Chapter Eight

Islam: A Dead End for Integration of Female Immigrants in Denmark?*

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This chapter is based on a research project originally entitled "The Mobilization of Muslim Women in Denmark." The project was based on interviews with heads and/or board members of various immigrant women's associations in three different larger municipalities. The women were interviewed primarily about incentives and barriers in forming and participating in immigrant women's associations. The data documents that, while immigrant women are doing everything they can to facilitate integrative ways of belonging, their activities in this regard are *not* based primarily on religious identifications. This finding raises interesting questions on whether faith-based (specifically Muslim) community formations face particular obstacles in Denmark, where church and state are not legally separated, and the current government (in office since 2001 and re-elected in November 2007) finds its support in the right wing Danish People's Party. Many respondents explicitly denounce their Muslim religious heritage, partly because several have fled oppressive Islamic regimes, and express fatigue about continually being queried on their religious practices by members of the ethnic Danish majority. Taking these observations into account, this chapter intends to find out why faith-based Muslim mobilization does not appear to be a preferred strategy for facilitating integrative ways of belonging among immigrant women in Denmark.

The Danish Context

To characterize the Danish setting, this section briefly describes the current Danish integration regime and origin of the immigrant/refugee population, the gender regime, and the state-church arrangement, as these aspects all seem likely to influence questions of faith-based mobilization among female immigrants in Denmark.

Integration regime

Scholarly literature about the Danish integration regime often points to a marked shift in recent years, dating back to the instatement of the present liberal government in 2001. The status and conditions of immigrants in Denmark has been greatly debated within the previous decade, partly because the government bases its majority on the support of the right wing Danish People's Party. However, several authors also point out that the debate emerged in the early-mid 1980s. Flemming Mikkelsen (2003: 98) states that "[f]rom having been preoccupied with regulating *access* to Denmark, the state after 1983 turned its attention towards domestic integration work" (my translation). Mikkelsen calls 1985 a "water shed year in Danish immigration history" (2003: 154), because from this year on, clashes between racists and anti-racists became more frequent and there were a number of demonstrations directed towards the conditions of immigrants *in* Denmark, rather than, as previously, directed towards conditions in their countries of origin. Jørgen Goul Andersen's presentation of statistical material supports the assessment that it is incorrect to talk about a radical turn in the Danes' attitudes to immigrants around the 2001 elections (2002: 8-11).

With the Danish Integration Act of January 1, 1999, regulations regarding housing placement of refugees were introduced, meaning that Danish authorities decide where a refugee who has been granted residence must live. The residence allocation is based on quotas, and the refugee must remain within the assigned municipality for a three year period after obtaining a residence permit (Vikkelsø-Slot 2004: 28-29). As far as more recent changes are concerned, Mikkelsen highlights the role of the present government in tightening the rules and regulations, but he sees this as a trend that already started in the 1990s under the previous social democratic government. Rikke Andreassen and Birte Siim state,

> Immigration became a heavily debated topic from 1997, when the then-Social-Democrat-led government appointed the former mayor of Aarhus . . . as Minister of the Interior. [He] introduced a new [tightened] immigration and integration law . . . In 2001, the Conservative and Liberal [coalition] government, with the support from the Danish People's Party came to power. A central part of their election campaign had been arguing in favour of tightened immigration laws. In 2002, they passed a law stating that family unification was only possible for people over 24 years of age . . . Denmark currently has one of the tightest immigration laws in Europe (2007: 11).

In March 2006 the Danish government once again tightened immigration laws, adding the provision that immigrants applying for citizenship have to sign a declaration obliging them to respect a specified list of "Danish values."[1] Furthermore, non-naturalized immigrants who are found guilty of certain types

of crime, risk losing their residence permit after having served their prison sentence.

