

Young Muslim revival

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Religion is strengthened in all Muslim groups in Denmark. Most significantly, the development of younger, well-integrated women born in Denmark shows the first study of the importance of religion for immigrants. Naser Khader calls for theologians who can think of Islam.

ISLAM AND INTEGRATION They are young, modern, independent and well-educated, and they live in a welfare society. According to all theories, their religiosity should be on return, but young people with immigrant backgrounds in Denmark do not control sociological models. They are taking on increasing numbers of Islam and cultivating religion in a far more outreach and independent way than their parents. At the same time, there are more young people than older immigrants who make religion dominate their lives.

This is evident from Integration Status 1. Half-year 2004 by Catinét Research. Catinét regularly investigates where religious refugees and immigrants consider themselves. But the new survey fills a gap by examining the importance of religion for immigrants for the first time and how they cultivate it.

The survey will only be published at a press conference on Thursday, but Ugebrevet A4 can today lift the main results:

- After some years of declining religiosity among immigrants, the average degree of religiosity is now growing. It is all age groups that are on average becoming more religious, but the development is particularly evident for those under the age of 30 and over 50.
- There are no teams in the assumption that it is the weak and marginalized who primarily seek a clue in religion. Especially younger, well-trained and well-integrated women say they have become more religious over the past five years.
- Young people invest far more resources in acquiring knowledge about Islam than their parents, and they are more likely to express their views and ways of life to the parents.
- Immigrants are developing a global religious identity. 31 percent feel solidarity with others of the same religious



conviction abroad, and 13 percent have, through their religion, connection with others with the same conviction in other countries.

Immigrants with immigrant backgrounds are like other young searchers, experimental and moving, and it is in the light of their active and outreach religious worship, says lecturer at the Academy of Migration Studies in Denmark at Aalborg University Flemming Mikkelsen, who has participated in the work with Catiné's examination.

Politics and religion are connected

He thus does not see religion as a direct legacy of the parents, for whom religion has been more a means of creating community and maintaining contacts with relatives and relatives in their home country.

"To the parents, the young religion uses to create an identity that enables them to act freely and independently. To the outside world, it is used as a political manifestation and to signal that one can be both second-generation immigrants, Danes and Muslims," says Flemming Mikkelsen.

International conditions and events also help push the growing religiosity, says Flemming Mikkelsen. He maintains a marked drop in religiosity in the first measurement of immigrants' religiosity after the terrorist attack at the World Trade Center September 11, 2001.

"The terrorist attack was followed by violent international and national criticisms of Islam as a religion and as a basis for life. It may have caused many Muslims to take their religion into consideration and criticism," he believes.

Subsequently, persistent pressure on Islam and a number of international conflicts such as the intifada in Israel, the invasion of Afghanistan and the last occupation of Iraq, led to a counteraction among Muslims not only in Denmark but also internationally. It has been nurtured by a growing network of Muslim organizations that have become more active in public debate, points out Flemming Mikkelsen.

"Highly suggests that religion and politics are closely linked and that religious organizations play an intermediary role," he says.

When Professor Viggo Mortensen, Head of the Center for Multireligious Studies at Aarhus University, contributed in 2002 to the report "Integration Research in Denmark 1980-2002" for the government, he realized how incredibly little one really knew about the role that religion plays for immigrants. That is why he is pleased with Catiné's investigation.

"Two things strike me: First, modernization of society does not necessarily lead to the weakening of religion, as the theory otherwise requires. Secondly, the growing religiousness is not an expression of marginalization. These are people who are well-integrated in society but who want their religion with them," he says.

The need for global ethical community

That up to a third of immigrants feel solidarity with religious fellow believers abroad and

thus sees themselves as part of an Islamic community, he also finds remarkable.

If growing religiosity is detrimental to integration, it all depends on what you understand about integration, points out Viggo Mortensen.

"If you understand it in the sense that everyone has to go fully into Danish values, religion is inhibitory. If, on the other hand, you are satisfied with a well-integrated citizen in a multicultural society, it is not," he says.

Viggo Mortensen believes that religion is important to the human identity and has the premise that it is not dangerous. Conversely, he is not blind to Islam being able to stand in contrast to the basis on which our society is based. If that happens, an urofactor is in play that will challenge the western countries.

"We do not talk about discussing values and formulating a global ethical community that can include both Christians and Muslims," said the professor.

He is excited to see if there is a draft for a red-white Islam in Muslim circles in Denmark. Internally in Islam, there are already discussions in Sweden about a blue-yellow adaptation of religion.

Secondary imams

The need for a more Danish version of Islam is highly present, says Naser Khader, a radical parliamentary member of Arab background. His criticism is especially directed at the current religious leaders, the Imams, whom he accuses of being out of step with the society in which they operate.

Naser Khader calls for Muslim theologians who can innovate Islam in relation to modern democratic Danish society. He wants a source-critical attitude into Islam.

"We lack theological lighthouses. And it is both shame and shame for Islam that we must thank the 2nd-rank imams that come from and are rooted in a completely different culture pattern," he says.

Naser Khader has been in frequent violent confrontations with groups of immigrants who see him as overflowing and godly believers. He himself sees himself as a Muslim just as many Danes consider to be Christians.

He is currently writing a book on Christian and Muslim religiosity with a Danish priest, and in this regard he became aware of his need to talk about God with a theologian he is wavelengthed with. So, on the basis of himself, he understands that young people with an immigrant background ask themselves who they are and how they can live with that background in a new country.

"It is also natural that the young people in the West dwell on and read about their religion, where the old ones just put it in their luggage without knowing the reasons. But when Danish-born youngsters go to Friday's prayer and hear the embarrassing hatred and condemnation, they can not avoid being affected by it, and it's deeply problematic," Khader said.

Religion as political weapon

Naser Khader's criticism of the Imams receives full support from Ayse Deveci, who came to Denmark from Turkey at the age of 11 and is known as the champion of immigrant women's terms.

The worry in the current development is for her not to see that the young people become religious if they just adhered to Islam's set of rules of conduct.

"The worry is that they make religion a political weapon, and they are supported by imams who come from remote villages without academic education. The Imams see our society as an enemy image, they must fight," she says.

Ayse Deveci has been a primary school teacher until last year and experienced the religious awakening at Tingbjerg School in the outskirts of Brønshøj, where a large proportion of the many immigrant girls began to cover up with long walks.

She believes that the war in Iraq has forced young people to take a position and that position has been given in advance in a society that, with Ayse Deveci's diplomatic description, "is not a world champion in concealing minorities" and helping them on their way to learning places and work.

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At the same time, young people have gained a religious basis from home, which they can easily build on.

"But development impedes integration. I have seen in the schoolyard how clicks are formed and how nuclear groups exert pressure to get others to wear a scarf. As a result, a more and more massive iron ring is being introduced around immigrant children compared to ethnic Danes. "

Therefore, if we consider it serious about integration, there is no way without walking in France's footsteps and banning religious symbols at school, whether it's cross or scarves, says Ayse Deveci.

She is also convinced that it will promote more tolerable coexistence if the Minister of Education changes the Christian teaching of religious education and makes it clear to the parents that there is no indoctrination in teaching.

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