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**Is Turkey Muslim and/or European?
The construction of Turkey in Danish identity politics**

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Abstract

The way the European Commission develops the concept of 'absorption capacity' in its November 2006 communication on the enlargement strategy formally allows for the way Turkey is discursively constructed in and by the member states to have important influence on the proceedings of the negotiations of Turkish membership as well as on any final decision. Turkish accession is in this way dependent on the identity politics of 20-odd European countries. The aim of the paper is to evaluate the possibilities for Turkish membership to be accepted by Denmark, a 'critical test' for Turkey to pass. To that aim the paper investigates how the dominant representation of Turkey's relationship to Europe in Danish political debate is being framed by themes formed in Danish discourse on Muslim migration and global Islam. Inspired by Bakhtin, the paper identifies three related features of intertextuality in the discourse of professional politicians on Turkish membership in the Danish parliament, Folketinget, which point to the conclusion that the implicit framing of Turkey as Muslim may decisively hamper its membership perspectives.

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1. Introduction: ‘Absorption capacity’ allows culture as criterion in Copenhagen¹

On the one hand, the Turkish application for membership of the European Union is handled exactly like any other membership application: according to the Copenhagen criteria and aiming at the *acquis*; i.e. the implementation of the entire body of EU legislation in the new member states. On the other hand, it is obvious that the Turkish application is *not* handled like the applications dealt with so far. The EU member states *did* unanimously agree to open accession negotiations in October 2005. But simultaneously the negotiations have renewed interest in the ‘forgotten Copenhagen criteria’; the capacity of the Union to absorb new member states.² Apart from the fact that Turkey is the most populous country to apply for membership of the EU so far, the reluctance to embrace Turkish membership is most often assigned to its being ‘different’ due to its Muslim population.

The Copenhagen criteria – as well as the *acquis* – is generally conceived as ‘culture blind’; i.e. they do not demand a specific culture as a criterion for membership.³ And the late Constitutional Treaty was in the end drafted without reference to any specific religion (Adler-Nissen & Knudsen 2005:212-4); likewise its resurrected incarnation, the Reform Treaty. However, the way the Commission develops the concept of ‘absorption capacity’ in a special report annexed to its November 2006 communication on the enlargement strategy highlights that the back door – or perhaps; the front door – is still open to cultural arguments against Turkish accession. The Commission reminds that

Democratic legitimacy is essential to the EU enlargement process. Every key decision leading to a country’s accession is taken unanimously by the democratically elected governments of the Member States and candidate countries. National parliaments ratify the decision. (...) Democratic legitimacy also means a Europe which listens to the expectations of its citizens and addresses their concerns through adequate policies. For any of its policies, including enlargement, the EU has to win the support of its citizens. (Commission 2006a:23)

¹ This paper has benefited from being presented in a very early version in a panel at the conference “Turkey in Europe. Religion, Politics and the Politics of Religion” in Copenhagen 18-20 January 2007; as well as from comments from members of the Danish Ph.D. networks on political science EU studies and Discourse/Identity studies; from Bjarke Hauerslev Larsen, Henrik Bliddal and Lene Hansen. None other than myself do, of course, bear any responsibility for the conclusions or positions of the paper.

² As stated in the Conclusions of the Presidency of the European Council in Copenhagen in June 1993: “The Union’s capacity to absorb new members, while maintaining the momentum of European integration, is also an important consideration in the general interest of both the Union and the candidate countries.” (European Council 1993:13).

³ The phrasing of the criteria as blind to culture does, of course, not mean that they do not come out of a specific cultural context. They certainly do. The criteria are, however, non-discriminatory in being blind to not only their own cultural background but also to cultural difference as such and, hence, to other cultures.

The restatement of these formalities of international law and realities of European politics which still form the foundation for the EU construct is, of course, an answer to the present state of affairs in the debate in a number of member states.⁴

The implication is that the way Turkey is discursively constructed in and by the EU member states will have important influence on the proceedings of the negotiations of Turkish membership as well as on any final decision. And however ‘culture blind’ the Copenhagen Criteria may have been crafted, at least some of these national constructions of ‘Turkey’ are described in cultural and religious terms. In a number of countries the question might even end up being decided by referenda, relieving the governments of any duty to relate the decision to the formal criteria in negotiations. Turkish accession is in this way dependent on the identity politics⁵ of 20-odd European countries and each member state is in this sense a critical case in relation to the question whether Turkey will in the end become a member of the EU or not. Of all these ‘critical cases’ in which Turkey has to appear palatable, Denmark stands out on two dimensions, leading to radically different conclusions:

- On the one hand, Denmark has a decidedly pro-enlargement record (Friis 2003: 284; Schimmelfennig 2001:50; Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier 2002:51).
- On the other hand, an otherwise sympathetic observer took the infamous Cartoon Wars as an occasion to characterize the Denmark as a “country which has recently acquired a significant Muslim population, and is not yet sure how to adjust to it.” (Anan 2006).⁶

The ‘Denmark’ summarized under this one label is the result of a series of discursive negotiations. These negotiations take place in many settings, but the ‘Denmark’ appearing as a unitary actor in Bruxelles is specifically dependent on conclusions reached in one forum: The Danish Parliament,

⁴ The Commission proceeds in the report to imply that the legitimacy of the enlargement may be secured by maintaining strict conditionality vis-à-vis the candidate countries and rigour in the negotiation process; by demonstrating the capacity of the Union to further integrate while expanding; and by communicating better the advantages and the challenges of enlargement (Commission 2006a:23). As the paper proceeds, it will be clear that it is doubtful that these measures will suffice – at least in the Danish case.

⁵ I do not use the concept of ‘identity politics’ in the same way as certain proponents for US American minority groups (cf. Heyes 2002; Smith 2003:11; 2004:47) who use the label for the struggle for recognition as a predefined minority group and for the subsequent struggle for rights based on this recognition. In a post-structuralist vein I see these struggles as parts of a larger identity political negotiation over who is to be recognized as what on the basis of which diacritica and with what effect. Identity politics is, hence, a subspecies of ‘the politics of representation’ (Milliken 1999:228).

⁶ Less polite characteristics by international organizations and media reports are summarized by Nielsen (2004:15-7, ch.4, 7) who finds the picture painted too grim.

Folketinget. When reading Danish parliamentary debates, it is clear that Turkey is not seen as a continuation of the 2004 enlargements. The construction of Turkey in Danish identity politics turns out to be intimately related to the construction of Muslim migrants in Denmark (of which many are of Turkish descent) and to broader constructions of Muslims as part of a global ‘politics of civilizations’.⁷ Since 9/11, religion – more specifically; Islam – has in the Danish debate increasingly been constructed as the condensation point of cultural difference in Denmark and globally. The present Danish policies in relation to immigrants, asylum seekers and integration of ethnic minorities are founded in an alliance between overt proponents of culturalism and proponents of a liberalism combining particularism and universalism in a very specific way. The relationship between the domestic discourses on Turkey, on Muslim migrants, and on global Islam is, however, not one of direct and explicit intertextuality. Rather, the Muslim character of Turkey – and hence its Otherness in relation to Europe – is acknowledged and deemed relevant by the centrality of *themes* recognized as central to other debates on ‘Muslim relations’.

The aim of the paper is to evaluate the possibilities for Turkish membership to be accepted by Denmark. To that aim the paper investigates how the dominant representation of Turkey’s relationship to Europe in Danish political debate relies on rhetorical figures, shaped in Danish discourse on Muslim migration and on global Islam. Specifically, the paper employs a discourse analysis of debates on Turkish membership in the Danish parliament, *Folketinget*.⁸ The conclusion

⁷ The one country of comparable size expected to apply for membership, the Ukraine, is so far from accession that it is not really suited for comparison. The remaining prospective member states home to substantial Muslim populations – Albania, Macedonia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina – appear, when compared to Turkey, to be constructed as different along different lines; i.e. they are framed as Balkan or Eastern European countries whose difference relate to the break up of Yugoslavia or the transition to market economy. Anyway, the possible accession of these states have not spurred nearly as much debate as Turkey: The search engine Infomedia.dk covering all Danish print media reports more articles on Turkey than the *sum* of articles mentioning Ukrainian, Albanian, Bosnian, Macedonian, and first in line Croatian EU membership, both in recent years and in the last 10 years in total. Furthermore, the articles on Turkey are generally discussing the specific case, while the articles reported on other prospective member states often just mention the individual case as a part of a listing or brief overview of the states waiting in the accession line. (Searches combining 'tyrki*/ukrain*/alban*/bosni*/makedon*/kroat*', 'eu*' and 'medlem*'.) The Danish parliament has not had any debates on individual membership applications within the last ten years – except on Turkey's (cf. fn. 8). Tekin (2007) finds that in a French context, Turkey is represented as *inherently Muslim* – while Albania and Bosnia is represented as *forcefully islamized*. Other discursive structures may be decisive in other member states; i.a. prospects of national grandeur in a further enlarged EU; geopolitical security and alliances; various historical ties or animosities; employment and economic development (cf. Dahllöf & Kronberg 2006). These discursive structures may be found in the Danish debate as well, but as it will be argued in section **Fejl! Henvisningskilde ikke fundet.**; in Danish official discourse, if these structures are active, they are generally read through the discourses on Muslim relations.