In so far as the origin of the Danish immigrant population is concerned, Denmark's Statistics provides several figures as of January 1, 2008. The total number of immigrants is 378,665, of which 63 percent originate from non-Western countries. In addition, they cite a total of 199,287 descendants (people whose parents are non-citizens), of which 52 percent are of non-Western origin. The large majority of non-Western immigrants originate from Turkey (31,433 plus 25,696 descendants), followed by Iraq and Lebanon. Although Somali immigrants are highly debated (partly because they are highly visible), they only constitute 10,357 plus 6,193 descendants (www.danmarksstatistik.dk). These figures have to be held up against the total size of the Danish population: 5,447,084 as of January 1, 2008, which means that just fewer than 7 percent of Danish population are immigrants.

Gender Regime

To understand the context of this study on mobilization of Muslim women, it is important to characterize the role of women as it is perceived among the majority of Danish society. Andreassen and Siim note:

> Gender equality has become part of the Danish citizenship model, and the present government defines gender equality as a key aspect of "Danishness" and Danish values. Gender equality and women's rights have become politicised in the struggle for control over migration (2007: 16).[2]

The Danish government speaks about gender equality as something the Danes themselves have already obtained, with efforts now needing direction toward bringing the immigrants on board. This is evident in the following excerpt from Danish Prime Minister Fogh Rasmussen's speech on the re-opening of Parliament after the summer session on October 2, 2007. Speaking on the theme of "the new inequality in Danish society" he stated:

> We want to improve the equality between women and men . . . Not everybody in Denmark enjoys equality. Some immigrant women have no contact with the surrounding society. They are unaware of their rights. They do not decide over their own lives . . . First of all, we want to encourage women of immigrant background to also get a job, get an education, obtain financial independence and participate in associations (www.ft.dk, my translation).

Buffy Lundgren (2007) describes Denmark as a country "in denial" of its ethnic diversity, gender, and ethnic equality issues. She states that gender segregation in the labor market is an issue, and although 27 percent of politicians are women, only 4 percent are leaders in the private sector, education

and public administration (Lundgren 2007: 4), while the majority of women are in care giving and social professions. Overall, Lundgren concludes:

> The Danish self-image as a "model society" may actually be an obstacle to Danes' own learning and development. I suspect that its star status as a model welfare state in the 50s and 60s contributes to a pervasive denial . . . Living in the shadow of the past all too often stops countries and organisations from doing the difficult work of building and maintaining internal cohesion (2007: 7).

State-religion Arrangements

State-religion arrangements arguably determine the space for non-majority religions and Denmark's state-religion arrangements are dominated by *Folkekirken* (The People's Church).[3] According to the constitution, Denmark is defined as a Protestant Lutheran country. The People's Church is a state church and has special privileges. For example, the state directly collects church taxes from taxpayers who have not actively requested *not* to pay, and the state also provides additional funding through general taxes. The church is integrated into several institutions; for example, public schools, where Christian studies are taught at the elementary level, and preparation for confirmation is integrated at the junior level. However, students can be excused. Everybody is registered with name, address, and personal number in Denmark, and the church is in charge of this registration, receiving remuneration from the state for this work. This means that all parents, regardless of religious observation or lack thereof, must register their children at the People's Church.

While Denmark is thus the proverbial example of a strong institutionalized connection between state and church, there are also reasons to modify this image of little accommodation of minority religions. First of all, Danes are "passively Christian in large numbers" (Klausen 2005: 138). Secondly, it is possible to become a recognized faith community in Denmark. There are currently more than 100 recognized faith communities (www.familiestyrelsen.dk/11/). Thirdly, the debate about registration of persons has been raging quite heavily since May 1, 2007, resulting in the Minister of the Church giving the option of electronically registering the births of children. This is in response to the previous criticism of the fact that everybody (irrespective of religious convictions or lack thereof) has to register their children with the local Lutheran priest. Considering previous political statements on the issue, this signals a remarkable change.

