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Denmark

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Demographics

As of January 2006, the total population of Denmark is 5.4 million; of this population, 463,235 (or 8.4%) are immigrants. There are an estimated 175,000-200,000 Muslims in Denmark, making up 3.7% of the total Danish population (Ministry of Integration, 2006; OSI 9) [1]. Most are first- and second-generation immigrants. Over the past two decades, Muslim immigrants have come from Iran, Iraq, the Palestinian territories, and Somalia. In the 1970s, many Muslims immigrated from Turkey, Pakistan, Morocco or Yugoslavia (U.S. Dept. of State, 2006; quoted in European Parliament 99). Turks make up the largest group of Muslims in Denmark (IHF, 2005). Muslims constitute the second largest religious community in Denmark after the Lutheran Protestant Church [U.S. Dept. of State, 2006; qtd. in European Parliament 99]. [2]

Labor Market

Research by state employment agencies and Danish think tanks provides very little information about Muslims in the labor market, because ethnicity is often explicitly kept out of surveys conducted by the national bureau of statistics (Danmarks Statistik), state-subsidized insurance associations, and labor unions. When ethnicity is a criterion for research, questions regarding religious identity are still avoided (OSI 19).

There are indications that Muslims do not excel to the same degree as native-Danish in the job market. According to the Open Society Institute (OSI) Report, the majority of ethnic minorities possess less skills and qualifications that are valuable in the workplace (OSI 19). However, even when ethnic minorities possess the same skills and education as their native peers, they are not on equal footing (Rezaei & Goli, 2005; OSI 19). Research by Tranæs & Zimmerman also found that discrimination is crucial factor in immigrants' experiences with the labor market; how exactly such discrimination is manifest, such as which groups are much affected and in what types of employment scenarios discrimination still visible, remains largely unknown (OSI 19). The one factor that has received some attention by academics is immigrants' access to networks-both within their own national and ethnic groups, as well as across ethnic boundaries (see Mikkelsen, 2001; Dahi & Jacobsen, 2005; Jagd, 2004; in OSI 19).

Research by the Ministry of Integration in 2005 explores employment rates of immigrants based on nation of origin:

Table 1. Employment rates for the economically active age group from selected predominantly Muslim countries (January 1, 2005)

Country	Employment Rate (%)	
	Male	Female
Turkey	62	42
Iraq	37	14
Lebanon	37	13
Bosnia-Herzegovina	54	44
Pakistan	63	32
Former Yugoslavia	60	46
Somalia	27	11
Iran	54	40
Afghanistan	24	13
Immigrants and descendants total	55	41
Native Danes - Total	81	75
Vietnamese	67	53

Source	(Ministry of Integration, 2006)
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From this data, the OSI report concludes that when "Phenotypic appearance, dress, and so on" deviate from the "typical European look," risk of unemployment increases. The Open Society's Report also points to the rise in unemployment among immigrants from Muslim-majority countries. The following table shows unemployment rates in 1996 and in 2000:

Table 2.

Unemployment rates in 1996 and in 2000 (%)	1996	2000
Native Danes	7	18
Nordic Citizens	13	-
Former Yugoslavians	24	-
Turks	41	-
Africans	37	-
Americans	16	-
Pakistanis	40	-
Palestinians/Arabs	37	-
Thailand	-	
Vietnam	-	
Somalia/Iraq/Morocco	-	>65
Source	(Larsen, 1999: 57)	(Ministry of Integration, 2002: 31)

In 2006 and 2007, the Danish economy has experienced an upswing that has impacted the above unemployment rates. However, ethnic minorities still remain marginalized in the labor market. Ethnic minorities who are employed are typically either self-employed (such as grocery shops, newspaper kiosks, taxi-driving) or have employment in some of the least attractive and low-paid jobs in the market (such as cleaning businesses, hotels, restaurants, catering) (Ministry of Integration, Yearbook, 2005; Rezai & Goli, 2004; Mikkelsen, 2001; qtd in OSI 21).

When it comes to hiring, a experimental study by Hjarnø and Bager in 1997 found that applicants had 1:32 chance of being called for a job interview depending on whether the individual had a native Dutch name or a typical "immigrant name," when both applicants had the same formal qualifications. There is a lack of systematic studies to explore discrimination against ethnic minorities when at work (OSI 23). The one exception is a survey conducted by the Association of Social Workers that found that social workers from a minority ethnic background experience ethnic-specific differential treatment at work (Ghosh, 2000; cited in OSI 23).

Denmark's unions play an important role in employment contracts and have been criticized for not dealing with discrimination (ECRI Report on Denmark, 2000).

Education

Danish law prohibits the registration of citizens on the basis of their religion and ethnicity. There are therefore no reliable figures on the number of pupils from Muslim backgrounds in the public school system, or information about their academic performance or access to educational opportunities.

The OSI's report points to modifications in teacher trainings and education programs for an understanding of institutional evolutions over the past several decades. Starting in the late 1970s, local governments became aware of the need for a customized approach to Muslim families with

school-aged children in their communities. Teacher education programs (including training colleges, postgraduate training, and refresher courses) placed emphasis on "education of the foreign-language pupils in Danish public schools" (OSI 16). [3] The term "foreign-language pupils" was eventually changed to "bilingual pupils" in both official documents and research discourse. Research on the education of bilingual children addresses topics such as religion, mother-tongue education, cultural background, second-language acquisition, gender roles and the structure of a Muslim family. The research on bilingual education began in the 1980s and has continued steadily since (OSI 16).

A new law in 2002 [4] rendered the provision of mother-tongue language optional. Under previous legislation, this service had been mandatory. [5]

A survey by Møller & Togeby (1999) questioned four large Muslim ethno-national groups about their experiences of discrimination in various spheres of life, including education. Of those questioned, 8% of Bosnians, 12% if Lebanese, 17% if Turks, and 26% of Somalis reported they felt discriminated against in schools, but the survey did not elaborate on how discrimination was experienced by respondents (qtd in OSI 17).

