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State of Memory: National History and Exclusive Identity in Contemporary Denmark

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STATE OF MEMORY: NATIONAL HISTORY AND EXCLUSIVE IDENTITY IN
CONTEMPORARY DENMARK

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Increased rates of immigration to Western European states over the past three decades have yielded a wealth of literature in the social sciences, much of which has focused on cases of individuals from so-called "non-Western" countries of origin. Immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers from the Middle East, Africa, and Asia often bring with them cultural and religious traditions that are unfamiliar to the citizens of states which receive them. Tensions between majority populations and growing minorities in Western Europe have resulted in skepticism—and, increasingly, hostility— toward immigrants, particularly those regarded as "Islamic."

But is this type of tension inevitable? Are difference and incompatibility really synonymous, as much of the literature seems to suggest? This research examines a single case, Denmark, in order to elucidate the processes by which a country's national identity comes to serve as a powerful rallying point in the midst of political uncertainty. Tracing the historical development of Danish nationalism and examining its contemporary persistence reveal a society in which elite political rhetoric has exploited a legacy of ethno-political unity to exclude "newcomers" on the basis of national solidarity. This analysis merges the cultural and the political, as well as the theoretical and the empirical, in its consideration of immigration and nationalism in a Western liberal-democratic state.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents—Continued

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In mid-September 2005, the culture and arts editor of Denmark's largest newspaper, *Morgenavisen Jyllands-Posten*, solicited illustrations from forty-two Danish cartoonists to "draw Muhammad, as you see him." The editor, a seasoned conservative journalist named Flemming Rose, had learned of a rumor that the Danish author Kåre Bluitgen had been unable to find an illustrator willing to collaborate with him on a children's book about the Islamic prophet. Rose and the paper's editorial board wanted to determine whether Danish illustrators were practicing self-censorship for fear of reprisal from Muslims, for whom visually depicting the Prophet was historically taboo. A fervent defender of the right to free expression, Rose promised the illustrators that their work would be published the following weekend.

The results of the survey proved inconclusive. Out of the forty-two illustrators contacted, fifteen responded and only twelve submitted drawings. It was thus impossible to know if the twenty-seven cartoonists who didn't respond were censoring themselves, if they had contractual obligations which prevented them from publishing with *Jyllands-Posten*, or if they simply did not wish to participate in the experiment. But, after some deliberation, Rose and editor-in-chief Carsten Juste decided to uphold their promise. On Friday, September 30th, the cartoons were published in the Culture section of the paper, accompanied by essays from both editors in which Danish Muslims were accused of a "sickly oversensitivity" and were told that, as residents of democratic Denmark, they

were obliged to open their religious faith to "mockery, sarcasm, and ridicule" (Klausen 2009).

The cartoons provoked reactions inside and outside of Denmark, ranging from peaceful demonstrations to boycotts of Danish exports in many predominantly Islamic countries and attacks on Danish embassies in Lebanon and Syria. The illustrations, which included one particularly incendiary depiction of the Prophet with a bomb in his turban, were regarded by many Muslims worldwide as blasphemy and as a direct assault on Islam by the secular West (Østergaard and Sinclair 2007). While some ethnic Danes expressed sympathy for their Muslim neighbors and regarded the cartoons as incendiary, many more applauded the perceived affirmation of the fundamental Danish values of free speech and unbridled self-expression. The "Cartoon Controversy," as it has come to be known, proved to be one of Denmark's worst international relations nightmares and reinvigorated the debates in the country about immigration, citizenship, and Danish national identity.

Far from arising out of nowhere, the publication of the cartoons was preceded by a number of high-profile international incidents involving Islamic extremists, including events in the United States on September 11th, 2001 and the brutal murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh in 2004. In response to increased hostility toward "Islamic" immigrants, since 1983—and particularly after 2001—official immigration policy in Denmark has become more restrictive, limiting the acceptance of applications for permanent residence and narrowing and lengthening the path to citizenship. Danish citizenship policy in the past two decades has formalized the expectation that immigrants not only familiarize themselves with Danish cultural and political values but internalize

them in order to successfully integrate into Danish society. These policies emphasize "core" Danish values: political autonomy of the individual, equality of gender roles, secular separation of religion and the state, and the highly egalitarian nature of Danish democratic political culture. Additionally, considerable proficiency in the Danish language and knowledge of Danish history and culture are regarded as prerequisites of successful integration—and, indeed, are requirements for attaining citizenship. The official narrative behind this program of immigrant "integration" is one of *preparation*; that is, social and cultural assimilation of immigrants supposedly ensures political and economic integration, thereby placing immigrants in the best possible situation to be economically self-sufficient and able to contribute "their fair share" to the Danish welfare system. Several scholars have noted that rather than an attempt to engage immigrants in sincere dialogue and to seek mutual attempts at compromise, this immigration policy scheme instead places the onus of integration entirely onto the immigrants themselves. Moreover, most immigrants to Denmark since the 1980s have come from countries with majority Islamic populations. Subsequently, skepticism toward these immigrants has arisen among much of the Danish public, which has very often been expressed in ethnocultural terms.

     Over the past three decades the "immigration issue" has dominated Danish political debate. That the issue has been framed in the context of cultural "compatibility" is difficult to deny. Prominent national politicians and elite media figures have appealed to the popular conception of Denmark as a national community whose cultural cohesion and political sovereignty are inextricable. Many researchers have explained this predominance of cultural arguments in terms of increasing levels of neoracism among

ethnic Danes and neonationalist rhetoric in public discourse. Less consensus exists, however, on both the origins and the implications of this "culturalization" of the immigration issue. Numerous academic studies on the subject (e.g. Enoch 1994; Gaasholt and Togeby 1995; Togeby 1999) base their analyses on a "clash of cultures" thesis, either implicitly assuming or explicitly positing that cultural relations between Danes and ethnically heterogeneous immigrants are inevitably antagonistic. Furthermore, while there have been several studies across as many academic fields on the nature and prevalence of ethnocentrism and neonationalism in Danish society, especially in the context of immigration, the translation of individual attitudes and perceptions into public discourse—as well as the effects of such translation on government policy—is less frequently explicated.

My objective in this thesis is twofold. First, I examine Denmark's history throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in which the Danish nation-state developed and was reinforced in terms of ethnic identity. Second, I survey the development of current immigrant integration policies in Denmark. In addition to the country's unique socio-historical experience, I demonstrate that the emergence of such policies is the result of a confluence of multiple factors, including responses to global and domestic economic conditions and the influence of elite discourse. Finally, I end with a reflection on the "culturalization" of the Danish "immigration issue" in which I briefly discuss the potential ramifications of the preoccupation with culture, both in public discourse and in academic research. By tracing the construction and the mobilization of ethnicity throughout the era of the Danish national state, I offer a clearer, more robust

backdrop against which the contemporary political climate in Denmark might be understood.

There are a number of issues in contemporary social and political analysis that my study touches upon but does not address, at least not directly. Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis, while "not intended to be a work of social science" (Huntington 1994, 13), has nonetheless been thoroughly debated. Huntington gives extensive treatment to the relationship between Western culture and political Islam, two constructs with which many researchers (Said 1981; Roy 2004; Parekh 2006) take issue as problematically conceived. There is also a rich body of scholarship on the changing nature of citizenship in Europe (e.g. Brubaker 1992; Triandafyllidou 2001; Koopmans et al 2005; Howard 2009; Kamens 2012), as national states seek the benefits of increased political and economic integration while attempting to retain traditional sources of national identity. Finally, much has been written, especially in cultural anthropology (see esp. Gellner 1983; Anderson 1983), on the construction and generational transmission of national identity itself. While these interrelated topics are critical to understanding much extant European political tension, I examine the case of one state, Denmark, in order to demonstrate that while presentations and interpretations ethnicity continue to complicate political dynamics in many European states, the particular historical experience of each state influences how it approaches the challenge of defining itself amidst demographic change.

CHAPTER II

DENMARK IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

History and a National Self

In the past decade, a handful of researchers (e.g. Linde-Laursen 2007; Olsen 2011; Mouritsen and Olsen 2011; Jespersen 2011; Østergård 2012) have theorized a potential connection between Denmark's historical experience, especially the unique development of its national state, and its current political culture, including its policies toward immigrants of so-called "non-Western" origin. Linde-Laursen (2007) regards Danish political culture as "bipolar," resulting from the absence of an "integrative evolution between state and civil society" (Linde-Laursen 2007, 267). According to Linde-Laursen, modern Danish history has been characterized by popular movements that historically have provided an alternative public sphere in which political values and power have been cultivated independently of the state. Consequently, skepticism and resistance toward immigrants and toward post-Soviet globalization more generally have enjoyed a clearer, stronger articulation in Denmark than in, for instance, Sweden, wherein a more coterminous development of state and civil society has allowed for the persistent legacy of an explicitly multicultural immigrant integration policy.

In a similar vein, Østergård (2012; see also Østergård 1992) posits continuity between Denmark's contemporary experience and popular movements in Danish history, particularly Grundtvigianism and cooperative agriculture in the nineteenth century. The values embodied by these largely agrarian movements—egalitarianism, self-reliance, and a pragmatic interpretation of the Lutheran tradition—have been ensconced in Danish political culture and Danish culture more broadly due to the opportunities for political

enculturation outside of the state that they provided during the formative years of Danish democracy. Østergård argues that the memory of these popular movements, combined with the country's geopolitical marginalization throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries, encouraged Danes to think of their national community as having arisen from their mutual experience of shared ethnicity and egalitarian democratic traditions.

That this national conception of self has oriented Danish attitudes toward the manifestations of increased globalization in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is, however, not simply a cultural legacy. Throughout Denmark's history there have been critical junctures—geopolitical events, religious revivals, literary publications, and decisions by elites to exploit political and economic developments—at which the trajectory of the Danish nation has been determined. My objective in the following chapters is to highlight these crucial events in Danish history and to demonstrate the continuity between them. In doing so I hope to strengthen the theory that Denmark's historical experience as a peripheral European state has influenced the way in which the nation perceives itself and its democracy in an age of globalization. Later on, I discuss how this national self-conception lends itself to exclusionary tendencies *vis-à-vis* non-ethnic Danes, specifically in the context of immigration.

A National State

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, several events ushered Denmark into the modern era. Generally maintaining an economically advantageous policy of neutrality for much of the preceding century, Denmark's humiliating defeat by the British in the Napoleonic Wars between 1801 and 1813 dealt a significant blow to the country

culturally as well as militarily. The conflicts resulted in a separation of the twin kingdom of Denmark-Norway in 1814 (with Sweden acquiring Norway as a condition of Denmark's defeat), a development which drastically changed Denmark's cultural landscape as it severed the connection between two realms with strong historical, ethnic, and linguistic ties. The gradual consolidation of the German principalities in the following decades increased regional tensions and complicated domestic politics, further jeopardizing the security of the Danish state. The colossal German empire forming south of its border naturally proved intimidating to the sparsely-populated, militarily devastated kingdom. Moreover, these events unfolded contemporaneously with mounting pressure on the Danish monarchy to allow for more representative government, part of a wider European trend toward liberalism. Having become untethered from the rest of Scandinavia and threatened from the south by its continental neighbor, Denmark found itself in a marginalized position both politically and culturally, at the mercy of the larger European powers. Especially early in the century, the survival of the sovereign Danish state was far from certain.

The corresponding period in European history was a tumultuous one. The Enlightenment of the eighteenth century was giving way to a Romantic backlash in many areas of social and political philosophy, and Romantic conceptions of ethnicity and language were growing more influential. These intellectual developments were accompanied by increasing resistance against the absolutist monarchies which dotted the continent, beginning with the French Revolution in the 1780s and continuing through the 1830s. Hence, the ideas of popular governance and national self-determination strongly influenced Denmark's experience throughout the 1800s. As the century unfolded, these

ideologies, along with critical historical incidents, facilitated popular socio-cultural movements among the newly-emancipated rural peasantry. The legacies of these popular movements would lay the foundations for the development of Danish national consciousness and would combine with the political experiences and objectives of the urban, bourgeois elites to profoundly impact the development of Danish political culture.

Territorial Turbulence

In contemporary usage, the name "Denmark" refers to a state which has existed more or less in its present form since 1864. The area that comprises modern Denmark was formerly part of the Oldenborg dual monarchy of Denmark-Norway, which from the late 1600s presented a powerful military and political presence in the North Atlantic. Indeed, the kingdom benefited economically as well as militarily from its role as gatekeeper of the Baltic Sea (Rasmussen 1995, 25). By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, a costly, protracted rivalry with its Scandinavian neighbor Sweden had left the sparsely-populated twin kingdom vulnerable to other regional powers. As a result of the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, Denmark formally annexed the semi-autonomous duchies of Schleswig and Holstein (see Appendix I). But as a result of its final defeat by Britain in the Napoleonic Wars in 1814, the country witnessed the loss of Norway as well as the bankruptcy of its central government. Denmark had gone from an expansive, "multinational conglomerate state" to a "tiny bi-national statelet at the top of the north-German plain" (Jespersen 2011, 22). The country would be further reduced to approximately its current size after the loss of Schleswig and Holstein to Austria and Prussia in 1864.

These losses of territory, as well as the dynamics between Denmark, Schleswig-Holstein, and imperial Germany throughout the century, produced a pivotal drama in Danish history. Schleswig and Holstein, two duchies with centuries-long historical ties, until relatively recently had a complex relationship with Denmark. Both had long retained significant autonomy as fiefdoms, but in the fifteenth century they formally associated themselves with the Danish Oldenborg monarchy. The Danish king thus became the duke of both territories. Due to a desire for peace and stability as well as the preservation of personal and property relations, the territories chose to maintain their Danish associations for the next four hundred years (Frandsen 2009, 10). Schleswig and Holstein were exempted from the introduction of absolutist policies of the king beginning in 1660; it was only in 1806 when the Danish monarchy annexed the more German-oriented Holstein that the relationship between Denmark and the duchies became strained.

By 1806, and particularly after 1814, the Danish "composite state" had begun to unravel. Following the loss of Norway after the Napoleonic Wars, Copenhagen's sphere of influence declined while the economic and political power of the German principalities began to increase. Danish political elites resented the growing German influence and grew concerned that Schleswig and Holstein might turn their gaze from Copenhagen toward Hamburg on the Continent (Rasmussen 1995, 32; Frandsen 2009, 14). In the two decades following 1814, as Prussia and other German principalities began to coalesce both culturally and politically, Danish liberals sought to counter the perceived threat to the south by eliminating the absolute monarchy and establishing a democratic regime,

which they regarded as a more legitimate form of government and as one better able to compete diplomatically in the changing European political climate (Østergård 1992).

Meanwhile, consistent with a more general European trend, Frederick VI of Denmark introduced regional consultative assemblies in 1830 which, while not legislative bodies, still acted as a channel for more independent political voices. Through these assemblies, Danish liberals expressed their opposition toward the absolutist Oldenborg monarchy. In 1838 the two regional assemblies in Denmark proper voted to unite the main Danish regions of the kingdom, and Schleswig and Holstein voted to unite with one another to ensure their continued independence. The king rejected both proposals in an effort to preserve the composite Danish state, and the monarchy retained its absolute power for the time being until the establishment of the *Rigsdag* by the new Danish constitution of 1849 (Frandsen 2009, 14-15).

Neither the continued autonomy of the duchies nor a homogeneous Danish nation advocated by the Danish liberals was compatible with the composite state which the monarchy wished to maintain. It was at this point that political elites in Copenhagen and in the duchies began in earnest to use to their own advantages "modern political ideas," i.e. the incipient nationalistic sentiment that was then pervading European intellectual circles (Østergård 2012, 56). Danish liberals accused the monarchy of being unrepresentative of the Danish people and demanded a state which united the ethnic group. Across the Eider River, political leaders in Holstein feared what they perceived as the tendency of the king to progressively incorporate the duchy into the Danish kingdom. Capitalizing on increasingly positive opinions of Prussia in the territory, politicians in Holstein encouraged the mostly ethnic-German aristocracy in the 1840s to sever ties with

Denmark and transition to an independent German state. The liberal opposition in Copenhagen was not as concerned with the loss of Holstein as they were with that of Schleswig, since the latter territory was comprised of a majority Danish population. The defection in Holstein led to the First Schleswigian War of 1848-1850, in which the Danish monarchy was able to retain control of the duchies. However, the next dozen years involved a bitter back-and-forth between Denmark and Prussia in which several agreements—to which Britain, France, Russia, and Norway-Sweden all were signatories—were brokered and then violated. The Second Schleswigian War in 1864 witnessed the Prussian and Austrian militaries driving Denmark out of both duchies for good. "Thus" writes Østergård (2012, 55), "nationalism came to tear apart the relatively well-functioning composite state, *Helstaten*." The truncated Danish state would exist in this form until 1920, when Northern Schleswig, with its majority ethnic-Danish population, voted through a plebiscite to rejoin Denmark.

