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Fighters, Girls and Other Identities

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CHAPTER 1: PRELIMINARIES

Every week, groups of children and adolescents meet in a building in the northern part of central Copenhagen. Most of them are from the local area. They get together with other young people and adults to engage in particular actions, rituals, and bodily movements. They agree that what they practice is the martial arts 'taekwondo' and that the collective of people who meet in this locality and carry out these practices together constitutes a 'taekwondo club'. The children and adolescents formally become members of the club when they have filled in a form and pay their monthly fee. The club, however, is not constructed by such formalities alone, but by the regular repeated practices and interactions between individuals. The members interact physically. They dress in certain ways, they move around, shake hands, hug, push, kick, and hit each other. A major part of the sports practice consists of demonstration, copying, correction, and repetition of bodily movements. Yet, the bodily actions are accompanied by verbal conduct, and as in any human community significant parts of the interactions between the club-members are linguistic. Although the club is defined by the sports discipline in focus during the training sessions, what goes on between the members before and after the sports-practice is equally essential to the participation in the club as a social community. It is these interactions around the sports practice, which I shall attend to here. This book concerns how individuals participate in a recreational social community in a late modern urban setting, how they negotiate their place in the social order, create and maintain friendship groups, relate to different social categories, and in particular how they employ linguistic resources and interactional activities to do so.

The social order, the status relations, the norms, and the rituals of the club community are not constructed anew in a vacuum every time the members meet. The members have a shared history and they also individually bring along histories of interactions, experiences, abilities, and memberships of other communities. At the same time as the members construct local social structures they also draw on resources and practices embedded within wider socio-historical processes and broader cultural frames through their joint practices. The children and adolescents in the taekwondo club interactionally bring about ways of participating in a community, but they do so under socio-cultural and historical conditions, which resemble the

conditions of other youth groups of similar make up in a range of late modern urban environments. Thus, this book reports on a study of identities and interactions among a heterogeneous group of taekwondo practitioners in the capital of Denmark, but it is not merely about these particular young people in this particular setting. By engaging with details of the everyday conduct of the children and adolescents in an urban sports club, the book aims to add to our knowledge about contemporary socio-cultural and sociolinguistic processes.

The title: *Fighters, girls, and other identities: Interaction in a martial arts club* refers to category labels significant within the club community and thereby emphasises the participant perspective on social categories and relationships employed in this book. In addition, the title illustrates a view of identities and social categorisation as dynamic. ‘Fighters’ and ‘girls’ are only a few of many potentially relevant and interdependent identity aspects and categories brought about by the children and adolescents. Finally, the title underlines the key issues of the book; ‘identities’ and ‘interaction’, and more importantly a key assumption of the book, that studying interaction in a specific field contributes to our wider understanding of categorisation processes.

My research is driven by an interest in how social differentiation and identity categories work among the young members of the club. I have approached my data with an emphasis on what actually occurs in the interaction, how social categories are made relevant through linguistic acts, and how my findings resemble or differ from phenomena dealt with in existing research and theoretical accounts. In addition, I am concerned with how the conduct of the young club members relates to, reproduces, reinterprets, or resists influential ideas about cultural diversity and youth in contemporary Danish society.

The ethnographic case study and detailed analyses of interactions reveal wide-ranging aspects of the connection between language use, social categorisation and agency in relation to broader societal positioning of minority youth. The general insights are achieved in two ways. Firstly, I relate the practices observed among the participants in my study to larger-scale discourses about cultural diversity and contemporary youth. The discourses I consider concern a pervasive emphasis on ethnic and cultural differences, integration as adaption, and the persistent understanding of particular youth groups as non-majority. Secondly, I continuously compare the findings of my study to recent research within sociolinguistics and

anthropology. The aim of the book is to participate in discussions of contemporary youth, cultural diversity, and the relation between language and social identities. The book concerns issues of relevance to research within sociolinguistics, (linguistic) anthropology, discourse analysis, additional language acquisition and bilingualism (and other related fields) as well as research within the sociology of sports. In addition, it should appeal to scholars within educational studies with an interest in sociolinguistic processes in out-of-school learning contexts.

The interactional construction of social relationships and identities could of course be studied in many different fields. A significant reason for my choice of the Nørrebro Taekwondo Club as my field of study has been my interest in studying children's and adolescents' interactions in a leisure time community characterised by their voluntary participation. A great many sociolinguistic studies of children and youth focus on school environments (e.g. Quist 1998; 2005; Maegaard 2007; Jørgensen, 2001, 2003, 2004; Rampton 2006; Lytra 2007; Goodwin 2006; Eckert 1989), and school is, admittedly, a major part of children's life, but leisure time is also highly significant. A study focusing on children and youth during leisure activities of their own choice can add important insights and supplement the existing sociolinguistic research carried out in formal educational contexts. In fact, it is a common assumption within current Danish integration-political initiatives as well as among practitioners in the field of organised leisure activities that participation in such activities is related to success in formal education.

Common understandings of society, culture, and identity that circulate in various communication platforms from mass media to face to face communication are central to the way this book makes knowledge contributions. It is by paying close attention to the everyday conduct of young participants in a sports club this work scrutinises prevailing assumptions about heterogeneous youth groups in Danish society. In the rest of this chapter I shall unpack a couple of such currently influential assumptions that are part of discourses on cultural differences, integration, and leisure sports and include understandings of: 1) what culture is and means for social life in contemporary diverse (but previously less diverse) societies, 2) what identity is and how identity relates to culture, 3) what it involves to participate in society, and 4) how organised social activities play a part in successful socialisation into society. After this discussion of what we could call the wide societal relevance of the book, I turn to the relevance and the positioning of my work within the field of research on language,

identity, and youth. After that, I introduce my fieldwork and present my approach to identity in interaction. Finally, I end this chapter with a brief outline of the book's content.

1.1 Cultural diversity, 'counter culture', and integration

I shall begin the discussion of dominant discourses on cultural diversity by considering the recent Danish research report '*Mehmet and the Counter Culture*'. The report grapples with explanations for educational underachievement among students of ethnic minority background, and it represents key elements of a widespread discourse on diversity in Denmark. The understanding of culture and identity within this discourse has been described as ethnocentric in recent discourse analytical work (Eriksen & Sørheim 2001; Rennison 2009). This ethnocentric understanding of majority culture as the natural unquestioned foundation of society seems to be reflected more widely in Danish discussions of integration. In section 1.1.1, I unpack this understanding and its predominantly assimilationist approach to integration. Another feature of the research report and current debates about integration is the assumption that organised leisure activities play a central part in societal integration, and I discuss this in section 1.1.2.

'Mehmet and the Counter Culture'¹ (Andersen 2010) reports a study initiated by the Danish Ministry of Education. The project sought an answer to a central question in current Danish integration and education-political discourses: '*Why ethnic minority boys underachieve in Danish compulsory education compared to ethnic minority girls and ethnic Danish boys and girls*' (Andersen 2010: 1, my translation). The introduction explains how the study is motivated by previous statistical surveys. These surveys document tendencies that include educational underachievement, weaker affiliation with the labour market, and less participation in organised leisure activities among so-called '*persons of an ethnic background different from Danish*'² (Andersen 2010: 1, my translation, see also Dahl & Jakobsen 2005; Deding & Olsson 2009; OECD 2006; Egelund 2003, 2007). By including the dimension of organised leisure activities in a study of educational performance from the onset, Andersen's project is in accordance with the current integration policy in assuming that lack of educational success and no participation in organised leisure activities is somehow connected.