Several surveys conducted since 2001 provide an overview of ethnic minorities' educational attainment and trends in educational choice. These include two reports by the EUMC's Raxen Programme, National Focal Point for Denmark (2004; 2005); the Ministry of Integration's Think Tank reports (2004; 2006); Uni-C Statistik (2005); and Mikkelsen (2001).

The OECD collects data on education from various statistical agencies within the country, the majority of which comes from census data from the year 2000. The OECD classifies educational achievement using the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED): ISCED 0/1/2: Less than upper secondary; ISCED 3/4: Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary; ISCED 5A: "Academic" tertiary; ISCED 5B: "Vocational" tertiary; ISCED 6: Advanced research programs. 0-2 are considered low, 3-4 as medium, and 5 and above are considered high. This data is not reported by religion, but does have country of origin as reported by the respondent. It is thus possible to construct an approximate picture of the educational achievement of the population in the country with ancestry from predominately Muslim countries. One significant problem is that some countries, such as India and Nigeria, have large Muslim populations but the immigrant population cannot be readily classified as predominately Muslim or non-Muslim. As such, the educational data is split by predominately Muslim origin, predominately non-Muslim origin, and a separate category for those whom classification would not seem justified. Proportions are for all reported data, individuals with no reported ancestry or education are excluded.

Table 3. Educational Achievement using the International Standard Classification of Education

(ISCED)

	High	Medium	Low							
Muslim	13%	28%	59%							
Non-Muslim	19%	40%	41%							
Indeterminate	12%	28%	60%							

Housing

More than half of Danes own their own homes, but only 13% of refugees and 18% of immigrants between the ages of 15 and 66 are owner-occupiers. Individuals may have a difficult time renting due to housing restrictions, prices and discrimination. This has led to the creation of ghettos around the major cities with poor housing and high numbers of minorities (ECRI Report on Denmark, 2000).

Half of the migrant population originating from non-Western countries inhabit housing built between

1966 and 1980. This housing comprises the largest share of neighborhoods that can be defined as socially deprived—they are overrepresented by low-income households, and long-term unemployed, single parents, alcoholics, and immigrants (Ministry of the Interior, 2001; qtd in OSI 24).

In the late-1980s, several mayors from the industrial suburban municipalities on the fringes of Copenhagen, raised concerns about the creation of ghettos, which they termed the "Khomenisation" of the residential quarters (Schierup, 1993; qtd. in OSI 25). This was an allusion to Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini, who in 1989 led the Iranian Revolution and established an Islamic state in Iran, making him a prominent Islamic leader and a symbol of Islamic dissention against Western values. During the period that "Khomenisation" was being used, Iranian immigration to Denmark had surged, but Iranians represented a relatively small percentage of the total Muslim population and it is unlikely that they were a majority ethnic group in these ghettos. It is likely the term capitalized on Western fears of Islam created by the Revolution in Iran. A series of regeneration programs directed at uplifting these communities followed, but have been relatively unsuccessful. Their primary objective of redistributing ethnic minorities to different localities has not been achieved (Koch-Bielsen & Christensen, 2002; qtd in OSI 25).

Research by Boerresen (2000) documents how immigrants were largely held responsible by the mainstream media and politicians for the alleged "ghettoisation"; she concludes that housing choices by minorities were not always based on their own preferences or culture, but instead were influenced by an array of socio-economic factors and socio-structural circumstances. Discrimination in housing and employment was one of the most significant factors (2002; qtd. in OSI 25).

State and Church

The Evangelical-Lutheran Church (The National Church of Denmark) is the official church of Denmark. All other religious groups in Denmark fall into one of three categories: approved, recognized, or "other religious communities"/ "societies of a religious character."

Historically, many religions in Denmark have been either "approved" or "recognized" by the Danish government. The 1969 Marriage Act marked a turning point in legislation regarding official recognition of religious institutions: prior to the 1969 Marriage Act, eleven religious communities had been approved by "recognition" by royal decree. Following the Marriage Act, which came into effect on 1 January 1970, official recognition came in terms of "approval" and included fewer privileges than "recognition."

These concepts are similar except that "recognized" religious have additional, yet "quite small" [6] differences: ministers of "recognized" religions are by extension also approved by royal decree, these religions name and baptize children with legal effect, and they maintain their own church registers and can provide official certificates based on information from their registers. All other rights of "recognized" religions are shared by "approved" religions. These rights include: they are allowed to conduct ceremonies such as marriage with legal effect; second, under the Aliens (Consolidation) Act of September 2006, [7] they have the right to residence permits for foreign preachers; [8] and third, member of these communities to deduct contributions to the community from their taxable income.

Since 1970, more than 100 religious communities have been approved. The number of religious groups "approved by the Danish government has increased exponentially over the past several years. In the thirty year period between the passing of Marriage Act (1969) and 2001, 57 groups had received approval. [9] That number has almost doubled to over 100 as of 2006. [10]

There are approximately 100 individual religious communities approved by the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs. Nineteen of these are Muslim congregations, [11] including the Islamic Cultural Center, Muslim Cultural Institute, Det Islamiske Trossamfund, Pakistan Islamic Welfare Society, and the Shiamuslimsk Trosamfund i Danmark. A complete list of the 19 officially recognized Muslim organization can be found at the official [website of the Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs..](#) [12]

Criteria for approval is defined in the Marriage Act, and relates to size, The criteria for approval have been laid down on the basis of the legislative history behind the Marriage Act. They relate to the size, orderliness, and likelihood of continued existence of the religious community. A standing advisory committee was created in 1998 to monitor approved religious institutions and guarantee that they still meet approval criteria. This body is independent of the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and its members hold expertise in religious sociology, religious history, law and theology. [13]

According to the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, burning of the Koran "may constitute a criminal offence and result in a prison sentence." [14]

Muslims in the Legislature

There are two Muslim members of the national legislature: [Hüseyin Arac](#) and [Naser Khader](#). No individuals with Muslim backgrounds were elected to the European parliament. Arac is a member of the Social Democratic Party and has represented the Århus County constituency since February 8th 2005. He was born in Turkey and was formerly a member of the Århus City Council. From 1990-2005, he was a lecturer on integration, labour market conditions, gender equality, etc., 1990-2005, presumably in Århus [Folketinget Official Website, www.ft.dk].

