The Question of Integration

The Question of Integration: Immigration, Exclusion and the Danish Welfare State

Edited by

Karen Fog Olwig and Karsten Paerregaard

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PREFACE

For several years Denmark has attracted the attention of the world because of its strict policy toward its immigrant population. Formerly known for its liberal lifestyle and generous welfare society, this Scandinavian country has now gained an international reputation of being one of the most anti-Islamic and anti-immigrant nations in Europe. Why is it that a country, until recently considered a role model by the rest of the world in terms of granting its citizens equal opportunities and respecting the cultural and religious differences of minority groups, now stands out as an example of how the prosperous societies of the Global North exclude and discriminate immigrants and refugees from the Global South? This book, by anthropologists who live and work in Denmark, seeks to find some answers to this question by exploring, through in depth ethnographic analysis, the encounter between the Danish welfare society and its population of immigrants and refugees.

The book is a revised, translated version of a previous Danish publication, *Integration: Antropologiske perspektiver* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2007). Written in the wake of the Mohammad cartoon crisis that erupted in 2006 (see the introductory chapter and the chapter by Heiko Henkel), it attempted to account ethnographically for the many questions and concerns that the cartoon crisis triggered. With this English language edition of the book we wish to show how ethnographic analysis can shed light on burning issues of globalization, immigration and integration in a small European country that has been subject to relatively little anthropological investigation. We also hope that the larger international community of migration and integration scholars will engage in the debate and help give the many questions and topics that the book brings up new perspectives. A key question is to what extent – and how – Denmark is exceptional in its reception of immigrants and refugees. Does Denmark stand apart or is it merely a representative of a more general trend of excluding and discriminating minorities in Europe and North America? To start the conversation we have invited three distinguished colleagues (from Britain and Canada) to write epilogues to the book discussing the Danish case from their particular scholarly and national vantage point. The broader, comparative framework suggests that the Danish case may be understood as both part of a general European response to the growing

globalization that seems to undermine the autonomy of the nation-state and as a more particular example of the development of the welfare state and the integration of its citizens in a time of uncertainty and crisis.

Two chapters (by Heiko Henkel and Helle Bundgaard) have been added to the English edition, whereas two chapters (by Katja Kvaale and Marianne Holm Pedersen) are not included in this volume, but published in other international venues. We wish to thank Zachary Whyte and Robert Parkin for editing the English language chapters, and the Migration Initiative and the Department of Anthropology, both at the University of Copenhagen, for their financial assistance. We also want to thank Marianne Alenius, the director of Museum Tusculanum Press, for supporting our ambition to publish an English edition of the Danish book. Finally, we would like to thank Kirsten Gelting, of the Migration Initiative, for her invaluable assistance with the lay-out of the book.

Copenhagen, September 1, 2010.
Karen Fog Olwig and Karsten Paerregaard

INTRODUCTION

"STRANGERS" IN THE NATION

KAREN FOG OLWIG
AND KARSTEN PAERREGAARD

In 2006 Denmark made headlines in the media across the world as Muslims reacted to a Danish newspaper's publication of satirical cartoons depicting the Islamic prophet Muhammad by boycotting Danish goods, burning the Danish flag and even attacking Danish embassies in the Middle East. Danes, who consider their country to be a respected, peaceful, freedom-loving country, reacted with shock and disbelief at this outburst of anger towards Denmark. For most ethnic Danes, the newspaper's right to publish the cartoons, which violated Muslim prohibitions on graven images of the Prophet and in one case suggested he was a terrorist, could not be disputed due to the principle of freedom of expression, whether or not they agreed with the wisdom of publishing these particular cartoons. For many Muslims in Denmark and abroad, however, the publication of the cartoons was yet another example of the disrespect that is shown to Muslims – and the Islamic faith in general – in Denmark and other Western countries.

This book does not concern the global "cartoon crisis" per se, but rather the Danish society that provided the nexus for it. In some respects, Denmark may be considered a microcosm of a more general European situation in which identities based on notions of national development grounded in the land are being confronted with a new globalized world in which increasing migration and ethnic diversity have become the norm. In other respects, however, Denmark, like the other nations of Europe, has also developed a particular national version of the cultural anxiety that has swept the continent in recent decades in response to the arrival of growing numbers of immigrants and refugees (Grillo 2003: Hervik 2006). Concretely, since the 1960s, this north European country of 43,094 square kilometers and almost 5.5 million people has seen the development of a population of immigrants, refugees and their offspring (usually referred to

as second-generation immigrants) amounting to eight percent[1] of the total population. While the size of the immigrant population in Denmark is modest by international standards, it has called into question the country's self-understanding as a culturally homogeneous, egalitarian welfare society with deep historical roots in the Danish landscape. This immigration therefore presents a lens through which to examine how a close-knit north European society has responded to contemporary forces of globalization and the social and economic changes that they have brought about.

A key issue in the Danes' response to globalization has been how to incorporate, or "integrate," a foreign population with cultural values and social norms that Danes widely perceive as backward and oppressive into what Danes believe is a modern, liberal, egalitarian and democratic welfare society grounded in the culture and history of the land. Part one of the book therefore focuses on the public debates among politicians, journalists, the clergy and researchers concerning how best to integrate foreign immigrants and refugees into Danish society without jeopardizing the social and cultural cohesion of the welfare state. It begins with a chapter on the development of the Danish welfare state and the challenges that contemporary immigration and integration are seen as posing for Danish society. This is followed by chapters analysing the political rhetoric concerning Danish society as a "tribe" or a "family," the public debate and policy on immigration and integration, religious discussions concerning the ability of the hitherto virtually mono-religious state to accommodate a plurality of religious practices and beliefs, and the particular position of Muslim immigrants in Denmark and their reaction to the publication of "the Muhammad cartoons." It is a central argument of the book that "integration" is not a neutral concept denoting the joining together of different population groups. It is rather an ideologically loaded concept, linked to Danish ideas of equality and belonging, which in turn are related to notions of cultural similarity closely associated with the Danish welfare state.

