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Narrating the self-reform of the Muslim Other

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Abstract

Since 9/11, the terrorist is often awarded the position of the radical Other; the personified existential threat to the West. The counter-terrorism strategy presented by the Danish government 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 policy narratives to identify the concepts of dialogue implied and the positions awarded to less-than-radical Muslim Others. The paper finds that Muslims might – especially after the Danish Muhammad cartoon affair – in counterterrorism dialogue find a position for talking back, even if it is still a position circumscribed by control and securitisation.

Key words

dialogue, counterterrorism narratives, less-than-radical Other, securitisation, Muslims

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Introduction: Narrating the self-reform of the Other

In his 2006 ‘state of the realm’ speech, the Danish Prime Minister summarised what the government took to be the conditions for the long-term counterterrorism policy of the Danish government: Most Muslims are waiting to be our partners in emancipating both themselves and us from the extremists threatening us and oppressing them. Terms such as ‘partnership’ and ‘dialogue’ have become part of the self-description of specific government counterterrorism policies. The etymology of the word ‘dialogue’ – originating in Greek *διά* (‘across/inter-’) and *λόγος* (‘speech’) – suggests that it denotes inter-action between two or more distinct entities. However, the Danish government discourse is generally giving the sense of a *one-way street*: We have something that the Muslims need (and most of them want); partnerships and dialogue are means to implement this already-defined goal. This article analyses how the use of the term ‘dialogue’ in government policies on counterterrorism has gradually changed to include more instances of *two-way* interaction – and places the government narratives in the context of parliamentary positions on what ‘dialogue’ is and ought to be.

The article is based, first, on a diachronic reading of the counter-terrorism initiatives of the Danish centre-right government in power from 2001 to 2011 as they were presented to parliament orally or in writing. The initiatives were read as a series of narratives each placing a Danish Self in relations to various Muslim Others; each narrative prognosticating, prescribing and legitimizing a set of courses of action on both sides. This initial reading singled out two policy initiatives as central for the development of the concepts of dialogue: While the tendency to give weight to policies of dialogue in government policies first surfaced in foreign policy formulations (on dialogue with Muslims in the Middle East), it has been taken further in an domestic policy document (on integration of Muslim migrants as a means to counter their radicalization). In a final reading, the government initiatives have been placed in the synchronic contexts of the parliamentary debates held on them. This analysis allows the article to identify both the agreements delimiting Danish discourse on dialogue with Muslims and the disagreements opening up for new policies.

The agreement forming the base of the debates is that terrorism should be prevented – and that some kind of relation exists between terror and Muslims (even if the disagreement includes exactly what the relation is). The article analyses these disagreements and shows how the Self/Other security narratives gradually become more reflexive. The most unlikely result of the merger of counterterrorism policies and integration policies is therefore not an intensified securitisation of integration policy but rather a relative de-securitisation of counterterrorism; nevertheless, neither of

the two amounts to an escape from security. Muslim voices entering into the dialogue as invited are circumscribed by security – but may find themselves empowered by the connotations carried by the very concept of dialogue.

The article proceeds with a section that introduces the theoretical framework which informs the analysis. The second section begins the analysis of the article by laying out how the authorities formulate narratives on the radically threatening terrorist Other implicating less-than-radical Others. Specifically, narratives of partnership and dialogue involving less-than-radical Others in counterterrorism serve as a supplement to policies of elimination and control. The third section examines how the term ‘dialogue’ – when used in counterterrorism policies – may imply either monologue, inclusion, or interchange between two different entities. A fourth section 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. The fifth section lays out how the need to control and monitor is implicated in the efforts of the government to position itself as the defender 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. A final section concludes by summing up the analysis and evaluating the strategic situation for those casted as Muslims who want to revise the script for the role as less-than-radical Others they are awarded in counterterrorism and integration policies.

Dialogue and less-than-radical Others in the construction of identity

The theoretical framework which informs the analysis of this article is based on how identity requires difference. Neither identity nor differences are simply there: Identity and difference must be articulated – they are discursive constructs (Laclau and Mouffe 1985). This articulation of a relation between Self and Other may take a variety of forms – and any specific articulation may be countered by those casted as Other. The conditions for protesting a particular casting vary greatly, however – not least depending on how radical the otherness is conceived.

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 identified as a threat to identity (Žižek 1992, p. 197, Wæver 1997, pp. 328-329). If a specific group – a sociological Other – is identified as that which prevents you from being the one you ought to be, that Other is radicalised. In other words, the Other is ‘securitised’; i.e. identified as a security threat

(Wæver 1997, p. 311): The Other is not merely said to be different from you but said to constitute an existential threat to your identity (Connolly 1991, p. 8). Moreover, you must handle existential threats if you are in charge – at least if the referent-object against which the threat is posed is worth defending (Wæver 1995). To remain in authority, you must declare how you want to fend off existential threats against the entity you represent. You must tell a plausible story about your choice of policy. Identity, then, is necessarily narrative (Ricoeur 1988, Gad 2010).

However, a story can rarely be told as a one-on-one showdown between you and the evil Other. A more complex cast of characters must usually be narrated to get the story going; a cast of *less-than-radical Others*. While a less-than-radical Other is not identical to us, nor is it narratively presented as a direct, existential threat to us (Hansen 1998). Rather, a cast of less-than-radical Others is constructed to facilitate and explain our relation to the radical Other.