Naser Khader was a Social Liberal Party MP from 2001 until May 7, 2007, when he split from the party to form the New Alliance. He is a prominent advocate in Denmark of the compatibility of Islam and Democracy. In response to the Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoons controversy, which began after the September 30, 2005 publication of offensive images of Muhammad in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten, Khader established a new organization, Moderate Muslims (see the "Media Coverage and the Jyllands-Posten Cartoon Controversy" section below). The organization was soon after renamed Democratic Muslims. [15]

Asama Abdol-Hamid stands out as a rising political individual; she has been a central figure in Denmark's most recent controversies related to Islam. In 2005, Abdol-Hamid was elected as deputy member of the Odense City Council for the Red-Green Alliance. Her decision not to shake the hand of male colleagues sparked nation debate (she greets them instead by placing her hand over her heart). She also acted as spokesperson for the eleven Muslim organizations that pressed charges against Jyllands-Posten in 2005 (for more information on the Jyllands-Posten cartoon controversy, see the "Media Coverage" section below). Among the eleven organizations she represented was imam Ahmed Abu Laban's Det Islamiske Trossamfund. [16] In 2006 she co-hosted a Danish TV show; this too was protested by politicians and civic groups, such as the Women for Freedom Association. [17] Critics complained about her choice to wear a headscarf in front of a national audience. In May 2007, she announced plans to run for a Parliamentary seat in the 2009 elections. If elected, she would be the first Muslim woman in the Danish Parliament. She moved to Denmark from Palestine when she was six years old. When questioned about heated topics in the debate about the compatibility of Islam and Danish society, Abdol-Hamid has said that she does not support the death penalty (outlawed in Denmark); her position on homosexuality is that she is "unconcerned with whatever sexual or ethnic background people have." [18]

Muslim Organizations

Although there are a number of Muslim organizations in Denmark, none represents the entire community in relations with the state. Muslim groups have called on the government to support the establishment of a democratically elected national council to represent Denmark's Muslims, but unlike the governments of other EU countries, the Danish government has not to date supported this effort. [19] These organizations have argued that a representative body would prevent Muslims with extremist positions from having a monopoly on the public voice of Islam in the Netherlands. [20]

The status and legitimacy of Muslim organizations in Denmark is a complex and controversial subject. While the majority of Islamic groups in Denmark represent relatively small local communities, [21] the most visible Muslim organization are those that have been central players in national debates about Islam in Denmark and they are therefore associated with Denmark's most recent controversies. The Jyllands-Posten cartoon controversy was by far the most formative event for Muslim organizations in the past decade. This event, which took place between September 2005 and March 2006, began with the publication of twelve offensive cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in the Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten* and at its height, put the Danish government in the middle of an international controversy (for more information on the Jyllands-Posten cartoon controversy, see the "Media Coverage" section below). Three organizations in particular received exceptional media attention: the Islamisk Trossamfund (the Islamic Society in Denmark), the Danish-based European Committee for Prophet Honouring (ECPH), and the Democratic Muslims.

Islamisk Trossamfung (IT) [22] and the ECPH are both at odds with the Danish government after members of these organizations worked to internationalize the 2005-2006 Jyllands-Posten cartoon controversy. Since the controversy, the government has targeted members of these groups for deportation and censorship. [23] Leadership within IT, including imam Ahmad Abu Laban and spokesman Ahmad Akkari, played a prominent role in the internationalization of the cartoon controversy despite efforts by the Danish government to keep the affair contained. Although Abu Laban claimed in February 2006 that he had no intention of making the Jyllands-Posten cartoons anything more than an internal Danish conflict, [24] an 2006 paper by Anders Rudling documents how Abu Laban and Akkari contributed to the internationalization of the controversy by circulating a 43-page manifesto to political and religious leaders and media in the Middle East (Rudling 2006). The organization claims to represent 29 Danish Muslim groups and their members-all in all 170,000 to 200,000 Muslims, [25] although the government does not recognize them as a representative voice of the country's Muslims. During the cartoon controversy, the Danish news publication *Ekstra Bladet* reported that Abu Laban's estimated support was likely closer to 5,000-15,000 Danish Muslims, and not 200,000 as he had estimated. [26] Abu Laban passed away on February 11, 2007.

Research on Danish Muslim organizations has suggested a connection between IT and the Wahabism of Saudi Arabia. [27] This is the case insofar as the IT's political positions (for example, the organization's vehement resistance to the publication of images of the prophet) have been consistent with Salafi and Wahhabi doctrine. Salafism and Wahabism are both Sunni movements that place emphasis on Qur'an and the imitation of the Prophet Moahmmed and the first generation of the companions of the Prophet and are culturally conservative. Salafism is the traditional theology endorsed by the Saudi state.

During the height of the controversy (Fall 2005 to Spring 2006) former IT spokesman Ahmad Akkari also served as spokesman for the European Committee for Prophet Honouring (ECPH). The ECPH has been referred to in the press as the "umbrella group that represents 27 Muslim organizations that are campaigning for a full apology from Jyllands-Posten." [28] News coverage during the controversy

does not clarify the relationship between IT and The ECPH, although Akkari is referred to as spokesman for both of these organizations in articles from this period. There is also no coverage of the ECPH forming, but the first publicized reference (in English) to Ahmad Akari as spokesman for the group was in a February 6, 2006 article in *The Guardian*, when he made public the group's intentions to press charges against Jyllands-Posten. Media coverage speaks of 27 Muslim groups filing a defamation lawsuit against Jyllands-Posten in March 2006, represented by lawyer Michael Christiani Havemann. [29] This is the same number of groups (27) reportedly represented by Akari's ECPH, [30] whereas Islamisk Trossamfund claims to represent 29 organizations (Rudling 2006).

