



LUNDS
UNIVERSITET

Brandur Mortensen Nolsøe

Lunds Universitet/Sociologiska institutionen
Masterprogram i Samhällsvetenskap

Ämne: Sociologi

Kurs: SOCM04

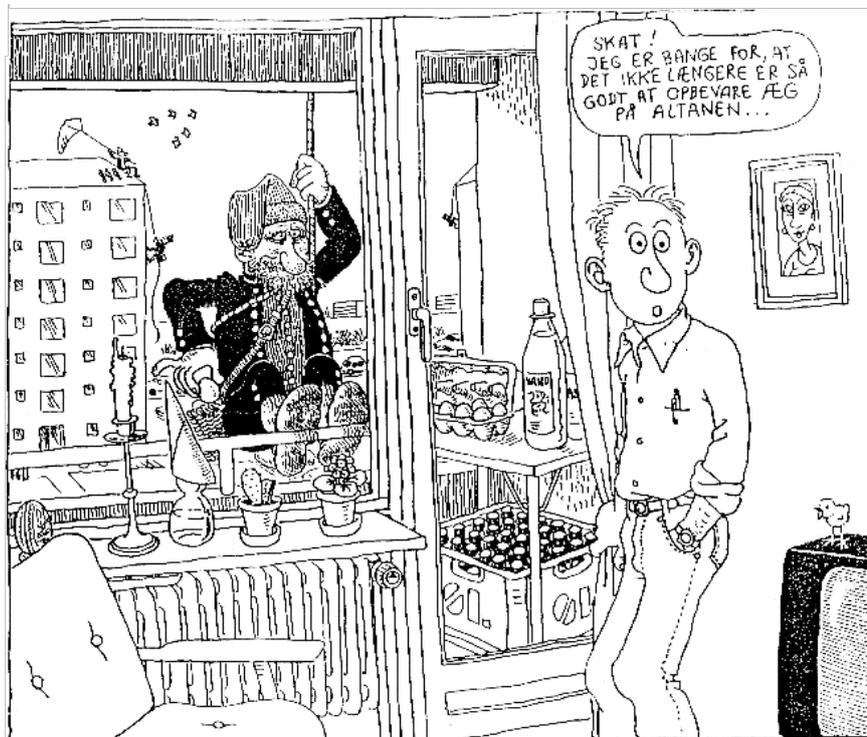
Höstterminen: 2017

Huvudhandledare: David Wästerfors

Bihandledare: Lisa Flower

Inconspicuously foreign

Everyday identity work within the Faroese diaspora in Copenhagen



Författare: Brandur Mortensen Nolsøe

Titel: Inconspicuously foreign: Everyday identity work within the Faroese diaspora in Copenhagen

SOCM04 Sociologi: Examensarbete för masterexamen, 30 hp

Huvudhandledare: David Wästerfors

Bihandledare: Lisa Flower

Sociologiska institutionen, hösten 2017

Abstract

This study explores the identity work of members of the Faroese community in Copenhagen. Building on a symbolic interactionist view on social interaction, I attempt to uncover the strategies behind the presentation of self in a diasporic environment, in which members adapt their role performances according to ongoing changes in rules of interaction. I have conducted between 50 and 60 hours of ethnographic fieldwork in Faroese environments in Copenhagen and Malmö, much of which was helped by my ongoing relations to the setting. My findings suggest a changing of the presentation of self in line with being inside and outside of the Faroese diaspora. Diasporic boundaries are reproduced through everyday interaction of community members, particularly in relation to the presentation of the Faroese self. This distinction mirrors the contrast in social behaviour between the home environment in the Faroe Islands as opposed to that of a large-scale city. From a dramaturgical view, this distinction can be explained in terms of frontstage and backstage behaviour. During unexpected encounters with other Faroe Islanders, management of role performance intensifies along with added scrutiny, which results in a conflict of role performances, specifically between the frontstage and backstage regions. The term “moral hangover” represents the consequences of a failed alignment between roles.

Key words: Presentation of self, symbolic interactionism, situational ethnicity, impression management, ethnic identity

Popular science abstract

Using fieldnotes from between 50 to 60 hours of ethnographic field research, I explore how Faroe Islanders in Copenhagen negotiate their ethnic identity in their everyday life. A Faroe Islander myself, I have made use of my ongoing relations to the field in order to gain insight into the daily lives of my informants. A discrete ethnic group in a foreign culture, Faroe Islanders communicate their identity in accordingly as they move between Faroese and non-Faroese environments. Part of this negotiation of identity centres on overcommunicating and undercommunicating ethnicity. As Faroe Islanders share the same roots as their neighbouring countries in the Nordic region, their ethnic identity is often not observable to outsiders. This allows for a switching between different roles during the everyday routines. In order to maintain the roles that are being displayed, different strategies are employed, for example by way of a team effort. However, unexpected encounters with other Faroe Islanders can lead to an unexpected breakdown of the role being displayed, resulting in a conflict of roles.

Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Aim and research questions.....	1
1.2 Setting the scene.....	3
1.2.1 A miniature continent.....	3
1.2.2 Neither here nor there.....	5
1.2.3 National identity: choosing a passport.....	6
1.3 Disposition.....	7
2. Theory.....	9
2.1 Symbolic Interactionism – a perspective.....	9
2.2 Dramaturgy.....	10
2.3 Impression management.....	11
2.4 Passing.....	12
2.5 Situational ethnicity.....	13
2.6 The Stranger: an analytical concept.....	15
3. Previous research.....	17
3.1 Communicating ethnicity.....	17
3.2 Ethnic identities in foreign cultures.....	18
4. Method and data.....	21
4.1 Relations to the field as a spur to study.....	21
4.2 Being there.....	23
4.3 The setting.....	24
4.3.1 Øresundskollegiet.....	24
4.3.2 The Culture House (‘Føroyahúsið’).....	25
4.4 Ethical considerations and limitations.....	25
5. Analysis.....	27
5.1 Deep diasporic roots: reproducing an ethnic community.....	27
5.2 Crossing diasporic boundaries.....	31
5.3 “It’s two separate worlds”: maintaining separate identities.....	34
5.4 Ethnic distancing.....	37
5.5 At home and abroad: switching identities.....	40
5.6 Managing different roles.....	43
5.7 The “moral hangover”.....	47
6. Conclusion.....	49
7. Bibliography.....	51

1. Introduction

This study is largely inspired by my own experiences of changes in interaction rules in the Faroese environment in Copenhagen. Some six years ago large parts of my social circles in the Faroe Islands moved to Denmark to study, most of whom joining a well-established Faroese community in Copenhagen. I myself moved to a relatively small town in the United Kingdom where I had no pre-existing relations and instead had to build a new social network entirely. During these study years I made several trips to Copenhagen to visit my childhood friends. Interacting with members of the Faroese community in Copenhagen, I became aware that their presentation of self was more closely tied to Faroese identity compared to what I was experiencing in my everyday life in the United Kingdom. Many Faroe Islanders in Denmark spend large parts of their everyday socialising with each other. However, as members of a “discrete” ethnic group, when interacting with Danes, their ethnic identity is isolated and may carry the label of an outsider. In effect, Faroe Islanders may communicate their ethnicity according to the extent to which they want their role in the interaction to be defined as Faroese or non-Faroese. Having taken up sociological literature on social interaction, specifically that of Erving Goffman, I had taken a particular interest in social interaction within the Faroese community. What I sought to explore was the way in which the presentation of Faroese self is managed according to the situation.

Faroese identity becomes especially relevant when Faroe Islanders meet in a foreign setting. In terms of dramaturgy, the setting here represents the stage on which the actor performs his or her carefully managed role. What has a particular influence on the role performance is whether or not there are Faroe Islanders in the audience.

1.1 Aim and research questions

This study explores identity work in everyday interaction amongst members of the Faroese community in Copenhagen. I analyse ethnographic fieldnotes from participant observation conducted mainly in Copenhagen and partly in Malmö using an interactionist approach. The main aim is to explain how Faroe Islanders manage their foreign identity in everyday life in a well-established Faroese diaspora. I am interested in finding out how Faroe Islanders negotiate the presentation of self inside and outside their ethnic community. As a further matter, it is my

hope that this study can add to the potential of other minority studies on a social interaction level.

As a Faroe Islander myself, though not a member of the community in Copenhagen, I have actively made use of my pre-existing knowledge about the setting, and utilised my ongoing relations to the field to gain access to the daily routines of the life of Faroe Islanders in Copenhagen. The following questions will be considered:

- 1) How do Faroe Islanders in Copenhagen reproduce their ethnic community?
- 2) Which strategies do they use to manage boundaries between belonging and not belonging to the Danish society?
- 3) How do they switch between presenting themselves as Faroese and non-Faroese?
- 4) How do they manage unexpected or embarrassing encounters that challenge their presentation of Faroese self?

In answering these questions, I use a series of theoretical concepts and previous research related to my field to underpin a discussion of various situations depicted in my fieldnotes, in which Faroes identity is either accomplished or avoided in everyday situations. I will demonstrate in detail, firstly, how ethnic communities and diasporic boundaries are produced and reproduced by members. Secondly, I will uncover how social circles are separated and what role ethnicity plays herein. Thirdly, I demonstrate how different role performances are managed by my informants. And finally, I will demonstrate the significance of the so-called “moral hangover” in Faroese context.

The first question will be addressed in section 5.1. The second question will be addressed in sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4. The third question will be addressed in sections 5.5 and 5.6, and the fourth question will be addressed in section 5.7.

1.2 Setting the scene

In the following sections, I will present and contextualise the Faroe Islands in relation to Denmark, as well as give a description of key social and cultural traits which help shape everyday interaction in the Faroese community in Copenhagen.

1.2.1 A miniature continent

As most maps of the world illustrate, the Faroe Islands are a particularly small and isolated group of islands. Apart from their nearest neighbour, fellow archipelago the Shetland Islands, the countries surrounding the North Atlantic Ocean make the Faroe Islands look miniscule; they are encapsulated in a dot smaller than your finger tip, pinpointed amidst Norway, Iceland and Scotland. Say your map is digital, and you gradually zoom in, you notice the Faroe Islands as an emerging array of small cities, towns, and villages that are invariably surrounded and bounded by water. And now you may have already taken note of the foremost external characteristics of the Faroe Islands: they are a small-scale island society. The smallness and strong sense of Faroese identity are embedded in the self-image of the many Faroe Islanders who live abroad, and such layers of identity are given special meaning when Faroe Islanders by chance cross paths in foreign surroundings. During such encounters, the importance of home inadvertently becomes especially relevant and, consequently, helps shape the sense of identity during the situation at hand.

As is typical for many small-scale societies, the Faroe Islands can often be found either in the top or the bottom of various global indexes. For example, high birth rates, low divorce rates and high maternal age (Statistics Faroe Islands, 2011). A close-knit and homogeneous island society with a well-developed infrastructure, it is a society with considerable social density and recognisability. At the same time, urbanisation, division of labour, high geographical mobility, and a welfare state akin to the Nordic model make for a late-Modern society. The strong connection the Faroe Islands have with the outside world is reflected in their trade agreements with the world's largest global economies, with fisheries amounting to more than 95 per cent of their export goods (Statistics Faroe Islands, 2018b).

The notable interplay between the late-Modern characteristics of Faroese society and the abundance of surviving cultural traditions and geographical history can give the impression

that it is a place unlike most others, not only for visitors, but also for locals. As Faroese anthropologist Firouz Gaini describes it:

For most Faroe Islanders it seems to be a more intricate test to describe the internal variation in society than to illustrate the outside world. Every stone, every valley and every mountain has a name and a story as well as a link to other places in the Faroe Islands. It is like a miniature continent with a condensed social structure that could be expanded to a much larger context. (Gaini, 2013: 13).

For the many Faroe Islanders living in Denmark, then, there are stark contrasts between the experience of the home environment and life in their adopted city environment. A study from 2007 estimated that the number of Faroe Islanders living in Denmark equalled nearly half of the home population, which was then some 48.000 (Den Nordatlantiske Gruppe i Folketinget, 2007). These figures uphold the known Faroese saying: “half of all Faroe Islanders have lived in Denmark”. Despite a steady stream of people who move abroad for better education and career opportunities, a corresponding counter stream of young Faroe Islanders deciding to return home to settle down has in recent years held off the threat of brain drain to Faroese society. In early 2017 the Faroese population had surpassed 50.000 for the first time, demonstrating a positive tendency of late (Statistics Faroe Islands, 2018a).

