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in the Danish Welfare Society – Dilemmas and Challenges

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Exclusion and Marginalisation of Immigrants in the Danish Welfare Society – Dilemmas and Challenges[*]

Abstract: The objective of the article is twofold: 1) to give an empirical picture of the state of affairs with regard to socio-economic and wider socio-cultural and political inclusion of immigrants in the Danish welfare society; 2) to discuss and theorise over the links and possible dilemmas posed by the politics of redistribution and the politics of recognition with the Danish case as a point of departure.

In a comparative perspective, the Danish welfare state and the 'Nordic Welfare model' are in many aspects – redistribution, unemployment, poverty reduction, gender equality and economic competitiveness – regarded, if not as an ideal, then at least as a practical example of a society in which a comparatively (e.g. compared to the US and UK) high socio-economic equality and social citizenship standard is successfully combined with high market economic efficiency.

However, with regard to the political discourse (right-wing anti-immigration populism has emerged since the nineties), legal rights and wider socio-cultural and socio-economic inclusion capacity of immigrants and refugees, the 'rosy' picture of the inclusive character of the Danish welfare society has been seriously challenged in recent years. Stricter policies on immigration have been implemented, and the Danish social security and employment policy measures in relation to immigrants and refugees have been changed. On the one hand, these changes have been driven by a strong 'work first' and 'dependency culture/incentive' discourse which has led to a reduction of the duration and level of social benefits and increased poverty among immigrants. On the other hand, other policy changes have pointed towards a more inclusive direction in such fields as education policy, active labour market policy measures and in innovative empowerment programmes in deprived urban districts.

Introduction

One day in January 2006, Danes woke up to see their beloved flag being burnt in countries whose names only some had heard about before and fewer knew anything of. The Media told them that the protesters were Muslims, and that they were protesting against the blasphemous depiction of their prophet in (caricature) cartoons presented on the front page of the largest Danish newspaper. The front page had in fact been

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published three months earlier but without attracting much attention. However, one of the events which fuelled the crisis was when the Danish Prime Minister was contacted by a number of ambassadors from Muslim countries in order to discuss the issue. The Prime Minister rejected the invitation. He argued that he could do nothing, since it was out of his and the government's legal jurisdiction to intervene in any way. According to the Prime Minister, the key question at stake was a matter of freedom of expression guaranteed by the Danish constitution – an issue that in no way could be questioned and negotiated in liberal democracies.

The Danes asked themselves: what was going on? Were they extreme mad men those who burned their flag? Or was 'something rotten in the State of Denmark'? They were used, when travelling abroad as tourists, to being seen as citizens coming from a country which, together with the other Nordic countries, was conceived if not as an ideal then at least as an example of good practice: high redistribution, low unemployment, much poverty reduction, relatively high gender equality and economic competitiveness. Furthermore, Denmark contributes with a relative high percentage of its GNP to developing countries, and at least in the eyes of the Danes themselves has a progressive position in relation to human rights in the international scene. All in all, and compared to other countries outside Scandinavia, Denmark has a high socio-economic equality, high level of social capital, trust (Svendsen, 2004) and social citizenship standards successfully combined with high market economic efficiency and an internationally progressive profile.

However, as we shall claim here, they have not been fully aware of a new and sneaking trend which for more than a decade had been penetrating the Danish welfare society and the welfare state: the demeaning ways in which immigrants and their descendants from non-western countries were being conceived and treated.[1] This newly emergent dimension is the focus of the present paper. The 'Mohammed crisis' as such, as the story of the ensuing dramatic events was labelled in the domestic media and political debate, including the flag- burning, consumer boycott in several Muslim countries, hectic diplomatic activities and statements of the Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, in Arab televisions is not the topic of the paper. However, the

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[1] This implies that immigrant 'guest workers' who in the 1960s became important for the Fordist type industries as a 'secondary' labour force at the very peaks of the business cycle shall only be our concern here in so far as they stayed for good. They were brought in on temporary resident contracts and were considered to be relatively transient 'birds of passage' that could be laid off at downturns (Piore, 1979).

'Mohammed crisis' to some extent crystallised the Islamophobic climate in the society, and we shall focus on broader reflections about dilemmas, contradictions and power struggles with regard to immigrant policy in the Danish welfare state. These reflections will be put into perspective with the help of the concepts of recognition and redistribution, inspired by the works of Nancy Fraser (1992 and 2000).

Compared to Sweden – the one among the Nordic countries which we see as the most comparable to Denmark as far as welfare institutions (private and public) are concerned – ethnic discrimination, doubtlessly, takes place in both countries. This discrimination concerns educational institutions, the labour market, housing, day-to-day interaction among people in the public sphere, etc. However, while discrimination is considered both illegitimate and is strongly condemned in the public Swedish political discourses, it has been tacitly approved in Danish mainstream public life. One of the main reasons for this is that, so far, for more than five years, the parliamentary majority of the present Danish bourgeois government (the Liberal Party and the Conservative party) has been dependent on the parliamentary seats of the Danish Peoples' Party. And the rhetoric of this party has been, and still is, strongly discriminatory. There are statements from Danish Peoples Party's (DPP) leading MP's like: "The only solution for this problem is to send them home, tightening, and an iron hard line towards Muslim men. Send the men home to torture and political persecution" (Martin Henriksen, May 22, 2006); "Islam will experience the same destiny in Denmark as Nazism and Communism" (Head of the DPP, Pia Kjærsgaard, January 30, 2006); "All in all, immigrants in Denmark do not contribute to anything in the society" (MEP, Mogens Camre, Oct. 4, 2005). In the local elections in the Autumn of 2005, one MP from the DPP, Louise Frevert, referred on her homepage to Muslims as cancer cells in the Danish society. These and other discriminatory and racist statements have never been officially condemned by the government but tacitly approved, and in the Autumn of 2006 central politicians from the Liberals, the largest political party, explicitly expressed adherence to the values of the DPP.