On the other end of the political spectrum is a new organization called the Democratic Muslims. This group was formed during the Jyllands-Posten Muhammed cartoons controversy in February 2006. Their first official activism took place on February 13, 2006, when they met with the Danish Prime Minister for talks to defuse the crisis. [31] The Democratic Muslims advocate peaceful co-existence between Islam and democracy. According to one of the group's founding members, Danish MP Naser Khader, the organization's mission is to facilitate debate within the Danish Muslim community and create space to explore the compatibility of Islam and democracy, as well as Islam and freedom of speech. [32] Abu Laban, the former leader of IT, referred to Naser Khader and similar Muslim Danes as "rats in holes." [33] Abu Laban's attitude toward Khader is a revealing example of how these prominent organizations are deeply divided according to their orientation to the Danish government and liberal Western values.

Two other Danish Muslim organizations are the Danish Association of Cybermuslims (DPCM) and Muslimernes Landsorganisation (The Muslims National Organization). The Muslimernes Landsorganisation, one of the nation's first attempts at an umbrella organization, is no longer in existence. An attempt at another umbrella organization was made in 2006, named Muslimernes Fællesråd (Muslim Council of Denmark). [Muslimernes Fællesråd](#) has an active website, with English and Danish versions.

The Danish Association of Cybermuslims (DFC), [34] run by Fatih Alev [35] is an internet forum that was created in 1998 for Muslims to connect and discuss contemporary issues as a community. It is the second of its kind, after three young Swedish Muslims started a similar forum in 1996. [36] The DFC was at the center of a Danish media frenzy in August 2004 after a member on their listserve used the forum to circulate an email praising the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh. Alev defended the circulation of these inflammatory comments, but did not defend his sentiments. He speaks of the organization as offering a space for dialogue among Muslims, although non-Muslims are also welcome to join. [37]

Islamic Education

Public school religious education explores a number of different religious traditions but is primarily focused on Christianity. Parents can request that their children not take part in these classes. Muslim organizations have suggested that there should be cooperation between the education ministry and their organizations in the curriculum development, but as of this writing, this had not yet taken place. Denmark also allows religious communities to establish private schools, which can receive state funding of up to 85% of the budget if the curriculum and practice meet state guidelines. In 2002, the guidelines were amended to ensure that schools prepare students to "live in a society characterized by freedom and democracy." At the same time, regulation and supervision were increased, and private schools were required to hew more closely to the public school curriculum. This caused protests among the independent schools.

There are eighteen Islamic schools in Denmark; [38] state funding covers up to 60% of the schools' costs. The remainder of the schools' costs are paid monthly by parents [Maréchal B., Allievi S, Dassetto F, and Nielsen J, Muslims in the enlarged Europe. Religion and society, Brill, Leiden, 2003, p 54; qtd in Islam in EP, 100]. About half of the Islamic schools in Denmark are located in Copenhagen.

Security, Immigration and Anti Terrorism Issues

The Danish government has enacted some of the most restrictive immigration laws in Europe. Two bodies of legislation, including the Aliens (Consolidation) Act (September 1, 2006) and the Aliens Order (October 5, 2005), marked this change. These laws were championed by a center-right coalition that took power from the reigning Social Democrats on November 20, 2004 as well as the anti-immigration Danish People's Party (DPP) that received 12% of the vote in the same election. These laws make it easier to reject asylum claims, limit residence application and family reunification, as well as reduce social benefits for refugees and foreigners (IHF, 2005). [39]

Between 2000 and 2006, there have been five significant pieces of Danish legislation related to immigration. The Aliens (Consolidation) Act of September 1, 2006 made family reunifications more difficult for immigrant families [40] and made it easier for the government to deny entry or expel immigrants. [41] The Aliens Order of October 5, 2005 clarified existing legislations and put further restrictions on the issuing of passports, visas, work permits, and residence permits. [42] The Integration Act of June 28, 2001 made Danish language courses mandatory and designated county and national government responsibilities for the care and integration of immigrants. [43] Act No. 375 on Danish courses for adult aliens clarified issues of structure, curriculum, financing and implementation of the Danish citizenship courses. [44] Finally, the Act on Equal Treatment of June 29, 2000 explicitly forbids discrimination on racial or ethnic terms and designated the Danish Institute for Human Rights as an official organization to monitor and make recommendation to combat discrimination and promote equal treatment in the Netherlands. [45]

Two significant pieces of legislation related to terrorism have also come into effect since 9/11. In June 2002, a package of laws called L35 were passed by the Danish parliament to combat international terrorism. The law gives police greater powers of surveillance, which can be used against Muslim individuals and groups. The law allows for the tapping and monitoring of emails without former permission of a magistrate, increased resources to use secret informants. It requires telecommunication companies and internet providers to record all internet traffic and mobile telephone communication.

In June 2004, the Danish Parliament passed the so-called "Imam Law", which would require religious leaders to speak Danish and respect "Western values" [46] such as democracy and the equality of women. [47] Further legislation gave the Danish government the right to reject "foreign missionaries" who espouse radical views. Although Danish constitutional law does not allow the mention of religion, the bill was widely viewed as being targeted at Muslims.

Bias and Discrimination

Denmark has an anti-discrimination law, Criminal Code Article 266b, which prohibits dissemination of racist statements and racist propaganda. Article 266b criminalizes insult, threat or degradation of natural persons, by publicly and with malice attacking their race, color of skin, national or ethnic roots, faith, or sexual orientation. When a number of Muslim organizations filed complaints with Danish police against Jyllands-Posten, they claimed that the newspaper had committed an offence under 266b and Blasphemy Law (Criminal Code Section 140) (for more information on the Jyllands-Posten

cartoon controversy, see the "Media Coverage" section below). The Blasphemy Law prohibits disturbing public order by ridiculing or insulting the dogmas of worship of any lawfully existing religious community in Denmark. Public authorities, first the Regional Public Prosecutor and later the Director of Public Prosecutors in Denmark, found no basis for concluding that the cartoons constituted a criminal offence, given that in this case public interest was better served by protecting the right of editorial freedom to journalists.