Due to the remote location of the Faroe Islands, it is often said that the inhabitants are a particularly adaptable group of people. For many, it has been necessary to move abroad to pursue work or education, which has entailed settling in foreign cultures and adopting a foreign language. This way, Faroe Islanders have a strong connection with the outside world. As a result of the Faroese school system, Faroe Islanders are commonly fluent in several foreign languages. The language capacity, particularly for young Faroe Islanders, also stems from the exposure to foreign television channels, which can range from Danish, Swedish and Norwegian to German, British and American. Whereas some non-Faroese television programmes for children are Faroese dubbed, older children and young adults predominantly watch English speaking television programmes with Danish subtitles, which stimulates two foreign languages at once. As there is little Faroese entertainment content on the internet, and Faroese is not available for subtitles on online streaming media, practical familiarity with foreign languages will likely continue in the future.

1.2.2 Neither here nor there

A few decades ago, the Faroe Islands might have been a mystery to most outsiders. However, during the previous decade, the tourism sector has grown rapidly to become an important industry. Visitors from near and far are now equipped with prior knowledge of their travel destination as they set foot on the islands for the first time. In political terms, however, notwithstanding the connections with the outside world, the Faroe Islands have ambiguous relations to the international community. An autonomous and self-governing country within the Kingdom of Denmark today, the Faroe Islands also have a long-standing history outside its current union with Denmark and Greenland, and in many areas their circumstances can seem paradoxical. Gaini (2013) summarises some of these intricacies by outlining that the Faroe Islands as a country:

- is part of the Danish Kingdom, yet outside the European Union
- has its own stamps, flag, anthem, etc. yet no seat in the United Nations
- is outside Schengen, yet Faroese citizens travel as Schengen-country citizens
- does not have a military, yet it is part of NATO via Denmark
- has distinct bank notes, yet the currency is Danish Kroner
- does not have an indigenous population, yet Faroese Islanders do not stem from immigrants
- has its own language and culture, yet it has strong roots in the Nordic region together with its neighbours

Due to this historical trajectory, the Faroe Islands may therefore seem an in between place that is neither here nor there: not a sovereign state, though with its own jurisdiction and capacity.

Traditionally, the island as a metaphor has been a base in anthropological research to depict a strong image of isolated and self-sustaining communities (Eriksen, 1993b). Though, in many cases, we can say that remote island communities are microcosms that more or less reflect the structure and properties of larger urban communities alike (Gaini, 2013). Here it ought to be added that, in Anthropological literature, critics of the so-called ‘cultures as islands’ argument state that there is no such thing as a completely isolated island community since island inhabitants are originally connected from different territories (Ibid.: 10).

Despite the notion that an island community is never isolated in the whole sense of the word, island life often has island-life characteristics. In Modern small-scale societies, one of these characteristics is likely to be high recognisability which, in effect, entails an absence of anonymity. For a sociologist, it may be tempting to see high recognisability as a hindrance to the individualisation process, which is a central part of our idea of late-Modern society. Regardless, a lack of anonymity has strong implications for social life. As a study on recognisability in the Faroe Islands from 2012 reports, in a homogeneous society, with high recognisability, social actions have the potential for stronger and more immediate social consequences, social conflicts and breaches of norms compared to large societies (Johannesen, K. J., 2012).

1.2.3 National identity: choosing a passport

Most Faroe Islanders have been in discussion with outsiders, in which they have tried to explain the gist of their national identity. However, as mentioned, that is not a simple task. To accomplish this, Faroe Islanders seem to have a somewhat fluid set rules to go by. This position becomes clear when it comes to the manifestation of the national identity: the passport. When applying for a passport, Faroe Islanders have the right to choose between a red European passport and a green Faroese passport. Some who have chosen the green passport, including some of my own relatives, have sometimes found themselves in a undesirable situation in international airports in which the passport inspector has looked puzzled at the green Faroese passport which says “Føroyar” on top, and “Denmark” directly beneath. Not recognising the Faroe Islands, the inspector may ask the anticipating passport owner as to the mere existence of his or her country (Gaini, 2013)¹.

A growing number of people choose the red European passport. The reason is partly that it entails more opportunities. Some may point to the practical disadvantage of border crossing incidents. Although, for older Faroese citizens the choice has not been necessary to make as they have simply kept the Faroese passport as the European passport became available not many decades ago. For another group of people, the Faroese passport reflects a nationalistic sentiment, in which case the red passport rejects their Faroese identity. Furthermore, having a European passport can imply a blessing of the Danish state and its political power over the

¹ Today the biometric passport makes the job easier for the passport controller as the computer does the work.

Faroe Islands as an autonomous country. From a more pragmatic perspective, international students, such as myself, are entitled to the mostly lower European tuition fees as opposed to overseas tuition fees, which are often considerably higher. Applying for university admission using a Danish passport automatically grants you all the rights that other EU-citizens have without the fuss that can occur as foreign institutions are confused as to the citizenship of the student.

The choice between a Danish passport and a Faroese passport reflects the everyday life of Faroe Islanders in Copenhagen. During their daily routines, they move between Faroese and non-Faroese social situations. This oscillation between environments also mirrors the ability of Faroe Islanders to adapt to their surroundings, to manage their presentation of self. As in choosing one passport over the other, in their everyday lives, Faroe Islanders can choose one identity over the other. In this study, I will attempt to uncover the strategies behind this choice between identities.

1.3 Disposition

The following is an outline of the main components of the thesis.

In chapter *two* I will present the theoretical framework which forms the basis of the analysis of my research material. Here key theoretical concepts will be explained in relation to the study. The chapter begins with an explanation of the self from a symbolic interactionist perspective. It then continues to describe the main points in Erving Goffman's dramaturgy, as well as a number of strategies of impression management. This is followed by a discussion of situational ethnicity, in which I explain the links between the presentation of self and ethnicity in a social situation. Finally, I will argue how a sociological image of "the stranger" may help understand the processes of presentation of self.

In chapter three I will give an overview of my research perspective which supports and guides my study. Introducing a number of central concepts and relevant previous research, the aim of this chapter is to give the reader an indication of the relevance of this study.

In chapter four I will, firstly, explain my motivations as a Faroe Islander to undergo this research and give an indication of my own relations to the setting. Secondly, the chapter offers a brief discussion of the advantages and limitations of ethnographic research in terms of my particular setting. Finally, in chapter four the ethical considerations that are relevant to this study will be discussed.

In chapter five I will analyse my findings and attempt to answer the research questions with the help of the above-mentioned theoretical concepts and previous research. I will discuss, respectively:

- how ethnic community and diasporic boundaries are reproduced by community-members
- how social circles are separated and what role ethnicity plays herein
- how different role performances are managed
- the significance of the “moral hangover”.

In chapter six I will summarise and discuss my findings.

2. Theory

In this chapter I will present the theoretical framework which forms the basis of the analysis of my material. Key theoretical concepts will be outlined and related to my study, which support my analytical perspective. I begin by explaining my understanding of the self from a symbolic interactionist perspective. I then describe the main points in Goffman's dramaturgy, and strategies of impression management which I will apply in my analysis. Following this, I will present the term situational ethnicity, which encompasses the link between the presentation of self and ethnicity in a social situation. Finally, in this chapter I will describe how a sociological image of "the stranger" may help understand the processes of presentation of self in the context of my material.

2.1 Symbolic Interactionism – a perspective

By the means of extensive fieldwork, social anthropology and sociology have long had the advantage of studying everyday social life first-hand. Drawing on such a tradition of studying social life, the sociology of symbolic interactionism takes a micro-sociological perspective and focuses on face-to-face encounters to understand the meaning that is attached to the behaviour of social actors (Scott, 2015: 11). Through the production of symbolic meanings in social interaction, identities emerge from interaction patterns. Moreover, from a symbolic interactionist approach, identity production is seen as an ongoing process which is never fully complete. In this study, I adopt this perspective as a means to focus on the negotiation of identity in the everyday life of Faroe Islanders living in Copenhagen.

The analysis of my material will build on the notion that there is no true self, and that social behaviour is shaped by our social surroundings (Cooley, 1902). With the help of symbolic interactionist theory, I will depict the presentation of different versions of the self of my informants, particularly focusing on the management of impressions and control of social information in daily situations. The key concern for a symbolic interactionist perspective is not objectively defining reality, but rather understanding how actors experience their own situations (Scott, 2015: 13). Symbolic interactionism, then, helps depict the processes and strategies which create these experiences. As Herbert Blumer says, coining the term 'symbolic interactionism' (Carter & Fuller, 2015: 2): "One has to get inside of the defining process of the actor in order to understand his action" (Blumer, 1969:16).

2.2 Dramaturgy

Although dramaturgy can be taken as a theoretical perspective in itself, it can be seen as a variant of symbolic interactionism in that its key concern is with face-to-face interaction and the work therein committed to negotiating and performing identity (Scott, 2015: 15). In his dramaturgical account on social interaction, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), Goffman describes how individuals in their everyday display a series of roles to others. As social actors, Goffman argues, we are ever concerned with how we are coming across and constantly try to set ourselves in the best light. As we enter the presence of others, the analogy goes, we enter the stage on which we give performances in order to control and manage how we appear to our audience. On stage, we play a range of different parts that are determined by our own view of the situation we find ourselves in. And, as an ongoing process, we adapt the roles we display depending on who we are interacting with. These observations are drawn from Goffman's field research in which he studied face-to-face interaction between members of the island community of the Shetland Islands (Goffman, 1953).

In addition to the performance itself, factors such as social surroundings and clothing play an important part of the impressions others receive from us. Our appearance is then interpreted by others in accordance to their corresponding expectations of the interaction. The performances portrayed by social actors entail two factors. Firstly, all of an individual's activity that takes place within a period in the presence of others, and, secondly, the performance has an influence on the observers (Goffman, 1959: 32). To Goffman, it was important to uncover not just the impressions given deliberately by the individual, but also scrutinise the part of our performance which is given off.

Adopting Goffman's analogy of the performance – both individual and in teams -, I address the two central parts of the self: frontstage and backstage. The frontstage is where we behave knowing that there is an audience observing us. On frontstage public performances are given, and carefully scripted roles displayed which represent our identity (Scott, 2015: 17). The roles displayed on frontstage follows the routines and the expectations of our behaviour. Here I refer in particular to the personal front, which can mean elements of identity ranging from clothes to facial expressions. The contrasting part of the performance is backstage, which is where the actor steps out of the public performance and instead relaxes in a private sphere. When backstage, the actor has time to reflect upon his public role performance and prepare before heading back on stage. Furthermore, when backstage, the actor becomes aware of his 'true' self, which can be considered a privileged insight (Ibid.).

2.3 Impression management

To Goffman, an individual only conducts himself from the perspective of the self, and thereby has no control over the social reality of the bystander. The capacity to give impressions comprises of two different categories of so-called sign activity; the impressions that the individual intentionally “gives”, and those the individual unintentionally “gives off” (Goffman, 1959: 14). The individual may meticulously utter verbal signs, which convey a meaning that is understood in the same way by all present, and no language barrier exists. However, as part of the same gesture, non-verbal signs may be performed, which the others may interpret as symptomatic (Ibid.).

A common concern for actors in terms of their role performing is trying to prevent incidents which disrupt their performance. Unexpected events can result in an embarrassing break with the role that is performed, and unmeant gestures can give off contradictory impressions. What Goffman calls ‘inopportune intrusions’ can occur if the performer is caught out of character whilst backstage (Goffman, 1959: 132). This jeopardises the staged image that the actor, or team of actors, have projected on themselves. In order to prevent such incidents, Goffman upholds, a number of particular techniques and strategies of impression management are used by the individual actor to execute his role performance.

‘Dramaturgical loyalty’, for example, refers to a certain moral obligation between team members not to reveal the secrets about their shared performance (Goffman, 1959: 135). This includes not betraying the reality of backstage into which the team members have exclusive insight. This also entails that others cannot be trusted to know their backstage behaviour. For many of my Faroese informants in Copenhagen, the frontstage region – or their public performances – relates to when non-Faroese friends are in their presence. And, in contrast, they are backstage when they are in the presence of only Faroese friends. Therefore, when Danes are present, there exists such a team-work between Faroe Islanders in which exclusive insight into backstage behaviour exists. This dimension of frontstage and backstage can represent the role of a Faroese interaction order (Goffman, 1983), which constitutes as distinct domain of social interaction within the Faroese diaspora in Copenhagen. Furthermore, another exclusive trait, which can be added to the Faroese social domain, is what Goffman refers to as ‘traffic rules’ of social interaction, which serve as protection of their personal territories from outsiders (Goffman, 1967: 12).

Another strategy of impression management is what Goffman refers to as ‘dramaturgical discipline’ (Goffman, 1959: 137). Here the actor conceals the struggle that goes into giving the

impression of being relaxed, or nonchalant. This strategy entails a certain awareness, which enables the actor carefully to manage facial and verbal expressions as well as bodily demeanour in order to give the appropriate display (Scott, 2015: 89). When an actor is dramaturgically disciplined, he is free to cope with any disruptions of the encounter whilst seeming immersed in the social activity at hand (Goffman, 1959: 210). Such discipline requires a disassociation with the performance.

