The burka ban - liberation or oppression?

A discourse analysis of the Danish 'burka ban' from a gender equality perspective

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Abstract

This thesis concerns the recent debate about the so-called cover ban in Denmark, which has been known in media as the 'burka ban'. The ban involves an illegalization of covering of the face that does not have a justifiable cause like weather conditions. Through a discourse analysis of media articles the aim of this thesis is to identify which arguments are represented in this debate. The material for the analysis is found in the two major Danish newspapers; Politiken and Berlingske. The analysis is inspired by the theories of Norman Fairclough. The theoretical framework of the thesis is centered on theories regarding gender equality and feminism, and the analysis focuses on the discourses of these topics that are reproduced in the debate. The results show how the discourse of gender equality is the most prominent in the debate, and it shows how this discourse is naturalized. Within this discourse, there is an element of liberation of women, and this liberation is presented as the goal for all women. Furthermore, only the majority has access to this discourse, and it is not possible for the minority to negotiate it in any way. I discuss how the debate can be seen as an expression of the discourse about Islam in Denmark in general, as well as how the ban can be seen in a context of objectification of the female body.

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction of context

On October 4th 2017, The Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti) first proposed the banning of 'all-covering clothing in public places'[1] to the Government (The Danish People's Party, 2017:1). This proposal is what publicly came to be known as the 'burka ban'. As it is mentioned in the proposal, it is an updated version, since this is an issue that the party has brought up before, the first time in 2009, and two other times since then (The Danish People's Party, 2017:2). In the proposal, The Danish People's Party argue that the European Commission of Human Rights has already approved a similar ban in France and Belgium (Ibid.). The Danish People's Party specifically mention the burka and the niqab, and how the party find covering of the face conflicting with Western society and Danish culture and values. They propose that offenses of a possible law should be fined and in some cases, they suggest the possibility of jail. Furthermore, they suggest that offenders would have to engage in courses teaching them Danish values. The Danish People's Party mention how they find the burka and the niqab degrading and oppressing to women. In the proposal of the banning, it is stated: "(…) life in Denmark is lived with respect for equality between men and women, which is why clothing covering the face cannot be accepted in public places"[2]. (The Danish People's Party, 2017:3). Through this statement, the Danish People's Party are directly presenting Islam and gender equality as opposites, and stating that the Danish idea of gender equality is not compatible with Islamic thought. Another argument The Danish People's Party present is that of safety. They mention how terrorists and criminals can benefit from being able to hide their faces, and that covering one's face is a general source of distrust within Danish society. The last thing that is presented in the proposal is 'experiences from other countries', however this section solely mentions which countries already implemented a ban, and not actually what consequences it may have had in these countries (Ibid.).

The previous times that The Danish People's Party has proposed a ban like this, it has been denied by the Danish Government, but this time the proposal was taken up for consideration. Throughout the fall of 2017, the issue was discussed and negotiated within the Government. On a party meeting on the 6th of October 2017 the party of Venstre agreed on proposing the ban (Politiken:3). On the 6th of February 2018 the Danish Government (Ministry of Justice) presented the final proposal under the name 'Tildækningsforbud', which translates into the 'cover ban'.

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[1] heldækkende beklædning i det offentlige rum
[2] livet I Danmark leves I respekt for ligeværd mellem mænd og kvinder, hvorfor ansigtsdækkende beklædning I det offentlige rum ikke kan accepteres

1.2. Introduction of proposal

In the following section, I will briefly present the final proposal as the Danish Ministry of Justice presented it on the 6th of February 2018. The proposal involves a full ban of covering one's face in public, unless it has a 'recognizable purpose' (Ministry of Justice, 2018:1). This purpose for example being covering of the face in extremely cold weather. It is stated in the proposal that the ban includes hats, hoods, scarfs, masks, helmets, suits and fake beards. In this way it is made clear that the ban does not only concern religious clothing, but all kinds of clothing that would cover the face in an inappropriate way according to the proposal (Ministry of Justice, 2018:4). The suggested punishment for covering your face is a fine that increases every time the law is ignored. In the proposal, it is stated that covering of the face is not: "(…) compatible with the values and cohesion of the Danish society (...)" as well as it is said that it is going against the "(…) respect for our community (…)"[3] (Ministry of Justice, 2018:2). It is stressed that the face of a person is a vital part of communication and recognition and through this a vital part of interactions in Danish society. The proposal states that if you cover your face, you are visibly showing that you do not wish to be a part of Danish society and that you are rejecting interaction with your fellow citizens. Overall, the proposal states that the aim of the ban is to ensure trust and respect in Danish society and a greater sense of cohesion and social interaction (Ministry of Justice, 2018:3-4). It is mentioned how there already is an existing law that makes it illegal to force someone to cover their face. This new law targets the people who actually cover their face. Furthermore, the threat of parallel societies is mentioned. It is stated, that covering of the face can be an expression of already existing parallel societies in Denmark (Ministry of Justice, 2018:3).

In relation to human rights, freedom of religion and freedom of speech the proposal spends several paragraphs dealing with these issues (Ministry of Justice, 2018:8-9). The proposal explains how to get around both the Danish Constitution and the Human Rights Convention. The freedom of speech protected in the Danish Constitution does not include material freedom of speech, which the niqab and burka can be seen as (Ministry of Justice, 2018:10). In terms of freedom of religion, it is stated that it can be justifiably overseen if it is a question of public security (Ibid.). It is clear when going through the proposal that there are many legal issues to get around with this ban, but the conclusion is that being able to see people's faces in public is of greater importance than the freedom to cover your face, no matter the motives. The general purpose of the ban, to promote and ensure cohesion in

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[3] foreneligt med værdierne og sammenhængskraften i det danske samfund (…) respekten for vores fællesskab

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Danish society, is argued as a legal purpose that can justify the ban (Ministry of Justice, 2018:12).

Preceding the actual proposal was the media debate about it. The debate is still very much narrowed down to Muslim women wearing the burka and the niqab. The debate is highly gendered and racial despite the attempted neutrality of the proposal. In the media, the ban has been consistently referred to as the 'burka ban'. I am interested in this debate compared to the nature of the proposal, as well as how the ban has been presented in Danish media.

1.3. Aim

The aim of this thesis is to identify the different arguments that are made in relation to the cover ban, and how the concept of gender equality is part of these arguments. I want to look into how the cover-ban is justified, and by who. I want to identify and examine the discourses reproduced and taken for granted in the debate, look into if they are defended and/or negotiated, and if so how and by which actors. I find the focus on gender equality relevant, as the debate is so clearly centred around Muslim women, and the wearing of burka and niqab. Through a discourse analysis of the debate in Denmark, I will look into the nature of the arguments, and interpret and explain how these arguments are rooted.

1.4. Contribution

With this thesis, I wish to add to the debate about the cover ban in Denmark. I hope to add a more diverse and academic contribution, with a focus on gender equality and intersectionality. While analysing on the Danish case, I find that this research will be relevant to similar cases as well. My research is in line with previous research in the field, and my goal is to identify some of the discourses and power relations involved in the debate. I will present some previous research in a later chapter. The intersectional point of view is a new perspective on the debate that I find to be especially relevant. In my discussion, I will incorporate a perspective of liberation of women, using the debate as my starting point. I find that this discussion is relevant not just regarding the issue of the cover ban, but regarding all cases of debates on women's rights.

1.5. Research question

My main research question is as follows:

What arguments are represented in Danish newspapers in relation to the 'tildækningsforbud' (cover ban) proposed by the Danish Government?

The main research question is followed by two sub-questions:

- *How is gender equality and feminism part of the arguments?*
- *Which discourses do the arguments rely on and reproduce?*

1.6. Delimitations

In terms of theoretical delimitations, the field was from the beginning narrowed to perspectives on gender equality, intersectionality and feminism. When looking at research in the field, I am only looking at perspectives on Islam and the burka and the niqab, and the relationship between majority and minority culture.

Regarding methodology, I am narrowing my field to two newspapers and the representations found here. In other media, other representations may be prominent. I am hoping, that by choosing two major newspapers each having different political views, I will try to get a general picture of the debate. I acknowledge that other voices and interesting perspectives will not be included as they are not part of the media sources chosen. However, what I wish is to get an idea about the hegemonic and dominant discourses in Danish media and I believe this is a good way to achieve that.

Through my analysis, I can only discuss the representations and not actualities. What I am analysing is the perspectives that are represented in the media. They reflect real opinions, but it is always only representations. The case of the burka ban will be a case in which I can look into a broader discourse of immigrants, gender equality etc. Furthermore, I am not including debate and public opinion. The interest of this thesis is how this issue is represented in media and which voices that are heard in the matter. I am also not including pictures in the analysis, only textual material. The time frame of the thesis has been from February 2018 to August 2018.

2. Theoretical framework

In the following section, I will present the theoretical perspectives that will serve as a foundation for the analysis. All of these theories include a perspective on gender equality. I chose this framework, since the focus of gender equality is one I have before commencing the analysis. I find it relevant because, even though the proposal is neutral, the debate is so clearly gendered. I include in this framework, a review of previous research in the field.

2.1. Civic integration and gender

In Kofman et al. (2013) it is explained how gender equality has become an increasingly important part of the debate about migration and integration in a number of European countries. With the rise of civic integration and integration tests in Europe, gender has become a significant part of integration policies (Kofman et al., 2013:5). Examples of these policies are regarding arranged and forced marriages, and minimum age of marriage (Kofman et al., 2013:7). The conclusion of the article is that gender relations in migrant communities has become more evident. The migrant, and especially Muslim, woman has become a symbol of a 'backwards' culture, and is presented as the victim. The migrant women are seen as both the problem, as well as seen as the solution to integration (Kofman et al., 2013:9).

In continuation of this perspective on gender as a part of civic integration, Rikke Andreassen writes in the article 'Ligestilling som redskab til at kritisere etniske minoriteter' (2009) on how gender equality has come to be seen as a core Danish value, and how minorities are criticized on the basis of this. The article specifically talks about the rhetoric of The Danish People's Party, and how they use the issue of gender equality to justify strict integration policies (Andreassen, 2009:3). She gives examples of the extremely generalizing discourse of the party that presents all Danish people as being completely for gender equality, and all Muslim immigrants as being against it, for example embodied by the practice of wearing a headscarf (Andreassen, 2009:10). In the book *'Tørklædet som tegn'* (2011), Andreassen has contributed with a chapter where she addresses the issues of gender equality and nationality. In this chapter, the construction of Danish nationality and inclusion and exclusion in Danish community is explained. Andreassen is explaining how the covered woman becomes a symbol of something that is in direct contrast to gender equality as perceived by the Danish majority (Andreassen, 2011:80). She also makes the point that Danish politicians, most of them male, who do not usually have gender equality as one of their focus points, are very quick to

bring up the issue when it comes to criticizing the Muslim minority in Denmark (Andreassen, 2011:81). All of this adds to the hegemonic discourse in Danish media of the Muslim woman as being a victim of oppression. Andreassen also mentions how in the debate during the past ten years, the Danish politicians have only used the word 'burka' even when they meant niqab, and how this in itself is a representation of the ignorance about the issue, and the lack of inside from the minority itself (Andreassen, 2011:85). Andreassen also addresses the paradox that a proposal against the burka should be to prevent women being forced to wear burkas, when the ban itself is an act of force (Ibid.). Andreassen explains how the debate about the burka is an example of symbolic politics about hypothetical conditions. It is about making a political statement on values, more than anything else (Andreassen, 2011:86). Women who wear niqab or burka, are seen as a symbol of Islam in Denmark, and the very embodiment of the discourse of Islam as oppressive to women. Gender equality becomes something that is racialized, and 'We' the Danish are liberated, and 'They', the minority are not (Andreassen, 2011:89). Through this discourse, the autonomy of the minority women is taken away (Andreassen, 2011:90). Through the ideas of Meyda Yegenoglu, Andreassen also makes the point about how covering the face can be viewed as liberating and as an attempt to break with objectification of women. When covering your face and body, it can be a statement of denying being part of existing gendered power relations. Choosing to cover up can be an act of taking construction of identity into one's own hands (Andreassen, 2011:91).