Based on statistical surveys of the final results from 2002-2005 of the Danish 'folkeskole'-exams in the 9th grade (equivalent of GCSE-level), the report's conclusions claim that: a)

boys with ethnic minority background underachieve compared to the other groups and b) it is not socio-economic background, but ethnicity and gender in combination that correlates with poor school achievements (Andersen 2010: 12-13). Furthermore, the study includes qualitative interviews with pupils and teachers in 3 selected schools with different pupil populations. Based on the interviews, the authors suggest that explanation for the statistical results can be found in the development of a ‘problem discourse’ related to minority boys in schools with a large population of ‘bilingual’³ boys. According to the authors, the minority boys in these schools experience a lack of acknowledgement in relation to their cultural and linguistic background:

The ethnic minority boys generally had a more positive attitude to school than ethnic Danish boys. Still, they also express a “trouble-maker mentality”, where they identify strongly with their ethnic community and where they display resistance to the school and the teachers. They generally feel that the school consider their ethnic background a problem and gather in cliques with other ethnic minority boys (Andersen 2010: 23, my translation).

The main argument of the report is that because the boys experience that their ethnicity is viewed as a problem, they orient strongly to ethnic categories and develop an oppositional peer-culture:

The boys instead find acceptance in the ethnic community, where trouble-making leads to higher status than well prepared homework (Andersen 2010: 33, my translation).

These observations lead to the concept of ‘counter culture’ being somehow related to communities of ethnic minority boys. This notion is central to the report (as we can see from the title) and it has also been central to the report’s implementation and uptake⁴. However, there is no further reflection on how orientation to an ‘ethnic community’ might lead to particular cultural orientations of trouble-making and opposition to school. Furthermore, the idea that ethnic minority boys constitute a distinct group is taken for granted. ‘*Mehmet and the Counter Culture*’ in this way reflects characteristics of more widespread discourses on diversity and ethnic minorities in the recent Danish debate:

- a. Ethnic minority youth, and in particular boys, are considered a central problem for Danish society.

- b. Successful participation in Danish society is understood as achieving decent marks in school, participating in organised leisure activities involving contact with adults (e.g. Andersen 2010: 2) and eventually becoming employed.
- c. The boys' failure to participate successfully in Danish society is explained as predominantly related to their ethnic and cultural background.
- d. Ethnic minorities are treated as a collective category. No differentiation is made between different ethnic groups, newcomers and ethnic minorities born in Denmark, different socio-cultural, educational or socio-economic status, or other differences within the highly diverse group of individuals, that this category encompasses.

Ethnic minority youth as a problem for societal cohesion, cultural differences as the key cause of this, as well as the essentialisation of ethnic minorities as one cultural group are central elements of the ethnocentric discourse that has dominated the Danish debate on integration (Yilmaz 1999; Rennison 2009).

1.1.1. Ethnocentric discourses on integration

Immigrant workers began to arrive in Denmark in the 1960s. During the 1970s, it became clear that these immigrants were settling in Denmark. When refugees also began to arrive during the 1980-90s, the attention to problems related to immigration increased in the Danish public debate. Although the immigrant population in Denmark is one of the smallest in Western Europe (OECD 2010: 7)⁵, Danish election surveys suggest that during the period 1987-2001 approximately 40 % of the Danish population considered immigration a threat to Danish society (Thomsen 2006: 225). The notion of integration has been very prominent since the mid 1990s (Olwig & Pærregaard 2007: 18). In 2002, the government of the time even established a distinct Ministry of Integration⁶. The webpage of the Ministry of Integration makes clear that this ministry deals with immigrants' and refugees' development towards successful membership of Danish society. From the written information and the links on the page, we can see that this involves participation in language courses, cultural courses, employment, education and taxpaying (see www.nyidanmark.dk).

Yet in the general debate as well as in much research on integration, it is rather unclear what the concept of integration refers to precisely (Ejrnæs 2002)⁷. Far the most dominant discourse in Danish media and current policy making is the ethnocentric perspective on diversity

(Yilmaz 1999: 180-81; Rennison 2009: 120-158). According to Rennison (2009: 121), this ethnocentric discourse is closely related to a collective ‘moral panic’ which results in resistance to strangers’ cultural practices⁸ and emphasises values related to culture. Culture itself is understood as inherited, static, and tied to birthplace and nation, and cultural differences are seen within the stereotypical frames of ‘us’ and ‘them’, with the ‘us’ imagined as a coherent cultural and national community (Rennison 2009: 128-131; Anderson 1991; Yilmaz 1999). Nationalist ideology is central to this discourse and the view of integration is assimilationist. Ethnic minorities are regarded as either ‘un-adapted strangers’, or as ‘disciplined strangers’ if they are well integrated (Rennison 2009: 153), and the goal for integration is to reach mono-cultural coherence through assimilation of cultural minorities into the majority culture. In fact this ethnocentric discourse on integration is not an exclusively Danish phenomenon, it is characteristic of public debate and policy making in a range of Western European countries (e.g. Blommaert & Verschueren 1998; Yilmaz 1999; Jaspers 2005; Extra et. al 2009).

One of the problems with this discourse is that it takes for granted the existence of an out-group without specifying further the characteristics of the group members (other than their non-majorityness, in this case non-Danishness). As Yilmaz (1999) notes, this construction has serious consequences for the hierarchical positioning within society of members labelled ‘ethnic minorities’:

The binary opposition between ‘us’ and ‘them’ constructs a reality which defines subject positions before the subject itself. The discourse restricts other ways of categorizing people. The same discourse constructs a tacit ‘us’ in opposition to ‘them’ where ‘we’ represent the norm while ‘they’ are characterized as deviant (Yilmaz 1999: 180-181, my translation).

These wider discourses on diversity, and the perspectives on minority youth they represent, are central to this book in two ways. Firstly, they constitute a significant part of the discursive environment in which this work as well as the experiences of the participants in the study are situated. Secondly, the data dealt with in this book contribute insights from the local lived realities of Copenhagen youth into issues of school success, cultural values and orientations, as well as large-scale processes of social categorisation. These insights question the assumption that ethnicity is the main defining factor for cultural orientation⁹, that cultural differences are the key to problems of educational underachievement, that the concept of

‘counter culture’ should be connected to ethnic minority communities, and that integration means assimilation to majority culture.

One significant finding of the taekwondo club study is that within this recreational site, minority boys frequently orient to measures of school success in their peer interactions (they brag about school achievements, discuss school work, and compete in spelling). At the same time, they employ linguistic practices which are not officially appreciated in school contexts (such as swearing, ritual insults, mixing features of various codes and employing a particular urban vernacular speech style) to engage in school related topics and activities. The study of young members’ participation in a sports club community reveals how different cultural practices stereotypically associated with school opposition and school ambition are combined in peer interactions. Furthermore, we shall see how culture as ethnic inheritance is only a small part of the participants’ cultural repertoires. Instead we shall see how, for example, gender matters in situated encounters and how it relates to other identity aspects.

