trampoline House aims to overcome.

Morten states that Trampoline House hopes to counter this absence of users by providing a space that bridges differences into Main Street Copenhagen:

It is a temporary space but ... it should be temporary because when it works, we are an exception to the exception but we are also a bridge. A bridge into society. Because when you come here, you will meet some Danes, and when they get to know you they will take you out to a bar or party. And then suddenly instead of everyone going to the House we start to spread out into the rest of society.

- Morten Interview

As a temporary space, Trampoline House attempts to perform as a passage into Danish society – a space for different members to interact and, if successful facilitate friendships between members. These friendships, Morten hopes, will allow immigrant users to open space in mainstream society by socializing with their Danish friends outside of the House.

Bridging into Danish Society

In this section, I demonstrate how Trampoline House works to counteract Danish norms of exclusion by pushing users to participate – and, ultimately, open space – in Trampoline House, a skill that then transfers to the negotiation of space into Danish society at large. Immigrant users who spoke to me noted that they felt isolated in their asylum camps and were at first hesitant to join Trampoline House due to the remote location of the camps. Upon first encounter with the House, users noted that they felt included in a way they did not experience before – primarily because Trampoline House placed them into a zone of radical democracy based on the idiom of friendship. David elaborates:

We say that we are democratic family ... that is why in House Meetings, everybody [can] speak up express what [is] ok or not ok. In the house meeting, the different things come up. If there is a program we want to implement ... it is brought to the house meeting.

When they say it user driven it is like, without the [members], [there wouldn't be any activities running. So, I think it is very true. Because without us, without you, it is only Morten, Søren, Finn and Tone [the staff]. So it [is] users of the house who come in and exhibit their different skills, expertise, knowledge.

- David Interview

Further, Trampoline House pushes users to open space for themselves in the House Meeting. Astrid understands this as a symbolic move:

There's a big wish to include all the users in the decisions and that's what we're really trying to do ... That's what you see in the house meetings, where you can speak up and you get the possibility to say what you think and make a suggestion and try to get involved in decisions ... But also you can feel that [users] are really not used to it, being included in that way [in Danish society]. So they are pretty shy often and ... don't want to say what they really think. But I think again the symbol in itself is strong because you can also feel when people feel accepted like equal persons, it does something to them. It makes them feel so at home and not in some institution.

- Astrid Interview

By urging the participation of all members, Trampoline House attempts to make users feel at ease in the public sphere of the House “family” – and, by extension, at ease with Danish citizenship. Though users may be shy at first, perhaps due to an erasure of agency from camp life, Trampoline House urges immigrant users to participate in the House by continuously noting, “This is your house too!” (Field Notes, April 11).

As a prototype of an inclusive Denmark, Trampoline House is an example of “open source urbanism” (Corsín Jiménez & Estalella 2014),²² aiming to shape Danishness through citizen participation. Trampoline House becomes a space of democratic inclusiveness, a public sphere that “incorporates and recognizes the diversity of identities that people bring” (Calhoun 2002:167) to the House and, finally, Danish society. This counters the systematic exclusion of immigrant users from the Danish society, where the public sphere is “not able to encompass people of different personal and group identities” results in a lack of public democracy (Calhoun 2002:165).

For the members I spoke with, Trampoline House performs as a space to counter mechanical solidarity (Durkheim 1893) based on similarities found in Danish society, replacing this with a new form of solidarity rooted in a *warm* appreciation and understanding of cultural differences. Members of Trampoline House are encouraged to *open space* in the public sphere by participating in the House. This is visible through weekly House Meetings, unites members of the House:

There are different ways of having relations with each other. There's also a group of people that are just hanging out at the House and that have their own kind of group – friends hanging out on the sofas, and they speak to each other. So there are small groups in the House. But the house meeting is one of the things that I really think is important to the House. Like you can hear when people are walking around, ‘house meeting! House meeting!’

²² Corsín Jiménez defines Open Source Urbanism as the transformation of urban spheres through the “wiring of the landscapes [of the] communities with devices, networks or architectures that [citizens] deem worthy of local attention or concern” (2014:342). Trampoline House is one such example of a network pointedly working towards garnering attention regarding inclusion in Denmark.

There was a name round and it was really funny. Every person said it's own name and then everybody in the circle had to shout the name afterwards, and it was going around the whole circle, maybe 35 people or something, shouting...it was a bit like in preschool ... So it was a good picture in a way, that that was where everybody met and spoke together and listened together and discussed the same subjects, so that's an important meeting.

- Astrid Interview

During their fieldwork on *Ungdomshuset* (The Youth House), an autonomous social center in Nørrebro run by young people, Stine Krøijer and Inger Sjørlev argue, “autonomous free spaces come to represent...everyday utopianism” (2011:85). Similarly to *Ungdomshuset*, Trampoline House is interested in working on social relations in hopes of urging all individuals to participate in making the social center (Figure 54a).



Figure 54a. Members of the House advocating for inclusion of immigrants in Denmark. The sign reads: “Here, there is space.”
(Trampoline House 2015)

At this point, it is useful to consider the sociological and anthropological literature that elaborates the distinction across ethnographic contexts. As a physical entity, the House can be considered a space where normative Danish identity can be contested and understood on members' own terms. Here, identity is about what a person does – and not how a person practices being-in-the-world. Social spaces such as Trampoline House are places: significant spaces where social relationships are “qualitatively different from a physical location or a geographical space” (Krøjer & Sjørlev 2011:87).

While Trampoline House is a place to practice social relationships, the physical entity of the House continues to play a major role in the overall function of the House, pushing users and Danish members to interact in a society where they may not otherwise have the chance to do so: they cannot avoid interactions due to everyday interactions tied to work and the evening gathering for the daily meal served at the House. This is incredibly valuable for Danish volunteers (such as Astrid), who are interested in interacting with individuals from other cultures and might not have the opportunity to do so in everyday Danish society, as well as for users who are not typically exposed to social situations with Danish citizens.

Steven Feld and Keith Basso consider places as “sites of power struggles or about displacement as histories of annexation, absorption, and resistance” (Feld & Basso 1996:5). Unlike space, which is simply a physical entity, place (as I employ it) is both physical as well as the symbolic meaning and connection linked to a space. These connections of place might be to “social imagination and

practice to memory and desire, to dwelling and motive,” and ultimately focus on contestation of identity (Feld & Basso 1996:8). Members at Trampoline House transform the House from a physical entity into a space of cultural significance – a place. Power struggles are edited out of this picture by the vision of Trampoline House as a prototypical Danish modern family of citizens.

Nørrebro

As a center mediating encounters between Danish members and users, Trampoline House places itself in a complex position within Danish society. Trampoline House’s location is telling of the House itself. The House is established in Nørrebro, a neighborhood of Copenhagen, consisting of a variety of “ethnic backgrounds [and] leftist political views” residents who share a pride of being part of the neighborhood (Feldt & Sinclair 2011:68). Mainstream Danes commonly refer to Nørrebro as the “ghetto” – a rhetoric that is supported in Danish media through the depiction of immigrants as dangerous. As Schuyler Marquez describes during her fieldwork in Denmark, it is not uncommon to hear “ethnic Danes refer to the 6A and 5A buses that serve the area as the ‘Oriental Express,’ in references to the riders on the bus” (Marquez 2010:18).

The multi-cultural setting of Nørrebro seems to have a major impact in the participation of users at Trampoline House. As Maria, a Danish volunteer and Bosnian immigrant, informed me:

The fact that it's on Nørrebro, it's easier to have it there because it's a multicultural area and there's a lot of different religions and nationalities and everything ... I came to Denmark in 1993 and we were in a camp in a small island in south Denmark and there were no other refugees or nationalities or anything else, so there you really had to become Danish in some way. There wasn't any space to maintain your own cultural values. Actually some of my family, I know they just stopped speaking Bosnian to their children. And their children like my age forgot their language because they just try to fit in. so I think it's easier in bigger cities, like [Nørrebro] to have your own culture.

- Maria Interview

Maria acknowledges that the location of Nørrebro is unlike “other” parts of Denmark, due to the diverse individuals who live in this section of the city.

Perhaps best to illustrate this is through the description of traveling through Main Street Copenhagen and into Nørrebro. Located north of Main Street Copenhagen, the scenery through the route to Nørrebro evolves drastically as one walks up Frederiksborggade, where cars populate the streets and Danes walk by silently. As one crosses into Nørrebro, the street population becomes much more diverse and alive, as Danes and minorities alike pass by, engaged in excited conversation. The stores shift drastically from the franchises found on Main Street Copenhagen to smaller ethnic grocery stores and worn-down travel agencies.

Perhaps due to the many minorities that call Nørrebro home, Danes living in Nørrebro have a more liberal and accepting attitude towards immigrants to Denmark. For Danes outside of Nørrebro, the neighborhood represents something entirely different. Astrid elaborates:

[Politicians] define the debate [surrounding immigration] by always attacking this minority of people living in the ‘ghettos’. [On] Blågarsgade,²³ for instance, some years ago they were talking about ... some shootings because of some gang stuff – so it was completely hyped in the media. I think maybe three people died [but] it was so hyped, everybody [outside of Nørrebro thought] “Okay Nørrebro, it’s a really dangerous place and you cannot [go there] – especially Blågarsgade, you’re getting shot.” It was so hyped. [Yet if you actually went] to Blågarsgade, it’s as quiet as it is now and it’s so relaxed. But people were really afraid.

- Astrid Interview

In recent years, Nørrebro’s image has slowly shifted to be viewed as “trendy” by ethnic Danes who identify as having “more liberal” ideas about Danish identity (Kivisto & Wahlbeck 2013). These sentiments resonated with Maria:

There are really a lot of young students, [and a lot] of open-minded people, in [Nørrebro] that come to the house and I know that in the countryside that would be more difficult.

- Maria Interview

Unlike other parts of Denmark, Maria believes that the House’s location in Nørrebro attracts people interested in meeting others from different backgrounds – something she believes would be more difficult in other locations. Morten, the Executive Director, elaborates:

Sixty percent of the people in Nørrebro vote for Enhedslisten,²⁴ [so] this is not like the normal Danish situation. So of course, I think we have more [volunteers] from the left coming here. And they do feel alienated because of this neoliberal economy and the way politicians have forgotten about why we have a welfare state. I also think that a lot of people come here because it’s back to basics. You can feel the effect of solidarity.

- Morten Interview

²³ Blågarsgade is a side street in Nørrebro where many local businesses lie and people come to socialize outside. On any given day of the summer, it is common to see the street filled with Danes and immigrants blending together in one crowd.

²⁴ Enhedslisten is the one of the radical leftist political groups in Denmark.

It is because Trampoline House is situated in Nørrebro, Morten believes, that more radical Danes are attracted to volunteer at the House. Morten hopes that along with drawing members to the House, the House will be able to branch out into Nørrebro's everyday life:

One way to expand the house would be to create a network of businesses and companies who [hire] refugees. If we could maybe make a sponsor agreement so they support the house so that in turn they get interns from the camps. This way we could open up the job market for people in the camps. It would open the house up. You can say the House is open in terms of all the left wing activists that come here. [But] it would be nice if some capitalist company would open up a position for an asylum seeker at their operation so that you know would just be able to integrate with the left wing of Nørrebro and that means money and jobs. That would be a dream for the future.

- Morten Interview

Morten anticipates that by involving local businesses, the House will expand into Nørrebro, drawing users to stay in the area. Through including users in everyday business life in Nørrebro, users have a chance to participate in the broader community. Eventually, Morten anticipates, this will allow users to branch out to Main Street Copenhagen.

Re-Placing Danishness

While Danish modern is still bound to the physical space of Trampoline House, the House aims to slowly evolve the conventional understanding of Danish identity specifically by involving Danish members. Danish members find something enthralling about Trampoline House, a space where they are able to interweave Danish identity with newfound values. It is at Trampoline House that Danish volunteers such as Astrid are able to simply “hang out” with one another,

going against the expected purposefulness found in secular Danish society. Placed into the merging of dominant Danish culture, Trampoline House understands itself as the antithesis to secular Danishness. Morten understands the House as mobilizing blended values in the sense of giving voice to them:

We have created a vehicle for inclusion for these people but it will be a limited space. We only have one corner of the city. The idea is to spread the practice, spread the method. And that is why it is important that it should be volunteers who work here because people from all parts of the city can join and see that it is actually possible to practice solidarity and that it's even fun to do it. It has to be more fun inside than outside the house. That is when it works. So in this sense we ... are spokespersons for these people but we also are spokespersons for a method and for a practice.

