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# ACCEPT PLURALISM

## Tolerance and Cultural Diversity Discourses in Denmark

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### *1. Overview National Discourses Background Country Reports*



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ROBERT SCHUMAN CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

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**Work package 1 – Overview of National Discourses  
of Tolerance and Cultural Diversity**

**D1.1 Country Reports on Tolerance and Cultural  
Diversity Discourses**

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## **Tolerance, Pluralism and Social Cohesion: Responding to the Challenges of the 21st Century in Europe (ACCEPT PLURALISM)**

**ACCEPT PLURALISM** is a Research Project, funded by the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Program. The project investigates whether European societies have become more or less tolerant during the past 20 years. In particular, the project aims to clarify: (a) how is tolerance defined conceptually, (b) how it is codified in norms, institutional arrangements, public policies and social practices, (c) how tolerance can be measured (whose tolerance, who is tolerated, and what if degrees of tolerance vary with reference to different minority groups). The ACCEPT PLURALISM consortium conducts original empirical research on key issues in school life and in politics that thematise different understandings and practices of tolerance. Bringing together empirical and theoretical findings, ACCEPT PLURALISM generates a State of the Art Report on Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Europe, a Handbook on Ideas of Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Europe, a Tolerance Indicators' Toolkit where qualitative and quantitative indicators may be used to score each country's performance on tolerating cultural diversity, and several academic publications (books, journal articles) on Tolerance, Pluralism and Cultural Diversity in Europe. The ACCEPT PLURALISM consortium is formed by 18 partner institutions covering 15 EU countries. The project is hosted by the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies and co-ordinated by Prof. Anna Triandafyllidou.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report analyses the cultural diversity challenges in Denmark and how they have been met with intolerance, tolerance, respect and recognition respectively. The report starts out by analysing the main traits of national identity and state formation, then moves on to Danish immigration history and the various ethnic and religious minorities resulting from immigration and from the changing of territorial borders, before it finally addresses how Denmark generally has handled cultural diversity challenges of the last 40 years.

Until the inflow of guest workers from especially Turkey, Yugoslavia and Pakistan in the late 1960s, immigration to Denmark was limited and often resulted in assimilation. In the 1980s a significant number of refugees from the Middle East and Sri Lanka arrived, while the 1990s brought significant groups of refugees from Bosnia, Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq. As of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2010, 9.8 percent of Denmark's 5.5 million residents are immigrants and descendants of immigrants, with 6.6 percent of the population from non-Western countries. The largest group is of Turkish descent and comprises roughly 60,000 persons.

The overshadowing concern with cultural and religious differences in Denmark today pertains to minorities of immigrants and descendants from non-western countries, most of whom are (identified as) Muslims. National minorities and older religious minorities of Greenlanders, Germans, Poles and Jews are today uncontroversial and rarely raise claims themselves about special or equal rights, symbolic respect and recognition. One exception is the small number of Romas (between 5.000 and 10.000) in Denmark, who still face the stereotype of the Roma as stealing, cheating, lying, poor, uneducated, lazy and unwilling to integrate inducing many to hide their background. Immigrants from non-western countries, on the other hand, is very controversial because of (what is perceived to be) their low ability or willingness to integrate into the 'modern' Danish society and democracy. The main diversity challenges that politicians consider important can be summed up in three core themes:

1. *Unemployment*: It is often emphasized that the percentage of non-Western immigrants on social security is out of proportion with the rest of the population. This is seen as a problem for the sustainability of the Danish welfare model.
2. *Parallel societies (ghettoisation)*: It is often noted that we need to avoid a situation where Muslims are living in their own secluded communities impervious to the rules and institutions of the rest of society and that we are heading towards such a situation if something is not done now. The fear is one of parallel societies hostile and indifferent to one another, of *Sharia* law being de facto implemented outside Danish law, and generally the erosion of society's social cohesion.
3. *Radicalisation/extremism*: There has been a growing concern with radicalisation within Muslim communities. In the discussion of the hazards of multiculturalism and parallel societies, tolerance has in part been framed as overindulgence or indifference towards problematic beliefs and practices among minorities that in a worst-case scenario could lead to acts of terrorism. Concern for the democratic mind-set of Muslims is often expressed. However, both in order to counterbalance



the symbolic exclusion of immigrant youth and thereby avoid radicalisation, and in order to counteract anti-Semitism in larger urban areas, the concept of toleration is being brought back onto the political agenda.

Since the mid-1990s, Denmark has seen a long period of politicization of integration and refugee issues, particularly focusing on Muslims. This has resulted in the comparably liberal immigration laws of 1983 being replaced through gradual reform since 1999 with one of the toughest immigration regimes in Europe. Parallel to this politicization of Muslims, the right-wing Danish People's Party (DPP) became increasingly influential. In 2001 the new liberal-conservative government became dependent on the DPP for their parliamentary majority, and the following years saw further restrictions and an even tougher political discourse that often focused on the (negative) effects immigration has on what is described as a high level of social cohesion in Danish society.

In both the discourse and law on integration a comprehensive notion of citizenship is established, drawing on central elements in Danish national identity history. Especially the period in the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, where democratization coincided with Denmark being reduced through several wars to a minor European state, has had a lasting impact on notions of nation, national identity and citizenship. The separation from its former lands created a Danish state without noticeable differences in nationality and language. This transition coincided with the country's relatively early democratization and led to an intense concern with the concept of the *Danish people* upon whom sovereignty had been conferred. This nationalist re-awakening produced an inward-looking Danish nationalism inspired by romanticism and based on the rural society and peasant virtues. The movement was placed within a Lutheran framework. In the current discourse on national identity five elements can be identified, of which especially the first four are related to the nation building stages of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Firstly, *Christianity* remains significant despite a decline in religiosity. Lutheranism is often described as having been instrumental in creating a political culture which strictly separates religion from politics. Secondly, *Danish language* constitutes an important element in national belonging. Today, the expectation of mastery and public use of Danish language by immigrants goes well beyond what is required to function in the labour market and ordinary communication. Thirdly, Denmark is often described as a *small* and *culturally homogeneous* country, with a characteristic social ideal of tight knit 'cosiness'. Present debates on cohesion in Denmark, the valuation of sameness, and mistrust of cultural pluralism per se draw on these themes. Fourthly, smallness and homogeneity are connected to values of *egalitarianism* (anti-authoritarianism, social levelling and the comprehensive welfare state) and a special way of understanding and organising *democracy* (as conversational and consensus-oriented). Finally, pride in the *welfare society* translates to a requirement of reciprocity and solidarity, concretely as an obligation to work and pay taxes, which may be seen as the key currency of symbolic recognition – i.e., the idea that membership depends on the ability to do one's share.

In the last two decades, the predominant discourse in Denmark with regard to religious and cultural differences has been one of integration, rather than of tolerance or of respect and recognition of ethnic and religious identities. The discourse of integration is explicitly set against the notion of multiculturalism. The latter is seen as synonymous with parallel societies and a moral, social and political failure to demand and further the integration into society of all its members. In general, cultural and religious differences are seen as illegitimate to the extent that they stand in the way of integration, understood as one's ability of live up to one's duty as an economically self-sufficient and taxpaying individual and as a participating citizen at all levels of civil society and political institutions.

In the discussion of the hazards of multiculturalism and parallel societies, tolerance has in part been framed as overindulgence or indifference to problematic beliefs and practices among minorities. This criticism of tolerance as indifference or *naivité* relies on a historical preference for ‘free mindedness’ or ‘liberality’ over ‘tolerance’. In the Danish debate about liberality vs tolerance, tolerance is construed as form of moral failure: it implies giving up the forming of judgements over what is right and wrong. Liberality, on the other hand, entails fighting for the values ‘you hold dearly’ while insisting on the same right for all others. The basis of this Danish interpretation of tolerance is, first, a strong commitment by all to equal citizen rights and to their protection by the state. Liberality, secondly, implies criticising and even ridiculing all that you find wrong. Liberality is a ‘republican’ virtue that enables you to participate in blunt public exchanges with a ‘thick skin’ so that you are able to reach negotiated, consensual democratic agreements with your opponents at all levels of society.

**Keywords:** cultural and religious diversity, immigration, ethnic minorities, tolerance, integration, Denmark

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Danes perceive Denmark as situated on the fringes of Europe, and not only geographically. At face value, this perception is a peculiarity, since Denmark has always been surrounded by and interacting with key players in the struggle for European dominion. Today, Denmark's closest neighbours in cultural, political and economic terms, Sweden and Germany, also constitute its main trading partners (Danmarks Statistik 2008).

As Denmark's role in the great European power struggles was gradually but inevitably reduced at the brink of the modern age, Danish national identity was more and more defined in accordance with its role as a minor European state. This transition is evident in Denmark's two national anthems written within a time span of just 42 years – respectively in 1778 and 1820.<sup>1</sup> The first anthem, “Kong Christian stod ved højen mast” (King Christian stood by the lofty mast), praises the “victorious” 17<sup>th</sup>-century warrior King Christian IV as the embodiment of the lands he ruled. This anthem was written at a time when the king still ruled the most powerful navy in Europe and led a multinational “Composite State” (Helstaten), consisting of Denmark, Schleswig-Holstein, Norway, the islands of the North Atlantic and a number of overseas Colonies. The second anthem, “Der er et yndigt land” (a lovely land is ours) was written after the Napoleonic Wars and the loss of Norway. It is dedicated to the tranquility and fruitfulness of the Danish natural landscape, the purity of the national language and the people's freedom. This anthem mainly serves as a warrant of the bonds of unbroken continuity between present and past, city and countryside, farmland, people and king. Here, powerfulness is only a memory of a long-lost past.

A national awakening in the 19<sup>th</sup> century fitted the political reality of the losses of Norway (in 1814, to Sweden) and Schleswig-Holstein (in 1864, to Germany) as well as the ideal of romanticism. The separation from its former lands created a Danish state without noticeable differences in nationality and language. The Danish nation and the Danish state eventually became so closely knit together that it to this day is difficult to think of the nation without the state.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Denmark gradually became a social democratic Scandinavian welfare state formed by the non-revolutionary Social Democratic Party. This social democratic struggle was also built upon a rearticulation of ‘the People’ (‘Folket’) as the emotional and essential core of the nation. Their struggle to reform the state was linked to a perception of the political elite as out of touch with the backbone of the nation: the working class (Hansen 2002: 60-61).

After the Second World War welfare programs expanded significantly, and growth and equality were successfully united. Although this positive development came to a halt in the 1970's, the fundamental social democratic vision of the welfare state had been largely accepted by even Liberals and Conservatives. Today all political parties (except maybe one minor party: Liberal Alliance) operate on political platforms that essentially accept an extensive social safety net as the foundation of the Danish society.

This widespread solidarity has come under pressure in recent decades as the share of immigrants and descendants has steadily risen. The overshadowing concern with cultural and religious differences in Denmark today pertains to post-immigration minorities with

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<sup>1</sup> The following analysis owes much to Uffe Østergaard's interpretation of the development from Composite to Nation State: Østergaard (2002).

backgrounds in non-western countries, most of whom are (identified as) Muslims. National minorities and more settled religious minorities are today uncontroversial and rarely raise claims themselves about special or equal rights, symbolic respect and recognition. Immigration from non-western countries, on the other hand, are very controversial because of (what is perceived to be) their low ability or willingness to integrate into the 'modern' Danish society and democracy.