The first complaint was filed on October 27, 2005 to the Regional Public Prosecutor in Viborg. On January 6, 2006, the Regional Public Prosecutor discontinued its investigation on the grounds that no criminal offense had been committed. On March 15, 2006, the Director of Public Prosecutions filed a decision supporting actions taken by the regional Public prosecutor. [48] Though these legal resolutions decided in favor of Jyllands-Posten's right to editorial freedom of expression, they also identified the need in Danish society for a respectful dialogue about Danish and Muslim values, ultimately suggesting that while the newspaper would not be censored, it also had a responsibility to contribute to a respectful climate. In its conclusion, the decision by the Director of Public Prosecutions states that statements by the Jyllands-Posten defense were "not a correct description of existing law" when they claimed that "it is incompatible with the right to freedom of expression to demand special consideration for religious feelings and that one has to be ready to put up with "scorn, mockery and ridicule."

International organizations have been among the most active voices in condemning what they perceive to be anti-Muslim sentiment in Denmark. In the Spring of 2001, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI, 2000) public its second periodic report on Denmark, which contained a number of well-documented critical remarks and recommended measure to eliminate both day-to-day discrimination as well as institutionalized discrimination against minorities in areas such as housing and the economy (OSI 36). The following is an excerpt from the report:

Problems of xenophobia and discrimination persist, however, and concern particularly non- EU citizens - notably immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees - but also Danish nationals of foreign backgrounds. People perceived to be Muslims, and especially Somalis, appear to be particularly vulnerable to these phenomena. Most of the existing legal provisions aimed at combating racism and discrimination do not appear to provide effective protection against these phenomena. Of deep concern is the prevailing climate of opinion concerning individuals of foreign backgrounds and the impact and use of xenophobic propaganda in politics. Discrimination, particularly in the labour market, but also in other areas, such as the housing market and in access to public places, is also of particular concern.(ECRI, 2000; qtd in OSI 37).

The OSI report notes that the dominant political establishment (including the Social Democrats, and most media outlets, downplayed both the authenticity and validity of the report's criticisms. Ironically, there is a growing body of scholarship about political discourse in Denmark that supports the findings of the ECRI report and documents how such alleged xenophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment appear increasingly visible [49].

Some scholars have ventured to claim that Denmark has become one of the most staunchly anti-Muslim nations in the West (see Andersen et al, 2006; qtd. in OSI 37). This sentiment is also reported by domestic observers and social science researchers (OSI 37). Two other publications have supported this perception: the first was a PhD dissertation by a Danish scholar in 2001 claimed that there was widespread cultural racism in Denmark directed particularly at Muslims long before 9/11 (Wren, 2001); the second was a report by the European Monitoring Centre (EUMC) which placed Denmark on the top of the list of countries where there had been a sudden increase in racial attacks

against minorities (qtd. in OSI 37).

In addition to this documented rise in discrimination and cultural racism, there has also been a substantial increase in the number of attacks on Muslims since September 11th, 2001 (Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, United Nations, 2002). The Danish police report hate crimes to the Danish Civil Security Service (PET), but do not categorize these incidents as anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic, or anything else. In 2004, the PET database recorded 32 "racist/religious" incidents. The Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination (DACoRD) is a nongovernmental organization that collects information on a range of racist and xenophobic incidents. In the period between January 1 and October 13, 2005, DACoRD recorded 22 Islamophobic incidents, eight of which were also documented in the PET database. [EUMC 68; more information available at www.drcenter.dk (12.05.2006)].

Reports have shown that many Danish Muslims have had difficulties gaining access to public places such as restaurants and clubs, and women wearing headscarves have been denied transportation on public buses (ECRI Report on Denmark, 2000). Somalis in particular have had difficulties in Denmark, being both Muslims and asylum seekers. Media and politicians have contributed to a widespread view that Somalis are not able to integrate into Danish society, and this has had a negative effect on the self-perceptions of the community. High unemployment and low hopes have led high numbers of students to drop out (ECRI Report on Denmark, 2000).

Islamic Practice

There are approximately 70 prayer rooms serving as mosques in Denmark, but none of these spaces were built specifically as places of worship. This is mostly due to divisions within the Muslim community, although recent years have seen an increase in public and political opposition to the building of mosques (EP 99).

In December 2004, the Dansk Islamisk Begravelsefond (Danish Islamic Cemetery Fund) purchased property outside Copenhagen to establish a Muslim cemetery. The purchase followed several years of dispute with municipal authorities (U.S. Dept. of State, 2007). September 2006, the first Muslim cemetery was opened near Copenhagen. It is owned and managed by the *Dansk Islamisk Begravelsefond* (Danish Islamic Cemetery Fund), a foundation composed of approximately 25 Muslim organizations and associations (EP 99). Prior to the establishment of this cemetery, Muslims were sometimes buried in special sections of others, but generally this made it difficult to follow Muslim tradition, which encourages Muslims to be buried with other Muslims, with the body facing Mecca.

As in most of the rest of Europe, there have been some conflicts over the hijab. In 2000, the courts decided that a department store's refusal to accept a girl wearing the headscarf to its training program constituted illegal discrimination. However, in 2003, the court decided that a supermarket which had a policy against any headgear in public positions was not acting in a discriminatory fashion. The cases hinged on the decision of whether the policy had reasonable and unprejudiced motivations. These decisions have been upheld by the Danish Supreme Court. The Danish People's Party has suggested a ban on the hijab in schools and other public places. Their proposal would prohibit the wearing of "culturally specific" headgear, but exempt Christian and Jewish culture. They argued that the hijab has a "disturbing" impact on "ordinary people" and slows integration of Muslim girls into Danish society. This proposal has not yet been brought for decision in Parliament, but the government appears to be rejecting the idea. There are regulations on slaughter practices, but these have not proven to be too burdensome for the traditional Islamic style.

Media Coverage and the Jyllands-Posten Cartoon Controversy

There is little or no qualitative research on the role of bias and discrimination in the Danish media, but from existing studies indicate that the daily media and the press as an institution, reduce the complexity of cultural variations within the Islamic community perpetuate stereotypes of Muslims (OSI 35). Studies that explore these themes include (Hussain et al, 1997); (Hussain, 2000b; 2002b; 2003b0; (Hervik et al, 1999); (Slot, 2001); (Hervik, 2003); (Madsen, 2000); (Andreassen, 2005).