The second part of the book examines how Danish understandings of integration translate into everyday life for immigrants and refugees in Denmark. This section of the book presents a number of ethnographic case studies of immigrants in Denmark and their encounters with the Danish welfare state and ethnically Danish staff in such places as educational institutions, social welfare offices, psychiatric hospitals, health clinics and exercise clubs. They scrutinize how these encounters have shaped immigrants' perceptions of Denmark and their experiences of social inclusion and exclusion. The studies show that, while the welfare state has

extended considerable social and economic assistance to immigrants and refugees, thus helping them settle in Denmark, Danish perceptions of these people as culturally different – and therefore as foreign elements in the country – have presented a serious obstacle to their social acceptance in Danish society. The Danish classification of immigrants and refugees as different has led to a strong focus on the need to integrate them culturally into Danish society, which has had the ironic consequence that a substantial part of the immigrant population, despite having lived in Denmark for years, even generations, has become permanently categorized as not (yet) belonging in the country. This reluctance to recognize immigrants and their descendants as Danish is reflected in the use of expressions such as “second-generation immigrant” or “person of other ethnic origin.”

Denmark: a culturally homogeneous society?

During the 1960s and early 1970s, Denmark received thousands of immigrants from the Balkans, the Middle East, Pakistan and North Africa who came to work as unskilled workers in Danish factories in need of labour at the time.[2] In 1973, when oil prices rose sharply, Denmark experienced an economic recession that created increased unemployment. Further immigration into Denmark was stopped immediately, but most of the foreign workers, who by then had obtained permanent visas in Denmark, opted to stay, and many who lost their jobs started their own retail or taxi businesses. The immigrant population continued to rise, as the immigrants sent for their spouses and children, or married and brought over people from their country of origin. By 1983 the immigrant population from non-Western countries had grown to approximately 50,000, or almost 60,000 if their descendants are included (Udlændingeservice 2008: 15). From the mid-1970s, when labour migration ceased, Denmark began to receive a considerable number of refugees from Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Iraq, the Balkans, Iran, Lebanon, Somalia and other politically unstable areas of the world. As a result of these population movements, Denmark had acquired a foreign-born population of non-Western origin of close to 240,000 in 2008. The descendants of this immigrant population accounted for more than 100,000 inhabitants in Denmark (Udlændingeservice 2008).

To many Danes, what began as the arrival of a few thousand labour migrants in the 1960s has turned into the large-scale influx of people from distant parts of the world with entirely different ways of life. Though the scale of this immigration is modest in the light of the much more extensive

immigration that has taken place in other parts of the world in recent decades, it is nevertheless common today to hear Danes remark that, whereas Denmark used to be a culturally homogeneous society, this is no longer the case because of the growing number of immigrants and refugees who have brought foreign cultures and religions into the country.

Interestingly, a close scrutiny of the culturally homogeneous Danish community that is supposed to be the foundation of modern Danish society will show that it was characterized by considerable cultural diversity. An important aspect of this diversity is related to the social and economic differences and the regional variations that characterized Denmark well into the twentieth century. This is described well in two novels from the early twentieth century, *The fishermen* by Hans Kirk, published in 1928,[3] and the first volume of *Pelle the conquerer* by Martin Andersen Nexø, which appeared in 1906.[4] Kirk's book focuses on a community of fishermen on the west coast of Jutland who made a precarious living on the rough North Sea, finding personal and moral strength in their fundamentalist interpretation of the Lutheran faith and their pious, ascetic way of life. They are depicted as significantly different from the nearby community of inland farmers, who made a relatively comfortable living from agriculture, practiced a rather liberal version of Lutheranism and enjoyed a more outgoing, this-worldly social life. These two communities had few social encounters, and when they did, they disagreed squarely on most moral, religious and social issues. Martin Andersen Nexø's volume describes another, though very different rural community located on the island of Bornholm in the easternmost part of Denmark. Whereas the Jutland communities were divided sharply along religious and occupational lines, Bornholm society was strongly class-stratified, ranging from wealthy owners of large farms to poor day-labourers, who barely eked out a living on the paltry wages they received for their work on the farms. The dialect spoken by the islanders would have differed so much from that spoken by the West Jutlanders that the two population groups would have found it difficult to communicate.

From a contemporary perspective, this diversity may be viewed as only variations within the single, overriding Danish cultural tradition that has shaped the country since time immemorial. Nonetheless for the Danish population at the turn of the twentieth century, these cultural differences were real enough and associated with significant social barriers. If the Danish society of the 1960s, before the late twentieth-century migrations into Denmark began, can be described as culturally homogeneous, we suggest that this is not so much because of the shared Danish ethnic roots of the population or because of a Danish heritage of shared cultural

traditions and social norms. It is rather due to several important social and economic developments that took place from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries.[5]

The first development concerns the emergence of a Danish democratic society believed to be based on an ethnically Danish population. Historically speaking, contemporary Danish democracy is usually contrasted with the strongly hierarchical absolute monarchy that ruled in Denmark until the middle of the nineteenth century. In this system, the upper class was dominated by foreigners, notably Germans who played a highly influential role during the eighteenth century. While these foreigners were responsible for introducing a number of progressive reforms,[6] they lost their influential position with the rise of a national, democratic movement in the late eighteenth century supported largely by the emerging, ethnically Danish middle class, which eventually led to the downfall of the absolute monarchy (Feldbæk 1992). The emergence of a democratic nation state is therefore intimately related to the rejection of a dominant foreign population within the country.