In the last two decades, the predominant discourse in Denmark with regard to religious and cultural differences has been one of integration, rather than of tolerance or of respect and recognition of ethnic and religious identities. This discourse of integration is explicitly set against notion of multiculturalism. The latter is seen as synonymous with parallel societies and a moral, social and political failure to demand and further the integration of all residents into society.

The strong focus on integration has changed the perception of Denmark as a country tolerant towards alternative lifestyles (first to legalize pornography and recognize gay marriages). The comparably liberal immigration laws of 1983 have been replaced through gradual reform since 1999 with one of the toughest immigration regimes in Europe. Among other things this has resulted in a two-tier system of social membership in which immigrants from outside the EU and the Nordic countries receive a special 'introduction benefit' the first three years of their residence. Hereafter they pass to another scheme termed 'start help' which applies to all – except non-Danish EU citizens – who haven't resided in Denmark in seven out of the last eight years. However, for Danish citizens it only applies if they have been residing outside of the EU. On these schemes individuals who are, for example, unemployed, sick, pregnant or on maternity leave receive welfare payments that are roughly half of what you would receive on the scheme for Danish citizens who have resided in the EU in seven out of the last eight years and for other EU-citizens.

The developments above set the scene for studying the recent cultural, ethnic and religious diversity challenges in Denmark and the ways in which they have been addressed. Section 2 will expand on the current dimensions of Danish identity and the selective reading of historical events and figures related to this discursive construction. Section 3 will broadly describe Danish immigration history and the challenges that the most relevant minority groups of Danish society face today. Finally, before the concluding remarks, section 4 will expand on the dominant interpretation of tolerance in Denmark and on the values and arrangements of the Danish integration regime.

In this report we use the following working definitions. *National identity* refers to the identity that Danes see themselves as sharing as members of the national community. *National heritage* concerns the historical bases of this identity. *Multiculturalism* relates both to the fact that there are distinct socially salient groups in society that differ with regard to their cultural and religious backgrounds, and to the broadly conceived normative position which holds that these groups should be given positive symbolic recognition of their contribution to society and/or bestowed with a special status through specific policies and rights. *Cultural, ethnic and religious diversity* refers to the notion that there are non-trivial differences along cultural, ethnic and religious dimensions between different groups. *Citizenship* is both understood as legal nationality, and as a social and political ideal that implies that the citizen participates democratically in political institutions and the institutions of civil society. *Integration* means the equal participation of immigrants in all spheres of society and is in Denmark based on the notion of the adoption by immigrants of the practices and values of 'active citizenship.' It is hence not equal to a complete cultural *assimilation* and the demand that immigrants become like Danes on all cultural and identity dimensions. There are two forms of *liberalism*: 1) classical or laissez faire liberalism is based on the notion that

the state should be neutral to different perceptions of the good life and provide the individual with the set of rights that give her the highest degree of freedom to pursue her own conception of the good life (if she so wishes), consonant with the equal freedom of all. 2) Perfectionist liberalism on the other hand stresses individual autonomy, i.e. the rational self-direction of one's life, as the central aspect of a good life. In perfectionist liberalism, the state should promote individual autonomy. *Republicanism* emphasizes the ideal of citizenship as democratic participation, because it is seen as part as a good life and/or because it is seen as essential for the maintenance of the institutions of liberal democracy. The doctrine of *civic integrationism* refers to the belief that integration of immigrants should be based on 'active citizenship' and includes elements of both republicanism and perfectionist liberalism. The *concept of toleration* implies not forbidding beliefs and practices that one finds wrong, because the reasons for not forbidding them are found weightier than the reasons for objecting to them. In the report, the terms of tolerance and toleration are used interchangeably. In Denmark there is a particular conception of tolerance that is called 'free mindedness' or 'liberality'. *Liberality* entails fighting for the values 'you hold dearly' while insisting on the same right for all others. Proponents of liberality contrast this notion of tolerance with an understanding where the *term* 'tolerance' is taken to mean indifference, relativism and the failure to form moral judgements.

## 2. NATIONAL IDENTITY AND STATE FORMATION

### 2.1 State formation

Through time Danish national identity has been influenced by the parallel and interwoven development of *state* formation and conceptions of the *nation*, each of which is connected to a series of key historical events.

The Lutheran reformation (1536) whereby church land was expropriated and church influence on state policy was diminished, coincided with the often heavy-handed creation by the state of a (protestant) Christian people. This proto-nationalist people-building emphasised individual loyalty to the Christian king, knowledge of and ability to read scripture and the catechism, and to this end extended the use of national language in churches and schools. Only later, with the liberal 1849 constitution, were freedoms of religion and religious worship in independent religious societies established, in conjunction with the creation of a state church, the so called 'People's Church' [*Folkekirken*], with locally self-governing parishes under government administration. Despite declining membership a large majority of Danes remain members of this church today, although most do not practice. Culturally *Folkekirken* retains a privileged position today (Mouritsen, 2009: 7-8).

The 1750s saw a large debate on how to define the nation and citizenship. Enlightenment ideas in the modernising monarchy produced – for a brief period of time – a form of cosmopolitanism where a person's motherland was the territory where he chose to live in loyalty and allegiance to the king, whether one spoke Danish, Norwegian or German. This civic-patriotic conception of the nation and citizenship was soon challenged by a growing national bourgeoisie that was hostile towards granting citizenship and state employment to foreigners. Criticism grew after an episode in 1770s, where J. F. Struense, a German-born physician to mentally ill King Christian VII, had seized power to initiate reforms before he was outmanoeuvred. This perceived German *coup d'état* provoked the *Law of Indigenous Rights* of 1776, whereby only citizens born in the King's dominions (but still also German speakers) could assume office.

From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Danish politics changed significantly when the last stage of nation building coincided with the country's relatively early democratisation in a way that still shapes contemporary delineation of national membership. When the king resigned in 1848 and the first free constitution was signed in 1849, all major political forces favoured comprehensive constitutional rights and (male) democracy. However, an internal conflict erupted between national liberals on the one hand and cosmopolitans and left-liberals on the other, who disagreed on the identity, in terms of language and territory (but not religion), of the new democratic people. The main controversies centred on Schleswig, i.e. whether to separate it from Holstein or incorporate both under the new constitution. The national liberals, who came to dominate, emphasized Danish language as constitutive for the nation, and furthermore wished to include certain German speaking territories, which would then have to be rendered Danish-speaking (Hansen, 2002: 56). This policy was of course resisted in the affected territories. Over the next 20 years, two wars were fought over the question of Schleswig-Holstein, with the second in 1863-1864 ending in a miserable defeat where Lauenborg, Holstein and Schleswig – including the Danish speaking parts – were lost, rendering Denmark an almost pure 'ethnic' and Danish-speaking nation. This blow produced an inward-looking, nationalist re-awakening inspired by romanticism and based on the rural society and peasant virtues. The loss of one-third of the country, including the most developed cities and regions, was counterbalanced by cultivating the Jutlandic moor, development of co-operative farm movements, and the establishment of popular folk high school education for peasant youth. .

Danish nationalism, emerging as a literary phenomenon in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, evolved into political nationalism from the 1830s (Korsgaard, 2004: 298), with N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783-1872) playing a prominent part in both movements. As a priest, author of hymns and songs, and church and school reformer, he laid the groundwork for a Danish populist nationalism that mixes 'cultural' and 'civic' elements within a Lutheran framework. Intensely concerned with the concept of the *people* and its spiritual roots, Grundtvig also introduced the idea of 'liberality' [*frisind*] as a particular kind of open-mindedness<sup>2</sup> that differed, in his view, from 'tolerance' in accepting but not being *indifferent* to the difference of opinion (Huggler 2009).

Today, the dominant conception of the nation and national identity reflects a selective reading of Danish national identity history. In it five semantic and narrative elements can be identified (Mouritsen, 2009: 23-25; Mouritsen, 2010: 8-9). *First*, even though traditional religiosity is declining, **cultural Christianity** remains significant. In the Danish context Christianity, Lutheran individualism, secularism, and peasant liberation and spiritual awakening become intertwined. Underlying is a narrative about the Danish peasants escaping from rural class society to a status of independent peasant-citizens through an 'awakening' stay at the Grundtvigian inspired folk high schools. The idea of a special Danish brand of Lutheranism, tied to this narrative, presupposes the separation of religion from politics and the practice of religion in a worldly fashion. Thereby it tends to place Islam in an unfavourable light.

*Second*, **Danish language** has constituted an important element in national belonging. Today, immigrants are expected to master and use Danish at a level well beyond what is required to function in the labour market and ordinary communication.

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<sup>2</sup> Following Jørn Huggler, we translate 'frisind'. Literally 'frisind' is a compound of two elements 'fri' (free) and 'sind' (mind), and is often also translated as 'openmindedness' or 'free-spiritedness'. We return to the cultural and political significance of this concept in the conclusion.

*Third*, Denmark is often described as a **small** and **culturally homogeneous** country with a characteristic social ideal of tight knit ‘cosiness’, in part owing to homogenising processes through state schools and through a national television station that had a monopoly almost through the 1980s. Present debates on cohesion in Denmark, the valuation of sameness, and mistrust of cultural pluralism per se draw on these themes.

*Fourth*, smallness and homogeneity are connected to values of **egalitarianism** and a special way of understanding and organising **democracy**. The influence from Grundtvigianism created a tradition of anti-authoritarianism, social liberalism and appreciation of social levelling that have become linked to the comprehensive welfare state and its focus on social and cultural equality, as well as to the post-World War II construction of a civic nationalism of conversational, consensual democracy (Koch 1945). The notion that these values are really only genuine in Denmark (and other Scandinavian countries) often enter into debates on the civic (in)capacity of newcomers.

*Fifth*, the pride in the **welfare society** evident in government discourse translates to a requirement of reciprocity and solidarity, concretely manifested as an obligation to work and pay taxes, which may be seen as the key currency of symbolic recognition – i.e., the idea that membership depends on the ability to do one’s share.

Today, cultural diversity is often associated with the existence of inferior cultures (un-western, un-modern, un-civilised) in Danish society (Mouritsen, 2009: 27). ‘Danish’ values of democracy, gender equality, and freedom of speech become presented, here, as universalistic concepts but with culturalist spins (ibid: 19), producing a ‘particular universalism’, which is both seen as historically founded and bounded, and superior because it is liberal and modern. To a large extent, Muslims have become the defining ‘other’ of these peculiarly culturalised civic-liberal self-understandings. They are who the Danes are not (Mouritsen, 2006: 88).

## 2.2 Citizenship in Denmark

The term ‘citizenship’ bears different meanings in a Danish context. The concept of *indfødsret* was the first coinage of a citizenship concept and literally means ‘the right to be native born’. It was legislatively constructed in 1772 to ensure that only citizens born in the King’s dominions could discharge honorary offices (Ersbøll 2010). The purpose was *not* to reserve positions for ethnic Danes and, hence, *indfødsret* was originally understood in terms of a *ius soli* interpretation. The interpretation of the law, however, soon changed such that only children born of native-born parents acquired *indfødsret* at birth (Ibid.).