Furthermore, and also contrary to Sweden, but still within the public political discourse contributing to the special Danish version of discrimination, is the ambivalence of the Danish Social Democratic Party regarding a number of the discriminatory policies and laws passed by parliament in the last decade. The Danish parliament has for more than ten years introduced legislative changes which imply

growing difficulties for immigrants to obtain citizenship, new barriers to establish family unification, new barriers for living together with their spouses and restrictions to get the same access to the social assistance system as the rest of the population. At the same time, as indicated and alluded to in the abovementioned quotations from leading members of the Danish People's Party, the legislation prohibiting the incitement of racial discrimination is seldom effectively applied. Also, there is no effective legislation against dissemination of racist utterances.[2]

So, our contention is that major parts of Danish society, step by step, have been infested by ethnic discrimination, and those dissenting voices which have protested against this development – for example, the small left-wing parties, the small and progressive bourgeois parties and NGOs like Amnesty International – have been ridiculed by attributions of labels such as 'Muslim lovers', 'Halal Hippies' and the 'politically correct'.

In that type of general environment, it is not so surprising that the cartoons appeared on the front page, that the prime minister – representing five million people – refused to meet with the ambassadors representing more that 100 million Muslims, and that the Danish Foreign Minister 'corrected' the UN General Secretary when he spoke of the importance of bridging cultural gaps between immigrants/refugees and the host country. In May 2006, the Council of Europe's Commission against Racism and Intolerance, ECRI, whose members are independent and recognised human-rights experts within the areas of racism, xenophobia and intolerance, strongly criticised the Danish discrimination policy. The ECRI also made no less than 36 clear recommendations as to how the government can take action to create a society which is not dominated by racism and discrimination. However, the Prime Minister, claiming that the report was full of mistakes, arrogantly denied the criticism. A recent report from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) argued along the same lines as ECRI.

Contextualizing Danish migration policy since the eighties

In the following we will briefly outline the most important aspects of the changing societal and political context in which the dynamics and contradictions of the Danish migration policy since the late eighties must be understood.

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[2] For further details on performance of police prosecution and the courts, with reference to individual cases of hate-speech and racist remarks, see, for example, the annual National Focal Point Report (Raxen) on www.eumc.eu.int.

Unlike many other countries with a colonial past, Denmark is a relatively new immigration country. In the post war 'golden age of the welfare state', immigrant issues only played a marginal role in mainstream politics. As mentioned above, the immigrant guest workers were brought to Denmark in the 1960s on temporary resident contracts, and many of them were laid off after the economic crisis in the mid 1970s.

Since then the political landscape and the political discourse around immigrant questions have changed a lot. In particular, during the nineties, the newly reorganised Populist Party, the Danish People's Party, successfully managed to influence the content of the national discourse towards an explicit xenophobic direction, and was able to reach a stable level of electoral support at around 10-15 pct. During the nineties, the largest parties in the Danish parliament, the Conservatives, the Liberal Party and important sections of the Social Democratic Party, were gradually influenced by the changed discourse and the electoral strength of the Danish People's Party. Step by step, they moved towards discriminatory policies. A substantial part of the electoral base of the Danish People's Party was former social democratic working-class voters who till then had been the traditional backbone of the party.

Another important factor in the gradual transformation of the political scene was that xenophobic or discriminatory attitudes entered the popular media that hereby interacted actively with mainstream party politics. Unlike the seventies and the eighties, xenophobic attitudes were no longer on the margins of the public discourse. Like in many other Western countries, the popular media gradually changed the content and style of public discussions of immigrant questions (Hussain *et al.*, 1997; Hussain, 2000; Madsen, 2000; ECRI, 2000; Hervik, 2002; Yilmaz, 2006). In the Scandinavian context, this is again contrasted with Sweden, where the media steadily rejected or actively questioned the legitimacy of nationalistic xenophobic populism. It never became recognised as a legitimate voice in the mainstream political discourse, but was seen as a threat against a sustainable democratic political culture (Löwander, 1997).

It appears that the Danish People's Party managed to develop a new political image as the true defenders of the 'white Danish welfare state'. The Party, which originated from the populist right-wing Party, the Progress Party, transformed the political project from ultra neoliberalism to a defence of basic values of the post-war Social Democratic welfare reforms in a number of areas. In particular, the defence of welfare rights for native elderly people, which constituted, and still constitute, a substantial part of the

party's electorate. The Party was also very successful with regard to the populist creation of the image of *the* party as the genuine voice of the 'native little man'.

The party's pro-welfare classic Social Democratic rhetoric, 'protected welfare for native Danes', was in a classic populist manner mixed with the xenophobic demonization of the immigrant community – in recent years with explicit Islamophobic connotations. 9/11 was a gift from heaven, which increased even more the electoral base of the party. Immigration and immigrants were constructed as *the* overriding cause of the threats to the Danish welfare state and social security for native Danes in the age of economic globalisation and EU integration. The nationalistic rhetoric was further successfully linked to an increasingly aggressive and nostalgic 'nationalistic identity politics', which emphasised the need for (re)mobilizing for the defence of the 'Danish Christian cultural heritage', Danish language, national identity, etc.

