

MUSLIMS IN THE UK AND EUROPE II



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INTRODUCTION

THE PAPERS IN THIS VOLUME provide a snapshot of emerging postgraduate work on Muslims in the UK and Europe. They are expanded versions of papers presented at the University of Cambridge Centre of Islamic Studies' second Annual Postgraduate Symposium held on 29-31 May 2015. The Centre of Islamic Studies annual symposium aims to bring together work in this expanding field and to provide a forum for critical discussion and reflection. Two scholars of Muslim societies and Islam, Professor Magnus Marsden of the University of Sussex and Dr Jeremy Henzell-Thomas of the Centre of Islamic Studies, acted as mentors and commentators, presenting keynote speeches and concluding reflections, which are reproduced here.

Professor Marsden's opening lecture reflected on key conceptual and methodological issues affecting the study of Islam in the social world. While Islam is often approached as an inherited tradition of thought and practice that can be interpreted in different ways in different locales, this does not mean that the relationship between "Islam" and "Muslims" in any given setting is straightforward. Marsden argues that the "religious" or "Islamic" – in whatever interpretation – does not exist as an independent dimension of human life, but is always produced in unpredictable ways in relation to the variety of quandaries and concerns that happen to arise in the midst of everyday life. Moreover, Islam and being Muslim is "[not] always at stake in what people of Muslim background think, say, and do". Therefore, Marsden suggests, rather than assuming we know, or should even try to define, what is meant by the term "Muslim", an anthropology of Islam could usefully study the ways in which people of Muslim background seek to emphasise or de-emphasise the Islamic in the midst of the particular contingencies of their lives. His case study of transnational Afghan trading networks who export from China to markets across the former USSR in fact revealed the unpredictable and flexible ways that Islam appears in the lives of these traders: it provides a repertoire of "shared ethical practices" which underpin trade, but is also approached in a versatile and adaptable way as traders seek to "span religious and cultural divides".

Most if not all of the postgraduate contributions follow the broad thrust of Marsden's approach in the sense that they work to de-exceptionalise the study of Islam and Muslims by focusing on themes of social agency, ethical practice,

and negotiations of cultural and national identity. As in the previous year's symposium, the emphasis in the postgraduate contributions is not on theology or comparative religion, but on understanding the wide variety of different Muslims' lived experiences in the UK and Europe, alongside an analysis of the forces affecting these lives. The papers therefore tackle a range of themes of broad interest to scholars working in various fields of social and political science. While there are many possible ways of bringing these papers into dialogue with each other, they are grouped here into four thematic sections: governmentality and discursive power; agency and the public sphere; law and culture; and national and ethno-religious identity. Some other cross-cutting themes emerge – such as the significance of geographical place, distance and proximity in the construction of identity – and these are highlighted below.

Governmentality and Discursive Power

Two papers in this volume discuss the UK government's counter-radicalisation PREVENT strategy. Elshimi notes that government de-radicalisation initiatives in the UK focus mainly on counter-ideological interventions into civil society and target the young. This is in contrast to those elsewhere in the world such as the Middle East and South East Asia, which tend to focus mainly on prisons and target those convicted of terrorism and criminal offences. The UK approach depends on the identification, by public sector managers, teachers and staff, of individuals deemed to be “at risk” or “vulnerable” to radicalisation. Noting the lack of robust empirical research supporting such de-radicalisation interventions, Elshimi suggests that these programmes are best understood not only as an attempt to forestall criminal acts, but more broadly as a way of disciplining the conduct and subjectivity of all citizens – that is, as a form of governmentality. Thus, he argues, the UK government's counter-radicalisation strategy promotes interventions that require all individuals to “scrutinise and hold their ideas in check in relation to “extremist” thinking and practices” with regard to “religion, politics and foreign policy”.

Peatfield also offers an analysis of the PREVENT strategy. Her article studies the effect on young individuals in Liverpool's minority communities (both Muslim and non-Muslim Black and Mixed Race) of being classified as “at risk” or “vulnerable” under the PREVENT framework. Paradoxically, these initiatives both promised “support” for the vulnerable and disempowered

them by rendering them the object of suspicion. She argues that classifications of vulnerability can have the counter-productive effect of “othering” individuals, making the already fraught process of forming a secure identity and sense of belonging even more difficult. This was especially so for young persons growing up in a heavily securitised environment. Language could have a negative securitising effect, as in the case of interventions and documents that constantly linked the terms “Muslim” and “radical”. Her respondents were sensitive to the way that in such a securitised environment they were called on to “justify [their] Britishness”, in a way that was alienating and that mirrored the historical othering of Black and Mixed Race communities in the UK.

Two other papers tackle the politics of representation and categorisation in relation to Islam in Britain. Jaede analyses the discourse of New Atheism in the UK, as a social and intellectual movement that seeks to liberate humanity from the irrationality of religious faith and the violence that it argues follows from such irrationality. Jaede argues that while the New Atheism movement purports to be free of any cultural or racial bias, in fact some of its most prevalent expressions are premised on a fundamental opposition to the “Muslim other”. This is seen in the way that Muslims but not Christians are frequently assumed in New Atheist discourse to lack agency, creativity and freedom in relation to religious texts and social and political decision-making. Thus, while New Atheists may decry various forms of Christianity, they do not invoke it as force that totally determines the behaviour of Christians, whereas Islam is treated differently, according to an “Orientalist” mind-set in which “the Qur’an and Hadiths cover everything [real] Muslims can possibly do or think”. He concludes that New Atheist discourse requires serious academic engagement to bring to light its concealed assumptions, especially since it is gaining traction in the world, overlapping both with resurgent right-wing movements and with “liberal mainstream” discourse in Europe.

In another challenge to reductionist representations, Sidlo describes the ways that the category of “cultural Muslim” has been deployed in discourses about Islam in Britain. Sometimes conflated with notions of “atheist Muslim” or “agnostic Muslim”, the term “cultural Muslim” arouses considerable debate within different Muslim circles as to whether it is a viable or self-contradictory concept; and also whether it is possible to talk about “Muslim culture” in a society such as the UK where the Muslim population is ethnically diverse. The notion of cultural Muslim is an interesting one, Sidlo contends, because it

implies that it is possible as a limit case to be an atheist without rejecting a broadly “Muslim” cultural heritage. It therefore makes it possible to think in new ways about the manner in which “individuals build their identity in relation to Islam”. Confronted with the binary options of either embracing or rejecting Islam, “cultural Muslim” suggests that other positions are possible. Her corpus analysis of selected British media over a ten-year period, 2005-2015, reveals very limited use of the term “cultural Muslim”, with most instances occurring in left-leaning newspapers. This suggests that a recognition of the complex, diverse and multi-dimensional ways in which individuals may relate to Islam in their lives is liable to be drowned out by the much more “newsworthy” and stridently discussed topics of “religious extremism” and “strong anti-religious sentiment”.

Agency and the Public Sphere

Several contributions discuss various forms of Muslims’ agency and activism in the public sphere. They write against Muslim exceptionalism in a variety of ways, for example by underlining the importance of notions of participant citizenship and other “non-religious” discourses to these actors, and by highlighting the particular constraints and opportunities within which they act. Moses analyses the way in which staff at an Islamic centre in London interacted with journalists during a period of intense media scrutiny. In 2014, stories emerged of local Muslims leaving the UK to fight for the self-proclaimed “Islamic State”, and a series of journalists contacted the local Islamic centre to understand how these would-be fighters had interacted with the centre. Much academic study of Islam and the media focuses on the way Islam and Muslims are represented in newspapers. Moses argues that it is important to understand news not just as the reproduction of dominant discourses, but as the product of specific encounters between journalists and sources which can be documented using ethnography. His analysis reveals that neither the Islamic centre nor the media are unitary actors, but consist of a variety of individuals sometimes pursuing varying approaches. He concludes that the staff of the centre have “opportunities...to shape stories that ultimately represent them”, but their capacity to do so is also shaped by their comparative lack of public relations resources.

Drawing on interviews with three generations of immigrant leaders in Ankara, Berlin, Cologne, Paris and Strasbourg, Arkilic discusses the trend among Turkish immigrant organisations in Europe, since the early 2000s, to

move away from acting as “traditional Islamic” institutions and to offer “non-religious” services. In a post-Islamist turn, they now offer a range of services, from professional development, to “political, social, and economic participation, citizen empowerment, bilingual education, and the preservation of cultural identity.” This is paralleled by the emergence of new immigrant organisations that position themselves as business, political and women’s groups. Arkilic connects this to the “shift from temporary to permanent settlement” of Turkish immigrants and the consequent generational changes in immigrants’ identity and patterns of social mobility. The second and third generations of Turkish Muslim leaders, who were born and brought up in Europe, have shifted their focus and have moved away from “traditional mosque-oriented organizations”; they no longer view the mosque as the principal site for identity construction – and this has led to a roster of collaborative activities among Turkish immigrant organisations offering similar services.

Pettinato analyses what might be seen as “post-Islamism” from a different angle. He presents a case-study of a Muslim faith-based activism organisation in Britain which campaigns on issues of social and environmental justice. The organisation seeks to encourage an activism that goes beyond “mere charity-giving”, arguing that the solution to developmental problems in today’s world requires a “complete change of consciousness and behaviour that must be translated into everyday ethical choices and actions”. This position chimes with broader trends of contemporary social movement activism and lifestyle advocacy, yet by invoking Quranic discourse and Prophetic sayings, the organisation seeks to cultivate a specifically faith-based agency – albeit one that seeks to critique and move beyond traditional notions of charity. The organisation thus articulates a complex interaction between the “cultural and normative” resources of both “Muslim tradition” and contemporary ethical discourses of global citizenship, environmentalism and the responsibility of the global North towards the South. The kinds of ethical and political agency called forth in this activism thus draw on faith but go beyond the narrow confines of identity politics; they are shaped by trends which Pettinato identifies as “post-secular”, “post-immigration-difference” and “post-conventional politics”.

Barylo describes the activities of Muslim charities in France and Poland, which similarly offer a wide range of services, from the provision of food and support to the homeless, student tuition and events on topics of wide public

interest. Moreover, some of these charities co-ordinate the activities not just of Muslim volunteers but also those of other faiths and none. Taken together, these organisations promote an image of Muslims as participant-citizens and serve to counter binary “them-and-us” attitudes. Barylo reports that Polish society exhibits a more “open-minded approach to cultural and religious difference”, which is an interesting counter-point to a finding by Gawlewicz and Narkowicz published in the previous year’s symposium proceedings (“Muslims in the UK and Europe 2014”) which described the increasing circulation of anti-Muslim prejudice between the UK and Poland.

Law and Culture

Three of the contributions analyse relations between legal frameworks and the cultural contexts in which they come to impinge on individual lives and decision-making. The first of these considers the effect of the Marriage Act of 1753 on Muslim couples in England and Wales; the second discusses recent European attempts to reformulate Islamic jurisprudence on divorce; and the third documents the way in which Islamic legal rulings by Shia jurists based in Iraq and Iran are received by Muslims in Cardiff. Vora examines the problem of unregistered marriages entered into by Muslim couples in England and Wales. In the event of marriage breakdown, such marriages – once declared as “non-marriages” in law – are not legally enforceable, meaning that financial orders to protect one or other party cannot be made. Drawing on in-depth case-studies of ten such marriages, Vora shows that in the majority of cases, the women were not aware that their marriages fell outside of the law, and he examines cultural reasons for this. Solutions proposed to date – such as enabling religious buildings to be registered for the purpose of effecting a civil registration – have not proved effective, and Vora argues that the current law is discriminatory as “a disproportionately significant group of British citizens [Muslims] are suffering as a result”. He suggests that a celebrant-based marriage registration system, as exists in Scotland, would prove to be a better solution.

Timimi discusses debates regarding the accommodation between Islamic law and contemporary social realities in Europe. In 2001, the European Council for Fatwa Research issued a statement on whether a woman who had converted to Islam could remain married to her non-Muslim husband. The majority opinion of its panellists was that such a marriage to a non-Muslim man would be considered void in Islamic law. But it noted a minority opinion

on the issue which permitted the marriage to continue, on the conditions that it did not harm the woman's religion, and that she maintained a hope that her husband would also convert to Islam. The reasoning in this case drew on the notion of the "purposes of the Shariah", which include the promotion and preservation of religion and family. Those supporting the minority opinion argued that without a ruling that such marriages could continue, women might be discouraged from converting to Islam; and moreover the Quranic verses supporting the majority opinion related to a context which was not comparable to a contemporary society where Muslims and non-Muslims coexist peacefully. Timimi notes that the minority opinion "is increasingly accepted by Muslim scholars in the West". Moreover, while some commentators regarded the minority opinion as dangerous form of "Europeanisation", those most critical of it had had "minimal contact and interaction with the European context". This raises the question of whether it makes sense to talk of a "European Islam" emerging in relation to this issue.

Tajri examines the notions of religious authority that guide the lives of a number of young Shia Muslims in Cardiff. For his respondents, notions of Islamic authority remain tied to specific places – the traditional Shia seminaries in Najaf and Qom – and to specific persons trained in those places. Tajri is interested in how his respondents experience and deal with the geographic and cultural distance between these places and persons on the one hand, and the realities of living as a young Shia Muslim in Cardiff on the other. His respondents both experience this distance as a "lack of adaptation" and collapse it through notions of the unity of Islam: "at the end of the day Islam is Islam. You can't change it according to where you stay or where you don't stay." Distance paradoxically produces both dissociation or a "social gulf" and, at the same time, a "romanticised image" of the shrine-cities which serves to enhance the influence of those trained there. Thus several interviewees both reveal a frustration that scholars from these institutions lacked "cultural empathy" for their own situations living in Cardiff, but also continued to feel "respect" and "obligation" to abide by their rulings. How this tension plays out in actual decision-making in the course of daily life needs to be explored further, Tajri observes.

National and Ethno-Religious Identity

If one of the themes of Tajri's article is the significance of locale in the construction of Islamic knowledge and identity, the final four papers address

the converse issue: the significance of Islam in the construction of ethno-national identities. Three of these papers take Balkan countries as their case studies; and the first of these, by Karic, in fact addresses a similar question to Tajri – how does the symbolic prestige of geographically distant places enter into the formation of local Muslim identities? She analyses the formation of Bosnian Muslim identity in relation to the significance of Cairo and in particular its historic Islamic university al-Azhar. She notes that the “role of the symbolic locale in the construction and expression of identity” has been neglected by scholars, and seeks to unpick the changing significance of Cairo for Bosnian Muslim consciousness through an analysis of 20th-century travel literature and novels. Links between Bosnia and al-Azhar had been cultivated by Bosniak Islamic scholars for centuries under the Ottoman Empire. Even after the collapse of this Empire, Cairo retained its significance for Bosnians as a centre of reform that seemed to promise solutions to experiences of intellectual and religious crisis. The promise of this locale was not to last, leaving the question of whether a new prestige location has emerged to orient Bosnian Muslim identity.

Dragouni offers an answer to this question, by exploring the ways in which Bosnian Muslim identity was constructed in the 1990s in opposition to “Europe”, which acquired an intensively negative symbolic value in the preaching of the country’s Deputy Chief Islamic Scholar after the civil war because of the perceived failure of Europe to act. Dragouni describes the politicisation of Bosnian Muslim identity through the conflict, documenting the evolving discourse of this prominent Muslim preacher. She notes how a pre-war focus on tolerance and co-existence gave way to a post-war rhetoric that evoked victimhood, and emphasised divisions between a Bosnian Muslim “us” and a European “them”. She reports that the sense of having been wronged by and detached from Europe persists among some of her present-day interviewees. At the same time, she notes that a small minority also construct Islam in Bosnia as “European Islam”, characterised by a centuries-old mixing of “Eastern and Western thought”, and marked by values such as “secularism” and “scepticism”.

The relation between Islam and ethno-national identity in the Balkans is also addressed by Gjevori. He describes the importance of a “latent Muslim identity” for significant parts of the population in Kosovo and Albania, and argues that current nation-building projects by political elites in these countries fail to reflect this identity. He argues that the importance of Muslim

identity for significant parts of the electorate has flourished in the wake of the collapse of communism and (in the case of Kosovo) of Yugoslavia. He analyses the ways in which Albanian imams in Kosovo and Albania respond to what they perceive as state efforts to promote Catholicism “at the expense of the Muslim majority”. One strategy adopted by the imams has been to protest against the paradoxes of state policies that claim to be secular yet seek to shape Islam through the regulation of dress, appearance and restrictions on mosque-building. Another strategy, in Kosovo, has been to contest nationalist history-writing, which is underpinned by a rejection of the Ottoman past, and instead to draw attention to the importance of Ottoman rule in enabling the migration of Albanians into Kosovo. As well as identifying a gulf between different versions of history and the nation, Gjevori also foresees a possible reformulation of Albanian identity over the coming decades.

The final paper in this section analyses similar processes of ethnic, national and religious identity formation, but at the other geographical end of Europe. Rajina discusses the shifting and diverse ways in which ethno-religious identity is constructed and expressed among the British Bangladeshi community in East London. She compares the way that two generations have drawn on the symbolic repertoires of language and dress to express their identity. She contends that the younger generation “are ‘going back’ to their religious roots and want to assert their distinctive character by identifying with the global Ummah of Islam; whereas the previous generation are closer to their ethnic identity and are more willing to integrate”. Her respondents from the younger generation distinguish between items of dress that they consider to mark ethnic identity, and those that they consider to mark religious identity. In some cases, the younger generation distinguish themselves from the older generation by being less willing to wear items of clothing that mark “ethnic” identity in public, and more comfortable to wear clothes that code an “authentically Islamic” identity. Some, however, approach trends in “Islamic clothing” more critically, arguing that in fact they represent an Arab ethnic identity rather than a universally Islamic or a necessarily pious one.

When it came to language, all of Rajina’s respondents recognised the importance of Arabic as a medium for enacting Islamic identity. Yet attitudes to Bengali were more complex. The first generation, who settled in the UK in the 1950s, regarded Bengali as important enough to learn alongside the

Quran; for some (but not all) in later generations, it was possible to “remain attached to one’s ethnicity without learning the language”; yet many in the younger generation value having acquired Bengali from their mothers to use in the house, and fear that their own children might not grow up in the language as they have done. Taken as a whole, these findings illustrate that distinctions between “ethnic” and “religious” identity, and the ways in which each is coded, cannot be taken for granted but need to be studied empirically and understood in relation to generational perspectives and social and political change. In broad terms, the younger generation appear to favour markers of what they consider to be “religious” rather than “ethnic” identity; yet affective attachments to Bengali (as a marker of ethnicity) and critical attitudes towards markers of apparently “religious” identity are also present in this generation.

The work presented in this volume attests to the vitality of interpretive scientific approaches to the study of Islam in the social world. Analytical concepts such as agency, identity and the public sphere feature in much of this work, and other concepts such as Orientalism and governmentality are also used to good effect to shed light on the processes documented here. New themes are emerging, notably the role of the symbolic locale in identity formation, and the ways in which geographical proximity and distance are experienced, conceived and sometimes collapsed through the mediums of culture and religion. This collection of papers also suggests that “Europe” is a valuable framework within which to analyse similarities and differences in the themes identified – the relationship between agency and the public sphere, law and culture, and ethnic and national identity – and thus to make sense of the forces and processes that constitute Islam in the contemporary social world.

Dr Paul Anderson

Keynote Lecture: Anthropology and the Study of Islam

PROFESSOR MAGNUS MARSDEN

I have been invited in this lecture to reflect on the relationship between anthropology and the study of Islam in different social and cultural circumstances. There is a rich scholarly tradition that explores the ways in which religions are produced, reproduced and transformed in particular social and historical contexts. The study of Islam has benefitted greatly from these perspectives, and, in this sense needs not be considered distinct from scholarly approaches to the investigation of other religious traditions. Indeed, I want to make a case in this lecture for further de-exceptionalising the study of Islam, a project that is perhaps especially important in the current context in which both Islam and being Muslim are often treated as essential and unchanging dimensions of the worlds of people of Muslim background. In order to develop such a project it is important to explore people's lives and the contexts – often changing and inchoate – in which these are played out in as a holistic way as possible. In doing such, Islam is to be recognised as deeply yet also diffusely embedded in everyday experience; sometimes being of central significance and at other times less important to people's lives. There is a need for scholars to be careful and critical in their use of terms such 'Muslim identity', 'being Muslim' and, indeed, 'Muslim' during the course of their analysis of Muslim worlds.

Scholarly debates about the study of religion are complex, multifarious, and inter-disciplinary. They converge, however, around questions that at first sight appear as being relatively straightforward: whether the focus of our study is Islam or being Muslim. A nuanced body of work has developed in anthropology and related disciplines concerning the ways in which human subjects embody and reflect on cultural, religious, and historical schemas. Many of these works argue that to distinguish between a religion in its abstract, cognitive or symbolic form and its material manifestations reflects binary distinctions - between the symbolic and real, cognitive and affective, belief and practice –which do not do justice to the full complexity of the worlds that people create and inhabit. This debate has opened yet further

questions for scholars to consider in their assessment of the role played by religion in the lives of their informants: how far is 'Islam' or 'being Muslim' always at stake in what people of Muslim background think, say, and do? Islam is now widely recognised by most scholars as being a complex and multidimensional religious tradition. Are scholarly attempts to understand 'being Muslim' equally reflective of the extent to which this too is an aspect of experience that is produced, reproduced and transformed in particular social and historical contexts and not simply a constant, empirically observable and analyzable feature of everyday life?

Systematicity and Articulation

A long tradition of scholarly writing has addressed the problems associated with treating religions as essential and unchanging. Along with my colleague Kostas Retsikas I have developed the notions of **systematicity** and **articulation** to capture some of the ways in which Islam is both evoked and diffused in the lives of people of Muslim background and to show how these processes unfold in mutual interaction with particular social and historic contexts.

Systematicity refers to the efforts required and undertaken by Muslims to evoke Islam in the midst of particular historical and social contingencies. In broad terms, it refers to types of connections and disconnections that people of Muslim background make in order to evince and eclipse 'the religious' as being a more or less central dimension of their lives. Systematicity, then, is something that people of Muslim background do and produce. Anthropologists and others who study Islam, however, are also involved in the processes through which Islam is evinced and eclipsed, given emphasis and also diffused. This is because the ways in which scholars frame their arguments and create the representations that they do of Muslims leads some connections that Muslims make between their daily lives and Islam to be privileged, and others to be rendered of secondary importance. As a result, and as anthropologists working on other religious traditions have widely noted, scholars need to be sophisticated in the categories they use to analyse 'the religious'. More importantly, they must also be attentive to the varying registers in relationship to which "Islam" is thought of, the overlaps that take place between these, and the consequences that such overlaps have for both influencing scholarly understanding of Islam, and the modes through which the Islamic is experienced about and conceptualised by people of Muslim

background. Theorists of modernity have recognised the need to explore “the modern” as a normative ideology, philosophical orientation and an actual project taken up by social actors in particular contexts. So too do anthropologists often encounter “Islam” during the course of fieldwork simultaneously as an analytical category, a matter of theological debates and a so-called “folk category”.

The concept of articulation is helpful for anthropologists to analyse the ways in which Islam is produced, reproduced and transformed in particular social and historical contexts. A long-standing body of scholarship building on the pioneering work of William Robertson-Smith has emphasised how far ‘the religious’ does not constitute a universal category of thought and action. It is, rather, continuously produced by means of its enmeshment with other fields of social life. In relationship to the study of Islam, scholars from a variety of disciplines have explored with great sophistication the importance of understanding how texts and religious life in general are always embedded within social life, power relations and modes of authority. More recently, scholarship has added to such debates by showing that the texts considered as being important to the Islamic discursive traditions are ‘not exhausted by’ ‘the founding texts’ of the Qur’an and Hadith: they reflect, rather, the influence of local and regional influences and traditions.

These works emphasise the social and cultural dimensions of the Islamic tradition’s textual dimensions. Yet there is also growing recognition of the extent to which the particular fields of social life with which Islam is enmeshed are multiple, and contextually variable. They might include, for example, anxieties over inter-personal relations and the testing times episodes of illness herald, the challenges of colonisation and economic marketisation, the creation of national identities and state structures in expansive transregional contexts, and the modes in which relations of religious authority are enacted, experienced and evaluated in transforming contexts. Islam’s invocation and diffusion is best explored through the ways in which ideas, practices, discourses and debates that are thought of by their participants as being Islamic are inter-involved with such arenas of contemporary social existence. Rather than being treated as distinct in an a priori fashion, these fields of social life are also mutually constitutive of ‘the religious’ in particular settings. This approach to the study of the religious is as much methodological as theoretical: it provides scholars with a way of exploring how Islam is a dynamic interface between different dimensions of everyday life, rather than

the stable essence against which these are to be compared.

Exploring such articulations between these fields of everyday life and Islam's multiple dimensions, reveals how 'the religious' is evinced in un-determined and un-expected ways. From this perspective, Islam is not studied for what it is, or what makes it unique or exceptional in comparison to other world religions: scholarly work on Islam, rather, like that on all other religions, is conducted to reveal broader human strivings to enchant and to foster the cultivation of curiosity and investigation of the world. It also forces recognition of the extent to which the scale of positions between Islam's evocation and diffusion in people's everyday lives is not the result of tactical acts of positioning by Muslims, but reflective of the extent to which all expressions of the religious are mutually constituted in relationship to the quandaries and concerns of everyday social existence.

The Anthropology of World Religions

An excellent and expanding body of literature concerned with the study of Islam has arisen over the past thirty years and more. Anthropologists working in Muslim societies once complained of the relative neglect of Islam as a central topic of investigation; in the current context, however, it is the analysis of Christianity that is said to be understudied. The burgeoning anthropological interest in both Islam and Christianity has also stimulated a revived and cross-disciplinary interest in ideas about 'world religions'. Several works have demonstrated how the category 'world religion' - far from being a purely analytical term - is the inheritor of a particular history, reflective of its roots in nineteenth and early twentieth century Orientalism. Pioneering scholars of religion sought to define, rank and classify 'world religions' in relationship to their success or otherwise at being 'universal'. These early works distinguished world religions from national or 'racial' forms of faith. Such modes of classification are, of course, closely related to evolutionary theory and its attempt to rank hierarchically different cultural and religious forms. They are also tied to conceptions of 'the universal' formulated by moral and ethical philosophers working within the Enlightenment tradition. Islam, for some early scholars, did not do enough to demonstrate its universality - it was, in essence, a religion of 'the Arabs' - a Semitic religion similar to Judaism.

Such theories concerning the definition of world religions continue to be visible in ongoing scholarly debates about the Islamic tradition. Many of the

questions that anthropologists have asked of Islam and Muslims in relationship to their attempts to understand world religions focus on the relationship between ‘folk’/‘popular’/‘local’ forms of Islam and ‘high’, ‘reform-minded’, ‘book-centred’ doctrinal Islam. These modes of analysis reflect a history of western thinking about Islam and other world religions that is premised on attempts to empirically evaluate the capacity of these to transcend registers of locality, nation and race, manifest themselves as being truly ‘universal’ and instil within those who follow them the ‘point-of-view-of-the-universe’. The obvious theoretical problems with such work on the idea of ‘world religions’ has led some anthropologists in particular to question the value of constructing distinct bodies of scholarship on Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and other religious traditions. Rather than focusing on the study of particular ‘world religions’, they call upon scholars to investigate conceptual themes that transcend these traditions: the role played by mediation in religious life, for example. This approach would pose a strong challenge to ‘civilisational’ or essentialising frameworks that treat different world religions as unique and coherent, either involved in patterns of conflict or synthesis with one another. By focusing on themes important to the religious generally rather than to distinct or particular religious traditions, thematically-oriented work would sharpen the ways in which comparisons are made between different religious traditions, and also help to fashion also a more rigorous approach to understanding change and continuity within them.

Importantly, however, scholarly writing has sought to simultaneously address thematic issues in the study of religion and contribute to the wider understandings of Islam. Anthropologists have focused on the relationship between texts and the contexts in which these are invested with meaning, spiritual significance, authority and power. A growing body of literature has also questioned the extent to which academic ideas about world religions have been above all else influenced by European thinkers, as some of the more one-sided critiques of the concept might suggest. Historical anthropologists, for example, have explored the rich synergies between European debates about world religions and the responses these provoked not only in the Muslim world, but also connected regions of Asia, especially India and Japan. These writings and other work in a similar vein demonstrate the type of contributions that the study of Islam can make to wider debates in the anthropology of religion, while, at the same time, also contribute ethnographically and conceptually to the understanding of Islam and a body of scholarly work concerning it.

Islam, being Muslim, and the people of Muslim background

Anthropological work focuses on both how and when Islam is a diffused aspect of the lives of people of Muslim background, and registered as being more of a central preoccupation. Michael Gilsenan emphasized the importance of contextualising the study of Islam not only in relationship to political economy but also social relationships: “To take any element on its own, or only in relation to other elements defined as “religious”, he argued, “would not reveal its social meaning. And we have to be prepared to find that religion is often only a very minor influence”. Gilsenan’s observation and other approaches to the study of Islam that were developed in parallel to it stimulated an excellent body of ethnographic work that explores Islam and the nature of being Muslim from the perspectives of particular social contexts.

A lively set of debates that builds on this work and remains of much importance today, for example, concerns the forms taken by Muslim personhood. Many recent works have challenged the simplistic use of the term ‘being Muslim’ to explain the relationship of Muslims to Islam; they have documented, rather, how Muslims inhabit and create multiple forms of personhood during the course of their everyday lives. These forms of personhood might be premised on logics and understandings of the make-up of ‘the self’ relating to Islamic doctrine. Yet they are also defined in terms of cultural definitions of respect, or more transcendent debates about what humanity and ‘the good life’ entails. In some contexts, Muslims may seamlessly inhabit such multiple forms of self; in others, these different aspects of selfhood might stand in relations of conflict with one another. This body of scholarship, then, powerfully contests the notion that Islam is invested with the capacity to shape Muslim selfhood in a deterministic way.

These debates about the importance of Islam to particular expressions of Muslim personhood have also led scholars to rethink their understandings of the processes through which Muslims seek to directly fashion their selves and societies in relationship to Islamic doctrine and teachings. Islam’s changing significance to particular societies and contexts is not always best understood in terms of ideas of ‘Islamization’, the progressive percolation of religious ideas and modes of thinking to more and more areas of everyday life. Muslims might seek to ‘Islamize’ some fields of their lives, yet not others.

At a time when not only Islam but all of the world’s religions are playing an increasingly visible role in public life, focusing on the multi-directional nature

of such 'Islamising' processes allows for further reflection on Islam's complex relationship to modernity. The political scientist Humeira Iqtidar, for example, has recently used ethnographic material to document what she argues are the secularising effects of Islamist forms of thought and practice in Pakistan. Iqtidar's study challenges simplistic understandings of Islamists, who, she argues, continue to be located by popular observers as existing in a realm outside of and opposed to "the modern". She also contests assumptions about the very nature of the domain of 'the religious' and its relationship to that of 'the secular'. Importantly, Iqtidar's contributions to these general debates about political Islam builds not only on the thematic issues addressed by anthropologists working on Islam: she also deployed ethnographic methods and material. Iqtidar's work, then, is testament to the wider significance of anthropology to the inter-disciplinary study of Islam and Muslim life more generally.

In the context of the so-called war on terror, and rising levels of Islamophobia, as well as support for anti-Muslim parties and politicians, having or not having to assert/reflect on the 'Muslim' dimensions of one's self has, however, become an increasingly permanent feature of the lives of people of Muslim background. Muslims are called upon to respond to critics of Islam by embracing 'moderate' forms of their religion or embody 'Islamic' forms of piety. Even in the context of these pressures, however, anthropological writing demonstrates that Islam's articulation with everyday life is in no way static, permanent or predictable. Adeline Masquelier has documented the lives of young Muslims in Niger who are the children of local reformers and vocal supporters of Bin Laden yet also avid consumers of American popular culture. In comparable terms, Benjamin Soares writes about 'Rastafari Muslims' in Mali. He documents the ways in which these people seek to contend with the context of structural readjustment that shape their everyday lives by developing unique forms of Islam that bring together Rastafari traditions with Islamic and Christian symbols.

People of Muslim background come to deal with the pressures, tensions, and strains of life in varied and often unexpected ways in many different types of settings across the contemporary world. In so doing, they underscore a key dimension of the broader approach to the study of Islam that I am suggesting in this lecture. People of Muslim background do not just switch between different expressions of moral or Muslim self in relationship to the particular social circumstances in which they find themselves. Nor do they chose to

emphasise or “back-stage” Islam’s significance to what they are doing at any particular moment. Moral subjects, rather, are produced through their actual engagement with the changing and often contradictory quandaries of everyday life. Muslim selves, subjectivities and modes of personhood do not precede the varying fields of social life with which they interact: they are, instead, mutually produced by these fields, and continually emergent, unstable and contingent as a result.

Such processes are not amenable to analysis framed in the language of “self-formation”, and this complexity also raises important questions about the anthropologists’ relationships to the people they study. Muslims react in complex ways to accounts written by anthropologists and scholars from related disciplines of the contested, socially mediated and variable presence that Islam plays in their everyday lives. For some, the tendency of anthropologists to dwell on the contradictory dimensions of Muslim self-presentation might appear to be little more than an accusation of religious hypocrisy on the part of their informants. For others, those scholars who emphasise the power of Islam to shape everyday life and the identity of Muslims flattens out important differences in belief and ideological position held by people in particular contexts.

Having explored some thematic issues shaping the ways in which social anthropology approaches the study of Islam, I now want to explore the nature of such an approach through a discussion of some ethnographic research that I have been conducting recently.

From Kabul to Kiev: Afghan Trading Networks

My recent work has focused on transnational networks of Afghan traders that are organised principally around the export of low grade commodities from China to wholesale markets in a wide range of settings across the former Soviet Union, especially in Tajikistan, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, as well as the UK. I have conducted fieldwork with the Traders in Central Asia’s Muslim-majority Republics, Russia and Ukraine, China, and Western Europe, especially London. By exploring the types of skills and capacities that Afghan traders bring to their lives abroad, the wider research project has extended in new directions my long-term interest in the forms of border-crossing mobility that are critical to the everyday lives and subjectivities of Muslim communities in the Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan frontier

region. The fieldwork has involved formal and informal interviews conducted in Dari and Pashto with Afghan traders. I have also spent time with the traders in their shops and warehouses, on the road as they travel, and in their apartments and other spaces of sociality.

The traders do not form a homogeneous ‘social group’ or single ethnic network, but are differentiated according to markers of status, wealth, and position in trading hierarchies; such forms of difference also intersect with, yet are never simply defined by, the traders’ ‘ethnic’ and linguistic identities. Traders do identify with particular ‘ethnic groups’, including Turkmen, Uzbek, Tajik, and Pashtun; yet most if not all trade and have business partnerships with men who identify with communities different from their own. The past ideological and political affiliations of the traders with whom my work is centrally concerned reflect Afghanistan’s modern political history and are as equally complex, contested, and diverse. Some worked as state officials and were directly affiliated to the Afghan socialist party (the PDPA) and trained in ‘Party Schools’ in Central Asia, while others fought on the side of anti-Soviet mujahidin movements. In more recent years, many of the traders have formed commercial relations with people from political factions they once opposed. The networks are therefore influenced both by modern forms of cultural nationalism inspired by political parties such as the PDPA and by participation in historic and distinctively Muslim trading networks. They are also further complicated by the traders’ historic participation in what Susan Bayly has referred to as the global socialist ecumene.

Islam and Trading Networks

The relationship between debates concerning the nature and influence of Islamic teaching, principles, and guidance that have long been important to Islamic scholarship and the conduct of Muslim business is a focus of much recent anthropological work. Companies have sought to produce Islamic financial services that comply with the Islamic prohibition on interest or *riba*; Muslims have also addressed the practices of giving alms (*sadaqat*) and religious taxes (*zakat*). These are also moral concerns for the traders with whom I have been working. I have been present during several discussions concerning how *zakat* and charitable donations should and are given. Reform-oriented forms of Islam are not absent from the lives of Afghan traders. Such ways of being Muslim, however, form one strand of people’s religious lives; their importance needs to be considered alongside the other

types of moral and ideological influences that inform their worlds. Afghan trading networks are often fashioned in relationship to ties between men that stretch back to their participation in one or another aspect of Afghanistan's socialist movement, as much as they are to those reflective of particular ways of 'being Muslim'. To gloss the worlds created by the traders, and the form taken by their networks, as 'Muslim' would presuppose that Islam, or their shared sense of 'being Muslim', is the only or key 'unifying force' linking them to one another. Before exploring this issue in greater detail let me introduce the traders and their activities.

Background: From Kiev to Yiwu - Networks and Nodes of Afghan Traders

Thousands of Afghans were educated and trained thanks to bursaries and other forms of assistance in universities, polytechnics, and technical centres in the five Soviet-Central Asian republics, Ukraine, and Russia from the 1970s until the collapse of the pro-Soviet PDPA government. Some stayed there and married local women; others returned to Afghanistan, served in the country's state and security forces, and then returned to the towns in which they had studied after Afghanistan's civil war in the early 1990s – the precise moment at which there was considerable scope for trading opportunities in the countries of the former Soviet Union. More particularly, the outbreak of a nearly decade-long civil war in Tajikistan after 1991 led to the formation of 'interstitial spaces within the larger economic structures' in which Afghans were able to 'carve their own niches of importance'. Many traders who initially established themselves in Tajikistan used the profits they made in the country to move to settings elsewhere in the former Soviet Union such as Moscow, Kiev, Odessa, and Minsk.

In spite of significant movement of Afghans out of the former Soviet Union to Europe and US/Canada from the early 1990s onwards, communities of Afghans have continued to be a vital feature of urban life across this space. The size of such communities vary: in smaller towns, such as Rostov-on-Don and Stavropol in southern Russia, or Khujand in northern Tajikistan, populations often stand at around 300; in the bigger cities that are known by Afghans across this world as being nodes for their activities as traders, notably Odessa in Ukraine, Moscow and St Petersburg in Russia, and, Dushanbe in Tajikistan, communities are often much larger, frequently in the tens of thousands. Marriage to local 'Russian' women has played a critical role in both

expanding and anchoring Afghan trading networks to the range of settings in which they live, and in ensuring their durability and ongoing significance. While some of the traders emphasise that they have successfully introduced their wives to Islam, many others say that whether or not their wife is Muslim or otherwise is not a matter of significance – it is the purity of the heart that counts.

Over the three decades that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, migration between the former Soviet Union and Afghanistan continued: the territories of the shurawi (Soviet Union) continued to be associated and imagined by commercially able Afghans with access to capital (or *sarmaiyah*) through the lens of trading success. As a young Odessa-based Dari-speaking man from Kunduz in northern Afghanistan remarked to me and another of our friends (Aman, a Pashtu-speaking Khalki-aligned former police officer in his fifties from Jalalabad) ‘we lost the chance of being educated when we left Afghanistan, and have come here not to sit in a detention centre and wait for a passport but to make some money and become something’.

Many of the traders consider the territories of the former Soviet Union to be an extension of Afghanistan. ‘I have never been abroad’ (*ma kharij hich na raftim*), one woman in her late forties who currently sells women’s clothing in a neighbourhood market on the outskirts of Odessa, remarked to me, only seconds after describing how she had traded alongside her husband in several Central Asian countries, two cities in Russia, and, now, in Odessa, Ukraine. The traders’ activities reveal therefore both connections between regions that do not conform to conventional maps of geographical, political, and cultural borders and also to the importance of these to the geographical imaginations of the traders themselves.

A handful of these mobile Afghan merchants who travelled to the shurawi in the 1990s are known to have made very significant fortunes; they returned to Afghanistan with the commencement of the international intervention in 2001 in order to benefit from the economic opportunities opening there – these men now run banks and airlines in Afghanistan. Two of them are currently in jail in Kabul for their role in the corrupt practices of The Kabul Bank. Other successful if less wealthy traders hedged their bets. Maintaining a business in Moscow or St Petersburg, they would send one brother back to Afghanistan to start a construction or import-export company, and another to China in order to open a trading office connected to their family business interests in both Russia and Afghanistan. A key way for men such as these to

register their success is to say to their compatriots whom they meet during the course of trading sorties, 'I have a life in both Moscow and Kabul'.

With the continuing instability in Afghanistan, communities of traders in the former Soviet Union are still being replenished with new migrants travelling to cities in the region both with the aim of trading there and of escaping Afghanistan. These include young men who were employed as translators for ISAF forces in the country, and had earned enough money doing so to establish a business in the *shurawi*. There are others who have connections of kin and friendship with established merchants living across the Commonwealth of Independent States who were willing to employ such trustworthy new-comers as sellers (*furishondah*) in their shops, or to give them goods on credit which could then be sold in retail markets. These new migrants are now found across the political space, and add another historical layer to the groups of Afghan communities living across it.

Importantly, in all the so-called 'Afghan markets', I have also met men who have decided to leave their lives (and often families) in western Europe in order to return to being an independent trader in contexts where they had previously worked. Moving from London and Rotterdam to Odessa, from Toronto and Utrecht to Moscow and Dushanbe, and from Oslo to Rostov-on-Don, these traders all claim that the *shurawi-i sabiq* (former Soviet union) offers the possibility for a man to engage in free work (*kar-i azad*) in a manner that is impossible in the tightly controlled markets of western Europe and North America. Many of the traders indeed attach positive moral qualities to the work of trade: trade is seen as a form of 'free' or 'independent' work (*kor-i ozod*) that lays the ground for the leading of a 'good life'. From this perspective, working in the markets of the former Soviet Union (*shurawi-i sabiq*) is a morally superior way of making a living than the type of working lives that they say Afghans living in Western Europe inhabit. Interestingly, however, there are important gendered aspects to such notions of where it is best to lead a moral life: families better off elsewhere.

The activities of the Afghan merchants vary from context to context depending on the particular niches each has offered. In Tajikistan, for example, traders of Afghan background established themselves as the major importers of food stuffs, including wheat, flour, confectionary, sugar, and, most recently, citrus fruits (tangerines, kiwis, pineapples), from Iran and Pakistan; they also export goods such as asafoetida to India. In Russia and the

Ukraine, Afghan traders were early pioneers in the import of cheap Chinese goods: initially they brought these goods (stationery, toys, hardware, clothing, souvenirs, construction materials, and electronic goods) from the city of Urumqi in western China. By the early late 90s and 2000s, Afghan merchants based in Russia and the Ukraine had established trading offices (daftar-i tijorati) and transport companies (shirkat-i transporti) in the eastern Chinese city that had emerged as being a key centre of the trade in cheap goods: Yiwu.

Yiwu

Yiwu, in China's Zhejiang province and about 2 hours by high-speed rail from Shanghai, is a city of approximately 2 million inhabitants that is home to the International Trade City or Yiwu Market, founded in 1982 and currently under the administration of the Zhejiang China Commodities City Group Co., Ltd. Yiwu has come to play a central role over the past decade in 'globalization from the bottom-up', especially in relationships to its status as a hub for the worldwide trade in low grade Chinese commodities. Yiwu Market is made of a complex of two markets: Futian Market and Huangyuan Garment Market (opened in 2011). According to the market's website, these goods are exported to more than 200 countries across the world, and approximately 1500 containers leave the city each day. The majority of the shops in the International Trade City either purchase the goods from factories located elsewhere in China, and store them in warehouses in the city, or are outlets for particular factories.

Traders from all over the world to Yiwu to provision low grade goods and export these to the markets in which they work. Not all but many of the traders who operate from Yiwu work within and identify with extensively scattered trading communities. In addition to the great range of foreign merchants active in the city, Yiwu is also home to communities of people of Muslim background from elsewhere in China, especially Hui Muslims (especially migrants from Yunnan), and Uyghurs from various locales across Xinjiang province (notably the ancient trans-Himalayan trading post of Yarkand or Shache). Yiwu's Muslims - foreigners and Chinese citizens - gather on Fridays at the city's mosque (a former silk factory) that was completed in 2012, thanks to donations made by local and foreign Muslims, including one donation in the form of several tonnes of Iranian marble.

Interestingly, while it might be easy to assume that Afghan traders cultivate

close relationships with Uyghur and Hui Muslims in China the situation is considerably more complex. On the one hand, Afghan traders owning business in Yiwu, especially hotels and restaurants, do employ Hui Muslims as cooks and waiting staff because this reinforces their halal status of their businesses. On the other hand, the traders often tell me that Uyghur Muslims in China are untrustworthy and that they prefer to build relations of both trade and intimacy (including of marriage) with ‘proper Chinese’ who might be prone to lying but are nevertheless skilled and dedicated workers. As is the case with other trading networks, Afghan traders working in the China and the former Soviet Union, hold a pragmatic and flexible attitude towards the role played by public forms of religion and piety in the constitution of their networks.

Yiwu has become one of the ‘central nodes of entrepreneurial and affective life’ for Afghan trading networks. A walk down Yiwu’s central boulevard, points to the impressive impact that traders of Afghan background are having on the city. A glance up to the signboards above the street, demonstrates how traders of Afghan background have settled in the city and now run transport companies and shipping agencies that send goods not only to Afghanistan and South Asia, but also to Europe, America and Australia, or as their advertising boards proclaim, ‘the entire world’ (tamom-i duniyo). There are indeed no less than four restaurants serving Afghan food in Yiwu. The role of Afghans in the restaurant and hotel sectors in the city brings attention not just to the collective nature of their economic strategies but also to the role that Afghans are playing in providing sites of cosmopolitan interaction for the city’s different trading communities. Nile Green has argued that Persian travellers to China in the first decades of the twentieth century relied on the ‘infrastructure of European-led globalization rather than the old musafer-khanehs of the Silk Road’. In the 2000s Afghan traders in China are likely during their trips to Yiwu to lodge in or visit hotels owned by their compatriots. These are certainly not the musafer-khanehs (traveller’s lodges) of the old Silk Route. Nevertheless, the varieties of functions they fulfil outweigh that of a simple ‘hotel’.

In the evenings, many of the men who work as agents and run transport companies assemble for example on the tables outside an Afghan-owned hotel-restaurant-trading complex. This important site of Afghan sociality is a hotel aimed at Muslim travellers: on its seventh floor there are not only a series of trading offices offering brokerage and transportation serves to

Afghan merchants visiting Yiwu but also a mosque (rather than merely prayer rooms that are common feature of many of the city's hotels). The clientele at the hotel and restaurant is diverse: Afghan merchants bring their Chinese translators (tarjumon) and agents (commission kor) to lunch for hearty dishes of qabili palao (rice cooked with meat and raisins). Iraqis and Syrians, Uzbeks and Turkmens, and traders from east Africa also chose to visit the restaurant because it is conveniently located nearby the International Trade Centre. The hotel is owned by Yama who is from Parwan in northern Afghanistan. Yama arrived in Yiwu by means of a complex route: he fled the advancing Taliban in the late 1990s and sought refuge in the UK (staying in the old pottery town of Stoke-on-Trent in the Midlands). After his case for asylum was rejected he returned to Kabul where his brother had opened a wholesale furniture business. Yama travelled to Yiwu and opened a trading office that facilitated the export of goods to his brother. Having established his office, Yama entered the hospitality sector, and reminisces today that he knew nothing about being a restaurateur when his 'hotel' opened; now, however, his pizza is famed across the city.

The Afghans permanently based in Yiwu act as brokers between their co-nationals and Chinese factory owners, run transport companies (shirkat-i transporti) and commercial warehouses (gudom), provide credit to Afghan traders, and act as money dealers and transfer agents (hawaladar). A few such traders have shifted their activities in the city from the field of brokerage to industry. Hamid , for instance, is original from Ghorbmand in central Afghanistan but since 19896 has lived with his family in Moscow. Before Hamid moved to Russia, his father was involved in the official credit-based exchange of Afghan natural resources for Soviet manufactured goods. Having initially established a transport company in Yiwu, Hamid has recently opened a factory in the city making silvery jewellery that he sells exclusively to a Russian buyer.

Most of the merchants who visit Yiwu come to buy goods from the famed 'small commodities' market. Those who travel to the city from Afghanistan purchase goods that they ship home, mostly by means of the sea port of Bandar Abbas in Iran. Many Afghans in Yiwu travel to the city from across the Eurasian arena and beyond. Afghans trade in Russia and Ukraine currently revolves around two further major nodes of Afghan commercial life.

The Sevastopol Hotel in Moscow is a group of buildings that was built for the

1980 Olympics, and is now home to two 16 story buildings (korpuz) that contain Afghan trading offices and retail shops. The 'Fatherland Trading Complex' several hundred Afghan men also work as porters (arabchi) moving the goods between the warehouses and the shops. The other major node of Afghan trading activity in this context is the 7-km market in Odessa: this 'container market' is supplied by ships arriving at the Black Sea port of Ilychevs. These nodes are themselves connected to regional trading nodes in Stavropol, Krasnodar, Kiev, Rostov-on-Don, and St Petersburg.

Eurasian Empires through Diasporic Eyes: Afghan Traders Across China and Russia

Members of Afghan trading networks share a great deal of information with one another about their compatriot's activities in different parts of the world, and have detailed knowledge about the trading activities and everyday lives of these people. Indeed, the traders think of themselves as 'international persons' (odamho-yi bayn-i milalli) with extensive knowledge of the economic possibilities and nature of everyday life in many different contexts.

The knowledge that Afghans hold furthermore is derived from specific practices that the traders deploy in order to gather and disseminate information, and these are especially critical to traders in Yiwu. While Afghan traders based in Yiwu often speak Mandarin, and some have even taken language courses in Chinese universities, most of the visiting traders do not, and therefore rely on such information from their compatriots in order to travel to and move through the city, as well as to find the contacts they need in order to be able to conduct their commercial operations cost effectively. It is normal for visiting Afghans to stay in the 'offices' of Yiwu-based Afghans. Afghan traders living in a wide range of settings receive guests and visitors from different parts of the world (cf. Marsden 2012a). This practice saves resources, helps to establish ties of trust, and facilitates information sharing.

On the one hand, traders travel frequently between different locales in which Afghans live, visiting their former class fellows and relatives for example. 'We have been dispersed (ma tit shudim)', I am often told, 'so we have to travel widely just to stay in touch with our relatives (khesho) and friends (dostho)'. One Afghan trader in Odessa remarked to me indeed that 'we Afghans are, like the Jews, dispersed all over the place'. While the visits that Afghans make to one another are often talked about as being social meetings that sustain

ties of friendship and kinship, they also often have an explicit information-finding dimension. A trader might be seeking to source a particular product, assess the economic value of investing in a market, or weigh up an offer made by a friend or companion to form a business partnership. This type of exploratory visit is also often conceived by established traders as being an important learning opportunity for their sons. Rituals of hospitality (*mehmon-dusti*) and the making of shared journeys (*safar*) are both important practices the traders deploy to gain access to information, forge ties of trust, and test the trustworthiness of their partners. Importantly, these practices all bear the influence of an Indo-Persian Islamicate culture in which trade and travel have historically formed two sides of the same coin.

Gathering information about world markets and conditions, as well as assessing the trustworthiness of other traders, are recurring discussion topics in Yiwu. Importantly, though, Afghan traders are not one-dimensionally economic actors constantly on the search for profit. Concerns besides those connected to making a profit are the focus of much discussion. In particular, traders discuss the ways in which the nation-states in which they work affect the nature of their activities and daily experiences. Discussions revolving around this theme reveal much about the relationship between traders and the state and underscore the traders' self-understandings of their being actors who inhabit realms that cut-across the international system.

On most evenings in Yiwu a collection of Afghan men gather at Yama's hotel and restaurant in order to play cards, smoke a shisha, and either partake of a plate of Afghan palaw or tuck into Yama's famed pizza. Afghan merchants converge on Yiwu from a multiplicity of directions, ensuring that the city is a node for information exchanges about the chancing conditions for commerce and life in multiple settings. During my stay in Yiwu, for instance, I spent several evenings with an Afghan trader based in St Petersburg (Iqbal) who had met-up with a relative (*Wasih*) who was visiting Yiwu from Chengdu, where he runs a transport company. Both of the men had served for the Afghan state and armed forces in the years of Soviet influence during the 1980s. They maintain residences in Kabul, only rarely travelling to their ancestral villages close to Jebul Siraj. A further man present during this period was a Moscow-based trader (*Halim*) visiting the city in order to purchase razor blades for export to Russia.

On the first evening of a series of gatherings, the conversation opened with a discussion of the varying conditions in which expatriate Afghans live. I focus

on the discussion here because it reveals the ways in which many of the traders emphasise the forms of connection that tie together Afghanistan, settings in the former Soviet Union and China, and the things that mark these out as different from other contexts. Halim, the Moscow-based trader, told those gathered, how he was dismayed with his son's activities in the Welsh city of Cardiff: on the one hand, he said, his son (now in his mid-thirties) has become religious (*mulloh shuda*) – a cause of concern for Halim who claimed to be a 'democrat'. On the other hand, Halim said that his son's religiosity had also affected the young man's business activities: he stayed in Cardiff rather than move to London because he was better able to balance his attempts to lead a pious life with making a livelihood in the Welsh city. Halim reported that he even had to send money to his grown son in the UK: 'I keep telling him', Halim said, 'that you should forget being a mullah and move to London where there are greater possibilities (*imkonot*) for making money' (*paisa jam kardan*).

Halim's remarks reveal how Afghans traders working in the former Soviet Union are often ambiguous about the possibility of combining commitment to public piety with being a successful trader: public forms of piety preclude the possibility of cultivating the forms of social finesse that are required for successful commercial activities in this context. By contrast, such forms of finesse are perceived as being less valued 'Western Europe', and this is manifested in distinctions both between people in the *shurawi-i sabiq* and Western Europe and also in the differing behaviour of Afghans settled across these contexts. Afghan traders in Ukraine often remark to me how 'strange' they find the avowedly 'religious' behaviour of UK-based Afghans who visit them in Odessa: 'they ask for *halol* this and *halol* that, and end up only eating fish'.

At a more general level, the traders also often say that while it is possible to trade and lead a 'free-life' (*zindagi-i ozod*) in the former Soviet Union, these ambitions are impossible to realise in western Europe. For many of the traders, moving from the *shurawi-i sabiq* to Western Europe not merely involves crossing geographic, political and cultural boundaries. Rather, migration out of the former Soviet Union also requires a willingness to trade the critical ambition of working independently as a trader for the willingness to accept state security. On meeting Halim in Moscow a year after we had first met in Yiwu, he told me that if he were to be able to 'close his accounts' (*hisob kitob*) in Russia he could now move to be with his son in London. This was because he was old and no longer had the ambition to trade or 'become

something'. As a result, he could 'peacefully' receive financial help from the state and/or his son. The categories through which the traders conceptualise the geographical spaces across which they work are informed thus by the values that animate their modes of making a living and are dynamic in that they shift in relation to the trader's changing positions in generational hierarchies.

The topic of conversation then turned to a comparison of the nature of everyday life for Afghans based in China and Russia. Considering the ways in which these traders make comparisons brings attention to the 'images, metaphors and understandings of similarity and difference' that influence their 'social relations and actions with neighbors and in a region'. The gathered traders thus exchanged views with Hamid (the jewellery factory owner) about the policies of China and Russia towards foreign traders. Both of the Russia-based traders (Halim and Hamid) agreed that life for foreigners was becoming increasingly difficult in Russia due to wave of xenophobic nationalism. Yet the men evaluated the situation of Afghans in China differently. Halim exclaimed that, by contrast to Russia, China was a paradise (janot) for Afghans: the Communist Party ensured that there was control and order yet that, as foreign traders, they were allowed to do as they pleased (such as sit openly in an Afghan restaurant, something, that is said to be unthinkable for Afghans in Moscow). In addition to seeking to achieve a good life through engaging in autonomous trading activities the traders also share a concept of a 'life-well-lived', an importantly element of which is the leading of an enjoyable public social life. China, Halim went on to say, 'is both communist and capitalist and therefore perfect for us'.

The China-based traders are aware that the conditions of life for them in Yiwu are very different as compared to other Chinese cities where foreign traders are regarded with greater suspicion by the authorities. Hamid asserted that it was only because men such as themselves brought money to China that they were able to spend their time well in the country:

Were we to enter the country as refugees (muhojir) – as we did in Russia thirty years previously – ours' would be a different story. At least every time we come here we spend at the very least \$30,000 on whatever it is we buy – that is why the Chinese are good to us now: if we came as refugees it wouldn't be paradise.

Interestingly, however, Afghan traders explain the different ways in which they are treated by the officials and immigration policies of varying nation-states

in relationship to geopolitical processes. While some traders do say that Afghans are simplistically treated as heroin-smugglers and terrorists, they also argue that the Chinese authorities treat them harshly because of international politics. According to this theory, the Chinese mistrust Afghans because they have provided a base for the Europeans and Americans in Asia: ‘if the foreigners leave Afghanistan’, I was told by a man in his early thirties who exports clothes from Guangzhou to Mazar-i Sharif in Afghanistan, ‘then the situation of Afghans in China will undoubtedly improve’. In a manner that is reminiscent of the ways in which the mobile Muslims studied by Seema Alavi in the 19th century carved out a transnational world that cut-across imperial assemblages but was not simply anti-colonial, the history of international relations are also layered into the self-understandings of Afghan traders. Afghan traders engage in acts of self-presentation that draw attention to their status as consummate international Muslims, savvy operators in complex geopolitical places and times—folk who are able to play one part of the world off against another, and to realise a profit from doing so.

The traders often emphasise how their fortunes depend on the past and future strategies, tactics and rivalries between nation-states and empires, as well as their own ability to gather and use knowledge about these. Iqbal runs a business in St Petersburg’s Apraksin Dvor market, yet, thanks to working in partnership with his brothers and developing an internet sales system, is able to proudly tell his compatriots in Yiwu that he has ‘a life in Kabul and a life in Moscow’. During the course of the conversation between the traders in Yiwu, Iqbal was keen to remind Afghans based in Russia how much they owed to the country in general and to President Putin in particular:

Russia - either out of regret for what happened in the past or for some future political strategy has given the Afghans the greatest gift they could have wished for – the Sevastopol Hotel trading complex. Without the support of Russia and the room for manoeuvre that the authorities have given to Afghans we would not be where we are today. Look how Mr Putin has turned the country’s fortunes around from the chaos of the 1990s to the strong and wealthy country that Russia is today.

