



AARHUS UNIVERSITY



Coversheet

This is the accepted manuscript (post-print version) of the article.

Contentwise, the accepted manuscript version is identical to the final published version, but there may be differences in typography and layout.

How to cite this publication

Please cite the final published version:

Haller, M. B., & Kolind, T. (2018). Space and ethnic identification in a Danish prison. *Punishment & Society*, 20(5), 580–598. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474517722541>

Publication metadata

Title:	Space and ethnic identification in a Danish prison
Author(s):	Mie Birk Haller & Torsten Kolind (Centre for Alcohol and Drug Research, Aarhus University, Denmark)
Journal:	Punishment & Society
DOI/Link:	https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474517722541
Document version:	Accepted manuscript (post-print)

General Rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognize and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

If the document is published under a Creative Commons license, this applies instead of the general rights.

Introduction

Since the birth of the prison institution, prison planners have been preoccupied with the influence of prison architecture on the prisoners' moral life and their processes of rehabilitation. In this way, prison planning reflects societal morality and the penal philosophy of the time (Jewkes and Johnston, 2007). Today's European prisons, for instance, have increasingly focused on avoiding the dehumanizing characteristics of earlier century's prisons and now attempt to create more 'positive environments' (Jewkes and Johnston, 2007). However, new sensibilities and new 'pains of imprisonment' (Sykes, 1958) may also develop in ostensibly humane prisons (Shammas, 2014), and the 'soft power' exercised in the more humane prison environments may generate new kinds of frustrations, such as the pains of indeterminacy, pains of psychological assessment, and pains of self-management (Crewe, 2011b). Attempts to create more positive environments and attention to the different needs of the prisoner population have led to an increased departmentalization of many European prisons. Increasingly, we see the construction of specialized prison wings to house or treat prisoners with drug problems, sex offenders, and young offenders (Kolind & Duke, 2016; McKeganey et al., 2016). In this paper, we are primarily interested in the growth of designated drug treatment wings.

In many European countries (including Denmark which is the focus of this paper), special wings closed off from the rest of the prison have been established for prisoners in drug treatment programs (EMCDDA, 2012; Kolind et al., 2013; Mjåland, 2016). Although

there are challenges associated with carrying out drug treatment in prisons (McIntosh and Saville, 2006), research has shown that the staff-prisoner relation in these specialized wings tends to be less authoritarian than in normal prison wings (Nylander et al., 2011; Kolind et al., 2015), and prisoners report that prison life on these wings is less harsh and stressful (Giertsen et al., 2015). On the other hand, the staff in these wings report new dilemmas related to the entry of new categories of treatment staff and the introduction of new treatment-related tasks (Nylander et al., 2011).

Despite the growing research interest in designated drug treatment wings, as outlined above, no studies have examined the consequences of such new specialised wings on the practices of identification hierarchies and typologies among prisoners. In this paper, therefore, we will investigate how prison spaces, like drug treatment wings and regular wings respectively, are used as symbolic metaphors for ethnic identification in Danish prisoners' everyday practice.

Within the last 20 years, Denmark has evolved into a multi-ethnic society. Issues of immigration and concerns about integration have become increasingly contentious themes in public and political debates (Mouritsen and Olsen, 2013). While 'ethnic problems' and notions of ethnicity, as Hall (1996) reminds us, are always historically, culturally and politically modified, in the present Danish context, ethnic minority young males have been represented as problematic 'others' because of their seeming involvement in crime, drug dealing and gang activities (Jensen, 2011). These problems,

which have been identified as troubling reflections of the difficulties of successfully integrating immigrant populations into Danish society (Klement et al. 2010). At the same time, a growing social exclusion and discrimination of ethnic minority young people has also been reported in many areas; for instance, in relation to education, the labour market, residential areas (so-called ‘ghettos’), social relations, the police, the night-time economy, and other social policies (Kolind et al. 2017).

Moreover, the growth of the ethnic minority populations in Denmark has also been reflected in crime statistics and in the composition of the prison population. As in other European countries (Hällsten et al., 2013; Salmi et al., 2015), disproportionately severe sentencing of people from ethnic minority backgrounds is documented in Denmark (Andersen and Tranæs, 2011). Economic deprivation and social disadvantage account for a part of this over-representation (Andersen and Tranæs, 2011). In 2004 (the first year where there was systematic monitoring on ethnicity and incarceration), 17% of the Danish prison population were of other than ethnic ‘Danish origin’.¹ By 2014, this figure had

¹ In official Danish classification, a person has ‘Danish origin’ if they have a least one parent who is both a Danish citizen and born in Denmark. Moreover, the Danish Prison Service distinguishes between ‘Danish citizens’ holding a Danish passport, ‘foreign citizens’ having a Danish address and social security number but who do not hold a Danish passport, and ‘foreigners’ without a Danish passport or any affiliation to Denmark’. In 2016, 71% of the prisoners in Danish prisons and detentions had Danish citizenship (Justitsministeriet, 2016).

risen to 27%.² In the maximum security prisons³, the amount of ethnic minority prisoners not of Danish origin reaches 44% compared to 24% in the minimum security ‘open prisons’. Among those prisoners undergoing drug treatment, prisoners with ‘non-Western’ background account for only 12% of the prisoners in the drug treatment wings in closed prisons, though they comprise 31% of the prisoners in these prisons (Heltberg, 2012: 54).⁴ The prisoners with ethnic minority backgrounds originate predominantly from Lebanon, Turkey, Somalia, Iraq, Pakistan, Iran, and Eastern Europe (Kriminalforsorgen, 2014, 2015).