In short, during the nineties, the Danish People's Party managed to put forward a new political project and discursive formation/package, which consisted of three closely, interlinked elements:

- Maintenance and improvement of welfare rights and social security for Danes, i.e. welfare, redistribution and social citizenship, but exclusively 'reserved for the natives';
- The (re)invention of a 'nationalistic identity politics' which addressed the exogenous dangers of the nation state. After 9/11, this rhetoric was radicalised and was linked to Islamophobic concerns about terrorism, radical political Islam, the 'clash of civilisations' and so forth;
- The construction of immigration and ethnic minorities – in particular new citizens with a Muslim background – as not only an economic burden for the welfare society, but also a cultural endogenous danger eroding the economic and cultural conditions of the Danish welfare society.

The practical outcome was first and foremost a gradual implementation of more restrictive policies of immigration regulation. The conditions for asylum seekers and for access to full citizenship has, since the early 1990s, been still more restricted, and there has been a significant reduction in the number of immigrants from Third World countries. After 2001, when the present Conservative-Liberal government replaced the former Social Democratic headed government, this path has been even more

strengthened – not least because the government's majority, as mentioned, has been directly dependent on the parliamentary seats of the Danish People's Party.

With regard to the social rights of immigrants already living in Denmark the picture is a bit more nuanced. One *the one hand,* the level of and access to social assistance for new coming migrants has been reduced (by approximately 1/3). Also, legislation has introduced growing difficulties for immigrants to obtain citizenship, new barriers to establish family unification and new barriers for living together with their spouses (Hussain, 2006; ECRI, 2006).

On the *other hand,* active labour market policies and educational measures have to some extent been redeveloped in a more innovative direction in order to improve the employment of immigrants, to which we shall return. First, however, we shall present some general and international observations about welfare states and ethnic minorities to be followed by some empirical data on ethnic minorities' living conditions in Denmark

Welfare states, immigrants and refugees

Now, let us focus on the kernel of our paper: the ways ethnic minorities are conceived and treated by the Danish welfare state and the Danish welfare society. First, however, we shall present some international observations. In general, it is often said that the national welfare states did not hinder the inclusion of non-citizen immigrants into welfare rights (Hammer, 1990; Hollifield, 1992; Soysal, 1994). Banting (2000) even claims to have shown that, in a broad comparative perspective, a common element of social democratic and corporatist European welfare states is their relatively successful incorporation of new immigrant minorities – compared to liberal welfare states. The main reaction to immigration in these countries has been less exclusion from welfare combined with a rather strong accent on restrictive immigration policies. Based on numerous international studies of immigration policies and social citizenship, Banting states:

> one might expect that previously homogeneous countries would face the most difficulty incorporating new minorities into social citizenship regimes, and that countries with traditions as immigrant societies or long experiences with ethno-linguistic diversity would have the least troubles. This is not the case. A critical variable seems to be the nature of the welfare state established in the post-war period. In countries that established expansive welfare states, whether of social democratic or corporative inspiration, the

balance tilts towards social incorporation. In countries that established more liberal welfare states, welfare chauvinism seems to be leaving a heavier imprint. (2000: 22)

In the same vein, Baganha argues (2000: 171) that in countries where welfare state traditions – contrary to the Nordic countries – "are not deeply entrenched and where considerable sections of the population have not fully internalised their own citizenship rights, then there is likely to be less pressure on the state to extend to immigrants social rights that pass from formal laws to everyday reality"

We shall not contest these more general observations. However, although we shall present some examples of areas of inclusion of immigrants and refugees in public institutions, such as education policy and active labour market policy, and in particular in innovative empowerment programmes in deprived urban districts, our data on contemporary Denmark are far from confirming a general 'rosy' picture of inclusiveness.

Danish observations

In the following we present statistical data on differences in living conditions between native Danes and immigrants and descendants from Western and non-western countries. However, these statistical or social constructions of the categories "native Danes" and "immigrants" and "descendants" tend to be somewhat misleading, since they contain big internal differences. First, there are major differences between, for example, immigrants from Somalia and from Pakistan. Second, the living conditions of, for example, an unemployed, unskilled native Danish man resemble much more the living conditions of an unemployed, unskilled Turkish man than that of an employed, well-educated native Danish man. It is rather the intersectionality of different positions and living conditions that makes a person or a group vulnerable. Having said that, we are, however, restricted by the type of data available.[3]

Demography

There has been an increase in the number of immigrants and their descendants during the last 25 years.[4] In 1980, they made up 3.0% of the population, and in 2005,

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[3] Most of the statistical data about demography, education, employment and unemployment, wage and income and housing are from the Ministry of Refugees, Immigrants and Integration, 2005.
[4] A person is defined as a Dane if one or both of the parents are Danish citizens born in Denmark. If a person is not Danish, s/he is either an immigrant or a descendant. A person is defined as an immigrant if

8.4% – corresponding to 452,095 persons. 70.9% of these were from non-western countries.[5] 42.5% of all immigrants have Danish citizenship. From 2001 to 2005, the net immigration has decreased from 17,147 persons to 9,428 persons.

A population prognosis from the Danish Statistical Bureau shows that in 2050 the number of Danes will have decreased by 5.1%, while the number of immigrants and their descendants from western and non-western countries will have increased by respectively 33.1% and 92.3%. In 2050, immigrants and their descendants will make up 14.4% of the Danish population (11.2% from non-western countries). The number of persons of working age from non-western countries will have doubled by 2050.

Education

The increasing number of immigrants and descendants is reflected in the rising number of enrolments of primary school pupils with a mother-tongue spoken at home other than Danish. In 2004/2005, 9.9% of the total number (599,040) of primary school pupils were children of immigrants and their descendants, compared to 6% in 1994/1995. This corresponds to an increase of 94% among the pupils belonging to the migrant communities in this 10-year period.