⁸ The debates analyzed began in 2002. Only then – after the events of 11 September 2001 and in the immediate shadow of the final negotiations of the big enlargement during the Danish presidency – did the Danish parliamentarians discuss the possible Turkish EU membership. Before, Turkey and the EU were scarcely mentioned in the same sentence in the *Folketing*. Not even the recognition of Turkey as a candidate country by the European Council in Helsinki in 1999

is that the framing of Turkey as Muslim may decisively hamper its membership perspectives even if the framing is implicit.

The proceeding section 2 discusses how aspects of intertextual relations between different bodies of discourse may be conceptualized to capture three related dynamics of intertextuality as it unfolds in the discourse of professional politicians; the demand for consistency of actors, the functional role of ambiguity, and the pitfall of 'imposed consistency'. Section 3 sketches the three main positions in the Danish debate on Turkey; a 'culturalist' discourse depicting Turkey as *essentially* different; a 'civilizationalist' discourse painting a picture of a Turkey capable of *catching up* with European standards; and an 'official' discourse deferring the choice between culturalism and civilizationalism. Section 4 points out how a number of features of the official Danish discourse on Muslim migrants and global Islam – as they are summarized by previous research – are reactivated in the debates on Turkey. This leads to the concluding prognosis in section 5 claiming that the official discourse while reiterating the 'culture blind' picture received from Brussels, is most likely heading towards the exclusion of Turkey due to cultural difference.

2. Discourses, intertextuality, and the role and pitfalls of ambiguity

The analytical aim of this paper is, as stated, to issue a prognosis on whether Denmark will oppose or applaud eventual decisions leading to Turkish membership of the European Union. Such a prognosis must focus on any obstacles for the decisive actors choosing the one or the other conclusion. The development of a set of analytical lenses attuned to such a task may begin with Bakhtin as he points out that any text is in principle oriented simultaneously backwards into the past

spurred parliamentary debate. The Danish newspaper debates show the same pattern: The numbers of leading articles in national dailies mentioning the EU Turkey relationship was; 1990: 2; 1991: 2; 1992: 4; 1993: 1; 1994: 4; 1995: 5; 1996: 3; 1997: 9; 1998: 11; 1999: 14; 2000: 10; 2001: 1(! a week before 9/11 – and then: silence until May); 2002: 41 (most post-Copenhagen summit); 2003: 30; 2004: 89 (most during EP election campaign or around summit decision to open negotiations); 2005: 82; 2006:40; 2007: 32 and counting (searches on Infomedia.dk, cf. fn. 7). The material analyzed was selected by asking the search engine on the web page of the Danish parliament, Folketinget, to report all plenary session negotiations combining words including 'tyrki*', 'eu*' and 'medlem*' (i.e. 'Turk*', 'Eu*' and 'member*'). The subject was featured in a number of parliamentary debates, most prominently in the debates on proposed parliamentary resolutions specifically focusing on Turkish membership of the EU (B 175 in May 2004, B17 in October 2004 and B34 in February 2007) all tabled by Danish People's Party, but the subject also surfaced in a number of general EU debates (F7 in November 2000, F21 in January 2001, F37 in February 2003, B24 in April 2004; F39 and F40 in March 2004; L137 in April 2005; L26 in October 2006) and on the occasion of the prime minister's annual 'state of the realm' address (R1 in October 2003, October 2004, and October 2005). The full list of debates is included in the references section below. A number of quotes from politicians originating in other parliamentary material or reported by newspapers – and explicitly referred to in the parliamentary debates – have been included. All empirical quotes are translated from Danish by the author.

and forward into the future – the two temporal directions being intimately related since the reception of any utterance is dependent on the discourses socially available:

Instead of the virginal fullness of an inexhaustible object, the prose writer is faced with a multiplicity of routes, roads and paths that have been laid down in the object by social consciousness.(...) [T]he object is a condensation of heterological voices among which his own voice, without which his literary nuances would not be perceived, and without which they 'do not sound'. (...) The speaker seeks to orient his discourse, and even the horizon that has determined his discourse, in relation to the horizon of the other, the one who does the understanding (Bakhtin in Todorov 1984:72; cf. Bakhtin 1981:278ff).

If discourse is defined as regularity in the dispersion of utterances (Foucault 1972:38) a number of discourses may be analytically discerned in any material. If intertextuality means that any text, any utterance, refers to other texts, other utterances, other discourses (Kristeva 1986:36-7, 111; Todorov 1984:60; Shapiro 1989:11; Hansen 2006:56),⁹ intertextual relations between these various discourses may be conceptualized in different ways.

The discourses of any society are stratified into “a multitude of concrete worlds, a multitude of bounded verbal-ideological and social belief systems” (Bakhtin 1981:288). One of the principles of stratification concerns the

'professional': the language of the lawyer, the doctor, the businessman, the politician (...) these languages differ from each other not only in their vocabularies; they involve specific forms for manifesting intentions, forms for making conceptualizations and evaluation concrete. (1981:289).

If every utterance is an attempt, however ultimately impossible, to arrest the flow of meaning by establishing a *specific* complex of intertextual relations (cf. Kristeva 1986:41), then a central task for political analysis is to uncover the mechanisms at work in political debates (cf. Czarniawska 1998:13). The empirical analysis developed in this paper highlights three structurally conditioning dynamics of intertextuality in the language of the professional politician,¹⁰ which specifies the entanglement of past and future discourse:

⁹ Kristeva warns that “The term *intertextuality* denotes this transposition of one (or several) sign-system(s) into another; but since this term has often been understood in the banal sense of ‘study of sources’, we prefer the term *transposition* because it specifies that the passage from one signifying system to another demands a new articulation of the thetic – of enunciative and denotative positionality.” (Kristeva 1986:111). The ‘study of sources’ included in the analysis of this paper purports to live up to the standards of a study in transposition by showing how the intertextuality does re-articulate the positions of both the Turkey and the Danish Self.

¹⁰ Bakhtin suggests, in a late piece from the 70’ies, that “Irony has entered into all the languages of modern times (...) Man in modern times does not declaim but he speaks, that is, he speaks with restrictions. Declamatory genres are essentially preserved as parodic or semi-parodic ingredients (...) The uttering subjects of high declamatory genres – priests, prophets, preachers, judges, leaders, fathers-patriarchs, etc. have left life.” (Bakhtin in Todorov 1984:102). Perhaps the one ‘p-word’ left out Bakhtin’s list – politicians – have survived, if not as a novelistic character to be taken serious due to his inherent qualities then definitively as a character of social life which even the ironic academic need to take seriously due to his effectiveness. We don’t care if Julio Iglesias declares his love – but we need to if George Bush

a) The demand for consistency – i.e. regularity – posed to actors.

A first rule of subjectivity in modernity is the need to appear consistent; if you jump from discourse to discourse – if you say A the one moment and B the next – you will not be taken as trustworthy, and if consistency is deemed entirely absent you might even end up in jail or in a mental institution (Foucault 1961). Since contexts evolve it is not enough merely to re-iterate the same utterances; a measure of rationality acceptable to the audience is needed in countering new arguments, incorporating newly imported situations, problems, facts etc. Each profession has its own institutionalized thresholds and control mechanisms for securing consistency and rationality. The transparency secured by public access, media surveillance and party competition leads to the constantly repeated choreography of Danish parliamentary debates which makes this specific institution rather well disciplined and the demand for consistency rather high.

b) The functional role of ambiguity in the face of a demand for consistency.

This high demand for consistency invokes the second feature of intertextuality in professional political discourse active in the debates analysed: To be able to appear consistent in the future when dealing with issues, you do not fully control, one strategy is to secure yourself a room of manoeuvre. A measure of present ambiguity is, hence, functional to future consistency: Saying A-or-B today leaves room for saying both A, B, A-or-B, most-likely-A etc. tomorrow without appearing inconsistent.

This second feature of intertextuality in the professional political discourse is – as section 3 will conclude – at work in relation to the position held by the majority parties in Denmark on Turkish EU membership: To keep – without appearing inconsistent – open the possibility of adjusting to whatever decision taken by the EU member states may take in relation to Turkey *and* in the mean time not provoke a sceptic electorate and its self-purported voice in parliament (the *Danish People's Party* on whom the government is relying for parliamentary majority), the liberal and conservative government parties and the social democrats have refrained from choosing whether they see Turkey as irreparably different when it comes to culture *or* just temporarily delayed in the civilizational process.

c) The pitfall of 'imposed consistency' when upholding ambiguity.

declares his enmity. But even the politician cannot make declamations in blue air; he needs to relate previous discourse and take into account expected answers and re-workings of his words.