In spite of the increase in the ethnic minority prisoner population, increased media attention, and a growing social exclusion, there is little qualitative research on how ethnicity is enacted in everyday prison life. In the United States, researchers were preoccupied with questions concerning race and ethnicity within prisons in the 1970s (see e.g.: Jacobs, 1979). However, this interest has declined in the last two decades, with only few qualitative studies on this area (Phillips, 2012: 29). As Phillips (2012: 48) argues with reference to the UK, little is known about the contemporary dynamics of ethnically

² In 2015, persons not of Danish origin made up 11.6% of the population in Denmark (Statistics Denmark <http://www.danmarksstatistik.dk/en>).

³ Denmark has five closed/maximum security prisons and eight open/minimum security prisons, which, together with the remand prisons, have a capacity of approximately 4,000 prisoners.

⁴ This study refers to police figures distinguishing between ‘Western’ and ‘non-Western’ origin. These figures are not fully comparable to the figures on ethnic composition mentioned above.

diverse prisons, such as the interracial, intra-racial, and cross-national interactions among prisoners.

In this article, therefore, we focus on the the relation between ethnicity and prison spaces in order to show how Danish prison spatial policy - especially with regards to drug treatment wings - essentializes notions of ethnic differences among prisoners. When we refer to ‘ethnicity’ in this article, we are concerned with how ethnicity is reflected in prisoners’ notions about norms, mentality, and attitude. Thus, ethnicity is not necessarily a matter of race, ethnic origin or official citizenship status.

Analytical background

According to Schütz (1954), all humans experience and understand others in terms of ideal types of typification. In this phenomenological understanding, typification is a cultural and social demarcation based on a human repertoire of cognitive schemes and realms of understanding. Identities, including ethnic identifications, can thus be understood as the way humans experience others in a typified manner. Ethnic typifications thus involve the assumptions through which people make sense of their worlds (Jenkins, 2008). Here we will investigate how particular prison spaces (regular and treatment wings) function as cognitive schemes in prisoners’ ethnic self-definition and ethnic identifications of others. It follows therefore, that prisoners’ divisions of their surroundings into ethnic natural kinds is what we want to explain, not what we want to

explain things with (Brubaker, 2002). In our understanding, ethnic identity is a social accomplishment continually constructed in interaction (Jenkins 2008). Hence, ethnic groups should not be seen as passive recipients of acquired cultures, but active agents who construct and negotiate their lives within given structural conditions (Song, 2003). That is, an individual's ability to choose an identity is constrained in various ways by social structure and social context (including geographical environment) that situate people in relation to similar (ethnic) others, so that collectively they experience their world from specific positions (Song 2003). As a consequence, ethnic identities are not essences, fixed or rooted. Rather they are fluid, dynamic and positional (Easthope 2009) and continually coming into being; similar to what Hall has coined 'new ethnicities' (1996).

The relation between schemes, ethnic identifications and space can be further understood by using Lefebvre's (1991) differentiations between *representations of space* and *representational spaces*. 'Representations of space' relate to the objective work of social engineers and technocrats, in our case prison officials working within the Prison Service who draw up plans, maps, models, and then construct prison spatial divisions. 'Representational spaces' on the other hand, refer to space 'as directly lived through its associated images and symbols' (Lefebvre, 1991: 39) and often refers to the way individuals make symbolic use of objects. Representational spaces embrace lived situations. Hence, such spaces are relational and situational, and highly dynamic. Finally,

although representations of space have an impact on lived reality (representational spaces), it is not a deterministic relationship; rather, the role of each kind of space and their mutual relationship have to be studied empirically. Linking Lefebvre's theory of space with ethnic identifications helps us focus explicitly on the intersection between ethnic and spatial cognitive schemes and typifications. Also, it helps us to focus on the interplay between administrative spatial/ethnic representational space and staff practices in the prison under study and, importantly, prisoners' practices and narratives that interpret such representations.

Data and setting

The study is based on seven months of ethnographic fieldwork (2012-2013) carried out in a Danish maximum security prison for male prisoners. Prisoners' names are anonymized and the prison is referred to as the 'State Prison'. State Prison has approximately 240 prisoners. It operates three separate treatment wings: a pre-treatment motivational wing, a primary treatment wing and a post-treatment wing. State Prison also had several designated regular wings with about fifteen to twenty prisoners in each. These included: wings for so-called 'strongly negative prisoners', 'gang-related prisoners', protected wings for 'weak prisoners', and wings for prisoners awaiting extradition.

The aim of the fieldwork was to investigate how initiatives for prisoner rehabilitation affected prisoners' everyday prison lives in different wings. The fieldwork focused

especially on the subjective experiences of prisoners who moved between the treatment and regular wings during transfers, drop-outs from treatment, released or re-imprisoned prisoners, etc. (see also Haller, 2015). In the process of studying these experiences, notions of ethnicity occupied a prominent place for both staff and prisoners. During fieldwork, the first author carried out 15 interviews with prisoners from regular wings, 15 interviews with prisoners from treatment wings, and seven follow-up interviews with released prisoners. An additional six interviews were conducted with treatment staff, of which three were with prison officers, and two with social workers. The interviews lasted between a half hour and three hours. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and then coded in NVivo by the first author. Selected interviews were then re-coded by the second author, after which the codes were compared.

All prisoners cited in this article had Danish citizenship and were born in Denmark. The majority of the prisoners with ethnic minority backgrounds had parents who originated from Arabic countries. They refer to themselves as ‘Muslims’ and most of them are fluent in both Danish and their parents’ mother tongue. The fieldwork and the interviews were carried out by the first author. Being a Danish female researcher in her thirties, she, naturally, stood out among the prisoners. At the start, many prisoners associated her with the female prison staff. However, after deducing that she was not employed by the prison, she was met with curiosity and accepted. In addition, some prisoners stated that it was easier for a woman to gain the confidence of the prisoners than a man.

