



## 'Muslims' after Partition and 9/11: The Construction of a 'Religious Minority' and its Challenges to 'Secularism' in India and Western Europe

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### Introduction

Upon entering the Institute for Asian and African Studies of the Humboldt-Universität in Berlin, one frequently stumbles upon posters and bulletins announcing talks or exhibitions, all of which 'somehow' seem to be related to 'Asia' and 'Africa'. Sometimes, this has a rather painful sight to it: there you are, spending hours on the deconstruction of concepts and images, only to find them resurrected again in photo and print, depicted in essentialising ways. Sometimes, these posters may serve as a reminder that the debates of the classroom have neither roots nor limits there, but live outside the world of academia indeed, and vibrantly so.

One day, some purple leaflets found their way into the library's locker room, proclaiming: "Muslims in Germany: Being normal is not enough."<sup>1</sup> Hoping to "creatively challenge popular clichés", the Hamburg-based magazine *Zenith* had organised a photo contest in order to present "a realistic picture of the daily Muslim life in Germany".<sup>2</sup> The award ceremony took place in Berlin-Moabit on 28 March 2014, free "oriental" snacks included. Having passed those leaflets, one might proceed into the department's library. On the bookshelf sits prominently a recent issue of *India Today*, its cover showing an illustration of a woman wearing a black hijab. The title reads: "Inside the Muslim Mind. Angst & Aspiration" – a 16-page-feature with interviews, maps, statistics, and special reports roughly outlining the situation of the "Muslim minority" before the 2014 elections. In his address to the readers, the editor-in-chief underlines the cover story's relevance by claiming that "the biggest danger to this



country is the possibility of sectarian violence. If 190 million are at odds with the state, the very idea of India will be under threat.”<sup>3</sup>

The *Zenith* photo contest and *India Today's* cover story serve as evidence of a discourse that brought forth the ‘Muslim minority’ and, for the latter, a concomitant representational burden. What mechanisms underlie the construction of this ‘group’, a religious minority within the ‘secular’ nation-state? Which events have shaped the discursive framing of this ‘minority’? What consequences entail its construction and specific discursive framing – both for the ‘minority’ and the ‘majority’? In order to find answers to these questions, I will draw on the productive powers that lie within the exercise of comparison:

[T]o confront two conjunctures with one another, in order to alter our understanding of both; a confrontation, furthermore, which allows them neither to be assimilated into the narrative structure of a unilinear history, nor merely to become signs of their own unique particularity. (Mufti 1995: 78)

By bridging continents and centuries, I seek to abstract from two unique particularities – the ‘Muslim minority’ in both India and Western Europe – the shared mechanisms and symbolisms of their construction. My argument is that the impact of the Partition of British India in 1947 bears striking similarity to that of the attacks on the World Trade Center in September 2001: both events consolidated pre-existing notions of ‘Muslims’ in India and Western Europe forcefully.<sup>4</sup> The scale of violence common to 9/11 and Partition contributed to an atmosphere of fear and loss that united ‘us’ against ‘them’: with the exterior enemy – ‘Islamic terrorists’ and ‘Pakistanis’ – being depicted as ‘Muslims’, heightened attention then was paid to ‘Muslims’ *inside*, who eventually became an interior *other*, a ‘minority’.

The discursive repercussions of 9/11 and Partition saw to it that, first, ‘Muslims’ was employed as a descriptive to override all other markers of identity. Second, this label then demarcates ‘Muslims’ from the ‘true’ ‘national’ citizen of both India and Western Europe, with the former being constructed as ‘Hindu’, the latter as ‘Christian’. Third, along with that demarcation came and comes the constant demand of ‘loyalty’ from the ‘minority’. Fourth, ‘Muslims’ constitute a *religious* ‘minority’ – they are set apart from the nation's core because of ‘religious’, and not, for example, ‘ethnic’ or ‘linguistic’ ‘differences’, though these qualities at times overlap. Hence, as they are being staged as ‘backward’ and ‘pre-modern’ by dominant majoritarian



discourses, 'Muslims' serve as the 'other' for an idealised projection of the 'secular' nation's self. Fifth, though in the position of the marginalised, the 'Muslim minority' nonetheless poses enormous challenges to that 'majority', precisely by defying the latter's claim of an irreligiously imagined 'nation' and 'secular' state.

Indeed, these very concepts – that of the 'nation' and that of 'secularism' – first provide the ground for the construction of a 'religious minority'. As every identity needs its contradiction in order to *be*, "minorities [...] are the means of constituting national majorities or mainstreams" (Pandey 1999: 608). Similarly, by demarcating that which is 'worldly' and 'rational', secularism "defines *itself* as the starting point in relation to which the 'religious' is constructed" (Hurd 2004: 238, emphasis in original).

I thus understand the 'Muslim minority' not as ontologically existent, but rather as a discursive product of "cognitive categorization" and a "framing [which] has to be defined and operationalized on the basis of [...] social constructivism" (Scheufele 1999: 103, 105). That discursive framing is undertaken by journalists, politicians, and other agents in public and political discourses, and hence cannot be separated from questions of power: who can speak, and who is heard? Both the discourses of post-Partition India and post-9/11 Western Europe produced new centres whilst locating the 'Muslim minority' at the margin, thereby creating "new antagonistic identity categories [which became] the common sense of the social structure" (Yilmaz 2012: 369). This shift as inscribed in the social structure not only informs perceptions of the present and future, but is furthermore "project[ed] back into the past as if it has always constituted the social/political horizon" (ibid.: 369). In order to make the articulation of alternative identities and politics possible again, the discursive construction of the 'Muslim minority' must first be contextualised and understood.

### **Nation, History, Legitimacy**

On the surface, contextual differences appear to make a juxtaposition of the 'Muslim minority' in India with that of Western Europe unusual.<sup>5</sup> The latter does not constitute one but rather a conglomerate of nation-states, all of which maintain their own governments, languages, narratives, etc. Then again, almost the same may be said of 'multicultural' India with its diverse communities and "numerous existing religions, languages, lifestyles" (Bajpai 2012: 197). And here already a main point of this essay takes off: in order to achieve



precisely that sense of relative 'unity' over differences, the narratives of both India and Western Europe have used or now use 'Islam' as its 'other'.

