RELIGION IN DIASPORA

Cultures of Citizenship

Edited by Jane Garnett
and Sondra L. Hausner

Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship

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The *Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship* series covers three important aspects of the migration progress: firstly, the determinants, dynamics, and characteristics of international migration; secondly, the continuing attachment of many contemporary migrants to their places of origin, signified by the word 'diaspora'; and thirdly, the attempt, by contrast, to belong and gain acceptance in places of settlement, signified by the word 'citizenship'. The series publishes work that shows engagement with and a lively appreciation of the wider social and political issues that are influenced by international migration.

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Jane Garnett and Sondra L. Hausner
University of Oxford, UK

Contents

Figures

Acknowledgements

Contributors

Nazneen Ahmed is a research associate at the Department of Geography, University College London, UK.

Jonathan A. Boyarin is Mann Professor of Modern Jewish Studies and Professor of Anthropology at Cornell University, USA.

Katherine Pratt Ewing is Professor of Religion at the Department of Religion and Coordinator of the Master of Arts Program in the South Asia Institute, Columbia University, USA.

Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh is a lecturer in Human Geography at the Department of Geography, University College London, UK.

Jane Garnett is Fellow and Tutor of Wadham College, Oxford, and an associate professor in the Faculty of History, University of Oxford, UK.

Ben Gidley is a senior lecturer at the Department of Psychosocial Studies, Birkbeck University of London, UK.

Florence Gurung is a postdoctoral research associate at the Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Oxford, UK.

Alana Harris is Teaching Fellow in Modern British History in the Faculty of History, King's College London, UK.

Sondra L. Hausner is an associate professor in the Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Oxford, UK, and Fellow and Tutor of St Peter's College, Oxford.

Ousmane Oumar Kane is Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor of Contemporary Islamic Religion and Society at Harvard Divinity School and Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University, USA.

Michael Keith is Director of the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society and Professor of Anthropology, University of Oxford, UK.

Tuomas Martikainen is the Director of the Institute of Migration in Turku, Finland.

Samantha May is a teaching fellow at the School of Social Sciences, University of Aberdeen, UK.

Jill Middlemas is a research associate at the Theology Faculty, University of Zürich, Switzerland.

Ramon Sarró is Associate Professor of the Social Anthropology of Africa at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Oxford, UK.

Faiz Sheikh is a Marie Curie Postdoctoral Research Fellow and PRIMO Experienced Researcher at the University of Hamburg, Germany.

Jasjit Singh is a research fellow at the University of Leeds, UK.

Abraham Zablocki is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Agnes Scott College, USA.

Introduction: Cultures of Citizenship

Jane Garnett and Sondra L. Hausner

This book draws on a wide range of disciplinary approaches, cultural vantage points, and geographical regions to address the interplay between religion in diaspora and cultures of citizenship. Its premise is that reflection on different religions, all of which in some sense have diaspora built into them and have conceived this foundational legacy theologically, and have also developed diasporically in particular historical circumstances, has intrinsic implications for understandings of citizenship. Debates about civil power, authority, and agency have historically been bound up with the relationship between the temporal and the transcendental, even where that distinction has been contested; historically situated conceptions of that relationship inevitably inform both sides of it.

Recognition of the historical inflections of those debates, and their often occluded legacies in the construction of modern political categories, helps to complicate those categories themselves and open them up to fresh interpretations. Methodologically, the essays in this book are concerned on the one hand to make interpretatively more precise interconnections between diaspora and religion and on the other to reconsider the role of religious ideology and practice in understandings of citizenship. In the chapters that follow, their authors span the religious landscape of the world to interrogate how locality informs religious identity and how religious identity informs location, when people have transnational loyalties and experiences.

In a stimulating critical review of work on diaspora and religion, Paul Christopher Johnson has recently commented that '[w]hile scholars have . . . directed their attention to the histories of religion, they have less frequently focused on the religious making of histories' (Johnson, 2012, p. 96). His subsequent attempt to establish a clear-cut distinction

1

between 'diasporic religions' and 'religious diasporas' seems paradoxically contrary to his overarching and welcome call for more rigorous attention to the complex interrelationships between temporal and transcendental signifiers of diasporic religion in specific historical contexts, not least given his acknowledgement of the possibility that all religions *are* diasporic cultures (pp. 103–104). History itself complicates such a distinction, even as it attends to the gaps, absences, dislocations, distances, ambiguities, and different registers and intensities of engagement that he rightly sees as characteristic of diasporic experience (cf. Coleman, 2013; Coleman and Maier, forthcoming; Keith, 2013). Religious narratives and constructions of tradition, which inherently embody different temporal and spatial, natural and supernatural dimensions, constitute the historical myths by which people of religious faith and practice live: these are the 'religious makings of history' which play out both in theory and in lived experience. The comparative ethnologies, theologies, and micro-histories presented in this book illuminate such processes.

At the same time, the discussions that follow do not simply enact diversity and complexity. Through the terms in which they address the relationship between religion and diaspora, they offer a critical challenge to the limits of dichotomous ways of thinking about citizenship in the modern world – to oppositions between individual and community; private and public; self-interest and altruism; secular and religious; modern and traditional; universal and particular. Here they find an affinity with a rich and developing literature in moral philosophy, theology, and political theory critical of the hegemony of assumptions purporting to be universal but in fact based on particular models of individualist and utilitarian ethics and conceptions of agency. Such critiques – grounded in virtue ethics, feminist ethics of care, scriptural reasoning, and multicultural 'mixed discourse' – have problematised notions of a neutral, disinterested, or secular public sphere and have pointed to the historically rooted power dynamics bound up in that ideal. They have thereby given a constitutive civil role to voluntary associations and relationships that are based on specific sets of shared values and histories (Adams, 2006; Crisp and Slote, 1997; Gascoigne, 2001; Held, 2005; Parekh, 2006). A fruitful focus on relationality, and on the ways in which the embodied practice of particular relationships both constructs virtue and a sense of agency and complicates the interplay between identity and otherness has ranged from new readings of Aristotle and bio-political theory (Cammack, 2013a, b; Esposito, 2011; Fumanti, 2010) to analysis of the workings of historically and culturally situated organisational forms such as the women's mosque movement

in Cairo in the late 1970s or London Citizens/Citizens UK from the late 1980s (Bretherton, 2011; Mahmood, 2005). The practice of such relationships, which may or may not be religiously based (but in the contemporary world often have a religious dimension), can both perform values intrinsic to participation in – and enhancement of – the moral character of the state, and also call legal definitions of status and the legitimacy of particular political policies to account. There are of course huge variations in the capacities of individuals or groups to articulate either position, depending on the nature of the polity, degree of legitimation of civil society, and the power imbalances built into particular political alliances. But approaching such questions through specific historical contexts of religion and its presence in diasporic contexts has the potential to establish a more rigorous dialogue between theory and practice and in the process to resist over-homogenised reifications of religions and diasporas themselves.

Memories and legacies

Part I of this book sets up important conceptual questions for the project as a whole and establishes the fundamental significance of a nuanced historical perspective. Colonialism, anti-colonialism, nation state building, and political debates about citizenship – all these processes developing not just over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries but deeper in the historical past – have forged legacies and framed memories both for diasporic populations and for the polities from which they have travelled and to which they have moved. These shifting cultural formations and appropriations in turn have drawn on historically inflected conceptions of religious tradition, reaching back into much earlier periods, but equally taking highly specific and contingent forms. In the recent past, changing ideas about nation and state have been re-inflected ethically and religiously, and debates about migration and diaspora have become increasingly central to arguments about civil society and globalisation (Glick Schiller, Çaglar, and Guldbransen, 2006; Glick Schiller, Darieva, and Gruner-Domic, 2011; Levitt, 2008; Vertovec, 2007): multiple temporalities, multiple pasts, and multiple strategies in relation to memory coexist in pluralistic societies (cf. Raghuram, Madge, and Noxolo, 2009).

Recognising that the modern Western nation state and the ideologies surrounding it are historically rooted in Christian paradigms, even when they are formally secular, the four chapters which make up Part I of this book focus on the perspectives of Jewish and Muslim religious

systems and political theologies in order to sharpen critical questions about definitions of diasporic identity and analytical approaches to civil engagement. Each chapter in Part I is characterised by a distinct but complementary methodological approach: Chapter 1 directly interrogates recent critical debates about religious and ethnic diaspora; Chapter 2 suggests ways in which rereading foundational sacred texts can illuminate varieties of response to religion in diaspora – in the past and the present; Chapter 3 deploys historical comparison to complicate theoretical homogenisations; and Chapter 4 brings theology and religious/political memory to bear in constructing a critical political theory.

Chapters 1 and 2, by Jonathan Boyarin and Jill Middlemas, respectively, address conceptions of the Jewish diaspora and ideas of Jewishness through reflection on the relationship between exile and diaspora. From very different yet complementary vantage points, they point to complexities in Jewish religious and cultural traditions that complicate that relationship and its attendant understandings of 'home', 'homeland', 'roots', and 'exile'. Both consider the potentialities of diaspora in terms of creative cultural interconnectivity, rather than ideologies unilaterally predicated on absence from a lost homeland. Building on his important work (with Daniel Boyarin) to conceptualise diaspora in terms of genealogically based forms of identity, Jonathan Boyarin reviews recent scholarship on Jewish diaspora, with particular reference to the United States and Israel. He considers Yiddish culture – a diasporic culture *par excellence* – as one of the resistances in an age of monolithic territorial nationalisms. With reference to young Jewish members of a particular synagogue in the Lower East Side of New York City, he illuminates ways in which memories, hybrid linguistic practices, and traditions are constructed in a vibrant contemporary associational culture – a 'fictive kinship' grounded in diasporic immigrant New York Jewishness. While such a culture – a diasporic one that transcends nation in this case – could be co-opted either by a US vaunting its liberal pluralism or by an Israel invoking the strength of Jewish bonds of solidarity, in fact it retains its flexibility and capacity for critical distance from both forms of institutionalisation of identity.

Moving backwards in time, Jill Middlemas examines diasporic identity and the challenges of integration and assimilation from the perspective of Old Testament scholarship. Commenting on the weight of scholarly emphasis on exile and longing for return, Middlemas focuses rather on Biblical texts that speak of diasporic experience in terms of survival, adaptation, and human flourishing. Offering fresh readings of

the stories of Joseph, Daniel, and Esther – all of whom achieved status in diaspora – she underlines the differences between various diasporic settings, as well as distinctions in the ways in which religious understandings relate to cultural practice and to the politics of identity. Indicating the contingency of ideas of homeland and diasporic strategy to the historically particular relationships between Judah and (respectively) Egypt, Babylonia, and Assyria, she demonstrates the individuality of each story by situating the texts (and their reworkings) in the specific circumstances of the groups by whom and for whom they were written. In each case, the mode of assimilation is part of the text, suggesting that such stories could act as guides to living, offer encouragement in the face of persecution, and even foster a kind of networked migration. We learn from these Biblical passages that religious texts themselves have commented on the nature of diaspora for many hundreds of years.

The other two chapters in Part I complicate understandings of the 'imperial', the 'colonial', and the 'postcolonial' in terms of both specific historical legacies and methodological approaches. Chapter 3, by Nazneen Ahmed, with Jane Garnett, Ben Gidley, Alana Harris, and Michael Keith, grows out of a comparative study of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim cultures in the East End of London since the late nineteenth century. This is an area whose history has been orientalised and mythologised in terms of a narrative of multiple discrete communities escaping poverty and alienation through well-defined pathways of self-improvement through civic engagement. Shifting the focus – looking through a diasporic rather than immigrant lens and excavating some of the subterranean micro-histories of faith and associational life – reveals a very different chronology and cartography of both mobility and stasis. Three key sites of strategic importance to South Asian Muslim diasporic cultures and to Muslim/Christian relations in east London since the mid-nineteenth century are considered here as locations of cross-cultural as well as cross-faith contact and negotiation of codes of hospitality and welfare. These micro-geographies stage performances of gender, faith, and power and reveal the claiming, sharing, and contesting of space by diasporic groups living alongside one another within civil society. By paying attention to the politics of naming and to the shifting inflections of imperial rule over the long twentieth century, as well as practising 'resistant reading' of presences and absences in the archive, historical nuance is brought to bear on postcolonial perspectives and chronologies.

Chapter 4, by Faiz Sheikh and Samantha May, reclaims imperial legacies and pre-colonial memories to discuss the implications of the

Muslim *umma* for political theories of citizenship and engagement in civil society. Consideration of the developing conception and practice of collective identity in early Islamic history, as well as the experience of the Ottoman Empire, offers ways of thinking about community which can fruitfully be set in dialogue with assumptions about the underpinnings of Western liberal citizenship. Sheikh and May argue that Muslim models of community, which incorporate multiple senses of belonging, do not challenge liberal citizenship per se, but rather the hegemony of its individualistic premises; indeed, the assumption that there may be only one kind of citizenry itself clashes with the pluralism such liberalism espouses. Their problematisation of both the theory and the historical practice of individualism has important resonances for other religious communities, as indeed for secular ideologies which are predicated on collective identities. Their chapter culminates in a critique of universalising claims for either liberalism or Islam as monolithic entities. A more sophisticated understanding of historical processes of political formation and of lived experience in the present would give scope for a more constructive and mutually beneficial conversation between these ways of thinking about politics and civil agency in local and transnational dimensions.

Associations

Part II of this book, 'Associations', takes up that aspect of sociality which is fundamental to both diasporic and religious experience. The self-consciousness inherent in being a member of a diasporic group appears, over time, to produce an explicit conception of religious identity and affiliation that may in turn underscore modes of political representation, in both so-called receiving and sending societies. The associations that members of a diaspora establish are not isolated locations or lobbying groups, but usually transnational and multimodal places that act to represent – and sometimes solidify – diasporic religious identity. There can indeed be an imaginative association of ideas even where there is no formal community of people. The conceptual and practical dimensions of religious experience and representation in diaspora are thus interrelated, but may not always map directly onto each other.

What sorts of connectivity are important to effective citizenship? What is the relationship between bonding and bridging capital, and what variables conduce to their relative prioritisation, either by diasporic associations themselves or by the state (Wetherell, Laflèche, and Berkeley, 2007)? To what extent are ideologies of association

themselves culturally specific, and how may they therefore serve to challenge conventional criteria and language, as well as demanding rigorous contextual analysis to make them function creatively in new situations (Burbridge, 2013; Mercer and Page, 2010)? Here, the book explores a range of registers in which principles of association operate in relation to diverse polities, configurations of church and state, and citizenship regimes. The significance of different forms of collective organisation by migrant groups is addressed, as is their relationship to secular voluntary bodies and to the states into which they arrive (and from which they leave). More abstract and virtual bonds are addressed in this context, including those of language and cultural connection mediated by the Internet or mobile phone.

Chapter 5, by Ousmane Kane, focuses on the French-speaking West African diaspora in the United States, which began in earnest from the mid-1970s, following the implementation of tougher immigration laws – and rising xenophobia and Islamophobia – in France. This chapter discusses the ways in which first-generation predominantly Muslim Senegalese in New York City have negotiated multiple citizenships, and non-citizenship, in the United States alongside maintaining and indeed deepening ties with Senegal. A largely undocumented immigrant population has managed to settle well in New York, thanks to a relatively tolerant law enforcement regime and to their successful mobilisation of a complex Senegalese associational culture, based on the one hand on village, region, and caste and on the other on broader religious (mostly Sufi), national, or African and African American affinities. Partnerships with American charitable organisations have helped to construct life in the United States, as well as development projects in Senegal.

The associational culture Kane describes is not all rosy, however. While there are striking examples of officially authorised claims to public space, such as the annual Murid parade in Harlem which draws participants from all over the United States and other Western countries, and of cross-community collaboration, there are also tensions with African American, Arab, and South Asian Muslims over different conceptions of Islam and over the contested relationship between spirituality and politics. To first-generation Senegalese, America represents a land both of economic opportunity and of cultural danger. Religious association is very strongly linked to the maintenance of cultural traditions that underpin ethical behaviour and civil and familial responsibility in both America and Senegal.

These tensions and complexities are apparent in many other configurations of diaspora association around the world. Chapter 6 considers

a multi-ethnic Muslim diaspora in Nordic Europe, with its very differ-
ent history of church–state relations and of social democracy. In this
chapter, Tuomas Martikainen addresses the interrelationships between
minority and majority (Lutheran) religious cultures and the state in
Finland. In recent years, Muslim organisations have increasingly formed
partnerships with local and national public authorities in Finland to
act against the historical context of the marginalisation of minority
religious groups. Both the dominant Lutheran Church and minor-
ity religious groups have configured ways of raising their profile and
developing a critical, countercultural voice.

While perceived societal threats associated with Islam motivate the
state both to co-operate with and to monitor Muslim organisations,
Martikainen argues that the specific forms of such cooperation are better
understood from the viewpoint of a changing welfare structure, whereby
civil society is increasingly functioning as an extension of the state –
and diasporic associations can thus provide care to migrant popula-
tions. This process, he suggests, is part of the wider neoliberal trend that
has transformed Western states since the 1980s. Societal and political
developments outside the religious realm are thus central to evalu-
ating contemporary debates about religion and religious associations
in diaspora. Religious associations, whether in the form of the state-
facilitated Islamic Council of Finland or state-sponsored and grassroots
interfaith networks, here embody new governance models and forms of
civil society.

Chapters 7 and 8 focus on two different communities in Britain whose
debates about appropriate forms of associational culture in diaspora
draw explicitly both on the politics of their 'homelands' and on the
challenges of reinforcing and representing religious and cultural authen-
ticity to others and to themselves. Chapter 7, by Jasjit Singh, gives such
debates a specifically generational dimension, by looking at how young
Sikhs in Britain associate with their tradition through new arenas of reli-
gious transmission, including Sikh camps and university faith societies,
but most importantly via the Internet. By examining the interrelation-
ship between new social media and other grounded forms of association,
the chapter illuminates ways in which religious and civil bonds are being
reconfigured in the contemporary landscape.