The first part of the fieldwork was conducted in the enclosed primary treatment and post-treatment wings. The first author took part in everyday life at the wings and ‘hung out’ informally with prisoners at the end of the daily scheduled program. As the fieldwork progressed, time was also spent and interviews conducted with prisoners in regular wings and with prisoners who had dropped out of the treatment wings. Prisoners’ trust and willingness to participate in the research project had to be continuously nurtured. Relations of trust depended primarily on whether prisoners felt the first author to be loyal and whether informal time was spent socializing with the prisoners. Researchers often define the relation between prisoners and officers as an ‘us versus them’ relation (Ugelvik, 2014; Liebling, 2010). During fieldwork, the first author was positioned between staff members and prisoners, but tried not to associate too much with the staff so as not to lose the prisoners’ trust. The regular and treatment wings, however, constituted different normative contexts; hence, the roles and relations to prisoners and staff varied significantly.

The primary ethical considerations during the fieldwork had to do with access to and handling different sorts of information obtained in often confidential settings inside the prison. Leaking confidential information about a person could impact seriously on their life both inside and outside the prison. Consequently, a main concern was to prevent information from flowing between different groups of prisoners, and between prisoners and the prison staff. When writing about the knowledge gained during fieldwork, we are

inspired by ‘situational ethics’ where dilemmas are weighed in relation to one’s knowledge about the empirical context and a general moral responsibility.

The politics of space in Danish prisons

Before we move on to show how ethnicity is enacted in the everyday prison life in State Prison, we outline the spatio-political context in which these practices unfold.

In Danish prisons, steps to sub-divide prisons into increasingly specialised wings has taken place over the last 15 years. Among other things, regular wings have been sub-divided into smaller units, separate rehabilitation wings have been established, and special wings have been set up for prisoners defined as ‘strongly negative’ or by other criteria. Such spatial designs were implemented in an attempt to address a variety of acute problems within prison institutions, such as overcrowding, drug use and poor working conditions for prison staff (Kriminalforsorgen, 2005). In State Prison, such problems were caused particularly by so-called ‘negative controlling’ prisoners who on several occasions violently attacked prison officers (Fransen et al., 2013: 209-213).

This spatial division of the prisons has occurred in conjunction with an augmentation of respectively ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ control procedures. Soft control procedures, for instance, include anger-management courses, special educational programs, and drug treatment. Hard control procedures comprise measures such as mandatory urine controls, strengthened disciplinary sanctions, and intensification of surveillance. In general, Danish

prison policy has become more bifurcate; a dual policy characterized by a simultaneous increase in both control and disciplinary sanctions and in treatment and rehabilitative initiatives (Kolind et al., 2013). In this way, the increased division between soft and hard control procedures and the concurrent spatial division into soft and hard prisons wings have resulted in a clearer division of prisoners into, respectively, co-operative and deserving prisoners versus the more resistant, undeserving prisoners. This continuum of these two groups is defined in terms of the degree to which they want to engage in their own rehabilitation. Furthermore, this development should be seen in the light of the Danish Government's general welfare policy principle of client responsibility, known as 'something-for-something' (Regeringen, 2004), which also applies to the criminal justice area. According to this principle, citizens who make a special effort (for instance, undertaking drug treatment while in prison) are rewarded (by, for instance, transfer to an open prison), whereas bad behaviour (e.g., prison drug use) 'should cost' (for instance by being denied weekend leave). As in a Governmental policy document: 'With "something-for-something", society rewards those who can and will, punishes those who can but do not want, and helps those who want but cannot' (Regeringen, 2004:6).

In 2006, ethnicity was further added to the Danish prison policy of sub-division. By this point, tensions had emerged between different ethnic groups of prisoners leading the Ministry of Justice to issue a press release arguing for harsher measures towards 'strongly negative prisoners', in order to restore law and order (Justitsministeriet, 2006). As

mentioned, specialized wings for ‘strongly negative prisoners’ already existed (mainly for biker-related prisoners), in the new policy, these wings would also include ‘prisoners with another ethnic background’ (that is, ethnic minority prisoners). As stated by the Ministry of Justice:

...some of the prisoners with another ethnic background who belong to certain gangs or criminal networks exhibit negative or threatening behaviour towards other prisoners and staff. There is a need for special wings for those prisoners similar to the existing wings for strongly negative prisoners who, for instance, belong to gangs (Justitsministeriet, 2006).

Importantly, Danish prison policy has thus undergone a change from the traditional *strategy of dilution*, according to which ‘problematic prisoners’ were to be dispersed throughout the prisons so as to dilute problems (Kolind et al., 2013), towards a *strategy of division*, characterised by accumulating specific problems in designated wings, with specialised wings based on prisoners’ gang affiliations, drug problems, or to a certain extent ethnicity. In the following, we will analyse some of the consequences of this new policy and *strategy of division* for the kinds of ethnic classifications made by prisoners in State Prison.

Space and ethnic identification in State Prison

The prisoners of State Prison were formally placed in different prison wings as a result of institutional guidelines, staff assessments of how to best keep peace and order, and prisoners' requests to reside in particular wings, for instance, a treatment wing. From the staffs' perspective, separating prisoners into different wings was a way to prevent conflicts and fights, which could occur when conflicting individuals or groups of prisoners served time in the same wings. Another rationale, from the staff's perspective, was to allocate prisoners with a 'cooperative attitude' or a 'negative attitude' respectively, into different prison wings. For example, in the treatment wings, the staff were concerned with having prisoners who had 'a positive attitude' and who were 'receptive to treatment' in order to maintain a good 'treatment culture'. However, as became clear during the fieldwork, ethnicity also played an important part in the allocation of prisoners into different wings. This had to do with the fact that the different wings in State Prison were understood by staff and prisoners as different cultural subspaces within the prison, allegedly with their own characteristic mentalities, being either 'hard' or 'soft'. As a prisoner explained about these two subspaces: 'These are parallel worlds; two worlds that can't be compared' (fieldnote). In the terminology of most prisoners, (both Danish and ethnic minority), the treatment wings were 'soft' and defined as 'Danish wings', whereas regular wings and especially wings for 'strongly negative' prisoners were often defined

as ‘hard’ wings for ‘foreign prisoners’⁵. Many Danish prisoners actually named these wings with ethnic designations such as wings for ‘Perker’⁶ or ‘Arabs’. In this way, staff’s concerns about keeping peace and order and their ideas about prisoners’ attitude, different ethnic categorizations, notions of strength and weakness, and different drug practices interacted to generate processes of formal and informal segregation between Danes and ethnic minority prisoners. This kind of segregation served to reinforce ideas about ethnic differences.