What has bound India into a 'nation-state', and how is that nation imagined? What has brought forth notions of Western Europe as a 'cultural' unit, which in part now sees its political reflection in the European Union? In both contexts, these questions cannot be separated from that of the 'Muslim minority', for they cross-fertilise each other: "nationalism stresses the cultural similarity of its adherents and, by implication, it draws boundaries vis-à-vis others, who thereby become outsiders" (Eriksen 1996: 30). These boundaries are drawn on multiple levels, both internally and externally. First, the 'nation' lends legitimacy to the 'state', which will contest its territory against 'other' nations. That territory – or rather, the notions of 'land' and 'belonging' – in turn informs the nation's narrative, with the claim of 'nativeness' to land constituting its 'legitimate' possession thereof. From this powerful idea – that any people or individual can actually be 'native' to a place on earth – stems the dichotomy of 'being native' vs. 'being foreign', thus making possible the category of the 'immigrant' and 'foreigner'.

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It is precisely through these discursive lenses that 'Muslims' have been viewed upon. Although the term 'immigrant' will not be employed for 'Muslims' in India, their discursive role nonetheless bears striking similarity to that of 'Muslims' in Western Europe. In both cases, they have been constructed as standing outside the imagined community; they are the ones that do *not* belong, neither to land nor nation. As the 'cultural similarity' of the latter tends to be narrated with 'historical' references – shared 'heritage', shared 'experiences', shared 'values' – a brief look back not into history but historiography shall illuminate how (supra)national imaginations drew and draw upon 'history' for authority and legitimacy. In the teleological narratives of both 'Christian Europe' and 'Hindu India', 'Islam' and 'Muslims' came to figure as the 'other'.

### *1. Western Europe*

As frequently quoted in this context, the existence of Muslim communities in Western Europe spans back to the seventh century, when Arab rule took over in Andalusia, Spain. And yet, fourteen centuries later, powerful public and political discourses still portray 'Muslims' as 'non-European'. This may largely be attributed to the imagination of a



European identity in contradistinction to Islam – “in many cases it was the defense of Christian identity against Islam that set the ground for the existence of so-called European culture” (cit. in Hellyer 2009: 2). Narratives of Western Europe typically rely on two reference points: a shared Hellenic and Roman heritage; and ‘Christianity’, which informs a simultaneously ‘secular’ and yet decidedly ‘Christian’ culture. The latter often is tied with ‘civilisational’ values. In fact, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, former French President and chairman of the Convention of the Future of Europe from 2002-3, “stated that he was considering inserting ‘an assertion of Christian values’ into his draft constitution for the European Union” (Hurd 2004: 250).

The ambiguity of this narrative of ‘Christian’ Europe – and how it indeed uses ‘Islam’ as its ‘other’ – may best be illustrated by the debate on Turkey’s accession to the EU. Since it acquired status as associate member of the European Community in 1963,<sup>6</sup> discussions over Turkey’s ‘forming a part of Europe’ have come up frequently ever since. The website *DebatingEurope.eu*, supported by, among others, the European Parliament, lists some of the most popular arguments for and against Turkey’s EU membership. Under the headline “History, Culture, Religion” is written:

Reaching out to this prosperous Muslim democracy would send a clear signal that Europe is open to the Islamic world. [...] Turkey has been fully entwined in Europe’s history since the Ottomans crossed the Bosphorus in the 14th Century. [...] Turkey’s rich cultural heritage is unique, but it is also undeniably European.<sup>7</sup>

Right next to it, the counterargument reads:

Turkey’s historic and cultural roots lay in Central Asia and the Middle East. It missed the shared experiences that bind Europeans together, from the cultural legacy of Renaissance and Enlightenment, to the horrors of the Second World War II which galvanized the drive for united Europe. As an overwhelmingly Muslim nation, Turkey’s cultural traditions are fundamentally different from that of Christian Europe [...].<sup>8</sup>

In both arguments, ‘Islam’ serves as a distinct point of reference and is demarcated as not (yet) belonging to Western Europe. However, “the southern territories of Spain and Portugal were indeed predominantly Muslim countries for longer than they have been Catholic”; and the first translations of classical Greek philosophers were owing to Arab Muslim scholars who had saved them from oblivion, thereby paving the way for the European Renaissance (Hellyer 2009: 3, 102).



Countless other examples may be drawn upon to write against a “narrative describing ‘Islam *and* Europe’ [...] which is predisposed to an emphasis on conflict, or, as some put it, on ‘clash’” (ibid.: 2). My point, however, is not to engage in a similar debate but instead to demonstrate that the teleological narratives of both India and Western Europe have provided the basis for the construction of a ‘Muslim minority’.

## 2. India

In the decades leading up to Partition, the (what-came-to-be) national narratives of India and Pakistan sought to construct a separate rather than shared Hindu and Muslim heritage. The use of two different scripts for ‘Hindi’ and ‘Urdu’, and the thereby subsequent growing apart of these two languages, is a highly symbolic example for that construction of ‘difference’ – and how the latter allegedly legitimises the respective nationalist claims. In their speeches and pamphlets, nationalist leaders constructed a linear history of ‘Hindu’ inheritance – already the name given to India during colonial rule, *Bharatvarsha*, provided ample opportunities to do so, as it frequently became linked with *Bharat*, the first Hindu king (Bajpai 2012: 195). In *The Discovery of India* (1946), Jawaharlal Nehru consciously invokes the ‘past’ – or what he makes of it – in order to ‘understand’ its impact on the ‘present’. He provides his own historical account of a ‘Indian national culture’, which he first traces back to ‘classical’ Sanskrit society. As Mufti (1995: 88) points out,

the chief characteristic of this [Indian] national cultural life is precisely that it has eventually forced all invaders from the Aryans to the Mughals – and it is interesting that the Aryan Vedas become the very source of national culture, while Turco-Persian ‘Islam’ remains an interruption – to become ‘Indianized’ (*DI*, 62, 241). The chief characteristic of Indian national culture therefore is its continuity, stretching back as it does to the 5,000-year-old Harappan (Indus Valley) civilization.

Eriksen's (1996: 30) “cultural similarity” required for narrating the ‘nation’ thus was found in a ‘Hindu’ informed history and heritage. Given the political context of the time – separate electorates having been introduced already with the Minto-Morley reforms in 1909, and the All India Muslim League's eventual claim for a distinct ‘Muslim nation’ – Nehru draws the boundaries of his imagined community as separate from ‘Islam’. The latter he discusses only in terms of



“conquest and conversion”, whereby “the arrival of Islam can be experienced only as a trauma and, to be precise, as trauma to the nation” (Mufti 1995: 88).

