

## The Voice of Exit - Towards a Theory of Democratic Inconsistency

Marco Goli

Copenhagen College of Social Work, Denmark

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**Abstract:** The international armed conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan are only the most apparent manifestation of the dilemmas that challenge the European liberal democracy. A much more crucial paradox, as far as certain European countries are concerned, is produced by the inertia of the democratic game it self. That is the construction of religious and ethnic affiliation as the very entrance ticket for immigrant populations to political participation. Taking departure in populism as the common denominator for major actors, as well as the characterising feature of the very arena for political competition between elites, e.g. media, the tendency becomes more and more obvious. Based on empirical evidences with Denmark as a critical case, that is both with regard to democracy and participation, this article introduces a “Theoretical proposition of Democratic Inconsistency”, arguing for the emergence of a new development in liberal democracy, addressing a situation characterised by a growing ethnic division of specific European countries.

**Keywords:** Theoretical proposition, democratic inconsistency, Denmark, immigrant populations

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### INTRODUCTION

Discussing the relationship between Immigration and Liberal Democracy, Fukuyama<sup>[1]</sup> identifies the Western responses to the challenges of fundamentalism as being justified into two categories: “...the solution lies either in walling off the United States and other target countries, or else ... going over there [certain Muslim countries] to fix the problem at its roots by deposing dictators and promoting democracy<sup>[1]b</sup>”. Acknowledging the integration of immigrants from Muslim countries as citizens of pluralistic democracies, as the crucial and longer-term challenge for the liberal democracy and due to the demographical characteristics of the immigrant population and the nature of the European welfare states, Fukuyama identifies Europe as the battleground for the confrontation between radical Islamism and liberal democracy.

Due to the established discourse that dominates academic conceptualisation, perspectives and research, those challenges are usually and naturally discussed within the framework of international politics, multiculturalism, identity formation, state policy, the political system, party composition in specific countries, policy of recognition, diversity management, etc.<sup>[2]</sup>. Characteristic of these widespread approaches is that the framework for discussion and the starting point for any analysis is/should be either one of two following perspectives, or a combination of them: Either the internal composition, characteristics, history,

nature etc. of the specific immigrant community. Or the way state policy influences the tendencies in specific immigrant population.

Considering response-strategies for Europe, Fukuyama in accordance with the established discourse proposes one of the good old arguments: “...Resolution of this problem [of integration of immigrants into liberal democracies] will require a two-pronged approach, involving changes in behaviour by immigrant minorities and their descendants as well as by members of the dominant national communities<sup>[1]</sup>.” At the same time and paradoxically Fukuyama acknowledges: “Many Europeans express scepticism about whether Muslim immigrants want to integrate, yet those who do are not always eagerly welcomed, even if they have acquired the language and basic cultural knowledge of the dominant society.” (Ibid. 14) The point is that the inability of the democratic system to adopt those democratically minded immigrants or those who through life experiences, education, residence or work in democratic societies convert to a democratic identity is addressed, but no analysis of the dynamic producing this pattern is presented.

**The theoretical proposition:** Traditional mainstream perspectives on democracy indicate both explicitly and implicitly that more democracy would presuppose and bring about more participation. The following alternative / opposite theoretical proposition of democratic inconsistency based on studies of Denmark as a critical case indicates that:

“More democracy would not necessarily bring about more participation for all, but partly due to the characteristic of democratic competition as a market and partly to some specific circumstances, the opposite.”

- \* In times of international value-conflict between democracy and Islam, the ethnic and religious identities that under normal circumstances are socially irrelevant<sup>[3]</sup> are made socially relevant by immigrant elites, the state and the media; the major stakeholders of the game.
- \* The logic of both media and politics as markets, create a pattern of interdependency between the stakeholders; politicians, media and immigrant elites playing for the favour of voters, consumers and supporters.
- \* In this game all stakeholders, who make up the opposing teams and the arena, are winners.
- \* The result of this game is “voice” as the best alternative for participation in political life for immigrants with religious affiliation or active disassociation with religious identification.,
- \* The game leaves “exit” as the best option for democratically minded immigrant populations who do not wish take part in the game on the exiting terms, e.g. entrance requirement and mode of representation enforced and maintained by the active stakeholders.