Dramaturgical discipline may be useful as an individual who is abroad has an odd encounter with another member of the same ethnic group. For example, a Faroe Islander in Copenhagen may find himself isolated from his ethnic community when running into another Faroe Islander. Not expecting the encounter, he may try to act nonchalant in terms of the encounter so as to give the impression that his performance does not need to change, even though the encounter has compromised his role performance. In such a situation, the Faroe Islander may experience what Goffman refers to as a conflict of roles (Goffman, 1961) in that he has to play two separate roles simultaneously that do not fit well together (Scott, 2015: 104). A further dimension of role conflicts presents itself in areas in which many Faroe Islanders live and often cross paths with each other. Although many of the Faroese residents may know each other, in many cases, their relationship can be characterised as familiar strangers (Milgram, 1977). Despite their fellow ethnic identity, which enables many reference points, there may be little knowledge about each other's' real selves (Scott, 2015: 44).

Giving and giving off information encompasses other aspects of the performance as well, such as clothing. For example, as I will describe in my analysis, my informants may sometimes deliberately wear clothes which symbolise the Faroe Islands, which symbolise the Faroe Islands, revealing aspects of their identity. Other times, they may leave such pieces of clothes in the wardrobe as they prefer to present themselves as a member of Danish society more so than a member of the Faroese community in Denmark.

2.4 Passing

Other strategies of managing the self are related to specific categories of social information. For example, In *Stigma* (1963), Goffman studies the strategies that stigmatised individuals use to deal with the rejecting effect of the stigma, and to control their 'discredited' identity (Goffman, 1963: 14). A stigmatised individual, according to Goffman, is unable to conform to the standards that are seen as normal. The problem with stigma is that it blemishes the character of the individual and spoils his identity in the eyes of others (Ibid.: 31). Whereas a 'discrediting'

stigma is immediately visible physically, or publicly accessible as social information, a 'discreditable' stigma is something that is regarded as deviant and can be hidden. To manage a discreditable stigma, for example, the social actor may try to pass as a "normal" person.

In a large-scale city, we may in our daily routines come across a vast range of people that we have never met before, and yet, when the day is done, none of the people we have passed by have left an impression on us. Perhaps there was no attribute that we noticed which was out of the ordinary or unexpected. However, if we pass by a person who, say, looks, smells or sounds unusual, we may well take note of that specific attribute and see it as a stigma. In *Stigma* (1963), Goffman looks at how stigma arises, how we avoid it and why. By stigmatised, he means a person who is unable to conform to the standards that are seen as normal. In my analysis section, I will use the terms passing to give meaning to the negotiation of Faroese identity in Danish culture both today, and through one informant's reference to his experience the stigma of Faroese identity in Denmark in the mid-1990s.

2.5 Situational ethnicity

Ethnicity in interaction, much like social identity, is not a constant trait: it is relative to social situations. For it is through everyday encounters that ethnicity surfaces and becomes relevant for the social actor. With this premise in mind, the term 'situational ethnicity' can be helpful in order to refer to the link between the presentation of self and ethnicity in terms of the social situation. Not least for members of ethnic communities in foreign cultures can the presentation of self be seen as attached to ethnicity. From that, we can recognise that ethnicity is produced and re-produced in social encounters. In line with the notion that the individual has many possible identities at his disposal which are used to control and stage how he appears to others, ethnicity plays a part in the negotiation of identity. A member of an ethnic minority may behave *ethnically* in some situations and *non-ethnically* in others (Eriksen, 1993a). Notwithstanding the notion that ethnicity is often relevant in many social situations, anthropological research suggests, in culturally diverse societies, many situations occur in which ethnicity is not important (Ibid.: 30). The point here is that ethnicity is practiced in specific moments in everyday life. This makes the question of *when* someone is ethnic highly relevant.

A common problem faced by social anthropologists is simply describing the identity of specific ethnic groups and defining their boundaries. For example, in his study on ethnic relations in Thailand, Micheal Moerman (1965) had trouble describing how one ethnic group,

the Lue, were distinctive from other ethnic groups. From asking individual Lue what their typical characteristics were, the responses were several of the same cultural traits as in other groups in the area. As the Lue did not have exclusive cultural traits in the form of livelihood, language and religion, Moerman found himself asking whether it was appropriate to describe the Lue as an ethnic group. Having pondered this, Moerman concluded that when someone is Lue, it is not according to objective cultural traits, but “by virtue of believing and calling himself Lue and of acting in ways that validate his Lueness” (Moerman, 1965: 1219). As he could not refer to clear boundaries of “Lueness”, Moerman defines it as an “emic category of ascription” (Eriksen, 1993a: 11). This suggests a subjectivity in terms of defining ethnicity, which, importantly, comes from the insiders rather than the outsiders.

Past anthropological accounts on tribal communities note that ties to kinship and tribal groups have in local towns been perceived as irrelevant, yet, in polyethnic environments, the same group memberships have been emphasised by the same individuals (Wilson, 1941: 2). This relates to the case of my informants who may have an interest to emphasise a belonging or an un-belonging to Faroese ethnicity in situations where these boundaries are not clear-cut to observers.

This can be linked to Goffman’s (1959) observation of individuals in everyday interaction in terms of overcommunicating their group membership, for instance to deliberately show off their ethnicity. In turn, individuals may sometimes undercommunicate their ties to their group, playing down ethnicity so as to make it less relevant to the situation at hand (Eriksen, 1993a: 21). In circumstances of extensive contact with outsiders, despite not being socially organised in line with their ethnicity, actors become strongly self-conscious of their identity. In urban environments, members of ethnic groups often find themselves negotiating their ethnic identity in such ways, having different strategies in different social situations in doing so (Goffman, 1959). This strongly relates to my fieldwork in that my informants downplay and highlight their ethnic identity throughout their everyday. I will present such instances in the analysis section, and depict the related strategies of presentation of self.

Regardless of ethnicity, the crucial underlying factor in social interaction is the situation itself. The acts of the individual feed into situations; the situation has its own laws and social rules. The individual is, in interaction with others, an ingredient of the situation that the individual finds himself in. In Goffman’s words, it’s “not men and their moments, but moments and their men” (Goffman, 1967: introduction). Or, in terms of my fieldwork, diasporic moments and their men/women. Even more simply: the interaction shapes the individual, not the other way around.

2.6 The Stranger: an analytical concept

The concept of a stranger is, from a Simmelean perspective, grounded in a constant oscillation between the inside and the outside (Wolff, 1950). Simmel himself, like many other scholars of his time, experienced the obstacles entailed by his “otherness” as a Jew in German society (Calhoun, Gerteis, Moody, Pfaff & Virk, 2007: 278). A stranger of today can be a familiar character tomorrow. Simmel defines a stranger as “an individual who is a member of a system but who is not strongly attached to the system” (Rogers, 1999: 58). The attributes of that stranger are his differences of time and place of his origin, his socially not belonging to the host society and also his independence in moving, staying and in his way of behaviour compared to the rest of the society which he enters. If we communicate with strangers we have - at the same time – the impression of being close to someone from a distance and of being far away from someone who is in our immediate environment. While wandering, the stranger moves from outside the society towards the inside.

In *The Stranger* (1944), sociologist Alfred Schütz studies the particular context which arises when the stranger enters into new social surroundings, which is the case, for instance, for an immigrant seeking to integrate and assimilate into society. In such unaccustomed situations, Schütz states, the stranger interprets and exploits the cultural patterns of others in order to orient himself (Schütz, 2002: 219). From the perspective of the individual, Schütz seeks to understand the immediate experiences of the stranger and how he goes about maintaining and managing social information. Through his scope, we can consider all social actors as strangers that seek membership in a new group. The main concern in *The Stranger* is with the immigrant: a position which all social actors have the potential to take, given the fitting social circumstances. Diverting to a more inward-looking perspective, Schütz defines the stranger as an individual trying to attain permanent acceptance or tolerance by the group which he is approaching (Schütz, 1944: 499).

Similar to this stance are the premises of Robert E. Park’s concept of the *Marginal Man* (Park, 1928). Marginal Man refers to the experience of the migrant trying to find his place in a new culture. Referring to the situation of Jews, as well as other ethnic groups, in pre-modern American society, Park examines the task of migrants to maintain two cultures at once, and as a result, the “marginal man” remains on the edge of two different cultures (Park, 1928: 892). Until the point of assimilation into one culture, and eluding from the other, he remains a

stranger in both (Rogers & Steinfatt, 1999: 45). This viewpoint, along with other previous works that are applicable here, for example the concept of *Double Consciousness* (Du Bois, 1968), suggests an ongoing ambivalence or ambiguity, whether he finds himself in a foreign culture or not, to establish his identity.

For many of my informants, the 'oscillation' between cultures (Clifford, 1988: 17) is a part of the daily routines. Moving between Danish and Faroese settings on a daily basis, Faroe Islanders in Copenhagen often switch between the role of the stranger and an ethnic group member.

3. Previous research

In this chapter, I will present an overview of my research perspective which supports and guides my study. By introducing a number of central concepts and relevant previous research, the aim of this chapter is to give the reader an indication of the relevance of this study.

By studying the everyday life of members of the Faroese community in Copenhagen, I attempt to give a broader understanding of how members of ethnic minorities negotiate identity in a foreign culture.

3.1 Communicating ethnicity

Since the 1980s and 1990s, ethnicity has grown to become a common term in the English language both in the social sciences and in popular writing. As opposed to race, which refers to physical differences between social groups, ethnicity refers to shared culture. This is not a new field of study. In the Social Anthropological tradition, ethnicity has been a central focus point for research since the 1960s (Eriksen, 1993a: 1). Whereas the classical social anthropology famously focused on isolated “tribal” societies, after the Second World War, many of the groups studied came into contact with each other, for instance due to migration from the colonies to Europe and USA, social groups have started being regarded as ethnic minorities. Much of the academic interest in ethnicity stems from the eventual visibility of ethnic groups in many societies (Ibid.: 3).

Prior to, and after, this, much social research focusing on ethnicity has sought to understand the ways in which ethnic relations are perceived. That is to say, how people perceive their own group compared to other groups, and experience their ethnic identity. The insight into ethnic relations that has become attainable through previous field research allows for a more nuanced and detailed image of ethnicity (Ibid.: 3). It is relevant for this study to sketch a complex image of the ethnicity-aspect of Faroese culture in Copenhagen, both in terms of self-image and how Faroe Islanders are perceived by others.

3.2 Ethnic identities in foreign cultures

In this study, everyday interaction of members of the Faroese community in Copenhagen is depicted to give an understanding of how identity is managed and negotiated when the social actor regularly takes part in more than one set of cultural patterns. Intercultural communication is, in sociological and anthropological theory, often linked to how the unfamiliar is perceived and negotiated by other members of society.

In the case of the Faroe Islander who moves to Denmark, the extent to which he has to settle in a new cultural environment is diminished by the cultural connection that exists between the Faroe Islands and Denmark. The Faroe Islander is used to reflecting on “danishness”, sometimes as an opposite, and sometimes, in a global context, as a counterpart of Faroese culture. In other words, there exists a cultural, and ethnic, proximity between Faroe Islanders and Danes, which, as I will show, is inconspicuous at times. These particular circumstances of the Faroese community in Denmark may well differ from other ethnic groups. Many instances in which social actors try to pass or cover their identities to “fit in”, research suggests, can disrupt the self-image of the individual, for example in respect of class. In his ethnographic study *Making It by Faking It*, Robert Granfield (1991) explores the strategies used by law students to hide their class background in a law school in which they experience class stigma. The stigma attached to their working-class backgrounds of the students creates role identity problems. To solve these problems, the students “fake it”, taking on new roles in the new elite environment, adopting the behaviours displayed by the other group members. This in turn leads to the experience of identity ambivalence (Granfield, 1991).

Another way of negotiating identity in a situation so as to enhance the social position of the individual is to intentionally express shared social and cultural attributes. In a study of social behaviour within Jewish communities in USA, social actors communicate their shared values through ‘ethnic signalling’ (Plotnicov & Silverman, 1978: 407). Ethnic signalling is an example of *team behaviour* in which two or more individuals seek to reveal their shared cultural elements which create a social unit. The resulting shared identity effectively distinguishes the individuals from their normal interaction (Ibid.). As a result, distance is created between the members of the social unit and the outsiders.

Ethnic boundaries, as patterns of social interaction, enable group members to self-identify as well as identify outsiders (Sanders, 2002). Rather than seeing ethnic boundaries as territorial demarcations, it is helpful to look at ethnic boundaries as a social construction, which insiders and outsiders mutually acknowledge differences in cultural beliefs and practices (Ibid.: 327).