The counterterrorism policies analysed in this article involve a series of less-than-radical Others. Different policies invite different less-than-radical Others to participate. But these Others are, nevertheless, Others. It might be possible for them to be included in some sense of We – but it is not a sure thing, and in what kind of We they may be included remains an open question. The less-than-radical Others are relatively de-securitised in comparison with the highly securitised radical Other (the terrorist). But they are not transferred to a space of ‘a-security’ (Wæver 1998); they are still discursively inscribed in a security problem. We need a policy towards Them to make sure that They do not somehow end up as *radically* Other; end up part of the existential threat to Our identity. We must reconstruct Their subjectivity – to re-form Their identity and Their propensity for action – to be sure to have Them on Our side.

The history of European and Western attempts to reform Others is lengthy – most prominently to resemble the model, i.e., the reformer. Depending on what sort of diacriticon is the threshold for identification, the policies can be identified as *conversion* (religion), *enlightenment* (knowledge), or *modernisation* (mode of production). Holding these policies of *reformation* together is that Self has a certain characteristic which Self believes that Other should also have. In the Western tradition of Empire, it is not decisive for the desirability of the end goal whether They agree or not – We know better, anyway (cf. Saïd 1978, ch. 1.I) – but Their opposition may trigger harsher measures.ⁱ Policies of elimination, control, and reformation are effectively one-way affairs: Self does something to Other.

Policies of reform are, however, more convenient if an Other can be constructed to actively participate in its own self-reform. If so, policies of reform may turn into policies of *partnership*. But partnerships are difficult to balance, as partners usually command highly unequal resources. When one of the partners represents the state and the other is part of civil society, both formal and material inequality is assured (Balloch and Taylor 2001, p. 6). Andersen concludes a study of partnerships as second-order contracts between the state and non-state entities – including both domestic and foreign development policy partnerships (2008) – by describing the complex relationship between freedom and obligation constructed in the partnership:

What partnerships seek to establish is ... the partner's freedom to commit to assuming responsibility for 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. (2008, p. 106)

A partnership between Self and not-so-radical Other becomes even more ambiguous when it is described as involving *dialogue*. Conversely, partnerships as a policy – even those involving dialogues – generally presuppose a common goal; a goal defined by the party articulating the partnership. Either because the initiator explicates the goal which the partner must agree to aim for or because the initiator embodies a quality which the partner – by entering into the partnership – aims at acquiring. As Karlsen and Villadsen describe a proliferation of dialogue as governmental technology in the Danish welfare state, they note that while '[t]he objective is to fill the room with individual's authentic statements ... the conversational space is already pre-shaped by regulatory procedures' (2008, pp. 359-360). Then again, 'dialogue' connotes a certain openness: Most basically, its etymology suggests an interchange between two distinct entities. Even more, however, the word is routinely taken to imply a dialectical process in which Self and Other dissolves in a wider Self of a higher order (e.g., Galtung 1988). Such a process may even be focused on the reform of the Self (Constantinou 2006). This tension between predestination and the openness involved in any employment of 'dialogue' makes – as we shall see – for intricate contractions and expansions. And most importantly; the specific contractions and expansions of the Danish discourse on dialogue as counterterrorism produce a highly circumscribed place for Muslims talking back as part of the dialogue to which they are invited. But even so, as Judith Butler notes; if one is awarded a position 'at a distance from oneself' (1997, p. 33-34), one may react using that position as a

platform for speaking back; i.a., by insisting to be included (cf. 1997, p. 91), since ‘it is clearly possible to speak with authority *without* being authorized to speak’ (1997, p. 157, cf. Karlsen and Villadsen 2008, p. 360). Hegemonic discourses, hence, are never monolithic: The remaining part of the article analyses how the dominant discourse on Danish dialogue with Muslims evolves and seek to manage its dislocation - and evaluate how other voices, Danish and Muslim, have taken and may take dislocations as an opportunity to re-articulate discourse.

Radical Others and less-than-radical Others in Danish narratives of self-defence

This section takes the theoretical framework introduced above to work by laying out how the Danish government formulated its narratives on the radically threatening terrorist Other immediately after the attacks on New York and Washington on 9/11 2001 (first subsection); how these narratives gradually – following the bombing of the London underground on 7/7 2005 – implicated less-than-radical Others (second subsection); and how they appeared to gradually award more agency to these less-than-radical Others called to partnerships and dialogue (third subsection).

The terrorist as radical Other and the responsibility of government

In Danish parliamentary debates, terrorists, terrorism, and terrorist acts are repeatedly and explicitly identified as a threat to Denmark, Danes, and key elements of Danish identity; they are characterised by a variety of invectives; and they are routinely dismissed and condemned as an introit to the interventions of each party spokesman (Gad 2009, p.102, fn.7). In other words, ‘the terrorist’ embodies the radical Other. Indeed, the government identifies terror as *the* threat defining our security:

The threats of the 21st century are fundamentally different than those we faced during the Cold War and in the first years after the fall of the [Berlin] Wall. The nightmare is no longer an all-destructive 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 around the world. (Regeringen 2003, p. 2)ⁱⁱ

And the Danish government followed up on the constructed threats – as it should to remain in authority: It presented a strategy to handle this radical Other. The immediate reactions to the events

of 9/11 focused on ‘fighting the terrorists’. This involved policies of *control* and *elimination*. Domestically, policies of controlling the possible activities of terrorists included the intelligence services being allowed a series of new operational modes. The policy of physically eliminating terrorists was primarily employed abroad by joining the US efforts in Afghanistan. ‘In this struggle, one cannot remain neutral’, the Danish PM at the time claimed (PM A.F. Rasmussen, Lib., 3 October 2006, 12:05-12:15).

Counterterrorism policies constructing less-than-radical Others

As time has passed and new events occurred in the Middle East and European capitals, the spectrum of Danish counterterrorism narratives has become more complex. Correspondingly, the cast of various less-than-radical Others has expanded to fill the roles in a ‘broad spectrum’ (Regeringen 2009, pp. 4, 12, 33) of counterterrorism policy narratives, which time and again has been further broadened. In 2005, in a debate in the aftermath of 7/7, the Danish Prime Minister explained that ‘The overall strategy of the government’ involved a number of elements.