But such ambiguity, however functional in deferring the choice between saying A or B, may involve the risk of leaving the definition of consistency in the hands of others: When you refrain from choosing A or B, others may succeed in imposing their demand for a specific consistency on you by framing the choice as one of a kind where you have in other instances chosen A.

While the government parties and the social democrats insist on deferring the choice between culturalism and civilizationalism, a pronounced culturalist voice is trying to impose its choice of consistency: As the Muslims migrants in Denmark and the Muslims in global politics repeatedly fail to pass the ever higher tests of integration and identification to which they are put by the government, so Turkey must be expected to fail their European test because they are Muslim.

To be able to impose the demand for this specific consistency culturalists need to establish intertextual links to deeper, more basic, more sedimented discursive repertoires of other discursive orders.¹¹ Specifically culturalists appropriate discourses on the integration of Muslim migrants and discourses on global conflict between the West and Islam. But the efficiency of the attempts to make these links cannot be decided independently of the discourse in analytical focus: First of all, you cannot once and for all analytically develop an inventory of decisive discursive resources available in a given social context. Furthermore, even though these links are in principle contingent,

¹¹ A number of conceptualizations of intertextual relationships between discourses are available to the analyst: The surplus of meaning always surrounding and challenging any discourse may be seen to organize itself to systematically attempt the re-articulation of elements of the discourse in question by fixing their meaning in a discourse organized in a different regularity of dispersion; hence, the relationship between two discursive formations is conceptualized as a struggle over the definition of a number of floating signifiers (Laclau & Mouffe 1985). Alternatively, a regularity first identified in one discursive 'order' may be shown to be emulated in another 'order' imported via discursive 'genres' (Fairclough 2005). A third option is that a specific regularity at one 'level of sedimentation' may open to disagreements over which regularity is to be enforced at another level (Wæver 2000; 2002; 2004; cf. Foucault 1972:67). Fourthly, a number of 'basic' discourses may be constructed to differ at one level, hence allowing each to include a number of 'variations' at another level (Hansen 2006:51-4). Fifthly, a number of independent discursive or interpretative 'repertoires' may be seen to be drawn upon in the pragmatic attempts of an actor to make sense to a situation or argument (Edley 2001:197ff; Gad 2005:61, 97). The choice between such conceptualizations of intertextual relationships between given discourses is very much a choice of analytical focus (cf. Chandler 2002:195), since any instance of intertextuality (i.e. manifest or implicit reference from one utterance to another) may, on the one hand, be said to implicate each end of the reference in the same discourse since the intertextuality can only be deemed such due to some sort of regularity – while on the other hand, the re-iteration of any utterance necessarily implies a change of context (Derrida 1988a:15f; cf. Kristeva 1986:111), and then the regularity of dispersion has changed and we may analytically conclude that we have a different discourse: “Even languages of the day exist (...) every day represents another socio-ideological semantic ‘state of affairs’, another vocabulary (...) its own ways of assigning blame and praise.” (Bakhtin 1981:291). So the fixation of parts of the context which makes it possible to see the regularity in dispersion of utterances always involves a choice. Hence, a central task in the construction of the analytical strategy is the specification of the criteria for judging whether two utterances are 'dispersed in the same regularity' or not – i.e. the specific regularity – in a way suited to inform the analytic interest. Each of the conceptualizations summarized could be employed to answer the question posed in this paper. The conceptual apparatuses could, however, come up with different answers, since they are attuned to make visible different forms of intertextuality; different forms of regularity/irregularity.

their establishment has been facilitated by the discursive strategies which the government parties have employed in these fields: When you imply Islam to be decisive in determining the agency – or at least the propensity – of Muslims in *these* spheres, then why not in *Turkey*? The implication of, say, the all-trumping importance of an ever-enlarging EU is empirically not as pervasive in government discourse.

The intertextual presence of another discourse may range from “full presence” or “explicit dialogue” to “the most discrete allusion”¹² in which the re-activated discourse “receives no material corroboration, and yet it is summoned forth (...) because it is held available in the collective memory of a given social group.” (Todorov 1984:73). As the analysis in this paper will show, in the Danish debates on Turkey intertextuality works in a rather indirect way:¹³

- not by quotation ("You have acknowledged that Muslim migrants won't integrate – Turkey won't either");
- not by implication of problems by explicit assignment of qualities ("Turkey is Muslim", i.e. '...and Muslims won't integrate') (cf. Hansen 2006: 56f);
- but by the mere suggestion of themes recognizable from other debates on 'Muslim relations' ("Violence against women is a problem in Turkey"; i.e. '...as we know is always a problem with Muslims, so other known 'Muslim problems' probably also applies to Turkey').¹⁴

¹² In a discussion of Latin poetry, Thomas prefers “reference” to “allusion” since Virgil, the author behind the texts he analyzes, is “not so much ‘playing’” with the reactivated discourse as he “intends that his reader be ‘sent back’” to consult and “then return and apply his observation” to the new text (Thomas 1986:n.8). This raises the question of intentionality – in relation to this paper; primarily of the politicians – to which the answer must be ‘yes, but’: Yes, the actors behind the utterances analyzed in this paper clearly have purposeful intentions when alluding, but they do – as we shall see – not have total control over the context and consequences of their actions (cf. Derrida 1988).

¹³ Chandler lists a number of dimensions along which intertextuality could be assessed (2001:204-5). If the intertextual relations between the official discourse on Muslim migration and global Islam on the one hand and on Turkey on the other hand should be characterized along these dimensions, the picture would be something like this: a) probably not very self-conscious on the part of the government (cf. however, fn. 12 above); b) noticeable alterations of discourse; c) not very explicit references; d) recognition of the allusions by audience crucial; e) rather large degree of total discourse adapted; f) rather dependent on larger structural context of discourse on ‘Muslim relations’. Todorov implies that Bakhtin likewise moved from a concept of intertextuality as a matter of degree on *one* dimension to seeing it as better conceptualized along a *number* of dimension (1984:68-74).

¹⁴ Chandler describes a kind of intertextuality employed in commercial communication which could count as a parallel: “In order to make sense of many contemporary advertisements (notably cigarette ads such as for Silk Cut) one needs to be familiar with others in the same series. Expectations are established by reference to one’s previous experience in looking at related advertisements.” (2001:200). In relation to advertising Chandler continues to describe the function of this kind of intertextuality: “Instant identification of the appropriate interpretative code serves to identify the interpreter of the advertisement as a member of an exclusive club” (2001:200). In identity politics impenetrable codes may serve to isolate from critique from outside the interpretative community.

Even as the government parties and the social democrats seem to stick to the ‘culture blind’ description of Turkey and the problems related to its EU membership application which is known from official EU documents, the proceeding sections of this paper show that the culturalist focus on problems acknowledged in official discourse on other subjects to be ‘Muslim’ is working to make it hard for the government to avoid acknowledging a Muslim framing of Turkey as *the* consistent way for the government parties and the social democrats to proceed.

3. The Danish debate: Absolute cultural difference or civilizational latecomer?

It is a complicated question about equal measures of politics, emotions, religion and culture. (MP Videbæk, Chr.dem, B175, 1st reading, 18:20).

The central task for this section is to sketch the three main positions in the Danish debate on Turkey – i.e. a ‘culturalist’ picture of a Turkey essentially different from Europe; a ‘civilizationalist’ picture of a Turkey capable of catching up with European standards; and an ‘official’ picture of Turkey deferring the decision on the quality and permanence of the difference.¹⁵

Before turning to the Danish debate it is – as the occasion for Denmark to deal with Turkey in the first place is the Turkish application for EU membership, and since reports and resolutions of the European institutions play an explicit role as intertextual resources in the Danish debates – worth noticing how ‘culture blind’ the picture of Turkey is painted in the November 2006 European Commission’s Progress Report on Turkey in relation to the accession process (2006b) and in the simultaneously published communication on the enlargement strategy (2006a), both reflecting the ‘culture blind’ Copenhagen Criteria.