The concept of *statsborgerskab* denotes legal nationality, and in terms of citizenship it signifies the citizen’s status as subject of a particular (national) state. Today *indfødsret* and *statsborgerskab* are used interchangeably as they denote the same status and rights.

The concept of *medborgerskab* (*medborger* literally means ‘fellow citizen’) signifies a horizontal interpretation of what belonging to the same society entails – a form of compatriotism. It is not a legal concept but a normative concept pertaining to certain virtues the citizen ought to strive towards. In its contemporary use it is closely associated with the comprehensive Danish welfare state and the notion of Denmark as a social space inhabited by a population of active citizens who share the same public values.

Due to the development from a multi-national to a national state whose borders followed, by and large, the ethnic boundaries of the population, it became increasingly less meaningful to differentiate between the above meanings of citizenship. From the early 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the different terms were perceived as inseparable and both *indfødsret* and *medborgerskab* gradually fell out of use (Ibid.).

However, citizenship as *medborgerskab* gradually re-entered the public discourse during the 1990s in the wake of the Muslim immigration and has been a central concept in the public discourse since the liberal-conservative government took office in 2001. The current distinction between *statsborgerskab/indfødsret* and *medborgerskab* denotes how access to legal citizenship is now perceived as a prize at the end of the road of successful integration. One has to be committed to the virtues of being a ‘fellow citizen’ (*medborger*) before one can gain recognition as a full-fledged member of the community.

Danish citizenship is generally understood in terms of *ius sanguinis*. Accordingly, Danes today tend to perceive Denmark as a community rather than a society, as a *Gemeinschaft* rather than a *Gesellschaft*. For more than 200 years after 1776 immigrant descendants were entitled to Danish citizenship either automatically or since 1950 through declaration (though from 1976 conditioned on residence and from 1999 also on conduct). This general entitlement was repealed in 2004 with immigrant descendants now being required to apply for Danish citizenship by naturalization (Ersbøll 2010: 26).

Since 2001 there has been a tightening on all fronts concerning permanent residence and naturalization. Both objective criteria such as years of residence (for naturalization: from seven to nine years) and self-support (for naturalization: no more than 6 months on public benefits in the last 5 years plus no debt to the state) as well as what can be defined as a subjective criterion of belonging has been tightened. The last aspect is probably the most central. Initiatives like the signing of an Integration Contract and a Declaration on Integration and Active Citizenship, a harsh language proficiency test (excluding many from ever gaining citizenship) and a citizenship test examining knowledge of “Danish culture, history and social conditions” signals a turn towards a more subjective element of belonging where being Danish is not only a matter of *submitting* to Danish legislation or even to Danish norms, but of *identifying* with those norms.

### **2.3 Denmark and Europe**

The opposition between being Nordic and being European was emphasized in the debate in the 19<sup>th</sup> century among romanticists and adherents of enlightenment ideology. The (liberal) left centering on Edvard Brandes and Viggo Hørup were condescendingly called “the Europeans” due to the fact that their emphasis on liberal values was less bound to a national or Nordic discourse. Being Nordic meant defining one’s identity in terms of being Danish or Scandinavian, while being European meant defining one’s identity in more abstract terms, as committed to more general ideas of the liberty and equality of man. As a result of this contrast, a significant discourse was established towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century according to which a true Danish sentiment could only be nurtured by a genuine anti-European feeling.

The consequence of the tight conceptual coupling of nation and state in the 19<sup>th</sup> century has been that encroachments on political sovereignty have been perceived as threats to the nation. Since the early 1990’s Denmark’s relationship to the EU has been marked with skepticism expressed in the consistent high level of no-support in referenda from 1992 and onwards. This inability to distinguish between nation and state has locked the debate in such a way that the pro-Europeans primarily have focused on the economic prospects and argued that the EU does not exceed normal inter-state cooperation while the euro-skepticists have claimed that the EU is a new superstate that threatens national independence (Hansen 2002).

When the Maastricht Treaty was turned down in 1992, the solution was a compromise that would keep Denmark within the European Community and at the same time ensure that the process leading towards the “United States of Europe” (allegedly the main concern of the electorate) could be brought to a halt (Krunke 2005: 341-42). Denmark ratified the treaty but



was allowed to opt out of the integration process on four issues: Union Citizenship, the Common Defence and Security Policy, the Economic and Monetary Union and the new initiatives in the area of Justice and Home Affairs.

The last of the four opt-outs was from the very beginning framed as a means of securing national sovereignty regarding questions of immigration and integration. However, the European Court of Justice's decision in the *Metock case* (2008), which allowed third-country nationals to obtain family reunification with their EU-citizen spouses whenever the latter had used their right to free movement under EU law, raised fears that the strict Danish immigration rules would be undermined. The Danish Government reacted strongly, with the Minister of Integration declaring it her goal to change the European legislation after the ruling. This testifies to the ongoing opposition to let the EU encroach on areas of importance to the national self-understanding.

### 3. CULTURAL DIVERSITY CHALLENGES

#### 3.1 Immigration history of Denmark

Before the immigration wave of Turkish and Yugoslav foreign labour in the late 1960s (a result of the demand for workers for Danish industrial production) the question of cultural homogeneity in Denmark was, with a few notable exceptions, hardly ever raised. Denmark has been – and probably still is - one of the most ethnically homogenous countries in the world. Danes have always been reluctant to perceive the nation and Danish history in relation to and as a result of immigration, which reflects itself in the fierce opposition the last 20 years to label Danish society as multicultural. Today 9.8 percent of Denmark's 5.5 million residents are immigrants and descendants of immigrants, and 6.6 percent of the population are from non-Western countries (Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration 2010: 17).

Following the Reformation, Denmark was a Lutheran Protestant country where the principle of '*cuius region eius religio*' was strictly pursued for decades: in the multicultural 'Composite State' there was strict church discipline, and Catholics, Calvinists and Jews were not allowed to settle here. However, due to economic needs a more tolerant view on religious differences began to show during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The first tendencies emerged in the Schleswig-Holstein duchy where the cities of Glückstadt and Altona were opened to immigration, including religious minorities, in order to benefit from the diligence of these groups and take up commercial competition with Hamburg. After the wars against Sweden in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, non-Lutherans were also allowed to settle in Copenhagen, Fredericia and Nakskov in order to help restore these damaged cities. An extensive tolerance was now instituted by the King in these cities which allowed Jews, Calvinists and Catholics to practice their religions freely. The Danish Law of 1683 removed several of the strict regulations concerning non-Lutheran immigration from the time of the Reformation and allowed all but monks and Jesuits access to the kingdom. As a result, Jews settled in many provincial cities (Østergaard 2007: 264-65). The law also proscribed Lutheran priests from inciting hatred against other faiths. Nonetheless, it was still the King's duty to protect his subjects against heresy and strictly forbidden to speak against the Lutheran church. Full religious freedom was not instituted until the ratification of the constitution in 1849.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the ideas of the Enlightenment slowly began to affect theological thinking and the relationship between the state and religious minorities. This led to greater tolerance among the different Christian confessions but the extension of tolerance to Jews was more difficult. When Bishops and other people of authority spoke of or decided on religious matters (e.g. the building of a synagogue) they often referred to the possible resentment of the

general public. It was a common sight for Jews to be harassed in the streets (Ibid: 145). However, toward the end of the century the ideas of the Enlightenment also began to benefit the Jews. Within 30 years (1784-1814) the government started to ignore the views of the clergy when deciding on religious matters relating to minorities. The guilds were opened in 1788 and in 1814 Jews were given equal access to all occupations, their educational opportunities (including university) were greatly enhanced, they got the right to buy land and they were added to the military enrollment (Ibid.). At the same time, however, the special rights Jews had within the areas of family and religion were reduced. To an increasing degree, equality was conceived as the elimination of special rights and the attribution of the same rights and duties to all. This ultimately led to the assimilation of many Jews.

This Enlightenment view of the government was not accepted by all. In ‘the literary Jew feud’ of 1813 several works hostile to Jews were published. The hostility intensified in connection with the 1813 state bankruptcy for which the Jews were blamed. In 1819 during the two days of ‘the corporal feud,’ Jews were physically attacked by an angry mob in Copenhagen. Because of police passivity the government had to have the military stop the attacks.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, approximately 3500 Jews lived in Denmark. In 1904-1917, following the violent pogroms in Russia this number doubled. The newly arrived Russian-Polish Jews were poor, had other customs, language, names and were often more orthodox believers than the semi-assimilated Danish Jews. This led the latter to fear that the newcomers might provoke anti-Semitism among the majority population.

In the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the industrial revolution took place in Denmark and increased the demand for foreign labor. By 1885 8.1 percent of the population in Copenhagen was foreign born (Ibid: 284). The majority of foreign workers came from Sweden and took on the hardest and worst-paid jobs. The Danish workers’ movement criticized the flow of Swedish labor for pressing wages and functioning as strikebreakers. Prompted by financial concerns, the government started sending home those foreigners who couldn’t support themselves. In 1891 the Poor Law (“Fattigdomsloven”) established that only Danish citizens were entitled to support from the state. At the same time, however, access to Danish citizenship was made easier, especially for Swedes and Norwegians. In combination with mixed marriages, a similar language and culture, this led to quick assimilation.

There was also a small flow of workers from Germany. Despite minor conflicts, the Germans were generally welcomed by the Danish Unions who placed great value on their international contacts. The demand for labor created by the cultivation of sugar beets that began in the 1870s and 1880s was met by Polish seasonal workers. In 1914 14,000 Polish workers came. However, the First World War led to a drastic decline, and after 1929 the flow of workers practically stopped. 3-4000 Polish men and women settled in Denmark. They stood out with their different language and religion (Catholicism). Harassment was not uncommon. The Catholic Church in Denmark supported the Poles and helped them adjust. It strived to assimilate them in order to avoid a Polish minority church and because it feared that the poor and alien Poles would diminish the Church’s reputation in Denmark. The Church generally succeeded in this endeavor as the following generations largely melted in with the Danish population (Ibid: 304).

After the Second World War less than 1000 of the approximately 30,000 non-German refugees from the war stayed in Denmark and did not noticeably stand out (Ibid: 332). Up until 1983 approximately 10,000 refugees arrived from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Uganda, Chile and Vietnam. They were perceived as unproblematic and largely welcomed with kindness and understanding.

The period after the Second World War was one of economic prosperity, with industrial expansion in Denmark in the 1950s and 1960s increasing the demand for labor. The first groups of guest workers came in 1967. Liberal immigration rules made it possible for them to come without work or residence permits. A spontaneous immigration of mostly Turks and Yugoslavs – and later on Pakistanis – took place after Sweden and West Germany tightened their rules. Immigration was first regulated with quotas for work permits in 1973. However after the oil crisis hit the country later the same year, all further labour immigration was suspended. Despite this the number of immigrants continued to rise as the foreign workers sought family reunification. Later on, their children often married people from their homeland.