On the 150th anniversary of the Danish Constitution in 1999, the Danish Council for Ethnic Equality issued a book debating the Constitution and its relation to contemporary Danish society. In it, Jørgen Bæk Simonsen (1999) argues that, although the Constitution does ensure *freedom* of religion in Denmark, people should also debate *equality* of religion—i.e., that no religion ought to be privileged above others. Undoubtedly, the People's Church has a privileged position in Danish society, institutionally, economically, and possibly

also in terms of popular support with 85 percent membership (Klausen 2005: 139).

According to the most recent authoritative source on mosques in Denmark, there are currently two purposely built mosques (Kühle 2006: 63), and an additional large one may be under way in Copenhagen. But while local municipal planning authorities have approved the construction of a grand mosque, the project is apparently stalled by lack of funding and disagreements about size among the Muslim population itself. Lene Kühle notes that there are 115 mosques (2006: 65) altogether in Denmark, of which many are so-called "basement mosques."

Another often repeated case of how Denmark has been extremely slow in recognizing the needs of its Muslim population is the issue of a Muslim burial ground (Klausen 2005: 109-113; Zagal-Farias 2002: 95-109). On this front, the first Muslim burial ground in Denmark opened in March 2006. Interestingly, the head of Danish Islamic Burial Fund, Kasem Ahmad, chose, to invite journalists from both abroad and home and reportedly stated that "[t]he burial ground is a sign that Denmark respects Islam" (http:// nyhederne.tv2.dk).

On the whole, it is clear that formally speaking, there is a very strong relationship between state and church in Denmark. On the other hand, Jytte Klausen's point about the Danes being "passively Christian in large numbers" (2005: 138) is rather telling. Although the debate resurfaces from time to time, the issue hardly seems contentious within the Danish setting. Take for example the following reaction by a practicing Muslim woman when I asked about the issue:[4]

> **HPN**: The fact that the Danish church is paid for by taxes and so on. Is that also a mixing up of politics and . . . [religion]?
> **B**: I am not agreeing with that. We are equal with the Danes. Because they are not going to take money from ethnic women or ethnic men . . . It has nothing to do with me.

The respondents do not see the Danish state-church arrangement as problematic or in any way interfering in their daily lives. For example, one respondent bases her rejection of Islam on the broad generalization—presumably based on her personal experiences of life in Iraq and Denmark, respectively—that, "If Islam was like Christianity, I would never refuse [the mindset]. Because they [the Christians] do not interfere in your life."

Design and Methodology

During my fieldwork there were no large national associations specifically aimed at ethnic minority women[5] to interview, and those individual women with Muslim background who held the attention of the press were not necessarily reliable sources for the views and experiences of ethnic minority women in Denmark in general. Therefore, the selection of respondents was based on a sample that can be described as "frontrunners" (especially chairwomen in associations), rather than members of association in general, or the presumable

majority of immigrant and refugee women, i.e., those not active in associations. In this way, the design excluded interviewing the very politically active immigrant women who were well-known to the media at that time because they often possess an explicit political agenda that would make open-ended interviewing quite difficult. However, it was necessary to find respondents who actually had experience with mobilization and active participation in Danish society, hence the focus on "frontrunners."

Because of the lack of large national immigrant women's associations, I decided to focus on three larger Danish municipalities: Copenhagen, Aarhus and Aalborg (see Table 8.1). These municipalities also enabled local comparisons of whether, for example, municipal practices influence mobilization patterns. The 1999 *Integration Act*, with its quotas for refugee settlement, means that some municipalities tend to have a specific ethnic profile, like for example, Aalborg, where a comparatively large group of Somalis reside. Aalborg has unused quota at the time Somali people were obtaining residence permits. Furthermore, these three cities have a high degree of geographic spread, as far as this is possible within a country as small as Denmark.

Table 8.1 Number of immigrants/refugees and descendants by municipality 2007

Based on data from Denmark's Statistics, final figures for 2007.