Media coverage of Muslims in Denmark has been focused on divisive controversies. After the murder of Theo Van Gogh in the Netherlands, a public Danish television station was sued by a group of Muslims for repeatedly airing his film "Submission", which was widely regarded as offensive by Muslims. [50] This episode was given media attention at the time. The most significant controversy in Denmark, however, followed the publication on September 30, 2005 of 12 cartoons in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* that caricatured Islam and the Prophet Muhammad.

The episode began with a contest for caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad by a Danish Paper responding to what was perceived as a climate of censorship surrounding coverage of Islam. Flemming Rose, cultural editor of the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*, became concerned by a series of events he interpreted as censorship by the European Muslim community in the Summer of 2005: the first of these was the closing of an art exhibit said to offend Muslims at the Museum of World Culture (the *Världskulturmuseet*) in Gothenburg. Secondly, the Tate Gallery in London cancelled an exhibit artist John Lathham that depicted the Koran, Bible and Talmud torn to pieces. A third event occurred in September when Kåre Bluitgen, a Danish children's writer experienced difficulties locating an illustrator for a book about the life of Muhammad. Three artists turned down her offer out fear for physical repercussions and the artist who finally agreed did so only on conditions of strict anonymity (Rudling 2). That same September, a delegation of Muslims approached Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen demanding that Rasmussen intervene with the Danish press to produce more positive coverage of Islam.

Rose held a competition for cartoons caricaturing Islam and the Prophet Muhammad. Twelve cartoons, selected from these submissions, were published on September 30, 2005. Muslims hold widely variant opinions on depictions of the Prophet Muhammad. Though the Koran makes no prohibition on the reproduction of images of Muhammad, Salafi and Wahhabi strains of Sunni Islam object strongly to the publication of representations of Muhammad. [51]

Many high-profile Muslims in Denmark were outraged by the cartoon and 3,500 protests were organized in Denmark throughout early October. Prime Minister Rasmussen was approached on October 12 by eleven ambassadors from Muslim countries to discuss what they argued was anti-Muslim media coverage. [52] Rasmussen refused to meet with the delegation. [53] Two Danish clerics, seeing that street protests and diplomatic gestures toward the Danish government were not effective, turned their efforts toward the international Muslim community.

In December 2005, a thirty-one year old imam named Ahmed Akkari traveled to the Middle East with a 43-page dossier of cartoons, letters and drawings. He represented the Islamic Faith Society of Denmark (Islamisk Trossamfund i Danmark) and claimed to represent 29 Danish Muslim organizations and the 170,000 to 200,000 members they represented. Abu Laban, a prominent imam in Copenhagen and leader of IT, was responsible for sending Akkari to contact religious and political leaders for help putting pressure on the Danish government. In addition to the twelve *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons, Akkari's dossier also included three cartoons that had not been published in the cartoon competition yet which Akkari claimed to represent Danish attitudes toward the prophet. The addition of

these cartoons later made Akkari and Laban subject to criticism that they were trying to inflame an already tense situation. These three cartoons were images of a praying Muslim being sexually assaulted by a dog, a picture of a "pedophilic Muhammad" holding hands with a young girl, supposedly his wife Fatima, whom Muhammad married when she was six and he 54. The third picture was of a Frenchman dressed as a pig for a "pig-squealing competition," to which Akkari added the caption that "this is the true picture of Muhammad" in the Danish press. [54]

Throughout December and January, protests, some of which became violent, broke out across the Middle East, and media coverage, including that by English and Western outlets, misreported that the three added cartoons were part of the original *Jyllands-Posten* publication. [55]

On January 26, Saudi Arabia pulled its ambassador from Denmark, as did Libya on January 29. Syria called for the Danish government to punish the *Jyllands-Posten* "criminals" and the Organization of Islam Conference, which represents 57 Muslim states, called upon the UN for a Resolution and economic sanctions against Denmark. On January 30, al-Fatah militants stormed the Gaza EU offices and demanded an apology from the Danish government. A boycott of Danish products spread throughout the Muslim world. During this period, many protests turned violent (Rudling 12). On February 4 in Damascus, the Danish and Norwegian Embassies were attacked, and in Beirut the next day, the Danish Consulate was targeted. Crowds in Tehran attacked the Danish and Austrian embassies on February 6. [56] In Europe during the following days, many Muslims also took to the streets.

On January 30, Carsten Juste, the Editor-in-Chief of *Jyllands-Posten* published an open letter of apology for causing offense and speaks of the controversy as the result of a grave misunderstanding. A [copy](#) of this letter is available on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website.

Both Akkari and Laban were attributed with internationalizing the cartoon controversy. Pia Kjærsgaard, leader of the nationalist Danish People's Party, accused the imams of "conducting a smear campaign against Denmark." [57] One popular reaction in Europe was to show solidarity with the newspaper. A significant portion of the European media chose to show support of *Jyllands-Posten* by re-printing the cartoons. By the beginning of March, the cartoons were published in 143 newspapers in 56 countries across the world. [58]

In response to the boycotts by Muslim countries of Danish product, the Danish dairy company, Arla, issued a statement published in 25 Arabic newspapers explaining that they "understood and respected" the boycott of their products. [59] Danish politicians, including the leaders of the governing liberal *Ventre* party and of the nationalist Danish People's Party immediately condemned Arla's statement as a submissive and spineless campaign. [60] By March 2006, the Swedish-Danish Arla Foods had lost 500 million Swedish crowns (approximately 80 million US dollars) from the Muslim boycott. This is just one example of how the Danish economy suffered from the controversy.

Beginning in February, certain events helped slowly diffuse the controversy. Abu Laban made public statements on February 10, 2006 defending Denmark as a "nice and tolerant" country and called for the violence to stop. On February 27, the European Union issued a statement that "freedom of expression and independence of the press are ""universal rights" but that they must be "exercised with responsibility", "within the limits of the law" and with "respect for religious feelings and beliefs." The members of the European Parliament also expressed solidarity with Denmark and condemned anti-Europe violence, especially the burning of European embassies in the Middle East. [61]

The Danish government could no longer ignore the crisis. Although the government's initial reaction in

October had been to refuse to accept any responsibility for the publications of a private media entity, the government did respond in February and March in a tone that defended Danish values and attempted to address what misinformation had been spread about Danish values and legal positions on religious practice. Prime Minister Fogh Rasmussen agreed to an interview with Al-Jazeera and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark initiated an information campaign to clear up misinformation that was circulating in the Muslim media.