Divergent Narrations of Conflict

Frandsen (2009) notes that the Schleswigian conflicts and the events associated with them have been framed for divergent purposes by different historiographies. Danish nationalist histories in the middle of the nineteenth century following the Schleswigian conflicts traditionally characterized the events as a "national conflict" between the Danish and German nations. In their opposition to the absolute monarchy, Frandsen argues, Danish liberals employed nascent European ideas about the political potential of ethnicity in order to construct an "imagined community" (see Anderson 1983) of Danes which (conveniently) required a liberal democratic constitution for its survival in a nationalizing Europe. The Kingdom of Denmark—the "composite state"—was an

outdated political model and, along with the monarchy that held it together, needed to be disposed of. The best way to do so was to manufacture the notion of Danish ethnic unity and to portray the rise of the German Empire as an ethnopolitical threat.

Scholars of Danish historiography in the early twentieth century (e.g. Linvald 1925; Commager 1927; Westergaard 1952) noted that the historical developments from the Napoleonic Wars to the final loss of Schleswig-Holstein in 1864 stimulated a proliferation of inward-looking research among mid-nineteenth-century Danish historians. Commager writes that after 1814, a new generation of historians emerged whose "work was a part and parcel of that revival of Danish nationalism and Danish culture which is the outstanding characteristic of this period in Denmark as in Germany" (Commager 1927, 145). He includes C. F. Allen, P. V. Jacobsen, and C. F. Wegener among scholars who sought to elucidate the origins of the Danish nation as far back as the 1100s. Linvald (1925) echoes the significance of Denmark's political experiences of the time and cites Troels Lund and J. Steenstrup as engaging in research toward similar ends. While critical research on the Schleswigian Wars by A. D. Jørgensen and Kristian Erslev later in the century might have tempered earlier explicitly nationalist scholarship, the events of the nineteenth century undoubtedly influenced perceptions of Danish national history and the role of Denmark in a wider European historical context (Westergaard 1952).

Instead of a national conflict, more contemporary scholars have regarded the Schleswigian events as a protracted, "internationalized" civil war. Frandsen (2009, 15) asserts that the artificiality of the Danish and German nations is evidenced by the fact that the ethnic Danish and German populations in Schleswig and Holstein had lived together

amicably for centuries prior, and that Holstein's true motive for gravitating toward

Prussia was the safeguarding of its autonomy. Østergård (2012, 56) characterizes

Denmark's loss of the duchies as a "self-inflicted defeat" arising from the "[s]tubborn

and intransigent quibbling by Danish National Liberal politicians and their misjudgement

of the international situation" as well as their insistence on integrating Schleswig into "a

Danish nation-state within the 'historical' framework […] regardless of the opinion of the

inhabitants." The debate between historiographies, however, tends to address the nature

of the conflicts in terms of the direct involvement of the belligerents, Denmark and

Germany. There is less disagreement on the fact that all parties involved employed

ethnicity as a weapon of political legitimacy: "Danish nationalists, Schleswig-Holsteinian

regionalists or separatists, and Holsteinian German nationalists all used the conflict and

the fundamental idea of an irreparable divide between the two nationalities in support of

their efforts to destroy the composite state and pave the way for nation states" (Frandsen

2009, 17).

Outward Loss, Inward Gain

While the ultimate military outcome of the conflicts might have been determined

by questionable strategic decisions of liberal politicians in Copenhagen, it is difficult to

overstate the formative impact that the Schleswigian Wars had on the popular

development of Danish national consciousness. With the loss of the duchies in 1864, not

only did Denmark experience a forty percent decrease in its population (Michelson 1969,

287) and a one-third decrease in its geographical area (Warming 1902, 293); it also was

stripped of a territory (Northern Schleswig) that until then had been recognized as

distinctly Danish since the time of Charlemagne (Larsen 1919, 569; Warming 1902, 318).

Following Prussia's formal acquisition of the duchies in 1867, its government enacted numerous policies in Schleswig intended to stamp out any vestiges of national sentiment among ethnic Danes. German was legally recognized as the sole language of official administration and Danish language instruction in public schools was gradually eliminated. When the singing of German hymns was mandated in schools in the 1870s and schoolchildren began to be punished for conversing in Danish, many parents in the region transferred their children to private Danish schools, which subsequently were abolished by the German government. Freedom of the Danish press and the ability of Danes in Schleswig to publicly assemble were severely curtailed, and by 1908, German was identified by law as the only language permissible in public settings. Danes were permitted to congregate only in the presence of an officer of the Prussian government, even for religious worship. Even the public display of the colors red and white (the colors of the Danish flag) was strictly prohibited on houses, graves, and clothing.[1] Indeed, for the 150,000 Danes living in the region at the time, "North Sleswick was an island, shut off from Prussia by antipathy and national differences, and shut off from Denmark by the iron barriers of Prussian law. On this island the agencies of Prussianism were always at work seeking to undermine the national culture, to erase memories, and to wrench the population from its Danish past" (Larson 1919, 249).

These extreme attempts by Prussian authorities to extinguish any embers of Danish nationalism occurred systematically from 1867 until the First World War. They did not go unnoticed in Denmark. Many Danes sought to alleviate the cultural suffering of their ethnic brethren south of the border, primarily through private initiatives since the

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[1] Eckhardt (1919:54) and Larson (1919:247) both report an instance in which a farmer residing in North Schleswig was forced by police to repaint a red kennel in which he housed a white dog.

Danish government was bound by the Treaty of Prague not to interfere in the region.

Open-air meetings featuring renowned Danish and Scandinavian speakers were hosted

just north of the border, literary societies distributed Scandinavian books to libraries in

North Schleswig (often covertly), and various associations awarded scholarships to ethnic

Danes from Schleswig to study at the University of Copenhagen and at technical schools

throughout Denmark (Eckhardt 1919, 56; Warming 1902, 306). There was thus a strong

identification with Schleswigian Danes among Danes in Denmark and a pervasive

sentiment that North Schleswig ought to be returned to Denmark proper. This eventually

occurred following the First World War.

　　　A notable—and forgotten—legacy of the German control of Schleswig was the

change in Danish citizenship policy. As stipulated by the Treaty of Vienna in 1864,

Danes residing in Schleswig and Holstein were guaranteed the option of retaining their

Danish citizenship, but only under two conditions: 1) they were required to declare their

choice within six years, and 2) they were required to emigrate to Denmark. Because most

Danes in North Schleswig expected the region to be returned shortly to Denmark, few

took advantage of the opportunity (Larson 1919, 233-234). However, after Prussia

formally took control of the duchies in 1867 and began conscripting young men for its

war with France, thousands of Danes opted to declare their Danish citizenship and

migrate. The confusion and disorder following this upheaval prompted negotiations

between the Danish and Prussian governments, and in 1872, Prussia agreed to readmit

many of the Danish "optants" who had fled their families and livelihoods in North

Schleswig who had fled their livelihoods in North Schleswig and whose families had

lived in the region for generations. In a calculated political move, however, Prussia did

not extend citizenship to these returning optants. Hence, they remained politically disenfranchised and more susceptible to expulsion, which happened in large numbers as Germany intensified its nation-building project later in the century (Larson 1919). Furthermore, because Danish citizenship was determined by place of birth (or *jus soli*, as Brubaker [1992] would later term it) and Prussian citizenship through descent (Brubaker's *jus sanguinis*), children born in Schleswig to Danish optants were effectively rendered stateless. In 1898 the Danish government changed its policy to that of *jus sanguinis*, extending citizenship to children of Danish parents regardless of place of birth. This decision by the Danish government to incorporate more ethnic Danes by defining nationality by blood further tied membership in the Danish community to ethnicity and would have important implications for the arrival of non-ethnic Danes to the country in the next century (cf. Brochmann and Seland 2010). It would also facilitate the success of a plebiscite in North Schleswig following the First World War, in which the region again became part of Denmark proper.

Particularly in a nineteenth-century European context, ethnic persecution and loss of territory by military conquest were hardly rare occurrences. What made the Schleswigian Wars and their aftermath so uniquely decisive was their role in the nation-building projects of both belligerents. However, unlike the German Empire, whose central government legislated nationalism onto its diverse territories, Denmark would experience a national "awakening" from below, catalyzed on the one hand by the Grundtvigian mobilization of the newly-emancipated peasantry and on the other hand by the experimentation with cosmopolitanism by the urban bourgeoisie. Culturally and politically marginalized from the south by Germany, and cut off from its Scandinavian

cousins by the Baltic and North Seas, Denmark would turn inwards, attempting to gain

from within what it had lost from without.[2] This awakening, beginning in the nineteenth

century and continuing through the Second World War, would prove paramount to

discourses on the relationship between Danish national identity and immigrant

"outsiders" in the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries.

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[2] Variations of this phrase "outward loss, inward gain" have widely served as a slogan to denote the introversion of Danish culture and politics of the time period (e.g. Hedetoft 1993:291; Østergård 1992:35; Yahil 1991:474)

CHAPTER III

NATIONAL MOBILIZATION OF THE PEASANTRY

From Peasant to Smallholder

Both influencing and influenced by the events surrounding the Schleswigian

Wars, the national mobilization of the peasantry in nineteenth-century Denmark is best

understood within the social, economic, and religious conditions of the time period. Until

late in the eighteenth century, the Danish area of the dual Oldenborg kingdom was

characterized economically by communal agriculture and seafaring trade. Its capital,

Copenhagen (*København*), located in the far eastern region of the realm on the island of

Zealand (*Sjælland*), was provincial by European standards, with a population of 70,000 in

1769 (Munck 1998, 208). The rest of the area was remarkably rural. As many as 60,000

tenant farms existed in Denmark prior to 1786, on which peasant farmers, comprising

close to 85% of the population (Kavalier 1962, 394; Fain 1971, 75), cultivated land

owned by aristocratic estate-holders.

In the 1780s, the monarchy began to carefully introduce reforms to the manorial-

style agrarian system. Tenant farmers—true peasants—were gradually emancipated from

their feudal roles, resulting in more autonomy and, the monarchy hoped, increased

agricultural product to export. This was a wise move by the monarchy both economically

and politically, as Europe's rapidly expanding population required more food and its

enlightened political climate appeared to be growing increasingly hostile toward

absolutist regimes. The reforms resulted in the transformation of the roughly 60,000

tenant holdings—around 60% of the total tenant holdings in the country—into

independently-run entrepreneurial farms (Østergård 1992; Jespersen 2011). Although there was at first some resistance from the landed aristocracy, opposition to the reforms was tempered by the inertia of the old feudal system, which initially kept the peasants, who lacked education and material resources, economically dependent on former aristocratic landholders (Michelson 1969, 286). As the educational reforms of the early nineteenth century (including compulsory education in 1814) were implemented, however, the peasantry developed better agricultural techniques, and their greater economic autonomy began to translate into increased production from which the entire Danish economy benefited (Munck 1998, 214). Commercial agriculture became Denmark's main industry, and a large new socioeconomic class of independent farmers was born. As Nielsen (2012) writes:

> The smallholders had become part of the agricultural labourers and were no longer peasantry. Atomization and uniform national rules were starting to penetrate through state intervention. […] In itself [the reforms] had nothing to do with achieving national solidarity, but was largely an expression of a centralization and a homogenization that could later be filled with a significant national cultural content. State centralism and individual subjectivization went hand in hand. (74)

Thus, while its motives may have been more economic and more intended toward self-preservation, the Danish monarchy instituted meaningful reforms which in fact facilitated the objectives of future political and sociocultural actors. Ironically, the anti-monarchical liberal democrats were among those who benefited most, first by exploiting the symbolism of the liberated peasants in the 1830s and 1840s for their own constitutional aims and later by aligning themselves with the farmers politically. For the farmers

themselves, their newly-granted political and economic independence would be complemented by their emerging spiritual self-reliance.

The People's Lutheran Church

Prior to the twentieth century, communities in Denmark were defined by parishes, in which, after the establishment of monarchical absolutism in 1660, ministers of the Danish Lutheran Church (The People's Church, or *Folkekirke*) acted as government officials in addition to their spiritual roles. Their civil duties included supervising poor relief, administering education, delivering official government announcements, and registering births, marriages, and deaths (Møller 2010, 230). In a country in which 80% of the population lived in rural areas, Lutheran ministers commanded significant influence over the community (Møller 2010, 231). In fact, the state mandated compulsory weekly attendance at local parish churches until 1855, and it was 1868 before Danes were legally permitted to form their own congregations and select their own ministers (Jespersen 2011, 115). Beyond being mere proxies of the monarchy, however, local vicars were also connected with their parishes socially and economically, as they derived their salaries from a portion of the tax on the agricultural output of the parish, much of which was paid in kind (Møller 2010).

The connection between the church and the state was more than simply an administrative relationship, however. The Reformation and the introduction of Lutheran Christianity in Denmark was preceded by the existence of a "highly stratified" society in which the monarch sat atop the political pecking order, followed by Catholic bishops and then by representatives of the nobility (Lausten 2002, 88-90). The Reformation in Denmark came about between 1520 and 1536, wherein a civil war characterized by

religious as well as political turbulence resulted in King Christian III implementing

Lutheran reforms to the Church; hence the Danish Reformation was a "revolution from

above" (Møller and Østergård 2013, 166-167). In 1665 the Royal Law formalized the

monarch's position as head of the Church and defender of the faith, and by the eighteenth

century, full citizenship in Denmark was contingent upon baptism and confirmation in

the Danish Lutheran Church (Buckser 1995, 259). According to Møller and Østergård

(2013), whereas Catholic society had made no distinction between the church and the

state, the new Lutheran conception of the church imagined a "division of labor" between

these two actors with a similar mission. The church's responsibility was to advance the

kingdom of God and it enjoyed the freedom to attend solely to such spiritual matters

while the monarch acted in the secular realm to ensure this freedom. Yet, although

ideologically separate, the Danish Lutheran Church and the monarchy were in fact not as

distinct as they both believed themselves to be. Hence, the *Folkekirke* was able to

maintain a powerful relevance in Danish society, ideologically through the Protestant

reinterpretation of its *raison d'etre* and in practice through the ministers as state actors:

"[…] nation and church formed a unity, while the state protected both" (Møller 2010,

241).

The monarchy's influence on the Danish Lutheran Church and the orthodox

theology which helped to maintain it continued until the first few decades of the

eighteenth century, when an anti-clerical movement known as Pietism arose particularly

in the rural provincial areas. Influenced primarily by German Protestant revivalism, the

Pietists rejected what they perceived to be the improper link between the state and the

Church and instead emphasized a return to Luther's idea of universal priesthood and the

importance of personal confession and conduct of individual Christians. Møller writes

that the revivalist Pietism movement "tried to realize the Lutheran vision of the direct

relationship between man and God by empowering the individual. Faith was taken out of

its institutional context and individualised, and in this sense revivalism could be seen as a

modern phenomenon" (Møller 2010, 234). The movement led to an erosion of the

authority of the established *Folkekirke*; by 1850 decentralized sects had emerged in the

parishes which tended to identify themselves with either of two sub-movements:

Grundtvigianism and the Inner Mission (Buckser 1995; Møller 2010).

Buckser (1995) and Møller (2010) note similarities and differences between these

two branches of the Pietist movement. "Each developed a sophisticated theology, an

organization for affiliated clergy, and a host of allied voluntary associations. Perhaps

most important, each gathered its followers into local communities" (Buckser 1995, 260).

The Inner Mission was generally associated with the poorer classes, including those

smallholders who did not succeed as entrepreneurial farmers following the reforms of the

1780s. The Inner Mission's ideology was more pious and somber and its communities

tended toward introversion and spiritual asceticism. Inner Mission adherents avoided

political activity and, indeed, most other types of association with larger Danish society.