‘Regular wings are for the uncontrollable Arabs’

In the regular wings and in the wings for ‘strongly negative’ prisoners, relations between prisoners and officers were more tense and impersonal than in the drug treatment wings. At times they were overtly antagonistic. The prisoner code as well as the norm among the officers called for prisoners and officers to interact as little as possible. On these wings, drugs were easily available, and drug use was frequent. This was not the case in the

⁵ ‘Foreign wings’ is an emic term that refers to the prisoners’ description of the social composition of the areas inside the prison. Thus, ‘foreign wings’ are not special wings officially reserved for prisoners without Danish citizenship.

⁶ In Denmark, ‘perker’ is a racist and derogatory term roughly equivalent to the British ‘Paki’, the Swedish ‘svartskalla’ (lit. black head) or the American ‘Nigger’. In Denmark however, ‘perker’ does not, refer to a history of racial abuse. (According to the Danish dictionary, ‘perker’ is an amalgam of Persian/*perser* and Turk/*tyrker*). In a Danish context, ‘perker’ is mostly used to refer to people originating from North Africa or the Middle East, but it is also used towards persons who are perceived to break with Danish social norms. Recently in Denmark, ethnic minority young people have adopted the term ‘perker’ for ‘internal’ self-identification.

treatment wings, based as they were on the ‘inclusive therapeutic community approach’, in which social inclusion and social interaction were seen as facilitators for drug-free lives. Prisoners were expected to co-operate in their own rehabilitation, which included having a positive attitude towards the prison institution generally and toward the treatment councillors and prison officers in the treatment wings. Being in the treatment wings and abstaining from drugs also implied – in accordance with the policy of ‘something-for-something’ – that prisoners had better chances of being granted rewards within the prison, such as early parole, weekend leaves, or transfer to an open prison.

In general, both prisoners and staff in State Prison regarded the treatment wings as wings for Danes. This was partly because both staff and Danish prisoners tended to regard the ethnic minority prisoners, mainly the so-called ‘Arabs’, as unsuited for treatment. The ethnic minority prisoners were said to possess behavioural characteristics, temperaments, and social norms that were not just different but incompatible to those of Danes. According to ‘Kent’, who had been in and out of State Prison many times over the past decade and who was now in Treatment Wing A, the ‘foreigners’⁷, as he called them, possessed a different mentality than ethnic Danes and therefore caused trouble and spoiled the atmosphere on the regular prison wings:

⁷ ‘Foreigner’ is an emic term that refers to prisoners’ own typology of ethnic differences. Thus, it does not refer to the prisoners’ citizenship.

They're always the ones making trouble on the wings. One is noisy. If there are two of them, they are very noisy and three, then they're already a gang, right. So they are the ones making the problems. And they are crude [...] If a new prisoner arrives then the first thing they [the foreigners] do is to chase him and ask him whether somebody's coming to visit him, and if someone does, then he has to bring some hash.

According to Kent, such issues and confrontations with 'foreign' prisoners are of recent date. Even though it was also tough to be in prison in the old days, the atmosphere, he states, has gotten much harder due to the growing numbers of 'foreigners'.

Ethnic Danish prisoners also often described 'Arab' or 'Muslim' cultures as incompatible with Danish culture. These 'Arab' or 'Muslim' prisoners were always seen as making trouble, extremely devoted to promoting their own group and in general behaving in ways that affected the wellbeing of the other inmates.

Consequently, ethnic Danes residing in the treatment wing explained how they had deliberately applied for transfer to the treatment wings in order to get away from the regular wings and the 'chaotic atmosphere' that they felt dominated these places where the 'foreigners' were serving their sentence. Bennet, for instance, who lived on Treatment Wing C had applied for treatment because the majority of prisoners in treatment were Danes and because he wanted to get away from the regular wing where the everyday life was so much under the control of groups of 'foreign' prisoners. Bennet explained:

When 15 or 20 out of 27 are foreigners, then they have the power and they run their own show. There shouldn't be too many of them because then they destroy a unit [...] That's why there aren't so many of them here [in the treatment wing]. It's actually intentional that no more can get in because they [the staff] know that [the foreign prisoners] can destroy an entire wing.

Ethnic Danish prisoners also distinguished between the different groups of 'foreign' prisoners, such that some ethnic groups were considered more compatible with Danish culture than others. Kent, an ethnic Danish prisoner, who in the same pragmatic way as Bennet had applied for drug treatment because he did not want to reside in the same wing with 'Perker', explained that the 'Perker' could not live on the same wing with the Eastern Europeans (particularly Serbs).

I'm happy with this wing [Treatment Wing A]. There are no 'Perkere' here because we have East Europeans here, right. [...] These East Europeans [...] are much more respectful and more like you and I [...]. They are not Muslims. It's always Muslims making all that trouble. [The Eastern Europeans] don't make any trouble. They are nice and friendly and easy to be around (Kent, Treatment Wing A).

According to some prisoners, ethnicity had become more important inside prison than outside. Georg, an ethnic Danish prisoner in the treatment wing, for instance, explained

that he had entered the treatment wing because cultural differences, which did not matter that much to him on the outside, became a problem inside:

It's not because I'm a racist in any way, and I have never been. I'm not the type to have many prejudices against other people. There are just some things that can't be changed, and that's these cultural differences. They just don't go together. It's like plus and minus.