A similar presentation of ‘Islam’ can be found in an article published by Babu Sampurnanand on 30 July 1947. Then Education Minister in the Congress Government of Uttar Pradesh, he comments on the soon-to-be Partition and Independence of India. Sampurnanand claims that India will recover its *swa-raj* (self-rule) not only from British colonialists but from ‘Muslims’ rule:

we are going to recover that [precious] thing that we lost a thousand years ago [...] With the defeat of Prithviraj [at the hands of Mohammad Ghor] at the battle of Thanesar, Bharat [India] lost its *swa* [one’s own, or self]. (ibid.: 616, additions and emphasis in original)

The ‘Indian’ ‘we’ now meant ‘Hindu’, or ‘non-Muslim’ at the least. That equation of ‘Indian’ with ‘Hindu’, however, seeks to render the latter invisible. Indeed, the religiously informed components of these constructs – the ‘Indian’ nation, culture, history – may then only be challenged by ‘another’ religious group. This is illustrated by the following episode:

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[T]he *Aj* of Banaras, perhaps the most important Congress paper in the Hindi belt, welcomed the pledge of loyalty to the constitution taken by the Muslim League members of the Constituent Assembly, but asked on 20 August 1947 why the same people had absented themselves at the time of the singing of “*Bande Mataram*,” the “national song” (as *Aj* called it) composed by Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, with its fairly pronounced Hindu overtones. The Muslim legislators had explained that they had abstained on grounds of religious sensibility. The editors of the Banaras daily shot back that while this anthem, unlike the flag, had not so far been ratified by the Constituent Assembly, it nevertheless had the stamp of “historical legitimacy”. (Pandey 1999: 619)

The ‘majority’ can simply decree the religious elements of its narrative to the realms of ‘culture’ and ‘history’, as “the presence or absence of religiosity among a political majority [is] irrelevant to its power” (Devji 2007: 88). Yet that ‘culture’ and ‘history’ are contested, and that the story presented is only one of a many, might be forgotten when its agents and agenda are rendered invisible. Those challenging the allegedly ‘objective’ or ‘true’ story do so from a marginalised position.



To the consequences that this situation entails for a religious minority within a 'secular' nation-state I will return later.

The above-mentioned episode moreover illustrates how, after Partition, 'Muslims' were forever set apart from the 'national' core of India, and thus seen as essentially *different* from 'Hindus'. This perception of 'difference' led to the retroactive construction of allegedly distinct 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' communities, which has an impact on scholarly attention till today : "[i]t seems [that] pluralism in South Asia has become synonymous only with the study of shared sites of Sufism and 'folk Islam'" (Khan 2012: 392). It thus becomes important not only to recover "the shared and everyday connected civic life", but, with regard to the question of this paper, to "re-locate the process through which the Muslim subject is produced through class, gender, literary and spatial politics" (ibid.: 392, 395). And yet ironically, while these different fields repeatedly reproduce the category of the 'Muslim', their very own identity markers then become erased by the latter. Hence, the questions with regard to identity construction and politics of all kinds must be, first, who profits, and second, what other constituents of a person's identity and position in society are rendered invisible?

## **Becoming 'Muslim': Identity, Loyalty, Threat**

### *1. India*

In his essay on the nineteenth century colonial stereotype of "The Bigoted Julaha" (1983), Gyanendra Pandey undertook precisely that task of critically examining the politics of constructing a 'Muslim identity'. Pandey (1983: PE-22) states that

the notion of a 'unified' and relatively undifferentiated Muslim community has tended to be over-stretched in the historical writings. Some shared feeling of belonging to a single religion there probably was, but it is doubtful that the mass of the Muslims in any particular region saw themselves as distinctly *other* than the 'Hindus'; rather, they would appear to have conceived of themselves as divided from various Hindu (and indeed Muslim) castes much as Hindu castes were divided from another (emphasis in original).

With new categories of identity being brought forth by public, political, colonial or other institutional discourses, the taking up of one or several of these markers necessarily is a process of ascription and/or self-definition. With reference to Judith Butler's theory of inter-





pellation: “being called a name” first brings the subject into life, and that name then becomes the one and only way for the subject to articulate – and thus constitute – itself (cit. in Spielhaus 2011: 137).

Pandey illustrates this process in his case study of North Indian ‘Muslim’ weavers in the late nineteenth century. In the 1891 census in Uttar Pradesh, Julahas had registered themselves in 244 different sections, deriving their ‘identity’ from geographical origin, caste, language, and other factors. Some “claimed a more or less noble Muslim descent” – a trend which was exacerbated by the 1901 census, when “officials decided to classify castes and communities according to rank” (Pandey 1983: PE-22). Hence, one of the many factors that contributed to the eventual stronger identification with the label ‘Muslim’ was the possibility to thereby acquire upward mobility, which was awarded to those adhering to a ‘purer’ ‘Muslim’ identity. Similarly, for those Julahas of the lowest Hindu castes, conversion to Islam was a means to escape that status. Overall, as Pandey (1983: PE-22, PE-19) states carefully, “many Julahas were at this time taking only their first steps towards becoming ‘Muslims’”, with “the question of consciousness” forever being impossible to answer.

This at first only gradual process was accelerated to the extreme by the event of Partition. India, as demonstrated above, saw its construction as a ‘Hindu’ nation. All ‘others’ were left with a “hyphenated” identity: Indian Muslims, Indian Christians, Indian Jews, Anglo-Indians (Pandey 1999: 608). The burden that Partition placed upon ‘Indian Muslims’, however, was unlike that of other ‘minorities’. Informed by a Hindu majority, India's dominant discourses held ‘Muslim’ ‘communalism’ and ‘separatism’ accountable for Partition. With Pakistan allegedly having been founded as the homeland for the Indian subcontinent's ‘Muslims’, ‘their’ nation-state now literally was on the ‘other’ side of independent India. On a nationwide level, then, Indian Muslims were turned into “the ‘minority’ even in districts, cities, or towns where they were a numerical majority”, for they were the ones that did not belong (ibid.: 610). ‘Not belonging’ consequently meant ‘belonging elsewhere’ – which in turn led to perceptions of threat and hence questions of loyalty.

The regional, caste and occupational markers by which generations of Muslims had been known – and privileged, denigrated, or even declared to be only “half-Muslims” – seemed to lose much of their significance. The Muslims were now, more and more – in official documents, in journalism, and in common



conversation – simply “Muslims,” and all of them were suspect as open or closet Pakistanis. (Pandey 1999: 614-5)

As the violent event of Partition had forcefully inscribed negative notions of ‘Muslims’, they now were constantly confronted with the “test of loyalty [...] required only of those who are not ‘real’, ‘natural’ citizens” (ibid.: 611). In October 1947, the Socialist leader Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia “had pointedly asked India's Muslims to ‘surrender arms and ... be loyal citizens of India, ready to fight, if need be, against Pakistan or any other country’” (cit. in ibid.: 617). In the same month, Govind Ballabh Pant, Congress Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, stated in a speech:

Every Muslim in India would be required to shed his blood fighting the Pakistani hordes, and each one should search his heart now, and decide whether he should migrate to Pakistan or not. (cit. in ibid.)