Empirical data that support the theoretical proposition stems from several sources; including population data from Statistic Denmark, Data from the Ministry of Integration, data on participation from the Social Research Institute, Denmark and several quantitative and qualitative survey- data addressing issues of participation and other related studies<sup>[4]</sup>.

**Why Denmark represents a critical case:** With regard to the traditional mainstream perspective on democracy and participation, Denmark represents a critical case according to the following criteria:

- \* Denmark is one of the widest developed countries with regard to principles of universal welfare regime<sup>[5,6]</sup>.
- \* Providing a snapshot of the current state of democracy worldwide (165 countries) by identifying countries democratic performances with regard to a range of criteria such as participation, The Economist Intelligence Unit’s identifies Denmark amongst the top 4 “full democracies” (The Economist, 2004)
- \* Denmark is actively involved in the so-called clash of civilisations through its’ involvement in the Iraqi war.

- \* Denmark contains a considerable immigrant population identified with regards to their “Muslim descent”.
- \* The country is famous throughout the world for its fight for “freedom of speech/expression”, “Freedom of association” and “Freedom of the press”.
- \* The policy of creating societal coherence, in which the Government actively tries to create a common national identity and solidarity, has been on the top of the Danish liberal-conservative Government’s agenda since 2001, speeding up since 2004.

**Formal and substantial participatory democracy:** Dahl (1970) introduces eight components, or institutional requirements as characterising a Polyarchy, which include: almost all adult citizens’ right to vote, eligibility for public office, freedom to form and join political parties and other organisations, freedom to express themselves on all political issues, political leaders’ right to compete for votes, in free and fair elections, under condition of diverse sources of information about politics and protection by law, where Government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference.

These are formal principles and requirements designed to safeguard participation. Denmark has a very high score on all these parameters. But participation is not only dependent on whether the formal conditions are in place.

Acknowledging that the democratic game, like any other game, in practice divides potential participants into outsiders – insiders at different degrees, one should emphasize the issue of substantially existing opportunities for participation as opposed to formally defined rights: Individuals and collectives appreciate that what counts is whether they actually can exercise these rights when the political opportunity structure and the rules of the game, the way it is played in practice, share, maintain and reproduce certain positions of privilege/ lack off privilege for certain groups or individuals. Another important aspect is whether individuals or collectives recognise or associate with the images of themselves, e.g. the mode of representation. The theory of new institutionalism in all different variances indicates clearly, that positions, once defined and institutionalised in accordance with certain discourses’ subsequently make the realisation of the rights possible at different degrees. In this regard it should be emphasized that democratic process by character is not a linear, but a circular process; that a proper and comprehensive participation and

representation in practice becomes both the instrument, the goal and the very dynamic mechanism that safeguards further development of democracy/polyarchy, improving the instruments and achievement of even higher goals. According to the citizens' opposite right of non-participation, equally important as the right to participate, it might be justifiable, that citizens can not be required to take part in the political process and agenda setting. Nevertheless, it is widely acknowledged that "democracies flourish when citizens are willing to take part in public debate, elect representatives and join political parties. Without this broad, sustaining participation, democracy begins to wither and become the preserve of small, select groups." (The Economist, 2004.) The rational choice perspective on institutions presents some very useful conceptualisation on the actors' choice of exit as a response to institutional deficiency<sup>[7]</sup>. This conceptualisation makes up the implicit framework in which the Danish case is studied.