Louis, another ethnic Danish prisoner, also perceived cultural differences between ethnic Danes and Muslim prisoners to be a major problem. In fact, he felt that his Danish ethnic majority status was threatened, and he blamed the prison authorities for having 'given in' to the demands of those with foreign origins:

The Danish prisons have been taken over by the foreigners. So now the Danes have no say in the Danish prisons. (...) Even the prison officers bow to them. The system is so corrupt in my opinion. We're in Denmark, and they're the ones deciding if we should eat pork. What's that all about? We're in Denmark, man. (...) But the system gives in to them because they make too much trouble, and no one knows what to do with them.

For the treatment counsellors and officers at the treatment wings, the construction of ethnic and cultural differences based on the spatial-symbolic divisions of the prison was a social reality they had to deal with in their everyday work. For instance, some staff

members asserted that Muslim prisoners did not apply for treatment because they were too proud and because they thought entering treatment to be a sign of weakness. An example of this view is provided by a prison officer, Mary, from Treatment Wing B, who furthermore established a link between ethnicity and space:

Then he's weak in the eyes of the others: 'Why the hell is he going to treatment? Can't he manage it, or what?' I think it has something to do with the environments they're in. That's why they don't dare to show weakness, right?

According to several treatment counsellors, it was also more difficult to earn the confidence and trust of non-ethnic Danes, as they were not used to talking about their feelings and personal problems. This made them shy away from treatment. One counsellor, Troels, working on Treatment Wing B, discussed the problem:

They're afraid of revealing themselves and too shy to talk about their problems. Some of them never spoke about their feelings before, so they have no vocabulary for it. Therefore, it takes a long time for them to get started [in treatment].

As a consequence of such beliefs, and ethnic identifications, counsellors also adjusted the prison's cannabis treatment program to better match the 'ethnic others' at the wing for 'strongly negative prisoners'. In the following quote, 'Mads', a drug treatment counsellor, explains one way of approaching (and we would say also confirming) ethnic differences:

In ethnic groupings, it's seen as a shame to receive help, right. So the method is to make the Alpha-male start treatment. Then they just point at the others and make them do the same. Right now there are a lot of East Europeans, and among them, the group [dynamic] works a bit differently, because they don't have so many Alpha-males. And that's also why we don't have so many of them in the Cannabis Project⁸.

In sum, ideas of ethnic differences had a great impact on how prisoners navigated in the different prison spaces and how they strategically tried to affect where and with whom they resided. At the same time, the different prison spaces, as we have seen, are viewed by both prisoners and staff as being associated with different ethnic mentalities, mentalities which were seen as having the power to 'infect' the prisoners at the wings.

'Treatment wings are for weak Danes'

Many of the ethnic minority prisoners (mainly those from Arab countries) did not identify themselves with Danish culture. Also, they rejected and disparaged the drug treatment wings as they identified the wings with 'Danishness' and, moreover, being incompatible with their ideas of masculine strength, honour and intrinsic ethnic mentality. Most of these ethnic minority prisoners self-identified as 'Muslims', which did not only refer to religious practices but also defined social alliances, norms and ways of behaving. As also

⁸ Despite the counsellors' intention of dissolving ethnic differences, the use of animal metaphors such as 'Alpha males' can also be seen as a means of maintaining or even creating otherness (see Borkfelt 2016)

observed in British prisons, inmates from Arabic backgrounds may emphasize or rediscover their Muslim identity in prison and they often help and protect each other (Marranci 2009).

Several of the ethnic minority prisoners who were heavy drug users (mainly cannabis) stated that they did not want to start treatment and then be part of what they called the ‘weak and feeble treatment wings’, as this would cause them to lose their reputation in the group. In fact, these prisoners, despite the fact being Danish citizens, did not want to be associated with Danishness, as they regarded not only the treatment wings but Danes in general to be ‘weak’. In their view, this weakness lay behind the Danes applying to enter the treatment wings. In this way, the distinctions between ‘Danes’ and ‘foreigners’ were maintained by both groups. For instance, Haatim, a prisoner with ethnic minority background from a regular wing, explained that the Danish prisoners often ‘escaped’ to the treatment wings simply because they were not strong enough to stay on the regular wings:

It’s because the treatment wings are such snitch-wings, where you can run away. And usually it’s only the Danes running away because they can’t live on a wing if there are ten ‘Perkere’ in the place and only two Danes. Well, then they are outnumbered, and they are not so strong, you know [...] They (Danes) are just weak.

According to prisoners who defined themselves as ‘non-Danish’, the Danes were simply not ‘real men’ and not strong enough to cope with life on the regular wings. In this way, being able to serve time on the regular and tough wings was seen by the ‘foreign’ and especially ‘Arab’ prisoners as a sign of manhood and strength. Masculinity, space and ethnicity thus intersected in the ‘foreign’ prisoners’ categorizations, reinforcing each other, in the sense of ‘You are where you live’. For Haatim (hyper)-masculinity was a defining characteristic of his non-Danish ethnic identity (see also: Ugelvik, 2014). In fact, Haatim was rather surprised about the vulnerability and weak sense of masculinity that he found among most Danish prisoners performed:

I don’t get how so many Danish boys are so weak, considering who their forefathers were. Because the Vikings, they were fucking tough, man. But the boys nowadays, they are so weak.