Later that evening, Iqbal told me that the current century would see the countries of the West (gharb) becoming increasingly weak and by those of the East (shark) growing in wealth and power because young people in the former only wanted to spend their money on holidays (tafrih) as opposed to ‘working hard and building up their countries’. As with other traders we have

met in this article, Iqbal conceptualises the territories of the former Soviet Union as belonging to a geographical space that is connected to Asia, rather than being a part of the West or ‘uropye gharb’ (Western Europe). Hamid however added a more pragmatic angle to the discussion stating, ‘the successes of Afghan traders in Russia and Ukraine would not have been possible without the flexibility that the authorities in these countries have demonstrated in towards the regulation of such trade’. For these traders, knowledge of international relations and the capacity to respond to developments in the field are critical to their collective and individual fortunes as well as self-understandings.

These conversations reveal that the traders to inhabit complex ideational universes. This raises further questions about the moral dimensions of their lives and work, as well as Islam’s significance to these. ‘We are Muslims’, traders who identify themselves as having been committed socialists often say, ‘yet our Islam is different from that of the mullahs.’ Identification with ‘communism’ in Afghanistan reflected the social and political dynamics of so-called ‘detribalised’ Afghans as much as any ideological commitment to socialism. Former members of the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan refer to themselves ironically as ‘communists’ yet say they were actually ‘democrats’, arguing that ‘if the people of Central Asia who were colonised by the Russians for more than seventy years are still Muslims and increasingly observe the Ramadan fast then how could ten years of Soviet presence in Afghanistan have made us communists?’ Nevertheless, these men do often reflect on the disjuncture between one another’s political affiliation and their inner belief or commitment: ‘Everyone joined the hizb (party) for one purpose (hadaf) or another, rarely for Marx’s thinking or ideas’, is a comment that I often hear. The nexus of conviction, belief, and self-understanding is always complex: ‘democrats’ complain that the motives people had for joining the party were different from their stated political beliefs—this brings attention to their own recognition of how striving to live a properly socialist life is different from supporting ‘the party’ or identifying oneself as a socialist. ‘Performing’ support for a regime, ideology, or moral code, far from being merely epiphenomenal, however, articulates with people’s feelings and felt inner beliefs: some ‘democrat-traders’ argue that socialist ways of thinking about the moral importance of selflessly serving ‘the nation, state and its people’ inculcated them with fervent ‘anti-corruption’ attitudes—their socialist past makes them purer (sahi) Muslims than their one-time ‘enemies’ in the mujahidin. They also often think aloud about their current activities

as traders in such terms: they recognise that the sight of former ‘communists’ now making a living as traders might illustrate their superficial or instrumental commitment to socialism. Yet many also argue that trading allows them to earn an honourable and autonomous living. By contrast, their erstwhile ‘Muslim’ opponents live life up in mansions in Kabul, paying for their wives to visit the city’s many new beauty parlours.

Conclusion

Religion plays a critical yet variable role in sustaining and reinforcing the capacity of trading networks to work within, while not assimilate to, the societies in which they are based. Trading diasporas and networks have adapted to modern conditions and newer forms of globalisation. One factor behind their success is the ways in which they have remoulded the religious traditions with which they identify: religions fosters a degree of internal cohesion and shared ethical practices which their trading activities require. At the same time, however, people who are part of trading diasporas also often showcase their capacity to be versatile and adaptable in their religious lives and the ways in which doing so allows them to ‘span religious and cultural divides as well as continents and oceans’.

The collective ambitions of Afghan traders I have suggested today is geared less towards making a homogenous ‘Islamic space’ or a globally oriented form of ‘Muslim network’, than cultivating the capacity to profit from arbitrages between different types of spaces, something that requires the ability to trade and pragmatism as being Muslim. Afghan traders additionally place great emphasis on their capacity to achieve prestige and repute by moving across an arena that both transcends but also depends upon the political boundaries of nation-states. In this sense they act as an important reminder of the need not to take the category of being Muslim for granted.

Governmentality and Discursive Power

De-radicalisation in the Prevent Strand of the UK Counter-Terrorism Strategy: Towards an Alternative Conceptual Framework

MOHAMMED ELSHIMI

Abstract

De-radicalisation has become increasingly prevalent in the UK as a strategy for tackling the threat of religiously inspired violence/extremism. British citizens fighting in Middle Eastern conflicts have rekindled the preoccupation of policymakers with the radicalisation of British Muslims. In addition, since being placed on a statutory footing in 2015, the PREVENT strategy in UK counter-terrorism requires public institutions, like schools and universities, to identify “vulnerable” individuals “at risk” of radicalisation. Indeed the work of PREVENT post 2011 has primarily been recalibrated towards a greater focus on de-radicalisation interventions, which are perceived by policy-makers to be a more streamlined and effective way of dealing with radicalised/extremist individuals. And yet despite the greater attention paid to de-radicalisation, the discourse on de-radicalisation is characterised by the absence of detailed research, little or no empirical evidence for policy development, and confusion surrounds its conceptual framework. This paper therefore offers an alternative conceptualisation of de-radicalisation to the one found in the PREVENT strategy. Drawing on the works of Foucault, I argue that de-radicalisation is best understood as a “technology of the self”. Conceptualising de-radicalisation as a technology of the self allows us to reframe the concept beyond the narrow confines of counter-terrorism policy and place it within wider governmental practices.

Introduction

De-radicalisation has been conceived by policy-makers in the UK as an instrument of counterterrorism in the fight against violent radicalisation. De-radicalisation programmes emerged in many countries in the Middle East (M.E), Southeast Asia (S.E.A), and Europe in the late 1990s with the overarching objective of getting individuals and groups to move away from terrorism.¹ In fact de-radicalisation interventions proved to be quite successful in places like Egypt and Algeria before 9-11.² However, it was only with the growing number of terrorist attacks globally after 9-11 that the development of de-radicalisation in the M.E. and S.E.A began to take shape. These programmes were guided by different strategies and varied in type from

individual to collective de-radicalisation, and between state or/and NGO run programmes. The delivery of these programmes has been implemented and expressed through a number of diverse activities that include counselling, dialogue, counter-ideology, state repressions, family involvement, and aftercare.³ On the whole, interventions took place predominantly in prisons.⁴

However, in contrast to programmes in the M.E and S.E.A, de-radicalisation interventions in the UK primarily (a) are based outside prisons and focused on civil society⁵; (b) target “extremist” and not terrorists or convicted criminals; (c) target youngsters; and (d) focus on the “Weltanschauung” of British Muslims and consequently valorise counter-ideological approaches in interventions. Moreover, de-radicalisation is situated in the second objective of the PREVENT strand (supporting vulnerable individuals) in UK Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which focuses on preventing the long-term causes of radicalisation. It is administered by the police in the Channel Project.⁶ The targets of de-radicalisation interventions are mainly young people who have been identified by managers, teachers, and staff working in public institutions as being “at risk” and “vulnerable” to radicalisation. After an assessment of “radicalised” individuals is made, they are put on an intervention programme to be “de-radicalised”. Examples of de-radicalisation intervention providers in the UK have included the Strategy to Reach Empower and Educate (STREET) which was run by a community and grass roots group based in Brixton, South London⁷ and the Active Change Foundation (ACF), which is a grass-roots organisation based in East London. In short, de-radicalisation in the UK indicates a number of distinct features that make it substantially different from programmes in other parts of the world.

Despite the new prominence of de-radicalisation in counterterrorism post 2011, de-radicalisation in the PREVENT strategy presents a number of challenges. These include definitional ambiguity, conceptual confusion, conflation of different policy logics, vagueness with respect to what it is trying to achieve, the disjuncture between the idea and practice of de-radicalisation, inconclusiveness with regards to the de-radicalisation process in the literature, the glaring absence of robust research on de-radicalisation, and the lack of empirical evidence for policy development. The aforementioned problems inherent in the idea and practice of de-radicalisation are remarkable in light of the considerable political, financial, and emotional capital invested in trying to understand and tackle radicalisation. Security concerns have dominated the policy agenda in the UK beyond the narrow scope of counterterrorism

between 2005 and 2015, impacting and dominating debates on multiculturalism, identity, and immigration, amongst other issues. The apparent meaningless discourse on de-radicalisation and problematic conceptualisation in PREVENT therefore begs the following ontological question: what is de-radicalisation?

This paper endeavours to provide a brief sketch of an alternative way of framing de-radicalisation in the UK, which given the space constraints, will not allow me to flesh out my points in substantial detail. Nevertheless I claim that de-radicalisation in the UK is best understood conceptually through the analytical lens of the “technology of the self”. It will be shown that viewing de-radicalisation as a technology of the self does away with the various problems surrounding academic attempts to understand de-radicalisation in the UK.

Problematisation

The PREVENT conception of de-radicalisation presents us with a number of challenges. Firstly, there is confusion surrounding the ontological framework of de-radicalisation. The opacity of de-radicalisation in the UK can be discerned in the Home Office definition of de-radicalisation, where it is described as “cognitive or behavioural change and sometimes to both”, and is said to be analogous to forms of “crime prevention”.⁸ It is not clear from this definition whether de-radicalisation entails cognitive or behavioural change, or both. The confusion about the term is compounded in the literature with the use of other terms which are used in the same context as de-radicalisation but that contain subtle differences in meaning and have subsequent policy ramifications. Terms like “rehabilitation”, “re-socialisation”, “de-programming”, and “dialogue” are used to refer to de-radicalisation programmes. It is also employed interchangeably in the discourse with other terms like “disengagement” and “counter-radicalisation”.⁹

Secondly, de-radicalisation also indicates conceptual confusion. My PhD fieldwork conducted between November 2011 and May 2013 with PREVENT practitioners revealed that the PREVENT concept of de-radicalisation was confusing and had in fact conflated four separate concepts.¹⁰ The data conveyed that there are multiple understandings of de-radicalisation in the UK context: one concept of de-radicalisation relates to the renunciation, through thought-reform, of violence only; a second conception situates de-

radicalisation as part of an attempt to domesticate Islam by suppressing extremism, embodied by Salafis and Islamists, and promoting a more liberal version of Islam in public spaces; the third conception, which out of the four conceptions represents the most significant challenge to policymakers, emphasises the need to have individuals adopt the political and social values of the country as a sufficient and necessary condition for a successful de-radicalisation to occur; and the fourth conception situates de-radicalisation within the preventative framework of youth empowerment, probation services, and crime prevention. Overall, the data corroborates the contested conceptual framework of de-radicalisation presented by PREVENT.

Thirdly, a corollary of this conceptual confusion is that de-radicalisation represents a conflation of four different policy agendas: counter-terrorism, counter-subversion, community cohesion, and crime prevention. The data therefore shows that de-radicalisation as a policy exhibits a tangled logic in which the functions of counter-terrorism, counter-subversion, community cohesion, and crime prevention are bought into a common localisation, in a way that moves the concern of policymakers far beyond terrorism. Indeed underlying the four policy areas are two conflicting policy logics- rehabilitative vs. preventive. On the one hand de-radicalisation generally posits a rehabilitative model targeted at individuals who have already crossed the line and pose a threat. On the other hand de-radicalisation sits within PREVENT, whose underlying logic is “prevention is better than cure”. The logic of “cure”, to use the medical vocabulary of this policy domain, has been intertwined with that of “prevention”; one is an act of reversal, the other pre-emptive. Insofar as de-radicalisation encompasses all four agendas, each with its own desiderata, being driven by conflicting policy logics, then it is clear that de-radicalisation in its current guise is incoherent.

A fourth problem is the disjuncture between the idea of de-radicalisation- getting people away from violence through counter-ideology- and what Channel seems to be doing in practice. For example, PREVENT exhibits a preoccupation with a future-orientated temporality, that is, something could happen in the future, which in conjunction with the immanence of the threat, justifies corrective interventions in the present.¹¹ It effectively moves the objective of policy-makers towards other concerns beyond only reducing the potentiality of violence: particular ideas, behaviours, and practices in the temporality of the present become problematic. Religious, political, and dissenting ideas and behaviour of religious and racial others therefore acquire

greater significance, becoming objects of concern, in a way that transcends the narrow scope of counter-terrorism.

Since those deemed “extremist” and “radical” have not committed a crime, indeed have not even breached the law, the future oriented logic underpinning de-radicalisation shifts attention away from the juridical realm and towards another sphere altogether; and it is in this space of the non-judicial, one geared towards shepherding the ‘Weltanschauung’ of British Muslim youngsters, that the terrain of PREVENT strategy and de-radicalisation intervention takes place. The focus of counter-radicalisation efforts is no therefore longer just about criminality and legality or even about safeguarding the public from the threats of terrorist attacks but on something much further down the spectrum- the “hearts and minds” of Muslims and an imposed conformity of norms for wider society.

Finally, the literature indicates that policymakers do not know exactly how someone becomes de-radicalised and that there is no empirical basis for the policy development of de-radicalisation programmes in the UK. With regards to the de-radicalisation process, policy-makers and academics have been trying to understand these processes with reference to the literature on gangs, social movements, and cults.¹² However, it isn’t clear what the process of de-radicalisation looks like from beginning to end in terms of pathways out of radicalisation.¹³ In terms of evidence for policy development, PREVENT acknowledges the absence of evidence that de-radicalisation works: “There is little empirical evidence underpinning intervention work in this area here in the UK and internationally”.¹⁴ Moreover, the absence of an evidence-based approach to de-radicalisation is augmented further by the marked absence of an independent and rigorous assessment of the Channel programme.¹⁵ These reports bring to light the acknowledgment of policymakers that de-radicalisation as a policy rests on flimsy evidence, not to mention the fact it underscores how little we continue to know about the precise details of the process of de-radicalisation, the profile of individuals undergoing interventions, and the success rate of de-radicalisation interventions.

Towards An Alternative Conception: De-radicalisation as a Technology of the Self

This section presents the case for conceptualising de-radicalisation as a technology of the self. “Technologies of the self” are defined as that:

....which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and the way of being, so as to transform themselves.¹⁶

As a technology of the self, de-radicalisation concerns itself with operating on the bodies, souls, thoughts, conduct, of individuals in order for those diagnosed as “radical” or “extremist” to transform themselves. Although the technology of the self explains self-fashioning as a form of freedom undertaken by individuals, I have modified it in order to conceptualise the focus of governmentality on the conduct of individual citizens. I want to deploy it in an expansive sense to include the way that all individuals and not just radicalised individuals fall under the preview of de-radicalisation. There is a sense that all citizens and subjects should scrutinise and hold their ideas in check in relation to “extremist” thinking and practices (synonymous with religion, politics, and foreign policy). This modified concept of self-formation comprises of three components:

1. Discursive Technology. This refers to the production of discourse that codifies the phenomenon of radicalisation, produces a regularity ideal for subjects, and makes discourse intelligible within structures of governance.
2. Disciplinary Technology. This refers to the way that institutions (in education, health, and so on) interventions (rehabilitative, preventative), programs, and rationalities of government (including in civil society organisations) operate together to ensure that the population is disciplined and controlled through surveillance, normalisation, and self-policing.
3. Confessional Technology. Traced to Christian confessional practices, this refers to the pastoralist practices in the governance of the population, which focuses on the body and soul of the individual. It is based on the relationship between experts and citizens, in order to acquire knowledge that feed into discourses on radicalisation, as well as guide the subjectivity of citizens.

These technologies constitute the ontological conditions and techniques involved in the formation of the self within governmental relations. This technological fashioning of subjects entails the relationship between truth, power, and identity or its “episteme, techne, and its ethos”.¹⁷ The ontological makeup of self fashioning is explained by the fact that the “truth” of radicalisation is produced to create a normative ideal for the population, which is then deployed by government in public and social institutions in

order to inscribe discipline and control on the body of subjects, and through pastoral practices results in particular forms of identity being adopted. The above technologies form the anonymous structures, networks of knowledge, social and cultural institutions that embody, as well as produce, the structural environment of the subject. All those structures shape people's lives and set the rules or procedures to be followed; they "determine conduct of individuals".¹⁸

It is also important at this juncture to clarify what is meant by "technology" in the awkward formulation "technology of the self". Nikolas Rose provides a comprehensive definition of the Foucauldian understanding of technology as:

.....any assembly structure by a practical rationality governed by a more or less conscious goal. Human technologies are hybrid assemblages of knowledge, instruments, persons, systems of judgment, building and spaces, underpinned at the programmatic level by certain presuppositions about, and objectives for, human beings.¹⁹

In other words, "technologies" encompasses the diverse techniques, assessments, and places that go into shaping the self in our contemporary society, underscoring the technological (in terms of order, control, and efficiency) frame dominating our cultural and social practices. Indeed as Rose asserts,

....our very experience of ourselves as certain persons- creatures of freedom, of liberty, of personal power, of self-realisation- is the outcome of a range of human technologies, technologies that take modes of being human as their object.²⁰

Notably, the technology of the self is compatible with the post-modern take on identity that conceives the self as emerging as a result of discourse and regular self-fashioning practices. Indeed, the post-modern concept of the self posits the self as emerging in response to linguistic practices and culturally available narrative forms. It is a conception critical of the Enlightenment conception of an autonomous, rational, and disengaged self.²¹ This is why despite Foucault's constant interest in the theme of the subject he did not develop a theory of the subject.²² According to Foucault, setting an *a priori* theory of the subject implies an idea of a universal and timeless subject which attaches people to specific identities, a position he rejected. There is no autonomous transcendent subject which exists outside its context, but rather the subject should be seen as embedded within historical and social context. Stressing the point that the subject is not a substance but a form, Foucault

noted that this form is not always identical to itself.²³ The subject and the notion of identity is therefore not fixed, but is instead constantly modified.

Consequently, the technology of the self is deployed in this article as a form of individuating power belonging to governmentality. A short definition of the term governmentality is captured by the phrase the “conduct of conduct”.²⁴ Conduct refers the attempt by government to shape with some degree of deliberation aspects of our behavior according to particular sets of norms and for a variety of ends.²⁵ Governmentality also refers to the emergence of political rationalities, or mentalities of rule, where rule becomes a matter of the calculated management of the affairs of each and of all in order to achieve certain desirable objectives.²⁶ Indeed in his examination of governmental practice Foucault found that the concern of governmental power historically, as far back as the ancient Greek City State, was linked by a single theme- “Omnes et singulatim” (all and each). In other words, Foucault saw in Western societies the tendency towards a form of political sovereignty which would be the government of all and each and whose concern would be at once to “totalise” and to “individualise”.²⁷ Foucault found that the practice of government was characterised by the way it took freedom itself and the “soul of its citizens” as a correlative objective of its own capacity²⁸ and “to develop those elements constitutive of individuals’ lives in such a way that their development also fosters that of the strength of the state”.²⁹

In this light, governmentality enables power to be conceptualised as positive and not merely negative, and bottom up and multi-directional, instead of top-down and linear. It also embeds the relationship between knowledge, power, institutions and interventions, and the conduct of subjects in its conceptualisation of power. This is important because it moves us beyond analysing de-radicalisation merely as a response to terrorism, or to view discourses on radicalisation as an isolated knowledge domain disconnected from policy, or even that change in conduct is merely brought about by the demands of policy elites. By conceptualising de-radicalisation as a technology of the self within governmental relations we understand the role that the multi-faceted dimensions of power play in executing de-radicalisation.

Discursive Technology (Truth): the Production of Radicalisation

Discursive technology refers to the production of discourse characterised by the deliberate effort to codify knowledge on the phenomenon of radicalisation

for the purposes of understanding it, categorising it, and rendering its finding malleable for concrete action in non-discursive domains.³⁰ Discourse claims the authority of the sciences, employing its models, theories, language, and methods. The logic of security on the one hand and that of identity on the other were brought into common localisation in the concept of radicalisation.³¹ “Radicalism” went from being a state of mind/activity to becoming a state of being and a problem of the soul, or something internal to the radical. The “radicalisation” process after 2004 became associated with the religion of Islam, Islamist ideology, the “identity-crisis” of young Muslim diasporas³² and the causal relationship between these factors and violence.³³ The existence of the radical, through discursive production, enabled the *possibility and potentiality* of radicalisation and the perpetual perception of an immediate and imminent threat, divorced from the reality of attacks occurring by radicals.³⁴ Radicalisation had been conceived within a particular framework and process- one which took as its starting point the paradigmatic law abiding citizen, and placed at the polar end of the spectrum the paradigmatic violent Muslim radical. The potentiality for violence by implication therefore resided within every British Citizen of Muslim faith. In this way discursive production constituted the knowledge base for administrative rectification and programmes of threat-mitigation.

Disciplinary Technology (Power): Hotspots and Correctives

Underlying disciplinary technology is the working of a more subtle and pervasive form of power. The rationale behind the punishment of crime evolved from retribution in the pre-modern world to reform and rehabilitation of the criminal in the modern world.³⁵ This rehabilitative model is premised on the logic that transforming the soul leads to changes in behaviour.³⁶ The focus is therefore on discipline and control of subjects rather than physical retribution and punishment. Crucial to the execution of disciplinary technology is the apparatus encompassing the institutions, buildings, as well as strategies of government, through broader domains like civil society, with the assistance of networks of authority (doctors, psychologist, teachers, and youth workers). This is done through surveillance, in which subjects are aware of being observed and thus internalise in the form of self-policing, in conjunction with “normalising judgment” and the “examination”; both of which are concerned with judging and placing subjects in relation to grids of “normality” in order to control their behaviour.³⁷ Indeed Channel is designed to identify “risk” and problematic

individuals *before they became a threat*, as well as applying normalising judgment to young people deemed “extremist”/“vulnerable” and through an examination, are put through “corrective” programmes under the pastoral guidance of “experts”. In fact Channel risk indicators correspond to certain behavioural types and patterns exhibited by individuals. In other words, professing a belief in “sharia” or the “caliphate”, the sudden adoption of certain clothing, and the articulation of political views flag up that particular individual as a potential terrorist.³⁸ As an intervention programme, de-radicalisation epitomises the power logic of disciplinary power.

Confessional Technology (Identity): Salvation in this Life

At the heart of confessional technology is the relationship between the “experts”, those with the authority to shape and direct our lives, and the subject, whose salvation is at stake. Equally central to the confession is the verbalization of sins, and the renunciation of the self.³⁹ The first dimension of the confessional logic is manifested in de-radicalisation interventions, where young “extremists” are assigned to mentors and are encouraged to engage in dialogue and “confess”. This discursive interaction between the interlocutor and the radicalised subject takes place within the structured and formalised relationship of mentoring.⁴⁰ The mentoring process deploys the techniques of psychotherapy, in which the patient/ “vulnerable” individual participates in discussion in order to identify their problem and have a chance at being rehabilitated back to “normality”. The “confession” extracted by mentors from mentees in de-radicalisation interventions is subsequently recorded, codified for analysis, and reproduced into the body knowledge of radicalisation, ultimately augmenting the ‘Truth’ of radicalisation. The second dimension entailed in the confession-subjectification depends on the discursive interactions. It is thus the act of verbalisation, alongside the act of proclamation that turns the individual into a subject. In other words it is the performative function of language that turns the individual into a subject.⁴¹ Confessional technology therefore plays a significant role in the formation of the self in de-radicalisation interventions.

The Significance of De-radicalisation as the Technology of the Self

Conceptualising de-radicalisation as a technology of the self allows us to debunk the prevalent notion that de-radicalisation is concerned with merely

mitigating the possibility of violence on British soil. Although this is undeniably one objective amongst others and indeed a necessary and desirable goal for policymakers, employing the concept of the technology of the self however situates de-radicalisation as a technique deployed by government in order to ensure that the Muslim populations within the nation-state are disciplined⁴², that citizens acquire the appropriate conduct⁴³ and that individuals adopt and invest in modes of subjectivity that are deemed sanitised and certified by political authorities. From the standpoint of neo-liberal governmentality acceptable subjectivity begins with the notion of the ideal liberal citizen, who is not only democratic, non-violent, and tolerant but also active, responsible, and self-regulating.⁴⁴

The preoccupation of policymakers with the ideas and practices of citizens beyond issues relating to violence is reflected in the way that certain forms of identities are being suppressed and affirmed. This risk management logic at the heart of de-radicalisation and PREVENT strategies has to be contextualised within wider narratives, unrelated to the security threat posed by Muslims, in which Islam is being “constructed as an essentially fundamentalist, anti-democratic and anti-modern religion and civilization”.⁴⁵ In short the Muslim population of Britain are perceived, through the prism of an undifferentiated and conflated category of radicalisation, by policymakers, political elites, and the popular media to represent a political, social, and cultural problem to the nation-state. Put in other terms, elite policymakers are thus responding to the issues provoked by the “Muslim Question”.⁴⁶ Conceptualising de-radicalisation as a technology of the self therefore enables us to view it as an instrument of government that seeks to deal with the multifarious challenges embodied in “the Muslim Question”, and not merely as a strategy to fight terrorism.

An additional practical significance conferred by viewing de-radicalisation as a technology of the self is the way it sheds lights on the workings of governmentality with respect to interventions, processes, and programmes that operate in society outside juridical spaces and frameworks. Indeed the non-judicial dimension of de-radicalisation interventions remains one of the striking features of UK de-radicalisation. This article has hitherto demonstrated the way governments seek the modification of behaviour in their citizenry outside the juridical realm through wide ranging measures, e.g. discourses, strategies, policies, programmes, interventions, and pastoral power. Therefore, understanding de-radicalisation through the lens of the

technology of the self contextualises de-radicalisation in relation to similar interventions in other policy domains. In this light de-radicalisation interventions share a similarity with programmes that help individuals improve their well-being by overcoming threats to their health, like obesity and smoking found in the policy area of Health, or ‘back to work’ initiatives found in Welfare and Employment.⁴⁷

Lastly, the technology of the self also elucidates the intricate and pervasive processes involved in the socialisation of individuals and citizens into society and the state. In other words individuals are not judged by the right and wrong of their actions (what the law does) but by where their actions place them on a ranked scale that compares them to everyone else. Normalisation techniques, such as the technologies of confession and discipline, are supposed to be an impartial way for “dealing with dangerous deviations”, but ultimately, according to Paul Rainbow, the “end of government is the correct disposition of things- even when these things have to be invented so as to be well governed”.⁴⁸ It is the objective of the technologies of the self in our society to bring the diverse assemblages of knowledge, techniques, experts, and practices to bear on individuals in order to reconcile their subjectivities and conduct with the paradigmatic values of the state and society.

Conclusion

This paper endeavoured to outline the theoretical boundaries of an alternative conception of de-radicalisation, one which eschews the conceptual problems inherent in the PREVENT strategy’s conception of de-radicalisation on the one hand, and the limitations evident in the scant literature on the other. It also tried to overcome the limitations associated with cognitive/behaviour factors in conceptualisation of de-radicalisation, not to mention the predominant association of de-radicalisation solely with the objectives of counter-terrorism. Additionally, this article endeavoured to offer a way of understanding the explicit contradictions in the policy logic of de-radicalisation between pre-emptive and preventive orientations, the disjuncture between the ideas (ideology) and practice of de-radicalisation (renouncing violence), and the ostensible paradox of premeditated interventions targeting youngsters categorised as “vulnerable”. To this effect, framing de-radicalisation as a technology of the self accommodates the aforementioned fissures, as well as offering greater theoretical and practical insights.

The argument was made that the formation of the self is accomplished through the interplay of three technologies; discursive, disciplinary, and confessional. Through this conceptual lens de-radicalisation is enabled by the production of discourse, which is then deployed in structures of governance-in institutions, through strategies, and within civil society. It is actualised with the use of experts and various techniques of pastoral power, working to transform the self. This alternative conceptualisation of de-radicalisation should be seen as a third person account of what goes into producing the self in modern societies from an external material perspective and not the first person interior perspective. Situated within neo-liberal governmentality, de-radicalisation is therefore less about the mitigation of violence and more about the making of a particular subjectivity- political, social, ethical- in our contemporary historical place and time. Reading de-radicalisation as a technology of the self generates a novel and more insightful way of understanding the idea and practice of de-radicalisation in the UK.

Making Vulnerable: The Effect on Minority Communities of the Identification of Vulnerability within PREVENT⁴⁹

ELIZABETH-JANE PEATFIELD

Abstract

This preliminary paper explores the findings of a multi-phased research study involving Muslims and non-Muslim Black and Mixed Race minorities (BMR) living in or around Liverpool. The study investigated the effects on these groups of the government's current counter-radicalization policy PREVENT⁵⁰. PREVENT suggests that radicalization can be a social process and that the drivers can exacerbate an individual's susceptibility to radicalization. This research aims to gauge the effects of being identified as 'vulnerable' to radicalization on the targeted communities and their perceptions of this. The study found that the discrimination faced by members of the Muslim community in Liverpool mirrored the discrimination faced historically by its Black and Mixed Race Communities (BMRC). A number of interesting patterns have emerged from the data which challenge the identification of drivers and the implementation of policy which constructs populations as the "other", through classifying them as vulnerable.

Introduction

This research engaged both Muslim and non-Muslim minority Black and Mixed Race Communities living in or around Liverpool, in order to identify how they felt about the UK government's current counter radicalization policy (CRP) specifically PREVENT. It also examined people's perceptions towards assumptions made throughout this policy such as the categorization of vulnerability and the identified drivers. A mixed methodology approach was employed in order to assemble quantitative and qualitative data in multiple stages. The benefits of this type of approach have been highlighted by Burke and Onwuegbuzie⁵¹. Using an anonymous coding system and a mixed methodology I was able to balance the ethical considerations with the opportunity to give the participants a voice. A quantitative collection strategy in stage one (S1) guided the qualitative interview stage two (S2). S1&2 engaged with Muslim participants, stages (S3&4) engaged non-Muslim Black and Mixed Race minorities. To gauge the awareness of policy and legislation and the effect upon participants, S1&3 utilized a ten-statement questionnaire with a five-point Likert grading system. Seven statements, including both

negative and positive assertions, were taken directly from PREVENT with the final three statements constructed to investigate the integration of the participants within the wider community.

In S2&4 I interviewed participants who had not taken part in S1&3 and utilized a semi-structure technique to allow the interview to develop organically whilst addressing the core findings from S1&3. In S2&4 three core questions were constructed to ascertain the participant's perceptions of inclusion and integration within British culture. They were also used to discuss whether current counter-radicalization legislation was counter-productive for the aim of creating a society which adhered to a multicultural ethos and valued integration. Finally I was interested to find out what the participants felt the government could do to improve the 'public' perception of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. A thematic analysis of the data identified four primary code categories; Drivers, Power, Social Control, and Identity. These were subsequently sub divided into sixteen secondary codes. In what follows I will briefly discuss the primary codes of Social Control and Identity and give examples.

Muslims, like BMRC, have historically been constructed as folk devils⁵² through their identification within government policy as a section of society which can be vulnerable to crime, deprivation⁵³ and now radicalization. Unlike any other faith group, members of the Islamic faith are the only ones identified specifically within CRP for security consideration⁵⁴ based on 'risk'. Alongside other members of society often considered powerless such as the young and people from lower socio-economic areas, a disparity between those in power and those perceived as powerless can be seen in the assumptions within policy. These assumptions can be seen if we examine the largest of the primary codes, the responses to the identification of drivers. When considering this category and the identification of vulnerabilities or drivers of radicalization, Raymond, a non-Muslim participant in stage four (PS4), suggests that the government's fear of losing control is a basis for targeting saying;

“I think that the government has just basically rounded up everyone they can't control into one big group and made them the problem.”

Both research groups completely rejected the label of vulnerability; moreover, their classification as vulnerable was perceived as condescending and degrading. All of the participants shared the opinion that just because

someone shared a faith with or had similar race to an individual who may engage in anti-social or radical behaviour, this did not mean that they themselves would necessarily support those actions. Nor did it mean that they did not fear those actions like other members of society. Some commented on how farcical it would seem if government policy criminalized by association everybody who had ever gone to university, given that a number of high-profile terrorists have been students⁵⁵. The idea of guilt-by-association was discussed by Kadir, one of the Muslim respondents (PS2). When discussing vulnerability, he contended,

“I am just as afraid of terrorism as you, I don’t want my wife or children blown up by some idiot who has interpreted the Qur’an to mean something it doesn’t.”

The frustration of the majority of participants was clear when they discussed the representation of Muslims within government policy. The participants felt that there was an association through language, which repeatedly linked the term Muslim and radical, effectively shaping the public’s perception of the problem of radicalization by word association⁵⁶.

Social Control was another primary code identified within the data as it examined the resilience towards a state-constructed othering of Muslims and minority populations⁵⁷. Based on a facet of identity (skin colour) the BMRC in Liverpool has experienced historic othering. This historical BMRC community has been described as ‘Liverpool-born Blacks’⁵⁸ and has long been characterized as facing significant racial discrimination that has been described as ‘uniquely horrific,’ compared to other Black communities across Britain in the 1980’s⁵⁹. Associative statements from S1&2 indicated a parallel between the experiences of the Muslim members of the community and the historical treatment of the BMRC identified in S3&4. A criminalization by association with a group (defined by race or faith) in society and a need to constantly prove one’s ‘Britishness’⁶⁰ was heavily criticized by participants. When discussing the way in which Muslims are forced to be political in order to defend their position within society, Kadir a Muslim (PS2) suggested,

“We have to be more politically aware now even if you don’t want to be it’s like you have to justify your Britishness I don’t have to justify my Britishness, I am British.”

Also dominant within the analysis was the recurrent theme of the racialization

of Muslims as members of a minority population. This theme was identified within the statements of both the Muslim and non-Muslim participants, framed within the primary code Identity. Moosavi⁶¹ suggests that 'white' Muslim converts are re-racialized, in essence losing their 'whiteness', when they became converts to Islam. Similarly, when discussing the over-securitization of Muslims it was suggested by many of the participants in S2 that the colour of their skin was the primary determinant with regards to stop and search. Nasrin (PS2) suggested that her son, who is of mixed race, is stopped and searched not because he is Muslim, but because he is of mixed race. It was only when he was asked his name that his ethnicity came to light. She said,

“My sixteen year-old son looks like everyone else he has his baggy jeans and t-shirts on especially because he is mixed heritage and he just looks like every other Black lad from Liverpool eight⁶². He doesn't have any physical differences in the way he dresses the only thing that gives his Muslim heritage away is his name. Which doesn't help.”

Similarly Qais (PS2) suggested that he didn't get stopped as often as some of his friends simply because he had a lighter skin tone. In the S4 data the BMR participants also talked of a 'common sense' assumption that Muslims were members of racial minority groups. Over half of the participants had been victims of Islam-related discrimination even though they were not Muslim. Islamophobia was intrinsically linked to their perceptions of racism and experiences of racism. All of the PS1&2 reported that tackling Islamophobia was a high priority for them in order to give members of the Muslim community a secure and safe environment. Similarly the PS3&4 reported that tackling racism was still high priority for them although the older members interviewed said things had seemed to change for the better since the 1980's, with the introduction of multicultural policy in Britain. However, after 9/11 things had deteriorated rapidly. Lilly, a non-Muslim mixed race participant (PS4), suggested when talking about race relations and racism,

“I think it did for a while after the 80's things started in the 90's to improve but soon as 9/11 hit things went downhill fast. Anyone with a brown face was a terrorist.”

In conclusion, since 9/11 the majority of participants (S2 &S4) had perceived an increase in suspicion and negative behaviour towards minority communities both Muslim and non-Muslim. Mythen⁶³ suggested that young

Muslims often found that social identity changed over time in a process of perpetual motion, dependent on circumstances. I would argue similarly, that processes of integration are, like many aspects of social identity, dynamic and fluid. They can involve differing levels of tolerance in relation to situations and the contexts in which they occur. The construction of minority groups as criminal by the implementation of draconian policies which seek to protect society is, by its very nature, alienating those groups the policies seek to protect. A racialization of the problem of extremism within the social narrative is causing a racialization of a faith group based on historical prejudice surrounding culture and colour.

Work by Mythen, Walklate and Khan⁶⁴ has revealed the institutional construction of 'risky' groups and the labelling of Muslims as threatening and dangerous. This construction of risk I would suggest is linked with race and racism, through a negative association of policy and social factors. This has placed an even greater burden on minority populations who historically have been subjected to systemic racism⁶⁵. Therefore there is an intersectionality of discrimination for Muslims combining discrimination of both faith and race. The citizenship survey cited by government in PREVENT suggests that extremist groups within Britain receive very little support (p16). The disparity between support and suspicion is, one may suggest, a confusing contradiction for any young person growing up in a securitized environment. On the one hand young persons are highlighted as vulnerable and therefore subject for an increase in security concern, based on their age, socio-economic background and ethnicity. Yet this same group are asked for their loyalty by a state in which they are being constructed as 'the other' through their identification as 'vulnerable to radicalization'. For any young person, who may be struggling to find a place in which they 'fit', this extra confusion must impact on their sense of self and the formation of their identity alongside their ideals⁶⁶.

Currently, the emphasis of national security concern is young people travelling abroad to engage in violent extremism and the risk they pose to the UK on their return. The emphasis of risk has shifted and yet it is still young people from minority groups who are being targeted through the implementation of policy. Although some may argue that race relations have improved over the last three decades, the statistics speak for themselves. The Institute of Race Relations reports that people from a Black or minority ethnic (BME) group are far more likely to live in poverty⁶⁷ than 'white'⁶⁸ people. A

shift back to a state of intolerance since 9/11 has left poor minority groups most exposed to social inequality, deprivation and state targeting, increasing the vulnerability of those groups identified as 'vulnerable'.

The Epistemic Violence of Sam Harris' Doxastic Theory of Action in *The End of Faith*

RICCARDO JAEDE

Abstract

This text is a revised excerpt from a longer and more detailed manuscript that examines the phenomenon of New Atheism as a social-intellectual movement aimed at emancipating humanity from violence and religious faith by propagating rationalism, scientism, and a particular brand of atheism. In it, I scrutinise its treatment of Islam by focusing on one particularly influential publication by the author and neuroscientist Sam Harris, 'The End of Faith – Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason.' I advance two arguments. The first is that the emancipatory universalism of Harris' liberationist programme is sustained by its opposition to the Muslim Other, and thereby follows an Orientalist paradigm. I seek to integrate two seemingly disparate theories of racism: Deleuze and Guattari's account of racism in the form of inclusive universalist cosmologies on the one hand; and the clearly excluding binomial oppositions of Orientalism on the other. The second argument is that the corollaries of this binary structure are used to justify various forms of violence against Muslims, from torture, military intervention, imposition of and support for dictatorships, to 'preventive' nuclear strikes. The excerpt reproduced here reproduces only the first argument, elucidating Harris' theoretical underpinnings of what may be termed his 'doxastic model of action'. The analysis of this particular New Atheist edifice bears out my contention that a new, synthetic framework is needed to make sense of both the incorporating and the othering dimensions of this form of contemporary anti-Muslim racism.

Introduction

In his 2006 publication, *The End of Faith – Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason*, author and neuroscientist Sam Harris proposes that religious faith is a form of unfounded belief that lies at the root of most forms of contemporary violence. In it, Islam is discussed as an exceptionally aggressive faith, whose contemporary coexistence with weapons of mass destruction poses a particular threat to the well-being, if not survival, of humanity. The argument goes that faith in general, with Islam in particular, must therefore be criticised thoroughly in all its forms, and combated through a spread of scientific thinking, atheist spirituality, and targeted policies.

At the heart of this view lies a particular model of how evidence relates to

beliefs, and how these relate to intentions and behaviour. Although he presents this model in an unsystematic and unorganised fashion, it nonetheless forms a coherent system of premises and propositions that re-emerge frequently throughout the book. In what follows, I will extract and elucidate in a systematic manner the set of premises and propositions that permeate his work, and which I term Harris' 'doxastic theory of action'. His model has three components: a doxastic one, pertaining to beliefs; an aetiological one, relating to questions of cause and effect; and a spiritual one.

Harris' Doxastic Theory of Action

Following an account of the various definitions of faith provided in religious scriptures⁶⁹, Harris advances his own epistemological definition: faith is to be understood as 'unjustified beliefs'⁷⁰ about the world. This is juxtaposed with 'justified' beliefs about the world, which are exclusively to be acquired through science and reason.⁷¹ Hence, 'belief' is the common denominator of both 'faith' and 'reason/science'.⁷² He then posits beliefs as representations of the world.⁷³ Therefore, he asserts, like scientific propositions, religious faith inherently makes truth claims about reality.⁷⁴

Drawing on the epistemological position of Realism,⁷⁵ these claims stand in a referential relationship to one and the same reality, and therefore can be either factually true or false: 'The moment we admit that our beliefs are attempts to represent states of the world, we see that they must stand in the right relation *to* the world to be valid.'⁷⁶ 'Evidence' is what determines whether the link between beliefs and objective reality is intact or not.⁷⁷ Hence, if a belief is supported by evidence, it is justified; if something is believed without evidence, and is not subject to change when confronted with evidence, it is unjustified.⁷⁸

Harris then adds a second definition of beliefs, constituting what will be referred to as the aetiological dimension of this concept. Under the subheading 'beliefs as principles of action',⁷⁹ he defines beliefs as any form of knowledge that informs or rather determines behaviour.⁸⁰ 'every belief is a fount of action *in potentia*.'⁸¹ He leaves no doubt about the determinacy, arguing that '[a]s a man believes, so he will act'.⁸² This aetiological dimension infuses beliefs with an ethical dimension.

Claiming that moral values relate to the well-being of sentient beings,⁸³ and well-being relates to states of the brain,⁸⁴ moral values thus relate to objective

facts about empirical reality.⁸⁵ Since science can investigate these facts and determine well-being,⁸⁶ it can determine moral values, thus establishing the link between facts and values.⁸⁷

In a separate step, this 'New Science of Morality' would lend descriptive, empirical credence to the prescriptive claims of Utilitarian consequentialism.⁸⁸ Proponents of Utilitarianism have variously argued that because only the consequences of an act count, there is no moral difference between letting a number of persons die through inaction (passive), and actively killing the same number through action.⁸⁹ Harris notes that many of these decisions are counter-intuitive, and that neuropsychology can show *why* they feel wrong. Concurrently, it can demonstrate that our moral intuitions are at odds with moral reasoning, reflecting cognitive biases that are anchored in our neurobiology.

In this sense, evidence-based beliefs (i.e., 'reason' and 'science') cannot but force one to accept the truth of Utilitarianism. It follows, then, that these beliefs would commit one to principles of action that aim to maximise the well-being of the greatest number of people. Therefore, evidence-based beliefs are doubly justified: epistemologically, in terms of their truth value; and morally, in terms of their outcome. The opposite is the case with faith-based beliefs. These are relics of older, irrational times that were internally repressive and externally aggressive.⁹⁰ Therefore, they could not and cannot but lead to violence in the past, present, and future.⁹¹

It is on the basis of this model that he traces the origins of any violent conflict in the world to religion or religious faith.⁹² Because all religions are mutually exclusive, they antagonise their respective believers and pit them in zero-sum battles against each other: 'they are leading us, inexorably, to kill one another. [...] ideas which divide one group of human beings from another, only to unite them in slaughter, generally have their roots in religion.'⁹³ This leads him to conclude that '[i]ntolerance is thus intrinsic to every creed.'⁹⁴ Anti-Semitism is cited⁹⁵ as a case in point, being not only 'intrinsic to both Christianity and Islam',⁹⁶ but a product also of Judaism. The reasons are purely theological and predate the ascent of Catholicism: the Jewish faith was too sectarian, the argument goes, its monotheism too exclusivist and supremacist vis-à-vis the polytheisms of the ancient world.⁹⁷ Furthermore, while the regimes of Josef Stalin and Mao Zedong were not religious in a narrow sense, 'the most monstrous crimes against humanity have invariably been inspired by unjustified belief.'⁹⁸

In this vein, religion continues to be the root of contemporary violence.⁹⁹ He asserts that as long as religion exists and is prominent, religious violence will also be – but with contemporary military technology.¹⁰⁰ Given that, in addition to their inherent antagonisms, most people’s beliefs in an afterlife subtract the deterrence of death, a nuclear war between India and Pakistan seems ‘almost inevitable’.¹⁰¹ Worse even, the fact that individuals, groups, and ‘cultures’ now have modern weapons makes them a mortal threat to the survival of humanity.¹⁰²

In sum, evidence-based and therefore factually ‘true’ beliefs lead to morally good actions, while unjustified and therefore epistemologically ‘wrong’ ones do not.¹⁰³ Accordingly, science and reason lead to good behaviour, while faith leads to bad behaviour. Furthermore, through science as objective arbiter, moral questions have objectively right and wrong answers.

In his last chapter, Harris introduces spirituality¹⁰⁴ as a third realm of contestation in addition to epistemology and ethics. He holds that because spiritual experiences *as experiences* relate to empirical states of the brain, they can be studied by science as well.¹⁰⁵ Since spirituality need not be anything beyond an experimental way of experiencing the world, there are no epistemological commitments beyond subjective descriptions of subjective realities.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, one can have *scientific* experiments in spirituality.¹⁰⁷ Hence, neither is at odds with reason or science. In fact, science and spirituality are as compatible as science and ethics.¹⁰⁸

The spiritual component is relevant for the matter at hand because of its interaction with the aetiological one. Arguing that the concept of ‘self’ as being a discrete entity may be constructed and not neurologically determined,¹⁰⁹ he suggests that spiritual practice can lead the way to transcend the ‘feelings of separateness’ between persons that lies at the heart of ‘almost every problem we have’.¹¹⁰ Here, again, religious faith is the greatest obstacle, not only to ‘a truly empirical approach’,¹¹¹ but also by monopolising mystic spirituality and, in the case of Islam, prohibiting and persecuting it.¹¹²

It follows, then, that faith is not only inadequate for the twenty-first century, but also a failure on all three accounts: in terms of the propositions that flow from it (epistemology); in terms of the suicidal and genocidal behaviour these propositions warrant (aetiology); and in terms of the fulfilling and unifying experiences it withholds (spirituality).

Concomitantly, Atheism, or as he calls it, *the end of faith*,¹¹³ is the panacea: its methods produce propositions that reflect empirical reality as opposed to unreason; therefore, the Utilitarian ethics tied to and deduced from science are the only ones that can inform the action necessary to avert global catastrophes; its true spirituality will transcend the divisions that keep people antagonised. Only a global *end of faith* can liberate humanity from the bondage of its apocalyptic inclinations descending from the unreason of faith. This programme entails not only the emancipation of non-Western societies by '[facilitating] the emergence of civil societies'¹¹⁴ and establishing a world government for economic, cultural, and moral integration, but also, this liberation requires a complete overhaul of its opponent. This opponent is inherently unable to change and accept evidence,¹¹⁵ since by doing so it would cease to be faith and would instead become reason. Therefore, the 'war between reason and faith',¹¹⁶ is a zero-sum conflict that can only be resolved by the total dissolution of either one of the antagonists.

In fact, defining his programme as 'the end of faith' explicitly denotes both a contentual and a temporal negation of 'faith'.¹¹⁷ The binary opposition thus far elaborated should now be fairly obvious: the doxastic model of action conceives of two possible kinds of belief (true/false); two kinds of actions (destructive/emancipatory); two kinds of values (right/wrong); two kinds of behaviours (moral/immoral); two kinds of outcomes (well-being/suffering); and, most importantly, two possible kinds of outlooks (atheist/faithful).

Orientalism and Epistemic Violence

The Positional Superiority of the White-Man Face

It must be noted, however, that Harris' view is more complex than merely a binary structure. As mentioned previously, the binomial opposition of faith and Reason, Science, or Atheism is roofed by the concept of 'belief' as their common denominator. Since every person holds beliefs, and since beliefs determine behaviour, they determine the entirety of human endeavours. Furthermore, according to the doctrine of Realism,¹¹⁸ all persons inhabit the same 'reality'. The binary structure embedded within the concept of 'belief' is thus transposed onto the entirety of reality – and thereby *imposed* upon the entirety of humans who inhabit it. Persons can be either rational or irrational, faithful or reasonable, violent or beneficent.

This section attempts to demonstrate that this universalist stance reflects a form of epistemic violence. With the concept of the ‘White-Man face’, Deleuze and Guattari advance a definition of European racism, not as an exclusive construction in the narrow sense, ‘by the designation of someone as Other’.¹¹⁹ Instead, they argue, this racism ‘operates by the determination of degrees of deviance in relation to the White-Man face’.¹²⁰ This ‘face’ is thus posited as the normative centre of identity, from which alterity is constructed in terms of scaled difference from that centre. This centre expresses a universalist attitude by extending its categories and values (its beliefs) to encompass everybody else: ‘From the viewpoint of racism, there is no exterior, there are no people on the outside. There are only people who should be like us and whose crime it is not to be. The dividing line is not between inside and outside but rather is internal [...]’¹²¹.

At this point, it is interesting to note that Harris himself acknowledges (albeit in passing) that concepts are mutually dependent on their counter-concepts and that language cannot be escaped conceptually,¹²² and that it therefore constrains thought: ‘There is just no escaping the fact that there is a tight relationship between the words we use, the type of thoughts we can think, and what we can believe to be true about the world.’¹²³ It is equally interesting, then, that he does not consider the implications of this statement for his own thought. Instead, he uses it to argue that concepts must therefore be logically coherent, thereby (re-)asserting the certainty of knowledge, which the approach of science provides.¹²⁴ He goes on to use this certainty to issue the universalist framework that flows from it and that encompasses both the rational atheist and the irrational theist. It follows, then, that this position corresponds to what Deleuze and Guattari were referring to: his universalist stance functions as the normative centre of its own framework.

Precisely because Harris’ ideas are discursively constructed, however, they cannot be positively given, ‘objective facts’. As such, they are ‘endergonic’, in that they require the exogenous input into a signifying system by a signifying and differentiating agent, motivated by his Nietzschean ‘Will’.¹²⁵ According to a classic Foucauldian understanding,¹²⁶ a concept can only be conceived of in a dual operation: it must be defined *in contrast to* its counter-concept(s), and through the simultaneous *devaluation* of its counterconcept(s).¹²⁷ In this context, Said draws attention to what he calls the ‘configurations of power’¹²⁸ of ideas: ideas are always embedded in discourse and therefore are always a product of and permeated by power. Hence, being able to *formulate* these

oppositions requires a certain position of power within discourse. This is what Said termed the ‘positional superiority’¹²⁹ vis-à-vis the object of expression, study, and language. It is by asserting a *superior* position that Harris can conceive of the concepts imposed onto the human universe. As its name suggests, a hierarchy has thus been established between the positional superiority of the normative centre, and what could be termed the positional inferiority of its periphery.

This periphery can consequently be understood to be faith. It must be emphasised that faith is not a *counter*-centre to atheism, but rather is the peripheral *realm*. The religions that find mention in Harris’ book (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism) can be placed somewhere on this spectrum. Importantly, not all religions find themselves at equal distance from the normative centre of Atheism. Christianity and Judaism are discussed amply. Hinduism finds sporadic mention,¹³⁰ and Buddhism is largely absolved from being a religion.¹³¹ Islam, on the other hand, is discussed not only at much greater length than the other faiths, but has also been reserved a special place in terms of how it is depicted and what policies are recommended to deal with the ‘problem’ it poses.¹³² Consequently, Islam plays a particular role in his theoretical model.

Islam in the *End of Faith*

This section will explore the way Islam is set apart in his book. Not only does it receive a particularly long treatment, with an entire chapter dedicated to it (titled ‘The Problem with Islam’); Harris appears to run the gamut of Orientalist and Islamophobic depictions of Islam, Muslims, Arabs, and Middle Easterners – a courtesy he does not extend to the other faiths.¹³³

For Harris, Islam is the faith that is the most antagonistic and intolerant towards other religions: ‘[...] Islam is undeniably a religion of conquest. [...] The tenets of Islam simply do not admit of anything but a temporary sharing of power with the “enemies of God.”’¹³⁴ It is lethally intolerant of its own apostates,¹³⁵ and essentially expansionist: ‘[...] the basic thrust of the doctrine is undeniable: convert, subjugate, or kill unbelievers; kill apostates; and conquer the world.’¹³⁶ Examples of Muslim violence abound throughout the book, to the extent that it would require a separate thesis to list them all and discuss them in proper detail. Since that is beyond the scope, exemplary insights will fulfil our purpose. For Harris, Islam clearly is not only the most

violent faith, but it is also essentially so. The Qur'an at its core is violent¹³⁷ and mandates terrorism.¹³⁸ Anybody who believes 'anything like what the Koran says' will be sympathetic to Osama bin Laden.¹³⁹ In support, he cites an uninterrupted list of verses from the Qur'an in chronological order, covering over five pages of his book, which prescribe violence against non-Muslims and describe their punishment in life and thereafter.¹⁴⁰ In keeping with his doxastic model, the link between the Qur'an and Muslim violence is undeniable – anybody failing to do so 'should probably consult a neurologist'.¹⁴¹

After acknowledging that the history of Western colonialism 'offers us much to atone for',¹⁴² he contends that only the doctrines of Islam provide an explanatory context to 'jihad' and suicide bombing, which is absent from non-Muslim areas.¹⁴³ It follows that all grievances are 'purely theological'.¹⁴⁴

All these aspects stand not only in direct contrast to the atheist normative centre, they also contrast with the other faiths, which are not mentioned to such extent, nor under these categories *in a contemporary context*. While historical faults of European Christianity are discussed at length,¹⁴⁵ and the US American practice of rhetorically invoking a god in politics is mocked,¹⁴⁶ Christianity is hardly treated as an explanatory factor in any of the cases of contemporary politics he mentions, such as the War in Iraq,¹⁴⁷ US collusion with dictatorships,¹⁴⁸ and its refusal to sign international treaties.¹⁴⁹ This is in spite of his citing statistics of how very widespread literalist Christianity is in the United States.¹⁵⁰

In the cases where Harris does hold general faith responsible, such as the war in the Balkans,¹⁵¹ it is notable that he does not go into discussing the 'tenets' of the 'involved faiths' to explain the violence. For example, while he points to Judaism to account for Israeli settlements,¹⁵² neither does he cite violent sections of the Torah to explain Israeli policies, nor does he in fact paint Jews as suicidal-genocidal, bloodthirsty fanatics. Instead, the onus is on the Palestinians, all of whom are Muslims, and who are going through a 'painful history'¹⁵³ – and yet their grievances are 'purely theological'.¹⁵⁴ It would be difficult to imagine Harris applying the same attitude to US Americans, and stating that their grievance for (e.g.) the September 11 Attacks are 'purely theological'.

These double standards are enabled through what Said termed a 'textual attitude'¹⁵⁵ within the Orientalist tradition: The Qur'an and Hadiths cover

everything Muslims can possibly do or think.¹⁵⁶ He discussed the practice of using the Qur'an or other texts to 'read into every facet of contemporary Egyptian or Algerian society'¹⁵⁷ as a *typical* element of Orientalism. Since the texts do not change, Harris' reading extends to their whole 'civilization with an arrested history',¹⁵⁸ making it unavoidable that 'any political, historical, and scholarly account of Muslims must begin and end with the fact that Muslims are Muslims.'¹⁵⁹ Due to the Qur'an, the views and opinions of roughly one-sixth of the world's population can be aptly subsumed under the singular 'the Muslim worldview'.¹⁶⁰

Since Muslims are always discussed in their deviation from and contrast to the West and the atheist normative centre, they have no other identity than the one that sets them apart from the centre. Harris is quite explicit here: 'Despite the occasional influence of Pan-Arabism, the concept of an ethnic or national identity has never taken root in the Muslim world as it has in the West.'¹⁶¹ Even though Middle Eastern dictators may be 'more liberal than the people they oppress',¹⁶² those are nonetheless '*Muslim* tyrants – in Iraq, Syria, Algeria, Iran, Egypt, and elsewhere'.¹⁶³ Said had summarised these essentialisations of the identity of the Other in such contexts as follows: '[...] no matter how deep the specific exception, no matter how much a single Oriental can escape the fences placed around him, he is *first* an Oriental, *second* a human being, and *last* again an Oriental'.¹⁶⁴

Therefore, Muslims only appear as a homogeneous and faceless mass,¹⁶⁵ who do not need to speak for themselves because their religious texts, as narrated by Harris, already speak for them.¹⁶⁶ Consequently, they lose their voices, their histories, their individuality – in other words: their humanity.

While faith in general is contrasted with the *end of faith*, no other religion than Islam is posited as the antagonist to both Atheism and the West. Again, examples abound. The two 'cultures' are explicitly contrasted in favour of the normative centre with statements such as this: 'Can we say that Middle Eastern men who are murderously obsessed with female sexual purity actually love their wives, daughters, and sisters less than American or European men do? Of course we can.'¹⁶⁷ He is also quite explicit about the particular status of Islam vis-à-vis other faiths: 'While Christianity has few living inquisitors today, Islam has many'.¹⁶⁸

In addition to a contentual negation of Islam, the *end of faith* is also defined along a temporal dimension in terms of moral progress. In the same way there

has been moral progress since the New Yorkers of the year 1863 to contemporary New Yorkers,¹⁶⁹ so:

‘not all cultures are at the same stage of moral development. This is a radically impolitic thing to say, of course, but it seems as objectively true as saying that not all societies have equal material resources. We might even conceive of our moral differences in just these terms: not all societies have the same *moral wealth*.’¹⁷⁰

Muslims are portrayed as being fixed in the fourteenth century,¹⁷¹ whose ‘moral and political development [...] lags behind our own.’¹⁷² These devaluating oppositions make his depictions a clear product of ‘a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between “the Orient” and (most of the time) “the Occident.”’¹⁷³ Harris is quite explicit about this distinction, making sure to leave no doubt about the antagonism between ‘us’ and ‘the Muslim world’:

‘We are at war with Islam. It may not serve our immediate foreign policy objectives for our political leaders to openly acknowledge this fact, but it is unambiguously so. It is not merely that we are at war with an otherwise peaceful religion that has been “hijacked” by extremists. We are at war with precisely the vision of life that is prescribed to all Muslims in the Koran, and further elaborated in the literature of the hadith [...].’¹⁷⁴

Notably, ‘we’ are not at war with Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, or Buddhism.¹⁷⁵ Clearly, the zero-sum ‘war between reason and faith’¹⁷⁶ discussed above is one between the West and Islam:¹⁷⁷

‘While it would be comforting to believe that our dialogue with the Muslim world has, as one of its possible outcomes, a future of mutual tolerance, nothing guarantees this result – least of all the tenets of Islam. Given the constraints of Muslim orthodoxy, given the penalties within Islam for a radical (and reasonable) adaptation to modernity, I think it is clear that Islam must find some way to revise itself, peacefully or otherwise. What this will mean is not at all obvious. What is obvious, however, is that the West must either win the argument or win the war. All else will be bondage.’¹⁷⁸

Until that ‘war’ is won, ‘[w]e will continue to spill blood in what is, at bottom, a war of ideas.’¹⁷⁹

Analytical Implications: Integrating Orientalist Exclusion with Universalist Inclusion

It follows that the ‘Other’ of New Atheism is not general ‘faith’, as Islam is defined through an even more radical alterity to atheism than is faith. While faith, both as a general category as well as in its Christian, Jewish and Hindu

manifestations is irrational and leads to intergroup conflict, Islam is the epitome of all the problems with faith and more. Therefore, Islam is not merely a deviation from the Atheist centre; it is more than that. Yet, in keeping with Deleuze and Guattari's observation, it is also not the excluded 'Other' in the sense of a total abyss, a categorical break between Atheism and Islam.