The sections in the Progress Report on Democracy and the rule of law, and on Human rights and the protection of minorities (2006b:5-22) are – true to the Copenhagen formula – framed as ‘political criteria’ (2006b:5). Whenever matters of culture, religion or ethnicity are mentioned it is as objects of political, administrative, military or judicial intervention, never as an explanation or cause in itself (2006b:7, 14-6). Even human rights violations which would in a Danish context have been

¹⁵ The ‘official’ picture is mainly painted by members of the liberal and conservative government parties and the social democrats. (Note that the two consecutive prime ministers Anders Fogh Rasmussen (lib.) and Poul Nyrup Rasmussen (soc.dem) are not related.) The ‘culturalist’ picture is painted consistently by members of the nationalist Danish People’s Party (who contributes to the parliamentary majority of the centre-right government), cautiously by members of the marginal Christian democrats, and every now and then by the odd member of the government parties and the social democrats. The civilizationalist picture is painted by members of the centrist social liberal party and the left wing Socialist People’s Party and Unity List.

next to impossible to mention *without* assigning them cultural causes are framed solely as problems for political, administrative, and judicial intervention:

Crimes in the name of honour and suicides committed by women due to the influence of the family continue to occur (...) [C]auses of suicides are early and forced marriages, domestic violence and denial of reproductive rights. Poverty, urbanisation, displacement and internal migration, and thus changing socioeconomic situation of women are the contexts within which suicides occur. Women's suicides are not always properly investigated, especially in the Southeast, Crimes in the name of honour and suicides committed by women due to the influence of the family continue to occur(...) [I]t still occurs that girls are not registered at birth. This hampers the fight against forced marriage and crimes in the name of honour since these girls and women cannot be properly traced. (2006b:17)¹⁶

The progress report does – in line with the Copenhagen Criteria – not speak of culture or religion as criteria for accession. Nowhere in the Progress Report of the Commission is culture or religion pointed out as the cause of anything good or bad. Not so in the Danish debate.

The common basis for any Danish discourse on the topic is that Turkey is different from Europe. As stated by the present prime minister:

[I]t is clear that Turkey is a society which is substantially [væsentslig] different from the traditional European societies. (PM A.F. Rasmussen, lib., US27, 12:20).

Actually, the only statement in the material analyzed in this paper that comes close to denying difference between Turkey and Europe is uttered by a rather marginal figure in Danish politics, Peter Brixtofte, a former mayor of suburban Farum for the liberal government party who was ousted for corruption charges, but who has – as one of the still standing positive achievements – a record of successfully integrating Turkish immigrants in his municipality. He is furthermore known to have commercial interests in Turkey. He claimed that

Turkey is a part of Europe. It became so 80 years ago when it had a leader named Mustafa Kemal, Atatürk, father of the Turks. He introduced a modern constitution separating religion from the state – contrary to Denmark where we have a state religion. They introduced the European alphabet, women were enfranchised, and they were forbidden to wear veils in public buildings. (MP Brixtofte, indep., R1, 2004.10.07, 13:50-14:00).

Noticeable is, first, that the implicit basis for his inclusion of Turkey in Europe is its substitution of a number of cultural practices known from other Danish debates to be Muslim with 'European' practices. So a digital division between Europe and Muslim is upheld, only Turkey is allocated to

¹⁶ Problems relating to the Kurds and other ethnic, national, linguistic, or religious minorities are generally accounted for by reference to nationalist ideology of homogeneity embodied in legal texts and public administration practices – not to Turkish culture or religion – or to cultural or religious difference as such (2006b:19-22). The chapters on Judiciary and fundamental rights, and Justice, Freedom and Security continue along the same lines (2006b:55-62). A few paragraphs explicitly on 'culture' is tugged away in the back of the report and takes up less than four lines of text; one of the three featured advances for which Turkey is applauded is the adoption of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expression (2006b:62-3). Earlier progress reports have dealt with minority rights in a language less politically correct in relation to official Turkish discourse (Özdalga 2007).

the European side. Secondly, even this most inclusive voice modifies the inclusion of Turkey in Europe by implying that Turkey is not *yet* truly European:

80 years ago Turkey took the first step towards being a part of Europe, and now they are proceeding modernizing the legislation. (MP Brixtofte, indep., R1, 2004.10.07, 13:50-14:00).

So the regularity in dispersion of utterances delimiting Danish political discourse on Turkey is that Turkey is different. On the basis of the agreement that Turkey is different, three discourses separate themselves by disagreeing at another level. The point of separation is how the difference should be described; whether the difference is seen to be (1) in terms of absolute, irreparable cultural difference between Turkey and Europe or (2) in terms of a temporary delay of a civilizing process common to Turkey and other European countries – or (3) whether the answer to this question is left open.¹⁷

First, a *culturalist* discourse depicts Turkey as *essentially* different from Europe. Turkey, according to this discourse, is a Muslim country and what ever they do Turkey will therefore never be European:

Turkey's culture in no way agrees with the cultures of the European peoples (MP Kjærsgaard, DPP leader, R1, 2005.10.06, 13:45).

Mostly the difference is articulated as one of 'culture' but occasionally the centrality of 'religion' (i.e. 'Islam') in this cultural argument is explicated and the Otherness of Muslims is constructed as more or less radical:

[T]he cultural aspect also gives rise to even more worry. The cooperation in the EU and the European democracies are based on the Christian values (...) Even though there is in Turkey a clear division between state and religion, it may very well show itself to be unstable since forces in the country are working at weakening the division, and the EU cannot include a declared Islamist state rule. (MP Videbæk, Chr.dem., B175, 1st reading, 18:25)

Turkey is not a natural part of Europe. Turkey is not geographically so. Turkey is, being a Muslim country, not a natural part of Europe culturally. So it is out of the question and it should be out of the question to imagine that Turkey could be a member of the EU. (...) We do believe that it is a problem, considering the history we have in Europe, that we shall witness a Muslim country becoming a member of the EU. (MP Skaarup, DPP, B17, 1st reading, 16:55-17:05; 17:15)

[W]e know that this is a country with an entirely different approach to very fundamental things like democracy and religion, where you have an Islamic society with some value norms different from the ones we know. (MP Skaarup, DPP, F39, 15:35)

¹⁷ Ifversen (2005) identifies culturalism and civilizationalism as the two basic discursive modes of talking about Turkey's difference in relation to Europe in a number of Danish newspaper articles from 2004-5 on Turkish accession. These two modes of discourse on Turkey are also identified in a broader European context by Rumelili (2004:44).

[T]he name of the city was, quite rightly, Constantinople, until 1453 when it was taken by the Muslims and drowned in blood, and the old Byzantine art was entirely destroyed and the churches transformed into mosques (...) [T]his very day, a genocide on Christians is taking place in Turkey (MP Langballe, DPP, B17, 1st reading, 17:20).

So the conclusion, in the words of a conservative MEP-candidate is, that

it will be wrong to start negotiating accession with Turkey. There need to be a common historical and cultural consonance [xx samklang] in the populations as is the case in the eastern and central European countries which have now become a part of our community. The same thing cannot be said about all of Turkey. (former minister Kirk, con., in JyskeVestkysten 17 May 2004, quoted by MP Arnold, soc.lib., B175, 1st reading, 17:35).

Second, a *civilizationalist* discourse counts not a number of incompatible cultures (in the plural) but *degrees of one* civilization. According to this discourse Turkey is an apprentice in relation to the universal values embodied by and radiating from Europe:

[T]he fact that the prospect was held out to Turkey at an earlier point in time – very long time ago, actually all the way back in the 60ies – that there might some time be negotiations with them, and that we have from the 90ies seriously said to Turkey that if they fulfil the Copenhagen Criteria, democracy, human rights and economic development, then we will be prepared to give a date for the start of negotiations; this fact has had a huge positive effect in Turkey (...) We have as Europeans a unique chance to support and strengthen this development (MP Holmsgaard, SPP, B17, 1st reading, 16:05)

The viability of the civilizationalist position is explicitly countered by culturalist arguments with reference to (least dramatically) the speed of the civilizational process:

I cannot understand why the Foreign Minister maintains this Utopian idea that Turkey should want to reform itself; to live through everything that Europe has lived through since the Renaissance. It is – pardon me for saying so – naïve to imagine this to happen within just 10-15 years. (MP Messerschmidt, DPP, S739, 15:30)

And (more dramatically) the very possibility of the civilizational process:

[N]either Atatürk or the Shah were the expression of a plurality inside Islam. They were expressions of antiislamism. The shah wanted, as a matter of fact, to rip the soul out of his people and remove the Muslim faith. I do not believe that one can do so (...) There is something in Islam that will inevitably strike through (MP Langballe, DPP, in Pedersen 2006:11).

Thirdly, an *official* discourse has as its *raison d'être* to postpone the answer to the question whether Turkey is irrevocably culturally Other or just a civilizational latecomer. This third strand of discourse articulates more nakedly what the two first strands have in common: It states that (present day) Turkey is different from Europe. But it leaves open, whether Turkey is doomed to stay different or Turkey may become European at a later point in time:¹⁸

¹⁸ Bliddal & Larsen (2006) labels this third discourse 'official scepticism'. In addition to the three discourses mentioned so far they identify in Austrian and Danish parliamentary and media debates a fourth (pointing out Turkey as a threat to the integration process of Europe by widening beyond the scope of deepening) and a fifth (depicting Turkey as a necessary element in the completion of the multiculturalist project of Europe). These two discourses are only marginally represented in Danish discourse (2006:73, 81) and scarcely in Danish parliamentary discourse.