- Morten Interview

In sum, as a “vehicle for inclusion,” Trampoline House is still confined to Nørrebro. For some users, the House performs as a bridge to Main Street Copenhagen by slowly drawing users out of the camps and into Danish society. As a result, Trampoline House is a unique location where users are provided an opportunity to learn secular Danishness from Danish members – the very members who seek to escape this everyday Danishness. For volunteers, Trampoline House plays a complicated role as an escape from homogenous Denmark in exchange for a unique form of Danishness – a Danish modern – where outside culture intermixes with the secular.

In the following chapter, I focus on perceptions of the House, specifically in the role of Trampoline House in testing a new form of inclusive Danish identity. I

also examine how Danish staff, volunteers and immigrant users understand the House, and how these members envision their usefulness for the House.

CHAPTER III: TRAMPOLINE HOUSE: PERFORMING DANISHNESS TO ITSELF

In this chapter, I begin by introducing the transformation of members into more inclusive citizens through the concept of liminality. Following this, I draw upon interviews with staff, volunteers and users to understand how members envision the House and how they believe they contribute to the House. Ultimately, I argue, the House is a space of mediation where members are able to create friendships between groups – a key aspect in the re-imagining of an inclusive Danish identity.

Transformed and Transforming Identities: A Study in Liminality

Danish volunteers and staff make the conscious decision to leave everyday Danish society in favor for the multicultural place of Trampoline House. Simultaneously, immigrant users willingly leave the asylum camps in favor for the House, a place of acceptance where users are able to socialize with individuals they might not otherwise speak to. The movement between the two realities of dominant Danish society into Trampoline House's place of inclusiveness might be understood as a rite of passage for members. Arnold Van Gennep argues that rites of passage consist of three main phases:

- a. Rites of separation from a previous social status;
- b. Rites of liminality, performed during the transitional stage;
- c. Rites of re-aggregation: the ceremonies of incorporation into a new social status.

- Van Gennep 1908

Victor Turner further focuses on the liminal phase, when persons become aware that they are “betwixt and between” statuses and the familiar world orders (Turner

1967:47). In the case of volunteers at the House, the rite of separation from dominant Danish culture and society occurred when each volunteer first made contact with Trampoline House and began to question what the House really means for Danish society.

Members of the House are “betwixt and between” (Douglas 1966; Turner 1967) the Danish modern being created at Trampoline House and conventional Danish society. As transitional members, Danish members are unbound and mobile between spaces, able to choose the extent to which they participate in the House. While immigrant users are faced with a similar choice, their positions as transitional members do not stop at the House, but follows them into their lives as immigrants in the Danish society.

The Structuring Goals and Values of the House

The goals of Trampoline House are two-fold:

1. To break the isolation that most asylum seekers find themselves in – and to provide them with the agency and tools needed for them to better their social and legal situation.
2. To inform the Danish public about the conditions of refugees and asylum seekers in Denmark, in an attempt to motivate the public to work to make the refugee and asylum policies more just and humane.

- Trampoline House 2015

Along with the two official goals listed on the website, Tone states that there is one more goal: integration. As mentioned, immigrant users who have legal approval to stay in Denmark are expected to learn Danishness. Trampoline House, Tone informed me, aims to prepare immigrant users to integrate by including

users in the everyday programming of the house. This is explained in Trampoline House's own words:

The Trampoline House strives to make the everyday life of asylum seekers in Denmark a little better by offering a space where they can engage in activities together with Danish citizens on equal terms. The house aims to create meaningful meetings and agency based on mutual respect, democratic learning, knowledge exchange, and network building.

- Trampoline House 2015

In this representation, the house aspires to be an outlet of communication, affording Danish members the opportunity to learn about user conditions while concurrently incorporating users into the Danish social sphere.

Staff

In the next two sections, I draw upon my interviews with Danish staff and volunteers to understand how they envision their usefulness for Trampoline House and how the House serves their visions of a Danish future. As a result of their interactions with users, Danish members are in position to reevaluate their conceptualization of self within the greater Danish society.

Morten

Morten met with me at the House on a Thursday before the House officially opened for members. One of the three original founders of the House, Morten first began to conceptualize Trampoline House through an art project known as the Asylum Dialogue Tank:

I am an artist so the Asylum Dialogue Tank was part of my socially engaged artistic practice. So it was supposed to have lasted for a three-month period and then I wasn't really sure what to use the results for.

But in many of the projects that I've been developing like since 2000, it was always temporary and you find, you get, it's like a research what is possible with a certain community and then at one point it stops because you move on to the next project.

[For example,] a painting. It's supposed to last for an eternity. But community projects are supposed to be temporary. And if you define a community project as not temporary then it stops being art, for some reason, because it begins to be a social practice more than artistic practice.

- Morten Interview

The Asylum Dialogue Tank fostered a great amount of interest from the Danish and immigrant population base, inspiring Morten and two other partners to begin the more permanent Trampoline House. As Morten understands it, the House is a socially engaged art piece due to the permanence of the structure. Typically, community engaged art projects are only temporary pieces – unlike more permanent projects. As a result, Trampoline House oversteps the realm of “art” to intersect with the community as a “socially-engaged” creative commons.

Following the installation of the House, Morten took the title of Creative Coordinator in avoidance of creating a structural hierarchy in the House:

[When] we opened up the house, we wanted to experiment with democracy, and we wanted a flat structure. We did not want a boss ... because [we thought] people should be able to feel included and to get some kind of power over their own life. So if you decide to join the house it's a vote for yourself, that you will be respected here and you are able to exert power here. Unlike in the camps, of course. So that's why we wanted this flat democracy because there should not be a Danish boss.

- Morten Interview

Morten was wary about instilling a visible hierarchy within the house, especially if the person in charge was Danish – a structure he believed would reflect camp life too much for users to understand the House as a safe space and zone of

escape. After experimenting with a loose structure, Morten realized the lack of visible order was creating confusion as members tried to negotiate their place at the house:

The first six months were totally chaotic [because] of this idea of “no control.” It got crazy because if you have anarchy ... a flat structure and you refuse to explain who is in power, that does not mean you [do not] have power. But it means that it is invisible to the new comers. And that is more dangerous [because] if [the] chair [of the leader] was empty, someone would sit in it because they are scared of the anarchy. And that caused problems because when this guy puts himself in my position [as leader], maybe I did not care so much if he sits in that chair but the rest of the people from the camps got really pissed because, “Why is this Russian trying to take power of the Trampoline House, where is this access to this power, he does not have the authority!”

- Morten Interview

While originally Morten was at a place of influence in the House, he avoided labeling himself as the “leader,” hoping to have a loose anarchist structure. This caused despair amongst immigrant users, who struggled to negotiate where the authoritative power lay. The founder members of the House then began to realize that immigrant users were seeking a leader to take charge:

We gradually found out that we had to change our hierarchy because it would be better to call things what they are. And then we realize that the asylum seekers wanted me to be the boss. ... People were pissed and they wanted to put me back into that chair. So eventually, I decided to take upon me this responsibility. And I think for me it turned out to be a lot easier [than I expected] to name it and not to be shy about it is a lot easier.

- Morten Interview

Upon assuming the position of “boss” at the House, Morten began to face negative feedback from Danish members:

We had a problem because all the Danish activists, they joined the house because they wanted loose anarchistic structure and did not like the idea of a boss. I sort of had an identity crisis because I needed to cater [to Danish members] but I needed to cater the people from the camps.

So finally, I came up with this beard because the Danes thought I looked like an underground rock star. While people from the camps from authoritarian regimes they thought I looked like a patriarch. That is kind of an artistic analysis of the problem; it's my performative identity.

- Morten Interview

Morten calls this story about power his “beard story.” Confronted with the counter expectations of Danes wanting a structure-less house and the users struggling to find a leader within the House, Morten resolved this dilemma by performing a split identity for these groups by presenting himself with a beard. For users accustomed to authoritarian regimes, Morten depicts a “patriarch,” the head of the House, so to speak. Danish members view Morten as a “rock star,” visually representing someone that is atypical for the Danish mainstream. Although Morten states that his role as leader is a performance, Morten was disciplined to become the leader members expected him to be, going in line with his internalized understanding of himself as a leader of the house.

Morten is now formally recognized as the Executive Director and has been given many nicknames by members of the house. On one occasion, Morten was given a new name outside of the House:

Basam was doing a rap one night and it was just too funny. Now it's catching [on with users]. At this venue [where] I was supposed to do this speech and half the crew was from Trampoline House and they were just shouting “Morten Mandela!”

- Morten Interview

Throughout my discussions, users noted to me that Morten is the “father” of the House (David Interview) and one of the “easiest people to talk to” (Hassan Interview). Morten’s role has earned him titles of affection, especially by immigrant users. As Morten notes, the consistent dedication to the house has created a close interest in Trampoline House as a project:

I was the one who found the money for the house and I was the one [who] kept working for the house. In this sense, it was kind of my baby more than Tone’s or the others.

- Morten Interview

Tone

If Morten is understood by users as the patriarch of Trampoline House, it can only be fair to call Tone the matriarch. Outside of the House, Tone is Morten’s life partner and the mother to a young daughter. Within the House, Tone is the “mother” (David Interview), encouraging users through constant engagement.

Like Morten, Tone was one of the three initial founders of Trampoline House. Currently, she is the Program and Volunteer Coordinator at the House:

I’m in charge of programming all the activities and services that take place in the house and I try to take care of the volunteers, give them proper introduction and supervision while in the house, and end the relationship with a letter of recommendation.

- Tone Interview

Tone’s priorities lie within ensuring that members feel welcome and visible at the House. For users, this takes place in the form of greeting users as they walk into the House:

As a volunteer, you have to pay attention to the individuals [especially users] coming in, say hello, ask them about their haircut.

They spend so much of their lives in the Danish society ignored;
this is the one place where we make them visible.

- Tone Interview

Tone consistently goes out of her way to make sure she greets users and asks them how they are doing. On one occasion, we were in the midst of a house meeting when a female user, arrived. Tone abruptly stopped the meeting to greet the user, exclaiming over her new haircut – even going as far as to ask the entire community, “Isn’t it nice?” (Field Notes, May 6).

Tone aims to utilize Trampoline House as a space for users to become visible, active members of the community by “unlearning” the invisibility they have been accustomed to in the asylum centers. Trampoline House, Tone believes, teaches users how to be active members at the House – a skill she hopes will transfer into the Danish society:

[When we first started] we had this idea that you can turn any person into an engaged political participant ... it’s not everybody who’s interested in being engaged political participant. And that there’s room for not being interested in the house meeting and in how the house is run.

But if you are interested and if you DO want to have agency and feel empowered in the house, then you have any - every... opportunity. That’s, in my opinion, how the house runs at the moment. And that everybody feels seen and heard and respected and included in whatever decisions they want to.

- Tone Interview

As an active staff member, Tone sees herself as performing a role of empowering immigrant users through encouraging them at Trampoline House.

For Tone, the House is a space where users can re-imagine their lives outside of the camps, an aspect she believes is important to acknowledge:

The house has a tendency as an organization to romanticize itself and what it does as an organization. The reality check of the house is always that everybody at the house loves the house but people in the camps are primarily concerned about their case and their life situation and we have neglected that in the house to make a real platform where that life situation can be evaluated and imagined otherwise.

- Tone Interview

Trampoline House performs as a space to renegotiate immigrant user life by allowing users to discuss their experiences. By providing a space to voice their concerns, Tone believes, immigrant users feel more accepted into Danish society despite their seclusion to the camps. Tone understands herself as part of a bigger project: one of inclusion through making immigrant users visible and accepting them into a microcosm of the Danish mainstream.

Danish Volunteers

Astrid, a Danish volunteer interested in making a cosmopolitan Denmark, uses the House as a way to “meet different people on equal terms” and to learn more about the variety of cultures (Astrid Interview). While the “debate about integration in Denmark has been full of anxiety” (Astrid Interview), Trampoline House is a place of mediation where Astrid can meet users while redefining what the Danish society means to her.

For her, Trampoline House is an escape from conventional senses of Danishness. I argue that for Danish members such as Astrid, Trampoline House is an experimental zone for reimagining Danish identity in terms, which source to inclusiveness as a core value. In short, while Trampoline House presents itself as a neutral space to learn Danishness, it is simultaneously a transformative place

outside of everyday Danishness that allows Danish members to test a new form of Danish modern for translation to Danish society at large.

Astrid

Astrid volunteers as a kitchen coordinator at the House. As we follow her relationships at Trampoline House, the contours of its everyday practices emerge, producing a sense of what works for many other members at Trampoline House – and also what falls short of their expectations.