Nearly seventy years after Partition, the issue of *India Today* as mentioned in the introduction is but one example that points to the continued “situation of suspicion and fear”, which was since intensified by the Kashmir insurgencies of the 1980s and early 1990s, the Babri Masjid burning in 1992, 9/11, and the Gujarat killings in 2002. As “the Muslim community [...] is suspected of being anti-national [...]” (Pradhan & Deka 2014: 12) on the whole, the stigmatisation is felt by individuals on a day to day basis:

I feel like a second-class citizen in my own country. I see the looks I get from others when I step on a train. I can sense their wariness. Am I to be treated differently just because I sport a beard?’ asks Sariful Islam, a 53-year-old businessman from Kapashdanga village. (Banerjee 2014: 21)

In recent research amongst women wearing hijab in India, the latter often “felt that Muslim women had been stereotyped as backward, illiterate, oppressed and victims of a barbaric society and/or closely aligned to terrorists in some way” (Wagner et al. 2012: 533-4). Thus, in addition to being held responsible for communal violence and seen as potential terrorists, ‘Muslims’ experience stigmatisation because ‘their’ religion has been framed as ‘backward’ and ‘pre-modern’. That framing places an incredible burden particularly on ‘Muslims’ forming a ‘religious minority’ in an allegedly ‘secular’ context. Before I return to the consequences of their position within that society, however, I will now illustrate the similarity in both the mechanisms and symbolisms of the Muslim minority's construction in India and Western Europe.



## 2. Western Europe

As cited above, Pandey (1999) demonstrates how Indian Muslims came to be 'Muslims' only, losing other markers of identity. That usage of one descriptive to override all others finds its counterpart in post-9/11 Western Europe. In 1994, media had referred to Cem Özdemir as the first German *Bundestag*-member of 'Turkish descent'. Sixteen years later, when Aygül Özkan was appointed Social Minister of Lower-Saxony in 2010, times had changed, and so had the headlines. As *Bild-Online* would have it: "'So help me God. Germany's first Muslim Minister sworn into office in Lower-Saxony's State Parliament'"<sup>9</sup> (cit. in Spielhaus 2011: 133).

The 'nation' seeps through either depiction, as both seek to highlight the 'difference' of the 'hyphenated' citizen. Yet what precisely constitutes that 'difference' has changed: from 'Turkish' to 'Muslim'. That change in descriptive took place in all Western European countries, albeit the markers that were formerly used to denominate today's 'Muslims' varied from country to country:

Until recently, it was far more common to identify them by their immigration or citizenship status (immigrants, asylum-seekers/refugees, or foreigners), by their economic function (guestworkers), or by their race, ethnicity or nationality (Black, Arab, South Asian, Turk, etc.). This was partly a result of state rules that automatically categorised people by an established institutional logic, and partly a result of the modes of organisation of the migrants themselves. (Bleich 2009: 363-4)

The recent "salience of 'Muslim' as a *politicised identity category*" (Adamson 2011: 901, emphasis in original) points to the construction of an 'other' on the supranational level. With 'them' being contrasted against a new sense of 'us', the emergence of a 'Muslim minority' simultaneously reinforces a 'European' identity. In fact, Germany's most recent anti-immigrant movement now deliberately calls itself Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the Occident (PEGIDA). Misusing the 1989 East German slogan of "We are the People", the adherents state their rejection of 'Islam' as part of the 'Judeo-Christian occident'. Their outrage against 'immigrants' and 'asylum seekers' moreover shows how these two categories have become increasingly conflated with 'Muslim'. From the 1960s onwards, migrant workers in Germany had come from, amongst other countries, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Turkey. While (erstwhile) citizens of the former three countries today smoothly merge into the notion of a European 'we', the



latter are set apart due to them being 'Muslims'. That shift in perception and thus denomination of 'Muslims' can be traced back to the late 1980s and early 1990s, when various events – framed as related to 'Islam' and 'Muslims' – had already made or were making international headlines: the oil crisis, the Iranian revolution, the Mujahideen in Afghanistan, the Rushdie affair, the Gulf War, the Palestinian intifada, the war in Bosnia (Said 1997; Bleich 2009; Adamson 2011; Yilmaz 2012). To use Said's words (1997: 7): "It was enough to use the word 'Islam' to cover what 'we' were worried about on a world scale".

Then came the attacks on the World Trade Center in September 2001. What Partition did for India, 9/11 did for Western Europe: it fostered the "tendency to analyse any expression of Islam from a political perspective" because it was perceived "as an *internal* and external threat" (Cesari 2005: 40). Incidents such as the Madrid train bombings and the murder of the Dutch film-maker Theo van Gogh in 2004, the bombings in London of July 2005, and the Danish *Jyllands-Posten* cartoon controversy in 2006 further consolidated that perception of 'threat'. Due to the heightened sensibility to and suspicion of 'Muslims', the latter term now was applied frequently, and often in error. Its usage by media and politicians resulted in lending it an almost 'ethnic' quality, for it had come to be employed irrespective of whether the thereby described persons were believing in or 'practising' Islam. As Spielhaus (2011: 131) points out, the prevailing definition in discourse essentially deduces a person's 'Muslimness' from his/her 'ethnic' background, but then continues to employ it as a religious attribution regardless. In turn, the stigmatization of that attribution is tantamount "to a form of religious discrimination more or less identical to the categories of ethnicity" – what Cesari (2005: 49) denominates as "the racialization of Islam." This process finds itself literally mirrored in the 2003 decision of the Commission for Racial Equality in the UK to bring "the issue of Muslims (a non-racial community) to the centre of its work" (Hellyer 2009: 162).

Just as in India, then, 'Muslims' have been cast as a homogeneous collective that is essentially 'different' from the 'European'. The merging of those two identities into a 'hyphenated' one – for the 'true' European is 'Christian' – is accompanied by notions of threat, as the general suspicion goes that 'not belonging here' means 'belonging elsewhere'. Precisely from this perception of 'threat' then evolves the aforementioned test of 'loyalty'. These themes – and indeed, the very



terms themselves – are frequently taken up by Western European media and politicians.

In an article titled “Muslims are trying to prove their loyalty” (*The Telegraph* 2008), one of the examples given to illustrate the ‘loyalty’ of British Muslims to the ‘nation’ is that “nearly every Muslim organisation regularly enjoins young men to join the Armed Forces”.<sup>10</sup> With reference to recent research of the University of Essex, *The Guardian* (2012) states that there is “a tendency by non-Muslims to assume that Muslims struggle with their British identity and divided loyalties”.<sup>11</sup> The theme of “British Muslim Identity and Loyalty” is also referred to by the Islamic Society of Britain, which states on its website: “Can you be British and Muslim? The answer is a resounding ‘YES’”.<sup>12</sup> It then goes on to say that

[L]oyalty to the state is also an important aspect of this discussion. [...] Some Muslim scholars have gone as far as saying that when a point of tension exists between British interests and the interests of a Muslim nation abroad, then British Citizens who are Muslims should support Britain by virtue of the social contract of citizenship they have entered into. (ibid.)