And although it opposed much of the *Folkekirke*'s dogmatic theology and practices, the

Inner Mission frequently preferred to work within the context of the established Church.

By contrast, the Grundtvigians engaged in an expressly political project which

involved a nationalistic re-conception of Lutheran Christianity within the context of

Danish history and culture (Buckser 1995, 261-265). Whereas the Inner Mission

emphasized the reward of the hereafter for virtuous suffering in life on Earth, the more

prosperous independent farmers and artisans of the Grundtvigian movement rejoiced in the very human (e.g., Danish) dimension of Christianity. This less theological, more historical interpretation of Christianity was essential to the movement's legacy as a foundation of nationalism in Denmark in that it rendered Danish Lutheranism more temporal—that is, more immediate and mutually experienced. To understand Grundtvigianism more fully as a popular movement and its near-universally acknowledged formative role in Danish culture, it is worth briefly explicating the life and work of its namesake, N.F.S. Grundtvig. Doing so will help to situate the movement's location in the broader narrative of the history of the Danish nation and its contemporary political culture.

N.F.S. Grundtvig: Dane First, Then a Christian

Especially outside of Denmark, Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872) is most commonly associated with the inception of the country's folk high schools, through which his synthesis of Lutheran Christianity, Danish history, and a Romantic conception of nationhood continued to influence Danish culture long after his death. Inside Denmark he is remembered as a cultural and religious reformer who is credited with conceiving much of what it means to be "Danish." By the end of his life, Grundtvig had become a bishop in the church that he himself had played a pivotal role in transforming; however, while his contributions to the Danish Lutheran Church were significant, his legacy endures more notably through the system of folk high schools he inspired.

Born into a family whose patriarch was a Lutheran priest, Grundtvig was exposed at an early age to the penitential brand of Protestantism which had pervaded Denmark

since the Reformation. It held that earthly life was but a stage of tribulation through which one passed on the way to eternal salvation—assuming, of course, one's acceptance of the redeeming love of Christ. As an aspiring scholar, and later in training to enter the priesthood himself, Grundtvig struggled to reconcile this conception of man's temporal experience with the more humanistic Romantic notions which had begun to permeate European academic circles. Inspired by the latter ideas, as well as by contemporaneous international events in which Danish national pride had been embarrassed, he turned to Nordic mythology in search of context and clarity. Over the next twenty-five years, until 1832, Grundtvig labored in his philosophical mission to reconcile Romantic humanism and Christian teleology in a Danish context (Thaning 1972, 22-42).

During this time, Grundtvig was initially critical of the Danish Lutheran clergy and the rationalistic philosophy which he regarded as having pervaded the theology of the Church. He "denied empty ritual, mechanical activity, rote learning. These were a form of death" (Fain 1971). Producing a number of volumes between 1810 and 1825 excoriating the Church for its "lifeless, insincere" ministry, Grundtvig was temporarily banned from preaching and thus was not able to continue the guest sermons which he had been performing. As the Church's intransigence became clear to him, Grundtvig's philosophy continued to evolve. Again inspired by the Romanticism he encountered earlier in his life, around 1832 Grundtvig profoundly altered his conception of the relationship between the individual and Christianity, claiming that it was not dogmatic adherence which gave the biblical scriptures their essence; rather, it was human life itself for which Christianity existed. "He had previously sought to Christianize human existence but had now come to realize that, on the contrary, true human existence was a

presupposition for the Christian life; his slogan was 'man first, and then Christian'"

(Lausten 2002, 215). Or, as Thaning (1972) writes:

> [t]he earth was the work of the Creator, and the Creator created before He became a
> Saviour, for salvation is liberation of the work of creation, the re-birth of human life. But
> man is born, man exists before he is re-born as the child of God—through baptism. It was
> this discovery which liberated Grundtvig from the renunciation of life that characterized
> Lutheran penitential Christianity, from the 'pilgrim view'." (88-89)

This new conception of the Christian human characterized Grundtvig's

philosophy and informed his work on the political and cultural life of his country. His

"enlightenment of life" ethos put immediate and tangible value into the temporal

experiences of human beings. It also posited that a relationship between man and Creator

existed prior to Christianity—a concept which reaffirmed the Protestant ethic of universal

priesthood but which undercut the hierarchical structure of the Danish Lutheran Church.

Along with the connection that he drew between Nordic mythology and the Christian

teleology, as well as his Herderian interpretations of language and culture, Grundtvig's

egalitarian, anti-authoritarian philosophy of the enlightened human spirit would prove

integral to the Danish folk high school movement that his work would inspire.

Folkehøjskoler

Along with his ideas about Christianity and the Lutheran Church, Grundtvig's

conception of Danish national identity developed in a time in Europe in which the

concept of ethnicity had become highly salient. The Napoleonic Wars at the beginning of

the nineteenth century devastated Denmark, which had aligned itself against Britain.

Once a formidable military and economic power in northern Europe, by 1814 Denmark

had lost Norway to Sweden and was reduced to a bankrupt country of roughly one

million inhabitants. At the same time, the nascent coalescence of the German principalities to the south implied that Denmark was finding itself in an increasingly precarious position, both politically and culturally. The loss of Norway catapulted the German-speaking proportion of the population from less than 20% to 35%, dramatically altering the linguistic profile of the multinational state (Rasmussen 1995, 26). In the context of a Europe in which language and ethnicity were increasingly regarded as politically consequential, this was no minor development; in fact it contributed to the nationalist conflicts in the Danish-held German duchies of Schleswig and Holstein in 1848-49 (Østergård 2012). Regarding the centrality of language to incipient national identities in the duchies, Campbell (1928) posits:

> A rather sharp division existed between [the] wealthy, educated, German-speaking aristocracy and the correspondingly poor, more or less illiterate, Danish-speaking peasantry, the natural tendency being for German culture to spread northward and blot out the Danish. This tendency had not aroused any great concern in Denmark in the many generations during which it had been going on because the Duke of Holstein as King of Denmark spoke German, and German was the aristocratic and, in part, the official language of Denmark as well as of the Duchies. With the rise of national feeling, however, came recognition and bitter indignation both in Denmark itself and among many of the Danish-speaking population of Slesvig. (40)

It was against this backdrop of political uncertainty and cultural ambiguity that N.F.S. Grundtvig grappled not only with his spiritual beliefs but also with his conception of Danish culture and the role that history, language, and education played in the composition of the Danish nation.

A series of visits to industrializing England between 1829 and 1831 convinced Grundtvig of a historical bond between the Anglo-Saxons and the Scandinavians that he

had long postulated; English pragmatism and utility and the industrial achievements he witnessed "were all refractions of The Nordic Giant Spirit" he had read about for years (Lausten 2002, 213). According to Grundtvig, this type of spirit manifested itself through individuals, but only to the extent that individuals enjoyed the freedom to realize themselves *as* a people. And as he saw it, neither the Danish Lutheran Church, with its entrenched, dogmatic clergy and Enlightenment-inspired rational theology, nor the universities, dominated by scholars from the aristocracy and their Latin, French, and German curricula, allowed the Danish people such freedom. Inspired to action by his sojourn to Britain, Grundtvig began in 1831-32 to develop his idea of the folk high school, through which he would combine his spiritual conception of enlightened human life with his distinctly Danish national aspirations (Yahil 1991, 464).

Compulsory education in Denmark was established in 1736 with the introduction of mandatory confirmation into the Danish Lutheran Church, and in 1814 the Board School Act brought secular education through state schools to children across the country (Jespersen 2011, 101). In Grundtvig's view, these schools were merely proving grounds for entrances into the urban, cosmopolitan universities which he so despised. Motivated primarily by the monarchy's creation of the provincial consultative assemblies and what he saw as the need for a culturally educated citizenry (Lausten 2002, 215), Grundtvig proposed his idea for the *Folkehøjskoler* as a network of independent high schools for young men, ages 18-25, from the rural middle peasant class. The purpose of these schools was to awaken the human spirit within each student through instruction in Danish and Nordic history, language, music, and literature, thus enabling them to realize themselves as part of the Danish nation. Attendance was voluntary and there were no exams.

Moreover, there was no explicitly religious character to any of the instruction, as Grundtvig believed that a person must be prepared as a (Danish) human before he can become a Christian. Many of the dozens of folk hymns and poems that Grundtvig had composed were sung and recited in the folk high schools, but these were more national than religious in character: "God, fatherland, and mother-tongue—these were the essentials of Grundtvig's schools" (Fain 1971, 89). History was also of crucial importance in Grundtvig's pedagogy, presented through his *Handbook of Universal History* (or *World History*) as a continuous flow of the Danish national spirit from the Viking era to the present: "[Grundtvig] did not ignore the importance of an understanding of other nations as his *World History* shows, *but the foreign was to be considered largely as it explained the native*" (Campbell 1928, 63, emphasis added). Having specifically been conceived in opposition to the more cosmopolitan "elite" urban schools, the folk high schools appealed primarily to the rural farmers. Although several schools included technical courses on farming and light manufacture as part of Grundtvig's emphasis on practical action, the folk high schools never became vocational schools; they remained committed to the cultural project that Grundtvig envisioned. Fain (1971) contends:

> It can quite legitimately be argued, I think, that Grundtvig and his folk high school movement are an illustration of pietism as a factor in the rise of Danish nationalism. And it is just that curious combination of pietism-romanticism-nationalism which has made the folk high schools so unique. Grundtvig constructed a national ideology and then roughed out a scheme for the kind of school in which that ideology could be transmitted. He was vitally concerned with the continuity of the Danish national tradition. It was imperative that the young be inspired with a feeling for the national community; otherwise, the heroic spirit of the North would remain forever dormant in Denmark. (88-89)

Det Danske Samfund (the Danish Society) was founded around Grundtvig's ideas with the purpose of lobbying the Liberal government to establish such folk schools, and demand intensified with the beginning of the first Schleswigian War in 1848 (Fain 1971, 78). Put off by the anti-elite nature of the movement, the government initially refused, so that private funds had to be mustered were solicited from peasant families (Kavalier 1962, 397-398). The first—abortive—attempt to establish a school was in 1844 at Rødding in Schleswig (not coincidentally, just north of the more German-oriented Holstein). The first school to enjoy more permanent success was founded in 1851 in Ryslinge on the island of Fünen by one of Grundtvig's disciples, Kristen Kold, who would later extend the folk high school model by instituting several independent primary schools (Kavalier 1962). As to the actual number of folk high schools and their students, Jespersen (2011, 114) claims that by 1874, the number of schools had grown to 50, and increased to 75 by the turn of the twentieth century. Canfield (1965, 20) reports total enrollment of over 5,000 students by the 1890s and more than 7,000 during the 1920s. Kavalier (1962:399) notes a peak in attendance during World War II at around 8,000 students. Although they experienced a decline after the war, in 1951 there were still 58 schools with over 6,000 students.

Cultural and Political Legacies

The folk high schools were not the only avenues through which Grundtvig's philosophy penetrated Danish society. Several rural communities established savings and fire insurance associations in the 1840s and 1850s to liberate themselves from urban and rural elite financial interests, thus increasing their self-reliance (Luebbert 1991, 74-75). After the success of the folk high schools began to be realized, many communities also

established cultural centers which hosted Grundtvigian lecture associations. Through

these cultural associations, the education that students received at the folk high schools

could be more broadly transmitted in a day-to-day setting. By the 1920s, roughly one

thousand such associations existed, averaging around one hundred members each (Yahil

1991, 466). According to Yahil (1991), because the farming class was such a sizeable

portion of the Danish population, democracy in Denmark "depended on the emergence of

the peasantry as a self-conscious, constructive, political power" (467). Considering both

that the distribution of wealth in Denmark was relatively equal (Østergård 1992) and that

the Danish state, especially after 1864, was almost totally ethnically Danish (Rasmussen

1995), the emergence of a politically self-conscious peasantry in Denmark was perhaps

more feasible than in other European countries. The Grundtvigian "national cultural

content" therefore had a fertile environment in which to take root, and the folk high

schools and associated cultural centers across the country were instrumental in

disseminating such content over many generations.

> In short, the Denmark of the nineteenth century could be reasonably accurately described
> as a gigantic village, where uniformity predominated and social distances were modest.
> In such an environment, a modernised model of agreement and dialogue such as
> Grundtvig's had a good chance of succeeding, whereas it is far from sure that it could
> work in larger multiethnic and multicultural European societies.
> (Jespersen 2011:120)

Østergård (1992, 2000, 2012) argues most directly that the economic and political

mobilization of the rural farming class combined with "the late industrialization and the

relative weakness of the bourgeoisie in Denmark" to create an "ideological hegemony" in

the national mentality which continues to influence Danish political culture (Østergård

1992, 5). Citing Barrington Moore's (1966) dismissal of the use of "smaller" countries as cases in analyzing the social origins of democratic development, Østergård counters that "their relatively small size means that certain factors determining differences in political culture and nationality in nation-states come out in a more clear-cut way" (Østergård 1992, 6). For Østergård, Denmark's distinct democratic political culture—insular, egalitarian and, in a European context, acutely liberal—is the product of the Grundtvigian nationalist mobilization of the emancipated peasantry, a process influenced by resistance to elite structures in Danish society, namely the official education system and the dogmatic Danish Lutheran Church. Danish Lutheran revivalism—the Pietist movement— imbued the peasantry in the eighteenth century with populist sentiments which Grundtvigianism would later combine with the themes of land, God, country, and *Folk* to create a class ideology of unity and self-reliance (Østergård 1992, 18). Because of Grundtvig's anti-institutionalism and his emphasis on the centrality of culture and language to Danish identity, the folk schools that his work inspired were able to inculcate a considerable portion of the Danish population with the idea that true freedom is achieved only through realizing oneself as part of the Danish national spirit. From 1844 until well into the twentieth century, generations of Danish middle-class farmers were taught that they were the true embodiment of their nation's spirit and, by extension, of the democratic values which allowed that spirit its fullest expression. Their populist values permeated all levels of Danish society and "made their fundamental imprint upon the other [sociopolitical] forces such as the commercial bourgeoisie and the rising working class" (Østergård 1992, 2000).

Nielsen (2012, 77) identifies the School Act of 1814 and its "side benefit" of evening school instruction as crucial in priming the emancipated farming class for the cultural-national and popular democratic project of the future folk high schools. These evening schools combined with the introduction in hundreds of parishes of book collections from the Royal Danish Society for Peasant Education to create "a unifying educational prototype of nationalism" (Nielsen 2012, 77). Also preceding the flourishing of the folk high schools was a more politically institutionalized peasant presence in the form of *Bondevennernes Selskab*, or the Society of Friends of the Peasants, a political association established in 1846 to demand more liberal and egalitarian economic and educational policies. In addition to rural farmers, the Society also included urban National Liberal elements that saw an alliance with the peasants as politically advantageous. "The cooperation between the national-liberal metropolitan middle classes and the *Bondevennernes Selksab* gave the democratic struggle popular support and political clout at the subsequent elections. The peasants could stand tall and declare that they had contributed to fighting for the Constitutional Act [of 1849] and democracy" (Nielsen 2012, 78). Later in the century, the emancipated, self-aware rural middle class would emerge as a powerful player in national politics.

CHAPTER IV

BOURGEOIS NATIONALISM

Tivoli and Danish Orientalism

At the same time that Grundtvig and his philosophy began making inroads into

Danish political and cultural life, the urban bourgeoisie was experiencing a type of

nationalization of its own. In 1805 the Danish Romantic poet and author Adam

Oehlenschläger (1779-1850) published *Aladdin eller den forunderlige Lampe* (*Aladdin,*

or, The Marvelous Lamp), his rendition of the tale found in *A Thousand and One Nights*.

First introduced to a European audience by the French Orientalist Antoine Galland nearly

a century earlier, the collection of Arabian and South Asian folk tales had been read

among the Danish aristocracy and urban middle classes since it had appeared in Denmark

in 1758 (Oxfeldt 2005, 28). Oehlenschläger's version, however, was a Romantic

nationalist reinterpretation of the familiar story in which the author recast several

characters as unmistakably Danish and employed explicitly Danish imagery and themes

in order to reinvent *Aladdin* as a folk tale consistent with those of Old Norse mythology.