With her dreadlocked hair, septum piercing, and mismatched clothing, Astrid struck me as the sartorial antithesis of Copenhageners one sees in passing on mainstream streets of Copenhagen’s central district – their dress nearly uniform, often consisting of no more than three neutral colors. Now in her early 20s, Astrid has backpacked alone around India and Nepal and has also traveled to South America, where she learned Spanish over the year she spent working on a South American farm. Her interest in the world is explicit in her future plans to travel to Spain and Greece with her brother, a trip that she believes will teach her “how to take care of [myself] in different cultures” (Astrid Interview). After traveling, Astrid returned to Denmark, and, when she continued to think about Trampoline House, signed up to volunteer at the House. Astrid acknowledges that this is not typical for Danish members, as the House can tend to intimidate some:

When you enter the Trampoline House as a volunteer, you also realize that it’s a mess sometimes and you have to step in yourself and really take responsibility and define your own role sometimes, and I think it scares people away sometimes. But it also does that when somebody comes who really likes that idea, they also stay and they’ll return to the House. Even me, when they’ve been away

for a long time, then they'll always get back, just to be at the Friday evening, maybe, but people get their own connection to the House.

- Astrid Interview

Astrid first heard about the House when Morten, one of the founders and current executive director, came to the production school where she was enrolled and spoke about Trampoline House:

[One of my friends and I] were making a ... stop motion [film] about refugees and asylum cases, and then we went to [interview] Morten. And then I [went back to Trampoline House again] figured out which type of place it was and then I went traveling for half a year, so that was a time when I wasn't there so much. But then I came back and I've been working there every week since summer.

- Astrid Interview

At first, Astrid was drawn to the House, returning to "figure out which type of place it was" – a return to the House based on a gravity of confusion. Astrid found the House intriguing, and was thereby drawn to it as a place of return.

Astrid acknowledges that as a Dane, her experiences are different than those of users:

I grew up in Denmark and I am privileged enough [volunteer. Users] have escaped from the most horrible conditions, [so] there's something a bit strange in the relation.

- Astrid Interview

It is at this point that Astrid began to feel more accustomed to being at the House, and began to take membership as a Danish member. Astrid's constant looping back to the House despite her mobility as an ethnic Dane who is accepted in the Danish society suggests a deeper interest in the House and its purpose, as

demonstrated by her interest in the House as a place of equal encounter between member groups:

The whole debate about integration in Denmark has been very full of anxiety in way of something that is strange to you; that is, something that you don't know anything about ... when you meet somebody from another country [for the first time], you [say], okay this guy is from maybe Iran ... and you start thinking...maybe I was afraid that he thought I was a racist... It's very normal to be pretty racist in Denmark ... and sometimes you have some expectations [that become self-confirmed] you're afraid that he thinks that I'm [racist]. So sometimes if you don't meet somewhere [such as Trampoline House] and if you're not forced to confront these expectations and actually confirm or disconfirm if they are true or false, then you can never meet and that's the place where the barriers are falling apart.

- Astrid Interview

Birgitte

Upon meeting Birgitte, I was immediately impressed by her put-together appearance and personality. Birgitte has a strong presence in the House, capturing the attention of members as she greeted them, asking them how they were. Birgitte was the only volunteer who asked that we interview in the House itself, and was not shy to ask Søren (the User Coordinator) and a user to leave the empty classroom so we could speak in private.

A graduate from the University of Copenhagen, where she majored in Anthropology, Birgitte left Denmark upon obtaining her undergraduate degree to work for the Red Cross in London while studying for her masters. When she decided that she wanted to return to Denmark for a masters in social work, she began looking for jobs similar to her work at Red Cross:

I started in October ... 2013. I was actually living in London [and was] planning to go home ... I looked online and I saw there was an advert for the Kitchen Coordinator role...I kind of expected it to be an internship. I applied for it and I had an interview over Skype and then I came home and I started and I quickly found out, it's not the Red Cross at all.

- Birgitte Interview

At first Birgitte expected Trampoline House to be similarly structured to the Red Cross, envisioning the House as a place where she would be able to aid vulnerable populations. However, upon starting at the House as a Kitchen Coordinator, she realized that Trampoline House was not as she had expected. Whereas Red Cross was incredibly structured with a “sharp division between workers and clients,” Trampoline House is much more fluid – a quality that Birgitte finds both positive and negative:

I love that this house is not [structured], but at the same time ... I wish there could be a bit more efficiency ... instead of talk about it for weeks and weeks...I think the House is starting to keep its fundamental principles and ideology but also professionalizing in a way, which I think is good because I think that's also about taking the responsibility that this House actually has towards the [users] by becoming a bit more officialized. Because this house does something really amazing that you can't find at any other place, but then it's also about living up to that responsibility in a way. Also because the users are very different: some like that it's [unstructured] and some people would like it to be more a structured place.

- Birgitte Interview

Despite the frustration Birgitte expresses at the informality of the House, she continues to work with the House, as she believes it is her responsibility. She envisions herself as carrying a social responsibility towards immigrant users. This attitude is evident in her dedication towards immigrants, to whom she feels

indebted as one more privileged and whose identity as such is defined against theirs. As a volunteer at the House, Birgitte is able to feel as though she is giving back, thereby accounting for her privilege as a Dane.

Apart from the House, Birgitte remains actively involved with the Danish Red Cross, as well as a new organization for unaccompanied minors in order to ensure that minors get the legal counseling that they need while applying for Danish citizenship. However, Trampoline House, Birgitte holds, is unique:

It really means a great deal to me. It has, in many ways ... made me discover that it's really possible to be together in this way. I've always wished it was possible and now coming to this house, I've been able to experience that it is possible.
If I have a bad day, coming here is really great, because people are just very nice and there's always someone to talk to. In that way, it's just a wonderful place coming ... I think it's just so inspiring to see that this can work and people can be together the way they are here.

- Birgitte Interview

Birgitte believes that Trampoline House has given her a new outlook on inclusion in Denmark, one of an inclusive, open society. Unlike other programs geared towards immigrants, Trampoline House gives Birgitte an idealistic view of differences coming together for one united cause.

Mads

I met with Mads at a coffee shop near Trampoline House. Soft-spoken, Mads carefully considered what he was about to say and directed much of our conversation towards language acquisition. A Danish teacher at the House, Mads has a master's degree in Danish as a Second Language. Mads' passion for the

subject shone through during the interview, as he discussed the various language-teaching theories and practices.

Mads' journey into Trampoline House began during a lecture series hosted by *Openhagen*, a left-wing political and theoretical forum:

I went to this lecture at University of Copenhagen, where Søren was giving [a] lecture about the Trampoline House ... and then we had an excursion to the House one Friday. After a while, I saw a small poster [asking for Danish teachers]. [Before that,] I didn't know they had Danish classes.

I [thought it would be] a very good opportunity for me because I didn't have [teaching] experience, and [it would] look good on my CV.

- Mads Interview

Initially, Mads started at the House to fulfill his personal need of gaining teaching experience, and acknowledges that the House is a personal benefit. As one of the two permanent Danish teachers, Mads is able to structure classes as he so desires, and is able to use the House as a "laboratory for trying out what they [taught] us in school" (Mads Interview). As a result, Mads is able to gain experience testing and perfecting different language-teaching styles.

At the same time that the House gives Mads the experience he desires, Mads is cognizant of how connected he has become to the House:

I'm more into the Danish classes, so my area is quite small. I come a bit before and then we talk. But when people are really engaged in the house, maybe, it gets too heavy for them and they have these experiences which is traumatizing and they feel like bearing other people's sad stories sometimes. In that sense, I'm not getting overburdened. But I think that it's a possibility to get that from some of the other people who get so involved and so engaged and after half a year, they're having depression.

- Mads Interview

Mads' awareness about his connection to the House stems from his acceptance that he alone, or the House alone, is not enough to change the situations of immigrant users. It is this self-same emotional distance, he believes, that allows him to affect some change through teaching users Danish, as he is able to separate his feelings about the situation of users when he leaves the House.

As a male volunteer, Mads occupies a special position at the House. At the Trampoline House, a gender discrepancy amongst volunteers was clear-cut. Most of the volunteers I worked with were female, and out of the six volunteers I spoke to, only one (Mads) was a male. Mads noted that his role as a male teacher gave him a different position in the House than his female counterparts:

I think some of the male asylum seekers like the fact that I'm male ...It's easy for me to get [male users'] attention in comparison to some of the girls. It's also because I've been there for so long so I have more authority maybe.

So when they know you, they also feel comfortable with you because they feel secure towards me because they feel, oh he'll stay there or he's coming again and again. So that's also safe.

- Mads Interview

Similarly to how Mads finds it important to distance himself from the House, he recognizes that for users, his constant return marks him as "safe". As a result, users feel comfortable with Mads. However, Mads also acknowledges that his gender plays a role in this, as his presence as a male volunteer demands a certain attention that female volunteers might not get from the majority-male user group.

Mads' passion for teaching Danish is what initially drew him to the Trampoline House, where he is able to structure his classes however he wants to. This allows him to gain the experience he felt that he needed in order to further

his career while simultaneously partaking in the House's culture of reciprocity by giving his knowledge to users. Ultimately, Mads notes, the House participates in a unique form of reciprocity that reaches over different member groups.

Maria

One of the most unique volunteers I spoke to was Maria, a Bosnian refugee who fled to Denmark over a decade ago. Having been raised in Denmark since she was a young child, Maria considers herself a Dane yet speaks fondly of her Bosnian roots. For Maria, Trampoline House is a personal project; at the same time, she believes she has a responsibility as a Dane who is fully integrated in the system.

Maria originally heard about the House three years ago:

Søren [the User Coordinator], is my sister's friend and she started coming there to the Friday dinners and then I went to an introduction for volunteers at that time and then I started doing some cleaning in the beginning and then the café and then [ended up working on the internship that Maria holds now].

- Maria Interview

Maria joined the House six months after it first opened, allowing her the unique experience of evolving with the population of the House. The duration of her involvement has created a deep connection between Maria and the Trampoline House community:

I've been there such a long time that I don't feel that I can not go there, because I know a lot of people quite good now; I know how much help these people need actually. So I have sort of a personal relationship with people.

I was quite young when I came to Denmark so I don't remember all these problems and things when you're a refugee, but I know

that my parents had a very rough time. I think it's a necessity to help these people.

- Maria Interview

By bringing her personal narrative to the House, Maria finds a way to connect herself with the other members of the House, aligning herself with immigrant users. Maria's position as a Dane puts her in a place of privilege, where she finds it necessary to help immigrant users in more vulnerable positions.

While the House is a place of privilege for Danes like Maria, it is also a unique place of acceptance where immigrant users are able to maintain their cultural identities while learning Danishness. This ability to hold onto cultural values is integral to Maria, who experienced this first hand:

I came to Denmark [and] we were in a camp in a small island in south Denmark ... there were no other refugees or nationalities ... so there you really had to become Danish [to fit in]. There wasn't any space to maintain your own cultural values.

Some of my family just stopped speaking Bosnian [and] their children ... forgot their language because they just tried to fit in.

- Maria Interview

Maria acknowledges that through the process of becoming Danish, a loss of culture occurs. It is this very loss of culture that Maria hopes to counteract through the Trampoline House:

A lot of people who come [to the House] feel like they can both make their [for example] Arabic food and listen to their Arabic music and speak about their culture and, at the same time, feel welcome in Denmark by Danish people that come there and share their experiences. So I think that they can both maintain [their own culture] and learn how Danish people want them to be.

- Maria Interview

For Maria, the physical entity of Trampoline House is a placeholder between Danish and cultural identities of users, a middle ground where the two come together in acceptance. Due to her multi-dimensional experiences, Maria envisions herself in a place of privilege compared to immigrant users, yet simultaneously is able to empathize and relate to what user groups might be experiencing. As a result, Maria feels closely connected to Trampoline House, which works to bridge together her multiple experiences and identities.

Immigrant Users

In this next section, I focus on three immigrant users at the House in order to understand how they comprehend Trampoline House. Similarly to how interactions with users shape volunteers in reimagining Danishness, immigrant users are influenced by their encounters with volunteers as they learn Danishness. For this member group, Trampoline House is valued as a *kulturhus*, where immigrant users are able to intersect their culture of origin with secular Danish identity.

For immigrant users, Trampoline House is a place of transition, but also a site of refuge from the asylum centers. Through the interviews with users, I demonstrate that the House is a place of escape: a site of intersectionality between Danishness and cultural identity. As a result, the House plays a role of acceptance that users might not find in other parts of the Danish society. Along with this, the House is an escape from the everyday realities of user life in the camps, where users are confined to remote locations. Trampoline House, then, is a place of no

contestation, where immigrant users are not as highly politicized as they might be in secular Danish society.

