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Danish concepts of dialogue as
counterterrorism**

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It takes two to Tango

Danish concepts of dialogue as counterterrorism

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[Abstract] Since 9/11, the terrorist is often awarded the position of the radical Other of Danish identity; the personified existential threat to Denmark (not primarily as a state but as a society). The strategy of the Danish government to counter terrorism describes itself as covering a 'broad spectrum' of efforts. It includes an 'active foreign policy' in relation to the Muslim world and an 'active integration policy' in relation to Muslim migrants. Both inside and outside the nation state efforts range from 'hard power' security strategies of elimination and control involving military, police, and intelligence operations to 'soft power' strategies of information, partnerships, and dialogue. The paper analyses Danish counterterrorism policies to identify the concepts of dialogue implied and the positions awarded to less-than-radical Muslim Others. The paper concludes that Muslims might in counterterrorism dialogue find a position for talking back – even if it is still a position circumscribed by control and securitization.

1. Introduction¹

On September 11 2001, 19 terrorists hijacked 4 planes in the USA. Thousands of innocent human beings were killed, and ever since, the world has not been the same. During the last 5 years it has become clear that we are in the middle of a global value struggle. It is not a value struggle between cultures or religions; it is a value struggle between sensible enlightenment and fundamentalist darkening, between democracy and dictatorship, between freedom and tyranny. In this struggle, one cannot remain neutral... The strongest force in this struggle is the desire and demand of millions of oppressed people for freedom. We saw that in Iraq when 12 million Iraqis defied the terrorists and went to the ballots ... We have to help Africa so that young Africans see a hope, see a future, see rich possibilities in their own country, so that they are not attracted to extremism, so that they do not end up on the wrong side of the global value struggle. The global value struggle takes place in Denmark too. .. Fortunately it is so that the great majority of Danes with an immigrant background ... are contributing positively to the Danish society. But there are also a few extremists who seem to hate the society which have secured their political freedom and material safety. ... We do not demand that everyone has to be alike or be of the same opinion – we want a society with freedom to diversity – but we must demand respect for the very fundamental rules of the game in the Danish society ... We must not out of naïve and happy-go-lucky tolerance show understanding towards or facilitate [give medløb til] religious fanaticism or political extremism. (prime minister A.F. Rasmussen, lib., R1, 2006.10.03 12.05-12.15).

In these sentences featured prominently in his 2006 ‘state of the realm’ speech, the Danish prime minister summarized what the government took to be the conditions for the long term counterterrorism strategy of the Danish government: Most Muslims are waiting to be our partners in emancipating both themselves and us from extremists threatening us and oppressing them. Terms like ‘partnership’ and ‘dialogue’ as part of the self-description of specific government strategies were generally describing a *one way street*: We have something that the Muslims need (and most of them want); partnerships and dialogues were means to implement this already defined goal.

The main tenet of the opposition to this picture of the world was that Denmark was placed in danger by acting self-sufficient:

Denmark was – because of a lack of dialogue – related to religious intolerance and discrimination of minorities due to all the circumstances of the Mohammed [Cartoons] crisis. (MP Kofod, soc.dem., F45, 17:05; cf. 16:50).

This paper analyses how the use of the term ‘dialogue’ in government policies on counterterrorism have gradually changed to include more instances of *two-way* interaction. While the tendency of giving weight to strategies of dialogue in government policies surfaced first in *foreign policy* formulations, it has recently been taken further in an *integration policy* document. If the tendency survives parliamentary politics, the most unlikely result of the merger of counterterrorism strategies and integration strategies will not be an intensified securitization of integration policy but a relative de-securitization of counterterrorism. It will, however, not amount to an a-securitization of neither.

The sections 2 and 3 establishes the paper’s concept of identity by relating the theoretical concepts of philosophical and sociological others and by laying out how authorities for-

¹ I am grateful to the Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (NUPI) for facilitating the research presented in this paper by hosting me as a guest researcher. A revised version of the paper (to be included in my ph.d. dissertation) will have benefited from comments at presentations to the 'Consortium on Research in Terror' at NUPI as well as to the Security Programme at the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO) and the Department of Political Science at the University of Oslo.

mulating strategies for handling the radically threatening terrorist Other may implicate less-than-radical others. Section 4 examines how strategies of partnership and dialogue involving less-than-radical others have been invoked in counterterrorism as a supplement to strategies of elimination and control. Sections 5, 6 and 7 examines how the term ‘dialogue’ may – when used in counterterrorism policies – imply either monologue, inclusion, or interchange between two different entities. Section 8 analyses how a concept of dialogue as a two-way interchange spurs the need for control and monitoring the limits to the difference of the party invited into dialogue. Section 9 lays out how the need to control and monitor the limits to the difference comes from the efforts of the government to position itself as defenders of Danish identity between an opposition calling for Self-reform and a supporting right wing party putting the possibility of reforming the Muslim other in question. Section 10 concludes by evaluating the strategic situation for Muslims wanting to revise the script for the role as less-than-radical others they are awarded by the counterterrorism and integration policies.

2. The Terrorist as Radical Other and the Responsibility of Government

Identity needs difference to be; you cannot deem someone identical without deeming someone else – some others – different. As long as everyone agrees on who’s identical and who’s different – who are included as We; who are excluded as this kind of They and as that kind of They – and everyone agrees that that’s the way things should be; no problem. Problems arise when not everyone agrees. Everyone never does.

The problem with disagreement is that the allocation of various others in boxes does not merely affect Them. As our identity is constituted in relation to their difference, redefinition of others affects our identity too.

In philosophical terms, a radical Other is that which prevents you from being the one you ought to be. Philosophically speaking there is always another other – even another radical Other – since identity as a concept implies that any change, any difference, any impurity can be pointed out as a threat to identity.

And threats to identity *will* be pointed out. If no one names an identity, it is meaningless to conceive of its existence. So identity exists only in discourse; only as part of the construction of meaning. But why explicate identity if it is unproblematic? If an identity is not explicitly problematic, it does not exist – and the moment it is brought into existence, it is necessarily made a problem (Wæver 1997:328-9; Žižek 1992:197; Derrida 1982).

Further: The radical Other – that which threatens and submerges discourse – urges an explanation; it is there to be discursivized and, hence, domesticated. If a specific group of people – a sociological other – is pointed out as that which prevents you from being the one you ought to be, that other is radicalized. Another way to put it is that the other is securitized; i.e. pointed out as a security threat: The other is no just said to be different from you but said to constitute an existential threat to your identity (Connolly 1991:8, 64).

In Danish parliamentary debates, one such sociological other securitized to be a Radical Other is ‘the terrorist’. Terrorists, terrorism, and terrorist acts are repeatedly explicitly

pointed out as a threat to Denmark, Danes, and key elements in Danish identity;² they are characterized by a variety of invectives;³ and they are routinely dismissed and condemned as an introit to the interventions of each party spokesman.⁴ Indeed, the government point out terror as *the* threat defining our security:

The threats of the 21st century are fundamentally different than the ones we faced during the Cold War and in the first years after the fall of the Wall. The nightmare is no longer an all-destructive [altødelæggende] nuclear war but massively destructive attacks from global terror networks or desperate regimes which have placed themselves outside the international community. Terrorism today is a real and essential threat to populations everywhere in the world. (Regeringen 2003:2)

Existential threats you need to handle if you are in charge (or want to be put in charge) – at least if the referent-object against which the threat is posed is worth defending (Wæver 1995). If you are in government (or in politics, in which case you want to be in government), you will want to be able to stay in authority – and to do so, you need to tell how you want to fight off existential threats against the entity you represent. You need to tell a plausible story about your choice of strategy.