We have to prevent support and recruitment for terrorism through our international involvement and through an active integration policy at home (PM A.F. Rasmussen, Lib., 16 November 2005, 15:15, cf. Regeringen 2003:13).

It is clear here that the relative weight of the spectrum – not least the foreign policy part – is tilted towards ‘long-term’ policies 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’. Abroad, the measures include foreign aid (to prevent terrorists from legitimising their deeds by referring to global injustices) and ‘peacekeeping operations’ such as ‘the reconstruction of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Sudan’ aiming ‘to integrate them in the international cooperation, including the cooperation to fight terrorism’. In parallel, an ‘active integration policy at home’ aims to ‘prevent young people from being attracted to the ideology of extremists’ (PM A.F. Rasmussen, Lib., 16 November 2005, 15:15-15:20). In other words, policies of reforming the Other came to the fore.

Why partnership and dialogue? The Other as an active character

Among these policies of reforming the Other, policies of partnership are featured increasingly prominently in the communication of the Danish government. The burden of reforming the Other is thus moved from the shoulders of the Self to the shoulders of the Other – the Danish government narrates the self-reform of the Other. In the post-7/7 debate in late 2005, the PM 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 Initiative, 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 radicalisation. (PM A.F. Rasmussen, Lib., 16 November 2005, 15:15)

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. (PM A.F. Rasmussen, Lib., 16 November 2005, 15:20)

The PM describes both partnerships – foreign and domestic – as involving ‘dialogue’. And the government texts developing both cases involve the tensions implied in combining a partnership (connoting a pre-defined goal, perhaps even pre-defined by the initiator of the partnership) with a dialogue (connoting equality between two entities).

The Arab Initiative was originally conceived of as part of a comprehensive foreign policy document presenting the government’s view of the post-9/11 world (Regeringen 2003).ⁱⁱⁱ The government texts presenting the Arab Initiative on its own premises explicitly ascribe the prioritisation of the aims to *the Arab Human Development Report*, which is introduced as ‘published by the United Nations Development Programme and written by a team of Arab researchers and political analysts’

(Ministry 2005, pp. 3, 7, 2009, p. 4). Only when presented within the context of counterterrorism, the bulk of the specific sub-policies included in these policies of partnership appear within the basically asymmetrical logic of reform towards an aim predefined by Denmark (to counterterrorism). Even when framed as counterterrorism, however, the term ‘dialogue’ sometimes implies a less lopsided relationship between Self and Other. (This is the focus for the next section.)

The domestic policies of partnership and dialogue were slower to evolve in government discourse. The articulation of counterterrorism policies and general policies regarding the integration of migrants was only cemented – in government policy statements at least – 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 labour market integration and including some attentiveness to grievances such as discrimination. The immediate reaction to 7/7 – soon followed by the Muhammad cartoon affair – was to supplement the labour 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 2011, forthcoming). In 2008-2009, however, a government policy paper suggested a partial shift to policies of dialogue. The paper presented a strategy to counter terrorism and was named ‘A common and safe future. An action plan to prevent extremist views and radicalization among young people’ (Government 2009).^{iv} Two reasons for applying policies of partnership and dialogue are presented in this policy initiative:

The first reason is that if We – Denmark – shall be successfully able to communicate to potentially radicalised Muslims (in Denmark and the Middle East), we need – according to the government – non-radicalised Muslims as partners:

When 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 face-to-face dialogue is key. (Ministeriet 2008, p. 30)

And the ethnic and religious ‘colour’ of the face is implied to make a difference: 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, p. 10). For instance,

Efforts should be made to give Muslim populations in various countries factual knowledge on Danish foreign policy, conditions for Muslims in Denmark and cooperation between the West and the Muslim World. In order to ensure this, an Arabic speaking staff member is employed, inter alia to establish contact with the Arab media. (Government 2009, p. 17)

There is also a domestic need for teaming up with partners enjoying Muslim authority: ‘Representatives from Muslim communities in Denmark ... may exert influence in their local communities’ (2009, p. 17). Therefore, a ‘well organised and democratically based leadership in the individual religious community has ... the potential to reach large proportions of the religious sectors’ (Ministeriet 2008, p. 39).^v Since ethnically Danish Denmark cannot reach the target groups on its own, a partnership with someone more similar to the potentially radicalised Muslims is needed.

The second reason for choosing a policy of dialogue, which the government presents, is that exclusion (also in the forms of perceived exclusion and self-exclusion) is ‘a threat to the cohesive force’ of Danish society (2008, pp. 10, 11-12, cf. Gad 2011). The popularised presentation of the action plan to counter radicalisation explains: ‘The danger occurs when the reality which young people experience comes to look like the message which the Islamists want to sell’ (Nyidanmark 2008, p. 10). Hence,

[our c]asting suspicion on ethnic and religious groups can be utilised actively in the propaganda we see from those 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. (Ministeriet 2008, p. 13)

The government’s point is that Denmark needs to affirmatively include Muslims to avoid their self-radicalising exclusion. Interestingly, this is where the counterterrorism policy of dialogue might end up reconstructing the integration narratives told thus far by the Danish government, which have primarily been a one-way street of Their adjustment to Our ways (Emerek 2003).