**The Danish academic discourse:** Contrasting the fact that issues of integration and immigration has been one of the very major political issues in Denmark throughout recent three decades, the study of the pattern of immigrants' political participation in Denmark, has been and still is a very poor and underprivileged field of research. The dominating discourse, however, has followed the framework of formal democracy, focussing exclusively on the impacts of the formal and procedural infrastructure of Danish liberal democracy on immigrants' political participation. The framework of the leading and very appreciated study, done by Togeby<sup>[8]</sup> is the formal political opportunity structure. The point of departure, or the hypothesis, is that the institutional framework, set up to receive immigrants and refugees and to integrate them, influence on how immigrant population organise themselves around the question of participation strategies. The elements of this institutional infrastructure are the right to participation in election, the existence of corporate organs and immigrant organisations' possibilities for being subject to public funds. These are understood as external factors compared to those internal factors of influence such as the number/size of different immigrant populations, the length of residence, etc.

Following bi-dimensional framework for the study of citizenship regimes into formal requirements of citizenship and cultural demands of the host country imposed on immigrants, Togeby (ibid.) concludes that the pattern of political participation among immigrants should be explained by the combination of the

proportional election system and the possibility of voting for specific candidates on the party lists, which makes it possible for immigrants even by relatively small numbers of personal votes, to send their ethnic peers into the national parliament.

Togeby acknowledges that in 2001 local elections immigrants of Turkish descent made up a half of the all elected candidates. Beside, she highlights, the majority of both candidates and elected are involved professionally in integrations issues; in the so called "integration business" as translators, cultural consultants, speakers etc. Dealing with the issue of immigrant participation in politics on an aggregate level and only dividing immigrants populations with regard to their national origins, Togeby leaves many questions unanswered, among which the most important ones includes how to explain the variations. Besides the study excludes the fundamental question of how the actual political game is played and what consequences it produce with regard to the internal competition between media, the internal competition between populist politicians and the internal competition between immigrant elites and the pattern of interdependency between all three groups that binds ideologically and/or preferentially polarised positions together. Neglecting the very characteristics of the discourse that produces and shares voice and exit for specific immigrant groups, the study, ends up with a celebration of Danish openness highlighting the growth of political participation on the aggregate level.

**Empirical evidence - The case of Denmark:** Like in many other countries, Denmark illustrate a self-perpetuating consensus - almost as if laid down by law - among key actors and institutions, such as the academic elites, Governmental actors and media, that participation in the social and civic spheres, would lead to participation in politics at different levels, in turn leading to different representation and thus to a process of democratisation

Variation of substantial participation and representation among different immigrant groups in Denmark indicates a strong connection between the way the position of players is defined and how exit becomes the most attractive alternative for immigrant populations who wish to disassociate themselves from religious identification and the respective social labelling. Most apparent is the negative relationship between participation in civic life and non-political organisations on the one hand and participation in politics and public debate on the other: The most active immigrants in politics measured by participation and representation at

local and national level and in media are individuals who can contribute, be it in constructive or polemic manners, towards a reproduction of the informally established framework, that is discussions on Islam. This game leaves the ground open for non-democratic forces. Putting it in Putnam's framework, though in a contradictory manner, participation in activities that produce social capital and substantial citizenship, does not lead to participation in politics.

Explaining the pattern of participation in Denmark the following historical trends should be highlighted: The first years in the new immigrants' history (late 1960's and 70's) participation of immigrants in civic and societal life was extremely poor, about zero. They were the unknowns – the strangers, who would leave the country as soon as the industrial hierarchy no longer needed them. Due to the changed definition of their status from guest workers to immigrants, the following decade (1980s) became a period of political mobilization, a process that was supported by public funds, by left-wing parties and trade unions. In the 1990's, the immigrant elites successfully lobbied for being considered "ethnic minorities"<sup>[7]</sup>. In the public debate nowadays, the term "ethnic minority" refers exclusively to immigrants and descendants with origin in "non-western" (the industrial world) and Non-EU countries, leaving them practically as identical with visible minorities.