David

I met with David on a Wednesday night while he was preparing the bar for the coming Friday, stocking it with beverages for the party that occurs after each dinner. David first heard about the House four years ago:

I saw a big sign about Trampoline House and different activities. But at that time I was worried that I do not know where is it, how to find it, so I never took interest in coming.

- David Interview

At first, David was concerned about visiting the House alone, as he was unfamiliar with the transportation route needed to get to the House. However, his roommates were able to persuade him otherwise:

My roommates had different flyers about Trampoline House in many languages – Danish, English, French; so they told me about Trampoline House. They [kept trying to get me to go to the House]. ... One of the guys gave me a ticket. He said: “So I give you this ticket and when they give you the ticket again, maybe you can give me back one.”

So I came down here [and] Morten talked to me about different activities, which are being done here in Trampoline House. And I liked it when I came

- David Interview

After his initial visit to the House, David overcame his fear of the complicated transportation system and began to join the activities at the House. For David, the House holds many meanings:

I love this place for so many things. From my experience, when I came down here [at first] I had some sort of depression, I had some

stress, I was...too much in my head. When I came down here, I think it made the other way around. I think I start[ed to] think that there [was] life again. ... In the center, you think about problems at home, problems here. And then you meet people; you see they have the same problems as you.

When you come [to the House] there are Morten, Tone and Søren, and other volunteers. You feel ok, the life continues, even though you are in this kind of situation. So this place is, I think, a rehabilitation center for us asylum seekers. We are happy.

- David Interview

David acknowledges that camp life has detrimental effects for his mental health.

Trampoline House serves as an escape from the everyday realities of camp life, where users such as David continuously wait to hear back from the Danish government if they will be given Danish citizenship.

David quickly became an active participant in the House, coming up with new ideas for the House. One such example is the creation of *David's Bar*, a bar that opens every week after the Friday dinner:

I was one of the House Meetings; there was a debate about alcohol and spirits. [Before] they used to give free soda on Friday night, but they said, "what can we do to set up a bar where we can sell beer at affordable price?"

Well, I said, "I can take a responsibility and set up a bar." They said, "Ok, let's try it". So the next Friday, I opened up a bar. It was very, very small and people liked it. And the turnout was very good. So, from then on we have continued having Friday bar – [and] sometimes they call it *David's Bar*.

- David Interview

David's capabilities are widely recognized in the House. Along with the creation of *David's Bar*, David assumed responsibility for managing money at the House, and quickly became a spokesperson for users at the House:

I became more active and I was called upon to go and talk on different occasions to people about Trampoline House: What it

means to be at Trampoline House, what it means to be an asylum seeker in Denmark, to talk about what is it like to be an asylum seeker, what you go through. I [gave] a wide range of talks. I even got the opportunity to talk to the mayor of Copenhagen.

- David Interview

David's involvement at the House is also explicit through his position on Trampoline House's board, a special position for a user such as himself. The House, David notes, is an extensive network of differences united by respect:

Usually we [all members] tend to be the same [and want to talk to each other]. Unless you [think], "Oh I am an asylum seeker, so I sit in one corner [away from others]." ... We are all like one.

-David Interview

For David, the House serves as an escape from camp life, which has quickly evolved to be a distraction from his situation in the Danish landscape. The Trampoline House community sympathizes with David's condition, either through being in the same situation as David (as users are), or by understanding camp life (as the volunteers strive to do). In the end, David feels a connection to the House that continues to draw him to the House:

Trampoline House is my first home. So, here I have a big family. We have different cultures, languages, so many things.

- David Interview

Trampoline House is a site of unity, where members such as David feel connected to each other based on their participation at the House. When he first joined the House, David felt discouraged about his situation. Being at Trampoline House allows David an escape from camp life, pushing him to participate in the House as

a distraction. By realizing that he was not alone in his situation, a feeling of unity between David and other members is fostered.

Hassan

Like all immigrant users I interviewed, Hassan asked that we meet at the House. We met on a busy day and were interrupted quite a few times during our conversation by other users who wanted to greet Hassan. However, Hassan was adamant about focusing on me, signaling to users that he was being recorded with a visible finger over his mouth: “Shhh!” Hassan first heard about Trampoline House two years ago when he came to Denmark as an asylum seeker from Sudan:

I heard about Trampoline House through my cousin ... He told me there is a Trampoline House. I said, “What is this Trampoline House?” And he showed me where it [was] and from that there I became a member.

- Hassan Interview

Like David, Trampoline House intrigued Hassan after he heard about it from his cousin. The distance of the House from the camps, made David hesitant to visit the House at first. Upon his first visit to Trampoline House, he became an active member of the House, returning every Friday for the Friday Dinners. On top of this, he would frequently attend the House Meetings on Tuesdays.

While Hassan has participated in other organizations such as the Red Cross, his weekly participation at Trampoline House is much more informal:

I feel more comfortable in Trampoline House than in other places. In other places, it quite formal but in the Trampoline House ... it is [a] formal and informal site. I feel free to show what I can in the Trampoline House.

- Hassan Interview

Due to the informal structure of the House, Hassan continues, members feel as though they want to contribute to the House:

I like it because it is flexible. When it is loose, it is flexible ... it gives people opportunities to [be] creative.
... For example if you see something wrong then you just go to help do it before you been you ask to do it.
Like for example if there is something [that] needs repair, then you always ... repair it ...because this is a place for us.

- Hassan Interview

For Hassan, the House is an entity that has been granted to members and, as such, he believes that it is the responsibility for members such as himself to care for the House:

It is a true user space because without the users Trampoline House doesn't exist. So Trampoline House existence depends on the users of Trampoline House.

- Hassan Interview

Hassan believes that the House is a user-driven entity, relying on users to attend the programs hosted. In this way, he finds himself contributing to the House through his attendance and care for the House. It is this willingness to contribute from the users that makes the House a free space:

The [thing I like] most in Trampoline House is the intercultural relation amount from people [from] different backgrounds ... I like the principle loyalty - it is a free place you can do anything [that is] good for the Trampoline House.

- Hassan Interview

While Hassan contributes to the House through his attendance, he still finds the House to be a place of multicultural inclusion and equality:

The Trampoline House mean[s] actually a lot to me because it is a multicultural place where people from all over the world are welcome...to use the Trampoline House and at the same time, it is [a] social place ... not a working place, and people interact to be [with] each other [in] different languages - different cultures. [It] is a special place for me.

- Hassan Interview

The House is simultaneously unifying for members. As Hassan explains:

I see myself a user of Trampoline House and had the same time I feel I am welcome according to the rules of the house and the I feel it is nice, I feel it is *one* to be here.

- Hassan Interview

In return for partaking in the House, Hassan believes that he is part of a unified, equal community of togetherness. Trampoline House is a place of accepting differences in favor of being one unified community.

Dahab

Dahab was one of the newer users I interviewed, having only been a part of the Trampoline House community for three months despite living in the camps for a longer period. As many users, Dahab first learned about Trampoline House from an acquaintance:

When I came here in Denmark to make asylum, I met some people from Sudan and they told me about Trampoline House [so I've known] about TH maybe one year ago. But [I've] come now only for three months, because [before I lived in an] asylum camp in Jutland.

- Dahab Interview

Distance played a major role in preventing Dahab from partaking from Trampoline House when he first heard about it, as he lived in a camp in the

Danish countryside (which could be as far as two hours away by train). After moving closer to Copenhagen, Dahab became more active at the Trampoline

House:

When I [started to] come I start[ed my internship] in TH. I have some school ... like Danish class. And I have praktik Friday in the morning, cleaning. Now every time I do this, I ... communicate with a lot of people.

- Dahab Interview

Dahab comes to Trampoline House twice a week, which is the maximum number of train tickets the House will sponsor. The House, Dahab stresses, is a place of escape from the mundane:

This is place if you not have something to do, you come here, you communicate with people – you have some program. It is not like when you sit in the asylum camp and think, all the thinking, maybe you get bored. ... When you come in Trampoline House, you meet some people, you do practice, you communicate with new people. Now, Trampoline House means to me a lot of things.

- Dahab Interview

Dahab acknowledges that the camps can be detrimental for users due to the lack of distractions at asylum centers. Trampoline House counteracts camp life by providing users with programs to distract them from their everyday issues while connecting individuals to meet one another on equal terms, regardless of the position they occupy at the House:

Asylum people [come to] communicate with people, [and] volunteers, they come to communicate with asylum people. [Everyone wants] to come and talk, to meet.

- Dahab Interview

While the House is a site of communication, Dahab notes that this might not transgress into everyday life outside of the House. When asked what he would call the people he knows at the House, he stated:

Community. Because what you call friends is somebody who is every time, you communicate with him. With some people from TH, I communicate with them only when I come to the house. ... I think this place is community.

- Dahab Interview

Upon his first encounter with the House, Dahab was given a ready distraction in the form of his cleaning internship, which works to both get him out of the camps and into the House, as well as to foster a sense of purpose for Dahab as a user of the House. The House is also a social platform for Dahab, allowing him to socialize with volunteers and users who he might not otherwise have the chance to talk to. For Dahab, Trampoline House is a community within the Danish landscape that he might not find at his camp.

House Member Relational in Performative Practice

Trampoline House performs as a space “where [anybody] can meet...and learn from one another on equal terms” (Trampoline House 2015). Tone envisions Trampoline House as attempting to bridge across difference:

We facilitate friendships with people from diverse ethnic, sexual, and gender backgrounds ... as a young Syrian man, you would learn a lot about gender roles in Scandinavia from spending time in the House. You would get to know a lot about the basic social democratic values and procedures by attending our house meetings, where everybody has to vote and people are constantly restructuring the meetings in order to make it work for the current congregation we have in the House.

You unlearn whatever totalitarian or dictatorial relationship you've been in by suddenly being regarded as an expert in camp life, that this idea that Trampoline House needs you.

Join us, it's your house. We can't run the House without you, regardless of whether you have an education or not, whether you tried to vote before or not ...

We have people from conflicting political backgrounds here and we try to kind of navigate and create small passages to cross these boundaries, whether they be class, race, gender, ethnicity, political, social backgrounds or boundaries and I'm very proud of that.

- Tone Interview

Tone stresses the importance of friendships between persons of different backgrounds as part of learning to be inclusive and crossing internalized boundaries that may prevent these members to interact with one another outside the spatial limits of the House.

Through forming friendships at the House, members may feel more connected to the House, spurning an interest in engaging with the social democracy format of the House – with the end goal of priming users for political participation in the Danish society. Political participation at the House is accomplished through many different ways, such as the weekly House Meetings, during which proposals for new activities can be suggested, shaping the ever-evolving program structure of the House.

The next chapter discusses cultural identities at Trampoline House through the weekly Friday Dinners. During Friday Dinners, identities are negotiated and celebrated as the house works to accept cultural differences.

CHAPTER IV: COMMUNITY MAKING: THE PLACE OF RELIGION

Members of the House are not static, evolving alongside the House as it performs a role as a mediator. In order to delve into cultural identity at Trampoline House, I base my knowledge off of Julie Beattie's theory of the self as an "endless becoming," shaped not just by personality traits but also by encounters between other subjects (Beattie 2003:xxxiii). The self is influenced by power structures that "can be tapped into as subjects consciously and unconsciously enact socially produced selves" (Beattie 2003:xxviii). In line with practice theory, Beattie examines the differences between performativity and performance. Pierre Bourdieu understands naturalized performativity as "habitus": namely, an "unconscious iteration" (Beattie 2003:xxix). On the other hand, performance is the "conscious knowing display" of self (Beattie 2003:xxix). For members of Trampoline House, identity negotiation and presentations of self are deeply intertwined.

Danish members expose users to their own habitus as naturalized Danes by *modeling* and *naturalizing Danishness* for users at the House. Unlike the discussion of integration in mainstream Danish society where integration is perceived as a one-sided project of homogenization, Trampoline House understands the shaping of users as dynamic. The House aims to shape users into Danish citizens while accepting difference. At Trampoline House, users consciously perform and celebrate their cultural differences, rather than erasing their cultural pasts and practices.

In this chapter, I discuss the performance of cultural identities through meal preparation at Trampoline House. I especially focus on the highly anticipated Friday Dinner, during which the preparation and consumption of this meal explicitly depicts the intersectionality between Danish and cultural identities at the House. Rather than focusing on the specific dishes prepared, I concentrate on the preparation of dishes as an instance of identity performance and negotiation. Food is one aspect in which religion shines through at Trampoline House – a theme I discuss later in this chapter. I then discuss the house as a space of intersectionality between the sacred and secular. This is especially prevalent at Friday Dinners: as the physical space of the house is transformed for the after party, so do users’ understandings of certain religious rulings.