The final aspect of the public and political integration debate that is relevant to this study is the assumption that participation in organised leisure activities is connected to successful participation in society in general. We see this reflected in Andersen’s work (2010) on leisure activities as a significant factor in educational outcomes. Likewise, the idea that societal benefits flow from participation in sport clubs is well established within the field of sports manifesting itself on various levels from policymaking to local participation in club activities and, as the fieldwork revealed, also in the Nørrebro Taekwondo Club.

1.1.2. Discourses on integration through leisure sports

Recent work within the sociology of sports amply documents the assumption within sports as well as sports studies that participation in organised recreational activities and sports clubs strengthens the integration of minority and socially marginalised youth into majority society (e.g. Anderson 2003, 2005, 2006; Boeskov & Ilkjær 2005; Agergaard & Bonde 2013), and in fact this idea has international currency (e.g. Bailey 2005; Theeboom et al. 2012). However, it is very salient in Danish public discourse that a *lack* of participation in organised leisure activities (in the form of club membership involving contact with adults) is considered symptomatic of problems with societal integration (Andersen 2010: 32).

Responding to this, there have been a range of sports political initiatives in Denmark focusing on integration of ethnic minorities through sports clubs. But these projects overwhelmingly aim for merely increasing the number of members (and sometimes instructors) with ethnic minority background in the clubs (I provide a detailed discussion of the sports political initiatives in chapter 2). They rarely take into consideration exactly how membership of a club leads to ‘*a community based on shared values and interest across ethnic, social, and political borders*’ (integration fund at www.nyidanmark.dk)¹⁰. Instead they assume that participants are accepted in a club community merely based on shared interests. Conditions for participation, community-based power relations, and processes of inclusion and exclusion within the community are overlooked. In addition, there is no consideration of different ways of orienting to sports skills or the relationship between sports skills and social status hierarchy (Madsen 2012, 2013). Finally, and in tune with the general Danish integration debate, ethnicity and cultural differences are foregrounded as the central problems. Political integration initiatives through sports overwhelmingly focus on ethnic and cultural minorities gaining knowledge of and adapting to majority cultural practices. A problem with this is a monocentric understanding of societal norms. This kind of integration rhetoric seems to view society as made up by one mainstream, whereas actual interaction within social communities is polycentric and there may be several normative ‘mainstreams’ (Blommaert 2013; Blommaert & Varis 2013).

My ethnographic and linguistic study interrogates these assumptions by looking in detail at social processes actually occurring among young martial arts practitioners. It points to the importance of reckoning with community-constructed social hierarchies, peer-practices and the local processes of inclusion and exclusion. From this a more complex picture emerges making clear that the monocentric view of society and integration is not sufficient and that locally incorporating processes involve much more than just ethnicity. Using linguistic ethnography to study linguistic constructions and sequences of interaction situated in a specific social community, it turns out that combinations of age, gender and sports skills all appear as key points of orientation.

1.2 Language in heterogeneous urban contexts

Of course I am not the first to suggest that a focus on language use will improve our understanding of social life. The well established traditions of sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology are defined by the study of language in relation to society and culture. There

are, however, substantial differences in how this relationship is treated in what is usually referred to as (quantitative) variationist sociolinguistics (e.g. Labov 1972a) on the one hand, and on the other linguistic ethnography which builds on the traditions of interactional sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology (e.g. Hymes 1980; Gumperz 1982). In this section I briefly outline recent research of urban youth language within these two perspectives. My own work adapts a linguistic ethnographic approach, but I shall argue that the insights derived from the study of interaction can (and should) influence the work within the variationist perspective as well.

Matters of linguistic conduct are central to discourses on cultural differences and integration. According to the assimilationist understanding of integration, cultural and linguistic minorities are required to learn the majority language and adapt to majority cultural practices (Jørgensen 2010: 108) if they are to be successfully socialised as good democratic citizens (e.g. Kristiansen 2003). In the social and human sciences most contemporary scholars would claim a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity than this, but there is still a significant part of sociolinguistic research on the speech of urban youth which fails to capture the complexity of the relationship between language and ethnicity.

In line with the general development of more culturally and ethnically heterogeneous populations in larger European cities, a growing number of sociolinguistic studies have focussed on contact situations with a substantial proportion focussing on youth. There has been a particular interest in the development of varieties of the majority languages (see Quist & Svendsen 2010 for a collection of Scandinavian studies and Kern & Selting 2011 for a collection of European research), and these are often referred to as ‘ethnolects’ (e.g. Androutsopoulos 2001: 2; Auer 2003: 255; and Christensen 2003: 141) or ‘multiethnolects’ (e.g. Quist 2008; Svendsen & Røyneland 2008; Freywald et al. 2010). In this way ethnicity is pinpointed as a key factor in the description of these new linguistic practices. In contrast in this book, I start from the assumption that most of youth identified as ‘ethnolectal’ or ‘multiethnolectal’ are actually born and raised in the Western European cities where they are studied. Linguistic, ethnic, and cultural heterogeneity are now inherent characteristics of the populations, and I try to avoid a priori assumptions about linguistic practice and ethnicity in relation to youth with minority background. My analyses offer alternative interpretations of linguistic resources previously characterised as ethnic. With sustained focus and sensitivity to

participant meanings and the interplay of various social categories in identity work, I aim to shift the ground away from predefined classifications, demonstrating instead how the polyphony of semiotic resources available to late modern youth highlights the complex relationship between language and social categories, and the fluidity of linguistic boundaries. Analyses of the situated use of linguistic forms reveal that in many cases ethnicity is not the most relevant interpretation of what is going on when these semiotic resources are employed in interaction.

Of course engaging with details of situated identity work entails particular methodological tools capable of capturing language use on the ground and its wider implications across a range of context levels. In this book, I employ linguistic ethnography (Rampton et al. 2004; Blommaert 2007), which has developed from interactional sociolinguistics (e.g. Gumperz 1972, 1982; Rampton 1995, 2006; Jørgensen 2010) and linguistic anthropology (e.g. Hymes 1974; Ochs 1996). This approach sees social categories and structures being produced and reproduced in everyday life. It starts with the lived local realities, and links these to larger-scale socio-cultural processes. Ethnography is central and the combination of the analytical frameworks provided by linguistics with the reflexive sensitivity required in ethnography is a major strength. I start with ethnographic and linguistic micro-analyses of situated interactions among 16 young members of the taekwondo club, and relate these to broader processes of social indexicality, social stereotyping, and discursive formations (My theoretical and methodological approach is explicated below).

