The (Un)Deserving Refugee

A MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF DANISH MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF SYIRAN REFUGEES BETWEEN 2015-2022
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Abstract

This thesis provides an analysis of how the Danish media represented the Syrian refugees between the years 2015-2022. This is achieved by doing comparative research by analyzing 27 different articles about the refugee groups from four major Danish newspapers. A Multimodal Discourse Analysis is applied, where the images and word phrasing of the articles are investigated to look for patterns in correlation with the theories. With a post-colonial perspective, the theoretical framework consists of the two theories of Orientalism and Deservingness. These theories are applied to discuss why the media discourse is as it is. It was found that the media representation has changed, and Syrian refugees are dehumanized and seen as an out-group, however, it does change for the better throughout the studied years.

Keywords: Syrian Refugees, Orientalism, Deservingness, Media Representation, Denmark
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1.0 Introduction

The following section will provide a brief introduction to the research topic and will be followed by my contribution to the topic, aim and finally the research question and limitations of the paper. Lastly, the intended structure of the paper will be outlined.

1.1 Introduction

The interest in topics relating to migration – especially refugees has risen over the years in the Danish political agenda. During the early onset of the Syrian refugee crisis of 2015, images of refugees wandering on foot alongside the Danish highways made history in Denmark (Hvidtfeldt & Nielsen, 2018). While this was the 21st century’s biggest refugee crisis in Europe, the phenomenon of refugees is an old and familiar one. Over the years, Denmark has received refugees from various European countries such as Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, and also from more distant countries such as Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Iran, Iraq, and Somalia (Hvidtfeldt & Nielsen, 2018).

What set the Syrian refugee crisis apart, was that in 2015, 1,321,560 claimed asylum in Europe. From more than a million refugees, 21,000 applied for asylum in Denmark, and 18,000 were granted asylum (DST, 2016), which is the highest since 1993. While the refugee crisis is addressed as the ‘Syrian refugee crisis’, it is important to note that it was not only Syrian refugees that were ‘wandering the Danish motorways’. Syrian nationals dominate among the asylum seekers, since 8,604 Syrians applied for asylum in Denmark in 2015, which is 41% of all the asylum applications (DST, 2016). However, Irani, Afghani and Eritrean nationals were also a part of this ‘crisis’ (ibid, 2016). Therefore, when the crisis is addressed as the Syrian refugee crisis, Syrian refugees or Middle Eastern refugees it is important to note that it is acknowledged that the asylum seekers did not only consist of Syrians.

A note on terminology

In addition, since the migration phenomenon from 2015 is merely known as the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ (UNHCR, 2015; DRC, 2015). A phrase that is commonly used in relation to the subject, in articles or in research papers. For the purpose of this study, I will use the phrase ‘refugee crisis’, however, I acknowledge that this has the potential of reproducing the
hetheric and discourse that may lead to prejudice around refugees (UNHCR, 2022; Videler, 2017). The word ‘crisis’ has a derogatory meaning (Videler, 2017) and with this study, the usage of this phrase can be put into perspective. Simply, the study can hopefully help the reader understand why phrases like these are used with certain refugees and not others.

This research understands a refugee as one of the most vulnerable persons on earth (UNHCR, 2022), a refugee is when a person is seeking refuge from their home country in fear of persecution (UNHCR, 2022). There follows an anticipated performance of the refugee role informed by an understanding of war, violence and their impact on persons displaced by conflict (UNHCR, 2022). The performative expectations of refugees construct them as involuntary, non-wilful objects shaped and moved by forces of conflict: "refugees" must fit the "victim" role in order to gain entry, and act so as to retain host acceptance (UNHCR, 2022).

Alongside the word refugee, crisis is often used. This study understands that a crisis is a time of intense conflict or danger.

1.2 Research Aim

The research aim will look at how the media portrays the Syrian refugees that arrived in 2015 from 2015-2022. I have narrowed down my research to concentrate on the Danish media, as the present elections are stirring up conversations about refugees and migrants (Esbjørsen, 2022). The articles will be focused on the integrational aspect and the arrival of the Syrian refugees, as the Danish media noted the arrival of the refugees in 2015 as a “historical phenomenon, that will be written in the history books” (Nexo, 2015), and the integrational aspect is a very prominent topic in the elections (Esbjørsen, 2022).

The aim of this research is to demonstrate the tendencies of the media in portraying the 2015 refugee crisis in the period of 2015-2022. The Comparative Research design will be used to essentially draw some conclusions concerning past and present occurrences. Social science theories will be used, that will help to anticipate or explain present or future events. Multimodal Discourse Analysis will be utilized to analyze media articles that focus on the integration and arrival of the refugee group and then compare it throughout time until the year 2022. Thereafter, the theories of Deservingness and Orientalism will be used to discuss the results.

Finally, the research question is:

*How does the Danish media portray Syrian refugees, who arrived to Denmark from 2015-2022?*

In order to answer this main question, further narrowed-down questions were designed:
What has changed in the media representation of Syrian refugees between 2015-2022?
- What has remained the same?

1.3 My Contribution

When I started researching this topic, I wanted to focus on the Middle Eastern and African refugees and compare their media representation to the Ukrainian refugees. However, I quickly hit a brick wall, as the timeframes for both the refugees was very different. The Ukrainian refugee crisis and the integrational aspect is still ongoing, whereas the Middle Eastern refugees from 2015 have been here for approximately seven years. I found myself generalizing a region instead of a country. Simply, I wrote about Middle Eastern refugees, depoliticizing the different stories all the refugees with different regional backgrounds come with, however, I did portray the Ukrainian refugees in a specific manner. I have now changed my thesis aim to look at how the Syrian refugees are portrayed in the Danish media and aim to compare these findings throughout the years of 2015-2022. I aim to politize and individualize the Syrian refugees by highlighting the background of the devastating backgrounds they come from.

The discourse that has been created, during the years, has left a far-reaching implications both on the international level, but also for the respective member states (Pandir, 2020). With this research, I aim towards making a humble contribution to the growing body of literature about the media representation Syrian refugees. Additionally, by translating the articles used in this research from Danish to English and conducting an analysis of the discourse presented in the articles in English, I aim to bring an international focus on this issue. Analyzing these articles and contextualizing them into the thesis, can illustrate the discursive shift on an international level, rather than in Denmark alone.

1.3 Delimitations and Limitations

This paper analyzes 15 articles from four different newspapers in the timeframe 2015-2022. This thesis focusses on how the refugees have been portrayed by the media from 2015-2022 and will conduct a Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA). Limitations arise where I make sure not to focus on an international level, as I think my research would get too broad and not give justice to the aims of the study. I therefore chose to focus on how the Danish media portrays the Syrian refugees that arrived in 2015.
This thesis is structured as follows. A literature review, that will provide the reader with an outline of previous research done on media representation of refugees on an international level. The thesis then proceeds to highlight the background with terms, that will be discussed further down in the analysis, to provide the reader with some background knowledge that will be helpful to understand the thesis better. Furthermore, the thesis will then introduce the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework will first discuss the terminology and history of the theories. In addition, I will introduce the chosen method, design, and material selection, followed by a discussion about the validity and reliability of the research. This leads to the second final section on the analysis of the research. Lastly, the concluding results will be introduced.

2.0 Literature Review

The purpose of this section is to give an understanding of the context that this research will examine. The literature reviews in the section will be consisting of books and academic articles related to the subject of media narratives in relation to migration, and the comparisons between media representation of certain refugee groups.

2.1 The Media Narratives of Refugee’s

Esther Greussing and Hajo G. Boomgaarden (2017) state that in 2015, more than 1.25 million refugees arrived at the borders of the European Union. These refugees were fleeing for international protection from war, violence and persecution in their home countries. Over a course of year, the number drastically increased, and the West was now seeing eye to eye with a so-called refugee crisis. This led to a climate of uncertainty in about its political, economic and societal implications (Boomgaard & Greussing, 2017). Previous research has emphasized, that acceptance and integration of refugees and asylum seekers may at least partly depend on the ways in which mass media relate the issue to the broader public (Boomgaarden & Greussing, 2017). Researchers have argued that the European media pushes a selective solidarity narrative by using certain word phrasing while addressing the migrants, and this is in fact argued to be due to capitalism (Boomgaard & Greussing, 2017). Most importantly, researchers have found major differences between countries, in terms of the sources journalists used, the language they employed and the reasons they gave behind refugee flows and lastly, the solutions they suggested (Berry et. al, 2016). The refugee representation is being racialized
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and feminized into vulnerability and threat that have framed images of refugees coming into
Europe in British newspapers (Gray & Franck, 2019). However, the authors, Gray and Franck,
(2019) of “Refugees as/at risk: The gendered and racialized underpinnings of securitization in
British media narratives” argue that this representation is neither new nor surprising, but rather
a reflection on the logics underpinning colonial modernity. And the media’s attempts to other
the Middle Eastern refugees is indeed a repeating phenomenon.