There has been a proliferation of different forms of Sikh association
in Britain since the early twentieth century, which have been involved
in single-issue campaigning, offering professional advice and support
to British Sikhs, and seeking to represent Sikh opinion to the state.
Gurdwaras have been established in increasing numbers to act as the

focal point for religious and social community. Yet the status of any of these organisational forms has been challenged by young British-born Sikhs, who have often found other forms of associational culture more congenial to their religious and political engagement. The interplay between youth organisations, the Internet, and Sikh television channels has led to more dynamic links between politics in the Punjab and the Sikh diaspora in the rest of the world, as well as to a more responsive mobilisation of Sikh opinion across the country within Britain. In some respects, these phenomena are mirrored by the impact of new media on the workings of other religious and political cultures in Britain; but aspects of the transformation are particular to the Sikh situation.

In Chapter 8, Florence Gurung addresses religious identity among Gurungs (a Nepali ethnic group) in Britain and considers how religious practice and belonging explicitly relate to ethnic identity. Here, understandings of religious identity are deeply connected with the political situation in Nepal and ongoing debates on equal rights and representation for all ethnic groups. According to the constitutional discourse, each ethnic group should have a single defining religious identity, and most of the hill ethnic groups are insistent that this should not be Hinduism, previously the official religion of the state. For the Gurungs, however, there is internal debate as to whether their religion of identity should be Buddhism or 'Bon', the term they have adopted for their traditional shamanic or animistic practices. In practice, while most Gurungs, both in Nepal and the United Kingdom, accept that according to their ethnicity they should lay claim to a particular religious identity, in their religious practice and belief they are often very eclectic.

The resulting split within a single diasporic ethnic community – there are too few Gurungs in Great Britain for factionalism – has been a cause of distress; some elements of disagreement relate to the legacy of Hindu domination (and the contemporary rhetoric around that history), such that definitions of identity were artificially reified in 'a strategy of divide and rule' (and now must be seen formally to counter Hinduism). Others touch on different types of argument for religious authority and the capacity for ritual practice, distinguished in part by varied emphases on either the personal priest/local ritualist, on the one hand, or the transnational Buddhist lama, on the other. This chapter teases out the different ways in which the influence of ethnic politics in Nepal and concerns about the form of the new Nepali state, and the needs of community building and mutual support in the diaspora, mutually influence the form and priorities of Nepali ethnic and religious associations in the United Kingdom.

Symbols

Symbolic capital and cultural performance form the core of Part III of the book, which illuminates strategies employed in migrant and diasporic contexts to reinforce identities on the one hand and to mediate cross-cultural connections and support on the other. The complexities of the relationships between citizenship and religious commitment and responsibility are explored through the always contested sphere of symbolic representation. These relationships may be negotiated strategically through selectivity in the display of religious markers and by the choice of particular forms of symbolic presentation, and their significance may be acknowledged in the recognition (or definition) by civil authorities of certain types of behaviour as exemplary. Or, they may be suppressed, such that other, more politically powerful ideologies may come to the fore. The chapters in Part III build on the arguments and material of Parts I and II in their engagement with the explicit performances of historical memory and the construction of bonds of relationship, here through the visible (or invisible) signs of religious affiliation. In so doing, they challenge oppositions that are too often assumed as binary – such as modernity and tradition; white/Western and non-white/non-Western; and culture and religion – and open up space for the expression of multiple modernities, in which the experiences of diaspora and religion play active, interlinked, and formative roles (cf. Castor, 2013; Zavos, 2014).

Chapters 9 and 10 discuss different forms of Muslim politics in diaspora, exploring the complex ways in which agency is exercised in relation to a classic religious symbol – the veil – and how the performance of such a gendered practice can enable, inform, or subvert dominant agendas. Chapter 9, by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, looks at the use of religious symbols by the political representatives of Muslim refugees in the Sahrawi refugee camps in Algeria – the SADR, or Sahrawi state-in-exile, whose constitution acknowledges Islam as the basis of its legal system. In the light of contemporary geopolitical contests, however, including localised concerns regarding 'Islamism' and 'terrorism' in North Africa, the distancing from (or 'veiling' of) religious symbols – the denial that women in the camps are veiled – has been deliberately enacted or performed during encounters with global humanitarian audiences precisely to demonstrate the exemplary and unthreatening nature of the Sahrawi camps. That is, the veil as religious symbol is itself veiled when secularism is desired as a political identification. The chapter underscores the multidimensional relationships between religion and

faith-based humanitarianism by exploring the ways in which religious symbols have been strategically mobilised – or rhetorically removed – as a means of negotiating interactions between refugees and humanitarian donors. Here, we see the variability of public discourse around religion in transnational contexts, or when it is useful and when it is not.

In Chapter 10, Katherine Pratt Ewing engages with current debates – both scholarly and popular – about whether Islam is or is not a 'culture'. In this actively contested discourse, the term 'culture' is opposed to 'Islam', which, by contrast, is sometimes argued as a universal set of beliefs and practices that can offer a grounded world view in any historical or cultural location. Drawing on conversations with young Muslim women – second- and third-generation migrants of respectively Turkish and Pakistani heritage – in mosque-based study groups in Germany and the United States in the months following 9/11, she indicates how the establishment of a distinction between religion and culture became a powerful mechanism for constructing agency and new conceptions of citizenship. She points to the significance of historical as well as generational specificity, demonstrating how an emphasis on Muslim virtues of piety and intentionality – thinking for oneself – helped to forge a practice capable of challenging the hegemonies and universalist claims of both 'traditional' Muslim culture and Western secular modernity. Specifically in relation to gender norms, the choice by these young women to wear a headscarf – but one associated with a global practice rather than with either Turkish or South Asian tradition – marked their independence and desire to reinforce a Muslim identity that they regarded as personally authentic rather than coloured with either the culture of the West or the old-fashioned ways of the villages and countries from which their parents had come. This they took to embody a considered Muslim position which could underpin active and integrated citizenship in Western contexts and resist stereotypical labelling and association with extremism.

Chapters 11 and 12 continue to explore issues of agency and exemplarity in different but comparable religious idioms. In Chapter 11, Ramon Sarró's study of Kimbanguism, a messianic Christian religious movement that originated in the Congo in the 1920s, and which has developed a significant presence in Portugal from the 1980s, rereads colonial and anti-colonial prophetic literature and practice in the light of new forms of postcolonial marginality. The hope that is integral to life in the diaspora, he suggests, is particularly conducive to a prophetic movement, which is exactly what the ethnography reveals. Not only are past sufferings symbolically present in church and liturgy, but memories

of the enactment of community-in-adversity form a layered bedrock of collective identity: religious revival and the expression of millennial hope in Congo are mapped onto both Jesus' life in Palestine and Kimbanguism in shanty towns on the periphery of Lisbon. The strength of this narrative reinforces Kimbanguists' performance of a strict code of Christian behaviour, which has led to their playing a mediating role in situations of urban conflict and to their being heralded by civic authorities as an exemplary minority. Methodologically, Sarró reclaims their conviction of hope and promise from being dismissed as a form of false consciousness or subaltern passivity and delineates its status as an active and purposive dynamic.

In the final chapter, Chapter 12, Abraham Zablocki considers the ways in which Tibetan Buddhism has been reconfigured in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries through the agency of Tibetans in exile. They have invoked Buddhist traditions of patronage and universalism to draw both Tibetans and non-Tibetans into a religious culture which has developed a worldwide resonance. The symbolic capital invested in the overlays of real and imagined Tibet has served to reinvent a form of religious identity that supports a diasporic ideal of nationhood – a projection both of loss and of desire. Chapter 12 situates this process in dialogue with the bureaucratic norms and idioms of the nation state. Since 1972, the Tibetan government-in-exile has issued Green Books, visual and conceptual echoes of passports, which serve to demonstrate holders' financial contributions and loyalty to Tibet. This form of 'fictive citizenship' – mobilised around Tibet as a symbol or 'signifier' – has been complemented since the mid-1990s by the introduction of Blue Books as a means for non-Tibetans to share in and contribute to this form of identity. The interrelationships between the religious and the political, the national, the diasporic, and the global in the markers of 'Tibet' have dramatic symbolic force precisely because they rely exclusively upon a shared imaginary to construct a nation state that, since the 1951 takeover of Tibet by China, exists only in exile. By creating citizenship of a state that does not have territory, these books – faux passports that are bureaucratic documents on the one hand and affective tokens of participation on the other – serve also as material evidence for the themes addressed throughout the book: they illuminate just how significant the experience of religious identity in diaspora contexts is for the ways in which we understand and inflect our conceptions and strategies of citizenship.

In all these cases, the articulation of religious identities and the negotiation of national and transnational identities are carefully and

in complex ways constructed in relation to each other, sometimes self-consciously and more often at the unconscious levels of lived experience. The tensions and disjunctions, as well as affinities between different expressions of religion and of nationhood, in relation to intersectionalities of race, ethnicity, gender, and generation, underpin ongoing debates about the nature of citizenship as they have over many centuries and throughout the world. Just as religious texts explicitly consider issues of mobility and separation, we see in this book how questions of the representation of religious identity against the backdrop of the state – or against the backdrop of particular states, namely those from which we have come and those to which we are moving – are active and salient among not only scholars but members of diasporas themselves.

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Part I
Memories and Legacies

1
Reconsidering 'Diaspora'

Jonathan Boyarin

The last few decades of interdisciplinary scholarship on culture, politics, and identity have been marked by a lively and still-expanding inter-est in comparative dynamics of diaspora, especially the interactions of diasporic formations with the nation states that serve variously as their 'homelands' and their 'hosts'. My own participation in that multidisciplinary and intercultural discourse has been inspired by my strong identification with something I have become accustomed to call Jewishness – neither necessarily nor solely the Jewish religion nor a people called 'the Jews' – combined with a fairly consistent disaffilia-tion with two nation states, the United States and Israel. In terms of positive cultural content, that combination of identifications and dis-identifications primarily resulted in a commitment to Yiddish culture, which may fairly be referred to as a diasporic culture par excellence and perhaps even as a culture of resistance in the age of monolithic territorial nationalisms.

Yet, by now no one should view an interest in Jewish diaspora as idiosyncratic. First of all, it is not merely an ancient or pre-modern phenomenon, nor is it in any sense obviated by the establishment of a Jewish nation state. To be sure, and as I discuss below, the existence of Israel has transformed for many Jews the rhetorical filiation with the Holy Land into practices of pilgrimage, financial and lobbying support, and the like. And the range and number of Jewish communities around the world seem to have drastically shrunk throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Yet, Jewish diasporic formations continue to thrive – indeed, some of the liveliest Jewish diasporic communities are radically neotraditionalist and separatist (Boyarin, 1997).

Moreover, while Jewish diaspora should not be taken as a model, paradigm, or test case, it is extraordinary in its historical depth, its

geographical range, and its interactions with a Jewish homeland both lost and regained, with a range of pre-modern polities and with various forms of the post-Enlightenment, liberal nation state. In as much as Jewish difference has been a central 'test case' for ideologies of diversity and collective identity in the nation state, Jewish diaspora raises the question of the relation between self-interested diasporic identities and ideals of 'disaggregated' identities fundamentally grounded in relation to ethnically or religiously different Others. Thus, for example, the philosopher Judith Butler has recently argued for a parallel between the diasporic dispersal of ethno-religious communities such as 'the Jews' on one hand and the contingent and constructed nature of individual personhood on the other – a parallel in which she clearly finds positive moral value (Butler, 2012). In sharp retort, Israeli sociologist Eva Illouz writes that 'the lack of political sovereignty itself contains regressive forms of identity that are highly preoccupied with ethnic boundaries and survival, while diasporas – Jewish diasporas included – reify and narrow identity' (Illouz, 2013, p. 318).

Another persistent reason to attend to Jewish diaspora is its pertinence to world system theories and the dynamics of empire. Early on, struck by the massive disruptions that had befallen and been undertaken by virtually all of the world's major Jewish communities through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, I conceived a project to describe those disruptions and resettlements under the rubric of 'the new diaspora'. The project remains on the drawing board some 30 years later, but the problem that it was to address – to wit, how those several communities' fortunes were dependent on their geographical situation in the dynamics of colonialism, nationalism, modernisation, and anti-colonialism – has nevertheless remained one of my ongoing concerns.

Perhaps it was good timing that led to the remarkable resonance of a piece titled 'Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity', co-written with my brother Daniel, first published in *Critical Inquiry* in 1993, and then in a volume on *Identities*, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Kwame Anthony Appiah (1993). That paper was inspired in large measure by an immediately earlier article on the politics of identity by Walter Benn Michaels (1992) that Daniel and I understood as being necessarily based on ideas of freedom and autonomy that were Protestant-individualist and (perhaps more implicitly) liberal-statist and that accordingly underlie notions of polity in the United States. It therefore worked very hard to articulate a notion of genealogically based identity as an alternative to territorial nationalism, while distinguishing our idea of genealogy as lucidly as possible from the legacy of

biological racism. Finally, Daniel and I argued that this diasporic mode of collective identification remained a viable and ethical alternative to Zionism.

By the time the article was written, talk about the decline or imminent demise of the nation state was very much in the air.[1] That talk has been both taken up and obscured by the subsequent fascination with the concept of 'globalisation' in various disciplines, in popular media, and, not least, in academic administrations and funding centres. Whether any of us still sees the nation state as necessarily a form in decline, and hence the pertinence or obsolescence of the notion that diaspora might serve as a model different from or competitive with the nation state, are certainly questions pertinent to the relation between diaspora and religion. Today, it seems that while the nation state might not in fact be declining, certainly not as inevitably or as rapidly as we might have imagined two decades ago, the aspect of state function that increasingly predominates is the police function, to the detriment of the social welfare function. In that respect, the 'self-help' aspect of diaspora communities – their tendency to rely on their own for basic forms of social support – may be increasingly adaptive and may well encourage diasporic communities to solidify and regroup, rather than to dissolve into multi-ethnic or post-ethnic liberal polities.

In any case, the 1993 'Diaspora' article is still cited relatively frequently, to the detriment of at least two subsequent pieces which take up and in some ways refine the ideas in the 1993 paper. The introduction to the short volume *Powers of Diaspora* (D. Boyarin and J. Boyarin, 2002) addressed a criticism made by Geoffrey Harpham in a personal letter to me and Daniel: how could we claim, on the one hand, that diaspora constituted a poetics of identity based on powerlessness and, on the other hand, propose diaspora as a model for the relation between identity and polity, which necessarily entails the enjoyment and exercise of power? Hence, the title of our book, wherein we did some work to identify the forms of power that diasporas do embrace, perhaps always, perhaps necessarily: most centrally, power over gender roles and, hence, patterns of marriage and kinship that enable diasporic communities to reproduce themselves outside the territorial homeland (see also Tölölyan, 1996). We also distinguished whatever diasporic ethics might be from altruism, suggesting that diasporic collectives are primarily interested in self-preservation and promotion. This should not vitiate our opening observation that the power diasporas enjoy differs in kind and not only in quantity from the monopoly on so-called legitimate violence claimed by states.

The introduction to *Powers of Diaspora* also countered attempts to displace discussions of Jewishness and Jewish experience from the purview of comparative studies of so-called new diasporas. Some of these attempts to move away from or beyond Jewish diaspora might have been motivated by a misguided assumption that collective Jewish identity is primarily and inevitably oriented toward Zionism and the Jewish state. That stance is pertinent as well to some of the critiques by younger scholars that I discuss below.

The last chapter of *Powers of Diaspora* was a paper I had originally published in the mid-1990s (Boyarin, 1997). It dealt with a then-recent United States Supreme Court decision striking down, as an unconstitutional establishment of religion, New York State legislation creating a special school district that coincided with the boundaries of the Village of Kiryas Joel. Kiryas Joel, named for the great communal leader Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum of the group known as the Satmar Hasidim, has an entirely Hasidic population. Its leaders had turned to legislation as a way to assure that their children who needed special education could get the services they needed from the state, without being obligated to go to the local public schools. That legislation was immediately challenged in court as unconstitutionally designed to favour one particular religious group. The successful challenge resulted in legislative redesign which ultimately passed constitutional muster. My analysis, however, focused on the seeming difficulty the Court had in adjudicating this case within the principles and precedents of Federal law on religious freedom. The Court was faced with a community that defines itself genealogically and collectively and struggled to articulate a response grounded in a religious freedom jurisprudence based on the assumption that religion is a private matter and that rights are based on territorially determined citizenship.

Throughout our separate and joint work on diaspora, Daniel and I have stressed two points that evidently appear to many scholars mutually contradictory. One point is that Jewish experiences of diaspora are highly distinctive and unusually rich for thinking about the relations among space, time, memory, and identity more generally. The second is that Jewish experience can and certainly should be compared and contrasted with other group experiences in order to shape a broader, anthropological (i.e. species-oriented and not merely group-oriented) self-understanding.

One key finding of these investigations is that absence from a lost homeland is not necessarily the defining characteristic of a diasporic population. As Daniel has recently summarised this view:

> [D]iaspora is most usefully mobilized as a synchronic condition by which human groups are related to each other in space; they may (and frequently do) have an origin in an actually shared past but need not (and, moreover, need not even have a story of such a shared – traumatic – past). Once this is said, a 'homeland' (real or even imagined) is not a necessary or sufficient condition for the existence of a diaspora, and within the history of a given collective, there can be multiple diasporas, from Babylonia, Bari and Otranto, Spain, the Rhineland, shifting homelands and even diaspora in which homeland is entirely absent and replaced completely by cultural connection.
>
> (Boyarin, forthcoming)

In this view, diaspora is not so much a shared predicament of loss as a shared strategy of survival, continuity, and the reproduction of meaning. While this account tends to emphasise 'strong' notions of collective identity, it is also open to the ways that interactions with collective others are fruitful and even necessary for group identity to persist in transformation. Although it does not insist that the answers to all new questions are somehow found in the group's cultural heritage, it does emphasise the redeployment of internal rhetorics, systems of conflict resolution, and the like in the face of new challenges to the balance between personal autonomy and group affiliation.