In Denmark, the identical terms of "Guest/Foreign workers", "Immigrants & descendants", "Foreigners", "Ethnic Minorities" and alike are almost synonymous with socially constructed identities as Muslim, incompetent, un/undereducated, un/under-skilled, unfamiliar with/hostile to democracy, oppressed (for women) and oppressors for men, backward cultural identities, traditionalist, ignorant, irrational and other similar connotations<sup>[4,7-9]</sup>. As a result those immigrants with strongest religious affiliation and weakest degree of integration, who are attacked/feel offended by the dominate discourse, both receive attention and become more motivated to mobilise themselves along ethnic and religious lines. Other immigrant groups, in spite of a higher degree of adaptation of and integration into the democratic culture<sup>[10]</sup> leave the scene, partly because they refuse to accept the constructed social identities based on religious/ethnic identification/disassociation and partly because they do not represent any value for neither of the stakeholders in their mutual conflicts. They are not interesting for the media because they are not news, they do not contribute to the value conflicts by being neither pro nor con and they are not interesting for populist parties who are interested in immigrant

politicians as far as those immigrants can contribute to the value conflict.

According to Banton's<sup>[3]</sup> Rational Choice oriented and Weber's instrumentalist views (in Hutchinson & Smith, 1996) ethnic or religious affiliation, being socially irrelevant under normal circumstances, that is when the individual's or collective's ethnic or religious belonging is not an issue, is irrelevant for the choices the individual or collective makes to utility maximize the socioeconomic condition. In accordance with these views supported by that of Habermas<sup>[11]</sup>, the role of Government in liberal democracies is/should be that of neutralising the relevance of ethnic or religious belonging in the public sphere. It should be obvious that handling this particular task is a specific challenge in the new era of ideological collision between democracy and Islam. Indeed, it is becoming harder and harder for politicians who maximise their utility in the market of votes, to resist the temptation. All other things equal a government that takes part in the conflict, even in a genuine and admirable, attempt to fight for freedom and justice would inevitably pull the trigger for making ethnicity and religious belonging a socially relevant factor, adding fuel to ashes and flames.

**The immigrant population in Denmark - Main demographic and social features:** By the first January 2004, the immigrant population in Denmark (though literally defined, referring to immigrants, refugees and descendants from all countries) made up 442.036, or 8.2 pct. of the total Danish population of 5.397.640 people. The term "immigrant population" includes in a statistical and formal manner people of both "western" (29.2 pct.) and "non-western" (70.8 pct.) origins. However, in the real world the term only refers to immigrant and descendants of non-western origin.

By 1. January 2003 the frequency of employment among immigrants from third countries was only 47 pct. In comparison the same rate for Danes was 77 pct. Immigrants with origin in Somalia, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Iraq have the lowest attachment to the labour market. Due to the explosive growth in Danish economy, statistics show that very recently Denmark has almost no unemployed. Many of these immigrants though live on welfare and many (about 50 %) of the population that are outside the labour force.

The so-called original/working-immigrants; Turks, Pakistanis and Yugoslavs, are still among the largest immigrant groups in Denmark. Over time people from other countries whose residence is mainly due to their status as refugees, like people from Iraq, Iran, Somalia and Bosnia, have become considerable populations.

Tables 1 show the share of the largest immigrant groups as a share of the total immigrant population (including immigrants from western countries.)

The term 'immigrants' includes both foreigners and naturalized citizens. The term 'descendants' means children born in Denmark, where at least one of the parents is foreign citizen born abroad – children born in other countries would be immigrants themselves.

40.4 pct. or 178 491 of the total immigrant (including descendants) population in Denmark are today (2004) Danish citizens of a different ethnic/national background, who paradoxically are counted among immigrants, making the picture even more blurred. Until 2003, a growing number of immigrants and descendants applied for and became Danish citizens. In 1994-1995, 2 658 immigrants and descendants became Danish nationals; the number for 2001-2002 was 9 378. Due to the new policy there was a rather dramatic reduction by 77.2 pct in issued citizenship a year later (2002-2003). But the development in 2003-2004 shows a modest growth and 4 885 individuals became Danish nationals. The tendency towards adopting Danish citizenship seems to be much more widespread among descendants, where 64.5 %, almost twice as much as immigrants, are Danish nationals. Foreign citizens with a minimum of 3 years residence in Denmark have the right to vote for local elections, while participating in national election requires Danish citizenship, which the individual can apply for after 9 years residence in the country.