Instead, Islam is subsumed under the category of faith and thus shares a common denominator with the other religions. This already implies gradation and placement within the peripheral realm, and not outside. But even more importantly, through the universal(ised) category of belief, which is superordinate to faith, Islam is included in the overall system of which Atheism is both a part and to which it is the normative centre. It is precisely this inclusion that allows Harris to construct the radical alterity of Islam *in deviation* to the Atheist normative centre. In fact, whenever Islam is discussed in *The End of Faith*, the contrast to Atheism is not only the most explicit, but is framed in terms of an opposition to the *West*. It becomes clear then that Atheism is in fact identified with the White-Man face, and that both are defined in radical opposition to Islam.

It is at this point that Deleuze and Guattari's inclusive definition of racism can be reconciled with Said's dichotomous concept of Orientalism. As argued before, Atheism constitutes the normative centre. Faith is defined in deviation from it, and constitutes the peripheral realm structured around the centre. Its Christian, Jewish and Hindu manifestations¹⁸⁰ can be understood to occupy their respective spaces somewhere on the continuum, in varying degrees of distance to the centre. Islam, however, has a special function. From what has been argued above, Islam can be understood to form an inferior counter-centre to Atheism, but within the realm of faith. As a faith, it is thus an inferior *deviation* from Atheism, while at the same time being the epitome of its *antagonism* to Atheism. In sum, Islam is the counter-centre *in* the periphery, *of* the periphery. In this sense, it is both included in Deleuze's and Guattari's sense, *and* excluded in Said's sense.

Consequently, the *end of faith* (Atheism) is differential in that it relies for its definition on the exclusion of its Muslim 'Other'. Simultaneously, this definition-through-exclusion must be accompanied by the devaluation of the excluded.¹⁸¹ This devaluation can only occur if the excluded finds itself in the same universe of meaning – to ensure commensurability, i.e. to guarantee that the categories used for excluding can be at all applied to the excluded.

This is in fact secured through the inclusive effect of ‘belief’ as a universal category.

One last clarification to make pertains to the labels ‘Islam’ as opposed to ‘Muslim’. As shown before, Islam manifests as Muslims; the ‘Other’ of *the end of faith* is not merely the metaphysical system anchored in texts, it is the very people as a (bio)political class.

Conclusion

The literature on Orientalism and Islamophobia to date makes no mention of New Atheism. Conversely, the emerging body of scholarly works on New Atheism does not yet include an analysis of its racism in general, nor of its view of Islam in particular.¹⁸² The absence of scholarly engagement with this movement and its intellectual coordinates is concerning, particularly in view of the fact that New Atheism enjoys increasing popularity, with most of its supporters either acquiescing or openly endorsing both its premises and its conclusions.¹⁸³ In fact, *The End of Faith* received much critical acclaim not only from leading newspapers in the US and UK, but also from influential intellectuals, including moral philosophers. Furthermore, the reactions to events such as the Charlie Hebdo attack in January 2015 and, more recently, the Paris attack in November 2015 once again highlight that there are significant overlaps not only between New Atheism and the rising parties and movements of the right wing, but also important links to liberal mainstream European discourse. This clearly warrants that the general phenomenon of New Atheism, in spite of its intellectual crudity,¹⁸⁴ be taken more seriously by scholars.

“Cultural Muslims” and their place in the discourse on Islamic identity in the United Kingdom

KATARZYNA W. SIDLO

Abstract

Two opposite trends in religiosity or, more broadly, spirituality, have been gaining in strength lately. On the one hand, increased levels of piousness and devotion are being observed. On the other, the number of people identifying themselves as “non-believers” or “secular” is on the rise. This paper is an attempt to characterize a segment of society that fits into the latter group, albeit in a heterodox way: namely “cultural Muslims,” who break the traditional dichotomy between Muslims (“us”) and not-Muslims (“them”), introducing the concept of a gradual identity. My analysis will aim to determine both who cultural Muslims are and how they are perceived by both religious Muslims and disaffiliates from Islam, and will attempt to evaluate their place in the public discourse on religion and in British society in general.

Introduction

Muslims in the United Kingdom embrace numerous identities—national, ethnic, religious, or sectarian—separately or in various configurations¹⁸⁵. Indeed, the very term “Muslim” can be understood quite differently by different actors. As noted by Liza Hopkins and Cameron McAuliffe¹⁸⁶, a continuum of identities constructed with respect to Islam—from its complete embrace (fundamentalist Muslim) to its complete rejection (ex-Muslim)—exists. In this paper I shall, however, deal exclusively with one of these identities, namely “cultural Muslims,” in an attempt to examine how those who self-identify as such define and justify this label, and how if at all it is modified in public discourse.

My research involved analysis of two major online forums: the Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain (CEMB), composed of 4496 mostly former Muslims, and Ummah.com, a U.K.-based forum with over 97,000 mainly religious members. In order to explore the reception of cultural Muslims by the wider public, I also conducted a search of the phrase “cultural(ly) Muslim(s)”¹⁸⁷ in the major British “quality” and “popular” newspapers. As a detailed, broad-spectrum analysis of the topic in question was unfortunately beyond the scope

of this paper, I have here focused on case studies that serve to introduce the phenomenon rather than exhaustively analysing it. That said, this study will hopefully serve as a constructive and informative presentation of the topic.

Definitions and Methodology

The phenomenon of cultural Muslims has only minimally captured the attention of academics¹⁸⁸ and news outlets. In public discourse “Muslims” are usually understood as individuals who were born into a family of Muslim origin, in a Muslim-dominated environment, with a traditionally Muslim name and/or identifying themselves as part of the Muslim tradition and heritage¹⁸⁹. In other words, they are understood as what Åke Sander et al. dubbed “ethnic Muslims”¹⁹⁰. Those same authors characterized a “cultural Muslim” as “anyone who is socialized into, and has to some extent internalized, the Muslim cultural tradition – the Muslim ‘cognitive universe’ (Berger & Luckmann’s phrase) – and who has a Muslim cultural competence.”¹⁹¹ Under certain circumstances, like in Soviet and Post-Soviet Central Asia or the former Yugoslavia, the term “cultural Muslim” (or sometimes “ethnic Muslim”) was used by Muslims themselves to “refer to the personalization of their religion, adherence to specific rites and the separateness they felt”¹⁹² from people of other faiths. A somewhat narrower interpretation was given by Hopkins and McAuliffe¹⁹³, Herbert J. Gans¹⁹⁴, Adis Duderija¹⁹⁵, and Göran Larsson¹⁹⁶, all of whom attach to it the condition that the person in question does not actively participate in religious life. In the words of the latter, cultural Muslims are

individuals who have a Muslim cultural background but do not practice Islam on a regular basis. Resembling most Christians in Europe (at least in Sweden) they pay homage to religious (Islamic) norms out of habit, for identity purposes or on specific occasions. For example, it is important to follow religious rites and customs during Ramadan, or in connection with life-cycle rituals, such as birth celebrations, marriages and funerals, but not during the rest of the year. Hence, for ‘cultural Muslims’ religion is ‘no longer an all-encompassing system of meaning, but rather a social subsystem alongside many other subsystems, like the economy, politics, education and the family.’¹⁹⁷

Yet other authors like Michael Appleton¹⁹⁸, Robert Lambert¹⁹⁹, Abdullah Saeed and Hassan Saeed²⁰⁰, and Ruth Mas²⁰¹, focusing on various topics not necessarily germane to the issue of cultural Islam per se, use the term interchangeably with “secular Muslim” without exploring its precise meaning.

Self-identification

It is worthwhile to compare these scholarly definitions with those offered by individuals who themselves self-identify as cultural Muslims. After a careful analysis of the definitions posted on the Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain (CEMB) and Ummah.com forums, I identified two understandings of the term:

- 1) unobservant Muslims who do not necessarily reject the existence of God (in which case the term “cultural Muslim” tends to be used interchangeably with the labels “secular” or “nominal Muslims”);
- 2) agnostic/atheist individuals who still—for a variety of reasons—label themselves as Muslims.

The first definition is somewhat less problematic; in both Europe and the U.S. a considerable percentage of Muslims evince a low degree of religious commitment²⁰². In the words of one member of the CEMB forum: “I would consider cultural Muslims to be the irreligious sort who don’t care much about practicing Islam but who also don’t hold particularly strong views against it either.”²⁰³ This label is also one that is embraced by some public figures drawing on their Muslim background. In a study by Eren Tatari²⁰⁴, six out of eleven city councillors of Muslim origin across London’s boroughs described themselves as non-religious, with Islam being their cultural identity; elsewhere Tatari quotes Kishwer Falkner, Baroness Falkner of Margravine serving in the House of Lords: “I am not a particularly practicing Muslim... I am a cultural Muslim... it changed over time...”²⁰⁵

The second definition, involving the lack of belief in God or questioning God’s existence, is much more controversial. Although numerous scholars have attempted to distinguish between apostasy and doctrinal heresy (one of the most prominent being Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Al-Ghazālī in his *Fayṣal al-tafriqa bayn al-islām wa-l-zandaqa* (“The distinction between Islam and zandaqa/unbelief”)), there is no agreement between Muslim scholars on exactly what constitutes apostasy²⁰⁶. Generally, however, it is accepted that being a Muslim in the broadest theological terms means, at the very least, believing that “[t]here is no god but God, [and] Muhammad is the messenger of God.” Consequently, “agnostic/atheist” and “Muslim” would necessarily be mutually exclusive labels.

Those who self-identify simultaneously as cultural Muslims and atheists or agnostics explain their views in numerous ways. Saif Rahman, the founder of Humanists and Cultural Muslims Association, admitted: “despite my busy life as an ex-Muslim activist I’m growing less convinced that ‘ex-Muslim’ is always a useful description. It can come across as confrontational and overly simplistic, and has the tendency to close down debate before it starts.”²⁰⁷ Others quote less pragmatic reasons; Alom Shaha, the author of *The Young Atheists’ Handbook*, argued in an interview for BBC 4’s “Islam without God” broadcast that “‘Muslim’ is much more an inherited identity label than a statement of religious belief.”²⁰⁸ An anonymous forum user opined similarly: “I am not ethnically a Muslim (because there is no such thing) but I was born into it which makes me a cultural Muslim. That means I am a Muslim even if I don’t believe in the doctrine and even if *takfiris* say I’m not.”²⁰⁹ From this particular point of view, then, one becomes Muslim “by birth,” presumably if at least one of the parents—the father, since Muslim women cannot marry men of other faiths—follows Islam.

This reasoning notwithstanding, the label of “cultural Muslim,” especially as it is understood in the latter of the ways presented above, is controversial for devout and former Muslims alike. This can be seen in the reactions of both groups to a forum post on being an “agnostic Muslim” published by Hassan Radwan, an active member of the Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain, posted on both the CEMB forum and Ummah.com within a short span of time. In the post, Radwan admits:

... there is so much in Islam that I still love and is good and that is very much a part of who I am and I feel more comfortable identifying as a Muslim. Yet at the same time there are things I find unable to believe in. . . . Identifying as a Muslim is also a pragmatic choice as it makes life easier amongst my Muslim family and friends. But it is also because Islam has without doubt been a major influence on me for half a century.²¹⁰

The comments on CEMB have been rather understanding, if lukewarm, perhaps to some extent due to the fact that all those involved in the debate already knew each other from the forum. Only one person explicitly expressed negative emotions and accused the author of hypocrisy and conformism. Other comments were either neutral or supportive (“People should be able to call themselves whatever they like.”²¹¹). Nevertheless, no one expressly applauded or approved the view, which could confirm the hypothesis that personal sympathies influenced the replies.

Reactions on Ummah.com were significantly less sympathetic, as was

expected from the more conservative website. One in every eight replies was highly critical of the “agnostic Muslim” label, mostly based on the premise that belief in God is indispensable to being a Muslim (“Islam is based on certainty and agnosticism is the opposite of that.”²¹²). Although the most neutral voices offered help and guidance in becoming “fully Muslim,” in general the forum members were disapproving of, if not appalled at, the idea of “agnostic” or “cultural” Islam.

Elsewhere, other common criticisms referred to the fact that Muslims are ethnically, and therefore culturally, diverse, and that as a result “[t]here is no ‘Muslim culture’ – there are different cultures To think there is one unifying ‘cultural Muslim’ identity is a misguided project at best,” in one user’s view²¹³. Another user underlined the great diversity of Muslims’ backgrounds in terms of their countries of origin: “Personally I don’t feel comfortable with the term, ‘Cultural Muslim’ – as which culture is that? My culture is partly Egyptian and partly English. My Pakistani friend who calls himself a ‘Cultural Muslim’ has a culture based around Muslim culture in South East Asia.”²¹⁴ In the words of yet another, “it is unnecessary to call yourself a cultural Muslim simply because you still enjoy or participate in things that muslims (sic) enjoy or participate in. I celebrate Halloween, but I am not a ‘cultural Celtic.’ I plan on drinking tequila and eating chimmy chongas tonight for cinco de mayo, but I am not a ‘cultural Mexican’”²¹⁵ (although in the same place another person presented an entirely different point of view by stating “I’m a cultural Muslim that same way I would consider many people to be cultural Sikh/Hindu/Christian. In the same way that I would be a cultural Canadian just because I like Hockey.”²¹⁶).

Place in Public Discourse

In order to analyse the understanding of cultural Muslims by the wider public, a mass media search was conducted. The way in which Muslims are portrayed in the media has received a fair share of attention from scholars, such as Kevin Dunn²¹⁷ and Shahran Akbarzadeh and Bianca Smith²¹⁸ in Australia and John E. Richardson²¹⁹, Elizabeth Poole²²⁰, Paul Baker, Costas Gabrielatos and Tony McEnergy²²¹, and Amir Saeed²²² (among others) in Great Britain; unlike in these studies, my intention was not to examine the media representations of Muslims in general, but rather to explore whether any attention has been given to cultural Muslims at all, and if yes, to determine the kind and quality of that attention.

To that end, four major British “quality press” titles and two so-called “popular press” titles were analysed, covering the period between 19 April 2005 and 19 April 2015. (The former publications included two right-leaning papers²²³ (the *Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*) and two left-leaning ones (the *Guardian* and the *Independent*), while the latter titles included the right-leaning *Daily Mail* and the left-leaning *Daily Mirror*. All papers’ corresponding Sunday editions were also used.) Analysis was conducted via use of the Sketch engine, Nexis U.K., Google searches, and advanced searches on each of the news outlets. The key words used for the search were “cultural(ly) Muslim(s),” “agnostic Muslim(s),” “atheist Muslim(s),” and, for purposes of comparison, “secular Muslim(s)” (due to the fact that this term tends to be used interchangeably with “cultural Muslim(s)”). Additionally, a general online search using the above mentioned terms was conducted.

Despite the large span of time searched and the fact that both news articles and commentaries (such as letters from the readers, editorials, and opinion essays) were included, the search yielded merely eight results (see Table 1). Additionally, a search for words corresponding to the second identified meaning of “cultural” in the identity marker under question (namely “atheist Muslim(s)” and “agnostic Muslim(s)”) was conducted, but this proved to be even less fruitful. Finally, “secular Muslim(s),” a collocation many times used synonymously for “cultural Muslims” and corresponding with the former of the identified meanings, was searched for. All results were analysed following the critical discourse analysis approach. The vast majority of the mentions of cultural Muslims were found in left-leaning newspapers, with the one in the *Daily Mirror* appearing within a quote from Richard Dawkins heavily criticizing all Muslims regardless of their degree of devoutness. The remaining six pieces were published by the *Guardian* and the *Independent*. In seven cases, the phrase “cultural Muslims” was mentioned in passing amidst discussion of another subject, with one piece—on the complicated and multi-dimensional identity of British Muslims—coming closest to the cultural Muslims case in arguing that “Muslims must be free to choose how they practice their religion or even just to be ‘cultural’ Muslims.”²²⁴ Only once, in a piece entitled “Time for cultural Muslims to come out,”²²⁵ were cultural Muslims the main focus of the story. The piece was penned by an author of Muslim background, who began by pointedly asking: “You might not be halal, or go to mosque very often. Can you still call yourself a Muslim?” The article generated substantial debate in the comments section, with most critical commentators voicing the same reservations found in the Ummah.com

forum: “The idea of being culturally a muslim (sic) doesn’t work in my opinion as Islam is not culturally homogeneous,”²²⁶ while others—usually those self-identifying as cultural Muslims (or “cultural Christians”)—supported the idea.

Interestingly, atheist and agnostic Muslims also received some, if very limited, exposure in the media. As those labels are far more controversial than that of “cultural Muslim” (since “cultural” tends to be treated as synonymous with “secular”), in the majority of cases they were used in passing while describing someone. (Two such comments related to Barack Obama.) Only one article was expressly dedicated to the issue of being both a non-believer and a Muslim, with its author stating: “it is still possible to be an atheist without necessarily rejecting a Muslim cultural identity and heritage.”²²⁷

The issue of cultural Muslims was not brought up often enough to identify any particular pattern: neither concerning dates of publication, nor variety of the contexts within which the label “cultural Muslim” appeared, nor presentation style. The one thing that most of the above mentioned articles had in common is that they were written by individuals of Muslim origin, for whom the label “cultural Muslim” was a means of self-identification: an identity to be claimed for oneself, not a classification to be imposed upon others. This, as well as the very low frequency of the term’s use in British media, stands in stark contrast to the way labels such as “devout,” “pious,” or even “fanatic” and “radical” were used. According to Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery²²⁸, who examined the trends governing the British media’s use of words relating to the strength of Muslims’ belief, words indicating strong religious dedication (“devout,” “strict,” “orthodox,” “committed,” “pious,” “observant,” “faithful”) appeared almost three times more often than those relating to a moderate belief (“moderate,” “secular,” “liberal,” “progressive”), while those indicating extreme belief (“extremist,” “fanatic,” “fundamentalist,” “militant,” “radical,” “separatist,” “hardliner,” “firebrand”) appeared a staggering seven and a half times more often. Although “cultural” was not one of the terms included in the search, these statistics serve as an informative background for the results of this study.

Discussion

The emergence of “cultural Muslim” as an identity label introduces a new way of looking at how individuals build their identity in relation to Islam. Thus

far, individuals have been assumed to follow one of two binary choices: to either embrace Islam (“I am a Muslim”) or to build their identity on the rejection of Islam (“I am ex-Muslim/former Muslim”). Cultural Muslims are thus particularly interesting in that they do not easily fit into either of these categories.

For the general public, however, this phenomenon is not as controversial and is certainly less interesting than the topics of religious extremism or strong anti-religious sentiment. This may explain why so little attention has been paid to this issue. Cultural Muslim voices are barely visible in the media and in public debate, and to my knowledge only one public opinion survey—conducted by the Islamic Human Rights Commission, interestingly—has treated cultural Muslims as a separate group (though unfortunately without giving any definition or explanation of how they differ from “secular Muslims,” another of the available identity options)²²⁹. Taking into consideration their position somewhat at one end of the “Muslim spectrum,” close to the growing “secular Muslims” label, one expects that more institutions will follow suit.

The criticism aimed at cultural Muslims, and especially at those who simultaneously self-identify as atheist or agnostic, is mostly based on the notion that belief in God is the core aspect of Muslimhood, making the “atheist/agnostic Muslim” label a contradiction in terms. Another popular critique challenges the notion that “Muslim culture” exists at all, especially in the United Kingdom, where Muslims come from multiple ethnic backgrounds (although admittedly more than half are South Asian in origin: 38 percent are Pakistani and 15 percent are Bangladeshi)²³⁰. Reservations such as these channel uncertainties surrounding the very concept of identities built around Islam: who actually is “a Muslim,” and—perhaps even more importantly—who decides who can call himself a Muslim. This question does not relate exclusively to cultural Muslims or “atheist Muslims,” who might feel that they are being denied the right to self-identify in this way; certain sects like Alawites (‘Alawīyyah) or Ahmadiyya (al-Jamā’ah al-Islāmiyyah al-Aḥmadiyyah) are not considered to be followers of Islam by many “mainstream” Muslims. Fundamentalist Sunnis and Shi’as have long exchanged mutual accusations of heresy, with entire governments (such as Jordan’s²³¹) and countries (such as Iran) being labeled as *murtaddīn* (apostates). More severe consequences are borne by individuals who are accused of betraying or abandoning Islam. The general public will have heard about Nasr Abu Zaid or Salman Rushdie,

but scores of less famous people face dire consequences of being declared apostates, or even as “not good enough” Muslims.

Unlike in the Catholic Church, where one officially remains a member until submitting a signed act of apostasy in the presence of two witnesses (or unless excommunication occurs), Islam does not have one formal governing body and is not hierarchical. As a consequence, there is no institution that can rule on one’s religious affiliation. Some states take such matters into their own hands; Egypt and Jordan place individuals’ official religious information on legal documents such as birth certificates and identity cards. However, as has been noted, being recognized as a Muslim in Iran does not necessarily mean being treated as one in, for example, Iraq, and in certain cases even in one’s own country accusations of apostasy may be brought even against those self-identifying as Muslims²³².

Along these lines, cultural Muslims, especially those considering themselves simultaneously agnostic or atheist, possibly face numerous problems should their identity become public. The concept of identity is still very much perceived in black and white terms, with individuals who do not easily belong on one end of the spectrum (in this case, “Muslim” vs. “non-Muslim”) exposed to critique from both sides. The issue of gradual or fluid identity is certainly not a well-discussed idea, especially in relation to Islam.

As this study was designed to serve as an introduction to the under-researched topic in question, it makes no pretence at being an exhaustive analysis of the “cultural Muslims” phenomenon. Numerous limitations to this study exist, with the small number of case studies available being the most serious. Future research could benefit from extending the territorial scope of analysis beyond the U.K., both in terms of media outlets and online forums examined. Introduction of the “cultural Muslim” option to various surveys’ religiosity spectra would enable more quantitative research to be conducted, although a precise definition would have to be reached beforehand. Regardless of the direction in which the study of cultural Muslims might proceed, one hopes that analysis of the phenomenon will provide valuable input into the broader study of issues of identity among British Muslims.

Table 1 *Frequencies of chosen belief terms used to describe Muslims, 2005-2015*

	cultural(ly) Muslim(s)	atheist Muslim(s)	agnostic Muslim(s)	secular Muslim(s)
<i>The Times</i>	0	0	0	2
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	0	0	1	12
<i>The Guardian</i>	5	4	1	35
<i>The Independent</i>	2	1	1	20
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>Daily Mail</i>	1	1	0	8
Total	8	6	3	77 ²³³

Source : own research.

Agency and the Public Sphere

Negotiating with Journalists: Islamic Institutions and Media Scrutiny

CHRISTOPHER MOSES

Abstract

This article focuses on journalist-source interactions to explore an ethnographic case study of an Islamic centre in London during a period of media scrutiny. The account constitutes part of a doctoral research project analysing Islamic institutions in London through the lenses of civil society and the public sphere, although is here treated largely in isolation. Drawing on my ethnographic findings and interpretive tools from the sociology of media, this article introduces the centre and its everyday life and offers an outline of the period of scrutiny, before addressing four specific themes pertaining to the media and the public sphere: the centre as a non-unitary public sphere actor, the significance of public relations resources, the role of centre representatives as journalistic sources, and the politics of meaning in debates over centre responsibility. Through these discussions, it contributes to academic accounts of British Muslims in relation to the media, framings of Muslim agency, strategies and capabilities of ill-resourced media sources, interactions between the media and religious actors, and above all, our understanding of how representatives of Islamic institutions in Muslim-minority contexts engage with the public sphere.

‘News is a product of transactions between journalists and sources.’²³⁴

What can an episode of media scrutiny tell us about contemporary Islamic institutions in Muslim-minority contexts, and their engagement with the public sphere? This article aims to address these questions by offering an ethnographic case study of an Islamic centre in London. In the summer and autumn of 2014, this centre became the object of media scrutiny, as a series of local Muslims had gone to fight, and sometimes die, for the self-declared Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (hereafter: IS), or had sought to assist IS efforts through other means such as financial support. Against the backdrop of a ‘moral panic’ about IS, a number of journalists came to enquire about the centre’s role in this episode and its relationships with these individuals. Their

‘transactions’ with centre representatives, and the contexts of these transactions, form the substance of this article.

The exposition and analysis contributes to a series of academic and popular debates. First, we can situate it within academic studies of British Muslims in relation to the media, which have predominantly focused on the representation of Muslims.²³⁵ Second, the study engages with two opposing ideological interpretations of Muslims’ agency. The first overdetermines Muslim agency, and frames Muslims, and by extension, Islamic institutions, as perpetual objects of suspicion. Thus, when Muslims guilty of criminality are linked to an Islamic institution, it too becomes part of a narrative of Muslim crime and/or terror, regardless of the meaningfulness of the link. The second interpretation underdetermines Muslim agency, and frames Muslims as perpetual victims. According to this logic, journalistic coverage of Muslims is destined to present them in a negative light, and Muslims are incapable of being anything other than media objects, unable to shape this coverage. Third, the analysis draws on concepts within the sociology of media to explore the institution’s capabilities and reputational standing, and consequently engages with understandings of journalist-source interactions. And finally, we can place the episode in the context of complex interactions between representatives of religious organisations and journalists, and thus, religious actors’ participation in the public sphere.²³⁶

The study emerges from my doctoral fieldwork, which explores Islamic institutions through the lenses of civil society and the public sphere. I observed the issues under discussion while I was undertaking ethnographic research as a volunteer at this institution, and consequently the article mainly draws on my experiences of the centre and my colleagues’ accounts of their interactions with journalists, as well as the reportage that was published and broadcast. As should be obvious, the bounded nature of this fieldwork defines, to some extent, what this article can adequately discuss. For instance, as I was not embedded with the various journalists chasing stories about the individuals concerned, the data does not facilitate extensive theorisation about why these media representatives acted in particular ways. However, acknowledging my positionality as an institutional insider, I undertook informal interviews with journalists unconnected to the episode to help me, together with the relevant literature, place the interactions, strategies and accounts within the context of news reporting culture. I have chosen to keep the institution anonymous.

Introducing an Islamic Centre

In a review of the literature on mosques in Western Europe, Marcel Maussen writes, ‘objects such as mosque buildings... do not have a self-evident, clear and constant meaning’. And yet, he suggests, ‘researchers have played a key role in providing interpretations and vocabularies to talk and think about Islam and mosques in Western Europe,’ producing a series of what he calls ‘distinctive sets of meaning’ as a way of understanding them. In turn, these sets of meaning have consequences for ‘the development of research questions and scientific knowledge, and for public and policy discourses about mosques and about Islam in Western Europe.’ Academics, he concludes, should ‘try to reflect critically upon their role in these processes of the production of meaning.’²³⁷

This article also presents a ‘distinctive set of meaning’ in relation to an Islamic centre, specifically in the form of a public sphere actor. Themes of power, reputation, recognition and responsibility are prevalent, as centre representatives negotiate with journalists about how best to account for the centre’s connections to the aforementioned local Muslims. But, following Maussen’s line, as well as the issue that this episode forms one thread of my ethnographic findings, it would be remiss not to establish some of the contexts in which this ‘set of meaning’ exists. Indeed, as my wider ethnographic research would suggest, there are many other ways of framing the institution, such as in relation to the history of its surrounding area, its participation in narratives of urban renewal, Islamic architecture in Britain, its ethnic and sub-ethnic complexity, everyday experiences of office work, internal institutional power struggles, civil society activism, intra-Islamic positioning, or relationships between religion and the state. Thus, this article aims to offer an appreciation of the wider institutional contexts, as well as a series of insights into some of the interactions that constitute part of an Islamic centre’s existence as a public sphere actor.

First, there is the ‘everyday’ life of the institution.²³⁸ The centre serves a religiously and ethnically diverse user community of several thousand, and its general activities include daily prayers, as well as Arabic classes, Islamic lectures and courses, educational and leisure activities serving children and the elderly, private celebrations, interfaith work, and collaboration with the local authorities to host programmes such as health services, training for employment, and English classes. As well as the media, its public sphere interlocutors include worshippers and other centre users, those running

partner projects on the premises, partner organisations such as secular charities and Islamic humanitarian organisations, several teams within the local Borough Council, benevolent donors and potential donors, and a wider network of interested Muslim individuals and organisations.

Second, when analysing the individuals' criminality, I would argue that we need to recognise both dimensions of what Philippe Bourgois, in the context of a discussion about crime, power and marginalisation, calls 'the theoretical debate over structure versus agency, that is, the relationship between individual responsibility and social structural constraints'.²³⁹ Thus, we have a broader understanding of these individuals' lives beyond their IS-related criminal culpability if we acknowledge their socio-economic and ethnic standing, particular social and religious networks, family background, educational history, trajectory of employment, and participation in gang culture. In relation to the centre, some occasionally worshipped in its mosque, others had done so in the past, and others were Muslims living in the local area but did not use the centre. The links, however, stop there. No one representing the centre was involved, and no events supporting IS-related activities were held on its premises, which, due to the centre's bureaucratic processes that can sometimes be a source of frustration for the centre user group, are a carefully controlled space. Evaluating these factors together, I would argue that this centre is best understood as one of the Islamically identifiable nodes within these individuals' lives, rather than a focal point for ideological influence in support of IS.

Third, this episode of media scrutiny in relation to IS is not unique. To date, there have been several examples of extensive media interest in instances of individual or small groups of Muslims departing the UK for IS. Case studies would also be possible of, for example, Birmingham, Bradford, Cardiff, Dewsbury, and Portsmouth. Together, these episodes of media scrutiny have contributed to what we might call a 'moral panic' about IS, which itself takes place against a background of widespread, if not all-encompassing, media hostility towards Muslims and Islam.²⁴⁰

And fourth, the episode is not the only time that the centre has been subject to media interest. Past coverage includes the building and opening of the centre, its pluralistic aims as a community centre, Ministerial visits, public perceptions of Islam, the role of faith in the voluntary sector, arrests of local Muslims on charges of terrorism, its education work, hosting of humanitarian relief events, and fundraising partnership with a local synagogue. It is also

important to point out that not all media interest results in published or broadcast coverage. For example, during my fieldwork a journalist from a tabloid newspaper approached the centre following the sending of a letter by the Communities Secretary to all mosques in Britain. He asked, as he presumably did of other Islamic institutions, a series of questions that touched on the themes of national pride, intra-Muslim responsibility over extremism, and state-Muslim relations. Colleagues considered that his questions were loaded, and, in view of his newspaper affiliation, any subsequent journalistic analysis would be simplistic. Consequently, they chose not to engage, and no coverage resulted of the centre.

Outlining a Period of Scrutiny

By the phrase ‘media scrutiny’, I refer in this instance to a series of occasions that involved significant, if varied, media interest in the centre over the course of a few months. During this period, the intensity of media interest towards the centre depended on the progress of legal processes at the courts and the gradual emergence of information from abroad, as well as the points at which journalists chose to engage with these events. At its height, some days involved colleagues spending several hours negotiating media interest or working through media-related matters internally, while others entailed no media engagement. And, like other experiences of media interest, coverage did not always result, or did not always include the centre. Journalists might, for example, approach the individuals through other analytical paradigms, such as education, crime, social deprivation, social media or gender.

The material that did appear pertaining to the centre included a TV news report filmed outside it, interviews with a local newspaper, a leading European newspaper and a national news programme, various explicit mentions or allusions in UK broadsheet and tabloid news articles, as well as two Anglophone news websites based outside of the UK, and two polemical pieces on a conservative news and opinion website. There was a wide range of explicit or implicit judgements on the place of the centre in proceedings, from treating it as the key uniting factor for young Muslims who go to fight for IS, to one of a number of background details in these individuals’ lives.

In addition to their engagement with the media, centre representatives’ actions included issuing public condemnations of IS, such as through sermons or website press releases, undertaking soft measures with the centre user group

such as classes for parents about extremist recruitment, and intensifying their work with local and central government authorities. For example, they hosted an event that featured speakers from the police, FCO and Home Office as well as a counter-terrorism specialist, to talk through issues with members of the local community. The goals of all these activities were, as one might expect, to dissuade more individuals from getting involved. Incidentally, the episode did not affect the centre's relations with local Borough Council representatives, who remained confident in the centre's work, would draw a distinction between the institution and the problematic segments of its user group, and were more interested in issues such as efficient use of funding, good governance, and how much of the centre's work focused on Borough residents.

Colleagues' reactions to the media interest included a genuine interest in engagement, a relaxed attitude towards and/or understanding of media interest in IS-related stories, bemusement at the focus on the centre, disappointment at how the centre or their words were represented, resignation over the ongoing interest, and, on a couple of times, exhaustion. The variation within these reactions relates to a range of issues, such as the particular individual, the style of journalistic approach, the content published or broadcast, and the point in time during this period of scrutiny. As a general comment, I felt that colleagues often thought that certain journalists misrecognised what they understand the role(s) of the centre, and those running the centre, to be. For example, it would seem straightforward to colleagues, but not necessarily journalists, that staff would not know all Muslims in the area, would not know all who had prayed at the centre's mosque in the past, would be unlikely to know those who only prayed on Fridays and were otherwise uninvolved in the centre's projects and activities, and that the centre should be open for prayer for all Muslims – provided they abided by the centre's rules of good conduct – regardless of their political views. Similarly, I felt that there were elements of misrecognition in the other direction: for instance, some colleagues did not seem to grasp immediately certain norms of news reporting culture, such as reducing hour-long interviews to a few sound bites, or how populist understandings of 'newsworthiness' related to news reporting objectives.

Finally, it is worth reinforcing that media interest in IS-related stories was not the only matter of importance for those running the centre during this time. Other issues they were managing included staffing capacity and loyalty,

financial challenges such as fundraising and chasing debtors, and difficulties related to ongoing building maintenance. To offer a couple of examples that touch on the centre's engagement with ideas of crime and local youth, one of the centre's more immediate problems occurred when they had to call out the Metropolitan Police's Specialist Firearms Command in relation to a scuffle between different groups of young men after prayer one evening. No physical harm resulted, and no press coverage emerged. Coincidentally, just over a fortnight later a newspaper reported the conviction of a local gang who were Muslims, had been arrested some months earlier, and were socially linked to those involved in the first incident. Unlike coverage that linked IS with the centre, this article foregrounded guns, drugs, and gang culture, rather than religion, ethnicity, and Islamic institutions. Reflecting on these events, a colleague spoke of 'the cycle of criminality that local boys find hard to escape', and emphasised the potential of the centre in breaking this cycle and supporting the future development of local children.

The Institution as a Non-Unitary Actor

Turning now to focus on specific themes within journalist-source interactions, it is interesting to find that, in its engagement with the media, the centre does not emerge as a unitary actor. First, among senior staff, a diffuse decision-making environment, varying opinions about how best to engage and the nature of the relationship with a journalist who had approached the centre led, at times, to the pursuit of divergent strategies. I include the qualifier 'at times' here, since I do not wish to over-emphasise this aspect of internal discord. Indeed, on many issues, such as avoiding engaging with a foreign state-funded news channel due its lack of credibility, senior staff were in agreement. However, when they discussed the possibility of an interview for a feature with the leading European newspaper referenced earlier, those who broadly preferred for the centre to keep a low profile argued against engaging with a non-Anglophone outlet in the context of a public relations exercise whose primary audience was national. Meanwhile, others saw it as an opportunity to offer an authoritative sociology of Muslim crime and outline the limitations of the centre's capabilities in solving these issues, followed up with the approach, and undertook the interview. Complicating this matter further is how the urgency of some news reporting cycles required more immediate attention, which in turn depended on who might be available to engage at any given moment. In sum, then, it would be impossible to locate a single, coherent media strategy among centre senior staff.

Additionally, not all media strategies and interactions can be attributed to institutional elites. For instance, when a team from a TV news programme visited unannounced one day and attempted to record worshippers leaving the centre after Zuhr prayer, some worshippers challenged the cameraman. An argument followed, and the news team left without usable footage of the centre. By contrast, when another team from a different TV news programme arrived later that day, there were no worshippers around, and the team was able to film their correspondent reporting outside the centre without meaningful challenge. The visits took place a few days before a court was to reach a verdict over three individuals, two of whom had past links to the centre. These links were weak, dated back a number of years, and were unknown to senior staff, who were therefore unprepared for any media interest.

Further, after one journalist wrote an unfavourable article about the centre in a London newspaper, another journalist, who had personal experience of the centre as an occasional worshipper, used their position as a columnist for a popular media blog to critique this account. This journalist then brought their article to the attention of centre staff by leaving a message through the online contact form, and asked them to repost it on the website and circulate widely, which they did. The article was popular with colleagues, who were also quick to note that it presented the capabilities of the centre in a more positive light than they might offer themselves.

Public Relations Resources

The second theme I wish to raise relates to the centre's strengths as a public sphere actor. Philip Schlesinger's discussion on evaluating source 'resources' is helpful here, and offers a model for addressing this question on the institutional level. It acknowledges three areas: 'the extent to which any given source is *institutionalized*', the '*financial base* available to a given actor', and '*cultural capital* in the shape of legitimacy, authoritativeness, respectability and the contacts which these bring'.²⁴¹

Following Schlesinger's methodology, the centre emerges as, to borrow Edie Goldenberg's phrase, a 'resource-poor' institution in the field of actors seeking to contribute to public discussions about Muslims and Islam.²⁴² Unlike, for instance, a government department or counter-terrorism think-tank, the centre does not have a meaningful long-term presence as a media source.

Additionally, it has a limited support base: unlike well-known public institutions with wide-reaching support, comparatively few people know of the centre. Financially, it could not support a public relations and engagement team, nor have a budget for occasional professional lobbyists. And compared to a resource rich organisation such as a successful multinational, it lacks a strong security presence, something significant for preventing journalists' easy access or even, as came up in discussion following a journalist's easy access, filmed 'mosque invasions' by far-right anti-Muslim groups. Further, if we take as axiomatic that Islamic institutions in Britain have reputational problems, for Schlesinger the centre will face the problem of a deficit of 'cultural capital': a 'credibility factor [that] plainly links in directly to the perception of sources within the media the rules of thumb for handling them'. An illustrative example here is how colleagues were sometimes nervous about the possibility of media interactions where a centre representative might not have 'enough' of an English-sounding accent.

While Schlesinger's model is a helpful one, its level of generality means that, of course, it cannot explain the outcomes of all interactions between journalist and institutional representative. Indeed, while some instances affirmed the thesis of a deficit of 'cultural capital', others ran counter to it. Additionally, as David Miller and Kevin Williams argue, resource poor institutions can improve their public standing, in spite of their comparative deficits, through an ability to 'conform to the practices and routines of... the nature of media production which determines the way in which information is provided', which 'can be useful in notching up cultural capital with the media'.²⁴³ This description echoes what I thought were the most successful aspects of centre representatives' engagement with journalists. In particular, a few colleagues who had prior media experience were able to work for the centre's reputational benefit by, for example, insisting on off-record briefings where possible.

Interestingly, centre representatives' interest in developing their public relations resources was limited. When I asked a colleague how the centre might develop a formal media strategy if financial support was available, he disagreed with the premise of the question. In spite of the reputational challenges Islamic institutions can face, the centre should, he argued, prioritise serving a local community above the idea of being a public sphere actor, regardless of whatever financial support from a donor might be available. Within the context of Islamic institutions, then, the question of public relations strategy cannot be reduced to a question of game theory.

Centre Representatives: Media Sources

A further way of exploring the centre's strengths as a public sphere actor is to focus on centre representatives in their roles as media sources, which raises questions of agency in the production of journalism. Following theorists such as Richard Ericson et al. as well as Miller and Williams, 'control' of any story depends on a number of variables, including access, choice of sources, perceived source authority, source strategies, alliance and conflict between sources or even within source and media organisations, journalists' personal relationships, and ideological conformity between journalists and their sources.²⁴⁴ Applying these insights to this case study, first it is important to note that the most significant restrictions to centre representatives' potential contributions, or attempts at control, occurred when either journalists chose not to offer them the opportunity to become sources, or individual journalists' residual suspicions about Islamic institutions shaped how the centre featured within their accounts, regardless of what sources had said.

Nevertheless, there were many opportunities where centre representatives, in their roles as journalistic sources, were able to contribute to the processes behind media coverage of the centre, and thus, media coverage of Islam and Muslims. For example, one of the main strategies of senior staff, particularly at the beginning of the media interest, was to seek to keep the centre's name out of the press. This logic relates to protecting the centre's reputation: it is undesirable to have Google search results of the centre that entail articles connecting it with themes of extremism, terrorism and violence. As a colleague suggested, 'The reputation we've built up through all of the work we've done, and the council and our other partners have done, in developing a centre that properly serves the community... [can get] wiped out, just like that.' Accordingly, they would make the case to enquiring journalists that the centre was not a significant factor in the individuals' lives, and presenting it as such would damage its public standing. Although not all journalists agreed and this strategy ultimately failed, it is worth noting that there were a number who did agree with their argument. Consequently, these journalists either referred to the centre by the local area and framed it as a background detail within their accounts, or used general information gathered from centre representatives but omitted the centre from their accounts.

These findings are also of methodological significance for the study of British Muslims in relation to the media. It demonstrates how an ethnographically informed approach can enhance our understanding both of Muslim agency

through Muslims' roles as journalistic sources as well as objects of media coverage, and of the heterogeneity of journalists' activities in covering Islam and Muslims. By contrast, academic approaches that focus on representation can neither take into account Muslims' perspectives during and regarding media production processes, nor measure absences of representation, such as here in the form of journalists who decide against including an Islamic institution in their accounts for reasons of misrepresentation.

Institutional Responsibility and the Politics of Knowledge

The final theme I wish to raise is the question of institutional responsibility, which emerged as a central theme in interactions between journalists and centre representatives. Specifically, to what extent should this centre be responsible for the actions of local Muslims, including those with whom it had a limited relationship?

Earlier in this article, I mentioned some of the centre's activities that constitute preventative work against crime and extremism. But how can we measure an institution's success or failure here? Some journalists' approaches implied the centre could better manage its responsibilities in shaping local Muslims to be good citizens. One suggested that, despite the centre's work, it still had a communication problem in reaching local youth in view of those individuals who had joined or supported IS. Others questioned whether the centre was fully aware of, and able to control, all of the conversations and activities of worshippers on its premises. The underlying premise here was that when Muslims would visit the centre in large numbers, such as for Friday prayers, some individuals would be likely to radicalise other attendees unless they were properly supervised by institutional elites. While the second approach misrecognises, in my opinion, both the everyday culture of the centre and the decision-making abilities of individual attendees, the former touches on an often-discussed matter of concern within the centre, namely how best to reach and shape the minds of the youth. During my fieldwork, various centre stakeholders approached this problem through a range of lenses, including sport, social life, volunteering, employment, and Islamic studies, as well as crime.

And yet, centre representatives and project leaders had more modest expectations of what they might be able to achieve among local youth. Constraining issues included their limited resources, competing models for

ethical behaviour among young Muslims, and a perceived trend of individualisation of Islamic authority, something that colleagues sometimes termed ‘Sheikh Google’. An illustrative example of the different perspectives occurred when, following an arrest of local Muslims not connected to the centre, a radio journalist introduced an Islamic scholar based at the centre as ‘want[ing] his flock to stay put’. To me listening with a colleague, this description jarred. In addition to the Christian-centric metaphor, senior staff’s perspectives on engaging with the centre user group would not include the phrase ‘staying put’, or similar. Simply, their understandings of users’ agency, which were not just limited to issues of extremism, but also everyday questions such as how the centre should be run, whom it should prioritise, and why, were more complex.

Ultimately, there is no clearly defined idea of the extent of the institution’s responsibility in relation to its local Muslims, or what executing this responsibility properly should look like. But, following Ericson et al., these discussions over responsibility would have a wider significance. The interactions functioned as an opportunity for both journalists and centre representatives to project their understandings of what Islamic institutions can, or should, do for their local constituency. This kind of debate, which interrogates normative social expectations regarding public understandings of Islamic institutions, is not a neutral one, and constitutes part of ‘the politics of knowledge’ inherent in news reporting culture.²⁴⁵

Closing Comments

To conclude, this article has discussed what an ethnographically rooted exploration of an episode of media scrutiny can tell us about contemporary Islamic institutions in Muslim-minority contexts, and their engagement with the public sphere. I have sought to offer both relevant context for the institution and the episode, as well as an analysis of more specific themes relating to the media and the public sphere.

Further analyses of this data are of course possible, such the ongoing consequences of the episode, the comparative subject-specific expertise of the different journalists covering stories of the individuals, and a more extended discourse analysis of the articles and broadcasts that resulted from these interactions. Further still, one could explore the extent to which this episode of media scrutiny relates specifically to Islamic institutions and Muslims in

Muslim-minority contexts such as Britain, as opposed to a study of any small, comparatively poorly resourced organisation working in a publically problematic area, a question that lends itself to discussions of de-Islamising studies of Muslims.²⁴⁶

In bringing the discussion to a close, I would like to stress a few points that I feel stand out in the context of academic understandings of contemporary Islamic institutions and their engagement with the public sphere. First, although the centre's links to the individuals fighting or supporting IS were limited, its representatives experienced various source and resource-related difficulties during the period of media scrutiny. However, media engagement and coverage were not homogeneous: some journalists had more sympathetic readings of the very same situation than others, to the extent that they left the centre out of their accounts altogether. This heterogeneity, as we have seen, cannot always be accommodated by methodologies within the study of Muslims and the western media that focus on representation. Finally, an ethnographically informed approach has also assisted in navigating between different ideological interpretations of Muslims' agency, in both showing the limitations of accounts of causal links between individuals and institutions, and acknowledging the opportunities of journalistic sources to shape stories that ultimately represent them.

Cooperation, Emulation, and Rapprochement: The Changing Dynamics of the Turkish Immigrant Organizational Landscape in Europe

Z. AYCA ARKILIC

Abstract

Since the early 2000s, Turkish Muslim leaders in Europe have redefined and reconstructed their discourse and activities. Turkish immigrant organizations' transformation is marked by traditional Islamic organizations' growing interest in non-religious services, and the establishment of new-generation conservative organizations that identify themselves as business, political, and women's organizations. These recent changes have triggered a process of collaboration, emulation, and rapprochement among Turkish immigrant organizations in Europe. To account for the changing dynamics within the Turkish immigrant organizational landscape in Europe, this study examines how Turkish immigrants' identity, claims, and social mobility have changed following their shift from temporary to permanent settlement. This research's findings draw from in-depth interviews conducted with first-, second-, and third-generation Turkish immigrant organization leaders in Ankara, Berlin, Cologne, Paris, and Strasbourg in 2013.

Introduction

In recent years, Europe has undergone radical socio-political and economic changes. The spiralling economic downturn and the success of far-right parties have precipitated a shift toward anti-immigration policies. Violent events, including 9/11, the London and Madrid subway bombings, the murder of Theo Van Gogh in the Netherlands, mass protests following the cartoon crisis in Denmark, and most recently the Charlie Hebdo shootings in France have rekindled policy debates regarding the perils of the alienation and radicalization of Muslim immigrants. As the *de facto* representatives of Islam and the most important claims-making actors in Europe,²⁴⁷ Islamic organizations have captured increasing scholarly attention over the course of the immigration, religious extremism, and securitization debates.²⁴⁸

While immigrant integration remains a major concern, the Turkish organizational field in Europe has been going through a process of “localization”²⁴⁹ and “post-Islamism”²⁵⁰ since the early 2000s. More specifically, as ranks within traditional Islamic organizations have been

replaced by second- and third-generation Turkish Muslims born and raised in European countries, these organizations have shifted their focus away from purely religious services to educational, professional, and socio-cultural activities. Having redefined their role as the institutional representatives of Turks living in Europe, they have embarked upon new projects in new issue areas, including political, social, and economic participation, citizen empowerment, bilingual education, and the preservation of cultural identity.

The proliferation of new-generation conservative organizations is another striking change that has been shaping the Turkish organizational landscape in Europe since the mid-2000s. Conservatism can be defined as an attachment to traditional beliefs and attitudes. Similar to traditional Sunni Islamic Turkish organizations, young-generation conservative organizations view Islam as “the social cement of society and a key element of national culture.”²⁵¹ Yet these groups represent a clear break from traditional mosque-oriented organizations, referring to themselves as business, political, and women’s organizations rather than religious organizations. These actors do not view mosques as the only venue for identity construction. Instead, they centre their claims and activities around other concerns, including employment, education, active citizenship, and inter-cultural dialogue. The transformation of the traditional conservative organizations and the emergence of new ones have triggered a process of collaboration, emulation, and rapprochement among Turkish immigrant organizations. This has been evidenced by their articulation of similar claims, demands, and messages, and the provision of similar activities.

Change and Adaptability in Islam

Scholars of European Islam have offered different views on how Islamic diversity should be conceptualized. Essentialist approaches to the study of religion contend that Islam is the new “other” of the Western world, a religion incompatible with Western values of freedom, liberty, and democracy.²⁵² In viewing Islam as a static religion, this approach cannot capture the dynamic ways in which Muslims reconstruct Islam in their daily lives. The essentialists ignore the historical and contextual factors that shape how religion is reproduced.

The contextualist²⁵³ and post-structuralist accounts,²⁵⁴ on the other hand, focus on change and adaptability in Islam. Contrary to the essentialist views,

these schools do not suggest a total relativism in which Islam is utterly malleable.²⁵⁵ Rather, they assume a negotiation between the universal practices of Islam and the particular circumstances of Muslims. These accounts depict Islam as a social phenomenon that is interpreted and practiced differently by its followers depending on the context. Islamist movements and religious politics take place in the present, and they shape and are shaped by the contexts in which they unfold.²⁵⁶ Fredrik Barth, for instance, suggests that in multicultural societies, each tradition develops an internal validity that is preserved among other traditions.²⁵⁷ Ahmet Yükleýen's ethnographic study of Turkish Islamic communities in Europe provides evidence for Barth's theory by showing that there is no single form of assimilated and privatized "European Islam," but rather multiple interpretations and practices of Islamic communities that localize Islam.²⁵⁸

In order to conceptualize Islamic diversity in Europe and to account for the metamorphosis of Turkish immigrant umbrella organizations in particular, this paper builds on the contextualist approach.²⁵⁹ A group of scholars have argued that in order to understand the emergence and the persistence of immigrant organizations, one must study bottom-up demographic, political, and socio-economic changes pertinent to immigrants²⁶⁰ as well as the aims, roles, functions, and strategies of immigrant organizations.²⁶¹ Others have drawn attention to the role of leadership in immigrant organizations.²⁶² This is because leaders may strengthen or weaken immigrant organizations by fostering internal cohesion or creating divisions over goals, strategies, and tactics.²⁶³ This research draws on all three strands of the literature.

This study examines the three largest and most active traditional Islamic umbrella organizations operating in France and Germany: the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs, the Islamic Community of the National Vision, and the Union of Islamic Cultural Centers. The Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İleri Türk İslam Birli i*, D T B) branches in Europe are tied to Turkey's Directorate for Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İleri Başkanlı ı*, D B). This institution has represented "state" or "official" Islam in Turkey since 1924. The first D T B branch in Europe came into existence in 1984. According to the organization's website, D T B is currently the largest umbrella organization in Europe with more than one thousand associations, and is supported by around 70% of Turkish Muslims.²⁶⁴ The Islamic Community of the National Vision (*Milli Görü İslam Birli i*) is a political Islamist movement whose ideology and political agenda are rooted in the

views of Necmettin Erbakan, a prominent political figure who called for the strengthening of Islamic values in Turkey until his death in 2011. This organization opened a branch in Germany in the 1970s, even before D T B, and therefore became the first immigrant organization providing religious services to Turks in Europe. Today, it is an influential organization with 514 mosque organizations operating across Europe.²⁶⁵ The third immigrant organization, namely the Union of Islamic Cultural Centers (*slam Kültür Merkezleri Birli i*) is a mystical Islamic organization whose members practice strict Islamic training related to the Sufi Naqshibendi order. The organization follows the teachings of Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan Efendi.²⁶⁶ The organization's first branch in Europe was founded in Germany in 1973; today it has 300 mosque organizations and 21,000 members in the country. Moreover, it has over 40 mosque associations in France. In both countries, the Union of Islamic Cultural Center branches reach out to younger Muslims through their boarding schools.²⁶⁷

In addition, this study looks at some of the new-generation conservative immigrant organizations that have emerged in France and Germany over the last two decades. The Association of All Industrialists and Businessmen (*Tüm Sanayici ve adamları Derne i*, TÜMS AD), the International Justice, Equality, and Peace Council (*Uluslararası Adalet, E itlik ve Barı Konseyi*, COJEP), the Federation of Entrepreneurs and Leaders in France (*Fransa Giri imciler ve Yöneticiler Federasyonu*, FED F), the Association Nenuphar, and the Union of European Turkish Democrats (*Avrupa Türk Demokratlar Birli i*, UETD) have been operating in various fields since their establishment. A common message voiced by the leaders of these organizations is that members of the Turkish émigré population should no longer be seen as immigrants but as “Europeans with a Turkish background.”

TÜMS AD is a Turkish civil society organization carrying out activities in the field of economic lobbying.²⁶⁸ The first TÜMS AD branch was established in Germany in 2013 by conservative Turkish businessmen.²⁶⁹ Since then, the organization has opened new branches in several other European countries, including France, Denmark, Austria, Belgium, and the Netherlands. FED F is another business organization founded in France in 2010 by conservative small- and medium-sized enterprise owners. The Association Nenuphar is a women's organization founded in France in 2011. It is devoted to the issues of women's empowerment, work-family balance, child education, intercultural dialogue, and bilingual education.²⁷⁰ COJEP is an older civil society

organization founded by new-generation Turkish leaders in 2000. It is a political organization, serving as a lobbying bloc for Turkish citizens' social and political rights in France.²⁷¹ Finally, UETD, which opened its first branch in Germany in 2004, serves as a predominantly political lobbying organization. Its aim is to contribute to Euro-Turks' deeper integration into their host societies by advancing their political and social interests throughout Europe. UETD is a well-organized body with branches in eleven countries in Europe.²⁷²

The main focus of this research is on conservative Turkish immigrant organizations operating in France and Germany. The majority of Turkish immigrant organizations in Europe are conservative. France and Germany have been chosen as the main host-country cases for two reasons: they house the largest Muslim populations in Europe, and they are home to the largest Turkish communities in Europe. According to Turkish officials, there are three million Turks in Germany, and one million in France.²⁷³ Paris and Strasbourg in France, and Berlin and Cologne in Germany serve as the main sites for research since these cities are home to the largest Turkish populations in those countries. Moreover, the headquarters of Turkish immigrant umbrella organizations are located in these cities. Interviews in Turkey are conducted in Ankara, the country's political and diplomatic center.

A Bottom-Up Transformation

Large-scale Turkish emigration to Western Europe started in the early 1960s as a result of short-term labor recruitment agreements signed between the Turkish and various European governments. The first agreement was reached with the Federal Republic of Germany in 1961. It was followed by similar agreements with Austria, Belgium, France, Sweden, and the Netherlands. The provision of unskilled guest workers [*gastarbeiter*] was seen as a panacea to the shattering economies of Europe and a temporary solution to Turkey's unemployment problem. In addition, Turkey had hoped to benefit from workers' skills and experiences upon their return to the homeland. Even though the economic downturn of the 1970s caused by the 1973 oil crisis brought the demand for Turkish workers to a halt in Europe, most of the guest-workers had already decided to stay in Europe.²⁷⁴ During the 1980s and 1990s, thanks to the introduction of lenient family reunification and asylum policies, Europe once again witnessed an inflow of Turkish immigrants, this time spearheaded by spouses and dependents.²⁷⁵ By the mid-1980s, policy-

makers came to realize that Turks were no longer temporary guests.

During the first years of Turkish emigration to Europe, the majority of organizations were labor-related. The 1970s witnessed the establishment of nationalist and religious umbrella organizations. However, these organizations clashed with each other over ideological or religious differences, and pursued goals rooted in the homeland. The profile of the Turkish community changed significantly in the 1980s and 1990s. Turks came to Europe in the 1960s and 1970s out of economic necessity. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, emigration was driven more by politics and ideology following a military coup in 1980, which led to the escalation of a civil war between the Turkish state and Kurdish rebels. Coupled with spiraling internal violence targeting the Alevi minority, this tension increased the number of asylum appeals to European countries.²⁷⁶ The emigration of Kurds and Alevis to Europe created a very heterogeneous Turkish diaspora, culminating in the proliferation of ethnic and political organizations. Since the 1990s, skilled immigrants and university students from Turkey have replaced low-skilled workers and political dissidents as the main immigrant group abroad, further changing the composition of the Turkish community.²⁷⁷

Turkish immigrant organizations began to turn toward their host states in the 1990s. However, due largely to involvement in their homeland's problems, most failed to develop strong ties with host-state authorities. A study conducted in 1996 with Turkish immigrant organization leaders in Germany revealed that 29 of 31 leaders interviewed had been born in Turkey. Another survey carried out during that period also found 86.6% of German Turks claimed to read newspapers in their native language.²⁷⁸ Despite the success of a handful of parliamentarians and businesspersons in Germany, such as Cem Özdemir and Vural Öger, the economic and political participation of Turks in their host societies remained low at that time. Moreover, their presence was felt largely in the form of small retail, restaurant, and service businesses catering largely to the needs of the Turkish community.