In Denmark, the immediate reactions in 2001-2 to the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington focused on ‘fighting the terrorists’. This involves strategies of *control* and *elimination*. Domestically strategies of controlling the possible activities of terrorists included the intelligence services being allowed a series of new operational modes. The strategy of physically eliminating terrorists was primarily employed abroad by joining the US efforts in Afghanistan. As strategies for dealing with others, both have long traditions (Todorov 1984:132-45; Lindqvist 1992; Foucault 1978).

‘In this struggle, one cannot remain neutral’, claimed the prime minister (cf. quote above). Only seldom, however, the stories can be told as a one-on-one showdown between you and the Evil Other. And even if a story may be based on an allocation of roles between the two possibilities of ‘Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists’, most often a more sophisticated distribution of roles is needed (cf. Hansen 2006:40). Generally, for such stories, you need a cast of characters – a cast of less-than-radical Others (Hansen 1998). Different strategies invite different less-than-radical Others to participate.

² ‘[T]errorism is a threat to society, to the values it is build upon, and to the individual citizen’ (Min. f. Justice Espersen, con., L217). ‘The terrorists we know today want to fight democracy and the rule of law.’ (MP Barfod, con., F7, 18.20).

³ ‘The threat No. 1 of the future’ (MP Poulsen, lib., AD14, 12:10); ‘abominable’ (MP Poulsen, lib., AD14, 12:10, MP Jensen, soc.dem., AD14, 12:10; MP Messerschmidt, DPP, F1, 16:25; 17:00); ‘brutal’ (MP Poulsen, lib., AD14, 12:10); ‘evil’ (MP Jensen, soc.dem., AD14, 12:10); ‘bestial’ (MP Behnke, con., F7, 17.25-30); ‘insane’ (MP Behnke, con., F7, 17.25-30); ‘crazy’ (MP Barfod, UL, F7, 18:20).

⁴ ‘Nothing may, after all, apologize or legitimize terror’ (MP Baastrup, soc., F7, 18:10) and ‘Terror is always an indefensible act and an act that always needs to be condemned.’ (MP Hoydal, Faroes, F7, 18.30). Even as a prelude to arguing a relatively de-radicalized picture of terrorism: ‘The Red/Green Alliance wants a world without war and terrorism. Any decent human being condemns terrorism.’ (MP Arbo-Bæhr, UL, F7, 17:35).

3. Counterterrorism Strategies Constructing Less-than-radical Others

As time has passed, bringing new events in the Middle East and European capitals, the spectrum of Danish counterterrorism strategies have broadened – and the construction of different less-than-radical others needed to take up their roles in an evermore ‘broad spectrum’ (Ministeriet 2008:29; cf. Pedersen 2008:xx) of counterterrorism strategy narratives have become more complicated.

In 2005, in a debate in the aftermath of the 7/7 bombing of the London underground, the Danish prime minister explained that

The overall strategy of the government ... involves three parts: We have to prevent support and recruitment for terrorism through our international involvement and through an active integration policy at home; we have to fight terrorists and terror networks and cut off their access to money and materials; and then we have to prepare ourselves for the fact that a terrorist attack may take place (prime minister A.F. Rasmussen, F7, 2005.11.16, 15:15; cf. Regeringen 2003:13)

It is clear from the interventions of the prime minister and his ministers in the debate that strategies of elimination and control are still central: domestically, the Minister for Justice presents a new catalogue of ‘necessary means for fighting terrorists and terror networks’ (ibid., 15:20). But the relative weight of the spectrum – not least in the foreign policy part – is tilted towards ‘long term’ (ibid., 15:15) strategies involving less-than-radical others: ‘Through our active foreign policy we seek to counter the *circumstances* out there, in the World, which may provide a breeding ground for support for terrorism.’ (ibid., 15:15; italics added). Abroad the measures include foreign aid (to prevent terrorists from legitimizing their deeds by reference to global injustices) and ‘peace keeping operations’ like ‘the reconstruction of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Sudan’ aiming ‘to integrate them in the international cooperation, including the cooperation to fight terrorism.’ (ibid.). In parallel, at home ‘We have to prevent young people from being attracted to the ideology of extremists’ (ibid., 15:20).

The others in focus for these counterterrorism strategies are less-than-radical. But these others are, nevertheless, others. It might be possible for them to be included in some We – but it is not a sure thing, and it is an open question what kind of We they may be included in. The less-than-radical others are relatively de-securitized in comparison to the highly securitized radical Other – but they are not a-securitized (Wæver 1998); they are still discursively inscribed in a security problem: We need a strategy towards Them, to make sure that They do not somehow end up as *radically* other; end up as part of the existential threat to our identity. We need to reconstruct their subjectivity – to re-form their identity and their propensity for action – to have them on our side.

There is a long history of European and Western attempts to have others reformed – most prominently to resemble the model, i.e. the reformer (cf. Todorov 1984). Depending on what sort of diacriticon is the threshold for identification the strategies can be identified as *conversion* (religion), *enlightenment* (knowledge), or *modernization* (mode of production). What holds these strategies of *reformation* together is that We have a certain characteristic which We believe They should have as well. Sometimes some of Them agree – sometimes They do not. Which warrant more or less coercive means to implement the strategy.

If They are constructed as split between, on the one hand, the masses which agree to have a need to be more like us and, on the other hand, a group of oppressors (the radical other of the masses) who does not (cf. Hansen 2006:114),⁵ a strategy of reform can be termed as one of *emancipation* (cf. Laclau 1996; 2005):

We have to take on our shoulders the responsibility to help and secure that also the Iraqi population will have a democratic and free country to live in. (MP Behnke, con., F7, 2005.11.16 17:40; cf. prime minister A.F. Rasmussen, lib., R1, 2003.10.07 12:30).

Strategies of elimination, control and reformation are effectively one-way affairs: You do something to Them; Their possible actions are only conceptualized as counter-active reactions to be dealt with accordingly. When it comes to strategies of emancipation, however, there are limits to what kind of action of the other may be discounted in this way. Hence the need arises to engage these less-than-radical others in partnerships and in dialogue to secure that their action benefits the common goal of their emancipation.

4. Why partnerships and dialogue?

Strategies of elimination and control are, as described in the previous sections, supplemented by strategies of reform and of emancipation. Strategies of emancipation are, however, more convincing if an other can be constructed to actively participate in its own emancipation. If so, strategies of emancipation may turn into strategies of *partnership*. Andersen concludes a study of partnerships as second-order contracts between the state and non-state entities – including partnerships between 1st and 3rd world NGO's as part of state orchestrated development aid (2008:42ff) – by describing the complex relation between freedom and obligation constructed:

What partnerships seek to establish is ... the partner's freedom to commit to assuming responsibility for the partnership. Partnerships represent an attempt to formulate mutual obligations concerning the self-creation of individual partners as responsible for and relevant to the partnership. It concerns the obligation to create yourself as a free and independent partner for the partnership – obligation towards the freedom in the image of the partnership. ... [I]t requires freedom reintroduced as obligation, but at the same time it has to presuppose freedom since otherwise there could be no obligation towards freedom. (Andersen 2008:106).