It is rarely acknowledged that Denmark, in fact, experienced considerable immigration in the period from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. Thousands of poor Polish and Swedish farm labourers immigrated to Denmark (Nellemann 1981; Willerslev 1983).[7] Their plight as a low-paid and badly treated underclass is depicted in *Pelle the conqueror*, which describes how Pelle arrives on Bornholm as a child with his father, a Swedish farm labourer, who seeks employment on a large farm.[8] The present-day tendency for Danes to regard themselves as having a culturally homogenous society that has only recently come under threat is thus based on a form of historical amnesia that blocks out the history of Swedish and Polish immigration to the country and the earlier diversity that was characteristic of pre-industrial Danish society.[9] These immigrant groups now appear to have become appropriated within the Danish notion of cultural homogeneity, and today the Swedish and Polish surnames that have been passed down through the generations are the only obvious trace of this immigration into Denmark.

Another important development during the nineteenth century, which shaped the notion of Denmark as a culturally homogeneous society, concerns the devolution of the multi-cultural Danish empire. In 1800 Denmark was a minor imperial power that included a number of small tropical colonies (in India, West Africa and the West Indies), several North Atlantic possessions (Norway, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland) and suzerainty over the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. A number of these territories were lost in the course of the nineteenth and

early twentieth centuries, several of them due to humiliating military defeats at the hands of the neighbouring countries of Sweden and Germany, and today only the Faroe Islands, Greenland and the northern part of Schleswig remain part of Denmark.[10] The down-sizing of the Danish empire led Danish society to focus on the internal social and economic development of the country, largely through rural cooperative movements that helped modernize farms and formed the basis of an agricultural industry (Østergaard 1992). In the historical consciousness of the Danish population, the development of the modern country is therefore closely associated with the emergence of an ethnically Danish, egalitarian nation state concerned with internal social and economic progress (Olwig 2003).

The modernization of the agricultural sector and its accompanying industrialization resulted in large-scale population movements, as the excess rural population sought economic opportunities in the industrializing urban centres. In 1840, 80% of the Danish population lived in rural areas. The 20% who resided in urban areas lived in small towns of less than 10,000 people, the single exception being the capital, Copenhagen, which had a population of about 120,000. By 1960, the rural-urban ratio had reversed completely. Seventy-four percent of the population now lived in urban areas, several of which had more than 50,000 inhabitants. Copenhagen remained the largest city, and with a population of 1.2 million the greater Copenhagen area had grown tenfold (Thøgersen 2007: 8). As most of the population adopted a modern, urban way of life, and as farming communities became increasingly depopulated and dependent on modern technology, many of the local cultural, religious and social distinctions disappeared.

If Danes today can maintain that Denmark was once a culturally homogeneous society, this past is only a fairly brief interlude in a long history of social, economic and cultural diversity. Nevertheless, the idea of Denmark as a formerly culturally homogeneous society is very strong. We suggest that the main reason for this is that it has become linked to perceptions of the contemporary welfare society as grounded in a community of people who, through a long shared culture and history, together built a modern, egalitarian and just society. The national welfare system has its ideological roots in the old village communities of cooperating and self-sufficient farmers (Østergård 1992), as well as in the more recent urban labour movement's notion of solidarity within the workers' collectivity (see Jöhncke, this volume). It therefore combines the traditional and modern virtues of extending help to those in need, associated respectively with the village and the labour unions, but now

extended to society at large in the form of welfare services organized through national agencies that are closely integrated into the public sector and funded by general taxation (Andersen 1984: 115-188).[11] This welfare system has reduced the social and economic inequality of nineteenth-century Danish society, and today Denmark is the country with the lowest Gini-coefficient in the world (UNDP 2009).[12]

The Danish welfare society has a well-established, progressive tradition of encouraging – and supporting with generous state support – groups of citizens who wish to form a range of political, cultural or social organizations or establish independent schools based on different educational principles or religious beliefs associated with particular religious congregations. In recent decades, a large number of ethnic organizations and Muslim schools have benefited from this tradition. As a welfare state Denmark also, of course, offers cradle-to-grave medical services and hospital treatment, care for the elderly and disabled, up to one year's largely paid maternity leave that can be shared by the parents, free education at all levels and subsidized care or after-school programmes for children from the age of six months. The extensive care programme for children has made it possible for both parents of young children to take up employment. With 73.2% of Danish women aged 15-64 employed in 2007, Denmark had the highest female employment rate in Europe (Eurostat Newsrelease 2008). Finally, Danish society has been very open to modern life-styles. The right to abortion has not been seriously questioned since it was established by law in 1973, pregnancy out of wedlock raises few eyebrows, but rather sets in motion a number of welfare measures intended to support the new family, and same-sex marriages have been legal – and socially accepted – since 1989.

With this general public support for differing educational, religious and cultural institutions serving varying ways of life, it may seem strange that Danes bemoan the loss of cultural homogeneity. In the eyes of the Danes, however, notions of cultural homogeneity do not imply a regime of social conformity, but rather one insisting on individual freedom, personal choice and social engagement. These are values that Danes believe are generally shared by the ethnically Danish population, but which they see as being challenged by immigrants and refugees. Thus in the eyes of many Danes, immigrants and refugees often adhere to religious (Islamic) beliefs that they view as fundamentalist and oppressive, practice arranged (often understood as forced) marriages and are unduly loyal to their families. Indeed, in the minds of many Danes, the welfare system depends on the existence of a national community of people who value a modern European way of life based on respect for individual choice and autonomy

as well as a sense of social solidarity. Because this welfare system has become so closely linked to what are perceived to be Danish core values, the question of how to integrate immigrants and refugees has come to revolve around how to turn them into "proper" members of society who adhere to these values, the assumption being that they do not share them.

From assimilation to integration

While many Danes, like many other Europeans, view the recent influx of immigrants and refugees as a threat to the national community, in many other parts of the world, such as the Americas, immigration has long been regarded as an important basis of the modern nation state. The contrasting migration experiences of the new and the old worlds help explain the different ways in which American and European scholars have theorized migration and their use of the terms "assimilation" and "integration". Whereas North American scholars have traditionally employed "assimilation" to account for the processes by which immigrants become part of, and achieve social mobility in, the receiving society, Danish (and increasingly also other European scholars) often use the notion of "integration" to examine the challenges that immigration poses to the cohesion of the nation state.