Furthermore, the media holds a pivotal role in dispersing information, spreading
knowledge and shaping ideologies, which can essentially lead to exerting influence over
societies. In this regard, the media discourse on immigrants and refugees has attracted immense
attention from several scholars. The persistent interpreting of the ‘others’ has been a
considerable topic of discussion (Djik, 2000). Djik (2000) argued that the media contribute to
the reproduction of the stereotypes, prejudices and eventually racism that refugees face. In fact,
in a seminal paper that employed a critical discourse analysis of two Australian newspapers, a
scholar (Teo, 2000) unraveled that criminal-related stereotypes for Asian immigrants had been
produced systematically. In addition, focusing on metaphors in the discourse of Los Angeles
Times, Santa Ana (1999), noticed that immigrants were presented as animals, debased persons,
weeds or disease. While other refugee groups, such as people from Slovenia, were stressed to
be a ‘moral panic’ and were highly concerned for the national security (Ana, 1999). Many
reoccurring themes were found in the research by Leudar et el. (2008), where the British
broadsheets were investigated to find out how the newspapers represented the refugees/asylum
seekers, and essentially identified ‘hostility themes ‘. However, during the Balkan conflict of
1999, the newspapers in the UK seemed supportive of affected/displaced people, adopting a
positive discursive practice, although some of the prejudices and stereotypes were reproduced
(Leudar et al, 2008). In the next and last section of the literature review, I will reflect upon the
research I have read and discuss differences and similarities between them. And discuss how I
can contribute to the literature with this thesis.

2.2 Reflections

In this literature review, we see a pattern of the media portraying a narrative of an in-
group and out-group of refugees. The Syrian refugees have been constantly and consistently
been portrayed as the out-group of the European society by portraying the cultural and religious
differences between the citizens and the refugees. In the previously mentioned research, there
is a lack of theories that explain these patterns, this research will investigate what theoretical
concepts could be used to make sense of the findings in the research. This is done in order to
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be able to reflect on the various reasons there might be for this ‘othering’ and inclusion of refugees, based on their looks, religion and culture. Therefore, this research will make use of the theories: Orientalism and Deservingness.

Previously mentioned researchers have used discourse analysis of articles in order to answer their questions (Gray & Franck, 2019). What makes this research unique is that, while focusing on the discourse too, this research will also contribute with the visual aspect of the material. More specifically, this research will also analyze the pictures used in the articles.

While exploring this field, I have observed that the use of The Comparative Research Design has not been put into use as much. In my research I use The Comparative Research Design and MMDA to conduct my research. Similarly, to the article “Refugees as/at risk: The gendered and racialized underpinnings of securitization in British media narratives” (Gray & Franck, 2019), I will use four different newspapers and analyze various articles about my topic. Differently than this article, I will also observe and analyze the visual aspects of these articles.

3.0 Background

In this section, the thesis will look into some themes that are relevant for the research. This section aims to explain how the themes are a way to identify the negative effects of the media representation of Syrian refugees, and further down the thesis it will explain how these themes facilitate Deservingness and Orientalism. Many of the themes are focused on the political aspect, in the last section of this part, I will explain why the political and the media go hand-in-hand, and why media representations matter. These are key to understanding the analysis.

3.1 Securitization and Criminalization of Migration to Europe

Many regulations on migration in Western Europe have emphasized the need for restrictions on population flows (Kostakopoulou, 2000, Ugur, 1995; Miles and Thränhardt, 1995; Alaux, 1991; Soulier, 1989). As an example, the Dublin Convention limits the ability of states to pass the buck in the case of an application for asylum. It sets out various criteria, such as place of application and family links determining the state that must process the asylum application. On the surface this convention improves the situation for the asylum-seeker, it potentially seeks a quicker procedure to deal with the request of the asylum-seeker, thus reducing the time the asylum-seeker spends in the detention centers. However, this interpretation of the convention neglects the fact that the Dublin convention is heavily overdetermined by a policy aimed at reducing the number of applications (Huysmans, 2000), making it impossible to submit applications in different Member States and therefore reducing
the chances of being accepted, which would obviously deter some refugees from seeking asylum in western Europe (Bolten 1991).

Martin Beck (2017) argues that one of the reasons for the strong need to securitize migration is rooted in the fact that diverse political camps contribute to a strong trend of securitizing the influx of refugees, this is indeed their attempt to justify the extraordinary and strong measures of political communication. Securitization is in fact an extreme form of politicization created by speech acts (Beck, 2017). The matter that separates securitizing speech apart from regular politicization is that the issue is dramatized and presented as an existential threat or a matter of “supreme priority” i.e., something “which calls for extraordinary measures beyond the routines and norms of everyday politics” (Williams, 2003; Buzan et al., 1998).

Migration to Europe often gets linked to Islamic terrorism by right-wing politicians (Beck, 2017). Beck (2017) mentioned in his article that a German politician, Marcus Pretzell, commented on the death causalities of Anis Amri’s attack on the Christmas market in Berlin on December 19, 2016: “These are Merkel’s dead” (Donahue, 2016). Other right-wing representatives that link migration to terrorism is the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán who called the refugee flow in 2015, a “Trojan wodden horse of terrorism” (Brunsden, 2017).

A less extreme - yet still hurtful reason for securitizing Europe is the allegations that migrants are draining European of their resources (Beck, 2017). Various politicians create a basic argument about the need to control immigration by stating things as “we know what damage uncontrolled immigration can do. ...To our infrastructure, as our housing stock and transport system become overloaded. And to our public services, as schools and hospitals have to cope with a sudden increase in demand” (May 2011). On the basis of such assessments, politicians justify extraordinary measures such as drastically “cutting immigration” and enforcing border control. These kinds of statements are not only limited to the right-wing, but all over the political spectrum.

3.2 Criminalization of Refugees

The contemporary world is full of trends that are directed at the criminalization of international migration. This trend of migration management is cramned with the obvious violation of
international refugee law principles such as non-refoulement\(^1\) (Ahmad, 2022). Criminalization of Migration is indeed a well-established fact of international law that states are legitimate in controlling, securing, and administrating their national borders while refusing entry of people or individuals arriving from certain foreign countries (Ahmad, 2022). An obvious observation today is that governments are inclined to keep forced migrants out of their countries, rather than welcome them in (Atak & Simeon, 2018; Ahmad, 2022). In present circumstances, far-right politics and xenophobia have created a hostile atmosphere for migrants in all countries.

For example, in Canada and France, the government has systematically stigmatized migrants as dangerous and/or deceitful, while some forms of migration – most notably, irregular migration are seen as wrongful and harmful to the host societies (Atak & Simeon, 2018). The ‘justified’ and ‘necessary’ result being presented is harsh policies and territorial exclusion (Atak & Simeon, 2018).

While doing research about criminalization of migration, researchers have contradicted the explanation of criminalization of immigrants (Atak & Simeon, 2018; Ahmad, 2022), however one simple explanation that is somewhat agreed on is that criminalization of migration is described as a cooperation and fusion of criminal law and immigration law, and they all agree that this dynamic raises all sorts of normative problems (Atak & Simeon, 2018; Ahmad, 2022). Various immigration specialists tend to regard the criminalization of immigrants as an instance where the government (media, politicians etc.) uses criminal law to coerce, threaten, and even govern vulnerable populations in ways that are contradictory with the humanitarian and human rights commitments required by international law (Atak & Simeon, 2018). Simply, criminalizing people based on their migration status can lead to several human rights violations, including discriminatory profiling, arbitrary arrest and detention, family separation, and the inability to access health care, housing, education, or other rights (Atak & Simeon, 2018).

Various authors have stated that the media plays a central role in the criminalization of migrants, shaping the public views and thereby justifying the application of criminal justice responses to irregular migration (Gerard & Pickering, 2013; Kim et al, 2011; Bosworth & Guild, 2008; Mountz, 2010; Spena, 2014). For example, calling a refugee ‘illegal’ is an example of criminalization of refugees in terminology (Brouer et al., 2017), the term illegal migrant is heavily criticized, not only because it stresses criminality and defines immigrants as criminals (Brouer et al, 2017), but also because

\(^1\) Non-refoulement does not allow any person to be sent back to the territories inimical to his/her life, liberty, and security
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it is inaccurate; although a migratory act can be illegal, people themselves cannot be illegal (Broer et al., 2017).