Three concepts of dialogue

The inclusion of sceptics and the self-excluded is no straight forward task. Furthermore, the two reasons to dialogue laid out above do not warrant a complete switch to policies of uncontrolled dialogue:

Firstly, the policy paper names one of the specific sub-policies ‘disagreeing dialogue’ (Government 2009, p. 17) to distinguish it from other kinds of dialogue. This special category leaves the impression that other kinds of dialogue do *not* involve disagreement. In that sense, the use of the category underlines the need to pay attention to how the word ‘dialogue’ is utilised in Danish political discourse on integration and counterterrorism. This section therefore identifies three different concepts of dialogue: Dialogue as monologue (the first subsection); dialogue as inclusion (the next subsection); and dialogue as interchange in need of counterparts (the final subsection).

Secondly, the future interaction implied in a narrative of dialogue opens a space for the Other whom one is engaging. And the space opened up is greater than the space opened up by a narrative of partnership on a predefined road towards a predefined goal. For this very reason, limits still exist that must be controlled. This need to monitor the Other engaged in dialogue is the focus of the next section.

Dialogue as monologue: Deferring dialogue

In Danish discourse on integration, the word ‘dialogue’ is – contrary to what the etymology of the word would suggest – most frequently used to denote a one-way process of one entity acting on another (cf. Lindekilde 2007, pp. 4-5, 20).

First of all, in the government action plan on the prevention of radicalisation, the word ‘dialogue’ is often accompanied by ‘enlightenment’ (Ministeriet 2008, pp. 34, 35, 37; Government 2009, p. 11-17).^{vi} Even if a headline says ‘dialogue’, the content of the policy might be ‘enlightenment’. One example is how the description of ‘dialogue and information’ initiatives abroad include ‘efforts to promote a nuanced and objective understanding of the relations between the West/Denmark and the Muslim World’, aiming to ‘give ... factual knowledge’ (2009, pp. 16-17) – but no two-way interaction. In this instance, the label ‘dialogue’ is either void or substantially employed to denominate a monologue.^{vii} A policy of one-way information is frequently accompanied in the government statements by an analysis of the distribution of knowledge claiming that We have the truth and They are plain wrong.

Secondly, 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, p. 43) and ‘the ability to see a question from all sides and the knowledge of democratic dialogue and argumentation’ (2008, pp. 45-46). In these instances, there might be a two-way dialogue somewhere on the horizon – but the immediate policy remains monological.

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 ... the initiative shall focus far more on support to the forces who want to develop free media, free communication, spreading of 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., 24 May 2006, 17:30)

In other words; by means of engaging Them in dialogue, we may support Their path towards a stage of development whereby They are able to choose dialogue as a preferred means of interaction. If this stage is reached, the difference of the Other is reduced sufficiently for the Other to be 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 – then you might learn to speak in a manner worth listening to’. The way narratives of dialogue-as-monologue interpellate the Other does not play very well with narratives of dialogue-as-inclusion and dialogue-as-interchange: These narratives are the focus of the following two subsections.

Dialogue as inclusion: Precarious invitations

The inclusion of non-radicalised Muslims in partnerships and society in general is central to the Danish counterterrorism policies. For the invitee to accept an invitation to be included, it is described as decisive that they do not feel patronised.

The government's domestically focused counterterrorism action plan proposes the establishment of a 'Dialogue forum *against* militant extremism' (Ministeriet 2008, p. 34, Government 2009, p. 17, 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 radicalisation is a common interest and a common responsibility' (Ministeriet 2008, pp. 34-35).

But securing the *inclusion* of someone who is currently reacting to perceived *exclusion* by further *self-exclusion* is not easy: One of the means envisioned for the implementation of dialogical inclusion is the establishment of community centres. A central argument for basing these centres 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 interfering with the dignity of the receiver' (2008, p. 37).

In parallel, the authorities must downplay authority and upgrade understanding and respect to invite inclusion:

The police must focus even more than at present on understanding culture [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 relationship. (2008, p. 39)

Similarly, the policy 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 attain an aura of religious missionary work. (Regeringen 2003, p. 16)

Hence, Denmark insists on neither the point of departure, the point of arrival, nor the route in between – only the general direction and overall intention must be correct: ‘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’ (Ministry 2005, p. 4).

In sum, the government attempts to invite partners in a non-authoritative and non-coercive manner to freely engage – as far, as much, and as deeply as they want – in their own obligation to the project to reform themselves.

But how is the invitation to the inclusion of difference envisaged to be issued without authority and coercion? Firstly, there is a domestic need for the instant performance of the inclusion of difference; a celebration which in itself performs the inclusion: ‘A visible campaign will be carried out celebrating democratic cohesion, diversity as well as the common and mutual responsibility for a good society with opportunities for all and respect for the individual’ (Government 2009, p. 16, cf. Ministeriet 2008, p. 36).

More important is, secondly, the long-time performative mechanism of individuals who ‘experience positive fellowship’ (Government 2009, p. 19) and therefore ‘feel that democracy offers them opportunities, responsibility, and recognition’ (2009, p. 11). Consequently, they ‘acquire democratic competencies’ (2009, p. 19), including ‘the ability to partake in democratic processes and resolve problems through dialogue as well as respect for the views of others and knowledge of other cultures’ (2009, p. 17). Among the specific sites of learning are civil society organisations (2009, p. 19), student councils (Ministeriet 2008, pp. 40-41), housing associations (Government 2009, p. 22), and even ‘practical lessons in local democracy in prisons’ (2009, p. 23).

Similarly, the very process of dialogue itself in the international efforts of the government 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 (Ministry 2005, pp. 7, 9).

Here, the word ‘dialogue’ is an invitation to inclusion via participation. Formulating such an invitation is a delicate task, however, as it must downplay the very hierarchical relation involved in one part supplying the goal, terms, and resources for the relationship. Nevertheless, the point of dialogue-as-inclusion is not to facilitate interchange between two independent entities. Rather, it is to facilitate the inclusion of the Other in the Self (at least as far as certain diacritica are concerned).

