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Sociolinguistic lab 1: On social justice

Several of the readings thus far reminded me of the experience of people of Color immigrating from countries like Morocco, Syria, Algeria, Tunisia, Iraq, Pakistan, and more. Many of these immigrants come from both the cultural and religious background of Islam and are incorporated into Norwegian society. Immigration from this area is something that has become popular only relatively recently (within the last fifty years or so), forcing this dominantly White, blonde, and blue-eyed country to take a hard look at the real meaning of the Norwegian identity. Today, many now-adults share their experiences having grown up Norwegian with immigrant parents. Many were raised in underprivileged areas and did not have the same experiences as their White counterparts.

Norwegian understanding of Islam and Muslim people has a long way to go. The article “Communicating and Contesting Islamophobia” by Mariam Durrani describes the fear that many Americans have of “Muslim-sounding” languages or people that even appear Muslim, which are deemed suspicious. Norway shares in this view of Muslim-background immigrants, mirroring the current Western trend towards Islamophobia in the wake of 9/11. In Oslo, many immigrants live in a lower income neighborhood called Stovner, which has a negative connotation attached to it. Gunerius is a shopping center often frequented by immigrants, and has a similar “ghetto” connotation. Muslim-background immigrants even have their own adapted version of Norwegian, often called *kebab-norsk*, or “kebab Norwegian,” referring to typical Turkish or Pakistani food. The term is somewhat offensive, and largely dismisses the legitimacy of the dialect spoken by this marginalized group. While the dialect may not be considered “correct” standard Norwegian, Norwegian is a language characterized by a wide variety of distinct regional dialects. Many argue for the recognition of these regional dialects, spoken by White Norwegians living in different areas of the country, while the dialect spoken by immigrants is largely cast aside.

However, the identity of these immigrants is something that has become much more popularized in recent years. For example, the book *Tante Ulrikkes vei* by Zeshan Shakar, released in 2017, provides a glimpse into the life of young adult children of immigrants and the racism they experience, based on the real experiences of the author. Additionally, many rappers are of an immigrant background and express their frustrations with their treatment in Norwegian society through their music. These rappers also often use *kebab-norsk*, strongly asserting their identity through language. Reclaiming these aspects of the immigrant experience and sharing their stories, the actions of this marginalized group mirror the approach taken by the Black community in the article “Languages of Liberation: Digital Discourses of Emphatic Blackness” by Krystal A. Smalls. Given the empowering platform of social media, “emphatic blackness” has taken a

stand, in which Black people refuse to be silenced in the fight for social justice. Similarly, the Muslim immigrant community in Norway is making strides to be accepted by Norwegian society while embracing their own identity and culture- a mixture of their cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.