3.3 Politicization and De-politicization of Refugees

To understand the concept of politicization and de-politicization of refugees, it is essential to understand that “refugees are persons who are outside their country of origin for reasons of feared persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order and, as a result, require international protection” (UNCHR, 2022). Simply, refugees are a political subject with political rights, whose situation requires right-based political decisions and actions (Pandir, 2020). But when the media predominately discusses refugee-related issues around the discourse of victimhood, they make it an emotional issue rather than a political one. The issue is not approached from a political standpoint with political discussions seeking political solutions to the issue and they are not given a fair amount of space and eventually, they are excluded from public debates (Pandir, 2020). This is a core example of depoliticization by the media. Simply, when refugee issues are not approached as political problems and not discussed around the rights of refugees and the responsibilities of (inter)national actors, they are depoliticized (Pandir, 2020). This will also be further shown in the analysis. In the same way, the refugee issue is depoliticized when there is no contextual reporting on the issue, for example why refugees are fleeing their country or understanding the reasons behind the wars and crises in refugees’ countries and the processes behind refugee mobility (Pandir, 2020). A politicized reporting of refugees is different from reporting their victimhood from an emotional perspective, as it places the issue back in the arena of politics, provides an understanding of the issue and discusses ways of improving refugees’ lives while focusing on their rights as refugees (Pandir, 2020).

3.4 Homogenization and De-individualizing Refugees

Homogenization of refugees refers to the representation of the refugee population as a uniform group sharing the same characteristics and conditions as if they are all the same kind of person. This is in large part the result of representing refugees as helpless victims or threats to society (Pandir, 2020). These stereotypical representations reduce them to a few properties and erase the diverse individual differences and experiences. Furthermore, the homogenization of refugees produces the effect of the de-individualization of refugees. Refugees are de-individualized when they are represented without any individual characteristics and presented
as, for example, big groups. In fact, a relevant example of this is Georgiou and Zabrowski who illustrate this point in their report about the press coverage of the 2015 refugee crisis in eight different European countries and found that although there was much to say about the refugees in the press, individual refugee descriptions are highly limited (Georgiou & Zabrowski, 2017).

Another way in which refugees are de-individualized and homogenized are how the refugees are named and labelled (Pandir, 2020). Studies on the European press revealed that the generic term ‘Syrians’ is used to refer to Syrian refugees in the news, simply, they are named after their national or ethnic identity (Pandir, 2020). The labels that occur less often are the politicizing words such as temporary protection, refugee, asylum seeker or immigrant (Pandir, 2020). This can create some consequences for the refugees. As mentioned above, when the people’s political status are not mentioned, the reasons why they left their countries of origin, why they are in the host-countries and what rights they have in the host countries are forgotten (Pandir, 2020). Secondly, using generic terms as ‘Syrians’ does not make a differentiation between those Syrians who fled to Europe and those living in Syria and other countries (not all Syrians are refugees) (Pandir, 2020). However, it is known that many Syrians that fled to certain countries in Europe had relatives in those countries or another form of relation to the country, not mentioning this can leave a gap of interpretation, such as the refugees seen as ‘welfare tourists’ (Pandir, 2020). Thirdly, using generic names positions refugee groups as an out-group with an distinct ethnic identity (Pandir, 2020), this also results in othering which will also be mentioned in the analysis. This also serve to maintain separation and distance between the sinam-group and the out-group (Pandir, 2020).

3.6 Why Media Representation Matter

The social construction of the migratory narrative essentially rests on reinforcing interactions between political, public and media discourses, with the direct causal relationship being quite difficult to establish (Beck, 2017). The mainstream media are assigned a central position in producing narratives about refugees, by selecting topics and issues and through processes of labeling and attributing qualities to groups and individuals, and inferring causes and meaning (Helbling, 2013). The selection of topics relates to the agenda-setting theory, which suggests that by paying considerable attention to certain issues, the media have the ability to influence what people think about anything (in this situation; migration and refugees), this sets the publics agenda, and from there the politicians can get influenced in their politics. However, it
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is mainly a theory because as said before, while it is common knowledge that the social construction consists of the three discourses, the causal relationship is difficult to establish (Beck, 2017). In relevance to this topic, the concept of framing is also important (Goffman, 1974), simply, it is not only important what issues the media write about, but also how they write about the issues (Goffman, 1974). Brouwer (2017) has argued that the more often the media mentions a particular issue and links it to a social ill or gap, the more likely that issue is to be considered a crisis. This resonates closely with Cohen’s (1972) concept of moral panics, which entails that a “condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests.” (Cohen, 1972). A defining characteristic of a moral panic is when the concern and actions taken are disproportionated, simply, they exaggerate concerns when the actual threat itself does not justify the out-grouping of refugees (Brouwer, 2017). I have now explained why politics are mostly mentioned in the above themes and how they relate to the media.

4.0 Theoretical Framework

For the reader to understand why I have chosen these theories, I will first explain how the refugees are perceived and under what conditions are they accepted, this will be done by explaining the theory of Deservingness. Then I will explain the concept of Orientalism this is for the reader to understand why the different refugee groups are perceived as they are and how some of the terms such as criminalization, securitization, and depoliticization are related to Orientalism.

4.1 The Concept of Deservingness as a Theory

Denmark is a welfare state, which states the social protection of citizens has become conditional and selective. The basic welfare question has now come to who should get what, and why. In order to understand the societal legitimation for the new conditionality of welfare it is important to know which Deservingness criteria are acknowledged by the public and their relative importance (Oorschot, 2017); whether people differ in the degree to which solidarity with others is conditional, and which groups in society tend to be most or least conditional in their views; and factors that might explain differences in people’s views. The deservingness criterias are suggested in five dimensions (Oorschot, 2017):
1) Control: vulnerable people’s control over their neediness, or their responsibility for it. Simply, the less control, the more deserving

2) Need: the greater the level of need, the more deserving.

3) Identity: the identity of the vulnerable, ie. their proximity to the rich or their ‘pleasantness’. The closer to the societies ‘us’, the more deserving.

4) Attitude: vulnerable people’s attitude towards support, or their docility or gratefulness. The more compliant, the more deserving.

In this research, I use this theory alongside the research method MMDA to explore the often stereotyped ways in which particular refugee groups come to be represented by the media discourse (Oorschot, 2017). Basically, we explore how the figure of refugees shifts between frames of deservingness and undeservingness depending on which refugee group the article portrays, and if it shifts according to who suits the Danish nation and culture better. In order to use this theory, Oorschot (2017) states the notion of (un)deservingness is based on three key themes: the economy, state security, and cultural similarities. I will look into articles about the arrival of refugees as a state of national security and cultural similarities as it is not only the literal security we are highlighting but also the nation's culture staying intact (Oorschot, 2017, p 9-14). This is also where the theories like Orientalism play a part. I contend that this theme of Deservingness -where the humanitarian logistics of protection and the securitizing rhetoric of deterrence mutually reinforce each other - directly mirrors and extends the humanitarian securitization of European borders (Vaughan-Williams, 2015). Consequently, this theory will help the reader understand if there is a norm of socially excluding certain refugee groups based on their (un)deservingness and how the media reinforces these conditionalities with their discourse (Oorschot, 2017).

4.2 The Concept of Orientalism as a Theory

Orientalism is the study of the Near and Far Eastern societies and cultures, languages and peoples by Western scholars. Orientalism, as we know it today, is a more negative connotation in certain aspects (Kyriakides, 2018) and it said to be influenced by the European imperialism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Said, 1978). It refers to the perceived inferiority of Eastern cultures, peoples and religions. The word Orientalism derives from the Latin word *oriens* meaning ‘east’. The West itself constructs themselves as an active
Orientalism in media representation of refugees builds on the idea that the identities and behaviors of refugees are affected, but not defined, by conflict and war (Lubkemann, 2010; Kyriakides, 2018). Framing refugees as victims “with no histories whose existence merely starts with the war” (Lubkemann, 2010, 28) depoliticizes refugees, which silences the argument that pre-conflict histories potentially mobilise against the media and policy scripts that currently are underpinning in Western states (Lubkemann, 2010; Kyriakides, 2018).

Furthermore, the post-9/11 fear has been well-documented and as has the ‘war on terror’ on Middle Eastern migrants/minority citizens in the West (Altheide, 2006; Linke and Smith, 2009; Mythen & Walklate, 2006). Consequently, recognition is oriented according to the geopolitical processes which manifest in the domestic context of receiving states, such as Denmark; contexts in which people designated as Middle Eastern (but not necessarily a Middle Eastern – Take Indians and Pakistanis as an example) in origin must very carefully navigate a thin line between inclusion as a deserving refugee victim or exclusion as an undeserving pariah (Kyriakides, 2018). This often leads to criminalization and securitization of refugees (Kyriakides, 2018).