Breaking Bread

As a strategy to draw users to Trampoline House, daily meals are prepared at the House by and for users (see Figure 92a). As Natasha, an international volunteer who has lived in Denmark for the past two years, explains:

[Users] get pretty crap foods in the camps ... it’s more [like] a cattle mart, they just kind of dish to [users] and tell them to eat it. [At Trampoline House], it’s more like we always sit like a family and we eat together ... it’s more a social thing here. Everyone needs food of course and it’s nice to eat together. -
Natasha Interview

Every night, Trampoline House hosts a dinner prepared by the kitchen crew – which can consist of both Danish volunteers and users. As the overwhelming majority of the kitchen crew, users have the ability to decide what to cook each day, providing these members the opportunity to make cultural dishes they may

not have the ability to make at the camps, where certain spices may not be found. Along with this, the food prepared at Trampoline House contains more variety than cafeteria-style meals served at asylum centers.

Dinner on a normal weekday is far from united; members spread across the house with their friends, segregated into small groups based on friend groups. On Fridays, however, the atmosphere changes for the weekly Friday Dinner – a highlight of Trampoline House. Members assemble tables through the main rooms, pulling together as many chairs as they can fit around the makeshift dining table. The togetherness found at Friday Dinners is just one of many reasons these dinners play such an integral role at the House.



Figure 92a:
Daily Dinner
(Trampoline House 2015)

Many of the daily dinners I attended were frenzied events. Members scrambled to the kitchen counter to obtain a plate of food, dropping what little change they had into a cardboard “Meal Donation” box. Tone proactively tried to counter this practice during Friday Dinners:

During dinner, there is no order serving the food. Adam and another user help serve, while I try to pass out dishes. At first we are serving a lot of food, thinking we have plenty of food, but we realize that there are many more people than expected. It’s complicated making food at the house, since the number of users always changes. Everyone is crowded, trying to stand in line, which is not how Tone wants Friday dinners to be served. Tone stands at the microphone, yelling: “Don’t stand in lines, wait for the food to come to you! This isn’t Sandholm [an asylum center], this is Trampoline House!” Everyone laughs, though the line stays.

- Field Notes, June 6

Friday Dinners are structured to work against the norms found in camps by promoting a sit-down dinner for all members of the House. Though users may not always follow Tone’s instructions, members expressed a shared appreciation for the rules she adhered to during Friday Dinners.

Friday Dinners highlight the cultural performance of user identity at the House. While Danish members typically model and naturalize Danishness for members in the House by exposing users to Danish customs, Friday Dinners are a celebration of users’ religious identity. Through the processes of food preparation, consumption and cleaning, user identities are celebrated and shaped while uniting the house as one community accepting differences.

A Friday Dinner

I arrived at the House early Friday afternoon to participate in the meal preparation for the Friday Dinner. The typical Danish volunteer who coordinated Friday Dinners was not in attendance; as a result, Dario, an Italian volunteer with whom I typically cleaned the house, had stepped up to coordinate the dinner. At first, there were no users at the House, yet users slowly trickled in to begin their shifts. Dario, the users, and I began to brainstorm what we wanted to make that day. Tone had asked Dario to prepare an “authentic Italian meal” to share with the House (Field Notes, June 6). As the cuisine had been decided, the kitchen crew was to decide what dishes to prepare this Friday:

We talk about what to make for the night, calculating that we would be cooking for 50 people. Finally, we decide to make two pasta dishes: one vegetarian and one with meat. Dario suggests that we get wine to put in the dishes, arguing, “Italian dishes need alcohol!”

I tell him that as a Muslim, alcohol is not allowed, and the users standing around us promptly agree with me.

Kareem, who is not a part of the kitchen crew, wanders into the kitchen to ask who is coordinating. As soon as he hears it is Dario, he says, “Oh, make sure he doesn’t put alcohol, since he’s Italian!” I reassure him that we have decided not to do so and Kareem nods, satisfied.

- Field Notes, June 6

Prior to purchasing ingredients for the meal, members of the kitchen crew discuss the night’s meal. During this time, they are able to voice their concerns and ideas about specific meals. This allows the kitchen crew to alter specific recipes as needed to meet dietary restrictions, such as religious needs. The majority Muslim user presence at the House is

increasingly felt through the absence of alcohol in the food, as immigrant users supported (and later thanked) me in arguing against the use of alcohol in the meal.

Trampoline House budgets 700 DKK (\$149 USD) each Friday dinner. After the kitchen crew decides what to cook, they head out to purchase ingredients from the local grocery stores. Shopping for the dinner is not unlike a strategy game, as the kitchen crew mentally calculates how much of each ingredient is needed:

We go to the cheapest grocery store ... a user pushes the cart while Dario and I try to estimate how much of everything we need. He does most of the calculating, and we decide that we will make enough of each dish for 25 people ... We ended up spending around 400 of the 700. Upon arriving back to the House, we realize that we bought too little food, and so I am sent out to purchase more ingredients.

- Field Notes, June 6

Upon returning to the House, the kitchen coordinator immediately sets people to work, assigning them certain responsibilities. Meal preparations for the dinners are energetic and loud events, due both to the enthusiasm of the Kitchen Crew as well as access to the House's speaker system.

There are five or six men cutting vegetables and asking Dario for instructions. Dario constantly checks on people, instructing them when they need guidance. Music is on in the background, and it changes depending on what people wanted to hear – from Justin Bieber, to Arabic music, to Andrea Bocelli.

- Field Notes, June 6

Members of the kitchen crew constantly look for tasks, asking the kitchen coordinator for new assignments. At the same time, the kitchen crew is good

humored about their work, teasing each other to lighten the mood while offering their peers support when needed. I experienced this when I was assigned to chopping onions for the dinner:

I start to tear up because of the onions, keep running to the bathroom to wash my hands and hide the fact that my eyes are growing increasingly red. Basam looks at me and sees me crying, teasing me in Arabic: “Ya haram!” (You poor thing!). Jean notices that I am tearing up, and motions to me to peel an onion for him, as he is also cutting them. I do, and then continue to try to cut mine, but he motions to continue peeling. He is very intuitive, ensuring that I have the tools needed to succeed; later, he notices that I am having trouble peeling potatoes with a knife and gives me a peeler.

- Field Notes, June 6

When teasing me for crying while cutting onions, Basam lightened the humor of the room and drew attention to my discomfort with my task. As a result other members of the kitchen

crew became aware of my disdain for cutting onions, taking over the assignment so I was comfortable in the kitchen space. As my interaction with Basam demonstrates, wit and



Figure 96a. Male users preparing a meal.
(Trampoline House 2015)

humor at the house cultivate a sense of social amity (Norbeck & Buettner-Janusch 1974) amongst members at the house, ensuring that members feel comfortable.

This reinforces a sense of friendship in the House, especially amongst the kitchen crew (see Figure 96a).

By five p.m., the meal is typically prepared and the House is abuzz. Members assemble the House for the dinner, placing as many tables together as can fit in the main room (see Figure 97a). The food is wheeled out on a cart and the kitchen crew dishes out the food, serving the already-seated members. After the food has been served, members are explicitly asked not to eat anything until the communal prayer. The moment the prayer ends, everyone digs in.



Figure 97a. Friday Dinner at Trampoline House.
(Trampoline House 2015)

Halfway through the dinner, members are reminded to donate money to the house by passing around a donation jar:

In the middle of the dinner, a small jar is passed around to put donations in. Typically, it is pay as you can, but if one doesn't pay, there's a risk of social stigma – especially as a volunteer, I later observe. One is perceived as stingy if you are a volunteer and don't pay.

- Field Notes, April 11

Though the house receives the majority of its funding from the Danish government, members of the house are still requested to donate to the house to keep it running. This also seems to reinforce a unity amongst members, who feel that they contribute to the house by donating what little money they have.

Trampoline House proactively tries to accept differences throughout the dinner, catering towards users to reinforce a sense of solidarity. During one dinner, I realized just how much the House aims to include all members through food:

I [am handed] a plate of food, which is customary for the dinner, as Tone wants to eat 'family style'. Upon realizing that there is meat in it, I tell the user who had served me that I only eat halal. He replies, "We're all Muslim, we eat halal here." Because I am still hesitant, I wait until he has left to ask Ahmad if the food is halal. He stares at me, clearly upset, scolding me in Arabic: "Inte bidek yani tidrubak? Ana atatek yaha." (Do you want me to hit you? I gave it to you.) Ahmad is upset that I seem to mistrust his word.

- Field Notes, April 11

Religion is continuously a theme in the negotiation of what is allowed in meals for the Muslim-majority users.²⁵ By acknowledging religious restrictions, Trampoline House celebrates user culture while allowing users to perform their religious duties. This is also made explicit in how the house closes every year for Ramadan. Staff members acknowledge that because most users will be fasting, attendance at the house will be lower as the daily meal is a key aspect that draws users to the House.

Religion continues to be a familiar aspect at the house that users joke about with one another. During the first dinner I attended at the House, Kareem (whom I had just met) teased me about religious rules while clearing the dinner tables:

When I finish eating, I have some chives left on my plate. Kareem, who is gathering all the dishes, looks at me seriously: “It’s *haram* [From Arabic: disliked by God] to throw that out.” Not knowing if he is serious and not wanting to seem rude, I finish them off, and Kareem laughs at me, affirming that it was a joke and did not expect me to eat all of it.

- Field Notes, April 11

Kareem used his knowledge about religion to create a connection between us through humor. While Kareem does not identify as Muslim, he is included by Muslim members of the House and is thus able to understand and joke about religious rules. This shared humor reinforces the solidarity found amongst users who attempt to maintain their religious identities at the house.

²⁵ This is similar to Mary Douglas’ *Purity and Danger* (1966), in which Douglas traces the rituals and rites surrounding religious limitations on food.

Following the meal, members form the cleaning crew by voluntarily removing the dishes in preparation for the next part of the evening: the dancing and drinking. In the kitchen, members begin to wash and organize the kitchen. Because such a high percentage of users at the house are male, the cleaning crew is typically all male. For some users, this can be very different than what they are accustomed to:

Ahmad comes into the kitchen after, while I am standing with Helle (a Danish volunteer) and Karolina (an international volunteer) while a male user washes pots and pans. Ahmad laughs, telling the user, “In my country, kitchen work is a woman’s job. Why aren’t you [gestures to me] doing anything, do it instead of him!”

At this point, I tell him, “In my country, men and women do equal work.” Louise supports me, saying that in Denmark, “If women do the cooking, men do the cleaning!”

Ahmad puts down his tea, as though he is about to start working, but just pats the user on the back, telling him it’s a good job.

- Field Notes, April 11

As Ahmad demonstrates, users are accustomed to gender norms of their cultures and may feel out of place while consciously performing more fluid Danish gender norms. Ahmad habitually expected the female members of the cleaning crew to wash dishes and tidy up after the dinner. When confronted with the Danish customs and norms, users are given the opportunity to reevaluate and understand the differences between their culture and Danishness. This allows users to consciously challenge their norms and expectations in the Danish landscape.

While some members clear the dishes, others gather around the foosball table, cheering each other rowdily amidst their dedicated games. Others find board games or cards, sitting to the side in groups. On the main floor, the tables

are cleared and members begin playing music in preparation for the Friday dancing. It is not solely during the Friday dinner that the physical activities of play can be found at the House. On Saturdays, male users and volunteers gather



Figure 101a. Trampoline House's soccer team.
(Trampoline House 2015)

to scrimmage in soccer (see Figure 101a). Typically play at the House is gendered, dominated by male users with the occasional female volunteer. On Friday nights, however, male and female members mix freely at the foosball



Figure 101b. Friday dancing.
(Trampoline House 2015)

matches or on the dance floor (see Figure 101b). Physical play here is a means of “promoting harmonious social relations” (Norbeck & Buettner-Janusch 1974:6)

amongst the different members and genders at the house. Play at the House is not only a means to socialize across member groups, but also a way to break across gender barriers and reinforce unity at the house.

Multicultural Meals

The “act of incorporation”²⁶ (Fischler 1988; Rozin and Fallon 1981) through food consumption is a reaffirmation of collective identity and belonging. Through food, consumers are able to “mark the membership of a culture or a group by asserting the specificity of what they eat, or more precisely [by] defining the otherness, the difference of others” (Fischler 1988:280).

Food as a demonstration of identity is further demonstrated by Tulaso Srinivas, who conducted fieldwork on cultural identity amongst Southeast Asian families in diaspora through pre-packaged meals. For these families, the precooked meals are a way to “reclaim their identity for [Indian families in diaspora]. This produces a limited and circumscribed authentic experience” (Srinivas 2013:371). Through the preparation and consumption of food, users are able to perform and maintain their cultural identities while Danish members accept differences through user cuisine.