The localization trend among immigrant Islamic organizations is a consequence of Turks' transition from temporary to permanent settlement. This change has gradually empowered Turkish immigrants in their host countries, and propelled a shift in their identity and attitudes. That said, while the transition from temporary to permanent settlement began in the 1980s, it took time for this transformation to mature and bear fruit. It was not until

the late 1990s (and particularly 2000s) that Turkish expatriates gained economic, political, and social clout in their host states.

Economically, Turkish companies have gradually diversified their activities and become active in fields other than the food and service sectors. The number of companies launched by Turkish entrepreneurs in Germany rose from 55,000 in 1999 to 70,000 in 2014.²⁷⁹ According to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there are currently 140,000 businesses established by Turkish businesspeople in Europe. These enterprises provide jobs for 640,000 employees, and their total annual revenue exceeds \$70 billion.²⁸⁰

In a similar vein, Germany's large Turkish community had long been underrepresented in federal politics. Even though Turks in Europe were fairly active in local politics of their host countries during the 1980s and 1990s, it has been only in the past 15 years that they have started leaving their mark on national politics. Ekin Deligöz, for instance, entered the German Parliament [*Bundestag*] in 2002; that was followed by the election of many other German Turks to the Bundestag over the last few years. This trend is visible in other European countries as well. In 2007, Özlem Çekiç became the first Muslim woman with a Turkish background to be elected to the Danish Parliament. The Alliance for Innovation and Justice Party (BIG), a local political movement established by German Turks in Cologne in the 2000s, achieved visibility on the German political scene in the mid-2000s. The party's first remarkable success came in 2009 when it secured two seats in the city of Bonn's local council. The party won 17,000 votes in the 2013 federal elections, becoming the first immigrant political party to compete in national elections.²⁸¹ That election also served as an historical moment for German Turks in other ways. That year, Cemile Yusuf became the first Turkish-Muslim deputy in the Christian Democratic Union Party's parliamentary group, Aydan Özoğuz became Germany's first-ever female minister of state with Turkish roots, and the number of Bundestag members of Turkish origin rose from five to eleven.

Individuals' success stories reflect the attitudinal changes taking place within the Turkish community. According to the Euro-Turks Barometer Survey, nearly half of the people of Turkish origin living in Europe today have citizenship in their country of settlement, while an estimated 82.5% of Turkish immigrants believe that they are well integrated into the society in which they live. The rate of political participation is also very high among the

Turkish diaspora. This has been evidenced by the 70% participation rate of German Turks in the 2013 federal elections.²⁸² While these numbers manifest a striking progress at the societal level, Turkish immigrant organization leaders suggest that Turks in Europe still face other challenges, such as assimilation, discrimination, and stigmatization in professional and daily life.

The changing identity, activities, and social mobility of Turkish expatriates have propelled the expansion of existing organizational activities and the mushrooming of new-generation middle-class organizations. Since 2004, the Presidency of Religious Affairs has emphasized that its new responsibility is “to serve as the institutional representative of Turkish citizens living in Europe.” The institution introduced a new “language-culture” program in 2005, which was followed by a “social service” scheme between 2005 and 2008, and the expansion of the education program between 2009 and 2013. D T B branches in Europe have come to realize even more that Turkish immigration is not a passing phenomenon. As a result, they have begun paying more attention to the needs of second- and third-generation Turks. Over the last two decades, these branches have initiated new projects on economic, political, and social participation, the empowerment of young, female, and senior citizens, and the preservation of native language and cultural identity. They have, for instance, established bilingual kindergartens, and theological institutes with the purpose of training bilingual religious personnel who can reach out to second- and third-generation Turks in a more empathetic and effective manner.²⁸³

Likewise, the Islamic Community of the National Vision branches in Europe have strengthened their youth and women’s units, and worked toward the development of their socio-cultural agenda. Their increasing focus on bilingual education in kindergartens, legal and professional training, and anti-assimilation and anti-discrimination programs have resonated well with the Turkish community. In 2012, the organization established its Ibn-i Sina Institute in Belgium. This became the first religious vocational high school [*imam hatip lisesi*] established in Europe. The school teaches both Arabic and English, and offers a variety of courses on natural sciences, religious studies, and Belgian culture.²⁸⁴ More recently, the Union of Islamic Cultural Centers has accelerated its activities in the areas of social services and religious education. This organization has started organizing workshops with other Turkish Islamic organizations, and opened more boarding schools at the elementary and secondary level in order to remedy common problems

Turkish students encounter in public schools. In addition to providing religious education and other courses in French, these boarding schools ensure that students graduate with a good command of the Turkish language.

These changes have precipitated a process of collaboration and rapprochement among Turkish immigrant organizations. The Turkish Islamic associational field in Europe had been replete with tensions and fragmentations emanating from organizational differences in the pre-2000 era. Since the early-2000s, however, leaders of Turkish immigrant organization have set aside past grievances, and come together for such occasions as Ramadan dinners, diplomatic events, and cultural festivals. Moreover, they have disseminated similar messages and offered each other assistance. D T B, for instance, provides religious personnel to other Islamic organizations when there is a specific need. The Islamic Community of the National Vision and the Union of Islamic Cultural Centers in France are in the process of building a mosque together.²⁸⁵ In a similar vein, D T B, the Islamic Community of the National Vision, and the Union of Islamic Cultural Centers officials in Germany come together every month to discuss what they can do for the Turkish community.²⁸⁶ The women's organizations of D T B, the Islamic Community of the National Vision, and the Union of Islamic Cultural Centers also organize monthly meetings, attend each other's seminars and workshops, and co-organize cultural events.²⁸⁷ As a TÜMS AD official has pointed out, new-generation Turkish organizations are also undergoing a similar process of rapprochement, supporting and assisting each other "to preserve and promote Turkish language, to contribute to our [Turks'] deeper integration into European societies, and to advance our (...) interests in Europe." In this official's words, "animosities of the past have disappeared, and Turkish organizations have finally united under common goals."²⁸⁸

Conclusion

Since the early 2000s, two key changes have reshaped the contours of the Turkish immigrant organizational landscape in Western Europe: Turkish Sunni Islamic organizations have shown more interest in non-religious activities, and new-generation civil society organizations have entered the field as new actors. Both old- and new-generation Turkish immigrant organizations have shifted their focus away from the homeland to their host states, investing in new issue areas, including economic, political, and social participation, citizen empowerment, bilingual education, and the

preservation of cultural identity for better integration. The transformation of existing Islamic organizations and the emergence of new-generation conservative middle-class organizations have led to a process of collaboration, emulation, and rapprochement among Turkish immigrant organizations.

Following the shift from temporary to permanent settlement, second- and third-generation Turks have become permanent citizens of Europe. In response to this drastic demographic and societal change, traditional Islamic organizations have adjusted to the changing needs and demands of the Turkish population, providing specialized and practical services to help resolve common problems. In addition, business, political, and women's organizations established by younger Turks have flourished. The growing popularity of the newly-established immigrant organizations signals that younger Turkish Muslims are looking for new channels to solidify their presence as permanent residents. In examining the evolving nature of Turkish immigrant organizations in Europe, this paper has emphasized the dynamism in the ways Muslims reconstruct their religion and identity in their daily lives. This study also shows that Turkish Muslim immigrants draw a boundary between integration and assimilation: their willingness to better integrate into their host societies does not mean that they are ready to be assimilated. Dual identity of immigrants, and the distinction between integration and assimilation will continue to be an important topic for scholars and policy-makers in the future.

‘MADE a Difference?’ – British Muslim Youth and Faith-Inspired
Activism between ‘Post-Conventional Politics’, ‘Post-Secularity’, and
‘Post-Immigration Difference’

DAVIDE PETTINATO

Abstract

How do young British Muslims understand their political subjectivity and operationalize their agency? How are they mobilized by UK-based Muslim activist organizations? And how can these questions inform broader debates about the Muslim presence in the British and European public spheres? These are the questions that this paper explores through an analysis of the case-study ‘MADE in Europe’, a youth-led, British Muslim faith-based organization concerned with issues of socio-environmental justice. Acknowledging the complexity of the relationship between religious commitment, social practice, and civic engagement, the paper adopts an analytical approach that attempts to move the debate on Muslim activism beyond crises narratives and reified categories. Through a contextualization within larger trends such as ‘post-conventional politics’, ‘post-secularity’, and ‘post-immigration difference’, the paper argues that the type of political subjectivity and agency expressed by MADE can signal a broader shift in the basis and nature of the presence of young Muslims in the UK¹.

Introduction

Young Muslims in the UK and Europe have increasingly become the focus of public debates in recent years, with intense attention focusing on themes such as belonging, values, ‘integration’, and participation in mainstream political and civic life. Exacerbated by concerns about security and prevention, the discourse has been dominated by “crisis narratives about disengagement, disaffection or extremism”²⁸⁹ that divert attention from forms of agency in which young Muslims *do* engage constructively with the public sphere and the political.²⁹⁰ As a result, little is known about how young Muslims understand their political subjectivity, whether they operationalize it through distinctive forms of agency, and about the *modi operandi* of UK-based Muslim activist organizations.²⁹¹

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On the methodological level, such a gap seems to be determined by “too little investment in understanding the complexity of the linkages between religious commitment, social practice and civic engagement.”²⁹² For this reason, the paper adopts a more differentiated approach that attempts to move the analysis beyond reified categories by contextualizing the specificity of a case-study (the faith-based Muslim organization ‘MADE in Europe’) against the broader background of three concepts/phenomena that somehow seem to characterize our era: ‘post-conventional politics’, ‘post-secularity’, and ‘post-immigration difference’. Exploring key material from the case-study, the paper contributes a broader picture of young British Muslims’ faith-based activism, and it presents some observations about the role and relevance of this particular faith-based organization for understanding broader dynamics of growth, maturation, and indigenization of the Muslim presence in the UK and Europe.

A Peculiar Convergence: ‘Post-Conventional Politics’, ‘Post-Secularity’, and ‘Post-Immigration Difference’

Faith-based Muslim activism in the UK and Europe takes place at a peculiar convergence between (at least) three facets of ‘post-’ that seem characteristic of our era: ‘post-conventional politics’, ‘post-secularity’, and ‘post-immigration difference’. This section outlines how appreciating the overlapping of such facets is essential to contextualize current reconfigurations of Muslims’ political subjectivity and agency.

Post-conventional politics

The turn of the century has witnessed the rise and proliferation of new forms of political subjectivity and agency across the globe. Once confined within the boundaries defined by the nation-state, party-politics, representative democracy and its institutions, the arena of what today constitutes ‘the political’ has considerably expanded as new understandings of and relationships between culture, identity, and citizenship have determined the normalization of the ‘post-conventional politics’ that emerged throughout the latter third of the 20th century.²⁹³

Articulating flexible and heterogeneous identities, political subjectivities in the current era are less ideological, programmatic, and collectivist than earlier forms, and their agency is articulated through more fluid, personalized, and *ad hoc* forms of expression concerned with *both* economic and cultural

dimensions.²⁹⁴ The “‘new, new’ movements”²⁹⁵ that characterize today’s “social movement society”²⁹⁶ seem then to express an “era of social justice activism” articulated through a “movement environment of large-scale direct activism, multi-issue networks, and untidy “permanent” campaigns.”²⁹⁷

Indeed, the consolidation of post-conventional modes of civic engagement in the current era is particularly relevant to young British Muslims not only as an alternative to the often “exclusionary norms and practices within mainstream political arenas,”²⁹⁸ but also as the expression of a new understanding of the relationship between identity, activism, and citizenship that shifts its terrain from national to global, and increasingly becomes related to cultural and moral rights and duties.

A renewed salience of the moral and religious dimensions in framing identity politics,²⁹⁹ in particular, raises important questions for the study of activism among young British Muslims and represents the core of the next facet of ‘post-’ discussed here: ‘post-secularity’.

Post-secularity

The discourse on post-secularity³⁰⁰ is important to inform the study of faith-based Muslim activism on two levels. On the one hand, a reference to post-secularity indicates a focus on the observed shift towards religious (as distinct from ethnic) identities among young people of minority ethnic heritage in general, and among young Muslims more specifically.³⁰¹ Questioning the assumption that “personal agency must necessarily be based on a secular, rational, and liberal individualist model,”³⁰² an analysis informed by post-secularity therefore looks at the fluid relation between faith-based/religious identity and social action, and contextualizes it against the interplay between the “religious, humanist, and secularist positionalities” of actors populating the “secularized social structures of modern late capitalism.”³⁰³

On the other hand, the post-secular blurring of conceptual boundaries between the private and the public is significant in light of the increasing presence of Muslims in the public sphere. Often concerned with the construction of ‘Muslim public spaces’ that incorporate faith-based elements, the Muslim presence (and, even more so, Muslim agency) challenges the “rigid dichotomy between the private and public spheres”³⁰⁴ traditionally endorsed by European society, and it highlights how the latter still has to “adjust itself

to the continued existence of religious communities in an increasingly secularized environment.”³⁰⁵ From this perspective, post-secularity can be thought of as a hybrid space where a “balance between shared citizenship and cultural difference”³⁰⁶ is possible.

Indeed, the fluid relation between sameness and difference is closely linked also to the third facet of ‘post-’ discussed here: ‘post-immigration difference’.

Post-immigration difference

Debates around Muslims in the UK and Europe often unfold within two kinds of broader themes: the cultural-centered debate about ‘British or European vs. Muslim identity/values’; and the societal-focused debate about adaptation-integration-multiculturalism. Both themes are, in fact, two sides of the same coin: an attempt to conceptualize ‘post-immigration difference’ and consequently operationalize ‘other-ing’ on the basis of that difference.³⁰⁷

The ‘post-’ of post-immigration difference thus refers to the acknowledgment that the diasporic dimension of the Muslim presence in Europe and Britain is increasingly becoming inadequate to represent alone minority-majority relations which today have less to do with migration than with the specifically European/British Muslim dimension of second and third generation Muslims (and indigenous European Muslims).³⁰⁸ The ‘difference’ of post-immigration difference, then, refers to how people from minorities (in this paper, young British Muslims) identify themselves, how they identify others, and how they are identified by others.³⁰⁹ The differences at issue are “those perceived both by outsiders or group members – from the outside in and from the inside out,”³¹⁰ and they can be located in the range of possibilities between positive distinctiveness and negative alienness.

Post-immigration difference as a whole therefore expresses the fact that as “Islam increasingly represents the internal religious other in Europe,”³¹¹ British and European Muslims are often still thought of as ‘the Other.’ Yet, they differ from Muslims who migrated to Europe and therefore represented the ‘external Other’: “an other of Europe from within Europe,”³¹² the British/European Muslim is the ‘internal Other’ same but not quite; different, but also similar.

The convergence of post-conventional politics, post-secularity, and post-immigration difference shapes the political subjectivity and agency of young British Muslims in the current era. The next two sections outline how these

are being reconfigured through the faith-based Muslim organization MADE in Europe (MADE).

A 'Muslim Youth Movement' (?)

In order to understand MADE's relevance within broader debates on British Muslim political subjectivity and agency, it is essential to focus on how this organisation frames itself as a *movement*.

MADE consistently articulates its discourse using references to the idea of 'movement', and it regularly utilises the vocabulary associated with this concept both at a macro- and a micro-levels. On the macro-level (i.e., in answering the quintessential question: '*What is MADE?*'), the idea of movement plays a pivotal role in characterising the organisation through a discourse populated by statements that either equate MADE with a movement, or highlight the movement-like nature of its mission. From this quintessential perspective, MADE is a "Muslim-led movement of young people who want to see our [British Muslim] community leading the fight against global poverty and injustice;"³¹³ it is an organisation which aims to mobilize a grassroots "Muslim youth movement of faith in action."³¹⁴

The predominance enjoyed by the idea of movement is also paralleled on the micro-level (i.e., in answering the pragmatic question: '*What does MADE do?*'), as MADE consistently applies the vocabulary associated with this idea to articulate virtually all of its projects. Thus, for example, MADE's "flagship campaign"³¹⁵ on maternal health ('At Our Mothers' Feet'³¹⁶), is described as one through which MADE "worked closely with UK Muslim leaders, scholars and communities to build a movement of grassroots support for UK Muslim NGOs to incorporate maternal health into their programme work,"³¹⁷ and thanks to which "[t]he movement for maternal health in the UK Muslim community has well and truly begun!"³¹⁸ Similarly, MADE's environmentalist advocacy ('Green Up My Community!' campaign) is described as aiming "to inspire a new pan-European Green Muslim Youth movement"³¹⁹ in order to get "Muslim institutions – particularly our mosques – at the forefront of the environmental movement, preaching green from the pulpit and demonstrating eco-consciousness in everything they do."³²⁰ Again, MADE's campaign on workers' rights ('Every Garment Has A Name'³²¹) is framed as a "movement (...) to ensure garment workers' rights,"³²² and the support for Palestinian farmers ('#BuyPalestinian'³²³) is articulated as an expression of

MADE's efforts to contribute towards "building a fairtrade movement (...) in Palestine"³²⁴ in order to "support the Palestinian cause and stand up against injustice and oppression (...) through our purchasing power."³²⁵

At a complementary level, the movement-related vocabulary is also adopted to articulate MADE's efforts in partnership with other organisations. Thus, for example, the day MADE took part in an inter-faith initiative to form the 'Christian-Muslim Youth Forum on Climate Change'³²⁶ is seen as a "day [that] saw a new movement of young people of faith coming together as part of a global movement (...) as stewards of the earth and [*sic*] demand that more is done to tackle climate change."³²⁷ Similarly, MADE's adoption of the internationally-known charitable challenge 'Live Below the Line'³²⁸ is described as a way to offer young British Muslims the possibility to "help build a movement of passionate people who want to change the way we think about extreme poverty."³²⁹ Again, the 2013 'Enough Food for Everyone, IF' campaign³³⁰ is referred to as "truly a historic movement" to "end global hunger" a movement which "young Muslims can and must be at the forefront of."³³¹

Finally, MADE's efforts in framing itself as a movement do not end with the articulation of its own discourse and projects. Indeed, MADE also attempts to consolidate the credibility of its image as a movement through relevant frame articulators (both internals, and externals) that publically endorse such a framing.³³² For example, young people who have volunteered for MADE in different capacities (i.e., internals) reinforce the idea of MADE as a movement by expressing the sentiment of 'feeling part of a growing movement':

"I feel part of a solution and part of a movement to educate and address important issues that we have in this unequal world. (...) We can do so much. My first step towards a solution is through volunteering with MADE in Europe, so that I feel part of the movement and solution to this extreme poverty."³³³

"The movement is growing and more and more people are coming on board. Don't let the train leave before jumping on – you won't regret it!"³³⁴

Additionally, authoritative frame articulators from both Muslim and mainstream development organisations (i.e., externals), consolidate the idea of MADE as a movement by expressing comments such as the following:

"MADE in Europe is a very good initiative. It should be seen as more than just an organisation - it is a movement. I really believe in volunteerism and the power of the youth."³³⁵

“Muslim communities in the UK have a vital role to play in challenging the inequality and injustices around the world. (...) We are pleased that MADE in Europe is taking a leading role in mobilising grassroots action.”³³⁶

Considered altogether, the aforementioned evidence highlights that MADE strategically commits a lot of efforts into building and consolidating its reputation as a movement (rather than as a faith-based organization). The question that this paper raises is: what does this tell us about the relationship between MADE and current reconfigurations of young British Muslims’ understanding of political subjectivity and agency?

MADE’s self-ascribed identity as a movement seems to indicate a political subjectivity and a operationalization of agency which similarly to social movements fluidly shift across the spectrum of possibilities within the arena of the political. The task of assessing whether MADE really represents a movement is well beyond the scope of this paper indeed, it remains a difficult task and the subject of intense debates defining what exactly a movement is, and what its relations with NGOs are.³³⁷ However, it is important here to highlight that insofar as advocacy-based NGOs like MADE are actively involved in awareness-raising activities (i.e.: in the process known as ‘conscientization’³³⁸), they do play a key role in either developing or sustaining movements by “encouraging the right type of atmosphere for mobilization around pressing issues.”³³⁹ In light of this, MADE shares with a social movement the potential to mobilize young British Muslims (and other actors of British Muslim civil society) on the basis of shared (or partially shared) values, around specific issues, and through extra-institutional tactics.

The next section highlights how MADE engages in such mobilizing efforts on multiple yet interconnected dimensions, with the goal to prompt a specific change of consciousness whilst resisting something (policies, systems, or specific lifestyles).

Distinctiveness Beyond Dichotomies

Among the publically available material produced by MADE, the video ‘*Intro to MADE in Europe*’³⁴⁰ represents an archetype of how the organization understands and articulates its political subjectivity and agency, and is therefore analyzed here as an emblematic case-study.

Throughout the first half of the video, MADE contextualizes the target of its

mobilizing efforts (the “average Muslim”³⁴¹) within a mainstream, secular, public sphere characterized by a cultural norm which is largely oblivious to the moral questions surrounding ordinary and seemingly harmless actions. Part and parcel of such a norm, the average Muslim engages in a mainstream, secular, public lifestyle which is shared with much of the rest of British society as an epitome of the Global North.³⁴² In doing so, he shares and perpetuates a system of production-consumption that MADE characterizes as being based on excesses, cruelty, and harm both towards fellow humans, animals, and the environment.

Halfway through the video, the average Muslim’s ride to the mosque signals a transition from a mainstream, secular, public dimension to a more distinctive, religious, and private one. Whilst so far the video highlighted the negative connotations of the average Muslim’s behavior as a member of mainstream British society, it is precisely on the level of his distinctive religious identity as a Muslim that the ethical short-sightedness seems to reach a climax. In a very symbolic way, it is through one of the acts of social responsibility that most emblematically stand as a marker of Muslim religious agency and identity (i.e.: charity-giving) that the average Muslim discloses a sense of moral contentment which MADE criticizes as oblivious, at best, and as self-contradictory, at worst. While charity-giving seems to represent a satisfactory enough form of agency for the average Muslim (who “has always felt that he has done his part”³⁴³), this is not the case for MADE.

Clearly, MADE is critical of both the lifestyle and the understanding of faith-based agency endorsed by the average Muslim, and it identifies the Mosque as the potential epicenter of his ethical inconsistencies. However, it also acknowledges the potential indeed, it could be read between the lines, the duty for the Mosque to be a fundamental conscientizing platform.

In fact, it is precisely in the Mosque that the ‘old’ average Muslim undergoes an internal reformative process, a change of consciousness that drives a transformation into the ‘new’ average Muslim. Such a conscientization is accompanied by a radical change in the way the average Muslim perceives the ‘inside-the-mosque’ sphere vs the ‘outside-the-mosque’ spheres. The apparent separation of these two dimensions (which seems to symbolize a mistakenly assumed dichotomy between the ‘secular-public’ vs the ‘religious-private’), is gently but firmly dissolved by the conscientizing wind represented by the words of a Prophetic saying. Through its transformative capacity, the

Prophetic message symbolically transmutes the Mosque's pillars into trees and its floor into grass, disclosing a continuum between different spheres (inside-outside; private-public; distinctive-mainstream) that was earlier unknown to the average Muslim. Only now, from the height of a conscientized viewpoint rooted in faith, the 'new' average Muslim can finally appreciate the interconnectedness between belief and praxis, 'religious' and 'secular', 'private' and 'public' only now he "realises the changes he needs to make."³⁴⁴

The video therefore suggests that the worldview advocated by MADE emphatically links faith and action by blurring the traditional European boundaries between 'the private' and 'the public'. The new average Muslim not only adopts a faith-informed *private* lifestyle based on ethical consumption and 'green' habits, but also becomes a *public* faith-inspired activist: the personal *is* political, and the mobilized Muslim becomes a member of the movement of "Muslims leading the fight against poverty, injustice, and environmental damage by raising awareness and campaigning for change."³⁴⁵ Importantly, the video not only strongly suggests that MADE understands the 'mainstream-secular-public' and the 'distinctive-religious-private' as overlapping dimensions of the same continuum of Muslim agency and identity. Crucially, it also sketches how MADE consistently applies this perspective in its mobilizing efforts.

Indeed, a fluid relationship between spheres can be appreciated throughout MADE's effort to negotiate a shared understanding of what is in need of change (diagnostic framing); what alternative roadmap needs to be adopted (prognostic framing); and why the call to join the movement is urgent (motivational framing).³⁴⁶

In its diagnostic framing, MADE conceptualizes two main problematic conditions. In the 'mainstream-secular-public' sphere, the problem is an unjust and cruel system of production-consumption imposed and perpetuated by the very Global North of which MADE and British Muslims are part and parcel. As a development organization, MADE highlights the negative nature of 'mainstream-secular-public' issues such as over-consumption, poor working conditions, and pollution. On the other hand, in the 'distinctive-religious-private' sphere, the problem is reducing the meaning of 'being a Muslim' to a matter of superficial ritual observation drained of ethics. As a faith-based Muslim organization, MADE highlights

what it perceives to be the average Muslim's inadequacy of putting into practice the Islamic ethics of socio-environmental responsibility. In both cases (secular and religious), this is a critique 'from within'. It is by emphasizing routine behaviors that are likely to be shared by most Britons that MADE prompts British Muslims to undertake a critical self-examination as members of a shared Global North. And it is by mentioning Islamic references that are likely to be familiar to most Muslims that MADE prompts British Muslims to undertake a critical self-examination as members of a distinctive faith community.

In its prognostic framing, MADE raises the question: is charity-giving enough? The answer is a negative one on two levels. As a development organization, MADE criticizes the possibility that the solution can be limited to financially supporting relief work or development projects through charity-giving. Rather, what is needed is a complete change of consciousness and behaviour that must be translated into everyday ethical choices and actions a macro-theory of change which MADE as a faith-based organization consistently articulates through the use of the Qur'anic principle that "Allah will not change the condition of a people, until they change what is in themselves" (Qur'an 13:11).³⁴⁷ Critiquing an understanding of faith-based agency which is restricted to charity-giving, MADE as a movement in the era of 'new, new' social movements calls for a holistic, fluid approach to agency, and it does so from a faith-based perspective: "Islam advocates for more than just giving to charity" and British Muslims "are called upon as citizens, people of faith and as human beings, to stand up and take action."³⁴⁸ Indeed, MADE advocates a solution which is not uniquely Muslim in its outer manifestation in the public sphere and therefore can be (and in fact, is) shared with both secular and other faiths-based organizations and movements. In MADE's narrative, an ethical lifestyle and advocacy-based activism constitute a shared platform for civic engagement by virtue of not being exclusively faith-based. However, MADE also clearly frames the 'Muslim-ness' of such a solution. Firstly, by quoting the Qur'an and Prophetic sayings, MADE articulates the solutions as organically stemming primarily from an Islamic frame of reference. Secondly, by characterizing its call to action as "inspired by the teachings of the greatest activist of all time: Prophet Muhammad (PBUH),"³⁴⁹ MADE identifies the ultimate rationale for taking action as belonging to the realm of faith.

Finally, MADE engages both the 'mainstream-secular-public' and the

‘distinctive-religious-private’ in its motivational framing, too. On the one hand, MADE aims to motivate British Muslims as members of the Global North by anchoring its own narrative to an empirically credible set of facts that stand as evidences ‘from out there, in the real world’. Further to this, recognizing that British Muslims (as other members of the Global North) might perceive certain issues as remote (‘there’, in the Global South), MADE aims to build salience by bringing the issues back home through an emphasis on their link to the local context (‘here’, in the UK).³⁵⁰ On the other hand, MADE’s approach to motivating British Muslims as members of a community of faith is two-pronged. Firstly, MADE emphasizes its narrative’s fidelity and centrality within the Islamic framework by intentionally framing the call to action from a faith-based perspective mainly through the use of short quotes from the Qur’an or Prophetic sayings that could reiterate its ethical-activist message.³⁵¹ Symbolically, it is precisely through a Friday sermon (on the Islamic principle of being stewards of the Earth) that the average Muslim of the case-study video is conscientized. Indeed, despite the clear overcoming of hermetic dichotomies between multiple dimensions of identity, the ultimate motive of MADE’s call to action is rooted in faith. Whilst the outer manifestation of MADE’s political agency is agreeable to like-minded sectors of mainstream society, the urgency of its inner motivation stems from a specific, subjective religious identity. That is why taking action “is not the responsibility of others. As Muslims, the fight against poverty and injustice starts with you!”³⁵²

Conclusions

In an era in which post-conventional politics, post-secularity, and post-immigration difference seem to converge, the political subjectivity and agency of British Muslim youth is progressively being reconfigured. MADE as a case study informs our understanding of such dynamics on two main levels.

On the one hand, MADE is symbolic of the fact that, as recent research suggests, young British Muslims “are active and engaged, and particularly in issues that concern wider society or that impact upon a broad sense of social justice.”³⁵³ Facing a leadership crisis both in the mainstream and Muslim spheres, and with limited prospects for effective participation in formal political processes except through the domineering framework of security and prevention, the British Muslim youth exemplified by MADE are seeking alternative arenas and modes of engagement in the arena of post-conventional

politics. Developing creative ways to express their “considerable and healthy appetite for a spectrum of dissent and activism,”³⁵⁴ MADE’s activists express a type of agency that is typical of the era of ‘new, new’ social movements that is, one committed “to living differently now, as opposed to programmatic or linear attempts to shape the future.”³⁵⁵

Indeed, MADE’s alignment (whether real or self-ascribed) with the ‘new, new’ social movement-type activism represents a different way to understand Muslims’ political subjectivity and agency in the UK and Europe. Moving beyond the reactive mode that characterized (and, to a certain extent, still characterizes) much of Muslim activism throughout the last two decades of the 20th century,³⁵⁶ MADE adopts a proactive approach that is not determined exclusively or mainly by need or crises, but rather by personal interests and lifestyles. Incorporating movement-like, informal, diverse modes of direct activism framed loosely around issues of socio-environmental justice, MADE is an expression of how commitment to religious values can determine specific orientations in the everyday politics of lifestyle actions concerned not only with Muslim-centric issues, but rather based on a much broader understandings of justice and the common good.³⁵⁷

In a post-secular environment where young British Muslims increasingly consider their faith as a crucial inspirational element for activism,³⁵⁸ MADE as a faith-based organization clearly attempts “to revitalise the [Muslim] tradition’s argumentative and symbolic resources.”³⁵⁹ Yet, in its framing of the solutions within an Islamic discourse, MADE expresses a political subjectivity that is far from sloganeering, and rather develops complex forms of interaction between “‘Western’ and ‘Muslim’ cultural and normative assets.”³⁶⁰ Advocating moral and ethical values rooted in faith, MADE seems to “demand, though in different guises, the ‘return’ to a Muslim way of life.”³⁶¹ At the same time, by attempting to provide a model of possible faith-based activism in a shared public sphere, MADE’s work is intimately connected with an understanding of political subjectivity and agency that acknowledges distinctiveness while allowing the possibility of overlapping spaces. Indeed, in its navigating between multiple spheres, MADE represents both a “faith-based charitable or development” organization and “a faith-based socio-political” organization.³⁶² Similarly to the former, it raises awareness of socio-environmental injustice among young Muslims and mobilizes them in support of development causes. Like the latter, it mobilizes Muslims on the basis of faith-based identities in pursuit of broader objectives located in the

area of public policy debates concerned with international development and a broad sense of socio-environmental justice.

On the other hand, the kind of political subjectivity and agency expressed by MADE also reflects and determines a specific understanding of the relationship between majority/minority an understanding that shapes the nature and modes of ‘integration’ at the levels of both personal identity formation and collective action.

Often “caught in the dilemma of being recognised as a legitimate minority culture, while escaping the predicament of being a minority to watch and monitor, continuously needing to prove its loyalty,”³⁶³ the section of British Muslim youth represented by MADE seems to understand its relationship with mainstream society in a way which transcends watertight dichotomies and overcomes forms of passive disaffection and ‘minority consciousness’. In a complex landscape where most young British Muslims seem to prioritize the label of ‘Muslim’ above that of ‘British’ whilst simultaneously feeling “that they strongly belong to Britain,”³⁶⁴ MADE’s activists blend a strong sense of ‘Britishness’ with the self-consciousness of belonging to a distinctive faith community.

Indeed, the evidence discussed in this paper highlights how MADE’s articulation of a distinctive faith-based perspective and the identification of Islam as the ultimate motive underpinning agency run alongside a strong sense of belonging to the mainstream. In this blurring of dichotomies, it could be argued that MADE represents a platform concerned with creating a political space for the articulation of multiple identities that “do not dilute essential components but revitalise them through their contacts or conflicts with other elements of identity.”³⁶⁵ Insofar as the internal pluralizing of identities “is essential to an integration in which all citizens have not just rights but a sense of belonging to the whole, as well as to their own group,”³⁶⁶ MADE is not only the expression of a new type of identity politics among second and third generation Muslims concerned with authenticity and belonging to multiple spheres. It also represents an indirect challenge to the power relation underlying current understandings of ‘integration’. Far from demanding to be merely tolerated, the young British Muslims of MADE seem to claim to be accepted as an equal partner in the public (civic and politic) arena a demand for recognition that is rooted in a desire for participation as members of society, rather than as members of a minority. This “call for hybridising the

notion of the public sphere³⁶⁷ expresses a redefinition not only of Muslim political subjectivity but also of the spaces where that can be manifested in agency through an approach that “challenges the idea of the mere coexistence between abstract, mutually aseptic others as members of a pre-established game.”³⁶⁸ Such an effort can be read as MADE’s determination to challenge ‘other-ing’ in its worst connotation (i.e., that based on a ‘negative difference’ articulated through “alienness, inferiorisation, stigmatisation, stereotyping, exclusion, discrimination and racism”³⁶⁹) and affirm a ‘positive difference’ based on the senses of identity and distinctiveness that a section of young British Muslims have of themselves.³⁷⁰

In conclusion, then, the relevance of MADE as a case-study lies not only in its potential to support young British Muslims to maintain and develop their faith-based identity and agency in constructive ways. It also lies in its conceptualization of a minority-majority relationship that sees Muslims no longer as the ‘other’, the ‘exotic’ or the ‘oriental’, but as the local and the indigenous.³⁷¹ Indeed, by challenging the stereotype of Muslims in Europe as an alien community whilst simultaneously retaining a distinctive Muslim identity, MADE can play a pivotal role in reconfiguring the public sphere “on the basis of a notion of intercultural civility.”³⁷² Such a reconfiguration “would make obsolete the much-cherished and much-criticised goal of a cultural ‘integration’ of Muslims in Europe”³⁷³ and rather promote the emergence of a ‘post-integration era’³⁷⁴ that can benefit not only Muslims but also the “long-term vitality of European polities”³⁷⁵ to the extent that they are willing and capable of acknowledging and appreciating the Muslim presence on the basis of the delicate balance between sameness and difference.

Muslim Charities in Europe: Redefining a Positive Image of Islam in the Public Sphere at a Grassroots Level. The Case of France and Poland

WILLIAM BARYLO

Abstract

The increased visibility of practising Muslims is known to fuel visceral reactions across Europe. This article points out how some grassroots charities based on Islamic ethics in France and Poland positively change the perception of Islam and Muslims in the public sphere. Through the case study of France and its high levels of Islamophobia, and Poland, which has less than 0.1% of Muslims, (including Muslim Tatar families settled since the 14th century), I focus on the relationships between Muslim organisations, the public and the authorities they depend on. Although tensions and distrust were tangible during the early days of their foundation, physical socialisation and dialogue help bridge the gap between Muslims and public services. Their work in the community and engagement in dialogue "humanises" Muslims as participant citizens, and works against perceptions of Islam as an abstract and threatening entity. The internal non-formal governance inspired by Islamic ethics also brings about a cohesive environment that appeals to volunteers of all faiths and none, enabling the building of solid bonds of trust between the various stakeholders. I thus conclude that Muslim extravert social action contributes to reducing prejudice against Islam and improves harmonious living in pluricultural areas³⁷⁶.

Introduction

With volunteers embodying a performative link between spirituality and active citizenship, grassroots Muslim charities in Europe offer a hybrid public space as a cradle for dialogue and defusing tensions. Engaging with various local stakeholders in the fields of education, poverty, alternative media, and offering services to the wider society, they become a participant element in their neighbourhoods, towns and universities. Their action, by building a cohesive network of supporters through work which serves the broader community, dampens hatred and misconceptions at a local level amidst a creeping Islamophobic climate.

Past years have seen wide scale initiatives, such as the 2012 joint campaigns in France and the UK (CCIF / Islamophobia Awareness Month)³⁷⁷ and the

April 2013 petition in France,³⁷⁸ aiming at bringing the topic of Islamophobia onto the political agenda at a national level. Their effect was uneven especially when viewed in light of the seriousness of the phenomenon, which seems to be the decade's challenge for Western European Muslims. Curtailing minorities' rights and individual liberties for the sake of national security has become a well-developed electoral strategy for both right and left wing parties. Populist discourses and methods are no longer monopolized by far right organisations,³⁷⁹ while simplistic or biased content flood mainstream media³⁸⁰. Tolerance towards racist speech has come to a point that to declare oneself explicitly "Islamophobic" is no longer taboo. The surge in campaigns, conferences and meetings organised by Muslims since 9/11 and 7/7 has had little impact on governments' policies. Furthermore, after the 13/11/2015 attacks in Paris, politicians perceive increased security measures as the only possible response and far right activists continue to hold the average Muslim citizen responsible for these crimes. However, in spite of the tense climate in Europe, some grassroots organisations motivated by Islamic ethics work as a successful mediator between wider Muslim communities and the public, and have had some small but tangible success in changing the narrative.

These are small-scale local charities: some serve meals to the homeless or help high school students, while others function as think tanks or alternative media. The fieldwork was limited to organisations that: offer voluntary services to society at large and not only to Muslims; work with non-Muslim volunteers; and whose actions and principles are inspired and motivated by Islam.

How and to what extent do they reshape the narrative at a local level? In which context, time and places does dialogue with the public or public services occur? How do their spiritual or religious inspiration manifest through their actions or internal dynamics? What are the background and profile of these volunteers? What are the larger implications and impacts of these charities in European modern societies?

The purpose of this chapter is not to provide a comprehensive answer to these questions, but rather provide the outlines of an emerging and original phenomenon; one of a generation with an original and multiple identity, participating beyond cultural divisions in a society which is their home. There is probably no straight answer on how to curb hatred and Islamophobia, but these charities provide a unique yet efficient way to install a sustainable dialogue and understanding between Muslims, citizens of different

generations, of all faiths and none, and the authorities. Therefore, I explore the dynamics of action and dialogue between these charities and their social environment, and examine the impact of these relations. This work relies on six years of ethnographic observations undertaken in France and Poland as well as interviews with around 80 volunteers in eleven different charities. By shedding light on their initiatives, internal dynamics and perception of Islamic ethics, this work presents various elements put forward by these Muslim charities which are taking part in the building of a cohesive society at a local level.

Islamophobia in France

More than twenty years after the first “head scarf issue” in France, controversies surrounding the visibility of practising Muslims seem not to have decreased. NGOs and consultancy organisations such as Amnesty International³⁸¹, CCIF or Open Society Foundation³⁸² point out the adverse policies of the French government against minorities and especially against Muslims. Indeed, for the past several years, French politicians tend to have a more coercive interpretation of secularism (*laïcité*), whereas the concept, as stated in the 1958 constitution, implies only neutrality of the government and employees in public services. The European Human Rights court has even pronounced a statement underlining France’s infringement of the European Constitution because a Sikh citizen was not allowed to keep his *Dastaar* (Sikh turban) on for identity pictures³⁸³. More precisely, the French government’s strategy is more focused on developing a secular fundamentalist policy and actively trying to remove religion or spirituality from the public sphere³⁸⁴.

According to recent opinion polls published in mainstream media, 43% of the French population perceive Islam as a threat to society³⁸⁵ and 84% are in favour of a ban of the hijab on the streets³⁸⁶. Although the objectivity of those quantitative studies has been questioned, they do not help change a climate of rejection of Muslim citizens. “Going out with the scarf on the streets in countries marked with secularism needs courage” states Nilüfer Göle³⁸⁷, talking about the public pressure that practising Muslims face, because of their visibility, as the root of controversies around Islam³⁸⁸. However, qualitative studies with deep fieldwork show an opposite trend when it comes to citizens meeting Muslim people in their daily life, which will be further discussed.

Polish Muslims

On the Eastern side of Europe, Muslim families settled since the 14th century (Tatars) are an officially recognised community in Poland. With no more than 3000 individuals, they are a minority within the 40,000 Muslims living on Polish territory³⁸⁹. Poland is among the countries with the lowest proportion of Muslims citizens in the world, estimated to be no more than 0.1%. Most of them are immigrants. According to K. P dziwiatr, neither Muslim nor other minorities are a concern for politicians³⁹⁰. Never has a Muslim faced hate speech or been a victim of criminal deeds based on their faith in Poland³⁹¹.

Based on the interviews of organisations' leaders and believers conducted during my fieldwork³⁹², Polish society is portrayed as open to cultural and/or religious differences. For non-Muslim citizens, a difference is made between Islam, Muslims and classical stereotypes found in the media (terrorism, extremism, human rights violations, etc.). Nevertheless, Polish society is not kept unspoiled by Islamophobia. K. Górak-Sosnowska introduces the concept of Platonic Islamophobia. This Platonic Islamophobia describes hatred against Muslims despite never having met them³⁹³:

“Muslims do not take the work of the others, even though we have no Muslim districts, we do not like them.”

According to K. Górak-Sosnowska and K. P dziwiatr, hatred against Muslims has no ideological roots, and does not stand on rational arguments³⁹⁴. However, far right organisations or web-based discussion groups often import idioms from their Western European counterparts, such as the theory of “invasion/Islamisation of Europe” or “the loss of Europe’s cultural legacy.” Those arguments fall flat, as a possible Islamisation of Poland is questionable with only 0.1% of the population identifying as Muslim after more than 6 centuries of Muslim presence.

Method

The approach used in this work relies on the anti-utilitarian theory of action developed by French Sociologist Alain Caillé³⁹⁵, inspired by Marcel Mauss’s works on the gift³⁹⁶. Whereas recent trends in the social sciences tend to go through a whole process of quantification and extreme rationalisation, “turning qualities into quantities (...), making exist in a numeral form what was expressed only with words³⁹⁷” and lead individuals to perceive themselves

as calculating beings³⁹⁸, Caillé's works allow us to conceive social interactions as not solely driven by interest, but rather takes into account bound-free generosity, gift, friendship, love and emotions. Caillé stressed the extent to which charities employing volunteers are offering an alternative: "volunteers' actions bear importance and social efficiency just because they have a certain logic of bound-free generosity, or spirit of gift. Or even because they actively and generally refuse to be merchandised or monetised. There is therefore a problem wanting at any cost to stick a price on the priceless³⁹⁹".

This research is the result of a micro-sociological study of eleven Muslim charities in France and Poland. The data has been collected through ethnographic participant observation and one-to-one semi-structured and informal interviews with 70 Muslim and non-Muslim volunteers from different ages, genders and cultural backgrounds from September 2009 to June 2015. The charities studied in this work were all founded in the first decade of the 21st century. The age of volunteers range from 18 to 35 years old with an average of 25. Volunteers from Indian, North African, West African, Far Eastern, or Caribbean origins are commonly found, as well as reverts to Islam and non-Muslim volunteers from various faiths and none. They follow different Islamic schools of thought or philosophies. These charities attract a mix of orthodox and more liberal people working together. The respondents represent a mix of various professional and social backgrounds. Some are students at universities, work as doctors, engineers, some others work in private security companies, postal services, public services, are unemployed; some are single, others divorced, or parents with children.

These charities have been created at the very beginning of mobile Internet and virtual social networks. The increased access to information enabled the average citizen to become aware of global social and environmental challenges. Therefore, the volunteers, using social media, pay a lot of attention to the consequences of globalisation and neo-liberalism, the rise in social inequalities, gender issues, racism, poverty and other issues such as healthier food, local entrepreneurship and environmental-friendly behaviours. Because of their work on universal issues such as poverty or education, the charities attract volunteers with no particular faith or belief. Present at a local level such as a single neighbourhood or the campus of a university, the actions undertaken by these organisations include but are not limited to providing:

- Food and psychological relief for homeless people

- Tuition for immigrants
- Tuition for high school students
- Exam paper archives for university students
- Cultural and informative events (around general interest subjects)
- Publication of articles, organisation of conferences (around general interest topics)

Most of these groups do not ask for state grants or subsidies. Their economy is mostly fuelled by donations and members' contribution with little help from government. These organisations are very limited in scale with a core team not exceeding a dozen volunteers, and the atmosphere is more of a family exempted from bureaucratic procedures. Committing oneself to one of these organisations does not require sending CVs nor going through interviews. Volunteers are quickly introduced, trained and are able to start working immediately. However, one should note that "this political Islam, of public activism, represents only a minority of Muslims in Europe, but its mobilisation capability and the capability to diffuse a discourse in favour of Islam goes often beyond the circle of its usual activists⁴⁰⁰". Most of the volunteers feel deceived by political parties and government's laggardness; the alternate way offered by associations is therefore extremely attractive to those willing to contribute to social change, enabling one to act and make a difference at a local level.

Dialogue with the Public and the Authorities

Regarding the charities in France, in the very early days following their foundation, some charities were priority targets of the French intelligence services⁴⁰¹. Although the post 9/11 paranoia has decreased, in 2013, mistrust still remains towards Muslim charities or welfare organisations. The main concern is, again, visibility (the *hijab*) or the explicit name of the group (as for example JMF (French Muslim Youth) or Amatullah). In practice, those associations faced no obstacles when willing to organise public events, until recently after the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks when JMF was denied grants because the local authority decided that "their name was hard to deal with." However, the situation evolved for Amatullah, founded in 2006. The charity organising soup kitchens for the homeless was under surveillance for months before the city council deemed their action to be beneficial for the town. At the time of this research, they have been granted offices, venues for their occasional events such as open days, anniversaries or fundraising and publicity. The charity

Averroes, based in one of the main universities of Paris, had aroused fears of proselytisation but as the charity became more familiar to the administrative services, they have been granted venues inside the university for their activities and events. As one of the head members of the university testifies: “From a legal perspective, I have nothing to criticise. They organise their events, and we help them twice a term. There are many charities we never hear about, but a few that stand out like Averroes. They show respect for authority I never experienced when I was a student.”

However, interviews with civil servants and volunteers reveal a serious lack of dialogue about faith and religious practices, while both show a willingness to engage in discussion. Civil servants working in the university express personal interest in these topics, wish to understand Islam and Muslim practices, and would be willing to have a discussion with the volunteers. Many however are afraid of crossing the “forbidden border” of talking about religion while being on duty. Such discussions are self-censored by a non-verbal “*laïcité*” etiquette, a fear of talking about religion in the public arena. On the beneficiaries’ side, relationships are far less complicated and religious background seems not to disturb people looking mainly for the services offered by these organisations. As an example, people in the neighborhood, from all faiths and none, give Amatullah food for their soup kitchens.

In contrast, Polish charities focus on the perception and understanding of Islam by the wider Polish society. They often organise and participate in open days at the mosque, conferences and roundtables with religious leaders, politicians, and are active on social and mainstream media. Volunteers do not have any identity complex, finding it normal to bear Polish and Muslim identity together. Although they may not have an official status, they nevertheless remain highly active. One remarkable example is the distribution of roses in the streets by the Alejkumki Muslim young women’s association. In November 2012, they wrote a letter describing Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, and summarised his life. This letter was attached to a red rose and then distributed on the streets of Warsaw by the girls dressed in black and red. This operation, *Roze Milosci*⁴⁰² (Roses of Love), was successful as the whole stock of roses was given to people; sometimes people just kept the letter rather than the flower. Also, two Polish Muslims, M. Kochanowicz and M. Marszewski, initiated a conversation between Polish “Islamophobes” (later called “Islamoseptics”) and other Muslims. The project, started on a Facebook page, produced first mixed results. However, people from this

discussion group agreed to have a meeting in a café and met for half a day. As a result, many from both sides expressed satisfaction and the feeling of having had a “positive experience” and having “learnt something new.”

The action of French and Polish Muslim charities raises the question of proselytisation. One of the main suspicions of the French government about local charities is that the organisations have a “hidden agenda” and use their activities as a cover to secretly attract people to Islam. In Islam, the concept of *da’wa* (presentation of Islam) has different interpretations. The charities studied here are not *da’wa* organisations and have no explicit goal to convey the message of Islam or to bring new people to faith. However, many volunteers are aware that their action could be a form of implicit *da’wa* in the sense that because of their visibility as Muslims, the public might build their perception of Islam and Muslims according to what they have seen while observing the charities’ activities. One female volunteer said: “I got involved because the perception of Muslim women in society wasn’t right. Women are not shown enough.” Many are aware of the poor opinion of Islam in the media and the government. Whereas changing mind-sets is not their primary goal, it provides more reasons for some volunteers to get involved.

Attractive and Cohesive Governance

In France or in Poland, the volunteers involved in these Muslim charities use principles inherited from traditional knowledge and culture such as proximity, conviviality, solidarity, brotherhood/sisterhood, gift, faith and love at different levels, from conflict resolution to setting the rules and guidelines (for instance, “smiling⁴⁰³” is an Islamic principle stated in the rules of the Amatullah charity). This can also be observed in the decision making processes they follow, based on Islamic consultation, *Shura*, rather than voting. When taking decisions such as new policies or guidelines for the charities, or deciding the next year’s project, every member present at a meeting at Amatullah is asked to suggest ideas, as a sort of brainstorming, and then choose the favourite one. Then, for deciding which option will be adopted, a discussion begins where everyone offers arguments, pros and cons. The discussion doesn’t end until everyone agrees on an idea. Most of the *Shura* processes may need a few hours, an evening or an afternoon, but some may last for days with phone or Skype discussions, and one to one conversations between different members and the president. Eventually, a second meeting is held to validate the whole process. For some guideline

decisions, although the president has the final word and no obligation to ask everyone, *Shura* is a tool for him to consult the volunteers and take into account suggestions from other members, ensuring that the new rules benefit everyone and do not create any disagreement.

Conflict resolution also finds its inspiration of the concept of fraternity in Islamic scriptures. When conflicts occur between a group of volunteers, often a third person tries to calm down the situation with rational arguments, but also spiritual arguments such as “a strong man is the one who retains his anger,” quoting a *hadith* from Prophet Muhammad. When conflicts occur between two people, reconciliation also happens in light of Islam. Not only is it found in *hadiths* that two believers should not stop talking to each other more than three days⁴⁰⁴, but Muslims are considered to be brothers and sisters in faith according to the Quran. A young woman said after an argument with one of the volunteers: “I don’t have any resentment against her, why should I remain angry? She’s my sister before anything else” (Female, 23, France). These examples show how principles found in Islam give a different perspective on the decision-making processes and disagreement management. These are not necessarily applied by everyone and every charity, but have been observed widely in most of them.

These elements, used to dampen tensions, have a strong cohesive power among the volunteers. Many volunteers help the charities even after they left university, or the neighbourhood, because of the “spirit of family.” The public and authorities see and meet with the same familiar people, instilling bonds of trust between the stakeholders. These elements also help to build a network of volunteers from various levels of orthodoxy. As a result, authorities tend to be appreciative: “I see girls wearing the veil, some others don’t, it’s a good thing, it’s a very open-minded charity⁴⁰⁵” (Male civil servant, 45, Paris). The non-bureaucratic governance and friendly environment appear attractive to the public. Young people seeking to bring about a tangible change in society are more attracted by these small scale charities rather than large mainstream organisations, which have a less flexible *modus operandi*. The “peaceful ambiance,” the possibility of talking about “things not related to work and studies,” or the possibility to “learn about a different culture” (quotes from interviews in both France and Poland) are the main factors expressed by non-Muslim volunteers as motivations to get involved. These inputs and their strong emphasis on human relations and proximity paralleled with social action for the wider society give a fresher definition of key concepts like politics and citizenship.

Redefining Citizenship

In modern societies, the idea of citizenship has been more related to a legal status of belonging (more as in the Ancient Roman institution of citizenship) rather than seen from the perspective of an active person in the society (which is closer to the Ancient Greek definition of a citizen). As citizenship may be considered as a concept of a “national form of humanity,⁴⁰⁶” Rudolf Martin Rizman suggests “to the passive acceptance of citizenship, one should substitute an active role comprising civic responsibilities and virtues⁴⁰⁷.” Although not necessarily involved in political parties, the observed volunteers clearly participate in politics in its essential meaning of “public life”, *bios politikos*⁴⁰⁸, as they are active in the city (*Polis*), this “open space where political action occurs⁴⁰⁹”. This is what Daniel Cefaï calls “concrete citizenship⁴¹⁰”. The example of these Muslim charities can clearly be conceived as a birthplace for what Dewey calls democracy “at home⁴¹¹”, offering an innovative way of practising this democracy enriched with traditional concepts inspired by Islamic ethics. This perception of citizenship has a clear impact on authorities. As an example, Gilles Poux, the mayor of the hometown of JMF in France states: “our society needs citizens to be actively involved; therefore, when seeing a charity like JMF, undertaking meaningful actions of general interest, we give them the means to achieve it, we offer them venues and technical means to enable them to reach their goal.” In France and Poland, Turkish organisations, respectively Plateforme de Paris and Dunai Instytut Dialogu, often invite politicians and the public to discuss issues such as renewable energy, organic food and health issues, with the help of a panel of experts and fuelling a debate between citizens. By contributing as Muslims in general discussions, they offer a vision of Muslims as participant citizens.

In both France and Poland, when looking at the perception of activism among the volunteers, one could observe two main opposing trends (among a plethora of different opinions): those who stick to a confrontational narrative and those bringing up positive stories. On the one hand, some volunteers tend to only share and talk about positive stories, such as positive political discourses, constructive initiatives from civil servants or people, and interfaith stories. These are seen more often trying to sustain a dialogue with public servants and encouraging their local community to actively contribute to local politics. They may not fully agree with their city council or university’s administration, but they believe that changing the context depends not on seeing where they can criticise, harm, and destroy; but rather on finding where

they can offer a solution. For example, they invite younger Muslims from the mosque to attend the public city council's meetings. This approach has shown promising results. Interviews with civil servants from the university or local city councils show that mind-sets have changed over a few years. Most of these initially mistrusted organisations now receive the full support of the public services, which provide them premises for their events, publicity and much more. This approach leads to a two-way humanising process; Islam and Muslims are no longer seen as an abstract entity.

On the other hand, some volunteers in France who come from a very liberal and modern background, often pursuing higher education in universities, mainly talk and share on social media about negative stories surrounding Muslims in France: attacks, negative media coverage, stigmatising political discourses, and so on. They tend to have an adverse view of elements representing the established political system. They do not trust local authorities such as the city council and refuse to engage in any form of dialogue with them. They tend to divide the society between "allies" and "enemies." They share articles shaming and blaming politicians or institutions, or other Muslims considered as traitors. Divergent opinions are considered as betrayals and any friend or ally who expresses divergent opinions becomes suspicious. Not every charity or volunteer is safe from falling into this profile, defining themselves negatively, by what they are not, by what they are against, all they see are items to be potentially rejected. They see enemies more easily than friends. They express anger more easily than empathy. They criticise more than finding solutions and believe that the world will improve by shaming and humiliating the culprits. One of their main arguments is that Muslims have been wounded, and still suffer from the remains of imperial, colonial, and globalising trends, mainly in France. Therefore, dehumanising the "other" is a form of revenge. It seems the divide operated by politicians, the media and the pressure brought by the securitarian narrative, have had a strong impact on some volunteers who, as a consequence, refuse to perceive themselves as "French citizens." In Poland however, the citizenship debate arouses less tension than in France: most volunteers interviewed did not find any incompatibility between being Muslim and a Polish citizen at the same time.

Another limitation of these findings is that not every organisation considered in this research works as a completely open system. Although being open to all in theory, in practice the religious references, activities and events

connected to the religious calendar are more appealing to Muslims or people who can relate to spirituality. As examples, Alajkumki, organising lectures around the understanding of sacred texts, and women-oriented activities, is naturally of more interest to Muslim women. Although heavily invested in interfaith, some Turkish organisations are more attractive to people from a Turkish background or who speak Turkish. Also, recent events and the change of administration can have an effect, as in the case of JMF, which was denied grants in 2015 because of the fear awoken after the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks.

Conclusion

By contributing to society at a local level on mainstream issues, grassroots Muslim charities remove lexical constructions based on binary distinctions between cultures, ethnicity or religion as “Muslims/non-Muslims” or “Them/Us”; rather, these organisations help consider society as a wider “Us”. Tackling poverty and lack of education in deprived areas in France made their presence legitimate to public services rather than a threat to security, as observed in the first decade of the century. In Poland, their extreme minority situation causes Muslims to adopt extravert behaviour and focus on a dialogue with the wider Polish Society. Also, a climate of respect is underpinned by a government that officially recognises Islam as part of the Polish culture and people who, on average, have an open-minded approach to cultural and religious differences.

The small scale and approach focused on proximity and human relations makes these organisations alternatives to both the welfare state and bigger NGOs inspired by the utilitarian vision of corporate culture. Thus, they are attractive to a wide range of volunteers not necessarily connected to any faith or belief. They provide an original and unique option to participate in wider society. As opposed to neo-liberal trends that put mottos of success, productivity and performance as synonyms of happiness, they do not focus on results but rather on intentions. This cohesive environment allows volunteers to stay involved for years, building bonds of trust between them, the public and the public services. Their sustained dialogue with authorities enables a humanisation of Muslims and Islam, seen therefore as partners rather than an abstract and threatening entity.