The main argument of Andreassen, is that the covering of women in hegemonic Danish discourse is oppressing to women, and the solution presented, is to force women to uncover. Gender is a significant part of the debate, as a way of signifying power relations. Feminism is racialized as well as instrumentalised and used to criticize the Muslim minority in Denmark (Andreassen, 2011:92-93).

2.2. European policies regarding minority women

In the article 'Rights of Ethnic Minorities in Liberal Democracies: Has France gone too far in banning Muslim women from wearing the Burka?' (2011) by Geoffrey W.G. Leane, he presents some perspectives on the French situation. The article has an extremely critical view on the burka ban, viewing it as being in conflict with basic principles of liberalism. Leane explains how the French concept of 'laïcité' is explained as a discoursive justification of the ban (Leane, 2011:1041). Laïcité is the French concept of secularism and a strict separation of church and state, where the public sphere is strictly secular, with no religious symbols of any sort. As laïcité is a cornerstone of

the French Republic, it has become one of the main arguments for the burka ban in France (Leane, 2011:1043). The argument presented by the French Government for the burka ban is that it is against the French values of '(…) individualism and human dignity' (Leane, 2011:1034). In regards to the French debate about the ban, the main argument from the public is that the burka to them represents something non-French and most of the non-Muslim French population simply find it offensive (Leane, 2011:1050). It is also an argument, that you should have the right to see someone's face in public. The burka is seen as a sign of unwillingness to integrate in French society. Yet another element is the question of safety, however there is no evidence it should be a safety issue not being able to see the face of a person (Leane, 2011:1051). Furthermore, no evidence is offered that the ban will be effective, mainly because it according to Leane is a solution to an imagined and constructed problem that may not even exist (Leane, 2011:1053). Leane also critiques what he calls the hostile feminist response to the burka, a view that ignores the women's own motives (Leane, 2011:1054). From the perspective of the feminists, the stated objective of the ban is emancipating the women by removing the burka. This also ignores the perspective that covering the face can be seen as emancipatory, and that the women may have motives like "(…) to disengage from the highly sexualized nature of women in Western society (...)" (Leane, 2011:1054). In turn, the women who might actually be forced to wear the burka will not in any way benefit from the ban, but instead they might face even more seclusion (Leane, 2011:1053). The main argument of Leane, is that it is wrong to approach an assumed force with just another force, and that by implementing the ban, the Government is no better than the assumed male Islamic oppressors (Leane, 2011:1054).

In the article 'Banning the Burka? An Ethical Appraisal' (2011), by Jakobus Vorster, an ethical approach to the ban is presented, written also on the French context. Vorster discusses the values of equality, dignity, freedom – and how they relate to the debate about the burka. These values are all included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Vorster, 2011:99). Included in these values are the freedom of religion and expression (Vorster, 2011:100). Vorster stresses that included in the freedom of religion, should be the Muslim woman's right to wear the burka. Vorster acknowledges that a woman *may* be forced to wear the burka, by a religious community or her husband, or for other reasons. However, the question Vorster poses is whether this possibility should mean that no one should be allowed to wear the burka all together. (Vorster, 2011:101). Vorster answers that these possible violations should be dealt with in another manner, not by legislation posed by the state. The freedom to choose should not be taken away because of the possibility that violations

may occur (Vorster, 2011:102).

Conny Roggeband and Mieke Verloo write in 'Dutch Women are Liberated, Migrant Women are a Problem' (2007) about how also in the Netherlands, there has come to be a large focus on minority migrant women. The article explains how earlier, multiculturalism and gender equality were seen as compatible, but how this is no longer the case (Roggeband & Verloo, 2007:271). The article examines how gender equality policies has become increasingly about migrant women only. They also mention the paradox that even though it is often a negative masculine culture that is presented in the debate as the problem with Islam, the solution is thought to be found within the Muslim women. The typical picture of the Muslim woman in the media is as them being the victim, and also a group that is in need of some kind of emancipation (Roggeband & Verloo, 2007:272). It is explained how the discourse in the debate have increasingly become about 'Them' as the homogenous group of Muslim women, as opposed to 'Us', being the Dutch women. These two groups come to represent a dichotomy where the 'Dutchness' of the Muslim women is denied (Roggeband & Verloo, 2007:285).

2.3. Multiculturalism versus gender equality

In this part, I will incorporate the perspective of Susan Moller Okin, who is very critical of the possibility for gender equality within minority culture. Okin's perspective in her article: '*Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?'* (1999) is that multiculturalism might be a threat to gender equality. According to Okin, it is a mistake to assume that the two can be easily reconciled (Okin, 1999:10). The dilemma is about group rights versus individual rights, and Okin's argument that a focus on group rights might harm women (Okin, 1999:11). According to Okin, multicultural policies can lead to the possibility of reinforcing inequality and violating the rights of women. She is for example expressing the threat of a control of women: "Sometimes, moreover, 'culture' or 'traditions' are so closely linked with the control of women that they are virtually equated" (Okin, 1999:16). Okin's argument is, that most of the cultural minorities that demand group rights are more patriarchal than the host communities, and therefore it would not be in the best interest of the women to ensure these group rights (Okin, 1999:17).

2.4. Gender equality and Islam

Birte Siim in her book *Medborgerskabets udfordringer* (2003) writes about political empowerment of ethnic minority women and the idea of gender equality from the perspective of the minority

women themselves. The book is an empirical research, studying ethnic minority women who volunteer in different organisations in Denmark. One of the things Siim notices when talking to the women is that Danish discourses of gender equality sometimes clashes with the more traditional structures of Islam (Siim, 2003:83). Even though the Muslim women all agree to wanting gender equality, they find that their ideas do not always live up to the Danish ideal. The women express how they are influenced by the Islamic ideals of the different responsibilities of men and women (Siim, 2003:84). They all believe in equal rights in public, but inside the home, in a family context, it is more personal, and more difficult to regulate. One of the women views the Danish ideal as having too much focus on private liberation, like sexual liberation (Siim, 2003:85).

In *Qur'an and Woman* (1999) by Amina Wadud, she explains the distinctions between men and women from an Islamic point of view: "The Qur'an (…) also acknowledged that members of each gender function in a manner which reflects the well-defined distinctions held by the culture to which those members belong" (Wadud, 1999:8). She continues: "(…) compatible mutually supportive functional relationships between men and women can be seen as part of the goal of the Qur'an (...)" (Wadud, 1999:8). However, Wadud also argues, that these distinctions are not to be seen as essential (Wadud, 1999:7). She adds, that the Qur'an does not propose a single definition of roles for men and women across all cultures. The role of women in the Qur'an is threefold according to Wadud: 1. A role that represents the social, cultural and historical context wherein the woman is living. 2. Fulfilling the universally accepted female role of nurturing and caretaking, to which exceptions can be made. 3. A role which is non-gender specific, and relates to being a devout human being, no matter the gender, or any other categories (Wadud, 1999:29)

In *Muslim i Sverige* (2003), Anne Sofie Roald writes on the Swedish context, and how 'the covered woman' is sometimes viewed as a betrayer of the fight for women's right that has happened in Europe during the course of the 1900's (Ouis & Roald, 2003:190). Roald writes in a context of the headscarf, as opposed to the burka and niqab. Roald makes a comparison to the garments worn by nuns, and how the discourse of nuns is not that they are oppressed, but instead are seen as the very picture of goodness and devoutness (Ouis & Roald, 2003:189). Roald suggests two possible solutions for this difference in discourse, one being that the covered Muslim woman come to symbolize the entire Islamic ideology and breeds islamophobic reactions, the other being that the nun represent the religion of the majority (Ouis & Roald, 2003:190). The argument from Roald is, that the covering of Muslim women as a symbol of oppression is a very reductionist view even

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though it cannot be denied that in some Muslim countries women are forced to cover (Ouis & Roald, 2003:211). Roald makes the point, that many women who choose to cover their hair are actually quite strong and willing to stand up for themselves and what they believe in, as covering up is something that is opposed as strongly as the way it is in Sweden (Ouis & Roald, 2003:212).

2.5. Discourses of feminism

In *Tørklædet som tegn* (2011), Birte Siim writes a chapter on national models for solving the debate about the headscarf. Like Roald, Siim is writing in the context of only covering up the hair. Siim explains how Danish feminists have different standpoints on the matter. The dominant discourse is that Islam is a threat to gender equality in Denmark. The scarf is a barrier, and therefore needs to be eliminated. However, another but less popular standpoint is that in a multicultural society there is not one right way to be a feminist or to be liberated (Siim, 2011:108-109). Siim is explaining this struggle between the two perspectives and discourses on feminism being feminism as universal versus a feminism more diverse, inclusive and specific to culture. Siim is however also pointing out how the voices of minority women are almost absent on both sides of this struggle in the media. Even though more perspectives on feminism are heard in the media today, it is still only a struggle between feminists with Danish background (Siim, 2011:110).

In *Veil – Privacy and Resistance* (1999), Fadwa El Guindi presents a critique of the Western feminist discourse that often presents how the veil assumes an inferior male. In the preface of the book, El Guindi explains that she had originally intended the book to be named 'Hijab', but for reasons of accessibility and familiarity, the title was changed. The term 'veil' then, integrates 'Hijab', and becomes a study with a larger framework of the anthropology of dress (El Guindi, 1999:xi,xii). El Guindi suggests through examples from the Qur'an, analysis and early Islamic feminist discourse, that the veil should be seen a symbol of division between a deity and mortals (El Guindi, 1999:157). El Guindi also speak of veiling in connection to feminism. Through ideas of Leila Ahmed, El Guindi describes how Islamic feminism can take two different forms. Either a more Westward-looking feminism or one that does not affiliate with Westernization. An argument of El Guindi is that: "Groundedness of feminists in their own culture has been largely overlooked in the discourse of feminism" (El Guindi, 1999:177). According to El Guindi, the liberal Western-influenced feminism and the Islamic feminism are not so different, as they both seek to emancipate women. The argument about lifting the veil is about emancipation from exclusion, and the voluntary veiling is about liberation from materialist culture and imported identities (El Guindi,

1999:184). El Guindi also addresses the issue of Western feminism, and how they in their defence of veiled women, end up reproducing the oriental discourse of the East (El Guindi, 1999:23).

Another perspective on feminism is from Chandra Talpade Mohanty in *Feminism without Borders* (2003). She is explaining how 'Third World Feminisms' deal with two projects. One being the critique of hegemonic Western feminism, and the other a formulation of a culturally grounded feminism. It is then about both deconstructing, and constructing (Mohanty, 2003:17).