In 1973, 12,000 guest workers resided in Denmark; family reunifications brought that number to 35,000 by 1978 (Ibid: 362). The realization that many guest workers planned to stay prompted the Social Democratic government in 1980 to make integration the explicit principle behind its immigrant policies: the goal was to make immigrants self-supporting and to strike a reasonable balance between assimilation to Danish language and culture *and* the preservation of the identity-carrying elements of the immigrant communities.

From 1984 the attention shifted to the flow of refugees coming from the Middle East and Sri Lanka, with 2,827 asylum seekers arriving in September 1986. This number drastically dropped to 137 in the following month after the law was tightened (Togebj 2002: 37). In 1992 it was decided to give Yugoslavian war refugees (approximately 9,000, mostly Bosnians) temporary residence in expectation of a rapid return to their home country. In 1995 when this turned out not to be possible, their residence was normalized. The good will of their surroundings contributed to a relatively smooth inclusion into society. In the mid-90's a large group of Somalis sought refuge in Denmark. They were met with an often intrusive attention from the public and much more attention than had ever been directed at comparable groups of Iraqi and Afghan refugees who had arrived throughout a longer time period.

Since the mid-1990s Denmark has seen a long period of politicization of integration and refugee issues particularly focusing on Muslims. At first the issues mainly revolved around welfare-state dependency, family reunification and the concentration of immigrants in ghettos. After 9/11 the focus was also directed at the (un-)democratic mind-set of Muslims, their loyalty to the Danish state and the lack of gender equality in many households. From the mid-90s the centre-left government came under increasing pressure to address immigration. This resulted in a number of revisions to the immigration and integration rules. It culminated in 1998 in a major revision that restricted the possibilities for permanent residence and family reunification and introduced a reduced 'introduction benefit' for immigrants. The latter entailed a break with the tradition of giving all residents the same rights. This introduction benefit was, however, raised again in 2000 after being met with political opposition and stories of refugees caught in poor living conditions. The discourse also toughened and deep cultural differences were targeted as a problem for the coherence of the national state – especially with appointment of the social democratic hawk Karen Jespersen as Minister of the Interior in 2000. It was often emphasized that Denmark should not become a multicultural country. Multiculturalism took on a negative connotation referring to parallel societies.

**TABLE 1** Immigrants and descendants in Denmark, 1 January 2010.

	Immigrants	Descendants	Total	Percentage of all foreigners in Denmark
Turkey	32,255	26,961	59,216	10.9%

Germany	28,234	2,678	30,912	5.7%
Iraq	21,306	7,958	29,264	5.4%
Poland	25,443	2,958	28,401	5.2%
Lebanon	12,012	11,763	23,775	4.4%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	17,911	4,310	22,221	4.1%
Other African countries	17,054	4,586	21,640	4.0%
Pakistan	11,169	9,223	20,392	3.8%
Yugoslavia	11,021	5,938	16,959	3.1%
Somalia	10,127	6,704	16,831	3.1%
Norway	14,663	1,404	16,067	3.0%
Other Asian countries	11,907	3,509	15,416	2.8%
Iran	12,098	3,111	15,209	2.8%
Sweden	13,233	1,921	15,154	2.8%
Vietnam	8,919	4,959	13,878	2.6%
Great Britain	11,832	1,221	13,053	2.4%
Afghanistan	9,966	2,664	12,630	2.3%
Sri Lanka	6,715	4,088	10,803	2.0%
Latin America	9,352	870	10,222	1.9%
Morocco	5,140	4,691	9,831	1.8%
China	8,506	1,182	9,688	1.8%
North America	8,773	908	9,681	1.8%
Thailand	8,849	562	9,411	1.7%
Phillipines	8,377	930	9,307	1.7%
Iceland	7,876	1,090	8,966	1.7%
Other Countries	81,684	12,126	93,810	17.3%
<b>All Countries</b>	<b>414,422</b>	<b>128,316</b>	<b>542,738</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: reproduced from Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration 2010: 29.

As this politicization of Muslims progressed, the right-wing Danish People's Party (DPP) also became increasingly influential. In 2001 the new liberal-conservative government became dependent on the DPP for their parliamentary majority, and the following years saw further restrictions and an even tougher political discourse. The new government made a wide range of changes aimed at reducing the number of immigrants, refugees and family reunifications, and at making it harder to get access to permanent residence and citizenship. Most recently, the government has proposed making family reunification dependent on the work experience, educational level and mastery of specific languages of both parties seeking reunification. But perhaps most notably, a host of initiatives have been undertaken to change the mind-set of immigrants – particularly Muslims – with the aim of modernizing their outlook on society (cf. section 3.2.4).

In brief, until the inflow of guest workers in the late 1960s immigration to Denmark was limited and often resulted in assimilation. Increasing cultural pluralism from the 1960s on, however, eventually led to politicization of the issues surrounding integration from the mid-1990s and resulted in more and more restrictive rules and a tough political discourse

aimed primarily at Muslims. The table above sums up the composition of immigrants and their descendants in Denmark as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2010.

The next section outlines the challenges that the main minority and immigrants groups have faced in and posed to Denmark. As an introduction table 2 below broadly describes the different minority and immigrants groups in Denmark and how they differ along six dimensions.

**TABLE 2** Main minority groups in Denmark and their dimensions of difference

Dimensions of difference	Racial	Ethnic	Religious	Cultural	Linguistic
<b>Native minorities</b>					
Greenlanders	X	X		X	X
Germans					X
Jews		X	X	X	
Catholics			X		
<b>Immigrants (non-Muslims)</b>					
Scandinavians (Norwegians, Swedes, Icelanders)					(X)*
Germans					X
Poles			X	X	X
Iranians (Christian)	X	X		X	X
Asians (Sri Lankans, Vietnamese, Filipino, Thai)	X	X	X	X	X
Roma	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Immigrants (Muslims)</b>					
Iranians (Muslim)	X	X	X	X	X
Turks	X	X	X	X	X
Arabs (Iraqis, Lebanese, Moroccans)	X	X	X	X	X
ex-Yugoslavs (Serbs, Bosnians)	X	X	X	X	X
Asians (Pakistanis, Afghans)	X	X	X	X	X
Somalis	X	X	X	X	X

\* In general Norwegian, Swedish and Danish are very similar. Icelandic however is not understandable for Danes.

The next section will focus on the Greenlandic minority, the German minority, the Roma minority, the Jewish minority and the Muslim minority as these groups have commanded the most public attention. The Muslim minority consists of many different nationalities (Turks, Iraqis, Lebanese, Bosnians, Pakistani, Afghani, Somali etc.) but the tendency in the media and politics is to treat the Muslim group as a whole instead of differentiating between the different nationalities. The Muslim minority have by far received the most public attention. It is also clear from table 2 that the Muslim minority (regardless of nationality) is the group that differs most along the six dimensions.

## 3.2 Toleration of differences

### 3.2.1 The Greenlandic minority in Denmark

Greenland, part of the Danish Kingdom since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was a colony until 1953, when the (theoretically) equal status between Danes and Greenlanders was formally declared. Following growing Inuit political and national awareness in the 1970s that emphasized a distinct Greenlandic culture in contrast with Danish culture, Home Rule was established in 1979 (Togeby 2002: 120). In 2009 Greenland's status was further enhanced with a declaration of the area's political autonomy, also entailing the recognition of Greenlanders as a *people* under international law and of Greenlandic as the principal language in Greenland.

Characteristics of Greenlanders living in Denmark and their demands and relation to Danish society closely reflect the political connection between Denmark and Greenland. In the 1950s Greenlandic pupils were sent to Denmark for higher education as part of a sustained modernization policy. Later younger children (12-14 years old) also came. In 1951 twenty-two children aged 5-8 from disadvantaged families were forcibly relocated in Denmark for education and foster care (ibid: 25). The idea, to create a Danish-minded elite which could take on a leading role in Greenland upon returning, was a complete failure (Ice News 2009). "*The Experiment*", a Danish drama film premiered this year, recounts the fate of these children. A debate arose in its wake, and Greenland's Prime Minister Kuupik Kleist demanded an official apology, which Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen has so far refused (Politikken 2009ab, The Copenhagen Post Online 2009). Apart from this recent example, issues of Greenlanders in Denmark rarely appear in debates and on the political agenda, and Greenlanders seldom participate themselves (Togeby 2002: 157).

In the 1970s and 80s Greenlanders in Denmark were primarily young students, as well as a relatively small group of women married to Danish men (ibid: 45). As education opportunities broadened in Greenland, the number of Greenlandic students in Denmark has decreased.<sup>3</sup> In 2001 family relations were the main reason for Greenlanders' settling in Denmark, and 75 percent of Greenlandic residents in Denmark had lived in the country for more than 10 years (Togeby 2002: 33-35).

Whether born in Denmark or Greenland, Greenlanders have Danish citizenship and hence the same political, civil and social rights as Danes, but receive no special treatment on the basis of the European *Framework Convention*. That is, Greenlanders in Denmark are not recognized as a national minority, which has been criticized by the Council of Europe (2000, 2004). Further, as Danish citizens they are not entitled to subsidies targeted at immigrants (Ministry for Social Affairs 2003:6).

Compared to ethnic Danes, Greenlanders in Denmark have lower levels of education and employment (Togeby 2002: 38). Approximately 40 percent depend on transfer incomes, compared to 20-25 percent of Danes. Greenlanders also have less political capital and participate less in electoral channels of democracy, whereas their participation in everyday civil society is equal to that of Danes (Ibid: 151). Compared to immigrants, they tend to be more integrated on several dimensions (in terms of having Danish friends, being married to Danes, residential segregation, stated preference for living in Denmark, reported dual identity/no identity problems (Ibid: 33-35, 121, 129, 153)). Many maintain an affiliation to Greenland through networks such as the Greenlandic Houses, located in the main cities, in which club meetings, lectures, exhibitions, personal guidance, consultancy, etc., take place; as such, these constitute regional meeting places for Greenlanders in Denmark (Ibid: 48-49).

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<sup>3</sup> In 2001 13% of women and 19% of men of Greenlandic background state educational reasons for living in Denmark

Despite common attachment to Greenland, Greenlanders living in Denmark hardly constitute a single group. Togeby (2002) distinguishes between five groups, which differ in their national belonging. One of these, *the marginalized*, had a Greenlandic childhood and have lived in Denmark several years but are not self-supporting or married to a Dane.<sup>4</sup> In 2002 the government initiated a number of policies to rectify the social problems of this group, many of whom are homeless, abuse alcohol, and feel isolation from society (Ministry for Social Affairs 2003). Even though the group of marginalised only make up a small percentage (5-10 percent) of all Greenlanders in Denmark, they are the most visible in the streets, have gained most public attention and hence constitute the stereotype (Ministry for Social Affairs 2003: 7; Togeby 2002: 45, 154). The grievance most often mentioned among Greenlanders in Denmark concerns discrimination, racism and general prejudices (Togeby, 2002: 112-126). However, compared to Turks, Greenlanders report few incidents of discrimination. Still, the refusal of some Danes to accept Greenlanders as full or natural members of the national community remains an obstacle to Greenlanders' becoming fully integrated equal citizens (Ibid: 152).