These grassroots activists elucidate how different cultures and traditional values applied in modern societies redefine and reform key concepts of

democracy, politics, and citizenship. The younger generations at the roots of these heterotopias contribute to the emergence of a pluralistic society and sow the seeds of mutual understanding. Mixing people from divergent schools of thoughts and opinions, they are means to prevent radicalisation, marginalisation, and tensions within their immediate neighbourhood. As mainstream media and politicians are still hard to access, these small Muslim charities show promising results to curb hatred on a local level.

On a final note, the divergent opinions found within these charities and sometimes the intense spiritual connection, making some seemingly exclusive, show that the reality of the field is complex and each situation is rather shades of grey rather than binary black and white. However, although each context bears elements offering a counterbalance, their very existence, as third-spaces between Muslim citizens and the wider society, is a step towards a mutual understanding.

Law and Culture

Unregistered Muslim marriages in England and Wales: The Issue of Discrimination Through 'Non-Marriage' Declarations

VISHAL VORA

Abstract

The marriage laws of England and Wales are straightforward, just and accessible to anyone wishing to join the club. Even though cohabitation is rising, marriage remains popular, especially as a family model for having children. Recording marriages in a correct and concise manner is obviously important. The Marriage Act of 1753 attempted to regularise marriage registration. However, in the last decade or so there appear to be an increasing number of unregistered marriages taking place within the jurisdiction of England and Wales, especially among the British Muslims. These marriages fall outside the grasp of the law and are not recognised as legally enforceable; the consequences fully unravel only in the event of breakdown. The current law on non-marriage is discriminatory as a disproportionately significant group of British citizens are suffering as a result. Drawing on qualitative ethnographic narratives, this paper explores the potential reasons why unregistered Muslim marriages continue to exist and document the treatment they receive by the courts. It concludes with proposals to resolve this issue.

It could be said that getting married in England and Wales is not difficult; not only are the rules relating to marriage celebration widely published by the government on their official website,⁴¹² but local authorities also have specific information on their own webpages,⁴¹³ together with the formalities that need to be complied with. In general, couples have choice of form; they can opt either for a civil or for a religious marriage ceremony and celebrate both at a variety of venues, in some cases even the same venue. The majority of rules pertaining to marriage are contained within the Marriage Act 1949 (The 1949 Act) which sets out the formalities required to effect a marriage according to the rites of the Church of England and also the formalities required to effect a marriage otherwise.

The 1949 Act is the result of a series of consolidating amendments, on a piecemeal basis, but is said to carry the legacy of the eighteenth century in the sense that it has not taken into account changes in society.⁴¹⁴ The 1949 Act allows for several routes to marriage. Part III⁴¹⁵ of the 1949 Act sets these out

which include marriage in a register office, in a registered building⁴¹⁶ (for religious ceremonies) and on approved premises⁴¹⁷ (hotels, restaurants and the like for civil ceremonies). For a legal marriage to take place it is necessary for it to be celebrated within a prescribed building and that an authorised person conducts the marriage.⁴¹⁸ The Part III amendments are of particular importance to British Muslims (and other minorities) as they are usually required to marry twice and divorce twice; once in law and then again in their faith. The only religious marriages that are capable of creating a legally valid union are those conducted by the Church of England, the Jews and the Quakers; this is because the officials performing such marriages also register them. For all other religious groups the 1949 Act provides in section 46 the option of having a post-marriage religious ceremony, thus making it clear that it is only the civil ceremony that is able to create a valid marriage; other religious marriages are not themselves legally valid marriages.

It was thought that by making such amendments to combine the civil and religious marriage, allowing them to take place concurrently and under the same roof, the marriage process would be made easier. However, despite these additions to the 1949 Act, British Muslim communities do not seem to have embraced the new options made available. Registration of their religious buildings has been low. The Muslim population of England and Wales according to the 2011 Census was recorded as 2.7 million⁴¹⁹ and as of December 2014 there were 263 Islamic religious buildings (mosques and other buildings) registered for the solemnisation of marriage.⁴²⁰ Compared to the British Hindu population, which was recorded as 816,000⁴²¹ at the same time, there were 99 religious buildings registered for marriage.⁴²² The number of Islamic religious buildings certified for marriage compared to the number of Hindu religious buildings for the same purpose is approximately 20 per cent lower when adjusted for respective population sizes.

Accordingly, British Muslims cannot rely solely on their religious marriage, the *nikah*, for legal validity. It must be followed by a civil ceremony marriage, unless of course the *nikah* is performed within a duly registered building by an authorised person. As there exists no 'common law marriage' in England and Wales, failure to undertake the civil ceremony of marriage (confusingly called 'registration' and understood by many to be an administrative process) will mean the married couple are just cohabitants, even though the start of their cohabitation was marked by a religiously valid ceremony of marriage.

While it may not be considered difficult to effect a legal marriage in terms of

time, cost and available options as described above, the current system is complicated and there have been calls for its simplification.⁴²³ Furthermore, although adaptations to the existing marriage law have been made, allowing for religious buildings like mosques and temples to be places of marriage solemnisation, minority ethnic communities have not found the process for obtaining licences easy.⁴²⁴ For the British Muslim community, are places of worship the ideal venue for marriages and could this among other elements explain the low uptake in registration?

The 1949 Act deals with those marriage ceremonies that fall short of some of the formalities, giving rise to a void marriage. However it is silent on the *minimum requirements* needed for a legally valid marriage to be created. A void marriage allows one party to obtain a decree under section 11 of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 (the 1973 Act) and both parties have a resulting right to apply for financial orders under sections 23 and 24 of the 1973 Act. Such remedies include all the usual orders available to divorcing couples. Since 2001 the judicial application of non-marriage has resulted in unregistered Muslim marriages being deemed non-existent marriages, or non-marriages⁴²⁵ for short. A non-marriage is considered *more* void than a void marriage and the financial orders available for void marriages are not applicable, as such non-marriages afford the parties no legal status.

It is surprising that English law should consider an internationally recognised form of marriage, at least in Islamic countries, as not capable of being a valid marriage, or at the very least, a void one. A *nikah* marriage is however recognised as legally valid under the rules of private international law, and does not require additional registration so long as it complies with the *lex loci celebrationis*, the law of the place of celebration of the marriage.

Clearly the 1949 Act reflects the interests of the early nineteenth century and requires reform to account for the significant changes that have occurred in society owing to migration and diversification of the population. There exists some debate about the current usage of non-marriage declarations, as the law seems to make a value judgement on the kinds of ceremonies that are capable of being granted legal status.⁴²⁶

Probert has argued that within the terms of the 1949 Act, non-marriage has a 'relatively narrow scope'.⁴²⁷ In the past six years there have been seven such cases⁴²⁸ concerning non-marriage, five of which involved Muslim ceremonies of marriage. Based on recent cases alone, the law is clear that such a ceremony

of marriage, when conducted without the corresponding civil registration, is not capable of creating a valid, let alone void marriage, and such a ceremony can only be a non-marriage.

Le Grice considers that the test for marriage should simply be ‘a ceremony and public expression of marriage’⁴²⁹ not if the ceremony created or purported to create a valid marriage under the 1949 Act. This is based on the law as expressed by Jackson.⁴³⁰ This is because the recent cases did not have the benefit of full legal argument and Le Grice who appeared for the wife, Ms Hudson, in the case of *Hudson v Leigh* argued this point unsuccessfully.⁴³¹ Bodey J stated that it was ‘unrealistic and illogical to conclude that there is no such concept as a ceremony or event which, whilst having marriage like characteristics fails in law to effect a marriage’.⁴³²

According to Leong,⁴³³ intention is the dividing line between a void and non-marriage and when there is creditable evidence of effecting such a mutual intention, by engaging in a religiously valid form of marriage, ‘the parties become married and are, therefore, entitled to at least the status of void marriage.’⁴³⁴ This argument seeks to ignore the marriage formalities and instead places weight on the intention of the parties creating an ‘inchoate marriage’ and avoid the status of non-marriage.

As the 1949 Act is silent on the minimum requirements to effect a legal marriage and the role of intention is outweighed by compliance with formalities, the case law in this area is unsurprisingly dominated by non-Christian marriages, and a value judgment is most certainly being made on what kind of ceremony can be given status. In the case of *Gereis v Yagoub*⁴³⁵ a Christian marriage took place in an unlicensed religious building yet the marriage was found to be valid.

This failure of British Muslims to complete the marriage process is not a new issue. The community itself has been long aware of this fact; this was one of the main reasons for the establishment of Sharia councils in the mid-1980s.⁴³⁶ Although this lack of compliance with marriage formalities has been an issue for a significant period of time now, only since the application of non-marriage have its harsh consequences been felt, to the detriment of those women in unregistered marriages.

When we examine unregistered Muslim marriage, it becomes necessary also to explore the role of religious tribunals, often called *sharia*⁴³⁷ councils. This

is because the when the state law cannot provide a solution, women turn to alternative forms of redress. The few studies, discussed below, recount the experiences of Muslim women users at particular *sharia* councils and show that a striking number of Muslims are marrying in England and Wales without the corresponding civil registration. There is inconsistency regarding the numbers of such marriages, with the figures ranging from 27 to 52 per cent. No academic study has quantitatively examined the occurrence of unregistered Muslim marriage itself. Accurately measuring the numbers of British Muslims in unregistered marriages is difficult, as the 'validity question' will only surface during the course of marital breakdown.

Shah-Kazemi⁴³⁸ examined 287 marriage case files and found that 77 marriages (27 per cent) of women were in unregistered marriages. This finding is not reflected in the study conducted by Douglas et al⁴³⁹ who found that 14 out of 27 marriages (52 per cent) involved couples in unregistered marriages however she does not give the number of those marriages celebrated outside of the UK and which would therefore be recognised without additional registration. Current PhD research by Parveen⁴⁴⁰ investigating 100 *sharia* council case files reflects Shah-Kazemi's findings; she puts the number of unregistered marriages taking place in England and Wales at 29 per cent.

Respondent Cohort

To understand the reasons creating these difficulties, fieldwork interviews⁴⁴¹ were undertaken with British Muslim women respondents in unregistered marriages. The research draws on 10 qualitative semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. All respondents were aged between 20 - 42 years and came from diverse socio-economic backgrounds in England; all but one had been university educated.

Methodology

Each interview lasted between one and two hours, allowing for in-depth data capture, which was done in the form of audio recording, thereby rendering the interview more like a conversation. Two interviews were conducted by telephone and contemporaneous notes were taken in the absence of audio recording. Qualitative interviews were chosen to obtain a detailed description of the life world of the respondent. A mixed methodological fieldwork approach such as the use of focus groups was considered however deemed

unsuitable due to the highly personal and sensitive nature of what was discussed by each respondent.

The recruitment of respondents was a difficult element of this study. Contact was made with relevant NGOs and charity organisations working in this area however they were unable to assist. I was told that most of their users speak to them in confidence so it would be extremely difficult to find respondents willing to speak. One prominent personal feature that I had not factored-in was my own gender (male) and ethnic background.⁴⁴² Many of the NGOs handling potentially relevant cases involved domestic violence and they were unwilling to engage with me. The majority of respondents came from legal referrals as this proved to be the only successful method. Owing to a lack of financial resources for this project, the option of using a female research assistant as proxy was not possible.

Although the sample of interviewees was small due to the difficulties in recruitment, these cases studies do shed light on the wider sociological realities of British Muslim women, their role within the family, and their engagement or lack thereof with marriage formalities. It was not the sole purpose of this research to generalise, but rather to illustrate in more depth the current English legal scenario concerning the issue of marriage validity and the application of non-marriage declaration for Muslim ceremonies of marriage.

Research findings

Of the 10 interviewees, all but two were under the impression that their unregistered marriage was legally binding and enforceable under English law. Of the two who were not under this impression, one respondent had actively chosen not to register her *nikah* and in the other case, the couple had married via a telephone *nikah* (proxy marriage). Both wives were clearly aware of their actions and understood that marrying through religion only would not have brought about a legally enforceable marriage. Their entry to the marriage was by informed consent. The other eight respondents however were under the illusion that they would be granted the same legal rights as other married couples, and it was only upon breakdown and interaction with a solicitor that they discovered otherwise.

All respondents had married their partners within a very short period of time, usually within six months of meeting. Although in some cases there was a

longer period between the initial meeting and the marriage taking place, it was still within a relatively short period of time, six months or less, that marriage was discussed formally. This formality involved the meeting of the respective parents' key family members, and announcing the forthcoming wedding to their wider community network. This act legitimised the couple should they be seen together alone. During this period matters between the couple still remained *hala*⁴⁴³ meaning no cohabitation or intimate relations, with all such 'married activity' reserved until after the wedding. The shortest marriage lasted just one month and the longest was 11 years.

***Nikah* Venue and Organisation**

Of the *nikahs* to have taken place in Britain, two took place in a mosque (neither of which was a registered building for the purpose of solemnising marriage), one in a consulate and one in an approved building. The other five took place within the bride's home and respondents commented how was this very much the norm within their cultural tradition.

British Muslim weddings are usually arranged by the bride's family; this duty is commonly performed by the father of the bride or another elder male relation. The research found that the brides themselves had very little if any involvement in the arranging of the marriage, in line with their cultural traditions, and this was regardless of their status outside of the home. Educational attainments and economic activity had no affect on their status within the home. It was noted that there remains a fundamental difference between the marriage and the wedding; most respondents were only able to participate actively in the latter. It was presumed by them that those organising the wedding and the Imam conducting the *nikah* ceremony were aware of the legal rules as their intention to marry was obvious and clear. The respondents had various levels of understanding regarding how their *nikah* marriage was registered. Differing accounts arose during the course of interviews but the overall view by all eight respondents was essentially the same; it was the duty of the *imam* to 'register' the *nikah* they had performed with the relevant official body, through some technical registration process, like providing details to the relevant authority to make the marriage 'official'.

Breakdown of Marriage

Upon breakdown of the marriages, recourse to the English courts was the

natural forum for those respondents who were unaware of the legal situation. It was only upon discovering the lack of compliance and hence possibility of enforcing the marriage through the courts, that they were forced to seek alternative arbitration. They all were puzzled as to why their marriage, equal in every other way to 'other recognised marriages' was not given proper status and legal validity by the law especially as it had been witnessed and a certificate issued by the Imam performing the marriage.

Half the respondents had been issued their *nikah* marriage certificates and felt this was an official and important document, confirming the status of their marriage. Those who did not have the marriage certificate were trying to obtain it.

In only one case did the *nikah* take place in a venue licensed for the purpose of solemnising marriages— an approved premises. However in this case no notice had been given and the ceremony had not been attended by a civil registrar so the marriage had not been recorded in the relevant register. In this case the respondent had been told when picking venues that this particular one was 'licensed to hold weddings'. She felt assured that her *nikah* would be legally binding as it was held there. This was not the case and at court her *nikah* was declared a non-marriage.

Of the ten marriages examined, five ended in *talaq* [an Islamic pronouncement of divorce]⁴⁴⁴; the remaining respondents were still religiously married though separated from their husbands at the time of interview. The five remaining respondents made clear that they would seek a religious divorce at the appropriate time. Being free to marry in the faith again remained very important for all respondents and it was clear that a civil divorce alone was not enough.

In all but one case, the respondents were upset and angry at what had happened to them and at being stuck in marriages without any enforceable protections. It was clear that the breakdown of marriage had taken place quickly and without much time for considering other viable options such as marriage counselling. Separation was quick to occur; one day they were married and the next it was all over.

Only in one case did the wife actively choose not to register her *nikah* marriage as she was not interested in sharing 'half' her assets with her husband. She was acutely aware of her financial position as being stronger than his; she

owned a property and did not want her husband 'taking half' should their relationship breakdown. She was keen to keep her personal assets out of the equation upon divorce.

Court Proceedings

Of the ten cases, only three proceeded to court although all respondents had received varying degrees of legal advice. Two unregistered marriages were declared non-marriages by family division judges of the High Court and the third was in the process of seeking a civil remedy via the Trusts of Land and Appointment of Trustee Act 1996 (TOLATA) to reclaim marital gifts (cash and gold) of significant value running into thousands of pounds.⁴⁴⁵

Of the two non-marriages, one followed up with a TOLATA claim and after two years of litigation the wife was awarded a moderate cash sum, but in the process incurred significant legal fees, totalling just over 20% of the final award. The other respondents who had also invested financially in their marriages had no choice but to exit the former family home with no financial remedy or division of assets whatsoever. This was even the case of the single respondent whose Pakistani *nikah* marriage was capable of legal recognition in England.

Research Inferences

For all respondents, having an Islamic marriage was very important, paramount in being and feeling married because the *nikah* is a culturally correct ceremony whereas civil registration was just a piece of paper. Marriage for British Muslim women remains the social norm; they were raised with the idea that getting married legitimises one's place in the community as it is the gateway to form a family. The cultural tradition of marrying at the 'right age' is still prevalent, although higher education and professional training has shifted this boundary a little; the family pressure to get married is still there. In addition, it is important to note that for these British Muslim women there is no alternative, even on a basic level such as dating, which is considered taboo. Pre-marital relations or cohabitation are absolutely not permitted or practiced, and this observation relates to the fact that marriages are arranged quickly, through parental introductions, family ties or an individual's own network of friends.

A Lack of Informed Consent

Those eight respondents who genuinely believed in the legal nature of their *nikah* marriage were shocked by the discovery that their marriages, in law, potentially held no status other than that of a cohabiting couple. They were confused why their marriage ceremony, clear intentions, behaviour and actions post *nikah* held no value in the eyes of the law. Furthermore many felt let down by the justice system, since as British citizens, they saw the role of the state as being to protect them. They saw themselves as British Muslims and could not understand why the *nikah* and corresponding certificate were not good enough to be counted as legal and binding marriage.

Cultural Traditions

All respondents reported that they had little involvement in arranging the actual marriage ceremony itself as this was outsourced to male family members, as dictated by cultural tradition and the way it had been done for generations. Although there have been changes to Muslim marriages, such as redefining the gender roles and pushing back the age boundaries for women to enter marriage, by virtue of being westernised through residing in Britain, there remain some key elements that have not been subject to change, such as the need have the consent of a male guardian (*wali*).

Generally husbands dictated what the wives should do within the confines of the home and maintained control. This element of control was noticeable at the time of marital breakdown in all but one case. It seemed as if the lack of legal status of the *nikah* came as no shock to the husbands. Even in the one legally valid marriage case, the wife was told when the husband pronounced *talaq* [divorce] that she had no rights over her children anymore and she should leave the house immediately and never come back. Even though the Muslim divorce process involves a three-month cooling off period (*idda*) as well as dialogue and arbitration, the underlying social realities experienced by these respondents are shaped by a well-established system of patriarchy and gender imbalance.

The Law is Unsympathetic

Had more respondent cases carried the financial burden of legal fees and sought a court hearing, it is probable based on case law that all would have

been declared non-marriages given the fact no civil registration was completed. The parties would have been held to wilfully have closed their eyes to the requirements of the 1949 Act by making surprisingly few enquiries and relying too much on family or others to ensure compliance. Although judges have sympathy for the plight of wives in unregistered marriages, the application of non-marriage has now been approved by the penultimate court in *Sharbatly v Shagroon*⁴⁴⁶. The respondents felt that this was unfair to them, as British citizens who had unknowingly entered into such a predicament..

Research Conclusions

Until and unless a case goes to the Supreme Court and is decided differently to that of *Shagroon*⁴⁴⁷, the concept of non-marriage is here to stay. With significant numbers of British Muslims engaging in unregistered marriages, there will be a disproportionate number affected by non-marriage. The concept of non-marriage needs to be limited in its application to play-marriages and self-devised rituals such as hand fasting or broomstick weddings.⁴⁴⁸ Non-marriage should not be used for religiously valid marriage ceremonies that create a marriage according to the parties' beliefs. Aligning such religiously valid *nikah* ceremonies of marriage with play-marriages is discriminatory and reform of the 1949 Act is now due following the case law in this area.⁴⁴⁹

In the past five years the issue of unregistered Muslim marriage has been the topic of press and media coverage; solutions have been put forward but without much success. The most recent campaign⁴⁵⁰ seeks to register *all* Muslim marriages and a series of road shows are scheduled to take place later this year to bring about awareness of the issue of unregistered marriage within Muslim communities. While such an initiative is noble in its remit to help alleviate the issue facing the British Muslim community, it has failed to work previously and it presumes that British Muslim women have the ability to bring about such changes and resist deep-rooted cultural traditions.⁴⁵¹ The most recent campaign is another attempt to encourage mandatory marriage registration and still involves working with an overly complicated marriage registration system that is in need of simplification.⁴⁵² That other jurisdictions – such as Australia, parts of America and Scotland – manage marriage registration practices differently suggests that there is a more successful method to reduce numbers of unregistered marriages.

This research has shown that the home is the usual setting for holding the *nikah* ceremony. Such places are not capable of being licensed for the purposes of marriage celebration. The solutions of implementing a celebrant based marriage model, similar to the system in Scotland, and removing the requirement for British Muslims to marry twice and within a particular building, go to the root of this issue. Placing the responsibility of registration on an authorised celebrant, removing the need for the ceremony to follow a particular form, and granting freedom of choice as to the language the ceremony is conducted in, would give the best platform for British Muslims (and other minority groups) to engage with the official system and marry via a culturally significant ceremony.

The Scottish system

In Scotland effecting a legal marriage is governed by the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977. Scotland accepts that religious marriage ceremonies vary greatly and as such, only seek to ensure the following two conditions⁴⁵³ are met:

- A declaration by the parties, in the presence of each other, the celebrant and two witnesses, that they either accept each other as husband and wife or accept each other in marriage, or make both declarations; and
- A declaration by the celebrant, after the foregoing declaration, that the parties are then husband and wife or are then married, or make both declarations.

There is no legally prescribed form of words to be used in relation to ‘marriage vows’. The ceremony may be conducted in either English or any other language so long as all the parties, including the celebrant, can understand the language, with the services of a translator if required. Hence the Scottish system is flexible and open-ended as the *nikah* ceremony does not need require any amendment from its original form to satisfy the legal burdens of marriage.

The Scottish system not only offers a three-year licence to members of almost all faith and belief groups to become their own marriage celebrants, it also offers a temporary registration system, allowing essentially anyone from a recognised faith group to apply for a licence and solemnise a single marriage.⁴⁵⁴

The most interesting factor in this system is the uptake of registration. It is not surprising to see that the majority of those holding such registration are those from the non-Church of Scotland group, however it is telling that seven per cent of all registrations are held by members of Islamic faith groups.⁴⁵⁵ Compare this figure to the small number of mosques in England and Wales that are registered for the solemnisation of marriage, and it is possible to say on this cursory evidence that the celebrant-based system has been well received and *is* working. No issues of unregistered Muslim marriage in Scotland have been reported.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that the current marriage laws are not up to date or adequate to protect the interests of British Muslims who fail to fully engage with the complicated marriage registration process. Allowing religious marriages to be celebrated in places of worship has not remedied the problem as the low rates of registration of religious buildings attest. Significant numbers within British Muslim communities are getting married without undertaking the corresponding civil registration and unaware of the legal consequences. Disproportionate numbers are affected by the declaration of non-marriage. The application of non-marriage has shifted from its originally intended usage of marriages conducted in the course of a play. Non-marriage declarations prevent financial orders from being made and until a change in the legal framework governing marriage registration is implemented, it is difficult to see how respondents similar to those who feature in this paper will be able to make use of their forum of choice, the English family courts.

While the Scottish celebrant system may not be perfect for England and Wales, some type of celebrant marriage model should be seriously considered. Such a system provides all those who wish to use it with a simple mechanism to marry in accordance with the law and would prevent unregistered marriages in England and Wales. And most importantly, it seems to actually work; in Scotland unregistered Muslim marriage is not a concern. The law on non-marriage has been etched through case law and, until change is introduced, can only be reversed by a decision of the Supreme Court or law reform resulting in wholesale redrafting of the 1949 Act.

The Purposes of Islamic Law and the Europeanization of Fiqh: A Case Study of Convert Females Remaining with Their Non-Muslim Husbands

TARIQ AL-TIMIMI

Abstract

Most converts to Islam in Europe are women; many of these are already married to non-Muslims prior to converting. In Islamic law, is that marriage permitted to continue, post-conversion? The majority of Muslim jurists argue that conversion makes the marriage void in some capacity at least. However, a dissenting minority has emerged in recent years premising their opinion on an understanding of the concept of the “purposes of Islamic law” (maqāṣid al-sharī‘a), arguing that the specific legal evidences upon which the majority opinion is based must be reviewed to determine their original context, and how that varies from the current European context; and arguing that the consequences of the majority opinion – legal, physical and emotional – for Muslim converts should be considered in light of the purposes of Islamic law. In the eyes of some, the concept of the “purposes of Islamic law” is being used to manufacture a “European Islam” that is at odds with traditional normative Islam. Yet contenders argue that maqāṣid al-sharī‘a may be employed to demonstrate the flexibility of Islamic law and consequently the universality of the religion. The purpose of this article is to outline the divergence of opinion that exists, the reason for it, and the role of maqāṣid al-sharī‘a in it. Noted too is the urgent need to engage scholars who are conscious of the exigencies that the Muslim community faces.

The Problem

‘Conversion is a complex phenomenon: it implies continuity and change, association and, at times, involuntary dissociation.’⁴⁵⁶ Perhaps nothing exemplifies this statement better than the question of convert females remaining with their non-Muslim husbands. Interestingly, in the 2013 Cambridge *Narratives of Conversion* report from which this quote is taken, there is no mention of this question, despite evidence that it “regularly”⁴⁵⁷ features as a problem.

Of the three Abrahamic faiths, Islam is unique in its acceptance of some forms of interfaith marriages, specifically of a Muslim man marrying a *kitābi*⁴⁵⁸ (Jew or Christian) woman.⁴⁵⁹ Initiating all other marriage types is expressly

prohibited.⁴⁶⁰ Hence, although the subject of this paper affects both males and females, the focus is on female converts specifically, because conversion to Islam in the UK (and elsewhere) is a largely female phenomenon.

According to anecdotal reports, three-quarters of converts to Islam in the UK are female. Naturally, a large number of these are already married to non-Muslim partners.⁴⁶¹ In 1995, Batool Al-Toma, current head of the New Muslim Project UK posed this dilemma in what she described as a “long letter” to ‘Abdullāh Al-Judai’, a Muslim jurist and hadith specialist based in Leeds, and current deputy head of the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR). The circumstances of the situation were as follows: numerous females at regular intervals had approached Al-Toma enquiring about their marriage status post-conversion. Some of these women had not yet embraced Islam. They had been informed by religious leaders or even at times lay Muslims that upon conversion their marriages would legally end. Consequently, some of these women were reluctant to convert, while others who had converted expressed the hardships that such position entails, explaining that they had been married for several decades and had children of varying ages with their husbands, or that they had no other home and family to turn to for shelter and support. In other instances, they argued that the husband was supportive of the conversion, or even encouraged it, and the would-be convert maintained that this would portray Islam in a negative light, given that the religion and law of Islam would become the primary cause of the family breakdown.⁴⁶² Sometime later Al-Judai’ responded that he had forwarded the question on to the ECFR. The ECFR, in turn, tasked its members to research the issue for its forthcoming convention. The outcomes were unexpected.

Legal Background and Contemporary Discussion

In his magisterial work *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam*, Yohanan Friedmann points out that, “in the earliest period of Islam there was a current of opinion willing to countenance the preservation of a Muslim woman’s marriage to an unbeliever. This possibility was not destined to last and it was excluded from the law as established in the major compendia. Eventually few legal issues in Islam came to be addressed with such unanimity of opinion as the prohibition imposed on giving a Muslim woman in marriage to an infidel.”⁴⁶³ Reflecting this, Yūsuf Al-Qaradāwi⁴⁶⁴ and Al-Judai’⁴⁶⁵ both state that upon first glance, this is an issue on which there appears to be a clear juristic consensus, i.e. the

woman must be separated whether immediately (upon conversion), or at the end of the waiting period (‘*idda*) or upon the refusal by the husband of the option of converting to Islam. “This is the fatwa given by the majority of contemporary clerics (‘*ulamā*’) in Europe and elsewhere. It certainly creates a problem if the woman is attached to her husband and he does not mistreat her or abuse her because of Islam, and more so if she has dependent children,”⁴⁶⁶ Al-Qaradawi argues. Of the six ECFR panellists who contributed to the research,⁴⁶⁷ Al-Judai^c argued that upon conversion, divorce is optional for the woman but not obligatory. However, he appears unique in asserting that if a woman elects to remain in the relationship, conjugal relations may continue.

Of the other panellists, ‘Abdullāh Al-Zubayr argues that with certain conditions – such as the woman’s insistence on remaining in the relationship, and a guarantee that the husband will not deter her from practicing her faith – the marriage may continue, as a concession under the pretext of necessity. He vaguely states that this is out of consideration for a necessary objective of Islamic law (*ri‘āyatan li-maqṣadin ḍarūrī min al-maqāṣid al-ḍarūriyya al-shari‘yyah al-mu‘tabarah*), without stating which and how. He is also ambiguous about whether conjugal relations may persist if she insists on remaining with her husband. Faysal Mawlawi argues that the woman and her husband are to be separated at the expiry of the waiting period, but that during this period normal marital relations (i.e. conjugal ones) may continue. Muhammad ‘Abdulqādir Abu Fāris strongly criticised the view that any form of relationship may continue and opined that the marriage terminates immediately. In a short piece, ‘Abdulquddūs Nihāt held that the marriage terminates at the expiry of the waiting period. He does not address the issue of conjugal relations.

Finally, Al-Qaradāwi mentions that far from there being a consensus, there existed at least nine opinions found in the classical *corpus juris*. In his usual manner - employing the notions of *taysīr* (facilitating ‘easier’ lives) and *takhayyur* (eclectically choosing between legal opinions) – and after adopting the opinion that the marriage be maintained, he reasons that there is a “practical problem in requiring a recently converted woman to remain with her husband and wait for him for years; can they restrain themselves while living under the same roof to not physically approach the other, especially if they’re both young?”⁴⁶⁸ Eventually he concludes obscurely that the legality of a Muslim woman remaining with her non-Muslim husband is a “compelling

opinion, reinforced by the needs of new female Muslim reverts [converts] who remain with their husbands in non-Muslim lands, especially if they hope that their partners would in due course convert too, and more so if they have children that she does not wish to lose [custody of].”⁴⁶⁹

On 22 July 2001, the ECFR issued a decision in which it stated that the majority opinion (of its panellists) is that a Muslim woman may not remain with her husband after the waiting-period, but that the minority opinion is that the marriage continues “with all the standard marital rights and duties, if the husband does not harmfully impact on her religion and she hopes that he would convert. This is so that women are not dissuaded from entering Islam for fear that they would separate from their husband and desert their families by doing so.”⁴⁷⁰

The role of *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿa*

Maqāṣid al-sharīʿa broadly refers to the intents, objectives, purports, philosophy and aims of Islamic law. The grand objective of the law is to secure benefit, and prevent harm. The aims are often scaled in the following order: the preservation and promotion of religion, life, family, intellect and wealth.⁴⁷¹ References to its role in the production of the opinions of Al-Judai^ʿ, Al-Zubayr, and Taha Al-^ʿAlwāni⁴⁷² are quite evident. However, exempting Al-Judai^ʿ’s lengthy opinion, it is apt here to echo Kecia Ali’s sentiment that the “methodological premise [for these fatwas] is too superficial to be sustained or applied more broadly, as it allows for almost any manipulation of the question to result in the desired answer.”⁴⁷³ In contrast to these opinions, in a two-part article Haitham Al-Haddād of the Islamic Sharia Council, based in East London, laments that *maqāṣid al-sharīʿa*, as a concept, is being employed to “permit the Muslim convert wife to remain with her husband, despite his disbelief, contradicting thereby the consensus of the ^ʿulamā’ or [at least] the agreement of the vast majority of them regarding the termination of the marriage contract upon her conversion to Islam.”⁴⁷⁴

Although mentions of *maqāṣid* are sporadic and somewhat minimal in the writings of the above, excepting perhaps Al-Judai^ʿ, no-one has been as elaborate on its utilisation in this issue as Jāsser Auda. He argues that what is fundamental to all the inter-juristic arguments is the methodological approach to the sources (*nuṣūṣ*) adopted by either side. He states, in a sentiment eloquently reverberated by Ali, that far from there being an

abrogation or phased-out legislation concerning this issue, the rulings differed in accordance with the change in circumstances. In the earliest days of Islam, the purpose behind the initial ruling was driven by the fear that by returning the convert women back to their husbands - after they had escaped from Makkah and deserted them - would place their faith and life in peril.⁴⁷⁵ As Ali put it, “In contrast to the cases considered by these muftis, the Qur’anic verse explicitly treats the situation of women who had converted and left their husbands. The situation of female converts to Islam who had come as refugees from a community engaged in conflict with the Muslims is, in several respects, quite different from that of women who desire to remain with their husbands, not to mention those living in a society in which Muslims and non-Muslims co-exist peacefully. The muftis could have chosen to argue that this Qur’anic ruling is context-specific and therefore does not apply in the dramatically altered scenario of a Christian or Jewish woman who converts to Islam in the United States today.”⁴⁷⁶ Some of the ECFR panellists drew on the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 9) of the European Convention on Human Rights,⁴⁷⁷ to justify their position.

It would appear that this opinion is increasingly accepted by Muslim scholars in the West.⁴⁷⁸ It is also noteworthy that the most critical opinion (of Abu Fāris) belonged to a scholar who had minimal contact and interaction with the European context.

With respect to the controversy surrounding the issue of continued conjugal relations, Al-Judai^c maintained that it was “meaningless” (*lā ma^cnā lahu*)⁴⁷⁹ to suggest abstinence, while allowing them to “share even the same blanket!”⁴⁸⁰ Interestingly, Auda goes further by saying that, “realistically thinking, we cannot prevent them, because it harms the woman before the man, and opens doors to infidelity to him, causing marriage complications and drawing the man further away from Islam, instead of closer to it.”⁴⁸¹

It is to be noted that on the sliding-scale of fatwas, generally the more interaction these scholars have had with the European Muslim community, the more ready they appeared to question their prior views and allow for minority opinions. Indeed, it may be that some expressed sympathy with Al-Judai^c because they are “living in the West”.⁴⁸² This demonstrates the importance of a domestic-based jurisprudence - a *fiqh* truly suitable to time and place - and further a need for a thorough review of all issues on which a claim to consensus is made. The logic underlying this is that if Muslims are a minority group in the UK, and this warrants in the eyes of numerous Muslim

jurists a *fiqh* tailored to their time and place, then this logic could sensibly be extended to a micro-minority, one no less significant, namely that of the Muslim convert female who embraces Islam while already married to a non-Muslim husband.

Europeanised *Fiqh*? Some Considerations for Future Research

Does this position amount to a Europeanisation (*taghrīb*) of *fiqh*? As Samira Haj indicates, the term Europeanisation has a double meaning: “(1) the adoption of European ways of life; and (2) estrangement, alienation (*tanfīr*) and repulsion from one’s own.”⁴⁸³ It is difficult to answer conclusively whether this position amounts to Europeanisation in these senses. But it must be recognised that the scholars who permit the marriages’ continuation place the protection of the female’s religion as *the* primary concern followed by the standard hierarchy of purposes found in the common understanding of *maqāṣid*: the preservation and promotion of religion, life, family, intellect and wealth. Hence, it is argued that this reasoning provides at least some limit to a total overhaul of *fiqh* in the name of European Islam. Furthermore, this discussion paves the way for an even more pertinent and timely issue, and one that is gaining currency: if a convert Muslim woman may remain with her non-Muslim husband who declines to convert to her religion, couldn’t such a marriage be contracted *ab initio*?⁴⁸⁴

Assessing Perceptions of Islamic Authority amongst British Shia Muslim Youth

MUHAMMED REZA TAJRI

Abstract

Using qualitative research methods, this Cardiff-based project investigates the perspectives that young Shia Muslims in Britain have today towards the concept of religious authority, and how these perspectives and attitudes affect their lives. The study reveals some of the more salient perceptions of Britain's Shia Muslims on issues of religious authority and its relevance vis-à-vis their own lives in the UK. The project's findings expose stark contradictions in the attitudes of some British Shia; their dissatisfactions with clerical religious authority on one hand, battling with a sense of compulsion to abide by their rulings on the other. The research opens up this relatively uncultivated area for further social science research within the UK's Shia population, particularly with regards to attitudes towards religious authority and its impact. I also reflect on how my position as a relative 'insider' may have impacted upon the participants' responses, as well as how their narratives of daily struggle left an impact upon me.

In the academic study of Islam, the issue of authority has attracted significant interest.⁴⁸⁵ This study sheds light upon the understandings and attitudes of British Shia Muslim youth, contributing to the wider study of 'Islam in the UK', by attempting to answer the following research questions, which informed the basis of the thematic analysis of the collected data. What do British Shia Muslim youth consider 'Islamic authority' to mean? Are their attitudes towards 'Islamic authority' driven by formal religious beliefs? And are there any feelings of uneasiness or difficulty, amongst young Shia Muslims in Britain, when trying to comply with Islamic authorities on one hand, and a British lifestyle on the other?

Shia Muslims and Authority

Despite the growth of social science research into Muslim communities in Britain⁴⁸⁶, not all denominational backgrounds have been explored in detail and Muslims' perceptions of religious authority have sometimes been represented in an overly simplified way. As Wiktorowicz states, "there is no

universally accepted interpretation of Islam. Nor is there a universally accepted religious hierarchy⁴⁸⁷”. Indeed there is no single unanimously accepted interpretation of the religion among Britain’s nearly three million Muslims.⁴⁸⁸ That is not to say, however, that distinct and formalised standpoints do not exist amongst certain denominations, including Britain’s Shia Muslims, estimated at nearly half a million in 2003.⁴⁸⁹

Differences between Sunni and Shia Muslims include their standpoints on religious leadership and authority. As a result, the socio-political stances of Muslims in the UK also cannot be considered to be uniform and unvarying. This disparity has been commented upon by Mandaville who notes that “the Shi’i tradition operates with a conception of religious authority that differs significantly from the Sunni variant – and this can be seen to have important political implications.”⁴⁹⁰ The question of how much influence transnational religious authorities have on young Shia Muslims, and whether or not that impacts upon their search for identity in Britain, feed into discussion about integration, assimilation and the search for identity and belonging⁴⁹¹ among British Muslims.

Religious authority for many of the world’s Shia Muslims is principally confined to clerical authority;⁴⁹² and these clerics are products of Middle-Eastern traditional Islamic seminaries. The formalisation and global centralisation of Islamic authority in contemporary Shia Islam, specifically pivoting around the seminaries in Iran and Iraq, have resulted in Shia Muslims largely referring to the authorities there, regardless of where they may be situated in the world. Even if local scholars are turned to for guidance, they are deemed to be intermediaries to the religious authorities in the Middle-East, who are considered to be at the summit of a clerical hierarchy.⁴⁹³

In modern Shia Islam, the religious authority of persons refers to jurists as opposed to theologians or scholars of other religious sciences. Even Ayatollah Khomeini, whose edict regarding Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* was followed by a wave of unrest,⁴⁹⁴ was in essence a jurist. Do perceptions of religious authority today still revolve around these jurists; and if so, how do young Shias in Britain perceive these jurisprudential authorities? Takim has explored the attitudes of American Shia Muslims towards Middle-Eastern authorities,⁴⁹⁵ although this was not based on any comprehensive social-science research. Direct investigation of Shia communities and their attitudes in the western world using social science research methods has almost been entirely absent from academia. An exception to this is Walbridge’s

ethnographic research of Dearborn's large Lebanese Shia community⁴⁹⁶, a brief section of which is devoted to analysing the views of community members about Shia jurists' transnational authority.

The academic study of Britain's Shia population has been confined to the analysis of their immigration patterns and exploration of their organisational and institutional development. Van Den Bos' work, for example, aims to uncover Europe-wide links between certain Shia communities, and concentrates heavily on The Netherlands, meaning that the examination of Britain's Shia communities is a rather shallow one. His work neither touches upon issues of religious authority, nor does it use qualitative research methods to access the opinions and judge the stances of the Shia Muslims who make up the subject of his research.⁴⁹⁷ Investigation into the status of Britain's Shia Muslims, in a social context, is meagre. Hussain's valuable efforts,⁴⁹⁸ in a project initiated by the Muslim Council of Britain in charting the demographics of UK Muslims, categorises Muslim communities in terms of their ethnic backgrounds. The work makes no mention of sectarian or ideological differences.

Focus Groups and My Position in the Research

Out of the eleven individuals invited to participate in the opening focus-group session, eight people attended and contributed. Two of the participants (Male 2, and Female 3) have been given anonymous names to make repetitive reference to them easier, as these two participants were later selected for interviewing on an individual basis.

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5	Participant 6	Participant 7	Participant 8
	Male 1	Male 2 (Mohammed)	Male 3	Male 4	Female 1	Female 2	Female 3 (Fatima)	Female 4
Ethnic Background	Iraqi	Iranian	Lebanese	Saudi-Arabian	Indian (Khoja)	Iraqi	Indian (Khoja)	Iraqi

Ideas about what young Shias perceive Islamic authority to mean, whether these perceptions are influenced by their religious understandings and whether there are difficulties in complying with them, surfaced during the focus group.

Being of a Shia Muslim background proved to be extremely advantageous for me in this research. I was known to the participants not only as a Shia

Muslim, but also as someone who has studied the traditional sciences in Islamic seminaries – as an imam or a shaykh. This position also helped in dispelling the scepticism towards western academia that is often found in Muslim communities, who often feel scrutinised by authorities in the UK.⁴⁹⁹

Having a rapport with the Shia Muslims' student group at Cardiff University, the members of which formed the initial focus group, also meant that the extra hurdle of going through a 'gatekeeper' was circumvented. Although I was known as someone who had a background in traditional Islamic studies, this did not seem to intimidate the participants or cause reluctance in expressing their views about Islamic authority. This was made manifest by how candidly they spoke, both favourably towards people in religious authority, as well as critically of them. I ensured that such a perception of me was not reinforced, by not wearing any clothing of 'religious' nature, and instead wearing casual clothing for the focus group session as well as the two subsequent interviews. This also aided in minimising the effect of the hierarchical power relationship between me, as the researcher, and the participants.⁵⁰⁰

In spite of my efforts to minimise my position as an imam or 'shaykh', it was inevitable that some of the participants would view me from this perspective. This became obvious midway through the focus group discussion as one of the participants turned and asked me directly, "Yeah... what is the ruling for that anyway?" However, the variety of views expressed would seem to suggest that this perception did not inhibit their discussion.

The invaluable contributions of the participants were also eye-opening for me on a personal level. As a result of having attended a single-gender grammar school, studied at traditional Islamic seminaries and even pursued Islamic studies in higher education at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, I have rarely experienced the struggles that some of the participants undergo on a daily basis in 'non-Islamic' and mixed-gender environments. Having been born and raised in the UK, I was well aware that inter-gender contact (particularly handshaking) was an issue for young Muslims to deal with. However, only after hearing from the participants, did the extent of the dilemma they face actually dawn upon me. This particularly allowed me to gain a much greater appreciation of their struggle and a deeper respect for how they endure some of the personal conflicts they face.

Findings: Perceptions, Reverence and the Tug-of-War

Perceptions and Expectations

It was obvious from the start that perceptions of the term ‘Islamic authority’, for this group, had little to do with scripture or sacred texts. Rather, the term centred upon personalities – persons not based in the UK. When asked about the first thing that came to mind when hearing the term ‘Islamic authority’, one individual unhesitatingly blurted out, “Imam Khomeini!”. Subsequent responses such as, “I’d say Ayatollahs”, and, “Yes, the *marāje*” [religious authorities]⁵⁰¹ further illustrated the group’s perceptions being squarely within a Shia context, despite the question not being specifically phrased to indicate any particular denomination of Islam. The participants’ perceptions that Shia authority is ultimately based in the Middle-East, reflected the attitude held across the Shia world.⁵⁰²

The geographical and cultural distances between the participants and the ‘*Islamic authorities*’ yielded a feeling of disconnection, and consequent frustration. When asked to elaborate on comments that some *marāje*’s jurisprudential rulings – regarding playing chess and watching football matches – were inconsistent with life in the UK⁵⁰³, one participant answered, “Some of them are definitely out of contact... There’s [sic] *marāje* living right now ... they resemble a hermit who’s locked himself in a room and doesn’t know what’s going on sometimes... especially in the UK”.

A female participant expressed her desire for a hypothetical ideal of *marāje* living in the UK:

I think not only if they were living here, but also if they could work so that they’d have a better understanding of what people go through... like if they were working in a mixed environment.

Her words carried several important implications: that Middle-Eastern *marāje* do not ‘work’, in the conventional understanding of the word; that they lack sufficient “understanding of what people go through” here in the UK; and that the environment in which they function is an isolated one. Her comments were seconded by her female colleague saying, “They don’t understand the struggle we go through here”. Geographical and cultural distance seem to have led to the issuance of edicts and teachings that this group found incompatible with their lifestyles in the UK. Concisely representing many of the sentiments

expressed by the group, one of the female participants said,

I think I'm reaching the conclusion as a result of this discussion, that my problem is not that there is no access, but I think I don't like their answers [nervous laugh]. I think I'm using 'no access' as an excuse, but in reality... I think because I find that difficult to apply, to my life, I'm probably not liking the answers I'm getting.

Reverence and Loyalties

Geaves observes that some scholars in positions of Islamic authority have found it difficult to adapt to modernism and western lifestyles;⁵⁰⁴ Lewis has argued that this has resulted in their losing influence.⁵⁰⁵ Whilst the same lack of adaptation was alluded to by the sample group of Shia Muslims in this research project, this does not seem to have resulted in any significant decline in influence or respect for these figures. Rather, the group expressed an overriding sense of obligation to adhere to their edicts. In addition, there were expressions of respect, coupled with an unwillingness to criticise too directly: expressions of criticism were almost immediately qualified or curtailed. This was not due to my presence, nor the judgement of their fellow Shia Muslims in the focus group; everyone was willing to speak quite candidly in front of one another. Rather these expressions seemed to arise from a genuine respect for the *marāje*, or a feeling that too much criticism of them might be religiously wayward. After clearly communicating his strong disagreement with the geographically and culturally isolated position of one of the *marāje*, during the interview, Mohammed immediately added, "I'm not trying to make him look bad, *astaghfirullah* [God-forbid]⁵⁰⁶". Even before Mohammed began to describe how much he felt that the *marāje* were 'out of touch', he began his sentence by, "With all due respect to all their eminences, the *marāje*, some of them are..."

An inner conflict was apparent in a number of the participants who, despite having criticisms of the positions of the *marāje*, felt compelled to resign their will and submit their intellect in a way that was reminiscent of the Kantian idea of self-imposed immaturity⁵⁰⁷. When asked, in the interview, how she felt about the difficulty of complying with certain teachings whilst living in the UK, Fatima replied:

Well, like, I follow Ayatollah XXXXX and if he said it obviously I would

have to follow it, whatever [the case]. You can't really deny it.

Another of the interviewees said that having religious authorities [*marja'iyat*]⁵⁰⁸ “is one of the *wājibāt*⁵⁰⁹ [obligations]”, and, “a very important component of the Shia creed”. I asked Mohammed whether he had ever sought guidance, on matters of a political nature, from religious authorities, be they in the UK or abroad. He recounted:

Yeah, yeah, I have before, yes, authorities from Iran. Basically, I wasn't born here in the UK, I was born in Iran. I moved here when I was six and I didn't have a British passport. After a period of time when I applied to get a British passport, I had to go to a place to... ummm, ... It's close by to town. I had to go there to... I think it was like an oath of allegiance to the Queen or something like that. I asked about that. I said, ‘this is the situation, you know, what shall I do in this matter?’

It was like, I forgot what it's called, but you just say it, like you would do everything to help the UK and, you know, it was basically like a pledge of allegiance to the Queen, like you're going to respect her and all that sort of things.

It was intriguing to learn that affinities and attachments to the foreign *marāje* were so strong, that their validation was first sought to ascertain the legitimacy of what one was required to do to become a British citizen. Ultimately it was the word of a foreign Shia Islamic authority that determined if, or how, Mohammed became a British citizen.

The Tug-of-War: Life in the UK with Transnational Guidance

This research also explored what difficulties, if any, were faced by this group regarding living in the UK and simultaneously conforming to ‘Islamic teachings’. After it became clear early in the focus group discussion that ‘Islamic authority’ to them meant Middle-Eastern *marāje*, the group were asked about the nature of the relationship between themselves and those authorities. A female participant said, without any hesitation, “In my personal opinion, there is no relationship”, this was supported by a chorus of agreement, “yeah, no relationship”. Blankly saying “No relationship” would be an inaccurate way of describing the association between them since they hold *marāje* in high esteem and largely feel duty-bound to adhere to their teachings. What was implied, however, was that there was a lack of communication and understanding between them. A lack of access to the

marāje was one of the challenges of living in the UK. Moreover, compliance with the teachings of some of the *marāje* was also seen as problematic. Mohammed spoke of one ruling that he personally took exception to, as he saw it conflicting with the kind of life he lives in Britain:

Ayatollah XXXXXX in his *Risālah* [book of edicts]⁵¹⁰ says watching football is *makrūh* [shunned]⁵¹¹. So he's very strict. So if I'm 20 years old living in Britain, you're telling me I can't watch football?... I think that kind of person would not necessarily know how the situation is here... possibly... his way of thinking may be difficult to follow.

Among the many problematic issues faced by young Muslims in the UK, while trying to comply with a jurisprudentially traditional stance, is the issue of cross-gender interaction. Shaking hands with the opposite gender was among the numerous dilemmas discussed with the participants. The fact that the traditional religious seminary environment in the Middle-East varies considerably from a British social context, was not at all lost on these young Shia Muslims. In fact, this notion led them to cite hand-shaking as one of the most significant social dilemmas that the *marāje* would be unable to appreciate. During the focus group, a female participant of Iraqi origin drew a comparison between the two lifestyles:

Like in a working environment, if you were to go into an interview or something and someone wants to shake your hand, that doesn't happen in Arab cultures... so they don't [understand] ... that stuff doesn't happen.

In such a situation, several participants revealed that they would refer to local or 'home-grown' scholars for guidance, since "those are the people who would relate to us the most". However, despite the social gulf between their own western environment, and that in the Middle-East, there was an expectation that the 'local scholars' would have travelled to the Middle-East for religious training in traditional Shia seminaries, in Najaf and Qom, before returning. This attitude shows that regardless of the frustrations felt due to a lack of cultural empathy, there is still a romanticised image around these 'shrine-cities', which hold a great status for many Shia people globally.

One participant referred to a 'tug-of-war' between trying to 'fit in' to British society, and doing what was considered to be in accordance with Islamic teachings. She struggled to gather her thoughts on something that she obviously felt quite strongly about:

I think the thing about, like, how we go through, like, there are struggles to be, like, obviously a Muslim in this society because there's, like, there's two sides to it... you want to be doing the right thing but you also want to be part of the society, like you know, like contribute to society and be part of it...

As she continued, her later comments made it clear that she felt her frustrations could be alleviated, or less burdensome, if the foreign-based authorities had more of a complete understanding of life in the UK.

And like, for leaders, who are not in the UK, they don't see all the things that we're actually going through that separate us, that is very difficult to deal with. So they think that 'this is how you're supposed to act, you should do it and there's no reason not to do it'. Whereas when you come to actually do it, you see there are so many things that are hard to do.

Some of the other participants had suggested that, had the *marāje* been based in the UK, their added empathy may have made them rule differently, but Fatima did not. In the individual interview, she was asked whether or not she could envisage the Islamic rulings changing if we were to conceptualise a *marji* being based in the UK. "No, I don't think so", she replied, "...because at the end of the day Islam is Islam. You can't change it according to your where you stay or where you don't stay. You have to follow it and try to put it into your life".

Whether or not UK-based jurisprudential authorities would be adhered to is questionable. Frustrations, resulting from a lack of access to the *marāje*, clearly evoke the desire to have someone of that jurisprudential calibre based locally. However, the experience of other denominations shows that locally-based scholars are often viewed ambivalently and their influence remains limited⁵¹². The overriding status of places like Iran and Iraq may hamper local jurists from having any significant influence for years to come.

In conclusion, we can say that a hierarchical structure of authority was certainly sensed practically by young Shia Muslims at a grassroots level. But as with any social science research, this project was limited in its focus, both geographically as well as regarding the age-range of the subjects, concentrating on the Cardiff-based Shia Muslim youth. The study can now be extended and broadened to examine the impacts that perceptions of Islamic authority have on Shia people's religious and social lives in the UK.

National and Ethno-Religious Identity

The Many Faces of Cairo: Bosnian Muslims and their Re-imagination(s) of the Identitarian Centre

DZENITA KARIC

Abstract

Throughout the four centuries of Ottoman rule in Bosnia, strong links were created between traditional centres of learning in the Arab world and Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) Islamic scholars. Even after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Bosniak religious scholars remained attached to Cairo, and especially to the Islamic University of al-Azhar, often seeking to find solutions there to issues plaguing their homeland. Through a discussion of the works of Mehmed Handžić (his virtue literature or fada'il on Egypt), Ibrahim Hakki Čokić and Muhamed Krpo (Hajj pilgrimage travelogues) and Skender Kulenović (a novel), this paper will give an overview of changing attitudes towards Cairo and al-Azhar; firstly, as the unique loci where Bosniak Islamic scholars sought religious and intellectual refuge; and secondly, as places which thwarted those hopes, recalling other residues of the colonial project – particularly, the cities of Bosnia.

The relationship of Bosnian Islamic scholars to traditional centres of religious learning in the Arab world was forged during the centuries of Ottoman rule, albeit with shifting intensities. The establishment of Ottoman religious schools (medreses) clearly drew future Islamic scholars from the Balkans to Istanbul and away from such cities as Damascus and Cairo, though this subject deserves further scholarly treatment.⁵¹³ It is certain that after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Cairo, Baghdad, Damascus and other cities regained their prestige as centres of learning for Bosnian Muslims.⁵¹⁴ Bosniaks were not the only Balkan Muslims for whom Ottoman educational institutions (and later the institutions of Turkish Republic) ceased to enjoy priority – Ibrahim Hatibo lu demonstrates same tendency among Bulgarian Muslims.⁵¹⁵ During the Ottoman period, traditional centres of learning such as Medina, Cairo and Damascus continued to enjoy a prominent role in the transmission of knowledge, either as places of religious visitation (Medina) or as important cities on Hajj pilgrimage or trade routes. This is evidenced by the large number of manuscripts they purchased in Damascus and Cairo,

and also by their having penned various works in Medina. A prominent example is the treatise by Hasan Imamović Bošnjak, a work on the virtues and merits of Medina, written during his year-long sojourn there. The early portion of the treatise is marked by its repeated reference to his homeland, forming a textual bridge between the two locales.⁵¹⁶

Apart from Mekkah and Medina, two other cities feature prominently in Bosniak Hajj literature written between the 17th and 20th centuries: Cairo and Damascus. From Jusuf Livnjak's travelogue written in 1615 to Ibrahim Hakki Čokić's serialised travelogue from 1932, Cairo and Damascus are portrayed as cities of learning (Cairo) and devotional visits or *ziyarat* (Damascus). Presented with a mixture of amazement and familiarity originating in a culture of reading that encompassed hadīth literature (including a genre on the merits of particular cities), these cities were necessary waystations on the Hajj, and almost an aim themselves. Authors also sought out their Bosnian compatriots, reinforcing the importance of these trans-national Islamic scholarly networks.

While Jusuf Livnjak's travelogue belongs firmly to the Ottoman period, the works to be considered in this paper belong to the 20th century, the era in which Bosnia and Egypt were no longer part of the same empire. The numerous borders enacted between the regions – physical, but also linguistic – seemingly de-familiarised Cairo in Bosniak literature and transformed it into a place of strange contrasts. As shall be seen from the following analysis, the literary depiction of Cairo passed through several phases: from being an immutable locus of blessing (*baraka*), to a lively place of learning for Bosniak Islamic scholars from the first half of the 20th century, to the city of Orientalising (and self-Orientalising) imagination, while at the same time remaining a centre for different imaginings of Bosniak identity.

The works that will be analysed in this paper belong to travel literature in its broader sense. In approaching this literature, several important points must be borne in mind; namely, that it is selective, citational, corroborative, and ethnocentric.⁵¹⁷ The images that a travelogue or virtue literature (*faḍā'il*) author tries to present in their work are based on a combination of previously acquired information and travel experiences, and thus present the author's prioritising of certain topics and motifs. This information on various locales is gathered from different textual and visual sources, which makes this literature citational; moreover, "it is texts (in the broadest sense of the word) that provide us with the tools for making sense of place – both foreign lands

and, dually, our home territory.”⁵¹⁸ The authors also rely on pre-existing expectations and, in doing so, further ensconce the ethnocentric position from which they are writing. As a final product, travel writing is bound to produce new knowledge as well, but this “is tied to [the] established narrative forms and assumptions of the reader”⁵¹⁹; travelogues are “neither purely factual nor purely fictitious, but perform different functions on different levels at the same time”⁵²⁰.

The travel literature of Bosniak Islamic scholars from the first half of the 20th century presents us with an interesting example of this phenomenon: the images of Cairo they present speak to us about the encounter of the Self with the Other – as all travel writing always does – but they also imply the porousness of borders between the narrating Self and the familiar and close Other (which is somewhat less encountered in the travel literature). In other words, the search for similarity and security in an increasingly hostile world allowed Cairo to commend itself to these authors as a motif.