The Trampoline House kitchen performs as a space of cultural performance and exchange, celebrating cultural identity through the preparation of different ethnically significant foods. Danish volunteer Maria explains:

I think a lot of people who come there they feel like they can both make their Arabic food and listen to their Arabic music and speak about their culture and at the same time feel welcome in Denmark by Danish people that come there and share their experiences.

²⁶ Fischler defines the act of incorporation as the “action in which we send a food across the frontier between the world and the self. [Through incorporation,] we become what we eat. Incorporation is a foundation for identity” (Fischler 1988:279). I borrow his understanding of incorporation to understand the performance of identity through the preparation and consummation of food.

I think that they can both maintain [their culture] and learn how Danish people want them to be.

- Maria Interview

Danish members consciously perform Danishness, familiarizing users with Danish norms. However, immigrant users are still given a space to perform their cultural identities. This performance is especially explicit through the food prepared at the house.

The meals prepared by the kitchen crew vary every day, depending on who is part of the team. Birgitte, the Wednesday kitchen coordinator, explains:

I've had a team of Iranian-Kurdish [users], and they always want to make Kurdish or Iranian food, which is fine, but we tend to get kind of the same meal every Wednesday now.

So it's difficult because the plan was to encourage people also to try new things but sometimes it's also just so hectic that we have to just go and shop and quickly make something.

- Birgitte Interview

Birgitte works predominately with Iranian and Kurdish users, who take advantage of the flexibility of the House in order to prepare cultural foods. In this occurrence, cultural identity is performed through food, as users cook meals that culturally mark and celebrate their differences.

The celebration of cultural differences through food is not limited to immigrant users. International members are commonly pressured to make “non-Danish” food by other members. I experienced this firsthand as members asked me what Americans ate and requested that I plan a meal for the House. Interest in different cultures is reflected through different meals – one of the central themes at the House.

Along with the selection of what to cook, the preparation of the meal also performs as a space of cultural exchange, as users are able to share their cultures with one another. This occurs both in the preparation and consummation of food, as well as in the music that the kitchen crew chooses to play while cooking:

Basam asks me if I listen to Arabic music and I tell him I know a little music, though not a lot of it. He turns on Fairouz (a well-known singer in the Middle East) and says to me: “This is what you hear in Syria in the morning.”
Noora cuts tomatoes while singing and dancing to the music, excited at Basam’s choice.

- Field Notes, April 29

Every occasion that I sat in on the meal preparation, the music reflected the user groups preparing the meal. Music at Friday Dinners is one of many ways that cultural identity is celebrated at the House, where identity is marked and difference is celebrated.

Intersectionalities of the Sacred and Secular

As demonstrated, cultural and Danish identities at the House are not isolated; on the contrary: each identity shapes the other while working towards a mutual acceptance and respect. Member identities, then, are mutually molded and performed in reflection of the other.²⁷ In order to understand member identity as socially produced, I employ the theory of “intersectionality” (Beattie 2003). Intersectionality “recognizes that social forces are not precise, analogous formations that develop in isolation and then intersect but rather are imbricated such that the meaning of each is realized through the others” (Beattie

²⁷ In this case, the “other” is the non-Danish self.

2003:xxxiv). In essence, intersectionality advocates that cultural identity is not created in seclusion and then altered at the presence of another identity.

Intersectionality argues that cultural identity is understood and shaped through the presence of other identities. Trampoline House performs as a mediation space where different identities are celebrated while encountering Danishness.

Following the meal, the house gradually gets more spacious as users leave and Danish visitors arrive:

After dinner, the majority of people leave. When I ask why, Kareem says, “there are only two late buses back to the camps—one at 7:20 and one at 11. It’s a long walk to the camps [from the bus stop] so people usually leave early.”

- Field Notes, April 11

Immigrant users rely on the bus to return to the camps; as a result, the time the buses leave influences users’ ability to socialize at the house. While users slowly exit the house after the dinner, it is typical for Danish visitors to come for the drinks and dancing that follows the Friday Dinner. With the shift in members at the House, the space of the house undergoes a dramatic transformation:

Tables are removed from the main room and a bare space is left – this will be the dance floor for tonight’s festivities. Music is blasted and drinks are handed out. A radical transformation takes place. As the house transforms into a bar/club, spirits are high. People hesitantly start dancing to a variety of music, making sure to get a beer before heading to the dance floor.

- Field Notes, April 25

Alongside the exiting of users and the physical transformation of space, a transition of user identity performance occurs. During the dinner, cultural identity is celebrated and religious restrictions respected by all members. Throughout the

after party, these same restrictions are negotiated and user identity becomes a performance of Danishness, instead of cultural identity. Basam, a Muslim user who constantly discussed religion with me, elaborated on how the House influenced him:

“Is it okay if I drink this?” Basam gestured to a bottle of beer that he is holding. I tell him I don’t mind at all, and he informs me, “Before I came to Denmark, I never used to drink ... Now I don’t fast and I began to drink ... but really only at the House.” He rationalizes his decision to me, as though he needs me to be convinced that it is okay. I reaffirm that I do not mind.

- Field Notes, April 25

While Basam previously stated to me that alcohol was not acceptable to consume as a Muslim, he understands his decision to drink as something that happens “only at the House” (Field Notes, April 25). While the House performs as a space for celebrate cultural identities during Friday Dinner, it also works to challenge users to redefine themselves through the naturalization of Danishness found at the house. Through the continuous transformation of the house, Trampoline House complicates member identities. In the case of immigrant users, religious beliefs are complicated, encouraging users to renegotiate their religious identities. For Basam, drinking alcohol is acceptable in the House as it is a natural activity for members wanting to be Danish (i.e. part of secular Danishness).

Identity performance at the House is contingent on which members are around. Similarly to how Basam felt the need to ask my permission to drink, Ahmad (a Muslim user) was aware of my religious preferences, shaping his actions to cater to me:

When Ahmad goes to get drinks, he asks, “Do you want anything?” I decline, as he knows I do not drink alcohol and I am not sure if there is anything non-alcoholic. He returns shortly after with sodas for us.

- Field Notes, April 11

Rather than returning with beer for himself, Ahmad altered his beverage in order to ensure that I was comfortable around him. Alcohol in the house is a highly contested topic that is shaped by the presence and performance of members.

While Muslim users may renegotiate their religious beliefs to accept alcohol and perform as part of the Trampoline House social life, this varies depending on whom the user is around. Performances of Danishness are conscious by users, as they acknowledge and rationalize their decisions to drink in order to understand themselves.

Friday Dinners perform as instances of identity celebration and negotiation. In the next section, I elaborate how the meals served at Friday dinners are celebrated to be multicultural. This counters the national rhetoric of users assimilating into Danishness in favor for a model of intersectionality and acceptance.

Communal Prayers

As discussed, Trampoline House performs as a space of intersecting identities aiming to bridge differences between members. One manifestation of the intersectionality of identities is through the communal prayer held before every meal. This prayer aims to foster a sense of community within the House by providing a structure for the Friday Dinners. As soon as members are handed their

dinner plates, they are asked to not touch their food until everyone has been served and the prayer has been offered:

We sit around a table family-style and are served plates of pasta with sauce. Morten tells us through a microphone that we should not eat yet; wait until everybody is served. When everybody has their plates, Søren asks, “Does anyone want to say a prayer before we eat?”

Søren tells everyone to be quiet so we can hear the prayer, and it takes a couple minutes to get everyone to be quiet.

A user comes to the microphone and says something in Somali, so while I do not understand, a sentiment seems to come through: one of happiness. The moment he is finished, everyone digs in.

- Field Notes, April 11

The placement of the prayer at the beginning of the meal is not unlike the religious tradition of saying a prayer before the meal. While members of the House may not necessarily ascribe to a specific religious belief, each Friday Dinner starts with a prayer said by any member who volunteers. This prayer is held in whatever language the member is comfortable speaking. While members might not understand the prayer, everyone ends the prayer with “Amen”²⁸ before beginning their meal. Despite the linguistic barriers found at the House, all members proactively try to listen and appreciate other members’ prayers despite the linguistic and cultural boundaries. After the prayer, members are welcome to their food:

During dinner there is a feeling of connectedness. Though we all sit together on long benches, everyone talks in groups, excluding nobody. As Ahmad later explains, “You can’t come to the house and sit alone. That’s why I talk a lot, to get to know people and feel comfortable.”

²⁸ Members end the prayer as they wish; I observed Muslims ending with the Islamic “Aah-meen” and Christians saying “Ah-men”. In this case, the prayer is ended due to member preference.

Members choose where to sit, which can lead to the hall being somewhat segregated; while users sit together, there is a long table to the side that is predominately filled with volunteers with the exception of a few users. I sit with three volunteers on a primarily user bench, and meet an Iraqi user.

- Field Notes, April 11

While members of the House are always able to socialize with one another, Friday Dinners amplify the relationships by inviting all members to enjoy a meal as a united community. As David understands it, the dinners reinforce a sense of family at the House:

Family [describes Trampoline House] best ... Look at the Friday dinner, where we come and eat together. ... Family is a nice word to use in Trampoline House. Family.

- David Interview

The once-weekly Friday Dinner unites people from different cultures by inviting them to join in the preparation and consummation of meals. These meals are a time in which users are able to perform their cultural identities through choosing and preparing meals. Through Friday Dinner, space is created for cultural identities, which are celebrated by all members.

CHAPTER V: CREOLIZING DANISHNESS

In his work on minorities in the United States, Renato Rosaldo discusses cultural citizenship as understanding all citizens as equal, assuming that there is a unified “sameness in relation to language and culture” (1999:254). Applied to the context of Denmark, cultural citizenship assumes that the highest status is that of a white, Danish- and English- speaking individual who has ethnic roots in Denmark. In her work on integration, Maja Homer Bruun argues that belonging in Danish society is also characterized by a “hierarchy [that] resides in relations between those who are capable of mastering the proper forms of sociality and those who are not and this is what we identify as value-mastering hierarchy” (Bruun et al. 2011:10). One major aspect of this value-mastering hierarchy is the Danish language. Through learning and speaking the Danish language, immigrants are able to perform their ability to be Danish.

Trampoline House performs as a zone of interaction between Danish-speaking members and users who have not learned the language, providing an opportunity for users to learn the Danish language – a skill transferable to Danish society. Danish members, on the other hand, are expected to speak English and Danish fluently, and are also admired for learning languages such as Arabic.

In this chapter, I examine Arabic, Danish, and English (three of the most common languages spoken) at the House and how these languages are perceived. I argue that while Danish members are glorified for speaking Arabic, a common language spoken by users, users are encouraged to learn Danish. At the same

time, members at the House try to work across linguistic barriers through translating during everyday interactions – even going so far as crafting a form of *Trampoline House English*²⁹ to work across linguistic differences. Through language, Trampoline House performs as a space of learning but also as a place of identity negotiation.

Membership through Language: The Admirable Volunteer

Danish members at Trampoline House are typically fluent in Danish (the national language) and English, which Danes are exposed to on television shows, as well as through English classes starting at third grade. While it is not a surprise for Danish members speak either of these languages, Danish volunteers and staff are typically admired for learning other languages that are useful in the House. One such example is Arabic, one of the most prevalent languages due to the user population. In this section, I focus on a couple Danish members who learned to speak Arabic.

Many of the Danish members at the House interested in learning Arabic have a relationship with an Arabic-speaker. One example is Louise. At the time of my research, Louise was dating Adam, a user from Syria. Due in part to her relationship with Adam as well as her personal interest in the language, Louise was just beginning to learn Arabic. While she did not take any Arabic courses at the House, she took classes in Copenhagen and practiced her Arabic with Adam. It was not uncommon to walk into the kitchen and find Louise surrounded by

²⁹ I borrow this term from Tone, who defined it in her interview with me.

Arabic-speaking users asking her to tell them what she had just learned – a request she would bashfully give in to while reaffirming that her Arabic was “not that good” (Field Notes, April 29).

Throughout our conversations, Louise would compare herself to “other Danes” who were uninterested in other cultures and did not ever come to the House:

Other Danes are all the same: they all wear tight, high-waisted pants and small jackets with ponytails that have just enough loose hair. They are stuck in one culture.

- Field Notes, April 11

Louise prides herself in not being like “other Danes,” as she makes an effort to learn about other cultures and languages. She understands herself as an inclusive Dane who does not confine herself to one culture; rather, she is part of the fluid community of culture (Bauman 2007) found at Trampoline House.