	Nationally	Copenhagen	Aarhus	Aalborg
Persons of Danish origin	4,969,384	403,900	258,026	180,804
Immigrants/refugees	360,902	73,289	27,548	10,737
Descendants	116,798	26,510	10,596	2,608
Immigrants/refugees and descendants as total of population	8.8%	19.8%	12.9%	6.9%

Figures for both immigrants/refugees and descendants also cover those of "Western origin."

The associations were selected on the basis of their names, which often included the words "women's association." The search criteria also included the addition of a name of a predominantly Muslim country of origin (e.g., The Afghan Women's Association or Somali Women's Organization Denmark) or a name specifically indicating a cross-ethnic organization (e.g., Multicultural Women's Club or Intercultural Women's Association).

The associations were chosen by searching the internet, looking at city council lists of partners and supported associations, network associations listed by Danish majority women's organizations, plus interviews or telephone calls with integration workers in both public and private contexts. Following these leads and relying partly on a snowball effect among respondents led to twenty-four formal interviews with a total of thirty-four women (some were group

interviews) within the primary target group: women of non-Danish origin who were active in ethnic minority associations. In addition, there were nine more or less informal (mostly non-recorded) discussions with other relevant actors. In total, the ethnic minority women within the sample together represent involvement in 26 associations, of which 13 were cross-ethnic, 4 Somali, 3 Kurdish, 2 Palestinian, 2 Iranian, 1 Turkish and 1 Afghan.

The interviews were conducted between August 2007 and January 2008 on locations chosen by the women themselves. They generally lasted about one hour, and most were recorded (with the written consent of the respondents), and all were carried out as relatively open semi-structured interviews with a few recurrent themes. All respondents were given the chance to comment on the transcript of the interview, but only very few took the opportunity to do so.

Based on the selection criteria and the aim of interviewing the "frontrunners," it is clear that their viewpoints and experiences discussed in the next sections do not represent the female immigrant population in Denmark as a whole. It is also important to stress that the respondents do not make up a homogenous group; for example, there are great disparities in the levels of education (ranging from holding a PhD to no formal education), employment within both private and public sectors, as well as being recipients of different types of welfare benefits. In addition, the ages range from sixteen to sixty years, and while the majority either arrived in Denmark as refugees or via family unification laws, fourteen were born and raised in Denmark.

Identifying as Muslim women—or not?

This section presents the perceived relationship between gender, religion, and integration. It discusses two overall themes related to the identity of Muslim women and the meaning of integration. Approximately one third of the respondents identified themselves as Muslims. But rather than focusing on the numbers, the following data relates to *how* this self-identification is expressed. It shows how these women view the relationship between being a woman and being Muslim. Even more interesting is their approach to this issue and how they perceive of the dominant Danish conception of this relationship. Starting with the women who *did* identify themselves as Muslim, the following exchange arguably reveals a prima facie notion that assertive self-identification as a Muslim woman seems self-contradictory to any Dane; even to a Dane who was explicitly contacted to discuss matters of female Muslim mobilization.

> F: Back then in Turkey, we went to Koran school . . . and when I finished the course I was asked by the teacher if I could help him teach some children during the summer.
> HPN: Can I then ask, does that mean that you identify as Muslim?
> F: Yes it does. Although perhaps not everybody would agree with me, but [laughs] . . . You are very welcome to be open and ask about it.

Another woman refers to the Koran to counter some of the prejudices she feels Danes generally harbor about Muslim women. Regarding gender roles, she says, "I am not saying they should have the same roles, because the roles are determined by culture. But the woman has to be treated as a human being of equal worth." She views gender equality as being entirely consistent with the words of the Koran, only adding that more women have to learn to read Arabic to facilitate their own emancipation—a viewpoint consistent with the reasons for her active involvement in the association.