In several ways this study of a martial arts club in late modern Copenhagen reflects the diversification of diversity in contemporary globalised societies (Vertovec 2010). This is how it questions simplified understandings of category belonging and relationships between cultural practices and categories. Not only ethnocentric, but also multiculturalist perspectives can be, and have been, criticised for applying a static and conservative view on culture and seeing ethno-cultural communities as harmonious entities – without considering the internal struggles around group identity and belonging (Halldén et al. 2008; Fraser & Honneth, 2003). Ethnicity and culture are concepts that have become increasingly ambiguous in contemporary globalised societies. Vertovec suggests *super-diversity* as a concept describing these current conditions:

Super-diversity is a term intended to capture a level and kind of complexity surpassing anything many migrant-receiving countries have previously experienced. Immigrant superdiversity is distinguished by a dynamic interplay of variables, including their country of origin (comprising a variety of possible subset traits such as ethnicity, language[s], religious tradition, regional and local identities, cultural values and practices), their migration channel (often related to highly gendered flows, specific social networks and particular labour market niches), and their legal status (including myriad categories determining a hierarchy of entitlements and restrictions) (Vertovec 2010: 87).

The concept of super-diversity and in particular the social conditions it is intended to describe has received a great deal of attention within recent years' sociolinguistic research (e.g. Blommaert & Rampton 2011; Jørgensen et al. 2011; Leppänen & Häkkinen 2013). Globalisation results in super-diversity not only because recent patterns of migration lead to increasingly diverse make-up of populations, but also because individuals' possible expressions of identity and affiliations with socio-cultural values become more complex and less predictable. This kind of diversity, according to Vertovec (2007: 1044-45), calls for attention to the interaction of multiple social variables and for qualitative studies of the local micro-politics of everyday interaction (Amin 2002: 960). Micro-ethnographic analysis is well tuned to attend to everyday interaction, get beyond old binaries of majority/minority and engage with the complexities of situated social identification (Blommaert & Rampton 2011). Vertovec's call for micro-interactional research rests in the realisations that super-diversity highlights the inadequacy of large scale research counting numbers and categories within sociology. My argument is that this goes for sociolinguistic research as well. Merely correlating speech forms with categories will not capture the sociolinguistic reality of super-diversity.

As one of the guiding principles of a sociolinguistics in super-diversity, Blommaert and Rampton (2011: 12) point to the importance of remaining aware of what Silverstein (1985) refers to as *the total linguistic fact*, as he notes that the object of study of a science of language should be '*sign forms contextualised to situations of interested human use and mediated by the fact of cultural ideology*' (1985: 220). This of course means that micro-analysis of contextualised human use should not only inform studies of sign forms, but the study of situated use needs to consider the elements of wider ranging ideology and patterns of available resources as well. Admittedly, this book is mostly concerned with practice and use, but I regularly relate to dimensions of linguistic forms as well as ideology by discussing other research.

It is often argued that sociolinguistic research on language in interaction is very different from sociolinguistic research on the distribution of linguistic varieties, and that it answers different types of questions.¹¹ But work such as Sebba (1993), Rampton (1995, 2006) and Jaspers (2005, 2008) show what studies of situated linguistic practice can gain from taking into account the wider sociolinguistic distribution and history of linguistic resources. In addition, I propose that research on situated practice can contribute significantly to the interpretation of broader patterns of distribution and change described by variationist sociolinguistics. In a Danish context, work statistically correlating linguistic forms with social categories has found that new linguistic forms are predominantly used by ‘multiethnic’ male youth groups. These findings have led to the suggestion that gender and ethnicity are influential in ongoing linguistic developments in the Danish capital (e.g. Quist 2005; Maegaard 2007; see Torgersen et al. 2006 for similar findings in London). In addition, recent Danish sociolinguistic studies suggest that language and class are no longer closely associated. Social status differences defined in the traditional sense, as belonging to a class of a certain educational and occupational level, have lost a clear connection with particular linguistic varieties. So it is suggested that traditional class-related speech varieties are no longer relevant to adolescents in contemporary culturally diverse environments (e.g. Maegaard 2007 and Kristiansen 2009), and instead ethnicity is emphasised as the key differentiating category for language use. In this book, I look into the situated use of some of the new linguistic resources that variationist research has identified as multi-ethnic, and I argue that this approach can reveal a great deal to studies of language variation and change. Studying the functions of particular linguistic resources in identity work helps us gain knowledge about the social values that speakers (rather than analysts) ascribe to language forms, and it shows, for example, that the new linguistic practices previously interpreted as ethnic by variationists (due to their more frequent occurrence among multiethnic groups of speakers), actually often index masculinity and ‘societal low’. So variationist sociolinguistics provides useful insights into the distributional patterns of linguistic forms which tell us something about wider norms. It is the pattern of usage that makes linguistic forms available for language users’ more or less conscious social work and style shifting (Silverstein 2003). Still approaches that prioritise pre-defined categories of class and ethnicity inevitable struggle to capture how social power differences are invoked in linguistic practices, but with the methods of interaction analysis and ethnography we can grasp the interplay of social categories and see that the values of minority/majority are interwoven with male/female, young /adult, and high/low (to mention only the most obvious).

1.3 Field methods, participants and data

From August 2004 to June 2005, I collected my data in the Nørrebro Taekwondo Club. Before this, I had informed the board of the club about the study and my interest in social relationships and linguistic practice among the children and adolescents. The board members were keen for the club to be the focus of a research project (this was not the first time, see Anderson 2005, 2006) and did not wish the club's name to be anonymous. I observed in the club 3-4 days a week from 4pm to about 7pm, when the youngest members had typically left. I was also present at a few fighting competitions during weekends in the field work period. Based on my observations, I chose to focus on 16 children and teenagers who agreed to participate in my study¹². From October 2004 the participants recorded themselves during their time in the club before and after the training sessions. The collection of self-recordings continued throughout the time of the field work. From December 2004 I collected video-recordings of group conversations among the participants, after this I carried out group-interviews, and towards the end of the field work period, I interviewed each participant individually (all interviews were audio-recorded, see timeline of fieldwork in figure 1.1).

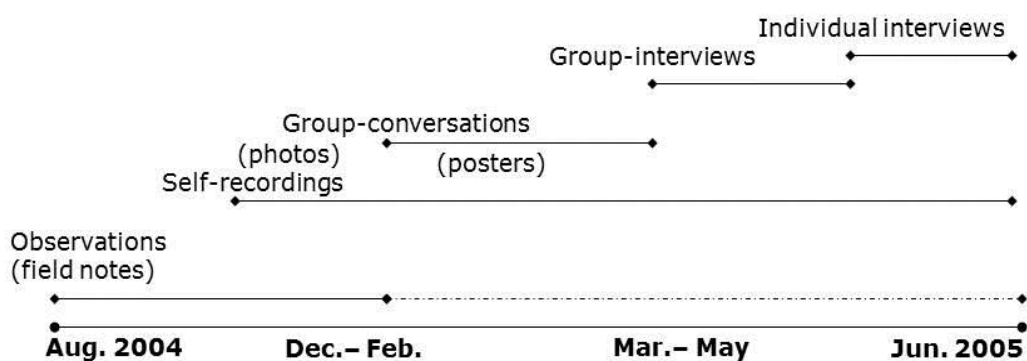


Figure 1.1: Data collection

I had many years of experience with taekwondo and the club before I began my research. Most of my informants I had known for several years before I carried out my study, and it would be impossible, and also pointless, to leave out my pre-research knowledge. I began practising taekwondo in 1989 in a club in a small town in North West Sealand, where I achieved the black belt in 1995 (At the time of the field work I had achieved the degree of 3rd Dan). Since 1996 I have been a member of the Nørrebro Taekwondo Club and participated regularly in the adult red-black belt classes. I became a children's instructor in 1997, and in cooperation with my brother I taught most of the children's basic technique classes until January 2002. I have been a member of the board in the club from 2000-2004, where I have, in particular, been engaged in children's matters (and social activities outside training sessions for adult members). I also taught the girls' class from 2003 until two months before beginning the field work.