In 2003/2004, immigrants and descendants had a weaker representation in the vocational education system than native Danes. However, during the last couple of years the gap between the immigrants and descendants and the native Danish youth in vocational education has narrowed down. In 1993/1994, 70% of native Danes aged 16-19 years started a vocational education course, compared to respectively 26% and 61% of immigrants and their descendants from non-western countries. In 2003/2004, 74% of native Danes aged 16-19 years started a vocational education course, compared to respectively 53% and 71% of immigrants and their descendants from non-western countries.

In the higher education system the same pattern is found. In 2003/2004, 17% of immigrants aged 20-24 years were participating in higher education, compared to respectively 27% and 33% of descendants from non-western countries and native Danes.[6]

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s/he was born outside Denmark, and as a descendant if born in Denmark (Ministry of Refugees, Immigrants and Integration, 2005: 11).

[5] Western countries are the member states of the EU (EU 25 countries), Iceland, Norway, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino, Switzerland, and the Vatican State. Non-Western countries are defined as all other countries (Ministry of Refugees, Immigrants and Integration, 2005: 12-13).

[6] There is no comparative data available for 1993/1994.

Especially in health care courses (among these medicine), immigrants and descendants are strongly represented.

Employment and unemployment

In January 2004, the employment frequency among 16-64 year-old immigrants and descendants from non-western countries and western countries was respectively 46% and 62%. Among Danes it was 76%.

Immigrants with a higher education taken in Denmark have a stronger attachment to the labour market than immigrants with a lower educational level. Among immigrants and descendants with primary school as the highest level of education the employment frequency is respectively 54% and 55%, while the employment frequency among immigrants and descendants who have a Danish vocational education is respectively 74% and 78%. However, the duration of education taken in the country of origin is also of importance for labour market attachment.

The proportion of immigrants and descendants who are not part of the labour force is much higher than among native Danes. In 2004, 46% and 34% of working-age immigrants and descendants from non-western and western counties were outside the labour force, compared to 20% among native Danes. More women than men among immigrants and descendants from non-western countries are outside the labour market (52% women and 39% men, compared to 22% native Danish women and 17% native Danish men, aged 16-64). 92% of the 25-64 year-old women immigrants from non-western countries have not taken an education in Denmark. Not all immigrants and descendants outside the labour market are on social benefits (sickness, social assistance, rehabilitation, maternity leave, leave benefits, etc.) since a much higher proportion among immigrants and descendants than among native Danes are self-reliant (neither in the formal labour market nor receiving social benefits).

Wage and income

Immigrants and descendants have generally lower wages than Danes and the wage dispersion is lower than among Danes. Especially immigrants but also descendants are to a much higher degree than native Danes employed in low-skilled and low paid jobs. However, when immigrants, descendants and native Danes have the same types of jobs, wage differences are mainly due to differences in education and work experience.

Ethnic discrimination does not seem to play a role in wage differences. The greatest barrier for immigrants and descendants, especially from non-western countries, is to enter the labour market.

Housing

During the 1980s and 1990s, the share of immigrants and descendants living in the 'social housing' sector[7] increased, and in 2004 they made up 23% of all tenants in this sector. This is almost a three times higher share than that of the total population. There are several reasons for this. One major reason is the high and increasing prices in the owner market. Immigrants' and descendants' incomes are below the average. Another reason is that connections and social networks are important in the private renting market. Furthermore, immigrants and descendants, to a much higher degree than native Danes, live in homes with the lowest standard of modern facilities (Kristensen & Larsen, 2006).

However, there are huge differences between immigrants and descendants from western and non-western countries. 84% among immigrants and descendants from western countries live outside the social housing sector, compared to 40% among immigrants and descendants from non-western countries. This cleavage is even more pronounced among descendants. 69% of descendants from non-western countries are living in the social housing sector compared to 22% of descendants from western countries.

There is also a strong segregation between different residential areas within the social housing sector. To achieve an equal distribution of different groups within the social housing sector, 20% of the unemployed people and 33% of the immigrants are to be moved to other housing estates/areas within the public housing sector (Andersen, 2005). The most unequal distribution of immigrants (and of the unemployed) among different residential areas is found in the smallest municipalities and in Aarhus, Odense and Aalborg (the second, third and fourth biggest cities in Denmark). The most equal distribution of immigrants is found in Copenhagen. Accordingly, there is no clear and unambiguous picture of the distribution of immigrants in residential areas between small and large municipalities.

The internal segregation in the public housing sector did not, however, grow from 1998 to 2002 (Andersen, 2005). The concentration of ethnic minority groups in certain

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[7] 'Social housing' means cooperative housing associations that are state-supported.

parts of the public housing sector has generally decreased. But some, especially Somalis and immigrants from Arabic speaking countries in North Africa and the Middle East, have increased their concentration in specific housing areas.

In a longer-term perspective of two decades, the segregation on the whole housing market does not seem to have escalated. There are no clear overall tendencies towards a higher concentration of rich, well-educated people in some housing areas and poor, low educated (among these immigrants and descendants) in other areas (Rockwool Foundation, 2006). Nevertheless, there is clearly a segregation in the housing market between, on the one hand, native Danes and immigrants and descendants from Western countries and, on the other hand, immigrants and descendants from non-western countries.

Poverty

The poverty rate is much higher among ethnic minority groups (western and non-western) than among native Danes. Two studies – although using different data and different definitions of poverty[8] – show almost the same results. The overall poverty rate measured was respectively 12% (Morissens, 2005) and 13% (Larsen, 2005). However, the poverty rate among immigrants was respectively 29% and 32%, and among Danes 11% and 13%. For non-western immigrants, Morissens shows that the poverty rate is 33%. Studies of child poverty (for example Hussain, 2003) have shown that children of ethnic minority parents suffer from poverty to a much higher degree than children of native Danes.