### 3.2.2 The German national minority in Southern Jutland

The only recognized national minority in Denmark are the Germans in Southern Jutland, who are Danish citizens but identify with German culture. A corresponding Danish minority exists south of the Danish-German border. No German-Danish minorities existed before the war in 1864, which moved the border northwards, creating a Danish minority in the Prussian realm. Before that time, the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein were separately administrated in the multinational Danish 'composite state' (Kühle 2003: 125).

The Versailles treaty after World War I required two plebiscites in Northern Schleswig to establish boundaries of national belonging (Ibid: 127, 169). In the northern zone, 75 percent favoured reunification with Denmark. A German majority emerged in the Tønder, Aabenraa and Sønderborg areas, and in the southern zone 80 percent voted for German nationality (see illustration below). The line between the voting zones was ratified as the new border in 1920. Since then the border has not changed despite some revision claims from the German minority, especially after the Nazi takeover in Germany, as well as some Danish claims after World War II (Klatt 2006: 11).

The two minority groups have been recognized in both Denmark and Germany, which have agreed on practical solutions to problems concerning family separations and broken trading and cultural relations, though the Danish government refused to make a bilateral agreement with Germany concerning the two minorities despite pressure from Germany and the German minority (Kühle 2003: 129-130). Hence, *national* policies for minority protection were passed to facilitate a significant degree of cultural autonomy for the minorities.

In 1920 a number of Danish policies were implemented enabling the German minority to establish private German schools or German speaking sections in Danish schools, with both receiving Danish state subsidies. German vicar positions were established in Haderslev, Sønderborg, Tønder and Aabenraa and in 1923 *Nordschleswigsche Gemeinde* was founded as an independent church in the rural districts closely connected to the *Nordelbische Kirche* in Schleswig-Holstein. It was also made possible to communicate in German with public

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<sup>4</sup> The other four groups: 1) *the Danish* are children from mixed marriages which have spent the most of their childhood in Denmark, 2) *the integrated* have a Greenlandic childhood but have lived in Denmark several years and is now self-supporting and married to a Dane, 3) *the partial integrated* have same characteristics as the former but is dependent on social security benefits, 4) *the newcomers* have only lived in Denmark for few years and are influenced by the attitude in Greenland defining Greenlandic in contrast to Danish.

institutions, and a relaxation of legislation made it possible for the minority to establish a political party, *Schleswig Party*, running for election in 1920.

In the years leading to World War II tensions between the German minority and Denmark grew, with more than half of the former supporting the Nazis, many volunteering for the German army and leaders expressing desire for changed borderlines (ibid: 130-131). After the war, the Danish state and legal system clamped down on the German minority by closing all of the 89 German schools and imprisoning many Germans, affecting almost all German-minority families.

This made the German minority, supported by the regional Länder governments of Schleswig and Holstein, eager to obtain publicly guaranteed minority rights. The *Bund Deutscher Nordschleswiger* (BDN) association, the new organizational centre of the German minority, declared unconditional loyalty to the Danish King and state and pledged to accept the present border, but in return sought recognition as a national minority entitled to safeguard its political and cultural interests (ibid: 131-133).

When Danes in Germany were given minority rights in 1949, the German minority initiated negotiations with the Danish government aiming to obtain a corresponding official declaration. The Danish government made it clear that the German minority already possessed the civic rights announced in Germany through existing practice, and that the minority could freely negotiate on equal terms with authorities. Hence, no governmental declaration or establishment of a liaison committee was achieved, but a promise of equality of rights was expressed in the minutes from the meeting (Copenhagen Note).

Following the West German NATO membership application the Danish-German minority issue emerged on the international agenda, resulting in dual government declarations: the 1955 Copenhagen-Bonn Declaration. It contained recognition of school examinations, the long desired written declaration of German-minority rights in agreement with Danish-minority rights, acknowledgement of the need for spiritual and material support of the minorities, and finally a free-choice basis of affiliation with German nationality and German culture that the government would not be allowed to verify, hereby maintaining the principle of 'disposition' [*sindelagsprincippet*]: those who wish to be part of the minority are part of it ("*Minderheit ist, wer will*" / "*til et mindretal høre, hvem der regner sig til dertil*") (Ibid: 99-100, 135-136; Klatt 2006: 74-76).

The German delegation did not achieve a bilateral liaison committee, and the consequences of the prosecutions after World War II for the German minority had not been part of the negotiations. However, the reciprocal declaration had great political and sociological impact and is often described as the turning point from national tensions to increasing mutual recognition and co-operation (Kühle 2003: 136).

Since 1953 a German minority-Danish government dialogue has been facilitated through a regular elected representative in the parliament in the periods 1920-43; 1953-1964; 1973-79 and, following failure to have candidates elected, through the *Contact Committee* established in 1965<sup>5</sup> (Ibid: 137). Inclusion of the German minority is also facilitated through significant local and regional political participation. In this regard, the merging of Danish counties in 2007 creating bigger administrative entities was opposed by the German minority, who feared losing their significant local political leverage in some city councils (ibid: 149). The close attention to the regional minority by the Danish queen and royalty has also contributed, at a more symbolic level, to reconciliation.

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<sup>5</sup> Committee members include the Ministers for Education and for Interior Affairs, party representatives and four members from the German minority.



German-minority issues do not take up much attention in the Danish media or public anymore. To a large extent the German minority is recognised as a well integrated group, and the co-operation between it and Danish authorities is almost without friction. The Danish-German way of handling the border and minority issues has in an international context been emphasized as role model for other areas. Today in Denmark there are 17 German-language schools, including one continuation school [*efterskole*, usually one year following basic schooling] and one gymnasium financially supported by the Danish state; several German-language day care centres and after-school centres; and German libraries financed by the German and Danish states (Kühle 2003: 133)

However, dislike of Germans still occasionally surfaces (ibid: 143). Two events have recently gained attention. First, the creation of a *Euro-region* between the county of Southern Jutland and the German part of Schleswig in 1997 ignited an emotional debate with anti-German hostility, threats of violence and incidents of vandalism (Kühle: 143-144). This transnational regional co-operation remains strongly supported by the German minority represented, presently, with a seat in the Southern Jutland Regional Council .

Second, the Danish ratification of the *European Treaty of Regional or Minority Languages* in 2000 initiated intense debate concerning the use of German language in Danish public institutions (Kühle 2003: 145-148). The debate was quickly played down by the Danish government, supported by the *Danish* minority in Germany. German language is now recognized as a minority language in Southern Jutland, meaning among other things that a greater effort is made to ensure German-speaking staff in residential homes for elderly people who cannot speak Danish well – an issue advocated for by the German minority.

### 3.2.4 Roma

For nearly 200 years, from 1554 to 1736, the Roma were outlawed in Denmark; if caught by the authorities they were either deported or put into forced labor. By the mid-1700s reports on the Roma had gradually disappeared, and for the next 100 years very little was heard of them (Østergaard 2007: 200). Not until the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century did the Roma (immigrating from Hungary and Romania) re-appear in noticeable numbers. A new law, stating that it was illegal to take up residence in Denmark if one sought work by travelling, was put into force to form a legal basis for deporting the traveling Roma; this law remained in force until 1952.

Today the Roma residents in Denmark have settled more permanently. In 2006 there were between 5.000 to 10.000 Roma in Denmark (Ibid: 204). Most are ‘guest workers’ from Yugoslavia who arrived in the late 1960s, and their descendants. A smaller number came as refugees from the wars in Yugoslavia and Kosovo.

A large part of the Roma is concentrated in the city Elsinore. The municipality has gained a certain media attention with their special initiatives aimed at relieving the group’s social problems, especially concerning low rates of school attendance among Roma children. From 1982 to 2004 the municipality maintained special all-Roma school classes for children deemed problematic. After the policy had been criticized internationally as racial segregation, however, the Ministry of Teaching declared that the school classes violated the primary school law. Another practice eventually found illegal started in 2000 and consisted in an economic incentive structure set up to make parents bring their children to school. If the children did not turn up in school, it was seen as a failure by the unemployed parents to participate in a mandatory ‘activation program’ and money was deducted from their social transfer payments.

A recent expulsion from Denmark of 23 Roma with citizenship in other EU countries, justified on the grounds of their threat to public order, created some debate on the

discrimination and prejudices experienced by the Roma in Denmark. The European Roma Rights Center (ERRC) in Budapest is currently preparing a court case against the Danish state, claiming that the expulsion violates EU law (EU citizens' right to free movement) and is discriminatory.

The stereotype of the Roma as stealing, cheating, lying, poor, uneducated, lazy and unwilling to integrate is well alive in Denmark and felt by the Roma, inducing many to hide their background (Schmidt 2003). This stigmatization may have influenced the lack of organizational representation to carry forth group demands to public institutions.

### **3.2.3 Jews**

Following a spread of anti-Semitic sentiment in Poland in 1969 more than 3000 Poles migrated to Denmark, contributing significantly to the number of Jews in Denmark. The Jewish minority today consists of somewhere between 5000 and 7000 members, less than one per thousand of the total population. The Danish Jews are especially of interest due to the status which the rescue of the Danish Jews during World War II still carries in Danish, Israeli and American national mythologies about the events during the Second World War.

Copenhagen is the religious center for Danish Jews. There are several synagogues in Copenhagen, and Jews also have their own nursery, school, after-school center, elder care home and cemetery. These institutions have never been the subject of critical public discussion in a way that resembles anti-Semitism.

The general impression is that anti-Semitism is practically unknown in Denmark except for conflicts between some Muslim immigrants and Danish Jews. Most noticeably the media reported on 20 documented incidents where Jews were harassed by Muslims during the three weeks of the Gaza War in 2008/09. However, the former head rabbi of the Jewish Community<sup>6</sup> in Denmark, Bent Melchior, was quick to emphasize that he did not see the incidents as reflecting general anti-Semitism and that their significance was blown out of proportion (as opposed to the DPP, who called for a national action plan to fight anti-Semitism). He did not want the fight against anti-Semitism instrumentalized in what he perceived to be a much more systematic and organized Islamophobia and fear of Muslims (Melchior 2009).

Unconcern about the level of anti-Semitism is in part contradicted by a recent study that demonstrates a significantly higher level of apprehension towards Jews among Turks, Pakistanis, Somalis, Palestinians and Ex-Yugoslavians than among ethnic Danes. Between 60 and 70 percent of the former five groups confirmed that 'you can't be too careful around Jews' compared to 18 percent of ethnic Danes (Nannestad 2009). This points to a tacit, rather than explicit, anti-Semitism. Cultural sociologist and former president of the Jewish Community Jacques Blum does indeed find a combination of straightforward harassment of Jews by Muslims (mostly unreported), as well as an undercurrent of anti-Semitism reflected in the negative connotation of the word 'Jew' in the Danish language (Jørgensen 2007). The latter has prompted Danish Jews to label themselves as Jewish or as having a Jewish background.

### **3.2.4 Muslims**

Since the 1990s a tendency has been identified across Europe to label immigrants in religious terms rather than in light of their ethno-cultural background or social roles in society (Allievi

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<sup>6</sup> *Det Mosaiske Troessamfund*, the main organization representing Jews in Denmark.

2006: 37). This tendency, whereby Muslims in particular are seldom categorized as Turks, Iranians or Somalis (or as students or workers) also exists in Denmark, where debates over integration and toleration of differences invariably centre on Muslims and where religion is often associated with potential conflict (Mouritsen 2006: 75-76).