On the one hand, my former relation to the field of study left me with particular advantages. I was, as a familiar co-member, met with an open-minded and trusting attitude towards my research, and I had easy access to the field. I did not have to spend a major part of the time in the field seeking background knowledge, such as information about the characteristics of taekwondo practice and the formal organisational structures in the club. Instead I could concentrate on the social practices among the youngest members. During interactions with me, the children and adolescents in the club could (and did) refer to past experiences, practices, and names without having to explain every detail, and I have throughout my research been able to draw on far more extensive knowledge than I could otherwise have obtained during the limited time available for the field work in connection with a funded project. On the other hand, my situation entailed certain limitations and challenges. Participant-observers can fruitfully gain from alternating between high involvement and more distant observation (Duranti 1997: 102). It is important to approach involvement in the field with an open-minded understanding of the practices, but too intense involvement can entail the danger of 'going native' (De Laine 1997; Bryman 2001), and a degree of distance is crucial to the interpretation and analysis of the observed practices (Gulløv & Højlund 2003). The fact that I was already a familiar member of the community of practice of the club when I began my observations meant that I could perhaps not as freely attempt a role as a researcher in the club. In my case it would have made no sense to restrict my interaction with friends and acquaintances I had known for years when I carried out my research in the club,

so I did not. I was an involved participant and interacted in the way I would usually do with other club members during the field work. This also meant that a few times I was disturbed in my observations of the children, if an adult friend wanted to talk to me and I had to change my focus of attention. I was also sometimes expected to carry out other functions in the club while I was observing (such as answering questions from children and parents or fetching games for the children in the café). Yet, although I was treated as a native member of the club I was, because of my age, obviously not a complete participant of the young members' peer-group, and in relation to the children and teenagers I could often assume a more observing role as an accepted by-stander (Duranti 1997: 101)¹³.

It was a challenge to carry out observations in this very dynamic environment where more than 200 children and adolescents arrived, practiced, and left during the week. Therefore I developed criteria of initial selection. I focused my observations on practices and interactions among the children before and after the taekwondo practice. The main reason for this was that the taekwondo sport itself, and the organised training, was never my intended research focus. Rather I was interested in the young member's participation in the community of practice surrounding the sports activities. During training sessions, social practices are strictly organised according to specific rules, and linguistic interaction is in principle not allowed (see chapter 2). This does not mean that linguistic interaction does not take place. There is no doubt that self-recordings from participants during practice could have been an interesting addition to my data collection. Still, wearing recording-equipment while practising martial art (jumping, falling, running, grappling, kicking, and punching each other) is difficult and was for reasons of safety not allowed. This meant that I chose the participants of the study among members who spent time in the club before and after practice, and decided to leave out the members who arrived just in time to change their clothes and left immediately after practice. I focussed my initial observations on which members were spending time and repeatedly interacting with each other, but I also aimed for including both male and female participants that varied in age, taekwondo experience and ethnic background.

Being an adult researcher studying children implies certain issues of power difference. In most communities adults compared to children have more influence, higher status and more access to information. Field roles though, as Gulløv and Højlund (2003) note, are never just *'(...) direct functions of age. Roles are negotiable and defined by many social parameters and individual interests'* (Gulløv & Højlund 2003:91, my translation). As participant in the

taekwondo club I was, nevertheless, in a position to comment on, restrict, and correct the children's behaviour in the club, whereas they were not in position to direct my behaviour. In addition, as an instructor, I was potentially in a position to give advice and make decisions in relation to technical taekwondo matters; I was in possession of a key to the club; and I could freely use the club facilities, whereas the children were dependent on permission from an adult office-worker. During the field work, I was of course also an academic carrying out a study, but my relation to the participants during the collection in general rarely emphasised the role of a researcher. This role became most prominent during interviews. Association with the (former) trainer role did not only entail authoritarian features. A children's instructor was, compared to other adults in and outside the club, also in a more familiar relation to the young members because of shared experiences and frequent interaction. And although I had carried out some disciplinary functions, I had always emphasised friendly, relaxed, and humorous contact with the young people in the club. I experienced my relation with the participants, in spite of being asymmetric in some ways, as mainly characterised by sympathy and trust developed during our years of mutual engagement in the club activities¹⁴.

A final aspect, which I found to be relevant to my field relations, was the aspect of gender. I am female, and during the field work, in addition to my usual use of feminine stylistic features outside training sessions (long hair, skirts, make-up, and dresses), I transported around with me a visible pregnancy. A pregnant woman was an unfamiliar identity in the club community, and it prevented me from actively practising the sport. In that sense it enhanced my status as *former* practitioner and instructor. My history of practices in the club and of interactions with the children was not dominated by traditional feminine characteristics. I had shouted Korean commands, demonstrated push-ups, taught the children forceful kicks, and always attempted an approach to the taekwondo practice similar to the male instructors'. During the field work, however, I experienced to a degree, rather classically, that my gender identity was an advantage in relation to the female participants and a limitation in my relation to the male participants. It was clear that in particular the younger boys (where the distance in age was also greater) during single interviews were sometimes reluctant to speak to me, but I cannot be sure that this was caused by the gender difference in particular. In general the interviews with the girls lasted longer than the interviews with the boys (apart from interviews with the oldest boys), and the boys appeared more comfortable when I talked to them in groups, which I mostly did. All the field relations, previous experiences, and identity categories are potentially relevant to the understanding of

the collected data. Still, the effect on the construction of data should not be assumed a priori, but considered in the data-analysis.

1.3.1 Participants

The 16 participants, chosen on the basis of my initial observations, had all practiced taekwondo for a minimum of one year in the club. I chose not to include complete beginners, because I wanted their voluntary participation to be based on repeated experiences as members of the club community. This excluded the most peripheral members among the young people in the club, but the membership statuses among the participants still vary significantly. The main criterion for my choice of participants was the friendship connections between them, observable as frequent interactions and participation in joint practices. The participants appeared to form five different friendship groups. The observed friendship relations among the group members were confirmed in the interviews. None of the groups were gender mixed. In general, I observed noticeably little interaction between male and female children and adolescents. The groups also appeared to be largely divided according to age. I will refer to the three groups of boys as simply: boys, 1, 2, and 3 (with 1 being the youngest boys and 3 being the oldest) and to the two groups of girls as: girls 1 (the youngest) and 2 (the oldest)¹⁵. A list of the groups and their members can be seen in table 1.a.