Having become acquainted with the German Romantic philosophies of Fichte, Schlegel,

and Herder only a few years prior (through none other than Henrich Steffens, Grundtvig's

mentor), Oehlenschläger enthusiastically appropriated *Aladdin* not in an attempt to depict

the tale in its authentic Arabic context, as Galland had done, but as a proxy, recognizable

to a Danish audience, through which he could portray his own Herderian conception of

Danish national identity. "Both the prologue and the epilogue stress that the authenticity

of Oehlenschläger's *Aladdin* lies in the poet's subjective experience of the tale, not in the

original. The literary project is thus presented as an unfraught reconstruction of a memory pertaining to Oehlenschläger as a person, both as a Dane/Northerner and as a poet" (Oxfeldt 2005, 44).

Oehlenschläger's *Aladdin* would become a pivotal work of Danish Romantic literature. In addition to being widely read, it was both alluded to and addressed directly by some of Denmark's most well-known literary figures, including Meïr Aron Goldschmidt and Hans Christian Andersen, with preeminent Danish literary critic and cultural titan Georg Brandes deeming it "an introduction to the whole of Denmark's intellectual life in this [nineteenth] century" (Brandes 1899, 230, quoted in Zerlang 1997, 89). Along with works like Thomasine Gyllembourg's *Den Magiske Nøgle* (*The Magic Key*, 1828), H. C. Andersen's *Nattergalen* (*The Nightengale*, 1843) and B.S. Ingemann's "Araben i Constantinopel" ("The Arab in Constantinople," 1850), *Aladdin* at once reflected and advanced a preoccupation with the Orient that at the time permeated Danish, and wider European, bourgeois culture (Oxfeldt 2005, 227).[3] The most overt and enduring embodiment of this preoccupation arrived in August 1843 in the form of Tivoli, an amusement park and pleasure garden which opened just outside of Copenhagen.

Inspired in large part by the cultural resonance of *Aladdin*, Tivoli also grew out of founder and Danish cosmopolitan Georg Carstensen's desire to import Parisian culture to Copenhagen. Combining dining, retail, and entertainment in the form of Oriental theatre, music, and carnival attractions, Tivoli provided Copenhageners with escapism against the backdrop of arabesque décor and Asian-themed gardens. The park included Chinese and "Moorish" pavilions, Turkish cafés and pagodas located along a zig-zagging promenade

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[3] Both Oxfeldt (2005, 29ff) and Zerlang (1997, 82) report that the parlors in many bourgeois households at this time were adorned with ottomans and divans and that King Frederick VII routinely "played dress-up" with Turkish robes and a fez.

(intentionally contrasted with the orderly, grid-like layout of Copenhagen's thoroughfares), and a bazaar at which individuals could barter and trade freely, a practice which remained illegal outside of the park's walls until 1857. Between 1844 and 1846, the park's newspaper, *Tivoli-Avis*, kept visitors abreast of shows and events but also instructed them on the norms and etiquette of practices new to many Danes, such as drinking coffee and smoking. In the first fourteen days of its operation, Tivoli hosted over 57,000 visitors; by the end of its first full season the following year, nearly 375,000 people had visited the park—almost three times the amount of people who then lived in Copenhagen (Zerlang 1997, 89).

Far from simply a themed entertainment venue, Tivoli was a self-aware social and political experiment (Zerlang 1997, 87). Elisabeth Oxfeldt writes in *Nordic Orientalism: Paris and the Cosmopolitan Imagination 1800-1900* (2005):

> In addition to ushering in modern circulation practices of goods and people, Tivoli strengthened its visitors' notions of a Danish national identity in two ways. As a physical manifestation of Oehlenschläger's imaginary mix of Copenhagen and the Orient, it responded to and strengthened the notion that Danes' national identity rested, in part, on their playful interaction with the Orient. In addition it provided its visitors with the opportunity to enact their national group identity as a reassuring social practice. Rather than relying merely on shared linguistic practices (in Benedict Anderson's sense of simultaneous individual readings of Danish newspapers and novels), Danes could experience their imagined community as an embodied practice in Tivoli. (57)

Oxfeldt continues:

> Orientalism, in the 1840s, was thus projected inward onto the monarchy of the past and onto the middle class democracy of the future with both practices feeling alien within Danish society. Viewing them as Oriental made them feel tolerable because the

Oriental—whether applied to political or aesthetic representation—was by nature

stripped of substance, and functioned simply as an exotic framework and fantasy space

inside which the Danes had enjoyed imagining themselves playing since the publication

of Oehlenschläger's *Aladdin*. Hence, the 1840s constituted a high point for the Danish

shared experience of Orientalism in a nation-building context. (57)

In Oxfeldt's estimation, then, Tivoli's Oriental themes, paradoxically exotic and familiar

in Danish culture by the 1840s, allayed the tumult of a society in transition by providing a

context in which social change could be mutually and unthreateningly experienced. "The

free Orient mirrored the freedom which, with the liberalism of the nineteenth century,

had become the ideological order of the day. And the fantastic Orient mirrored the

endless possibilities that opened up with that which was summed up by the word

Progress" (Zerlang 1997, 104).

Beyond simply helping to ease the Danish middle class into modernity, Tivoli

employed a uniquely Danish form of Orientalism to inspire self-confidence in a

population that was experiencing continual cultural, political, and geographical

marginalization by larger European powers. Tivoli allowed for a modern, cosmopolitan

collective relation to the new: "Instead of performing Danishness through a provincial

emphasis on one's relation to the past, wearing either imagined or real folk costumes,

[bourgeois] Danes preferred acting out Danishness by emphasizing their contemporary

relation to new and exotic impulses […]" (Oxfeldt 2005, 67). However, with the decline

of Romanticism and the advent of Positivist and Absolutist philosophies later in the

century, Oxfeldt (2005, 40-44) maintains, this playful, "empty" Orientalism would give

way to an Orientalism tied more concretely to a (perceived) geography and characterized

as "lamentably underhumanized, antidemocratic, backward, barbaric, and so forth," as

Said (1978, 150) would describe a century later. The Orientalism in *Aladdin* specifically was the subject of Georg Brandes's similarly-titled 1886 essay, in which he insisted "that it was time Aladdin—in his mind, representing Oriental sloth and childishness—be expelled from the Danish cultural and political 'home'" (Oxfeldt 2005, 21). In the vein of the Hegelian dialectic, argues Oxfeldt, "[w]hat Brandes perceived as threatening was precisely that Oehlenschläger's Romanticist Orient had not served as an unambiguous Other" (Oxfeldt 2005, 40).

Mirroring the shift in philosophical discourse and emerging scientific conventions regarding biology and human evolution, Tivoli (along with the Copenhagen Zoo) began to exhibit indigenous peoples captured or otherwise imported for display to the Danish bourgeois public. Between 1878 and 1903, Tivoli hosted dozens of exhibits featuring Africans, American Indians, Arabs, Chinese, and Circassians in their "natural" states (Andreassen 2003, 40). Often these people were "provided" to Tivoli and to the Zoo by German exotic animal importer Carl Hagenbeck, who had made similar arrangements with zoos in Hamburg, Berlin, Paris, London, and other European metropolises. While the practice of importing "exotic" peoples for public display was not new to Europe, the arrangement of which Tivoli was a beneficiary in the late nineteenth century was the most systematic occurrence and affirmed prevailing popular attitudes on race and ethnicity:

> The exhibitions of exotic people became a means of reiterating a particular world order by confirming theories of human development and the hierarchical order of races. […] By staging the exhibitions so that European audiences, regardless of class or position, could come and view the 'other' in the same way that they viewed animals, the superiority of the European race was confirmed in an audience's eyes.

(Andreassen 2003, 31)

At Tivoli, which remains open and in 2012 hosted over 4 million visitors,[4] the practice of

exhibiting ethnicities in such a manner continued until as recently as 2000 (Andreassen

2003, 38; Oxfeldt 2005, 223). From its origins as a pleasure garden, offering Danes the

chance to collectively experience the modern through a familiar yet empty exoticism,

Tivoli had by the end of the nineteenth century assumed the ethnocentrism of the culture

in which it was situated. The Other now was real, identifiable, and undesirable.

With Tivoli and with a tradition of literary Orientalism, then, the urban middle

and upper classes of Danish society in the nineteenth century experienced a

nationalization of their own. Contrasting themselves with an Oriental "Other" allowed

them a self-realization as *Danish* and facilitated the eventual influx of Grundtvigian

influences on the more established cultural and political spheres. As the nineteenth

century drew to a close, Denmark found itself on the verge of experiencing transitions

which would further integrate the nation.

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[4] http://www.euroinvestor.dk/nyheder/2013/01/02/tivoli-besoegstal-2012-samlet-hoejere-end-2011/12170915. Accessed 06 July 2014.

CHAPTER V

TWENTIETH-CENTURY DENMARK

The period of Danish history between the final loss of the duchies in 1864 and the First World War witnessed the initial formation of many of the institutions that define society, politics, and culture in the country to this day. Subjected since the eighteenth century to German cultural influences, from within as well as from without, Denmark sought during this time to highlight what was distinctly Danish (Allen 2012, 51-56). Indeed, "[o]n the basis of this conscious demarcation from Germany and all things German, the modern, popular and democratic Denmark emerged, i.e. everything Danes today celebrate as being particularly Danish about Denmark and the Danes" (Østergård 1992, 32-33). The looming specter of imperial Germany and the fresh memories of military defeats fostered an introverted Danish political culture *vis-à-vis* its foreign relations and its domestic agenda. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Romantic nationalism that had characterized Denmark's cultural awakening had subsided, but the political nationalism that would eventually embroil the major European powers would not leave Denmark untouched.

Cooperative Agriculture

As a remarkably agrarian society, even by nineteenth-century European standards, Denmark's agricultural experience dominated much of the country's political and economic profile in the decades following 1864. Several important sociopolitical developments of the time, including the dynamics between the urban and rural classes and the resulting political alliances, were preceded by pivotal events in the agricultural

sector. Following a series of bad harvests throughout Europe in the 1870s, the European

grain market became flooded with imports from Russia, Australia, and North America

(Michelson 1969, 287). Since grain was Denmark's primary export at the time, the

Danish economy found itself in dire straits and needed to innovate.

> The traditional story tells how Denmark went through a long 'crisis of grain sales' of
>
> *c.*1876–94, which stimulated a diversification of agriculture into dairy and meat
>
> production. The reasons given for why Danish agriculture succeeded in adapting to the
>
> challenges of the second half of the nineteenth century are commonly given as follows:
>
> firstly, land reforms meant that holdings were large enough to be able to benefit from
>
> new technologies; secondly, peasant emancipation meant that decisions and financing
>
> could adjust more easily; thirdly, farmers enjoyed a high level of education; fourthly,
>
> there were no grain tariffs, thus allowing the use of cheap grain for feeding the animals
>
> involved in dairy production; and fifthly, there was public support for research and
>
> research institutions. We dispute none of these. (Henriksen et al. 2012, 772)

The strategic shift toward dairy and meat production spared Denmark almost certain

economic collapse; Denmark instead began exporting meats and cheeses, primarily to the

expanding British market. Production occurred mainly through cooperative farming

associations, whose emergence and success are widely attributed (Michelson 1969, Yahil

1991, Østergård 1992, Jespersen 2011) to the impact of the Grundtvigian movement and

its cultivation of national solidarity and self-efficacy among the Danish agrarian

smallholders. Henriksen et al. (2012, 786) argue that tariffs favorable to Danish dairy

producers had encouraged the development of the industry earlier in the century than

many analysts recognize, and Østergård (1992, 36) points out that poor agricultural

laborers were exploited and excluded from the otherwise democratic governance of the

cooperative associations. Nevertheless, the Grundtvigian mobilization of the Danish

middle agrarian class had an undeniable impact on its ability to thrive. By the 1890s, over half of the chairmen of cooperatives dairies had attended a folk high school, assuming leadership positions in an industry which by 1903 handled 80 percent of Denmark's bovine population (Michelson 1969, 298).

Peasants and Parliamentarism

The influence of the Grundtvigian movement was not limited to the economic arena, however. The same values that permeated significant elements of Danish society and contributed to the development of cooperative agriculture also extended to the political sphere. To be sure, Grundtvigian ideas and values gained currency mostly among the rural, middle-class farmers, who were the subject of Grundtvig's national philosophy to begin with. There were other, at times competing, ideologies circulating in Danish society, including the more austere Inner Mission and, particularly in some circles in Copenhagen, socialism. Additionally, especially among the landed aristocracy, there was plenty of resistance to the notion of a unified peasantry (Jespersen 2011, 71). Regardless, over the last quarter of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, conflict, coalitions, and compromises on the national and international political scenes ensured that Grundtvig's legacy would persist. In the shadow of the rising German Empire, outward loss, inward gain and national solidarity based on the idea of exceptional "Danishness" would typify the development of Denmark's political culture.

By 1864, following Denmark's resounding defeat in the Second Schleswigian War, the National Liberals had exhausted their favor among the Danish electorate. They were replaced in 1865 by a government comprised almost entirely of the landed gentry (and supported by King Christian IX) which would control Danish politics for the next

three and a half decades. These aristocrats dominated the *Landsting*, the upper chamber

of the Danish *Rigsdag*. In 1866 they persuaded the Small Farmers' Movement, a coalition

which enjoyed a majority in the *Folketing* (the lower chamber), to support changes to the

Danish constitution which eliminated the direct election of members of the *Landsting* and

gave disproportionate influence to the largest taxpayers in each constituency (Jespersen

2011, 72). This effectively gave the *Landsting* a stranglehold on the legislative process,

which they and their leader J. B. S. Estrup would exploit between 1875 and 1894.

Initially the Small Farmers' Movement supported the constitutional amendments,

regarding them as a cross-party alliance against attempts at the types of (what they

considered) misguided reform that the National Liberals had undertaken prior to the

Schleswig conflicts. But the coalition had agreed to support the amendments only in

exchange for greater political influence, and after the landowners in the *Landsting* failed

to uphold their end of the compromise, the farmers saw the writing on the wall. In 1870

the various elements of the coalition united to form *Det Forenede Venstre* (The United

Left), which achieved an absolute majority in the *Folketing* two years later. *Venstre*,

many of whose leaders were graduates of the folk high schools (Fain 1971, 85), would

serve as the political opposition to the aristocrats in the *Landsting*. The conservative

landowners, who comprised *Højre* (The Right), circumvented *Venstre*'s attempts to

obstruct Estrup's policies by governing through provisional budgets from 1885 to 1894.

All the while, *Venstre* fought to establish parliamentarism, whereby no government could

stay in power without support from a majority of the *Folketing* (Nørgaard 2000, 191).

In their struggle to oust *Højre* and introduce reforms to the political system,

Venstre found an ally in the Social Democrats, a smaller party which had emerged in the

1870s as the representatives of the small but growing class of urban industrial laborers.

Between 1877 and 1903, *Venstre* and the Social Democrats engaged in electoral alliances

in an effort to break *Højre*'s monopoly on certain districts. While at first glance an

unlikely partnership, Luebbert (1991, 138-139) contends that the liberal agrarian *Venstre*

was able to accommodate the socialist objectives of the urban working class due to the

established tradition of liberalism in Denmark, on the one hand, and on the other hand, by

framing the alliance as an assault on conservatism, This downplayed the divergence in

ideologies between the parties. Hence, *Venstre* was able to ensure the success of its

liberal plan by bridging the urban-rural divide, at the time the only politically significant

divide in Danish society (Luebbert 1991).

      Højre remained firmly entrenched until 1894, when a compromise was reached

with *Venstre* in which Estrup would cease his provisional government. Over the next six

years, plagued by internal divisions, *Højre* would lose seats in the *Rigsdag* to *Venstre*, the

latter finally coming to power in 1901. This *Systemskifte* (system change) resulted in the

implementation of parliamentarism and the selection of the prime minister by a majority

of the *Folketing* rather than by the king. "The long, hard battle of the Danish farmers to

convert the economic and legal freedoms they had won through agrarian reform 100

years before into real political influence was finally won" (Jespersen 2011, 75).