One more aspect of Jewish diaspora may help explain both its relevance to and its difference from other groupings. Certainly to a greater extent than other major world diasporas, and perhaps uniquely, Jewish diaspora resonates at the level of what might be called a global political theology based on the Western nation state's origins in varieties of Christianity. I do not refer here only to the evident pertinence for current geopolitics of the twentieth-century attempts to overcome Jewish diaspora through genocide and the establishment of a Jewish nation state, but even more so to a larger historical framework in which the return and conversion of the remnant of the Jews was seen, by Christian missionaries and others aligned with the movements of European colonialism, as part of the conquest of the world for Christ which was to hasten the second coming.

In that sense, the historical convergence of the life of Jesus (as conceived in retrospect by early Christian writers) with the destruction of the Second Temple, the end of the Jewish commonwealth, and massive Jewish exile has perhaps helped shape an implicit notion of diaspora more broadly as an anomalous situation evoking a future vision

of redemption and resolution. By contrast, then, the persistence of diaspora (and indeed, the constant production of new diasporas) might well evoke a troubling yet generally productive anti-teleological *suspension* and *contingency*. Diasporic formations, that is, might usefully be thought of as drawing on and propelling alternative temporalities to the dominant model of progressive, linear time that Walter Benjamin famously identified in his 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' (Benjamin, 1969).

Meanwhile, younger scholars have addressed and criticised the new articulations of a positive Jewish diasporism in a range of ethnographic settings. Jasmin Habib's *Israel, Diaspora, and the Routes of National Belonging* (2004) and Caryn Aviv and David Shneer's *New Jews: The End of the Jewish Diaspora* (2005) question the continued validity of the term 'diaspora' as applied to Jews. Habib suggests that it be strictly limited to those Jews whose group identification centres on the Jewish state, while Aviv and Shneer recommend that it be consigned to the past of Jewish culture and politics altogether. Shaul Kelner's *Tours That Bind* (2010) points out that the diasporist call that Daniel and I made has been responded to primarily by artists and intellectuals and, he claims, should not be taken for a popular or grass-roots form of Jewish identification. Nadia Abu el-Haj, in *The Genealogical Science* (2012), doubts how neatly genealogy – a concept whose valorisation is crucial to the argument of our 1993 article – can be distinguished from race and thus calls into question the plausibility of a diasporist, anamnestic, and simultaneously anti-racist politics.

Against a possible tendency to see the vitality of Jewish diasporic identification only in retrospect, newer work asserts the urgency of reorienting our understanding of Jewish ethnography on the spatial plane. Matti Bunzl's *Symptoms of Modernity* (2004) cites my ethnography of Polish Jews in Paris (Boyarin, 1991) as 'axiomatic' in its indulgence of a 'deep nostalgia for a world that has disappeared' (p. 6) and goes on to complain that 'we have next to no ethnographic data on the *contemporary* lifeworlds of European Jewry' (ibid.). I take it that Bunzl's reference to 'deep nostalgia' is intended as a contrast to cheap nostalgia. He acknowledges the profound yearning for recuperable resources of the past across and despite the gaps of massive disruption and loss. Yet, he also refuses to indulge what he names, focusing instead on the politicisation of Jewish and queer group identities in the complex context of post–Second World War Austria. The title of Aviv and Shneer's book likewise, and unmistakably, points us firmly away from the worlds we have lost and into the worlds we inhabit now.

My response to Bunzl's claim that others and I had focused too much on old Jews was to write about Jewish young adults in my Lower East Side neighbourhood of New York City (Boyarin, 2011). My study centred on the synagogue belonging to an organisation known as Congregation Anshe Brzezan – meaning literally, 'People of the Town of Brzezany', in the Galician province that was once part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and is now Poland. That organisation – called a *landsmanshaft* in Yiddish – was a classic form of migrant voluntary society, combining functions of marriage brokerage, a familiar style of religious services, along with the kind of practical benefits (in relation to death, sickness, temporary unemployment) that the state did not yet provide early in the twentieth century. There were thousands of such societies among Jewish immigrants to New York alone (and countless more among Italian and other immigrant groups) (Soyer, 2001).

But by the early twenty-first century, no one from Brzezan and almost no one from the surrounding towns was left at the synagogue, now called, simply, 'the Stanton Street Shul'. Instead, I found there a curious and entirely tenuous mix of class and geographical mobility, new capital investments in an old neighbourhood late to the gentrification game, and powerful desires on the part of some individuals for a 'rooted' yet diasporic grounding in the heritage of immigrant Jewishness. Today's much-reduced Orthodox Jewish life on the Lower East Side is located at the intersection of the nearby Wall Street and Midtown financial districts, the booming and wealthier Modern Orthodox enclave on the Upper West Side, and the Hasidic neighbourhoods of Williamsburg and Boro Park across the East River.

I have already posited Yiddish culture as a diasporic formation par excellence. The Yiddish language that the earlier immigrants brought with them was a classic diasporic creole – integrating word stocks and syntaxes that East European Jews had shared with their non-Jewish neighbours, constantly open toward relexification while retaining a manifestly distinctive group sensibility. Similarly, the young adults who come these days to the modest Stanton Street Shul, for example, are engaged in diasporic bricolage through both time and space. They attend to and highlight bits of immigrant Yinglish that they hear from the synagogue's elderly members, such as the injunction to a newcomer to return to the synagogue: 'Don't be strange!' When one of those elders passes away, they continue the little dance he used to integrate into the Friday night services, now calling it 'the Abie shuffle'. They read the memorial plaques engraved in stone on the wall and offer a *kiddush*

[sanctifying drinks and snack after the Sabbath services] in honour of the centenary of the death of an earlier congregant, who would otherwise be utterly forgotten. In these ways, they are creating a flexible yet almost certainly evanescent mix of idioms from the Jewish past and from contemporary popular culture, affording themselves an identity that relies neither on a reactive anti-modernism nor on a progressive accomplishment of assimilation or acculturation.

These younger congregants are flexing the powers of diaspora not only in the space of the nation state but also within and in partial resistance to its unilinear temporary. They return to the past, not so much in the service of a greater future, but more to halt for a moment the seeming inevitability of death, extinction, and personal oblivion. The resistance is not only ideological but material as well, as their efforts to preserve landmarks of diaspora identification such as the Stanton Street Shul or the Bialystoker Home for the Aged (see Kobrin, 2010) throw at least a small spanner into the works of real-estate capital, which would much prefer to use these lots for undistinguished but expensive new housing. Their diasporic identities, that is, complicate the workings of the state and its particular modernity.

Of course, no diasporic formation in the twenty-first century exists outside of those larger political and economic structures. At Stanton Street, the effects of generational disruption and partial reconstruction are patently evident. Only in the sense of fictive kinship are the younger, new congregants at the Stanton Street Shul the children and heirs of the immigrant generation. Most of them were actually born elsewhere and are recent newcomers to this 'old Jewish neighbourhood'. For the most part, even those grandchildren and great-grandchildren of immigrants who exercise a strong Jewish identity have little sense that their personal identity is shaped by the particular places in Europe where their ancestors were born. Yet, at the same time, some measure of affective association with the broad cadences, tastes, and interpersonal styles of Ashkenazi Jewishness is a key reason why they keep coming back to this unassuming building.

While my study of Stanton Street is intimate and internally focused, contemporary diasporas, Jewish and other, also need to be analysed in terms of the mutual stratagems that diasporas and states deploy to profit from, resist, and avoid one another. Matti Bunzl's evocation of the urban, Germanophone, and largely secular Jewish public sphere in late twentieth-century Vienna is exemplary in this regard. This is not a remnant community but rather an emergent one. Bunzl sees striking

parallels between the production, abjection, and celebration of Jewish and queer minorities in Austria.

Bunzl attributes the positive changes in recent decades partly to an assumption of collective agency on the part of the Jewish community. At the same time, he stresses that these efforts from within the two respective minority communities coincided with a newly available public symbolic space, and with new 'reasons of state' for Austria to recast itself as a tolerant and diverse nation, fully ready and able to adjust its national identity in order to participate in the expanded and invigorated broader European community. Thus, Bunzl's case study demonstrates how the nation state may integrate and recruit diasporic groups to serve its own needs for legitimation.

It is not clear just how and in what ways this situation is new. Bunzl argues that, in contrast to the past few decades, 'in early modern times, Jews did not have a privileged position vis-à-vis the body politic' (p. 16). This claim seems to be rooted not only in the work of Zygmunt Bauman (1992) or its antecedent, Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1972), but also in a Foucauldian idea about the radical epistemological separability of different historical epochs. But here, at least, the unsupported claim serves to obviate the constitutive significance of Jews – as fellow and as figure – in European history for millennia, closing off difficult questions about what precisely was new in the symptomatics of European identity in our time; surely it is not the first time Jews have been explicitly understood as an 'asset' of the state (p. 149).[2]

Much like the embrace of Israel by US Evangelical Christians, then, the Austrian state's newfound openness to a Jewish collective sphere is not cause for simplistic optimism. The new current situation, less rigidly nationalistic, more open within a broader European transnationalism, is hardly a utopic resolution. First, Bunzl rightly queries the ultimate desirability of having any such identities crystallise into static groupings. In the language of diasporic powers and strategies I am emphasising here, such institutionalisation of identity risks abandonment of the very flexibility and mobility that help diasporic groups survive. Second, he suggests that the promotion of Jews and queers as 'model minorities', and indeed the greater openness of the European community within its own expanded boundaries, serve well to mask the abjection of other Others beyond and within Europe's borders – Others whom we might consider 'symptoms of postmodernity'. In this fashion, Jewish desire to continue to be 'welcomed' in Europe or elsewhere militates against the

imperative of reaching through Jewishness towards solidarity with those Others.

Against the resistance to the necessary centrality of homeland in diasporic consciousness and rhetoric that Daniel and I have articulated, Jasmin Habib stresses precisely that dimension. As she writes, 'What interests me are the individual and collective practices that tie some North American Jews to Israel and that lead them to identify Israel as their homeland and refuge' (Habib, 2004, p. 7). Her analysis relies on a somewhat idiosyncratic, and certainly provocative, notion of what being 'in diaspora' means for Jews, one that concurs with Zionist thinking in asserting that the existence of Israel fundamentally changes the terms of belonging and distancing for all Jews. For Habib, diaspora is not 'a geographical location but rather ... a practiced relationship to homeland' (p. 10), and so *only* those Jews whose collective identity is in some way based on practices of identification (celebratory or contentious) with Israel are in diaspora. Accordingly, Habib's definition of diaspora – whatever one might think of its analytic merits – ends up reinforcing the centrality of the homeland even to those living 'outside of it' in diaspora.

Habib documents how the putative 'homeland' is continually reproduced as central and, thus, how the very notion of diaspora becomes commonsensically tied to distance from that homeland, rather than (as Daniel and I have contended) to a shared identity with non-contiguous fellows in the present. Thus, echoing the revisionist histories of the War of Independence, she notes that a presentation describing the policy of 'Judaising' the Galilee by settling more Israeli Jews in this region fails to reveal '[h]ow land might have come to be owned by the Israeli Jews, or what happened in order to prevent the Palestinian population from expanding its land base' (p. 106). Elsewhere, Habib describes how a plaque at an ancient synagogue site describes the mosaic floor as representing 'the "story of redemption ... central to Jewish belief"' '[i]nstead of conjecturing that the floor depicted the mingling of belief systems at the time' (p. 126). Habib richly documents Jews living in diaspora (according to her own definition) in North America, who draw on visits to Israel to both strengthen their own Jewishness and, thereby, help negotiate their relationship to the North American states and polities within and to which they 'belong'. Yet, an account that explicitly and exclusively restricts the notion of diaspora to those who form their group consciousness around the centrality of the group homeland leaves in analytic limbo those who are outside the homeland, vigorously engaged in Jewish identity (such as the young congregants reinventing

the Stanton Street Shul) and yet not particularly reliant on Israel as the source of that identity.

Evidently, the 'homeland' of Israel is a central resource for diasporic Jewish identities today, yet the comparison of Israelis and diasporic Jews as Jewish subjects is commonly cast as a contrast between fullness and lack. In the accounts of key moments in the Israeli-Arab conflict as presented by an Israeli tour guide, Israelis are depicted 'as committed to Israel and [as] leading normal lives even in the most dangerous circumstances. They were different from North American Jews because they lived in constant danger' (p. 108). The tour guide's implicit message is that those in the 'homeland' are living more authentically Jewish lives, while those in diaspora are somehow playing it safe – a curious reversal of the standard depiction of diaspora as a place of dangerous exposure.

Habib challenges the notion, which she suggests is a commonplace of cultural studies, that group identities are and ideally should be hybrid identities, not unitary:

> What if those whom we meet and engage refuse to acknowledge the pluralities of their own locations? What if people *do not* self-identity as plural identities but rather are guided by the terms set by the modern notions of authenticity and identity? (p. 248)

Habib thus rejects the temptation to insist that everyone's identity is really hybrid and that only when everyone acknowledges hybridity will we all finally get along. She suggests that unitary identities might not inevitably perpetuate murderous ethnic conflict, pointing out that her informants do not plan to emigrate to Israel, nor do they believe that all of the Land of Israel is necessarily for the Jews only. No matter how strongly, no matter how completely her informants may believe that Israel's fate and identity are their own, this need not, and in most cases, does not translate into a practical politics *requiring* the ideological or practical erasure of Palestinian identity and rights – even if they and their North American Jewish fellows have remained largely complicit in that erasure until now. The struggle for Palestinian equality and for Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation might, therefore, not require so great a transformation of the hearts and minds of diaspora Jews as we – including Daniel and I in our writings on the politics of diaspora and Zionism – have long assumed. On this slender but relatively hopeful reed, Habib rests a plea for ethnography's potential to contribute to a more effective rhetoric of reconciliation.

Another challenge to the argument that homeland is not necessarily central to diasporic identify comes from Shaul Kelner's study of the Birthright tours to Israel, intended to strengthen the Jewish identification of young Jewish adults from outside Israel. Phenomena such as Birthright would seem to be the anti-diasporic strategy par excellence. Yet, Kelner argues that Birthright is more accurately understood as a moving site of intersection for multiform agencies, both corporate and personal: Jewish community organizations and foundations, the Israeli state, tour guides, and Birthright travellers. He stresses as well that even as its tours are designed to foster a sympathetic identification with the Jewish state, they function more, and are understood to function more, as shapers of diasporic Jewish communal identification rather than as replications or enforcements of hegemonic Zionism.

Kelner's concluding claim that contemporary diaspora studies as they stand do not account for his quite credible analysis is exaggerated. Rather, his work complicates and adds new documentation and nuance to existing diaspora studies that already have room for complex mediations between homeland identification and diasporic grounding. Kelner's analysis places the 'centre' back in the centre. He accordingly complains that the kind of ideological 'neodiasporism' he identifies in Daniel's and my 1993 article ignores the reality of 'a diasporic practice that continues to direct people, resources, and priority to the State of Israel' (Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993, pp. 205–206). Kelner argues as well that the polemical 1993 essay produces a counter-absolutism to Zionism and that it fails to recognise the likely productivity of a situation where Israel serves as a 'symbolic homeland' for people who are nevertheless hardly rejecting diaspora. Again, all this raises the crucial question of the relation between symbolic affective ties to a presumptive homeland on the one hand and the real-world political engagements between that homeland, 'its' populations in diaspora, and their 'host' states on the other. Yet, it hardly obviates the larger point that diaspora is not necessarily dependent on homeland, nor is homeland always central to diaspora.

As many times as that point has been made, diaspora is still commonly conflated with exile, and arguments for the normality, health, or desirability of renewed Jewish sociality outside of the State of Israel can themselves be cast as the rejection of a diasporic consciousness. Thus, Aviv and Shneer's *New Jews*' subtitle – 'The End of the Jewish Diaspora' – contains a pointed irony. It aims to convey the notion that, far from anti-Semitism having put an end to Jewish vitality outside the new Jewish state or Zionism itself having obviated Jewish life elsewhere,

Jews in various parts of the world today are rooted where they are and not about to disappear. Their text repeatedly displays some confusion about what the term 'diaspora' is taken to mean. Its links to the notion of 'exile' are heavily emphasised (e.g. Aviv and Shneer, 2005, p. 98). The notion of a positive diasporism is mentioned, but Aviv and Shneer's attitude towards it remains somewhat unclear. Accordingly, in the service of their thesis that the new Jewish world is not characterised primarily in terms of diasporic lack or longing, Aviv and Shneer emphasise throughout the idea that Jews have put down 'new roots' in various homelands (e.g. p. 18) and point to these Jews' 'ability to be rooted, to live in a postdiasporic moment' (p. 22). This suggests that up until the present, Jews, wherever they lived, were rather *unable* to be rooted – an implication that is of course entirely consistent with Zionist ideology, but largely inconsistent with the picture of Jewish communities one gets, for example, from the collection *Cultures of the Jews: A New History*, edited by the eminent historian David Biale (2002). The larger point is that it is an anachronistic imputation from the modern European romantic–nationalist rhetoric of 'rootedness' in a given people's soil to suppose that only now (for the first time since when?) have 'new Jews' overcome the putative pathology of earlier Jewish diasporic consciousness.