In a review of American migration research, anthropologist Nancy Foner notes that a great deal of "the scholarship concerning the earlier immigration emphasized the way immigrants were assimilating and becoming American; ties to the home society were often interpreted as 'evidence for, or against, Americanization' and, in many accounts, were seen as impeding the assimilation process" (2000: 183). The underlying assumption in this research, according to the historian Charles Tilly (1990), is the idea that immigration and social and economic mobility are intricately linked and that the latter automatically follows from the former. Thus immigration was imagined as taking place in the form of a long queue of people of different nationalities waiting their turn to be assimilated, so that they might gain access to the many possibilities that the country offered newcomers (1990: 81).

The concept of assimilation was coined by the Chicago School of sociology, which was concerned with the many poor European immigrants who came to work in the meat industry of Chicago at the beginning of the twentieth century, and the poverty and need for social reforms that this immigration generated.[13] Anthropologist Jonathan Schwartz observes that many of the sociologists associated with the Chicago School believed that the rural communities that these immigrants came from in Europe had

more or less disintegrated due to heavy outmigration and that what was left of village culture was therefore of little use in American society. At best it was regarded as a possible resource to draw on as the immigrants adapted; at worst, “the peasant-immigrant culture appeared a useless and heavy obstacle to effective integration, assimilation and Americanization” (Schwartz 1985: 131).[14] In this understanding of immigration, then, the immigrants’ abilities to become part of American society and thus acquire social and economic mobility were contingent on their readiness to abandon their cultural traditions and “assimilate” into the receiving society.

This notion of American assimilation was subject early on to critical scrutiny, and in the 1940s W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole presented a new model suggesting that the adaptation of immigrants took place in a three-generational process that ended when the immigrants’ grandchildren assumed an ethnic identity based on their grandparents’ cultural traditions and thus found their particular place in the United States’ multi-ethnic society (Waters 1999a: 194-5). The model, in other words, conceptualized immigration as a process that not only lasted several generations, but also involved the development of a multicultural society that recognized the cultural traditions that immigrants had brought into the country. It also viewed immigrants’ adaptation to the United States as a process that constituted an essential aspect of the receiving society, rather than as something that takes place on its margins. This concept of immigration and adaptation is closely linked to the idea of the United States as an immigrant society consisting of people from different parts of the world who have come to create a new society on the North American continent (Tilly 1990: 83).

In recent decades this model of generational adaptation has been criticised, as the increasing focus on equal rights in the United States has created an awareness that racial barriers prevent many immigrants from enjoying the sort of improvement to which they should be entitled in the land of freedom and opportunities. This has led American migration scholars to examine the obstacles that prevent immigrants from achieving the expected economic and social mobility and to explore how they cope with this problem (see, for example, Portes 1995; Portes, Halle and Guarnizo 2002). There has been particular interest in the role of immigrants’ continued relationships and connections to their countries of origin and the ways in which these ties may help immigrants increase the “possibility of survival in the places full of uncertainty” (Foner 2000: 184). Furthermore, there has been an increasing interest in multi-cultural identities, as American society has developed “an official commitment to cultural pluralism and cultural diversity” (ibid.: 183). Thus, today “the

maintenance of multiple identities and loyalties is viewed as a normal feature of immigrant life; ties to the home society complement – rather than detract from – commitments in this country" (ibid.).

In the United States, immigration is associated with the creation of a modern North American society, which means that the vast majority of North Americans are the descendants of immigrants and that most North Americans expect that contemporary immigrants will become Americans. Indeed, according to Schwartz, the "immigrant who becomes an American in the 'melting pot' is one of the distinctive heroes of Modern Times" (1985: 131). In the United States, immigration studies have therefore become a research area of critical importance for everybody in North American society, and they have always played a crucial role in the social sciences (see Waters 1999b: 1264). The heroic status given to successful American immigrants does not mean that all immigrants have been well-received, as many undocumented Mexicans have learned. Nor have all immigrants found a better life in America. Indeed, immigrants are generally expected to fend for themselves, often under difficult conditions.

In Denmark and most other Western European countries, by contrast, immigrants and refugees have not achieved the heroic status that they have historically enjoyed in North America. Rather, they have been regarded as a marginal population associated with inexpensive labour and flight from problem areas suffering political or religious persecution or outright war. Similarly, migration research has tended to be a relatively peripheral area of study concerned with social problems in the welfare society, which reflects the general conception of immigration as a burden for the welfare state. The American ideal of the United States as a harmonious land of immigrants is in some ways just as unfounded in reality as is the Danish ideal of Denmark as the traditionally cohesive country of a culturally homogenous people. Thus Foner notes that "debates about incorporation on both sides of the Atlantic are imprisoned within divergent mythic constructions – endogenous nations of Europe, on the one hand, and...the United States as a nation that has always celebrated immigrants, on the other" (2005: 212). In a globalizing era of increasing population movements, however, the American insistence on emphasizing the contribution that immigrants make to the receiving society may seem more timely than the Danish persistence in viewing immigration as a force that threatens the cohesion of society and that should therefore be avoided as far as possible.

When examining immigrants' adaption to the receiving society, migration researchers in Denmark and other European countries often make use of the notion of "integration" (Koopmans 2010; Phillips 2010).

In the Danish context the term is both new and old. According to the Danish Language Committee, an institution that records the vernacular use of words in Danish newspapers and other public media, “integration” has been part of the Danish language since the nineteenth century.[15] However, early references to the word indicate that the majority of the population did not know its meaning, and therefore it needed to be defined. Common definitions of “to integrate” included to “incorporate,” “absorb,” “assimilate,” or “adapt” something or somebody into “a larger whole.”