As the quote above continues, however, the Arab Initiative also includes a different kind of project: ‘[D]ialogue projects *proper* are to diminish clashes of opinion and create contacts across divisions which would not necessarily have been crossed otherwise’ (Ministry 2005, p. 9, italics added).^{viii} ‘Dialogue proper’ must be understood as involving two-way interchange between different entities. Dialogue as a two-way interchange implies the need for the Self to listen to what the Other says, however, even if the original intention was for the Self to do the talking. The next subsection focuses on this concept of dialogue.

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’ (Udenrigsministeriet 2006, p. 10, italics added); i.e., a two-way interchange between different entities; however, this definition only occurs in passing in the text presented to parliament, as a justification for what in the text appears to be an unforeseen need for self-development on the part of the Danish NGOs as part of the partnership-establishing process: ‘[M]any of the Danish organisations have had to learn and conclude their own experiences during the cooperation with the Arab partner’ (2006, p. 10). In parallel, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) recollects from a survey of Middle Eastern perceptions of Denmark in the aftermath of the cartoon affair ‘an expressed wish for a dialogue in which there is true reciprocity ... in which both parties as a point of departure recognise the existence of differences and also show a will to relate to the problems of one’s own society’ (2006, p. 13).

These examples demonstrate the force of the etymology of ‘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 two-way interaction by listening as well as speaking, you might meet demands for your self-reform – even if the aim of your invitation was the reform of the Other.^{ix}

In parallel, the domestic action plan to counter radicalisation in one instance explicitly embraces a policy of two-way dialogue between differing partners:

The objective is to strengthen the ‘disagreeing dialogue’ by entering into dialogue with individuals who represent controversial views. Often, it is precisely these individuals who have the best chance of influencing the attitudes of the young people who are in a process of radicalisation, in a non-violent direction. (Government 2009, p. 17)

But what is it exactly that we are disagreeing on – what is the difference defining the relation to the Other? The difference of the counterpart – which is to be upheld – clearly pertains to culture and religion: ‘Let us recognise that there is difference between our cultures and let us not believe that we have to remake each other’s. Muslims shall not be Christians and Christians shall not be Muslims’ (Minister of Foreign Affairs Møller, Con., 24 May 2006, 18:15).

A substantial difference between culture and religion is needed to constitute a relevant counterpart in dialogue – but difference is not enough. For dialogue to be meaningful, this religio-culturally different-yet-non-violent counterpart must be ‘able to influence’ – and if it is not by itself able, the government is ready to empower it: ‘[T]he effort must build on partnerships, competence building, and strengthening the moderate and constructive forces’ (Ministeriet 2008, p. 53). And if the counterpart is not present, the government is ready to constitute it:

Although many young people are active participants to democracy, there are, unfortunately, quite a few young people – especially among those with multicultural backgrounds – who do not use it or see its possibilities. The Government wishes to establish a forum for young people with different cultural backgrounds who are involved in associations or networks that are engaged in democracy, civic citizenship or intercultural activities. (Government 2009, p. 20)

Among the functions which the reports suggest for 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, organisations etc’ (Ministeriet 2008, p. 42).

It also envisions how existing groups 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, organisational 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, p. 59)

But there is no such thing as a free lunch.^x The status and material support foreseen in the reports comes at a price:

Danish Muslims should be assisted in the development of a code of conduct ensuring that extremist forces do not use mosques or Islamic cultural centres as a platform for spreading undemocratic views or recruiting members. (Government 2009, p. 25)

To sum up: As part of its counterterrorism policy, the government proposes engaging non-radicalised Muslims in dialogue. As the Other is engaged in dialogue, the government must make explicit a concept of dialogue as a two-way process; i.e., a process including listening on the part of the Self. 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. The next section focuses on these limits regarding the difference of the Other engaging in dialogue together with the need to monitor them.

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 case scenario is that the Other does not listen and does not reform himself. Inviting an Other into dialogue understood as a two-way interaction involves stakes that are immediately higher, since the Other is awarded a platform to speak from; the interventions of the Other are legitimised in advance. Faced with two-way dialogue, a need thus arises to control the direction of the dialogue. To control the dialogue, there is a need to limit the agenda which is to be engaged by the invited

Other; there is a need to limit the difference of the invited Other; and there is a need to monitor that the Other remains within the limits of difference.

Concerning the agenda of the dialogue, one pitfall is that the Other might ask the Self to re-make itself. While the action plan suggests establishing a ‘contact unity for dialogue between the authorities and religious communities’, the dialogue is in the same very move limited to focusing on ‘the scope of the activities of these [communities]’ (Ministeriet 2008, p. 38). This in effect says that ‘We will have a dialogue – but there is only one point on the agenda: You’.^{xi}

Another way of maintaining control is to limit who is invited to join the dialogue. Such a limitation is repeatedly performed in highly abstract terms invoking a heavy load of liberal, Western political philosophy: ‘Our common endorsement of the fundamental values of the society – freedom, equality, and mutual responsibility for all – is ... a precondition for our differences to be able to thrive in a good way’ (Ministeriet 2008, p. 12, Regeringen 2003, p. 14, cf. Government 2009, p. 17).