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General suspicion of ‘Muslims’ and their ‘loyalty’ likewise was, and still is, on the rise in Germany. In 2004, Otto Schily, then Minister of the Interior, addressed Muslims living in Germany to organise candle-lit demonstrations against terrorist attacks and for a peaceful interpretation of Islam. Federal President Horst Köhler asked for Muslims to raise their voice in unison; Wolfgang Schäuble, back then member of the parliamentary opposition, wanted Muslims to distance themselves from terrorism (Spielhaus 2011: 141).

That ‘Muslims’ pose a ‘threat’ to ‘Europe’ as a whole is overtly claimed in the following article, which was published in the *Irish Herald* (2014):

Ireland is far from being alone in having to deal with this dilemma of misplaced loyalties in the Muslim community. The UK, France and many other European countries have much larger numbers of native-born Muslims willing to go and fight in what they feel is indeed a noble cause. [...] In Ireland, however, the smaller number means we are in a better position to combat this threat.<sup>13</sup>

In order to prevent “Muslim youth” from “radicalisation”, the author demands the creation of “an identity that maintains the Islamic tradition but meshes with the values and mores of modern Irish society” (ibid.).



In Spain, 'Muslim' seems to signify an extra-national identity as well. In an article titled "The fear of saying you're a Muslim" (*EIMundo* 2012), one of the interviewed women states: "the most common phrase we are told is 'get out of this country' [...] most people just don't get it in their head that I'm not a foreigner, I'm Spanish, from the Basque region".<sup>14</sup> In a short text titled "Defence and Loyalty demonstrated to Spain", the Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España (UCIDE) refers to a highly decorated subdivision in the Spanish Army that has traditionally incorporated Muslims, and then "repudiates any hint of suspicion against Muslim Spanish militia and their loyalty".<sup>15</sup> The organisation also states its concern over reports of Muslims having lost their job due to religious prejudice and discrimination. The multiple stereotypes 'Muslims' are being confronted with not only stem from notions of 'threat' and 'misplaced identities', but moreover derive from the long-standing misrepresentation of 'their' religion. Rather than reproducing the latter here or examining its origins, I instead now will illustrate the role a 'religious' – and specifically, 'Muslim' – minority plays in a 'secular' nation-state.

### **The 'Religious Minority' in a 'Secular' Nation-State**

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Due to the negative misrepresentations of 'Islam', and the construction of 'Muslims' as a *religious* minority in an allegedly 'secular' context,

the representational burden that falls upon the figure of the Muslim is precisely that of being the *other* within the modern nation, the continually repeated, *negative* reminder of the national(ist) self's modernity [...] [It] becomes an undifferentiated staging ground for the traditional, the premodern, the underdeveloped, the archaic. (Mufti 1995: 84, 85)

That staging serves various purposes. Again, it may be invoked to create a new sense of 'we'. Differences within the newly perceived 'majority' are glossed over, unity may be achieved amongst those who once were disunited.

#### *1. Western Europe*

In Western Europe, the shift in discourse that constructed 'Muslims' as its supranational – and 'backward' – 'other' saw to it that

the pronoun 'we' is used to mean first 'we' the progressives, and then a slide occurs towards 'we' the nation (or in a broader sense, European civilization) at the end of the quote. The shifting uses of



'we' indicate new ways of articulating 'we'-ness – a slippage through which traditionally progressive notions are rearticulated as the core of national culture(s) [...] traditionally progressive anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-sexist and anti-homophobic arguments are detached from their historical relations to left-wing politics and reappropriated by the populist right to mark national identity, particularly in European nations. (Yilmaz 2012: 373-4)

The 'Western' self becomes equated with gender equality; sexual, political, and religious freedom; and other 'modern' and 'civilisational' tropes that 'Muslims' ostensibly lack. Formerly marginalised positions can thereby move towards the centre: The representation of 'Muslim' women as suppressed allows non-Muslim feminists to relocate 'patriarchy', and, by uniting with those they had formerly fought against, enter mainstream politics (Haritaworn, Tauqir & Erdem 2007: 194). In a similar fashion, non-Muslim queers that portray Muslims as the "real homophobes" thus not only push aside the brutal history of European homophobia and its perpetuated violence, but moreover empower their formerly victimized identity (ibid.: 201). On the level of state politics, Jasbir Puar uses the conceptual frame of "homonationalism" to criticise "narratives of progress and modernity that continue to accord some populations access to citizenship – cultural and legal – at the expense of the delimitation and expulsion of other populations" (2013 : 337). She identifies "Islamophobia" as one of the factors that have contributed to the production of narratives alike.

Notions of the 'backwardness' of 'Muslims' and 'Islam' derive from their constructed oppositeness to Christianity *and* secularism, and their thus alleged incompatibility with modernity. In Western Europe, the Protestant Reformation provided the ground for

[t]he Westphalian settlement [which] cemented a modern concept of social and political order in which individual subjects assembled a society under a single sovereign authority. [...] This new moral order, however, was still conceived within a broader Christian framework. [...] Thus a specific *concept* of secularism was inaugurated at Westphalia and contributed to the normative basis for the contemporary state system. (Hurd 2004: 241)

Then came Enlightenment's philosophical criticism, seeking to both inherit and legitimise the state's authority by pure 'reason' and thus necessarily calling for a 'secular' state and 'rational' citizens. Kant's influential moral philosophy called for the privatisation of religion. The separation of the latter from all matters public is the desire of laicists. In order to achieve this, however, they "constantly, sometimes fran-



tically, re-inscribe the boundary between the public and the private, between the sacred and the secular, between the mundane and the metaphysical" (ibid.: 243). Hence, laicism produces the religious subject itself whilst simultaneously relocating it at the realm of the violent and irrational. This renders its very ideal impossible.

In any case, most Western European nation-states instead have found different and extremely ambiguous ways "to maintain the historical accommodation of religion" and for "allow[ing] religion its proper place in political life" (Triandafyllidou, Modood & Zapata-Barrero 2006: 18). Notions of the 'violent' and 'irrational' were projected upon the *other* religion. Thus was made possible the very concept of "Judeo-Christian secularism", which, by its adherents, is not seen as a contradiction in terms but as "a unique Western achievement rooted in a shared civilizational heritage (Hurd 2004: 246-7). 'Civilization' indeed is a key term here, for Judeo-Christian secularists believe that their 'religious' heritage provides the foundation for 'Western' 'democracy' and 'liberalism' in the first place. As these ideas become inextricably linked, "it follows that those who are *not* secular are not Western, and those who are *not* Western cannot be secular" (ibid.: 251).