The following Table 2 shows the development in the number of naturalization among certain national categories of immigrant and descendants in Denmark.

**Pattern of immigrants' participation in politic in Denmark:** Following the Law of Integration of 1999, municipalities with a certain size of immigrant population have been able to establish Local Integration Councils (Integrationsråd). By 2001, 48 local "Integration Councils" were established around the country. The task of these councils is to provide advice on local integration policies as well as an arena of political participation of immigrants on integration issues. Records from the municipality of Copenhagen with regard to participation in the Integration Council (2006) showed a very unsatisfactory level. On average only about 10 % of immigrants vote for Integration Councils and usually there are controversies about whether these councils are a contribution to democratic participation or to the division of people alongside ethnic background. Besides, many immigrants disassociate them selves with the social labelling that

these elections implicitly create<sup>[7,12]</sup>. Before the policy-shift in 2001, immigrants' participation in the society was not only encouraged as a fast track towards legal equality and equal welfare rights, but also by substantive subsidies to immigrant associations. These measures to encourage participation have been reconsidered and mostly stopped. Dealing with the shift in the integration policy, Tøgeby<sup>[8]</sup> concludes that the absence of poly-ethnic rights make it difficult for ethnic minority members to actually unfold their cultural diversity. There is no doubt that the rather missionary fight for Western values in the Muslim world with which Danish Government along with GB and the USA identifies itself, also has discursive implications for the Government's attitude towards the Muslim population in the country. It is at least a growing experience by the Danish Muslim population.

Putting aside the principal cartoon controversies and the Danish Government's engagement in the Iraqi war, where a overwhelming majority of Muslim population, in particular those with national backgrounds in Turkey, Pakistan and Arab countries, disassociate themselves with, the focus of political and public debate on Islam and Muslims has generated new and more religious grounded mobilisation among Muslims. Manu Sareen, member of the local parliament, Copenhagen Municipality, argues: "The young immigrants and descendants feel like being pushed out of the Danish society and they withdraw them selves increasingly and seek in to their own parallel society" (Jyllands-Posten, 29/12/03). Other studies show that immigrants engagement in their own organizations are carried by the elite and many immigrants feel that their concern and political preferences are not represented in a satisfactory manner by Danish political institutions. That is considered as the main reason why immigrants turn to their own societies and establish their own organisations<sup>[13]</sup>.

**Immigrants' political participation in Denmark:** About 1.5 % of the total electorate have an immigrant background. Participation of immigrants in local elections is much lower than the average. A bit more of 1 %, or 49 of the total seats of municipality committees around the country have an ethnic background, while 3 out of 179 seats in the national Parliament are occupied by individuals of (publicly recognised) immigrant descent. In the national elections 2001 there were 14 immigrant and descendants running for a seat in Parliament.

In the parliamentary election 2005, the 31 immigrants that ran for seats were from the countries of

origin as follows: Turkey 9, Arabic countries 10, Pakistan 4 and Bangladesh 1. Outlining the patterns of integration/disintegration among immigrant populations in Denmark, Mikkelsen<sup>[10]</sup> shows that in particular population from these countries have the strongest religious affiliations and participation in religious associations. Other groups with very weak religious affiliation are represented in the following by the number who ran for a seat: Iran 1, Former Yugoslavia 2 (Bosnia 1 and Kosovo 1). The third group, though from non-Muslim countries is represented by following numbers: Taiwan 1, India 2, Uruguay 1, Germany 1. The Tables (3 & 4) below show the record for 2005 election and the development over the years. They indicate clearly that the same pattern is perpetuated:

There is no doubt, that immigrant societies with strongest religious and ethnic affiliation are overrepresented and immigrant societies with weakest religious and ethnic affiliation are underrepresented with regard to participation in Danish politics.