[T]he answer is, if one asks if the Turkey we know today may become a member of the EU, a very clear answer: No, the Turkey we know today cannot. The next question one may pose is: Well, can Turkey in 15-20 years become member of the EU? To that question one has to answer that no one today is in a position to say anything about that because it depends entirely on what will happen in the course of the 10, 15, 20 years, how ever long time it may take. One need to realize that if Turkey at some point in time gets closer to being qualified for membership of the EU it is because Turkey have in the meantime introduced 80.000 pages of EU legislation in its national legislation and we will, hence, in any case be speaking of an entirely different Turkey than the one we know today. It will, if I may say so, be a European Turkey. (PM A.F. Rasmussen, lib., R1, 2005.10.06, 19:50-19:55)

This official discourse in a sense articulates the tenets of the civilizationalist mode of speaking depicting Europe as a forceful civilizing agent:

[I] believe that most people sensibly realize that it will be a huge advantage to support the forces in Turkey who want a modern Turkey; who want reforms in Turkey; and who want a Turkey oriented towards the West cooperating with Europe. (PM A.F. Rasmussen, lib., R1, 2005.10.06, 19:50-19:55)

It is exclusively [sic -/upg] the prospect of becoming – in many years from now – a member of the European Union that creates this development [of democracy and human rights]. (MP Barfoed, con., B175, 2nd reading, 16:35)

But the civilizationalist optimism on behalf of Turkey is carefully tempered in official discourse:

We are, though, responsible for how things will be in Europe in 10-15 years and the decisions we make today (...) have effect many, many years to come. I believe it to be very important for Europe to have a European Turkey. (...) But it is clear that it presupposes a Turkey (...) sharing those values with us. (MFA Møller, con., S739, 15:30)

After all; Turkey may end up on being beyond the reach of civilization:

I suppose that we all agree that we in Denmark and Europe have a common interest in Turkey developing into a fully fledged democratic society, a humanist society and a society firmly anchored in the Western, European world, instead of anchoring in fundamentalist forces elsewhere? (MP Barfoed, con., B175, 2nd reading, 16:35)

To sum up; the official discourse on Turkey is that ‘we’ – Denmark, the EU and the West – should do everything in our power to let civilization reach Turkey; but in the end, Turkey may turn out culturally Other anyway. The conclusion is, when talking of Turkey, decidedly left open. This ambiguity makes it possible for the government to keep open the possibility of adjusting to whatever decision taken by the EU member states in relation to Turkey without being judged to be inconsistent *and* in the mean time not provoke a sceptic electorate and its self-purported voice in parliament; the DPP on which the government relies for its parliamentary majority.

A parallel openness is not as decidedly articulated by the government in debates on Muslim migrants and global Islam. Their discourses in these debates may, when the chips are down, be expected to assert a structuring effect on the construction of Turkey, not least since the DPP is ready to impose a consistency on the government between the official discourses on Turkey and on other

‘Muslim questions’. The next section analyses how themes from these debates are present in the debates on Turkey in ways that indirectly frame Turkey as Muslim and, hence, irreparably Other.

4. The Muslimization of Turkey in official Danish discourse

As described in section 3, official Danish discourse on Turkey in relation to the EU stays clear of deciding whether Turkey is irrevocably culturally Other or just a civilizational latecomer. This section takes its departure from the way in which dominant discourses on a number of related issues *have* made that choice in the framing of Muslims in general. This suggests that this framing of Muslims will most likely be decisive for the choice ‘at the end of indecision’ in relation to Turkey. The claim is not that the choice is already made or that it is necessary in any absolute sense. It is of course possible that the Danish government wakes up one morning, takes a look at Turkey (and at the Danish public opinion), and concludes that it sees a European country. The point to be made here is that – taking into consideration the shapes of the construction of Muslims in general – this is not very likely.

The sensitive point in this argument is, of course, whether Turkey is already framed as a Muslim country. If, when reading official discourse, you look for utterances explicitly referring to Turkey as Muslim or to its difference as being of an absolute cultural or religious quality, you do not find many. Before taking office, however, the present prime minister was quoted:

I cannot imagine Turkey being a member of the EU. Politically, economically and culturally it would be a stranger [fremmed fugl] in the cooperation, and a Turkish membership could make the cooperation unstable. (later PM A.F. Rasmussen, lib., in Larsen 2000:227)

As prime minister he – with the responsibilities of the office – assumed the official discourse of wait-and-see:

[S]ince Turkey had become a candidate country it should of course be treated as other candidate countries. (PM A.F. Rasmussen, lib., in Larsen 2004:353)¹⁹

He did, however, give the official discourse a decidedly culturalist twist as he explained his stance during the 2002 EU enlargement summit in Copenhagen:

¹⁹ Bliddal & Larsen (2006) notes the change of wording between the two editions of the biography of the prime minister as a change of conviction (cf. Larsen 2000; 2004). The change has been noted in the debate as well, leading a culturalist to make this more general comment: "Well, there has been a tendency for politicians in opposition – broadly, in other EU member states as well – to agree that Turkish EU membership was not such a good idea, and that therefore you've talked about perhaps even 50 years out in the future etc., but as soon as you're in government, you get a different opinion; then it's the new politicians in opposition who are sceptic." (MP Dahl, DPP, F21, 16:25).

[T]he EU had in 1999 decided that Turkey should be a candidate country. My view was that it – given that this decision was taken – could have damaging political consequences in Turkey if one were suddenly to change that. My fear was that it could prepare the ground for extremist Islamist forces in Turkey. (PM A.F. Rasmussen, lib., in Larsen 2004:353-5)

In this way the geopolitical position of Turkey is read through the lenses of a global conflict between the West and Islam:

[W]e do, though, all have an interest in keeping Turkey on a pro-Western course and in avoiding that Turkey turns to the East – or said straight forwardly, to secure that the forces in Turkey that wishes Turkey to be anchored in NATO and in any case to cooperate closely with the EU, are strengthened. (PM A.F. Rasmussen, lib., US27, 12:20).

[W]e need to have a discussion of security politics and we need to include a security political aspect in the question. Because I would rather not that Turkey turns to another part of the world, turns to Islam, once again turns to sharia legislation, at a point in time where Turkey has after all gotten so far, as it has. (MP Rohde, lib., F18, 10:30-10:35)

So according to official discourse it was in fact the Muslim element of Turkish identity which constituted the reason for *negotiating*. But this does emphatically *not* equal a reason for actually *letting* Turkey in the EU. One would rather expect the opposite when the general othering of Muslims is taken into account – not least when a number of the specific issues on which Muslims are othered recur in the dominant discourse on Turkish membership.

Before turning to the specific links made from other discourses on 'Muslim relations', it should be noted, how the overall framework of reference for the critical attitude to Turkey in the official Danish discourse remains the Copenhagen Criteria and the EU *acquis* – but even so, the specific points of contention listed are all repetitions from the discourses othering Muslims. A quote from a liberal MEP announcing her defection from supporting Turkish membership as a reaction to the Commission progress report briefly summarized in section 3 is illustrative:

First of all there are marked lacks in relation to freedom of religion and speech in Turkey, i.a. in relation to article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code which prohibits utterances critical of the Turkish state. An article which the EU countries have – out of consideration for the freedom of speech – in no uncertain terms called on the Turkish government to change. Without success, however. Lately, the Turkish prime minister, Erdogan has refused to meet the pope, as Erdogan was supposedly of the opinion that the pope had spoken out as a critic of Islam. That did not fall on fertile Turkish ground. Examples like these make it difficult to see a community of values between the member states of the EU and the Turkish state at the moment. The other main problem concerns human rights. Violence against women seems, among other things, to be an area in which the launch of a crackdown is needed. In addition one still hears a lot of complaints about torture in Turkish prisons and especially of the difficulties of the Kurdish minority. Human rights seem at times to be a vague concept in Turkish terminology. That is a problem since human rights are not an area where we can or will compromise. Third comes the case of the divided Cyprus. (Riis-Jørgensen 2006)

Of a choice of basic elements of democracy, political rights are featured – not civil-military relations or independence of the judiciary. Of a choice of political rights, freedom of religion and speech is highlighted – and they are highlighted in connection with each other so that the freedom

of speech problematics involves religion as in the Cartoon Wars, fresh in memory. The religious group whose freedoms are implied as infringed is Christian – not for instance the Alevi. Of a choice of infringements of individual and collective rights, the rights of women – known from the Danish debate on immigrants as an issue with Muslims – is featured before i.a. torture and the rights of the Kurdish minority. By selecting specific ‘problems’ and words, indirect intertextual references are made between the issue of Turkish EU membership and that of Our relation to Muslims.