A slightly different take on "Islamic gender roles" is presented by another respondent who says, "if you look at Muslims, you always think that it is the man who decides. He doesn't, the women do too! Of course, the man has the final word in public, but the women decide, too." While this may reveal personal experience, it is all the more interesting in terms of what preconceptions she is *expecting* to find in her various social settings. Another respondent shares that it may be the *expectations* from majority society that are more repressive than any actual *practice* within one's "own" community: "We actually feel repressed when we are always talked about in a negative way." She is the chairperson of one of the very few associations among the sample study group that actively defines itself as religious, finding strength in discussing and expressing their religion together. She refers to the adage, "if you have one branch, it is easy to break, but if you collect a bundle, it becomes much harder."

Other associations have a much more cautious approach to mixing religious discussions with their associational activities. This is shown by one example from this women's group:

> HPN: How about religion. Do you discuss it, or?
> E: Well, yes. I have great trouble with this, because some of them think a lot about religion, and there are many things that they find wrong for me to do. Otherwise, we are all Muslim, but you know, there are different takes on how much you adhere to religion. So yes, we did discuss, and they did not at all agree with me! . . . Even though I *am* Muslim, and my parents are Muslim . . . But my husband and I do not raise our children in that way. No, we celebrate Christmas with the Danes, and we have other kinds of celebrations. Yes!

Another woman has a much more radical view on the relationship between Islam and womanhood, which she also conveys in her work with the association:[6]

> I: I am not Muslim *at all*, and the two others [board members] are not strongly religious. It is more *nationality* than religion . . . We formed this association to take women *away* from slavery, and in my opinion, Islam is pure torture for women. Put on a scarf, and if you say anything along the way, they can kill you. You are on your own; they cannot use you as a witness. You need one more—two women for one man; that's what I can't take.

The link between female oppression (even torture) and Islam is also expressed by another respondent. She objects strongly to a formulation in my written letter of consent, which states that "I am at present researching Muslim and other immigrant women's participation in different types of associational and political work." As she rightly points out, one cannot simply find individuals and say "because you come from Iran, you are a Muslim;" which was, of course, never my intention, although I did select her on the basis of the association's name, which includes a reference to Iran.

> G: For example in Iran, when they are whipping somebody, they take the Koran in one hand like this [lifts one arm], and then a whip. The Koran in the left hand, right, and then whiplashes with the other hand. So you whip women . . . what kind of impression can that possibly give other than Koran and whipping, right? I mean, it is very demonstrative, and it makes you experience . . . I believe that more than 90 percent of Iranians are *not* Muslim. They actually feel hurt if you ask them, "are you Muslim?"

She points out, "there are many among my generation, who are not believers . . . For example, my siblings, none of us believe in God or any kind of religion, all are atheists. And all of my acquaintances; I do not know anybody who are believers as such." Most of the other respondents from Iran are approximately twenty to twenty-five years older than this woman, and none of them identify themselves as Muslims either, which very likely had to do with their experiences of the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979.

In sum, several women do not self-identify as Muslims on the grounds that Islam is repressive to women, whereas those who do self-identity as Muslims are cautious to explain that Islam itself is not oppressive to women— apparently believing that this is a prior assumption of many.[7]

What is "Integration" to these Women?

The alignment between womanhood and Islam is to some extent considered a lost battle in the Danish context. One aspect in which these women generally seem much more ready to struggle relates to the meaning of "integration," and whether or not this is a concept that resonates with being a Muslim living in Denmark. One respondent states: "So we are trying to make Muslim women better integrated into Danish society," repeatedly stressing that being a practicing Muslim and participating in Danish society is not a contradiction in terms. On this note, she also speaks about the concept of *fatwah*— "that which is allowed." She emphasizes that fatwah can be context dependent, hence also dependent on one's need to "integrate"; in the same vein calling for education of Imams in Denmark, so that there would be knowledgeable persons able to present contextually appropriate readings of the Koran. The possibility of aligning Islam and Danish culture is stressed by another respondent:

F: Integration goes both ways. To understand each other's culture and accept who you are and then respect each other. That is integration to me. It has nothing to do with the idea that just because I have moved to Denmark, I have to be a Dane. I accept the culture and religion of the Danes, but I have my own, you see . . . What the media is talking about is *assimilation*; that you have to be a Dane. But even if I am not wearing a scarf, I have some traditions, and I observe Ramadan; but I also work, and I get educated.
HPN: You are saying that the media is talking about assimilation. Is that your general impression?
F: Yes it is. That if you are wearing clothes that look like everybody else's, if you have an education and you speak Danish, then you are integrated.