2.6. Intersectionality and feminism

I will add an intersectional perspective from Patricia Hill Collins in *Fighting Words* (1998). The intersectional paradigm is rooted in the experience of the Black society in the USA. The paradigm gained recognition, as scholars became more aware that no single category like race, class or gender can separately explain the experience of people, but rather it must be explained by the very intersections of categories (Collins, 1998:116-117). Intersectionality: "(…) highlights how (…) social groups are positioned within unjust power relations, but it does so in a way that introduces added complexity to formerly race-, class-, and gender-only approaches to social phenomena" (Collins, 1998:205). This perspective does not eliminate the categories and groups in themselves, but it shifts the focus to the individual rather than group based identities, and policies made on the ground of these. The boundaries between categories are not static, but fluid, and categories cannot be seen as separate, but always in relation to the other, looking at intersections (Collins, 1998:205). Collins focuses on the construction of 'The Other'. She draws on her own experience as a black woman in the USA, explaining how she was not seen as an individual, but simply as a signifier of racial and economic group (Collins, 2011:3). She mentions how she has learned that her experience of these unjust power relations and social injustice is not unique. Similar experiences are expressed by many other minorities, like Muslims, Jews or gay people (Collins, 1998:4-5). Collins also addresses the issue of representation, when being part of a minority, and the power of media. The example she uses is about poor black women becoming a symbol of what is wrong with America, and how the discourse about this particular group has been strategically used to justify social policies designed to shrink the Government sector. The women as individuals become less visible, and instead represent all black women, and furthermore the entire black community (Collins, 1998:36-37). This perspective, I find, is very relevant as a parallel to that of Muslim women in Europe today, which is why I have incorporated this perspective.

3. Theory of science

In this section, I will briefly touch upon the question of theory of science. Through the theoretical perspectives I am incorporating in this research, a normativity is included. Most of the research and theory I am dealing with is normative, and has a standpoint against the banning. Some, like Leane, are extremely critical of a ban. All seek to identify power relations. An exception to this is Okin, who represents the only academic standpoint that arguably would defend the banning of the burka through her arguments.

With Fairclough, a critical theoretical perspective is included as well, inspired by Marxist thought. In Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, an element of wanting to change the existing society for the better is included. The aim of identifying and understanding discourses is ultimately to use this knowledge as a basis of knowing what needs to change (Fairclough, 2015:6). This will be elaborated in the methodological chapter.

This thesis includes a feminist perspective, while at the same time being very critical of feminist discourse. I am very inspired by the intersectional perspective. Collins explain how intersectionality in research, when studying structural power relations on a group level: "(…) provides an interpretive framework for thinking through how intersections (…) shape any group's experience across specific social contexts" (Collins, 1998:208).

Regarding epistemology, I do not attempt or strive for objective knowledge in the traditional sense, but with the perspectives of Donna Haraway (1991) I go along with the perception that all knowledge is situated. According to Haraway: "(…) only partial perspective promises objective wisdom" (Haraway, 1991:190). Objectivity in feminism is according to Haraway not about a division of object and subject, but about the limited and situated knowledge in itself. Haraway focuses on the subjectivity as 'vision', and how it is through this embodied vision that knowledge can be achieved. Objectivity, then is something that is always grounded in this embodiment: "(…) objectivity turns out to be about particular and specific embodiment and definitely not about the false vision promising transcendence of all limits and responsibility" (Haraway, 1991:190). This responsibility is according to Haraway key when doing research, and the researcher herself is responsible for the knowledge produced. Positioning ourselves within research is the key to this

responsibility, both in a moral and a political sense (Haraway, 1991:192-193). I will elaborate on my own position in the methodological chapter.

4. Methodology

To achieve the specified aim, I will first do a short policy analysis of the policy proposal, using the tools of Carol Bacchi. Then I will do a discourse analysis of the political debate about the topic in the media. I wish to do an analysis on the arguments made for and against the cover-ban. The questions I am interested in, are which arguments are represented in the debate, who are the voices being heard and how are they presented in the media. I will answer these questions through a critical discourse analysis with the inspiration of Norman Fairclough.

4.1. WPR analysis

I will use Carol Bacchi as a concrete tool for the short policy analysis. Bacchi presents the method: *Whats the problem represented to be* (2009), specifically designed for policy analysis. This tool will be the inspiration for the short policy analysis. Six steps are presented in this method:

1. What's the problem represented to be? In this step, the key is to clarify how the problem is represented in the policy. The solution that is presented, is a key to the representation of the problem, and reveals how the problem is thought about. The solution in itself implies a problem. A problem is not something that is just 'there', but it exists in the very sense that a solution through a policy is suggested (Bacchi, 2009:2-3)

2. What are the presuppositions of the policy? The primary goal in this second question is to identify deep-seated cultural premises and values within problem representations and to investigate what understandings and conceptual logics are present. The goal is to reveal these conceptual logics that can limit the understanding of an issue (Bacchi, 2009:5). Public debate tend to rest highly upon binaries and dichotomies, and through analysis these should be revealed (Bacchi, 2009:7). As well as identifying key concepts and categories (Bacchi, 2009:8,9).

3. How did this representation come about? At this stage of analysis one should look into the history and development of the problem (Bacchi, 2009:10).

4. On the fourth stage the focus is to look into what is left unproblematic in the policy, the possible silences as well as the limits in the problematisation (Bacchi, 2009:12).

5. What effects are produced by the representations? Bacchi talk about three kinds of effects: Discursive effects, subjectification and lived effects. Discursive effects are effects are those that follow from the limits as to what can be thought and said. Subjectification is understood as the way

subjects are constituted in discourse, and lived effects is the very impact on life and death (Bacchi, 2009:15).

6. The last step is regarding how and where the representation has been produced and defended, and how this could be questioned. This step directs attention to practices that let certain problem representations dominate (Bacchi, 2009:19).

4.2. Theories of Norman Fairclough

In the following, I will present some of the theoretical perspectives on discourse analysis through the theories of Norman Fairclough.

In Language and Power (2015), Fairclough introduces his theories and perspectives on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). In the introduction, Fairclough mentions and stresses the importance of the normative elements of his approach to CDA (Fairclough, 2015:6). Fairclough states that the aim of CDA is not simply to describe existing structures, but more so it is to change existing societies for the better with the help of CDA. Fairclough describes this as the "(…) essence of CDA" (Fairclough, 2015:6). Fairclough furthermore states, that the critical aspect of CDA, means looking for explanations of why a certain discourse have come to be a certain way (Fairclough, 2015:7). Fairclough also elaborates, that his perspective on CDA: "(…) seeks better understanding of how language contributes to the domination of some people by others as a step towards social emancipation: our chances of changing existing social reality for the better in part depend upon understanding it better (...)" (Fairclough: 2015:46). Through this, the normative elements of Fairclough's CDA are very clearly stated, the aim is to change an existing reality into something better, and there are groups of people that are believed to need some sort of emancipation. Fairclough's theories are explicitly inspired by Marxist theory, with dialectical reasoning being a key concept in CDA (Fairclough, 2015:48). Ideology and constant attention to it is a key concept to focus on in CDA. One example of ideology being the capitalist one of 'economies must grow'. CDA is about questioning these common sense ideas, and which consequences are accepted to be part of a higher ideology (Fairclough, 2015:47).

Language is seen as a social practice in the form of discourse, meaning that language is a social practice determined by social structures (Fairclough, 2015:51). Language is always a socially conditioned practice, conditioned by other non-linguistic parts of society and linguistic phenomena are social phenomena in themselves (Fairclough, 2015:56). This means, that when analysing

discourse, one is not simply analysing text, but the very relationship between text, interactions and the social conditions in which they are produced. To be able to cover these three dimensions in analysis, three dimensions of CDA is needed: description, interpretation and explanation. Description covering the more formal look on the text, interpretation dealing with the text as a product of a process and explanation, which is concerned with the social determination of processes as well as their social effects (Fairclough, 2015:58-59).

Power relations is always an issue when it comes to discourse. There is always an element of power involved, when understanding how different categories of people with different interests interact with each other (Fairclough, 2015:65). Also, discourse holds a power in itself and there is a dialectic relationship between structure and practice. Discourse is able to constitute social practice as well as being determined by them which leads to social continuity (Fairclough, 2015:67).

Fairclough distinguishes between power in discourse and power behind discourse. Power in discourse can be explained as when discourse becomes a place where power is actually exercised and creates unequal relations (Fairclough, 2015:73). One example of this can be how power is exercised in cross-cultural encounters where a form of 'gatekeeping' by the white majority can take place, determining and constraining discourse (Fairclough, 2015:76-77). Fairclough also mentions how media discourses can exercise a form of hidden power, with the media having a built-in ideal subject. The producers of media exercise power over consumers as the producers are the ones who decide what will be brought in a given media (Fairclough, 2015:78-79). Fairclough focuses on the handling of causality, and how causality is represented. Who or what is represented as the cause of something (Fairclough, 2015:80).

In regards to power behind discourse, Fairclough is explaining that the whole social order of discourse is somehow held together by power. An example of this is 'standardization' of language, where a specific social dialect come to be standard language. This is part of a much wider process, in which the establishment of nationhood can be found (Fairclough, 2015:84). Also an aspect of power behind discourse, is about access to discourse. This meaning, who has access to a specific discourse and who has the power to constrain this access (Fairclough, 2015:89).

Social struggle in discourse may take various forms. In the case of 'power in discourse', social struggle takes place within the discourse. In the case of 'power behind discourse', the social

struggle concerns the discourse itself (Fairclough, 2015:98). When it comes to ideological struggle as a particular form of social struggle it is one that is especially relevant to CDA because it often takes place in language. These ideological struggles are both in discourse as they takes place in language, and are at the same time behind discourse as the struggle concerns the very legitimacy and social meaning of language (Fairclough, 2015:110). Ideology and discourse is always related, in the sense that discourse draws upon ideological assumptions, taken as 'common sense' and contributes to existing power relations. There is a close relationship between power and ideology (Fairclough, 2015:101). Political discourses are one example of a struggle of ideologies where different notions of common-sense are at stake (Fairclough, 2015:108). In many cases there will be a dominant discourse, and various discourse trying to challenge this dominating discourse (Fairclough, 2015:112). Naturalization of discourse can be seen as the road to common sense. Common sense is a direct effect of power, and what comes to be seen as common-sense is directly determined by the ones who exercise power in a given society. This naturalization often leads to the loss of ideological sense in a discourse, as the discourse becomes neutral in a sense, and beyond ideological struggle (Fairclough, 2015:113). When talking about common-sense, it is important to keep in mind that meaning in language can be an ideological struggle in itself. The meaning of a word is not an independent thing, but rather a complex relation to other words which Fairclough calls a 'meaning system' (Fairclough, 2015:114-115).

Fairclough presents the following practical procedure for analysis:

1. Description, which concerns vocabulary, experiential, relational and expressive value of words, use of metaphors, different grammatical features and general textual structure (Fairclough, 2015:129-130). Experiential value of words shows the knowledge and beliefs of the producer of the text, and the way the social world is represented. Relational value has to do with social relationships. Expressive value can be seen as the way the producer evaluates the reality it relates to (Fairclough, 2015:130).

2. Interpretation, which involves looking into situational context, inter-textual context, semantics, pragmatics, presuppositions and common-sense assumptions (Fairclough, 2015:156-164)

3. Explanation is the last step, needed to explain the power relations in question. The objective of this stage is to portray discourse as part of social process, seeing discourse as part of social struggle, and recognizing relations of power. Focus should be on what power relations determine discourses,

and what the effects are. (Fairclough, 2015:172-173).