Sometimes group identity is apparent to all observers as the ethnic and cultural criteria are interpreted as such by both insiders and outsiders. Other times, ethnic identity is not recognised by the insider, yet outsiders may interpret, say, traces of dialect as ethnic traits. In a study of how ethnic identity is manifested, these dynamics of recognising ethnic group categorisations in social situations prove to depend on intangible factors (Coggeshall, 1986: 180). In certain social contexts in which two group members do not initially identify each other, specific behaviours or beliefs are deliberately accentuated. Such conscious manipulation of ethnic identity is an example of how ethnic group identity is overcommunicated. Importantly, the strategy of the group member can also be to downplay the shared group categorisations in order to avoid being identified as an ethnic group member.

In terms of “discrete” ethnic groups (Horowitz, 1985), the perceived image of ethnic groups can be quite inconsistent. In a study on ‘white Irish’ identity in England, Willis (2017) reports an ambiguity of the ethnic identity of Irish ethnicity in the United Kingdom. Physical characteristics, such as skin colour, are often used by outsiders to define ethnicity. In this sense, there are significant differences in the general perception of ethnic groups. For instance, the physical characteristics of Faroe Islanders and Danes is often inconspicuous, and even falls under the same “Nordic” umbrella to some outsiders. Willis reports on the differences in perception of her own ethnicity as a social researcher. Drawing on interviews and fieldnotes from two previous research projects, she argues that, because her ethnic identity was sometimes acknowledged and sometimes not, her white Irish identity is fragile (Ibid.: 1681). Whereas she acknowledges her own ethnic group, some of her interview participants did not recognise any cultural traits, such as her accent, and thus her ethnic identity went unnoticed. Her ethnic identity was deconstructed during her interaction. Ethnicity must, firstly, be performed, and secondly be acknowledged by others (Ibid.).

A study by Cvajner (2012) on the presentation of self amongst Eastern European immigrants in Italy focuses on the management of a social stigma attached ethnic identity. Often perceived as “poor mothers with questionable morals” (Cvajner, 2012: 186), immigrant women in Italy actively try to present themselves in ways that can be seen as decent and worthy and restore their social status. The women feel that their low status in society has been forced upon them, as they had to migrate following the collapse of the USSR and feel humiliated due to this stigma. Whereas research often perceives social networks as rationalistic and mostly instrumental, Cvajner argues, personal networks play an important part in terms of both supporting and preserving the sense of self-worth of the members (Ibid.: 187). As many of my informants often interact in social contexts in which their ethnic identity is not initially

revealed, these research findings link to the strategies behind the negotiation of identity as addressed in this thesis. The inconspicuousness of Faroese identity in Copenhagen often allows for deliberate downplaying or emphasising of Faroese ethnicity as my informants negotiate their identity.

4. Method and data

This study is based on 50 to 60 hours of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Copenhagen and Malmö, and to a small extent in between the two cities, over the course of two months in the Autumn of 2017. A large majority of the data derives from participant observation of the daily activities of members of the Faroese community in Copenhagen. A smaller part of my data is collected from field-based interviews and go-alongs, which have been arranged opportunistically during the course of my field research in the same setting.

In this chapter I will, firstly, explain my motivations as a Faroe Islander to undergo this study, and give an indication of my own relations to the setting. Secondly, I will offer a brief discussion of the advantages and limitations of ethnographic research in relation to my particular setting. Finally, I will explain the ethical considerations that relate to this study.

4.1 Relations to the field as a spur to study

Looking to study everyday life in the Faroese diaspora in Copenhagen, I decided take an observation-based approach in collecting empirical data, which entails making observations and obtaining first-hand experiences in the field as the participants. To this end, the decision to undergo ethnographic field research seemed natural. However, the grounds for conducting such fieldwork was, initially to me, not standard compared to my knowledge of ethnographic research. Contrary to traditional ethnographic research as I saw it, the setting of this study seemed one to which I as the researcher have pre-existing relations, which I have opted to use to my advantage in collecting the data. Therefore, in the context of my empirical material, it is noteworthy to outline the extent of my relations to the setting of this study, as well as my personal motivation to study social interaction amongst Faroe Islanders in Copenhagen.

I have a fairly substantial social network in Denmark, which consists of family, friends and other acquaintances. Although I have not lived in Denmark, I have frequently travelled to Copenhagen during holiday periods, either to spend free time there or intermediately before continuing my journey from abroad to the Faroe Islands. As I have observed and interviewed people whom I know personally, my role as a researcher has, to a large extent, been perceived as that of an insider. I argue, however, that my position in the setting, at the same time, has been perceived as outside in that my informants are not used to spending time with me in

Copenhagen, particularly in circumstances other than social events, and in that most of my informants are aware that I have not been part of the Faroese community in Copenhagen.

During the course of my fieldwork, I have actively sought to distinguish between my role as a researcher on one hand, and as a visitor in Copenhagen on the other. In this way, I have tried to reinvent my social proximity to the daily activities of the people in the setting using an ethnographic methodology. Although I had ongoing relations with some of the participants beforehand, with an ethnography-frame of mind, I have attempted to “immerse” in the worlds of my participants in a systematic way so as to better grasp what they experience as important and meaningful in their daily routines. Many authors have stated that immersing can open many windows of opportunity, for example, by enhancing the fieldworker’s sensitivity to everyday interaction and social process (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995: 2). This may give the researcher the ability to observe how other people respond to social activity and, at the same time, himself experience these events and the circumstances that cause them (Ibid.). As Goffman elaborates, immersing entails

subjecting yourself, your own body and your own personality, and your own social situation, to the set of contingencies that play upon a set of individuals, so that you can physically and ecologically penetrate their circle of response to their social situation, or their work situation, of their ethnic situation (Goffman, 1989: 125).

My fieldwork, then, has produced insight information which I had not been able to observe without the tools of ethnographic fieldwork. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that so-called sensitising concepts often help the researcher make sense of the empirical data at hand as many concepts in social sciences can seem ambiguous and cause uncertainty in terms of how to investigate them (Blumer, 1954: 6). Several sensitising concepts have played a part in my organising, understanding and defining of my field research, for example by sensitising me for markers of ethnic identity in social interaction.

What triggered my interest in studying social interaction of Faroe Islanders in Copenhagen was a curiosity that dates back to 2011. After I had moved to the United Kingdom, and many of my childhood friends had moved to Denmark, I became aware of the changes of presentation of self between myself and my friends in Denmark. Whilst I was a lone representative of Faroese culture in my environment, and attempted to subsume in British culture, my childhood friends instead settled into a well-established Faroese community in Denmark. Although the reasons for moving abroad were, as they are today, mostly educational, a large part of my

personal motivation was also to experience a new culture. After my first semester in university, I became aware of the differences between living in an environment in which you are a stranger, compared to one in which you have pre-existing relations. I was most of all intrigued by the way in which *Faroese* interaction continued to prevail in Copenhagen, whilst I, in the United Kingdom, was culturally isolated.

4.2 Being there

My fieldwork was conducted in Central Copenhagen and Malmö during the Autumn of 2017. Between 50 and 60 hours were spent in the field altogether, a small part of which in Malmö, and the majority in specific areas in Copenhagen where I was likely to meet Faroe Islanders. The fieldwork is mostly based on participant observation, though I classify approximately one fourth of my material as interviewing and go-alongs. Much of the material has come about somewhat opportunistically, as is typical in ethnographic research, considering that I did not plan ahead all my days in the field. At the outset, I did plan to solely go to social events, which took place within my timeframe of conducting fieldwork. However, as it turned out, a large part of my fieldwork came about in situations which I had not foreseen. For example, I snowball-sampled my way to arranging several meetings and social gatherings.

Drawing on my pre-existing social network in Copenhagen so as to more easily get into contact with informants, during the first few weeks I was able to take part in social gatherings, parties and spontaneous get-togethers. Then, as time went by, I turned my focus away from spending time with acquaintances to systematically searching for participants randomly. This was possible mainly due to my knowledge of certain places in Copenhagen in which many Faroe Islanders spend their free time.

Part of the interviews was audio-recorded with the consent of the informants. During shorter interviews that were not planned beforehand, I took notes with pen and paper and subsequently revisiting the notes to write them up in a more comprehensible way. Similarly, as I conducted participant observation and did go-alongs, I mostly retracted myself in order to give myself time to scribble down notes. In doing so, I tried as much as possible not to behave unusually to the social situation. In order to fit into the everyday interaction, as the researcher, it is important that you participate small talk and follow the otherwise implicit social rules that apply to the group of individuals (Fangen & Nordli, 2005: 141).

In terms of my methodological approach, I could have studied my field using other methods, for example group interviews. What made me decide on an ethnographic approach was the

personal conclusion that it was the best way to immerse in the daily activities of my informants, and not influence their activities so much so that they became insecure because of my presence. Whilst it is impossible for the researcher not to influence the setting which he is studying, it is possible to take measures, such as that of the “partly participating observer” (Ibid.:) so as to get close to the informants without “going native” (Geertz, 1973: 14).

4.3 The setting

Whilst I have conducted my fieldwork in different places in Copenhagen and Malmö, in terms of my data collection, specific areas in Copenhagen have more significance than others. The two main areas are generally known for being gathering places for Faroe Islanders in Copenhagen, in terms of housing and different kinds of activities. For that reason, much of my fieldwork has taken place in the following two environments.

4.3.1 Øresundskollegiet

In the Faroese community in Copenhagen, a few locations have a long history of bringing Faroe Islanders together. The area in Denmark in which most Faroe Islanders live is the dormitory area, Øresundskollegiet, on the island of Amager. I decided to focus on this area for the purpose of getting into contact with participants. Øresundskollegiet is the largest dormitory in all of the Nordic countries. It is often said that more than half of all the residents at Øresundskollegiet are Faroese. Many of the Faroe Islanders that move to Copenhagen take residence in Øresundskollegiet, for longer or shorter periods. In many cases, childhood friends who grew up in the same neighbourhood, end up living in the same building block. Those who take up residence in Øresundskollegiet today are, in fact, part of a long-standing tradition of Faroe Islanders maintaining their childhood bonds in Denmark. I have myself visited people in Øresundskollegiet in my spare time. In terms of my fieldwork, my pre-existing network in Øresundskollegiet served as an advantage to make contact with potential informants. I would, for example, ‘snowball’ sample (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995: 34) once I was already there and in between interviews and go-alongs.

4.3.2 The Culture House ('Føroyahúsið')

Føroyahúsið (meaning the Faroe-house) is a Faroese culture house located on Vesterbrogade, a few hundred meters from Copenhagen central station. It is an official representation of Faroese culture in Copenhagen and is partly funded by the Faroese government. Føroyahúsið houses an array of events, ranging from late night parties and Faroese feasts to political and religious events. It is a public institution, however, in addition to public funding, it is also partly financed by private donations. As its website states, Føroyahúsið is a hub for Faroese culture, and a gathering place for people who are interested in Faroese culture and spiritual life (Føroyahúsið, 2018). During my fieldwork, I spent several weeks in the café of Føroyahúsið talking to other café-goers and conducting spontaneous recorded interviews.

4.4 Ethical considerations and limitations

It is the responsibility of the researcher to be sensitive to the well-being of the participants, and to avoid causing any harm to the participants. Neither I, the researcher, nor my participants were exposed to any danger during the course of my research. Furthermore, I have taken certain measures to ensure the anonymity of the participants, for example by given them aliases, not referring to actual names of participants in doing so. To this end I have also deemed it necessary to irregularly change the sex of my informants as I have written my fieldnotes. Given the social density and high recognisability amongst the member of the Faroese community in Copenhagen, it is not impossible to identify a person despite of their alias. Therefore, the randomly added obscurity serves as a necessary protection of identity, diminishing the capacity for speculating about anonymity. This has implications for my data in that my informants do not represent social categories in terms of their sex.

Depending on the participants asking for information, I shared a varied amount of information about my project. As a minimum, however, I explained that my presence in the field was due to a research project, to which the participants were relevant, and that I might reiterate some of their remark. I ensured all of my participants that their identity would not be revealed. When in the field, the ethnographic researcher should try to signal transparency so as to avoid deception of the participants. False accountability affects the results of the researcher, and have implications for the individual participant.

It is important that I as the researcher allow the readers to make their own construction of my analysis and try to let it speak for itself (Bourdieu, Accardo & Balazs, 1999: 623). This falls under the ethical principles of the Swedish Research Council for humanistic and social scientific research, for example in terms of confidentiality (Swedish Research Council's Codex 2017). Furthermore, the level of trust between myself and the participants is a noteworthy consideration. My pre-existing relations to the field have allowed for a good dynamic in that sense. My study, however, does not claim to produce total truths, but instead give indications and advance information (Cohen, 1991: 15).