The idea that appearances matter in terms of whether a person is considered integrated or not is a recurrent theme in women's' responses in the study. Very likely, this is a result of the prolonged and heated debate about the Muslim headscarf in Denmark, which for some time has set the agenda when debating the integration of Muslim women (Siim and Skjeie 2008). But while data above documented rather defensive tactics in terms of the alignment of Islam and womanhood, questions on how "integration" is understood are often met with a much more assertive tactic, as demonstrated by the responses of two women of different ethnic backgrounds, who actively questioned the dominant media and lay depictions[8] of what "well integrated" means:

> **HPN:** What does integration mean to you?
> **T:** I have always been saying that some people think about integration, as if you have to wear trousers and cannot wear a scarf. But that´s not it! Integration is that you are able to communicate with people, that you are going out and meet other people . . . I have met many people who said "Oh, you are well integrated." But how can they know if they do not know me? They cannot tell just from how I look. I may not be inside. Maybe I am cross with everybody and xenophobic. But if you can go out and communicate with people . . . it is about being an open person, forming networks. That is what I think integration means to me.
> **U:** If I want to be integrated, it does not mean that I have to drink alcohol or go to a disco or someplace like that. But that I can integrate with Danish language, Danish society, I can learn what things are like within the other culture, the Danish culture. But it is very important that immigrants join each other when having to integrate with the Danes. Because I live here in [neighborhood X] where there are about thirty nationalities, and it is very important that they integrate with each other.

While certainly not all Danish politicians promote the idea that Muslim women have to remove their scarf in order to be "well integrated," one issue on which they generally seem to converge is the idea that the road to integration in Denmark goes through the labor market. This has been a persistent theme for

several years[9] that has, of late, been finding expression in the official "Declaration on Integration and Active Citizenship in Danish Society," which, among other points, says that "I understand and accept that the individual citizens and their families are responsible for supporting themselves. I shall therefore endeavor to become self-supporting as soon as possible."

In cases where the Muslim headscarf (not to mention the one actual case of a *burqa*) is seen to stand in the way of labor market participation, suggestions by several politicians have been that labor market interests must override religious preferences (Siim and Skjeie 2008). Interestingly, the following respondent, who here questions the primacy of labor market participation, ran for Parliament elections in 2007 for the Liberal Party, which has taken a key role in promoting labor market participation as a precondition for successful integration.

> **H:** [T]o me it [labor market participation] does not equal integration, it is a very important *element*, but work in itself is not integrating, because you can be at some factory all by yourself for seven hours a day, not learning anything at all about society. It is an important element in becoming integrated . . . but it cannot stand alone. However, to go out, be part of society, take part in arranging things.

While labor market participation has received great political attention as a means to integration, one debate, which has been notable for its absence from Danish political agenda, is the idea that citizenship could also be considered a *means* for integration. In Lærke Klitgaard Holm's (2006) analysis, this forms a large part of the explanation for Danish politicians' rejection of dual citizenship. Talking about a local ethnic minority community, I received the following rather dejected assessment of citizenship attainment:

> **HPN:** Did most of them apply for citizenship?
> **E:** Most of them have it . . . But they are not too pleased with it. Because they say it is only on paper. And that is true. It is *only* on paper that they are Danes.
> **HPN:** Because they are not being accepted or respected?
> **E:** Yes, that's how it is. We are Muslims.