Aviv and Shneer assert, quite plausibly, the existence of 'a new Jewish world that has many easily traversable centers in the twenty-first century' (p. 161). Yet again, why assume or suggest that this is a historically new situation? Moreover, in the attempt to displace the notion of diaspora, why make the assumption that the term necessarily implies not only common identification across interrupted space, based on a rhetoric of shared origin, but a teleology of return to 'an imagined mythic home in the future' (p. 8)? Such an assumption elides an important debate in comparative diaspora studies and, more pertinently, subtly reinforces the suggestion that the notion of Jewish diaspora is inseparable from Zionism.

Aviv and Shneer actually know that '[h]istorically, Jews' understanding of home and diaspora was made up of everyday practices and relationships to local communities and to [a range of] mythic homelands, no matter where one lived' (p. 4). They also know that, far from the relation between Zion and exile exhausting the spatial affect of Jewishness, 'Jews have always had many diasporas and homelands' (p. 6). When they describe 'many Jews living in the American Jewish diaspora [who] long for a metaphorical "return," or at least a routine pilgrimage, to the American Jewish homeland-New York' (p. 7), they actually display the term's continuing pertinence and echo or anticipate Daniel Boyarin's

recent reaffirmation of the possibility of multiple affective centres for diasporic consciousness, rather than a single, lost homeland. Thus, their own evidence suggests that their reference to the end of diaspora is both intentional and a bit hasty. Honest reporters, they provide evidence that some still operate 'within the discourses of diaspora' (e.g. p. 43) and that diasporic sensibilities can coexist with 'rootedness' (p. 44), a term that requires its own rhetorical scrutiny. Commenting on testimonials to the new Center for Jewish History in New York, they note that 'every-one...views the world through a diasporic lens' (p. 147), but insist that the Center, by asserting a focus outside Israel, 'is playing a role in dismantling diaspora' (p. 149). One could easily point to its role in sustaining diaspora – unless, that is, one remains under the sway of the old notion, shared by Zionism and by its legion kindred territorial-ethnic nationalisms, that ' "diaspora"...connotes powerlessness' (p. 20). This assertion of the equation between diaspora and powerlessness skirts the critical question of the relation between group identity and state power and contradicts a key point that Aviv and Shneer make exceptionally well – to wit, that what they lucidly analyse as 'diaspora business' (see pp. 52, 57) continues to exert powers of its own.

Perhaps the clearest meaning of Aviv and Shneer's phrase, 'the end of the Jewish diaspora,' is indicated by the title of their Epilogue – 'The End of the Jews'. They mean clearly to deny that (as the old Jewish Federation slogan asserted) 'we are one' and that there is still any kind of fundamental Jewish unity, let alone one centred on a longing for physical return to Zion. Moreover, given the generally sanguine tone of their report on world Jewish conditions, they implicitly deny that this lack of uniformity is a tragic or even a deplorable thing; indeed, their real theme seems to be not so much the multiplicity of homelands as the non-centrality of *any* given and shared features of Jewishness for the many global people who share, and who claim, that name today. The repeated emphasis on 'rootedness' may then mask somewhat their real point, which is that diffusion does not equal disappearance.

Aviv and Shneer's series of thumbnail portraits of new Jewish communities and institutions in various parts of the world might, therefore, be further instantiations of a new way of thinking about the presence of Jewishness today. As the cultural critic Jon Stratton (2000) has suggested, we might, rather than counting Jews or even thinking about who 'is', in some static or fixed way, Jewish and who not, attempt to identify what Stratton calls 'Jewish moments' in contemporary representation. Perhaps what's really newest and hard for us to grasp is that

there doesn't even seem to be much of a *hierarchy* of such moments. This levelling leaves open the unsettling possibility that no Jewish reference might necessarily be more profound or resonant than any other. Thus, for example, while Aviv and Shneer include a brief and striking reference to what's called 'the Wailing Wall' in Zach Braff's 2004 movie 'Garden State' – a film otherwise devoid of Jewish moments – one has the impression that references to the Lower East Side or a bowl of chicken soup might have served very much the same purpose. This interchangeability of Jewish moments suggests that, for diasporic identification, references to the 'mythic homeland' might not always work to mark and interpellate group identity on an entirely different level than do the group's food ways, music, or even genealogy.

What, then, of our argument in 1993 that diasporic bonds of genealogy need not imply a racial logic? Nadia Abu el-Haj's book might be the most incisive argument to date that the 'powers of diaspora', free of overt militarism as they may be, are nevertheless never innocuous. It examines both the academic and popular discourse on 'Jewish genetic history', including well-funded laboratory studies, websites, and commercial services that trade money and a cheek swab for an account of one's hitherto secret ancestry. Its most pertinent message is that legacies of race science are inevitably imbricated with secular nationalisms, perhaps especially deterritorialised nationalisms. She is clearly not content with our insistence that 'genealogy', as we use the term, is simply a name for cross-generational claims of kinship ties with responsibilities and pleasures – and that, as we noted in *Powers of Diaspora*, genealogy can be as often coercive as enjoyable. She accordingly offers the clearest summation and critique of our 1993 article that I have seen:

> The genealogical principle, the Boyarins respond, is not reducible to race. Genealogy has always been cardinal to the Jewish tradition, and that was true long before the emergence of the concept of race.
>
> In principle the Boyarins are right . . . . Nevertheless, given the history of race science and racial thought, given the history of slavery, eugenics, and genocide, it is hard to imagine how the genealogical principle can remain unaltered. Moreover, ever since prominent Jewish social scientists and Zionist activists recast Jewishness in the language of race and biological descent, the meaning of Jewish 'genealogy' has been fundamentally transformed, at least for the vast majority of Jews around the world who never rejected Zionism, either in cultural or in political terms . . . . [S]ubstantive biological claims about group-based

differences, *even ones that present themselves as historical and cultural arguments*, are not far afield.

(Abu el-Haj, 2012, p. 176)

First, it is worth noting here that Abu el-Haj grants a presumptive hegemony to Zionism, such that any Jew anywhere in the world must first actively *reject* Zionism in order to escape being understood as a Zionist. Granted that no other ideological movement among Jews today comes close to this hegemonic claim, her presumption remains just that, and it is at least questionable whether it is accurate to assume that Jews who don't 'reject' Zionism are, ipso facto, Zionists – or more precisely, whether the findings and arguments of those Jewish social scientists and activists had the massive ideological effect her argument assumes. More broadly, Abu el-Haj's claim is situated within a Foucauldian notion that we are, as it were, in a new episteme of the 'biological'. Within this posited new episteme, descent – and hence genealogy – is understood in reductive, genetic terms, rather than as a complex and integrated mix of what we might call cultural and biological transmission. Yet, the ethnographic investigation of that epistemic claim has barely begun.

Part of the issue here, of course, relates to debates about the history and scope of 'the question of race'. Our argument, it seems to me, was not so much that genealogy preceded 'race', as that notions of race became, in the discourse of modern 'race science' (itself intimately tied to questions of citizenship, migration, and colonial management), essentialised and separated out from other components of group identity, including language and what is commonly called religion. Abu el-Haj's point that genealogy can nevertheless not be *innocently* inoculated from the legacy of biological racism is certainly not to be refuted but taken into account and further investigated, including through different and even more sensitive ethnographies. She suggests that there is a slippery slope from intellectual or polemical claims about the validity of genealogically based identities to overtly racist doctrines. At what point might that suggestion devolve into a claim that *no* collective identity is politically viable except those constituted at current sites of territorial resistance? The logical conclusion here – and I am carrying it perhaps *ad absurdum* for purposes of clarifying and invigorating the argument – would be that virtually no non-territorial, kin-based collective identity might be regarded as ideologically defensible.

And here I am compelled to invoke the slogan of a leading scholar of another diaspora – that is, Paul Gilroy's 'anti-anti-essentialism' (Gilroy, 1993, p. 102). After we have dismantled the essentialist claim that 'we

are one', there still remains the question, difficult as it may be, of trying to say something about what we *are* in our multifariousness. I do not suppose, in fact, that Aviv and Shneer mean that the words 'Jew' or 'Jewish' have no real content, but rather that these meanings far surpass our everyday academic or organisational assumptions. Nor do I suppose that Abu el-Haj is really interested in delegitimising diasporic communities, Jewish or otherwise. Rather, as Gilroy writes, 'the fragile psychological, emotional, and cultural correspondences which connect diaspora populations in spite of their manifest differences are often apprehended only fleetingly and in ways that persistently confound the protocols of academic orthodoxy' (1993, p. 81). One corollary of this point is that the essentialisms we worry about may sometimes be an inevitable product of the work of reduction and generalisation that we, as academics, have no choice but to continue.

A timely reminder. For, in defence of my own written texts, I am tempted to say of Bunzl's book that I cannot imagine how he takes my *Polish Jews in Paris* (Boyarin, 1991) to privilege 'a pristine past of cultural purity over a messy cultural present marked by traumatic loss and ongoing population flux' (Bunzl, 2004, p. 6); of Habib, that I have no idea where in my and my brother Daniel's writing she sees an advocacy of a 'spiritual rather than a national identification with Israel' (Habib, 2004, p. 266); of Aviv and Shneer, that prematurely discarding the notion of diaspora precludes consideration of Jewishness as consisting largely in the sense of belonging somewhere else, *as well as* here, and not *instead of* here, as Daniel's *A Traveling Homeland* will stress; of Kelner, that it is most helpful when responding to an ethnographer's polemic to respond, as well to the ethnography already done (see Boyarin, 1996); of Abu el-Haj, that there is a real risk in seeming to collapse all forms of non-'religious' Jewish collective identity in the twentieth century and beyond with Zionism. But those kinds of orthodox reactions, as Gilroy reminds us, constrain our ability to apprehend fragile and subtle correspondences. Meanwhile an opening towards the new – and, one hopes, a dialogue between the new and the getting older – might help us to sustain the most encouraging re-integration of Jewish diasporas into the still-emerging field of comparative diasporas and their affiliated powers, and into the ongoing critique and transformation of the nation state form. That form, nevertheless, remains the dominant model for the articulation of identity and polity among *homo sapiens* on planet Earth since the twentieth century.

Worth underscoring by way of conclusion is the constant ebb and flow between extinctions or restrictions of diaspora (whether through

state citizenship absorption or through various forms of repression) and the creation and evolution of new diasporas, such as the Israeli diaspora in New York (Shokeid, 1988). As suggested above, diaspora does not develop 'progressively', but depends on what appear from the perspective of a linear temporality to be unpredictable or haphazard projections and retrojections. It thus disrupts not only the territorial logic of the nation state polity but also its temporal logic. Moreover, it is well to remember that what we call theory is merely a patch for the realities we do not know or have forgotten. Not only the future therefore but also the past of diaspora, Jewish and other remains to be discerned.

Notes

1. The article appearing immediately after ours on diaspora was titled 'A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation-State' (Miyoshi, 1993).
2. Consider, for example, the medieval notion of Jews as s*ervi camerae*, the role of Jewish bankers in the early modern and modern periods, and the use, particularly by French colonialists, of Middle Eastern and North African Jews as *compradors*, local middlemen, and administrators.

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2
Biblical Case Studies of Diaspora Jews and Constructions of (Religious) Identity

Jill Middlemas

Introduction

A prominent frame of reference with which to understand religion among migrant or transnational communities rests on the dual *topoi* of exile and attitudes towards the homeland, with particular attention to longing for and thoughts about return to the land of origin. These are not exclusively contemporary questions: the Old Testament contains multiple stories about forced and voluntary migrations of different peoples, emphasising the themes of departure and return. While social science analyses focus on mapping and modelling attitudes towards places of origin and inherited traditions by migrant communities, Biblical scholars tend to discuss this as exile. What if we consider attitudes towards diaspora which are better characterised as survival and adjustment in the country of residence instead of as separation from the country of origin? The Old Testament contains tales of diaspora that when examined critically reveal successful strategies for integration and adaptation, debate around which provides a productive meeting place for interdisciplinary dialogue.

In spite of the prominence of the theme of dispersion and the repeated threat of forced and voluntary migrations, the term 'diaspora' does not actually appear in the Hebrew Old Testament, and thus no single view of the phenomenon can be had from the Biblical portrait. In Biblical studies, diaspora is understood to be the result of a tactic of war and is referred to as dispersion or 'scattering to the winds' from which the people ('a holy remnant') will be repatriated to the homeland through divine initiative. When Biblicists use the term 'diaspora', they refer in

the main to a very particular form of religious phenomenon. Diaspora is 'not so much [a reference] to the expatriates of a nation-state as to the adherents of a religion who have been driven away by external forces from the usual centre of that religion' (Coggins, 1989, p. 163). There is, in fact, widespread dispersal of Jews[1] from the defeat and depopulation of the northern kingdom of Israel (which fell in 722 BCE to the Assyrians) and the southern kingdom of Judah (which fell in 587 BCE to the Babylonians).[2] The exiles of the former northern kingdom, also referred to prosaically as the lost ten tribes, disappear from the literary record. When used in the context of Biblical studies, then, the origin of the Jewish diaspora is understood in relation to the deportation[3] of Jews from the former southern kingdom of Judah with its capital in Jerusalem.[4] The mass deportation that accompanied the downfall of Jerusalem in the sixth-century BCE is in Biblical literature and Old Testament scholarship the 'Exile' par excellence. Although we (seem to) have writings from Jews who were exiled after the collapse of the kingdom of Judah in the sixth-century BCE, many perhaps written among the Jews in Babylon, these texts are not referred to as diaspora literature.[5]

Biblicists, thus, tend to speak of disruption, the loss of a homeland and longing for return as exile – with exile being understood as a temporary state of affairs – rather than diaspora, which might be characterised better as successful long-term adaptation within the country of residence. Diaspora is thus overshadowed by themes of exile and return, with the bulk of interpretive attention on exile rather than diaspora. Moreover, exile is presented by the Biblical writers as a punishment and a state of existence contrary to the divine mandate to occupy a land promised to the Patriarchs. Exile is thus presented as negative and homecoming or return as positive.

Exile and return are guiding concepts in the Biblical constructions of history in the Priestly, Deuteronomistic, and Chronistic Histories,[6] in the prophets, and in some of the poetic books, as in the book of *Lamentations* and many psalms. Even whole collections, such as the torah (*Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy*) and the editorial shaping of the prophetic literature, are guided by an exile/repatriation schema (Clines, 1978). In addition, the Jewish scriptures or the canonical Hebrew Bible[7] are actually shaped around the theme of exile – Adam and Eve are exiled from the Garden of Eden at its beginning (Gen. 2:4–3:24) and the Jewish population from the kingdom of Judah at its end (2 Chron. 36).[8] The main thrust is on the exile as temporary, with return, repatriation, and restoration as the desired goal. Furthermore,

the dual *topoi* undergird one of the most prominent Old Testament traditions, that is, the story of the Exodus from Egypt.[9]

While living in exile is not considered a desirable state of affairs according to mainstream Old Testament tradition, tales of Jews succeeding in diasporic settings are part of its literature, to which the story of Joseph and the books of *Ruth*, *Jonah*, *Daniel*, and *Esther* attest. By considering constructions of religious identity in foreign settings as variegated presentations of diasporic life in the Old Testament, it becomes clear that there is no single religious (or even areligious) response to living outside the place of origin. Furthermore, there is in fact no great emphasis on return. Instead the literature includes stories of Jews succeeding in diaspora, often against the odds, as guidelines for survival and as shared memories of continued existence. These can be examined profitably as Biblical case studies to gain insight into diaspora, transnationality, and religious expression, as has been done in the context of refugee studies (see especially Krulfeld and Camino, 1994). A view towards diaspora rather than exile provides an alternative vision, in which it is the location for blessed family and communal life away from the ancestral land and the specific religious observances promoted and maintained therein. The Biblical case studies stem from the genre of the historical novella and feature Jews living and interacting in foreign settings.[10] They argue for a differently conceived religious understanding of diaspora and expose the inadequacy of a definition based simply on the observance of a designated set of practices. It is to these stories that we now turn.

Biblical case studies of diaspora

Novellas, like the story of Joseph in *Genesis*, chapters 37–50, the book of *Daniel* (especially chapters 1–6), and the book of *Esther*, are lengthy tales in which the main characters undergo a status change.[11] They present different ways of viewing the Jewish community in diaspora contexts and reveal a variety of thoughts about religious belief and expression.[12] The novellas are so called because they share many characteristics typical of the novel, such as a unity of plot, suspense, dramatic irony, and involved psychological situations. They serve a didactic purpose, as well as being entertaining. In particular, they centre on the theme of conduct in foreign lands.

The novellas share in common the motif of the 'Jew in the court of the foreign ruler', and include the stories of Joseph, Daniel, and Esther and her uncle and adopted father Mordecai (Wills, 1990). They present a

tale with historical verisimilitude, in which the characters live in a real-istic historical setting outside the homeland of ancient Israel, including Egypt and the Mesopotamian kingdoms of Babylonia and Persia. Rather than being concerned with relating history in the sense of presenting an objective report of the past, a historical context is given in order to ground the story in real life, enabling diaspora readers to relate to the story and the characters and their choices (Humphreys, 1985, p. 86).

The story of Joseph (Gen. chapters 37–50)

The story of Joseph is perhaps the first of the novellas and the proto-type for the traditions associated with Daniel and Esther. It tells the tale of Joseph, the 11th son of Jacob, who was also named Israel and tra-ditionally considered the 'father' of the 12 tribes of ancient Israel. The story of Joseph concludes the first book of the Old Testament, which is about beginnings – the beginning of creation and civilisation (chapters 1–11) and the beginning of a people recounted in a variety of ancestor traditions (chapters 12–50). The Joseph story presents the circumstances of the migration of Israelites to Egypt and thus serves as the bridge to the traditions about the Exodus from Egypt that follow. Centrally, the stories in the book of *Genesis* speak of a people on the move, a nomadic people who are promised land to inherit.