Louise comes from a family that is held in high esteem by the Trampoline House community. The respect for Louise and her family is entrenched in their interest in the Arabic language, as her father and sister both know the language. On one occasion, Louise’s sister visited the House and Basam immediately greeted her in Arabic, welcoming her enthusiastically in his mother tongue. Similarly, Louise’s father was highly admired by Basam, who noted that Louise’s father “knows some bad jokes in Arabic,” suggesting that her father was fluent not only in the Arabic language, but had cultural knowledge as well (Field Notes,

April 11).³⁰ Users at Trampoline House welcomed Louise's family due to her family's interest and acceptance of Arabic language and culture.

Søren, the user coordinator, was similarly placed to Louise. Søren was engaged to a Syrian woman, whom he married a couple months after I left the House. As the user coordinator, Søren commonly greeted users in Arabic. Taken aback by the Danish man's attempts to stitch together pieces of Arabic, I approached Søren, inquiring how he learned the language. He noted that he had learned it both at the House and because his Syrian girlfriend had helped him learn Arabic (Field Notes, April 22). Despite never having a formal education in the language, Søren was able to pick up Arabic at the House simply by being surrounded by Arabic speakers. Though not proficient in Arabic, Søren would draw upon certain Arabic terms in everyday conversation. This phenomenon is hardly unique; as I elaborate later in this chapter, members of the House commonly interwove Arabic into different languages. Søren's ability to make basic conversation in Arabic gave him leverage amongst Arabic speakers at the House who saw him as invested enough in users to learn their language.

Accepting Non-Arabic Speakers

As I discussed in the methodology section, access to language plays a major role in inclusion at Trampoline House. By speaking Arabic, I was given access to the Arabic-speaking users – one of the groups with the most influence at the House. In many instances, my limited ability in Arabic allowed me to gain rapport with

³⁰ When I inquired as to what the jokes were, Louise evaded the question by saying, "they aren't jokes a proper girl like you should hear!" (Field Notes, April 11).

users in a way similar to Louise. During one dinner, Ahmad, a user, was upset at an international volunteer:

Ahmad stares after her, clearly annoyed. He turns to Louise, Kareem and me and says in Arabic: “You see, this girl, she’s so rude, she doesn’t like me and I don’t like her. There have been other times I’ve asked her to help and she won’t do anything. One time, I was doing the dishes and she and a friend were in the kitchen so I asked her to help because they were taking up space. Twice I asked her and she didn’t do anything. So I told her to leave. Ever since then, there’s been a tension between us.”

- Field Notes, April 11

While this epigraph demonstrates many different issues, I have chosen here to illustrate the accessibility that Arabic-speaking members are given at the House. Because Ahmad was able to communicate to me in a language that the subject of his gossip did not understand, he felt comfortable talking to me. In this way, there is a solidarity found through user language.

This is also explicit in my interactions with Nora, a Sudanese user who spoke Arabic. When I first started at the House, Nora was hesitant to talk to me due to the effort that she had to put in when speaking another language and the lack of confidence she had in her linguistic abilities. It was only after I struggled to talk to her in Arabic that Nora opened up to me:

“You are my friend now! We are friends! I’ll teach you Arabic!”
[After this], Nora asks what I was most comfortable speaking so she could communicate with me in that language.

- Field Notes, April 22

While at first Nora was not interested in speaking to me, this quickly changed after I made visible efforts to communicate with her. Along with this, because Nora saw that I was not fluent in Arabic (and was willing to make a fool of

myself in order to connect with her), Nora felt comfortable enough to connect with me in her broken English and Danish. My poor mastery of the Arabic language served to create a level ground for my interactions with Nora, as she and I were in the same boat of poor linguistic knowledge.

Language and Inclusion

While Danish volunteers at the House are admired for speaking user languages, users are rarely expected to be proficient in Danish. During the few instances in which Danes visited the House for the first time, hesitance surrounded the visitors during their initial interactions with users. This was especially explicit when Tone introduced a Dane to Hassan, a Sudanese user:

Tone introduces a visiting Danish Board Member to Hassan, who greets the visitor in Danish. The visitor seems taken aback: “*Han taler dansk!*” (He speaks Danish!) Tone responds in English, “Yeah of course, he’s been here for a long time. He isn’t new.”
- Field Notes, June 10

Oftentimes, this hesitance stemmed from an uncertainty of how to interact with users – specifically, which language to use when speaking to users. Users who speak Danish are confronted with unexpected surprise and excitement.

Richard Jenkins (2012) surveyed “modern ethnic Danes”³¹ about what it is that unites all Danes and found that learning the Danish language was recognized as a major part of Danishness. Birgitte echoes these sentiments:

If you’re not willing to [learn Danish] or if you don’t have the resources or the energy then someone needs to help you [it poses a challenge for you to be Danish].

³¹ Jenkins uses this term to refer to Danes who have been born and raised in Denmark and have familial roots in Denmark.

It's very much about, are you capable of ... taking the steps [to integrate]. You really can't be here in the long run if you don't speak the language. It will be so difficult for yourself and you won't learn how to navigate the system, which is so fundamental in this society because the system is everywhere and we are, in many ways, so dependent on it. So in that way, if you have the resources and you're willing to put in the effort, I think you can keep all the culture you want. But if you're not willing to do that, then it will be very difficult.

- Birgitte Interview

Birgitte believes that learning Danish is vital for immigrant users, since mastering the language allows individuals to navigate the Danish welfare system, a major aspect of every Dane's life.

Despite the importance placed on users learning Danish to participate in the society, there is a gap in resources to do so – due to both the lack of interactions immigrant users have with Danes and the limited language courses offered at the asylum centers. Noor, a Sudanese user, elaborates:

[Noor] tells me he wants to live in Hellerup.³² I ask him: “Isn't that for more well-off Danes?”

He affirms this and tells me that because they are all Danes, he would learn to better integrate [by learning the language].

- Field Notes, May 6

Though Noor has been in Denmark for three years, his time at the camps has not provided him with any knowledge about the Danish language. As a result, he is still not proficient in the language. For immigrant users such as Noor, learning Danish can be difficult, as there are few programs that teach Danish for

³² Hellerup has the stereotype of being a suburb of Copenhagen for the upper class and is thus populated with ethnic Danes.

immigrants living in camps. Trampoline House aims to meet this need by providing Danish lessons twice a week by Danish volunteers (see Figure 117a).



Figure 117a. A Danish lesson at the House.
(Trampoline House 2015)

As I have alluded to, language acquisition and socialization is linked to becoming a competent member of society. In order to speed the process of language socialization at Trampoline House, classes consist of different levels of users and are taught by native Danish speakers. This linking of novices and experts (Schieffelin & Ochs 1996) aims to teach new learners through interacting with different levels, crafting an active learning environment. These lessons are taught by Danish volunteers and combine different levels in the same classroom.

Danish instructor Mads explains:

The special thing about the system is that normally in language classes you are divided by education or background and the language closeness to the target language, but we don't have this [at the House].

It's just a mix of very different levels of Danish acquisition and levels of education before that. So it's very important that people help each other.

We benefit from the general spirit of the house, so that's a good process in that people can help each other...and those who are weaker, they get pulled up by those who are more advanced, and they benefit from explaining the language.

- Mads Interview

By following a “scaffolding structure” (Vygotsky 1978), immigrant users are able to learn the Danish language from mother-tongue speakers as well as by actively practicing with one another. Along with this, the scaffolding structure found at the Danish classes aligns with the solidarity found within the house. Immigrant users share a lack of linguistic knowledge – a gap users hope to close through the lessons at Trampoline House. Through combining different levels of fluency in the classroom, immigrant users are provided an opportunity to learn more Danish through assisting each other in the classroom.

Hassan compared his experience learning Danish at a mainstream integration program to the classes at Trampoline House:

I speak Danish but at the same time, I feel that the Trampoline House is helping people a lot in learning language and the culture of the Danish people. [Especially because users are looking for] Danish residence so of course they have to learn something about the culture the Danish culture and the language.

- Hassan Interview

Hassan understands the classes offered at Trampoline House as teaching users to understand Danish society alongside learning the Danish language. This skill can then be transferred into mainstream society to ease the transition of users into Danish society.

Motivated to be Danish

As I have touched upon and was continuously reminded through the conversations I had with Danish members, learning the Danish language was perceived as a vital part of performing Danishness. While immigrant users at Trampoline House struggled to learn Danish, many users persisted through language courses, hoping to make their transition into Danish society either. In some cases, immigrant users did not feel motivated to learn the language, discouraged by their legal situations. As Mads notes, motivating immigrant users to learn Danish comes with its own struggles:

It depends on what people want with the language. If they don't see the future here, it's hard for them to really get engaged with the language ... So, if you're an asylum seeker and you've been here for five years, and...you want to stay here [and] enter society, then you have, of course, more initiative to learn the language.

- Mads Interview

Mads's analysis surrounding motivation is similar to educational linguist Bonny Norton Pierce's argument that second language acquisition is tied between the language learner and the social world. Based on a study of five women immigrants to Canada, Pierce argues that motivation to learn a language "must be understood with reference to social relations of power that create the possibilities for language learners to speak" (Pierce 1994:26).

Users who have been in Denmark for an extended period of time while waiting to be approved for legal residence seem to have little to no motivation to learn Danish. Basam is one such example. Though he has been in Denmark for two years now, he still does not know very much Danish (Field Notes, April 25).

Similarly, Noor had been in Denmark for almost three years and though he was fluent in English, he had little to no Danish ability. Noor' experience was similar to Ahmad, a Somali who was completely fluent in Arabic and English, with minimal interest in speaking Danish. When asked why they did not speak Danish, users attributed their lack of linguistic ability to not having the resources to learn or use the language outside of Trampoline House – a space where English is commonly spoken, making the Danish language less relevant at the house. Along with this, the ambiguity surrounding the legal statuses of users may foster a lack of motivation to learn the Danish language.

Language Acquisition

Trampoline House urges users to learn Danish in efforts to ease the user's transition from the camps to Danish society. As mentioned, the Danish language is a major aspect in Danishness – part of any ethnic Dane's habitus. As an unconscious rehearsal of identity, the Danish language has the capability to exclude and regulate members of the Danish society. In the Danish society, the Danish language is a major aspect that users are expected to grasp as they learn to perform Danishness.

Though the Danish language is naturalized for Danes, Danish members of the house are conscious of the expectation for users to speak Danish in the greater Danish society:

I sat in the main room with Nora on a Tuesday afternoon, right before the Danish class is scheduled. When class time approached and Nora stayed sitting, a Danish volunteer who taught the class approached Nora, asking her if she was planning on coming to class that day. Nora laughed and explained that she did not feel like joining since “Danish is so hard.”

The volunteer pushes Nora to come, urging her, “Don’t give up just because it’s hard – that makes it more rewarding. Learning Danish is important, especially in Denmark!”

- Field Notes, June 6

As Nora experienced, she was urged to join Danish lessons, as the language was integral to performing Danishness. For users, learning Danish is intertwined with social competence, testing users’ ability to be Danish by learning the language.

Translating Across Difference

Translation theory understands language on the basis of two main assumptions: language as a way to communicate and language as meaning (Venuti 2006; Rubel & Rosman 2003). Within Trampoline House, language is both a communicative measure, as well as an inclusive device. As a result, translation of language within the House carries an overall meaning of inclusion by working across differences.

Translation, scholars argue, follows one of two models. While some scholars understand translation as a “natural act [and] basis for the intercultural communication which has always characterized human existence” (Rubel & Rosman 2003:6), other scholars view translation as a “traitorous act [in which] cultural differences are emphasized and translation is seen as coming to terms with otherness” (Rubel & Rosman 2003:6). Acts of translation are a “social act, involving social relationships, transforming, as well as crossing boundaries”

(Rubel & Rosman 2003:15). For members of Trampoline House, translation carries a meaning of inclusion as members translate across difference to negotiate “otherness,”³³ ultimately performing an inclusive Danish modern.

If translation works to bridge across difference, translators can be understood to “constitute a boundary or border” (Rubel & Rosman 2003:15). Members at the house who translate, then, work to cross this boundary by including members who may not otherwise be able to participate. In this section, I focus on translation at Trampoline House, specifically on how members work to include and accept difference.

Every Wednesday, the entire House is invited to attend the House Meeting, where members come together to discuss current issues. These meetings are held in English, a language spoken by the majority of members at the House. Members that do not speak English can request a translator, who can be any member of the house and typically translates for immigrant users:

The meeting started with a quick overview of the agenda (written in English), which was sent out at the beginning of each week for members to look over. Following this, Morten and Tone asked if anyone needed translation, in which case someone who could translate would sit next to that person and translate when people spoke. Those at the meeting were varied; from Somalis that needed Arabic translation, to French-speaking members who needed translation.