Group/ Pseudonym	Age	Ethnic background	Belt colour	Parents' occupation
Boys 1:				
Yusuf	10	Moroccan (born in Denmark)	Blue with red line	Mother: secretary Father: kitchen help
Tim	10	Danish-Polish (born in Spain, came to Denmark at the age of 6)	Green	Father: musician (lives in Spain) Mother: not working
Zaki	10	Moroccan- Iraqi (born in Denmark)	Red with two black lines	Father: working (but does not know with what) Mother: not working
Boys 2:				
Mohammed	13	Pakistani (born in UK, came to Denmark as a baby)	Red with one black line	Father: small shop keeper Mother: not working
Micas	10	Pakistani (born in Denmark)	Red	Father: works at greengrocer Mother: not working
Usher	11	Pakistani (born in Denmark)	Blue with red line	Father: taxi driver Mother: not working
<i>Ahmet</i>	11	Palestinian (born in Denmark)	Red	Father: hairdresser Mother: hairdresser
Boys 3:				

Fouad	15	Moroccan (born in Denmark)	Blue	Father: retired Mother: not working
Ilias	14	Moroccan (born in Morocco, came to Denmark as a baby)	Black (1 st Dan)	Father: primary school teacher (lives in Jutland) Mother: primary school teacher
Murat	14	Afghan (but parents grew up in Pakistan, born in Denmark)	Black (1 st Dan)	Father: retired Mother: incapacity benefits
Girls 1:				
Anna	11	Danish	Blue	Father: engineer Mother: psychology teacher at nurse college
Michelle	12	Danish	Blue	Father: plumber Mother: receptionist
Iris	11	Moroccan (born in Denmark)	Orange	Father: work in clothes production Mother: not working
Girls 2:				
Misha	15	Taiwanese-Mexican (born in Taiwan, lived in Mexico and came to Denmark at the age of 3)	Black belt (1 st Dan)	Father: engineer (lives in Taiwan) Mother: educated veterinarian (but pursuing further education in different field)
Ling	15	Thai (born in Thailand came to Denmark at the age of 11)	Green	Father: (lives in Thailand) Mother: no work info
Malena	15	Polish (born in Poland came to Denmark at the age of 7)	Red with two black lines	Father: (lives in Poland) Mother: incapacity benefits

Table 1.a: Participants listed according to friendship group, gender, age, ethnic background, belt colour and parents' occupation.

Selected background variables of the participants are also listed in the table, some are traditional sociological variables as gender, age, and ethnic background, and one, taekwondo experience (belt colour), is more specific to the community of practice (see table 2.a, chapter 2, for hierarchical order of belt colours). In addition, I have listed parents' occupational status in the table as it was explained to me during the individual interviews. Some of the participants, however, were rather unclear in their answers to what their parents did. Most of the children lived in the local area of Nørrebro, apart from Iris, Anna and Tim, who lived in Emdrup and Frederiksberg (areas stereotypically associated with higher social status than Nørrebro). Ilias attended an Arabic private school and Murat attended a Danish private school, but all other participants went to the local public schools.

1.3.2 Data

The data were recorded in interactions with other participants they would otherwise interact with in the club¹⁶. The data consist of audio-recorded self-recordings from the participants (on mp3-players); video-recorded group-conversations, which I recorded on a still camera in a table tennis room in the club while the children, without me present, were engaged in activities (making a poster called ‘A day in the taekwondo club’ from their own photos, or a collage of ‘boyish’ and ‘girlish’ pictures from the free postcards, Go-cards); and audio-recorded semi-structured qualitative interviews. I have recorded one interview with each group listed above (although Ahmet did not participate in any group-interview) and one individual interview with each participant¹⁷. The group-interviews all turned out to be different, some lasted 30 minutes and some 1 hour, and different topics were emphasised in each interview.

In all, I collected about 25 hours of recordings. These data are supplemented by my observations (documented by notes, lists, drawings, and maps); a range of club documents (like lists of members, internal informational documents, meetings reports, and texts on the club web-page); the participants’ photo-documentation; the posters they produced during the group-conversations; participants’ profiles on the internet chat-homepage, Arto; a few replay-sessions where I discussed recordings with the participants; and interviews with adult members. During the field work I carried out one interview with the children’s main instructor, but I also had access to transcriptions of interviews with black belts from the club carried out by a journalist in connection with a planned publication (see chapter 2).

1.4 Approaching identity in interaction

The theoretical and methodological underpinnings of my work build on a varied collection of insights and resources from modern sociology (e.g. Bourdieu 1991; Giddens 1984), theories of indexicality and interactional sociolinguistics (such as Gumperz 1982; Agha 2007; Rampton 1995, 2006; Jørgensen 2010; Heller 2007; and Blommaert 2005) as well as conversation analytical work (e.g. Zimmerman 1998; Goodwin 2006). The theoretical frameworks are introduced and discussed in connection with the empirical analyses in the chapters to come, but an introduction to my overall approach to identity in interaction is useful at this point.

Identity has been a central concern in sociology and sociolinguistics for the past 40 years (with the influence of the works of, for instance, Erikson 1968 and Goffman 1963) and it is one of the most widely used concepts in social sciences and humanities (Bendle 2002). At the same time as being a popular research topic, identity is also a highly contested concept (e.g. Hall 2000), and its usefulness as analytical category has been questioned (e.g. Bendle 2002; Brubaker & Cooper 2000). The problem with identity in contemporary research relates to the highly varied use of the concept resulting in under-theorised and vague accounts (Bendle 2002: 1). Current approaches to identity within sociolinguistics are influenced by poststructuralist thinking and emphasise the flexibility and fluidity of identities. The account of *acts of identity* by Le Page & Tabouret-Keller (1985) represents this flexible view of identity in relation to language use, and has been highly influential within sociolinguistics. Since then sociolinguistic approaches to identity have developed and been significantly nuanced in the pursuit of locating identity work in interaction and linguistic practice. Examples of this are Blommaert (2005) and Coupland (2007), who emphasise that identity work does not merely involve strategic controlled acts, but through semiotic displays social category associations may 'leak' from our behaviour in less controlled ways (Coupland 2007: 111). In addition, a central part of identity work is the ascription and reception of social category belonging by others (Blommaert 2005: 206; see also Agha 2007: 234).

So if identity is already so well researched and criticised as analytical concept why do we need another book about it? The answer to this is that identity continues to be a relevant *category of practice* (Brubaker & Cooper 2000: 4), and this is how it is approached in this study. Ascription of and identification with social categories have important consequences for human social life in general and for processes of social marginalisation and contestation. The field I study is no exception to this. The participants are often categorised as 'minority youth', they identify and label others as 'fighter', 'paki', 'tough girl' etc. and they bring about stereotypical associations with identities through their communicative acts. To gain a comprehensive understanding of how the children and adolescents participate in a club community, negotiate their place in the social order and relate to wider societal processes, consideration of identities can hardly be overlooked. Dealing with identity as a category of practice means that the analytical focus is in fact practice, that is contextualised social, semiotic and linguistic acts. The aim of my research is not to describe what identity is and the end point of my research is not identity as situated achievements of one or another social role. I do not finish my analysis by concluding, for instance, that in these excerpts Ilias performs a

streetwise identity. I consider identity work to be stories we tell about social belonging through linguistic and other semiotic practices in situated activities. With the underpinnings of sociolinguistic and interactional approaches to identities and language, I study these practices and their links to reach the end point of my research, namely to contribute to discussions of cultural diversity, language and social categorisation as aspects of the social life and societal conditions of contemporary urban youth.