4.3. My position and ethical considerations

A fourth point of analysis mentioned by Fairclough is regarding the position of the analyst. Fairclough stresses how the analyst will have to draw on their own MR (interpretative procedures) in order to explain how other producers draw on theirs. For this reason, it is important that the analyst is sensitive to what resources they themselves rely on while doing the analysis. According to Fairclough, it is only self-consciousness that distinguishes the analyst from the participants that are being analysed. Moreover, as a critical analyst, the goal is to be conscious about the rootedness of discourse in common-sense assumptions (Fairclough, 2015:175-176).

I will briefly go into my own position as a researcher in this field. In line with Fairclough, I will have to draw on my own capacity and ability to engage in the process of discourse. This includes remaining aware and conscious about the discourses that I, myself, rely on as well as my own presuppositions and assumptions that I will do my best to remain transparent about. Categories like my gender, age and political standpoint are all part of my own MR. My own position has shaped the research question and the focus of the thesis. I have been doing research in the field before, and through this research, I already have some assumptions. Both my gender and my political standpoint have influenced the research, from the formulation of the problem to the way I have been dealing with the material. My own normative standpoint, and being very critical of the ban myself, does no doubt have an influence on the way this thesis is structured. As mentioned earlier in the section about theory of science, in line with Haraway, I do not view my own position as a hinder for knowledge, but as the very foundation of it.

4.4. Validity and Reliability

Regarding the validity and reliability of this thesis, I will once again refer to Donna Haraway. Her concept of situated knowledge is key to the concept of validity in this thesis. Because of the fact that objectivity is not the goal in the traditional sense, the concern is not truth, but rather trying to explain the nature of a phenomenon (Rosenberg, 2008:114). The reflexivity on my own position in the research, is key for the validity. Furthermore, it is essential to be transparent about the way data has been collected. I will elaborate on this in the further section. It is about being as clear as possible about the frame in which the research has come about. The internal validity then, becomes the way to enhance the external validity (Szulevicz, 2015:92).

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In terms of reliability, because I am working within a framework of situated knowledge, this also means that the results will always be affected by the position of the researcher. Fairclough also touches upon this, when saying that the researcher needs to use her own MR to interpret and explain the discourses. For these reasons, it is also not possible for data to remain consistent across repeated investigations. Reliability then, is a matter of understanding the meaning attached to a particular discourse, at a certain point in time (Schurink, 407:1998:). Furthermore, I find that it is a strength regarding reliability, that, despite the situated nature of the thesis, my findings are in line with previous research in the field.

The general point is, that instead of trying to eliminate the personal biases and assumptions, the key is to embrace them and remain transparent about them, as they are the very core of the understanding and knowledge gained.

4.5. Data selection and introduction of media material

In this section, I will introduce the sources in which I have found the material for analysis. The material is newspaper articles found in two of the major newspapers in Denmark, respectively 'Politiken' and 'Berlingske'. The main reason for the choice of these sources, is the fact that they are the largest, as I want to look at the most prominent discourses. Furthermore, these two newspapers reflect different political standpoints, Politiken being more popular with left-wing readers, and Berlingske with right-wing readers. I will briefly present the two sources. Politiken was founded in 1884. The newspaper has since the 1920's been known for its focus on culture. The historically political persuasion of the newspaper is 'Det Radikale Venstre', which is social-liberal. As of 2013, the circulation of Politiken was 91.984 (Den Store Danske, 1). Berlingske, formerly known as 'Berlingske Tidende', was founded in 1749. The historically political persuasion of the newspaper is conservative. As of 2013, the circulation of the newspaper was 81.789 on weekdays, and 96.908 on Sundays (Den Store Danske, 2). A Gallup study from 2011 shows how even though the newspapers are today independent of political parties, the readers reveal that the political element is still existent. The majority of the readers of Politiken are the socialist and social-liberal, whereas the majority of the readers of Berlingske are the conservatives and the liberals (Madsen, 2011)

In my filtering I will be looking for articles written from 1st of October 2017 and until April 2018. I

have limited my material to this period of time since the debate first arose around October 2017, and in April 2018 the proposal went through (Berlingske:10). My key search word to find the articles that will be used in the analysis will be 'burkaforbud' (burka ban). I was initially thinking to use the juridical term 'tildækningsforbud' (cover ban), but I found no relevant articles using this word, since the media continuously sticks to the term burka ban. I will only be using articles written by journalists and experts, not public opinions or debate. I have made few exceptions, an editorial from Berlingske and an opinion written by a politician. I have included these exceptions, as I found them relevant to the analysis. I will be using articles who has the ban as their main topic. I will keep the focus on articles regarding the Danish debate, and not the rest of Europe. The articles are found mainly in the physical newspapers as well as on the websites of the newspapers. The number of articles from Politiken is 15 and the number of articles from Berlingske is 13. The relatively equal amount of articles used is a coincidence after filtering all articles as stated above. The first article from Berlingske is from the 5th of October and the last from the 6th of April. The first article from Politiken is from the 6th of October and the last from the 10th of April.

When quoting, I am translating the quotes from Danish into English. I will be providing the Danish original quote in the footnotes as well, to ensure transparency and avoid misinterpretations.

4.6. Clarification of concepts

During the analysis when talking about the 'cover ban' I will be referring to the policy, and when talking about the 'burka ban' I will be referring to the debate.

I also find it relevant to briefly present the different Danish Political parties that will be mentioned in the analysis, as well as their general agendas.

The Government:
- Venstre (main Governmental party): Venstre was founded in 1870. It is a right-wing, liberal party, historically connected to the farmers, and closely connected to the unions. Along with the Social Democrats, it is one of the two largest parties in Denmark (Den Store Danske, 3).
- The Conservative People's Party (Det Konservative Folkeparti): Founded in 1915. Since 1950, the party has had a close cooperation with Venstre. At the election in 2015, the party faced considerable deterioration (Den Store Danske, 4).
- Liberal Alliance: Founded in 2007 by members leaving Det Radikale Venstre. One of their

main agendas is lowering personal taxes (Den Store Danske, 5)

The opposition:
- The Social Democrats (Socialdemokratiet): Founded in 1871. Characterized as the party of the working class. As of the election in 2015 they are the largest party in Denmark, however Venstre won as they had the political majority on their side (Den Store Danske, 6).

- The Radical Left (Det Radikale Venstre): Founded in 1905. Social-liberal party, placed between the right- and left-wing (Den Store Danske, 7).

- The Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti): Founded in 1995. Their key issues are preservation of the national, strict immigration policies and resistance against a multicultural society (Den Store Danske, 8)

- The Alternative (Alternativet): Founded in 2015 by Uffe Elbæk, former member of Det Radikale Venstre (Den Store Danske, 9)

5. Analysis

5.1. Brief policy analysis

In the following, I will do a short policy analysis of the proposal presented by the Ministry of Justice, using the tools of Bacchi. I am doing this analysis as a ground for the discourse analysis I will be doing after. In the discourse analysis, I will go deeper into the context surrounding the policy analysis, and this short policy analysis is just to look into how the proposal is formulated, and what is presented as the problem in the proposal. This means that I will focus on the points 1,2,4 and 5 of Bacchi's method for analysis, as point 3 and 6 very much concern the context in which the representation has come about, as well as how the policy has been produced and defended.

In the introduction, a representation of the problem is clearly presented in the following words:
"(…) according to the perception of the Government it is not compatible with the values and cohesion of Danish society or the respect for our community to keep the face hidden in public"[4] (Ministry of Justice, 2018:2). The problem, then, is presented as people covering their faces in public, and how this is a threat to the trust in Danish society. Furthermore, it is said that if you do choose to hide your face, you are thereby stating that you do not wish to be a part of Danish society. The solution presented, is making it illegal for people to cover their faces.

One of the first things mentioned in the proposal, is how covering of the face can lead to parallel societies forming in society. This clearly reads into a discourse of ethnic minorities in Denmark living in parallel societies, and then from the very beginning it is clear in the proposal, even though not directly addressed, that this is ultimately an issue of ethnic minorities. When it is said in the proposal that "(…) covering of that face can be a visible sign of already existing parallel societies with their own norms and rules"[5] (Ministry of Justice, 2018:3), it is furthermore made clear that these parallel societies are to be prevented, and it is suggested that this proposal can help with this prevention. As mentioned earlier, the terms burka and niqab are not explicitly mentioned, but will fall under the terms 'scarf, hoods, masks' etc., which are mentioned as unacceptable if they cover the entire face of a person. Overall, even though burka and niqab are not mentioned, is seems clear

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[4] (…) efter regeringens opfattelse ikke er foreneligt med værdierne og sammenhængskraften i det danske samfund eller respekten for vore fællesskab at holde ansigtet skjult i det offentlige rum.
[5] (…) tildækning af ansigtet kan være et synligt udtryk for eksisterende parallelsamfund i Danmark.

that the proposal targets ethnic minorities more than anything else. Although the word integration is not explicitly mentioned, a significant part of the proposal involves how you cannot be a part of Danish society if you cover your face. In this way, it can be said that successful integration is not possible if the face is covered.

Within the policy, several cultural premises and values are taken for granted. Trust is represented as a core value of Danish society, and something that must be defended. This is the ultimate justification of the cover ban, the notion that it is to secure a trustful society. Respect is another important value, and it is presented as disrespectful to cover your face in Danish society. This being no matter the reasons you might have for covering your face (except for the special circumstances like weather conditions). Trust and respect are both very universal values that arguably would be valued in all societies. In the proposal, trust is linked directly to the physical appearance of people, saying that it is not possible to have trust in a person whose face you cannot see. In regards to respect, it is suggested that people who cover their faces, do not respect Danish society. Covering the face is seen as a form of anonymization, and this is said to be taking a toll on Danish society (Ministry of Justice, 2018:2-3). In this logic, it is justified to force people to dress in a certain way, because according to the proposal it challenges the core values of society. In continuation of what is taken for granted the actual motives for covering the face is left unproblematic.

In terms of discoursive effects, the proposal is a powerful expression of the majority way of thinking about people covering their face in public, and an expression of how this cannot be tolerated in Danish society. In regards to subjectification, the proposal leaves the people who cover their faces in a position where they are presented as not wanting to be members of Danish society. Looking at the lived effects of the proposal, there will be fines for the people who will not obey to the law. The women who wear niqab and burka will have to stop doing that to obey they law. There is also the possibility of misunderstandings. Given the nature of the proposal, situations may occur where it will be difficult to determine what is considered criminal behaviour and what is not.

5.2. Discourse analysis of debate

5.2.1. Strategy for Analysis

I will start out by presenting the different arguments that I have identified while going through the debate. I will look at how they are made, who makes them and what they present as the problem in these arguments. After this, different themes that I find relevant to the arguments are identifies, and

I will go further into an interpretation of these themes. The step of explanation will take place in the discussion, where I will relate the discourses identified to social structures.

5.3. Different arguments

As I have been going through the articles that serve as the material for this discourse analysis, different arguments by different actors have presented themselves. I have identified these arguments, and I will be summing them up in the following:

5.3.1. The Government

As stated in the above policy analysis, the main argument formally made by the Government is, that covering of the face cannot be an accepted part of Danish society, and that it is a sign that you do not wish to be part of Danish society.