The story contains two motifs: Joseph's interaction with his fam-ily (chapters 37–38, 42–50) and Joseph in Egypt (chapters 39–41). The two stories are intertwined with the familial elements appearing at the beginning and end, with the success of Joseph in Egypt sandwiched in between. The story focuses on Joseph, who is sold into slavery because he alienates his siblings. After a number of trials, he is imprisoned in Egypt, where he becomes known as an interpreter of dreams. When he successfully interprets the dream of Pharaoh, he is awarded the posi-tion equivalent to the prime minister (Vizier), and it is in that position that he reunites with his family. His position of power in the Egyptian government means that he is able to save his family, which is con-fronting hard times in their native Canaan. His father and brothers and their families move to Egypt and enjoy rewarding and prosperous lives there.

A few examples of religiosity in the story highlight the religious belief of the Jewish characters, as well as the esteem in which their religion is held by others not of the Jewish faith. Joseph displays awareness of a divine plan: 'though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as God[13] is doing

today' (Gen. 50:19–21).[14] Moreover, the story includes God speaking with Joseph to reassure him:

> Then God said, 'I am God, the God of your father, do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again'.
>
> (Gen. 46:3–4; see also 47:27)

Departure here is not something to fear. In addition, there are expressions of continuing divine activity in a setting outside the homeland, as well as support for individual Jews in foreign settings: 'Then Joseph said to his brothers, "... do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life" ' (Gen. 45:6, see vv. 8 and 9).

Further, divine oversight of Jews outside their homeland and the benefits of diaspora living are messages to be shared with those who remain in the place of origin. Joseph commands his brothers to return home in order to share the news of divine providence for the Jews outside their homeland: 'Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, Thus says your son Joseph, "God has made me lord of all Egypt, come down to me, do not delay ... I will provide for you there" ' (Gen. 45:9–11). Finally, others not of the Jewish faith come to recognise and declare that there is something special about their deity and worshippers. Declarations about the Jewish god are even placed on the lips of the Egyptian monarch to bolster the authority of the statements: 'Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find anyone else like this – one in whom is the spirit of God?" So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you" ' (Gen. 41:38–39).

Religious elements linked to the practice of Judaism are obscured in the story, but not totally absent. The protagonist is presented as believing in the activity of God in and through historical circumstances. At the same time, however, he does not participate in any outward signs of religiosity that might be associated explicitly with Jewish identity. Joseph does not observe purity laws or fast, for example. In addition, Joseph is distinguished from the Patriarchal figures that precede him (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) in that he is not presented as a Patriarch who receives direct and immediate communication from the deity through oracles. The type of communication mediated to the Patriarchs portrays them as priests, and Joseph is not characterised as having priestly functions or abilities. Neither a Patriarch nor a priest (Westermann, 1992, pp. 197–205, 253–254), Joseph is a layman: he is representative of every

human, but he is distinguished by being one of the wise, who succeeds in life in a foreign land because of divine intention. A message is sent through his character that the deity supports individuals and families loyal to the deity, wherever they may be. Location is less important than devotion, which may be expressed in different ways.

In the Joseph story, the observance of specific religious behaviours is downplayed, and the focus lies instead on the omnipresence and omnipotence of the deity. Diaspora Jews figured through the character of Joseph are presented as economic and political members of society, who recognise that their deity oversees their welfare and prosperity, but they do not participate overtly in religious rituals. The deity of Joseph's diaspora oversees history and works through and in historical modes, but community response in pietistic behaviours is not emphasised in any particular way. Instead, there is an emphasis on what one might categorise as confession, as in Joseph's statement to his brothers of his enslavement: 'You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good' (paraphrase of Gen 50:19). Otherwise, the familial elements of the story are emphasised, and communal identity is defined more by genealogy than ethnicity or specific religious practice.

Given the propensity of the Old Testament to present diaspora as exile and life outside the homeland of ancient Israel as contrary to divine intentionality and somehow not authentic, Joseph's story stands in stark contrast. What stands out in particular is an overwhelmingly positive portrayal of Egypt and the Egyptian people (Westermann, 1992, p. 245), as well as the presence of the deity in a guiding and supportive role outside the homeland. It has even been argued that the presentation of life in Egypt is so positive that it functions along the lines of a travel brochure for Egypt, extolling its benefits to encourage migration (Lang, 2008). From a diasporic perspective, it conveys in the first instance the message that the community in Egypt lives and thrives under divine care and support. In this way, the story of Joseph is contrary to other material in the Old Testament, such as that recounting the tale of the prophet Jeremiah, who prophesies destruction for those who flee to Egypt to make their home there (Jer. 41, 44). At the same time, Joseph's story includes the idea that Egypt is not the authentic final resting place for Joseph and his family. When the father of Joseph dies, he is said to have been returned to Canaan for burial alongside his ancestors and his wife Leah (Gen. 49:31) at his request (50:13–14). Similarly, although Joseph is buried in Egypt, he asks to be brought to the Promised Land by the Israelites upon their arrival there for his own final resting place (50:25). These examples indicate that the Jews identifying with the story did not

consider Egypt home and that it was far preferable to return to the land of origin to be among family or compatriots in death.

The story of Daniel (chapters 1–6)

The book of *Daniel* is another story about Jews in diaspora, but its message is somewhat different from that of Joseph, because it focuses on how to live an overtly Jewish lifestyle in a foreign land. The book comprises two parts in the Old Testament tradition: a series of 'court tales' in chapters 1–6, similar in theme and setting to the story of Joseph, and apocalyptic visions in chapters 7–12. The court tales take place in Babylonia in the sixth-century BCE, but may originate during the Persian period (539–334 BCE), as they reflect some Persian court customs and interests (e.g. astrology, dream interpretation). The Biblical Daniel seems to be drawn from traditions associated with this name (see Ezekiel 14:4, 20; 28:3) in order to relate a series of stories that would edify Jews of a later time who lived outside the land of ancient Israel and who were under pressure in their local environments.

The court tales relate the story of Daniel, who was exiled to Babylonia among the first deportees from Jerusalem by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar in 598 BCE. He was raised in the royal court along with three of his friends and achieved great status in the service of the royal administration in Babylon. The legends portray Daniel as a wise man who faithfully follows the law (torah) and observes religious behaviours, such as eating kosher food, fasting, and praying. Daniel and his friends are persecuted for participating in religious behaviours that are not of the majority, but they are saved through their faith in their god and by their pious activities. Even though Daniel adheres strongly to his Jewish faith and practices, he accepts education in Babylon (chapter 1) and the honours given to him by the imperial rulers, Nebuchadnezzar and Darius (Dan. 2:48–49; 6:28/29).

As with the story of Joseph, the court tales in the book of *Daniel* contain examples of belief in divine providence outside the homeland, as well as the recognition of the special status of the Jewish god by foreigners. As with Joseph, expressions of a divine plan and indeed providence appear. For example, Daniel declares to the Babylonian king: 'There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries and has disclosed to King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen at the end of days' (2:28, cf. v. 45). The narrator reinforces Daniel's belief by attributing historical events to divine causality and power: 'The Lord let King Jehoiakim of Judah fall into [King Nebuchadnezzar's] power, as well as some of the vessels of the house of the Lord' (1:2); 'God allowed Daniel to receive favour

and compassion from the palace master' (1:9); 'To these men [Daniel and his three friends], God gave knowledge and skills, while Daniel also had insight into visions and dreams' (1:17); and the ruling authority of kingdoms on the Earth is attributed to the Jewish god (see 2:37–38, 5:18–21). Also similar to the Joseph story is the revelation of foreign awareness of the majesty of Daniel's god through declarations made by the Babylonian king: 'Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face … and said "Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries"' (2:46–48 cf. 3:28–30; 4:1–3, 34–37). The recognition of the deity by foreigners is made more emphatic in the Daniel story in that the Queen Mother (5:10–12) and Darius the Persian king (6:25–27) also state their awareness of the power of Daniel's god. What is different from the Joseph story is that these court tales highlight the pious religious rituals observed by the characters. Daniel eats kosher food because he 'resolved that he would not defile himself with the royal rations of food and wine' (1:8), prays (2:18, 20–23) and refuses to bow down to an idol – the statue established by King Darius (chapter 6).

The hero Daniel rejects pressures from society and its rulers to assimilate to the culture of the majority, although he accepts Babylonian rule in general and his service to it. He survives and thrives rather than assimilates, observing religious behaviours that maintain his Jewish identity by rejecting non-kosher food, refusing to worship a statue (considered to be an idol within Daniel's tradition) and praying at regular intervals. These are examples of public and private piety. Daniel is repeatedly punished for his refusal to observe Babylonian cultural norms, but he survives death, and his faith is vindicated by his achievements (excelling in wisdom, dream interpretation, etc.), his continued survival, and the honours eventually bestowed on him by the king. The community in which Daniel lives is portrayed as hostile to difference (chapters 1; 3; 6), but individuals like the imperial rulers in due course come to appreciate the protagonist's faith and religion, and even his deity (chapters 2, 6).

In contrast to the Joseph story, there is thus an emphasis on pious behaviours as a mark of religious identity and communal solidarity. The point of the story seems to be that the deity of Daniel and his community protects and blesses those who live by the torah, even outside the land of ancient Israel. It offers a model of how to live as a minority group in a dominating or majority culture, or, in different contemporary terms, in a pluralistic society where there are pressures about identification from many angles. It encourages its readers to maintain group and religious identity in the face of persecution and indicates the success achievable even by minority members of society. There is

nothing inconsistent about being a faithful religious observer of Judaism and serving a foreign empire (Berquist, 1995, pp. 226–227). Divine help rewards obedience (Dan. 3:6), yielding the notion that 'the exiled Jews must know that they are not alone; despite all appearances, they have not been abandoned to the control of a despotic world empire'(von Rad, 1968, p. 276). The story is also about maintaining faithful observance of the law and symbolic behaviours that reinforce group cohesion and identity.

Also in contrast to Joseph's story, the community in which Daniel finds himself, to which he is exiled, is portrayed as hostile on the whole to Jews. Diaspora is depicted, then, not idealistically, but as a dangerous environment, where success in life comes through faith in and observance of rituals for a deity who is ultimately in control of historical events and whose divine plan triumphs over human machinations. There is no exit plan for Daniel as there was for Joseph: there is no mention of return to the homeland for burial. Instead, Daniel is promised at the end of the book that he will be rewarded 'at the end of days', which has been taken by some as an indication of resurrection. Equally in contrast to the Joseph story, familial and genealogical elements are downplayed. Strict adherence to the law serves as the only criterion for inclusion in Daniel's community. This different interpretation of living in diaspora seems to reflect the different social circumstances of the group by whom and for whom it was written. This is a group that appears to be alienated from society and which suffers persecution and pressures towards assimilation. Diaspora is presented as a dangerous place that can be negotiated by the observance of authorised religious behaviour in the honour of the deity to whom divine causality and omnipotence are attributed.

The story of Esther (and Mordecai)

In contrast to the tales of Joseph and Daniel, in which there is a clear Jewish hero who triumphs against the odds, the book of *Esther* contains two main protagonists – Esther and her uncle and adopted father Mordecai. The story itself functions as the scriptural basis for the Jewish festival of Purim. In this respect, the scroll of *Esther* serves a very clear religious function, namely to authorise and promote a religious festival. In addition, it attests to the popularity of the story, as well as the festival among Jews, many of whom would have been in diaspora contexts at the time of its final edition. The composition of the book of *Esther* remains a matter of debate in that it could be the result of two

stories – one about Mordecai and one about Esther – that were later joined together, but what is clear is that a joint story of Mordecai and Esther succeeding in the court of the Persian king circulated before it was associated with the festival of Purim (Esth. 9:20–32). The final version of the story which authorises Purim as a festival attests to its popularity among Jews, especially those in diaspora.

The action takes place in Persia. In the story, Esther withholds her Jewish identity on the advice of her uncle Mordecai, wins the favour of the king through a beauty contest, and becomes the queen of Persia. Meanwhile, Mordecai has made an enemy of the king's Vizier, Haman, and all the Jews in the realm are threatened with death. Risking her life, Esther uses her proximity to the king to intercede on behalf of the Jews at the urging of Mordecai, and the tables are turned on Haman, who is killed along with his family and the enemies of the Jews. The suppression of those antagonistic to the Jews takes place over two days, and these two days become the dates for the celebration of the festival of Purim.

The book of *Esther* is distinguished from the stories of Joseph and Daniel, and in fact all of the literature in the Old Testament apart from the Song of Songs, in that the Jewish god is never mentioned. In addition, Judaism seems to be reflected more in community or ethnic loyalty – a national identity – rather than outward displays of religious behaviour. It is distinguishable further from the stories of Joseph and Daniel in which the characters attribute actions to divine causality. There are two examples of religious behaviour in the book, but neither is very forthcoming in its details. The first is a three-day fast called by Queen Esther to be observed by all the Jews (Esth. 4:16–17). Tellingly, the deity for whom the fast is called is never mentioned and details of the fast and accompanying prayers are not included. The second appears at the conclusion of the story in the statement that many of the citizens of Babylonia were converted to Judaism: 'Furthermore, many of the people of the country professed to be Jews because the fear of the Jews had fallen upon them' (8:17). This detail has been understood by Old Testament and Rabbinic interpreters as projecting an element of proselytism into a story otherwise unconcerned with religious behaviour, and the mass conversion, if that is what is being represented here, is not explained in any precise way.

What the story of Esther offers is a series of open-ended statements that could be (and indeed have been in subsequent extra-Biblical literature) interpreted as allusions to religious belief in divine intervention and providence. Some examples include the awareness of (divine)

oversight of the Jews when Mordecai seeks to persuade Esther to inter-vene on behalf of her community: 'Do not think that in the King's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silent at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews *from another quarter*, but you and your father's house will perish' (4:13–14); in speculation about (divine) plans for Esther when Mordecai concludes his speech to Esther by asking: 'Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this' (4:14); and in the suggestion of (divine) providence on the occasion when the king could not sleep and thus uncovers the good deeds done for him and the realm by Mordecai (6:1–2), thus marking the turning point in the fate of the Jews. None of these details refers overtly to divine interven-tion or causality and thus they contribute little towards understanding the religious beliefs of Esther's community. Moreover, the recognition of the deity of Joseph and Daniel by an external figure is found only in a vague allusion in the book of *Esther*. The recognition does not come from the king or a royal family member, but from an ordinary citizen, and it says nothing about the deity of the Jews. The words of Zeresh to her husband Haman, the chief antagonist of the story, only acknowl-edge implicitly the power of the Jewish god over history: 'If Mordecai, before whom your downfall has begun, is of the Jewish people, you will not prevail against him, but will surely fall before him' (6:13).

Thus, except for the brief mention of a fast and the possible con-version of the Persians, there is nothing overtly religious about the story of Esther or its characters. Indeed, none of the cited possible allusions to religious belief indicates clearly the expressions of divine purposes/help/authority found in the stories of Joseph and Daniel. Moreover, Esther hides her Jewish identity in order to succeed to the throne and reveals it only when expedient to do so in order to prevent the destruction of the Jews. Even Mordecai is not portrayed as observing any religious rituals. The impression given by the Biblical Esther tale is that the Persian community among which the Jews lived was a hostile one, and the chief threat was from other citizens of Persia rather than from the imperial authorities. It is in this way quite appropriate that the conversion of some members of society is included as a conclusion to the story and that the declaration of the particularity of the Jews is placed on the lips of Haman's wife. Equally, Esther calls a fast which is a religious ritual, but details about the fast are imprecise; fasting is a ritual behaviour also observed by other communities in the Persian empire. These details, then, are not meant to be particularly Jewish in character,

and indeed they serve to downplay the particularity of religious expression, so as to integrate the Jews of Esther's diaspora and allow them to survive in a hostile environment.

The loss of religiosity in the story was keenly felt in antiquity. There are two extant Greek versions of the story of Esther and Mordecai that contain six lengthy insertions (termed 'the Additions') and other shorter statements that clarify each of the above points as activity for and by the Jewish god. In addition, the Greek texts reinforce religiosity by including the characters' religious behaviours and highlighting divine activity and causality (Nagel, 2006; Middlemas, 2011). Similar to the story of Joseph, but to a more marked extent, the Biblical story of *Esther* concentrates its attention not on religious markers of identity but on genealogy and community. Mordecai is included among the deportees of Nebuchadnezzar at the time of the destruction of the southern kingdom: 'A man, a Judahite, was in Susa, the Citadel, and his name was Mordecai…who was exiled from Jerusalem with the exiles, who were exiled with Jeconiah, king of Judah, whom exiled Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon' (2:4–5, my translation).[15] An emphasis on community solidarity appears also in Esther's speech to the king, in which she clearly aligns herself with the threatened Jews: 'let my life be given me…and the lives of my people…For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated' (8:6). Exile and a national communal identity, rather than a religious one, are highlighted as the most important markers of Esther's diaspora community. Indeed, exile here indicates place of origin and provides a link for the communal members to each other, while not promoting repatriation.

The canonical Esther story ends with the authorisation of the Jewish festival of Purim. When we take into consideration that the book concludes with a Jewish festival, we can understand better the popularity of the story among Jews in diaspora and of Purim itself. Furthermore, it provides a religious context, as well as a supporting story that unites Jews wherever they may be (in diaspora and in the homeland). Similar to the story of Daniel, there is no reference to longing for a return to the land of origins (whether in life or in death). The story concludes with Mordecai, from the authority of his position as Vizier, watching out for the welfare of his people (10:3). The scroll of Esther is properly about uniting a people through a story and a celebration of triumph over enemies of Judaism. It is about honouring and supporting Jews in diaspora *for* Jews in diaspora.