As Mufti points out, this poses an allegedly irresolvable dilemma for the religious minority within that context: "how to remain [or be] 'secular' and distinctly Muslim" (1995: 84). In Denmark, where discussions had evolved over the right of employees to wear hijab in private shops and firms, 'debates' were "typically framed as a Kulturkampf against 'spiritual darkness' and religiously motivated discrimination and dominance of women" (Mouritsen 2006: 86). The reply of Muslim women was to the point: wearing hijab "is an individual choice, which takes on an even more 'autonomous' meaning in a secular society" (ibid.). By repudiating its constructed contradiction, this response successfully turns the dilemma as presented by Mufti upside down. Moreover, the visible resistance of these women to public oppression challenges notions of 'secularism' in Western Europe. What precisely constitutes an allegedly 'secular' society? Simple as the definition of secularism may seem – "a distinction between the public realm of citizens and policies and the private realm of belief and worship" (Modood & Kastoryano 2006: 163) – it likewise renders the ideal of a secular state impossible, for the private encounters the public on a daily basis. The question to be asked is: on what understanding will these encounters be regulated, and by whom?





It is precisely there that lays the power and burden of the Muslim minority, as

[t]heir challenges expose the taken-for-grantedness of secularism in most European countries. They press politicians and intellectuals to rethink what is secularism, whether it has ever truly characterized modern European societies and most importantly why and in what version it is still desirable. (Triandafyllidou, Modood & Zapata-Barrero 2006: 3)

Numerous examples for those encounters come to mind here: Switzerland's ban of building Mosque minarets due to a popular initiative in 2009; the debate on circumcision in Germany in 2013; or, more generally speaking, debates over religious holidays, prayer breaks during work hours, state-funded 'religious' education, cemeteries, and so forth. Moreover, with 'the veil' as worn by some Muslim women having become a highly contested symbol for the 'oppression' and 'backwardness' of the latter, many Western European countries have seen a 'national' debate over the 'meaning' of 'the veil'.<sup>16</sup> It is noteworthy that many of the 'problematic' encounters evolve around visibility (hijab and the building of mosques/minarets) and education ('allowing' students and/or teachers to wear hijab), with the latter being responsible for the transmittal of the nation's core 'values' and ideas. The 'other' and its 'cultural threat' shall not be exposed to 'us', and especially not to 'our' children. Because 'they' *are* visible, however, and indeed *can* speak, 'Muslims' challenge notions of 'secularism' and 'equal rights'. Hence, Western European countries are pressed to rethink their conceptualisation of 'secularism' and consequently alter their laws according to that re-evaluation.

In Spain, debate over 'the veil' first evolved in "2002 when a Moroccan girl in a Madrid school insisted on wearing a headscarf in class" (Martín-Muñoz & López-Sala 2005: 132). When a Catholic school which was partly state-funded expelled another Moroccan girl for wearing hijab, education authorities required another state-run school to take in the student, but did not force the partly state-funded Catholic school to readmit the girl (*ibid.*). In Brussels in 2003, the city decided not to admit students wearing the hijab to its municipal schools. In overall Belgium, it was then ruled that each school may decide on its own whether or not to 'allow' its students to wear the veil (Bousetta & Jacobs 2006: 30-1).

In 2003, a Muslim Italian, "asked the teachers in the pre-school his children were attending to either remove the crucifix from the



classroom or to also exhibit sura 112 from the Qur'an" (Saint-Blancat & Perocco 2005: 101). After the school's headmaster refused to do so, Smith took the case to the local court of L'Alquila, Italy, where judgement was passed in his favour. This was followed by "[a] bitter national debate [...] regarding the relations between the lay state, the church and religious freedom" (ibid.: 102). A similar debate on "Italian culture and identity and their compatibility with religious and cultural diversity" had already taken place in 2000, when the Mayor of Lodi, a small city near Milan, had given a municipal piece of land to a local Islamic organisation so that it could build a mosque there (Triandafyllidou 2006: 123).

In 2004, the Federal Court of Germany relegated the decision of whether teachers were 'legally allowed' to wear hijab in public schools to state legislations – on the grounds that this was to be judged by educational boards, and thus a matter not of federal but state (Bundesländer) politics. Hence, in 2004, Baden-Württemberg became the first German state which forbade its teachers to wear hijab. Numerous German states then followed suit. The state of Berlin prohibited the wearing of *any* religious symbols not only in schools but by all civil servants (Cesari 2005: 47).

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In France, a similar law was passed in 2004, banning *all* religious symbols in public schools. After heated national debate over 'the veil', President Chirac set up a commission to inquire into the role of secularism in France. In its report titled "Affirming a Firm Secularism that Brings People Together", the 'experts' proposed to ban the veil,

arguing that "the question is no longer of freedom of conscience, but of public order", citing "tensions and confrontations" in schools, and "pressures" and "constraints" on young women to wear the veil. (cit. in Bleich 2009: 373)

Interestingly, the arguments brought forth in favour of 'secularism' wander through continents and centuries in a strikingly similar robe: 'secularism' is invoked often as a necessity for 'unity' and 'peace'. Immanuel Kant already, to whose moral philosophy is indebted much of secular and laicist theory, hoped for Christian theology to be replaced with 'rational religion' in order "to overcome the adversarial effects of sectarianism" (Hurd 2004: 242).



## 2. India

Precisely within that discursive frame – overcoming ‘sectarianism’, or rather: ‘communalism’ – took place the debate on an ‘Indian’ conception of ‘secularism’ after Partition: “secularism was viewed as the surviving dictum that would unify all existing communities under one umbrella, at least ideologically” (Bajpai 2012: 197). In the decades leading up to independence, the establishment of the All India Muslim League with its later demand for a distinct ‘Muslim’ nation-state provided the ground for

the construction of a dichotomous narrativisation [...] whereby all associated with the Muslim League implied a politics of communalism whereas that associated with the Congress was secular nationalism. (ibid.: 195)

After Partition, that prejudiced image was conferred to all notions of ‘Muslim’ politics. ‘Secularism’ came to be equated with the very idea of an ‘Indian’ (Hindu) nation, the term itself being employed “as a replacement for nationalism”, with its “co-ordinates [...] being] defined vis-à-vis its prominent other, ‘Communalism’” (ibid.: 199, 198). The conceptual frame of ‘Indian’ secularism was thus only possible in contradistinction to its allegedly ‘non-secular’ ‘Muslim’ other.