Social exclusion

A study (Larsen, 2005) measured social exclusion in the year 2000 in relation to social relations, political participation and leisure time/cultural activities.[9] Exclusion in relation to social relations is much higher among ethnic groups (western and non-western) than among native Danes (32% and 17%). Ethnic minority groups also

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[8] Morissens (2005) uses register data from 2002 and the 60-pct. median income line as the poverty threshold. Larsen (2005) uses data from the year 2000 'Danish Level of Living Survey', and defines the poverty threshold by a combination of gross yearly household income and monthly disposable income after tax, rent and other fixed expenses.

[9] These areas, of course, only represent a limited selection of living conditions areas. Other important areas such as housing and household economy and consumption could have been added (see the sections above on housing and poverty). Social inclusion and exclusion are measured by an aggregated index, which consists of different variables within three areas: social relations, trade union and political activities, and leisure time activities.

have a higher share of 'the middle group', that is, those who are in between inclusion and exclusion (52% and 39%). Only 18% of ethnic minority groups are included, compared to 44% among native Danes. In relation to political participation, 35% of those belonging to ethnic minority groups and 15% among native Danes are excluded. In relation to leisure time/cultural activities, however, there are no major differences between ethnic minority groups and ethnic Danes in terms of inclusion and exclusion.

The aggregated exclusion measured as exclusion on at least three of the four abovementioned indexes (including poverty) is not high, but there are nevertheless twice as many among ethnic minority groups than among native Danes that are excluded (4% and 2%). However, a much higher share of ethnic minority groups than of native Danes is in 'the middle group' (55% and 30%), while only 40% among ethnic minority groups compared to 67% among ethnic Danes are included.

A comparative study (Tsakloglou and Papadopoulos, 2002) of twelve western European (EU) countries shows that the likelihood of social exclusion in all countries is higher among non-EU citizens than among EU citizens. However, this difference in likelihood is much higher in Denmark (37.92) than in any other EU countries.[10] The overall degree of social exclusion is, comparatively speaking, low in Denmark, but the gap between EU citizens and non-EU citizens is much higher in Denmark than in the other EU countries. Even though non-EU citizens in Denmark may receive higher benefits than in most other EU countries, they are relatively speaking worse off in Denmark than in the other EU countries.

Health conditions

There is a strong positive correlation between poor health condition and social exclusion. In general, 16% among ethnic minority groups have a poor health condition compared to 7% among native Danes, and those with poor health condition have a share of excluded on each of the four above mentioned living condition areas that is twice as high as the average. The poorer health conditions among ethnic minority groups than among native Danes is one of the reasons for their lower labour market participation rate.

International studies have shown that poverty, poor living conditions and the position in the social hierarchy are among the most decisive factors in increasing poor

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[10] Luxembourg has the second highest likelihood (22.76), France the third highest (11.54), and the Netherlands the fourth highest (9.84). The other Nordic countries are not included in the study.

health conditions and mortality (for example Fein, 1995; Shaw *et al.*, 1999; Mitchell *et al.*, 2000 and Seeman *et al.*, 2004).

Restricted benefits

Since these measurements of poverty and social exclusion have been conducted, restrictions on social assistance benefits for certain groups of claimants have been introduced. The restrictions have affected ethnic minorities to a very high degree, because they are dependent on social assistance benefits for longer periods to a much greater extent than native Danes. These restricted benefits are targeted towards those who are most marginal in relation to the labour market, thus changing the long-established principle of the Danish welfare state to have equal treatment of social assistance claimants. Until 2002, the basic social assistance benefit was the same for persons who did not receive other social benefits and who were either refugees, long-term unemployed or outside the labour market. The differentiation and lowering of benefits has been introduced gradually during the past four years. The lower 'Introductory Social Allowance' ('Starthjælp') is directly targeted towards immigrants and refugees*, w*hile the 'benefit ceiling' ('kontanthjælpsloftet') for certain groups of social assistance claimants, in principle, is not targeted towards refugees and immigrants. However, the share of immigrants affected by the 'benefit ceiling' is much higher than among native Danes because immigrants are often much longer than native Danes on long-term social assistance.

The government's argument for introducing the lower benefits is that it is expected to increase incentives to enter the labour market. However, at present little is known about the effects on employment or poverty. A few studies (Hansen & Hansen, 2004; Graversen & Tinggaard, 2005) indicate that the employment effect is very limited. Those on restricted benefits are not more likely to be employed than those on 'normal' benefits, since only 10% of those affected by the reduced benefits were able to get a job compared to 11% among those on 'normal' benefits (Graversen & Tinggaard, 2005). Taken that the employment effect is as low as this, it can be anticipated that poverty has increased among most of those affected by the restricted benefits. This is supported by Graversen and Tinggaard (*ibid.*), who show that the affected families have experienced greater difficulties in making ends meet. For example, some do not pay rent, or day care institution or instalments, and some choose to move to cheaper

accommodations. It is exactly the same groups that are affected by the restricted benefits that, prior to the introduction of the restricted benefits, were most vulnerable in terms of poverty and social exclusion. It is therefore to conclude that the restricted benefits have the exact opposite effect of what was intended: namely, further exclusion instead of inclusion into the labour market and other areas of Danish society.