Processes of identification and categorisation involve positioning on different social levels. Participants in a social encounter may relate to different social roles with respects to the activity of interacting (as speakers, listeners, storytellers etc.), the activity type they are engaged in during the interaction or the genre relevant to the situation at hand (a job interview, casual talk with friends etc.), or more wide scale socio-cultural frames (gender, ethnicity, age and class relations). All of these interpretive frames are dealt with under the headline of 'identity' in interactional and sociolinguistic research. Indeed, we may not gain much analytical precision from covering this broad scope of social processes with the concept of identity, and accounts of identity in interactional and sociolinguistic work suggest various sub-concepts to separate the levels of analysis (e.g. Zimmerman (1998); Coupland 2007: chapter 5).

I combine analytical perspectives addressing different levels of context¹⁸. I do this to investigate the links between social categorisation and semiotic practices in the here-and-now situations as well as the historical and socio-cultural embeddedness of the resources used. I take into account a level of what I call a *sequential context* with an analytical focus on how turns-at-talk relate to one another in a stretch of conversation. What do the individual turns do? What are the displayed reactions and alignments in the following turns by other participants? But also, how are the utterances composed with respect to accent, grammar, and word choice, and how does the form relate to their function? In addition, I consider what I refer to as the *situational context* and the types of activities relevant to the interaction. What are the participants engaged in during the conversation? Where does the interaction take place? Who are present? And what type of conversation is it? There might well be several simultaneously relevant activities going on in a specific situation. They may be playing cards in the café and having a casual chat that involves a ritual insult activity, for instance, or stamping a train ticket at the station whilst discussing their test results in school. I also include a level of *relational context* which involves the social relationship between the

participants, and their former interactional history (to the extent that I have access to this in my data). Finally, I discuss institutional, moral, or ideological codes, values, and identities possibly made relevant, reproduced, or negotiated during a particular sequence of interaction on a level of *socio-cultural context*. Different normative orientations are relevant within specific socio-cultural domains and spaces, and a multiplicity of these normative domains may co-exist¹⁹. Thereby the context levels are not treated or to be understood as separated or independent. They are simultaneous perspectives which inform and influence each other, and they correspond to particular analytical conceptions. Incorporating such different analytical perspectives is a way of grasping the multiscalar layering of social interaction (Blommaert 2010). I start with a close look at what happens in the interactions between the participants. I am aware that these interactions are situated within a particular community and take into account how this is reflected in the conduct of the participants. This means that I also carry out ethnographic analysis across interactions within the club. The community relates to a larger field of Danish association sports in which particular discourses and ideologies are negotiated and to even more global principles of human social organisation (such as widespread social meanings ascribed to gender categories or age differences). Local interactional practices within the club community might invoke broader ideological discourses as well as more community-specific ones. At the same time, interactions between members constitute the club community and its social meaning making.

1.5 Outline of the book

In the introduction I laid out the overall argument of this book: that studying the details of interactional activities among a group of young martial arts practitioners significantly complicates the picture drawn by influential societal discourses on cultural diversity. In addition it complicates the understanding of contemporary sociolinguistic processes we reach from studying the distribution of language forms. As I have demonstrated, tendencies of cultural and ethnic essentialism can be traced in public discourses as well as in part of recent sociolinguistic research. A central assumption of the work in this book is that complications constructively add to our knowledge of language, identities, and cultural diversity (see also Blommaert & Dong 2010). This way of arguing is characteristic of the epistemology of linguistic ethnography.

The relation between the specific case and its wider socio-historical context is dealt with in relation to the studied martial arts club in chapter 2. The chapter involves an introductory

macro-contextualisation and a discussion of the club as part of the field of sports in Denmark as well as considerations of the historical background of the club, its location, and the particularities of the sport (building on Bourdieu's 1994, 1996 theoretical framework). I further consider the individuals' social practices and identity positioning on the level of the friendship groups in the club and the relevance of social identity categories and sports skills to the social order and status hierarchies within the club informed by the analytical concept of community of practice (Wenger 1998). I find that orientation to sports as competitive activity or mutual social fellowship is central to the participation and positioning in the club, and I discuss these ethnographic observations in relation to the prevalent assumptions in sports-politics and among sports practitioners of leisure clubs as potential sites for societal integration. Thus, for readers with an interest in the sociology of sports, this part of the book is of particular relevance.

In the study of a martial arts club, the sports activity itself stereotypically connotes traditional masculine values, and my analyses of the social organisation and conduct of the club members (presented in chapter 2) indeed suggest that femininity represents a minority category within the club community. The club makes different ways of participating available by offering a gender exclusive girls' class, and those who choose the girls-only class are positioned as and remain very peripheral members. In addition, aspects of gender identity play a part in both the societal discourses and the sociolinguistic research discussed above. Finally, gender identities are made relevant by the participants in their presentations in interviews where gender-stereotypes are reproduced and, in particular by the oldest girls, partly challenged. In chapter 3, I discuss interactional means of negotiating social status and alliances in playful and less playful interactional practices among the girls and boys in the club. I relate the data to interactional sociolinguistic accounts of frames and contextualisation conventions (based on Gumperz 1982 and Lytra 2007). In line with Goodwin's (2006) work on interactional negotiations between school girls, my data suggest that the girls are strongly concerned with processes of inclusion and exclusion. In contrast to this I find that the boys' conversations are characterised by explicit demonstrations and claims of competence often embedded within (mostly playful) competitive interactional activity types. This leads me to suggest that the dimensions of competition and social fellowship pointed to in chapter 2 can be traced on the micro-level of interactional practices among the girls and the boys in the club.

A tendency of the research in Western Europe over the past three decades has been the focus on particular speech styles developing in urban multicultural communities. As pointed out in section 1.3, research on these speech styles tends to foreground ethnicity as explanatory category through the labelling and the interpretations of contemporary urban youth language. In chapter 4 I discuss how the foregrounding of ethnic relationships in professional research discourse contributes to particular positioning of minority youth. The chapter includes a description of the major trends in the sociolinguistic developments in Copenhagen as well as previous research on the heteroglossic speech style of youth in culturally diverse settings. Based on interactional data from the club illustrating the situated use of linguistic resources associated with the contemporary urban speech style in Copenhagen, I discuss the relevance of ethnicity to these practices. Finally, drawing on Agha's (2007) theoretical framework for understanding situated communication in relation to wider sociolinguistic developments I consider the consequences of constructing the object of contemporary urban youth language in certain ways.

The final chapter concerned with micro-analysis of interactions is chapter 5. Here the focus is interactional sequences where orientation to youth cultural practices and orientation to measures of societal success (such as school achievements) are brought together. I analyse sequences where the participants engage in classroom related activities (such as spelling, discussion of essays etc.), and discuss how the participants incorporate different cultural frames by bringing peer-cultural speech practices into educationally focused interactional activities. The analyses make clear how the participants challenge and renegotiate dominant assumptions of a contradiction between mainstream-societally accepted behaviour valued in school contexts, and resources for gaining social peer-credibility among youth. After that, I consider the wider relevance of such interactional practices in relation to the issues of integration and societal positioning of minority youth, and in relation to sociolinguistic enregisterment (Agha 2007).