**Immigrants' participation in civic and societal organizations in Denmark:** According to Mikkelsen<sup>[14]</sup> the participation of immigrants in civic associations and associations in general is very poor: 7.1 % participate in parent committees in schools, 3.4 % in housing associations and 8.5 % in leisure/recreation association such as clubs, 11.7 % in cross-ethnic associations and 1.2 % in political associations. Nevertheless, there are major variations in the level of participation among different categories of immigrants. The highest level is represented by immigrants of Iranian descent and the lowest among immigrant of Pakistani descent. Immigrants from Iranian and Pakistani descent who represent the opposite ends of engagement in associations are however very close to each other when it comes to leisure. Both represent a very high level of engagement in clubs (such as sport clubs etc.), while immigrant of Turkish and Pakistani descent seems to prefer participation in more ethnic oriented forums. Mikkelsen concludes that 21% of immigrants are engaged in leisure activities that involve people of Danish descent, while 45 % prefer activities that one way or another excludes people of Danish descent (p. 117) and 34 % are active in leisure activities that are mixed (Danish and immigrants).

Mikkelsen<sup>[14]</sup> has emphasized the impact of religious organisations and associations, specifically the Islamic ones as creators of identity among immigrants. In the last years, Islam seems to become a major unifying factor among specific Muslim immigrants, this

is probably due to the polarised public debate on Islam, internationally and nationally and the politicization of Islam, not least by majority politicians. Dealing with immigrants' activities in the religious sphere of life, Mikkelsen shows that 25 % (mostly immigrants of Turkish, Pakistani, Palestinian and Somali background) often attend a mosque (Iranians and Yugoslavians are very rare visitors of a religious association). Immigrants with stronger ties to religious associations and mosques are typically characterized by loose ties with the Danish population, by difficulties with the Danish language; indeed the question of integration does not seem to be a major pre-occupation. Many of them wish to return home, despite very long residence (more than 20 years) in Denmark or even being born in the country. Rezaei<sup>[4]</sup> has shown that the same segment usually invest their money in the country of origin. A recent study indicates clearly that Islamic religious affiliation, specifically among individuals of Turkish, Pakistani and Arab descent is growing.

**Media discourse on migration – Who is invited to play the game in Denmark:** Based on an empirical investigation of the daily news flow on ethnic affairs in the dominant news media, Hussain (1997, 2000 that is long time before 9.11 and invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan and nuclear disputes with Iran) argues that Danish media have played an important role in the (re)production of a prejudiced discourse on ethnic minorities. In this discursive process, Muslim minorities have been the primary focus. Referring to 9/11 as a focal point of implicit reference, Hussain emphasizes an even more intensified focus on Islam. Among issues that specifically are highlighted in media, Hussain underlines: The question of cultural integration of immigrants and descendants of Danish values, the role of Muslim religious leaders (Imams) in integration process, the question of gender-relations among Muslim immigrants, arranged and/or forced marriage, dilemmas related to collective and individual freedom, freedom of expression, speech and association in Islam and democracy and the limits of tolerance.

A brief look at the newspapers and electronic media in the past years – even the very recent Mohammad cartoon crisis excluded - seems to support Hussain's conception. A review of the media coverage in Denmark in the summer of 2001, where 800 articles regarding ethnic relations were studied, shows that 95 pct. of them were about Islam, normally providing a rather negative image of Islam and Muslims.

In the publication "Impression Management and Political Entrepreneurship in Denmark" Necef<sup>[12]</sup>

Table 1: Major immigrant groups by origin in Non-western countries, 2004

Country of origin	Immigrants	Descendants	Total	Percentage of total immigrant population
Turkey	30,887	23,370	54,257	12.3%
Former Yugoslavia	30,416	8,305	38,721	8.8%
Iraq	20,701	4,970	25,671	5.8%
Lebanon	12,101	9,689	21,790	4.9%
Pakistan	10,689	8,561	19,250	4.4%
Somalia	11,774	5,589	17,363	3.9%
Iran	11,730	2,483	14,213	3.2%
Vietnam	8,643	3,812	12,455	2.8%
Sri Lanka	6,815	3,509	10,324	2.3%
Afghanistan	8,986	1,247	10,233	2.3%
Morocco	4,948	3,851	8,799	2.0%
Other countries	180,112	28,848	208,960	47.3%
All countries	337,802	104,234	442,036	100.0%