By the mid-twentieth century, “integration” had become more common in Danish. For the past fifty years it has been used increasingly in public debates, but often with different meanings reflecting the general development of Danish society and its growing complexity. In the 1950s “integration” referred to the economic, political and military integration of Europe, while in the 1960s it became an important term in public debates on the European Common Market, as Danes began to discuss how joining the Common Market would influence Danish society.[16] During the 1970s it began to be used within the field of pre-school pedagogy. Here “integration” was, and still is, used to refer to the need to incorporate children of varying mental and physical capacities (e.g. due to age or possible forms of disability) within the public pre-school institutions.

By the 1990s politicians, journalists and social scientists had begun to employ the concept to discuss the social and cultural challenges of incorporating immigrants and refugees into the Danish welfare society. Around the turn of the millennium, accordingly, the meaning of “integration” gradually changed from referring to more general problems of integration within Danish welfare institutions to the specific problem of integrating immigrants and political refugees into Danish society. When a new Ministry of Integration was created in 2001 by the newly elected right-of-centre government, nobody had any doubts about the target group of this Ministry.[17] The issue of integration no longer had to do with Denmark’s position in the EU or how to create a well-functioning group of children with various abilities – it concerned how to deal with the immigrants and refugees in Danish society.

From an anthropological perspective, integration concerns not only the particular processes of adaptation that migrants experience when they adjust to life in a new society. Integration also refers to the more general processes of adaptation that all individuals must go through if they are to become part of a functioning society. A society cannot exist through time if it only consists of individuals or groups who insist on doing everything their own way without regard for the welfare of the larger collectivity. Members of a society must come to some sort of agreement regarding how

they are going to live together if a society is to function. This agreement does not necessarily imply cultural conformity, but rather some sort of mutual understanding concerning what sort of cultural differences can be accommodated and how. Furthermore, this understanding will change through time in response to the changing historical contexts of life. Analytically, this means that we must see social communities and cultural ideas of belonging as constructions that are constantly challenged, contested and attributed with new meanings. While it is possible for social scientists to discuss at a more abstract level different models and systems of integration, at a concrete empirical level they must investigate how specific notions of community and belonging are constructed and negotiated in particular societies and historical eras, as well as the ways in which this leads to the inclusion and exclusion of certain kinds of people.

Immigration and integration in Denmark

From a Danish historical perspective, it cannot be taken for granted that immigrants or refugees will be regarded as strangers who must be subjected to various measures of integration before they can be accepted into Danish society. As already noted, well into the eighteenth century, Germans were regarded as resourceful citizens who could make a useful contribution to the country. Similarly, in the seventeenth century the Danish king allowed European Jews to establish a community in Copenhagen, and during the eighteenth century Denmark welcomed French Huguenots. Whether or not a receiving society sees the need for immigrants to undergo processes of integration – and if so, what kinds of integration it will call for – depends on what social and cultural distinctions the members of a given society make in relation to foreigners, the value that they attach to these distinctions and the ways in which they apply them to specific people. This will become clearer through an examination of the ways in which immigrants and refugees have been received in Denmark since the 1960s.

The growing focus in popular and political debates on the integration of refugees and immigrants into Danish society occurred in the aftermath of the foreign labour migration that took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Up to the middle of the latter decade, many Danes considered these labour migrants to be “guest workers” who were in Denmark only temporarily. This impression may very well have corresponded with the migrants’ own plans, since returning to one’s country of origin is often the final goal of labour migrants (see, for example, Foner 2000). The Danish media, according to Jonathan Schwartz, described the labour migrant as a

“guest worker” who was “thankful” because he (the vast majority of the immigrants in the late 1960s and early 1970s were males) was allowed to take up work in Denmark (Schwartz 1990). The media also published stories about the guest worker who brought presents to his Danish employers to express his gratitude when he returned to Denmark after his summer vacation in his home country. The Turkish immigrants, who apparently arrived with little hope of receiving a warm welcome in Denmark, fit this image of guest workers well. Greek immigrants, however, who had greater expectations of Danish society and therefore showed signs of disappointment when they were not treated on equal terms with their Danish co-workers, were regarded as more troublesome. In this period the presence of immigrant workers in Denmark was expected to be temporary, and most Danes simply assumed that they would all return to their home countries once their labour was no longer required. Hence, their stay in Denmark and their continued ties to the country of origin were not regarded as a problem, and there was little interest in developing a policy of integration to facilitate their adaptation to Danish society (Schwartz 1990: 45-7).

The notion of immigrant workers as temporary guest workers changed when unemployment rates increased rapidly after the oil crisis in 1973 and the immigrants did not leave the country, but rather decided to establish themselves in Denmark by bringing their wives, children and other close relatives into the country. As it gradually became apparent that the temporary guest workers were becoming permanent immigrants, integration became an issue of public concern. The growing numbers of political refugees who arrived during the 1980s and 1990s added fuel to the integration debate. Statistics were produced showing that immigrants and refugees had a rate of unemployment three to four times higher than the ethnically Danish population (Thomsen and Moes 2002: 2) and that they lived in ethnic ghettos and married within their ethnic groups (see Rytter, this volume). By the early 2000s, it had apparently become the general view that most immigrants and refugees “have their origins in countries that are very different from Denmark with respect to understandings of democracy, the labour market and participation in the labour market, family structure, etc.” and further that their “education, experiences, values and norms cannot be regarded as immediately useful in Danish society” (Emerek 2003: 2-3, our translation). Little attention was paid to the ways in which the economic and social environment of the receiving Danish society might have influenced the position of immigrants and refugees in Denmark and their continued attachment to religious practices and cultural traditions connected with these countries of origin.