On March 15, the Danish Director of Public Prosecutors ruled that Jyllands-Posten was not in violation of Danish law. From that point forward, the controversy continued to cool, although the Danish foreign ministry remained on high alert and Danish export to the Middle East continued to suffer. Muslim protests continued through the spring, with select Muslim leaders issuing statements of condemnation and calling for boycotts, including one by Osama bin Laden on April 24, 2006. [62] Politically, the controversy put the Danish government in the middle of one of the most internationally publicized conflicts since World War II. [63] It continues to be cited by European governments as an example of the need to strike a delicate balance between freedom of expression and cultural respect.

Public Perceptions

One of the best sources of public opinion towards Muslims has been in polling done surrounding the Jyllands-Posten cartoon controversy. [64] In a poll conducted by Megafon and released February 9, fifty-eight percent of a total 1,033 Danes polled said the Danish imams were responsible for the worldwide protests. Of this group, 22% blamed Jyllands-Posten and 11% blamed leaders in the Middle East. [65] Only five percent blamed the Danish Government. [66] Seventy-nine percent supported their Prime Minister's refusal to apologize, and 62% of Danes did not believe Jyllands-Posten should apologize for its role in the controversy. [67] Eighty-two percent felt that the imams had hurt efforts to integrate immigrants in Denmark, while only six percent said they were helping the process. [68]

The Megafon polling also had some interesting findings about how the controversy had changed public opinion in Denmark. Regarding their changing perception of Islam, sixty-one percent said their view had become more unfavorable (Megafon, February 9). Most Danes felt their relationship with Muslim countries had been damaged. On January 27, twenty-five percent of Danes said they felt these relationships had been irreparably harmed. On February 3 (less than one week later), this number had climbed to 46% (Epinion, January 27, February 3). Fifty-six percent of Danes felt the controversy had caused the divide between Danish Muslims and non-Muslim Danes to widen. Only 3% felt the gap was narrowing and 31% said it stayed the same (Epinion, February 5). This same period of time, from late-January to early-February, also saw a significant jump in the amount of Danes' who felt the controversy had increased the risk of a terrorist attack against Denmark. On January 31, 69% of Danes felt the risk had grown; on February 9, this number was 78% (Megafon, January 31). [69] A February 5 Epinion poll also found Danes split down the middle when it came to the controversy's impact on large-scale religious conflict. Forty-eight percent said they were worried the violence could lead to a war of religions, while 46% said they felt that war of that kind was overrated. [70]

Negative perceptions of ethnic minorities in Denmark were documented in 1995 Gaasholdt and Togeby (1995). They found that 37% of Muslims would not want a Muslim for a neighbor and 64% would not want a close family member to marry a Muslim (qtd. in OSI 34). When the same questions were asked by replacing "Muslim" with "person from another race," the figures changed to 18% and 36% respectively, indicating that public attitudes were especially negative toward Muslims.

The official position of many scholars and members of the government is that attitudes towards Muslims have not changed significantly over the past decade. These were the findings of a study by

(Togeby et al., 2003) and were echoed in a 2002 report by the Ministry of Integration. Furthermore, anti-Muslim attitudes are characterized in these reports and in a study by Andersen and Tobiasen (2002), as reflections of the fact that Danes themselves are not religious and are overwhelmingly secularized and therefore harbor a general skepticism toward religious practice (OSI 34).

There is a second body of scholarship that holds the opposite view of Danish popular perception of Muslims—namely, that public attitudes towards Muslims have deteriorated since the late 1980s (OSI 35).

Political and Intellectual Discourse

Anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant politics has been increasing over the last years, with anti-Muslim rhetoric becoming more prominent. [71] Although most anti-Muslim rhetoric comes from far-right groups, they do have a tendency to affect the discourse from other political parties. Danish arguments over the headscarf have not been successful at the political level, but the courts have ruled that businesses may restrict their wearing in public positions (IHF, 2005).

Rhetoric of a value-divide between Danes and Muslims is common within the political sphere (OSI 36). Social Democrat leader Paul Rasmussen (1994–2001) in 2000 spoke of a divide between "us" and "the others" and said that "it is really a problem if the Danes begin to feel strangers in their own neighbourhood." Moreover, according to Rasmussen, "everyone should accept Danish values." [72]

The former Minister of Integration, Karen Jespersen, expressed that same year that "I could never under any circumstance live with (the idea of) a multicultural society in which the cultures are positioned equally." She added, "in my opinion it is wrong to juxtapose Muslim values with Danish values."

International governmental and research organizations have documented growing anti-Muslim sentiment in Denmark. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance 2001 report on Denmark identified day-to-day discrimination against minorities as well as institutionalized discrimination in areas such as housing and the economy (OSI 36). Other international bodies have also offered critiques of the Danish climate, including the United Nations Standing Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDW), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (OSI 38).

The response of leading political figures can generally be categorized in the words of Prime Minister Rasmussen's response to the ECRI's most recent report (2006), calling it a botched up job not to be paid any attention to. [73]

In February 2006, the anti-immigrant Danish People's Party (DF) called for the government to revoke the citizenship of three leaders involved in the controversy, and to exclude them from integration dialogue because of their involvement in "internationalizing" the cartoon controversy. The three individuals targeted by the DF were Ahmad Akari, former spokesman of the Islamic Society of Denmark and spokesman (as of February 2006) of the ECPH; Mahmoud Al-Barazi, head of the Muslim League in Denmark; and imam Mohammad Al-Khalid Samha, a member of the ECPH and leader of the Danish Muslim delegation who visited Muslim countries. These Muslims have complained that threats of deportation are the opposite of what Denmark needs: according to Imam Mohammad Al-Khalid Samha, a member of the European Committee for Prophet Honoring and leader of Muslim delegation that is attributed with internationalizing the conflict, "We are in a dire need now to

open a direct dialogue to listen to each other without barriers." Moves by conservatives, therefore, are perceived as acts of censorship on much needed dialogue. [74]

Immigration Minister Rikke Hvilshoj was one of the officials behind the call to exclude these Muslim leaders from integration dialogue in Denmark. He argued that they were knowingly trying to arouse anti-Danish sentiment in the Muslim world. On February 8, 2006, he told the Berlingske Tidende newspaper, "I think we have a clear picture today that it's not [these] imams we should be placing our trust in if we want integration in Denmark to work."