      What is most important in understanding this period in the history of Danish

parliamentarism is the infiltration into the political establishment of the Grundtvigian

rural middle class. Constituting the majority of *Venstre* for much of the late nineteenth

century, the middle-class farmers contributed significantly to the liberal democratization

of Denmark. Indeed, as the single largest class in Danish society at the time, and a

remarkably homogeneous one no less, they were in an advantageous position to do so

(Luebbert 1991, 138). Via their independent civil society and their political experience

through avenues outside the state (e.g. *Bondevennernes Selskab*, the Grundtvigian lecture

associations, and the agricultural cooperatives), the rural middle class, Grundtvig's "true

Danes," had developed the political self-efficacy they needed to emerge as leaders in

Danish politics (Østergård 1992; Linde-Laursen 2007). Additionally, their collaboration

with the Social Democrats combined their agrarian interests with the labor interests of the

urban working classes, culminating in constitutional and parliamentary reforms which

reflected a liberalism more hegemonic in Denmark than in many other European

countries, including Scandinavian cousins Norway and Sweden (Luebbert 1991, 79, 134).

This alliance of camps with ostensibly disparate political ideologies would portend more

political and cultural consensus in the decades to come.

Neutral Denmark

     As the major European powers militarized during the first years of the twentieth

century, the issue of national defense dominated Danish political debate. In 1905 *Venstre*

split into two factions, with *Det Radikale Venstre* (The Radicals) breaking off to form

their own party. These Radicals, comprised primarily of urban intellectuals and the rural

lower class, had become disillusioned by *Venstre*'s more conservative tendencies

regarding defense and were more willing than *Venstre* to work on defense issues with the

Social Democrats, who advocated complete national disarmament (Woodhouse 1974,

220; Luebbert 1991, 79). While this suggestion was not widely shared, to an extent there

did exist consensus on the left—that is, among the Radicals, the Social Democrats, and

some elements in *Venstre*—that, as a small country on the European periphery, limited

military spending was in Denmark's best interest (Woodhouse 1974). Indeed, across the

Danish political spectrum, there was agreement "on the necessity of keeping a low

national profile in order to avoid attracting the attention of […] powerful neighbors"

(Allen 2012, 91). With the hubristic misstep of the Second Schleswigian War still within

living memory, Danes were by no means eager to engage anyone in armed conflict, least

of all Germany. "The vociferousness of certain military patriots, which was out of all

proportion to their numbers, must not obscure the national consensus for neutrality"

(Woodhouse 1974, 224).

At the outset of the First World War, Danish Foreign Minister Erik J. C.

Scavenius declared that Denmark "would 'show favourable neutrality' towards Germany,

adding, however, 'as far as this is consistent with the notion of neutrality'" (Blüdnikow

1989, 683, quoting Sjøquist 1973[1], 109). Ambiguous as this might seem, Denmark had

to carefully negotiate its neutrality during the war, as neutrality itself can be regarded as

provocative since neutral countries often benefit economically from regional military

conflict—or at least can be perceived by belligerents as doing so (Blüdnikow 1989, 684).

Danish involvement in the war consisted mostly of aid initiatives by the Danish Red

Cross and the Danish Ambulance Committee. The former undertook a program in which

it assumed responsibility for the welfare of German and Austrian prisoners of war in

Russia. Danish doctors ensured the delivery and administration of medicine to these

POWs in camps in Russia, in which conditions were atrocious (Blüdnikow 1989, 689).

Due mostly to the diplomatic negotiation required to perform such a service, it was often

difficult to distinguish between private Red Cross initiatives and official ministry

involvement (Blüdnikow 1989, 689-690). By the end of the war, the Danish Red Cross

had *de facto* become responsible for all Western POWs in Russian camps. In an effort to legitimize its neutrality, the Danish government exploited the ambiguity surrounding the administration of the program for political prestige (Blüdnikow 1989, 701).

For a small country surrounded by conflict between much larger military powers, neutrality was perhaps Denmark's wisest, though certainly not its only available, course of action. Denmark benefited from the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, which guaranteed the plebiscite in Northern Schleswig the following year. Following the war, its policy of neutrality continued.

> Denmark's neutrality in the First World War, the reasons for it and its main postulates, constituted the concept of neutrality that Denmark followed during the inter-war period. After settling the North Schlezwig [*sic*] question, Denmark no longer had territorial or revisionist aims. Its interests in foreign policy became much more self-directed and aimed at the protection of its territorial integrity, independence, national security, and economic interests. As a consequence, the policy of neutrality gained its continuation and development. (Shishkina 2009, 23)

Denmark thrice reduced military spending in the interwar period (1922, 1932, and 1937) and as tensions escalated again across Europe in the late 1930s, supporters of rearmament never gained any serious influence (Shishkina 2009, 23-24). The support from fellow Scandinavian countries that Social Democratic prime minister Thorvald Stauning had lobbied for earlier in the decade never materialized, and by the time Germany invaded Denmark in 1940, the country had turned so far inward that it could offer no defense.

Georg Brandes and the Second World War

Denmark's extreme neutrality preceding World War I and in the interwar years formed the basis of a strategic plan by political decision-makers to maintain both the territorial integrity of the state and the relative prosperity of the Danish economy. While

far from uncontroversial, the policy of disarmament and neutrality received support from camps spanning the entire Danish political spectrum (Woodhouse 1974; Shishkina 2006; Allen 2012). Danish neutrality, however, had origins in Danish culture as well, reflecting the introversion of Danish society in the decades following the Schleswigian conflicts. This introversion, reinforced by the Grundtvigian and bourgeois nationalizations of Danish society throughout the nineteenth century, profoundly impacted the way in which Danes viewed themselves and their role on the world stage. The ramifications of this enduring national self-perception are evident in two twentieth-century phenomena in Danish society: the stark public disagreement regarding cultural giant Georg Brandes and the myth of national unity emerging after the end of the German occupation of Denmark in 1945.

Born in Copenhagen in 1842, the literary critic and social commentator Georg Brandes would come to be known as the father of the "Modern Breakthrough," the rejuvenation and reorientation of Scandinavian art and literature in the late nineteenth century. Brandes came of age during the Schleswigian conflicts and his nascent professional career was influenced by the heightened saliency of ethnicity in Denmark which followed Germany's campaign to exorcise Danish culture from the duchies throughout the 1870s and 1880s (Allen 2012, 56). Through his lectures in major Western European cities and essays, most notably his *Main Currents in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (1871), Brandes sought to promote Scandinavian—particularly Danish— cultural products both to compensate for Denmark's diminished geopolitical clout and to counter what he regarded as the hegemony of German culture in West European art and literature of the time (Allen 2012, 60). He introduced major figures in Scandinavian

literature to a wider European audience, including writers such as Henrik Ibsen, Søren

Kierkegaard, and Jens Peter Jacobsen. In addition to popularizing Nordic culture

throughout Europe, Brandes was an unapologetic proponent of progressive sociopolitical

ideologies and advocated reform to bring about more egalitarian gender and class

relations. Ahead of the First World War, Brandes was highly critical of Germany for

what he perceived as its chauvinistic militarism. He remained strictly neutral, however,

refusing to engage in the nationalist propaganda to which many of his intellectual

contemporaries succumbed during the War (Allen 2012, 116). Instead, he championed

the causes of groups which he regarded as the subjects of cultural oppression, such as the

Poles under Russian occupation and the Armenians persecuted by the Ottoman Turks.

Until his death in 1927, Brandes continued to expound his brand of anti-Romantic

humanism in articles, essays, and the occasional lecture across Europe.

Brandes's life and legacy, both during his lifetime and in Danish historical

memory, has been the subject of much debate. Particularly among upper-class

progressives and young academics, he was celebrated as Denmark's unofficial cultural

ambassador. Later in life, as his reputation had become more established, he enjoyed the

status of respected literary figure outside the country. But within Denmark, he was

widely reviled for what many considered his international orientation, to the extent that in

1877 he moved to Berlin out of fear for his life and lived there until 1883, returning to

Denmark only to accept a faculty position at the University of Copenhagen (Seidlin 1942,

431). His left-wing politics combined with his cosmopolitanism to make Brandes a

subject of disdain for many Danes, especially outside of Copenhagen.

Georg Brandes is thus in many ways a paradoxical figure in Danish history. Indeed, his work at times reflected his enigmatic legacy: his otherwise positivist-rationalist criticism of German Romanticism was contradicted, for example, by his polemical 1899 article in *Die Zukunft*, in which he excoriated the German attack on Danish language and culture in Schleswig. Moreover, Brandes's preoccupation with liberating Danish national identity from the liberal elites in Copenhagen comports with Grundtvig's mission, but his universal humanist tone, along with the cosmopolitanism of his professional and personal lives, made him a difficult figure for many Danes to accept (Allen 2012, 100-104). Beyond differing opinions of the man himself and the contrasting interpretations of his work, however, Brandes serves as an instance of an exceptionally well-known Dane whose ideological enemies reviled him by manipulating his ethnic identity to cast him as a national outsider.

Brandes was born into a Jewish family at a time when anti-Semitism in Denmark was relatively mild (Gibbons 1980; Tangherlini 2008). A small Jewish minority had lived in Denmark—mostly in Copenhagen—for centuries, establishing a formal Jewish community in 1684. This community was granted full civil rights in 1814 (Buckser 1999). In Brandes's youth, then, his Jewishness was not a salient aspect of his identity. Even in his early professional life in the 1860s, as his philosophical and political positions came into increasing conflict with that of the powerful National Liberals, the fact that he was a Jew was rarely mentioned (Gibbons 1980). It was only after 1871, when the German campaign against Danish ethnicity in North Schleswig began to concretize the concept of Danish ethnic identity, that Brandes's Jewishness was deployed against him. Writing in different languages and publishing in journals and newspapers in

different countries, Brandes's engagement of the international community through his mission to reframe Danish identity in a more cosmopolitan context spurred resentment among his opponents, many of whom for the rest of his life characterized him "as the ungodly and rootless Jew" (Knudsen 2004, 22, quoted in Allen 2012, 97). Several books about Brandes were written by other famous Danish authors, such as Konrad Simonsen and Harald Nielsen, in which they posited that Brandes's Jewish identity prevented him from being truly Danish (Gibbons 1980). Brandes was also a popular target for *Punch*, a conservative, anti-Semitic magazine published between 1873 and 1894. "The feeling that Brandes was foreign and alien in some way," however, "was by no means the exclusive property of rabid anti-Semites. It was not necessarily even hostile. Even people such as the writer Henrik Pontoppidan, who liked and respected Brandes, sensed a difference of temperament which they attributed to his Jewish ancestry. *The explanation simply seemed so evident as to be unquestionable*" (Gibbons 1980, 64, emphasis added). Even through the Great War, towards the end of his life, his rejection of nationalism in favor of humanist universalism was continually cited by his domestic critics as proof of his patriotic incapacity as an iteration of the perennial "wandering Jew" (Gibbons 1980; Allen 2012).

As a native Dane with a high international profile, Georg Brandes professed to speak on behalf of the national community, at least culturally. But his interpretation of what it meant to be Danish did not sit well with more introverted political and cultural elites, who identified and exploited the aspect of his background which would most convincingly ostracize him. Their ability to do so was facilitated by regional geopolitical events which rendered ethnicity both comprehensible and salient. Brandes's refusal to

endorse the blind nationalism that accompanied much of the Danish experience during World War I further distanced him from his countrymen (Allen 2012, 90). While his work as a positivist literary critic and humanist social commentator has remained comparatively uncontroversial in other countries, Brandes's legacy in Denmark suffers from decades of a narrative which has derided his efforts to internationalize the Danish nation.

German Occupation and National Myth

In its quest for European domination, Nazi Germany invaded Denmark on the ninth of April 1940, just thirteen years after Georg Brandes's death. The continued demilitarization of the country during the interwar period rendered Denmark utterly defenseless, and its political policy of neutrality ensured virtually no resistance on the diplomatic level. The trauma of invasion was mitigated to a certain extent by the agreement between German authorities and a coalition Danish government which allowed for continued Danish neutrality and internal sovereignty in exchange for an assurance of no resistance to the German occupation. Not surprisingly, the political relationship in fact proved not to be a partnership among equals. Germany diverted nearly all Danish agricultural output for sale to German consumers, coopted Danish manpower for labor in German factories, stole from the Danish treasury, and, in 1941, coerced the coalition government into signing the Anti-Comintern Pact, drawing Denmark closer to the Axis (Skov 2000, 92; Buckser 2001, 13; Sørensen 2005, 296). Between 1941 and 1943, several thousand Danes were recruited to fight on behalf of Germany, either through volunteer Danish military units or directly through the *Wehrmacht* and *Waffen-SS* (Skov 2000, 92). Crucially, though, the extent of Germany's exploitation of the

country—and Denmark's own involvement in the German war effort—was concealed by heavy press censorship for the duration of the occupation (Skov 2000).

Danish resistance to the German occupation, especially before 1943, was minimal. As per the arrangement with the German authorities, resistance was legally forbidden and explicitly discouraged by the coalition government. What nominal resistance did occur before 1943 came from the political extremes (the communists and the far right wing radicals) in the form of minor acts of sabotage against factories and German military installations. With the ability to control most of their day-to-day internal affairs, and spared the experience of armed conflict which ravaged much of the rest of the continent, Danes by and large remained more concerned with avoiding personal and economic hardship. Intermittent acts of resistance and sabotage were often regarded with indifference or even regret at the loss of employment opportunity (Skov 2000, 94-95). Indeed, "the vast majority of the population seems to have supported the official line of cooperation," a fact evidenced by the general elections of March 1943, in which nearly 90 percent of the electorate voted by a margin of more than nine to one to retain the coalition government (Sørensen 2005, 297; see also Marklund 2013, 97-98). In August 1943, however, as the tide of the war appeared to be turning against Germany, the coalition government stepped down amidst a wave of labor strikes and popular protests (Sørensen 2005, 297). Acts of sabotage, while never regular occurrences, nonetheless increased in frequency and became somewhat more systematic. By 1944 Danish army officers had organized an underground army for mobilization in case "the invasion or near approach of Allied troops made its use compelling" (Skov 2000, 100). This army was never needed, as British soldiers liberated Copenhagen on May 5th, 1945. Although

resistance did escalate toward the end of the war, it was neither widespread nor politically consequential enough to drive out the Germans, who withdrew from Denmark only after defeat on their own soil by the Allied powers.

During the occupation, several key Danish diplomats had acted *in negotiorum gestio*[5] to represent Denmark abroad, most notably Henrik Kauffmann, Denmark's chief envoy in Washington, D.C. Cognizant that the Danish government's cooperation with Nazi Germany might be perceived by the Allied powers as complicity, Kauffmann worked to garner favor with the Allies by signing Denmark onto the Declaration by United Nations in 1942 and by unofficially representing Denmark at subsequent UN conferences. Much to the chagrin of the coalition government in Copenhagen, whose rule depended on its policy of appeasement of Germany, Kauffmann promulgated the notion that Denmark was a small country occupied by an overwhelming military power, and that contrary to its pragmatic political agreement with Germany, it in fact stood in solidarity with the Allies (Skov 2000, 96). A group of Danish expatriates, known loosely as *Frie Danske* ("The Free Danish"), did likewise in London. Through the construction of this image of the Danish population as unified in its opposition to Germany, these *de facto* Danish diplomats were able to gain legitimacy among the Allied powers and to act on Denmark's behalf.

Meanwhile, beyond acquiescing to German demands for labor and manufacture, the coalition government during the occupation had arrested and detained hundreds of Danish communists—a violation of the Danish constitution. Additionally, members of the small underground resistance movement had also executed suspected informants.

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[5] Latin phrase meaning "to do the business of"; used in international diplomacy to indicate that the agent is acting on behalf of the principal, typically without the principal's knowledge.

These instances, along with the number of Danes who fought for Germany on the Eastern Front, were unknown to the broader Danish population due to the considerable media censorship during the occupation. Skov (2000, 101) argues that due to this climate of misinformation—or, rather, no information—the image of Danes as united against the occupation was easily internalized after the war. Following May 1945, "political speeches, newspaper articles and a wide variety of celebratory publications stressed the fundamental unity of the vast majority of the Danes from the royal family to paupers in their resistance" (Sørensen 2005, 298). Immediately after the liberation, the occupation began to be reinterpreted by politicians, journalists, film-makers, and even historians in such a way that the (near) whole of the population was incorporated into the "resistance" movement:

> As only few people had been actively involved in resistance in the early years, a new concept of "passive resistance" was introduced to include just about anyone not actually paid by or serving the Germans. As passivity indeed had been prevalent, this put the vast majority of citizens into the resistance category right from the beginning and lent credence to the myth's claim that the whole nation had resisted from the start. (Skov 2000, 104)

Following the occupation, the government also conducted a "clean-up"—that is, a campaign to punish those who had worked with the Germans, which in itself "required a carefully contrived version of society" based on a simplistic us-versus-them, resistance-or-collaboration dichotomy (Skov 2000, 104). Close to 40,000 Danish citizens were arrested, of which roughly 14,000 were convicted and 46 executed (Skov 2000, 105; Sørensen 2005, 299).