Out of the debate emerged a general public attitude that the immigrants' and refugees' great cultural difference from Danes prevented them from becoming properly integrated into Danish society (for critical discussion of this view, see Steen 1993; Preis 1996; Schierup 1993; Schwartz 1998).[18]

As can be seen from this brief review of Danish attitudes towards immigrants and refugees, it was only in the 1990s that Danes really began to become concerned with the perceived existence of irreconcilable cultural differences between immigrants and refugees on the one hand and Danes on the other (Hervik 2004). This happened at a time when Danes were becoming aware of the increasing impact of globalization, whether in the form of the export of Danish jobs to foreign countries with a cheaper labour force, the substantial migration to Denmark through family reunification or flight, or the growing difficulty of controlling Danish borders and maintaining Danish sovereignty as the European Common Market evolved into a European Union that assumed greater political and legal power. In this climate of national anxiety – which finds parallels in many other European countries, as the British anthropologist Ralph Grillo (2003) has shown – the perceived cultural differences of immigrants and refugees have become a symbol of the social difficulties being experienced by the Danish population today. The debate has therefore come to focus almost entirely on the problem of the immigrants and refugees, rather than on the problem of Denmark as a receiving society (Hervik 1999).

In their efforts to define integration as a problem that concerns only immigrants and refugees, and not ethnic Danes, the media and the politicians often prefer to ignore the growing discrimination against non-ethnic Danes (ENAR 2008) as well as the underlying racism that fuels the xenophobic rhetoric against cultural and religious minorities such as Muslims (Quraishy and O'Connor 1991). At the same time, in the public debate on integration in Denmark, offensive and condescending terms are increasingly being used, as immigrants and refugees are blamed for their failure to become integrated. The negative tone of the debate paved the way for the Muhammad cartoons in 2005 and the crisis they generated (Berg and Hervik 2007). Indeed, the crisis that followed the publication of the cartoons was not just triggered by the images themselves, but just as much by the apparent inability of the political establishment and of Danish society at large to recognize the devastating effect of the derogatory vocabulary employed in the public debate on immigrants and refugees.

Although some Danish scholars have publicly questioned the ways in which the media and the politicians discuss immigration and integration, the Danish preoccupation with culturally problematic immigrants and

refugees is reflected in much Danish migration research. According to Schwartz (1990, 1998), Danish researchers have generally viewed immigrants and refugees as outsiders who resist adaptation because of their cultural differences. They have therefore tended to focus on the cultural differences that are believed to underlie the most problematic aspects of immigration to Denmark. This approach has led one migration researcher to criticize her colleagues for viewing immigrants as problem cases for the welfare state (Mørck 1998: 35), and another to note that immigrants and refugees are increasingly being regarded as a serious burden on the welfare system (Emerek 2003: 4). For the British migration scholar Karen Wren (2001), such views are evidence of what she calls a cultural racism among Danish scholars studying immigration and integration. She argues that this cultural racism is caused by “the culturalist bias of academic research, which has been very closely connected with public policy” (Wren 2001: 152), and she claims that it has led Danish scholars to neglect the social structure of Danish society.

The aim of this book

The aim of this book is to analyse critically how cultural categories are employed in Danish society to differentiate immigrants and refugees socially from the ethnically Danish population and the ways in which this has shaped social perceptions of people with foreign backgrounds and their encounters with the welfare state. It is not the goal of this book to judge either Danish society or the architects of Danish immigration policy. Rather, using anthropological perspectives, we wish to describe and analyse how a society that has long prided itself on being progressive, enlightened and egalitarian can end up being regarded as intolerant and xenophobic in many of the countries with which the Danes like to compare themselves (Hedetoft 2006). We suggest that, by defining Denmark as a modern welfare society based on cultural values and social norms that are linked to the ethnically Danish population, Danes have erected considerable barriers to the inclusion of immigrants and refugees into Danish society. This barrier-building cannot be explained by facile reference to racist or xenophobic tendencies in Danish society. Rather, it must be analyzed as a response to the difficulties Danes are experiencing in redefining their understanding of Denmark as a welfare state within a globalizing world that is increasingly interconnected and interdependent. This is the topic of the first section of the book.

Another major concern is to analyse, using ethnographic case studies, the role of the welfare society in the reception of immigrants and refugees

in Denmark and how they have experienced this political project. The studies show that the Danish perception of immigrants and refugees as a "social problem" has resulted in a lack of recognition of the positive qualities that these people possess. Within the context of a welfare society, however, a focus on social problems can be regarded as a proactive strategy deployed in order to designate a segment of the population as a particular category of people in need of help. This is an approach that has worked with other "problem" groups, such as the destitute, the seriously ill and the fragile elderly. By categorizing them in this way, the welfare system can give them the economic support, medical treatment or physical care they need. The case studies in this book show that immigrants and refugees *have* been provided with significant social and economic assistance through the welfare system, and that this has helped them settle in Denmark. Indeed, some groups of immigrants and refugees have done extremely well in Denmark. Thus, within one generation, the free system of education in Denmark has enabled the descendants of Pakistani immigrants to reach the educational level of the ethnically Danish population, whereas the descendants of Vietnamese refugees have actually outperformed the ethnically Danish population educationally.

The historical background of Danish society discussed in this introductory chapter and the analyses of the contemporary welfare state in a globalizing world presented in the two following sections of this book show that "Danishness" and "the welfare state" are inseparable. Thus despite the fact that "Danishness" and "the welfare state" at times seem to have completely conflicting goals, they are so intertwined that they have to be understood as interconnected. As long as this is the case, the tremendous efforts of the welfare system to "integrate" immigrants and refugees will only have the result of drawing attention to a category of people who can then be perceived as not belonging to this society. The book therefore raises questions concerning how to preserve, and further develop, a social welfare society, based on a system of social solidarity that is closely connected with shared cultural values, in a globalizing world of increasingly interconnectivity and mobility.

Part I: The cultural construction of Danish society

The first part of the book examines dominant ideas of Danish society and Danishness and the ways in which they shape the reception of immigrants and refugees in Denmark. The second part explores how immigrants and refugees experience their encounter with Danish society. The chapters therefore move from a general analytical level that examines how Danish

national society is both imagined and practised to a more specific empirical-analytical level. The ethnographic case studies examine the different forms of social relations and kinds of communities that emerge when people interact and communicate in specific situations and particular circumstances.