Experiencing maldistribution and disrespect

There are only a few studies on the experiences of receiving and living on reduced social assistance benefits. Ghosh (2005) shows that the Introductory Social Allowance is experienced both as a material and a moral problem, but among refugees the deepest feeling is that of injustice. They feel they are not seen and treated as equals. The following quotation summarizes the overall experiences of the interviewed refugees quite well:

> The problem with the Introductory Social Allowance is not only the question of surviving. I like to survive with respect and dignity. It is hard to survive with this benefit and it does not give you the possibility of having a decent life with good food and some reasonable furniture. When I came to know that the newly arrived persons like me are entitled to get lower benefits than others, I became very angry and sad. I felt that I was not trusted, as if they don't believe that I would look for job if I got the same amount of money as the Danes. Instead of being grateful for having asylum in Denmark, I feel ashamed of not being appreciated as others. (a male refugee, Ghosh, 2005: 33)

The other story: Social innovation, inclusion and empowerment

What we have told so far, however, is mainly the pessimistic and negative part of the Danish narrative. But, of course, there are also oppositional forces pulling in other directions. At the political level counter forces have been mobilised. In the public discourse, not only the two leftist parties (United Left and the Socialist People's Party, which together get 10-15% of the votes), but lately also progressive liberals (in particular the Radical Party, which is a social liberal party which musters support from approximately 10% of the voters according to recent opinion pools) have strengthened their voice against the government. As indicated above, the Social Democratic Party also has ongoing internal conflicts about the issues. Hence, the positions of the party in some aspects might be open to future changes.

Lately also, parts of the business community have expressed for the first time deep concern about the situation (and this was in fact a positive outcome of the *Mohammed crisis*), namely the contemporary political climate with regard to immigration legislation and stigmatisation of ethnic minorities. The types of arguments put forward by the critics can briefly be divided into three (sometimes overlapping) positions or angles from which the contemporary government and its allies in the Danish People's Party are challenged:

1. The leftist welfare universalists who argue that immigrants should enjoy full citizenship rights and hence reject the politics of 'negative selectivism' (see later discussion) in relation to ethnic minorities or 'ethnic second-class social citizenship'. This position is first and foremost represented by the two leftist parties, but to some extent also parts of the social democratic movement.

2. The global-oriented employers and social liberals, who mainly argue that the stigmatising and old-fashioned nationalistic discursive climate damages the international image or 'brand' of Denmark as a tolerant and pluralistic nation. The xenophobic image attached to the present government is therefore seen as a 'negative brand' in the context of political and economic globalisation, since it creates image barriers for Danish companies in international markets (not least in the Muslim world where consumer boycott of Danish products – in some countries for a number of months – in fact reduced their market share) and for employers who want to be attractive in relation to recruitment of talented employees outside Denmark. This position has, for example, been put strongly forward in the public debate after the turbulence of the Mohammed crisis by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs in Denmark Uffe Elleman Jensen (who is a member of the same party as the present Prime Minister). Former top diplomats have also argued along this line: in the global economy, Mohammed cartoons are a risky affair.

3. The 'ethical and morally concerned multiculturalist' forces who argue that a 'politics of human respect' means accepting cultural and ethnic diversity. This position is represented by actors from human rights movements, immigrants' associations, progressive professionals working with ethnic minorities, community activists, social workers, street-level bureaucrats and local government representatives who often work with practical issues related to improvement of the local integration policy.

As mentioned earlier, active labour market, integration and educational measures have to some extent been redeveloped in a more innovative direction in order to improve the access to the labour market for immigrants. Since the enactment of the Integration Law of 1999, all local governments have been obliged to offer (up to) 3 year-long programmes for language education and labour market training schemes for new immigrants. Compared to the more fragmented previous measures, this meant some improvements as well as obligations for local governments to coordinate their efforts. But as mentioned above, these improvements were part of a 'stick (obligations) and carrot (rights)' package which also implicated lower levels of social benefits for immigrants. This combination of 'stick and carrot' policy – the *Janus face of immigrant policy* – echoed very precisely the overall trend in Danish social and labour market policy: namely the logic of workfare policy. Since the late eighties, rights to benefits have increasingly been closely and systematically tied to obligations to agree upon and participate in activation measures plans directed towards inclusion in the labour market. A second point to be stressed here is that systematic emphasis on structural ethnic discrimination in the labour market has only been addressed in a vague manner. The emphasis has been first of all on the supply side of the labour market and less on structural barriers, including discrimination, on the demand side.

However, looking at the practical implementation at the local level of the labour market measures and language courses a striking fact is the diversity. Some local governments emphasise the 'stick' part and administer the national legislation in a rigid way, whereas others emphasise more the innovative and participatory practices with the creation of more 'minority friendly' opportunity structures – in particular with regard to improved educational opportunities, counselling and employment. Hence, the dominant national discourses do not give a complete picture of what is going on in Danish society with regard to ethnic minorities in practical policy. In a number of practical policy areas, more exclusionary and empowerment oriented capacity building has taken place.

In particular, in area-based social action programmes one can identify actors, voices and social forces in play on the scene which have more elements of an inclusionary *'politics of recognition and respect'* (Lister, 2004) than a sceptical/xenophobic 'politics of exclusion and domination'. In the following, we will briefly illustrate this in the field of contemporary urban policy, which is based on

ongoing case studies in four large urban residential areas with the largest concentration of ethnic minorities in Denmark (Andersen *et al.*, 2006).

In these areas, long-term social action programmes have been set in motion (funded by the national Urban Committee, EU-programmes and local governments) in order to design and implement proactive measures against 'ghettoization' and to improve the quality of life in the housing areas with huge concentrations of ethnic minorities and unemployed (Munk, 1998). The innovative element of the strategy has been its emphasis on bottom-up empowerment processes of local actors, community activists and stakeholders with regard to identifying the most important challenges and possible solutions of the local participants and institutions.