As time passes and the immediately chosen strategies of elimination and control have been sought implemented without any determinate success, strategies of partnership are featured more and more prominently in the communication of the Danish government.

In the post-7/7 debate in late 2005, the prime minister talked about two relationships in terms of partnerships; one abroad and one at home: As part of the active *foreign* policy

we have, by The Arab Initiative⁶ begun an important dialogue with the Arab countries and Iran. The Initiative supports local reform aiming at more free and democratic societies – a development which the government finds to be decisive in the prevention of further radicalization. (prime minister A.F. Rasmussen, lib.,F7, 2005.11.16, 15:15).

⁵ Hansen's concept of a 'split subject' does not seem to be related to the Lacanian/Kristevan concept similarly termed.

⁶ The official English translation of what is in Denmark literally presented as The Arab Initiative is 'Partnership for Progress and Reform' between Denmark, the Middle East, and North Africa.

Domestically, the contribution to counterterrorism from the active *integration* policy builds on the premise that

Danish Muslims and immigrants in Denmark are decisive allies in the fight against terrorism. Together we can win this fight. We shall prevent young people from being attracted to the ideology of the extremists – and that requires us to promote dialogue and counter radicalization in certain Muslim quarters. (Ibid., 15:20).

Partnerships as a counterterrorism strategy generally presuppose a common goal; a goal defined by the party articulating the partnership – either because the initiator explicates the goal which the partner has to agree to aim for, or because the initiator embody a quality which the partner by entering the partnership aims at acquiring. The bulk of the specific sub-strategies included in these strategies of partnership, hence, remain within the basically asymmetrical logic of reform. The term ‘dialogue’ when used as a label for a substrategy of partnerships does, however, sometimes – though not always – imply a less lopsided relation between self and other.

The Arab Initiative was originally conceived of in 2003 as a part of a comprehensive foreign policy document⁷ but was only effectively launched to the public in 2005⁸ and evaluated and adjusted in 2006⁹ in the aftermath of the Cartoon Crisis. The parliament debated the initiative and the evaluation on 24 May 2006.¹⁰ The evaluation, the adjustment and the debates resulted in slightly more weight to strategies of two-way dialogue.

The domestic strategies of partnership and dialogue were slower to evolve. The coupling – in government policies at least – of counterterrorism strategies and general policies of integration of migrants was only cemented after the 7/7 London bombings had propelled the concept of ‘home grown terrorists’ into the debate in 2005. Until then the government had primarily sponsored a classical economically Liberal concept of integration focusing on labor market integration and including some attentiveness to grievances like discrimination. The immediate reaction to 7/7 – soon joined by the Cartoon affair – was to supplement the labor market efforts with a more culturalist concept of integration bordering on cultural assimilation through a focus on a steadily growing list of ‘values’ fundamental to Danish society (Gad 2008a¹¹). Recently, however, a government policy paper departing in counterterrorism considerations has suggested a partial shift to strategies of dialogue in integration policy.

⁷ Regeringen 2003. Subsequent references will be in the form: (2003:pagenumber).

⁸ Parallel texts in Udenrigsministeriet 2005 and Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2005. Subsequent references will be in the form: (2005:pagenumber).

⁹ Udenrigsministeriet 2006. Subsequent references will be in the form: (2006:pagenumber).

¹⁰ Folketinget, plenary negotiations 24 May 2006, 1st reading of F45 (Debate on The Arabic Initiative [Partnership for Progress and Reform]). Subsequent references will be in the form (title name, party affiliation, F45, hh:mm). References to other parliamentary negotiations will follow the same form; for details consult the references section.

¹¹ A more detailed analysis is in preparation as Gad 2008b; cf. Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration 2007; and the plenary negotiations of *Folketinget* on 26 April 2007, 1st reading of F37.

Two reasons for applying strategies of partnership and dialogue are presented in this government policy paper on counterterrorism named ‘A common and safe future – suggested action plan on prevention of extremist attitudes and radicalization amongst the young’.¹²

The first reason is that if We – Denmark – shall be able to successfully communicate to potentially radicalized Muslims (in Denmark and in the Middle East), we need partners. We need non-radicalized Muslims to communicate to potentially-radicalized Muslims since

[w]hen it concerns working on the opinions and norms of a person who is not yet quite settled in questions of identity – or who is already marked by rooted extremist ways of thinking – the dialogue taking place face to face is key. (2008:30).

Abroad ‘there might be a need for an increased involvement of the Danish resource base with roots in these regions in the international engagement of Denmark’ (2008:10), hence

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will send out an Arabic speaking staff member to one of the embassies in the Arab world who will, i.a., be assigned with securing the contact to Arab media ... and securing the communication of positive stories about Denmark to the Arab/Muslim world. (2008:37).

Domestically, there is a need for hooking up with partners enjoying Muslim authority: ‘Representatives for Muslim local circles in Denmark, enjoying social status ... are able to influence in the local circles where they move’ (2008:34) and, hence, a

well organized and democratically based leadership in the individual religious community has ... the potential to reach large proportions of the religious sectors. (2008:39).

But there is also a need for imbuing state authority with Muslim authority by teaming up with Muslim employees:

Yet another element that may contribute to increasing the contact and trust between the police and the citizens of pluricultural background is ... the recruitment of applicants to the police of other ethnic background than Danish (2008: 39);

and ‘Teachers with a multicultural background will be able to work as role models for children and youth with a similar background’ (2008:44). Since the ethnically Danish Denmark cannot reach these target groups by itself, a partnership with someone more alike these potentially radicalized Muslims is needed.

The second reason for choosing a strategy of dialogue is that exclusion (also in the form of perceived exclusion and self-exclusion) is ‘a threat to the cohesive power’ of the Danish society (2008:10, cf. pp. 11f). As the popularized presentation of the action plan to counter radicalization explains: ‘The danger occurs when the reality which young people experience comes to look like the message which the Islamists want to sell.’ (Nyidank 2008(2):10). Hence,

[our t]hrowing suspicion on ethnic and religious groups can be utilized actively in the propaganda we see from the ones opposed to a plural, democratic society. For this reason too it is important that suspicion of being part of the problem is not thrown on anyone able to contribute to the solution. (2008:13)

¹² Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration 2008. Subsequent references will be in the form: (2008:pagenumber).

So we need to affirmatively include Muslims to avoid their self-radicalizing exclusion. This is where the counterterrorism strategy of dialogue might end up reconstructing the integration strategies so far pursued by the government which have primarily been a one-way street of Their adjustment to Our ways.

Inclusion of skeptics and the self-excluded are, however, not a straight forward task. Furthermore these two reasons to dialogue do not warrant a complete switch to strategies of uncontrolled dialogue.

First, the fact that it is necessary for the government writers to name one of the specific sub-strategies ‘disagreeing dialogue’ (2008:34) underlines the need to pay attention to the way the word ‘dialogue’ is utilized in Danish political discourse on integration and counterterrorism.¹³ Hence, the following sections zoom in on dialogue as monologue (section 0); dialogue as inclusion (section 6); and finally dialogue as interchange in need of counterparts (section 7).