An attempt to capture the subtlety and complexities of situated identity work and social relationships in a sports club is not likely to lead to simple straight-forward conclusions. And this book does not either. Yet, in chapter 6, I outline some main insights gained from this work and I discuss their possible consequences in relation to the societal positioning of ethnic minority youth and the aspects of current sports sciences and sociolinguistics discussed in the introduction. The journey through everyday encounters of young taekwondo-club members

throughout the next pages will shed a new light on accounts of culture, identity and integration. We should now be ready to set off.

¹ Danish: Mehmet og Modkulturen.

² Personer med anden etnisk baggrund.

³ Bilingual is the term employed in official school statistics to refer to pupils from homes where Danish is not spoken. In practice however, the term seems to be employed mainly to refer to children of Moslem background (see Karrebæk 2006:9)

⁴ The Ministry of Education emphasizes ‘counter culture’ in their publications that relates to the report, and the Danish unions of teachers and nursery teachers (Danmarks Lærerforening and BUPL) have employ the concept of counter culture in a joint contribution to the public debate (see e.g. the feature in the national newspaper Information 26.08.2010).

⁵ 10.4 % immigrants including children of born in Denmark by ‘foreign-born’ parents (Statistics Denmark 2012)

⁶ The current government (2014) has closed down this ministry and instead immigration and integration is dealt with in other ministries, such as the Ministry of Law or the Ministry of Social Affairs

⁷ Rennison (2009) identifies eight different discourses on diversity related to the integration debate in Denmark. In addition to the ethnocentric discourse she identifies a rights- and anti-discrimination-discourse, a discourse on “broadness” and acceptance, an empowerment-discourse, and a multiculturalism-discourse (mainly characteristic of human rights organisations, particular political organisations, and cultural research). She also identifies a market-discourse, an innovation-discourse, and a competence-discourse (characteristic of the field of business and of a neoliberal ideology). These types of discourses all in different ways emphasise the potential benefits of diversity for businesses. Within this understanding, integration is viewed as an economic issue for society (or individual businesses). Thus, successful integration equals contribution to society by minority members through participation in education and the labour market.

⁸ According to Rennison, one of the initiating forces behind the moral panic in the Danish debate was an immigrant-sceptical campaign run by the tabloid newspaper “Ekstrabladet” for about five weeks in the spring of 1997.

⁹ The idea of the preeminence of ethnicity is also firmly embedded within disciplines such as cross-cultural psychoogy (e.g. Sellers et al. 1998 and see overview in Charmaraman & Grossman 2010)

¹⁰ (http://www.nyidanmark.dk/dadk/Integration/puljer/puljebeskrivelser/det_frivillige_integrationsarbejde_og_deltagelse_i_idraets_og_foreningslivet).

¹¹ Quist (2008:8) argues in relation to the study of new linguistic practices in multiethnic communities in Copenhagen, that a variety perspective and a stylistic practice perspective answer different kinds of questions. Because it does not seek to investigate the nature of categorical identities and their linguistic expressions, research within the variety perspective merely employs identity categories as independent variables. However, the systematic methods of this approach are needed when the goal is to describe linguistic variation (Quist 2008: 17).

¹² The participants were not told specifically what my research focus was. They were told I was working at the university and that I was interested in their social lives in the club, that participation in the study would be anonymous, and that it would involve video and audio-recordings of interviews and conversations. The same information was given in a letter of agreement to the parents of the participants, and these were returned to me with the parents’ signature, before I carried out any recordings.

¹³ I usually placed myself in the café with a book (and my notebook), occasionally helped with administrative tasks as described above and frequently chatted to the young members. I did not engage in their practices of playing playstation games, table-football, table-tennis, playful fighting, or warm up exercises in the gym. Some adult members would occasionally participate in these informal practices with the children, but I had never done so before and chose to stay in the familiar role as part of the audience to the various competitive activities. This position appeared the most unremarkable and was a convenient position, in between observation and participation with good possibilities of note-writing.

¹⁴ This attitude to me is suggested, for instance, by the way some of the girls were not afraid to voice a critical opinion about another instructor and did not hesitate to express their dislike for the taekwondo discipline of basic technique, well knowing that I, as their former instructor, had always emphasised the importance and quality of technique. Likewise the boys openly told me about fellow members’ rule-breaking behaviour.

¹⁵ Two of the participants were only partly group members (their pseudonyms are written in italics in table 1.a). Ahmet caught my interest because I noticed that he did not seem attached to any particular friendship group. Instead his

participation in activities in several different groups appeared to be accepted. One of the groups he interacted with was boys 2, and I decided to include him in the study. I recorded group-conversations between the members of the boys' group 2 both with and without Ahmet's presence. The group-interview with boys 2 was carried out without Ahmet present. Iris was also only partly associated with girls 1. The younger girls formed friendship dyads rather than groups of three or more. Initially, I asked both Iris and her closest friend in the club to participate, but her friend's parents did not approve of her participation. Iris did, however, frequently interact with the two other members of girls' group 1, but would normally be accompanied by her friend. The girls reported an understanding of their relationships as two pairs of best friends. Iris was present at both group-conversation and group-interview with girls 1.

¹⁶ All recorded data, apart from the self-recordings (of which only the sequences in focus are transcribed) were transcribed in a preliminary version by me or a student assistant according to the CHAT-format of the CHILDES conventions (MacWhinney 1995). I initially chose this format because I was already familiar with the conventions and I was interested in developing a data-corpus potentially suitable for supplemental quantitative analysis as well (In this work I have not made use of this potential). During the micro-analysis I listened through the sequences in focus repeatedly, including the ones from the self-recordings. I spent at least 2 hours on each sequence (often a lot longer). I adjusted and developed the transcripts during the analysis. The final versions presented here are by large transcribed according to what Steensig refers to as *minimal CA conventions* (Steensig 2005) which build on Jefferson's transcription system (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974).

¹⁷ During the interview I attempted a relaxed conversation, but had in advance an idea of a number of topics I wanted to discuss. At appropriate points during the interactions I initiated the topics listed in this loosely structured (memorised) interview guide: Tell about a recent experience in the club; Friends in the club; Groups in the club (elaborate on gender relations if they are brought up); What is considered cool in the club?; Reasons for practising Taekwondo; Language (which languages do you speak? and when do you use them?).

¹⁸ Blommaert (2010) suggests the notion of sociolinguistic scale to grasp the nature of the social situatedness of language. The scale metaphor is a way of operationalising the connection between micro- and macro-levels of social reality and to take into account a dimension of power hierarchies as well. Scale refers to movement in time and space dominated by particular norms and codes. Or as semiotized space and time as Blommaert (2010: 35) describes it. Scale range from the local, momentary, subjective to the translocal, timeless, objective – with various potential scale-levels in between.

¹⁹ This co-existence of norm centres is what is referred to as polycentricity (Blommaert, Collins and Slembrouck 2005; Silverstein 1998: 405).