Whereas controversy over integration is discussed as related to issues of culture, culture is almost always linked to religious beliefs and associated value conflicts. Since the end of the 1990s immigration and integration policies have been important issues among the electorate and a main theme in election campaigns (Mikkelsen 2008: 185), although there are now indications that it may be losing saliency after continual tightening of immigration, citizenship and integration policies and requirements that has been implemented over the last decade.

Public discussions tend to take place in an 'us-them' framework which, on the one hand, is concerned about the social and residential segregation of an out-group of Muslims in vulnerable suburb districts (these officially termed 'ghettos' have recently been the target of competing action plan proposals from the Government and the Opposition (Opposition, 2010; Government, 2010)). On the other hand, the 'us-them' polarity is reinforced as Islam is increasingly constructed in opposition to Danish values of democracy and equality (Mouritsen 2009: 19; Lindekilde 2009: 4).

In Denmark, as noted, the constitution gives a privileged position to the Lutheran *Folkekirke* as the state church, while also guaranteeing freedom of religion to other religious communities; these can be officially recognized by the state, but without getting all the same privileges. Today 23 **Islamic communities are legally recognised** (Ministry of Justice, 2010A). Approved religious communities may be granted authorization to officiate marriages, subject to individual evaluation of congregations (Ministry of Justice 2010B). In contrast to the state church, other religious communities finance their activities, buildings and cemeteries themselves.

A **mosque** built in accordance with traditional Islamic rules does not yet exist. Financial difficulties and obstacles to obtaining planning permits have long delayed the process despite strong desires among Muslims, who have set up advocacy groups in favour of a mosque. Groups opposing the building of mosques in Denmark have also been established, and the political salience of the issue remains high. Particularly controversial is the question of whether to allow calls to prayer from mosque minarets, which is currently prohibited. In 2009 the Ahlul Bait association was granted permission to build the Imam Ali Mosque in Copenhagen. The building will have a traditional look with a dome and minarets, the latter only having symbolic function. The cost of the project is estimated to be 40-50 million DKK, of which less than half was collected by June 2010, through private donations from Denmark and abroad (IslamDenmark.dk). Building a Mosque in Aarhus has also been discussed. At the time of writing, these plans have collapsed due to internal disagreements among Muslim groups, lack of finances (aarhus.dk) and disagreements about location. For now, Muslims in Denmark use previously existing buildings not built for the purpose as places of worship.

The first **Muslim cemetery** not attached to a Christian cemetery was established in 2006 near the city Brøndby outside Copenhagen (Danish Islamic Funeral Fund.dk). Until then Muslims were either buried in their country of origin or in special areas of cemeteries reserved for Muslims. The negotiations and preparation preceding the opening of the Muslim cemetery date from the early 1990s, when different Muslim associations joined together to advance their claim. The process made slow progress due, among other things, to disagreement over the prohibitive price (21.5 million DKK/approx. 3 million EUR) initially asked by the local council that owned the desired land. After the Danish Muslim Association had managed to raise 3 million DKK, the Social Democratic government in early 2001

pledged to compensate the remaining difference within a price set by an impartial appraisal commission. The new government that took office later in 2001, supported by the Danish People's Party, withdrew the promise (Hjort 2002: 11). The price was later set at 3.2 million and the *Danish Islamic Funeral Fund* (a fusion of 23 associations) bought the site, which they now administer with private funds. Negotiations to establish Muslim cemeteries in Herning (Jutland) and Roskilde (Zealand) are now taking place, meeting Muslims' wishes to be able to bury family members nearer to their homes (Ritzau 2008, Kristeligt Dagblad 2008).

An official **education for imams** (corresponding to the official Lutheran priest educations) does not exist, but the possibility has been discussed for a number of years (Kristeligt Dagblad 2005, Pedersen 2007, Borking 2010). It has been argued that a Danish education would stem the influx of radical imams without any background in Denmark. Currently, imams from abroad who are affiliated with an approved religious society in Denmark can obtain a residence permit (Law of Foreigners, §9f subsection 1).

The Danish version of the **head scarf** debate began as a controversy about whether cashiers in supermarket had a right to wear headscarves on the job, or whether it was a legitimate interest of the employer to ensure that no customer was 'inconvenienced' by the headscarves, and that they were therefore ultimately allowed to fire employees who insisted on wearing headscarves. The controversy was settled with the right of the employer to dictate a job uniform. In most cases practical solutions have been found, with a large majority of employers accepting the headscarf (Ugebrevet A4, 2008).

Debates over headscarves in schools have not been as protracted or politicised as in France or Germany, in part because of a relatively decentralised system of school administration, which has facilitated local solutions. Debates over headscarves have, however, spread to other areas, from politicians wearing headscarves at the speaking podium in Parliament to whether or not judges may wear headscarves (the latter a purely hypothetical debate that prompted an amendment of the Law of Justice Administration [*Retsplejeloven*] in 2008 (Klarskov 2008).

In the latter case the Danish court agency [*Domstolsstyrelsen*] had announced that Muslim female judges could in fact wear headscarves in court, but the government disregarded the statement and banned the wearing of any kind of religious or political symbols in court (Law of Justice Administration: §56 subsection 1; Boddum 2008). The headscarf is in general involved in the larger debate about integration and Islam's compatibility with the fundamental values of Danish society, especially gender equality (Mouritsen 2009: 20).

Owing to existing Danish legislation on **private schools**, Muslims are allowed to run Muslim schools on the condition that the curricula meet basic Danish standards. No official statistics on the number of Muslim schools exist; however in 2004-5, 21 independent schools were categorised by the Ministry as having predominantly bi-lingual students (Ministerial answer to question in Parliament, 2006). This number may be compared to the total number of independent schools, which is about 500, and the number of regular public schools, which is about 1600.

Various controversies concerning education have emerged in public debate, including native-language instruction (abolished in 2001); questions of separate changing rooms and shower facilities for Muslims in connection with sports activities; the uneven distribution of immigrant children in schools; bussing of pupils (practiced in Aarhus and discussed in Copenhagen); and, most recently, parents' meeting only for mothers.

A more general change of the Danish official school ideology may also be identified, in line with a growing focus on national identity, diversity and integration in society. The preamble of the Danish Law for primary and secondary school [*Folkeskoleloven*] was

changed in 1993 (and adjusted in 2006) to emphasise that pupils must become ‘familiar’ with Danish culture (and history, 2006) while giving them an ‘understanding’ of other countries and cultures (billedkunstlaerere.dk).

Certain subjects referred to as ‘identity carrying subjects’, such as history and Christian studies [*kristendomskundskab*], were strengthened. In particular, a discussion has taken place between politicians and teachers as to whether ‘religious studies’, as a broader information subject, could be taught instead of ‘Christian studies’ as a cultural and identity-oriented subject (even if the latter does not include the preaching of Christianity). The government made it clear that Christian Studies is a compulsory subject. How these changes may affect the pupils, however, depends largely on their implementation by teachers (Mouritsen & Olsen, forthcoming).

In the intense public debates on integration problems, Danish media have tended to confront non-Western ethnic minorities, particularly Muslims, to get their reactions regarding the issue at hand. Hence, immigrants are often presented in the role of a self-defending reactor to a political agenda that has been defined by others (Lindekilde 2009: 26-27). This media focus may partly explain why ethnic minorities in Denmark raise more claims regarding issues of integration, as compared to claims regarding issues of immigration, asylum, citizenship and homeland affairs. However, better opportunities for immigrants, when compared with those in most other countries, to participate in the framing of *local* integration policy, e.g. through integration councils, could be an explanation for this tendency too (ibid: 22-23): the Danish local electoral system has been found to be relatively favourable to (concentrated) immigrant groups in the larger cities. Before the Muhammad caricatures in 2005, Danish Muslims had not mobilized and engaged in continued claims-making or been prominent actors in national debates, but this is now changing (ibid: 26).

Often in debates of Muslims vis-à-vis the Danish society all Muslims have been portrayed as a monolithic group. However, in some cases internal splits among Muslims have become evident, even in public media. This has been the case, for instance, with the issue of whether *sunni* Muslims could identify with the Mosque project in Copenhagen, which was led by a *shia* community. Particularly in public debates surrounding the Muhammad caricature controversy, different Muslim groups became visible expressing quite different views, emphasising different problems, and making different claims to the state. The question of which groups, representing which Muslim communities, the state should consult or negotiate with remains controversial.

One way of distinguishing between Muslim groups is to describe Muslim claimants as exponents of different ways of practicing Islam in a Danish context (Lindekilde 2008: 78-79). A major task, here, is to combine their identity as Europeans/Danes and their Islamic beliefs, which may be done in different ways by stressing various normative interpretations of Islam and different guidelines for adjusting to Danish society. Three basic types of this diverse ‘diasporic’ Islamic religiosity have been distinguished by Werner Schiffauer – see the table below (Schiffauer 2007). The different dispositions should be viewed as positions on a continuum.

**TABLE 3** Types of Islamic Religiosity

“Cultural Muslims”	“Neo-orthodox Muslims”	“Ultra-orthodox Muslims”
emphasis on non-discrimination	emphasis on the right to difference	rejection of the struggle for recognition
normative pluralism	normative conservatism	“authenticity”
Islam should be practiced in private	strong affiliation to Islamic community	sectarian affiliation to the Islamic community: elitism
scepticism towards strong/influential Islamic organisations	communitarian solidarity is hold in high esteem	
<i>sharia</i> is not an issue	search for life in conformity with <i>sharia</i>	implementation of <i>sharia</i> by political action (revolutionary Islam) or by withdrawal (quietist Islam)
mobilisation is difficult	empowerment by mobilisation	empowerment by political action (only revolutionary Islam)
secularism: rejection of ostentatious religious symbols in public	fight for Islamic symbols in public	Islamic symbols are expressions of political loyalty (revolutionary Islam)
religion integrated in everyday life	Methodist and systematic religiosity	ascetic and religious virtuosity
assimilation	integration	isolation
acceptance of cultural modernity	search for alternative modernity	Islamization of modernity

Source: reproduced from Lindekilde 2008, applied from Schiffauer 2007: 80-90

**Cultural Muslims** are the most assimilated group and believe that Islam can be practised in the same secularised way that Danes typically practice Christianity. Thus religious symbols are not to be displayed in the public sphere. The organisation *Democratic Muslims* are the clearest exponent of this group. It was established during the Muhammad caricatures controversy, attempting to mobilise the ‘silent majority’ of Danish Muslims (Lindekilde 2008: 79).

**The Neo-orthodox Muslims** maintain their Islamic traditions but in a way that is adjusted to the Danish context. Sometimes demands for certain privileges are made by groups belonging to this category. An organisational exponent of this group is The Community of Islamic Faith [*Islamisk Trossamfund*], who was very active in the public debate in the beginning of the caricature controversy. They demanded an official apology for the publication and initiated the sending of the ‘imam delegation’ to Egypt, Lebanon and Syria, thereby aiming to achieve external support for their claims (ibid: 86; for a detailed analysis of Muslim organisations and claimants during the Muhammad caricatures controversies in Denmark see Lindekilde 2008).