Accommodation, resistance, and reaction in diaspora

The stories discussed above are self-consciously related to diaspora: all three share the theme of Jews triumphing against the odds in foreign environments. Diaspora is a setting for success: in every case, the Jewish protagonists attain positions of leadership and prestige in foreign courts. A number of differences between the tales deserve special attention, however. The stories of Daniel and Esther are specifically related to the 'Exile' and present an alternative to the return emphasised in mainstream Old Testament literature. And while all the main protagonists maintain kinship or group ties, this emphasis is less pronounced in the story of Daniel (where religious practice and allegiance come to the foreground).

Significantly, the stories provide three very different portraits of what is considered appropriate for a person of Jewish descent amid foreigners. The tales of Joseph, Daniel, and Esther represent a spectrum of religious and areligious responses in diaspora settings. In the story of Esther, there is no mention of God at all, no appeal to tradition or symbols of particular identity. It is true that a fast is mentioned (even called by Esther), but the religious overtones of the fast are downplayed. The stress is placed instead on the historical reality of a deportation that led to the community in Persia and the maintenance of group identity and loyalty in a new and foreign – and hostile – environment.

In stark contrast, the Danielic court tales highlight religiosity and public displays of piety by Jews. Daniel and his three friends remain strictly loyal to religious beliefs and traditions associated with the expression of Judaism in the homeland. They observe the law, eat kosher food, pray, and fast, and there is an overt acknowledgement of divine sovereignty, omnipotence, and omnipresence. Daniel and his friends consistently outperform their colleagues in the foreign court through the direct assistance of their god. The Jewish god is portrayed as a living and active deity, observable in historical circumstances through people adhering to the Jewish faith.

Somewhere in between these extremes lies the story of Joseph, which contains understated religious overtones. Events are said to be controlled by the deity, but neither Joseph nor his family engage in obvious religious behaviours while in the land of Egypt. The emphasis is on family loyalty rather than the observance of specific religious activities. In all three cases, however, the Jewish diaspora tales function to attest to the well-being and prosperity of Jews outside the homeland to those back home.

The three stories also differ considerably in their presentations of what constitutes the foreign environment. Egypt is presented favourably, whereas the Mesopotamian locations of Babylon and Persia are presented as threatening, both to individuals and to groups of Jews. In the story of Joseph, the land of Egypt prospers under the stewardship of Joseph and the riches of the land are extended to Joseph's immigrant family. There are threatening people here and there, but the population as a whole seems favourably inclined towards the inclusion of outsiders. In the story of Daniel, Babylonia is portrayed variably. It is the place where Daniel is trained and honoured, but foreign kingdoms that do not follow divine precepts of justice are to be destroyed. On more than one occasion, Daniel predicts the downfall of the kingdoms in which he lives (first that of the Babylonians under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar and his son Belshazzar, and then that of the Persians under Darius). Moreover, Daniel and his friends are persecuted for observing religious rituals consistent with their faith. Esther is accepting of empire, but violently opposed to the majority society threatening the security of the Jews. The massacre of the enemies of the Jews takes place over two days (and is in fact extended by Esther from the one day sanctioned by the king). The potential threat of individuals hostile towards Jews is quashed further in that many are converted to Judaism. The foreign environment in which Esther's community lives is a hostile environment, but under the wise guidance of Esther and Mordecai, it becomes a safer place, physically freed of dangerous and threatening individuals.

And yet, a common feature of the stories is the elevation of the Jewish heroes. Joseph, Daniel, and Mordecai are given positions of power and authority within the three main centres of powers of the ancient world – Egypt, Babylonia, and Persia. Esther attains the position of queen. There is no limit to the status Jews can achieve in diaspora. The success of the main characters is related very clearly in the Joseph and Daniel stories to the universality, supremacy, power, authority, and governance of the Jewish deity. The successes of Esther and Mordecai are not related to divine causality in any way, but hints of divine assistance appear. In the stories of Jews in the courts of foreign kings, the Jewish deity is made known through people, their actions, and their successes.

Conclusions

Very recently, Biblical scholars have started to appeal to concepts drawn from the social and cognitive sciences to understand these stories. Mary Mills has analysed the stories of Daniel and Esther by focusing on border

crossings in order to tease out elements of commonality in expressions of difference (Mills, 2006), but the most prominent framework for conceptualising diaspora literature has been that of dissonance theory (Carroll, 1979, pp. 86–128; Collins, 2000). The argument here is that being Jewish outside the land of tradition and divine promises has been taken to result in dissonance or a situation in which new cognitive elements were introduced into group experience as a result of a rupture or lack of alignment of some kind. Strategies, such as avoidance techniques, explanatory systems, and/ or social support, were employed to reduce or eliminate the distinction felt by a group's allegiance, concept of identity, and communal traditions in a new environment not supportive of those elements. Each of these strategies appears present in a variety of permutations in the Biblical case studies we have surveyed. At the same time, the concept of dissonance might not be adequate to explain many of the features found in the diaspora tales under examination as they also speak to the development of strategies for survival and the maintenance of a communal story often containing religious elements.

Dissonance for the Jews in diaspora arose not only because the Jews were outside their land of origin but also because at the time the diaspora tales were being fashioned Judaism was being constructed according to a symbolic universe that made particular sense within ancient Israel. Jews in diaspora had to think about what it was to be Jewish outside the land, distanced from the symbols of religion (such as the temple, the priesthood, and the authorised recitation and refraction of inherited traditions), and as a settled community in another land of residence. In addition, diaspora Jews had to negotiate their understanding of religion and identity within a context of many different religions with which they were in contact and also with respect to their minority status amid a plurality of peoples and in environments with varying degrees of acceptance or animosity towards difference.

Whatever their overarching messages, different strategies very likely emerged to overcome or reduce the pressure of being a Jew in a foreign land. The case studies of Joseph, Daniel, and Esther/Mordecai attest to a variety of possibilities for understanding the religious or ethnic self in diaspora settings, as well as ways of relating to and conceiving of peoples, races, and systems outside the land of origin. The disjunction between living away from the country of origin and settling or being part of a long-term settlement in a foreign country is reduced by downplaying distinctive religious elements (as in Esther and Joseph); by emphasizing the peculiarity, even superiority, of Jewish traditions in

comparison to other religious observance (Daniel); through the creation of explanatory systems emphasising the role of the Jewish god in family and communal support, as well as in history (Joseph and Daniel); by references to the triumph and salvation of the Jews in historical circumstances (Esther); by eliminating references to the Jewish god and particular religious observances that would draw attention to the ways in which Jews were different from their neighbours, as well as by emphasising religious behaviour held in common with foreign neighbours (like fasting) (Esther); and by emphasising family and community loyalty and solidarity (Joseph, Esther, and to some extent Daniel). The successes of the Jewish characters in their diaspora settings reduced the pressures of dissonance or disjunction. Furthermore, because the achievements of at least two of the characters were explicitly attributed to divine oversight, the stories promoted continued adherence to the Jewish god, particularly for those distanced from the centre of Jewish religious expression and authority in Jerusalem.

A focus on diaspora, as opposed to exile, reveals variability and plurality in religious response and in constructions of identity among communities living away from a land of origin. Living outside the homeland afforded new possibilities, even freedom, for expressing the religious and the communal self. The Biblical case studies reveal disjuncture, but no sense of rupture, loss of, or longing for home. This reading counters the thrust of much Old Testament/Hebrew Bible scholarship, which rather relates to an exile and return/restoration framework. Here, it is shown that the Biblical examples actually challenge the idea of landedness as normative, while at the same time presenting positive portrayals of group identity in diaspora based on genealogy, as well as religion. The diaspora stories of Joseph, Daniel, Mordecai, and Esther suggest alternative faithful responses to living in foreign environments and thereby provide a complement to an exclusive focus on the concepts of exile and return not only within Biblical interpretation but also in modern conceptualisations of diaspora (cf. Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993; and Chapter 1 of this volume). Biblical diasporas present paradigms of successful ways to integrate into foreign lands by a people joined together through genealogy and/or shared traditions without placing the stress on assimilation and without emphasising a return to the land of origin.

Notes

1. The use of the term 'Jew' for members of the population of the northern and southern kingdoms of ancient Israel and before the fifth century BCE

is controversial because the identity markers of Judaism were coming into effect in the fifth century BCE and fourth century BCE. For shorthand, I use Jew here.

2. Ancient Israel was actually made up of two separate kingdoms – the northern kingdom of Israel with its capital Samaria and the southern kingdom of Judah with its capital Jerusalem. The traditions of David, the temple, and Jerusalem are traditions from the southern kingdom of Judah.

3. The deportation of members of a populace or even whole cities is an example of a martial tactic perfected as a strategy of war and control by the Assyrians. It was used also by the Babylonians, who exiled inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem and parts of the kingdom of Judah in the sixth-century BCE. There remains a debate about the people who remained behind; see Lipschits (2005) and Middlemas (2005).

4. Bickerman (1984) notes that our documentary evidence of the deportees of Israel and Judah is limited to the exiles of the territories of Judah and Benjamin, or in other words those territories that made up the southern kingdom with its capital in Jerusalem. Other Jews at the time chose to flee to Egypt and surrounding territories. Middlemas (2007) includes the experiences of different exiled communities to offer an alternative/complement to the focus on the Babylonian exiles.

5. Erudite exiles of the priestly and royal classes returned to Judah. The literature that was brought with them and the perspective reflected therein became the overarching gist of Old Testament literature, especially in the two groups of texts that have been particularly instrumental for Judaism and Christianity, the torah (*Genesis* to *Deuteronomy*) and the Prophets (*Judges, 1–2 Samuel*, *1–2 Kings*, and the literature by named prophets, *Hosea*, *Amos*, *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, etc.).

6. The Deuteronomistic History refers to the united presentation of historical events found in the books from *Joshua* to *2 Kings* introduced by and consistent with part of the book of *Deuteronomy*. The Chronistic History refers to the historical presentation found in *1–2 Chronicles*. The Priestly History forms part of the first five books of the Old Testament, also called the torah or the Pentateuch.

7. I refer to the order of books in what is known in Jewish tradition as the TaNaK. The Old Testament of the Christian Bibles has a different order which ends with the book of *Malachi* rather than *2 Chronicles*.

8. Carroll (1997). *2 Chronicles* (36:22–23) actually ends with a Persian mandate authorising a return to Jerusalem and the reconstruction of the temple, but repatriation is not portrayed as having taken place.

9. The concepts of exile and return have modern relevance in that they undergird Zionist interpretations of history and statehood; see Zerubavel (1995) and Silberstein (1999).

10. The stories may be the product of Persian or Hellenistic period Jewry. The Persian or Achaemenid period is usually dated from the fall of the Babylonian Empire in 539 to the rise of Alexander of the Greeks in 334 BCE, while the Hellenistic period refers to the period of Greek dominance after the conquests of Alexander. The stories of *Ruth*, *Jonah*, and parts of *Daniel* are set earlier than the Persian period, but many scholars would agree that the themes they represent became prominent during the Persian period and

they are therefore relatable to it. The final form of *Daniel* and *Esther* are thought to be Hellenistic, but the book of *Esther* is set within the Persian period, even within the Persian court. In addition, the bulk of its composition may belong to the Persian period, if not before; see Johnson (2005) and Dalley (2007).

11. Scholars focusing on these stories tend to examine them with categories applicable within Old Testament studies and not as revealing situations of diaspora; see Humphreys (1973), Meinhold (1975; 1976), Humphreys (1985) and Berquist (1995, pp. 221–232). An exception is that of Daniel Smith-Christopher who interacts with diaspora and refugee studies (Smith, 1989, pp. 153–178; Smith-Christopher 2002, pp. 163–188).

12. They are distinguishable from short stories in the books of *Ruth* and *Jonah*, which are brief glimpses of a theme punctuated by characters that do not develop. These stories also present many facets of the deity and human response in diaspora settings, but they will not be considered here as their view is mediated from a Judahite/Jerusalemite perspective and they function didactically for that community.

13. I have replaced pronouns when referring to God in recognition of concerns about gendering the deity and its potential to foster a mental icon of the divine. For more on this discussion as part of the aniconism debate, see Middlemas (2014).

14. The references are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament, and the verse references are to the English translation.

15. The reference to deportation has been associated with Mordecai's grandfather so that the historical citation fits with the Persian setting of the story. Middlemas (2012) shows how this detail is theologically motivated and not meant to be historically accurate.

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3

Historicising Diaspora Spaces: Performing Faith, Race, and Place in London's East End

Nazneen Ahmed, with Jane Garnett, Ben Gidley, Alana Harris, and Michael Keith

Introduction

From the late nineteenth century to the early twenty-first century, there has been a prevailing tendency to orientalise the East End of London. The idioms have changed, but underlying distortions of perspective have remained, from 'darkest London' through myths of the Blitz to 'the new East End' (Dench et al., 2006; Gidley, 2000; Walkowitz, 1992). This orientalised east London has been framed through (and served as an icon for) two conventional narrative tropes in the history and social science of migration in Britain, one temporal and one spatial. Both narratives are embedded in often-unspoken assumptions about the exercise and practice of citizenship. In particular, east London histories privilege the trajectories of migrant minorities that arrive in London's lower echelons and are rescued from the abyss through self-improvement and civic engagement. The stories of Huguenot refugees, the Jews of the East End, the Maltese, the Indians, and the Irish are all in some ways redemptively showcased as plot lines of model minority integration. This familiar chronological script is mapped onto an equally familiar cartography as migrants move up, move out of the ghetto and into the suburbs, and leave space for the next wave of settlement. In spatialised Chicago School geography, stories of invasion, succession, and neighbourhood change, as, in chronologies of ladder-climbing minorities, we tend to find cast lists that are relatively unblemished by the presence of traces of difference. The ethnic mosaic is the key metaphor here: it implies social worlds that pass each other by relatively untouched.

Shifting the focus – looking through a diasporic rather than immigrant lens and excavating some of the subterranean micro-histories of east London religious faith and associational life lived across local and transnational boundaries – reveals a very different chronology and cartography of mobility and stasis. Despite the intense and continuing preoccupation of observers, critics, and policymakers with the religious and moral character of the area across this period, there has been surprisingly little sustained engagement with its life on the ground, and with modes of analysis which could complicate dominant readings. At the same time, much literature on diaspora, multi-/interculturalism, and cosmopolitanism has tended to focus on the recent (certainly postcolonial) past, thereby occluding suggestive historical contingencies, as well as sometimes uncomfortable continuities. A central aspect of religious life in east London has been its long-standing diasporic nature, whether Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Zoroastrian, or Muslim.

In this chapter, we focus on how diasporic religious affiliations of Muslims have been performed in public and institutional spaces in east London in various historical moments since the late nineteenth century. Rereading self-presentations and contemporary commentaries reveals migrant stories which cut across the imagined borders of the ethnic mosaic and which defy the tidy chronology of ethnic succession: these are stories of diasporic Muslims out of place or untimely, and involved in messy contingent alliances with diverse others in the metropolis. We focus here principally on South Asian Muslims: nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century seamen and nursemaids who travelled repeatedly to and fro from the Indian subcontinent and sometimes settled; and late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century British Bengali women. The intersectionality between religion, gender, ethnicity, and nationality is seen to be fundamental to their self-understanding and engagement with dominant imperial, British, and Christian cultures, even as the languages of British power and citizenship have drawn on the strategically deployed overlaying of these characteristics. This excavation also raises methodological questions regarding the problems and possibilities of resistant readings, challenging assumptions made about the ways in which subalterns speak and are heard in the archive (Joseph, 2004, p. 10; Spivak, 2010, pp. 18, 256). Emphasis upon space and encounter can unsettle the established narrative of displacement and segregation by instead retrieving moments of tension, affiliation, and resistance in communities across difference in east London.

Mobility, citizenship, and space

Over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, port and colonial connections translated people from across the world to London, just as more localised migration swelled the city's population. The area around the docks (the geographical focus of which repeatedly shifted across the period) was demographically highly mobile. The appearance of strange people of diverse faiths in the colonial capital was seen as a significant challenge for governance and social order. New arrivals (from the colonies or indeed non-metropolitan Britain, including Ireland) generated different connections of place and faith, whilst simultaneously they were classified and organised by, through, and in new institutions that were neither part of a private domestic arena nor straightforwardly a part of city publics. The institutional networks that emerged in the late-nineteenth-century city bear witness to this urge to rationalise, organise, make sense of, and reform the buildings, bodies, and minds of the population of east London. The development of the settlement movement, with its particular links between the universities, major public schools, and inner London, appealed to ideal types of the Christian, the Jew, and the Muslim, and a more general sense of mission addressed both the lapsed denizens of urban poverty and the newly arrived from the Empire and the Pale. The missionary moment of the Victorian and Edwardian city generated both surprising encounters and newly emergent counter-publics.

A historian of Swedish religious welfare institutions in London over this period commented that for many sailors, who set off for the East or West Indies without returning to Sweden, English ports became part of the mother country (Evander, 1960, p. 218). Imperial commerce complicated conceptions of home for those who were not imperial subjects. For those who were – for the many South Asians, Africans, or West Indians who travelled to Britain in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries – the encounter with the imperial metropole was culturally much more challenging than for Lutheran Scandinavians. The mobility and employment rights of South Asian seafarers were especially tightly controlled (more so than for African or Caribbean sailors) through legislation that prevented seafarers from settling within the colonial metropolis (lascars – seafarers from India and Ceylon, most of whom were Muslims – could only officially be discharged in India, although many did jump ship): Indian seamen were at the bottom of the 'hierarchy of citizenship' (Visram, 2002, p. 218; Wemyss, 2009, pp. 147–153). Whilst the 1905 Aliens Act is often seen as the first piece of restrictive

legislation on immigration to Britain, it was designed principally to target the poorest category of East European Jews; South Asian seamen, despite being part of the Empire, were already restricted. In the absence of opportunities to participate fully in British society as citizen-actors, these South Asians mobilised diasporic and religious affiliations whilst sojourning in London, in so doing negotiating limits and boundaries that were designed by the colonial state and by Christian missionary institutions to police their behaviour.

The Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders was opened in 1857 by a group of missionary societies, including the London City Mission (LCM) and the Church Missionary Society in Limehouse, as a more salubrious alternative to the network of private lodging houses catering to lascars and other foreign sailors. As the British public struggled to make sense of the causes of the 1857 uprising in India, missionaries who had been long active amongst the dock communities of east London found that their calls for welfare provision for both lascars and ayahs (South Asian nannies) were finally and swiftly attended to by both the government and the East India Company. In some respects, missionaries had anticipated 1857, since in pamphlets such as James Peggs' 1844 *The Lascars' Cry to Britain* imperial hospitality was urged in order to prevent resentment and hostility spreading, through transnational networks, back to British India:

> If these men came to settle in our country, their conversion to Christianity, and at least their favourable impression of its spirit and precepts, would be of very great importance; but this is increased a hundred fold, by their return to their own countries, and the influence which they are destined to exert in their families and connexion. The mind shrinks from the tale of woe, which one brother might tell of another, who sunk and drooped and died, and was huddled out of sight, 'buried with the burial of an ass'.
>
> (Peggs, 1844, p. 29)

Missionaries and Christian philanthropists, who identified Britain as a Christian country, saw very clearly that failure to provide hospitality to strangers could undermine not only national morality but also visitors' respect for British values. That would in turn affect the credibility of British rule, and the efficacy of Christian activities abroad.

Concurrently, there was increasing anxiety about the moral degeneracy and uncontrollability of the poorest areas of big cities like London. On the one hand, foreign workers needed to be rescued from exploitation at the hands of unscrupulous local touts, while the use

of their cheap labour was justified by talking up their superior qualities of obedience and industry (which of course in turn elicited British working-class antagonism to them). On the other hand, their supposed tendencies to docility and effeminacy were mapped onto an orientalisation of slum areas in general. The public debates surrounding the lascar and ayah presence in east London in the latter part of the nineteenth century related clearly gendered identities to conceptions of imperial loyalty and duty. Masculine qualities were used rhetorically to characterise and justify the exercise of British authority in east London as in India (cf. Sinha, 1995).

The politics of hospitality, boundaries of offence

Missionary work, whether in London or the colonies, has always been predicated upon the careful negotiation of the encounter with those to be civilised. The Strangers' Home was a key London site for these encounters, serving as both refuge and agent of moral discipline. It provided subsidised board and lodging, looked after sailors' money, facilitated employment (repatriation), and advocated for them. As well as holding Christian services, which seafarers were encouraged to attend (and mostly did), the Home provided prayer spaces for Muslims and Hindus and offered meals that observed religious dietary principles. Language instruction, as well as Christian teaching, was offered. Although, for some, to convert may have been part of the narrative of finding a better life in Britain (and some had already encountered mission schools in India), it was said that few did so. The Home was thus a space of homosocial encounters between missionaries and ethnically diverse seafarers and of cross-faith contact and dialogue, regulated at the same time by imperial and Christian moral controls.

Joseph Salter, a long-standing London City Missionary at the Home, and regular visitor to the nearby Ayahs' Home, which the LCM took over in 1900 and which ran on similar principles, also set up an 'Asiatic Rest', incorporating an oriental library for women and men in the evenings and on Sundays. He noted people coming there to see the Qur'an, or pictures of Medina or Mecca (Salter, 1896, pp. 153, 159–160). Keen to evangelise (and having learnt several Indian and African languages in order to do so), in his reports to the LCM (anthologised in 1873 and 1896) Salter nonetheless signalled respect for religious distinctions: sympathising with a homesick young woman who had left three children in India and helping her to make a Hindu oath and return home; accompanying a Muslim funeral; and acknowledging arguments about

faith in which he was not successful (Salter, 1879, 1896, pp. 115–116, 135–137; Ahmed, 2013, p. 110).

In reading accounts of encounters between missionaries and lascar seafarers in east London, and catching glimpses of contestation and complexity, it is, of course, essential to draw out the subtle power play of the encounter. The missionary's potential success in terms of conversion was predicated upon the breaking down of perceived strangeness in order to develop familiarity and then trust. Especially when visiting ships, the missionaries were clearly often conscious of their own position of 'guest', navigating a space not their own, despite overarching presumptions of cultural and spiritual supremacy. In this context, the Strangers' Home provided not only a space of sanctuary but also social control and containment, where lascar seafarers were both cared for (and thus became indebted) and disciplined, functioning as both 'shelter and prison, a residence that keeps the lascars out of true England' (Lindeborg, 1994, p. 391). Salter's detailed accounts of engaging with lascars both in the Strangers' Home and on board ships demonstrate both missionary and seafarer carefully picking through delicate codes of hospitality and offence that framed specifically gendered, homosocial relations. On occasion, each transgressed the boundaries set by the other, and it fell either to Salter or to a particularly diplomatic lascar to calm offended sensibilities and bring the conversation back into more mutually accepted, gently provocative limits:

> Controversy is not encouraged, but it often happens it is the only opportunity that occurs. A few days before recording these words visitors arrived in the gay attire of the East; one of them in a dress as yellow as the buttercup. He was the ship's storekeeper. Every item of Christian truth advanced was objected to by the storekeeper and his company, except where those truths are confirmed by the Koran. But finally the storekeeper made an apology for his companions, saying: 'We are not informed well enough to know that our opposition is justifiable'. With this explanation the opposition ceased and the exposition continued with due attention.
>
> (*London City Mission Magazine*, 1881, p. 90)

In his retrospective construction of the narrative, Salter presented himself as the sensitive missionary, very conscious of the potential for giving offence, but hardened to receiving it in the form of insults from seafarers and reinstating his didactic dominance in the 'due attention' then given to his expositions. Salter's self-construction as sober, fatherly

instructor was contrasted to the lurid, feminised clothing of the seafarers and their stubborn responses. Yet, from his narrative it is impossible to ascertain the actual feelings of offence experienced by the seafarers and whether these feelings were in fact ameliorated. The overarching power dynamic of the encounter – and the British imperial space in which it took place – means that regardless of Salter's consciousness of being a 'guest' on board the ship, both he and the lascars were aware of his dominant position as representative of the Strangers' Home. The seafarer who intervened to defuse the situation, therefore, may well have been acting from a position of strategic 'sly civility', conscious of not biting the hand that fed him, rather than from the humility and ignorance ascribed to him by Salter (Bhabha, 1994, p. 99). Such potential for performative agency, on a wide spectrum between accommodation and resistance, is important to bear in mind when picking up the faint traces of nineteenth-century South Asian voices. These interactions were not straightforward. At the same time, the gendered constructions within which their speech was reported have proved strikingly tenacious into the present and have contributed to the ongoing orientalisation of the East End, within which the lived complexities of encounters and negotiations have been ironed out.

Performativity/masculinity

The nineteenth-century London docks played host to a set of competing gender identities that were fundamentally inflected by the interconnected politics of faith and empire. Through their accounts of engagements with lascar seafarers, missionaries and merchant naval officers constructed their own masculine identities by contrasting their conduct with that of the lascars. Lascar faith practices were at the heart of debates regarding their 'docility', their childlike impressionable natures, which, as Georgie Wemyss has demonstrated, has been an enduring racial stereotype attached to the migrants from Gujarat and Bengal (p. 160; cf. Sinha, 1995). Testimonials of working with lascars mobilised by shipping merchants emphasised their well-ordered and disciplined character, particularly after shipwrecks and 'disasters at sea', which often resulted in wide-ranging public debates regarding their employment. In a gloss which nuanced gendered categorisations, Muslim sobriety was cited as a key benefit of employing lascar seafarers:

> The chairman of the Peninsular and Oriental Company also from the first refused to believe the accusations of cowardice and inefficiency, and at the recent meeting of the shareholders he bore

warm testimony to the steady and sober habits of the Lascars, how amenable they are to order and discipline, how again and again they have proved their gallantry individually and collectively.

(*Leeds Mercury*, 1887)

Yet, even these constructions of lascar seafarers, which mirror representations of the 'self-discipline' of the ideal European worker as projected by temperance Chartism, can suggest strategic engagements in homosocial power play by the seafarers themselves (Harrison, 1973, p. 197). Shompa Lahiri's notion of 'sly docility', influenced by Bhabha's 'sly civility', has a bearing here. The 'masquerading acquiescence', which she attributes to educated Indian women's strategic performance of docility in the presence of male Indian nationalists in the colonial metropolis, mirrors the homosocial dynamic between lascar seafarers and colonial authorities, as sobriety and obedience were mobilised strategically in order to maintain employment and reasonable treatment on ships, just as lascars consciously maintained good relations with Salter despite the pressure placed upon them to convert to Christianity (Lahiri, 2010, p. 45).

Lahiri's emphasis upon performativity, developed through the work of Judith Butler and modified by postcolonial theory, is particularly illuminating with regard to the annual Muslim Mourning of Muharram celebrations, held in the docks from as early as 1805. Here we have evidence of a lascar community that was very visibly performing difference. In a challenge to Wemyss' construction of the lascar community as hidden, the existence of numerous detailed newspaper accounts of Muharram, including, on one occasion, an illustration (see Figure 3.1), suggests that, at points, lascars were also a highly visible community. Whilst the published narratives were predicated upon difference – the lascar was seen as exotic and fanatical – it is also possible to trace within them moments which point both to lascars' own affirmation of their religious faith and to British concerns to validate and thereby in some respects domesticate it.

A particularly detailed report accompanied the illustration of the festival in the *Graphic* in 1892, which noted that the Muharram procession that year was unusually large. The report describes weeks of preparation undertaken by the lascars, costumes bartered from theatrical companies, and leave and double rations negotiated from the naval offices. The collective identity offered by their faith seems to have been employed strategically by lascar seafarers in order to navigate boundaries between themselves and missionaries, merchant naval officers (from whom blessings were sought en route), and the general east London public.

Figure 3.1 'Mahometans in England: The Mohurrum Festival at the Docks'. *Graphic*, 8 August 1892, n.p.

> The grand procession formed at the gate of the Albert Dock, and in addition to these elaborate edifices was a miscellaneous following of fantastically-attired creatures [...] A Father Christmas, with long beard, a scarlet robe trimmed with swansdown, and conventional icicles and holly seemed strange in such surroundings, but the fact was that the costume had been seen by one of the men in some theatricals on the 'Peshawar', and had evidently commended itself to his mind, for the loan of it had been begged as an especial favour from the company.
>
> (*Graphic*, 1892)

The article provides numerous examples of faith practices being central to lascars' own articulations of embodied self and sense of diasporic belonging. The reporter indicates their membership of a transnational community experienced in navigating – and performing acts of worship in – multiple imperial metropoles:

> The men spared neither money nor trouble to make their final display as gorgeous as possible, and a visit to the 'Peshawar' earlier in the week revealed about a dozen of them seated in the second-class saloon and building up a representation in tissue paper and bamboo

of the tomb of the two martyrs. This structure was surmounted by
a dome of red paper crossed with a gilt trelliswork. The crescent in
silver was reared above it, at the corners were placed large bunches of
really gracefully modelled yellow lilies and sunflowers in fine paper.
Through an interpreter they explained that it was by no means as
beautiful as they would wish, but London was not Bombay, and they
did not like all the sheets of coloured paper obtainable here.

(*Graphic*, 1892)

Especially striking about this description is the lascars' construction
of sacred space through the careful and considered making of the
papier mâché replica tomb, or *ta'zīyeh*, an established South Asian
Shi'a diasporic practice (Van Skyhawk, 2008, p. 128). Lascars thus self-
consciously engaged in theatrical spectacle, and claimed British phys-
ical, indeed public, space for worship, albeit temporarily. Through the
sound of drums, cymbals, and flutes and the visual impact of the proces-
sion, streaming banners demarcating the space occupied by the Muslim
worshippers, the docks were marked out and transformed momentarily
into Muslim holy ground. Whilst the illustration from the *Graphic* is at
best a caricature, it gives some sense of the scale of the festival and the
energy and movement of the procession.

At one level, this seems an example of what Shompa Lahiri terms
'embodied transgression' of the imperial gaze (Lahiri, 2010, p. 59; cf.
Roy, 1998, p. 30). Yet the expression of such a faith tradition was always
controlled and circumscribed, both through interpretation and through
the restriction of movement, residence, and settlement imposed upon
lascar seafarers by colonial authorities. This particular procession in
1892 took place along a prescribed route, and the accompanying arti-
cle notes that, unlike in previous years, it took place without throngs
of east London public spectators, who must have been limited as a
result of crowd violence the previous year and perhaps in the knowl-
edge of public order concerns around Muharram processions in Bombay
at this period (Kidambi, 2004). At the same time, while the image
depicted intensely black bodies dancing wildly, the caption, by describ-
ing the festival as 'a kind of Moslem Lententide...observed with due
honours by the Indian and African sailors', stood in tension with this
emphasis in its underlining of the seriousness of the procession's reli-
gious purpose by analogy with Christian custom. This complex interplay
between transgression, restriction, and the concern to find affinities
highlights the methodological complexity of postcolonial readings of
the archive.

Moreover, examples of lascar religious processions, prayer on deck, and prayer outdoors at Mission festivals also demand that we remember that practices of religion include spaces that exist between public and private, beyond a simple mapping of formal places of worship. Routine inscriptions of everyday life – religiously marked clothing, walking, marching – trace the presence of the religious body onto the landscape of the Victorian city in ways that may be architecturally ephemeral but were symbolically central to contemporary practice. To focus exclusively on official places of worship would occlude temporary, transient, and contingent appropriations of space. Such claims were of particular significance when access to formal places of worship was refused by institutional authorities, as was the case for Muslims in east London until the establishment of the East London Mosque in 1941.

Empire/Anti-empire

The potential problems with ascribing agency to lascar seafarers as they figure in the colonial archive are most clearly illustrated through a survey of readings of lascar 'resistance' to imperial power. P&O accounts of lascar seafarers were concerned to promote them as loyal, docile, imperial subjects. We may be tempted to unsettle this description by teasing out moments of dissent and collective protest. Indeed, as Rozina Visram and Georgie Wemyss have demonstrated, there is substantial evidence that they utilised their labour value strategically during the Second World War to improve conditions and finally gain some level of wage equality with their white peers. The reported treatment of an earlier strike in 1882 neatly indicates the ways in which empire, religious faith, and notions of religious 'diaspora', or religious transnational solidarity, were – and were seen to be – interconnected:

> The whole of the Lascar seamen on the ships taken up for the expedition to Egypt have refused to go with them on a mission which they regard as one of aggression towards their co-Mohammedans [...] there will be no difficulty in filling their places with Englishmen, and possible complications arising from a crew in religious sympathy with the enemy will at least be avoided.
>
> (*Daily News*, 1882)

The disturbing possibilities suggested by this collective protest can be demonstrated by the keenness of reporters to control and contain the very narrative of protest elsewhere. Just two days after the

above report, it was alleged that the lascars had returned to duty, their protest having been shown to be misplaced following manipulation by Jews masquerading as 'fanatical Mussulmans' (*Pall Mall Gazette*, 1882).

Whilst the lascars here were presented as part of the Empire, and indeed instrumental to its successes, east London's Jewish population was described as menacing and exploitative. The anti-Semitism of this account resonates with a wider moral panic from the 1880s to the 1920s in which xenophobic imaginings of alien sedition and continental anarchism (and later foreign Bolshevism) overlapped with conspiracy theories about Jewish incitement of revolution (Glover, 2012; Kadish, 1992; Turnbull, 1998). In such discourse, Jewish Bolsheviks were often accused of manipulating British workers to strike or of directing the childish anti-imperialism of non-white subjects, as in colonial directives to the authorities in Calcutta in 1921 to 'observe individuals with "semitic features" or of a "somewhat Jewish appearance"', allegedly acting as 'Bolshevik Agents' (Chattopadhyay, 2006, p. 173). What is significant about this allegation in the 1882 context is the way in which the rhetorical pairing of Muslims and Jews intensified the orientalising of maritime east London while also removing agency from the Muslim workers.

Interpretations of resistance are complicated by evidence in the mid-twentieth century of lascars articulating a proud Commonwealth identity and loyalty to the British Empire, playing a more complex role than that allotted to them in counter-narratives of heroic anti-colonial resistance. Syed Abdul Majid Qureshi, a Muslim Sylheti, came as a sailor to east London in the 1930s, jumped ship, and stayed, becoming a restaurateur and political activist; he reminisced in the 1980s about his negotiation of various forms of seemingly contradictory affiliation to both empire and anti-colonial diasporic political networks during the Second World War. This was, of course, a moment when the imperial dynamics had shifted considerably since 1882, or even the 1920s. His support for anti-colonial efforts existed alongside his participation in the war effort and his sense of being part of the wider *umma*:

I was a First Aider [...] Many people were frightened, but I have a strong faith in God – if I die in the cause of humanity doing some good service there is some satisfaction, but if I die without doing anything, well then it does not give the same satisfaction to your mind.

We felt, we Muslim people, that this was our war too, because the Japanese were at the gate of India. And we were frightened because we – not only Muslims of India but the whole Muslim world which includes Arabia – we knew that the safety of England meant the safety of the Arab world, so we supported the war effort. But at the same time we did put our demand for Independence.

(Adams, 1987, pp. 157–158)

These apparent contradictions, or perhaps pragmatic manoeuvrings, illustrate the potential dangers of reading narratives with 'too postcolonial' a lens – a lens which might blind us to, and potentially silence, other affiliations, stances, and forms of collective belonging that do not fit into a postcolonial epistemology. The archive reveals emergent forms, identities on the move, shifting with and beyond the tectonic plates of imperial and post-imperial relations.