- Field Notes, March 11

³³ In this case, “Otherness” is entrenched in the context of linguistic ability – and is accepted through the working across barriers.

Through asking members to translate and help one another, Trampoline House reinforces a performance of unity across difference. Translating across difference is hardly unique to the House Meetings; due to the diversity of the house, many everyday interactions rely heavily on communicating across linguistic barriers, either with exaggerated hand gesture or (more commonly) by involving multiple individuals. Translation at the house is based on the availability of language speakers – i.e. if the individual needs translation from English to Arabic, there must be a member available who can translate across the two languages. The translating member can be either a user, volunteer or staff, depending solely on who is available to translate.

While Trampoline House aims to bridge across difference, this does not always occur. On slower days, it is not uncommon to walk into the House and find different groups sitting together depending on mother tongue³⁴:

During the name round, Tone bends forwards to see who is talking. She laughs when she asks “Sudan, introduce yourselves!” Since it’s a bunch of Sudanese users who sit together behind where the actual house is sitting. She also asks “kitchen crew, introduce yourself!”

- Field Notes, June 3

For some members, the House is a space of similarity through linguistic and cultural identities rather than an opportunity to work across difference. However, despite the selected grouping of some members, members of the house work to include immigrant users through their everyday encounters.

³⁴ This ranges from Pashto to Arabic, Farsi to Italian, to list a few.

Everyday Encounters

Users come from a vast variety of backgrounds, resulting in a multi-lingual culture at Trampoline House. This was visible at the first house meeting that I attended:

An old member had sent a postcard from Australia and signed the card, “*Vi ses snart, inshallah!*” (See you soon, if God wills!) Within the sentence, the volunteer had written in both Danish and Arabic – two languages predominant at the House. The crowd around me greeted the card with rambunctious laughs and fond smiles.

- Field Notes, March 11

Members at the House have normalized the intersectionality of language in everyday conversation. Søren, who was extremely well-liked by all members, was especially fluid in code switching (Scotton & Ury 1977):³⁵

Søren constantly switches language depending on the situation. In everyday conversation, he speaks broken Arabic or Danish depending on whom he is speaking to, yet when speaking as an authority figure, he speaks in English.

- Field Notes, April 25

When performing as an authority figure, Søren consciously speaks in a formalized English the language that Trampoline House presents itself in due to the majority of members who can understand English. However, during daily interactions,

³⁵ I draw from Scotton and Ury’s understanding of code switching as an unmarked performance for speaker and listener: “In conventionalized exchanges, switching may be an unmarked choice between bilingual peers, or with any participants it may be a marked choice; in non-conventionalized exchanges, switching is an exploratory choice presenting multiple identities” (Heller 2010: 156-7). In the context of Trampoline House, members switch language as a presentation of multiple identities, which at times works to mark difference – and, as a result, marks the conscious efforts to work across difference.

Søren adopts a broken pattern of speaking, pulling in phrases from different languages. This is especially shown in his use of Arabic terminology:

However, when speaking in English, Søren peppers his speech with Arabic phrases of “*Inshallah*” (God-Willing) or “*Alhamdulillah*” (Praise be to God), perhaps as a reaction to being surrounded by the majority-Muslim user population.

- Field Notes, April 25

Søren ensures that he includes all members by switching language based on whom he is speaking to and in what particular context. The code switching found in Søren’s daily interactions by is defined by Tone terms as *Trampoline House English*. Trampoline House English removes “unnecessary” words while allowing members to add words in other languages into the conversation in order to communicate their point (Tone Interview).

As David sees it, interactions at Trampoline House are majorly in English in order to include the majority of members:

[Trampoline House] unites people from different cultures, from different backgrounds. We speak different languages, but in the end of the day, we ... find a central way of communication. [We] are in Denmark where everyone speaks Danish. But not everyone speaks Danish in Trampoline House. There is a big population who speak English. English is international.

- David Interview

While the majority of members at Trampoline House speak English, this is not always the case. Due to the multitude of languages spoken at the house, everyday conversations are far from straightforward. Interactions at the House are unique due to the laborious process of translation that occurred during any conversation:

Throughout dinner, I spoke to volunteers while sitting next to the Arabic-speaking crew. Ahmad and Basam called me out for ignoring them, saying that I would rather talk to the others. I turn, and begin talking to them in broken Arabic, English and Danish. Whenever I can't think of a word, I say it in the language I know it in and either Kareem or Ahmad would translate from English to Arabic, or Osman would help from Danish to Arabic, in order to include everyone. This mode of conversing has become normal for me at the house.

- Field Notes, April 25

Through the deliberate and arduous process of translating, members are able to perform an inclusive self. Members at Trampoline House are conscious of their linguistic differences, taking measures to ensure that everyone is included in their daily interactions. It is this very trait that Hassan finds special at the House:

The Trampoline House mean[s] a lot to me because it is a multicultural place where people from all over the world are welcome [to] use the Trampoline House and at the same time it is [a] social place [where] people interact [with] each other [in] different languages [across] different cultures.

- Hassan Interview

As demonstrated in this chapter, language is a major aspect of the inclusive Danish modern identity being re/negotiated at Trampoline House. By being aware of difference, members at the House consciously understand themselves as part of an inclusive community. Immigrant users at the house perform Danishness through learning the Danish language and socializing with Danes – an opportunity not found in the few language classes offered outside of the House. Danish members, on the other hand, are given the opportunity to learn inclusiveness through everyday encounters with users as Danish members acquire linguistic abilities and work to include all members. This has resulted in the creation of

what members understand as Trampoline House English: an inclusive language for all members of the house.

CONCLUSION

One Tuesday afternoon after my cleaning shift, I sat with a couple international volunteers while enjoying a cup of coffee from the kitchen. We began to discuss the meaning behind the name “Trampoline House.” In all our time there, the staff members never once explained why it was that they had chosen the title – and online searches yielded no satisfying answers. After much deliberation, we came up with a consensus. Trampoline House, as we understood it, is a catchall: a way to *jump* into Danish society with safety net cushioning any fall. It is a space of inclusion, a place of belonging when there is nowhere else. Trampoline House is interactive and malleable – shaped by members’ participation. It is an expansion of Danish society: an escape from the secular and leap away from camp life. Perhaps the best way to illustrate this definition of Trampoline House is through the annual *48-Timer Festival* (48-Hour Festival), where the House explicitly expanded the spatial boundaries into the city of Nørrebro.

Scene from 48-Hour Festival: Taking Trampoline House Beyond the Walls

In Summer 2014, Nørrebro hosted a neighborhood-wide festival known as 48-Timer Festival. Advertising itself as “48 Hours of Culture at Nørrebro” (48 Timer 2015), the yearly festival sprawls over the entire Nørrebro neighborhood with different vendors, cultural events, and speakers. One major event consisted of contenders for the EU Parliament speaking about refugee issues in Denmark, a talk that members of Trampoline House attended. Throughout the day, the talks

had been held in English. However, when one politician began to speak Danish, members of the Trampoline House community united together to take a stand:

Three politicians running for the EU Parliament [we]re there to talk about refugee stuff. [The] whole day was in English so that [users] could understand and could speak up at the venue. But suddenly, [the speaker] switched [to Danish] at a really important point...

Trampoline House members made a point in saying, “We don’t speak, some of us don’t speak Danish, we need translation or we need another language!” ...

So [the members] forced the [politicians] to switch language and you know, I could not have done it better myself. Actually, if I had been there and had asked them to switch it would have been not as good because the craving for language comes from these people. And because they took the initiative by themselves, that is the House Meeting. ... I am so fucking proud. I really think it’s amazing. I know it came out of frustration because “what is going on here?!?” ...

One of our missions is to make refugees visible and to allow them to be proud and to take part in democracy. That is what we try and teach here at the house meeting and all of our venues to try and empower people. ...

Trampoline House has brought to them as a community because as a community to force the whole festival to change the spoken language of whatever they are doing for the sake of the people is powerful.

- Morten Interview

Through everyday encounters at Trampoline House, members are cognizant of their linguistic abilities, altering their communication styles to include all members. This performance of inclusiveness is not typical of Danish society, where citizens habitually speak Danish. The conscious approach to inclusion at Trampoline House creates a sense of solidarity amongst members, empowering them to transfer these skills in everyday society. As Morten relayed, users at the

48-Hour Festival were frustrated at the dialectical switch, protesting together to have the speaker switch language – a demonstration that proved successful.

I use this excerpt to demonstrate the “assembly”³⁶ (Corsín Jiménez & Estalella 2013: 151) of members at Trampoline House into the Danish landscape. Trampoline House attempts to perform as a space of inclusiveness – a performance that, in this instance, expands outwards of its spatial boundaries to the urban space of Denmark. Trampoline House performs as a prototype, suspending the politicized Danish identity in favor for an inclusive Danish modern. Through assembling a diversity of members, the House mobilizes a potential for change by creating relationships between members of the House and the Danish political sphere.

Danish Modern: An Ongoing Experiment in Inclusion

This thesis has examined how a Danish *kulturhus* aims to serve as a prototype for an inclusive Danishness by performing as a space of cultural identity re/negotiation. I began by elaborating on the history of Danish national identity in *Reimagining Danishness*. Here, I argued that Danish national identity relies on the performance of everyday Danishness. As a result, immigrants are excluded from Danish identity, an exclusion that is most explicit through Danish media. In order to counter this exclusion, Trampoline House was founded as an alternative space for testing an inclusive Danish modern.

³⁶ As Corsín Jiménez and Estalalla define it, the “process of assembling ... produces a novel sense of urban neighborliness,” thereby creating “social and political subjects throughout the process” (2014:170). In the case of Trampoline House, members assemble for the cause of an inclusive Denmark, a cause that is realized and mobilized through the House – and then moves outwards *from* the spatial limits of the House.

In *Siting Trampoline House*, I discussed the impacts of Trampoline House within the greater Danish society, as well as in a more local scale of the neighborhood. As a physical entity, Trampoline House represents a larger prototype, which is experienced uniquely by different members of the house – experiences demonstrated in *Trampoline House: Performing Itself to Itself*. Danish members range from using the house as an escape from everyday Danishness, to utilizing the space to gain teaching experiences, while users commonly believed the house to be a place of escape from camp life.

To go even further, I demonstrated the acceptance of differences through performance of cultural identity found at the Friday Night Dinners. During this time, users of the house consciously perform their cultural differences through the preparation of meals. Religion plays a major aspect in the dinner, where these differences are accepted without contestation. Following the dinner, cultural identities are negotiated, making way for a more liberal and open identity. In this way, Trampoline House is a space of identity acceptance but also of identity negotiation. *Creolizing Danishness* focused on the bridging of differences amongst members through language acquisition. While Danish national identity is intrinsically tied with the Danish language, Trampoline House aims to counter this through Trampoline House English – a language that takes inspiration from the simplification of language and the code switching found within the house. Members of the house are aware of their linguistic differences, which demonstrate

a larger identity difference at play. Through bridging across linguistic barriers, members demonstrate the Danish modern that is modeled at Trampoline House.

Throughout this thesis, I aimed to explore Trampoline House as a public space of performance, a place of encounter and departure, where Danish members leave Danishness while users enter Danishness. Overall, I have demonstrated how Trampoline House aims to renegotiate Danishness by performing as a space of inclusion and bridging across differences. As members described to me, the House is a community of acceptance. I experienced this firsthand as I observed members negotiate their identities, altering their self-presentation depending on the situation. My research has found that Danish members and immigrant users of Trampoline House are part of a greater web of identity negotiations. While outside of the House, members are held to the static definition of Danish identity, Trampoline House serves to challenge this and push members to rethink their identities.

In February 2015, major Danish news site *DR* published an article entitled “The Danes Do Not Know Refugees or Immigrants” (Jensen 2015). The short article discusses how only seventy percent of Danes have little to no contact with immigrants and are uninterested in bridging the gap. Trampoline House aims to counter the contested acceptance of immigrants in the Danish landscape by providing a space of encounter between member groups. Slowly, the House is moving outwards of the spatial barriers of its walls to reach towards Main Street Copenhagen. Through encouraging encounters between member groups,

Trampoline House is continuously shaping and testing a Danish modern for an unstable future – a Danish society valuing inclusion and acceptance.



Figure 134a. Trampoline House: Spreading Outwards.
(Photos courtesy of Google Maps and Trampoline House [2015])



Figures 124b (left) & 134c (right). Trampoline House advocating for immigrant rights in Nørrebro (131b) and Main Street Copenhagen (131c).
(Trampoline House 2015)

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