On the 22nd of October 2017 Jacob Ellemann-Jensen, at the time a spokesman for Venstre, stresses that the ban is an issue of trust. Danish society is presented as 'open' and the burka and niqab are presented as a threat to that openness. The argument is, that there will be no trust if we cannot see each others faces. It is clear in this article that he is presenting the same rhetoric that is used in the proposal. He also mentions that it is already illegal to force people to cover their face, but they also need a law for people who choose to hide their face voluntarily (Berlingske:5). This description of Danish society as 'open', and the covered woman as a threat to that, makes a very clear analogy of Danish people being *open,* as opposed to the covered Muslim women, representing the entire Muslim community who are represented as the opposite *closed.* This both in a literal sense through the niqab and burka, but also how these through this particular discourse, come to represent the entire Muslim community as closed.

After the proposal was presented on the 6th of February 2018, an article from the 7th presents the final proposal. Here, Minister of Justice Søren Pape from The Conservative Party is quoted, and repeats the argument made in the policy about respect for the community and Danish values. The argument that trust and respect needs to be ensured by showing our faces in public (Berlingske:8).

In an article from Politiken, on the 5th of October 2017 the disagreements within the Government are presented. It is explained how The Conservative Party is for the ban, and Liberal Alliance is against. It also presents that the party Venstre as well has been torn about this issue. Since August

the party has been divided in groups who are either for or against (Politiken:1). I will elaborate on the arguments and opinions in the further sections.

5.3.2. Voices from Venstre

There have been disagreement, not just among the Government parties, but also internally in the parties. Individual members of the party Venstre express different opinions throughout the debate. Many of them change their rhetorics after the proposal is made public. An example is Jan E. Jørgensen from Venstre, who from the beginning was against the ban. His argument was, that a ban might lead more women wearing burka and niqab. In an article from Politiken on the 6th of October he is quoted saying: "We all think it [the burka] is bad. The debate has been about, how to limit the use of burka in an appropriate way"[6] (Politiken:2).

However, in another article from Politiken on the same day, it is explained how Venstre has now reached a decision, and that the majority of the party is now for a ban, despite the internal differences. Jan E. Jørgensen is one of the members who has changed his standpoint, and in the article he is questioned about this change. He expresses that he is still skeptical, but that this is the solution the party has agreed on (Politiken:3). Another subject that lead to internal disagreements within the party, was the question of punishment. In an article from the 15th of December, it is said that there are disagreements within Venstre about the possibility of prison punishment. Regarding this issue, Jan E. Jørgensen is once again the front runner, saying he cannot support the ban if it involves a possibility for prison (Politiken:9).

The first article from Berlingske from the 6th of October 2017 features statements from mayors and Venstre city councils in Denmark. Arguments are made that wearing a burka shows 'lack of respect' towards the majority society. The argument made by the mayors quoted in the article, is that you have to dress according to the country you live in, and the burka or the niqab is according to the mayors, not in line with living in Denmark. One mayor, Pernille Beckman, says that the core of liberalism is freedom for people, but at the same time she says that covering the face 'threatens the Danish existence'. Many express the liberal dilemma of on one hand having the freedom to dress how you want, and then on the other hand also as a liberal having the need to see the face of the person you are interacting with. Mayor Søren Steen Andersen is quoted saying that it is a

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[6] Vi synes alle sammen, det [burka] er dårligt. Debatten har drejet sig om, hvordan man mest hensigtsmæssigt begrænser brugen af burka.

symbolic thing to show the face. He suggests how showing your face is a sign of standing up for yourself and being honest (Berlingske:1).

In a Politiken article from 26th of January, after it is revealed the proposal will also include hats, etc, Jacob Jensen from Venstre is quoted saying that the proposal is crazy. Despite this, he supports the ban because he has to, but says that he will make sure to make clear, that it is not in his good will. (Politiken:11).

5.3.3. The Liberalists against

In an article from Berlingske the 7th of October the disagreements within the party Venstre is expressed. Eva Kjer Hansen, member of the party states that it 'hurts her liberal soul' (Berlingske:3). In another article from the 26th of January 2018, after the proposal is made public, different politicians are mentioning how they find it ridiculous that the ban is also targeting hats and scarves etc. that cover the face. Eva Kjer Hansen is once again quoted in this article, saying how she finds it ridiculous that she will not be able to wear her scarf as she wants to, even if it is not cold. I find this statement extremely interesting, as it is the very core of the debate. Women not being able to wear their scarf as they want to. The difference being, that Eva Kjer Hansen is a white, Danish, non-Muslim woman (Berlingske:6).

In an article from Berlingske the 8th of February 2018 it is said that the party of Liberal Alliance has chosen to let members of the party vote individually. The majority of them are against the ban. However, all the ministers from Liberal Alliance will vote for the ban, as they are part of the Government. The party are allowed to release the members to vote individually because the cover-ban is considered an ethical issue (Berlingske:9). Head of the Liberal Alliance youth organisation, Søren Nielsen is quoted saying "To begin with, I think it is insane that you will forbid people to wear whatever they want to"[7] (Politiken:11).

5.3.4. Det Radikale Venstre

In the from the 10th of April in Berlingske, Morten Østergaard, head of Det Radikale Venstre is quoted. He calls the ban hypocrisy, illogical and unrealistic. He also says that it is nothing but symbolic politics, in the sense that this is not really a major issue within Danish society as so few women actually wear it. He questions what the actual problem is. If it is social control then it is just

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[7] Jeg synes, det er sindssygt, at man til at starte med vil forbyde folk at rende rundt I det tøj, de gerne vil.

a punishment of the victims. His argument is that with this ban the Government is compromising personal autonomy and responsibility. He does not buy the argument from the Government that the cohesiveness of Danish society is being threatened. He argues that there are many things you can do that will make you stand out from mainstream society, other than putting on a niqab, and that he will never think it is okay to start forcing people in any way. He sees it as a slippery slope, and worries that the next thing the Danish People's Party want is banning all religious headscarves (Berlingske:13).

5.3.5. The Liberalists for the ban

In relation to the difference of opinions within the parties in the Government, the leader of Liberal Alliance Anders Samuelsen is quoted from a post on Facebook in an article in Politiken on the 6th of October:

> Everybody agrees that the burka is an expression of extreme oppression of women. No matter how few women it concerns, it makes me sick every time I see this form of clothing. It reminds me of women, who lost their freedom. It reminds me of all the women in the world who suffer under warped, dark men's unsympathetic and petrified interpretation of old texts. These men, are the core of the problem[8] (Politiken:3)

Even though there are many internal differences within Liberal Alliance, the head of the party makes his opinion very clear through this statement. He even suggests that everybody agrees that the burka and the niqab is oppressive to women, and by this makes it clear what the hegemonic discourse is.

5.3.6. Fear of extremism

In a feature article by Özlem Cekic in Politiken on the 5th of December 2017, she voices the opinion that extremists might benefit from the ban. Cekic is a former politician and a Muslim herself. She stresses that she does not understand why women wear it in the first place and she thinks the burka represents a 'darkened stance', but at the same time she dissociates from banning it. She says that the ban will not change anything. She stresses the power of exclusion, and how organisations like

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[8] Alle er enige om, at burkaer er udtryk for ekstrem kvindeundertrykkelse. Uanset hvor få det drejer sig om, får jeg kvalme, hver gang jeg ser den form for beklædning. Det minder mig om kvinder, der har tabt friheden. Det minder mig om alle de kvinder I verden, der lider under forkvaklede mørkemænds usympatiske og forstenede fortolkning af gamle skrifter. Dé mænd er problemets kerne.

Hizb ut-Tahrir can take advantage of these exclusions. She calls the cover ban nothing but a cover up burka ban. She says that the burka is in contrast to 'Our' view on women, our being the majority discourse. She also points out that the majority of women wearing niqab is Danish convertites. Her point is, that it is not possible to ban something just because we do not understand it. One force cannot justify the other force. However, she finds it completely fair that workplaces can demand to see people's faces. Freedom is for everybody, including the ones we do not share opinions and values with (Politiken:8).

In Berlingske the 7th of October Søren Pind, then a member of Venstre, called it directly in conflict with the Danish constitution, and he expresses his fear that extremists will be able to use this to their advantage. However, he agrees with the proposal because of the change from burka-ban to cover-ban (Berlingske:3). In an article in Politiken on the 6th of October, Pind calls it 'dangerous' to implement the ban: "It will create strife in our society, and it will make sure that the propagandists and islamists have an opportunity to point out an evident hypocrisy, in relation to the grounded rights that we are targeted by"[9] (Politiken:2).

5.3.7.   The Danish People's Party

The party express how they find that any visible Islamic religious symbol is a sign of not wanting to integrate in Danish society, and therefore must be banned. They want the ban to be solely about Islamic headwear, Søren Espersen from Danish People's party says in an article from Politiken the 26th of January how he finds the proposal ridiculous when the purpose and the target group from the beginning was only the Muslim women (Politiken:11).

Furthermore The Danish People's Party are not hiding that they hope that this is the first step, eventually leading to a ban of hijab as well (Politiken:1). After the proposal is made final after many weeks of doubt, Martin Henriksen who is the spokesperson for immigration from the party is quoted saying that it is a victory over Islamism. He also states that he does not really care about the added part about social control, since he does not think it will make a difference (Politiken:15).

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[9] Det vil skabe ufred I vores fællesskab, og det vil samtidig sikre propagandisterne og islamisterne en mulighed for at påpege et evident hykleri I forhold til de grundfæstede rettigheder, som vi står på mål for.

5.3.8. The Social Democrats

In an article from the 5th of October in Politiken it is mentioned that The Social Democrats have not yet taken a public stand on the matter but that the head of the party Mette Frederiksen has called the burka: "(…) one of the most women-oppressing things there is"[10] (Politiken:1).

I incorporate a comment from social democrat Lars Aslan, from the 18th of October. His argument is, that being for a burka ban is progressive and the right thing to do as a left-wing politician. He is calling the burka and the niqab the 'most oppressive fascist symbol' (Berlingske:4). His choice of words here are incredibly loaded, directly linking the burka and niqab to fascism. According to Aslan, the left-wing must fight social control and oppression of women through this ban. Being left-wing means having to ban the burka and the niqab, as these according to him are against gender equality.

After it was unclear for weeks if the ban will get the majority of votes, in an article from the 6th of April it is explained that it eventually was The Social Democrats that secured the ban, because of the disagreements within the Government. The Social Democrats however has the condition that they want the focus to be the women to be able to support the ban. The police will have to judge whether it is a question of social control, and then to provide help to the women. The discourse of the Social Democrats is viewing the women as victims and not as law offenders (Berlingske:10). Their main focus is helping the women and fighting social control. Spokesperson Trine Bramsen is quoted: "(…) the most important thing for us, has consistently been to get a tool to fight the systematic oppression of women that unfortunately happen in some environments"[11] (Berlingske:10). Bramsen is stressing that they do not just want the fines, but also an investigation of possible social control. However, The Social Democrats would have also preferred the proposal to be only targeting the Muslim women. She is quoted in another article saying: "The essential thing is, that we look into the social control that we think the burka and niqab are symbol of. It is about the women living a free and equal life (…)"[12] (Politiken:13). The Muslim woman is through this discourse presented as weak, and as a victim that needs to be emancipated.