Second, even though a strategy of dialogue opens a wider space for the other whom one is engaging than does a strategy of partnership, there are still limits that need to be controlled. This need to monitor the other engaged in dialogue is the focus for section 8 which – via section 9 on dialogue as confrontation and dialogue as an appendix to self-engagement describing the background for the need to monitor – leads to the concluding section on the strategic position of non-radicalized Muslims.

5. Dialogue as Monologue; Deferring Dialogue

The etymology of the word ‘dialogue’ – originating in Greek *διά* (‘across/inter-’) and *λόγος* (‘speech’) – suggests that it denotes an inter-action across two or more distinct entities.¹⁴ In Danish discourse on integration, the word ‘dialogue’ is, however, most frequently used to denote a one-way process of one entity acting on another.¹⁵

First of all, in the government action plan on prevention of radicalization the word ‘dialogue’ is often accompanied by ‘enlightenment’¹⁶ (2008:34, 35, 37) – and even if a headline says ‘dialogue’, the content of the strategy might be ‘enlightenment’. One example is the description of the Arab Initiative which includes myth busting, ‘a precise and nuanced educational [oplysning; literally: enlighten] effort’, ‘public diplomacy initiatives on Danish foreign policy’, ‘challenging and countering the unequivocal and negative presentation of Danish foreign policy engagement’, ‘information sessions’, ‘information

¹³ In parallel, the need to stress the element of mutuality in ‘*Mutual* integration in the civil society associations [foreningslivet]’ (2008:14, 41; italics added) highlights how ‘integration’ in Danish discourse equals Their assimilation to Our ways. The specific initiatives listed under this heading does – irrespective of the heading – only include measures to equip Them to engage in Our unmodified organizational forms.

¹⁴ *The Online Etymology Dictionary* warns that ‘Mistaken belief that it can only mean ‘conversation between two persons’ is from confusion of dia- and di-.’, i.e. ‘across’ and ‘two-[http://www. etymonline.com/ index.php?term=dialogue](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=dialogue), cf. <http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/dialogue>, both accessed 29 September 2008).

¹⁵ Lindekilde conceptualizes two logics of dialogue and deliberation observed in Danish debates during the Cartoon affair as ‘monological’ and ‘multilogical’; both often termed ‘dialogue’ (2007:4f; 20).

¹⁶ Literally ‘oplysning’, which may also – less drastically – be translated ‘informing/information’.

materials’; all one-way measures summarized as ‘dialogue and enlightenment’ (2008:35). In these cases the ‘dialogue’ is really a monologue.

A strategy of one-way information is frequently accompanied by an analysis of the distribution of knowledge claiming that We have the truth and They are plain wrong:

The cartoon affair has ... shown ... that Arab populations have a scanty [alt for ringe] knowledge of our society and not the least of our great effort and engagement in the region. (MP Poulsen, lib., F45, 2006.05.24 16:45)

Misinformation, propaganda, misunderstandings and problems of communication constitutes important parts of the complex of problems of which extremist opinions are also a part. ... A comprehensive plan will be drawn up for information and communication on the government’s and other authorities policies and efforts in areas like integration, the conditions for religious communities, Denmark’s engagement in the outside world, etc.. ... It is ... a key challenge that normal channels of information does not necessarily reach the young people whom one as a public authority wants to engage in dialogue. (2008:57; cf. Nyidanmark 2008(2):13)

Second, a series of educational measures are listed which aim at securing that grown ups as well as primary school children (in public and especially private – i.e. Muslim – schools) acquire the ‘societal goals and values’ (2008:43) and ‘the ability to see a question from all sides and the knowledge of democratic dialogue and argumentation.’ (2008:45f). In these cases there might be a two-way dialogue somewhere in the horizon – but the immediate strategy remains monological. Or in the words of a critic in parliament: ‘All in all, one must say that the initiative so far has been marked by a rather didactic atmosphere’ (MP Lund, UL, F45, 17:45).

A third variation implies dialogue to be simultaneously a central part of both a) the goal of enlightenment and b) the means to achieving that goal:

The purpose [of the Arab initiative] was to establish a basis for a broader dialogue with the countries of the Middle East and Northern Africa and, hence, contribute support to the development of democratic and economic reforms ... [T]he initiative shall focus far more on support to the forces who want to develop free media, free communication, spreading of information [oplysning; literally: enlightenment] and knowledge. An enlightened population has a better possibility for independently making up its mind and thereby for choosing. Knowledge is power – and therefore access to knowledge is for the Arab populations the master key to choosing democracy and dialogue rather than dictatorship and violence. (MP Christmas-Møller, con., F45, 17:30; underlining added)

In other words; we may – by means of engaging Them in dialogue – support Their way towards a stage of development where They are able to choose dialogue as a preferred means of interaction. If this stage is reached, the other is ready for inclusion in two-way interchange.

The effectual deferral of inclusion in two-way interchange is what unites concepts of dialogues-as-monologue: Now you listen and do as We say – later you might be ready speak in a way that is worth listening to. The message of dialogue-as-monologue does not play very well with strategies of dialogue-as-inclusion and dialogue-as-interchange; the focus for the following two sections.

6. Dialogue as Inclusion; Precarious Invitations

Inclusion of non-radicalized Muslims in partnerships and in society in general is central to the Danish government's strategies for countering terrorism. To have someone accept invitations to be included, however, it is seen as decisive that they do not feel patronized.

The domestically focused government action plan to counter terrorism proposes the establishment of a 'Dialogue forum *against* militant extremism' Ibid., 2008:34; italics added) – that is, it invites partners who are free to engage in a partnership with an obligation to the predetermined goal defined by the partnership:

The aim of the effort is ... to promote the understanding of the partners in dialogue that countering violent radicalization is a common interest and a common responsibility. (2008:34-5)

But securing the *inclusion* of someone who is currently reacting to perceived *exclusion* by further *self-exclusion* is not easy: A central argument for basing community centres [medborgercentre; literally: co-citizen centers] in public libraries is that

they are physically located locally where the young are, and ... they are offered openly without presenting themselves as a social service or inferring with the dignity of the receiver. (2008:37)

In parallel,

The police needs to an even higher degree than today to focus on understanding culture [kulturforståelse] [to facilitate t]he police's dialogue with young people – not least young Danes with a pluricultural background - [which] is of essential significance for a respectful and trustful relation (2008:39)

So authorities need to downplay authority and upgrade understanding and respect to invite for inclusion. Similarly, the strategy of including Middle Eastern Muslims is precarious:

Concerning the work in the Muslim world it is especially important that the effort is not perceived as 'cultural imperialism' and that it does not get an aura [et skær] of religious missionary work. The renewal must be done in respect for local values and in a way supported by the affected populations. Only in that way is there a prospect for its success. (2003:16).

Hence, Denmark does not insist on neither the point of departure, the point of arrival, nor the route in between – only the general direction and overall intention needs to be right:

There is no single recipe for democratic development... The starting points as well as the outcomes of every process of development will always be those of each of the nations involved. (2005:4)

In sum, we need in a non-authoritative and non-coercive way to invite partners to freely engage – as far, as much, and as deep, as they want to – in their own obligation to the project to liberate themselves.