Malik, a prisoner with ethnic minority background, who prided himself in having served time in what he defined as the ‘worst prison in Sweden’, described Danish prisons as kindergartens by comparison. Therefore, he stated, he had no problems serving time on the tough regular wings at State Prison. At some point, however, he had run into trouble and was therefore transferred to a treatment wing for a few days. He explained: ‘There are many Danes here [on the treatment wing], because they don’t dare to sit there [on the regular wings]’ (fieldnote). According to Malik, being able to cope with life on the ‘tough

wings' and in 'tough prisons' was a sign of strength and manhood which Danes generally lacked. But strength was not enough. According to Malik, alliances and networks were needed in order to be protected, and in general, the Danish prisoners did not have such alliances. Malik explains:

In the treatment wings many are there for protection. Because they don't dare to be over there [regular wings] [...] If they go over there, they are beaten up. Here [in the treatment wing] they survive. Over there you have to be a man. But sometimes it's not enough that you are a man. You also need to have friends. You need to have three or four friends around you that you trust.

In State Prison, the treatment wings were regarded as wings with better facilities and a more personal and softer culture. Minority prisoners explained that the Danish prisoners applied for treatment not in order to be drug free but simply in order to escape the regular wings and obtain better living conditions (See also Haller, 2015). For these minority prisoners, residing in the treatment wing was a clear sign that the prisoner could not stand the pressure and hence had lost their personal integrity. As a consequence of the fact that minority prisoners were concentrated in the regular wings, they were excluded from the benefits and opportunities that could be gained from being in a treatment wing: excursions, better recreational facilities, and better looking files. Being excluded from these benefits, together with experiences of unfair treatment in the court system and by police and prison officers in general reinforced these prisoners' experiences of being

discriminated against in the criminal justice system (see also: Andersen and Tranæs, 2011). Prisoners often referred to such discriminatory practices as a ‘Perker levy’. Abdi, residing in the ‘strongly negative prisoners’ wing, was born and raised in Denmark and defined himself as non-Danish, explained:

Somehow it’s preferential treatment. If my name had been Rasmus or Jens [typical Danish names], then they would have given me lots of chances [...] and I wouldn’t have cared so little about the system.

The existence of different prison spaces, each with their own privileges or restrictions, thus reinforced the prisoners’ ethnically invested institutional identity: abstinence from drugs and participation in therapy for those in the treatment wings points to a willingness to work on one’s rehabilitation, to empowerment and to progress, while remaining in a regular wing is associated with violence, drug use and drug sale, and a general attitude of resistance and opposition.

Interestingly, and as an additional twist to understanding how treatment wings work as cognitive schemas for ethnic identification, treatment wings were in Denmark from their very start in the mid-90s associated with being ‘soft’ and ‘comfortable’. That is, before ethnicity was as important as today, prisoners and also prison officers working at treatment wings were constructed as ‘others’. The officers working at the treatment wings were by officers at regular wings perceived as being too lenient and also untrustworthy

as they fraternized too much with the prisoners, and prisoners were by prisoners at the regular wings seen as weak and potential snitchers (Kolind, Frank and Dahl, 2010). In this way then, present day ethnic stereotypifications has somewhat been superimposed onto these existing cognitive schemes.

The blurring of ethnic categorization

Despite the construction of essentialist ethnic identities based on the contrasts between the drug treatment wings versus regular prison wings, these ethnic identifications were also challenged in everyday routines. This was especially true in the treatment wings. At times, a contradiction existed between the identifications of the prisoners and staff and their actual practices. Although the treatment wings were depicted by both prisoners and most of the staff as being wings suitable only to more cooperative Danish prisoners, approximately one-third of the prisoners on Treatment Wing B were of non-Danish ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore Danish prisoners on the treatment wings differentiated between the 'foreigners' residing in regular wings and the ethnic minority prisoners with whom they shared their everyday lives as part of a treatment regime. And Danes and minority prisoners seemed to get along better in the treatment wings. Being 'foreign' therefore, was not simply a matter of ethnic origin or citizenship status. It also reflected ideas about norms, mentality, and ways of behaving. However, when looking into the actual practice of these norms, and hence the ethnic categorizations derived from them, they were often situational and fluid.

The talk and actions of Ruben, a Danish prisoner on Treatment Wing C, illustrates how ethnic categorization was at times fluid in actual practice. In interviews and everyday conversations with other prisoners, Ruben explicitly stated that he did not want to interact with ethnic minority prisoners. However, when the first author mentioned to Ruben that ‘foreign’ prisoners also resided on the treatment wing, he answered with a shrug and explained that the minority prisoners on his wing ‘did not behave like foreigners’. Similarly, Bennet made fun of Ruben because he had proclaimed that he hated foreigners but still hung out with Omar (a prisoner of Arab origin). ‘Omar is calm and reasonable,’ Ruben replied, and insisted that things would be different if there was a ‘pack of foreigners’.

As the case of Ruben shows, ethnic stereotypes flourished in State Prison, but at the same time, ethnic identity was also enacted in more complex ways in various everyday interactions. Negotiating and deploying their identities, and not only ethnic identities, was a recurrent practice for most prisoners, who often described themselves and others as having many different ‘facades’ or ‘faces’. In this way, fluidity and context-dependent behaviour was a core feature of prisoners’ experiences (see Haller, 2015). This also applied to ‘Hasan’, who was of Arabic origin but was born in Denmark and spoke fluent Danish. Hasan insisted on defining himself as a ‘foreigner’. He also explained how he had two names, Mads and Hasan, in order to be part of both cultures. ‘I’m like a chameleon’, he said. Hasan described that even though he had served time in a treatment

wing for a brief period, it was most relevant for him to use his non-Danish name when being in prison. In the same way, he described how there were two kinds of Danes: The majority of Danes were ‘weak’, and there were some few ‘strong Danes’ who managed to act like immigrants. This group of Danes was sometimes defined, not only by Hasan but also more generally, as ‘sneperkere’ (i.e. snow[-white] Pakis). Hasan explained:

My Danish friends, they have a mentality just like immigrants. Just like me and the rest. So they can stand being on a wing with only foreigners. In the first place, they have balls so they can defend themselves if something happens to them. They are not afraid to talk back to someone if they interfere with them or anything.