5. Analysis

In the following chapter I will analyse my findings and attempt to answer the research questions with the help of theoretical concepts and previous research. I will, respectively, examine in detail how ethnic community and diasporic boundaries are reproduced by community-members, how social circles are separated and what role ethnicity plays herein, how different role performances are managed, and examine the significance of the so-called “moral hangover”.

5.1 Deep diasporic roots: reproducing an ethnic community

The fact that people from the same background tend to live in the same place abroad is often said to be a natural tendency. In ethnic communities, there are several practical advantages to be gained from sticking to the community to which you feel affiliated. Like most other ethnic groups in foreign cultures, Faroe Islanders in Denmark tend to support each other in their everyday lives. As a Faroe Islander myself, I have often benefited from the network of Faroe Islanders in different countries. When moving to a foreign culture, an individual may feel estranged, for example to new rules of interaction (Goffman, 1967). In effect, the stranger may be unsure of how to present himself; of which role he is to display according to the rules of interaction that are at hand, and which are important to know for a social situation to flow smoothly (Scott, 2015: 31). Here, the Faroese diaspora can play a central role for the ability of Faroe Islanders to settle in their new surroundings. As described by one of my informants, Faroese newcomers can enter into a foreign culture, but at the same time:

Have an opportunity to experience a version of home (Jacob).

Some manifestation of the Faroese community in Copenhagen can be found in and around a range of dormitory complexes across Copenhagen in which many young Faroe Islanders take up residence during their studies. The largest of these, Øresundskollegiet, is a known example of an environment in which Faroe Islanders can live the Faroese way and distance themselves from foreign culture. Dominated by Faroese residents (it is said that more than 50 per cent of the residents are Faroese), Øresundskollegiet serves as a centre in the Faroese diaspora in Copenhagen. Because of the large network of Faroe Islanders that has been established in the

area, it is often a natural process that leads to insiders taking up residence as they move to Denmark to start their studies. With this, ethnic identity plays a part in the way in which Faroe Islanders join the Faroese diaspora in Copenhagen. As partly exclusive to Faroe Islanders, Øresundskollegiet in itself serves as a reproduction centre of Faroese ethnicity, and has done so for many decades. Whereas contact used to be made by word of mouth, today the internet makes it a much simpler task for members to find accommodation. There are Facebook groups for Faroe Islanders living in Copenhagen, and for those living in Øresundskollegiet. These are digital ways in which Faroe Islanders produce their exile community. From my fieldwork, the most common example is the case of one individual occupying the flat of an acquaintance for a limited period of time, which serves the interest of both the newcomer and the one looking for someone to sublet their flat:

The day before I boarded the plane to Denmark, a friend of mine wrote to me and said that he had a friend who needed someone to live in his flat whilst he was away. I just said yes please, and just like that, I had a place to stay for five months (Egil).

I wanted to stay at Øresundskollegiet because that's where my friends were, and so I asked around on the Facebook group. I had no luck at first and ended up sleeping on my friend's floor during the first couple of months of my studies, which was a bit of a pain for both myself and my friend. Then after two months there was finally a free room at Øresund, and in the end, I stayed there for more than a year (Jógvan).

In some cases, young Faroe Islanders living in Øresundskollegiet are the second generation of their family to have lived there, having been preceded by their either their parents, uncles or aunts. Others have a network of family members at the dormitory. Harley, who lives near Øresundskollegiet, reports:

I have about 24 cousins and every one of them has lived there at some point!
(Harley)

Although many of my informants state that they do not regularly spend time in the Faroese culture house, they often imply that they often attend social events arranged and housed by the establishment. Located close to Copenhagen central station, Føroyahúsið ('The Faroe House'), as it's named, it is well suited for people to drop in or otherwise attend events. Føroyahúsið is

the official Faroese culture house in Copenhagen and partly financed by the Faroese government. With both a café and a bar, it hosts events spanning from social and political events to religious gatherings. The core of the Faroe House is its café, which is open several workdays every week. Faroe Islanders are also known to stop by to buy traditional Faroese food, read the Faroese newspapers, or to have a coffee or a Faroese beverage. As the following excerpt details, symbols of Faroese culture are visible in Føroyahúsið, as well as identity traits involved in the interaction, which reproduce the experience of the Faroes Islands:

The two or three times I had been there beforehand were both late-night festive occasions during which the lights had been dimmed, and so it seemed like a new space to me altogether. I had not noticed for example that, hanging on the wall behind the bar were traditional whaling tools from the Faroe Islands (whaling is seen as an important symbol of Faroese culture): ropes, gaffs, spears and knives. And above the door frame, nailed to a wooden board, hanged the horns of a Faroese a ram.



*Figure 1:
Traditional
Faroese
whaling tools.*

These tools stood as strong signifiers of Faroese culture in a space that at face value seemed like a standard café in Copenhagen. I was sitting by a table with my laptop when a woman in her sixties walked through the door, calling one of the bartenders loudly in Faroese as she entered: “I’m here for the beer!”. One of the the bartenders greeted her with a smile. He shouted “Hi!” to me on his way over to meet the woman.

The woman explained to the bartender that she wanted Black Sheep and Veðr (two varieties of Faroese beer). The bartender disappeared into the room behind the counter and returned two minutes later with a case of beer and placed it on the table where the woman had sat down. The bartender was busy. He went into the back again and returned with a plate of Faroese sandwiches and a Faroese beer, which he served a man sitting at a table reading a Faroese newspaper. They were out of *skinsakjót* (cooked fresh lamb meat), the bartender said, to which the man nodded and asked jokingly if the ryebread was Danish. “What’s the difference?”, the bartender asked. They both laughed. “That’s alright”, the man replied, “remember my fish” (he had previously ordered 3 kilos of Faroese cod to bring with him home). All the customers had been served and several of them were now listening to the radio. The bartender sat down next to me. Having asked about my project earlier, he continued our discussion about social behaviour. “It’s funny, back at home you can spot those who live abroad. They are more dressed up when you’re out”, he said. “People at home care less about appearance because everyone knows each other anyway. And those who have lived abroad have adopted the more international culture of trying to make a good impression”. We both laughed.

(Fieldnote labelled *Spending time in Føroyahúsið 1*)



Figure 2:
A menu showing Faroese food for sale.

5.2 Crossing diasporic boundaries

As is the case for most all ethnic groups in foreign cultures, Faroe Islanders living in Copenhagen experience a transformation of their surroundings and experience a period of settling into their new environment. Quite particular for the experiences of Faroe Islanders is the transition from a condensed and homogeneous society, with social restriction and lack of anonymity, to a diverse and urban city characterised by individualism. To draw a clearer and more nuanced picture of the circumstances of members of the Faroese community in Copenhagen, it is suitable to give an indication of the importance of the pre-existing Faroese community that many of my informants have joined. The presence of the pre-existing community has such an effect that leads to a dichotomising dynamic between the inside and outside of the Faroese diaspora.

An example of this initial process of joining the community is finding preliminary accommodation. With some luck, this can be sorted out through the social network of Faroe Islanders in Copenhagen. This, one informant explains, was a big advantage in that it allowed for a less stressful initial period of settling in Copenhagen. However, she says, this had other implications for the way in which she formed her new social network in that she quickly became attached to the Faroese environment. Therefore, today, she feels somewhat unattached to the environment outside:

Before I knew it, I had everything I needed right there at Øresundskollegiet, and naturally I didn't need to be all that social at university (Rakul, recorded interview).

Rakul suggests that she is comfortable in her daily life in the Faroese environment in which she lives. There is an indication of a comfort of living in an area such as Øresundskollegiet, which, in turn, diminishes the need to build a new social network. In the Faroese community, members are able to draw on interaction orders (Goffman, 1983), which exclusively stem from their home environment. This tendency is apparent in how most of my informants describe their relationship to Danish culture. Even though Danish culture is not unfamiliar to them, some of my informants indicate that they do not feel Danish in the slightest, and actively keep a distance to Danish culture in their everyday. For example, having lived in Copenhagen for four years, Rasmus admits, he continues to be hesitant to adopt the Danish language. As a student, he attends university in his everyday alongside fellow Danish students, yet he spends the majority of his time amongst Faroe Islanders in the dormitory area of Øresundskollegiet:

I am social like everyone else, and we do Friday bars together and everything, but I prefer speaking Faroese. Danish is not me. So, I do not spend more time than necessary at school. (Rasmus, recorded interview).

Rasmus does not lack understanding of the Danish language. Rather, he does not feel comfortable speaking it. Saying Danish is “not him”, he implies that he does not want to speak his second language notwithstanding that it is the first language of his country of residence. He explains that he moved to Copenhagen in order to get a degree, and that the plan from the outset has been to move back to the Faroe Islands to work as soon as he finishes studying. His distance to the Danish language and hesitation to socialise with his Danish classmates thus comes from his motivation.

Other informants who express a similar distance to the Danish language describe their relationship with the language as more ambiguous. Although expressing a reluctance to speak Danish, the nature of the reluctance stems from an issue with how they are perceived by the bystander, more so than a lack of interest. As Ragnar explains:

I feel like it singles me out as the only foreigner in the conversation, and it probably reminds them of just that every time I jump in.

(fieldnote labelled *Spending time in Føroyahúsið*).

To Ragnar, his accent serves as a label of the outsider. When amongst Danes, he is self-conscious about his ethnic identity, and aware that it may become relevant to the interaction and his presentation of self. In Goffman’s terms (1963), a known strategy of identity management is covering associations with certain aspects of identity. In Ragnar’s case, his accent hinders his ability to cover his ethnic identity, which passes social information about his identity, and thus disrupts his role performance (Goffman, 1959).

In this way, some Faroe Islanders may find themselves in the position of the stranger (Schütz, 1944), feeling excluded from the common grounds of insight knowledge. In effect, they may be unsure of which role to play and of the rules of interaction that are at hand, which are important to know for the situation to flow smoothly (Scott, 2015: 31). Conversely, returning home to the Faroese environment after classes have finished means leaving a foreign environment, in which they are the stranger, and re-entering one in which they are the insider. Faroe Islanders in Copenhagen, it seems, are constantly shaping their behaviour with reference

to the symbolic boundaries between being inside and outside, which demand different performances.

In the eyes of the outsider, Faroese communities are not easily detected at first-hand compared to other ethnic groups in Scandinavian societies. Ethnically, Faroe Islanders share the Nordic roots of their Scandinavian neighbours, and, in effect, the manifestations of Faroese culture are often not tangible in the public sphere. One aspect of this is perhaps their tendency to develop a good command of the local language. A study from 2016 on the abilities of Nordic citizens to communicate in other Scandinavian languages suggests that Faroe Islanders are most prone to adopt the local language of their country of residence in their everyday life (Brink, 2016). Faroe Islanders learn Danish from an early stage of primary school, and in some cases, those that have lived in Denmark for several years reach the point where they are rid of their Faroese accent. For others, however, despite their good language skills, and links the between Faroese and Danish culture, ethnic identity consistently plays a part in the way in which they manage their presentation of self outside the Faroese diaspora, for example in terms of spoken language.

The Faroe Islands, similar to Iceland, have a long-standing history of being territories part of the union with Denmark². Therefore the two countries have a cultural proximity to Danish culture. This is evident in food habits, and clothing, which Faroe Islanders often buy from the same clothing chains as Danes. However, it is far from unusual to see Faroe Islanders wear different styles of traditional pieces of clothes, such as sweaters that have been knitted in the Faroe Islands, which are part of modern Faroese fashion. Clothes, then, can also give implications of how ethnic identity is being negotiated.

² Iceland, for example, shared the Danish monarchy until the Second World War. Although Iceland was recognised as an independent state in 1918, the republic of Iceland was formed in 1944.

5.3 “It’s two separate worlds”: maintaining separate identities

The distinction between interaction orders inside and outside the Faroese diasporic boundaries are acknowledged by most all of my informants. This becomes clear through the social circles that are formed on either side of the diaspora as there is often a separation between Faroese and Danish social circles. Frida and Tommy, who have lived together in Øresundskollegiet for a number of years, have made particularly few relationships with people other than Faroese Islanders. On the same floor as their apartment, six out of eight residents were Faroese Islanders, mostly students, with whom they had friendly relationships. For many of my informants such circumstances make for a certain comfort and play a significant part of the incentive to live in Copenhagen. And in turn, when these circumstances change, it disrupts the level of comfort in everyday life. As Frida explains:

So many of my friends have moved home that there’s almost no one left here (at Øresundskollegiet). It has all changed so quickly.
(Fieldnote labelled *Visiting Frida and Tommy*).

Likewise, many of Tommy’s neighbours have finished their studies and moved back home to start working. Their intentions were from the beginning only temporarily to live abroad.