But how is the invitation to inclusion of difference envisaged without authority and coercion? First, domestically there is a need for an instant performance of the inclusion of difference; a celebration which in itself performs the inclusion:

To strengthen the community in general there is ... a general need for an increased recognition of the plurality which the Danish population is today marked by. In the light of this ... a highly visible campaign is launched to celebrate the Danish population, its plurality and its common and mutual responsibility for a good society with possibilities for all and respect for the individual human being. (2008:36).

But second, more important are the long time performative mechanism of individuals ‘experiencing’ being ‘part of the community’ and, hence, ‘obtaining democratic competencies’ through ‘practical participation in different forms of dialogue and decision making processes’ (2008:40) – through civil society clubs and associations, through student’s councils (2008:40f), through participatory urban renewal projects (2008:48f), and even through ‘practical training in participatory democracy [nærdemokrati] in the prisons’ (2008:51).

Similarly in the international efforts, the very process of dialogue itself is seen as a mechanism of inclusion; not only inclusion in a practical community of interaction but also inclusion in the set of values which is to frame the partnership:

The government’s overall goal ... is to support reforms and progress in the Arab countries ... and promote political dialogue between parties in these countries and Denmark. These two objectives are seen as two sides of the same coin. ... This implies that the vast majority of activities under the programme will be developed and carried out in partnerships between Danish and Arab organisations [... since] partnerships between Danish organizations and institutions ... and their Arab counterparts ... leads to natural dialogue on questions of reform (2005:7, 9)¹⁷

So the word ‘dialogue’ may mean an invitation to inclusion through experiencing participation; an invitation which it is a delicate task to formulate, since it needs to downplay the very hierarchical relation involved in Our supplying the goal, terms and resources for the relationship.

However, as the quote above continues; The Arab Initiative includes a different kind of projects as well:

[D]ialogue projects proper are to diminish clashes of opinion¹⁸ and create contacts across divisions which would not necessarily have been crossed otherwise. (2005:9)

This ‘dialogue proper’ involves two-way interchange between different entities. Dialogue as a two-way interchange implies Our need to listen to what the other say, even if it was originally intended that we should do the talking. This concept of dialogue is the focus for the next section.

7. Dialogue as Interchange; the Need to Listen to have Counterparts

In the evaluation of the Arab Initiative, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs describes ‘the proper intention of dialogue [as]: *mutual* exchange of experience and broadened horizons on *both* sides’ (2006:10; italics added) – e.g. a two-way interchange between different entities. This definition occurs, however, only in passing as a justification for the unforeseen need for self-development on the part of the Danish NGOs as part of the process of establishing partnerships:

[M]any of the Danish organizations have had to learn and conclude their own experiences [drage deres egne erfaringer] during the cooperation with the Arab partner. (2006:10).

¹⁷ Two specific examples are ‘exchange of students, research cooperation, exchange of curricula, etc.’ between universities and ‘co-production and exchange between journalists’ (2006:23).

¹⁸ The Danish text has ‘bryde meningsmodsætninger [literally: break contrasts of opinion]’ which could imply a strategy of inclusion rather than one of interchange.

The MFA in parallel recollects from a survey of Middle Eastern perceptions of Denmark in the aftermath of the Cartoon affairs an

expressed wish for a dialogue in which there is a true reciprocity ... in which both parties as a point of departure recognize the existence of differences and show a will also to relate to the problems of ones own society. (2006:13).

These examples testify to the force of the very word ‘dialogue’: If you invite some other to a dialogue, you run the risk that they demand it to be a two-way interaction. And if you engage in a two-way interaction by not only speaking but also listening, you might meet demands for your self-reform – even if the aim of your invitation was the reform of the other.¹⁹

In domestic policies of integration, the need to listen as part of a strategy of dialogue is, i.a., negotiated through the handling of alleged discrimination against immigrants and ethnic minorities. A report from a government think tank on integration is instructive in how charges of discrimination are constructed as *not* worth listening to: First, ‘*actual* discrimination’ is next to impossible to measure – and while ‘*perceived* discrimination’ may, secondly, be an actual ‘barrier against important aspects of integration’ this perceived discrimination is, however, ‘subjective’ and, hence, ‘reservations need to be made’ to reports of it (Ministeriet for Integration m.v. 2006: sections 1.4, 6.1, 6.4; italics added).

In the early days after the present liberal/conservative government came into office, the worry that discrimination might hinder labor market integration was indeed primary to the Minister of Employment:

we have difficulties listening to people who do not speak proper Danish, i.e. standard Danish... We are not tolerant towards anything else than fluent Danish. ... We have to consider if our habitual thinking [on what constitutes proper Danish] stands in the way for getting a share of the new-Danish manpower. (Beskæftigelsesministeren 2002)

From the 7/7 London bombings and the 2006 Cartoon affair on, however, the worry of discrimination and the need to listen took second place in policies of integration. A statement from early 2008 is exemplary: perceived discrimination does constitute a problem but the main mistake to be corrected is that the majority community has not been decisive in demanding cultural assimilation of minorities:

Out of misguided kindness we have for years wrapped the immigrants up in cotton wool. We have called it cultural differences and let things slide while imagining Denmark as a multicultural society. ...[Y]oung people of different ethnic background do experience discrimination. ... It is no use. Integration is a common responsibility and the trades and businesses do have part of the responsibility. ... [But] a lot of the integration problems are about people who have moved to Denmark but do not engage in society. It might be about linguistic barriers but it is also about having – and not the least about sticking to – different values and norms. ... [C]ulture and religion may curb the daily well-being and development in the workplaces. (Beskæftigelsesministeren 2008)

¹⁹ This convoluted sentence could be taken to draw the same conclusion: ‘[I]mmigrants and descendants from the Middle East and Northern Africa living in Denmark [will t]hrough their cultural and social roots in the region potentially be able to ... put the program in perspective in relation to the domestic Danish debate on meetings of culture and multiethnicity.’ (2006:28). Read like this, the message would be that Muslim migrants as part of the Arab initiative might be able to influence the domestic Danish debate. It could, however, also be read to say that Muslim migrants as part of the Arab initiative might be able to influence the *perception in the Middle East* of the domestic Danish debate.

A few months later, however, the action plan to counter radicalization has as a central point that it is

important to strengthen the efforts to counter discrimination – and to a higher degree also concentrate the efforts towards neutralizing the diffuse sense of discrimination apparently felt by some young people. (2008:32)

The inclusion of the word ‘apparently’ in the sentence derives the listening part of this strategy of dialogue-as-interaction of some of its thrust: ‘We hear that you claim to perceive to be discriminated. We acknowledge that this perception is a problem. But we don’t really believe that the perception is correct.’ So the immediate solution to this problem remains a one-way strategy: ‘It is necessary to communicate in a more clear way what is done and what possibilities the young people have.’ (2008:32). The very need to counter not only (hard to measure) ‘actual’ discrimination but also (subjective) ‘perceived’ discrimination constitutes, however, an openness to listening as part of dialogue.

And more generally the action plan on counter radicalization explicitly embraces a strategy of two-way dialogue between differing partners:

To a certain extent efforts should be concentrated on ‘disagreeing dialogue’ – that is direct dialogue with persons who represent controversial opinions but are able to influence the opinions of the young ones in a peaceful and responsible direction. (2008:34).