Table 2: Naturalizations by national background 1995, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 (Own data on Statistics Denmark)

	1995	1999	2000	2001	2002
Europe (A)	2,083	5,072	5,900	5,342	7,340
- Yugoslavia (former)	413	709	1,523	1,137	3,413
- Turkey	797	3,154	2,787	3,130	2,418
Africa (B)	311	903	2,371	1,751	3,396
- Morocco	122	322	485	213	313
- Somalia	12	215	1,189	1,074	2,263
North America (C)	46	58	53	65	74
- USA	36	51	38	38	60
South and Latin America (D)	94	149	255	251	334
Asia (E)	2,202	4,765	7,844	3,631	5,137
- Afghanistan	24	98	276	215	301
- Iraq	177	918	2,210	871	1,161
- Iran	531	914	1,105	437	519
- Lebanon	216	601	1,099	309	376
- Pakistan	145	463	545	297	573
- Sri Lanka	635	523	819	365	594
- Thailand	56	137	214	124	172
- Vietnam	137	439	647	318	508
Oceania (F)	8	19	16	13	13
Stateless/others (G)	516	1,450	2,372	849	1,006
All (A+B+C+D+E+F+G)	5,260	12,416	18,811	11,902	17,300

presents a comparative study of some specific immigrant elite strategies to influence the policy and the public debate. Necef brings about a closer look at the institutional and discursive structure of the channels of political influence for immigrant political entrepreneurs. Outlining the political opportunity structure, the dominant discursive environments and the election system in Denmark, Necef discusses the

conditions and circumstances that ambitious immigrant political entrepreneurs must deal with in order to become successful<sup>[12]</sup>. The three immigrant MP's from time to time publicly express a wish not to be considered as immigrant politicians, but rather as normal/mainstream politicians, even if the very path of their becoming Members of Parliament has been a clear involvement in the integration business, mostly as

experts in the nature and the implications of the immigrant culture.

The most prominent among the three immigrant parliament members who for a long while fought to be considered as a mainstream politician, paradoxically won landslide support among native Danes (and the opposite among majority of Muslim immigrants) for his positive contribution towards the strongly threatened image of Denmark during the cartoon-crisis by initiating the "Association of Democratic Muslims". Recently describing what he has gone through, he addressed this paradox by stating, that he a long time ago decided to exclude two things in his political career at any price; namely not to become member of any ethnic or religion or immigrant association and not to mix politics and religion. By initiating "The Association of Democratic Muslims" he realized that he had indeed brought about a frontal violation of both promises!

### CONCLUSION

Mainstream perspectives on liberal democracy indicate that participation is the goal and the instrument by democratic processes can be ensured; that more democracy would create more and (potentially) equal participation for all. Distinguishing between procedural and formal democracy on the one hand and substantial democracy, experienced by individuals and collectives on the other, the empirical data and theoretical articulation presented in this critical case of Denmark challenges these perspectives.

In the core of this argumentation is an understanding of democracy as a circular process and a game. Due to some specific centrifugal and centripetal dynamics, the European liberal democracies in countries with the certain (mentioned) characteristics have not and would not produce more or more equal participation among immigrant populations.

The complexity of the new era in which the European liberal democracies finds it self taken into account, the further process as well as the results, should be studied as a democratic game, taking departure in a conception of both politic, media and immigrant elite competition as a market. In this regard we have identified the processes that due to inevitable inertia of the game categorises immigrants into insiders and outsiders, with regards to their attractiveness as players in the game. The paradox is that the positions of insiders and outsiders are not corresponding positively, but negatively, to the degree of integration of different immigrant population.