The Authors and their Works

Although literacy rates among Bosnian Muslims changed rapidly over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, concurring with the growth of a vernacular literature, certain members of the Islamic scholarly class continued to write in Arabic. One of them was Mehmed Handžić, who graduated from al-Azhar and returned to his country afterwards to become one of the leading Sarajevo Islamic scholars committed to strengthening the religious and cultural bonds between the Arab world and Bosnia. His work “A book in which the author describes his journey to Egypt” (*Kitāb yašifu fīhi mu’allifuhu riḥla ‘ilā Miṣr*) (*Riḥla* in continuation) was, according to the cataloguer, written in 1944.⁵²¹ It is written in the style of an extended faḍā’il treatise on the city’s merits; along with vociferous praise of Egypt, Handžić is trying to communicate to the imagined (Arabophone) reader facts about Bosnian history and people, as well as literary production. Unlike his predecessor from the 17th century, Hasan Bošnjak Imam-zade, who wrote a classical virtue-genre (faḍā’il) work focused on Medina, Handžić’s work, although written in the classical form, is replete with references to Bosnia (though these references are arguably attempts to cultivate the image of a “timeless Bosnia”). Thus, the *Riḥla* contains various stories and legends, as well as occasional notes on the origins of Sarajevo and authors who contributed to Ottoman religious and literary life. However, the largest part of the *Riḥla* is dedicated to a description of the merits of Egypt.

The *Rihla* follows the pattern of classical faḍā'il works in its structure: the praise of Cairo and Egypt is supported by references to Qur'anic verses, hadith and excerpts from relevant works. Textual knowledge is given precedence over the experiential, which appears sporadically throughout the work. Reference to classical sources is at times inflected by observations on the "new knowledge" – including mention of the British presence in Egypt. Personal reflections appear more rarely and are connected to Handžić's time among the Islamic scholars.

Handžić's *Rihla* presents us with the established repertoire of imaginal associations for Cairo and Egypt; these include Qur'anic episodes (such as the story of Yusuf and Zulaikha), and also al-Azhar, regarded since the 18th century as the premier seat of learning in the Arab world. Egypt itself is not observed as a place endowed with all the virtues, but it is seen as deeply significant. Handžić sought to reinforce ties with these religious centres, which were of increasing significance to Bosniaks. The turning to Cairo and Egypt as sources of religious authority and power implies a renewed emphasis on the Arabic language as the medium of learning. Handžić points out that there is no history of Bosnia in Arabic, which suggests a sustained scholarly neglect. It remains unclear whether Handžić wanted to undertake this task, but it certainly signals an intent to strengthen textual links between the two reading audiences.

While the title of Handžić's work might be misleading, since it is not an example of travel literature in the classical sense – it does not contain the development of the travelling self or a straightforward narrative of the journey per se – another work written a decade earlier (1932) does indeed exhibit the classical features of a travelogue. Ibrahim Hakki Čokić, also a member of the Bosnian Islamic scholars, was an editor of the conservative journal *Hikjmet*, published from 1929 to 1936 in Tuzla. The journal was known for its traditionalist stance on numerous issues concerning Muslims of the period, and Čokić's travelogue which was published over the course of several years reflects some of the fierce debates (such as, for example, the issue of the translation of the Qur'an). This source is especially important for its depiction of the small community of Bosnian students in Cairo in interaction with the Egyptian reformists; these exchanges left a lasting impression on the Bosnians and on the course of modern Islamic thought in Bosnia itself.

Ibrahim Čokić started his Hajj journey in 1932, but undertaking a pilgrimage was not his only motive for travel, which would involve a stay in Cairo. He

was trying to help his nephew to begin study at al-Azhar and with that in mind joined the pilgrims (hajjis), hoping to make their way into Egypt pending government approval.⁵²² Thus, from the very beginning of the travelogue, the centrality of Egypt is asserted in the context of these motives for the travel, overshadowing the motive of performing Hajj. Unlike Handžić's treatise on virtues, which studies Egypt from the perspective of discursive knowledge and relies on almost no personal experience at all, Čokić's narrative is steeped in reflections on the events that happened during his journey. He retells the dialogues, describes scenery and, most importantly, conveys his impressions of the places he visits with his fellow pilgrims. His traveller's zeal is intent upon reaching Cairo, and the Hajj motive is deliberately foregrounded. While Handžić's Cairo is privileged by its textual importance, the centrality of Čokić's Cairo has an experiential basis. However, the traveller's experience itself was shaped by the circumstances of the period that impelled Bosniak authors to search for an educational and religious centre.

Cairo (and Egypt by extension) as the assumed centre of Bosniak authors was in the crosshairs of different imperialist plots according to Čokić, further testifying to its identitarian potential. Cairo and other large cities in Egypt merit attention for their ideological and religious significance, which various enemies (typified by the British) try to undermine or eliminate. The foremost imperialist weapon for Čokić is the institution of the quarantine, which is enforced not for reasons of sanitation or as a precaution against diseases such as cholera, but as an impediment for Muslims who would like to go on Hajj. Čokić is aware that the existence of the quarantine would not be possible without Egyptian complicity, but even this is ascribed to conduct influenced by the English.⁵²³ The quarantine is thus imposed by a foreign body on Egyptian soil with the intention of attenuating the crowds of Hajjis and consequently weakening the Muslim body politic.⁵²⁴

When Čokić is not discussing British economic, religious and social pressures on Egyptian society, he gives an impressionistic account of intellectual trends at al-Azhar, including both Arab Islamic scholars and Bosniak students. It is among the latter that Čokić feels "as if he came to Bosnia"⁵²⁵. The Islamic scholarly network further included a number of figures hailing from the heartlands of the Ottoman Empire and settling in Egypt, such as Mustafa Sabri efendi, the last Shaykh al-Islam. Čokić meets with Muhibuddin al-Khatib, the owner of "Al-Fath" journal but fails to meet Rashid Rida in

person, having attended his lecture at the Young Muslim Men's Association (Jamiat al-Shubbān al-Muslimīn).⁵²⁶ His encounters with diverse Cairene Islamic scholars are retold in detail, and he deploys the authority of sympathetic Azhari Islamic scholars in his fight against religious reformism in Bosnia, also expressing a profound dislike of the course of events in Turkey.

This travelogue can be contrasted to another account of the Hajj *rihla* (pilgrimage journey) by Muhamed Krpo from 1938, which gives another perspective on the Cairene Bosnian diaspora before the Second World War. Muhamed Krpo himself was a member of the Sarajevo Islamic scholars, though he did not engage in the same fierce polemics as Ibrahim Hakki Čokić, notwithstanding their shared interest in politics. As an amateur photographer, Krpo wanted to add more to his travelogue and, unlike Čokić, he included photographs of women. His travelogue is not especially committed to the presentation of intellectual life in Cairo; instead, Krpo focuses on what he sees on the streets, particularly Egypt's burgeoning nationalist movement. This is at once both alluring and repulsive, though Krpo does note a number of things he regards as worthy of emulation in his homeland.

While travelling through Egypt, Krpo is both amazed and perplexed at what he notices, and not unlike Western travellers of the period, invokes a number of essentialisms:

While on one hand indolence, laziness, apathy and decadence rule, on the other a totally new life is being created, a new epoch of Egypt is beginning, new generations are rising (...) this is a religiously and nationalistically conscious, well organised and disciplined Egyptian youth. (Dok na jednoj strani vlada indolencija, nerad, apatija i u malost, dotle se na drugoj strani stvara sasvim novi život, nastaje nova epoha Egipta, izgra uje se novi naraštaj (...) to je vjerski i nacionalno svjesna, dobro organizovana i disciplinovana egipatska omladina.)⁵²⁷

What Krpo sees in Egypt is a place of oppression, but also one of burgeoning nationalism in which hopes for the restoration of self-sufficiency and independence for Egyptians is revived. Like Čokić, Krpo praises the Young Muslim Men's Association and also the Wafd party. For Krpo, the (Muslim) youth in Yugoslavia should look to the Egyptian model, or, at least, to the example of the local Christian youth community, instead of wasting precious time on trivial sporting activities.⁵²⁸ Even though Krpo does not draw a direct parallel between the Egyptian and Yugoslavian political contexts, it is clear that he feels the need for Muslim peoples to work on the betterment of their situation in a way suited to their complicated circumstances at the intersection of indirect colonialism and rising anti-colonialist movements. Krpo assumes

that Egyptians present a positive model for others because of their "Islamic, and then national consciousness" (*islamskoj, a po tom nacionalnoj svijesti*), which causes are supported in the main by King Faruq.⁵²⁹ The priority of religion over nationalism is stressed as the formula for success, while the situation of Muslim youth in Yugoslavia is presented as lacking in organisation and leadership.⁵³⁰

What Krpo's and Čokić's works share is a dual image of Egypt; when the political awakening or religious scene is being discussed, Egypt is hailed as a desired model for other Muslim peoples. However, when particular details of the visit are in focus, such as the quarantine in Čokić's travelogue or Krpo's perpetuating struggle with beggars on the streets, caution is urged on readers and would-be pilgrims, reminding them of the dangers of the sprawling metropolis.⁵³¹ The Egyptian city is divided into two segments in Krpo's presentation: the one built to "European standards" and the "native" one.⁵³² Krpo's observations are coloured by his wish to present himself as "European" and as decidedly different from the "natives". This pre-set narrative attitude operates in tension with the author's admiration for Cairo's cultural vitality, which finally impels him to write:

Blessed are those in this life to whom fate gave the fortune to live in Cairo, the city of the marvellous East, the fairy city of the Arabian nights. Or so it seems so to me (listening to the enchanting Umm Kulthum's voice and watching the movie). (Blaženi su u zemaljskom životu oni, kojima je sudbina dodijelila sreću, da žive u Kairu, gradu zaista bajnog istoka; vilinskom gradu 1001 noći. Ili se meni (slušajući besprimjerno zanosan Um-mi Gjulsumin glas i gledajući taj film), tako ini?)⁵³³

Throughout Krpo, Čokić and Handžić's works different tensions can be noted: from amazement with al-Azhar, to a Eurocentric obsession with orderliness, and, finally, the expression of sheer joy at the pleasantries of Cairo. However, although Cairo remained a centre of religious education for Bosniak Muslims, after the Second World War its place was increasingly taken by such cities such as Baghdad. Still, Cairo retained its potential to function as a symbolic locale in the identity construction of Bosniak writers, albeit in a quasi-orientalistic form. This process can be observed in the novel *Ponornica* (1977) written by Bosniak author Skender Kulenović. The novel depicts events in the life of a noble Bosniak family at the beginning of the 20th century. The protagonist of the novel is Muhamed, a young student in Cairo who changes his educational career from al-Azhar to a secular university, causing

considerable consternation among the elders and religious notables of his town. This image of Bosnia, carefully cultivated and evoked by travelogue authors and Islamic scholars is painfully shattered in the course of a couple of decades as a result of changed political and social circumstances.

These works represent the textual basis of the study of the image of Cairo and its place in the Bosniak social imaginary throughout the 20th century. Through them, it can be shown that Cairo held a prominent place not only because of its role as an intellectual hub and pre-eminent seat of traditional religious learning, but because of its importance to the cause of religious reformism. This intellectual trend would come to flourish in Bosnia and make a decisive contribution to the renewed vitality of religious thought. In this sense, Cairo became a mirror-image of the home and homeland the authors were striving to create, and, in the case of Skender Kulenović, the place they wanted to criticise.

Between Two Worlds: Cairo as a Haven

Mehmed Handžić, as has already been noted, spent a considerable amount of time in Egypt, recording this not only in his *Rihla*, but in a number of short essays. Thus, in his "Do na ina mnogo stoji" ("The manner is very relevant"), Handžić points out how he had a chance to attend the lectures of professors who gained considerable fame and the esteem; those he mentions include Ali Mahfuz, Muhammed Behit and Abdulaziz Čauš ('Abd al- 'Aziz Jawish).⁵³⁴ In another essay on religious education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, he points out how al-Azhar is the only university which deserves the title, and emphasises the importance of its rector Muhammed al-Ahmedi.⁵³⁵ This observation Handžić makes – just as in the *Rihla* – is linked to his preoccupation with affairs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and he expresses his hope to open an 'Islamic religious university' there,⁵³⁶ disregarding the considerable obstacles in his way. It should also be noted that Handžić, notwithstanding his profound respect for al-Azhar, also tried to connect the establishment of Cairo and the university to a Slav.⁵³⁷

It is important to note how reform and reformism of the Cairene/Egyptian variety is depicted positively in Handžić's work, as well as in the travelogues of Čokić and Krpo, in contrast to the far less flattering picture of contemporaneous Turkey.⁵³⁸ The contrast is further emphasised in the latter two, where Atatürk's advocates are scorned and ignored.⁵³⁹ The basis of

progress, in Handžić's opinion, is Islamic fraternity and religious consciousness - both far from evident, he suggests, in the Turkish intellectual scene.⁵⁴⁰ There are several ways to explain the appeal of Cairo/al-Azhar to Bosniak ulama in the first half of the 20th century. Most significant, however, was its pre-eminence as the "only ordered source of Islamic religious knowledge, available to us, the Muslims of Yugoslavia".⁵⁴¹

The travelogues of Čokić and Krpo, on the other hand, present not only al-Azhar but the nationalist movements of the period with fulsome praise, pointing to them as exemplary for the Bosniak people, against whom they serve as a foil.⁵⁴² Unlike Handžić's presentation, however, the Cairo of the travel writers is not static, and includes not only impressions of al-Azhar but of the contemporary cultural scene, including the work of songstress Umm Kulthum.⁵⁴³ In this sense, 'medievalising' and "modernising" images⁵⁴⁴ are blended together to emphasise the city's ability to adapt to the exigencies of the present without sacrificing a sense of its past, an ideal that Bosniak Islamic scholars valued (as seen in the works of Mehmed Handžić). Ibrahim Hakki Čokić went further in the search for Cairene allies in his struggle against the pernicious reformism he felt himself to be surrounded with. Throughout the dialogues Čokić presents to his readers his anti-Turkish attitude is on full display, and Ankara (not Istanbul) is posited as the antithesis of Bosniak religious renewal.⁵⁴⁵

However, the pre-eminent status al-Azhar enjoyed among Bosniak intellectuals began to decline later in the century. The novel by Skender Kulenović, *Ponornica*, distorts the image of the identitarian centre by highlighting the sterility and decadence of a system no longer viable in a world of colonial domination. Al-Azhar university, once "the sun of faith and wisdom",⁵⁴⁶ becomes a place where sterile ideas are endlessly recapitulated. The protagonist's decision to leave al-Azhar represents a turning away from Cairo as a potential religious or cultural identitarian centre, though he does acquire fame as an architect.

Al-Azhar in the novel retains its symbolic resonances as a place of mystical knowledge, though the utility of this knowledge is questioned throughout the work. In this sense, a certain orientalisng motif is discernible in the novel: Cairo as a decrepit and dysfunctional centre. Though inhabited by co-religionists, moreover, their way of life is still vastly different to Bosnian Islamic traditions and practices.⁵⁴⁷

Conclusion

There is a dearth of literature on the role of the symbolic locale in the construction and expression of identity, especially in the context of the formation of religious identity. This paper has broached the question of the imagination of the identitarian centre in selected Bosnian literature from the 20th century. The works analysed were the product of the Islamic scholarly class, barring the novel of Skender Kulenović. It has been seen how, once the symbolic power of Istanbul had begun to diminish, Cairo emerged as a centre of education, reformism and possible solutions to the perceived crises confronting the Muslim world. By the second half of the century, Cairo's prestige among Bosniaks was clearly in a state of serious decline. One question not addressed in this paper – but deserving sustained attention – is whether a new centre was emerging as a replacement to Cairo, or if self-sufficiency and intellectual autonomy became the norm in the religious and cultural life of Bosnian Muslims.

The preacher (*khaṭīb*) between Europe and the Umma. The politicization of Bosniak identity reflected in the preaching of Ismet Spahić

OLIMPIA DRAGOUNI

Abstract

The paper focuses on the interrelations between the role of Ismet Spahić – for many years the first imam and preacher (khaṭīb) of the Gazi Husrev-beg mosque in Sarajevo, and since 1993 deputy to the Bosnian Chief Islamic Scholar (reisu-l-ulema or raʿīs al-ʿulamā) – and the politicisation of Bosnian Muslim (Bosniak) identity in relation to constructions of Europe and the worldwide Muslim community (umma). The sermons of Ismet Spahić from the 1980s and 1990s serve here as the primary source of analysis. Also analysed are interviews, conducted with young Sarajevan Muslims between April and June 2015. Respondents were asked identity-related questions in semi-structured interviews. I put their answers in dialogue with the activity of the preacher so as to reflect the history of politicization of Bosniak identity. The paper shows how the 1992-1995 war (trans)formed Bosniak society and the discourse on the umma and Europe. The pre-war sermons were focused on inter-faith dialogue with non-Muslim neighbours as co-citizens of Yugoslavia, while the post-war sermons depart from this deeply ecumenical approach. Rooted in feelings of having been wronged, they simultaneously turn towards self-appreciation and re-appreciation of Islamic values while seeking dissociation from the non-Muslim ‘other’. This shift has resulted in a turning away from Europe, rejection of non-Muslim values now recognized as European, and a deeper attribution of their own heritage to the Islamic world.

Introduction

Islam, having been introduced in the Balkans in the 15th and 16th centuries as a result of the Ottoman conquest, has a rich and longstanding history in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) comprising the single largest religious group in the country⁵⁴⁸. Since the 1990s, the subject of Islam in Bosnia has mostly been researched in reference to the issue of Islamic nationalism, (post-)war trauma, politicization of religion, radicalization and security studies. Although my study on sermons in Bosnia was initially an attempt to approach and reevaluate the local understandings of umma, I have not managed to escape the trap of writing on Bosnia in war-related terms; perhaps this is simply impossible due to the war’s impact on the country.

Sources and Methodology: Why Sermons?

Initially, I asserted that the sermons can be viewed as an approximation of public civil discourse among practicing Muslims. However, following Mayen Hashem⁵⁴⁹, I chose to read them as sources revealing how the umma is projected and invoked. The paper is less focused on the rhetorical and discursive strategies of the preacher – that is, how he uses the example of Prophet Muhammad to make arguments relevant to the community⁵⁵⁰. Instead, it aims to extract the interrelations between the sermons in their narrative layer and the contemporary socio-political and historical contexts relevant to the Bosniak condition, through applying a Discourse Historical Approach as an interdisciplinary method of linguistic and extra-linguistic sociopolitical analysis⁵⁵¹.

Umma is herein not understood as an ethnic or purely religious community of believers, but rather as a source of identification (not identity)⁵⁵² for Muslims, and as such “experiencing the umma is an act of imagination”⁵⁵³. Hence it becomes an ever transcendent, moral nexus of ontological security for believers that is “rich in generative opposites: (...) prevailing but ailing, caring but out of reach, colorful but has the same aroma, strong but has no power, well-intentioned but misunderstood, innocent but feared (...) pulls together the fragments of history and geography”⁵⁵⁴, and, as such, it remains as an arch between reality and imagination.

Similarly, the sermons “make sudden shifting between material reality and distant reality; between the empirical reality of the nowhere and the also empirical” reality of the Hereafter and Heaven; between positivistic causality and moral causality”⁵⁵⁵. The utopian realism of the sermon creates a mental picture of an elevated blissful reality through double-imaging: juxtaposing the ideal, constructed historical image with a generated representation of lived, contemporary reality⁵⁵⁶. Thus, defining the spatial (Sarajevo) and temporal frame (1981-1995) is crucial for understanding the unfolding events and the meanings behind words spoken by Spahić, resonating with the immediately lived reality of the local population.

Choice of Representative(s): Why Ismet Spahić?

Ismet Spahić was born in 1940 in Puhovac near Zenica in Bosnia Herzegovina (BiH). He graduated from Gazi Husrev-beg medresa in Sarajevo (1959). In 1962 he began working as an Imam in Visoko, where he was the head imam

between 1965 and 1978, in the area of Islamic Community Council. He also completed his secular higher education: in 1968 he completed the first level in Economics in Zagreb, and afterwards continued his studies in Belgrade. In 1978 he became a Quran teacher (*mudarris qirā'a*) at Gazi Husrev-beg medresa, and in 1980 he became a Memoriser of the Quran (*Hafiz*). He was named the first imam and preacher of Gazi Husrev-beg mosque in 1985, and in 1993 he was appointed deputy to the Chief Islamic Scholar. Since 1998 he has been the Head of Gazi Husrev-beg medresa⁵⁵⁷, called by the Western press “the second highest-ranking cleric in the country”⁵⁵⁸.

As the first preacher in Gazi Husrev-beg's mosque, since 1987 Spahić has had his sermons printed in the “Preporod” (“Revival”) periodical, and in 2000 they were collected in a book which is still available and popular. It is worth noting that Gazi Husrev-beg's Mosque is considered to be central not only in terms of location— in the very heart of Sarajevo's old town (opposite the Gazi Husrev-beg's medresa, the most important educational institution of this level in Bosnia) – but also as the message-bearer and official voice of the Islamic Community (*Islamska Zajednica*) of Bosnia and Herzegovina⁵⁵⁹.

Spahić's sermons seem to provide an excellent source for further analysis – showing how the collapse of Yugoslavia and the war of 1992-1995, as the basic factual and transitional signpost which clearly bore an ever-transforming influence on the Bosniak mentality⁵⁶⁰, became a turning point in local worldview and attitudes. One could say that Ismet Spahić was both a creator and product of this change.

To examine whether the reality invoked by *khuṭba* has achieved any resonance with the post-war reality, I talked with young Bosnian students living in Sarajevo, between March and June 2015, using qualitative methods of socio-anthropological research. These survey representatives were chosen through purposive sampling: they were practicing, observant Muslims of 23-26 years of age, who had received an Islamic education in local medresas and/or the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo. Thus, although the result should be approached with a certain distance as non-probability sampling techniques tend to produce certain biases and as such the results are not representative of the wider community, the semi-structured interviews subjected to critical discourse analysis proved the transcendence of both fields of Spahić's activity in the past (in the mosque as preacher, and in the medresa as its leader) onto the reality of the *umma*, and the various aspects of it that could be confirmed or rejected.

Pre-war Rhetoric

Spahić's sermons from the late 1980s dealt with various aspects of everyday education in the Islamic way of life. The two key concepts apparent in this period were: (1) the need for education for Muslims (that is, teaching them a rational approach to Islam, the pillars of Islam, and the fulfilment of the religious obligations), and (2) the need for good relations with neighbours, that is Christians (Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs), Jews (who were, however, substantially less numerous throughout Bosnia after the Holocaust – even in Sarajevo), and atheists.

The sermons of this period reveal deep understanding of the need for tolerance towards the monotheist Other with simultaneous appreciation for the uniqueness of one's own faith. In 1987, Spahić asserted, "[e]very community buries their people in its own fashion, depending on the belief they follow. (...) In its essence, Islam self-identifies with monotheist religions which preach faith in eternal afterlife, but it is different from them: in its unique view of man, his life and death."⁵⁶¹ Islam is evoked here as not only compatible with tolerance and openness towards the monotheist Other, but also as the source of such compatibility:

Brothers and sisters in Islam, you see that nothing in our faith is without Islamic purpose and sense. That's why the Prophet, a.s., rose even before dead Jews [and honoured them]. It is our sunnet⁵⁶² obligation, to follow the dead non-Muslim or rise when his funeral procession comes along; and thus to show our respect for him and his body which was created by God⁵⁶³.

Hence, the non-Muslim Other is an equal partner who deserves respect as a human, and as God's creature. The issues of the co-existence and inter-religious mingling of the Yugoslav population were mirrored by the ongoing debate about whether a Muslim can pray for his non-Muslim ill or dead neighbour, or whether he can rejoice during the Pilgrimage Feast (ʿīd al-aḍḥā) with a non-Muslim⁵⁶⁴. In this regard, in the 1980s Spahić is deeply ecumenical, stating that "a part of pilgrimage sacrifice (qurbān) (...) is given to neighbours, Muslims and non-Muslims, it makes no difference. Try to represent tolerance and warmth of our exalted faith (...) which is open to others and try to express your neighbourly love with qurbān."⁵⁶⁵ This is especially important, as in the Balkans the specifics of qurbān can also be traced through non-Islamic communities, and dated possibly to pre-Islamic and pre-Christian times⁵⁶⁶. Keeping the tradition of sharing the meat from the animal slaughtered for religious ritual was therefore a way of expressing openness to one's neighbours.

Post-war Rhetoric

The ecumenical rhetoric of Spahić changed immensely in the early 1990s, and later mentions of Spahić in academia and the press refer mainly to those later, fierce sermons of his, with Spahić being himself referred to as “the populist imam of Sarajevo.”⁵⁶⁷ A 1995 article by Xavier Bougarel, who examined Spahić’s sermons between March and May 1992 and quoted him extensively, identified this period as “a victory for radical political Islam in Bosnia.”⁵⁶⁸ This article, quoted by subsequent researchers⁵⁶⁹, established Spahić’s image as a radical even before the siege of Sarajevo in late April/early May. The quoted sermons called for

“(…) drawing up our ranks as closely as possible (…) so that we can say to anybody who advances against us, ‘Do not come any closer for here there are ranks of mu’mins [believers] who will die on these ramparts, but who will not give up their daggers.’ (…) Where the umma is concerned, each person watches over the others⁵⁷⁰.

In a postscript to the article written in 1994, Bougarel explained that when he was writing the text in May of 1992, nobody knew a war of such intensity and unimaginable cruelty would follow soon after⁵⁷¹. It can, however, be assumed that Spahić somehow sensed the upcoming disaster, especially since the first ethnic cleansings committed by the Serbs had already begun in April, 1992. Moreover, during the summer of 1992 he lost his own wife, three daughters, and only granddaughter, all of whom were killed in Sarajevo by Serbian shelling while they were fetching water. He later told a Western journalist: “[i]f it was oil that was pouring down the streets of beloved Sarajevo, instead of my children’s and my neighbours’ blood, you would rush (…) and stop that leaking.”⁵⁷² It is highly unlikely to assume that his personal tragedy did not affect his perceptions, expressed not only as a private person, but also in his role as a public figure.

The research proves that the post-war narrative of Spahić became dramatically different from the pre-war, ecumenical one, and in 1996 he himself said, “[t]his terrible aggression that hit us, left behind it heavy consequences, great traumas and a large number of orphans and widows.”⁵⁷³ The war led to a division and “Muslims in this war learned a lot and understood who their friend is, and who’s their foe.”⁵⁷⁴

During the interviews I conducted in 2015, a common theme was evoked by my respondents. Nearly all of them mentioned – unprompted – that before the war, people in Bosnia would mingle more, and that mingling used to be

desirable, but that it also posed a threat to the “cleanliness” of Islam⁵⁷⁵. This state of affairs was also associated, both by Spahić in his khuṭub and by my respondent (A), with the period of communism (or more accurately, socialism) as a time lacking in opportunities to educate children according to the rules of Islam. The explanation was that before the war people lacked knowledge on how to practice Islam. It is noteworthy that the more ecumenical attitude of the 1980s did not mean that “pre-war” Spahić encouraged the blurring or forgetting of the borders of a functional Islamic framework. On the contrary, he underlined the second most common issue evoked by Islamic scholars at the time: the need for religious education on how to be a “proper” Muslim.

If you want to be a complete Muslim, you must know how a Muslim prays, how and when he washes, how and what he eats, how he engages in sexual intercourse with his wife, how he talks, how he comes to company and how he leaves, what he does when his child is born, how he gets married, how he trades, how he sleeps, how he treats his parents, neighbours, older people, people who are not Muslims, how he works in the field, how he studies, how he judges, how he buries, etc.⁵⁷⁶

It is therefore clear that pre-war, Spahić focused on the ritual aspects of being a Muslim, while his post-war rhetoric added meanings that strengthened the division between *Us* and *Them*⁵⁷⁷, such as the sense of being wronged, the sense of being a victim.

The blurred pre-war divisions between Muslims and non-Muslims becoming an issue were also mentioned by the respondents I talked to in the spring of 2015. Nearly all of them stated that one of the biggest weaknesses of “socialist” Muslims was their ignorance of how to practice Islam on a daily basis. Only one voice (D) stated otherwise, emphasising that what is important in Islam is “its essence, and not a ritual formalism.”

For Spahić, however, the main reason for following religious rituals was to retain identity and integrity. Since the war, he has evoked the figure of martyrdom as a central theme (“To forget martyrs (šehids / šuhadā) and their children is to forget ourselves, which must not happen, because that would be the way to the same genocide against us.”⁵⁷⁸). A similar discourse was maintained this year (2015) by some of the Bosnian Muslims on the Internet, after the Charlie Hebdo attacks. Dozens of Internet users would comment (and hundreds would support their comments) that they would not sympathize with the victims of the attack because while the war in Bosnia raged and the Srebrenica genocide happened, Bosniaks were abandoned by

the international community, which furthermore even today leaves the Palestinians alone to their suffering⁵⁷⁹.

Moreover, the annual commemoration of Srebrenica, which this year marked the 20th anniversary of the massacre, revealed that victim-based identity is very strong and possibly growing even stronger among Bosniak youth (this can also be observed in Internet comments, innumerable talks in real-life, and by the type of events commemorating the wrongs that the Muslims of Bosnia suffered in the early 1990s). The official stance of the Islamic Community (IZ BiH), represented by the former Chief Islamic Scholar Mustafa Cerić, and Ismet Spahić as his representative, is that absolute justice will not be achieved on earth⁵⁸⁰, and that it belongs only to God. This approach has had a strong appeasing influence, thanks to which many local vendettas have been prevented from getting out of hand and the subsequent radicalization of various local populations has been avoided. At the same time, it seems to have confirmed the status of Bosnian Muslims' martyrdom and victimhood as a permanent identity feature, which can be washed off and compensated for only by and through God (Islam).

The above-mentioned assertions reveal two points: the first is the sense of having been wronged, and thus detached from Europe; the second is the turn towards the Muslim world, with its problems now being perceived as Bosniaks' own. This choice was already observable in the sermons of Spahić of the 1990s. Self-appreciation of Muslim identity would go hand in hand with acknowledging Europe's 'faults', and its subsequent rejection:

We must, my brothers, persist and break complexes. Certain people must be made to know that the complex of inferiority because one is a Muslim must be removed. We don't need the complex of Europe anymore. Let Europe be ashamed of its deeds, you and I will be proud of ours.⁵⁸¹

This self-appreciation changed the perception of Self in intercultural and interreligious dialogue. The Muslim stance became less prone to compromises on elements of self-perceived heritage or identity:

The other day I said to one German journalist: Don't ask Bosniak Muslims if they are in favour of multinationalism or multiculturalism. Pose that question to yourselves, Europeans, who hide behind your humanism, behind some human rights. Are you for one such coexistence, because I am a minority here? Do you accept me with "La ilaheillallah" ["there is no God but God"] or do you want to put a cross on me? I have historical evidence that I am in favour of multinationalism; that I am for coexistence. Next to my [Gazi Husrev-beg] mosque you have a Serbian Orthodox church, no more than 50 meters as the crow flies. It was built when the mosque was already there, perhaps a bit later. Does that not tell you something? You and I must know where we live and it's exactly faith that must be more important than anything.⁵⁸²

Hence, coexistence, although now desirable, no longer means mingling, unless it is with other Muslims – as one of my respondents stated while explaining the current Bosnian stance on Turks and Arabs, describing these relations as historically-based blood-mixing of Bosnians and Turks, thus creating a “new Islamic race.”⁵⁸³

In this perception, the demarcation line between Europe and Bosnia is Islam itself (and the concept of Muslims as victims⁵⁸⁴), as Spahić urges: “[g]o on the path as it was ordered to you by God’s Prophet. (...) Five times it must be abluted, five times prayed, there is no ‘You want this, you don’t want that’. It’s not European civilization, there is no alcohol.”⁵⁸⁵

Although far distanced from the pure rejection or condemnation of Europe, an echo of this attitude was heard from some of my respondents: “Bosnia is in Europe, it is a European country, but some European values can never be introduced here, like homosexuality.”⁵⁸⁶ Exactly the same narrative can be found in Spahić’s sermon in Bosanski Petrovac in 1997, at the re-opening ceremony of a mosque that had been destroyed during the ethnic cleansing campaign by Serb forces, when he said:

“I hear a lot of people saying these days, ‘We want to go to [join] Europe.’ Well I say I don’t want to go to Europe. I’ll take their technology but I don’t want to go to Europe. There they lead around poodles instead of children on their walks. There the church is marrying men with men and women with women! Don’t take me to Europe!”⁵⁸⁷

Elsewhere, he called on Bosniaks to openly reject what he associated with European values, saying “let’s reject this “European culture” and that is cussing, alcohol, gambling, playing cards, women, etc. That is the European scum.”⁵⁸⁸ As much as Europe is considered to be more technologically advanced (confirmed by respondents A, B, C and D as an attractive aspect which could be utilized), European culture tends to be associated with “excessive freedom” and a moral code not only separate but also incompatible with the Muslim one. The rejection of modernity associated with Europe and the non-Islamic world, and enclosure in what is purely sharia-abiding, and in what is local (as one researcher called it, the “claustrophobic”⁵⁸⁹), seemed to Spahić to be a safe haven: “[i]f mini-skirts are worn, the shells will begin falling again.... If the Četniks [Serb nationalistic soldiers] don’t send them, Allah will find someone who will!”⁵⁹⁰ Although most of my young respondents tended to disagree with this attitude to women’s clothing⁵⁹¹, their attitude towards Europe and European values seems at least ambiguous.

One of the interviewees stated, “We don’t have much will to be European, I think it comes from the Ottoman period”, adding that to be a European Muslim means to “be better, to look down on other Muslims” even though “Muslims from Myanmar or Pakistan are not less important than those in Europe.”⁵⁹² Although the younger generation tended to primarily associate quite positive values with Europe (i.e. technical superiority, economic advancement, and also tolerance, including toward Muslims), it is clear that they seem closer to Turkish and Arab Muslims historically, mentally, and economically, despite individual varying views on the role of Erdoğan, or of the Gulf Arab States in Bosnia, and their economic and cultural presence.

The issue of brotherly feelings for Islamic states and communities has been underlined by all of my respondents, as well as for the memory of the military, material and moral support provided by other Muslims during the war. However, bear in mind that one respondent (D) claimed to find true and unambiguous pride in the Europeanness of Bosnian Islam, while cutting off its identity from what he called “Asian influence”. It is also noteworthy that respondent (D), who had received a thorough education in both local and classical Islam as well as in Western culture, philosophy, and political thought, openly expressed the idea that the worst sermon he ever heard was one of Ismet Spahić’s, because of its politicization and the introduction of a discourse which should never be introduced to a mosque⁵⁹³. As (D)’s opinions were very provocative and revealed a completely different set of affiliations and their justifications, I will quote them extensively in order to provide a sort of counterbalance. This counterbalancing judgment may not be entirely representative of the practicing Muslim youth of Sarajevo, and might rather represent elitist tendencies, but it surely deserves to be noted as present:

“Islam in Bosnia is European Islam, which is documented by the 500-year-old tradition and experience of Islam here, in Europe, and of communicating with the intellectual tradition of Europe. It is first of all, and at most, European. This might not be a known category, but it is not an immigrant, imported category. Our Islam is not an immigrant one, but is a tradition based on centuries of Eastern and Western thought, with values such as secularism. (...) Apart from practicing Muslims there are cultural Muslims, and this leads to a relaxation in regards to some sharia rules, a kind of distance of what we practice here and call Islam [church bells begin to toll in the background] (...) What is important here is the tolerance, freedom, a kind of scepticism towards Islam. Questioning Islam – this is important, and makes it possibly the most Modern Islam in the world. (...)

“Since Europe can be defined as the opposite of the Eastern World, we have coexisted long enough in this hostile environment, and this taught us how to live with this culture and its products. Thus, we have learnt to ask questions about the essence of Islam as opposed to formalism. And many things were possible here, which were not possible in countries that call themselves Islamic: human rights, feminism, women’s rights, which here, in a predominantly Muslim country, are much stronger than in any other Islamic land.

“When you live in Europe, you are surrounded by people of different attitudes to alcohol, sex, and you enter a dialogue with your own faith and discover that many things which are presented to you as not OK are subject to manipulation by figures who present themselves as interpreters of faith. Finally, you believe your European neighbour more than some Islamic quasi-authority in his land, in Egypt or Arabia. Finally, you realize that apparently those people there, in the Eastern corner of Asia – apparently are wrong, and manipulating. (...) They focus on unimportant issues like covering women, and somewhere in Asia, Africa, they ban women from driving cars and call that Islam: this formalism is more important than the essence. So when you live, hear, and read books, and feel that you belong to the civilization to which both Dostoyevski and the Marquise de Sade belong, all this creates a big distance from formalism. And formalism is an enormous problem for contemporary Islamic thought⁵⁹⁴.”

The stance presented by respondent (D) can be described as the antithesis of Spahić’s thought. Despite living in Sarajevo as a child throughout the entire siege and receiving an Islamic education, (D) has never shown a victim-based identity, negative associations with socialism, or with the culture and values associated with Europe and Modernity. In this regard, this young man remains on the opposite spectrum from the “claustrophobic” – at the openness of “oekumene”⁵⁹⁵. Interestingly enough, however, to a certain extent his turning towards the European repeats Western stereotypes of the Middle East, Asia and Islam itself, just as Spahić’s view of Europe echoes the Middle Eastern stereotype of the West. Therefore, these two self-perceptions reproduce mutual biases and thus, in Sarajevo, East meets West in an interesting clash: not one of civilizations, but rather of perceptions.

Conclusions

The small sampling I have researched should lead only to careful conclusions. However, the analysis of the prevailing discourse seems to confirm the change of importance and meaning of the umma as projected into society. Ismet Spahić’s sermons seem to represent and reinforce this turning point. It is clear that after the war in the 1990s, Bosniak Islamic identity became politicized. The processes of victimization, self-appreciation, politicization, and reevaluation of multiculturalism are observable in the material gathered and examined. This turning point is not merely a historical event, but rather an explanatory background to the observations on the contemporary condition

of Muslim Bosnians. They have been lured in by the prosperity of Europe on the one hand, and on the other hand they have experienced the trauma of genocide. Also, the feeling of being wronged applies not only to Europe as a whole, but to the promise of multiculturalism and laicism itself: Bosniaks have experienced flourishing followed by collapse. The experiences of the past have shaped the condition of Bosniaks in a twofold manner: they have created both an openness and culturally-based tendency to self-educate and coexist, as well as a tendency to turn away from non-Muslims and seek refuge in the ontological safety of the Islamic umma.

The Muslim identity of the Albanians: Between Myth and Reality

ELIS GJEVORI

Abstract

This paper will discuss how local Imams have sought to frame the Islamic identity of the Albanian people in Albania and Kosovo. This paper will draw on YouTube speeches as well as other social media platforms and analyse their rhetoric and impact on wider society and identity-building. Additionally, this paper will explore some themes that the Imams use as a rallying call to amplify their message, e.g. education, hijab, and what are perceived as state-led efforts to promote Catholicism at the expense of the Muslim majority. The Imams, very successfully, have created a space to discuss Islamic identity and challenge nationalist narratives.

Introduction

The religious composition of Albania has been a matter of dispute and politicisation for several decades. In 2011 however, the Albanian government agreed and held the first census since the 1940s - when the Muslim population was 72% of the total population⁵⁹⁶ - which asked a question on religious affiliation. The 2011 census concluded that Muslims were 60%, Catholics 10% and Orthodox Christians at 7%⁵⁹⁷, while in Kosovo, Albanian Muslims account for 95% of the population, Orthodox 1.4% and Catholics 2%.⁵⁹⁸ Many Albanians converted to Islam in a process that spanned hundreds of years, making Albania one of the few countries to convert *en masse* in the Balkans. These post-Ottoman countries form Europe's only two Muslim-majority countries. After independence both countries have pursued a rigid implementation of secularism at a state level. The collapse of communism in Albania in 1990 and the disintegration of Yugoslavia in Kosovo in 1998/99 resulted in what some would see as a re-awakened interest in Islam across the region, and in particular amongst the Albanians.

In Albania and Kosovo, secularism does not merely signify the separation of state and religion, as it does in most Western societies. The Albanian and Kosovar state, drawing upon the French model and practice of *laïcité*, exerts

considerable influence over religion in order to limit its sphere of influence, control or direct it. Both governments pay particular attention to Islam in this regard, which has, in turn, resulted in some tension with the Muslim community. The government's interference with the Muslim community's internal affairs, as opposed to its distant approach to the other religious groups, is indicative that it is not equidistant from all religions. The Catholic and the Orthodox churches are not supervised by the state. They are largely self-governing, and hence only subject to the normal processes of the laws and regulations. Conversely the running of mosques, its imams, the hijab in public space as well in schools and the beard have all been remarked upon or regulated by the respective governments.

Methodology

This paper will analyse the discourse of Imams, and how they aim to persuade and enunciate their arguments, including any emotional references and what they evoke in the popular imagination. The case studies have been chosen due to their grassroots popularity and ability to influence the national debate. In this paper I have worked with audio-visual materials and written sources on social media and news outlets. There is a sufficient amount of primary source information available to allow for a granular observation of the various actors under review.

Background

It is important to outline the parameters that inform the role of Islam in Albania and Kosovo. It has been noted by observers that mainstream debate politically, socially and at many times officially, shares a common thread in its open hostility towards Islam and Muslims. Imams in Albania and Kosovo are attempting to counter two main narratives that are propagated. One narrative, by the internationally acclaimed Albanian novelist Ismail Kadare, states that "the Albanian path to Europe should be taken without the baggage of Islam, which is not worth it and only delays the arrival".⁵⁹⁹ This view portrays Islam as a barrier to entering the "civilised world", and reduces Islam to a position of inferiority. Similarly, the former President of Albania, Alfred Moisiu opined that "Albanians are often cited as a country of Muslim majority. [But] this is a very superficial reading of the reality. Islam in Albania is neither a residential religion, nor a faith spread originally... As a rule, it is a

shallow religion”.⁶⁰⁰ He went on to say that Muslim Albanians are at their core Christian thus, entry into Europe is not insurmountable, provided Christianity is embraced.⁶⁰¹ This constructivist position sees Europe as a “Christian Club”,⁶⁰² therefore Christian voices, symbols, and iconography, familiar to Europe, ought to be promoted. These themes – that Islam is a hindrance, and further, that Europe is a Christian grouping to be emulated – and the role that Muslims should attach to their identity, run concurrently in social and political discourse. These parameters inform much of the public debate regarding the role of religion and in particular Islam in society.

Kosovo

The role that Islam should play in Kosovo was discussed in a policy paper commissioned by the Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development in the early 2000s, which among other recommendations proposed that Kosovo authorities promote Sufism over Orthodox Islam and, more generally, the rekindling of Catholicism in the country as a bulwark against rising Islamic expressions.⁶⁰³ Imams have responded by attempting to highlight the inconsistency of the state, declaring itself secular, while involving itself in how Islam ought to be shaped. Additionally, the perceived preferential treatment shown towards the Catholic community by the state has only heightened tensions. Therefore, when in 2011 the Catholic Church in Kosovo successfully lobbied against legislation that allowed the teaching of religious education (of all faiths) in public schools, as well as the wearing of the hijab, (which is informally banned)⁶⁰⁴ the ensuing debate highlighted some of the issues important to the Muslim community.

One of the most popular Imams in Kosovo spoke out against such calls. Dr. Shefqet Krasniqi’s official Facebook page has over 127,000 likes,⁶⁰⁵ his videos attract thousands of views and his YouTube channel has garnered more than 1.4m views.⁶⁰⁶ In a sermon delivered during the Islamic month of Ramadan, he outlined some goals of the Muslim community. Dr. Krasniqi suggested that the Catholic Church had acted against the will of the people.⁶⁰⁷ He went on to explain to his congregation that this is a battle of ideas about who is able to influence the identity of the population: on the one hand a segment of society that comprises some sixty thousand (Catholics), or on the other the much larger Muslim majority. The discourse deployed by the Imam touches the core of the identity-building process including educational and religious symbols. Society in Kosovo has undergone significant transfor-

mation since 2000. The Imam alludes to this great change – this flux in identity - occurring in society. He argues in his sermon that Muslims must not be side-lined from this discussion, but must instead contribute to establishing and protecting their rights. The Imam admonishes Muslims, arguing that Islam is something that goes beyond the mosque and that religion has a role to play in the public sphere⁶⁰⁸. He goes on to reference the respect the USA, Canada and Australia show towards Islam and draws a comparison with Kosovo which denies girls and young people an education or a religious education because of an animosity towards Islam.

In speaking about the standards in the ‘West’ and contrasting the local attitude to religion, Dr. Krasniqi aims to do two things. One is expose the duplicity of a government that claims to be liberal. The other is to ferment a much more politically and socially aware Muslim community which is able to lobby the government on matters important to it. However it is important to note that the civil society Dr. Krasniqi is speaking of goes beyond the actions of non-governmental organisations. It implores and aims to cultivate a shared Muslim understanding regarding the orientation of society. Creating this culturally shared memory is important in identity construction and identity maintaining. The awakening, preservation or formation is an essential component in the survival of any community. Therefore it is also important that scholars have attempted to increase the depth of this culturally shared memory through the use of history and the narratives that it can offer. We can see this in how Ottoman history is perceived.

There is an effort to bridge the Albanian Ottoman past and the current modern nation state. This is a politically charged topic, since so much of the modern nation state has been built on condemning the Ottoman Caliphate.

When an Imam, Irfan Salihu, recently questioned nationalist historiography, noting that Albanian migration to Kosovo was facilitated by the arrival of the Ottomans,⁶⁰⁹ he was suspended from his position as Imam. Irfan Salihu and Dr. Krasniqi have sought to readdress the Ottoman past of the Albanians. The educational system in both Kosovo and Albania portray the Ottoman period negatively, associating it with Islam. The scholars have sought to challenge this nationalist reading of the Ottoman period by seeking to talk up the positives, such as Albanian success in all fields of the Ottoman state. Imam Salihu questions why the “Pope and the cross” are held in such high esteem but Islamic history and the Muslims that seek to defend it are called “Turks” or “Arabs” – a pejorative term amongst some Albanians.

The narrative presented by these two imams aims to bridge a lost link in the cultural history of the Muslim Albanians and, importantly, to bring it to the present making it relatable whilst differentiating itself from state-sponsored historiography.

Another attempt to challenge state teaching of Ottoman history was put forward by Imam Mulla Osmani who challenged a common trope of nationalist thought in Albania and Kosovo which have been fundamental to the myth of nationhood.⁶¹⁰ The central and almost untouchable figure in post-Ottoman Albanian history has been Skenderbeg, a borderline mythical figure whom, it is said, resisted the Ottomans for 25 years. The emotional reaction that is evinced by this figure is considerable. The common myth is that he fought for Albanian nationhood and Westphalian sovereignty, a concept that emerged several hundred years after his death. What is important about what Imam Osmani said and was subsequently relayed by other Imams in Albania is his position that “If Skenderbeg has killed Muslims he is not my hero”. The central trope of the Albanian state in both countries rests on this figure, who converted from Islam to Catholicism and fought against the Ottomans, to build an Albanian identity. However this central tenet is being challenged by a reinvigorated Muslim community who perceive that the current nation-building process does not reflect their identity. By offering counter narratives, Imams are offering alternative tenets in the process of identity formation. The challenge in the years ahead remains how political institutions can accommodate what is becoming a sustained position in the wider Muslim community: the lack of acceptance of the nation-state narrative.

Other positions that Imams have taken has been in regards to the normalisation of the outward appearance of Muslims. Increasing signs of religiosity amongst Muslims and their treatment by the media have been discussed by the influential Imam, Enes Goga. He argues that the political class is attempting to make religious observance a wedge issue between nominal Muslims and more observant Muslims, creating fear and intimidation.⁶¹¹ By asserting that Muslim men are demonised in the press and by politicians, the Imam is creating a narrative of victimisation. More importantly, the Imam also seeks to bring nominal Muslims into the same camp as the observant Muslims, making use of wider public dissatisfaction and alienation towards the political class.

The Imam also describes a tendency to try to create a divide between more religiously observant Muslims, labelled “extremists”, and more nominal Muslims, labelled “moderates”. The Imam finds this dichotomy meaningless, arguing that this is a “nation of Muslims, who love their country”. In all these competing narratives what we have is two competing forces: the governing political class one on the one hand is attempting to construct an identity that is wholly secular and unaffected by Islamic influence. On the other hand there is a clergy that is attempting to infuse national identity with Islamic influences.

Albania

Discourses of Albanian identity that draw on Islamic elements are more advanced in Kosovo than in Albania, but nonetheless are gaining in influence in Albania too. In Albania, officially a secular state, a great deal of influence is exerted on the Islamic community in a bid to control and nationalise it: in essence, to socially engineer a more compliant form of Islam⁶¹² that meets nation-building goals. It therefore came as a surprise that on the 100th anniversary of Albanian independence, the Mufti of Shkoder, a city in Northern Albania with a mixed conservative Muslim and Catholic population, Imam Muhamed Sytari in his Friday sermon spoke against what he saw as the whitewashing of Islamic figures from Albanian history.⁶¹³ The view is noteworthy because it is an oft-repeated complaint. It is part of a discourse that seeks to make Islam a part of the national fabric.

Nonetheless, linkages are also forming between the Imams and popular national figures. The Imam of Tirana, Ahmed Kalaja, and extremely popular international and national football players (Sokol Cikalleshi, Mergim Mavraj and Shkelzen Gashi) have embraced each other in a move to bolster the image of Islam in Albania. Is this part of wider strategy or not? The players on many occasions have been approached by the media enquiring why they have beards and go to the mosque. While mainly ignoring these issues, players have at times challenged these questions through social media. Additionally they have actively approached Imams and have taken pictures with them in the mosque or out socialising, subsequently posting these pictures online with the Imams doing likewise. Tapping into the mainstream population which is enthusiastically devoted to football legitimises Imams and widens their appeal. This increasing awareness of Imams in society conversely allows Imams an opportunity to shape discussions beyond their conservative base.

Thus, Imams are able to contribute to national debates concerning the role of Islam in society, praying, being religious and growing a beard, and to question nationalist historiography and the role of Islam in society – all actions and views normally portrayed as uncharacteristically un-Albanian. Imam Kalaja has attempted to invert this anti-Islamic discourse presented by the media and politicians. He suggests that such attacks are Islamophobic and anchors this in a deeper historical narrative, suggesting that such attackers are also opponents of the Albanian people.⁶¹⁴ This is reminiscent of historical narratives in which Albanians suffered greatly at the hands of forces that marked them out for discrimination based on their Islamic faith. In linking successful international Albanian football players and Imams, they are able to portray a powerful narrative, one which accommodates Islam as a function in Albanian identity.

In other areas, Albanian Islamic communities in Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia have all agreed on a framework to create a project of “great national importance”⁶¹⁵ to agree on a dictionary of Islamic terminology in the Albanian language. This project aims to institutionalise Islamic terminology in Arabic that is commonly used and embedded in the everyday language of the Albanian people. This is important because a crucial tenet of Albanian nationalism is language⁶¹⁶. The consequence of such a project, arguably, is that by increasing awareness amongst Albanians of Islamic terminology that already exists as part of the Albanian language, public perception of what it means to be Albanian could potentially be impacted. This is an important development, Should it prevail it may prove to be a milestone in the evolving discourse on Albanian national identity.

Conclusion

This paper has tried to briefly outline some of the emerging trends in the Albanian Muslim community’s discourse in preserving Islam as a source of identity. In the present moment, Albanian Muslims are engaged in vigorous discussions regarding identity, the role of religion in the public sphere, what it means to be Albanian, what it means to be European, and whether these identities are mutually exclusive. The current debates centre around perceived injustices relating to the building of mosques and the preferential treatment churches receive, the role of Islamic scholars in Albanian history and how to accommodate the region’s Ottoman history, something which would entail re-writing the nationalist’s narrative.

What is evident from my research is that there is a latent notion of Muslim identity amongst many Albanians, more so in Kosovo and increasingly so in Albania. A report by the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies, published in April 2015, highlighted that 40% of youth between the ages of 18-24 have a “a lot of trust” in religious institutions⁶¹⁷ with 55.3% of the wider population declaring that they trust religious institutions.⁶¹⁸ Additionally, the ability of the Kosovar or Albanian states to co-opt the Islamic clergy appears to be unsustainable. Social media allows independent Imams, denied access to the media, to influence wider discourse through their online platforms.

Lastly, in an age of globalisation and increasing multiculturalism, transnational religious networks are creating a permissive environment in which the old ideas of the nation state do not hold as firmly as they once did. The Albanian populations have emerged after several decades of communism which had created weak state institutions. In the face of this, the public space is certainly redolent with opportunity, particularly regarding discussions of what it means to be Albanian and the extent to which Islam can be one of many formative parts of Albanian identity. There is at the moment a cultural dissonance in Kosovo and Albania between on the one hand, Muslim scholars, and on the other, the political elite. Religion is one of the greatest cultural identity markers and politicians and political institutions will aim to co-opt or imbue themselves with the prevailing religious practices. However in Albania and Kosovo the political elite are at odds with the Islamic clergy and a significant part of their electorate. How this is to be resolved will be a central and growing question over the next 15 to 20 years.

Dress and Language: A Critical Analysis of the Concept and the Process of Identity Construction within the British Bangladeshi Muslim Community in East London

FATIMA RAJINA

Abstract

The complexities of Islamic societies and cultures have coloured vast parts of the globe and continue to exert a powerful effect in non-Islamic societies to this day. However, the varieties of cultural, social and political mechanisms which exert influence in Islamic societies defy simple categorisation. As such, this study undertakes a critical analysis of the concept and the process of identity construction within the British Bangladeshi Muslim community in East London, which extends from Brick Lane to Ilford. I aim to explore how two very different generations of British Bangladeshis deal with their identity and how this affects the integration, especially of young Muslims, into wider British society. I explore factors that help structure an ethno-religious identity – with a particular focus on language and dress – and how the British Bangladeshi community has developed this identity over time. This is an important discussion, as the Bangladeshi community has been settled in East London since the late 1950s. This study also takes other factors, such as the role of politics, into consideration in order to help identify the shifting boundaries created by the community in relation to ideas of perceived sameness and otherness within British society.

Introduction

“The Bangladeshi community in Britain began to take root, on the territory marked out by the first few casual pioneers who had found the way ‘across seven seas and thirteen rivers’ from Sylhet to Aldgate. Here at last was the memorial to those thousands of nameless sailors who died in cold water and blazing engine rooms. The Empire had finally come home.”⁶¹⁹

Islam, since the 11th of September attacks, has become the centre of debate in many spheres in the world, and has led to tensions between the Islamic world and its occidental counterparts, as terms such as ‘Islam’ and ‘terrorism’ are seen as almost synonymous. The bombings and tragic acts carried out by a few Muslims and such acts being justified using the Holy Qur’an has led to questions such as: is Islam the problem, or the Muslims practising it? Is Islam compatible with the ‘modern’ world? How can Muslims be integrated into Western societies, especially if these Muslims’ allegiance lies with their religion

rather than the state within which they reside? Or are Muslims more loyal to their parents' country of origin?

In Britain, it was after the terrorist attacks of 7 July 2005 that British Muslims, including the young, have come under unprecedented public scrutiny, as the attack was perpetrated not by hardened al-Qaeda operatives but by young British Muslims.⁶²⁰ This attack has created a sense of panic amongst Muslims living in Britain, which resulted in a societal dynamic of 'integration' vs. 'seclusion' forcing Muslims to redefine their identities as either 'moderates' or 'extremists'. Words such as 'Muslim' and 'young Muslims' together most often trigger associations with violent extremism. Young Muslims, just like their non-Muslim peers, are facing similar everyday challenges of adolescence, and in addition, they are also trying to deal with issues unique to their 'Muslimness'. After this attack in Britain, it is hardly surprising that the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims, the role of culture, identity, ethnicity, multiculturalism and many other concerns have attracted considerable attention in recent years. It also increased the public interest in Islam, and the 'evidence for this includes a new abundance of faculty openings and curriculums in colleges and universities that deal with the Islamic religious tradition.'⁶²¹

In the present paper, I examine the role and construction of an ethno-religious identity within the British Bangladeshi community. I hypothesise that the younger generation are 'going back' to their religious roots and want to assert their distinctive character by identifying with the global *Ummah* of Islam; whereas the previous generation are closer to their ethnic identity and are more willing to integrate. I demonstrate this by exploring British Bangladeshis' relationships with dress and language. The former includes attire which my respondents classified as religious as well as cultural, such as the *sari*, *shalwar kameez*, *funjabi*, *lungi*, *jubba*, *hijab*, *niqab*, and the *jilbab*; and I explore the latter regarding the use of Bengali, Arabic and some references to Farsi terms used by South Asian Muslims as religious expressions.

Dress

Dress, in any culture, is an important aspect, as it functions as an outward, obvious symbol of the culture concerned. It is also one of the first elements of a culture people can utilise to distinguish one group from another. The way one expresses oneself is referred to as personal identity, which Goffman,

in his book *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* defines as 'the assumption that the individual can be differentiated from all others.'⁶²² Clothing can be seen as a vehicle to identify an ethnic or religious group, and ethnic and religious dresses can be seen as an expression of pride and love for one's heritage and group cohesion. Attire can also act as an indicator of the individual's expression of their identity and also demonstrates that 'group inclusion and exclusion are made apparent through modifying and supplementing the body.'⁶²³

Though ethnic dress is theoretically a marker of one's ethnic identity, demonstrating a common or shared heritage and background of a particular group of people, yet it can also be merged into the construction of a national dress, marking who belongs to the nation and who does not. This is demonstrated in Berreman's study of a northern city in India where Muslims were identifiable through the *burkha*, and perceived as being outside the nation-state; while Hindus were identified through the *sari* and perceived as representatives of the nation-state. He noted that during the Hindu-Muslim riot in Ahmedabad the 'would-be killers identif[ied] their victims through dissimilar Hindu and Moslem (sic) ways of dressing'.⁶²⁴ Here one can note how the descriptors 'Hindu' and 'Muslim', which are terms to identify one's subscription to a religion, are utilised as a way to demarcate ethnic identities, with the former having the privilege of being incorporated into the national imagining.