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[10] (…) noget af det mest kvindeundertrykkende, der findes.
[11] Det vigtigste for os har hele tiden været, at vi får et redskab til at bekæmpe den systematiske undertrykkelse af kvinder, der desværre foregår i nogle miljøer
[12] Det afgørende er, at man kigger på den sociale kontrol, som vi mener, at burka og niqab er symboler på. Det handler om, om kvinden lever et frit og lige liv (…)

5.3.9. The Social Democrats against

In an article from the 1st of February 2018 Mette Gjerskov from the Social Democrats who met two women wearing niqab (from Kvinder I Dialog) makes it clear she cannot support a ban that determines what people can and cannot wear. She is hereby going against the general line of the party. However, she says she still finds it very strange that women choose to wear niqab or burka. Gjerskov is saying that the two women she met with both described wearing the niqab as liberating. They were both well-educated, born in Denmark, and they viewed it as an opposition to the sexualisation of the female body. The two women were part of the organisation 'Kvinder i Dialog', whose perspective I will elaborate in the following (Politiken:12).

5.3.10. Women wearing niqab, all from the organisation Kvinder i Dialog (Women in Dialogue)

In another article from the 6th of April, an interview is made with a woman called Sarah, who wears the niqab (member of Kvinder I Dialog). She talks about how wearing the niqab to her is something liberating and positive. She describes the niqab as giving her happiness, energy and a closer relationship to God. She chose to wear the niqab herself, and no one else in her family wears it. It is also a way for her to go against ideals of beauty and vanity. In public, she wishes that her personality and opinions are in focus, and not her physical appearance. She calls the law ridiculous and discriminating. It is the first time the voice of a niqab-wearing woman is heard in the data selected. She also mentions how in Denmark, liberation is often linked to nudity, whereas in Islam, being covered is seen as positive and liberating. She understands that it can be difficult for Danish people to grasp, but not understanding something is not a good enough reason to ban it. She also says that the ban will not make her take off her niqab (Berlingske:11).

5.3.11. Islam scientists

In continuation of the interview with Sarah, on the 7th of April, an interview with Islam scientist Heiko Henkel is brought in Berlingske. He is explaining why it is wrong to only view the niqab as a symbol of oppression and how it is more of a symbol, and a statement, a provocation even. He calls the idea of the oppressed Muslim woman a 'narrative' created through media, and says that no scientific research can prove that it is actually oppressing women to wear a niqab. He also says that most of the women, like Sarah, choose it themselves and that they have not grown up in families with niqab-wearing women. Henkel ultimately sees the niqab as as identity-marker, even if an extreme and provocative one, and he does not think the cover ban will make any difference – although he thinks it might make the women even more eager to represent themselves as individuals

and that it will definitely not make them take off their niqab (Berlingske:12).

On the 15th of October, there is an interview with Sabba Mirza, a female Muslim lawyer who wrote a PhD on Muslim and the Niqab. Her argument is that the ban is only symbolic and does not make any real difference. She also argues that she finds the current law to be symbolic and not fitting for the reality. She finds it wrong to only focus on covering of the face, and according to her it should be about being forced to wearing any garment a person do not wish to wear themselves. Since 2007, it has been illegal to force anyone to hide his or her face; however no one has been convicted all this time. According to Mirza, this shows that this is not the way to go, when there is not even proof that women have been forced. There is no evidence that women wearing niqab or burka are oppressed, so who are we to judge that (Politiken:6).

5.3.12. Members of the Danish parliament

In an article from the 17th of January it is explained how the organisation Kvinder i Dialog wanted to meet with the Danish parliament to express their point of view. The parliament denied meeting with the women because they wanted to meet them only if they were not wearing niqab or burka. The women agreed to this if only women politicians would be present at the meeting. The female politician, Laura Lindahl from Liberal Alliance who the women had contacted directly is quoted saying she is considering this offer, but is worried it would be discriminative to the male politicians. In the article it is also said how Mattias Tesfaye from the Social Democrats has been meeting with two women dressed in niqab, because he was curious of their arguments. He says this is not something he usually does, and compares it to debating with anonymous profiles on Facebook. He says he will not do it again, as the work of the parliament should be an *open* process, suggesting this is not possible when talking to women who cover their faces. One politician from Alternativet however disagrees with this point of view, saying that when we are debating a topic like niqab and burka, of course the politicians should be open to meeting the women wearing it (Politiken:10).

5.3.13. Other Muslim women

In an article from Berlingske the 7th of October, interviews with Muslim women on the street are conducted. The journalists are looking for women wearing hijab or burka, but they cannot find any. They mention that according to a 2009 study there are around 100-200 women in Denmark wearing niqab, and maximum 10 wearing a burka. The journalist go to the largest mosque in Copenhagen. In the reception, they tell him that no women wearing niqab or burka come in the mosque. They talk to

women wearing Hijab instead, and these women find the whole debate to be too big of a deal these days considering how few women actually wear a burka or niqab. One of the women mentions that if women are not allowed to wear what they want, that would just be oppression which is exactly the thing the politicians talk about wanting to remove (Berlingske:2).

On the 9th of October, another input from Muslim women is included. The women do not themselves cover their face. They think that the debate about it lacks proportions. However, these women have very different opinions as well. One thinks the debate is ridiculous, one finds that the government should focus on other, more important, issues. One finds it non-Danish to ban what people can wear and not wear, whereas another finds it non-Danish to cover up and supports the ban. The journalists asks one of the women if she finds it to be oppression of women to wear the niqab, and she says that it can be, and she says that she both knows women who chose to wear it themselves, and some who were forced to (Politiken:5).

5.3.14. Young Muslims from Radio WAIH

In an article in Politiken from the 20th of October, a group of young Muslims who are trying to change the politicians mind about the ban are interviewed. Their aim is to strengthen the voice of a young minority in a media picture they find to be twisted and one-sided. They find that there is a need for Danish Muslim identities that is not always presented as different from and in opposition to the majority society. They see it as necessary to include Muslims of different opinions, otherwise they would be no better than mainstream media. As well as acknowledge the problems that may exist within Muslim communities (Politiken:7).

5.3.15. Berlingske

In an editorial from the 27th of January 2018, an answer is made, to the critics who ridicule the proposal. The editorial is saying that this is not a joke. The argument is that society cannot work if we cannot see each other's faces and therefore the ban is necessary. As an editorial, this is the opinion of the newspaper. Therefore, it is very clear through this article what the standpoint of Berlingske is. In the editorial it is stated that the cover-ban "(…) is a result of immigration from cultures where women are oppressed"[13]. It is also mentioned how parallel societies are a consequence of this immigration. It is also suggested that people who perceive themselves as being advocates for gender equality, are being hypocrites if they do not support the cover-ban, as the

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[13] (…) er et resultat af en indvandring fra kulturer, hvor kvinder undertrykkes.

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burka and niqab according to the editorial is oppression of women happening right in front of their eyes (Berlingske:7).

5.3.16. Legal perspective (From Politiken)

An article from the 7th of October in Politiken explains the juridical difficulties of the ban. A professor in political science says that there is a risk of 'hidden discrimination', if the ban when implemented will only be targeting Muslim women, despite the way it is formulated. The journalist is asking questions to try to push the politicians to say that the ban is really just directed at Muslim women. They defend themselves saying it is also for example Ku Klux Klan hoods or drug dealers who cover their face who is targeted (Politiken:4).

In another article from Politiken on the 7th of March, the juridical issues are elaborated. Advokatrådet (The Lawyer Council) is interviewed, and they mention how the proposal does not take into account for example health issues that would require you to cover your skin. Problems could emerge where people would be forced to give sensitive personal information to the police in order to avoid a fine. Issues like this are not specified in the proposal.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights argue that the ban being only in public places might create misunderstandings. The boundary between public and private can sometimes be blurry. They give examples like asylum centres, foster homes, prisons etc. These are issues that are also not specified in the proposal (Politiken:14).

5.4. General linguistics

In this section I will go into the words used in the debate, using the perspectives of Fairclough. As mentioned earlier, the debate has continued to hold on to the use of 'burka ban' as opposed to the 'cover ban', even after the proposal was introduced. The word 'Tildækningsforbud' did not appear until the 10th of February 2018 in Politiken after the proposal was presented, but it does not become a term that is used. Looking through the headlines of the articles, the word 'burka' is mentioned 9 out of 15 times in the Politiken articles, and 7 out of 13 times in the Berlingske articles. The word 'niqab' is mentioned in two headlines in Politiken, and in one in Berlingske. 'Tildækningforbud', only appear in the two headlines from Politiken, after the proposal was introduced and none from Berlingske.

The fact that in the media they have stuck to the choice of words 'burka ban' makes the debate in itself gendered and racial. In general, what is presented in the debate is the wearing of the burka, which also includes the wearing of the niqab – a point that stressed by Rikke Andreassen suggests a general ignorance in relation to the subject of Muslim culture and the concept of covering up. None of the other examples of garments that cover the face that are mentioned in the proposal, are part of the debate. This is the most significant difference between what is debated and the proposal itself. Another sign that the target group of the ban is seen only as Muslim women, is that they are the only ones interviewed.

5.5. Discourses and themes in the debate
5.5.1. Left-wing and right-wing arguments

Throughout the debate, the arguments are made within a political context, and the majority of the arguments dealt with in this analysis come directly from Danish politicians. There are multiple layers, as there is a general agenda of the respective parties, as well as the individual agendas of the politicians. As seen in the debate, these do not always match when it comes to this particular topic. Most of the parties, except the Conservatives and the Danish People's Party, have been internally torn regarding the ban. As seen in the arguments presented above, Venstre, Liberal Alliance and the Social Democrats all have had members for and against. The Government and most of the right-wing parties focus on a discourse of trust and cohesion within Danish society, and how the burka and niqab is a threat to that.

From the left-wing the general argument is that this ban will be liberating the women from oppression. The main discourse is the one of social control, and how burka and niqab is an expression of these women being controlled and oppressed. The Social Democrats are the front-runners regarding this argument, most clearly stated by Lars Aslan and how to him, being left-wing means being for the ban. Aslan also targets the left-wing who is against the ban as hypocrites. Berlingske, who in the editorial directly calls the left-wing hypocrites for being against the ban, uses the same strategy. This argument is very much in line with the argument of Okin. The argument of oppression of women is also mentioned by right-wing parties, but it is not the main one. An exception is Anders Samuelsen, head of Liberal Alliance, who completely goes along with the argument of oppression, and agrees that this is the reason for the importance of the ban.

5.5.2. Distancing from the niqab and burka

When going through all of the arguments listed in the above, the only ones who really defend wearing the niqab and the burka are the women who actually wear it themselves. Even the ones who are against the ban, make sure to be clear about the fact that they dissociate themselves from the actual wearing of burka and niqab. Before stating being against a ban, all actors make sure to say that they do not understand the practice. The reason they are against a ban is not because they support the practice, but because they find it wrong to make laws about what people can and cannot wear. It is a common-sense argument in the debate, that wearing niqab or burka is something strange. As mentioned above, it is an argument both from the ones pro and con the ban that it is oppressing to women. The Muslim women heard in the debate who do not cover their faces, make sure to say that they do not want to be associated with the practice as well.

5.5.3. The target group of the ban

When looking through all of the arguments it is easy to question for who the proposal is really for, or at least what the problem is and who it is a problem for. In relation to the policy, and the analysis made earlier, the problem is presented as people covering their faces, and how that does not match with Danish values.