In the decades after the Second World War, the story of national unity, sacrifice, and heroism in the face of invasion and occupation—in Sørensen's (2005, 295) words, the "official narrative" that the majority of Danes continue to accept—achieved hegemony in Danish collective memory (Skov 2000; Sørensen 2005; Marklund 2013). Early efforts to establish a counter-narrative, one which criticized the complicity of the coalition government and denied the idea of widespread "passive resistance," were ultimately unsuccessful, as texts and films affirming Danish unity had permeated bookstores and classrooms (Sørensen 2005, 304). As late as the 1990s, even historians who approached the issue critically were merely "allotted their fifteen minutes in the spotlight rather than the chance to rewrite generally held interpretations of the war" (Sørensen 2005, 314). Instead, although the official narrative has periodically been called into question, it has successfully been mobilized by vocal, elite elements in Danish politics and media on the occasion of perceived threats to national sovereignty, such as the debates over Denmark's membership in the European Economic Community in 1972 and over immigration in the twenty-first century.

A National Unity

If a nation truly is an imagined community, as Anderson (1983) suggests, then the strength of the bonds between members of that community depends in part on the extent to which members identify with one another. In turn, numerous interrelated social, historical, and political factors influence the proclivity of a member to identify with fellow members. The debate is ongoing as to whether strong mutual identification between members of national states inhibits the integration of individuals outside of the national community (see, for instance, Reicher and Hopkins 2001). However, if a shared

sense of national cohesion does indeed result in active exclusion, we might expect to find that the most exclusive national communities are ones whose historical experiences have been defined by the consistent, direct, manifest cultivation and mobilization of national unity in response to threats to the community, regardless of whether those threats are real or perceived.

Denmark is such a national community. The shift of power throughout the nineteenth century from the Danish absolute monarchy to the Danish people was accompanied by military conflicts which reduced Denmark to an archipelago populated by a community of individuals with common social norms, historical memories, and cultural predispositions. While institutionally liberal, Danish democracy nonetheless developed in the context of an ethnically homogeneous society. At a time and in a geopolitical milieu in which it enjoyed new political legitimacy, ethnicity factored strongly into constructions of Danish nationhood. The ethnic dimension in the self-conception of the Danish nation-state was inescapable.

More than simply *being* almost totally ethnically homogeneous, Danes became self-consciously ethnic. Marginalized politically, geographically, and culturally on a continual basis from 1814 until the end of the century, Danes learned to use their ethnicity as a coping mechanism, gaining from within what they were losing from outside. Grundtvig's Herderian ideology, which gained so much currency even into the twentieth century, posited that the true bearers of Danish identity were not the cosmopolitan urban elite but the peasant farmers, those Danes closest to the (cultural and geographical) center of Denmark. Yet as Danes who were products of the Grundtvigian and cooperative agricultural movements began to enter the social and political

mainstream with more frequency in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they were met by an extant elite. This elite, through their own bourgeois nationalizing experiences, had become increasingly receptive to the idea that ethnic camaraderie might supersede class and other social distinctions, particularly in an era of rising external threats. The popular movements had articulated anti-elite sentiment by fostering a civil society independent of the state. But in their international orientation, Danes grew more solidary. In this time period, then, ethnicity in Denmark served to mute concerns of political instability and cultural ambiguity. This trend would repeat itself as similar fears would surface nearly a century later.

CHAPTER VI

"IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS"

Denmark's official statistics bureau, *Danmarks Statistik* (Statistics Denmark),

classifies the population of the country into three categories: "persons of a Danish origin,

immigrants, and descendants."[6] "Persons of a Danish origin" are individuals born in

Denmark to parents with Danish citizenship, whereas the category "descendants" is

comprised of individuals born in Denmark but to parents with no Danish citizenship. A

person born outside of Denmark is granted Danish citizenship only if both parents are

Danish citizens. The population of Denmark at the beginning of 2014 was 5,627,235[7] and

of that number, 626,070 individuals were classified as "immigrants and their

descendants": 220,783 from "Western countries" and 405,287 from "Non-Western

countries."[8] Denmark, like the other Nordic countries, allows for the legal residence of

non-citizens, but requires nine years of uninterrupted residence for naturalization, as well

as the successful completion of an extensive exam on Danish language, history, and

culture (Brochmann and Seland 2010).

The label "Non-Western countries" refers to states outside of Europe and North

America, other than Australia, and New Zealand. Persons classified as immigrants and

descendants of immigrants, particularly those from non-Western countries, experience

significantly lower rates of labor force participation and higher levels of poverty

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[6] Statistics Denmark. <http://www.dst.dk/en/Statistik/emner/indvandrere-og-efterkommere/indvandrere-og-efterkommere.aspx>. Accessed 20 September 2014.
[7] Statistics Denmark. <http://www.dst.dk/en/Statistik/emner/befolkning-og-befolkningsfremskrivning.aspx>. Accessed 20 September 2014.
[8] Statistics Denmark. <http://www.dst.dk/en/Statistik/emner/indvandrere-og-efterkommere.aspx>. Accessed 20 September 2014.

(Andersen, Larsen, and Møller 2009; Brochmann and Hagelund 2012). In addition to economic marginalization, non-Western immigrants are the target of social ostracism, most especially those from states where the majority of the population is Islamic (Kublitz 2010; Kvaale 2011; Mouritsen and Olsen 2011; Simonsen 2012; Sedgwick 2013). This last group is a conflation of individuals with diverse cultural and religious affiliations and traditions from a variety of national backgrounds, including immigrants and descendants of immigrants from the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia. This conflation occurs both at the level of public discourse (Yilmaz 2006; Hervik 2011) and at the interpersonal level (Haldrup, Koefoed, and Simonsen 2006; Koefoed and Simonsen 2009). The generalizing of perceived "Islamic" immigrants and their descendants in Danish society over the past three decades has combined with diffuse negative images of these individuals to result in "the reconstruction of Muslim immigrants as a potential enemy within" which, in some respects, has become "an almost permanent, naturalized condition" (Rytter and Pedersen 2013).

The number of Islamic residents of Denmark, or immigrants (and their children) who happen to be from states with majority-Islamic societies, is difficult to determine for a number of reasons. The Danish census does not ask for any ethnic or religious demographic information. Beyond logistical considerations, however, "non-Western" residents in Denmark include newly-arrived refugees from Islamic states, but also individuals who came originally as foreign workers in the 1970s who have adopted secular Danish values and lifestyles to widely varying degrees. So, what is a "Muslim"?

Carle estimates that 150,000 "Muslims" lived in Denmark in the year 2000, with 60 mosques and 17 private Muslim schools (Carle 2006, 84). In a survey of estimations

of the Islamic population in Denmark, Jacobsen (2012) arrives at an aggregate of 231,230, or 4.2% of Denmark's total population. However, Jacobsen specifically emphasizes the problem of equating ethnicity and religion. A precise tally of "Muslims" in Denmark is thus impossible to generate. More importantly in this context, individuals in Denmark deemed "Muslim" or "Islamic," labeled either by themselves or by others, have been the target of skepticism from the Danish government and Danish society more generally, with many ethnic Danes questioning whether an Islamic identity is compatible with a Danish one. This sentiment has been illustrated starkly in the past decade and a half, not least by the Danish government's establishment of a *burqa* commission in 2009 in its consideration of legislating against this specific article of Islamic women's clothing. After it was found that only three women in the country wore the *burqa*, the government decided not to pursue the ban.[9] In this case, however, the investigation itself was more revealing than its result. As one journalist for *Politiken* put it, Danes simply "don't want to look at that sort of oppression."[10]

Foreign Labor and Refugees

Immigration to Denmark prior to the mid-twentieth century was intermittent. The Danish kingdom witnessed the arrival of occasional contingents of Jews and Roma from the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries. In the era of the nation state, Denmark hosted German laborers in the mid-1800s and, as the country began to industrialize toward the end of the century, small numbers of Swedish factory workers and Polish farm workers arrived to fill demands for labor (Yilmaz 2006, 133-135; Brochmann and Hagelund 2012, 98). Between 1901 and 1917, several thousand Jews from Russia and

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[9] *Politiken*. <http://politiken.dk/indland/ECE878265/kun-tre-kvinder-baerer-burka-i-danmark/>. Accessed 05 July 2014.
[10] Mads Zacho Teglskov, e-mail message to author, 25 March 2014.

Eastern Europe migrated to Denmark in the wake of pogroms, and in the 1930s, about 1,500 Jews fled to Denmark from Germany to escape persecution from the National Socialist German government (Buckser 2001, 9-10). By and large, however, the population in Denmark remained overwhelmingly ethnically Danish.

Following World War II, Denmark began to experience a labor shortage due to the increased industrialization and economic growth. Initially addressing the issue by entering into a common labor market with the other Nordic countries, by the late 1960s, the demand for labor intensified to the point that the Danish government felt compelled to relax its immigration restrictions to allow for more foreign "guest" workers to enter the country. Starting in earnest in 1967, immigrants (primarily men) from Turkey, Yugoslavia, Morocco, and Pakistan arrived in Denmark to fill jobs in both urban and rural industries (Hervik 2011, 92; Brochmann and Hagelund 2012, 101; Jacobsen 2012, 33). The Arab oil embargo and international economic recession of 1973 led the Danish government to cease granting any further permits to foreign workers. Jørgensen (2010, 165) reports that by this time, 6,173 people of Turkish origin had migrated to Denmark, comprising the largest ethnic minority group in the country. Most of these migrants (as those of other nationalities) were the workers themselves, but family reunification soon become a common trend as workers' wives, children and other relatives migrated to Denmark. This process continued after 1973 through the issuing of residence permits on a provisional basis (Brochmann and Hagelund 2012, 104). Throughout the 1970s, Denmark also took in refugees from countries wracked with political violence and warfare, the most numerous being 3,500 persons from South Vietnam in 1975 (Brochmann and Hagelund 2012, 112).

Having become relatively frequent by the end of the 1970s, family reunification and the arrival of refugees began to constitute contentious issues in Danish politics. Thanks to the economic prosperity in the years following the Second World War, the Danish welfare state—"designed for a homogeneous population in an enclosed national space"—had succeeded in providing a comfortable, secure existence for most Danes (Brochmann and Hagelund 2012, 100). However, as both domestic and international economic growth stagnated after 1973, unemployment rates escalated among Danes and immigrant workers alike. Right-wing political parties, which had at first supported the arrival of guest workers as an instance of the free movement of labor, began to express resentment over what they regarded as the burden these workers placed on the welfare state (Yilmaz 2006, 202). Additionally, because Denmark was now taking in women, children, and elderly persons, the character of the debate began to assume a social as well as an economic dimension. Adequate housing was initially the dominant issue, but before long the immigrants themselves were identified as being problematic (Brochmann and Hagelund 2012, 108).

Lacking a comprehensive immigration policy until 1983, the Danish government administered visas and residence permits largely on the basis of individual cases. This resulted in a patchwork of residency statuses among immigrants, statuses on which the extension of welfare-state social benefits depended. Regardless of their residency status, immigrants were guaranteed a minimum of protection against injury and illness, and immigrant children enjoyed the same rights to education as Danish children (Brochmann and Hagelund 2012, 110-111). But because many were excluded from other welfare benefits to one degree or another, immigrants comprised a particularly vulnerable social

class which was especially affected by the economic recession and subsequent unemployment. Highly salient in the national media to boot, immigrants to Denmark thus found themselves under heightening scrutiny entering the 1980s.

Unlike its Scandinavian neighbor Sweden, which in the 1970s and 1980s witnessed a similar immigration pattern, Denmark's strategy for accommodating immigrants did not include an explicit multicultural policy. Rather, at least in its initial approaches, Denmark maintained a program of institutional integration. Whereas Sweden early on altered its welfare system by creating separate administrative units and providing funding for immigrants to retain their ethnic and cultural affiliations, Denmark opted to place the responsibility for integration on the immigrants themselves, mandating in 1973 instruction in Danish language and society—at first 40 total hours for each immigrant and increased to 220 hours in 1975 (Brochmann and Hagelund 2012, 111). Thus, while Sweden incorporated diversity as compatible with its welfare model, the Danish government insisted on equality of liberal democratic citizens through egalitarian welfare-state values and limited itself to providing to immigrants the same types of social benefits that it did to ethnic Danes, albeit within a scheme of somewhat arbitrarily-determined residency statuses.

Although some Danes expressed frustration and skepticism about immigration in general, there was a general consensus on Denmark's moral obligation toward refugees (Yilmaz 2006, 202). Pressure on the government to formalize the process of application for asylum and refugee status resulted in the Refugee (or "Aliens") Act of 1983. This Act simplified the application process and allowed applicants to stay in Denmark while their cases were being considered. More importantly, it extended more legal rights to refugees

and immigrants with permanent residence statuses, including guaranteeing family reunification as a right. By granting legal protections to immigrants independent of the welfare system, the Refugee Act further contextualized the "question" of immigration as a social and political issue rather than strictly as an economic issue. This question would continue to dominate the Danish political agenda as the number of immigrants increased: in addition to creating a more hospitable environment for immigrants, the Aliens Act coincided with the protracted conflict between Iran and Iraq as well as Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon. Consequently, in 1984, 4,312 refugees arrived in Denmark, up from 332 in 1983; a year later, the number climbed to 8,698 (Brochmann and Hagelund 2012, 115).

Changes in Attitudes and Policy, 1980-2001

Used to describe laborers from other countries who came to Denmark beginning in the 1960s, the somewhat pejorative term "guest worker" was employed deliberately. It reflected the assumption by much of the Danish public that these workers, mostly young men, would fill jobs in Danish industries and then return "home" once they were no longer needed. For the Danish government, it was relatively easy to extend (partial) welfare benefits to foreign workers both because their migration into Denmark was tightly regulated and because most entered Denmark alone. However, with the introduction of family reunifications and the admission of increasing numbers of refugees, the impact of immigration on Danish society began to extend beyond the labor market and into schools, shops, and even government, as immigrants could vote in local elections after three years of residence (Mouritsen and Olsen 2011, 694). Many ethnic Danes perceived themselves as more and more frequently confronted with new ideas

regarding gender roles, family and generational dynamics, and the relationship of the individual and religion to society (Enoch 1994, 286). The extent to which these cultural differences actually constituted challenges to the Danish "way of life," and what specifically it was that they were challenging, would comprise the majority of Danish political debate well into the twenty-first century.

The 1980s thus marked a shift in the Danish immigration debate toward cultural differences between immigrants and Danes, particularly immigrants from non-Western societies (Brochmann and Hagelund 2012, 114). The traditional distinction between foreign workers and refugees began to fade. In public discourse, the collapsing of "guest" workers, refugees, and their families into the catch-all group "Muslim immigrant" created a category which included primarily immigrants from Islamic societies. "Very early the host society began to refer to the migrants and refugees no longer as Turks, Arabs, Pakistanis, or Somalis but as Muslims. This change became part and parcel of a new political trend that in no way was intrinsically related to the dynamics of migration, the migrants, or the refugees but was rooted in a debate among Danes" (Simonsen 2012, 18). The use of simplistic labels "immigrant" and "Muslim," then, erased the nuances of national origin, religiosity, and length of residence in Denmark and positioned non-ethnic Danes as just that: the Danish national community's "Other."

Particularly instrumental in facilitating this trend were a handful of right-wing political figures and their respective organizations which, while originally excoriated by national politicians and in newspaper editorials, over time helped to turn the tide of public opinion through their persistent polemical rhetoric. With only one television channel in Denmark in the 1980s, newspapers and tabloids like *Jyllands-Posten*,

Politiken, *Berlingske Tidende*, and *Ekstra-Bladet* were especially influential as forums of

public discourse, disseminating elite political rhetoric and publishing editorial letters

(Yilmaz 2006:213). An early, and vociferous, figure in the debate was Mogens Glistrup,

who had formed *Fremskridtspartiet* (The Progress Party) in 1972 as a populist party

which vehemently opposed the Danish tax system. Upon his release from prison in

1985—after serving time for tax fraud, quite a serious offense in Denmark—he and the

Progress Party began to espouse an increasingly anti-Islamic platform (Hervik 2011, 24-

25). He consistently referred to immigrants as *Muhammedanere* ("Mohammedans") and

demanded that they pay for their own integration (Brochmann and Hagelund 2012, 117).