To see how this selection mechanism works – and to substantiate that the selected ‘problems’ are constructed to be of importance – the paper will concentrate on a peculiar construction of the relationship between universality and particularity which has been observed in Danish discourse when othering the Muslim immigrant and global Islam (Mouritsen 2006; Hedetoft 2006a; Lægård 2007).

The point that human rights and civilizational standards have historically been defined and promoted by the West is not novel (Hedetoft 2006a:413). Like all universalisms they depart from a particular place and time (Laclau 2002; Mouritsen 2006:71). Neither this fact – nor the particularist criticism based on it – has, however, been able to disarm the considerable illocutionary effect world (sic) wide from terming these rights and standards *human* and *universal*. Danish debates on ‘Muslim relations’ – i.e. a number of partially connected debates on migration, integration, terrorism, and rights and freedoms – have been found to articulate Muslims as radically Other (Mouritsen 2006:88) through a construction of specific values as being simultaneously universal and specifically Danish.²⁰

When representatives of the government parties are speaking of these issues, a number of cultural traits are, hence, excluded from what is Danish. As Hedetoft summarizes the general feeling of the integration policies: “The immigrants (...) are the problem – not us.” (2006a). These negatively

²⁰ Mouritsen (2006) identifies three strands of discourse on multiculturalism in relation to Muslims: First, the strand of discourse summarized in this section which he, in the framework of a discussion of Danish political liberalism, labels *particular universalism*. Secondly, a *culturalist* strand arguing the right of (in principle any people but in this instance) Danes to have their own culture (2006:76-8). Thirdly, what could be labeled a *functionalist* strand of discourse arguing that the homogeneity of (in principle any culture but in this instance) Danish culture is the prerequisite for stability and solidarity (2006:78). Hedetoft identifies a complex discursive setup in official Danish policy, media and public opinion (2006a:412) combining the same elements: The basic premises are, according to Hedetoft, laid out by culturalism but the complex includes elements of functionalism (2006a:407) and particular universalism (2003:3; 2006a:398, 401, 407). Lægård (2007) discusses the particular universalism of Danish liberalism as a form of nationalism. Wren (2001) and Hervik (2004:247) find culturalism to be dominating in Danish media and popular discourse. Haldrup et al. (2006) find culturalist popular discourse to be mutually constitutive with a number of everyday practices of othering Muslims which they label *practical orientalism*.

valued cultural traits could have been ascribed to the ethnicity or race of their practitioners, to the level of their socioeconomic development, or even to individual frailty or fallibility. But they are instead linked to religion – or rather to one religion; Islam – as *the* master variable explaining all vices. As one researcher concluded on a recent electoral survey; "Islam has increasingly become a point of condensation for animosity against strangers." (Tobiassen 2003:361, my transl.).²¹

This tendency to articulate problems and issues around Islam does not limit itself to policies relating to immigration and integration of minorities. Through the concept of *kulturkamp* or 'value struggle' the policies relating to Muslims in Denmark and on the global scale is articulated (cf. Mouritsen 2006:86). One example is the way prime minister Rasmussen in his 'state of the realm' address of 2006 links the section on global affairs with the section on integration of immigrants: Rasmussen moves from the war on terror, the interventions to promote democracy, and the need to counter radicalization in Africa – via noting that "The global value struggle is taking place in Denmark too" – to a list of Danish values, with which Islam seem to have issues – before proceeding directly to labor market integration of minorities (Rasmussen, R1, 2006.10.03). Hence, the post 9/11 global 'politics of civilization'²² and the War on Terror frames and underpins both the *practical orientalism* of everyday life (Haldrup et al. 2006) and the 'particularist universalism' which this section will turn to in a moment (Hedetoft 2006a:413; 2003:3; Haldrup et al. 2006:183; Gad 2006b:20ff; cf. Sheikh & Wæver 2005:32).

Proponents of integration – of immigrants in Denmark and of Turkey in Europe – do protest against the way Islam, migrants and security concerns are linked:

It is of historical importance that Turkey may now open the negotiations on its accession which have been prepared for 40 years. (...) Despite difference, despite religion, democratic principles are valid for the community which the EU is. (...) We know that forces in Denmark and in the Folketing want to hinder this development. Some members of the Folketing are building an image of an enemy of human beings in the Danish society and in Europe by derogatory and insulting terms of abuse aimed, among others, at Muslims. (...) These are forces which are contributing to making integration a very, very difficult cause, also in Denmark. (MP Jelled, soc.lib. leader, R1, 2005.10.06, 16:05-16:25)

²¹ Similar observations are made based on analyses of variously located discourse by Mouritsen (2006:75-6, 83, 88); Sheikh & Wæver (2005:31); Wren (2001:147, 156); Haldrup et al. (2006:174, 183); Thomsen (2006:188); Simonsen (2006[2004]:8, 14, 173ff); Hauge (2003:54); Fenger Grøn & Grøndahl (2004: 15, 179; 208f) – in contrast to the diacritica found characterizing foreigners until the 90ies (Jensen 1999a&b).

²² As should be clear by now, I see the present 'politics of civilizations', not as a battle between religiously predefined civilizations, but as a subspecies of 'identity politics' as defined in fn. 5. I see these struggles as parts of a larger identity political negotiation over in- and exclusions. I, hence, agree with the widespread view that Huntington (1993) has been less analyzing or prophesizing than evoking – civilizations as well as clashes (cf. Sheikh & Wæver 2005:5).

But apart from demonstrating the irony of the protest reproducing the link protested against (cf. Butler 1997:130), the quote serves merely to demonstrate how easily Turkey is included – even by an opponent – in the chain of equivalence arranged around Islam containing the concepts excluded from Danish identity.

The remaining part of this section will show how instances of the 'particularist universalism' of official discourse on Muslim migrants and global Islam are reactivated in the official discourse on Turkey.

First, in opposition to Islam the Danish freedom of speech is presented as unlimited especially in relation to religiously legitimized practices and prohibitions (Mouritsen 2006:87; Hedetoft 2006b:1-2; 2006a:413; Wren 2001:157) Even though Danish law includes regulation of both blasphemy and hate speech (Mouritsen 2006:70). And even though the unlimited freedom seems only to apply to Danes advocating unlimited freedom and practice of speech: attempts – especially from Muslim groups – to question the legitimacy of legal limits or the appropriateness of any particular exercise of the right of expression – are constructed as attacks on (the first-class Danish version of the universally good of) liberal democracy as such (Wren 2001:157; Lindekilde 2007).

During the 'cartoon wars' – the world wide debates and widespread boycotts and riots in Muslim countries following the publications of a series of cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad in a Danish newspaper – freedom of speech was by the Danish government epitomized as an absolute and central value of democracy. Occasion was also found to make this point in relation to Turkey:

I do not find that it was wise, the démarche by the 11 ambassadors [of Muslim countries in relation to the caricatures of the prophet Mohammed published by Jyllands-Posten], and I would like to add that I especially find that the Turkish ambassador should have reflected twice taking into consideration that Turkey is applying for membership of the EU. (PM A.F. Rasmussen, lib., S492, 13:25)

In the course of action Turkey offered itself as 'broker', 'bridge' or medium for a 'dialogue' between Europe and the Muslim world – an offer the Danish government refused, even though the positive role of the Turkish government was acknowledged. Ifversen notes how the bridge metaphor on the one hand only works if Turkey is different from Europe, i.e. if Turkey is related to Islam in a way different from Europe proper. On the other hand, the metaphor relies on an emptying of Turkey from substance so that it can serve as a medium to reach the substance of the Muslims (Ifversen 2005:9):

[The Turkish government] pointed out the need for building bridges between different cultures and religions. (...) Turkey would have liked to act as broker, but Denmark did not find that to be a good idea and nothing came of it. The Minister for Foreign Affairs mentioned that he had spoken to [Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs Abdullah] Gül several times, trying to persuade the Muslim country to assist in explaining to the

population that there is a difference between the European tradition for freedom of speech and the conviction of religion held in Muslim quarters (MFA Møller, con., in European Affairs Committee 2006:2, 4-5)

Other complexes of infringements of the freedom of speech were discussed within the framework of the debate on Turkish membership, i.a. the ‘insults’ to the Turkish state by various intellectuals suggesting revised Turkish stances on the Armenian genocide or Cyprus:

[T]he mere fact that such proceedings [against Orhan Pamuk according to article 301 of the Turkish penal code which penalizes insults against Turkishness, the Republic, etc.] can be instituted is very problematic and deeply regrettable, and I would like to say this no matter what the outcome of the case may be since these are utterances which would in each case be legal utterances in a Danish context. (...) There is no reason what so ever to tone down the importance of this. I find these cases very serious (PM A.F. Rasmussen, lib., S493, 13:30)