In his contribution, Steffen Jöhncke shows that there is a close link between the ways in which contemporary Danish society is conceived, structured and practised and its development as a welfare state. The idea that the goods of a society must be distributed in order to create welfare and equality for all is based on the belief that, although people may have different needs and capabilities, these differences are relatively minor and will disappear if everyone contributes to the commonweal because people are, fundamentally, alike. In popular understanding, however, this idea of equality and equivalence is closely associated with the notion of Denmark as a culturally homogeneous society, and it therefore tends to be applied only to people who are ethnically Danish. Thus it is a common perception that only the ethnically Danish population understands and appreciates the rights and obligations associated with being part of the Danish welfare system. If immigrants and refugees are categorized as so different – in terms, for example, of culture, economic resources or educational background – that they cannot participate properly in the system of redistribution upon which the welfare society rests, then they become stigmatized as a group of people who sponge off the system without contributing to it, whether or not this can be documented.[19]

The perception of immigrants and refugees as a problem group is underscored by the prevalent perception of Denmark as a culturally homogeneous national community. Mikkel Rytter shows how this conception is supported by the common use of kin images, such as “the family of Denmark,” to refer to Danish society. In using such images, Danes are essentially stating that shared blood ties and biological descent are necessary preconditions for the legitimate claim to a Danish national identity and full membership in society. The idea that immigrants and refugees need to become part of the family of Denmark, through marital and kin ties grounded in Denmark, has been influential in the passing of bills in the Danish parliament imposing increasing restrictions on the right to marry a spouse from the country of origin. Because the bills are couched in a “neutral” language concerning immigrants’ and refugees’ years of residence in Denmark and their national affiliation, their discriminatory effect is concealed.

In her discussion of the grammatical structures behind the public debate on immigrants and refugees in Denmark, Inger Sjørslev suggests

that categories of social inequality and cultural difference have become so imbedded in the contemporary Danish language that they appear "natural" in everyday life. With reference to the German society of the 1930s, she argues that the current public debate on immigrants and refugees employs a comparable vocabulary that makes possible social exclusion not only in speech but also in practice. This leads her to reject integration as an analytical term and to suggest that researchers adopt concepts of a higher level of abstraction that allow a bird's eye analysis of the many political implications of the notion of integration and the social and political contexts in which this notion unfolds.

These studies show that cultural constructions not only reflect the existing world but also contribute to the creation of particular social orders. The specific ways in which these constructions are interpreted and practised, however, may vary considerably. Thus, it is possible for most Danes to concur that Denmark is culturally homogeneous because the exact meaning of cultural homogeneity is rarely articulated except for relatively vague references to the Danes' shared ethnic background. The power of a strong consensus model becomes apparent in Cecilie Rubow's analysis of the Danish National Church. She shows that the Church is dominated by such a model, even though the clergy disagree on important issues and carry out their work according to different perceptions of the Church as a public institution. Thus, the emphasis on consensus within the Church can be seen to gloss over a wish to conceal internal differences and create a community that is so resilient that it can include everybody. This suggests that the notions of homogeneity and consensus can only be maintained as long as the majority agrees to highlight their similarities and downplay their differences.

The ongoing debate on homogeneity and difference, consensus and conflict, social inclusion and exclusion, and the social practices with which this debate is connected, define to a great extent the conditions under which integration in Danish society can take place, be maintained and be contested. This debate has acquired an increasingly Islamophobic tone, and a common view today is that Danish culture is incommensurable with Muslim culture. As Sjørslev shows, Muslim immigrants are described in the media as representing the antithesis of Danish democratic, open-minded and civilized values. This has had the paradoxical result, as Tina Jensen describes in her article, that Danes who convert to Islam are believed to have "undergone [such] fundamental and radical processes of transformation" that their conversion basically entails "abdicating their Danishness" or "emigrating from Danish society."

This refusal to recognize Muslims as part of Danish society provides the most important key to understanding why the publication of the cartoons of Muhammad in a Danish newspaper developed into a serious crisis. In his analysis of the “cartoon crisis,” Heiko Henkel argues that the complicated turn of events must basically be viewed as a “transitional drama” involving “an ongoing struggle for recognition”. This struggle concerned not only the terms through which Muslims in Denmark can be “recognized as legitimate citizens/residents of Danish society – and on which Muslims may recognize the demands of Danish society as legitimate,” but also, at a more general level, “the forms of identity that can mutually be recognized as ‘Danish.’” He concludes that a solution to the ethno-religious conflict can only be found in a new framework of mutual understanding and recognition.

By subjecting the political project of integration to critical inquiry, we do not wish to disregard the impact of immigration on Danish society, nor the many challenges it may entail for either the Danish welfare state or the immigrants and refugees arriving in it. On the contrary, it is precisely because the political project of integration intervenes so directly in the lives of a large number of people that it needs to be subjected to critical analysis. Critically, these analyses must not content themselves with observations on the macro-level, that is, at the level of the general society and its many institutions, but must also engage with the micro-level of integration, that is, in the myriad of informal and face-to-face relations that unfold in daily life as immigrants and refugees seek to create a life for themselves in Danish society. This is the subject of Part II of the book, which focuses on the specific social contexts in which processes of integration become visible.

Part II: Inclusion and exclusion in the welfare society

The ethnographic studies presented in this book show that welfare institutions play a central role in the encounters of refugees and immigrants with Danish society. As soon as asylum-seekers achieve refugee status, together with other recent arrivals they are enrolled in introduction programmes that are intended to prepare them for their new lives in Danish society. As legal Danish residents, they can obtain job training at educational institutions; their children are expected to attend day-care centres so that they can become socialized the Danish way together with Danish children; those who suffer from various ailments are treated at clinics and hospitals; and those who need to improve their general well-being are offered a variety of exercise programmes. Welfare

Denmark clearly invests considerable resources in preparing immigrants and refugees for life in the country.