Wherever exactly the limit for acceptable difference is drawn, the limit must be monitored since this concerns Others potentially radical, i.e., a potential existential threat to the identity of the Self. In the action plan to counter radicalisation, the government allots attention to this question of controlling the counterparts in dialogue; both in relation to the Muslim Danes in general (the majority of whom are, as we may recall, ‘decisive allies’ 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 – according to the policy initiative – ‘raise attention to signs of radicalisation ... to improve the possibilities for implementing preventive measures’ (Ministeriet 2008, p. 30). The government finds, however, that waiting for the problems to pop up will not do; spot checks must be carried out: ‘[S]chools should prepare the students for living in a society with freedom and democracy ... [A] series of inspection visits to 25 selected schools will be carried out.’ (Government 2009, p. 18)

However, the narrative of the policy initiative continues to imply that the really serious trouble with monitoring the limit of acceptable difference is that it is so difficult to tell. According to the popularised version of the action plan, it only concerns slight differences on the part of the Other, difficult to tell for outsiders

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

As the difference is difficult to determine – the narrative continues – the partners in partnerships and counterparts in dialogue must make themselves transparent for monitoring. In general, ‘Well organised religious communities, characterised by transparency ... may contribute positively to Danish society’ (Ministeriet 2008, p. 38). And the closer the target group is to radicalisation, the reports describe, the closer monitoring is needed of the less-than-radical Other we need as a partner or counterpart in dialogue:

[A]ppointing more imams [to work in prisons] ... may contribute to countering the radicalisation of Muslim inmates ... Clerical actions and sermons shall take place in Danish [a list of exceptions omitted] ... It must be possible for the prison officers to follow every clerical action and if necessary record them, e.g., with a view to having them translated. (2008, p. 52)

By institutionalising a set of procedures for monitoring the limits of acceptable difference, the position of the Muslim less-than-radical Other engaged in dialogue is clearly not really a de-securitised position. The terrorist radical Other is an overtly securitised figure. Concerning the less-than-radical Muslim Other, the securitisation is institutionalised in procedures of monitoring as a necessary supplement to the policies of inclusion and dialogue.

The next section lays out why it is necessary for the government to perform this re-securitisation. The necessity comes from the need to articulate, on the one hand, securing Danish identity with, on the other hand, the possibility of dialogue with an Other potentially asking you to change.

Dialogue as clash – dialogue as appendix to self-engagement

The previous section laid out how the Danish government articulates policies of two-way dialogue – only to supplement them with measures to monitor the limits of the difference to be allowed in dialogue. This section suggests that this articulation is part of the government’s positioning of itself

as the defender of Danish identity by reforming the Other – between a right wing party doubting the possibility of reforming the Other and an opposition promoting self-reform.

The monitoring policies come explicitly in response to the Danish People's Party – the right wing party upon which the government depended for their parliamentary majority – as their spokesman asked:

[C]oncerning the immigrants who are to participate and co-operate in this project [the Arab Initiative]: How do we ensure that the people we're cooperating with – who have a connection to the Middle East and live in Denmark and might even be Danish citizens – are not identical with the imams who were so responsible for ruining it for Denmark [during the cartoon affair]? (MP Espersen, DPP, 24 May 2006, 18:25)

The depth of the scepticism behind the DPP's call for monitoring is clear from how the DPP repeatedly questions if Muslims are at all capable of reform, capable of democracy:

[E]ven if Denmark is the victim of the [cartoon] conflict and the Arab world is the perpetrator, we are kindly holding out our hand as an invitation to reconciliation and dialogue and we even pay for it ... it is likeable that we in the democracies ... stubbornly against all odds insist that even in the Arab countries, popular rule and development must be possible ... the DPP accepts the continuation of the Arab initiative ... not 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. (MP Espersen, DPP, 24 May 2006, 17:10)

To support that dialogue aimed at reforming the Muslim world is a responsible counterterrorism policy, the government works to redraw this image presented by the DPP of a Western civilisation clashing with a Muslim one into a clash within the Muslim world between civilisation on the one side and fundamentalism on the other:

The clash of civilisations, which many fear will destroy any calm development of the world in the future, is taking place right now *within* the Muslim civilisations whereby fundamentalists will

damage the many good forces in the Arab world who – like we do – 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., 24 May 2006, 16:30, italics 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 civilisation and relegated to the extremist outside, and the mutual engagement between civilisational clashers may even be labelled a ‘dialogue’ on 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 [literally: inter-popular] understanding. (MP Lund, Red/Green, 24 May 2006, 17:55, cf. MP Søvndal, Soc, 24 May 2006, 17:15)

For the opposition parties, then, the alternative is between ‘confrontational dialogue’ and ‘dialogue and understanding’. In this alternative, however, 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 area’ (MP Lund, Red/Green, 24 May 2006, 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., 24 May 2006, 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. (MP Baastrup, Soc., 16 November 2005, 18:10-15, cf. MP Søvndal, Soc., 24 May 2006, 17:35)

Implied in such a narrative is that the Other may have rational grievances – even if they are echoed in the grievances voiced by the radical Other. The point of this redistribution of rationality between Self and Other is that the Self may only hope to influence the Other to reform himself if the Self foregoes with an example to follow: ‘If our message of democratisation 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, Red/Green, 24 May 2006, 17:45). In this policy promoted by the parliamentary opposition, dialogue then basically amounts to an appendix to self-reform.^{xii}

Contrarily, if the Self sees itself as embodying qualities which are to be protected against change, any opening to Others will only compromise the identity of the Self. Even if the Other with whom the Self engages in dialogue is not the radical Other; if the less-than-radical Other reproduces the demands of the radical Other, the result remains – according to government speakers – 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 honoured member] really willing to give in to terrorism and let the threat of terror mean that one refrains from doing something’ (MP Poulsen, Lib., 17 March 2004, 12:40).^{xiii} In the situation envisioned by this speaker, 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 different religious faith shall not make us give up what is ours. (MP Hornbech, Lib., 23 November 2000)

As the government is not inclined to raise questions about its preferred policies of elimination and control, it needs to control the limits of what input may come out of the supplementary policy of dialogue. Hence, dialogue is reduced in parliamentary negotiations to a rhetorical appendix to self-engagement, either in the form of an anticipated post-scriptum legitimising self-reform or as an occasion for self-fortification. The form of dialogue prescribed by the opposition – 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. When change is advocated with reference to the supposed grievances of the Other – it will be harder to ignore should the Other intervene.^{xiv} Nevertheless, even if a demand from the Other for the reform of the Self is prognosticated, the very proscription communicates a fortified policy of their reform in our image: ‘We need to reform – so that We can persuade Them to reform to look like Our reformed image’.