The idea of refugees from the Middle East being corrupt, uncivilized and static (Said, 1978) stems from liberal economists like James Mill and Karl Max (Said, 1978). In fact, Karl Max justified the British colonization of India to prepare for future revolutions in India by stating this pattern is ‘unchanging due to the narrowness of the village communities’ (Said, 1978). This statement also put all Orientals (Arabs and South Asians) into the same boat (Said and Asians). This often leads to criminalization and securitization of refugees.

Many critical theorists regard this form of Orientalism as a part of an ideological colonialism, justified to be a concept of the “White man’s burden” (Said, 1978). The “‘White man’s burden” is a means to justify the colonial project, where -rathert than being a process of domination for political and economic gain – it is in fact a selfless endeavor carried out to rescue the Orientals from their own barbaric backwardness and self-mismanagement (Said, 1978).

Lastly, Edward Said describes Orientalism to shed light on the underlying structures of power, knowledge, hegemony, culture and imperialism that has been historically embedded in what Said calls “colonial discourse”. Colonial discourse is a systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage and even produce the Orient politically, sociologically,
militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively, during the post Enlightenment period (Said, 1978). This study understands that the current migration patterns stand more or less on European colonialism (Massey, 2000; Kyriakidea, 2018), and that they continue to reproduce the racialisation and logics through an inclusionary and exclusionary practice. In addition, it understands that the inclusionary and exclusionary attitudes of Danes are based on Orientalism and Deservingness. This study understands that postcoloniality is a way of seeing the Eurocentric lifestyle as dominating, and ‘The Orient’ lifestyle as less than deserving.

This study derives from the understanding that, the three theories are inherently depended on each other, Deservingness is an invitation for Europeans to excuse racial capitalism (Vaughan-Williams, 2015), Orientalism is an ideology which promotes the superiority of the West and its people, and sees Europe as a capitalist miracle that has to be protected from the Orient, making inequalities appear without recognizing its part in the polarization (Amin, 2009).

5.0 Methodology and Material

In this section, the choice of method and material for this investigation will be presented. To investigate how the Danish media portrays Syrian refugees between 2015-2022, Comparative Method will be employed as a method to conduct a MMDA of 15 articles about the arrival and integration of the two refugee groups. An analysis of these articles is intended to provide an insight into the media narratives and portrayal of the Syrian refugees, and how they differentiate from each other. This will be analyzed in relation to the theories presented above and the literature review. Lastly, the validity and reliability of this research will be discussed.

5.1 Comparative Method as a Research Design

In order to fully understand this investigation, it is important to present the method and research design. A research design constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of the material.

In this thesis, using the qualitative Comparative Method would be effective. The Comparative Method is a research design that looks at an object of study in relation to another (Knutsen & Moses, 2012). As in this research, the object of study is normally compared across time and/or space. In order to use this research method to answer the research question, the object of study would be the timeframes of which this study focusses on. The study is looking
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at how the Danish media portrays Syrian refugees in the timeframe 2015-2022. The comparative research designs often look for patterns of similarities and differences, explaining continuity and change. Therefore, I will lastly discuss the similarities and differences in the Danish media's portrayal throughout this timeframe. Looking at John Mills methods in comparative research designs ‘The Method of Difference’ (Knutsen & Moses, 2012).

5.2 Method: Multimodal Discourse Analysis

The history of discourse analysis is beset by a vague homonym around the term ‘discourse’ (Kress, 2011). According to Kress (2011), the term ‘discourse’ names a large territory, located somewhere in the middle between two ‘markers’, which might generally speaking be something that “provides accounts of connected stretches of language in use and uncovering silent social, political, psychological features in text entities”. (Kress, 2011). In sociolinguistics, the emphasis is merely on comprehending the link between the environment of language use and the features of the language used (Kress, 2011: Hymes, 1964; Labov, 1966, Bernstein, 1984). Simply, in such work the social and its meanings are foregrounded in: who speaks to whom, when, with that purpose and in what ways. However, in many contexts language alone does not create meaning (Björkvall, 2017). Instead images, illustrations and information graphics play key roles for the production and interpretation of meaning. Kress (2011) states that a mode is a term that allows us to get away from using language for everything. According to Björkvall (2017) this is obviously the case in contemporary mass media texts, among other multimodal texts. This concept of text not only includes modes of communication other than writing or speaking. Basically, too strict a focus on the linguistic parts of these texts can result in missing out on relevant meanings conveyed by other modes, such as images. Therefore, I have chosen this analysis method, as my research method, so I can not only look at the text, but also the images of the material. However, it is important to point out that, when MMDA is used, you can only identify potential meanings, rather than fixed meanings.

The majority of relations between human beings involve power; this is also the case in the type of symbolic interaction discussed here (Björkvall, 2017). There can be three types of power relations. However, we rarely if not never know the power relations between the reader of a multimodal text and the person depicting it. Therefore, in my analysis I have to look for the symbolic power relations which is the camera angle or perspective of these images.
Tuba Dawood (Björkvall, 2017). When looking at the images, there are three main vertical perspectives in images (Björkvall, 2017; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006)

- from above, which gives symbolic power to the reader.
- from below, symbolic power is given to the persons in the image.
- eye-to-eye, this is a perspective of equality.

Other factors that are relevant for this research is:

- Social distance, where the depicted persons would be cropped at the waist down or at the knees. Here the reader is symbolically positioned as if they are at a farther distance from the persons in the image than in the case of personal distance.
- Impersonal distance persons can be depicted in full figure, however they will only occupy half of the total image space and be presented as if they were strangers or more distant acquaintances (Björkvall, 2017).
- Systemic Functional Linguistics, are the writers using statements, questions, offers or commands in order to communicate with the reader?

Now the question is, how do I use MMDA in this research?

1) MMDA considers basic verbal analysis of the texts, and then uses the analysis of individual representational choices in text. (Björkvall, 2017).
2) MMDA looks at representational resources that represent the attitudes of speakers. This is done by conducting an analysis of quoting verbs, and representation of the attitude of speakers through visual gaze, poses etc. (Björkvall, 2017).
3) Linguistic and visual semiotic resources available for representing people and naming strategies. MMDA looks at how through language and image, some participants are individualized or collectivized, made specific, generic, personalized or impersonalized, objectivated, anonymised, aggregated and suppressed.
4) MMDA finds out the way linguistic and visual representational resources represent what people do. There are various ways to showcase the same action some persons are always represented in engaging in mental type actions, others are being represented engaging with material actions. (Björkvall, 2017).
5) MMDA also looks at different kinds of metaphors and other rhetorical tropes which are used in different contexts to attempt to shape understandings.
Nominalization and presupposition in language is a study area of MMDA as well.

Trying to analyze modality and hedging in texts and visual communication is another step of MMDA.

Using these seven frames to inspect a multimodal text ensures to show out how meaning is built up in media texts and the way that people make, use and reuse semiotic choices. By understanding these choices it may be possible to reveal ideology in media texts and challenge it (Coskun, 2015).

Lastly, the analysis will be divided into years depending on what years have similar stages of the Syrian refugee crisis, for example the arrival of Syrian refugees were a main topic from 2015-2016. This is so the reader does not read a lot of the same.

5.3 Collecting Research Material

In order for the reader to comprehend and to strengthen my reliability, I will be as transparent as possible in regard to my material selection process. I will aim towards explaining my selection process and the reasoning behind my chosen path.

By choosing material that is largely similar at the beginning, any observed difference between the cases cannot be explained by those similarities. In the selection process, I will divide the material into four different stages. First, I will select material from Berlingske, then from TV2, DR1 and Information. Secondly, I will conduct my research with the same wording in each newspaper-website, but will filter the year and select the first article. This will leave me with 27 articles. Lastly, I will compare the different interpretations of the material and look at how the portrayal is similar and how it is different. I am choosing to compare the media representation between 2015-2022, this is because most Syrian refugees arrived to Denmark in 2015, and a lot of them are still a very prominent debate topic in the media today.