A common initiative in the housing estates has been the employment of community workers acting as facilitators of networks and citizens' interest articulation. These empowerment agents and other mobilised actors became part of preventative social work attempting to strengthen the social life and networks in the estates. The cooperation, on a permanent basis, in the municipalities between the local welfare state and tenants' associations, community activists and mobilisation and inclusion of immigrants own associations and networks in the local policy networks, has been one of the most important outcomes of the local network strategy launched. The programme has also resulted in a redirection of social work and community work in the districts towards a more neighbourhood-oriented and empowerment oriented approach focusing on citizens' social mobilisation and capacity building as the vehicle of social change. In many larger cities – like Copenhagen and Aarhus – these processes have changed the power balance between the City Hall and the deprived districts in favour of the latter. Hence, in these and other cities 'the voice and presence' of ethnic minorities have been strengthened. Their interest articulation and capacity to have a practical influence on a number of policy areas like crime reduction, housing, education, training, active labour market policy measures and community work have gradually been improved. The very latest evidence documents improved rates for education and employment and decreasing levels of youth criminality.

Redistribution and recognition

The empirical observations in this paper consist of the political and discursive climate around legislation on ethnic minority matters, information from the Danish Statistical Bureau, the 'Danish Level of Living Survey', and the regional experiences from Danish urban districts with high concentration of immigrants. These data will now be interpreted within the concepts of redistribution and recognition as they have been formulated by Nancy Fraser (1992 and 2000).

Assuming that justice today requires both redistribution (of socio-economic life conditions and rights) and recognition (of different socio-cultural identities to have a legitimate voice as equal partners in the public sphere), Fraser tries to formulate a theory of social justice which identifies and defends only those versions of the cultural politics of difference that can be coherently combined with the social politics of equality. But she also focuses on the ways in which socio-economic disadvantage and cultural disrespect are currently entwined with and support one another. Increasingly, however, identity-based claims tend to predominate, as prospects for socio-economic redistribution appear to recede. Fraser goes on pointing that the remedy for economic injustice is political-economic restructuring of some sort which might involve redistributing income, reorganising the division of labour or more radically *transforming basic economic structures*. The remedy for cultural injustice, in contrast, is some sort of cultural or symbolic change. This could involve upward revaluing of disrespected identities and cultural products of maligned groups. It could also involve recognising and positively valorising cultural diversity. More radically still, it could involve the wholesale transformation of societal patterns of interpretation and communication in ways *that would change everybody's sense of self.*

Fraser often underlines that the distinction between redistributive remedies and recognition remedies is analytical. Redistributive remedies generally presuppose an underlying conception of recognition, and she notices that Honneth (2003) argues that recognition is the fundamental concept of justice and can encompass redistribution. However, she argues, there are social collectives such as class that are only rooted in the political-economic structure of society, and there are other social collectives, such as homosexuals, whose despised sexuality is rooted in the cultural-valuational structure of society. Most of the social collectives, and among them the immigrants and the refugees, are, however, differentiated by virtue of both the political-economic structure and the

cultural–valuational structure of society. When disadvantaged, therefore, they may suffer injustices that are traceable to both political economy and culture simultaneously.

Ethnicity, on the one hand, resembles class in being a structural principle of political economy. In this aspect, ethnicity structures the capitalist division of labour. It structures the division within paid work between low-paid, low-status, menial, dirty, and domestic occupations, held disproportionately by people of non-Danish/ non-Western ethnicity, and higher-paid, higher-status, white-collar, professional, technical and managerial occupations, held disproportionately by ethnic Danes. On the other hand, ethnicity is not only political-economic. It also has cultural-valuational dimensions, which bring it into the universe of recognition. Thus, ethnicity too encompasses elements that are more like sexuality than class. A major aspect of ethnicity is what Nancy Fraser calls Eurocentrism: the authoritative construction of norms that privilege traits associated with European ethnicity. Along with this goes discriminatory cultural ethnicity: the pervasive devaluation of things coded non-European. This depreciation is expressed in a range of harms suffered by people of non-Danish/non-Western ethnicity, including demeaning stereotypical depictions in the media as criminal, bestial, primitive, stupid, and so on; violence, harassment, and dissing in all spheres of everyday life; subjection to Eurocentric norms in relation to which people of non-Danish ethnicity appear lesser or deviant and which work to disadvantage them, even in the absence of any intention to discriminate; attitudinal discrimination; exclusion from and marginalisation in public spheres, and the denial of full legal rights and equal protection.

The two faces of ethnicity intertwine to reinforce one another as Eurocentric cultural norms are institutionalised in the state and the economy, while the economic disadvantage suffered by people of non-Danish ethnicity restricts their 'voice'. Insofar as people of non-Danish ethnicity suffer two distinct kinds of injustice, they necessarily require at least two distinct kinds of remedy, which are not easily pursued simultaneously. Nancy Fraser argues that socialist economics combined with a deep deconstruction of the whole societal cultural politics work best to solve both the redistribution and recognition problem. However, she also admits that such radical "type of scenario to be psychologically and political feasible requires that (US) people are weaned from their attachment to current cultural constructions of their interests and identities" (Fraser, 1992: 90).

Also in Denmark socialism is very far from being on the economic-political agenda and in the post-flag-burning repercussions the appreciation of nationalistic norms and values have been flourishing. Today and in the foreseeable future, more radical transformations of the society are not very realistic. This makes both redistribution and recognition a set of real dilemmas. And the crucial question is to what extent it is possible to approach the recognition and redistribution issue without fundamentally changing property relations and income distribution, and without a basic reconstruction of society's values and norms.