**The Ultra-orthodox Muslims** consider the other two groups as not being *real* Muslims or as ‘selling out’ on Islamic values. These segments often come together in loose networks instead of organisations and often choose to live isolated from society. They reject democracy by being passive and often they support violent groups in their lands of origin which are condemned by the West, e.g. Hamas and al-Shabaab. Danish authorities are worried about the development of these groups because radicalised Muslims, including individuals actually convicted of terrorism, have come from here.

Muslim organisations cutting across national origin but with Islamic religiosity at their cores have gained ground in recent years, especially among the second and third generations of Muslim immigrants (Mikkelsen 2008: 144-145). Emphasising a pan-Muslim identity is favoured by many youth who seek integration in the host society without entirely losing their background (Lindekilde 2009: 36). For this group religiosity is becoming an increasingly important part of their identity, and they spend more and more time and energy, compared with their parents, familiarizing themselves with Islam. At the same time they clearly seek recognition from Danish society, signalling that simultaneously being a second-generation immigrant, a Dane and a Muslim is perfectly possible.

#### 4. DEFINITIONS OF TOLERATION AND RESPECT IN DENMARK

Historically, tolerance has in a widely received interpretation been dismissed as a form of indifference and relativism with regard to the beliefs and actions of others. As such it connotes the idea that all beliefs, values, and practices are of equal value and therefore also of no value. Tolerance, in this sense, means the inability to make judgements, or to differentiate properly between right and wrong, good and bad, true and false (Bredsdorff & Kjældgaard 2008: ch. 15). While this idea is based on a biased (or misunderstood) reading of Enlightenment philosophy, many have wished to employ an alternative term, a favourite being *frisind*, meaning ‘liberality’ or ‘free mindedness’.

This term, originating from the influential populist leader, author and priest N.F.S. Grundtvig, originally refers to the idea that the state should stay out of matters of religion and let the exponents of different views of religion use all verbal powers at their disposal to promote their own views and criticise those of others. By contrast, ‘tolerance’ would here be indifference towards, and refraining from judgment on that which one considers wrong, and thereby losing an essential moral faculty as a human being.

Yet with the state as the guarantor of equal civic freedoms – securing, as Danes have put it since Grundtvig, *freedom to Loke as well as to Thor*<sup>7</sup> – liberality means that one is able to speak truth against a lie without holding back in dull indifference or adopting social conformism in order to ensure social and political peace (ibid.). One is able to fight for all that one holds dearly (*‘kæmp for alt hvad du har kært’*),<sup>8</sup> while insisting on the same rights for others. The notorious Danish cartoon crisis referred to this understanding of liberality: by those who argued for the right to criticise and ridicule the beliefs of others, as well as by those who were concerned that all the relevant parties did not in fact have equal civic standing in Danish society (Ibid; Meer & Mouritsen 2009).

The preference for liberality over tolerance is particularly conspicuous among right-of-centre politicians in Denmark today. A competing conception of tolerance developed in connection with a split up of the Liberal party in 1905 (in Danish the party is called Venstre, literally ‘Left’). Ongoing debates in Parliament led to an institutionalisation of the split-up and the creation of two separate liberal parties, one mainly consisting of farmers and members of the liberal professions (Venstre), and another made up by small peasants and intellectuals (Radikale Venstre, literally ‘Radical Left’).<sup>9</sup> The political views of both groups were by and

<sup>7</sup> In Nordic mythology Thor of course denotes uprightness and truth, whereas Loke stands for falsehood and deviousness.

<sup>8</sup> The passage is from a hymn, ‘Altid frejdig, når du går’, by Christian Richardt, written in 1867, which has become associated with resistance and struggle, in particular resistance to the German occupation during World War II.

<sup>9</sup> The bone of contention leading to the division of the liberals was the question of the defences of Copenhagen. By circumventing the Commons Prime Minister Estrup of the governing Right Party (Højre) had financed the extension of

large inspired by the thoughts of Grundtvig, but the latter also found inspiration in the thoughts of brothers Georg and Edvard Brandes and the editor Viggo Hørup, representing a new, radical, form of liberalism. Due to this ideological difference not only two distinct liberal parties but two distinct liberal ideologies developed, and these two different interpretations of liberalism caused the reception of tolerance to follow two separate courses throughout the 20th century. In very general terms: in contrast to the right-wing liberals who, by and large, stuck to Grundtvig's distinction between tolerance and liberality, left-wing liberals accentuated the importance of a universal concept of tolerance.

Recent times have seen a change in the subjects and objects of toleration in Danish discourse. While it never acquired an unequivocally positive meaning, the main concern with tolerance has shifted: from the intolerance of the majority against immigrants in the 1970s and the 1980s, to a concern, in the 1990s and the 2000s, that too many immigrants (potentially tolerant themselves) being reluctant to integrate would have a corrosive effect on the otherwise well-established, traditional tolerance of the majority. There has never been any celebration of multiculturalism in Denmark, beyond seeing cultural diversity as giving interesting spice of life (foods, folklore, etc).

From the 1990s onwards, multiculturalism has represented 'parallel societies', disintegration, and a moral, social and political failure to demand and promote the full inclusion of all groups into society: into its labour market, education, civil society organisations and, eventually, politics. This inclusion is seen to be endangered by too much tolerance or overindulgence towards groups who abuse the rights and privileges they enjoy in Denmark and who may not eventually reciprocate the tolerance of the majority (or who may themselves in the future become an intolerant majority).

The form of inclusion available for immigrants is based on a comprehensive concept of equal citizenship that pertains to all fields of life, including family and private life. The only form of recognition given to immigrants is that of becoming a full and equal citizen; a form of recognition nonetheless withheld for a considerable number of years, until immigrants have proved their determination and ability to become full members of society through economic self-sufficiency, Danish language literacy and knowledge of Danish history, culture and fundamental political values. Some symbolic (and legal) recognition is also given to working immigrants who bring special professional skills to the country and contribute to its economic growth. However, their positive contribution is seen as almost purely economic, not cultural (skills, not identity) (Mouritsen & Olsen 2011).

#### **4.1 Acceptance and integration in Denmark**

##### ***The values of the Danish integration regime***

The inclusion of post-immigration minorities in Denmark is based on the values of equal and active citizenship. The fundamental idea is that this status is accessible to all who want it, and that it is not *prima facie* a particularly Danish, 'national' form of citizenship. As a normative and identity- or practice-oriented ideal ('good' citizenship) it is relatively comprehensive (Mouritsen & Olsen 2011; Mouritsen, under review) and is conceived to have a progressive and emancipatory potential for the suppressed and dominated in different ways, i.e., in

(Contd.)

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the outdated defences of the capital city, which had, due to the massive urbanisation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, far outgrown the boundaries of the old city. He was able to do so with the political support from the right-wing liberals. The left-wing liberals on the contrary considered spending money on military expenses as a waste, especially in light of the defeat of 1864, which had demonstrated the Danish military's inefficiency in front of a determined enemy.



relation to traditional authority and patriarchal norms, gender equality and child education, and even sexual practices. Capacity to practice critical self-reflection in private lives as well as politics and democracy is crucial.

Right of the political centre, these values are often seen as anchored in a broader Danish cultural-Christian tradition influenced in particular by the Grundtvigian movement which emphasises popular consent, anti-authoritarianism and liberality. Groups on the left, while generally subscribing to the same comprehensive understanding of these values, are more reluctant to agree to this particular cultural heritage argument (Mouritsen 2006). Liberality is thus broadly considered a central virtue when dealing with others in a democratic system such as the Danish, i.e. where democratic decision making is often understood (and celebrated) as a ‘form of life’ characterised by informality, deliberation, equal voice and consensuality.

Democracy and democratic debate do not here connote politeness and civility, let alone ‘recognition’, so much as blunt and open exchanges are combined with having ‘thick skin’. In this view, one has to be able to handle rudeness and even ridicule as a part of democracy. There is no real place for offence or for being offended, neither hence for catering to cultural and/or religious sensibilities, which again diminishes the space for criticism of stereotyping, pejorative expressions, etc. This all entails that Danish tolerance in a paradoxical way is not seeing society and exchanges between groups in society as being based on ‘co-existence’ or a *modus vivendi*. Tolerance is wrong, or even a vice to the extent that it implies permissiveness or ‘letting people be’. Rather, tolerance is, as it were, a republican virtue that structures the critical exchanges of citizens in what is essentially a cooperating democracy.

### ***Policies and institutional arrangements***

Danish efforts to reduce discrimination and create equal treatment for all to a large extent have been driven by the need to transform international obligations into national law (Justesten 2003, Nielsen 2010). However, the early 1990s saw the creation of a Board for Ethnic Equality (BEE) with the purpose of ‘*fighting difference of treatment in all its aspects as well as supporting that all ethnic groups in society, irrespective of differences in their conditions, are given the opportunity to exercise their activities on an equal footing.*’ (Law on the BEE 1993). The BEE was to work through campaigns and counselling of public and private organisations, individuals and policy makers. Consonant with the dominant perception in the 1980s of subjects and objects of toleration, the BEE was supported across the political spectrum. Behind the BEE, which was based on a Social Democratic proposal, was a general concern with racism and pressure from immigrant organisations who had fought for recognition as ethnic minorities rather than as immigrants and who pointed to discrimination as a main cause of minority exclusion (Nævnet for Etnisk Ligestilling 2002: 7-12).

The BEE defined ethnic equality as ‘*more than just formal rights. Ethnic equality entails equality before the law, equal access to the institutions of society and equal right to realize one’s distinctive character (særpræg) within the limits of the law*’ (Ibid, 15). One idea behind ‘ethnic equality’ rather than just ‘ethnic equal treatment’ (a discussed alternative) was that ethnic equality meant more than formal equal treatment and might imply certain types of positive action, as well as a recognition that the different needs of different groups might have to be met in different ways. It is not clear that ethnic equality as a concept entailed either an appreciation of cultural differences as a positive contribution to society *per se*, or the recognition of minority identities as valuable.

The BEE could not process individual complaints about discrimination. Danish legislation against discrimination and racism was based on criminal law until 1996 where a

new law on discrimination in the labour market opened up possibilities for civil law suits. This law was supplemented in 2003/4 by the implementation of two EU directives on anti-discrimination which extended civil law prohibition against discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity beyond the labour market. This extension also introduced administrative complaint procedures, which were strengthened in 2009 with the creation of a new Equality Board which will process complaints on all relevant grounds.

Nonetheless, public campaigns against discrimination and racism suffered a blow with the change of government in 2001, which closed the BEE and ‘restructured’ the Danish Centre of Human Rights into a new Danish Institute for Human Rights. The present governing coalition of Liberals, Conservatives and Danish People’s Party had found the two former institutions too vocal in the general immigration and integration debate. The new government prioritised restrictions in immigration policies and access to citizenship and pursued a tough integration policy already initiated in the late 1990s by its Social Democratic predecessor.

Integration policies, over the last decade, have aimed to render the immigrant able to participate ‘on an equal footing’ in Danish society, to a large degree placing the responsibility for this to happen on the individual immigrant/minority member, rather than the receiving society. The aim was

to contribute to the newly arrived foreigner’s possibility for participating on an equal footing with other citizens in the political, economic, work-related, social, religious, and cultural life of society;...to her quickly becoming self-supporting; ...to contribute to giving the individual foreigner an understanding of the fundamental values and norms of the Danish society (The 1999 Integration Law, par.1).