Additionally, when looking for a newspaper to choose. I decided to look at the political stance of the newspaper. At first, I wanted to represent different political stance, three to be exact. A conservative and right-wing stance, a neutral stance and a more liberal and left-wing stance. However, I decided not to do this as I believe that this will confuse the reader and give a much broader research material. Instead, I chose to focus on four newspapers. I choose Berlingske, Information, TV2 and DR for two reasons, Berlingske is stated on their website to be neutral, and their website were one of the few that allowed to look at their older articles. I
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choose a neutral stance as I believe this will lead to the validity of my research to increase. Furthermore, *Berlingske’s* target-group of readers are middle aged Copenhageners between 35-64 years that have the mental and economic capacity in their everyday lives (Ocast, 2022). This means it is aimed at the ‘regular Dane’. It is made for the regular reader who merely wants factual news. Furthermore, there is no source about DR’s target-group, however, using the constructivist perspective, it is known that DR is one of the most common used online newspapers to get your daily news (Reseke, 2021). Which also makes the target-group ‘the regular dane’. In addition, I have used more articles from DR than the other newspapers, this is due to the larger amount of newspaper articles that were found. *TV2*, is watched and read by every second Dane, which makes it the most popular newspaper in Denmark (Reseke, 2021), and also DR’s main competitor. Lastly, I chose the newspaper *Information*, this newspaper has a target-group of Danes with a interest in cultural diversity and travelling the world (Front Media, 2022).

As mentioned before, I will investigate articles published by the same publisher and analyze the content of the article. I choose to look specifically into the content, and not only the text, as I believe that the pictures and word phrases go hand in hand in this. The chosen publisher would be *Berlingske* and DR. All articles focus on the Syrian refugees.

When looking for articles, I choose a systematic procedure in order to reduce bias and therefore increase validity and reliability. I used the official websites and used the search word Syrian refugees 2015 and raised the year every time. *Information’s* website had a filter to set the years, which I found very helpful. I chose the first article that came up, as it indicates the article with most popularity.

This table shows the number of results I got from my search on each website.

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<tr>
<td>Berlingske</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>2030</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7733</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV2</td>
<td>8272</td>
<td>39384</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>82882</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>741</td>
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<tr>
<td>DR1</td>
<td>1093</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>2663</td>
<td>92833</td>
<td>753</td>
<td>957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>752</td>
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I decided to choose the 27 selected materials from the two newspapers. All the material is listed in the reference list. One article from every year in every newspaper, except *Information,*
therefore I do not have articles from 2017-2018 and 2020-2022. When searching for articles on Information’s website, various articles popped up, however none of them were relevant to my topic, I therefore chose to not include those years in my research. I acknowledge that this can create bias, hence reduce the validity of this research (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018).

5.4 Methodological Implications

Firstly, validity is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers account. Factors that can address validity is trustworthiness, authenticity and credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In order to address the validity of my research, the first factor I address, will be trustworthiness. As an IMER student, there is a chance that I will be biased in my research. But to decrease my bias, I have firstly, addressed this factor, secondly, I will use material from newspapers that are generally used by the Danish population. Real life is composed of different perspectives, that do not always coalesce, discussing different aspects of this topic and using material from different papers will increase the credibility of an account. Simply this will give a more realistic account to the topic (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). According to Creswell & Creswell (2018) clarifying the bias I as a researcher bring to the study is another way of adding validity to the findings. Reflectivity is already a very well-rounded theme of qualitative research, and self-reflectivity creates a very open and honest narrative that will resonate well with the readers (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, stating my biases in relation to my academic and personal background could increase the sense of validity. Writing about a topic that is so sensitive, can be challenging and I believe my academic background has some biases towards subjects, that I fully acknowledge. This formatted my material selection and theories.

In addition, looking at the external validity of the research, to review the entire project can increase the validity as well. Can this study be applied to the whole Danish population? Choosing mainstream newspapers used by everyone is my way of trying to generalize my studies.

In addition, reliability in qualitative research refers to the consistency of the responses in the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Basically, in my research, continuously questioning my approach, continuously documenting what I’m doing in my research and whether it is consistent.
6.0 Analyzing and Interpreting the Material

In this section I will analyze the chosen material in order to discuss my research question. I will divide the analysis by year and compare newspapers in each timeframe, as I believe it will result in a more in-depth analysis. Furthermore, I will compare the findings within each year and apply my theories to the analysis. It should be noted that the background knowledge discussed further up will be useful in this section. There will be an analysis of each year through the lenses of the two theories, and then it will be compared in the conclusion.

6.1 2015 – The Arrival of Syrian Refugees to Denmark

It is assumed to the core of a journalistic role, invoking the idea that the media is an attack dog and uses fear and conflict to pursue other viewpoints than reality (Cock et al, 2021). Furthermore, five of the articles about the Syrian refugees show fear-provoking and negative language such as “challenge, language conditions, lack of education, parallel communities, arrival on the highway, Border Control, ”(Meyer, 2015; Sørensen, 2015; Nexø, 2015; Westersø, 2015).

Other than that, the media debate around Syrian refugees in 2015 were often handled and solved by politicians and officials, the media simply came with statements, and updates alongside slight warnings to the public. Not making the public a part of the solution or process of handling the refugees. This can especially be seen in the titles of the articles:

- This is Bigger than what some Border Control in Rødby can Handle” (Meyer, 2015)
- Images of the Refugee Crisis – Packed trains and People Wandering on the Highway (Sørensen, 2015)

Lastly, the article overall had a systematic linguistics pattern of statements, which were informative, there was no mention of the reader, rather the relevant political actors were either making statements and/or debating with each other. Simply, the Syrian refugees were presented as an ‘other’ rather than somebody you can identify themselves with.

The rise of the far-right had been reflected in the media portrayal of Syrian refugees. The constant criminalization and unwelcoming of immigrants made it a trend in the media and politics to ‘other’ the refugees and see them as a threat to the Danish culture and Welfare system. Further using the theoretical lens of Orientalism; The Oriental East, which is contemporary
Europe’s most prominent threatening external other, has replaced communism and is increasingly coupled with hostility against Muslims (Haldrup et al., 2006). Like the British newspapers, themes of hostility are found in various of the articles. For example, when Sørensen (2015) mentions that “various of the refugees ran away from the police in order to not be registered”, I noticed that various of these pictures were refugees facing their backs to the camera (Sørensen, 2015; Meyer, 2015). I believe this could be a means to dehumanize the refugee individual, especially when it was a picture in groups.

In addition, in some of the images, we see a pattern of adults or authorities holding a child’s hand (Meyer, 2015; Burcharth, 2015; Sørensen, 2015; Westersø, 2015), which can indicate both authority protection and securitization, which can lead to the criminalization of immigrants. Furthermore, the newspapers used images which were taken from above, giving power to the reader (Björkvall, 2017), other than that there was an impersonal distance and a strong and constant presence of police and authorities in the pictures (Westersø, 2015; Burcharth, 2015; Sørensen, 2015; Meyer, 2015). Impersonal distance can be a symbolic indicator that shows the reader that the person (or people) in the image is not an acquaintance or somebody relatable to the reader, and the Syrian refugees are presented in a group. The article by DR contained 17 images, where 7/17 of the pictures had police or another authority in them and they had impersonal distance. 10/17 of the pictures were eye-to-eye, but the refugees were in very vulnerable positions, and 7/17 were taken from above. This can be another means of dehumanizing refugees. Looking at each of the newspapers and their wording, they all had a prominent presence of language that could lead to securitization. TV2 mentioned ‘police’ seven times, while the headline and sub text mentions ‘refugee crisis’ once in each category (Westersø, 2015). Moreover, DR mentions ‘police’ two times, which is a lot considering the article was only quarter a page, this article also used ‘refugee crisis’ in the headline (Sørensen, 2015). Berlingske, used ‘police’ and other securitizing words nine times, and mentioned border control in their headline. In fact, the whole article was about the naiveness in thinking border control will help lessen the ‘burden of a refugee crisis’ (Meyer, 2015). Information was the longest article of them all, and it mentioned ‘police’ two times, however it used the phrase ‘state of emergency’ twice too. Furthermore, in the contextual meaning it was merely meant as a mockery towards the government and the UN, rather than a means to securitize Syrian refugees (Burchardt, 2015).
The presence of authorities (Border police and general police) in the pictures of Syrian refugees was very prevalent, further showing how they are seen as a threat to national security. While Information was neutral in their securitization of refugees, DR1 and TV2 managed to appear more biased with their vulnerable pictures and choice of words, using phrases such as “the refugees managed to run from the police” (Sørensen, 2015). Lastly, the notion of people from the Middle East (the Orients), being ‘barbaric and corrupt’ (Said, 1978) is being indirectly applied here. The tone in the article is presenting bias, when using such word phrases like ‘running away from the police’ (Sørensen, 2015), some could argue that it even criminalizes refugees, because it is a wrongful action towards the protectors of the host society (Atak & Simeon, 2018).