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During the struggle for independence, the Congress Party had exploited ‘religion’ in most ambiguous ways. On the one hand, its Hindu majority leadership employed religious symbolism to mobilise the masses, and to gain “cultural confidence vis-à-vis the colonial power” (ibid.: 194). On the other hand, given the country’s religious diversity, for the movement to be a truly national one, it *had* to be ‘secular’ – how else could Congress have claimed to represent ‘all’ of India? In order to unite the ‘nation’ against a colonial power, its religious diversity had to be both recognised and incorporated. Ambiguously, the Congress leadership’s commitment to ‘secularism’ then was “defended as a continuation of the ancient traditions of the country [...] drawing] upon popular notions of Hindu civilizational virtues of tolerance and accommodation of religions and of minority groups” (Bajpai 2002: 193). The similarity of the ‘civilisational claims’ of Hindu-informed ‘secularists’ to those of Judeo-Christian secularists is noteworthy.

After independence, the implications of that religious diversity for the conceptualisation of the Indian nation-state were much discussed in the Constituent Assembly debates (1946-1949). K. M. Munshi, a prominent Gandhian, argued that “[e]ven while we are talking of a



secular state, our mode of thought and life is largely coloured by a religious attitude to life... the state in India cannot be secular in the sense of being anti-religious” (cit. in *ibid.*: 181). From that ambiguity – recognising the importance of religion whilst wanting to avoid the colonialists' mistake of mixing it with politics – stems a conception of ‘secularism’ that

would shift its location on a wide spectrum of claims – that religion was a defining factor of the Indian way of life, that Indian secularism did not imply irreligiousness, that religion had nonetheless to be relegated to the ‘private’ realm and expelled from the realm of politics, that the state would grant equal freedom to one and all to practice, preach and profess their own belief systems but that this would not intermingle with the domains of the state, and paradoxically enough, that the state would have to intervene in the religious domain to protect minorities. (Bajpai 2012: 199)

That protection of the rights of religious minorities remains a highly contested field till today. Apart from the right to preserve their own languages, scripts and cultures, religious minorities can, for example, acquire partial state-funding for the establishment of institutions that impart religious education. Most importantly, private affairs – for instance, matters of inheritance and matrimony – may be managed according to the rules and doctrines of the respective minority communities. For the majority religion Hinduism, however, the state has in fact become an intervening force from the beginning. Article 17 of the Constitution asks for the abolishment of the caste system in Hinduism, while Article 25 (2) enables the state “to make laws providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of the Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus” (*ibid.*: 207).

As the state increasingly undertook tasks of religious reform in Hinduism, notions of ‘secularism’ changed. By the 1980s, it came to be identified mostly with the protection of ‘religious minorities’ and their personal laws. A major difficulty was and is, however, that these ‘religious’ laws at times stand in conflict with Fundamental Rights as guaranteed by the Constitution. Hence, the desirability of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) has been debated over from the early days of the freedom movement, with Nehru himself being in favour of a UCC. Moreover, the Directive Principles of Article 44 of the Constitution require the state to eventually implement a UCC (Kirmani 2011: 5).



The Shah Bano case famously constitutes a major hallmark within that debate on a UCC. In 1978, Shah Bano, a Muslim woman from Madhya Pradesh, had filed a claim for maintenance from her divorced husband. A small amount was first granted to her by the Indore Magistrate's Court, and then increased by the Madhya Pradesh High Court. Her husband argued that this conflicted with Muslim Personal Law, under which he was required to pay maintenance only for a certain period. The case was taken to the Supreme Court in 1985, which ruled that Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code, directing him to pay maintenance, applied regardless of religious personal law. In a highly controversial move, however, the court supported its judgment by claiming that Shah Bano was entitled to maintenance payments not only under the Criminal Procedure Code but under sharia as well (Bajpai 2002: 186). In fact, the Supreme Court had invited 'Muslim representatives' to interpret Islamic doctrines on the grounds that it could not ignore the 'sentiments' of a large group of the population. Leaving aside the problem of representability, the 'secular' court had, by doing so, relegated the judgement of "what religion consisted in" to "the views of the members of a religious community, rather than those of the state or of non-members" (ibid.: 191). Even more ambiguously yet, the Supreme Court ultimately demanded the creation of a UCC that would replace religious personal law.

This was met with protest by the 1973 founded All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), arguing "that a secular court could not decide on matters related to sharia and especially on matters related to the home and family" (Kirmani 2011: 5). In turn, the Hindu Right – Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) – then "cit[ed] the opposition to the Shah Bano case as evidence of Muslim 'backwardness' and resistance to national integration" (ibid.: 6). Two themes thus reoccur in that rhetoric: 'Muslims' are portrayed as harbouring 'sectarian' sentiments; and the 'oppressed Muslim woman' must be rescued by the 'civilising mission' of right-wing Hindu groups, whose rhetoric mirrors the colonial stance. Moreover, the Hindu Right argued

that the apparently secular Congress has provided reservations for Muslims in civil and educational institutions and been lenient to discriminatory Muslim personal laws, thereby elucidating its prejudices. A state which is "genuinely" secular ought to view all citizens through a similar lens and thus a Uniform Civil Code is desirable. It is on the same stand that the Congress is labelled as being "pseudo-secular." (Bajpai 2012: 209)



This is remarkable indeed, for it was the Hindu Right who had once been “in favour of Hindu theocratic institutions, scriptural injunctions, participation of religious institutions in legislative procedures [...]” and other *clearly* non-secular measures (ibid.: 210). During the 1950s, it had resented the codification and reform of Hindu personal law through the four Hindu code bills, instead desiring a non-interventionary state.

The controversy over the Shah Bano case reveals how both “supporters of the Hindu Right and Muslim conservative groups used ‘Muslim women’ and personal law as the terrain on which to fight political battles over questions of group identity” (Kirmani 2011: 6). Moreover, it becomes evident that the ‘Muslim minority’ plays a major role in debates over ‘secularism’ in India – and indeed has done so from the very beginning of the state's formation, when the legacy of Partition informed the conceptualisation of ‘secular’ India.

### **Conclusion**

2014 saw the election of Narendra Modi from the Hindu nationalist BJP as India's prime minister as well as an enormous rise of seats allocated to right-wing parties in the European Parliament. The irony of nationalist parties working *together* clearly is not only based on their common demand for more national autonomy from the European Union, but also well-founded in the anti-Islam agitation of prominent figures such as Marine le Pen (Front National) and Geert Wilders (Partij voor de Vrijheid). But one must refrain from merely pointing to the actions and rhetoric of right-wing powers. The discursive construction and abuse of the ‘Muslim minority’ is rather to be located at the very centres of society: media, courts, schools, governments.