Eventually expelled from his own party in 1991 for his exceedingly virulent tone,

Glistrup nonetheless articulated an expressly (negative) cultural perception of immigrants

to Denmark on which other politicians and elites would later build.

Perhaps the most infamous anti-immigration, anti-Islamic voice in Denmark over

the past thirty years, however, has been Søren Krarup. Krarup, an ultraconservative

Lutheran minister and editorial journalist, formed the Committee against the Refugee Act

of 1983 and in 1986 took out two consecutive ads in Denmark's largest newspaper,

Jyllands-Posten, beseeching Danes to boycott a fundraising drive by the Danish Refugee

Council. He stated that with these ads, his intent was not to discourage aid for refugees

overseas, with whose plight he sympathized and for whom the DRC's fundraiser was

directed. Rather, his campaign was directed at the DRC itself, which he described as a

"state within a state" that "terrorize[s]" the Danish government and Parliament into

allowing the "uncontrolled and unconstrained mass migration of Mohammedan and

Oriental refugees [which] come through our borders" (Krarup in *Jyllands-Posten* 1 Sept

1986, quoted in Yilmaz 2006, 302). For the next twenty-five years, as a regular

contributor to *Jyllands-Posten* and the tabloid paper *Ekstra-Bladet*, and later as a member

of parliament from the Danish People's Party between 2001 and 2011, Krarup

promulgated an anti-immigration agenda which characterized the very existence of

Denmark as threatened a) by the increasing number of Islamic immigrants, who, in his

estimation, possessed a common cultural orientation fundamentally incompatible with

Danish culture, and b) by national political elites, whose "multicultural" policies were

ensuring Denmark's demise.

Meanwhile, Conservative Minister of Justice Erik Ninn-Hansen, whose ministry

made the decisions on asylum cases and who had initially praised the 1983 Refugee Law

for its humanitarian approach, almost immediately began to call for a scaling-back of the

law. In the years following the passage of the Law, Ninn-Hansen withheld and

misrepresented information to the media about the actual number of immigrants arriving

in Denmark, as well as about the amount and destination of funding for immigrants from

the Danish government (Yilmaz 2006, 204-207). Combined with the anti-immigrant

rhetoric from Søren Krarup and the far right, this created in the Danish public a "moral

panic" around immigration which resulted in a political preoccupation with the issue

(Schierup 1994); indeed, the publication of Krarup's *Jyllands-Posten* ad and his related

antics seemed to serve as a critical juncture in the transformation of the Danish public's

attitude on newcomers (Yilmaz 2006). The rhetoric at the national political level had

shifted from economic concerns about the Danish welfare state to more holistic fears

about a cultural threat to the Danish way-of-life. By the end of the 1980s, then, "an

extremely polarized anti-Muslim, anti-refugee discourse had become firmly rooted in the

public domain in Denmark" (Wren 2001, 155). Right-wing elements in Danish politics and media had been crucial in fomenting public skepticism toward immigrants and had achieved significant success in bringing their nationalist hyperbole into mainstream Danish sociopolitical discourse (Wren 2001; Yilmaz 2006; Hervik 2011; Mouritsen and Olsen 2011; Simonsen 2012).

Due in large part to its salience in the media, immigration remained the central issue on the Danish political agenda throughout the 1990s (Yilmaz 2006; Hervik 2011; Rytter and Pedersen 2013). In 1992, in the midst of refugees and families of immigrants continuing to arrive from Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, North Africa, and later Somalia, Danes were asked to vote on a referendum on the Maastricht Treaty. The Treaty would begin the European Economic Community's process of transition into the European Union, resulting in increased integration for European member states. In a surprising outcome, Danish voters rejected the Treaty, approving an alternate version the following year only after the addition of "opt-out" clauses that allowed Denmark to retain significant autonomy in the arenas of economy, military, and naturalization. Danish voters thus signaled their skepticism toward globalization and what they perceived to be a loss of national self-determination (Hervik 2011, 41-43; see also Sedgwick 2013, 212). Also in 1993, the Danish Ministry of Education enacted the new Danish Education Act, which for the first time distinguished between "Danish" and "other" cultures in national curricula, giving unmistakable preeminence to the former (Hervik 2011, 39). Authored by then-Minister of Education and "known Grundtvigian nationalist of the German national-romanticist variety" Bertel Haarder, the Act implicitly acknowledged the growing presence of non-ethnically-Danish children in Denmark's education system,

marginalizing them by referring specifically to education for Danish children, rather than education for children living in Denmark (Hervik 2011, 39-40).

Increased public support for more restrictive immigration legislation eventually culminated in the passage of the Integration Law in 1999. The Law mandated a three-year program of integration in which refugee families were assigned and restricted to a specific Danish municipality. At the same time, it reduced refugees' "introductory" welfare benefits. The goal of the law was to prepare refugees for the Danish workforce by preventing the type of urban "ghettoization" which supposedly had previously marginalized them socially and economically; refugees would thus be more thoroughly inculcated with Danish norms and values (Larsen 2011). Additionally, the Integration Law allowed for the repatriation of welfare-dependent non-permanent residents and deliberately excluded alternative social aims like ensuring equal opportunities and creating a society of mutual respect (Mouritsen and Olsen 2011). The Integration Law therefore further oriented the Danish approach to integration toward economic participation in the welfare system and placed the onus of integration onto immigrants themselves (Brochmann and Hagelund 2012).

CHAPTER VII

UNBRIDGEABLE DIFFERENCES

From Race to Culture

By the year 2000, immigration policy in Denmark had assumed an identifiably cultural tone, reflecting the previous decade and a half of rhetoric from the political far right which homogenized immigrants of diverse backgrounds and emphasized their (perceived) common Islamic identity. Anti-Islamic and anti-immigrant statements in speeches and newspaper editorials originated with far-right-wing politicians and media figures and moved steadily into mainstream Danish public discourse, gaining legitimacy and translating into government policy. Non-Western immigrants were increasingly portrayed as a threat to the cohesion of the Danish national community. But how did this discriminatory rhetoric become so influential, particularly in a country which supposedly prided itself on egalitarian democratic values and traditions?

Several scholars (among many others, Barker 1981; Balibar 1991; Schierup 1994; Yilmaz 2006; Hervik 2011; Mouritsen and Olsen 2011) have noted a shift in Western, particularly European, patterns of "racist" discrimination since the end of the Second World War. Rather than (supposed) biological traits, social ostracism began to operate through a cultural paradigm, in which different cultures were considered concrete, internally coherent, and incompatible. This new face of racism allowed for a somewhat more insidious form of exclusion, where categorical membership of excluded persons was no longer determined by phenotypical characteristics but by religious beliefs and cultural practices.

Hervik (2011) acknowledges the traditional link in Western philosophy between culture and ethnicity and employs the complementary concepts of neonationalism and neoracism in analyzing the experience of modern Denmark. Hervik describes neonationalism as an reimagination of the nationalism that pervaded Europe throughout the nineteenth century—that is, the belief that imagined communities based on shared origins, traits, and values (i.e., nations) should enjoy the right to political self-determination (see Anderson [1983] 1991). Such communities construct themselves by using ethnic, racial, and/or cultural attributes to include some individuals and exclude others, and they perpetuate their existence by the ideological innovation and reproduction of this dichotomization (Hervik 2011, 31). Thus for Hervik, neonationalism is the contemporary face of the latent nationalism existing in many European states, a reaction to—and a collective psychological defense against—the political and cultural ambiguity wrought by increasing globalization in post-Soviet Europe (Hervik 2011, 32; see also Banks and Gingrich 2006).

Drawing on previous work by Barker (1981) and Balibar (1991), among others, Hervik presents neoracism as the primary ideological device by which the inclusion/exclusion dichotomy integral to neonationalism is supported. This "new" racism is no less complex, or potent, a concept than the "classic" racism that undergirded, for instance, twentieth-century apartheid in South Africa or Jim Crow in the American South. However, unlike the latter, the former does not expressly posit a hierarchization of peoples based on skin color or other phenotypical demarcations. Rather, although biological qualities do often enter into the equation, neoracism is more *cultural* in character and operates from three assumptions: 1) that, by nature, individuals are linked

inextricably to their culture of origin, and 2) that all cultures are equal, but 3) that cultures are fundamentally incompatible and therefore do best by being kept separate (Hervik 2011, 36-37; see also Miles 1993).

In both its "classic" and "new" forms, argues Hervik, racism is a system of social differentiation in which exclusive categories of individuals are formed and maintained based on essential characteristics that those individuals are deemed to possess. The particular profiles of such categories in a society, as well as which individuals are placed into which categories and who does the placing, are determined by the specific historical context in which the society has developed. In a society exhibiting neonationalist tendencies or characteristics, the power of the act of inclusion/exclusion which the society's neoracist schema reinforces depends on the ability to ensure that such dichotomization has negative consequences for the excluded (Hervik 2011, 38). In other words, the distinction made between groups by the society's neoracist schema must yield an unequal hierarchy of categories. "The aspect of power may be particularly clear in cases of institutional power used to control access to, for instance, the labor market, national politics, the news media, or the police force [...] but can also be enacted by hegemonic social groups" (Hervik 2011, 38). As Hervik reveals, in an attempt to strengthen the sense of national community among ethnic Danes, national politicians and the key figures in the news media have used their positions of institutional power since the 1980s to dominate the discourse on Islamic immigrants. The result has been an extensive collective perception of non-Western immigrants as absolute outsiders, incapable of membership in the Danish national community due to their cultural "Otherness."

Culturalization of the Debate

> "Danish culture belongs together with the history of a Danish people who have had the
> happiness to belong to their own country and to be able to form their own law and their
> own conditions…" (Krarup 2001, quoted in Kvaale 2011, 235)

> "Love of fatherland and home is one of the loveliest human emotions to be found, closely
> connected with honesty and decency—and an old nation state represents a home. Here [in
> Denmark] the family or people have their sanctuary and their community. That doesn't
> mean one can't have guests. Neither does it mean one cannot open one's doors for the
> needy or give them permanent residence. But if one doesn't recognise the difference
> between hosts and guests through transforming the family home to an official hotel, then
> one is attacking the family and the home and simultaneously laying the foundations for a
> large array of conflicts, which definitely will not, and cannot be peaceful." (Krarup 1984,
> quoted in Wren 2001, 154).

> "If we have an uncontrolled and unconstrained mass migration of Mohammedan and
> Oriental refugees, then we cannot be here ourselves – in any case not in naturalness and
> peace." (Krarup 1986, quoted in Yilmaz 2006, 255)

Yilmaz (2006) identifies Søren Krarup as a pivotal figure in the "culturalization of
the debate" in three ways. Through his speeches and his frequent editorial contributions
to *Jyllands-Posten* and *Ekstra-Bladet*, Krarup kept the issue of immigration salient in
Danish public discourse, helped to construct and maintain the perception of immigrants
both as culturally homogeneous and as culturally distinct from ethnic Danes, and insisted
upon the absolute incompatibility of Danish and "Islamic" culture. Krarup's tone directly
reflects—or refracts—the conception of Danish culture originally posited by Grundtvig,

referring to the "naturalness" of a people's culture derived from its history and geographical location. His rhetoric also constructs a notion which would surface both in other elite discourse and in usage among ordinary Danes in years to come: that of the Danish cultural "home."

At the level of public discourse, Yilmaz analyzes the debate over immigration in Denmark as an instance of "hegemony of the cultural," interpreting the phenomenon as an "ethnicization of the whole field of social formations" (Yilmaz 2006, 129). He argues that the arrival of immigrants in the 1960s and their growing numbers throughout the subsequent decades was accompanied by a shift in Danish political discourse from an economically-oriented concentration on the welfare system to a cultural preoccupation with incoming migrants. The Danish welfare state, which in the years following World War II had become an increasing source of pride and even identity for Danes (Koefoed and Simonsen 2007), was purportedly increasingly threatened by foreigners who reaped its benefits without contributing to its coffers. Combined with the contemporary external political and economic uncertainties of globalization and European integration, fear and resentment toward immigrants developed in significant portions of the Danish population. "In this articulation, arguments about identity, culture, and economy are woven together […] [Danes'] anxieties are directed at immigration as a major threat to the only remaining basis of their access to welfare—their Danishness" (Yilmaz 2006, 130). Faced with social and political ambiguity, then, Danes once again turned inward to their national community for reassurance and solidarity.

According to Yilmaz, aside from conflating the welfare system and national identity, what makes the Danish case unique is the complete predominance of ethnicity in

public discourse on immigration. Indeed, he regards the far right wing's "ethnicized" portrait of immigrants as having "infiltrated" Danish sociopolitical debate through mainstream political parties and the media, to the extent that by the late 1980s the entire debate had been cast in ethnocultural terms. The result was that individuals who supported more inclusive approaches to immigration—namely politicians and media figures on the left—were forced to discuss the issue in ethnic and cultural terms in order to defend their positions. This monopolization of the context in which the debate took place, argues Yilmaz, reflected the hegemony which an ethnocultural conception of immigrants had achieved throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

Into the Twenty-First Century

The year 2001 was a momentous one in Danish politics. The campaigning ahead of the parliamentary elections in November was dominated by the "immigration issue." Even more traditionally moderate parties like *Venstre* and the Social Democrats campaigned on promises of curtailing the "tide" of immigration (Skidmore-Hess 2003; Mouritsen 2006; Yilmaz 2006; Hervik 2011). The preeminence of the question of immigrants and their potential impact on Danish national security was ensured by the events in the United States in September of that year (Rytter and Pedersen 2013). By the end of the elections, the Social Democrats had lost their position as the strongest Danish political party in terms of popular support and parliamentary representation, a status which they had held since 1924 (Skidmore-Hess 2003, 89). In their stead, a coalition *Venstre*-Conservative government assumed power, supported in the *Folketing* by the Danish People's Party (DPP), which had surprised analysts by achieving twelve percent of the popular vote (Skidmore-Hess 2003, 100). The DPP's leader, Søren Krarup, was

elected to Parliament, and his counterpart in *Venstre*, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, was selected as the new Prime Minister. The latter had appeared on a *Venstre* campaign poster (see Appendix II) which featured a well-known scene of a small group of male Muslim immigrant youths shielding their faces while leaving court after having been convicted of the gang rape of a ethnically Danish girl (Yilmaz 2006, 187-188). In the photograph, the males are accompanied by a young woman in a *hijab* pointing an obscene gesture at news cameras and, as it turned out, shouting "Fuck the Danish nation!" (Haldrup, Koefoed and Simonsen 2006). Fogh Rasmussen's grinning portrait and signature appear in the corner of the poster, and emblazoned across the middle are the words *Tid til forandring*—"Time for Change."

Venstre's victory on an anti-immigration platform, vividly illustrated by the campaign poster, signaled the indisputable infiltration of the far right's political agenda into mainstream Danish politics. No longer was the overt and unabashed negative stereotyping of immigrants the sole endeavor of radical conservative political elements; indeed, the new prime minister (and, as of this writing, the current Secretary General of NATO) had successfully campaigned on the premise that immigrants, especially Islamic ones, were not welcome in Denmark. Once a neoclassical liberal whose main concern was scaling back the Danish welfare state, Fogh Rasmussen had become the leading political figure in what would be a decade of further legislation limiting the social and political opportunities of new migrants to Denmark.

The coalition *Venstre*-Conservative government, with support from the Danish People's Party, enjoyed an absolute majority in the *Folketing* after the 2001 elections. For the next ten years, the coalition government would enact legislation and policies which

made Denmark's naturalization policy the strictest among the Nordic states and one of the strictest in Europe (see Brochmann and Seland 2010). Additionally, legislation was introduced which limited the number of refugees and made family reunification more difficult. The number of refugees which Denmark accepted fell from 5,211 in 2001 to 233 in 2007, and the newly-formed Ministry for Refugees, Immigrants and Integration began to select refugees based on their "integration potential," in practice resulting in a larger proportion of Christian immigrants (Rytter and Pedersen 2013, 5). In 2005, preceding the now-infamous *Jyllands-Posten* Cartoon Controversy, Minister of Culture Brian Mikkelsen launched his "Canon of Culture" project against "immigrants from Muslim countries who refuse to recognize Danish culture and European norms" (quoted in Kublitz 2010, 108). The project was an extension of the Culture War that Prime Minister Rasmussen had announced immediately following his election in 2001. Rasmussen declared war on elite "judges of taste," i.e. "politically correct" progressive elements in the Danish public sphere like the Danish Centre for Human Rights and the Board for Ethnic Equality, which advocated for cultural expression opportunities for immigrants (Hervik 2011). The Canon of Culture project consisted of committees formed in areas like architecture, film, music, and literature charged with compiling "traditionally" Danish cultural offerings as a celebration of Danish cultural heritage.