Furthermore, the presence of authorities in the text could also be a theme of protection. “the police are following the walking refugees to ensure their safety, but also in hope of the refugees might want to register themselves in Denmark” (Sørensen, 2015), the refugees are walking on the highway, which is potentially dangerous, and the presence of the police is showing a theme of protection, alongside other articles where they are holding hands with refugee children escorting them to safety (Meyer, 2015; Westersø, 2015). There is a pattern of words and phrases that goes to show. Words and phrases like border control, “running away from the police” (Sørensen, 2015; Westersø, 2015) and international cooperation.

However, in one picture, we see three people holding hands (Meyer, 2015), this is a theme of unity. A theme of unity is repeated various times in the articles about arrival, where we see families of refugees holding hands and an officer playing with a refugee child while sitting down (Sørensen, 2015; Westersø, 2015). Many could argue that unity is a solution to the negative attitude towards the refugee crisis. In addition, helpers from organizations are present in the article, “Red Cross is also following the refugees on the route. They are giving out water for the refugees” (Sørensen, 2015). In addition, the article from Information stated that the Danes made a group, free from politics that were dedicated to help and spread positivity around refugees, this group was called The Friendly Citizens(venligboerne) and they increased from 500 to 30,000 people in the matter of weeks in 2015 (Nexø, 2019).

As mentioned before, the Syrian refugees are mentioned as a generic term such as their national or ethnic identity, this is another way of homogenizing and de-individualize the refugees. Instead of using their political statuses like temporary protection, asylum seeker,
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refugee or immigrant they lean towards using ‘Syrian refugees’ etc. . This does indeed produce some issues and consequences for certain refugees. When people’s political status or why they fled the country isn’t mentioned in the media, it makes it difficult to discuss the refugees’ rights and humanize them in the debate, essentially marginalizing them.

Refugees are political subjects with political rights and their situation requires rights-based political decisions and actions. However, when the media predominantly discusses the refugee issue around the discourse of victimhood and securitization – which is an emotional approach, based on Saviorism and fear – political discussions seeking political solutions to the issue are not devoted a fair amount of space. This is indeed a theme of depoliticizing refugees by the media. Simply, when you do not approach refugee issues with a political approach, and the rights of refugees and the responsibilities that come with being a host country of international actors, then they are depoliticized (Pandir, 2020). When the media dehumanizes refugees, by posting vulnerable images of them and victimizing the Syrian refugees, they appeal to the emotional part of the reader (Sørensen, 2015). The same goes for when the Syrian refugees are portrayed in a negative light (Sørensen 2015).

In the same way, when the refugee issue is depoliticized by not providing the reader with a contextual report on the subject, it prohibits the reader from understanding the backgrounds of the groups of refugees, which involves understanding the reasons behind the wars and crises in refugees’ countries and the processes behind the refugee mobility. For example, we see in both the arrival articles of the Syrian refugees, that they are not mentioning why the refugees decided to flee their country (Meyer, 2015 ; Sørensen, 2015), starting the debate around the deservingness of a refugee (Pandir, 2020). The reason behind the depoliticization of Syrian refugees could be that political actors prefer to talk about the refugee issue within the framework of humanitarian aid, instead of the responsibilities the nation holds, in order to position themselves or the nation as Saviors helping the people in need.

6.2 2016 – Are We Shifting Towards a More Humanized Front?

In 2016 the debate went from being about the refugees arriving to Europe by foot to revolving around the massive number of refugees dying at sea while migrated irregularly to Europe. The UN was being encouraged to rethink how to better protect and care for refugees (Alfred, 2016). In the chosen material, a politicizing view is used by various articles. Words like Family-Reunification, Foreign Affairs, Refugee Convention and Quote-Refugees are repetitive (Winther, 2016; Winther, 2016; Funch, 2016). This is indeed a step towards a more humanizing and justice-oriented solution for the Syrian refugees, as it is politicizing the
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‘refugee issue’. In Barlag’s (2016) article a success story about three refugees starting jobs at a big butchery is highlighted, using positive linguistics about the Syrian refugees such as: motivated, success, good work environment, and hard working to describe their work ethics (Barlag, 2016).

On the contrary, Winther (2016) from Berlingske had a rather Orientalist view on the family-reunification debate when the article mentioned a Syrian refugee being in a polygamous marriage and wanting to bring all his three wives and 17 children to Denmark, which was being described as ‘grotesque, unreasonable, unfair and disgusting’ (Winther, 2016), degrading non-Western values (Said, 1978).

The imagery in these articles also changed, the images now mostly consisted of refugee women and children with the lens focused on the children. Gendering and using children - especially when they are crying, in the pictures lead to more empathy for the victims of war (Study Finds, 2022).

6.3 2017 – More Success Stories, The Discursive Shift Towards Deservingness

Both the images and linguistics around Syrian refugees’ changes for the better in 2017, mostly, and a lot of the previous trends were both being disrupted and used at the same time (Vording, 2017; Richardt, 2017).

In this article, a new and comprehensive research about the education level of migrants in Denmark set the tone for the article. ‘Lesser education means fewer chances of getting a job in Denmark, therefore less of a chance to integrate into the Danish society’ (Bruhøj, 2017). Negative linguistics such as ‘integrational challenge, less education’ was used throughout the article, alongside the same picture of refugees on the highway from 2015 which indicates the de-individualization of refugees (Pandir, 2020). As mentioned before, de-politicization is indeed harmful for refugees (Pandir, 2020). In the article by Berlingske, Syrian refugees are compared to Western migrants, without any mentioned of Western migrants being mostly expats and therefore having higher educations (Burhøj, 2017; DST, 2022). Putting expats and refugees in the same boat and comparing them is indeed harmful for the refugees, because the different circumstances of expats and the Syrian refugees isn’t mentioned (Burhøj, 2017). Other than this, the article uses ‘Syrian migrants’ instead of ‘Syrian refugees’, which takes away the vulnerable political status refugees have in the world (Pandir, 2020; UNHCR, 2022). Lastly, educational background and lack of political context, when talking about refugee integration and refugees in general, indicates the notion of Deservingness. When refugee's political status isn’t mentioned, the neediness of refugees are forgotten, as I previously
mentioned, refugees are the most vulnerable people on earth, when this is taken away from them, this idea is shifted (Oorschot, 2017).

The TV2 and DR1 articles mention success stories about refugee students and workers being thankful and useful for the Danish society (Richardt, 2017; Vording, 2017). Positive words are more prominent in these articles, such as: Gratitude, positive feedback, thankful, contributed, extraordinary talent (Richardt, 2017; Vording, 2017). In Deservingness there are factors that show how much refugees deserve. These are determined by control, need, identity and attitude (Oorschot, 2017). Identity is about how close the societies and the refugee are to each other, when refugees get into the workplace, they appeal to the identity and attitude of the host society (Oorschot, 2017). In addition, Richardt’s (2017) article mentions the Orientalism – even though that exact word isn’t used, when the interviewed refugee, Ammar Ibrahim states “We feel, there is a need to change the view that a lot of Danes have of us, refugees. There has been created a negative view of people who have nothing. The Danes think that refugees are people who don’t do anything and that we come from a society that sleeps” (Richardt, 2017). Ibrahim is pointing out how ‘the Orientals’ are seen as lazy by the Danes, which is also a concept we see in Orientalism (Said, 1978). In addition, Ibrahim also states “People see a lot of other people, that have had bad experiences with us. We want to highlight what we do and that there are a lot of positive stories out there as well.” (Richardt, 2017). As said before in Deservingness there is a concept of attitude and identity, Ibrahim is trying to relate to the readers by creating gratitude and commonness between the reader and him. Lastly, the imagery used clips from the news segment, where the workers and students are in focus, there is focus on their hands and faces which indicates a relation and close-up interaction with the viewer (Richardt, 2017; Vording, 2017). This could be done to create familiarity between the reader and the refugee (Kress, 2011).

6.4 2018 – Building a Bridge

In 2018 the European media hereunder, the Danish media was very focused on a set of issues that were coming to light under the asylum process for Syrian refugees (Secen, 2022). These issues included: The limitation of subsidiary protection status awarded to Syrian refugees, lifting the ban on the deportation of refugees, the treatment of refugees in the host countries and the living conditions (Secen, 2022). In Denmark, the living conditions of refugees were a wide controversy in the Danish media, in fact in various articles refugees were interviewed and admitted to wanting to return home because of the hostile conditions they were met with in Denmark (Brorson, 2018; Lund, 2018), this sparked a heavy debate between left-
wing politicians and citizens contemplating the deservingness of Syrian refugees, calling them ‘Welfare tourists’ (Secen, 2022).