Jyllands-Posten editor offered a similar explanation when he chose to hold a contest for Muhammad cartoons. He was responding to demands by the Muslim community for more balanced and/or positive reporting on Islam and to recent decision by European theaters and art galleries to cancel potentially controversial exhibits and performances. [75] He felt that Muslim objections to negative coverage and threats of violence amounted to censorship and limitations on freedom of speech: "This is a popular trick of totalitarian movements: Label any critique of call for debate as an insult and punish the offenders." [76]

The statements of Samha, Hvilshoj and Rose's have similarities: each of these individuals are trying to influence how practical issues related to Islam and Muslims are approached (such as press coverage, artistic expression, conflict resolution), which actors are recognized as legitimate negotiating partners in discussion, and how integrated Danish Muslims should act. Rose and Samha also directly speak of fears that censorship stands in the way of constructive dialogue, although they disagree on the sources of this censorship. Danish Muslims are not the only Danes who object to Rose and Hvilshoj's conservative positions. In the Danish Parliament, Minister Hvilshoj's calls for deportation were rejected by the ruling coalition. According to Britta Holberg of the ruling Liberal party in the naturalization committee "We are in no position to revoke someone's citizenship." She added, "I cannot punish someone just because s/he thinks differently and it is ridiculous at the first place to grant them Danish citizenship and then revoke it." Simon Emil, representative of the Social Liberal Party, also said the call was an attack on free speech and that individuals' citizenship should not be subject to political motivations, "It makes no sense to reconsider the citizenship of someone because some politicians are not pleased with his/her opinions; otherwise, everyone in this society will really watch their words from now on for fear that their citizenship could be revoked." In early February 2006, civic organizations emerged to critique anti-immigration conservative attacks. One day after its February 9, 2006 launch, webpage [anotherdenmark.org](#) had collected 8,500 greetings and short messages from Danes. The website included a letter printed in Danish, Arabic, and English that "strongly condemns the actions of Jyllands-Posten that have offended Muslims around the world" and called for an apology from Jyllands-Posten editors. According to anotherdenmark.org spokesman Nicolai Lang, "If we want to break down prejudices on both sides, then it's important to show that the majority of Danes aren't hostile toward Islam, and that there are many of us who believe that we can live together with respect for each other's culture and identity."

Another site, *Reconciliation Now* ([forsoningnu.dk](#)) was able to gather 36,000 electronic signatures in its first four days of existence. This electronic petition, designed by Dane Hans Hüttel, criticized the cartoons for showing "a serious lack of tact and sensitivity" and pointed to the distinction between "opinions expressed by a Danish newspaper and the opinions of the Danish people as a whole." [77] MP Khader Naser also launched his group, Democratic Muslims, during the same period in February 2006. The group was initially called "Moderate Muslims," but the name was changed almost immediately. Members of Democratic Muslims are specifically concerned with critiquing radical Muslims and contributing an alternative voice to public debate. By February 13, 2006, Khader's organization already had 700 members and 2,500 identified supporters. [78]

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[4] "Circular no. 618 pf 22 July 2002, issued with reference to paragraph 5, Art. 7 of the Law on Public Schools." [Footnote 17] in OSI 17.

[5] "Until this new legislation, State-run schools were obliged to arrange teaching of the mother tongue alongside the Danish language, if a class could be established for up to 12 pupils belonging to the same language group. If there were fewer than 12, the pupils were enrolled in such a class in the nearest school." [Footnote 18] in OSI 17.

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[72] DR-TV. 1 January 2000. [Footnote 36] in OSI 36.

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[75] In the summer of 2005, Världskulturmuseet, the Museum of World Culture in Gothenburg, Sweden, decided to censure an art exhibit and remove a painting, which was said to offend Muslims. The painting removed by the museum had a sexual motif and a quotation from the Koran. A discourse of multi-culturalism and fear of offending the sizable Muslim community dictated what predominantly non-Muslim museum visitors in a secular country were allowed to see. A few months later, the Tate Gallery in London cancelled an exhibit by avant-garde artist John Latham depicting the Koran, Bible and Talmud torn to pieces. ("Inget öppet samhälle utan hädelse" Dagens Nyheter 11 January 2006; Fleming Rose, "Why I published Those Cartoons" Jyllands-Posten 19 February 2006.) In September the same year, Kåre Bluitgen, a Danish writer of books for children had trouble finding an illustrator for a book about the life of Muhammad. Out of fear for terror and physical repercussions, three artists turned down the offer. When an artist, prepared to illustrate the children's book was finally found, she/he agreed only on conditions of strict anonymity (Rudling 2).

[76] Rose's comment continues: "...That is what happened to human rights activists and writers such as Andrei Sakharov, Vladimir Bukovsky, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Nathan Sharansky, Boris Pasternak. The regime accused them of anti-Soviet propaganda, just as some Muslims are labeling 12 cartoons in a Danish newspaper anti-Islamic. The lesson from the Cold War is: If you give in to totalitarian impulses once, new demands follow. The West prevailed in the Cold War because we stood by our fundamental values and did not appease totalitarian tyrants." qtd. in Rudling 3.

[77] "Greetings from Denmark" Copenhagen Post 10 February 2006. Available online at: <http://www.cphpost.dk/get/93863.html>.

[78] "More and More Moderate Muslims Speak out in Denmark" The Brussels Journal 13 February 2006. Available online at: <http://www.brusselsjournal.com/node/811>.