As illustrated in this essay, the excessive usage of the label ‘Muslim’ after Partition and 9/11 produced a ‘subject’ and ‘minority’ whose defining characteristic became ‘being Muslim’. That ‘quality’ is put at odds with the ‘true’ Western European and Indian, which in turn leads to demands of ‘loyalty’. At the same time, this demarcation of a ‘distinct’ and ‘different’ group serves as the projection of an ‘other’ for an ideally imagined ‘Hindu’ India and ‘Christian’ Western Europe. The staging of the ‘Muslim’ minority as ‘backward’ and ‘pre-modern’ allows the respective Hindu and Christian majority to make ‘civilisational’ claims which are somehow tied to ‘their’ ‘religion’: the latter becomes culturalised. It is precisely this culturalisation of the majority's religion



that provides the ground for the claim to an irreligiously imagined 'nation' and a 'secular' state.

This claim is disputed by 'Muslims' in India and Western Europe, who – as a religious minority – “inevitably threaten the authority of existing assumptions” by introducing new discourses and thereby disrupting others (Asad 1999: 181). Nonetheless, these challenges to the majority come from the position of the marginalised. The discursive construction of a 'minority' in contrast to a 'majority' can only but place a burden on the former. Moreover, its construction ultimately alters the very order of society itself. It presents

a tectonic movement that has shaken the entire political landscape and realigned social and political movements along a new fault line. [...] Once the new antagonistic identity categories become the common sense of the social structure, even those who argue against right-wing positions draw upon the same epistemology of the social. In this sense, an epistemic collusion occurs between right and left. It is this shared epistemology of the social that is the basis for the new hegemony. (Yilmaz 2012: 369)

The question that thus remains is how to break through this hegemony and its antagonistic identity categories, in short: how to make stories, identities, and politics possible again that do not even require the label “alternative” anymore. Riem Spielhaus' remarks at a talk in Berlin in June 2014 stayed with me: “This is a weird thing for me to say as a scholar of Islam”, she concluded, “but: we need to talk less about Islam.” Indeed it seems only then that other conceptions of the social may prevail again.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> My translation. Cf.: “Muslime in Deutschland. Normal ist nicht genug.” (original leaflet).

<sup>2</sup> My translation. Cf.: “für ein realistisches Alltagsbild des muslimischen Lebens in Deutschland” and “gängige Klischees kreativ zu hinterfragen”. Zenith-Fotopreis 2013, <http://www.zenithonline.de/deutsch/zenith-fotopreis> [retrieved 26.03.2014].

<sup>3</sup> Purie, Aroon. 2014. from the-editor-in-chief. *International issue of India Today*, 17 March, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Although the attacks on the World Trade Center in September 2001 took place on US-American ground, I will instead focus on the discourses of Western Europe for various reasons. Said (1997: 12) already pointed out the “extremely important distinction to be made between American and European awareness of Islam”. That difference in awareness stems from the colonial histories of some Western European countries and hence, large migrant populations from these (former) colonies, particularly in France and Britain; Orientalism as a discourse, way of thinking and



presentation; and overall a “long-standing cultural attention to Islam” and its perception as a “religiocultural challenge” (ibid.: 13).

<sup>5</sup> By 'Western Europe' I refer to both a not clearly defined geographical entity and a 'cultural' imagination which unfortunately still operates along the borders of the Cold War. I thereby mean the nation-states of Austria, Belgium, Cyprus (which geographically 'belongs' to Asia), Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. Most of the mentioned are member-states of the European Union. All of these countries are inhabited by a 'Christian' majority population.

<sup>6</sup> Republic of Turkey. Ministry for EU Affairs. *ANKARA Agreement*. <http://www.abgs.gov.tr/index.php?p=117&l=2> [retrieved 26.03.14].

<sup>7</sup> Debating Europe. *Arguments for and against Turkey's EU membership*. <http://www.debatingeurope.eu/focus/infobox-arguments-for-and-against-turkeys-eu-membership/#.UzK54f6PLOG> [retrieved 26.03.14].

<sup>8</sup> ibid.

<sup>9</sup> My translation. Cf.: “So wahr mir Gott helfe. Deutschlands erste muslimische Ministerin im Landtag von Niedersachsen verteidigt” (cit. in Spielhaus 2011: 133). It is noteworthy that Aygül Özkan was a party member of, and thus appointed by, the CDU (Christian Democratic Union).

<sup>10</sup> Hannan, Daniel. 2008. Muslims are trying to prove their loyalty. *The Telegraph*, 27 February, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/danielhannan/3555475/Muslims-are-trying-to-prove-their-loyalty.html> [retrieved 22.08. 14].

<sup>11</sup> Moosavi, Leon. 2012. Muslims are well-integrated in Britain – but no one seems to believe it. *The Guardian*, July 3, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2012/jul/03/muslims-integrated-britain> [retrieved 22.08.14].

<sup>12</sup> Islamic Society of Britain. *British Muslim Identity and Loyalty*. <http://www.isb.org.uk/loyalty/> [retrieved 22.08. 14].

<sup>13</sup> n. N. 2014. Irish Jihadists will return as dangerous men. *Herald*, 22 August, <http://www.herald.ie/news/irish-jihadists-will-return-as-dangerous-men-30527101.html> [retrieved 22.08.14].

<sup>14</sup> My translation. Cf.: “La frase más común que nos dicen es 'vete a tu país' [...] a muchos no les entra en la cabeza que no soy extranjera, que soy española, vasca”. Figueras, Amanda. 2012. La angustia de decir que eres musulmán. *El Mundo*, 29 April, <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2012/04/27/espana/1335521507.html> [retrieved 22.08. 14].

<sup>15</sup> My translation. Cf.: “Los Grupos de Regulares han tenido componentes musulmanes tradicionalmente, y constituyen precisamente la unidad más condecorada del Ejército de España, por lo que desde la Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España rechazamos cualquier atisbo de sospecha sobre los militares musulmanes españoles y su lealtad [...]”. Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España (UCIDE). *Defensa y lealtad demostrada a España*. <http://www.ucide.org/es/content/defensa-y-lealtad-demostrada-espa%C3%B1> [retrieved 22.08. 14].

<sup>16</sup> As Popal (2007: 92) points out, the terms 'discussion' and 'debate' are misleading indeed. The 'other' women cannot bring in her voice due to it being permanently – and, as it seems, purposely – 'overheard'. The fact that it is being overheard means that she *does* speak but is not admitted into the discourse. Popal hence denominates the 'controversy' on the hijab as a 'monologisation' (“*Monologisierung*”) that has been masked as a 'debate'.





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