This integration policy has been deepened and extended in consecutive stages, moving from an initial emphasis on labour market functionality and language into a wider realm – particularly after 9/11 – of civic competences and liberal values, cultural and historical orientation, and loyalty. It has pushed sensitivity towards cultural identities and notions of a society based on pluralism, mutual respect and tolerance of diversity into the background (Hvenegaard-Lassen 2002: 251; Mouritsen & Olsen 2011).

However, government policy has not been without focus on tolerance and equal respect. In 2003, the government developed an action plan, ‘For the Promotion of Equal Treatment and Diversity and The Fight Against Racism’ (based on the 2001 Durban Declaration). This plan again refers to the old Nordic ‘freedom for Loke as well as for Thor’ as a principle of equal treatment that implies that ‘we are not identical and we should not be made uniform’ and stipulates that ‘difference is the precondition for all democratic dialogue’ (1). But consonant with the new perception of subjects and objects of toleration, the plan eagerly underlines that ‘tolerance should go in all directions’, and points to problems of intolerance between groups of ethnic minorities as well as ‘intolerant attitudes among ethnic minorities towards the majority population’ (14). The remedy is again the creation (through integration policy) of a set of shared values:

The freedom to be different can only thrive if there is a widespread commitment in society to the shared fundamental democratic values of freedom, equal worth (ligeværdighed), responsibility, duties and active participation. (15)

The plan was mainly premised on state support for initiatives formed by other actors, primarily from civil society. In 2010 it was replaced by a new action plan on ‘Ethnic Equal Treatment and Respect for the Individual’. The new plan is based on the same ideas of spreading the fundamental principles of democracy. It does, however, reflect an increased concern with intolerance both against minorities and within minorities (anti-Semitism in particular) and underlines the need to map and counteract discrimination in different areas of life such as work, spare time activities and education. As something relatively new, it refers to diversity management in workplaces and conceives of diversity as an asset for companies and for the economy more generally. Also in a few places it even mentions that ‘nobody should be discriminated, degraded or threatened because of, for example, their ethnic origin, sex, belief, sexual orientation or because they have voiced their opinions’ (5), presumably pointing in two directions simultaneously: against the degrading of minorities on the one hand and the threats against cartoonists, opinion makers and politicians on the other.

The shift in emphasis that this plan entails can reasonably be explained by a desire to attract highly skilled workers to the booming (until 2008) Danish economy on the one hand, and on the other a concern with domestic cases of planned (but not executed) terror actions (and the Cartoon Affair). As to the latter, the plan is indeed directly tied to a strong government concern with radicalisation of minority youth and is part of the realization of the 2009 government action plan on ‘Prevention of Extremism and Radicalisation among Young People’. In this plan the fight against intolerance and discrimination is regarded as an important part of avoiding extremism and generally connects this goal with increased efforts to instil democratic values in all new members of society, in particular through education and civil society participation. Hence tolerance and equal respect are back on the agenda, this time not only in order to ensure the rights and security of minorities, but especially with a view to enhance the security of the majority.

#### *Acceptance and accommodation as a social practice*

Danes exhibit a relatively high level of comfort with the idea of having neighbours who have a different ethnic background or another religion than themselves, compared to the European average.<sup>10</sup> Danes are also more likely than the EU average to have friends and acquaintances that have another ethnic background (62 percent) and religion (66 percent) than themselves. Younger people mix more with people of different backgrounds than do older people, and the more education you have, the more you mix with people of other ethnic backgrounds (Eurobarometer 317/2009, factsheet on Denmark, p. 1).

Paradoxically, Danes at the same time perceive their country to be quite discriminatory in relation to people with different ethnic or religious backgrounds. 77 percent and 55 percent find discrimination on the basis of these respective grounds widespread (ibid). Between 63 and 68 percent also suspect that skin colour, ethnic background and the expression of a religious belief make a negative difference for job candidates when employers choose between people of equal skills and qualifications (ibid 2).

This indicates that while people themselves in general are appreciative, indifferent, or perhaps tolerant towards ethnic and religious differences in their daily lives, they perceive others to be rather intolerant of such differences. Eurobarometer surveys generally show a high level of comfort, among Danes, with the idea of having people with different ethnic

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<sup>10</sup> Ethnic background: 8.6 vs. EU27 average 8.1 (score between 1 and 10); Religion 8.9 vs. EU27 average 8.5 (Eurobarometer 296/2008:Tables QA6.4 and QA6.5.)

background elected for the highest political office in the country while the comfort level with regard to people with a different religious background is at the European average (Eurobarometer 317: 69, table QE6.5).

Studies of political tolerance carried out in Denmark (but thought to apply generally) demonstrate, however, that tolerance is conditional on the perception of whether the groups in question respect democratic norms and hence live up to a norm of reciprocity (Petersen et al. 2010). Low tolerance, on the other hand, is found with regard to groups who have been previously associated with an 'extremist stance in terms of violent and non-democratic behaviour' (ibid 10, 13). The partial exception here is the group of 'ordinary Muslims' (as opposed to 'Islamic fundamentalists') who are not tolerated among those who dislike them the most, despite the fact that they have not been directly connected with extremist stances. This is likely to be explained by the 'perception that the social practices of even ordinary Muslims are in conflict with liberal ideals' (ibid 14).

The findings of the above studies suggest that Danes personally have a somewhat high tolerance level in their daily practices when it comes to people with different ethnic or religious backgrounds than their own, and that there is a relatively high level of contact between people of different cultural and religious backgrounds, especially among the young and the well-educated. Indeed, Danes may be indifferent towards or appreciative of such cultural and religious differences. However, their perception is paradoxically that the tolerance of other fellow citizens is low. Moreover, political tolerance is largely conditional on the perception of others' respecting fundamental democratic values and subscribing to a norm of reciprocity: no toleration for the intolerant.

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Over the last two decades, the predominant discourse in Denmark with regard to religious and cultural differences has been one of integration, rather than of tolerance or of respect and recognition of ethnic and religious identities. The discourse of integration is explicitly set against the notion of multiculturalism. The latter is synonymous with parallel societies and a moral, social and political failure to demand and further the integration of all residents into society. In general, cultural and religious differences are seen as illegitimate to the extent that they stand in the way of integration, understood as the ability to live up to one's duty as an economically self-sufficient and taxpaying individual and as a participating citizen at all levels of civil society and political institutions.

The idea that we need to be mutually reassured at the symbolic level that we all belong to the same community (in that we affirm the same fundamental democratic values) is now a central part of a self-conscious discourse on the necessity of ensuring the 'cohesion' of Danish society in order to sustain the support for the Danish welfare community and its social and moral achievements. While these achievements include equality and self-reflective moral and political autonomy for the individual citizen, the idea of social integration through values is closer to the idea of a *Gemeinschaft* built on mechanic solidarity (Durkheim), than to that of a *Gesellschaft* premised on abstract norms of interaction, individualism and division of labour (organic solidarity).

This '*civic integrationism*,' with its comprehensive notion of citizenship, draws on central elements in national identity history that place a value on the society's smallness, popular participation, consensus and the ability and duty to communicate in the same language across social and political cleavages. For the right-of-centre, it is rooted in a broader national and Christian culture. The centre-left also subscribe to the citizen ideal, but tends to

reject the right wing's somewhat nationalist interpretation of its basis. It is generally believed that status as an equal citizen with identical rights and duties provides sufficient support for the realisation of cultural and religious identities and that it is accessible to all with the right motivation. Danish citizenship as a social and legal status is not biased towards a specific nationality, culture or religion. Nonetheless immigrants are thoroughly vetted through integration and language tests to qualify for citizenship: the formal legal status is a prize and the end of a long trial period that is supposed to ensure and demonstrate the commitment by the new-comer to the fundamental democratic values of Danish society.

The overshadowing concern with cultural and religious differences in Denmark today pertains to post-immigration minorities who arrived from non-western countries in the last 40 to 50 years, most of whom are (identified as) Muslims. National and older religious minorities of Greenlanders, Germans, Poles and Jews are today uncontroversial and rarely raise claims themselves about special or equal rights, symbolic respect and recognition. Immigrants from non-western countries, on the other hand, are very controversial because of (what is perceived to be) their low ability to integrate into the 'modern' and 'liberal' Danish society and democracy.

The turn towards integration has pushed the question of toleration aside. In the discussion of the hazards of multiculturalism and parallel societies, tolerance has in part been framed as overindulgence or indifference to problematic beliefs and practices among minorities. This criticism of tolerance as indifference or *naivité*, relies on a historical preference in some parts of society for 'liberality' over 'tolerance'. Tolerance is seen as form of moral failure: it implies giving up the forming of judgements over what is right and wrong. Liberality, on the other hand, entails fighting for the values one holds dear while insisting on the same right for all others. The basis of this Danish interpretation of tolerance is, first, a strong commitment to equal citizen rights by all and their protection by the state. Liberality, secondly, implies criticising and even ridiculing all that you find wrong. While this leaves some space for legal tolerance, understood as the right to think and act in ways that are considered wrong, it leaves little space for social tolerance, understood as abstention from criticism of, among other things, cultural and religious sensibilities. Liberality is a 'republican' virtue that enables you to participate in blunt public exchanges with a 'thick skin' so that you can reach negotiated, consensual democratic agreements with your opponents at all levels of society.

In the last 4-5 years, concern with radicalisation and extremism may have led policy makers to re-consider whether the swing towards civic integrationism, also fuelled by post 9/11 fears of radical Islamism, has been too one-sided. Slightly more emphasis is given to concepts like tolerance and equal respect in order to prevent minorities from being alienated and turning against society: these concepts are thus back on the agenda, not only to ensure the rights and security of minorities, but also improve the safety of the majority.

In conclusion, the main diversity challenges that politicians consider important relate almost exclusively to non-Western immigrants. As described above, the concerns driving them can be summed up in three themes:

1. *Unemployment*: It is often emphasized that the percentage of non-Western immigrants on social security is out of proportion with the rest of the population. This is seen as a problem for the sustainability of the Danish welfare model.
2. *Parallel societies (ghettoisation)*: It is often noted that we need to avoid a situation where Muslims are living in their own secluded communities impervious to the rules and institutions of the rest of society and that we are

heading towards such a situation if something is not done now. The fear is one of parallel societies hostile and indifferent to one another, of *Sharia* law being de facto implemented outside Danish law, and generally of the erosion of society's social cohesion.

3. *Radicalisation/extremism*: There has been a growing concern with radicalisation within Muslim communities. In the discussion of the hazards of multiculturalism and parallel societies, tolerance has in part been framed as overindulgence or indifference to problematic beliefs and practices of minorities that in a worst-case scenario could lead to acts of terrorism. Concern for the democratic mind-set of Muslims is often expressed. However, both in order to counterbalance the symbolic exclusion of immigrant youth and thereby avoid radicalisation and in order to counteract anti-Semitism in larger urban areas the concept of toleration is being brought back onto the political agenda.

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