While these welfare institutions do offer a range of services that are intended to ease immigrants and refugees into Danish society, they have the unfortunate effect of emphasizing what these people lack, rather than what they have to offer.[20] In the current political climate, this lack is often viewed as a cultural lack caused by non-Danish backgrounds. In many instances, as the ethnographic cases make clear, a foreign cultural background therefore becomes equated with problems. When, as Helle Bundgaard shows, the child of an immigrant or refugee experiences difficulties adjusting to a pre-school, the teachers are quick to look for the cause of this problem in problematic child-rearing practices in a home where the parents have a different cultural background. When, as Katrine Schepelern Johansen points out, doctors and nurses find that an immigrant patient at a psychiatric ward is difficult to treat, they attribute this to his or her non-Danish ethnic background.

The problem with these ways of perceiving and treating people is that they never go beyond cultural stereotypes about immigrants and refugees in Denmark. The professional staff essentially rely on commonsense categories such as "minority parents" or "patients with a non-Danish ethnic background" that reinforce notions of cultural others. An important reason for this is that the staff lack the resources to invest the time and effort needed to develop a more informed approach. The cases also show, however, that some staff members react instinctively to immigrants and refugees in terms of ethnic stereotypes.

While some professionals inadvertently create cultural barriers between themselves and the people they are supposed to help, others disregard the significance of individuals' cultural background entirely and treat them solely in terms of problems they can diagnose on the basis of their particular training. When Iraqi refugees describe their suffering, as Sofie Danneskiold-Samsoe shows, they crave recognition of their heroic resistance against an oppressive political regime so that they can be shown the sort of respect to which they think this entitles them. In the Danish welfare system, however, they are either diagnosed as torture victims who need to be rehabilitated through psychiatric treatment, or as suffering from various physical ailments that can be treated with pharmaceutical products. Hence, their narratives of suffering are only acknowledged as documentation for their ruined health that entitles them to obtain various welfare benefits.

The torture victims' outrage at being reduced to damaged bodies and psyches points to the limits of the welfare system: it can attempt to find

solutions for practical problems related to education, health, housing, income, etc., but it cannot create the social and emotional conditions that make life worth living. Hanne Overgaard Mogensen’s study of HIV-infected Ugandan women exemplifies this. While they were very grateful for the medical treatment they received, they experienced their lives in Denmark as extremely lonely. They had largely lost contact with their Danish husbands and their families after being diagnosed with HIV, and they tended to avoid fellow Ugandans, fearing that the knowledge of their HIV status in the African community would subject them to further negative stereotyping. The women therefore longed for close personal relations, not just a formal relationship with a Danish professional in the health system – something the national health system could not offer them.

While the national welfare system has made great efforts to provide education, health services and various social benefits to immigrants and refugees in order to ensure that they can function on a par with the native-born population, the ethnographic studies in this collection thus show that the results have been mixed. The welfare system may have succeeded in creating an acceptable social and economic standard of living for the new Danes, but it has failed to recognize the resources they possess. Being an immigrant and refugee with a non-Danish ethnic background has often been tantamount to being a problem case for the welfare system.

Fortunately, a somewhat different picture emerges from the ethnographic studies that go beyond investigating the formal relations generated by the welfare system to look at the more informal ties created through personal interactions within the various social settings. This is perhaps most clearly brought out by Sally Anderson’s analysis of a group of women participating in exercise classes. In a detailed study of their interactions over the year they exercised together, she shows that they increasingly developed verbal and non-verbal contact and gradually created a community across ethnic and religious boundaries in which they engaged in social, economic and cultural exchanges on an equal basis. Anderson suggests calling such physical accommodation and social exchange, involving strangers interacting at particular times and spaces, *micro-integration.* Through this micro-integration categorical identities are bridged and negated, and personal resources can come to the forefront. Similar processes of micro-integration can be seen as having taken place in some of the other social contexts discussed here, such as the pre-school. However, the ethnographic studies also show that crosscutting ties are most easily sustained within more intimate spaces of closely knit personal relations. As Mogensen points out, such spaces tend to be closed off to strangers in Denmark. In the public domain, however, which is characterized

by more fragile consociate relations, categories such as Danes, immigrants and Muslims tend to take over, allowing the divisive ethnic and religious boundaries to re-emerge.

The chapters in this book show that, while the Danish welfare system has succeeded to a great extent in eradicating poverty and reducing class differences, contemporary globalization processes and, in particular, the influx of immigrants and refugees from countries outside the Western world have posed a challenge to the ideology of equality and equivalence on which it rests. They also demonstrate that the welfare society tends to experience serious difficulties in seeing migration and the cultural diversity to which it may lead as positive forces that can contribute to Danish society. Rather, the Danish welfare system and public discourses in Denmark regard people with a non-Danish ethnic background as particularly problematic and difficult to integrate, and therefore in need of special attention and means of intervention. Instead of addressing the challenges that contemporary globalization poses to Danish society the categories of cultural difference and the public discourses (and cartoons) that convey (and picture) them generate and sustain the idea that equality and cohesion are incompatible with immigration and heterogeneity. Future generations of Danes will therefore be faced with the challenge of inventing new ways of promoting welfare that build on notions of equality as well as engagement in the global world.

International Perspectives

To discuss the perspectives on immigration and integration presented here, we have asked three international scholars to write an epilogue in which they engage in a critical dialogue with the chapters in this book and offer an external view on the issues raised. In the first epilogue Richard Jenkins identifies the idea of integration as a general challenge for all citizens in modern society, rather than as one that primarily involves immigrants and refugees. In a thought-provoking discussion of educational institutions and processes of enculturation in contemporary Danish society he compares the integration of foreigners to the socialization of children, thus reminding us of the many implicit assumptions and expectations that are glossed over by "the problem of integration". Jenkins lines up several possible scenarios for the future relationship between Danes and immigrants and concludes that even though the formers' increasing demands on the latter to "integrate" have complicated their co-existence and created a regrettable "us-them" conflict, there is hope that the