I met with Farhana at a café in Bethnal Green. She awaited me in her flowery, summery dress and we decided to go to the park nearby where the noise level would be lower. As we spoke of identity and growing up in East London, Farhana shared her thoughts on what dress means to her. She stated that 'people can wear whatever they want, really. It's not defined by a dress code.' The 'it's' refers to Bengaliness and whether dress can function as a means to express one's ethnic identity. She further elaborated and explained how she differentiates between the wearing of the *sari* to the *shalwar kameez*:

The *sari* is something that is specific to the Indian subcontinent and Bangladesh, and Bengali culture...the *shalwar kameez* is much more of Islamic kind of dress, as far as I'm concerned, also from the subcontinent, but more of an Islamic way of dressing, really. Whereas the *sari*, Hindus, Muslims, whoever, wore it, and there was no, sort of, distinction as such, in terms of religious identity...it was a cultural, sort of, dress, for many women. (2014)

Farhana consciously distinguishes between the two attires and emphasises the role of the *sari* as functioning as the marker for one's ethnic identity and the *shalwar kameez* as a marker for one's religious identity. This is an interesting analysis, as the wearing of the *sari* was associated with Hindus and while West Pakistan attempted to create a unified Islamic identity with East Pakistan, it felt the Bengalis' 'Hindu' traditions held them further from accomplishing this unified identity. The *sari* was perceived to be too 'Hindu' thus drawing the Muslims away from their real identity, assuming one's ethnic identity could only be expressed through one form of dress. Although dress is a personal choice every individual makes, it is nevertheless 'completely social because they are socially acquired 'selections' from socially constructed ways of attributing identities on the basis of social positions individuals fill.'⁶²⁵ In addition to this, Goffman (1963)⁶²⁶ argues there is a difference between personal and social identities, where the former refers to self-attributions and the latter to widely shared categorizations of individuals as social objects. Furthermore, Farhana felt that the *shalwar kameez* was not a gendered attire because 'it's like a unisex dress, you know, there's no, sort of, sense of gender about it... and so, for me, Islam, sort of, tries to show, not show the body, really, or parts of the body, where the *sari* is a very feminine garment.' Interestingly, though Farhana perceives the *shalwar kameez* as a functioning marker of one's Islamic, religious identity it is also worn by Punjabi Sikhs, which then ruptures the idea of it being an exclusively 'Muslim dress'.

The male dress of *lungi* and *funjabi* carry different connotations for the men I interviewed. Prior to discussing the research participants' responses I provide an overview of the attires traditionally worn by Bangladeshi men. The *lungi* is a sarong-like attire worn by men, usually, in hot climates where wearing trousers would otherwise be very unpleasant; and it is worn as a national dress by men in Bangladesh. The *lungi* is designed in a skirt style, which is sometimes easily confused with the *dhoti* (famously worn by Gandhi), with its linear-like sheets. The *funjabi* (pronounced with an 'f' by Sylhetis and also known as *shalwar Punjabi suit*), consists of wearing a *kameez* (a long tunic) or *kurta* (a tunic) but in Bengali the word *funjabi* itself refers to the top garment only, and can be worn with a slim *shalwar* pyjamas (pronounced *fyjamas* by Sylhetis), or with jeans or normal trousers. As was the case with the women, when the British arrived in India for the first time, they were 'invariably shocked by the 'nakedness' of the loin-clothed Indian boatmen.'⁶²⁷

I interviewed Sohaib in Whitechapel in the Pie Factory opposite East London

Mosque. The restaurant, which is halal and run by Muslims, is reviving the East End, working-class traditional staple food of pie and mash, sharing recipes and the history of it on their walls. Sohaib, a lawyer by profession, states:

So I wear the *funjabi* and the *fyjama* and the *lungi*; not *lungi* so much. Some people do, for *jumu'a* [Friday prayers]; some of the elders, they wear *lungi* with the *funjabi*. But it's not – maybe it's because of the cold in this country. ... but I think it's just not done around here. I wouldn't want to be the odd one out.

Sohaib's response indicates that the *lungi* is adopted by the older generation, most likely those in their 50s and 60s, who continue to wear it for *jumu'a*. His final comment also suggests that the *lungi*, even once it enters the public sphere, is worn by an older generation more attached to it. Sohaib indicates that he would not want to be 'the odd one out', which Goffman argues is due to people feeling obliged 'to 'fit in' to some degree but how they do so is both culturally specific and contextually variable.'⁶²⁸ I interviewed Khalid, aged 25, who mentioned how his dad sometimes wears the *lungi* with a *funjabi* for *jumu'a* but he has never done so himself. This can be illustrated by the following interview with him:

Me: Do you not wear *lungi*?

Khalid: I don't know. I very rarely wear it (laughs). *Lungis* are amazing, they're really amazing.

Me: But yet you don't wear it?

Khalid: Yeah, I don't wear it because I'm uncomfortable. I'm used to wearing shorts in the house. No, I do *akhta* (sometimes). I'm not against it. I do wear *lungi* sometimes at home. Absolutely, only at home. Never-

Me: Never to *jumu'a*?

Khalid: Never ever. Put it this way, when David Beckham wore his sarong, he got plastered for that, he got absolutely laid for that, if I spend time in my house in my *lungi*, people are going to think I'm a crazy guy. Again, you're thinking about what other people are going to think of you.

As suggested by Sohaib, who does not want to be the ‘odd one out’ and Khalid who is concerned about ‘what other people think of you’, it is noticeable that there is a case of behaving and acting according to how one’s peers dress or else one risks becoming the subject of mockery. As they adhere to the dress code set by their peers they ‘come to orientate themselves to the social world and learn to perform in it, and recognize how the body is central to this experience.’⁶²⁹ It also seems that the *lungi* is a more prominent garment for the older generation, which could be due to their attachments ‘back home’. Interestingly, none of the male participants viewed the *lungi* as a religious garment, as none of them explicitly stated this, however, the *funjabi* was identified as a religious garment and was worn by the younger, as well as the older generation I interviewed, in public and private.

Observing religious garments within the British Bangladeshi Muslim community in the East End has been intriguing. It is argued that ‘as more and more Bengalis have settled in the Whitechapel area of East London, markers of Jewishness once common in the area have virtually disappeared to be replaced by clothing repertoires associated with Bangladesh and Islam: *saris*, *shalwar kamizes*, *hijabs*, *jilbabs*, shawls and *niqabs* for women; beards and *kurtas*, particularly for older-generation Bengali men.’⁶³⁰ My own research explores research participants’ personal views, interpretations and experience of religious clothes, using ethnography to access different frameworks and perspectives. By focusing on male religious clothes also, I am to shift away from the already existent gaze on the woman’s body.

The debate around male religious dress is addressed by another research participant, Ripon, whom I interviewed in his office in London. He spoke of how his conception of religious dress was vastly different to that of his father, who believed that the *funjabi* functioned as a marker to express one’s religious identity. Ripon, on the other hand, argues: ‘that’s not to say he is wrong because the Prophet (*saw*⁶³¹) used to wear long shirts that is along that line, but it’s not Islamic dress, that’s what the Prophet (*saw*) used to wear.’ Ripon here differentiates between what is ‘ethnic’ and ‘religious’ and explicitly states that the Prophet (*saw*) wore this because he was born into the Arab culture thus wearing what was the norm at the time. The discussion surrounding the Muslim dress code for men, nowadays, is one that pertains mainly to wearing of the *thobe*. As Tarlo remarks, styles, ‘especially those regionally associated with the Middle East and North Africa’ are ‘being accorded the status of authentically ‘Islamic’⁶³² perhaps due to their geographic proximity to the origin of Islam itself and the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammed (*saw*).

Interestingly, although the *thobe* is perceived in the UK as a religious garment this may not necessarily be the case in the Gulf countries where the wearing of the *thobe* may hold little religious significance. Another respondent, Dr. Ahmed, speaking about the importance of dress expressing one's religious identity, mentioned that 'even if you go to any kind of Middle Eastern countries, the way they dress is a cultural thing, it sometimes has nothing to do with how religious they are... whereas here you'd probably be confident that if somebody is dressing in a certain way, then they probably are more religious'. This assumes that the wearing of clothes which some may perceive to be 'Islamic' and from the Gulf region, is creating a space for 'new classifications and understandings'⁶³³ of what constitutes Muslim male dress here in the UK; whereas elsewhere it would hold a different meaning. The understanding of what constitutes Islamic dress for men and women is drawn from the *Qur'an*, *Sunnah* (the actions and examples of the Prophet (*saw*)'s life); and *Hadiths* (the sayings of the Prophet (*saw*)). Tarlo, citing El Guindi (1999), argues that 'contrary to what is often assumed by outsiders, these textual sources contain more references to men's dress than to women's.'⁶³⁴ Shiraj, during his interview, referred to the Saudi *thobe* as a religious dress, which he wears for *Eid* celebrations: 'But sometimes I do wear other religious dresses on different occasions, like the Saudi *thobe* and all that, we would wear during Eid time.'

Language

Language is a crucial element in formulating one's identity, and in this case, the British Bangladeshi community is no different. During the struggle for independence in Bangladesh, utilising the Bengali language as a key identifier functioned as a boundary for self-identification and categorisation, and as a way in which Bangladeshis differentiated themselves from Pakistanis. Edwards states that 'nationalism from its modern inception was inextricably bound up with language'; language was seen as 'an outward sign of a group's peculiar identity and a significant means of ensuring its continuation.'⁶³⁵ The Language Movement of 1952 in Bangladesh emphasised the vitality of the language and the need to create a nation-state in order to preserve the language itself. Here in the UK, the Bengali language was considered so important by the first generation that many British-born Bangladeshi children were sent to *fora*⁶³⁶ where they would receive not only lessons in reciting the *Qur'an* but also in reading and writing in Bengali.

When I posed the question about the role of language to Alom during our interview in an office room at the Metropolitan University Campus in Aldgate, he informed me that he does not differentiate between standard Bangla and Sylheti Bangla. Regarding the former, he argued that ‘nobody speaks in that language anymore, that’s just for radio and TV and books’ (2014). I further probed him on the importance of passing on the language to his daughter and his response was:

I myself have struggled with that question for many years, is it really important for our young people to learn Bengali, and I still don’t know to be honest, but I do think identities are important... because one could find about Bengali culture or could be exposed to Bengali culture without knowing the language he could study that in English and find out about the history. (2014)

Alom felt one could remain attached to one’s ethnicity without learning the language, as the exposure to the culture itself is sufficient. However, would the community at large accept the individual as a member of the community? Does one need the validation? Though Alom’s statement raises many questions, it is imperative to consider what it means to the young people to know the Bengali language and to be able to communicate with other members of the community using the language. Here, Jahangir, another participant currently a student at a London university observed:

I mean there is something I fear that is our generation is the last generation I think that are going to speak Bangla, that’s something that I fear, it’s like we.... We are talking about our kids I don’t think they are going to be speaking Bangla, at all to be honest, and I fear that, I think it’s quite sad. (2014)

Jahangir’s point is an important one to note, as for him, it is ‘an identity’ and ‘if I am Bengali then I have to speak Bangla I think, that’s my view anyway.’ Jahangir felt that one cannot detach the language from the experience of being a Bengali. I received a similar response from Shamim (2013), who argued that it was very important for him to speak Bengali at home:

If I see, actually, the way I grew up, the language is so important, my mum said something to me when I was really small in the kitchen, I remember, she told me: ‘I never want to hear a word of English at home.’ I didn’t ask why, she explained to me why: ‘Look, I can speak English

and your dad can speak English. And you will be speaking English all the time outside, at school, at work... but Bengali is what you need to practice so I want you to ask for everything in Bengali and only if you don't know how to ask, then I'll explain in Bengali words to you and you will use that from now. How is that?' And that was the way she got me to learn Bengali and that was really important. So lots of my friends, despise the news, despise everything that was going on in Bangladesh, not because they understood what was going on, but because they could not understand the language that was used on television, or in the *natoks*, in the dramas, I got an appreciation for this from this.

Shamim emphasises his appreciation for the Bengali language which was acquired from his mother, who made it compulsory for him to speak Bengali in the house. This was further reinforced by other research participants I interviewed who fondly recalled speaking Bengali at home. They argued that growing up in an area, the East End, where there were many other Bangladeshi families, helped many to retain their linguistic skills. Most of the research participants admitted to speaking Bengali, especially the dialect of Sylheti, and took much comfort from the language. But Samad (2004) suggests that the loss of linguistic skills, i.e. the ability of the second generation to speak the language of their parents, plays a role in one's construction of an ethnic identity: 'as South Asian linguistic skills are lost, identification with Pakistan and Bangladesh – countries that young people may only briefly visit – becomes less significant and Muslim as an identity becomes more important. However, it must be emphasised that this process is more pronounced among the Pakistanis than Bangladeshis due to their divergent heritage.'⁶³⁷

Out of 43 research participants, only two spoke fluent Arabic whereas everyone else was able to recite the *Qur'an*, as they attended after-school *fora* where they received lessons in Quran recitation (*tajweed*). One of the participants fluent in Arabic spoke very affectionately about the language, and when I asked him how important it is to learn Arabic, he stated:

I think it's very important, I think it's a religious obligation. If you ask me what it means to be Muslim, part of what it means to be Muslim is to learn the Arabic language, because it's the "lingua arabica", we say, as opposed to the lingua franca, of the Muslim world, and at one time it was of the whole world. And anybody who was anybody at one time needed to learn Arabic to study and go into higher education.

When I asked him if it is sufficient just to be able to recite the *Qur'an*, he vehemently disagreed and pointed out that one ought to learn Arabic 'to be able to understand the Quran in its native tongue.' He further argued:

And so I don't believe that just understanding the *Qur'an* is the best way to learn the Arabic language; like any other language, you need to concentrate on all four skills and if you do that, it transforms your life. Because if it's passive - if your knowledge of the Arabic language is passive, so you need the *Quran'ic* texts to be able to prompt you to comprehend it, and then to understand it; and when it's not there, the Arabic isn't there, then it's not really part of your life, it hasn't transformed you. Whereas if it's inside you and it runs off your tongue, it's transforming you.

He strongly emphasised the need to learn Arabic, not only for recitation purposes but also to understand the language itself in order to have the best experience of being a Muslim. He argues that the acquisition and maintenance of the language, in its wholeness, which includes the key four skills of reading, writing, reading and speaking, enhances the formation of a concrete religious identity. The hegemony of Arabic as the language of Islam was emphasised throughout his other comments, in which he also asserts that English as a medium cannot accurately reflect the essence of the *Qur'an*. Khalid, an interviewee aged 25, also affirmed that Arabic is essential to understanding the *Qur'an* but he also acknowledged that despite trying to learn Arabic he was always able to use translations in order to help him understand and create a relationship with his faith. When I asked him about the importance of Arabic in his life, he elaborated:

It's important. It's not something which I have considered. It should be important to me but it's not, because, although I can read it, I struggle to understand it. I have made various attempts to actually learn it, one obviously being going to Oman on a two week language exchange to learn Arabic and not coming out with anything. But Arabic, we're told, is the language of the Quran, so for us to understand it, what the Quran says it's really really important for us to understand. As I say I can read it and it's fine, but to understand it is a different thing. But saying that there's so many translations available in English where I can understand what each paragraph says and there are so many classes for me to attend to understand what each chapter means, or each surah means or

whatever. Arabic is important, but it's not something which I've ever considered because there's so many other things available which compensates you.

During the interview I sensed frustration from Khalid, who had attempted to learn the language without success. This can be seen in light of the "sanctification" of Arabic: a process through which, according to Pargament and Mahoney, 'aspects of life are perceived as having divine character and significance'.⁶³⁸ Khalid's approach also exemplifies his multiple, hybrid identity which is expressed through the using the language which is perceived to be appropriate to particular contexts.

Conclusion

Language and dress have, over time, come to entail different meanings for each participant I interviewed and the young generation has formed a diasporic identity where they merge elements, including dress and language, from both their British and their Bengali heritage. This allows them to navigate a path according to the social context at the time. Dress has evolved with the communities' exposure to various socio-political events affecting them in their locality, from the *shalwar kameez*, *sari*, *lungi*, *funjabi* to the wearing of the *hijab*, *jilbab*, *jubba*, and *niqab*. Language has also evolved but has taken on a different tone, depending on the generation a person is interacting with. Jahangir feels Bengali is needed to guard and protect one's identity, which is done through acquiring the ability to communicate in the language, but Alom felt one can attain an attachment to the culture through learning the history, even if that is done in English. However, the importance of Arabic was a common theme amongst the research participants, with each participant emphasising their personal attachments to the language, despite not always understanding it.

Concluding Reflections

DR JEREMY HENZELL-THOMAS

In my concluding reflections at the first ‘Muslims in the UK and Europe’ Symposium in 2014,⁶³⁹ I reflected on the range of research methodologies explored in the excellent series of papers presented at that event. They included strict quantitative analysis and various types of qualitative and ethnographic studies, including audio recordings of interviews, focus groups, and case studies. We heard about Participatory Action Research (PAR), mediating concepts, and counterpublics, all of which creatively undermine established power relations, preconceived categories, and rigid binaries in various ways. And we were also given illuminating examples of how the discipline of critical discourse analysis can expose the way in which attitudes and prejudices are learnt and cemented through text and talk.

In this, the second of these annual symposia, you have further extended this range of methodologies, as for example in the use of ethnogeography which takes into account the geographical and social location of communities, and sees them as overlapping spaces containing many communities interacting with and influencing one another rather than as separate and distinct diaspora enclaves with defined transnational links.

I also made various suggestions last year as to how the work of the researchers who contributed to that first symposium might be built on and extended. These included: how can the Academy amplify its impact in the public domain? How can Muslims become a truly creative minority within European societies for the common good? How can we discover empirically what actually works in reframing perceptions about Islam and Muslims in the public mind? And how can we achieve clarity in the definition of key terms within discourses so corrupted by muddled terminology? I focused on the last of these in my keynote lecture (‘The Good Word’) on the first evening of this symposium, but what has struck me in many of your presentations is the way in which you have grappled so effectively with the key questions as to how Muslims can engage with wider society for the common good and how perceptions of Muslims can be positively reframed.

It was inspiring to hear of new approaches to civic engagement, especially those involving increasingly self-confident young Muslims who are comfortable with multiple identities and who are transcending what they see as the outmoded dualism between faith and public life, even though an extraverted expression of that might be easier in the culture of relatively greater rapprochement that exists in the UK, Germany or Poland, than in the culture of ideological secularism prevalent in France, where introversion may be a safer path.

Such discussions called to mind the symposium on civic engagement, social activism and political participation convened as part of the *Contextualising Islam in Britain II project* organised by this Centre.⁶⁴⁰ The following section headings on this theme in that report encapsulate some of the issues you have gone on to elaborate in a very systematic way in this symposium:

1. The Inclusion of Religious Voices in the Public Sphere
2. Active Citizenship, Community Spirit and the Common Good
3. Spiritual Responsibility and Progressive Social Activism
4. Navigating the Secular Public Space: An Islamic Counter-Narrative
5. Equality, Impartiality and Universality
6. Political Freedom and Peaceful Dissent
7. The Sanctity of the Natural Order
8. A New Islamic Public Theology

The vocabulary here chimes strongly with much of what we have heard during this symposium on issues of civic engagement. The many important principles you have encompassed have included the following:

1. Grassroots organisations motivated by Islamic ethics, and embodying social and civic responsibility and virtue.
2. Alternative and innovative ways of defusing controversies and curbing anti-Muslim prejudice. This can include a healthy appetite for a spectrum of dissent and activism.
3. Utilizing democratic means to protect religious rights, such as appeals to national and European institutions, participation in public debates, and finding common ground with other religions.
4. Embracing universal issues such as poverty and education, and thus attracting non-Muslim participants.

5. Muslim activism which goes beyond crisis narratives about disaffection and extremism.
6. New modes of action developed by young Muslims, going beyond conventional forms of political agency and identity. This includes the ethnogeographic dimension in which members of the younger generation are moving outside the inter-generational power structure and experiencing greater social cross-over.
7. A clear break from traditional umbrella and mosque-centred organisations and the development of business, youth and women's associations favouring collaboration and rapprochement, and reflecting greater upward social and economic mobility.
8. Activism in which faith is a crucial inspirational element in tackling poverty, injustice, and environmental degradation, as well as advocating ethical consumption. This builds on one of the presentations last year which had suggested how the principle of *tayyib* (what is good) can be applied so as to go beyond that of *halal* (what is permitted) to promote better animal welfare and ethical consumption.⁶⁴¹
9. Steering between opposing ideological frames, not buying into the frame which overplays Muslim agency (and thus sees Muslims as objects of perpetual suspicion), nor buying into the frame which minimizes Muslim agency (and thus sees them as perpetual victims).
10. Understanding the law and working, where appropriate, to change and reform it.
11. Challenging mindsets by subverting various discourse features (*topoi*) used in discriminatory rhetoric. These include:
 - (a) Subverting the *topos* of the 'Islamic threat'. Effective 'subversion' here depends on clarifying the extent of violence associated with many other sources apart from Muslim fanatics. Ethno-nationalist and separatist groups carried out the vast majority of the 152 terror attacks in Europe in 2013, according to Europol, the EU's law enforcement agency. According to a report released last year, only two attacks in 2013 were 'religiously motivated'.⁶⁴² I mentioned the disproportionate focus on the 'Islamic threat' in my earlier lecture. Just before the recent general election, the *Daily Mail* published an article under the headline 'Muslim vote could decide 25% of seats'.⁶⁴³ This was based on a report

by a think tank called the Henry Jackson Society which appears to have an explicit anti-Muslim agenda. The scare-mongering implication is obvious, and consistent with the manufactured spectre of Muslims taking over the country. But there seems to be no awareness of the blatant double standard in demanding that Muslims ‘integrate’ into British society while at the same time whining if they exercise their right to vote! And only last week the education charity ‘Show Racism the Red Card’ reported a new survey of 6,000 pupils aged ten to sixteen which showed that most of them grossly overestimated the numbers of Muslims in England, and that one third of them claimed that Muslims were ‘taking over the country’.⁶⁴⁴ What is needed in the face of all of this is rigorous research to home in on the evidence which can counter misperceptions rife in a society increasingly governed by dominant narratives and ideological agendas perpetrated by the media.

- (b) Subverting the *topos* of ‘culture’. This challenges the use of differences in culture as an argument for exclusion by bringing to light the essential principle in Islam which respects cultural diversity and never divorced people from their own culture or tradition.
- (c) Subverting the *topos* of ‘indoctrination’ or ‘unreason’ attached to faith. In media discussions about the role of faith schools, religious education has even been dismissed by a prominent philosopher as ‘intellectual abuse’⁶⁴⁵ carried out in ‘ghettoes of superstition’, which, ‘far from aiding social cohesion, only cause further divisions’.⁶⁴⁶ Such critics are emphatic in asserting that religion has no place in public life and in demanding that it is relegated entirely to the private sphere. The claim that religious education constitutes ‘indoctrination’ is, however, decisively contradicted by young people themselves. The UK Professional Council for Religious Education has reported that amongst secondary school students aged 11 to 18 those who enjoy RE and see positive benefits for their own lives from studying religion outnumber by four to one those who are negative about RE.⁶⁴⁷ Recorded statements by these students reveal that many like RE because of the opportunities it gives for expressing opinions, engaging in discussion, acquiring knowledge of other faiths and cultures, developing the skills of philosophical enquiry and reflection, and pondering the meaning and purpose of life.⁶⁴⁸ The *topos* of ‘indoctrination’ or ‘unreason’ can thus be decisively subverted by showing to what extent the opinions of those fundamentalist atheists implacably opposed to religion are themselves often rooted in dogmatic

and authoritarian beliefs at odds with the culture of 'evidence' which they pride themselves on upholding.

- (d) Subverting the *topos* of 'monolithic identity' by demonstrating the widespread diversity of Muslims.
 - (e) Subverting the *topos* of 'nationalism'. In relation to Albania, for example, this turns on its head the stereotypical portrayal of Muslims as 'un-Albanian' by showing to what extent anti-Islamic discourse (and imagery focused on the beard and on the act of prayer) is itself 'anti-Albanian'. A similar mode of subversion is involved in bringing to light the convergence that can be found between Islam and various sets of 'national values'.
12. Finally, perhaps the most important of all: Being human and humane in forming relationships between communities and individuals, expressing cross-cultural interest, friendliness, conviviality, solidarity, generosity, empathy and love rather than expounding doctrines or regurgitating scriptural pieties or taboos. What is often of central importance in fostering this dimension of relationship is the act of bringing people together not in the virtual world of digital space but through actual physical engagement where there can be a meeting of minds and hearts.

It is of course great to see projects and well-conducted social science studies and investigations which show how a new generation of Muslims is engaging with wider society, but may I also bring us back to something I said in my lecture and that is the vitally important insight which has emerged during both last year's symposium and this one that Muslim consciousness cannot be reduced to the merely social or cultural markers of identity assumed in so much Eurocentric analysis. Islam is a religion and a spiritual path, and is therefore concerned above all else with metaphysical identity and transcendence. There is a need for more research studies to bring this out and not get trapped in the terms, conditions and expectations of culturally determined concepts and jargon-rich terminologies, with their conventional mental and social taxonomies.

The movement away from sterile forms of religiosity implies more than new modes of social, political and cultural engagement, but also reflects a deep need to rediscover an authentic yet contextually sensitive Islamic spirituality, especially in the face of its perversion by violent extremists.

AFTERWORD

PROFESSOR MAGNUS MARSDEN

IT WAS A DELIGHT TO LISTEN to the carefully researched and thought-provoking papers presented at the Muslims in the UK and Europe II conference. Given the nature of current debates about both Muslims and Europe in Britain and the UK, the important role that events such as this play in stimulating nuanced understandings of Islam and Muslims should not be understated. I was particularly struck by the significant contributions that this year's papers made to three areas of scholarship that are important to the representations of Europe's Muslims more generally.

Firstly, the papers brought recognition to the complex and dynamic relationship between geography and being Muslim in Europe. At one level, the papers covered a wide range of geographical locales that intersected with multiple confessional communities: from Tajri for example we learned about Shi'a Muslims who wrestled with the need to lead authentically Shi'a lives in Cardiff while also dealing with the daily concerns of living far from the great shrine cities of Shi'a Islam. Barylo provided us glimpses into the ways in which Muslims in Poland seek to demonstrate themselves as active participants in civic life through charitable giving and organisations. In turn, Karic demonstrated the historic importance of Cairo to Islam in Bosnia and asked how the decline of the Ottoman Empire had changed Bosnian Muslims' geographical imaginaries and thus also influenced the nature of Islam in the region. Dragouni's paper in the volume also addresses the relationship between geography and being Muslim in Bosnia. Dragouni explores the legacy of the civil war for understanding the relationship between Bosnian Muslims and Europe, suggesting a growing sense of distance and detachment. Timimi's paper about Muslim scholarly opinion on the legitimacy of marriages between a converted Muslim woman and her non-Muslim husband also raises the issue of how far particular types of opinion about religious matters are depicted as 'Europeanised' rather than being authentically Islamic. As such, all of these studies, and many more presented in the conference, moved away from treating Muslims in Europe as being a group who are affected by wider trends in the Muslim world. Instead, they addressed the historic significance

of Islam to Europe and showed the active and variegated contributions that Islam and Muslims make to everyday life in Europe.

A second key issue addressed by the papers was the nature of the category 'Muslim' itself. The papers presented at the conference interrogated the category of Muslim from various angles. At one level the papers explored the methodological implications raised by the religious identity of the researcher herself. Thus Ramadan argued that her being a Muslim meant that her informants were better able to talk about the issues they faced as academic researchers in the UK. In the discussion that arose from the paper, however, it was also recognised that what 'being Muslim' means in any particular settings varies considerably. In some settings, for example, rather than being solely about proclamations of faith or belief, being Muslim may be deemed to be as much about behaviour, affect, and comportment: recognition of this unsettles the preconceived understanding of what being Muslim is often taken to mean in the West.

These issues were directly addressed in several of the papers. Pettinato showed how Muslim faith-based activist organisations are informed both by Muslim traditions but also ethical ideas about the environment and sustainability oriented at humanity generally. Sidlo's fascinating study of 'cultural Muslims' in Europe showed that 'cultural Muslims' need not be religious – and might even be atheist – but do nevertheless seek to relate to their 'Muslim' cultural heritage. Older anthropological work on Muslim societies has often brought attention to the complex relationship between 'doctrinal' and 'folk' Islam (to use terms coined by Veena Das). More recently, scholarship on Islam in the former Soviet Union has demonstrated how Muslims both led committed atheist lives while also constituting themselves as Muslims through the daily practice of a variety of rituals. What is important about Sidlo's work however is that it brings attention to complex forms of Muslim identification in European settings where it tends to be assumed that people of Muslim background must either commit to publically lead a life of faith and piety (and address all the complex issues that this raises) or assimilate through embracing secular norms. By contrast, Sidlo demonstrates how the identity possibilities of people of Muslim background in Europe and the UK are far more complex; her work suggests more broadly the urgent need to develop methodologies and research questions that are able to capture the voices and experiences of Muslims who so often slip under the net of research in this ever-expanding field. In his paper on Albania, Gjevori brings attention to the

difficult policy issues raised by the complex nature of Muslim identity. He argues that while Albanian Muslims may not collectively presently themselves as pious Muslims, for many in the country being Muslim is a critical aspect of their identity formations, and something that is also increasingly connected to the country's past entanglement within the Ottoman Empire. Gjevori brings attention to the issue of how state policy should (or should not) seek to address and give space to such often inchoate aspects of collective identity that – in bringing attention to past histories of connection – are also often deeply problematic for the ideologies of the modern nation state.

A final issue raised in all of the papers was the importance of the notion of authenticity for the various ways in which Muslims in Europe and the UK strive to be Muslim. We heard from a number of papers about the problematic interventions being made by states in Europe and the UK to police and control acceptable modes of being Muslim. Elshimi explored the UK's PREVENT strategy and suggested that it was being deployed to discipline and define acceptable modes of being Muslim. Likewise, Peatfield showed how policing in Europe isolated and Othered young people by defining them one-dimensionally as Muslim. Both of these papers demonstrated how the policies of the security state are – if anything – intensifying anxieties within Muslim communities about faith, piety, and religious identity, rather than providing the space for discussion and debate that they claim is their aim. The effects of such policies on Muslim groups and communities are only added to by militant forms of secularism and atheism – such as the New Atheism movement studied by Jaede – that treat Islam as exceptionally rigid in terms of the constrictions it imposes on human creativity, emotions and independence in comparison to other world religions, notably Christianity.

There is no doubt that the study of Islam and Muslims in Europe and UK will grow in significance over the coming years. What was inspiring about the gathering in Cambridge was to see the work of young scholars that was both empirically grounded but also intensely critical of the state of popular (and some scholarly) discourse about Islam in Europe today. Yet while the events in Paris and Belgium, the policies towards immigrants (often Muslims) in countries such as Denmark, and the so-called European 'refugee crisis' more generally will provide an important impetus for further research, scholars will also need to be careful about how to proceed, both in terms of the sources of funding they accept, their modes of gathering data, and, perhaps most importantly, in terms of the questions they seek to ask. By resolutely

reminding scholars of the need to be specific about the types of Muslim communities and the forms of Islam they are studying, careful about their use of widely used terms such as Muslim, and historically grounded in terms of their recognition of the long important role that Islamic faith and Muslim individuals and communities have played in Europe and the UK, the papers in this volume have all made an important contribution to laying the foundations for future research.

Endnotes

- ¹ Tore Bjorgo & John Horgan, *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Disengagement from Political Violence*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 1-2.
- ² In Egypt al- Gama'a al-Islamiyaa, AKA Islamic Group (IG) declared a unilateral ceasefire in July 1997 that resulted in comprehensive de-radicalisation of the organisation by 2002. In Algeria a unilateral ceasefire declared by the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) in October 1997. See Omar Ashour, *The De-radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming armed Islamist Movements* (New York and London: Routledge 2009); Omar Ashour, "Post-Jihadism and the Ideological Revisions of Armed Islamists", in *Contextualizing Jihadi Thought*, edited by Zaheer Kazimi and Jeevan Deol (New York, London: Hurst & Company, 2012), 124.
- ³ Richards Barret and Laila Bokhari, 'Deradicalization and rehabilitation programmes targeting religious terrorists and extremists in the Muslim world: an overview', in Bjorgo & Horgan (2009), 173-4.
- ⁴ Bjorgo & Horgan (2009) and Ashour (2009).
- ⁵ In the UK interventions in prisons do exist but are a marginal feature of Prevent and very little is known on it. Prison de-radicalisation is managed by National Offender Management (NOMS). Since 2007 NOMS has been trying to develop interventions targeting the drives of radicalisation. See Home Office, *the Prevent Strategy* (2011), 88; and Basia Spalek, Salwa El-Awa and Robert Lambert, 'Preventing violent extremism in prison', *Prison Service Journal*, 180, (2008): 45–54. According to the *Prison Service Journal*, there are two intervention programmes- Healthy Identity and Al Furqan. See *Prison Service Journal*, 'Combating Extremism and Terrorism', September, No. 203 (2012), 31.
- ⁶ Home Office, *Prevent* (2011), 57
- ⁷ STREET stopped receiving money with the suspension of PREVENT in order to be reviewed by the Coalition government in 2010. They are no longer provide counter-radicalisation and de-radicalisation interventions for government.
- ⁸ Home Office, *Prevent*, 56.
- ⁹ John Horgan, "Deradicalization or Disengagement? A Process in Need of Clarity and a Counterterrorism Initiative in Need of Evaluation", *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 2, No 4, (2008): 3-8.
- ¹⁰ Mohammed Elshimi, "Prevent 2011 and Counter-radicalisation: what is De-radicalisation?" in *Counter-Radicalisation: critical perspectives*, edited by Christopher Baker-Beall, Charlotte Heath-Kelly and Lee Jarvis (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 218.
- ¹¹ Charlotte Heath-Kelly, "Counter-Terrorism and the Counterfactual: Producing the 'Radicalisation' Discourse and the UK PREVENT Strategy." *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 15 (2013): 394–415.
- ¹² Bjorgo & Horgan (2009), 7-10.
- ¹³ Emma Disley, Kristin Weed, Anais Reding, Lindsay Cutterbuck, and Richard Warnes,

'Individual disengagement from Al Qa'ida-influenced terrorist groups', Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) to inform policy and practice in preventing terrorism, RAND Europe, Home Office (2011), VI.

¹⁴ Home Office, Prevent (2011), 61

¹⁵ HMG, 'Channel: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism,' A guide for local partnership, ACPO (2012) ; Home Office, Prevent (2011) , 36 and 59.

¹⁶ Michel Foucault, "The Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault", In *Technologies of the Self*, edited by Luther Martin, Hugh Gutman, and Patrick Hutton (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 18.

¹⁷ Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (London: Sage, 2010), 27.

¹⁸ Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, Peter Miller, *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 1-4.

¹⁹ Nikolas Rose, "Identity, Genealogy, History", in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, edited by Stuart Hall & Paul Du Gay (London: Sage Publishing, 1996), 131-132.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 132.

²¹ Nick Mansfield, *Subjectivity: theories of the self from Freud to Haraway* (Allen & Unwin: Australia, 2000), 13-21.

²² Michel Foucault, "The ethic of care for the self as a practice of freedom": an interview with Michel Foucault on January 20, 1984. Raúl Fornet-Batancourt, Helmut Becker, Alfredo Gomez-Müller and J.D. Gauthier. In *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 12, (1987), 121.

²³ *Ibid*, 121.

²⁴ Burchell, Gordon, Miller, 2; Dean, 17.

²⁵ *Ibid*; Dean, 18.

²⁶ Rose (1996), 134.

²⁷ Burchell, Gordon, and Miller, 3.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 5.

²⁹ Lois McNay, *Foucault: A Critical Introduction* (Polity Press: Cambridge, 1994), 121.

³⁰ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin. 1991); Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose, "Governing Economic Life", *Economy and Society* 19 (1), (1990): 1-31.

³¹ Rik Coolsaet, "EU Counterterrorism Strategy: Value Added or Chimera?" *International Affairs* 86 (4), (2010), 869; Heath-Kelly, (2013), 410.

³² Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West*, (Lanham, MD, Rowman and Littlefield 2005); Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

³³ Jonathan Githens-Mazer, "Rethinking the Causal Concept of Islamic Radicalisation", *Committee on Concepts and Methods Working Paper Series* (2010), 10.

³⁴ Heath-Kelly, 407-408.

³⁵ Foucault 1991

³⁶ Ibid, 104-134.

³⁷ Ibid, 170-194.

³⁸ Stacey Gutkowski, "Secularism and the Politics of Risk: Britain's Prevent Agenda, 2005–2009," *International Relations* 25 (3) (2011): 352-3; HMG, ACPO (2012), 12.

³⁹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge*. Vol. 1 (London: Penguin 1998), 64.

⁴⁰ HMG, ACPO, 21; Lasse Lindekilde, "Refocusing Danish Counter-Radicalisation Efforts: An Analysis of the (Problematic) Logic and Practice of Individual De-Radicalisation Interventions", in *Counter-Radicalisation: Critical Perspectives*, edited by Christopher Baker-Beall, Charlotte Heath-Kelly and Lee Jarvis (Abingdon: Routledge 2015); Basia Spalek and Lynn Davies, "Mentoring in Relation to Violent Extremism: A Study of Role, Purpose, and Outcomes", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35, 2012: 354–368.

⁴¹ Tina Besley, "Foucault, Truth Telling and Technologies of the Self in Schools." *Journal of Educational Enquiry* 6 (1), (2005), 85.

⁴² Jonathan Githens-Mazer and Robert Lambert, "Why Conventional Wisdom on Radicalization Fails: The Persistence of a Failed Discourse," *International Affairs* 86 (4) 2010, 900.

⁴³ Heath-Kelly (2013); Nadia Ali, "Mapping the Muslim Community: The Politics of Counter-Radicalisation in Britain," in *Counter-Radicalisation: Critical Perspectives*, edited by Christopher Baker-Beall, Charlotte Heath-Kelly and Lee Jarvis (Abingdon: Routledge 2015).

⁴⁴ Lasse Lindekilde 'Neo-liberal Governing of "Radicals": Danish Radicalization Prevention Policies and Potential Iatrogenic Effects', *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*: Vol. 6 (1) 2012, 117; Nikolas Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (London: Free Association 1999), 230-232.

⁴⁵ Jose Casanova, "The Politics of Nativism: Islam in Europe, Catholicism in the United States", *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 38 (4–5) 2012, 5.

⁴⁶ Jose Casanova, "Secularisation, Religion and Multicultural Citizenship", Public lecture within the symposium *Islamic Theology in Dialogue*, University of Hamburg (January 14–15 2010), 28.

⁴⁷ Lindekilde (2012), 113; Rose (1999).

⁴⁸ P. Rainbow, *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 21.

⁴⁹ The British Government's counter-extremism strategy

⁵⁰ Home Office, *Prevent Strategy*. London. Crown Copyright (2011).

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- ⁵⁹ Gifford, Tony, Wally Brown, and Ruth Bunday. *Loosen the Shackles: first report of the Liverpool 8 inquiry into race relations in Liverpool*. Karia Press, 1989.
- ⁶⁰ Cameron, David "To mark the 799th anniversary of Magna Carta, the Prime Minister has written an article for the Mail on Sunday on British values. Accessed 16th November 2015 Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/british-values-articles-by-david-cameron>. (2014)
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- ⁶⁴ Mythen, Gabe, Sandra Walklate, and Fatima Khan. "'Why Should We Have to Prove We're Alright?': Counter-terrorism, Risk and Partial Secularities." *Sociology* 47, no. 2 (2013): 383-398.
- ⁶⁵ Capdevila, Rose, and Jane EM Callaghan. "'It's not racist. It's common sense.' A critical analysis of political discourse around asylum and immigration in the UK." *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 18, no. 1 (2008): 1-16.
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- ⁶⁷ Poverty has been classified by IRR as people with an income of less than 60%of the median household income in the UK.
- ⁶⁸ The term white is in parenthesis as it is not a true descriptive representing variation within a population.
- ⁶⁹ Harris, *The End of Faith*, 64.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 14 f., 65, 78.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 62 f., 225. Hence his characterisation of beliefs as 'propositional attitudes' (*ibid.*, 51, 234 n.3).
- ⁷² Cf. *ibid.*, 50.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, 58.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 63, 68. It must be emphasised at this point that this work is not primarily concerned with the truth-value of Harris' claims. Therefore, whether 'science', or 'religious faith' make such claims is not the issue at hand.

- ⁷⁵ Ibid., 178-84, esp. 180 f.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid., 63, italics orig.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., 62.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid., 65.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid., 51.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid., 44, 52 f.
- ⁸¹ Ibid., 44, ital. orig.
- ⁸² Ibid., 44.
- ⁸³ Ibid., 171, 185-7, 190-2, 205, 273 f. n.24.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid., 173-5.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid., 145 f., 185.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid., 173-5, 177.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid., 170 f., 177.
- ⁸⁸ This argument emerges at times in the book, but is developed extensively in his later publication, *The Moral Landscape*. Nonetheless, the idea is already sufficiently present in *The End of Faith* to allow for its consideration here.
- ⁸⁹ See Unger, *Living High and Letting Die*, for a particularly comprehensive case.
- ⁹⁰ Harris, *End of Faith*, 21, f., 70 f., 80-92, 98 f., 101, 150.
- ⁹¹ Ibid., 26 f., 107, 126 ff., 224.
- ⁹² Ibid., 26 f., 30, 94, 109.
- ⁹³ Ibid., 13.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid., 13.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid., 92-106.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid., 92.
- ⁹⁷ Ibid., 93 f.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid., 78 f.
- ⁹⁹ Ibid., 26.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 26 f., 107, 126 ff., 224.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid., 27.
- ¹⁰² Ibid., 107, 126, 128 f., 224.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid., 43.
- ¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 208-21, but also 40-4, 165.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 43, 210, 221.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 221.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 210.
- ¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 43, 165, 210.
- ¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 213 ff.
- ¹¹⁰ Ibid., 214.
- ¹¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹¹² Ibid., 216, 284 n.12.

¹¹³ Ibid., 221. Throughout the book, Harris avoids the term ‘atheism’. Although this is never explicitly dealt with, the reason seems to be his espousing of spirituality. Nonetheless, his views are nearly unanimous with those of the other three leading New Atheists, and he sees himself as one of the so-called Four Horsemen of the Non-Apocalypse. In spite of his apparent reservations about the term ‘atheism’, then, not even Harris expresses doubt about whether he is a leading New Atheist.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 151.

¹¹⁵ See, for instance, *ibid.*, 22.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 15.

¹¹⁷ Cf. also Said’s observation about imaginative boundaries, which can be both geographical and historical (*Orientalism*, 55).

¹¹⁸ Harris, *End of Faith*, 180 f.

¹¹⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, 178.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Harris, *End of Faith*, 53, 236 n.6.

¹²³ Ibid., 54.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 53 ff..

¹²⁵ Cf. Münker and Roesler, *Poststrukturalismus*, 25; Daniel, *Kompendium*, 140 f.

¹²⁶ Foucault, *Madness and Civilisation*, xii.

¹²⁷ Cf. also Münker & Roesler, *Poststrukturalismus*, 25.

¹²⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 5.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 6 f.

¹³⁰ Harris, *End of Faith*, 17, 26-8, 94, 114, 229, 247.

¹³¹ Ibid., 283 ff. n.12.

¹³² Ibid., 108.

¹³³ The following is not an exhaustive account of the depiction of Muslims and Islam in his work; and of the aspects foregrounded in this thesis, not all are discussed in this section. Some important ones are treated in the original manuscript under the section discussing the political implications (i.e., the second argument).

¹³⁴ Ibid., 110.

¹³⁵ Ibid., e.g., 110, 113, 116.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 113.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 32 f.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 32-4.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 117.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 117-123.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 123. He then cites a poll from 2002 to show how widespread Muslim support for suicide bombing supposedly is (124-6), and that the attacks of September 11, 2001, were also endorsed by ‘a significant percentage of the world’s Muslims’ (127).

- ¹⁴² Ibid., 33.
- ¹⁴³ Ibid., 32 f.
- ¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 30; see also 109, 128, 133, 138, etc.
- ¹⁴⁵ These are mostly the Inquisition (80-87), witchhunts (87-92), its role in anti-Semitic pogroms, and its failure to sufficiently confront the Holocaust (100-6).
- ¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 46 f.
- ¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 128, 143, 146, 196, 198.
- ¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 140.
- ¹⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 16.
- ¹⁵¹ Ibid., 26 f., see also the section on the aetiological dimension.
- ¹⁵² Ibid., 94.
- ¹⁵³ Ibid., 109.
- ¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 30, cf. also 109. In the same vein, Israel is not responsible for ‘the suicidal derangement of the Palestinians’ (135), whose genocidal ambitions would rage unrestrained if not for the Israeli army occupying them (ibid.). It is telling that his main sources on the Middle East, Islam, and all matters related are Alan Dershowitz, Bernard Lewis, and Samuel Huntington.
- ¹⁵⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 92.
- ¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 92 ff., 96.
- ¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 301.
- ¹⁵⁸ Harris, *End of Faith*, 107.
- ¹⁵⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 318.
- ¹⁶⁰ Harris, *End of Faith*, 231 n.10.
- ¹⁶¹ Ibid., 128; cf. also 30.
- ¹⁶² Ibid., 131 f
- ¹⁶³ Ibid., 132, italics added.
- ¹⁶⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, 97, ital. orig.
- ¹⁶⁵ The only exception is the anonymous suicide bomber with whom he opens his book (11 f.), and whose figure can be understood to function as the epitome of all Muslims.
- ¹⁶⁶ Cf. also Harris, *End of Faith*, 130; and Said, *Orientalism*, 34 f.
- ¹⁶⁷ Harris, *End of Faith*, 189; cf. also 116, 143-5, 252 n.15.
- ¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 107.
- ¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 143.
- ¹⁷⁰ Ibid., italics orig.
- ¹⁷¹ Ibid., 107, 145.
- ¹⁷² Ibid., 145.
- ¹⁷³ Said, *Orientalism*, 2 f.
- ¹⁷⁴ Harris, *End of Faith*, 109 f.
- ¹⁷⁵ In fact, Buddhism is treated quite favorably throughout the book. It presents a

stereotypical case of the idealised Orient, the splendor of its ancient history ‘arrested’ (cf. Harris 2006: 107), and this ‘immobilized [...] quality’ (Said, *Orientalism*, 208) encapsulated in the title of the chapter concerned with spirituality: ‘The Wisdom of the East.’ (Harris, *End of Faith*, 214 ff.). Ironically, this is the very phrase Said used to describe this form of Orientalism (cf. Said, *Orientalism*, 208; cf. also Hall, *Spectacle*: 214).

¹⁷⁶ Harris, *End of Faith*, 15.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. also Ibid. 94, 128 f., 152.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 130.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 53.

¹⁸⁰ Other more ancient religions are sporadically mentioned, but are not relevant for the matter at hand.

¹⁸¹ Cf. Foucault, *Madness and Civilisation*: xii.

¹⁸² There are a few exceptions to this, the shortcomings of which are discussed in the longer manuscript. Notably, Dickson’s contribution to Amrasingam’s *Religion and the New Atheism* explicitly discusses the image of Islam in *The End of Faith*. Yet, the approach he pursues is to criticise Harris for being ‘unscientific’ when it comes to Islam (e.g., Dickson, ‘Religion as Phantasmagoria’, 38), and to empirically rectify the picture Harris paints of Islam and Muslims. He concludes that the reason Harris is mistaken about the subject is because he is merely ignorant of it (Ibid., 53). As should now be sufficiently clear, this is too benevolent an ascription.

¹⁸³ As discussed in the longer manuscript, the fact that the debates centered around the existence of god, the truth-value of science versus scripture, and the question of morality without god, indicates that of those who read the publication, only few took issue with it – at least not publically. There was an uproar in reaction to *The End of Faith*, which prompted Harris to write a book in response. That book is titled *Letter to a Christian Nation*, and the word ‘Islam’ or ‘Muslim’ does not appear in it even once. This may serve as a further indicator of some sort that not too many took great issue with his treatment of Muslims. While it is inconceivable that not a single Muslim and/or scholar read the book, Harris seemed rather surprised by the charge of Islamophobia and scientific racism levelled at him by Murtaza Hussein in April 2013. In fact, by 2010, there had been over 20 responses in book-length to New Atheist publications, largely by Christian scholars, but almost no sociological one investigating it as a social phenomenon (Amarasingam, *Religion*, 3). By 2014, the number of works have proliferated and also include philosophical treatments (e.g., Ossadnik and Tavernier, *Spinoza*). Yet, there still does not seem to exist one scholarly article discussing the overlap between New Atheism and Orientalism by the time of writing.

¹⁸⁴ Their lack of expertise in their self-designated area has been subject to criticism.

Ossadnik’s and Tavernier’s monograph, for instance, elaborates on the fact that Harris’ epistemological critique of religion bears striking comparison with Baruch de Spinoza’s thought, but adds nothing of substance to it. Moreover, Robbins and Rodkey (‘Beating “God” to Death’) argue that New Atheist critique of religion is completely out of touch with

contemporary Christian theology like that of Paul Tillich, Thomas Altizer, Rudolf Bultmann, and John Caputo. They hold that these theologians are more anti-theist and atheist than the New Atheists could possibly be, whose positivist belief in a non-God becomes a form of 'theological theism' (Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 184 f.) equivalent to that of religious literalism – which excludes Atheism from being a true atheism (id.: 26, 32; cf. also Amarasingam, *Introduction*, 5). Platzner ('Judaism and Atheism') concurs, advancing the contention that Jewish theological thinkers beat the Atheists at being atheist.

¹⁸⁵ PEW Research Centre, "Muslims in Europe: Economic Worries Top Concerns about Religious and Cultural Identity," 13-Nation PEW Global Attitudes Survey, <http://www.pewglobal.org/files/pdf/7-6-06.pdf> (accessed 21 March 2015); Gallup & The Coexist Foundation, "The Gallup Coexist Index 2009: A Global Study of Interfaith Relations," http://www.euro-islam.info/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/gallup_coexist_2009_interfaith_relations_uk_france_germany.pdf (accessed 19 March 2015).

¹⁸⁶ Liza Hopkins and Cameron McAuliffe, "Split Allegiances: Cultural Muslims and the Tension between Religious and National Identity in Multicultural Societies," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 10, no. 1 (2010): 38–58.

¹⁸⁷ The vast majority of people seem to use terms "cultural Muslim" and "culturally Muslim" interchangeably and so an extended search was conducted in order not to overlook any results.

¹⁸⁸ Selman Yilmaz, "Cultural Muslims: Popular Religiosity among Teachers in Public Elementary Schools in Turkey," *Journal of History, Culture & Art Research* 2, no. 3 (2013): 237–258; Christine Soriea Sheikh, "Islam as Ethnicity, Islam as Religion: A Typology of How Religious and Ethnic Identities Intersect among Second-Generation Muslim Americans," paper presented during at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Sheraton Boston and the Boston Marriott Copley Place, Boston, July 2008.

¹⁸⁹ Naturally, this description is not exhaustive; converts to Islam, for example, tend to be discussed in both media and scientific research quite often as well. Nevertheless, discourse analysis literature (quoted in the "Place in the public discourse" part of this paper) strongly confirms the presented generalization.

¹⁹⁰ Muhammad Anwar, Jochen Blaschke, and Åke Sander, *State Policies Towards Muslim Minorities: Sweden, Great Britain and Germany*, Berlin: Edition Parabolis, 2004.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² William C. Rowe, "Cultural Muslims: The Evolution of Muslim Identity in Soviet and Post-Soviet Central Asia," in *Geographies of Muslim Identities. Diaspora, Gender and Belonging*, ed. Cara Aitchison, Peter Hopkins, and Mei-Po Kwan (Great Britain: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2007).

¹⁹³ Hopkins and McAuliffe, "Split Allegiances: Cultural Muslims and the Tension between Religious and National Identity in Multicultural Societies," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 10, no. 1 (2010): 38–58.

- ¹⁹⁴ Herbert J. Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity and Symbolic Religiosity: Towards a Comparison of Ethnic and Religious Acculturation," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17, no. 4 (1994): 577–92.
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²³³ In a similar study conducted by Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery between 1999 and 2009, their search for “secular” in relation to “a Muslim” yielded 72 results.

²³⁴ Richard V. Ericson, Patricia M. Baranek and Janet B. L. Chan, *Negotiating Control: A Study of News Sources* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 1989), 377.

²³⁵ E.g., Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (London: Vintage, 1997), Elizabeth Poole, *Reporting Islam: Media Representations of British Muslims* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2002), John E. Richardson, *(Mis)Representing Islam: The Racism and Rhetoric of British Broadsheet Newspapers* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004), Elizabeth Poole and John E. Richardson (editors), *Muslims and the News Media* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2006), Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin, *Framing Muslims: Stereotyping and Representation after 9/11* (London: Harvard University Press, 2011), and Paul Baker, Costas Gabrielatos and Tony McEnery, *Discourse Analysis and Media Attitudes: The Representation of Islam in the British Press* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

By contrast, there are comparatively few accounts of Muslims in western contexts in relation to the media that explore Muslim agency and engagement with media processes. Examples include: Habiba Noor, “Assertions of identities through news production: News-making among teenage Muslim girls in London and New York,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 10 (2007): 374-388, and Farida Vis, Liesbet van Zoonen, and Sabina Mihelj, “Women responding to the anti-Islam film Fitna: voices and acts of citizenship on youtube,” *Feminist Review* 97 (2011): 110-129. Both these articles focus on Muslims’ reflections on media processes. More recently, Michael Munnik, with whom I have discussed my research findings, has addressed the problem of academic ‘orthodoxy’ in accounts of Muslims in a western context in relation to the media in, “British Journalists, British Muslims: Arguments for ‘A

More Complex Picture' of their Relationship," In *Islam and the West: A Love Story?*, ed. Sumita Mukherjee and Sadia Zulfiqar (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015).

²³⁶ Cf. Matthew Engelke, *God's Agents: Biblical Publicity in Contemporary England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013).

²³⁷ Marcel Maussen, "Making Muslim Presence Meaningful: Studies on Islam and Mosques in Western Europe," (Working Paper 05/03, Amsterdam School for Social Science Research, University of Amsterdam, 2005), <http://arsiv.setav.org/ups/dosya/17082.pdf>

²³⁸ Cf. Timothy Jenkins, *Religion in English Everyday Life: An Ethnographic Approach* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), and Nathal M. Dessing, Nadia Jeldtoft, Jørgen S. Nielsen, and Linda Woodhead (editors), *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

²³⁹ Philippe Bourgois, *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 17.

²⁴⁰ Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (London: Routledge, 2002), 1.

'Societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible. Sometimes the object of the panic is quite novel and at other times it is something which has been in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight.'

²⁴¹ Philip Schlesinger, "Rethinking the Sociology of Journalism: Source Strategies and the Limits of Media-Centrism," in *Public Communication: The New Imperatives: Future Directions for Media Research*, ed. Marjorie Ferguson (London: SAGE, 1990), Chapter 4.

²⁴² Edie N. Goldenberg, *Making the Papers: The Access of Resource-Poor Groups to the Metropolitan Press* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1975).

²⁴³ David Miller and Kevin Williams, "Sourcing AIDS News," in *The Circuit of Mass Communication: Media Strategies, Representation and Audience Reception in the AIDS Crisis*, by David Miller, Jenny Kitzinger, Kevin Williams and Peter Beharrell (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 1998), 125.

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²⁴⁶ Cf. Samuli Schielke, "Second thoughts about the anthropology of Islam, or how to make sense of grand schemes in everyday life", (Working Paper No. 2, Zentrum Moderner Orient, 2010), https://www.zmo.de/publikationen/workingpapers/schielke_2010.pdf.

²⁴⁷ Sarah Carol and and Ruud Koopmans, "Dynamics of Contestation over Islamic Religious Rights in Europe," *Ethnicities* 13 (2013): 165–90.

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Institutional Recognition of Islam: The Islamic Charta of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany and Case Law in German Courts,” in *Islam and Muslims in Germany*, ed. Ala Al-Hamarneh and Jörn Thielmann (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 215–29; Kerstin Rosenow-Williams, *Organizing Muslims and Integrating Islam in Germany: New Developments in the 21st Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

²⁴⁹ Ahmet Yükleyn, *Localizing Islam in Europe* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2012).

²⁵⁰ Werner Schiffauer, *Nach dem Islamismus: Die Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görü : Eine Ethnographie* [After Islamism: The Islamic Community Milli Görü : An Ethnography] (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2010).

²⁵¹ M. Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

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²⁵⁴ Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

²⁵⁵ Michael Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Middle East*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 1982).