In the environment created by welfare state, international conflicts about values and principles, political leaders (searching for votes) media (searching

Table 3: Immigrant candidates by party and national origin and region

	Capital 15	Iceland 8	Jutland 8
Parliament parties	15		
Liberals	2	Taiwan, India	
Social Democrats	3	Turkey	Turkey Turkey
Danish people party	-		
Conservatives	-		
Socialist Peoples Party	4	Pakistan, Turkey, Morocco	Palestine
Radical Liberal	3	Syria India	Pakistan
Christian Democrats	-		
Unity List	3	Morocco	Turkey Uruguay
Parties not in Parliament			
Centrum Democrats	9	Pakistan, Morocco	Turkey 2, Pakistan, Turkey, Syria Israel, Germany
Minority Party	5	Turkey, Iraq, Bangladesh	Somalia, Bosnia
Outside parties	2	Kosovo	Iran

(Source, Ole-Stig Andersen, 2006)

Table 4: Total immigrant-candidates in parliamentary election 2005, 2001, 1998 and 1994 (Source, Ole-Stig Andersen, 2006)

	2005	2001	1998	1994
Countries, 55	31	14	9	1
Turkey, 14	9	2	2	1
Pakistan, 12	4	5	3	
Morocco, 6	3	2	1	
Syria, 4	2	1	1	
India, 2	2			
Somalia, 3	1	1	1	
Uruguay, 1	1			
Germany, 1	1			
Taiwan, 1	1			
Iraq, 1	1			
Iran, 1	1			
Palestine, 1	1			
Bosnia, 1	1			
Kosovo, 1	1			
Israel, 1	1			
Kina, 1		1		
Lebanon, 1		1		
Afghanistan, 1		1		
Iran, 1			1	
Former Yugoslavia	2			

for watchers/readers/listeners) and immigrant elites (searching for influence) attract each other, creating a positive sum game, in which they as interdependent stakeholders are all winners. The losers, however, are individuals or collective of immigrants who disassociate them selves from social labelling based on ethnic and religious affiliation or orientation. In the time, where politicians, media and immigrant elites benefits from conflicts, immigrants who are democratic



minded or have adopted democratic values, are not interesting.

The empirical data supporting this alternative “theoretical proposition of Democratic inconsistency” is based on the Danish experience as a critical case. The data on variation in immigrants’ participation in politics/political life in Denmark shows that in recent years religious identification among immigrants and attachment to religious associations have been growing. The most active immigrants in politics/political life measured by representation at local and national level and in media are individuals who can contribute, be it in a constructive or a polemic manner, to discussions on Islam. That excludes certain immigrant groups with no or little religious affiliation, either because they do not represent a value for conflicting parts and for the arena in which the conflict takes place (e.g. the media) or because they actively chose the opposite available option; the exit in the sense of not running for seats in national or local parliaments. With regard to the other very important issue of voting behaviour among different segments of immigrant population there is no reliable data in Denmark.

There is a growing importance of immigrant population as a political factor and integration and migration as some of the most debated political issues in European countries. It is so not least in countries like Denmark, where a proportional electoral system combined with the possibility for voting for specific individual candidates (the open party list), make sure that rather small personal votes can send a candidate to the national parliament, no matter that candidate’s rank on the party list and in countries where rather small seats become pivotal with regard to the winning coalition. The issue requires a lot more further empirical investigation and academic attention. This kind of research would shed a lot more light on the theoretical proposition described here. The empirical focus should be on discovering the relationship between integration and political behaviour among different immigrant groups on the one hand and the political opportunity structure including both formal and substantial and the character and impacts of existing discourses on the other.

**Appendix 1 Data:** Data, the quantitative as well as the qualitative, has been the empirical evidences for 4 publications:

1. Goli and Rezaei, 2005. Managing cultural diversity in Denmark, Berlin Institute for Comparative Social Research, BIVS, European Migration Centre (EMZ), Berlin.

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3. Rezaei and Goli, 2005. The dual labor market in a welfare state perspective.
4. Rezaei and Goli, 2006. Immigrants’ close network, -a catalysator or a barrier for mainstreaming. University of Roskilde, Denmark.

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