But over what are we disagreeing? What kind of difference is it that we have in relation to this other; this other which We are inviting to a two-way dialogue? It is clear, that the difference of the counterpart – which is to be upheld – pertains to culture and religion:

Let us recognize that there is difference between our cultures and let us not believe that we have to remake [lave om på] each others. Muslims shall not be Christians and Christians shall not be Muslims. (MFA Møller, con., F45, 18:15).

A substantial difference of culture and religion is needed to constitute a relevant counterpart in dialogue – but it is not enough. Neither is the overall commitment to non-violent means in itself enough. For dialogue to be meaningful, this religio-culturally different yet non-violent counterpart needs to be ‘able to influence’ – and if it is not by itself able, we need to empower it: ‘the effort need to build on partnerships, competence building and strengthening the moderate and constructive forces.’ (2008:53). And if the counterpart is not present, we shall constitute it:

Even if many young people with a pluricultural background are active in the democracy there is unfortunately a large group who does not avail itself of it or sees its possibilities. A special democratic platform focusing on plurality is therefore established. The platform is expected to take the form of a network consisting mainly of young people with pluricultural background, representatives from select organizations in voluntary civil society organizations [det frivillige foreningsliv] and the world of education (2008:42).

Among the functions of this network is that it should work as a

Mouthpiece for young people with pluricultural background in questions of current interest, including advice to ministries, organizations etc. (2008:42)²⁰

²⁰ This way of constituting counterparts is a well known strategy for the corporatist Danish state. Examples include the state initiation of the Danish Consumer Council in 1947 prompted by a need for the state to have an interest based organization to counterweigh commercial and agricultural interests.

Existing groups too may enter into partnerships to enjoy both the status as a partner in dialogue and material support:

The government ... will strengthen the dialogue with the Muslim religious communities about how extremism may be countered. Through a partnership – involving among other things advising, organizational and possibly economic support – work may be done to support those Muslim groups who want to contribute an effort against extremism and abuse of their religion. (2008:59).

There is, however, no such thing as a free lunch. The status and material support come at a price:

Danish Muslims shall be helped to develop a codex to secure that extremist forces do not utilize mosques and Islamic culture centers to spread undemocratic opinions and to recruit members. ... [M]ain priorities are that the abilities and competences of the imams shall be further developed; that mosques shall be centers which promote cohesive power, citizenship and dialogue; that there shall be responsibility and transparency; and that added access to mosques shall be given to women and youth. (2008:59).

To sum up: As one of the strategies to counter terrorism, the government proposes to engage non-radicalized Muslims in dialogue. As the other engages – or fails to engage – in dialogue, the government makes explicit a concept of dialogue as a two-way process; i.e. a process including listening on Our part. The government even wants to engage in ‘building’ counterparts for this dialogue. The difference of the counterparts relevant to engage in two-way dialogue, however, needs to stay within certain limits. These limits to the difference of the other engaging in dialogue – and the need to monitor the limits – are the focus for the next section.

8. Staying in control – the Need to Monitor the Limits of Dialogue

Inviting an other into a dialogue understood as monologue is relatively harmless; the worst thing that may happen is that the other does not listen and does not reform himself.²¹ Inviting an other into a dialogue understood as inclusion or as a two-way interaction involves stakes that are immediately higher since you have awarded the other a platform to speak from: You have legitimized the interventions of the other in advance. So faced with a two-way dialogue a need arises to limit the agenda which is to be engaged by the other invited; limit the difference of the other invited; and monitor that the other stays within the limits of difference. Only then do you have a chance of staying in control of the dialogue.

Concerning the agenda of the dialogue, the pitfalls are many. One is that

cross-religious dialogue efforts specifically focusing on contrasts and different sets of values may contribute to a self-fulfilling prophecy. ... The strategy of the Arab Initiative has been to avoid these ‘across the cleavage [over kløften]’ dialogues (2006:16).

²¹ Such a resistance against a one-way remaking of another might in itself constitute a problem for the remaker: since it challenges the value of the direction of remaking; i.e. the universality of the values of the Self (cf. Rumelili 2004; 2007). This lack of recognition of the self might spur re-conceptualization of the crucial elements of the self-conception (Gad 2008c) – or it might provoke a regression to a strategy of elimination.

Since the overall aim of the dialogue is to avoid radicalization by facilitating co-operation or even inclusion there is no need to dig the trenches deeper by discussing the foundational difference.

Another pitfall is that the Other might ask you to re-make yourself. While the plan of action suggests establishing a ‘contact unity for dialogue between the authorities and religious communities’ the dialogue is in the same very move limited to focus on ‘the scope of the activities of these [communities]’ (2008:38).²² We will have a dialogue – but there is only one point on the agenda: ‘You’.

Controlling the agenda of dialogue by explicitly listing it in advance is one way of staying in control. Another – and probably more efficient – way is to limit who is invited to join the dialogue. This is repeatedly done in highly abstract terms invoking a heavy load of liberal, Western political philosophy. The action plan to counter radicalization says i.a.:

Our common endorsement of the fundamental values of the society – freedom, equality, and mutual responsibility for all – is ... a precondition for our differences [forskelligheder] to be able to thrive in a good way. (2008:12).

The Arab initiative delineates its invitation in words of similar origin:

Dialogue must build on mutual respect. Cultural and religious differences must be recognized within the framework of the universal human rights. Religious and cultural values and traditions may never serve as an excuse for depriving the individual human being of its freedom or rights. Where extremism in one way or another is placing itself in the way of democracy and respect for human rights, Denmark shall actively support the forces working for tolerance and respect for the individual human being (2003:14)

The way ‘mutual respect’ is added to the delimiting criteria makes it impossible to decide, if the mutual respect is criterion in parallel with the ‘framework of universal rights’ – or if the human rights are a threshold to pass on the way to mutual respect.

Compared to the principled statements of government text, in parliamentary debates, the limits are tightened. In the words of the speaker for the liberal government party:

the initiative is [to be] concentrated on the cooperative [samarbejdsvillige] countries and governments ... We have to demand democratization and will to reform (MP Poulsen, lib, F45, 16:45).

After parliamentary oversight, the invitation is only extended to the ones who have a track record of reforming themselves – not just to those who declare their adherence to a list of entrance criteria.

Even so, Denmark may suggest less-than-radical Others with whom we are in a dialogue to lower their threshold for inclusion of close-to-radical Others more than Denmark is willing to accept when dealing with others abroad:

Islamist movements, often constituting a strong, popular opposition, in many countries include moderate Islamist organizations working for political liberalization ... By not recognizing these organizations and by not seeking to include them in the political process one might contribute to

²² So, as a comment to the plan of action submitted to the Ministry suggests ‘The description of assignments [of the contact unity] concerns to a higher degree ... information rather than ... dialogue proper’ (Institut for Menneskerettigheder 2008:6).

pushing them towards the embrace of radical circles. ... Denmark ... speaks for the inclusion in the political process of all political actors and groupings, on the condition, of course, that they work on a peaceful and democratic platform. (2006:27).²³

Wherever exactly the limit for acceptable difference is drawn, the limit needs – as this concerns Others potentially radical, i.e. potential existential threats to our identity – to be policed. In the action plan to counter radicalization, the government allots some attention to this question of controlling the counterparts in dialogue – both in relation to the Muslim Danes in general (the majority of whom are ‘decisive allies’ (prime minister A.F. Rasmussen, lib., F7, 2005.11.16, 15:20) in the fight against terrorism), and in relation to the specific partners for specific dialogues.