During my fieldwork in Øresundskollegiet and other areas in Copenhagen where many Faroese Islanders live, many informants describe the hardship they had experienced in intertwining their Faroese and Danish social circles. This is mainly due to the clear distinctions made between a Faroese audience and other audiences for the given performances (Goffman, 1959). Furthermore, several of my informants have kept their Faroese and Danish social circles separate and rarely intertwined them. As separate groups of Faroese and Danish friends are likely to encompass different rules of interaction, maintaining the separation is a way of avoiding the risk of breaking the rules of interaction. As Tommy explains, he and Frida have never made friends with Danes because they have never felt the need:

Faroese people in Copenhagen see their way of life as different from the Danish way of life. When you move to Copenhagen your friend list immediately fills up to capacity. You automatically have so many Faroese friends that there is no room for Danish friends, and you simply have no interest in broadening your circle any further.
(Fieldnote labelled *Visiting Frida and Tommy*).

Here, Tommy accounts for his distance towards Danes, implying that he has not adopted the Danish way of life mainly because the Faroese cultural milieu in which he lives is sufficient. He is, in a sense, able to uphold the attachment to the community in which he grew up in the diaspora. The socialisation that takes place after moving to Øresundskollegiet is not an entirely new one, but it is rather a change of an old setting, which automatically takes shape. There are certain occasions during the daily routines in which these boundaries are perhaps necessarily broken. For example, as Layla explains, regardless of her relationship with her respective Faroese and Danish friends, she mainly socialises with each group separately, and maintains her friendships in that way. In the following excerpt, Layla and I are discussing her relationship with a Danish couple that lives in the neighbourhood, and the negative consequences that had come out of her mixing both sets of friends during a social evening:

Layla lit her cigarett, sighed again and said, “I invited them to the party the other day because it felt like the right thing to do. I shouldn’t have done that”. We both laughed. “I struggled so much with it during the party that I sort of ended up minding the Faroese friends whilst John (Layla’s house mate) entertained the Danes. The room was divided into two halves. What a disaster”. I asked how come the guests didn’t mix. Layla leaned in towards me and said quietly, “She won’t stop talking!”. She slapped her flat palm on the balcony table: “and I couldn’t manage Faroese and Danish friends at the same time. They are too different. It’s two separate worlds.”. I asked if that was a general feeling, and Layla leaned back into her chair and said “Well, I always thought things would be more down-to-earth with my Faroese friends in Denmark but it’s actually the opposite. Like with the mothers’ group here for example, it’s a much more casual arrangement. They appreciate that as a new mother you don’t have the energy to make everything look perfect. Danes are easier to be around because they tell it like it is. As long as you respect their calendar. Danes will say straight away whether they can make it to something or not, whereas Faroe Islanders will go to great lengths to avoid telling it like it is, they will overdraw their bank account before they’re being honest”.

(Fieldnote labelled *Meet-up with Layla*).

Despite her best efforts to include her Danish neighbours in her party, Layla admits with regret that her party became divided into two groups rather than an event in which different social

circles would connect. The struggle that she describes with intertwining her Faroese and Danish in the same social context reflect a crisis of identity performance. We can say that two different representations of self are put into play at once result in a conflict of roles (Goffman, 1961). In *On-Face Work* (1955), Goffman upholds, the *face* encompasses the verbal and non-verbal actions that represent the individual's point of view in social situations. In situations such as Layla's, an attempt to portray multiple faces at once can either pay off or result in chaos (Ibid.: 339). Layla's struggle to maintain more than one face at once had a negative outcome, even to the extent that she lost her face.

The special ties that bind Faroe Islanders abroad together can have an isolating effect on the outsider. Given that the Faroe Islander reserves his social life mostly to other Faroe Islanders, social activities may unintentionally appear to be exclusive. This can, for example, mean that they as team members have a shared role performance, which they are accustomed to displaying. During a social event in Copenhagen, Chris, who is a Danish acquaintance of several Faroe Islanders, explains that it can be difficult to become a part of a social group which consists mainly of Faroe Islanders. Whilst he eventually came to spend time with Faroese friends on a daily basis, he says, he felt like an outsider in the beginning:

The Faroese circle is pretty hard to break into. There is a lot of inside knowledge that seems unattainable, and it takes time before you feel you are fully included in the group. I don't think it is intentional, though. None of my Faroese friends have ever rejected me, it is just a cultural thing (Chris).

What labels Chris an outsider can be interpreted as dramaturgical loyalty (Goffman, 1959: 135) between his Faroese friends. Dramaturgical loyalty refers to insight knowledge that includes team members and excludes outsiders. There is a moral obligation between team members not to reveal their backstage behaviour, and the trust required to get such insight knowledge is, as Chris attests, hard earned. Faroese friends are likely to have known each other for longer than Chris has known his Faroese friends, and from their fellow background 'traffic rules' (Goffman, 1967: 12) have been established, which acts as a barrier between their pre-existing interaction order and outsiders. In several other cases in my fieldwork, the same dimensions of frontstage and backstage regions of their presentation of self are discussed, and it seems they are an indicator of a Faroese interaction order (Goffman, 1983), which represents a distinct domain of social interaction within the Faroese diaspora in Copenhagen. Dramaturgical loyalty, as a team strategy of impression management, reproduces ethnic identity in everyday

life, when outsiders are present. This relates to Plotnicov & Silverman's (1978) findings on ethnic presentation of self in Jewish communities in USA, which report cases of ethnic signalling in team behaviour, in which team members actively seek to reveal their shared cultural elements. This puts them in the light of a social unit with shared identities, and distinguishes the team members from the line of interaction between them and the outsiders. Such ethnic signalling is a way of overcommunicating group membership (Goffman, 1959) to make ethnic identity relevant, and create distance between them and the outsider.

5.4 Ethnic distancing

The ways in which Faroe Islanders become part of the Faroese community do not always come as naturally as I have demonstrated above. As mentioned, many Faroe Islanders move to Denmark anticipating the cultural diaspora that they are about to join, and welcome the practical advantages that come from it. In turn, other informants are prone to expand their social network beyond their Faroese circle. The diaspora can in these cases hinder the socialisation in Copenhagen, for example by spending much social time in Øresundskollegiet around Faroe Islanders instead of building social networkk Danish friends. Particularly important for the process of making friends is the initial period in which you settle in Copenhagen. Harley, who has lived in Copenhagen for at least five years, says he appreciated the fact that he found accommodation in an area that is not particularly common for Faroe Islanders to be in. He explains that she spent the first few years in Denmark living in a corridor with Danish and other international people, which had a positive effect on him:

Harley: I had spent those first years coming home from university to a dormitory and a kitchen filled with Danish and interactional people, and people from elsewhere in the world, who were my friends. It was an inspirational invironment, and we were doing all kinds of different courses and were on different levels academically, which was good. We would discuss a new topic almost every day, and agree and disagree, you know?

(Fieldnote labelled *meet-up with Harley*)

The diversity of Harley's social environment away from the Faroese diaspora was a somewhat educational factor in his everyday life. He indicates that the difference in backgrounds of the

people in her dormitory gave her everyday an element of inspiration. We can see this as a contrast to the homogeneity of Faroese backgrounds in other dormitories that are within the diasporic boundaries. In being amongst people from international backgrounds, Harley's ethnicity has been less relevant as other outsiders have been present much of the time in their dormitory. According to Harley, this took a naturally-caused change as he moved to a new place in Copenhagen:

Harley: As I moved closer to Amager (the island where Øresundskollegiet is), I slowly became one of the Øresunds-people. I remember it well, it was like I was dragged into the old soup, you know? And I kind of lost that spark that I had. I went from being *the* Faroe Islander to being one of the many Faroe Islanders in the Ghetto (Øresundskollegiet) who do not get into contact with Danes. It was like I was trapped in the orbit of planet Øresund, its gravity.

(Fieldnote labelled *meet-up with Harley*)

This suggests a frustration towards the way in which the Faroese community "cuts off" one's social performances. In a sense, other Faroese Islanders make her feel controlled and prohibit her socialising. As Harley reports, there is a tendency of not making much contact with Danes when you live in Øresundskollegiet. Here, Harley refers to the before-mentioned consistent separation between Faroese and Danish contacts, and a disinterest towards socialising with Danes. The effects of living in the "ghetto", Harley jokingly states, eventually take their toll on your appearance:

Harley: You can smell it on a person that they live in Øresundskollegiet because after a while you develop a sort of dim and grey complexion. And it's no wonder why... as you stare out the window, your thoughts reflect off the concrete wall and straight back into your head.

(Fieldnote labelled *meet-up with Harley*)

In certain situations where Faroese Islanders are "isolated" from their community, they have a choice between which role performance they want to give. This is relative to the ability to speak Danish as a Dane. For instance, some informants report, overcommunicating (Goffman, 1959) ethnic identity can be an advantage if you want to intentionally stand out. The other side of the

coin is when being Faroese is a disadvantage. As overcommunicating ethnic identity may only makes the others present focus more on that element of your presentation of self. For Harley, being the sole Faroe Islander in his environment, his ethnic identity has not surfaced and become relevant in the same way as it does when there are two or more ethnic members in the interaction.

Over- and undercommunicating ethnic identity is a way in which to manage the social information you are giving about yourself. The outsider-perceptions of Faroese identity in Denmark has changed over the years. Following an economic crash in the Faroe Islands in the early 1990s, many Faroe Islanders moved to Denmark. From this situation, a negative image of Faroe Islanders was portrayed in the Danish media. Faroe Islanders in Denmark, then, managed a stigma that was attached to their ethnic identity. The slogan: “Spar i skat, skyd en færøing” (save taxes, shoot a Faroe Islander), which was sometimes seen printed on flyers in taxis cars in Copenhagen, epitomised to some extent the atmosphere of the period. Thomas, who lived in Copenhagen as a student in the 1990s, reports that during their everyday, some Faroe Islanders felt uneasy because of the media coverage: “We tried to avoid big crowds as people might shout something at us, and we often tried to appear Danish, you know?.”

As a way of managing his presentation of Faroese self, Thomas sought to control the social information he was giving about himself. Goffman (1963a) describes a similar strategy of presentation of self in terms of managing a stigma. An individual may seek to cover a discreditable stigma by passing as “normal”. Similarly, as Thomas attempted to hide his Faroese-ness, the strategy was to cover his ethnic identity in order to manage a discreditable stigma. The satirical cartoon below, printed in *Extrabladet* in 1994 as part of an advertisement to invite Faroe Islanders to move to apartment blocks in the suburb of Ishøj, portrays an exaggerated image of a Faroese man “getting by” in a concrete jungle in Copenhagen (*Sosialurin*, Faroese newspaper from april 1994).

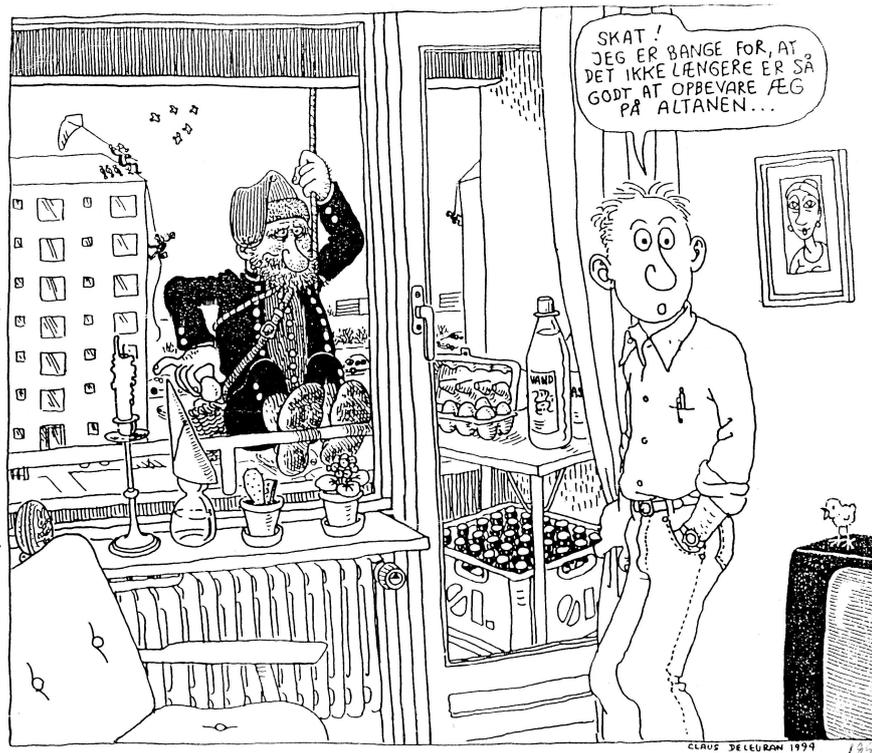


Figure 3:
Image printed
in Faroese
newspaper
'Sosialurin'
in april 1994.