Already Titmuss (1974) saw that universalism could have problems with answering the particular economic needs of specific groups – for example, specific groups of handicapped people – and he consequently suggested that positive selectism be added. The extra resources provided by this principle would make the distribution of income more equal, and this element of positive selectism would constitute a "sophisticated universalism/egalitarism" (Thompson & Hogget, 1996) without violating the basic idea of universalism.

The practical application of *positive selectism* is, of course, not simple but should in a more general formulation be based on central societal positions on economic and cultural justice. So far, however, in Denmark, the reduced level and access to social assistance for new coming immigrants points the opposite way, namely, to negative selectism.

To overcome the existence of specific values and norms involves societal recognition and positive valorisation of cultural diversity. In addition to positive selectism, there could be a need for *particularism* in the universal welfare state project, i.e. a universal/egalitarian welfare state with built-in openings for special treatment targeted towards smaller groups and individuals (in contrast to positive selectism, which concerns larger groups of persons). But also here there are no simple practical solutions, rather often contradictory dilemmas where a central point is not to be trapped in total and unconditional relativism. Most often ethnic minorities' special diets in day-care institutions or going to mosques on normal working Fridays, or generally socially recognised but pre-arranged and compulsory marriages, circumcising small children and Sharia legislation are examples of more conflict-generating values. Can a societal balance be established? And are there limitations as to the degree of tolerance and to status recognition?

The principles of universalism constitute, together with positive selectism and particularism, a kind of welfare state with built-in options to provide extra benefits when needed and the acceptance to be different when recognised. Considering the power struggle around both the content and the form of the welfare state/welfare society, it seems not only impossible but also meaningless to formulate a general recipe for positive selectism and for recognised particularism. What could, however, make the processes of formulating the societal power balance of universalism, positive selectism and particularism easier is a positive and fruitful climate for debate with unlimited access for all cultural and political agencies, not least the less powerful of the ethnic minorities, to take part in the debate (see also Phillips, 1995). To fully understand such processes, Nancy Fraser suggests a status model where misrecognition is not relayed through free-floating cultural representations or discourses but is perpetrated through institutionalised patterns, through the working of social institutions that regulate interaction according to parity-impeding cultural norms. Examples might include 'whites' are law-abiding, 'blacks' are dangerous; ethnic Danes are free to enter marriages, immigrants shall be more than 24 years before they can marry and prove their 'belonging' to Denmark. The status model understands social justice as encompassing two analytically distinct dimensions: a dimension of recognition, which concerns the effects of institutionalised meanings and norms on the relative standing of social actors; and a dimension of distribution, which involves the allocation of disposable resources to social actors.

Each dimension, Nancy Fraser argues, is associated with an analytically distinct aspect of social order. The recognition dimension corresponds to the status order of society by socially entrenched patterns of cultural value – status groups – each distinguished by the relative honour, prestige and esteem it enjoys vis-à-vis the others. The distributive dimension corresponds to the economic structure of society, by property regimes and labour markets, of economically defined categories of actors or classes (in a Weberian sense), distinguished by their differential endowment of resources. In all societies, these two forms of ordering are interimbricated. Under capitalist conditions, however, neither is wholly reducible to the other. On the contrary, the economic dimension becomes relatively decoupled from the cultural dimension. From this perspective, status subordination cannot be understood in isolation from economic arrangements, nor recognition abstracted from distribution. Only by

considering both dimensions together can one determine what is impeding participatory parity in any particular instance. The status model avoids reifying group identities: what requires recognition in this account is not group-specific identity but the status of individuals as full partners in social interaction.[11]

Also the theme of social innovation should be placed centre stage in the processes of establishing both recognition and redistribution. We are talking here about capabilities of the more powerful agencies to handle cultural tensions and transform the opportunity structures for ethnic minorities in a more inclusive direction.

Social innovation – here defined as the ability to organise collective action/empowerment (including efficient political representation) from the bottom – is a condition for reaching sustainable democratic and social development. Social inclusion and integration are impossible without both social conflict and truly democratic dialog based on a willingness to seriously listen to and take others' interests and perspectives into consideration in order to achieve a more just and cohesive society. *Socially productive and transformative conflicts* can be defined as conflicts which encourage the social learning of collective and individual actors and hence reduce transactions costs and enhance social capital; the norms and networks facilitating collective action for mutual benefit. The politics of inclusion could be defined as the productive/innovative linkage of the politics of redistribution and the politics of recognition, which over a longer time span creates sustainable paths of democratic and social development increasing the capacity to handle both conflicts about economic resources and life-chances and conflicts about identities (Andersen & Siim, 2004).

We define empowerment as processes of awareness and capacity building, which increase the participation and decision-making power of citizens and may potentially lead to transformative action changing the opportunity structures in an inclusive and equalising direction.

Empowerment is not entirely a matter of political will and capacity to act. This would be a voluntarist position. Social rights and economic resources still matter – and so do the politics of redistribution to empower the least privileged to enhance their political inclusion and participation. Generally speaking, this could be supported by a *combination* of universalistic social citizenship rights and politics of 'positive selectivism' and bottom-up designed social action/empowerment programmes. The

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[11] On the debate on group rights versus individual rights, see, for example, Ahmed (2005).

latter is important because it creates space for flexible identification of the most important problems to address and the strategies to overcome them, which is a condition for practical learning and empowerment processes of actors in order to develop the long term and practical inclusion capacity building for the public agencies, partnerships, NGOs and other actors of importance. But without more far-reaching changes at the macro level with regard to socio-cultural and socio-economic opportunity structures, which clearly address structural ethnic discrimination in all spheres of the social fabric, empowerment strategies are likely to fail.

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