In relation to young people the well established local cooperation on crime prevention involving schools, social services, and police should ‘raise attention to signs of radicalization ... to improve the possibilities for implementing preventive measures’ (2008:30) including ‘individual preventive talks ... between intelligence officers and persons from extremist groupings’ (2008:30) to signal that we know who you are, but also the ‘development of a mentor corps’ equipped to ‘tackle identity related problems through conversation and guidance’ (2008:31). Furthermore,

a network of school directors on democracy training and problems concerning extremism ... may ... be used as an active tool, so swift reaction may be taken if radical activities should blaze up (2008:44).

And waiting for the problems to make themselves visible will not do; spot tests will be made:

The Ministry of Education begins a dialogue with the associations of private primary schools about carrying out a series of inspections of 25 selected private primary schools with a view to evaluate whether the schools are in accordance with the demand for them to prepare the pupils for living in a society with freedom and popular rule. (2008:44).

The task of policing the limit of acceptable difference, however, is not an easy one as it concerns slight differences on the part of the other hard to tell for Us as outsiders:

to distinguish between radicalization and ordinary religious interest is difficult. ... To judge whether it is a case of violent radicalization or just political or religious interest demand such a highly specialized knowledge that it will be impossible for the individual [crime-prevention] worker to distinguish. (Nyidanmark 2008(2):11)

As the difference is hard to tell, the partners in partnerships and counterparts in dialogue need to make themselves transparent for monitoring. In general,

Well organized religious communities, characterized by transparency and good leadership ... may contribute positively to the Danish society. (2008:38; underlining added).

The closer, the target group is to radicalization, the closer monitoring is needed of the less-than-radical other we need as a partner or counterpart in dialogue:

²³ These ‘double standards’ are criticized by an opposition speaker: ‘ Hamas has been elected by a majority in the Palestinian population. Hamas is definitively not my cup of tea; Hamas is a religious, fundamentalist movement which I cannot in any way support. But I can, however, support that the Palestinians have elected Hamas, and therefore I do not think that one should, for instance, cut the support for the Home Rule.’ (MP Lund, UL, F45, 17:55).

[A]ppointing more imams [to work in prisons] ... may contribute to countering radicalization of Muslim inmates. Imams working in prisons shall pass a thorough process of approval to secure that they have the necessary abilities in Danish language, knowledge about the Prison Service and insight in Danish societal conditions. Furthermore the imam's opinion on the Prison Service need to be evaluated and in each case a security assessment shall be made. Clerical actions and sermons shall take place in Danish [a list of exceptions omitted -/upg]... It must be possible for the prison officers to follow every clerical action and if necessary record them, e.g. with a view to translation. (2008:52).

By institutionalizing a set of procedures for policing and monitoring the limits of acceptable difference it is clear that the position of the Muslim less-than-radical Other engaged in dialogue is not really a de-securitized position. The terrorist radical Other is an overtly securitized figure. Concerning the less-than-radical Muslim Other, the securitization is institutionalized in procedures of policing and monitoring as a necessary supplement to the strategies of inclusion and dialogue. The next section lays out how this re-securitization is necessary for the government to make to articulate, on the one hand, the necessity of securing identity with, on the other hand, the possibility of dialogue with an other potentially asking you to change.

9. Dialogue as Clash; Dialogue as Appendix to Self-Engagement

The government articulates strategies of two-way dialogue – only to supplement them with measures to police and monitor the limits of the difference to be allowed in dialogue. This articulation in part of the governments positioning of itself as the defenders of Danish identity by reforming the other – between an opposition promoting self-reform and a right wing party doubting the possibility of reforming the other.

The policing and monitoring comes explicitly as an answer to the right wing Danish People's Party, on which the government relies for its parliamentary majority:

[C]oncerning the immigrants who are to participate and co-operate in this project [the Arab Initiative]: How do we secure that the people we are cooperating with – who have a connection to the Middle East and who live in Denmark and who might even be Danish citizens – are not identical with the imams who to a very high degree tore it for [ødelagde det for] Denmark [during the Cartoon Crisis]? (MP Espersen, DPP, F45, 18.25).

The DPP repeatedly questions if Muslims are at all capable of reform and inclusion, of democracy.²⁴

even if Denmark is the victim of the [Cartoon] conflict and the Arab world is the perpetrator it is us who kindly hold out our hand as an invitation to reconciliation and dialogue and we even pay for it. ... [I]t is likeable [sympatisk] that we in the democracies ... stubbornly against all odds insist [holde fast ved] that even in the Arab countries there must be a possibility for popular rule and development. ... [T]he DPP accepts the continuation of the Arab initiative ... not the least because the government has intimated to us that ... the initiative is simultaneously of great significance for the security of Denmark. It is ... to the benefit of Denmark, that as many countries as possible become democratic countries. (MP Espersen, DPP, F45, 17:10; cf. MP Langballe, DPP, in Pedersen 2006).

²⁴ Aggressive confrontation with Islamism is not the monopoly of Danish People's Party. MP Naser Khader, who is currently re-branding his centrist splinter party as fundamentalist liberalists, recently supplied the headline 'Dialogue? Stuff it! [Rend mig i dialogen]' to an interview on how to relate to Islamism, radical or not (Khader in Johnsen 2008).

To support that dialogue aimed at reforming the Muslim world is a responsible counter-terrorism strategy, the government works to redraw this image of a Western civilization clashing with a Muslim one into a clash between civilization (in the West and in the Muslim world) on the one side and fundamentalism on the other side:

The clash of civilizations which many fear will destroy a calm development of the world in the future is taking place right now within the Muslim civilizations where fundamentalists will damage the many good forces in the Arab world who – like us – seek stability, security, and progress and who see it as decisive to have the countries opened up politically and economically and thereby contribute to weakening Islamism and stopping the terrorism destroying their everyday life. (MFA Møller, con., F45, 16:30; cf. MP Kofod, soc. dem., 17:05; underlining added).

But this redrawn clash is taken by the opposition as an invitation to venture into an extrapolation so that the DPP is excluded from civilization and relegated to the extremist outside:

[I]f one wants to enter into a dialogue, you may start the dialogue by throwing mud at the others and then wonder why it comes to nothing. ... I believe that the Danes to a very high degree are of the opinion that they would like to get rid of the fools – that is the ones who have organized themselves in Islamic Jihad and Hamas and the like; extremist religious groupings on the one side, and the Danish People's Party constantly contributing such generalizations on the other side. (MP Søvndal, soc., F45, 17:15; cf. MP Kofod, soc. dem., F45, 17:15; MP Lund, UL, F45, 17:25)

This postulated strategy of mutual engagement between civilizational clashers may even be a 'dialogue' in its own terms:

The Danish People's Party and the political Islamists we see in the Middle East are feeding each other and feeding on each other and creating a confrontational dialogue from which ordinary people are suffering and which is damaging the attempts of other people ... to create dialogue and international [mellemfolkelig; literally: inter-popular] understanding. (MP Lund, UL, F45, 17:55)

So to the opposition parties, the alternative is between, on the one hand, 'confrontational dialogue' and, on the other hand, 'dialogue and understanding'. But in this alternative, the dialogue becomes an appendix to understanding – and the substance of understanding is already established. The questions to be asked of the other in dialogue are largely rhetorical:

The question is if Denmark today has at all the moral authority necessary to make a useful effort in this field. (MP Lund, UL, F45, 17:45).