Ishøj Kommune annoncerer i den færøske dagspresse med, at den har store, gode lejligheder nær den danske hovedstad. Kommune vil hellere have forgældede færinger end andre indvandrere, som ser endnu mere fremmedartede ud. (Tegning: Claus Deleuran)

Mimicing a man descending down a cliff to catch bird eggs, the Faroe Islander is stealing eggs from his neighbour in his apartment block. The image depicts a stereotype of a Faroe Islander who continues living “the Faroese way” in Denmark.

5.5 At home and abroad: switching identities

Many of my informants report clear differences in how they behave in the Faroe Islands and in Denmark, mainly because, to them, the expectations of their social conduct differ significantly between being abroad and being in the Faroe Islands. My fieldwork has given me a strong impression that Faroe Islanders on a daily basis reflect on this need to adapt their presentation of self. Several informants report that the element of anonymity is important to this distinction. In the following excerpt, Tanja, who lives in Malmö, but often travels to Copenhagen in her free time, explains to me how she experiences the transition that follows when she goes back to the Faroe Islands for Christmas:

I came back and sat down at our table. Tanja told me that she had decided to go home for Christmas (as most Faroese students living abroad do). She said it with an unenthusiastic tone. I looked at her and asked, “Yeah?”. “Yeah. I don’t know, I feel I probably should. I’m excited, sure, but there’s that need to live up to the expectations when I’m at home that annoys me. I suppose this is what you are studying?”. I said yes, laughed, and replied: “I understand, but what makes you feel that way?”. Tanja laughed: “I don’t know... It’s always that process of getting into character when you get back home, you know? I mean, I come home and all of a sudden everyone knows about me and that affects my thinking. Compared to here (in Malmö) where I don’t have to think so much about it.

(Fieldnote labelled *Meet-up with Tanja*).

Tanja clearly states that she feels the need to “get into character” when she travels to the Faroe Islands. Going from a large city in which she can go about her everyday life with a degree of anonymity to an environment in which she is recognised by every bystander, adds to the need to manage her impressions. This is an implication of added scrutiny which exists in the Faroe Islands, and which entails different rules of interaction. As Tanja describes it, the need to give a public performance emerges when she returns to the Faroe Islands. In this sense, when she is abroad she is backstage and not as concerned with role performing (Goffman, 1959). When abroad, her presentation of self, then, is more in line with what she perceives as her “true” self, and when she travels to the Faroe Islands, she switches to another identity.

Whilst most of my informants report a difference in role performance when they travel home, their perspectives vary. Some say they feel more scrutinised in the Faroe Islands, however, others describe the same circumstances in a more positive way. In the following excerpt four Faroe Islanders living in Copenhagen show different stances on how going back home changes their presentation of self:

Dan: Going home is a real transition. It’s tiring frankly because I lose the privilege of being anonymous in the city and instead everybody knows me (the others nodded). In Copenhagen I can go grocery shopping wearing a lazy day outfit. (Everyone at the table laughed). That’s so the Faroese way of doing it!

Joan: Yup, definitely. But, but, but... I love going back to my home town exactly because everyone already knows me. And so when I go shopping I’m even more

comfortable wearing lazy clothes than in Copenhagen. Then again, if I'm in the Torshavn (Faroese capital), I think more about my appearance and dress up more.

Shyla: I don't feel that way at all. That's just, no offense, because of the culture in your town.

Joan: I guess so. But it's not like people don't peek through their curtains to watch you when you're walking past their house or anything. It's just that everyone there has known me since I was a kid and so they've seen my worst sides anyway (laughter).

Shyla: God, I can't stand that crap! One time I had been out buying some everyday stuff, having not even looked in the mirror on my way out of the house. This was before I got my job... when I came back home, my mum told me that someone she knows had seen me buying snacks and looking like I had overslept on a Wednesday. I mean, come on!

(Fieldnote labelled *Hanna's dinner party in central Copenhagen*)

There are a some of interesting points to make about this excerpt, which relate to front and backstage performance. Whereas Dan describes the loss of anonymity as negative, and that in the Faroe Islands he feels the need to manage an audience, Joan has a somewhat opposite view: she is more comfortable wearing "lazy clothes" in her home town for the same reason that Dan does not. This shows a difference in how they experience front and backstage role performance (Goffman, 1959). The key for Joan is that she is in her backstage region when the audience already knows the most private versions of her self. In turn, if the people "peaking through the curtains" are strangers, that would make her performance public. Shyla, on the other hand, emphasises the negative affect of having an audience that are not strangers. For she did not live up to a certain character in that she did not look representable out in public.

"Oversleeping on a Wednesday" represents a Faroese interaction order (Goffman, 1983) in which you ought to look representable when out in public. The fact that the audience knew Shyla was what resulted in an issue with role performance. Similar to Tanja, who feels obligated to "get into character" in the Faroe Islands, Shyla expresses frustration with the expectations of her presentation of self, which she can avoid in Copenhagen. However, these boundaries are for Joan more related to how well the audience knows her; in the Faroese capital, her role performance is public, whilst in her home town, she feels relaxed. "The Faroese way" is often reflected on with humour as a contrast to the interaction order (Goffman, 1983) in Denmark. During my fieldwork, I noted many occasions in which Faroe Islanders highlighted the funny differences in behaviour between Faroe Islanders and Danes. For example, according

to several participants, the way to present yourself as a Faroe Islander is simply by saying “hello”. In turn, in Denmark, if you enter a group interaction with people that you do not know personally:

You shake everyone’s hand, regardless of how many they are.

(Karin, recorded interview)

In the Faroese interaction order, shaking the hand of someone may, then, be taken as an odd gesture. We can say that these differences reflect the traffic rules of interaction (Goffman, 1967), which distinguish a Faroese performance from a Danish one.

In similar examples, the way in which people boast about their accomplishments in their daily lives is perceived by my informants as a cultural distinction. Karin further reports that she gets annoyed at her Danish friends when they boast about themselves. And if you haven’t done your homework, she says, her Danish friends confront it as a fault. On the other hand, if you do all of your homework, your Faroese friends will ask: Why on earth did you do all of it? (Karin, recorded interview).

The implication that doing all of the homework is not cool resembles the Nordic code of Jante Law as an interaction ritual, which discourages boasting and encourages modest humility. In the Faroe Islands, it is nearly impossible to have celebrity culture due to the density of the population. Fame-personas are ambiguous as too many people already know someone’s personality. And similarly, putting yourself on a pedestal and boasting about your own achievements can give the impression egoism and failure to abide the code of interaction. In a study on politeness in the context of the Swedish Jante Law (Scott, 2016: 1), Jante is an interaction ritual which represents a form of collective face saving, which is practiced through “polite forms of talk” (Ibid.). From Karin’s example, we can say that Faroe Islanders reproduce such interaction rituals by way of managing their self-image.

5.6 Managing different roles

In and around the areas in Copenhagen in which many Faroe Islanders live, you are likely to hear Faroese murmur at any time in the halls or outside on the streets. Faroese residents are then used to encountering other Faroe Islanders in their everyday and can easily follow the ‘traffic rules’ of the interaction order (Goffman, 1967: 12). However, Faroe Islanders who live

elsewhere may find themselves uncertain of what to expect from, or how to anticipate, the situation as they are about to walk past someone on the street without immediately recognising them. For the Faroese Islander, such a casual encounter entails a concern with interaction which is often specific to the Faroese ethnic identity. In the following excerpt, I found myself in such a situation as I arrived at Øresundskollegiet to go about my fieldwork:

As I arrived outside the block in Øresundskollegiet where Frida and Tommy live, I remembered that you need the entry code to open the door that leads to the flat corridor. The corridor had no walls, but the first floor of the building was as high as a first floor balcony, and so I couldn't enter the building without using the main entrance. Tommy and I had agreed I would join the two of them for breakfast at 9 AM. It was now five minutes to, and so I messaged Tommy on Facebook and waited for his answer whilst standing on the street outside. The door next to their flat then opened and out came a woman of about my age. She saw me through the fence though I did not recognise her. She quickly slammed the door shut, locked it, and tiptoed her way along the corridor over to the door that led to the main entrance into the apartment block. She disappeared through the door and into the main entry room inside the building. I ran over towards the main entrance to try and catch the door as she would open it. When I made it over, I was surprised to see the woman was already holding the door for me. I leaped up the stairs and grabbed the door. "Thanks very much", I said in Danish. "You're welcome old boy", she replied in Faroese and laughed before she got on her way.

(Fieldnote labelled *Visiting Frida and Tommy*).

The woman's reply strongly affects the situation on my behalf. Firstly, it discloses my Faroese identity, making it relevant for the situation. Secondly, she draws me into a line of interaction that is different from the one that I had started by speaking Danish to her. As the woman recognised me, and I not her, she was able to influence the situation in such a way that she could accomplish her preferred self-presentation. By responding to me in Faroese, the woman ethnifies our interaction, which activates my identity and highlights our ethnic identity. In other words, my Faroese identity is situationally accomplished in the response from the woman. This relates to the findings of anthropologist Moerman (1965), who sought to define the identity of the Lue as an ethnic group. Moerman reports that the question of *when* someone is Lue comes down to when a Lue validates his own Lueness. This validation takes place in the everyday life

of the Lue, and relies on the individual's own experience of ethnicity. Ethnicity, then, is not constant, but rather is relative to the situation.

As relatively few people speak Faroese, Faroe Islanders abroad commonly find themselves in situations in which they can surmise, with relative certainty, that their conversations in Faroese will be inexplicable to those present. This feeling of anonymity may be acted upon, sometimes for amusement, and other times it is a free pass so as to express freely the impressions one gets from the people present without them knowing, avoiding conflict in doing so. There may be an audience, however, with the assumption that no one in it speaks Faroese and therefore shares their ethnic identity. In such a situation, the actor may not feel inclined to negotiate their identity. In turn, an encounter with other Faroe Islanders in such a situation is always somewhat unexpected and breaks down the ongoing performance, turning one's role from being anonymous to scrutinised, and rendering all acts subject to consequences. The following excerpt is between myself and a Faroese couple that have entered the train carriage and sat down a couple of rows ahead of me on a train from Sweden to Denmark:

The man who had been speaking loudly on the phone was sitting directly behind the Faroese couple. Right before the first stop in Denmark, he stood up, still on his phone, and the Faroese woman immediately said (in Faroese), "Finally... what a bloody pain he is. What even is that language?". Her partner replied, "Gibberish". The rude man got off the train. After 20 minutes, the voice in the speakers finally announced that the next stop was Copenhagen Airport, which was my stop. The Faroese couple stood up and exited our carriage, passing by me on the way without meeting my glance. I followed them a moment later and joined a row of five people waiting for the exit doors to open. In front of the row was the Faroese couple. And as the train finally stopped, and the light on the doorknob turned from red to green, the Faroese woman forcefully pressed the button to open the door but it wasn't working. The beeping coming from the door continued, and the people waiting in the row were starting to show their concern with the situation, likely because they had a plane to catch. The Faroese man reached his hand over the button and started pressing continuously. Then, before anyone could step in, I said in Faroese: "I think you have to hold it for a second or two". The Faroese man instantly turned his head towards me looking confused. Forcefully working the doorknob, he turned his head away again without replying. The doors finally opened and the Faroese couple leaped out onto the platform, the row of people and I following them. I stepped onto the platform and to the right, straight into the direction of the

Faroese couple, who were fumbling with their backpacks. Both of them had caught my glance as I was walking towards them, and so I stopped. They looked up at me, tittering, and said, “well... thanks for the help” before turning around and hustling through the crowd of people towards the escalator.

(Fieldnote labelled *Encounter with a Faroese couple*)

There are a couple of interesting aspects in this excerpt. Firstly, the Faroese couple are speaking their native Faroese language without knowing that there is a person present who can understand them (me). They are assuming that they can speak “freely”. This is demonstrated, for example, in that the Faroese woman does not wait until the loud man had stepped out of the train, but rather expresses her opinion about his behaviour directly, presuming that he cannot understand her. The key point, nonetheless, is that she herself presumed that no one present understood her, and that she was not in risk of being judged by any outsider. Secondly, as I, an evidently native Faroese speaker, intervened, they realised I might have heard their entire conversation on the train. Hence, their performance collapsed in the same instant as I revealed my identity. In Goffman’s terms, the Faroese couple had not, as they assumed, been in the *back* during their train journey. Rather, they unknowingly gave a *frontstage* performance with me as the audience – or the performance turned into a frontstage one when I started to talk. In effect, the realisation that they had revealed relatively vulnerable selves (ones that are not for outsiders to see), gave them a feeling of discomfort, especially as I confronted them once again as they stood baffled outside the train on the platform. As I was a different category of audience than the others on the train, a conflict between their roles occurred (Goffman, 1961). And whereas they would have normally assigned a specific role in the present of myself as a Faroe Islander, there was a discrepancy between what had been revealed and their rehearsed presentation of self.