This woman does not equate citizenship attainment with integration, and is, in fact, about to use her right as a European Union citizen (*qua* her Danish citizenship) to move to England, where she hopes life is less difficult in terms of impact from the political system.

Conclusion

Faith-based mobilization does not appear to be a preferred strategy for facilitating integrative ways of belonging among immigrant Muslim women in Denmark. The overall reading of the Danish situation is that the dominant discourse on integration in Denmark depicts integration as virtually

incompatible with practicing Islam. There are several factors that explain why Islamic-based mobilization among immigrant women in Denmark is so low, among these are the structural and discursive limitations documented above. A third factor could be the fact that Islam, as a religion, is not based on a hierarchical structure, and individual Imams speak only for themselves. This might be one reason for the several failed attempts among the Danish Muslim community as a whole to create a unified group.

Generally, the women downplayed their Muslim cultural and religious heritage, but had strong views on what integration is, and wanted to challenge the dominant conceptions or discourse about their Muslim identity. In this way, they indirectly (and sometimes also directly) challenged the perceived incompatibility between integration and being a practicing Muslim. Using a metaphoric description of this state of affairs, the conclusion is that seeing faith–based Muslim mobilization as a first step toward integration is a road that is cut off by Danish political and media discourse. Rather than choosing this (dis)connection as their battlefield—partly because some of the respondents did not personally identify as Muslim—the respondents rather chose to focus on attempting to challenge the dominant conception of the end goal, namely what "integration" supposedly entails.

Notes

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1. See "Declaration on Integration and Active Citizenship in Danish Society," Danish Ministry for Refugees, Immigrants and Integration, http://www.nyidanmark.dk/ NR/rdonlyres/7A32FAD0-E279-467C-91E3-3074249ED586/0/integrationserklaering_e ngelsk.pdf (accessed May 26, 2008).

2. This assessment of the Danish situation is supported by Langvasbråten (2008), while Roggeband and Verloo (2007) suggest that this is probably a general European phenomenon, which certainly applies to the Netherlands. See Trude Langvasbråten, "A Scandinavian Model? Gender Equality Discourses on Multiculturalism," *Social Politics* (Spring 2008): 32-52; Conny Roggeband and Mieke Verloo, "Dutch Women are Liberated, Migrant Women are a Problem," *Social Policy and Administration* 41, no. 3 (June 2007): 271-288.

3. This is the popular name for The Danish National Evangelical Lutheran Church.

4. "HPN" marks my own questions in interview quotes, whereas respondents have been assigned a random letter.

5. There are some large national associations for people with a Muslim background. These tend to be divided into either religious ones (e.g., The Islamic Faith Community, from 2004 and Danish Muslim Union, from 2008) or non-religious ones (e.g., Forum for Critical Muslims, from 2001 and Democratic Muslims, from 2006).

6. This statement came following a question about whether the association was for Iraqi women in general, to which she responded that it was only intended for Kurdish Iraqi women, as she saw Iraqi women in general as more religiously observant.

7. This observation opens up a number of issues about interviewer/interviewee relations, which I unfortunately do not have the opportunity to explore further here.

8. According to World Economic Forum, out of twenty surveyed countries, Denmark is the country in which most people (79 percent) see greater interaction between the Muslim and the Western world as a threat. Furthermore, Denmark is the only country in the report in which there are no recorded findings of a positive tone in the media toward "the other." Concerning a negative tone toward "the other," Denmark is only surpassed by Lebanon, Namibia, Palestine and Iran. See World Economic Forum, "Islam and the West: Annual Report on the State of Dialogue." January 2008. www.weforum.org/pdf/C100/Islam_West.pdf (accessed May 26, 2008).

9. This convergence on labor market participation as the road to social integration goes also for ethnic Danes, a logic whereby youth below the age of twenty-five since 1993 have restricted access to some welfare benefits to encourage their full labor market participation.

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