Conclusion: Radicalising invitations to monological dialogue

To sum up, the preceding sections have shown how since 9/11, the Danish government has presented narratives of elimination and control to counter terrorism – supplemented, increasingly after 7/7 and the cartoon affair, by reform narratives. These reform narratives have involved narratives of partnership and dialogue: The Danish Self seeks to engage less-than-radical Muslim Others in partnerships and dialogues aimed at the self-reform of the Other. Dialogue has in most cases been envisioned as a one-way affair (Self telling the Other what to do). Nevertheless, as the narratives of one-way dialogue have turned into dead ends, the concept has increasingly been used in ways which imply a two-way interchange between different and differing entities. Traditionally, domestic narratives of integration have been based on the perceived religio-cultural homogeneity of Denmark - and cultural diversity represented by Muslim migrants has been identified 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. The need to protect Danish identity from being questioned, however, appears to be strong: First, in parliamentary debates opposition voices advocating two-way dialogue in effect reduce dialogue to an appendix to a pre-defined self-reform. Second, the invitations to Muslims to participate in two-way dialogues actually issued by the government are still inscribed in a security narrative:

Try to consider how the dialogue narratives sound as invitations if you are the less-than-radical Other; a Muslim in the Middle East or Denmark, invited to engage in dialogue with the Danish state. You 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 on the agenda involve monologues recited by the inviter; 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 specific skills allowing

you to communicate with potential terrorists. Or maybe you are invited because you are seen as a potential terrorist yourself...

Would you – if identified as a Muslim – accept the invitation? Many would probably not (cf. Mach 2006, p. 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-radicalised Others in the wrong direction (Gad 2011). In that sense, the net effect of the initiative could ultimately be negative.

Should you – as someone identified as a Muslim – accept the invitation? That is a truly difficult, strategic question. A role awarded in a securitised narrative is particularly circumscribed: When attention is pre-focused to consider any deviation from the script for potential radicalisation, creative improvisation is not easy. The crux of the matter may, however, be what happens if you do *not* accept the invitation for dialogue. If no one takes up the invitation issued to dialogue, the inviter must come up with an alternative story to explain and attempt to solve that problem. Such an alternative story *might* include a renewed invitation to dialogue revised to be more hospitable. But how the inviter continues the narration of the relation may just as well close down even the possibility of a circumscribed dialogue. Perhaps the relevant question is if there is any *other* way to resist the delimitation of an identity than to insist on redrawing its limits from within (cf. Butler 1997, p. 140). Such a strategic consideration might conclude differently, depending on whether the invitation to dialogue is issued as part of identity politics within or beyond the nation state.

Concerning the domestic counter-radicalisation action plan, heated public debate among cabinet ministers left the impression that any mentioning of dialogue in the same sentence as terrorism, Islamism, or even Islam was controversial (cf. Hardis 2009). In terms of specific policy initiatives, neither the debate among the ministers nor the consultation process changed much. But when comparing the civil servants' initial report (Ministeriet 2008) with the final version sanctioned by the government (Government 2009), the most striking change is that the latter is less narrative: There is less explanation *why* the individual policy initiative should be promoted – less talk of *what* the policies should do and *how* they should achieve their goals. The main impression left is very abstract; that Denmark must engage in dialogue with Muslims to stop terror, even if some of them are controversial partners in dialogue. Whether enough show up for the dialogues envisioned by the domestic invitations to make sense in the continued narrative remains to be seen. As does the government's reaction if no one shows up; whether the continuation of the narrative will be a reformulated invitation – or a wholly different story.

Concerning the Arab Initiative, the 2006 evaluation, adjustment, and debates resulted in slightly more weight on policies involving two-way dialogue. This recalibration dominates the communication of the initiative as it was re-launched (Ministry 2008). Notably, however, two different tracks of communication seem to become increasingly distinct: On the one hand, when telling stories of how to deal with the less-than-radical Other (the average Middle Eastern Muslim), the Arab Initiative is presented as '*demand-driven*' (Ministry 2008, p. 3, italics in orig.), based on '*equal partnerships*' (2008, p. 4, italics in orig.) and oriented towards the realisation of goals defined by the Other – on a general level as represented in the Arab Human Development Report; specifically as 'formulated by Arab governments and non-governmental organisations' (2008, p. 3). And the two goals of 'dialogue' and 'reform' – described in the original introduction as 'two sides of the same coin' (2005, p. 7) – are now simply listed side by side; the programme is now described as having 'the objective to establish a basis for improved dialogue, understanding and cooperation between the Arab region *and* to support existing local reform processes in the Middle East' (2008, p. 2, italics added). On the other hand, when telling stories about how to deal with the radical Other (the terrorist), the Arab Initiative is included as a dialogical partnership ultimately contributing to the higher aim of preventing terrorism (cf. Regeringen 2009, p. 31).