In the debate, however, there are multifaceted perceptions of what the actual problem is. There seem to be a discoursive disagreement about whether on one side it is a problem for Danish people who face a society with a lack of trust (the main right-wing argument), or rather on the other side if it is a problem for the Muslim women who are supposedly being oppressed (the main left-wing argument). The majority of the Danish parties who all agreed on the proposal, did so for different reasons, as part of their respective overall goals and agendas. The Government, expresses the wish to create a Danish society with more trust. The Danish People's Party do not hesitate to say that what they want is to ban Islamic clothing altogether in Danish society. The opposition, The Social Democrats, express that their wish is to work towards eliminating social control. They all have different agendas with backing up the proposal, or at least different justifications as to why they support it. The one thing they all have in common, is the belief that covering your face is a bad thing, burka and niqab included, but the underlying political motives are different.

5.5.4. Discourse of gender equality

The discourse of gender equality is one of great importance throughout the entire debate about the

burka and the niqab. Even though gender and gender equality is not present in the proposal itself, it is very much explicit and an extensive part of the debate surrounding it. Gender equality is constantly represented as a core Danish value. Furthermore, the discourse of gender equality seem to be very naturalized, and difficult to negotiate. This means that wearing the burka or niqab are very difficult, if not impossible to include in the discourse of what gender equality in Denmark is, because they are so essentially seen as oppressing to women. This can be described as a form of what Fairclough calls 'gatekeeping' by the majority. The majority has the power to determine what can be included in the discourse and what cannot. This process is very much like the one in the Netherlands, described by Roggeband and Verloo.

This argument can be seen in line with Okin's argument that patriarchal cultures can maintain structures that oppress women. It is the same idea presented, that minority culture should not be entitled to their own cultural practices, as they may oppress and control women. Even though oppression of women might happen, I find that this is a very linear view of culture (Okin, 1999:16). It is presented how some cultures are 'behind', and as 'We' the Western society are in front, it is our responsibility to 'help' them get to where we are. This is the discourse critiqued by El Guindi, who stresses how this argument is just reproducing an orientalist discourse.

On the other side there is the argument, for example made by Leane, that forcing someone to dress or not dress in a certain way is oppressing in itself and therefore is not a solution to anything. As Leane mentions, it is interesting that when trying to go against patriarchal and oppressing structures, the group that are targeted are the supposed 'victims' and not the 'offenders'. As Leane puts it, the Government imposing these policies on women are simply repeating the patriarchal structure.

Another argument, one made by Andreassen is how gender equality becomes instrumentalised and has become a way to criticize ethnic minorities. This is not just a strategy of The Danish People's Party, but a general argument throughout the debate.

5.5.5. Feminism and intersectionality

In continuation of the perspective of gender equality there is the aspect of feminism. In this case, it is a case of indirect feminism, of emancipating others. The debate very clearly has a tendency of wanting to emancipate 'The Other Woman', meaning the minority woman, in this case the Muslim woman. The majority of people in the debate agree that the burka and the niqab is a symbol of

oppression of Muslim women. The paradox is trying to liberate or emancipate people from force, and doing so by forcing them. It is not the stated aim of the Government, but for example the Social Democrats who wish to eliminate social control through the proposal. In relation to the two different discourses on feminism described by Birte Siim, the one that is present in the debate, is not very diverse and represents the universal and static view of feminism.

In relation to the topic of feminism, I find it relevant to include an intersectional perspective. I find this perspective to be lacking in the discourses that are present in the debate. In some understandings, a woman is seen regardless of other categories, and what is right and the goal, is presented as the goal for all women. Through the intersectional perspectives presented by Collins, it is not possible to view categories separately, nor 'on top of each other'. The intersections are key, being a woman is not a universal category, as it never stands alone. The key will always be in intersections of categories, and specific intersections make specific issues for individuals. It is important, that it is a shift from groups to individuals. Throughout the debate, Muslim women wearing niqab or burka are dealt with as one specific group.

The dominant feminist discourse presents how liberation is the goal. The discourse of liberation is a historical discourse with roots in the 1970's women's movement. The argument that the niqab or burka can be seen as liberation in itself, is an argument which I will go into in the next section.

From an intersectional point of view, the right of the minority is in focus, in this case Muslim women. The problem in the debate is, that they are not really heard. This issue relates to the one described by Collins, her example of being a black woman and only being seen as part of a racial group and not as an individual. In the same way, the Muslim woman is in the debate not seen as an individual but as a signifier of a particular ethnic and religious group. The discourse of the oppressed Muslim woman is used as a way of criticizing and justifying the ban. In both the proposal and the debate, the group is targeted over the individual. This is a clear expression of power and uneven power relations, and the notion of 'Us' and 'them'. The majority have the power to determine what being Danish can embrace, and what is considered gender equality. This power is executed without listening or taking into account the individual voices of the women. They are assumed to be oppressed. From an intersectional point of view, it is not possible to talk about what is 'right' for all women, even though they live in the same country. It is necessary to take into account the individual, a perspective which is largely overlooked and ignored throughout the debate.

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5.5.6.   The niqab as liberating

In this section I will look at the argument from the niqab-women themselves: that covering their faces is liberating in itself. This is an argument presented by Sarah who wears a niqab, a point of view she shares with other niqab-wearing women referred to in the debate. It seems that their opinion, being the very group targeted by the ban, should be taken into account. However, even though their voice and their argument is somewhat represented in the debate, it seems that no one really listens to it, or take it seriously. As it does not fit into the hegemonic Danish discourse of what it means to be liberated, it is not considered to be relevant. The hegemonic idea in Danish society today is, that it is liberating to uncover yourself and your body, not to cover it up. This, however, is exactly the argument presented by the burka- and niqab-wearing women themselves. That covering their bodies, and their faces is something positive, and something that liberates them. It seems that Danish majority society has a very tough time accepting this argument, maybe even seeing it as an excuse, or thinking that 'we know better'. No one at all, except the women themselves, talk about covering the face in a positive discourse.

The niqab and burka as liberating, is also one of the arguments of Leane. Leane mentions how the discourses clash, when the majority discourse express the need to emancipate the Muslim women, while on the other hand the motives of the women themselves are ignored, as they are saying that they find it emancipatory to cover their faces. In the opinion of Leane, the majority culture does not have the right to determine what is right and wrong for other people, as this is a denial of their own autonomy. Leane mentions how the women may be trying to distance themselves from the sexualised view of women. This perspective is shared by Andreassen, who explain how the wearing of burka or niqab can be viewed as a construction of identity, and a way to break with gendered power relations.

This clash of discourses of liberation, can be seen as what Fairclough calls an ideological struggle. The majority discourse 'wins', because it is not really up for negotiation in the first place. The majority discourse has become what Fairclough calls naturalized. This means, that the negotiating discourse is not even really considered as a valid argument. The Danish majority discourse of being liberated is very different than the one presented by the women who themselves cover their faces. The majority discourse is that the less clothes you wear the more liberated are you. This discourse is historically grounded in the feminism of the 1970's, with burning bras, being naked, liberated and emancipated from norms and expectations of women etc. This is also a point mentioned by the

niqab-wearing woman Sarah, saying that the discourse of liberation is often connected to nudity. She finds, that the ban is done on grounds of not understanding, or misunderstanding her motives to cover her face.

Because the niqab and the burka is seen as oppression of women, it is also viewed as a 'threat' to the fight for women's right. The argument is that acceptance of the minority culture might set the majority back, and in some way sacrifice what the majority has been fighting for. This discourse view culture as linear and presents the majority culture as having come a longer way than the minority. This becomes the justification of banning. In this very constrained view of culture, the different cultural and historical contexts are completely ignored. Looking at the argument of Mohanty, the minority feminist both has to break with this majority feminist discourse, while trying to formulate a feminism of her own.

5.5.7.   Majority ideology, power and discourse

In this section I will elaborate further on the elements of power in the debate, that I have already touched upon. In the perspective from Fairclough about ideology, the cover ban can be seen by the majority as an acceptable consequence to reach a higher ideology, which is represented as a common Danish ideology. Included in this is that Danish citizens need to be able to see each others faces to keep up a sense of trust in Danish society. The argument made by the Government while justifying taking away people's right to dress freely, is that it serves a higher purpose of maintaining trust. The common-sense ideology is that trust is needed, and the fact that it symbolizes lack of trust when someone choose to hide their faces. This need for trust, then, is presented as a more important value to maintain as opposed to all individuals right to dress freely and express their religion in any physical way.

In the debate, as mentioned before, it is a very common-sense opinion, that covering your face is a symbol of oppression of women. When Anders Samuelsen is saying that 'everybody agrees that the burka is oppressive to women', with an unspecified 'everybody', he is very clearly reproducing a discourse of the burka being oppressive to women. When the women who cover their faces are given a voice in the media, but are not really *heard,* it is clear who has the power to determine the discourse of gender equality, and who has access to it. The niqab- or burka wearing women do not have access to the discourses of gender equality and liberation, because they are covering their faces. No matter the arguments of the women, the discourse will remain that they are oppressed.

One of the very apparent examples of a concrete expression of unequal power-relations, is how the niqab-wearing women was not even heard out in the parliament because they refused to take off their niqabs. It seems absurd that in regard to a policy about to change these women's lives, the politicians would not even hear them out if they did not take off the niqab, which was exactly what the women were coming to oppose in the first place. The concern of the female politician Lindahl is rather that she is worried about discriminating her male colleagues as they could not meet the women if they were uncovered, and not worried about discriminating the women by forcing them to take off their niqab. This seem a very clear sign that throughout this debate, uneven power relations has made it very difficult, if not impossible, to be heard in the matter. The whole policy in itself, can be seen as an expression of uneven power relations. The policy, like the debate, is reproducing a discourse about a minority whose culture does not match with Danish society. It is an expression of power within a cross-cultural encounter, and the majority is in control of the discourse, such as the discourse on gender equality.

In line with to Okin, an argument will be that allowing the burka and niqab may be just another way to oppress women, and keeping them in a patriarchal structure where women are viewed as having to cover themselves up. In the arguments this standpoint is represented by the ones saying that burka and niqab is always oppressing to women, and this adds to the common conception in Danish media, of Islam as patriarchal and oppressing to women per se. Through this conception, it is impossible to view Islam and Danish society as compatible. This is by far the most common representation of Islam in Danish media, and the one used by politicians like the Danish People's Party. Other representations of Islam are rare, and the hegemonic discourse is not really challenged or negotiated at any point in Danish mainstream media.

5.5.8. Danishness, Us & Them

Throughout the debate, there is a constant dichotomy between Islam versus being Danish and living in Denmark. The burka becomes an embodiment of Islam, and emphasizes the discourse of 'Us' and 'Them'. Again, it is interesting how quick most of the voices in the debate are to state that they do not understand the practice of covering the face. Even liberal and left-wing politicians who think that the women should be allowed to wear whatever they want. This just shows, that it is not an accepted opinion to be 'for' the wearing of garments that cover the face.

In all of the above it is shown how a constant 'Us and Them' discourse is being reproduced, with the main argument being that of gender equality. This is directly discoursively linked and related to

being Danish, and being a Danish citizen. Covering the face is perceived as non-Danish, and is consistently presented as not being compatible with living in Denmark. The argument for this found in the historical discourse of gender equality. All of this contributes to, and reproduces the discourse that Islam and being Danish are opposites. As mentioned earlier, the debate also contributes to a discourse of culture as linear. How 'We' as the Danish majority have been fighting for gender equality, and now are threatened by 'Them', who are behind us. A justification is made through this, of how it is the job of the majority to help the minority get to the same point. In The Danish People's Party's initial proposal they are suggesting that offenders of the law would have to take a course in Danish values. Once again, Danish values and burka, representing Islam, is presented as a dichotomy. But it is not just the right-wing who reproduces this discourse. The left-wing do it too, when suggesting that all women who cover their faces are being oppressed. An analogy that is referred to more times in the debate, is the one of Danish society as *open* and Islam as *closed*. This is related to the issue of trust, and the discourse that the people need to show their faces in order to be trusted. Through this discourse, it is not presented as possible to live in an open society, and cover your face. This is another way, that the physical garment becomes a sign of something much more than just a way of dressing, but a symbol of an entire community. Another dichotomy is how the wearing of the burka is sometimes described as dark. This is for example done by Samuelsen and Cekic. Even though it is not explicit, it implies that Danish society represents the 'light', or the 'enlightened'.