Discussion

In this article, we have investigated the relation between institutional classification practices and prisoners’ ethnic identifications in a prison context that has been increasingly influenced by a policy of administrative subdivision and by a growing focus on ethnic differences. As has been shown, ethnic differences have become increasingly reinforced and essentialized as a consequence of the spatial divisions taking place within State Prison. The division between treatment wings, regular wings, and wings for ‘strongly negative prisoners’ has affected the everyday ethnic categorizations of both prisoners and staff. Moreover, the dual policy of ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ control measures has

added to the ethnic identifications, as these control measures have come to affect ethnic groupings in different ways: the 'hard' control measures increasingly target ethnic minority prisoners, while 'soft' control measures are used primarily towards ethnic Danish prisoners. This is not an effect of deliberate prison policy, but an unintended consequence hereof. That is, the ethnic minority prisoners suffer from hard control measures not because they are ethnic minorities, but because they do not participate in the soft control regime. As a consequence, prisoners in State Prison have actively constructed and deployed everyday ethnic categories based on the spatial divisions of the prison, talking about 'the uncontrollable Arabs' on the regular wings and 'the weak Danes' living on the treatment wings. Thus, both prison staff and prisoners may increasingly associate certain (problematic) behaviour with certain ethnic groups. In fact, our data indicate that the increased departmentalization within State Prison may have unintentionally accentuated ethnic stereotypical thinking, which then may have caused a stronger motive for institutionally reinforcing such spatial division as a means to overcome the problems this policy had caused. As stereotypes and prisoners' identities, to a high degree, are constructed around racial and cultural categories, prisons like State Prison have become fertile environments for actualizing, reinforcing and reinterpreting ethnic differences. This conclusion fits well with prison researchers showing that the prison milieu tend to enlarge and experiment with concepts and narratives from the social life 'outside' and actualizes notions of 'us and them' (Liebling et al., 2010). Crewe (2011a) even goes so

far as to define prisons as an ‘environment of essentialism’ In relation to ethnic stereotypification, we can even ask ourselves, if prisons like State Prison facilitate forms of ‘everyday racism’, that is, when everyday practices and activities reflect and reinforce social conditions in which ‘race’ is believed in (Smith, 2016). Racism, which Smith (2016: 2) defines as ‘a process [...] routinely created and reinforced through everyday practices’, thus have a *raison d’être* in the given structural conditions of the State prison. Moreover, the division of prisoners into spaces subjected to either strengthened control or strengthened rehabilitation indirectly exacerbates the division of ethnic groups into different spaces, which facilitate different possibilities. In this view, the existence of the treatment wings inadvertently comes to reinforce notions that differential treatment was connected to ethnic differences.

However, we emphasize that notions of ethnic differences were not only reproduced but also deliberately challenged by the staff at the treatment wings. Frequently, they tried to ameliorate the barriers between different ethnic groups of prisoners. They did this by trying to (re)construct rehabilitation programs so that they could better incorporate ethnic minority prisoners, or they encouraged minority prisoners to transfer into the treatment units. In this way, the rehabilitation contexts were also used to reduce the importance of ethnic differences. Moreover, as we also argued, in everyday life of the prison, ethnic identities can also become blurred in the representational spaces of the prisoners and staff.

Ethnic identity is not more ‘fixed or unchanging than [...] the situations in which it is produced and reproduced’ (Jenkins, 2008: 14).

Our study can be of relevance for bureaucrats and policy makers when designing and deciding the spatial division of prisons. Designated wings for special ‘problem groups’ such as prisoners with drug problems have generally shown good results (Mitchell et al., 2006) and are also in line with EU policy (EMCDDA, 2012). However, when such spatial thinking and policy is applied to the dynamic nature of ethnic identity – either intentionally by the erecting of special wings for potentially misbehaving or violent ethnic minority prisoners or unintentionally when a majority of ethnic Danes opt for transfer into the treatment wings and a majority of minority ethnic prisoners remain in regular wings – it can also unintentionally reinforce the very problems it seeks to address. More specifically, it is necessary to ensure that prison spatial policy does not inadvertently construct especially ethnic minority prisoners as problematic identities.

References:

- Andersen LH and Tranæs T (2011) *Etniske minoriteters overrepræsentation i strafferetlige domme*. Copenhagen: Rockwool Fondens Forskningsenhed.
- Borkfelt S (2016) Introduction: thinking through Animal Alterities. *Otherness: Essays and Studies* 5(2):1-12
- Brubaker R (2002) Ethnicity without groups. *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 43: 163-189.
- Crewe B (2011a) Soft power in prison: Implications for staff–prisoner relationships, liberty and legitimacy. *European Journal of Criminology* 8(6): 455-468.