²⁵⁶ See, for instance, Asef Bayat, *Making Islam Democratic: Social Movements and the Post-Islamist Turn* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007); John Bowen, *Can Islam Be French? Pluralism and Pragmatism in a Secularist State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

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- ²⁶³ Nedim Ögelman, "Documenting and Explaining the Persistence of Homeland Politics among Germany's Turks," *International Migration Review* 37 (2003): 163–93.
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- ²⁶⁶ Jonker, *Eine Wellenlange zu Gott: der "Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentren" in Europa*.
- ²⁶⁷ Author's interview with an official from the Union of Islamic Culture Centers, November 27, 2013, Cologne.
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- ²⁷⁶ Ibrahim Sirkeci, Jeffrey Cohen, and Pinar Yazgan, "Turkish culture of migration: Flows between Turkey and Germany, socio-economic development and conflict," *Migration Letters* 9: 1 (2012): 33–46.
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- ²⁸⁵ Author’s interview with an official from the Union of Islamic Cultural Centers, June 1, 2013, Paris.
- ²⁸⁶ Author’s interview with an official from the Islamic Community of the National Vision, November 22, 2013, Cologne.
- ²⁸⁷ Author’s interview with an official from the women’s branch of the Islamic Community of the National Vision, May 17, 2013, Paris.
- ²⁸⁸ Author’s interview with an official from TÜMS AD France, May 29, 2013, Strasbourg.
- ²⁸⁹ Therese O’Toole and Richard Gale, “Contemporary Grammars of Political Action among Ethnic Minority Young Activists,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 33, no. 1 (January 1, 2010): 126.
- ²⁹⁰ For the purposes of this paper, I use a broad conception of both the terms ‘political’ and ‘agency’. As it will become clear in the course of the paper, both are contextualised within a larger environment of ‘post-conventional politics’ that include non-institutional targets, tactics of action, and forms of agency. In particular, in this paper I utilize the concept of ‘political subjectivity’ to express how identity (and, in particular, its religious dimension) shapes the understanding of the political and of political activity; and I use the concept of ‘agency’ to mean a type of more or less organized/collective action in the public realm that reflects a concern and an engagement with social, political, and public policies and debates.
- ²⁹¹ O’Toole and Gale, “Contemporary Grammars of Political Action among Ethnic Minority Young Activists,” 127–128; Mohammed Ralf Kroessin, *Mapping UK Muslim Development NGOs* (Birmingham: International Development Dept., University of Birmingham, 2009), 3.
- ²⁹² Richard Gale, “Muslim Youth, Faith-Based Activism and ‘Social Capital’: A Response to Annette,” *Ethnicities* 11, no. 3 (September 1, 2011): 402.
- ²⁹³ Ingolfur Blühdorn, “Self-Experience in the Theme Park of Radical Action? Social Movements and Political Articulation in the Late-Modern Condition,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 9, no. 1 (February 1, 2006): 24; David S. Meyer and Sidney G. Tarrow, *The Social Movement Society: Contentious Politics for a New Century* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1998); Claus Offe, “New Social Movements: Challenging the Boundaries of Institutional Politics,” *Social Research* 52, no. 4 (December 1, 1985): 817–68; Kevin McDonald, *Global Movements: Action and Culture* (Wiley, 2006). The first move towards a type of agency which is articulated

through extra-institutional channels is usually identified with the ‘new social movements’ emerged in the increasingly post-industrial Western societies of the 1960-70s. Based on the notion that ‘the personal *is* political’, the new social movements emphasized identity-based criteria (e.g. age, gender, culture, lifestyle, ethnicity, etc.) and started to engage the political outside of traditional norms. The shift towards the terrain of culture and lifestyles, and the advocacy for more collective or intangible goods represented the emergence of a form of post-conventional politics which later become known as ‘identity politics’. Space restriction forces me to remain at the level of generalities of this complex issue. For useful reviews on the themes of the salience of ‘identity’ and ‘culture’ among new and contemporary social movements, see: Mary Bernstein, “Identity Politics,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 31 (January 1, 2005): 47–74; Kate Nash, “The ‘Cultural Turn’ in Social Theory: Towards a Theory of Cultural Politics,” *Sociology* 35, no. 1 (February 1, 2001): 77–92.

²⁹⁴ Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2014); Michel Wieviorka, “After New Social Movements,” *Social Movement Studies* 4, no. 1 (May 1, 2005): 1–19; Jacqueline Kennelly, *Citizen Youth: Culture, Activism, and Agency in a Neoliberal Era* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Carles Feixa, Inês Pereira, and Jeffrey S. Juris, “Global Citizenship and the ‘New, New’ Social Movements Iberian Connections,” *Young* 17, no. 4 (November 1, 2009): 421–42; McDonald, *Global Movements*; Lauren Langman, “Occupy: A New New Social Movement,” *Current Sociology* 61, no. 4 (July 1, 2013): 510–24; Blühdorn, “Self-Experience in the Theme Park of Radical Action?”; Meyer and Tarrow, *The Social Movement Society*; Donatella Della Porta and Sidney G. Tarrow, *Transnational Protest and Global Activism* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).

²⁹⁵ Feixa, Pereira, and Juris, “Global Citizenship and the ‘New, New’ Social Movements Iberian Connections,” 423.

²⁹⁶ Meyer and Tarrow, *The Social Movement Society*.

²⁹⁷ W. Lance Bennett, “Social Movements beyond Borders: Organization, Communication, and Political Capacity in Two Eras of Transnational Activism,” in *Transnational Protest and Global Activism*, ed. Donatella Della Porta and Sidney G. Tarrow (Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 212.

²⁹⁸ O’Toole and Gale, “Contemporary Grammars of Political Action among Ethnic Minority Young Activists,” 132.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 129; 137–138.

³⁰⁰ Characterized by a sheer variety of meanings attached to the term and by tensions (sometimes incompatibilities) between some of them, the discourse on ‘post-secularity’ seems to be “shot through with uncertainty about the question of whether it refers to a concept or a reality.” [James A. Beckford, “SSSR Presidential Address Public Religions and the Postsecular: Critical Reflections,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 51, no. 1 (March 1, 2012): 13]. Yet, despite the possibility that post-secularity might refer more to an intellectual artefact than a real phenomenon, the concept is utilized here to refer to the objective growing visibility of religions in general, and Islam more specifically in the public sphere of European and British society.

³⁰¹ O’Toole and Gale, “Contemporary Grammars of Political Action among Ethnic Minority Young Activists,” 137.

³⁰² Beckford, “SSSR Presidential Address Public Religions and the Postsecular,” 4.

³⁰³ Beaumont, Justin, “Transcending the Particular in Postsecular Cities,” in *Exploring the Postsecular: The Religious, the Political, and the Urban*, ed. Arie Molendijk, Justin Beaumont, and Christoph Jedan (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2010), 6.

³⁰⁴ Armando Salvatore, “Making Public Space: Opportunities and Limits of Collective Action Among Muslims in Europe,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30, no. 5 (September 1, 2004): 1025.

³⁰⁵ Jürgen Habermas, “Notes on Post-Secular Society,” *New Perspectives Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (September 1, 2008): 19.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

³⁰⁷ Badredine Arfi, “‘Euro-Islam’: Going Beyond the Aporiatic Politics of Othering1,” *International Political Sociology* 4, no. 3 (September 1, 2010): 236–52; Tariq Modood, “Post-Immigration ‘Difference’ and Integration: The Case of Muslims in Western Europe,” *New Paradigms in Public Policy* (British Academy Policy Centre, 2012).

³⁰⁸ This applies particularly to nations such as the UK, where migration happened mainly in the third quarter of the twentieth century.

³⁰⁹ Modood, “Post-Immigration ‘Difference’ and Integration: The Case of Muslims in Western Europe,” 25.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

³¹¹ Salvatore, “Making Public Space,” 1027.

³¹² Arfi, “‘Euro-Islam,’” 236.

³¹³ “WHAT WE DO” MADE in Europe Website, ‘About’ section, accessed May 27, 2014. <https://www.madeineurope.org.uk/about>.

³¹⁴ MADE in Europe, “MADE in Europe. Annual Review 2009/2010” (London: MADE in Europe, 2010), sec. Mission2022011; MADE in Europe, “MADE in Europe. Annual Report 2010/2011” (London: MADE in Europe, 2011), sec. Mission; MADE in Europe, “MADE in Europe. Annual Report 2011/2012” (London: MADE in Europe, 2012), sec. Mission.

³¹⁵ MADE in Europe, “MADE in Europe. Annual Report 2012/2013” (London: MADE in Europe, 2013), 6.

³¹⁶ MADE’s longest campaign so far, lasting 3 years, from 2011 to 2013

³¹⁷ MADE in Europe, “NGO Resource Pack. Top 20 Global Maternal Health Interventions” (London: MADE in Europe, 2012), sec. Introduction. About At Our Mothers’ Feet. .

³¹⁸ “AT OUR MOTHERS’ FEET” MADE in Europe Website, ‘Campaign Success Stories’ section, <https://www.madeineurope.org.uk/campaign/past/aomfsuccess> (accessed 27 May 2014).

³¹⁹ “”GREEN UP MY COMMUNITY”” MADE in Europe Website, ‘Latest News’ section, <https://www.madeineurope.org.uk/updates/news/item/green-up-my-community> (accessed 27 May 2014).

³²⁰ “GREEN UP MY COMMUNITY!” MADE in Europe Website, ‘CAMPAIGN’ section, <http://www.madeineurope.org.uk/campaign/greenup> (accessed 27 May 2014).

³²¹ Through which MADE joined international efforts to lobby clothing brands to sign up to the Bangladesh Fire and Building Safety Accord and pay up into a compensation fund following the tragic collapse of the Rana Plaza Factory in Bangladesh in 2014, which killed 1127 garment workers and injured thousands more.

³²² “NO HUMANS WERE HARMED IN THE MAKING OF THIS T-SHIRT” MADE in Europe Website, ‘Blogs’ section, <http://www.madeineurope.org.uk/updates/item/no-humans-were-harmed-in-the-making-of-this-t-shirt> (accessed 27 May 2014).

³²³ Which followed the Israeli attack on Gaza through operation Protective Edge, started on 8 July 2014.

³²⁴ “FOSIS ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2012”, MADE in Europe Website, ‘Latest News’ section, <http://www.madeineurope.org.uk/updates/news/item/fosis-annual-conference-2012> (accessed 27 May 2014).

³²⁵ ‘The Muslim Power of Boycotting & Ethical Purchasing’ MADE in Europe Website, ‘Blogs’ section, <https://www.madeineurope.org.uk/updates/item/the-muslim-power-of-boycotting-ethical-purchasing> (accessed 20 August 2014).

³²⁶ With the ‘Christian Muslim Forum’ in view of the then UN Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen. The forum developed the ‘Christian-Muslim Youth Statement on Climate Change’

³²⁷ “MEETING THE ARCHBISHOP” MADE in Europe Website, ‘Blogs’ section, <https://www.madeineurope.org.uk/updates/item/meeting-the-archbishop> (accessed 27 May 2014).

³²⁸ Live Below the Line is an annual anti-poverty campaign organised since 2010 by the Organisations ‘Global Poverty Project’ and ‘Oaktree Foundation’: it challenges participants to feed themselves on the equivalent of the extreme poverty line for five days.

³²⁹ “LIVE BELOW THE LINE” MADE in Europe Website, ‘Blogs’ section, <https://www.madeineurope.org.uk/updates/item/live-below-the-line-2> (accessed 27 May 2014).

³³⁰ The initiative brought together over 100 charities and faith groups to lobby the UK government to tackle global hunger.

³³¹ “ALLAH CREATED ENOUGH FOOD FOR EVERYONE” MADE in Europe Website, ‘Blogs’ section, <http://www.madeineurope.org.uk/updates/item/allah-created-enough-food-for-everyone> (accessed 27 May 2014).

³³² For a discussion on the importance of the credibility of frame articulators, see: Robert D Benford and David A Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” *Annual review of sociology* 26 (2000): 619–621.

³³³ “PART OF A SOLUTION” MADE in Europe Website, ‘Blogs’ section, <https://www.madeineurope.org.uk/updates/item/part-of-a-solution> (accessed 27 May 2014).

³³⁴ “SHABAANA KIDY, ULTIMATE CAMPAIGNER!” MADE in Europe Website, ‘Blogs’

section, <https://www.madeineurope.org/updates/item/shabaana-kidy-ultimate-campaigner-2> (accessed 27 May 2014).

³³⁵ Dr Hany El-Banna, founder of one of the leading UK-based Muslim NGOs, Islamic Relief. In: MADE in Europe, "MADE in Europe. Annual Review 2009/2010," sec. People's Page.

³³⁶ Gillian Temple, former Head of Public Engagement at one of the leading mainstream NGOs, Oxfam. In: *Ibid.*

³³⁷ Lucy Earle, "Social Movements and NGOs: A Preliminary Investigation" (INTRAC. International NGO Training and Research Centre, 2004); Alejandro Bendaña, "NGOs and Social Movements A North/South Divide?" (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 2006).

³³⁸ The term 'conscientization' and its derivations are used in this paper drawing from the educational and social concept developed in the early 1970s by the Brazilian educator and activist Paulo Freire (and also adopted by liberation theologies and other forms of social justice movements around the world). The concept refers to the process of critical consciousness raising in which learners-activists develop both a deeper understanding of cultural and socio-economic norms, and the motivation and capacity to act in ways to change such norms. Conscientized learners-activists understand cultural, socio-economic, and political dynamics and contradictions, and take action against the oppressive/unjust elements which characterize them.

³³⁹ Lucy Earle, "Social Movements and NGOs: A Preliminary Investigation," 6.

³⁴⁰ MADE in Europe, *Intro to MADE in Europe – Muslims Campaigning against Global Poverty & Injustice*, YouTube video, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91FAQRGoMXc> (accessed 27 May 2015).

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

³⁴² Within the field of development studies, different approaches and terms are used to explain global socio-economic and geo-political differences: all remain contested and considered somehow reductionist. The paper adopts the terms of 'Global North' and 'Global South' because it recognizes their potential to highlight an unequal distribution of access to resources on a global scale whilst recognizing that the 'South' also exists in the 'North' and vice versa. Also, this vocabulary is less prone to the hegemonic thrust which was inherently embedded in earlier definitions (such as 'First World' vs. 'Third World'; 'Developed World' vs. 'Developing World'; 'Center' vs. 'Periphery'). Indeed, 'Global North' and 'Global South' are adopted in this paper as terms that provide a more open approach to "the very complicated politics of difference and inequality found within these two regional constructs" Vincent Jr. Del Casino, *Social Geography: A Critical Introduction* (John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 126.

³⁴³ MADE in Europe, *Intro to MADE in Europe – Muslims Campaigning against Global Poverty & Injustice*.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁶ For an overview of how social movement theory conceptualises core framing tasks, see: Benford and Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements," 615–617.

- ³⁴⁷ MADE in Europe, *Intro to MADE in Europe – Muslims Campaigning against Global Poverty & Injustice*. This verse is also present in the header section of most of MADE’s website pages, and it is consistently quoted in MADE’s published material.
- ³⁴⁸ MADE in Europe and Oxfam GB, “Islam in Action! The Ultimate Campaign Toolkit” (London: MADE in Europe, 2011), 5.
- ³⁴⁹ MADE in Europe, *Intro to MADE in Europe – Muslims Campaigning against Global Poverty & Injustice*. The four letters P-B-U-H combine to form an acronym for the phrase “Peace be upon him,” which is the English rendering of the Arabic *alayhi al-salam*, a devotional phrase used by Muslims whenever mention is made of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).
- ³⁵⁰ “The average UK household”; “air pollution in the UK.” Ibid.
- ³⁵¹ MADE in Europe and Oxfam GB, “Islam in Action! The Ultimate Campaign Toolkit,” 31.
- ³⁵² Ibid., 3; 5.
- ³⁵³ Ahmed, Sughra and Siddiqi, Naved, “British by Dissent” (The Muslim Youth Helpline, 2014), 74.
- ³⁵⁴ Ibid., 76.
- ³⁵⁵ McDonald, *Global Movements*, 64.
- ³⁵⁶ Zafar Khan, “Muslim Presence in Europe: The British Dimension – Identity, Integration and Community Activism,” *Current Sociology* 48, no. 4 (October 1, 2000): 31.
- ³⁵⁷ O’Toole and Gale, “Contemporary Grammars of Political Action among Ethnic Minority Young Activists,” 133.
- ³⁵⁸ 70 percent of the respondents surveyed by the ‘*British by Dissent*’ report mentioned that faith encouraged their activism and that, in turn, the latter impacted very positively on their being Muslims. Ahmed, Sughra and Siddiqi, Naved, “British by Dissent,” 52.
- ³⁵⁹ Salvatore, “Making Public Space,” 1025.
- ³⁶⁰ Ibid., 1026.
- ³⁶¹ Ibid.
- ³⁶² Gerard Clarke, “Faith Matters: Faith-Based Organisations, Civil Society and International Development,” *Journal of International Development* 18, no. 6 (August 1, 2006): 840.
- ³⁶³ Salvatore, “Making Public Space,” 1027.
- ³⁶⁴ Event Report, “Young, British and Muslim: Academic Research and Real Lives.” (AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society Research Programme, 2011), 1.
- ³⁶⁵ Salvatore, “Making Public Space,” 1024.
- ³⁶⁶ Modood, “Post-Immigration ‘Difference’ and Integration: The Case of Muslims in Western Europe,” 14.
- ³⁶⁷ Salvatore, “Making Public Space,” 1024.
- ³⁶⁸ Ibid., 1027.
- ³⁶⁹ Modood, “Post-Immigration ‘Difference’ and Integration: The Case of Muslims in Western Europe,” 29.
- ³⁷⁰ Tariq Modood, “Multicultural Citizenship and Muslim Identity Politics,” *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 12, no. 2 (2010): 157–158.

³⁷¹ Akbar S. Ahmed and Hastings Donnan, eds., *Islam, Globalization and Postmodernity*, 1st Edition edition (London ; New York: Routledge, 1994), 5.

³⁷² Salvatore, "Making Public Space," 1029.

³⁷³ Ibid., 1024.

³⁷⁴ This term has been used by public intellectuals such as Tariq Ramadan to indicate a condition where Muslims in Europe can accept, nurture, and develop multiple dimensions of their identities while confidently moving between them in a way which enables both faithfulness to Islam and commitment to civic participation as 'members of society' rather than as a 'members of a minority'. Tariq Ramadan, *What I Believe* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 69.

³⁷⁵ Salvatore, "Making Public Space," 1024.

³⁷⁶ This work is based on my doctoral thesis 'l'islam, moteur de l'engagement citoyen?' (Paris: EHESS University, 2016). I have previously used some of the data and findings in a book chapter published in French: "Charités musulmanes en Europe : vers une image positive des Musulmans dans l'espace public ? Etude de cas en Pologne et en France" in N. Göle and R. Id Yassine (dir.), *Enquête de l'islam Européen*. Paris: Halfa.

³⁷⁷ For CCIF see : <http://www.noussommeslanation.fr/>. For the Islamophobia Awareness Month see : <http://iamonth.org/>.

³⁷⁸ <http://www.change.org/fr/p%C3%A9titions/contre-une-loi-stigmatisante-pour-une-commission-sur-l-islamophobie> ; http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2013/03/28/ne-stigmatisons-pas-les-musulmans_3149730_3232.html.

³⁷⁹ Thomas Hammarberg, Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe 28 Oct 2010 'Le discours populiste stigmatise les musulmans européens'

http://commissioner.cws.coe.int/tiki-view_blog.php?blogId=2&bl=y&offset=30

³⁸⁰ Gresh, A. (26 Oct 2012). « Cette lancinante "menace islamique." » Blogs le monde diplomatique

³⁸¹ Amnesty International Report (2012). 'Choice and prejudice: discrimination against Muslims in Europe'

³⁸² Open Society Foundations Report (2011). 'Les Parisiens Musulmans' At Home in Europe project.

³⁸³ United Nations Centre for Civil and Political Rights. Session 102, Communication no 1876/2009 released on September 27, 2011. Pacte international relative aux droits civils et politiques.

³⁸⁴ Jean Baubérot, *L'intégrisme républicain contre la laïcité*, (Paris : Éditions de l'Aube, 2011).

³⁸⁵ IFOP Poll for LeFigaro (October 2012). 'L'image de l'Islam en France.'

³⁸⁶ IFOP poll, (23 March 2013). 'LES FRANÇAIS ET LE PORT DU VOILE OU DU FOULARD ISLAMIQUE PAR DES EMPLOYÉES DE LIEUX PRIVÉS ACCUEILLANT DU PUBLIC'

³⁸⁷ Nilüfer Göle, European Public Islam seminar, 17 November 2013, EHESS, Paris.

³⁸⁸ Nilüfer Göle, *Interpénétrations*. (Paris: Galaade 2005), 109.

- ³⁸⁹ Katarzyna Górak-Sosnowska, *Muslims in Poland and Eastern Europe, Widening the European Discourse on Islam*, (Warsaw : University of Warsaw Faculty of Oriental Studies, 2011).
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- ³⁹¹ Author interview (K. Górak-Sosnowska), Warsaw, 5 December 2012.
- ³⁹² Author interviews (various people in 2012), 'Polish Muslims : an unexpected meeting' 2013 film documentary, Paris: Light Inc.
- ³⁹³ Katarzyna Górak-Sosnowska, "Platoniczna islamofobia?" Arabia.pl, <http://www.arabia.pl/content/view/282077/2/>, (2006, 23rd January).
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- ³⁹⁵ Caillé, Alain. *Théorie anti-utilitariste de l'action et du sujet*. (La Découverte, Paris. 2009).
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- ³⁹⁸ Miller, Peter. Governing by numbers: why calculative practices matter. (*Social Research*, 68 (2). 379-396. 2001)
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- ⁴⁰¹ Author interview (Mayor's assistants of Bagnolet and La Courneuve), La Courneuve, Bagnolet, 2012.
- ⁴⁰² <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y56UOekhXDY>
- ⁴⁰³ Sunan al-Tirmidhi (n°1879)
- ⁴⁰⁴ Hadith Bukhari, Book 18, Hadith 81.
- ⁴⁰⁵ Interview with one the managers of the university, May 2011.
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- ⁴⁰⁷ Rudolf Martin Rizman, "Nationalisme et citoyenneté démocratique", in Conseil de l'Europe, *Concepts de la citoyenneté démocratique*, 2005.
- ⁴⁰⁸ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (L'espace public: archéologie de la publicité comme dimension constitutive de la société bourgeoise, translation by Marc B. de Launay), (Paris: Payot 1978), 15.
- ⁴⁰⁹ Christian J. Emden, David Midgley, (eds.), *Changing perceptions of the public sphere*. (Berghahn Books, 2012), 3.
- ⁴¹⁰ Daniel Cefaï, *Pourquoi se mobilise-t-on ? Les théories de l'action collective*. (Paris: La Découverte, 2007), 717.
- ⁴¹¹ John Dewey, *The Public and its problems*, (Penn State University Press, 1927).

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- ⁴¹⁶ See s41 Marriage Act 1949.
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- ⁴²⁰ HL deb 6 July 2015 Col 88
- ⁴²¹ *Supra* 9
- ⁴²² Personal Communication from GRO Hunt Stephen, ‘Hindu Buildings Registered for Marriage’, 07 2015.
- ⁴²³ Sonia Harris-Short and Joanna Miles, *Family Law: Text, Cases, and Materials*, 2nd edition (Oxford University Press, 2011), 65.
- ⁴²⁴ Menski Werner, ‘Legal Pluralism in the Hindu Marriage’, in *Institutions and Ideologies: A SOAS South Asia Reader*, by David Arnold and Peter Robb (Routledge, 1993).
- ⁴²⁵ It was in the case of *A-M v A-M* (Divorce: Jurisdiction: Validity of Marriage) [2001] 2 F.L.R 6; [2001] Fam. Law 495 at para [24] that Mr Justice Hughes (as he was then) concluded the couple were in a ‘non-marriage’ although the term was first mentioned in the case of *Gereis v Yagoub* [1997] 1 FLR 854.
- ⁴²⁶ Probert, ‘When Are We Married?’, 403.
- ⁴²⁷ Rebecca Probert, ‘Evolving Concept of Non-Marriage, The’, *Child and Family Law Quarterly* 25 (2013): 315.
- ⁴²⁸ *MA v JA and the Attorney General* [2012] EWHC 2219 (Fam)
Galloway v Goldstein [2012] EWHC 60 (Fam)
Sharbatly v Shagroon [2012] EWCA Civ 1507
Dukali v Lamrani (Attorney General Intervening) [2012] EWHC 1748 (Fam)
Al-Saedy v Musawi (Presumption of marriage) [2010] EWCA 3293 (Fam)
El Gamal v Al Maktoum [2011] EWHC B27 (Fam) and
Hudson v Leigh (Status of non-marriage) [2009] EWHC 1306 (Fam)
- ⁴²⁹ Valentine Le Grice, ‘A Critique of Non-Marriage’, *Family Law* 43, no. 10 (2013): 1284.

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- ⁴³² *Hudson v Leigh* (Status of non-marriage) [2009] EWHC 1306 (Fam), [2009] 2 FLR 1129 at para [69].
- ⁴³³ W. K. Leong, 'Formation of Marriage in England and Singapore by Contract: Void Marriage and Non-Marriage [article]', *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family*, no. 3 (2000): 256.
- ⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, 269.
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- ⁴³⁶ 'The Muslim Law (Shariah) Council UK', *About the Muslim Law (Shariah) Council UK*, n.d., http://www.shariahcouncil.org/?page_id=23.
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- ⁴⁴⁰ PhD researcher at Birmingham University:
<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/law/staff/profile.aspx?ReferenceId=48677>
- ⁴⁴¹ Respondent interviews were undertaken in London during summer 2013.
- ⁴⁴² My background is non-Muslim (South Asian) Gujarati.
- ⁴⁴³ Quranic term for that which is lawful
- ⁴⁴⁴ Islamic divorce initiated by the husband
- ⁴⁴⁵ Applications under TOLATA seek to discern the parties' intentions provable on the balance on probabilities and follow equitable doctrines. Issuing such a claim often means starting additional legal proceedings which can be expensive in terms of legal fees and the chance of success can be far from favorable.
- ⁴⁴⁶ [2013] 1 FLR 1493
- ⁴⁴⁷ Valentine Le Grice, 'A Critique of Non-Marriage', *Family Law* 43, no. 10 (2013): 1283.
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- ⁴⁵⁰ Myriam Francois-Cerrah, 'Sharia Marriage in the UK Is Not Toxic – Polygamous Men Are', 3 July 2015, sec. Women, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11715461/Muslim-Sharia-marriage-in-the-UK-is-not-toxic-polygamous-men-are.html>.
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⁴⁵⁴ National Records of Scotland Web Team, 'We Would like a Family Friend to Solemnise Our Marriage. Is This Possible?', Document, *National Records of Scotland*, (31 May 2013), <http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/registration/getting-married-in-scotland/we-would-like-a-family-friend-to-solemnise-our-marriage>.

⁴⁵⁵ Data obtained from the National Records Scotland office, Registration of Approved Celebrants Rolling Programme 11 June 2015, (on file with author).

⁴⁵⁶ Yasir Suleiman, *Narratives of Conversion to Islam*. (Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge, 2013), 1.

⁴⁵⁷ Batool Al-Toma, (Telephone interview, 27 April 2015).

⁴⁵⁸ Literally 'People of the Book': a term used in Islamic thought to refer to Jews, Christians or Sabians—those who possess a divine text (e.g. Torah). Although limited to the above three by the great majority of Muslim scholars, in a lengthy discussion in his exegesis, Muhammad Rashid Rida argues that Hindus, Buddhists, Confucianists, among others, may also be included in the term: the repercussions of this opinion on Islamic law are very significant. See Muhammad Rashīd Ridā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, (2nd print, Egypt: Dar al-Manār, 1367AH) 6: 185-196.

⁴⁵⁹ Yohanan Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 160-193.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid. See note, *infra* 28.

⁴⁶¹ According to the 2001 Census, 4,233 Christian men were married to Muslim women. Updated statistics are unavailable, but one can surmise that the number has only increased.

⁴⁶² In the introductory pages to his published work on the subject, Al-Judai^c provides a synopsis of what appears to be the letter that Al-Toma had sent him. See, ^cAbdullāh Al-Judai^c, *Islāmu aḥad al-zawjayn wa mada ta'thyruhu 'ala 'aqd al-nikāḥ: dirāsah fiḥḥiyah muḥḥallah fī du'nuḥūḥ al-kitāb wal-sunnah*. (2nd ed. Leeds: Al Judai Research & Consultations, 2008), 6-8.

⁴⁶³ Yohanan Friedmann, 172.

⁴⁶⁴ Yūsuf Al-Qaradāwi, *Fi fiḥ al-aqaliyyāt al-Muslimah*. (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 2001), 105-106. See, al-Majallah al-'Ilmiyyah lil-Majlis al-Urūbi lal-Iftā' wal-Buhūth 2 (2003), 424-444. In these writings, Al-Qaradāwi recounts how at a conference in the United States some twenty years ago (i.e. 1980/81), Hasan Al-Turābi was of the view that a Muslim woman may remain in her marriage to a non-Muslim, creating uproar among the participants.

⁴⁶⁵ Al-Judai^c, 5.

⁴⁶⁶ Al-Majallah al-'Ilmiyyah, 454.

⁴⁶⁷ Dina Taha, "Muslim Minorities in the West: Between Fiqh of Minorities and Integration,"

Electronic Journal of Islamic and Middle East Law (EIJMEL) 1 (2013), 25-28, provides a summary of the various views, despite some factual errors. Alternatively refer to Al-Majallah al-‘Ilmiyyah in its second dedicated issue to the subject.

⁴⁶⁸ Al-Majallah al-‘Ilmiyyah. 439.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid, 439-440.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid, 446.

⁴⁷¹ For introductory references on the subject, refer to: Muhammad Hashim Kamali’s *Maqasid al-Shariah Made Simple* (London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2008) and Jasser Auda’s *Maqāsid al-Shariah: A Beginners Guide* (London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2008).

⁴⁷² Taha, 27-28. See also al-Alwani, “Fiqh of the Muslim Minorities” <http://islamicstudies.islammesssage.com/Article.aspx?aid=579>, (accessed 15 April 2015).

⁴⁷³ Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur’an, Hadith, and Jurisprudence*. (Oxford: Oneworld Publications. 2006), 18.

⁴⁷⁴ Haitham Al-Haddād, “Ayna akhta’ al-maqāsidīyūn al-juddud fi na ratihim ila maqāsid al-shariah” <http://dorar.net/article/526>, (accessed 9 April 2015).

⁴⁷⁵ Jasser Auda, *Fiqh al-Maqāsid: Inātat al-Ahkām al-Shar’iyyah Bi-Maqāsidihā*. (Herndon, Virginia, USA: al-Ma’had al-‘Alami lil-Fikr al-Islāmī, 2008), 202-208. Auda repeats the same chapter almost verbatim in his more recent work *al-Ijtihād al-Maqāsidī: Min al-Tassawur al-Usūlī ila al-Tanzīl al-‘Amālī*. (Beirut: al-Shabakah al-‘Arabiyyah lil-Abhāth wal-Nashr, 2013), 91-112.

⁴⁷⁶ Kecia Ali, 20. For further on this methodology in approaching the sources, aptly named “hermeneutical historicism” by Mohammed Fadel of Toronto University, refer to his article “Is Historicism a Viable Strategy for Islamic Law Reform? The Case of ‘Never Shall a Folk Prosper Who Have Appointed a Woman to Rule Them’” *Islamic Law and Society* 18 (2011). In Fadel’s view: this manner in dealing with the sources is more politically prudent for ‘reformers’ as it allows them to exhaust the ‘progressive’ possibilities inherent in the conventional methods of interpretation, before advertng to more controversial justifications, which is often a weakness found in much of feminist Muslim discourse. However, the difficulty this method brings is that, as Sherman Jackson indicated in his comments on it, Islamic jurisprudence provides no guides as to how hard (or even where) an interpreter might look for circumstantial evidence that evinces an intent to specify the range for the general term. Ultimately, “it is impossible to understand juristic attempts to limit the scope of a revelatory text, or conversely, their failure to do so, without taking into account their subjective motivations and concerns.”

⁴⁷⁷ No specific reference was made to the Article, instead general references to the notion of human rights and religious freedom were made.

⁴⁷⁸ Muhammad Akram Nadwi, a notable UK-based scholar, stated that on a recent visit to the United States he found that this opinion was surging in its popularity among Muslim community leaders. When pressed to provide some names, he stated that owing to the

unusualness of the opinion, they wished to remain unnamed, (Personal interview, London, 15 March 2015). Similarly, in an email (24 April 2015), Yasir Qadhi, a prominent US-based scholar expressed his “sympathy” with Al-Judai’s opinion, but provided that this should only be a dispensation (*rukhsah*) and not the default rule (*aṣl*).

⁴⁷⁹ ᶜ Abdullāh Al-Judaiᶜ, (Personal interview, Oldham, 29 March 2015 and 26 April 2015).

⁴⁸⁰ Al-Judaiᶜ, 242.

⁴⁸¹ Interestingly, on a practical basis, Al-Toma informed that in her extensive engagement with the convert community, it was “quite common” to adopt Al-Judai’s particular view concerning conjugal relations. At the very least she said, it made converts’ husbands accommodating of their wives conversion and not “agitators against Islam.” In her words, conjugal rights were “central” to the marriage contract, which would have no value otherwise.

⁴⁸² Yasir Qadhi (Email, 24 April 2015).

⁴⁸³ Samira Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic tradition: reform, rationality, and modernity*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 77-78.

⁴⁸⁴ As Kecia Ali demonstrates (*supra* at 20-21), although she mentions that she does not aim “to construct a legal argument for the permissibility” of Muslim women marrying on-Muslim men. Recognition of this logical extension is in fact one of chief reasons why scholars who acknowledge the merits of the arguments of the dissenting minority, are reluctant to actually adopt it, and this reverts back to a *maqāṣid*-founded argument: something may be permitted in a particular short-term, situation or instance (*juzʿ*), but prohibited in a long-term, larger scale (*kull*). However, Al-Judaiᶜ simply argues that there are specific textual (i.e. Quranic) indicants prohibiting it. Al-Turabi disagrees, *see* Alex B. Leeman, “Interfaith Marriage in Islam: An Examination of the Legal Theory Behind the Traditional and Reformist Positions,” *Indiana Law Journal* 84 (2009); ‘Asharq Al-Awsat Interviews Sudanese Islamist leader Dr. Hassan Turabi’ <http://www.aawsat.net/2006/04/article55266971/asharq-al-awsat-interviews-sudanese-islamist-leader-dr-hassan-turabi>, (accessed 10 April 2015).

⁴⁸⁵ Zaman, Q. M (2002). *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. p 38

⁴⁸⁶ Miller, M. J. (2006). *Muslim Immigration to Europe*, in *Muslim Public Affairs Journal*, 1 (1). pp 59-68. Los Angeles: Muslim Public Affairs Council.

⁴⁸⁷ Wiktorowicz, Q. (2005). *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield. p 136

⁴⁸⁸ Booth, R. (2012). *Census: almost one in eight people in England and Wales born abroad*. [The Guardian online] Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/dec/11/census-one-in-eight-born-abroad> [Accessed: 12 Dec 2012]

⁴⁸⁹ Addley, E. (2003). *A Glad Day for Mourning*. [The Guardian online] Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/jun/28/religion.uk> [Accessed: 09 Jun 2013]

⁴⁹⁰ Mandaville, P (2007). *Global Political Islam*. New York: Routledge Press. p 40

⁴⁹¹ Modood, T. (2010). *Still not easy being British: Struggles for a Multicultural Citizenship*.

London: Trentham Books.

⁴⁹² Walbridge, L. S. (2001). *The Most Learned of the Shi'a*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁴⁹³ Amirpur, K (2006). *A Doctrine in the Making? Velayat-e Faqih in Post-Revolutionary Iran*. in *Speaking for Islam* (ed. Kr mer, G. & Schmidtke, S.) pp. 218-240. Boston: Brill Publications. p 218

⁴⁹⁴ Pipes, D. (2003). *The Rushdie Affair*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers. p 26

⁴⁹⁵ Takim, L. (2011). *Shi'ism in America*. New York: New York University Press. p 145

⁴⁹⁶ Walbridge, L. (1997). *Without Forgetting the Imam*. Michigan: Wayne State University Press.

⁴⁹⁷ Van Den Bos, M. (2012). *European Shiism? Counterpoints from Shiites' Organization in Britain and the Netherlands*. in *Ethnicities* 12(5), pp 556-580. London: SAGE Publications.

⁴⁹⁸ Hussain, S. (2008). *Muslims on the Map: A National Survey of Social Trends in Britain*. New York: Tauris Academic Studies

⁴⁹⁹ Gilliat-Ray, S. (2005). 'Closed Worlds: (Not) Accessing Deobandi dar ul-uloom in Britain'. in *Fieldwork in Religion*, 1(1). pp 7-33.

⁵⁰⁰ Mkandawire-Valhmu, L. and Stevens, P. E. (2010). *The Critical Value of Focus Group Discussions in Research With Women Living With HIV in Malawi*. in *Qualitative Health Research*, 20(5). pp 684-696.

⁵⁰¹ Plural of *marji'*; authority to which one turns or appeals (Wehr, H. [1974]. *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*. London: Macdonald & Evans Ltd. P. 328). The word is conventionally used in Shi'a jurisprudence to refer to the most senior jurisprudential authorities.

⁵⁰² Sachedina, A. A. *Article: Taqlid: Blind Adherence or Rational Acceptance?* University of Virginia.

(referenced: 28/08/13) – <http://people.virginia.edu/~aas/article/article5.htm>

⁵⁰³ These comments referred to some rulings from Iran-based jurists, stating a prohibition of playing chess and it not being recommended to watch football.

⁵⁰⁴ Geaves, R (1996). *Sectarian Influences Within Islam in Britain*. in *Community Religions Project Paper Series*. Paper 12. Leeds: The University of Leeds. P 76

⁵⁰⁵ Lewis, P. (1994). *Islamic Britain: Religion, Politics and Identity among British Muslims*. London: I.B.Tauris. p 114

⁵⁰⁶ *Astaghfirullah*: A phrase transliterated from the Arabic language, which means "I seek God's forgiveness"; comparable to the conventional use of the phrase "God-forbid" in English.

⁵⁰⁷ Kant, I. (2009). *An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?*. London: Penguin Publications

⁵⁰⁸ *Marja'iyat*: The institutionalised relationship between the *marāje* and their followers amongst ordinary Shia Muslims.

⁵⁰⁹ *Wājib*. pl *Wājibāt*: Arabic word meaning obligation or duty; in this context it is referring to religious incumbencies.

⁵¹⁰ *Risālah*: Arabic word literally meaning 'message', 'treaty' or 'accord'. Conventionally, it has been shortened from '*Risālah 'Amaliyyah*', which in Shia Jurisprudence, refers to a book

containing a set of religious edicts issued by a given jurist.

⁵¹¹ *Makrūh*: Arabic word meaning 'disagreeable' or 'detestable'. In Islamic jurisprudence it refers to any act, the avoidance of which would be rewarded, yet does not fall under the category of unlawful acts and so its performance would not warrant divine punishment.

⁵¹² Lewis, P. (1996). *The Functions, Education and Influence of the 'Ulama in Bradford's Muslim Communities*. in *Community Religions Project Paper Series*. Paper 12. Leeds: The University of Leeds. p 16

⁵¹³ See more in: Christine Woodhead, *Ottoman Languages*, (New York: Routledge, 2012)

⁵¹⁴ Osman Lavić, Rukopisi Mehmeda Handžića u Gazi Husrev-begovoj Biblioteci, *Anali* (1987), 37

⁵¹⁵ Ibrahim Hatibo lu, Religio-Intellectual Relations between Bulgarian and non-Bulgarian Muslims in the First Half of the 20th Century, *Islamic Studies* (2007), 73

⁵¹⁶ The manuscript is kept in two places: Bošnjački institut in Sarajevo, and Suleymaniye Kutuphanesi in Istanbul.

⁵¹⁷ Irvin Cemil Schick, Self and Other, Here and There: Travel Writing and the construction of identity and place, in: *Venturing beyond borders – Reflections on genre, function and boundaries in Middle Eastern travel writing* (ed. by Bekim Agai et al) (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag Würzburg, 2013), pg 13

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid*, pg 20

⁵¹⁹ Bekim Agai, Religion as a determining factor of the Self and the Other in travel literature, in: *Venturing beyond borders – Reflections on genre, function and boundaries in Middle Eastern travel writing* (ed. by Bekim Agai et al) (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag Würzburg, 2013), pg 106

⁵²⁰ *Ibid*.

⁵²¹ I used the autograph copy of the work which is kept in Gazi Husrev-bey's Library in Sarajevo under the mark R-622.

⁵²² Ibrahim Hakki Čokić, Moje putovanje na hadž, *Hikjmet* (1932), 18

⁵²³ Ibrahim Hakki Čokić, Moje putovanje na hadž, *Hikjmet* (1932), no 41, 148

⁵²⁴ *Ibid*, 149

⁵²⁵ Ibrahim Hakki Čokić, Moje putovanje na hadž, *Hikjmet* (1935), no 12, 364

⁵²⁶ *Ibid*, 368

⁵²⁷ Muhamed Krpo, Put na hadž: Putopis jednog hadžije, (Bosanska Pošta: Sarajevo, 1938), 39

⁵²⁸ *Ibid*, 39-40

⁵²⁹ *Ibid*, 40

⁵³⁰ *Ibid*, 42

⁵³¹ *Ibid*, 48

⁵³² *Ibid*, 50

⁵³³ *Ibid*, 61

⁵³⁴ Mehmed Handžić, Do načina mnogo stoji, *Eseji, rasprave, članci* (Sarajevo: Ogdalo, 1999), 34

- ⁵³⁵ Mehmed Handžić, *Vjersko obrazovanje u Bosni i Hercegovini* (trans. Enes Karić), *ibid*, pg 44-45
- ⁵³⁶ *Ibid*.
- ⁵³⁷ Mehmed Handžić, *Osnivač Kaira i El-Azhera* (Misao da je Slaven), *ibid*, pg 293-298
- ⁵³⁸ See, for example, Handžić's curt dismissal of the translations of complete khutba in Turkey (Handžić, O Hutbi, *ibid*, pg 74)
- ⁵³⁹ The relationship of Bosnian intellectuals with Arab reformist thinkers was also strengthened by occasional references of the latter to the perceived value of Bosnian Muslims. See, for example, Handžić's treatment of Shakib Arslan's comments on Bosnian Muslims in: *Tračak nade*, *ibid*, pg 186-187
- ⁵⁴⁰ *Tračak nade*, *ibid*, pg 189
- ⁵⁴¹ *Ezher i mi*, *ibid*, pg 307
- ⁵⁴² Muhamed Krpo, *Put na hadž: Putopis jednog hadžije*, (Bosanska Pošta: Sarajevo, 1938), 40-41. However, as a travel writer committed to the principle of "truthful" presentation of reality, Krpo mentions the downsides of his journey through Egypt, such as the practice of baksheesh and the poverty.
- ⁵⁴³ Krpo, *ibid*, 60
- ⁵⁴⁴ About the concepts of "medievalizing" vs "modernizing" Cairo see more in: *Making Cairo Medieval* (ed. by Nezar AlSayyad, Irene A. Bierman and Nasser Rabbat) (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2005), 1-5
- ⁵⁴⁵ Ibrahim Hakki Čokić, *Moje putovanje na hadž, Hikmet* (1935), 366-367
- ⁵⁴⁶ Skender Kulenović, *Ponornica* (Sarajevo: Sarajevo Publishing, 1997), 32
- ⁵⁴⁷ A prominent example of this is the description of the funeral in Egypt and in Bosnia. "The same faith, but different departure to other world." (Skender Kulenović, *ibid*, pg 85)
- ⁵⁴⁸ Zheliazkova, Antonina. "The Penetration and Adaptation of Islam in Bosnia from the 15th to the 19th Century." *Journal of Islamic Studies* 5 (1994): 187-208. Bosniaks form one ethnoreligious community in BiH, and in the neighbouring Sanjak region of Serbia and Montenegro, and are predominantly Sunni Muslims (Hanafi school of jurisprudence). Non-Bosniak Muslim minority groups in BiH include Albanians, Roma and Turks.
- ⁵⁴⁹ Hashem, Mayen. "The Ummah in the Khutba: A Religious Sermon or a Civil Discourse?" *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 30 (2010): 49-61.
- ⁵⁵⁰ Jones, Linda. *The Power of Oratory in the Medieval Muslim World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
- ⁵⁵¹ Wodak, Ruth and Meyer, Michael. "Critical Discourse Analysis: History, agenda, theory and methodology," in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, ed. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (London: Sage, 2009), 30-31; El-Nagar, Shaimaa. "Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity in the Discourse of Muslim Televangelists: The Case Study of Hamza Yusuf." *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines* 6 (2012): 78.
- ⁵⁵² Al Faruqi, Maysam. "Umma: The Orientalists and the Qur'a-nic Concept of Identity." *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 16 (2005): 33.

- ⁵⁵³ Hashem, *The Ummah in the Khutba*, 54.
- ⁵⁵⁴ Ibid., 51.
- ⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., 49-51.
- ⁵⁵⁷ Spahić, Ismet. *Hutbe* (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 2000)
- ⁵⁵⁸ <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/12/15/world/in-sarajevo-a-different-kind-of-islam.html>
 Kifner, John. "In Sarajevo, a Different Kind of Islam," *The New York Times* (15.12.1993);
 Kuhner, Jeffrey. "Islamist State in Europe?," *The Washington Times* (18.12.2005)
<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2005/dec/18/20051218-125507-6951r/?page=all>
- ⁵⁵⁹ Džambegović, Emir. *Imidž islamske zajednice u BiH* (Sarajevo: El Kalem, 2014)
- ⁵⁶⁰ This influence was recognized and verbalized by all my respondents from Sarajevo; when asked what they thought the three most formative experiences for Muslim Bosnians are, they would evoke the war and the politicization of the Islamic discourse, and of Islamic identity, as the most significant.
- ⁵⁶¹ Spahić, *Hutbe*, 27.
- ⁵⁶² Sunnet: according to the example of Prophet Muhammad
- ⁵⁶³ Ibid. 40.
- ⁵⁶⁴ In the Yugoslav times this issue was often undertaken by Muslim scholars. Exemplification can be found for instance in the tafsir and fatāwā of Husein ozo from the late 1950s to the late 1970s. Husein ozo, *Izabrana Djela*, (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 2006).
- ⁵⁶⁵ Spahić, *Hutbe*, 67.
- ⁵⁶⁶ Skimiš, Biljana. *Krvna žrtva. Transformacije jednog rituala* (Beograd: Balkan Institut SANU, 2008).
- ⁵⁶⁷ Lederer, György. "Islam in East Europe." *Central Asian Survey* 20 (2001): 11.
- ⁵⁶⁸ Bougarel, Xavier. "Ramadan during a Civil War (as reflected by a series of sermons)." *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 6 (1995): 26.
- ⁵⁶⁹ Bougarel's research is of the highest value and its contribution to the knowledge of Bosnia and Islam in Bosnia is not a subject of critique. Nevertheless, subsequent researchers and analyses have decontextualized the sermons provided by Spahić, quoted in English by Bougarel. As Lederer duly noted, not much is available in the English language that is written from a religious Bosnian Muslim perspective. Talks of pre-war processes which constructed the identity of Bosnian Muslims as radical Islamic fundamentalists are a repetition of the language of Serbian propaganda. However, this discourse, in good English, can indeed be found on the Web. Hence, it has influenced many Western Balkan analysts, while the voices of Bosnian Muslims seem to be absent from the popular discussion. Lederer, *Islam in East Europe*, 29.
- ⁵⁷⁰ Bougarel, *Ramadan during a Civil War*, 10.
- ⁵⁷¹ Ibid., 26.
- ⁵⁷² Beelman, Maud. "Serb shells kill 15 at soccer game," *The Daily Gazette* (02.06.1992), <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=RllGAAAIBAJ&sjid=NukMAAAAIBAJ&pg=5675%2C192775>.

⁵⁷³ Spahić, *Hutbe*, 118.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁵⁷⁵ Respondent (A); Man of Bosnian citizenship, Bosniak born in Saudi Arabia (family choices). Moved back to Sarajevo after the war, together with his family. 24 years old, unmarried, student at the University of Sarajevo, practicing Muslim. Interview: April 2015.

⁵⁷⁶ Spahić, *Hutbe*, 46.

⁵⁷⁷ However, one interviewee (C) noted that even though after the war Bosnian society split into ethno-religious groups which became hermetic, a revival of interfaith relations could be observed as people become curious about their neighbours again. Respondent (C); Woman of Serbian citizenship, Bosniak born in Novi Pazar (Sanjak in Serbia), moved to Sarajevo for studies. 26 years old, married to a Bosnian man, mother of two children, graduate of the University of Sarajevo, practicing Muslim. Interview: April 2015.

⁵⁷⁸ Spahić, *Hutbe*, 120.

⁵⁷⁹ Facebook. Post by the Bosnian portal Klix.ba encouraging people to leave candles or pencils in front of the French Embassy in Sarajevo as a sign of solidarity with the victims of the Charlie Hebdo shooting in January 2015, with ensuing comments of Facebook users. Post dated January 7th, 2015. Accessed April 20, 2015.

<https://www.facebook.com/Klix.ba/posts/10152580869906821>

⁵⁸⁰ Wettach, Tania. "Religion and Reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe* 28 (2008): 3.

⁵⁸¹ Spahić, *Hutbe*, 140.ā

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*, 206.

⁵⁸³ Respondent (B); Man of Bosnian citizenship, Bosniak born in Bosnia, spent childhood in Sweden, after the war came back to Sarajevo. 23 years old, unmarried, graduate of the University of Sarajevo, practicing Muslim. Interview: April 2015.

⁵⁸⁴ "(...) I say that the ideological platform of both the army and of all Muslim Bosniaks is what they kill us for: La ilahe illellah (Lā ilāha illa Allāh). That is our platform. That is our greatest capital and our strength and it's exactly that which broke the teeth of the Montenegrin and Serbian monster, aggressor, that was about to eradicate us". Spahić, *Hutbe*, 130.

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁵⁸⁶ Respondent (C).

⁵⁸⁷ Helms, Elissa. 2008. "East and West Kiss: Gender, Orientalism, and Balkanism in Muslim-Majority Bosnia-Herzegovina." *Slavic Review*, 67 (1): 100.

⁵⁸⁸ Spahić, *Hutbe*, 137.

⁵⁸⁹ Spahić, Vedad. "Ideologija provaljene ograde." *Život Časopis za književnost i kulturu*, 54 (2011): 137.

⁵⁹⁰ Helms, Elissa. *East and West Kiss*, 100-101; Merdjanova, Ina. 2013. *Rediscovering the umma: Muslims in the Balkans between nationalism and transnationalism* (London-New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 87. Elissa Helms notes that people listening to the sermon at the time

(1997) felt rather confused, and the call for marrying only women who wear modest clothing was treated by the crowd as slightly ridiculous. Additionally, she notes that most of the women who had gathered there for the opening of the mosque, and those outside it too, were not dressed according to what we could recognize as the usual Islamic customs. For more deliberations on Europe as a (gendered) threat see: Helms, *East and West Kiss*, passim.

⁵⁹¹ Respondent (C), however, stated that her husband does indeed like to brag to his male cousins that his wife is a “proper” Muslim woman, wearing modest, dark-coloured abāya reaching to the ground.

⁵⁹² Respondent (A)

⁵⁹³ The interviewee (D) complained about Spahić’s direct support for Bakir Izetbegović’s SDA party, which was also mentioned and disliked by (B). (D) also condemned Spahić for publicly insulting another public figure during the sermon. What’s interesting is that all respondents expressed their dislike for khuṭub which mention politics, and felt that the sermon, although dealing with matters of the community, should stay separate from the sphere of politics – which should itself, according to them, remain “secular”. Respondent (D); Man of Bosnian citizenship, Bosniak born in Bosnia, spent all his life in Sarajevo, 24 years old, unmarried, student of the University of Sarajevo, practicing Muslim. Interview: June 2015.

⁵⁹⁴ Respondent (D)

⁵⁹⁵ Just as Vedad Spahić juxtaposed the “claustrophobia” of Ismet Spahić with the oecumene of Enes Karić. Spahić, Vedad. “Ideologija provaljene ograde.” *Život Časopis za književnost i kulturu*, 54 (2011): 137.

⁵⁹⁶ Dela Roka, Roberto Moroko, *Kombësija dhe feja në Shqipëri 1920–1944 (Roberto Morozzo della Rocca, Nation and Religion in Albania 1920–1944)* (Tirana: Eleni Gjika, 1994), p. 19.

⁵⁹⁷ Nielsen, J., Akgönül, S., Alibašić, A., & Racić, E. (Eds.). (2014). *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe* (Vol. 6). Brill. Pg 21 Olsi Jazexhi

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid. 370.

⁵⁹⁹ Elbasani, A., & Saatçio lu, B. “Islamic actors’ support for democracy and European integration: A case for power-seeking?” WZB Discussion Paper, December 2011. 15.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid. 15.

⁶⁰¹ Muslim Forum of Albania, accessed April 13, 2015,

<http://www.forumimusliman.org/tema10-11-05.gif>

⁶⁰² Byrnes, T. A., & Katzenstein, P. J. (Eds.). (2006). *Religion in an expanding Europe*.

Cambridge University Press. Pg 71

⁶⁰³ “Political Islam among the Albanians: Are the Taliban Coming to the Balkans?”, Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development, accessed April 13, 2015. 23.

http://www.kipred.org/advCms/documents/14714_Political_Islam_Among_the_Albanians_Are_the_Taliban_coming_to_the_Balkans.pdf

⁶⁰⁴ “Catholic Church against the teaching of religious education”, Alb Info, August 24, 2011, accessed April 13, 2015, <http://www.albinfo.ch/kisha-katolike-e-kosoves-kunder-mesim-besimit-ne-shkolla/>

- ⁶⁰⁵ Official Facebook Page of Dr. Shefqet Krasniqi, accessed April 13, 2015.
<https://www.facebook.com/Hoxha.Dr.Shefqet.Krasniqi/timeline>
- ⁶⁰⁶ Official YouTube Channel of Dr. Shefqet Krasniqi, accessed April 13, 2015.
<https://www.youtube.com/user/krenariaofficial/about>
- ⁶⁰⁷ “This religion of ours is being fought”, Dr. Shefqet Krasniqi, accessed April 13, 2015.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32IXYyuZv4w>
- ⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.
- ⁶⁰⁹ “Imam defends Serb history”, *Gazeta Express*, April 1, 2015, accessed April 13, 2015.
<http://www.gazetaexpress.com/lajme/hoxha-nga-prizreni-mbron-historine-serbe-ne-kosove-ska-pasur-shqiptare-ata-i-solli-turqia-video-91072/?archive=1>
- ⁶¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=16&v=k2Yvn0HTAhY>
- ⁶¹¹ “For Rexhep Qosja”, Imam Enes Goga, accessed April 13, 2015.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrTcbZoW_EM
- ⁶¹² Nathalie Clayer, *Adapting Islam to Europe: The Albanian Example*. Islam und Muslime in (Südost) Europa im Kontext von Transformation und EU-Erweiterung, (2009): 67-8
- ⁶¹³ “Imams on the 100th anniversary of Albania”, Imam Muhamed Sytari, accessed April 13, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GwhwCnIA4R0>
- ⁶¹⁴ “Mosques of Tirana”, March 30, 2015, (4:47 p.m), comment on Facebook post on “Mosques of Tirana” Facebook Page.
- ⁶¹⁵ Sulejman Rexhepi “Hair on the egg”, *Telegrafi*, July 17, 2014, accessed April 13, 2015.
<http://www.telegrafi.com/lajme/qime-ne-veze-26-6898.html>
- ⁶¹⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge University Press: 1992), 53.
- ⁶¹⁷ “Report inquiring into the causes and consequences of Kosovo citizens’ involvement as foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq”, Kosovar Centre for Security Studies, accessed April 16, 2015, 10.
http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/Report_inquiring_into_the_causes_and_consequences_of_Kosovo_citizens%27_involvement_as_foreign_fighters_in_Syria_and_Iraq_307708.pdf
- ⁶¹⁸ “Kosovo Security Barometer”, Kosovar Centre for Security Studies, accessed April 16, 2015. 13. http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/Kosovo_Security_Barometer_-_Fourth_Edition_383440.pdf
- ⁶¹⁹ Caroline Adams, *Across Seven Seas and Thirteen Rivers: Life Stories of Pioneer Sylheti Settlers in Britain*, (London: Thap, 1987), 66.
- ⁶²⁰ Kylie Baxter, *British Muslims and the call to global Jihad*. (Clayton, Vic: Monash University Press, 2007), 1.
- ⁶²¹ Ernst, Carl W. and Martin, Richard C. (eds), *Rethinking Islamic Studies: From Orientalism to Cosmopolitanism* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 1.
- ⁶²² Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1963), 57.
- ⁶²³ Strübel, Jessica. ‘Get Your Gele: Nigerian Dress, Diasporic Identity, and Translocalism’ *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol.4, no.9, January (2012), 30.

- ⁶²⁴ Berreman's study cited by Joanne B Eicher and Barbara Sumberg 'World Fashion, Ethnic, and National Dress' in *Dress and ethnicity: change across space and time*. Edited by Joanne B. Eicher (Oxford: Berg, 1995), 302.
- ⁶²⁵ Roach-Higgins, M. E., & Eicher, J. B., Dress and identity. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 10, 1–8, (1992), 5
- ⁶²⁶ Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1963)
- ⁶²⁷ Cohn cited in Emma Tarlo, *Clothing matters: dress and identity in India*. (London: Hurst & Co, 1996), 33.
- ⁶²⁸ Goffman cited in Emma Tarlo, *Visibly Muslim: fashion, politics, faith*. (Oxford: New York: Berg, 2010), 67.
- ⁶²⁹ Joanne Entwistle, 'Fashion and the Fleishy Body: Dress as Embodied Practice', *Fashion Theory*, 4:3, 323-347, (2000), 336.
- ⁶³⁰ Emma Tarlo, *Visibly Muslim: fashion, politics, faith*. (Oxford: New York: Berg, 2010), 45.
- ⁶³¹ An Arabic acronym for "May God's peace and blessings be upon him"
- ⁶³² Ibid, 7.
- ⁶³³ Ibid.
- ⁶³⁴ Ibid.
- ⁶³⁵ Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*. (London: Hutchinson, 1961), 71 cited in John Edwards, *Language, Society and Identity*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 23.
- ⁶³⁶ Classes/lessons for the recitation of the Qur'an and in some cases Bengali language lessons were also incorporated into these lessons. These lessons took place after school or on the weekends.
- ⁶³⁷ Yunus Samad. 'Muslim Youth in Britain: Ethnic to Religious Identity'. Paper presented at the International Conference: Muslim Youth in Europe, Typologies of religious belonging and sociocultural dynamics, Edoardo Agnelli Centre for Comparative Religious Studies, Turin, 11th June 2004, 17.
- ⁶³⁸ Kenneth I. Pargament & Annette Mahoney, THEORY: "Sacred Matters: Sanctification as a Vital Topic for the Psychology of Religion", *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 15:3, 179-198, 2005, 183.
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