The unconditional backing of the freedom of speech is upheld in relation to the ROJ TV which broadcast in Kurdish from Denmark by satellite – even though not only Turkey but also the US have asked the Danish government to close down the station on grounds of alleged relations to the PKK which is listed as a terrorist organization by both the EU and the US:

We have in this country one hundred percent respect for freedom of the press and for freedom of speech, and I have made it clear that this must apply to Turkey as well. (PM A.F. Rasmussen, lib., S968, 13:05)

A second example of the particularist universalism concerns the way disagreements and problems are said to be dealt with by Danes and Muslims respectively. The purported absoluteness of Their religion, which make civilized freedom of speech a taboo might also explain why They are prone to fight and kill both Us and each other. When religion is absolute truth, there is, it seems, no possibility of compromise – unlike in Our religion feeding doubt and self-criticism. This in turn explains why they needed to seek asylum here in the first place and/or why their countries are so poor that they want to move here (cf. Hervik 2004:254; Langballe in Pedersen 2006). In relation to Turkey questions relating to the Kurdish minority (which double as a Kurdish-Turkish minority in Denmark) are mainly brought up by the right wing and left wing opposition parties:

[C]oncerning minorities it was very clear that the head of government [prime minister Erdogan of Turkey] was of the opinion that we in Denmark do not at all do enough for the Turkish minorities; an opinion set somewhat off in the subsequent press conference [in which Erdogan did not participate due to the presence of representatives for the aforementioned ROJ TV]. (MP Messerschmidt, DPP, S968, 13:00)

[W]e risk that a number of people - i.a. the Kurds fighting for the rights of the Kurds to speak their own language who have sought asylum in Denmark to escape political persecution in Turkey – that when they, when Turkey become a member of the EU, then they will be expelled to the Turkey they fled. (MP Barfoed, UL, L35, 21:50-21:55)

Whatever the exact occasions for speaking of ethnic minorities in relation to Turkey, the effected connotations are negative – both in relation to internal Turkish matters and to the relationship between Denmark and Turkey.

A third instance of particularist universalism contrasts Our basic social structure to Theirs. The Danish egalitarianism – which is seen to be of universal validity – is not easily combined with the patriarchalism said to be inherent in Islam hindering equality in gender relations (Wren 2001:147-8). In Denmark the headscarf of ‘the Muslim woman’ – an object spurring the most diverse debates in many European countries including Turkey (cf. Göle 2006:250) – are²³ mainly discussed on the premises that freedom means that the individual has a duty to be free from certain cultural traditions rather than the freedom of the individual from interference by the majority or the state (Mouritsen 2006:82, 85-6, n.14; cf. Mørck 1998; Hervik 2004:254, 259-60; Sheikh & Wæver 2005:32-3). The same Muslim patriarchalism deprives children of autonomy in relation to their parents who arrange or force marriages and ‘re-education journeys’ to the homeland of the parents upon their children (Mouritsen 2006: 86; Gad 2006a:20). In addition to being contrary to Danish egalitarianism these – conspicuously Muslim – practices are said to counteract integration respectively by repeatedly importing un-aculturated youth for marriage and refreshing alien culture in the youth brought up in Denmark and, hence, supposed to be integrating.

The invoking of this complex of problems frames of Turkey as Muslim:

[I] see huge problems in relation to the dominant conception of the female sex in Turkey. (MP Christmas-Møller, con., RI, 2004.10.07, 19:30).

And the framing allows for a direct activation of fear of further immigration to Denmark:

It is a fundamental common European value that men and women may decide for themselves to whom they want to marry. (...) It will be harder to solve the problems related to integration [of migrants] in Denmark, [if the strict Danish regulation of family reunification is undermined by Turkish EU-citizens being allowed to move freely across the borders.] (former PM P.N. Rasmussen, soc.dem., in Ulrichsen 2004)

A framing which is impossible to distinguish from the worries of culturalism:

[T]o be a member of the EU does in fact mean a lot. It also means a lot to Danish wage earners that suddenly there is a lot of people, well maybe one of the largest countries in the EU when it comes to population, if Turkey is suddenly allowed to enter, who may move freely and compete with wage earners here in Denmark for the jobs offered. (MP Dahl, DPP, B175, 1st reading, 18:40)

Even for proponents, the prospect of changing Turkey entirely before its accession is the only way to get rid of this threat:

If we see a well functioning and economically far more well situated country in 20 years, or how long we should be talking of, it is exactly a question if there is such a great reason for worrying if a lot of Turks will come to the other European countries. I think it might be an unfounded worry (...) There might even be Turks

²³ Along with issues like female sexual mutilation, differentiated education of boys and girls and details of everyday life like whether shower curtains should be provided for kids to screen off their nudity while showering after phys. ed.

here in Denmark who chose to go home because they may suddenly see a sensible economical and political development in their original home country (MP Antonsen, lib., B175, 1st reading, 17:45).

A fourth version of particularist universalism concerns the basic form of individual identification. Since Grundtvig – a 19th century vicar who became the leading figure of Danish nation building – the Danish nation has conceived of itself as particularly *egalitarian* which is seen as a precondition for liberal democracy (Mouritsen 2006:80). This egalitarianism is partially seen as an ancient heritage, partly the result of popular enlightenment, both contributing to the *folkelighed*, i.e. the historical self-formation of the people which constitutes itself based on a linguistic community: In our post-Babel predicament the only way to be human is the national way (Lundgren-Nielsen 1992: 96ff). Hal Koch, a Grundtvigian theologian, described in a prominent Danish theory of democracy (1945) this egalitarian democracy as not just a form of governance but a *way of life* (cf. Mouritsen 2006:81); a concept that was – contrasted by the German occupation of WWII – immediately understood as specifically Danish. The universality of the *ummah* featured centrally in the depictions of Islam is not very easily reconciled with the Grundtvigian concept of nationally boxed *folkelighed*.

Muslim immigrants and refugees do, however – according to the Danish Alien Act expressing official discourse – have a “potential for integration” in the Danish society and nation state.²⁴ But as they do not necessarily have the *impulse* to realise the potential by themselves, the Danish authorities need – on behalf of Denmark – by a number of measures to discipline the strangers to do so (Gad 2006a:19). The disciplining measures include i.a. a reduction of social security benefits and postponement of permanent residence permit and citizenship (Gad 2006a:n.19).

This rhetorical figure may in the debate on Turkey be recognized, in the description of the cause that is pointed out *behind* the slow speed of the civilization process:

Turkey will not be a member of the EU. And this is how it should be as long as the progress is so limited. I simply cannot imagine [urealistisk at forestille sig] that the rest of us [vi andre] should go as far – and relax our demands so considerably – as Turkey demands. (MEP Riis-Jørgensen, lib., 2006)

The reason that the negotiations drag out is – according to the liberal MEP – that “Turkey demand” a “relaxation of the demands” concerning human rights. This only makes sense if Turkey is seen not to share the *same* values as the EU; they adhere to *different* values. So the reason why civilization does not work is that *their* culture is essentially not the same as *ours*. The contrast to the description

²⁴ I.e. ‘integration’ in official Danish discourse includes a substantial measure of cultural assimilation (Hedetoft 2006a: 419-20; 2006c:1, 6).

of the new East and Central European member states is stark; they were presented as Europeans – their Europeanness only temporarily suppressed for 40 years of Soviet rule. Turkey – like the Muslim migrants in Denmark – lack the *impulse* to integrate.²⁵

Even if the opponents of culturalism generally avoid entering into discussions in terms of culture and religion it is now and then acknowledged that this is actually what the discussion has turned out to be about:

[W]e will not have referenda on individual persons or yes or no to specific religions. We do not like things like that. We have freedom of religion in Denmark, there is freedom of religion in the EU, religion is not among the terms of admission of the EU, and for that reason we do not like referenda introducing this subject. (MP Arnold, soc.lib., B17, 1st reading, 16:25-16:30)

In this way the civilizationalists are paradoxically reproducing the premises of the debate laid out by the culturalists.