Even though it is not an explicit goal of the policy, the fact that it seeks to improve cohesion in Danish society, can also be interpreted as seeking to improve integration of immigrants. One argument in the debate, presented by Cekic and Pind, is that integration might actually suffer from the ban, and create even more tension between majority and minority.

The only argument that seem to really work towards a common understanding, and tries to break with the discourse of 'Us' and 'Them', is the young Muslims at Radio WAIH who demand that more Muslim voices are heard in Danish mainstream media, to create a more diverse picture of Islam in Denmark. In general, there is a lack of Muslim voices heard in the debate.

6. Discussion

In the following, I will discuss some of the paradoxes that I have identified in the analysis. I will furthermore relate the discourses identified in the analysis to social structures, and go further into the power relations and struggles that I have identified.

6.1. Islam in Denmark

As stated in the analysis, the practice of wearing burka and niqab is very clearly being presented in the debate as something that is in direct contrast with 'being Danish' and what the category of Danish means. Within the category of being Danish, there is the category of gender equality, and the wearing of burka and niqab is discoursively seen as a threat to this understanding of gender equality. The burka and niqab becomes a symbol of Islam as an entirety, and reproduces a discourse that represents being Danish and Islam as opposites.

The debate about the burka is in many ways a picture and an embodiment of the discourse about Islam in Denmark. In the debate discourses of social control, parallel societies etc. are mentioned, which are all negative connoted and represent Islam as contradictory to Danish society. The burka and the niqab are visible signs, that something is different, and there are very strong opinions about what this represents. The majority agrees that it is a representation of gender inequality and oppression of women. The fact that some women would voluntarily wear a burka or a niqab seem to be almost impossible to understand, and the women's own autonomy is constantly overseen throughout the debate. A representation of the covered woman has been manifested in a negative discourse, and this discourse has become so naturalized that it is not to be negotiated. No matter the motives, covering of the face is not something that can be compatible with Danish values, and it is stated clearly in the proposal that people who choose to cover their faces in public, will automatically be assumed to not want to be a part of Danish society.

I view this as the main consequence and problem of the implementation. That the people covering their faces are automatically assumed to be bad citizens, who do not have the intention of being part of society, solely because of what they wear and what that represents to the majority.

Even though the policy in itself is not explicitly about Islam, it is not difficult to see when reading through the debate, that this is what it is ultimately about. This is the reason that politicians have ridiculed the proposal for trying to be something that it is not. It is a way of getting around the law

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so that no discrimination will take place. However, there is still the possibility that the ban will be expressed as discrimination, if only Muslim women are targeted when the ban is implemented.

6.2. The paradox of liberation

The argument of the niqab or burka as liberating, is one both found in the theoretical framework, as well as from the women covering their faces themselves. This argument, though represented in the debate, is not really taken into account by anyone. The majority discourse of how to be liberated how to be a feminist and believe in gender equality is non-negotiable. The majority of the arguments presented agrees that wearing a burka or a niqab is a sign that some form of oppression is in question. The debate is not really a dialogue, but rather a presentation of different arguments, and justifications for the ban.

I find it relevant to draw a parallel to what had been named the 'new wave' or 'fourth wave' feminism where women fight for the right to be undressed, and still being considered strong as well as refusing objectification by owning their own sexuality publicly (GirlSquad, 2017). The argument of these women, are similar to the argument of the covered women, it is about breaking with objectification of the female body. Uncovering and covering then, can be seen two different answers to the same societal problem, being the objectification and sexualisation of the female body. The example I will refer to is the feminist group 'Girl Squad', consisting of three girls, two of them born in Denmark and the third in the Soviet Union. One of their main arguments has been for women to demand the right to one's own body, and not letting strangers define your body, and what it means. One of the reactions they have faced, was people calling them 'wrong' feminists, and saying that it is not possible to take them seriously when they are undressed. The argument from some of the feminists of the 1970's, is that you cannot call yourself a feminist, if you expose yourself on social media (GirlSquad, 2017).

These disagreement about what feminism can contain, is just another example that feminism, and liberation is historically bounded, and is always within a context. It also highlights the importance of the intersectional perspective. Just as it is not possible to speak of the category 'woman' as a single unity, it does not make sense to talk about one single way of being liberated and emancipated as a woman. From an intersectional point of view, feminism is not one thing, it is grounded in time and culture. There is a need for a more diverse feminism, like the one explained by Siim. A feminism where more voices, experiences and perspectives are included, and a feminism that is

open-minded and respectful. A feminism where all women are granted the same autonomy, and self-determination.

It is not possible to force people out of a situation that may or may not exist and furthermore there is no proof that that will work. This is another argument that suggests that this policy is solely symbolic more than anything else. The actual consequences are minimal, compared to how much this has been debated in Danish media, and around Europe as well.

It comes down to the majority consensus, that covering the face is not something that can be tolerated within Danish society. Whether the argument is to 'help' liberate the women, or to maintain a sense of trust in Danish society, most voices in the debate agree that it does not belong in a society where gender equality is a core value.

The point of liberation, equality and freedom for women, is women having complete autonomy over their own bodies. This is also the main argument of the new wave feminists, that they have the right to dress (or undress) exactly like they want, and that that does not give any other people the right to think a certain way about their bodies, or them as individuals. The question I will ask, is if this is not exactly what is done when you forbid people to dress in a certain way. The autonomy over one's own body is taken away, and it is like wearing a burka or a niqab justifies that we think a certain way about an individual. When a woman puts on a burka or a niqab, there will be many assumptions, and people are not afraid to speak their mind about what they think about it. They automatically assume that this woman is being oppressed, in the name of Islam. These assumptions have discoursively been accepted as the 'truth'. The goal, I would say, is to see it from the perspective of the individual, and respecting their motives and autonomy. Here I want to include another example about the autonomy of the female body, the example of going topless in public. It is currently an issue fought my many feminists (Sommer, Instagram). I imagine what would happen if it was made illegal for women in Denmark to go topless in public. I assume there would be a roar from this feminist movement about how women's bodies through a such ban were being objectified and that it would be a recognition of the female body as sexual on premises that take away the female autonomy of choosing when to be sexual, and not being objectified against her will. The discourse from many feminists today, is that for example going topless in public is going against the sexualisation of women (Sommer, Instagram). Ironically, the argument is the same for women covering themselves; that they refuse to be a part of sexualisation of the female body. It is two ways to deal with the same issue, which is refusing to be seen as objects. I am arguing that the niqab and

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burka wearing women are very much objectified in the debate.

The argument from the new wave feminist about the burka, is that the covering up of a woman is still a symbol of a sexualisation of the female body. Nikita Klæstrup from Girl Squad express how she sees the burka as a representation of women as belonging to men. However, she makes it clear that she does not know the motives of the women themselves, and that she does not believe in the ban (Klæstrup, 2018). The main argument from the new feminists is, that covering up is just a way of agreeing to the discourse that the woman's body is sexual and need to be covered. They believe the only way to go against this, is by actively showing the body, owning one's body and denying the sexualisation of women's bodies on other people's terms.

As I see it, the debate and proposal is ultimately a clash on the perceptions and discourses of gender and gender equality. The new wave feminist and the covered Muslim woman represent two polar standpoints. Going topless is often viewed as a clear and strong standpoint. Choosing to wear a burka is discoursively not viewed as a strong individual act at all. It is seen as something that is directly or indirectly forced on women by the Islamic community they belong to. The only one in the debate who refers to the covered women as strong, is Islam scientist Heiko Henkel who calls the niqab a conscious provocate statement of identity.

6.3. A struggle of values

The debate can be seen as a struggle of values, values like gender equality, trust and freedom. All values that are represented as core Danish values, and all used as arguments for the ban. No one is disagreeing with these values being fundamental for Danish society, however there is a disagreement about what these values practically mean, and the discourses about them.

For example the example of freedom. Freedom is an argument of both banning, and not banning. On one side the freedom to cover your face and dress how you want, and on the other side to ban covering of the face in order to secure freedom for women. In both arguments, the ultimate goal is freedom. The struggle in the discourse concerns which option is considered the most free, banning or not banning. In the discourse of trust, Danish society is represented as open, honest and enlightened, and the practice of wearing burka and niqab are seen as opposite to that. The way trust is presented, the covering of one's face become a threat to that, as it is seen as a form of anonymization. The discourse of gender equality in Denmark is so static that it becomes almost

neutral. It is not possible to negotiate it, becomes it has become common sense, something that is not up for debate. A constant gatekeeping is taking place throughout the debate, determining what can be a part of a gender equality discourse, and what cannot. Going back to the nudity versus covering up argument, the nudity can much easier be accepted into the discourse, as opposed to the covering up. This can be explained by the way nudity is historically a part of women's liberation in Denmark. However, I find that when identifying the arguments and looking through the debate, it is an 'imagined' struggle. What the burka and niqab has come to represent, is something constructed by media and politics. The actual meaning of it and the motives of the women wearing it is not important, or at least not taken into account. The majority of the participants in the debate agrees it is oppression of women, and the only real struggle taking place in discourse, is the justification of whether or not it should be banned. There is not a real ideological struggle going on as to whether or not the burka and the niqab are oppression of women. A real discoursive negotiation of Danish values does not take place.

7. Conclusion

The main argument for the ban from the right-wing is that it is a threat to the trust and cohesion of Danish society. The main argument for the ban from the left-wing is that the covering of the face is oppression of women, and must be eliminated. This means that there is also a disagreement in discourse about what the main problem is, whether it is a lack of trust in society, or the oppression of women. In the debate, both the left- and right-wing distance themselves from the practice of covering the face, even if they are against a ban.

Even though the argument from the women covering themselves is that they find it to be liberating, it is not an argument taken into account. A constant dichotomy of being Danish versus Islam is discursively reproduced, exemplified by the discourse of gender equality. The discourses of gender equality and liberation of women in the debate seem very naturalized and therefore constrained to a certain meaning. Furthermore, not everyone has access to these discourses. The discourses belong to the majority, and the minority would have to assimilate into the discourses to be taken seriously. A covered woman talking about liberation of women does not have any power within the Danish context, and it seems the discourse is not up for negotiation. A form of gatekeeping is taking place within the debate, where the majority is determining what can be considered part of the discourse, as well as who has the right to use it.

Looking at these discourses, there is a lack of an intersectional perspective throughout the debate. The niqab- or burka-wearing woman is seen as a signifier of a minority group, rather than being seen as an individual and as a woman with autonomy and self-determination.

The struggle taking place in discourse is about how the ban can be justified. At no point throughout the course of the debate is there an actual ideological struggle going on about whether or not the burka and niqab should be seen as oppressive to women. Even though the covered women are given a voice in the debate, they are not really heard, and their argument is not taken into account in the policy-making process.

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