What was most telling about the Canon of Culture project was not its initiation *per se* but the reasons Mikkelsen publicly gave as to its necessity. Characterizing "Muslim culture" as "medieval," Mikkelsen introduced the project to provide Danes with the "cultural armament" required to fend off the immigrant attack on "Western values like democracy, equality, and human rights" (quoted in Kublitz 2010, 113). Along with

comments like those from Søren Krarup and from Danish People's Party MP Louise

Frevert, who in 2005 compared Muslims in Denmark to a metastasizing cancer (Kublitz

2010, 108), this rhetoric from political officials at the highest levels made clear that, as

far as the Danish government was concerned, non-Western immigrants, simply by virtue

of the backward, illiberal religion they were perceived to share, were a threat to the

Danish society. The Rasmussen government's closing and defunding of councils and

advisory committees like the Centre for Human Rights formalized this anti-immigrant

position. Eliminating internal sources of advocacy for immigrants, Rasmussen and the

Venstre-Conservative coalition government established that "foreign" cultural elements

were in no way compatible with membership in the Danish national community.

CHAPTER VIII

BEYOND CULTURALIZATION

> As in most other countries, large segments of the population in Denmark have, and
>
> probably always have had, ethnocentric attitudes. Racism and ethnic prejudice are likely
>
> to have existed, at least latently. However, structural circumstances—the absence of a
>
> 'suitable' group of strangers toward whom these attitudes could be expressed—caused
>
> the prejudice to remain latent. In recent years suitable target populations, namely the
>
> [foreign workers], have presented themselves. At the same time large segments of the
>
> Danish population are experiencing economic and social difficulties, that is, they find
>
> themselves in a social situation conducive to an increase in prejudice. […] If a group that
>
> is sufficiently different (in a negative sense) from the majority is available, then ethnic
>
> prejudice will surface, as it has done recently in the Danish population. (Enoch 1994,
>
> 297)

In addition to public discourse, discussions of Denmark's "immigrant situation" in

academia since the 1980s have been dominated by "cultural" explanations. As the above

excerpt from Yael Enoch's 1994 article in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* illustrates, many

researchers (see, for instance, Gaasholt and Togeby 1995) have adopted the assumption

that differences between ethnic Danes and incoming migrants are naturally antagonistic

and have operated from this point of view in their analyses. Other, more contemporary

researchers have skirted such reductionist tendencies but have nonetheless retained a

preoccupation with *the cultural* that risks propagating the very essentialism that they

attempt to avoid.

  Also writing in 1994, Carl-Ulrich Schierup maintains that a tendency toward

"culturalist racialization" (or *culturalization*) in academic analyses of European

immigration arose chiefly from the tradition of cultural relativism in (what was in the 1960s and 1970s) mainstream cultural anthropology.[11] Originating first with the preeminent cultural anthropologist Franz Boas, who was himself inspired by a Herderian ethnic conception of culture, cultural relativism was reinforced by the structuralist anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss and, as Schierup argues, until "the postmodern turn" was interpreted and mobilized to create a "naturalized" view of cultures as ethnicized, internally coherent, primordial, and self-replicable (Schierup 1994, 281-285; see also Hervik 2011, 34). Such an understanding of culture undergirds the notion of multiculturalism, which Schierup regards as the liberal-professional institutional response to the "new racism" pervading contemporary Scandinavian societies. Like Hervik's conception of neoracism, Schireup's "new racism" demarcates and discriminates via culture rather than biology. Whereas Sweden in the 1970s adopted an official, systematic policy of multiculturalism in an earnest attempt to help immigrants retain their cultural identities, Denmark instead oriented its integration approach on a liberal, universalist interpretation of citizenship: immigrants would most successfully achieve social and political equality by becoming effective contributors to the Danish welfare state. The problem, in Schierup's estimation, was that "processes of a culturalist racialization seem to have penetrated the agenda of the [Danish] political power structure to a great extent, threatening to terminate in the collapse of any reasonably universalist conception of citizenship, enforcing, instead, an explicit particularist universalism of 'us' [ethnic Danes] against 'them' [non-Western immigrants]" (Schierup 1994, 286). Thus, the ideological foundation of multiculturalism—that immigrants possess intrinsic cultural

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[11] Schierup's 1994 article in the academic journal *Innovation* was largely a synopsis of his book *På Kulturens Slagmark—Mindretal og Størretal Taler om Danmark* (1993, Esbjerg, Sydjysk Universitetsforlag) which, having been written in Danish, regrettably was inaccessible to this author.

attachments which are integral to their identity—is the same ideological foundation of the "culturalist racialization" which has been employed in Denmark to justify their differential treatment.

In her article, quoted above, Enoch attempts to explain why ethnic Danes in the mid-1980s held negative attitudes toward Islamic foreign workers when, for instance, they had facilitated the escape of nearly 7,000 Danish Jews to Sweden during the German occupation of Denmark forty years prior. Why did Danes exhibit such magnanimity to one ethnic minority group and then so strongly resent another? She concluded that because of their long history residing in Denmark and their high levels of assimilation, Jews were simply not "different enough" from majority ethnic Danes to provoke their latent racism and ethnic prejudice. Islamic foreign workers, on the other hand, find themselves beyond the "normatively defined threshold" of cultural acceptability, a threshold of which "each member of the majority [Danish ethnicity] is intuitively aware" (Enoch 1994, 297).

While there is value in the idea that a historical experience shared between ethnic Danes and Danish Jews over several centuries might mitigate potential tensions between the two groups, Enoch's analysis is still problematic. It ascribes to each ethnic group a cultural essence, an essence detectable by the limits of its level of tolerance of difference. Moreover, her assumption that every society "probably always" has contained a tinderbox of ethnocentrism—susceptible to ignition under the right conditions by a spark of ethnocultural difference—is analytically sterile: ethnic prejudice in a society is simply chalked up to the trespassing by a minority ethnicity of a cultural threshold arbitrarily and equivocally defined by the majority. Paradoxically, the quality of the cultural difference

becomes secondary to its quantity, which, even Enoch concedes, is impossible to determine (Enoch 1994, 297). In the end, by positing "sufficient" ethnocultural difference as the basis of the negative attitudes of ethnic Danes toward Islamic immigrants, the only conclusion to be drawn is that it is the immigrants themselves who are to blame for their own marginalization—if only they weren't so different!

Enoch's study is but one example of a conception of difference which essentializes cultures and ethnicities, in turn reinforcing the notion of cultural incompatibility. When minority ethnic groups are perceived as fundamentally different from the majority, differences become concrete and inescapable. This has serious ramifications in the policymaking realm: injustices between social groups arising from political and socioeconomic inequalities are reinterpreted as cultural differences, thereby obscuring the true nature of the problems and confounding attempts at effective solutions. The clearer the distinction made between the majority ethnic group and a minority ethnic group, the easier this process of cultural reinterpretation becomes, and the more difficult it proves to be to escape the cultural trap.

Although explicitly culturalist analyses like Enoch's were more common in the 1980s and 1990s, more recent research which retains cultural differences or ethnic heterogeneity as units of analysis (for instance, Norris and Inglehart 2011; Dinesen and Sønderskov 2012) still run the risk of implicitly reiterating the assumption that a plurality of cultural orientations "naturally" leads to problematic—if not antagonistic—social and political relations. Hence, the value of analytical approaches such as the one found in Yilmaz (2006) is located in their examination of structures of power relations and of the connection between elite discourse and the formulation of public policy, helping to avoid

the danger of cultural essentialism. However, Yilmaz is guilty in one respect of tossing the baby out with the bathwater, as it were.

In viewing as problematic "the positive distinction between reality and its symbolic reflections in discourse," that is, the empirical relationship between the (constructed) categories "immigrant" and "Dane," Yilmaz posits the following argument which, while lengthy, is worth reproducing from the original:

> Danish immigration and racism research draws on a heuristic definition of racism—cultural or not—as a more or less consistent set of ideas that guide statements and actions. First, racism (discrimination based on racial, cultural, ethnic or religious difference) is a practice that can be accomplished by using a variety of discursive resources, some of which draw upon egalitarian and democratic ideals […] Treating racism as a coherent ideology leads researchers to look for the expressions of this ideology in discourse rather than focusing on the effects of discursive practices. Second, it has also to do with the classical structuralist perspective that characterizes analyses: racism is often analyzed through a categorization of statements into binary oppositions that are considered to be the basis of the construction of race, ethnicity and nation […] If we recognize racism as the guiding principle in the treatment of immigrants, it is not because society has become imbued with a racist ideology but because society's limits are drawn by an antagonistic relation to the category of immigrant which becomes excluded from the collectivity. In the articulation of this antagonism, a variety of elements that have no necessary relationship with one another are linked together. (Yilmaz 2006, 151-152)

For Yilmaz, the master linkage in Danish public discourse since the 1980s has been that between the social categories "immigrant" and "Danish nation" (or "Danishness"), two categories he regards as devoid of any "ontic" content and were only contingently linked together initially by the political far right, Søren Krarup in particular. These "empty"

categories, according to Yilmaz, are worth analytically little until they are connected in an "equivalential chain" of narrative elements, in which an antagonistic relationship between them is established. As more mainstream actors in the political sphere and the media began to speak of immigrants and ethnic Danes using the same rhetorical tools, the antagonism posited between the two groups was reified and became the dominant narrative by which immigration to Denmark was understood by significant portions of the Danish public. The bathwater that Yilmaz tosses out, then, is the idea (illustrated by Enoch above) that the racism of ethnic Danes toward non-Western immigrants is the coherent, systematic expression of an ideology derived from insurmountable differences.

The discrimination experienced by non-Western immigrants to Denmark is not the result of a primordial ethnocentrism latent in Danish society. Rather, most of the anti-immigration sentiment in Denmark has been facilitated by the work of specific actors with specific motives, resources, and opportunities who have intentionally constructed or manipulated social categories and the relationships between them toward their own ends. However, the proverbial baby which Yilmaz neglects in his analysis is the empirical value contained within the category "Danish nation." The precise qualities of "what it means to be Danish" are constantly in dispute in Danish sociopolitical debate, but the concept of "Danishness" is analytically identifiable and valuable in that it reflects the empirically demonstrable sense of ethnically-derived nationhood that Danes have produced throughout their history and continue to reproduce on a daily basis. Far from being simply "an empty signifier" (Yilmaz 2006, 133), "Danishness" in fact designates a positively distinguishable historical process of collective identity derivation that not only has operated in Denmark since the nineteenth century but has provided neonationalist

actors like Krarup with a receptive cultural milieu, indeed facilitating their ability to link

the discursive elements to which Yilmaz refers. Rather than a battery of reified cultural

characteristics (see Baumann 1996), "Danishness" is instead perceptible as the extent to

which ethnic Danes identify with one another in order to differentiate themselves from

those whom they regard as *de fremmede*—the strangers. "The fact remains […] that

[Danish] ethnic and cultural homogeneity, which is often ridiculed by critics as a

regrettably self-satisfied provinicialism, constitutes a cultural, historical, and economic

dimension of the empirical reality underlying the politics and debates of integration into

the Danish welfare state" (Kvaale 2011, 231).

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The Changing Face of Denmark

The case of Denmark in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is that

of a small state undergoing a considerable demographic transformation. Beyond having

had a remarkably homogeneous population for most of its history, Denmark's historical

experience as a marginalized state on the periphery of Europe repeatedly placed it on the

defensive, a position which the Danish national community embraced by adopting a

strategy of retreat inwards into what its members shared in common: ethnicity. Hence,

while not a tangible set of characteristics, "Danishness" nonetheless connotes a powerful

and ubiquitous sense of togetherness and solidarity which has been transmitted

consistently from generation to generation. Reproduced at various levels of society and in

myriad ways, "Danishness" remains at once a fleeting collective quality and a uniquely

discernable historical legacy. In a state with no significant numbers of ethnic minorities

until relatively recently, distinctions between *culture*, *society*, and *the political* have

traditionally meant little. It is only with the late arrival of groups of people with different

histories and cultural orientations that Denmark has had to conceive of democracy apart

from *Danish*.

But cultural differences do not inevitably lead to sociopolitical strife: Danish self-

perceptions and perceptions of differences between Danes and newcomers have been

shaped—or distorted—in specific ways by historical circumstances, often deliberately by

individuals or groups with vested interests. Liberal political elites capitalized on the

nascent notion of Danish ethnicity in their nation-building project in the mid-nineteenth

century and employed the same theme decades later when denouncing Georg Brandes,

whom they regarded as too cosmopolitan—that is, too willing to engage with "external"

cultural elements. Ethnic solidarity was formally mobilized yet again within living

memory, during the Second World War; when military resistance to an overwhelming

invading power proved futile, Danes bore the strains of occupation by exaggerating their

ethnic homogeneity. The solidarity and uniformity of the Danish nation in that time

period continues to be overemphasized today in popular historical accounts. Most

recently, many politicians and media elites have used the cohesion of the Danish nation

as a rallying cry in response to increasing Europeanization and globalization.

Likewise, the homogeneity of immigrants to Denmark has been overemphasized

by powerful public figures. Beginning with *Aladdin* and Tivoli early in the nineteenth

century, cultural elements of the Middle and Far Easts were simplified, stereotyped, and

diluted to render them more accessible and palatable to the Danish public. These tropes

became part of the Danish cultural psyche, creating an imagined geography of exotic,

faraway lands whose native inhabitants would be put on public display as curios later in

the century. While Danes had abandoned notions of biologically-based racial hierarchies

by the time significant numbers of immigrants began to arrive in the 1960s,

preconceptions of non-Western cultures persisted in the Danish collective imagination,

enabling the monolithic interpretation of Islam and its adherents that Mogens Glistrup,

Søren Krarup, and other prominent Danish voices would later promulgate and exploit.

Beyond the Saidian Orientalist cultural tradition typical of many Western

European societies, however, the success with which these Danish actors have

manipulated common perceptions of Islamic immigrants—and have translated such perceptions into exclusionary government policy—can be attributed to the remarkable salience of ethnicity throughout the history of Denmark. *Danishness* has been used now for a century and a half as a collective psychological defense mechanism and has most recently been employed to cast immigrants as cultural outsiders, foreign "guests" in the Danish national "home" who must accede to a strict schema of behavioral expectations based on Danish cultural values or else return from whence they came.

Certainly, not every ethnic Dane is hostile toward non-Western immigrants or views them through a reductive lens; many understand and appreciate the nuances and complexities of Denmark's immigrant profile and some are indeed supportive of accepting immigrants as "new Danes." But the problem arises when "acceptance" comes to be conditional on the compatibility of cultural traits between Danes and newcomers. At least until the most recent parliamentary election in 2011, the national discussion of the "immigration issue" has been framed almost totally in these cultural terms, where "immigrants" and their culture (in the singular) have been homogenized and presented as incompatible with the strength and security of the Danish nation. The Danish case presents the unique instance of a state in which democratic political values of a society historically have been so conflated with the society's ethnocultural experience that many newcomers are regarded as fundamentally incapable of full membership and participation in the national community. Non-Western immigrants often must jettison all semblances of "non-Danish" cultural and religious identity in order to attain citizenship, and even then, many remain marginalized. To the extent that Denmark continues to insist on

identifying newcomers primarily by their culture rather than by their political potential,

Danish society will remain a community divided.

FIGURE 1.

Denmark circa 1856, illustrating the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. (Glatz 2015)

FIGURE 2.

Venstre Campaign Poster, 2001 National Elections

Source: "Venstres visuelle fjendtlighed." Jens E. Kjeldsen, Kommunikations Forum. 08 September 2002. <http://www.kommunikationsforum.dk/artikler/venstres-visuelle-fjendtlighed>. Accessed 12 July 2014.

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