- Crewe B (2011b) Depth, weight, tightness: Revisiting the pains of imprisonment. *Punishment & Society* 13 (5): 509-529.
- Earle R and Phillips C (2013) "Muslim is the New Black": New Ethnicities and New Essentialisms in the Prison. *Race and Justice* 3(2): 114-129.
- Easthope H (2009) Fixed identities in a mobile world? The relationship between mobility, place, and identity. *Identities* 16(1): 61-82.
- EMCDDA (2012) *Prisons and drug use in Europe: The problem and responses*. Luxembourg: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction.
- Fransen P and Wedell F (2013) *Borgen Med De Mange Ansigter: Statsfængslet i Nyborg 1913-2013*. Nyborg: Statsfængslet i Nyborg.
- Fængselsforbundet [Prison Union] (2014) Kriminelle tilrejsende fylder mere og mere i fængsler og arresthuse. *Fængselsforbundet* (9). 4-5.
- Giertsen H, Nylander P-Å, Frank VA, Kolind T and Tourunen, J (2015) Prisoners' experiences of drug treatment and punishment in four Nordic countries. *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 32: 145-164.
- Hall S (1996) The new ethnicities. In Morley D and Chen KH (eds): *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge, pp.441-449.
- Hall T, Amanda C and Howard W (2000) 'Self, Space and Place: Youth Identities and Citizenship'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 20(4): 501-13.
- Haller MB (2015) *Spaces of possibility. The contrasting meanings of regular and treatment wings in a Danish prison*. PhD Thesis, Aarhus University, DK.
- Heltberg T (2012) *Væk, Kære Væk: Om Terapeutisk Stofmisbrugsbehandling i Fængsler Og Hvad Der Kan Ske, Når Forskningsmaterialet Ændrer Sig Undervejs*. PhD Thesis, University of Copenhagen, Dk
- Hällsten M, Szulkin R and Sarnecki J (2013) Crime As A Price Of Inequality?: The Gap in Registered Crime between Childhood Immigrants, Children of Immigrants and Children of Native Swedes. *British Journal of Criminology* 53(3): 456-481.
- Jacobs JB (1979) Race Relations and the Prisoner Subculture. *Crime and Justice* 1: 1-27.
- Jenkins R (2008) *Rethinking ethnicity. Arguments and explorations*. London: Sage.
- Jensen SQ (2011) Othering, identity formation and agency. *Qualitative Studies* 2(2): 63-78.
- Jewkes Y and Johnston H (2007) The evolution of prison architecture. In: Jewkes Y (ed.) *Handbook on Prisons*. Devon: Willan Publishing, pp.174-196.
- Justitsministeriet [Ministry of Justice] (2006) *Styrket Indsats Over for Negativt Stærke Fanger (Press release)*.
- Justitsministeriet [Ministry of Justice] (2016) *Opgørelse af indsattes og klienters etniske baggrund 2015*.
- Klement C, Kyvsgaard B and Pedersen AJ. (2010) *Rockere, bander og risikofaktorer*. Copenhagen: Justitsministeriets Forskningskontor/Rigspolitiet.
- Kolind, T, Frank VA and Dahl H (2010) Drug treatment or alleviating the negative consequences of imprisonment? A critical view of prison-based drug treatment in Denmark. *The International journal on drug policy* 21(1): 43-48.

- Kolind T, Frank VA, Lindberg O and Tourunen, J (2013) Prison-based drug treatment in Nordic political discourse: An elastic discursive construct. *European Journal of Criminology* 10: 659-674.
- Kolind T, Frank VA, Lindberg O and Tourunen, J (2015) Officers and Drug Counsellors: New Occupational Identities in Nordic Prisons. *British Journal of Criminology* 55: 303-320.
- Kolind T And Duke K (2016) Drugs in prisons: Exploring use, control, treatment and policy, *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy*, 23(2): 89-92.
- Kolind T, Søgaard T, Hunt G and Thylstrup B (2017) Transitional narratives of identity among ethnic minority youth gangs in Denmark: from collectivism to individualism. *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, 18 (1):3-19
- Kriminalforsorgen, [The Danish Prison and Probation Service] (2005) *Årsrapport for Kriminalforsorgen 2004*. København.
- Kriminalforsorgen (2014): *Statistik 2014*. Kriminalforsorgen.
- Kriminalforsorgen (2015): *Statistik 2015*. Kriminalforsorgen.
- Lefebvre H. (1991 [1974]) *The production of space*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Liebling A, Price D and Shefer G (2010) *The Prison Officer*: Oxon: Willan Taylor and Francis.
- Marranci G (2009): *Faith, ideology and fear: Muslim identities within and beyond Prisons*. London, New York.
- McIntosh J and Saville E (2006) The challenges associated with drug treatment in prison. *Probation Journal* 53: 230-247.
- McKeganey N, Russell C, Hamilton-Barclay T, Barnard M, Page G, Lloyd C, Grace SE, Tepleton L and Bain C (2016) Meeting the needs of prisoners with a drug or alcohol problem: No mean feat. *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy*.23(2):120-6.
- Mitchell O, Wilson DB and MacKenzie DL (2006) The Effectiveness of Incarceration-Based Drug Treatment on Criminal Behavior. *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 11.
- Mjåland K (2016) Exploring prison drug use in the context of prison-based drug rehabilitation. *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy* 23(2): 154-162.
- Mouritsen P and Olsen TV (2013) Denmark between liberalism and nationalism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36: 691-710.
- Nylander P-Å, Lindberg O and Bruhn A (2011) Emotional labour and emotional strain among Swedish prison officers. *European Journal of Criminology* 8: 469-483.
- Phillips C (2012) *The Multicultural Prison: Ethnicity, Masculinity, and Social Relations among Prisoners*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Regeringen [Government] (2004). Noget for noget [Something for something]. Kbh: Beskæftigelsesministeriet.
- Salmi V, Kivivuori J and Aaltonen M (2015) Correlates of immigrant youth crime in Finland. *European Journal of Criminology* 12: 681-699.
- Schutz A (1954) Concept and Theory Formation in the Social Sciences. *The Journal of Philosophy* 51(9): 257-273.
- Shammas VL (2014) The pains of freedom: Assessing the ambiguity of Scandinavian penal exceptionalism on Norway's Prison Island. *Punishment & Society* 16: 104-123.
- Smith A. (2016) *Racism and everyday life : social theory, history and 'race'*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Song, M (2003) *Choosing Ethnic Identity*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

- Sykes G. (1958) *The Society of Captives: A Study of a Maximum Security Prison*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Ugelvik T (2014) 'Be a Man. Not a Bitch.' Snitching, the Inmate Code and the Narrative Reconstruction of Masculinity in a Norwegian Prison. In: Lander I, Ravn S and Jon N (eds.) *Masculinities in the Criminological Field*. Surrey: Ashgate, pp.57-69.