Although Berlingske has shown a pattern of using very biased language in the chosen material, Kamil's (2018) article for Berlingske did contain neutral and statistical content. The article was merely based on statistics about refugees around the world. On the other hand, the articles by Brorson (2018) and Lund (2018) were about revolved around the topic of returning home to Syria, which was still considered unsafe at the time (Lund, 2018). The word ‘repatriation’ was used 12 times in the article, while ‘unsafe’ was used nine times (Lund, 2018). There is a notable discursive shift in 2018 based on the chosen material (Brorson, 2018; Lund, 2018), while the former years used very securitizing and de-individualizing linguistics, the articles from 2018 are interviewing Syrian refugees and understanding their journey to Denmark. In Brorsons's (2018) article, the journalist goes undercover as a refugee from Lesbos to Denmark and uses very neutral language to explain the journey (Brorson, 2018).

Lastly, the images used were quite interesting. Berlingske used the images from 2015 of refugees arriving in Denmark on the highway (Kamil, 2018), while DRI used an image of a group of refugee men going into a bus starting their journey back to Syria from Turkey (Lund, 2018) and TV2 who had images of the Moria Refugee Camp in Lesbos in black and white (Brorson, 2018). Using black and white pictures helps the reader focus on other aspects of the photo (Björkvall, 2017), which could contribute to the nature of the article, simply, Lund really wanted us to understand and see the journey that refugees go through to come to Denmark. This could also imply a bridge to politicizing refugees and humanizing them when you explain -with neutral non-victimizing words, the journey and hardship they went through to come to the host country (Lund, 2018). In addition, the camera angle is from above and from a social distance, which could indicate power to the reader and how the reader’s and the refugee’s situations are distant from each other (Björkvall, 2017). Looking at the sparking debates of deservingness in the media, these articles could be the media's way to build a bridge between the host citizens and the refugees, when explaining their desperation and essentially highlighting their neediness.

6.5 2019 – Syria, a Safe Place?

In 2019 the Danish Refugee Board reported Syria to be safe to return to (Mortensen, 2019), however big international organizations such as Amnesty International were passionately arguing against these claims (Thaulow, no date) and according to the article from TV2 the backlash did in fact win, because some rejected asylum seekers were given asylum in
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Denmark on the grounds of personal persecution (Barfoed & Mortensen, 2019). Both articles from TV2 and Berlingske are written by the same author, and all three articles from TV2, Berlingske and DRI have same context and use politicized words like ‘repatriations, asylum seekers, Syrian refugees, persecution, and democratic’ (Jensen, 2019; Barfoed & Mortensen, 2019; Mortensen, 2019). There was also used securitizing words like ‘military, security state of Damascus’ (Jensen, 2019; Barfoed & Mortensen, 2019; Mortensen, 2019), although this is words of security the context is about the safety state of Damascus and not securitizing of refugees, there is a difference that needs to be noted, as the effects of these are totally different. Words used around security in this context related to politicizing the debate around refugee repatriations and the words about the securitization of refugees is a harmful term that affects refugees (Pandir, 2020).

While all three articles write about the same topic - the effects of the decision by the Danish Refugee Board and the effects of the new laws around Syrian refugees and they all use the same words and concepts, the DRI is showcasing how these decisions are affecting the refugees “I feel hopeless. My future is in the hands of strangers. Maybe they will make a mistake and we will be sent home to war, torture and dictatorship” (Jensen, 2019). This article does appear to use emotion and humanization.

In addition, the article from Information was an article that showcased how the literary activism has been seeping through since 2015, this is especially relevant since the protests from social activists were on the rise after the decision of the Danish Refugee Board (Nexø, 2019). The article stated that the Danes made a group, free from politics that were dedicated to helping and spreading positivity around refugees, this group was called The Friendly Citizens (venligboerne) and they increased from 500 to 30.000 people in a matter of weeks in 2015 and were still growing (Nexø, 2019).

The individualization of refugees was very prominent in the images. Three out of four images were of a single refugee in focus; however, the placement was different. In two of the photos, the refugees were in the center and one of them was a closeup, and the second was on the side. And the two photos where the refugees are far away, you can’t see their faces, which can indicate a social distance between the reader and the subject (Björkvall, 2017). Taking the context of the articles and the images into consideration, it looks like the media has begun to humanize the refugees, and show a distance between them and the reader in order to highlight the unsafety the refugees are in at that point (Jensen, 2019; Barfoed & Mortensen, 2019; Mortensen, 2019).
In 2020 *Berlingske* published an op-ed by an anonymous Syrian author titled “*The Danes tell me to go home and rebuild my country, but the reign of our >Hitler< is still ongoing*” (Anonymous, 2020). As mentioned before, the debate around Syria being safe was still ongoing, and with that came this op-ed, the writer explains how Syria is not safe to go back to as their >Hitler< won (Anonymous, 2020). Alongside this, *DR1* wrote an article about the conflict between EU and Turkey which resulted in Turkey opening their borders to Europe resulting in a swarm of refugees entering Greece like 2015 (Nørskov, 2020), and *TV2* wrote an article about the possibility of a new European refugee crisis (Stephensen, 2020). Both these articles used securitizing language like “*Border control, securing the border*” and negative words such as “*burden, economic burden, refugee flood*” (Nørskov, 2020; Stephensen, 2020). Other than that a distinct word was used for the refugee ‘burden’ in the article was “sorteper”, the black buck, this was a reference to the refugees (Stephensen, 2020). There was a pattern of fear factor, when referring to the 2015 refugee crisis, that left Europe in a tumble (Stephensen, 2020).

The images used for the op-ed from *Berlingske* was a closeup of the back of the Syrian anonymous Syrian refugee with a blurred background and focused on him (Anonymous, 2020). This is an indication of his anonymous preference. In the other two images we see, firstly, the 2015 refugees on the highway in Denmark (Stephensen, 2020) and secondly, a big group of refugees in distress on the Greek border from Turkey (Nørskov, 2020). Both pictures are taken from above angle and show a big group of refugees, which indicates power to the reader and de-individualization and homogenization of the refugees (Pandir, 2020).

In addition, did the Deservingness get ‘taken away’ here? Are Syrian refugees not seen as ‘in need’ anymore now that the debate around Syria as a safe space has been ongoing? The Anonymous Syrian refugee states “*Many right-wings are yelling >go back to your home country<*” (Anonymous, 2020), and the pattern of fear factor on the articles form *DR1* and *TV2* also add to this (Nørskov, 2020; Stephensen, 2020).

**6.7 2021 – Orientalist Approach to Integration and Deportations**

In 2021 the debate around the repatriation of refugees to Syria was still ongoing. The Ministry of Foreigners was under massive pressure from international organizations and constant demonstrations by Syrian refugees being deported (Patsheider, 2021; Wolfgang, 2021). With this, *DR1* and *TV2* both published a relevant article titled “*Imprisonment, Torture,*
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disappearance: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Look Away from Warnings in Their Own Report About Syrian Refugees” (Patsheider, 2021) and “Deportation Threatened Syrian Refugees Protesting for the 11th Day” (Wolfgang, 2021). In the articles threatening words like “house raiding, harassment, threats, torture, arrests, hearings, pressure and destructing of private property” were used to describe the situations the deported refugees could be facing (Patsheider, 2021; Wolfgang, 2021). Wolfgang’s (2021) article follows Syrian refugees protesting against the deportations, some refugees were said to go on hunger strikes and some were sitting outside the Danish Parliament for 11 days (Wolfgang, 2021). Indeed, these articles were objectively showcasing the protests and critique that the Danish government was getting for deciding that Syria was safe (Patsheider, 2021; Wolfgang, 2021).

When Andersen (2021) mentions that women are often not allowed to work in Middle Eastern culture, it implies the statements about Middle Eastern women being the “poor oppressed women”, which comes from Orientalism (Birk & Nielsen, 2021; Said, 1978). The idea of seeing Syrian refugees as a ‘problem to solve, is still a factor in the integrational aspect and the focus on the problems that are faced when they come to Denmark is highlighted more than the easy routes. Other than that, the notion of integration is more seen as an order or a necessity.

6.8 2022 – Ukrainian Refugees Come to Denmark

Into 2022, the topic of repatriation of Syrian refugees was still ongoing (Martensen & Sircic, 2022; Marquardt, 2022), and the consequences were catching up to the EU. In fact, according to Berlingske, other EU countries were receiving Syrian refugees from Denmark, seeking refuge from the harsh Danish asylum politics (Marquardt, 2022). Syrian refugee women that were well-integrated into Danish society and were studying or working in Denmark were getting deported back to Syria and getting separated from their families (Martensen & Sircic, 2022). In these articles a pattern of politicizing words like “refuge, repatriation policies, asylum” (Martensen & Sircic, 2022).