Equally, the answer of the other to come out of the dialogue is known before any dialogue is initiated:

Denmark has come out [of the Cartoon affair] with a reputation which makes it more difficult to promote some of the things related to democracy (MP Søvndal, soc., F45, 17:40)

And so it must be, if the conclusion – that We need to engage in Self-reform – is known from the beginning:

These solutions require corrections to our foreign policy; to our foreign policy alliances, and to our development aid, etc. They require real integration with real, equal opportunities when it comes to education, jobs, and housing, and hence real and robust prospects for the future on equal footing. (Baastrup, F7, 18:10-15; cf. MP Søvndal, soc., F45, 17:35).

We may only hope to influence the other to reform himself if we do forego with an example to follow:

*If our message of democratization and respect for human rights are to have any effect it is necessary that we ourselves live up to those standards – and unfortunately Denmark does not. (MP Lund, F45, 2006.05.24, 17:45; cf. MP Helveg Pedersen, soc.lib., F45, 2006.05.24, 18:00)*²⁵

So in this strategy promoted by the parliamentary opposition, dialogue basically amounts to an appendix to Self-engagement. This form of dialogue as an anticipated post-scriptum to self-reform does, however, uphold the structural opening to the other. Even though we have initially not waited to actually listen – if the partner in dialogue actually says something it will be difficult to decline listening. We are advocating change legitimated by Their supposed grievances – so it will be hard to ignore, should They intervene.

Contrarily, if you see yourself to embody qualities which are to be protected against change, any opening to others will only compromise your identity. Even if the other, whom we engage in dialogue is not the radical other; if the less-than-radical other reproduces the demands of the radical other, the result remains the same:

*[T]he terror has won if [we] are not willing to do what needs to be done when terrorism and the terror networks demand. Is [the honored member] really willing to give in to terrorism and let the threat of terror mean that one decline from doing something (Poulsen, AD14, 12:40; cf. Langballe, US108; Møller, US108; Langballe, F7, 17:40-45; MP Espersen, DPP, F7, 19:10)*²⁶

In this situation, dialogue must be an appendix to a different form of self-engagement; not to self-reform but to self-fortification:

We do ... not want a multicultural Denmark. We find that Danish Christianity, history, culture and conception of democracy shall be the foundation upon which Denmark rests. We need to be better at dialogue ... and in that dialogue we shall dare to say who we are. The presence of people of another ethnic background and a different religious faith shall not make us give up what is ours [vort eget]. (Hornbech, lib., F18, 2000.11.23)

A Bakhtinian inner dialogue – potentially placing identity in jeopardy – needs to be averted; the price is that an external dialogue with the other is too dangerous since it might spur doubts on the integrity of identity.

²⁵ The MFA, on the basis of surveys in Jordan and Egypt, concedes that ‘the impression of Denmark has changed as a result of the [Cartoon] affair. From giving relatively positive associations to a liberal and open minded [frisindet] welfare society, Denmark is today closely associated with the ‘West’ under the leadership of the USA which is typically perceived to be cynical and of moral double standards.’ (Udenrigsministeriet 2006:13). The MFA notes as a ‘positive element’ that the respondents ‘to a great extent distinguish between Denmark and the Danes.’ (2006:13) implying that only the image of the state and not that of the people has been damaged. The MFA’s conclusion to this problem is, however, not to chose a strategy of dialogue but one of enlightenment: ‘It will take a sustained effort to reestablish a positive image of Denmark with a point of departure in the real [sic] Denmark as a peaceful, Scandinavian country.’ (Udenrigsministeriet 2006:14). The recommendation highlighted in the executive summary is ‘To make an increased public diplomacy effort to communicate motives and values for the Danish engagement in the Middle East and to present the Arab Initiative as a part of a comprehensive Danish foreign policy for the Middle East which to an equal degree prioritizes the security political and socio-economic aspects.’ (Udenrigsministeriet 2006:3) – even if the final conclusion to the analysis is that ‘living in strict accordance with our own principles will probably be the most efficient lever for the recovery of the trust and credibility in the cooperation with the Middle Eastern countries.’ (2006:27).

²⁶ In this quote not only this or that quality of the Self is put into question; the very capability of agency is at stake: If we listen to possible demands of an other and retract from *this* course of action, we will have lost the capacity to act altogether – since the same demand is also one of the demands of the radical other.

As the government is not inclined to put its preferred strategies of elimination, control and emancipation in question, it needs to control the limits of what input may come out of the supplementary strategy of dialogue. And dialogue is in parliamentary negotiations reduced to a rhetorical appendix to self-engagement either in the form of an anticipated post-scriptum legitimizing self-reform or as an occasion for self-fortification.

10. Conclusion

Since 9/11, the Danish government has pursued strategies of elimination and control to counter terrorism – supplemented, increasingly after 7/7 and the Cartoon affairs by strategies of reform and liberation. The strategies of liberation have involved strategies of partnership and dialogue – recently increasingly dialogue understood as a two-way interchange between different and differing entities. Domestic policies of integration have taken its point of departure in the perceived religio-cultural homogeneity of Denmark. Cultural diversity represented by Muslim migrants has been pointed out as a threat to this central element of Danish identity discourse. In this context of integration seen as one-way assimilation, a turn to dialogue could be significant.

Let us, however, turn the tables and see how the strategies of dialogue look from the perspective of the less-than-radical other: Muslims in the Middle East and in Denmark are invited to engage in a dialogue with the Danish state. Most of them will probably agree to the aim: To avert terrorism.

As you read through the invitation you have just received, you find that the agenda of the dialogue is long and detailed; that a number of the specific points of the agenda involves monologues recited by the invitor; that you are supposed to perform in specified ways before and after arriving at the table; and that a series of measures will be taken to monitor your behaviour and utterances. You also notice that you are only invited because you are perceived to be well-connected to or at least in command of special skills allowing you to communicate with potential terrorists, whom you probably agree are bad guys. Or maybe you are invited because you are seen as a potential terrorist yourself..

Would you accept the invitation? Many probably would not (cf. Mach 2006:4) and there is a danger that the framing of the invitation might turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy by pushing a few of the, hence, potentially-radicalized others in the wrong direction (Danish Institute for International Studies 2008:2). So in that sense, the net effect of the initiative could turn out to be negative.

Should you accept the invitation? Yes. As Judith Butler notes; if one is awarded a position "at a distance from oneself" (1997:33f) one may react using that position as a platform for speaking back; i.a. by insisting to be included (cf. 1997:91), since "it is clearly possible to speak with authority *without* being authorized to speak" (1997:157). There is no other way to resist the delimitation of an identity than to insist on redrawing its limits (1997:140). Insist on participating in the dialogue you have been invited to – and insist on redrawing the limits put up whenever you find them disturbing. Only in that way may you, the potentially radicalized, help secure that the net effect of the initiative is in the end positive.

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