At one point, however, the dominant discourse resists the import of rhetorical figures from discourses on 'Muslim relations' to the discourse of Turkey. In debates on Islam, a special version of *secularism* is presented as simultaneously inherently Danish and inherently democratic. In this instance of the particularist universalism a Lutheran division between a personal realm of faith organized by the Church and a realm of societal interaction regulated by the state is claimed to be necessary for liberal democracy to flourish. Even Lutheran Christianity needs, however, to be kept on track; hence the need for a state church to control any religious excesses (Mouritsen 2006:79-80; cf. Sheikh & Wæver 2005:29-33). While this elaborate argument for the specific Lutheran secularism is not explicitly reproduced by the whole political spectrum, it seems to serve as the only viable way of reconciling liberal ideals with the institutionalized reality of the Danish state church. Islam, contrarily, is presented as a law-based religion without any secular division between private affairs and politics (Mouritsen 2006:70-1, 80, 82; Hedetoft 2006b:1; Hervik 2004:254) – in contrast to Christianity having contradiction inscribed directly in the scripture (through the Gospel being told differently by four evangelists). Even proponents of integration – of Muslims in the Danish society and of Turkey in Europe – submit to the normative primacy of Christianity on this point:

²⁵ This cultural reason for the problems – with or without the concluding recommendation to terminate the negotiations – is mostly voiced by representatives of the government parties, but it is also featured by social democrats: “The question is if we are able to receive, i.e. if we are able to incorporate a society as different as the Turkish into our culture” (MP Auken, soc.dem., L26, 14:20) On the other hand, religion as argument is discounted even by some social democrats when voicing a skeptic stance in relation to Turkish membership: “It is not about religion but about the distance in democratic tradition and the real life carrying into effect of democracy.” (former MFA Lykketoft, soc.dem., in DR 2006).

[I]t is in a sense correct that it is an anomaly to speak of Christian fundamentalists. (MP Holmsgaard, SPP, B17, 1st reading, 16:20).

Given that a religiously defined culture is by official discourse acknowledged as part of the problem with Turkey, it comes – especially when bearing in mind this particular Danish construction of secularism – as no surprise that the culturalists propose a radical Othering of Muslim Turkey by implying that a Muslim population needs a harsh military disciplining to keep up democratic appearances:

First of all, one must say that we must count ourselves lucky that the military still has a good deal of influence in Turkey, for if it did not – and if all the well-meaning wishes from the West for a reduction of the power of the military were realized – it would amount to us having a fundamentalist state today. (...) Secondly, it is a fact that there is an upper class and a middle class of Western orientation in Turkey who are of a more modern turn of mind, but at the same time the popular masses [folkedyb] are, and will probably stay for centuries to come, of a Muslim and fundamentalist mentality. Does [Liberal MP] Mrs. Charlotte Antonsen really think that you may in the course of the next, say, 15-20 years rip the religious soul out of such a huge population? (MP Langballe, DPP, B17, 1st reading, 15:30)

Official discourse on Turkey does – as mentioned above – keep open a possibility for the radicalization of Turkey inherent in Islam:

[W]hat we do in any case risk by excluding the Turks by saying: 'You do not belong here with us', is that they turn to Islam. So they will turn to fundamentalism, since we will be showing them that there is no hope for them in a democratic, in a Western world, and that is incredibly dangerous. (MP Rohde, lib., R1, 2004.10.07, 15:15)

But even if the possibility of radicalization is kept open, the culturalist suggestion that military repression is needed to keep Islam in its place is rebuffed:

I believe that one may be a Muslim without being a fundamentalist. (...) I simply do not understand how it is possible to sit as a politician in a Danish parliament and say that the only way to uphold democracy is by the power of the military. (MP Antonsen, lib., B17, 1st reading, 15:30)

To sum up: On the one hand, Turkey is on a number of crucial issues – most notably gender relations and freedom of speech – framed as a Muslim country: Turkey's problems when it comes to adhering to European values are presented as parallel to problems ascribed to the integration of Muslim immigrants in the Danish debate. On the other hand, the 'Muslim framing' of Turkey does not bring with it all potential negative connotations into official discourse: Even though culturalists attempt to associate Turkey with the violence and terror said to be inherent in Islam, the whole range of associations is not accepted by official discourse; the official Danish discourse on Turkish EU membership does insist to refuse radical Othering of Turkey and thereby keeps the possibility of a civilizing process open. That Turkey is different is, however, never questioned.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of this paper suggests that Turkish EU membership may, unfortunately, end up as collateral damage of Danish identity politics. The official Danish discourse on Turkish EU membership – adhered to by a broad parliamentary majority – has culturalist leanings due to its implicit framing of Turkey as a case of ‘Muslim relations’; Muslims being the primary Other of present Danish identity politics. The ‘damage’ done to Turkish EU membership prospects can be classified as ‘collateral’, since the framing is indirect and not necessarily intended by the government from the outset.

The framing of Turkey as ‘Muslim’ implies that Turkey will – regardless of any progress on the ground measured by Copenhagen criteria or *acquis* standards – be ‘guilty by association’; by association to Muslim immigrants presented to be a problem for Denmark (cf. Jung 2005:8) and by association to a picture of Islam constructed to serve Christian theological purposes (cf. Simonsen 2006: ch. 8; Said 2002:86, 299, 304-7) as well as present day identity political purposes. Taking into consideration the construction of the Muslim Other in Danish debate in general, Denmark can be expected to side with the most restrictive countries in any specific decision on the proceedings of the negotiations. The legitimization of excluding Turkey from Europe will be mirrored in the legitimization of the exclusion of Muslims from Danish identity – since Turkey is indirectly framed as Muslim, even if Turkey is not charged with every negative connotation ascribed to Islam in Danish identity politics.

The damage done to Turkish EU-membership is ‘collateral’ in two ways; First, the main target for othering is not ‘Turkey’ but ‘Muslims’. Second, the exclusion of Turkey-as-Muslim is not necessarily intended by the representatives for the government parties. It might be, but this way of framing might as well be a structural consequence of a series of related dynamics of the way intertextuality works in professional political discourse: a) The demand for consistency posed to actors. b) The functional role of ambiguity in the face of a demand for consistency. c) The pitfall of ‘imposed consistency’ when upholding ambiguity. After all,

The word in language is half someone else’s. It becomes ‘one’s own’ only when the speaker populates it (...) And not all words for just anyone submit equally easily to this appropriation (...): many words stubbornly resist (...); they cannot be assimilated into his context and fall out of it (...) Language is (...) populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others. (Bakhtin 1981:293-4).

When speaking of Turkey in a Danish context, words like ‘freedom of speech’, ‘violence’, ‘minority’, ‘women’, ‘migration’, ‘integration’, and ‘secularism’ are not at the free disposal of the

government (or of the opposition, or of representatives for Turkey, for that matter). These words resonate with meanings induced into them by other speakers – or by the same speakers in debates on ‘different’ topics. And in the case of Turkey, the sound which they resonate is that of the Muslim Other.

The task for Turkey and proponents of Turkish EU membership is not only to make the necessary changes on the ground in Turkey to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria and the *acquis*. However unjust – to Turkey and to Muslims – it seems that the general image of problems ascribed to Muslim migrants is weighing as a burden on the shoulders of Turkish and European proponents of Turkish EU membership.

Due to the indirect way in which the ‘Muslim’ character of Turkey is intertextually implied, this obstacle may prove itself to be much harder to clear away than any ‘facts on the ground’ both in Turkey and in its relations to neighboring states. As ever in identity politics, when one threshold for integration is met, another exam may turn up, since integration is at most a goal secondary to the primary goal of integration policy: i.e. upholding identity.

6. References

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- 8 May 2002, debate on S1839 (Question regarding environmental aid in Eastern Europe) (15:50-16:20)
- 28 May 2002, 2nd reading of L35 (Act on revision of the penal code etc. to implement the UN convention on financing terrorism etc.) (21:25-22:15)
- 1 October 2002, R1, annual "state of the realm" speech by the prime minister (Anders Fogh Rasmussen, V)
- 23 October 2002, debate on US14 (Question regarding Cyprus) (12:25-12:35)
- 20 November 2002, debate on US27 (Question regarding the position of the government on Turkish membership of the EU) (12:15-12:25)
- 8 January 2003, 1st reading of F21 (Debate on the results and consequences of the Danish EU presidency) (14:35-18:00)
- 26 February 2003, 1st reading of F37 (Debate on the government's plans for the future of the EU) (17:25-20:20)
- 15 April 2003, 2nd reading of B24 (Act on more openness in the Folketing's dealing with EU matters) (10:30-10:50)
- 23 April 2003, debate on S2881 (Question regarding the breach of confidence by the prime minister) (15:15-15:20)
- 23 April 2003, debate on S2882 (Question regarding the knowledge of the foreign minister) (15:20-15:25)
- 8 May 2003, 1st reading of L222 (Act on the enlargement of the EU) (17:40-19:05)
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- 14 December 2004, 2nd reading of B17 (Motion on resolution on a consultative referendum on the position of the Danish government in relation to the wish of Turkey for membership of the European Union) (13:15-14:45)
- 19 April 2005, 1st reading of L137 (Act on Denmark's ratification of the constitutional treaty) (13:25-19:00)
- 15 June 2005, 1st reading of F18 (General debate) (9:00-22:15)
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