In April of 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine, which shocked a lot of surrounding countries, a European country was now at war. With this came a flood of Ukrainians around April-June, and the tone around this refugee flood was noticeably different (Jepsen, 2022). This sparked a big controversy in the media and was also addressed by TV2 in the article “This is Why there is a difference between Ukraine and Syria – Olsen Dyhr Explains” (Jepsen, 2022). The article interviews a red block politician, Pia Olsen Dyhr, about the difference in treatment of the different refugee groups to which she answered, “We are taking in more Ukrainians because
they are a European country and there is only one country between Denmark and Ukraine, Poland” (Jepsen, 2022), this was an argument used by many politicians. In addition, a special law was passed in the same period of the interview, that allowed Ukrainian refugees to be eligible to the same rights as Danish citizens (Jepsen, 2022), this was indeed also big controversy between human rights advocates and many politicians. Olsen Dyhr was later asked if she thought religion was a factor in integrating into Danish society and asked to comment on how some politicians meant that it is easier to accept Ukrainian refugees because of religion to which she answered “According to integrating refugees, it could be a factor if you are Christian or Muslim. I must admit if you are a practicing Muslim, and you follow the Hadith as a way of living, we have a challenge. It means something for the integration” (Jepsen, 2022). As mentioned before this study understands that Deservingness and Orientalism are dependent on each other, and when Olsen Dyhr mentions that Syrian refugees don’t integrate properly into Danish society if they are practicing Muslims, she entails that they don’t resonate with the Danish identity, and therefore they are not deserving.

Lastly, the pictures used are very different, in contrary to the other years. While Berlingske used an image of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs taken from below (Marquadt, 2022), DR1 used a closeup picture of a Syrian woman getting deported (Martensen & Sircic, 2022) and TV2 had a video clip from the news segment, where Olsen Dyhr was getting interviewed (Jepsen, 2022). Berlingske’s image could showcase the helplessness the Syrian refugees are feeling over an authority (Marquardt, 2022) when the picture is taken from below, while DR1 could be insinuating an emotional response from the reader since a closeup eye-to-eye allows the reader to see the emotions on the woman's face (Martensen & Sircic, 2022) and lastly the clip from TV2 focusses on Olsen Dyhr with a mix between closeups and half cut, this is because the article has her on focus.

7.0 Conclusion

This study did show that although there is a variety of occurrences regarding Syrian refugees in the studies period, the reoccurring frames were those of securitization, dehumanization, criminalization, de-individualization, homogenization and deservingness in the form of labor participation of the refugees. Securitization and de-individualization were especially reoccurring in 2015 and were less frequent by 2016 and onwards. The de-individualization became less frequent by 2016, however, the topic of deservingness in the form of labor began, which was also seen in 2017 and 2018. In 2019 deservingness in the form of neediness (to stay in Denmark) started as there were debates around repatriation which
Tuba Dawood switched the focus in the media from deservingness around labor to deservingness around neediness, but the same pattern of individualization was ongoing. This went on well into 2022. There was still a use of the 2015 linguistics but at a much lower frequency. Despite the media's decreasing interest in Syrian refugees, the influence of Danish newspapers on attitudes towards them is very much still present in the chosen articles. This can be reflected in the themes, linguistics, and especially when the 2022 Ukrainian refugee crisis began, and it vastly showcased the difference in treatment and representation by the Danish media. This study does however understand that the chosen material does not directly represent all the articles published around the chosen topic.

Moreover, this study also shows that the same pictures of Syrian refugees on the Danish highways were used a lot throughout the studied period and it was used mostly as a fear-factor, which we saw in 2015, 2019, and 2020. Other than this, the images changed from being homogenized and showing a big group of refugees to pictures of individual refugees in the focus frame.

The portrayals of the refugees were different depending on the type of newspaper. From 2015-2019, DR1 and TV2 often had similar contributions to the Syrian refugee debate, having a strong stand when it comes to dehumanization, securitization, and depoliticizing the refugees. The same goes for Berlingske, however, these patterns were more consistent until the end of the studied period. Only three out of eight articles were positive about refugees in Berlingske. This may be because the right-wing political stance Berlingske had till the early 2000’s (Søllinge, 2021), was still present. In contrast to this, Information managed to stay neutral, reflecting the facts, rather than criminalization and securitization.

When it came to the years of 2019-2022 refugees, TV2 and DR1 had a somewhat humanizing, politicizing and solidarity approach to the debate. Overall, Information managed to do what the newspaper is meant to do - to inform. Although DR1 and TV2 are competitors and the two most read newspaper media in Denmark, they both shared the same similarities and differences when it came to the refugee debate. According to my research, the Ukrainian refugees have been categorized as the in-group of Danish society, as their similarities in geographical stance and religion is highlighted by the media and politicians. While Syrian refugees have been categorized as out-group, due to their difference in culture, religion and looks, their behavior and culture are as often seen as ‘oriental’ and ‘barbaric’. This studied period showed a fluctuation between deservingness and undeservingness when we see the once homogenized representation of Syrian refugees become more individualized.
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In addition, when Olsen Dyhr states that it is easier to integrate Ukrainians because they are Christians, and they are more >deserving< of help because they are a European country, it derives from European exceptionalism and Deservingness (Vaughan-Williams, 2015; Oorschot, 2017, p 9-14). In the theory of Deservingness, I refer to the notion of identity, when the identity of the one in question is ‘similar’ or ‘pleasant’ to the host country, they are more likely to make exceptions for them. Deservingness is an invitation for Europeans to excuse racial capitalism (Vaughan-Williams, 2015). Olsen Dyhr states that “Muslims are harder to integrate”, while Andersen (2021) says that Syrian women are not a part of the Danish labor market. The continuous topic of integration is successful through, mostly, partaking in labor work. It further proves that a lot of the Deservingness derives from racial capitalism. Orientalist notion that promotes the superiority of the West and its people; the notion of Deservingness which sees Europe as a capitalist miracle to be protected from the Orient (Amin, 2020); public debates like the one with Andersen and Olsen Dyhr (Birk & Nielsen, 2021; Jepsen, 2022) - all contribute to the othering, securitization, and homogenization of Syrian refugees.

Lastly, if I was to do another research related to this subject, I would like to research if the ethnicity of the journalists affects the representation of refugees, since this research has indeed showcased negative attitudes toward Syrian refugees. The language did change throughout the years for the better, but it was never fully neutral in the majority of the articles. It could be interesting to have interviews with a group of people who are critical thinkers, such as university students and compare their findings to each other.
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Appendix

Picture 1. (Source: Meyer, 2015)

Pictures 2. (Source: Sørensen, 2015)
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Picture 3. (Source: Martsen & Sircis, 2022)

Picture 4: (Source: Wolfgang, 2021)
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Picture 5: (Source: Stephensen, 2020)

I de seneste år er der mange flygtninge og migranter søgt mod Danmark. Den største gruppe er sirer, der ofte flyser fra død og brutalitet. Tyrkiet er voldsomt afsat, idet der er en udfordring for integrationsministeren, menier udmeldingsmyndigheder tog igang. Statsbyggeri (D). Foto: Claus Fischer
Tuba Dawood

Picture 6: (Source, Lund, 2018)

Picture 7. (Source: Brorson, 2018)
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Picture 8. (Source: Mortensen, 2019)

Picture 9. (Source: Barfoed & Mortensen, 2019)
Da flygtningene gik på de danske motorveje opstod der en form for undsætningsstilstand – og også en uklar og rodet situation, som afslørede et politisk system, der ikke ønskede at forholde sig til disse konkrete mennesker, der vandrede på dansk territorium. Netop det rasede Henrik Nordbrandts digt med.

Picture 10. (Source: Nexø, 2019)

“Mange glemmer fuldende, når de sammenligner Syriens med Tysklands efter anden verdenskrig. Ved Hitler blev der en over 10 millioner flygtninge, mens der i dag bor omkring 10 millioner flygtninge i Syrien.”

Mærker af tempest i sin familie sikkerhed i Syrien. Foto: Linda Kastberger
Tuba Dawood

Picture 12. (Source: Nørskov, 2020)
Børn Højems Andersen har som koncernchef i Odense Kommunes beskæftigelses- og socialhaftevning ansvar for, at ledige syreve kommer i arbejde – der er etterlatt såd at være gjort. Foto: Linda Kastrup