One strategy of avoiding such incidents is having the ‘dramaturgical discipline’ (Goffman, 1959: 137) to carefully manage facial and verbal expressions, as well as bodily appearance to give the appropriate display without losing face. Odd encounters with other members of the same ethnic community can be “saved” by acting nonchalant so as to give the impression that no conflict of roles has occurred.

5.7 The “moral hangover”

As several of my informants report, the distinction between the Faroese and the non-Faroese is a present distinction in their everyday. Between these two dimensions often lie the boundaries between the public and the private. The above-mentioned examples of the backstage being related to Faroese audiences, and frontstage representing the public sphere, illustrate the different role performances that these two regions entail. As they ‘oscillate’ (Clifford, 1988: 17) between the outside and the inside of the diaspora in their everyday, so too does the presentation of self change. For my informants who live around many other Faroe Islanders, role performing can quickly be jeopardised, by what Goffman (1959: 132) refers to as ‘inopportune incidents’. As unexpected incidents occur, the performer is caught out of character. In effect, a conflict of roles (Goffman, 1961) can occur. The risk of this is heightened during Faroese social events, particularly when the occasion is festive and alcohol consumption is involved.

According to Jacob, who lives in Copenhagen, a moral hangover “causes more pain than a physical hangover”. This implies that the uncertainty of the presentation of self the night before is worse than headaches caused by drinking alcohol. In the Faroese audience, during such social events, are close friends and acquaintances. Typically, people are also present who often cross paths with each other during their everyday life, yet do not interact. Such relationships can be characterised as familiar strangers (Milgram, 1977). A familiar stranger in the Faroese diaspora is likely to know some of your friends or family members, yet is not familiar with your usual role image. Typically, one familiar stranger wants to avoid greeting the other if he does not greet back. In turn, they do not want to be rejecting by ignoring each other: giving such an impression may cause repercussions for one’s image in that word can spread. As the familiar strangers are likely to share parts of the same Faroese social network, we can say that the “familiar” is represented by the “Faroese” characteristic of their identity.

A moral hangover is the result of a discrepancy between the role that is normally presented and that which was presented the night before. During the days following the night out, the individual may feel discomfort about their performances as they may have showed an inconsistency in their everyday role performances. In areas such as Øresundskollegiet, the recognisability amongst the Faroe Islanders is equal to, if not higher than in the home country. The high recognisability is cause for a certain curiosity about neighbours and others who present themselves in the given environment. This is epitomised in the image of heads peeking

through the window in order to see who is approaching. As Jacob, who lives in Øresundskollegiet, reports: “In the Faroe Islands, the flowerpots in the windows come to life” (Fieldnote labelled *spending time at Øresundskollegiet*). The environment Øresundskollegiet can, in this sense, be seen as an extension of the Faroe Islands where there is a high risk of “moral hangovers” in that backstage reflection upon whether one’s self presentation the day before made adequate impressions or not, and that one is likely to be confronted with the same bystander the following day. This scrutiny reinforces any stigma that might have derived from “unusual” presentation of self.

6. Conclusion

This study has explored the identity work of members of the Faroese diaspora in Copenhagen from a sociological perspective. Using my own insight knowledge as a Faroe Islander, I have based much of my fieldwork on pre-existing knowledge about the setting. A large part of my data has materialised on behalf of my ongoing relations to the Faroese community in Copenhagen. And, building on a symbolic interactionist understanding of social interaction, I have sought to achieve an understanding of the strategies of the presentation of self in terms of my informants.

As discussed in my analysis section, Faroe Islanders who live in Copenhagen establish a way of negotiating identity, which differs to a large extent from that which they practiced before moving to Denmark. I have presented examples of how travelling back home to the Faroe Islands demands a change of presentation of self, and this experience often acts as a realisation of the changes of their own social behaviour adapts to the surroundings.

Referring to ‘situational ethnicity’, I have upheld the premise that ethnicity is produced and re-produced in social encounters, and that ethnicity surfaces and becomes relevant for the situation when two or more social actors participate in the same encounter.

Using excerpts from my fieldnotes, I have given examples of how Faroe Islanders continuously shape their presentation of self with reference to the symbolic boundaries between being inside and outside, which demand different role performances. Part of this distinction can be divided into a frontstage region - which, for many of my informants, represents role performing in the presence of other Faroe Islanders – and a backstage region, in which actors are more relaxed and prepare their role performing in the public region. This distinction can also be understood in terms of a stranger who moves in between familiar and unfamiliar rules of interaction. When there are other Faroe Islanders in the audience, role management intensifies in order to manage the scrutiny that comes with the social information that audience members have already attained. A result of out-of-role behaviour amongst other Faroe Islanders can later result in a confrontation with a stigma, as word may spread in related social circles about unusual presentation of self. The term “moral hangover” represents the results of a discrepancy between roles after a softened role management has a conflicting alignment with one’s character. Unexpected encounters with other Faroe Islanders break down the ongoing performance, turning the given role performance from anonymous to scrutinised, which

subsequently results in a conflict of roles between the backstage and frontstage regions. The consequences of which affect future impression management in the Faroese community.

The dichotomy of the inside and outside spheres of the Faroese diaspora reflects the social networks of many of my informants who keep their social circles of Faroese and Danish friends separated, and rarely intertwine them. In situations in which friends from both circles are present, a result can be a conflict of roles, which contradict each other.

One interesting trend in my results is the fact that many of my informants have moved to Denmark with little intention of expanding their social networks. Instead, the plan from the beginning is settling in the Faroese community. Moreover, maintaining a Faroese social network in Copenhagen, like when in the Faroe Islands, has in many cases been a priority for my informants. Although many of my informants socialise with Danes, the Danish associates rarely achieve a relationship with my Faroese informants to an extent that is equal to relationships between members of the Faroese community. A future study could perhaps further explore the process of forming social relations in similar settings.

7. Bibliography

- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic Interactionism, Perspective and Method*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Bourdieu, P., Accardo, A., & Balazs, G. (1999). *The weight of the world: Social suffering in contemporary society*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Brink E. T. (2016). *Man skal bare kaste sig ud i det*. [online] Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers. Available at: <http://sprogkoordinationen.org/media/1337/man-skal-bare-kaste-sig-ud-i-det.pdf>. Last accessed 26 Nov. 2017.
- Calhoun, C., Gerteis, J., Moody, J., Pfaff, S. & Virk, I. (2007). *Classical Sociological Theory*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Carter, M. J. & Fuller, C. (2015). Symbolic Interactionism. *Sociopedia.isa*. doi: 10.1177/205684601561.
- Clifford, J. (1988). *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Coggeshall, J. M. (1986). "One of Those Intangibles": The Manifestation of Ethnic Identity in Southwestern Illinois. *The Journal of American Folklore*. 99 (392), pp. 177-207.
- Cohen, R. (1991). *Negotiating across cultures: Communication Obstacles on International Diplomacy*. Washington, DC: US Institute for Peace.
- Cooley, C.H. (1902). The looking-glass self. *O'brien*, pp.126-128.
- Cvajner, M. (2012). The presentation of self in emigration: Eastern European women in Italy. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 642 (1), pp. 186-199.
- Den Nordatlantiske Gruppe i Folketinget. (2007). *Hagtøl um føroyskar útisetar, ein kanning um føroyskar útisetar í Danmark*. Christiansborg.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. (1968). *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*. Chicago, AG McClurg, 1903: Johnson Reprint Corporation.
- Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I. & Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Eriksen, T. H. (1993a). *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Pluto Press.

- Eriksen, T. H. (1993b). In which sense do cultural islands exist? *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale*. 1 (1b), pp. 133–147.
- Fangen, K. & Nordli, H. (2005). *Deltagande observation*. Malmö: Liber ekonomi.
- Føroyahúsið. www.fohus.dk. Available: <http://www.fohus.dk>.
Last accessed 11th Jan 2018.
- Gaini, F. (2013). *Lessons of Islands: Place and identity in the Faroe Islands*. Torshavn: Faroe University Press.
- Goffman, E. (1953). *Communication conduct in an island community*. (Unpublished PhD dissertation.). Chicago: Department of Sociology, University of Chicago.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor.
- Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. Middlesex: Penguin Books.
- Goffman, E. (1963a). *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Middlesex: Penguin Books.
- Goffman, E. (1963b). *Behavior in Public Places*. New York: The Free Press.
- Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behaviors*. New York: Anchor.
- Goffman, E. (1971). *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Goffman, Erving (1983). The interaction order. *American Sociological Review*, 48 (1). pp- 1 17.
- Goffman, Erving (1989). On fieldwork. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. 18 (2), pp. 123-132.
- Granfield, R. (1991). Making it by faking it: Working-class students in an elite academic environment. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 20 (3), pp. 331-351.
- Herzfeld, M. (1997). *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State*. London: Routledge.
- Hillery, G. A. (1955). Definitions of Community: Areas of Agreement. *Rural Sociology*. 20 (1), pp. 111-123.
- Holzner, B. (1967). The Concept of “Integration” in Sociological Theory. *The Sociological Quarterly*. 8 (1), pp. 51-62.
- Horowitz, D. L. (1985). *Ethnic groups in conflict*. University of California Press.

- Johannesen K. H. (2012). *Høgur kendleiki í smásamfeløgum – Den moderne lilleby og det åndelige liv*. Master thesis. Københavns Universitet.
- Milgram, S. (1977). The Familiar Stranger: An Aspect of Urban Anonymity. The individual in a social world. *Reading*.
- Moerman, M. (1965). Who are the Lue: ethnic identification in a complex civilization. *American Anthropologist*. 67 (5), pp. 1215-1229.
- Park, R. E. (1928). Human migration and the marginal man. *American Journal of Sociology*, 33 (6), pp. 881-893.
- Plotnicov, L. & Silverman, M. (1978). Jewish Ethnic Signalling: Social Bonding in Contemporary American Society. *Ethnology*. 17 (4), pp. 407-423.
- Rogers, E. M. (1999). Georg Simmel's Concept of the Stranger and Intercultural Communication Research. *Communication Theory*. 9 (1), pp. 58–74.
- Rogers, E. & Steinfatt, T. (1999). *Intercultural communication*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Sanders, J. M. (2002). Ethnic boundaries and identity in plural societies. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28 (1), pp. 327-357.
- Schütz, A. (1944). The Stranger: An Essay in Social Psychology. *American Journal of Sociology*. 49 (6), pp. 499-507.
- Schütz, A. (2002). *Den sociala världens fenomenologi*. Göteborg: Daidalos.
- Scott, S. (2015). *Negotiating Identity: Symbolic Interactionist Approaches to Social Identity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Scott, S. (2016). Politeness as collective facework: the case of Swedish Jante Law. *Studies in Symbolic Interaction*. Sussex Research Online.
- Social Degmocratic Party of the Faroe Islands (2014). *Fordómar og fakta um Føroyar, Danmark, ríkisfelagsskapin og ES*. Available at: <https://www.powtoon.com/onlinepresentation/bxGhH0OXM4w/asa-og-oli-fordomar-og-fakta/?mode=movie>. Last accessed: 12th Jan 2018.
- Statistics Faroe Islands [Hagstova Føroya] (2011). *Cencus 2011*. Available at: http://statbank.hagstova.fo/pxweb/en/H2/H2__MT/. Last accessed 12th Jan 2018.
- Statistics Faroe Islands [Hagstova Føroya] (2018a). *Fólkatalið farið upp um 50.000*. Available at: <http://www.hagstova.fo/fo/tidindi/2017/04/folkatalid-farid-upp-um-50000>. Last accessed 12th Jan. 2018.
- Statistics Faroe Islands [Hagstova Føroya] (2018b). *Economic activitie*. Available at:

http://statbank.hagstova.fo/pxweb/en/H2/H2__MT/. Last accessed 12th Jan 2018.

Swedish Research Council's Codex (2017) Forskningsetiska principer inom humanistisk samhällsvetenskaplig forskning. <http://www.codex.vr.se/texts/HSFR.pdf>
Last accessed: 5th Jan 2018.

Tönnies, F. (1957). *Community and Society*. Michigan: Michigan State University Press.

Willis, R. (2017). The fragility of “white Irish” as a minority ethnic identity in England. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40 (10), pp. 1681-1699.

Wilson, G. (1941). *An Essay on the Economics of Detribalization in Northern Rhodesia, Parts I-II*. Livingston: Rhodes-Livingstone Institute.

Wolff, K. (1950). *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. New York: Free Press.