The analytical setup does not allow judgment on the interpellatory effects of the particular communications. In general, however, one may (with Hajer 2009, pp. 9-10) warn against believing that the backstage of internal identity politics may be kept separate from the front stage of external identity politics. The cartoon affair – including its implications for the Arab Initiative – appears to confirm the validity of this warning. In this light, following the advice of the 2009 evaluation of the Arab Initiative – which calls the MFA to develop a clearer strategy for communicating the policies, principles, and guidelines of the Initiative (Skadkaer Consult 2009, p. 25) – might clearly have the unfortunate effect of alienating either the parliamentary majority or potential Middle Eastern partners.

On the one hand, it is not possible to conclude with a happy ending on this account of how the Danish government narratives on dialogue with Muslims have unfolded: Muslims have not been offered thoroughly de-securitized positions in relation to Danish identity. On the other hand, the analysis has given two significant grounds for optimism: First, oppositional voices in the parliamentary debates employed concepts of dialogue which involved a principled openness to critique from the Other - even if the envisioned dialogues were in the particular circumstances reduced to an appendix to a pre-defined self-reform. Second, the etymology of the term 'dialogue'

appears to be a strong resource: The account of the development of Danish counter-terrorism narratives in this article can be read to demonstrate that if you invite to a dialogue, it may be next to impossible to resist a demand from the Other that such a dialogue should indeed be a two-way interaction.

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Notes

ⁱ Cf. Gregory (2004) for an inventory of objectifying discursive constructions allowing the West to disregard the lives of Muslim Others in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine. Cf. Gad (2011) for an analysis of the peculiar Danish way of arguing for an imperial right to promote 'universal' values.

ⁱⁱ Where no official English version of the text is provided, quotes are translated from the Danish by the author.

ⁱⁱⁱ The initiative was only effectively launched to the public years later (Ministry 2005). It was evaluated and adjusted in the aftermath of the cartoon affair (Udenrigsministeriet 2006) – the parliament debated the initiative and the evaluation on 24 May 2006. Following a second evaluation process (Skadkaer Consult 2009), the initiative was re-launched (Ministry 2008, also available in Danish, Arabic, and French). The initiative was originally conceived of as closely linked to EU efforts and framed by the presence in the region of parallel American efforts (Regeringen 2003, p. 16), but synergies were soon found to be lacking (Udenrigsministeriet 2006, p. 12).

^{iv} The final report was based on a civil servant report prepared for consultations (Ministeriet 2008). The language and foci of the papers echo EU writing on counter-radicalization, and the civil servant version explicitly mentions the EU policy (along with UK, Dutch, German, and Canadian experiences) as inspiration 2008: 23). Parallel to the writing and editorial process, Denmark formally acted as the lead country in the EU's efforts to base de-radicalization policies on 'knowledge and research'.

^v In parallel, there is a need for imbuing state authority with Muslim authority by teaming up with Muslim employees in the police force and schools (2008, pp. 39, 44).

^{vi} 'Oplysning' literally means 'enlightenment, but it may also be translated 'informing/information'.

^{vii} The description of domestic 'dialogue and information' involves that 'the young people should be made familiar with facts' via 'targeted information activities', 'information meetings', 'information material', 'targeted use of the Internet'. But it *does* also involve that '[t]he young people should also feel that they have the opportunity to make their opinion known and that someone is listening – even if they will not always agree' (Government 2009, pp. 15-16).

^{viii} The Danish text has 'bryde meningsmodsætninger' [literally: 'break contrasts of opinion'], where the English text has 'diminish clashes of opinion' which could imply a policy of inclusion rather than one of interchange.

^{ix} Marie Koch Wegter, who has hands-on experience with the Arab Initiative from her work in the MFA, intimates to me that the Initiative was always so performed in the Middle East (personal communication, 5 October 2009). A review

of the Arab Initiative concludes on the basis of a comparative study of Middle East reform programmes that the relative ‘success of The Arab Initiative may, finally, be ascribed to the egalitarian approach on a series of levels’ (Skadkaer Consult 2009, p. 30). The project comparing Middle East reform programmes focused only on the programme formulations, however, not on how the policies were carried out in practice (cf. Schlumberger 2009). The analytical strategy of the present article does not allow more detailed treatment of this question – only to note that, when talking to parliament, the government formulated narratives of a primarily one-way project for Their reform with the pre-defined aim of countering terrorism. Hence, the need to explicitly describe how it – post-cartoon affair – is not so, *and* to present it in a way conveying the impression that it is not so *anymore*.

^x Ultimately, there was no lunch at all: The proposed ‘support’ to Muslim religious communities was downgraded to ‘dialogue’ in the final version of the action plan (Government 2009, p. 25).

^{xi} The contact unit was not included in the final version of the action plan.

^{xii} In contrast to the ‘homo-diplomacy’ suggested by Constantinou (2006), which is a self-reform intended to better facilitate otherness.

^{xiii} Not only this or that quality of the Self is put into question; the very capability of agency is at stake: If the Self listens to possible demands of an Other and retracts from *this* course of action, the Self will have lost the capacity to act altogether – since the same demand is also one of the demands of the radical Other. (Cf. MP Langballe, DPP, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Møller, Con., 13 April 2004, MP Langballe, DPP, and MP Espersen, DPP, 16 November 2005, 17:40-45, 19:10).

^{xiv} On the basis of surveys in Jordan and Egypt, the Minister of Foreign Affairs 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 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 double moral standards’ (Udenrigsministeriet 2006, p. 13). The conclusion drawn by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to this problem is not to choose a policy of dialogue, however, but rather 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’ (2006, p. 14). 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, p. 27), the recommendation highlighted in the executive summary is ‘[t]o make an increased public diplomacy effort to communicate the motives and values for the Danish engagement in the Middle East and to present the Arab Initiative as part of a comprehensive Danish foreign policy for the Middle East which places equal priority on the security political and socio-economic aspects’ (2006, p. 3).