Performing femininity/ayahs at the margins

Early accounts of missionary work amongst foreigners and 'Orientals' make only brief reference to East Indian women, acknowledging a sizeable number to be living in east London, but not considering them a significant enough social problem to warrant further description. Ironically, this lower visibility made for fewer restrictions on their employment status than for lascars; ayahs were frequently discharged in Britain. The Ayahs' Home, founded as early as 1825 by a committee of women in aid of ayahs abandoned in England, and funded by families who required accommodation for their ayahs between trips to and from India, was taken over in 1900 by the LCM. In 1920, the Home moved from Whitechapel to Hackney.

From this point, annual yet frustratingly formalised reports from the Home appear in the *London City Mission Magazine*. Whilst the Strangers' Home reports are vividly peopled with descriptions of lascar seafarers, and even use reported speech to give us some (albeit moderated and modified) idea of lascars' own voices, descriptions of the Ayahs' Home provide hardly any testimonies from ayahs themselves. They are represented as far more docile, respectful, and less violently unpredictable in character, symbolically combining conventional ideals of femininity and the naïve childlikeness of the colonised. In the 1921, *London City Mission Magazine*'s special features on the opening of the new Home by Lady Chelmsford, wife of the former Viceroy of India, ayahs were said to

open 'their hearts to [missionaries] like children; they do not fear them as they would a judge' (p. 142). However, the spatial organisation of the Home itself and short descriptions of (appropriately feminine and homely) leisure activities point to patterns of diasporic solidarity and enactment of community amongst ayahs as they inhabited the Mission's space, as a description of the tour given to funders and Lady Chelmsford after the opening ceremony attests:

> The company inspected the 'Home of Nations', the rooms of which were ticketed 'Javanese', 'Malay States', 'Indians', 'Chinese', 'Siamese', etc. The striking dadoes and distempered walls reminding one of the liking for gay colours shared by these children of other climes, whilst the general arrangements and amenities evoked words of high praise and approval. It was ascertained that the Ayahs spend much of their time doing embroidery and playing pachis, an Indian game, played with a marked cloth and cowrie shells.
>
> (*London City Mission Magazine*, 1921, p. 143)

The Viscountess, who had only very recently returned from India, expressed empathy with the transplanted women, in reported speech which underscored the imperial project represented in the Home:

> The memories which she had of the time she spent in India made her feel that anything she could do for Indians was a labour of love. She was specially glad to be identified in a small way with work which was for the benefit of Indian women. It had been said that our dominions were bound to us by an invisible chain of mutual respect and affection, and it seemed to her that in carrying on such work the London City Mission was forging one more link in the chain that was going to bind that great Indian dominion more closely to us. (p. 141)

Glimpses of respect for difference within the Home come through reports that attendance at the (officially optional) daily Christian service was complemented by private worship according to different faith traditions, and dietary requirements were respected, suggesting that the women were keen to maintain their respective faiths despite the challenges presented by life in interwar London (p. 141). A 1936 article in the *Magazine* movingly demonstrates the link between food, faith, well-being and belonging, and the emotional toll that strange food in

a strange place could take. An ayah, who had been resident in England for some time,

> has now become very homesick and does not want to stay any longer. Her health has not been too good, but we discovered that she had not been able to have any of her own kind of food for some months past. She cannot get on with English food, but a few days of her own food have put her right, and she is now very happy, knowing that once in the Ayahs' Home she is really on the way to her native land.
>
> (*London City Mission Magazine*, 1936, p. 144)

Dietary provisions were consistently emphasised in both Strangers' Home and Ayahs' Home accounts in the Mission magazines as indicative of a culture of hospitality and tolerance. Yet leisure activities as described above could also suggest separation and even segregation of the ayahs of different cultural groups; it is not clear to what extent this was desired by the women themselves, nor to what extent the 'Indian game' crossed cultural boundaries. This space, like the Strangers' Home, presented itself simultaneously as refuge and containment, a space of hospitality that had the potential both to reify and to transcend distinctions.

The marginalisation of ayah voices in the colonial archive is compounded by changes in the ways in which imperial interactions were culturally understood, as well as by the influence of modern technologies that changed the nature of missionary work and the production of missionary literature. Already in the late nineteenth century Salter observed that steam ships required shorter docking times (from stints of months to a matter of days inland), and that there was correspondingly less time to develop social relationships with lascars on board, resulting in shorter, less individualised accounts of missionary work in the Homes and on deck:

> I used to have good meetings on Spanish, or Italian, or French ships for a fortnight, or three weeks or more. Now these ships stay twenty-four hours and then leave again, so that, directly a ship comes in, the work must be done at once or the opportunity is lost.
>
> (*London City Mission Magazine*, 1885, p. 241)

Detailed ethnographic descriptions of lascar seafarers from early accounts of the Strangers' Home in the mid-nineteenth century were replaced by the shorthand of photographs by the 1920s. In the account

of the opening of the new Ayahs' Home, the ayahs' presence was visually presented (one of them indeed looks directly into the camera, challenging the viewer with her direct and solemn gaze), whilst the caption noted only the presence of the white British dignitaries.

The profound silencing of ayah subjectivities within the LCM reports of the Ayahs' Home is made still more obvious by the fact that the most dramatic reported example of female resistance occurred during Salter's encounters with lascar seafarers. Read alongside the Ayahs' Home reports, this moment is one of profound dissonance that points towards possibilities of female resistance existing beyond the realm of representation: 'One of the women, a Mussulman, objected in rather angry terms, saying she wanted no saviour, and did not believe what I had to say about Jesus' (*London City Mission Magazine*, 1867, p. 7). If lascar seafarers were rendered subaltern within the missionary and colonial archive, ayahs and other East Indian female subjects were the most subaltern of the subaltern voices in the archive, marginalised by gender, faith, race, and occupation in the imperial spaces of east London.

Subaltern historiographies of twentieth-century east London: Cross-faith alliances

In the period from the 1950s onwards, it is no longer feasible to describe the archive as a 'colonial' body of knowledge – nor indeed is it possible to contain the multiple and shifting forms of representation and self-representation in one organised category. Majority community representations of the 'Other' are increasingly contested by acts of self-representation and innovative historiographical interventions, such as the Plassey Project of the Brick Lane Circle, by migrant communities themselves.[1] Yet, as Georgie Wemyss has demonstrated, the hegemonic narratives of east London still mobilise racist stereotypes of lascars and ayahs in constructions and representations of the Bengali community in East London, presenting ongoing historiographical challenges (Wemyss, 2009, p. 73). Chronological trajectories of ethnic specificity are disrupted by a consideration of the multiple identifications of diasporic faith. People who migrated from Sylhet, catalogued first as lascars and ayahs, then as 'Asians', 'Bengalis', or Bangladeshis, have only latterly, in changing political contexts, been denoted British Muslims. This categorisation has operated (and been instrumentalised) both negatively and positively in terms of debates about citizenship and civil society over the last two decades (Keith, 2013).

In contrast to the period of the Strangers' Home, where the parameters of space inhabited by Muslim lascar seafarers and ayahs were defined and maintained almost exclusively by imperial authorities and Christian missions, in the post-war period wider migrant settlement resulted in the construction, claiming, and adaptation of east London space for faith purposes by Muslim diasporic communities themselves. Indeed, as Humayun Ansari's research into the building of the East London Mosque affirms, this process of claiming space began even earlier, and was consolidated as the Muslim communities in east London increased in size after the end of the Second World War (Ansari, 2011, pp. 73–74). The emergence of new mosques across east London both before and after the war highlights the productive tensions of alliances across both ethnicities and faiths in the construction of religious buildings (notably East London Mosque). Early mosques appealed principally to the commonality of devotional faith, whilst later constructions rested on the particularities of religious need (e.g. for people of specifically Somali or Bangladeshi ethnicities). The 'offended' groups now became those who could be identified as belonging to a generally secularised white majority. Meanwhile, support for the Jamme Masjid's call to prayer and minaret construction in the late 1970s and early 1980s was publicly articulated by Christian faith organisations. Occupying a very different position of cultural power from that held in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Christian organisation, The Tower Hamlets Clergy Chapter, articulated a sense of shared values with their Muslim 'brothers and sisters' not from a position of proselytising, but from a recognition of the shared challenges faced by faith groups in living and sharing space with non-religious groups (*East London Advertiser*, 1980).

These are the kinds of ad hoc, temporary, and contingent alliances between communities across difference that have been written out of the hegemonic historical narrative of east London. Other stories of contingent alliances could be excavated, such as those of Jewish tailors fostering children of striking Catholic dockers during a strike of 1912; of Jewish philanthropist Nathan Rothschild sitting on the board of the original London (later East London) Mosque; or of wives of early London Mosque imams using kosher butchers in the absence of halal butchers in east London. In shifting the methodological focus from 'waves of migration' that have successively displaced one another, to the examination of space and how it has been shared, claimed and contested by communities living alongside one another, it is possible to map these forms

of affiliation and resistance within and between the numerous and multiple faith communities of east London.

Bridging Spaces

Examination of the spatial politics of east London in conjunction to gender and faith in the twentieth century problematises the mapping of spaces in east London as exclusively diasporic or ethnically marked. The Jagonari Centre on Whitechapel Road is one example of an interstitial space, which, in its own words, acts as 'a bridge for women, a base for women' (*Jagonari Annual Report*, 1996–1997). Founded in 1981, after new community funding was made available by the Greater London Council (GLC), initially Jagonari operated from various community centres and women's homes. Its purpose-built Centre was completed in 1987. The building was constructed by a feminist architectural collective in close consultation with women users of Jagonari's services, who had a major input into the aesthetic and functional design. As a result, it is a hybrid, syncretic architectural space, built of London brick and containing a mosque-inspired courtyard and South Asian-style-decorated window grilles and railings (see Figure 3.2):

> The Jagonari women wanted a courtyard – a common feature of Asian public and religious buildings – although they also wanted a secular feel that would embrace all religious and cultural groups.
>
> (Towers, 1995, p. 125)

The Centre's foundation by a group of Bangladeshi women in the early 1980s occurred in part in response to ongoing mainstream representations of Bangladeshi women as childlike, docile, and in need of rescue, which led to the production of a series of short films entitled 'Through Our Eyes', which were broadcast on Channel 4, and then to funding proposals to set up a physical centre. A 2006 interview with two of the founders gives an indication of the competing expectations and perceptions that they had to negotiate, not only from Bangladeshi men or the Council but also from other female activists:

> One thing we found was a difficulty between English feminism and what Bengali women really needed. English feminism was that they should be emancipated. You shouldn't allow your husband to treat you like this. It's always lecturing, you should do this, you should do that. Whereas, lot of the time we found ourselves actually arguing

against other women. Saying that, that might be what feminism is in general, but you have to moderate it when you are talking about Asian woman in particular. You can't just go barging in and saying you should do this, you should do that. Because you will alienate people so we have to actually be careful about what was said in our name. Because of course there were quite a few White radical women, for all the best will in the world could have actually jeopardized it quite considerably. They made Jagonari seem to be too radical, so we actually had to make sure that the balance was there.

(Swadhinata Trust, 2006)

Jagonari's 1986 annual report written by a group of Bangladeshi women also articulated its aim to provide locally based, self-representative forms of support for Bangladeshi women:

The plights of the 'deprived and lonely Bengali woman' and the 'misunderstood suppressed Bengali girl' have been taken up by well-meaning white youth and community workers and organizations who had a role to play. However, Asian women working with Asian women were very few and far between.

(*Jagonari Annual Report*, 1986)

Despite the significant contributions of Jagonari and other organisations, however, representations of east London Bangladeshi women continue to be framed in terms of passivity, docility, and submissiveness, as illustrated by the 2009 report on the Bangladeshi Muslim Community published by the Department of Communities and Local Government as part of its series, 'Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities'. The publication, part of a series produced in order to inform authorities about various Muslim ethnic groups in Britain, made no reference to women's faith, and only passing mention of social contributions made by Bangladeshi women, but instead, in an echo of Salter, focused on Muslim men as a social problem:

Family is seen as the most important influencing body that is at the heart of everything. Men in general are seen as key influencers who dominate in community affairs, unlike women who are often subjugated by men.

(Department of Communities and Local Government, 2009, p. 10)

Figure 3.2   Jagonari Centre, Whitechapel Road, London. Photo Jane Garnett

Whilst the Jagonari Centre began specifically to provide services for Bangladeshi women, it has continually reinvented itself to recognise the demographic and social shifts that have taken place in east London. Rather than constituting a space that caters to one specific cultural group's needs, Jagonari has now developed itself as an inclusive women's organisation providing English-language training to London migrants from countries other than EU member states, running offender programmes, and offering childcare services. Moreover, the space has multiple uses at any given time and is embedded in a complex set of networks with partners including other third sector, faith, and cultural organisations, and local, national, and European funding bodies. Although Jagonari characterises itself as explicitly secular, as part of its aim to recognise and provide support for multifarious aspects of women's identities, the Centre has undertaken interfaith and faith-based projects, including 'Islamic Gardens in the UK', 'Real Faith, Real Lives', and an exhibition of artworks by Jewish artist Gitl Braun titled 'Eve's Daughters'.[2] The management committee is made up of several original founding members, and the day-to-day running of the Centre is undertaken by a predominantly Bangladeshi Muslim female staff. The Centre's training projects, integration work, domestic violence initiatives, and substantial involvement in local, national, and European social networks demonstrate the ways in which Bengali Muslim women have made an enduring impact upon the social and physical landscape of east London.

Tracing the ways in which women have constructed their own spaces in east London, such as Jagonari, and using subaltern methodologies to retrieve ways in which migrant women have navigated the spaces of east London historically, are thus key means to unsettle dominant and influential representations of migrant women. While it is not an official place of worship, religious faith has informed both the construction of the Centre and numerous projects undertaken over the years. Given that many mosques in east London do not have adequate provisions for Muslim women, or are generally not attended so frequently by Muslim women as by men, to map mosques as the exclusive spaces of faith and diasporic identity would silence a considerable proportion of Muslim women's own articulation of diasporic belonging and faith in a more pluralistic community context within the spaces of east London. Ostensibly 'secular' spaces such as the Jagonari Centre have multiple uses and act as bridging mechanisms between communities.

Conclusion

The lascar, the ayah, the Bengali, the Muslim. The typologies of identity foreground in turn profession, geography, faith. Emergent identities in turn have seemed to strengthen the boundaries of these typologies, turning demography into a recognisable (and politically deployable) cartography of placed people marked by difference. A suspicion of the historical and geographical ordering of these taxonomies has informed this chapter. A sharper focus on the spaces of east London as mutable and contested might help us to understand the waxing and waning of particular kinds of both identification and classification.

Conventional representations of east London appeal to the spatial imaginary's metaphor of the mosaic and the temporal narrative of ethnic succession and assimilation. This chapter, based on a diasporic perspective, suggests that something more complex might be found in the micro-histories of settlement, engagement, religious affiliation, and urban encounter. Rather than a mosaic of incommensurable ethnic others, our mapping suggests tension, affiliation, and resistance by communities across lines of difference and the formation of transient and contingent alliances. Rather than reflecting natural histories of ethnic settlement, encounters in the imperial and post-imperial east London contact zone can be seen as *staged* in the area's performative spaces, whether homosocial missions or women's centres. Complex gendered performances – notably forms of sly docility – have exceeded the ethnic and religious scripts written for these natives and strangers, and in these performances relations of self and other have been negotiated and renegotiated. Such performances, however, cannot be straightforwardly evidenced in their fragmentary archival traces, and stubborn postcolonial tactics of resistant reading are required to render them (fleetingly) visible. This venture moves us beyond the erasure of the agency of the subaltern from the archive – a gendered silencing of the early ayahs and lascars and later Sylheti women – and avoids the risk of an equally gendered heroic narrative of subaltern resistance which would overlook the shrewd complexity of their identifications. Whilst the micro-histories uncovered here are specific to their time and space, their disturbance of the conventional narratives of immigration points to an alternative positioning of faith and diaspora far beyond the East End.

Notes

1. See the work of the Swadhinata Trust, the Brick Lane Circle, and Humayun Ansari's history of the East London Mosque, as well as Faruque Ahmed's surveys of Bengali diaspora newspapers. The Plassey Project, organised by the

Brick Lane Circle in 2009–2010 and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, was a historical project that mapped east London in terms of its imperial past and London's ties to the area now known as Bangladesh. The project resulted in the publication of a book, written by the eight young people who participated in the project: Ali, R., Jamal, I., and Chowdhury, L. (2010). *Plassey's Legacy: Young Londoners Explore the Hidden Story of the East India Company.* London: Brick Lane Circle.

2. This exhibition, displayed in Jagonari's foyer in May 2007, aimed to 'bring out the similarities between the two communities in East London [..] and demonstrate how much can be achieved, despite (or because of) a background, even with English as a second language, and British as a second culture' (Chair's Introduction, 2007).

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4

Remembering the *Umma* in the Confines of the Nation State

Faiz Sheikh and Samantha May

Introduction: Rendering legible Islamic imperial memories

The chapter presents one framework of political formation, the *umma*, understood here as the global community of Muslims, and overlays this historical and contemporary assembly on that of the liberal citizenship of the nation state. It argues that the *umma* disrupts some of the assumptions of liberal citizenship, specifically the role of the individual and the secular characters of that citizenship. Such disruption is achieved through drawing on pre-colonial memories. In relation to the wider discussion on diasporic and transnational understandings of religious culture within established populations, this chapter traces how Muslims who settle in European societies interact with the norms of liberal citizenship found therein. It concludes that notions of citizenship as derived from historical imaginings of the *umma* can nonetheless largely accommodate themselves alongside a framework of liberal citizenship. Transnational Muslim solidarity or community does not entail an actual threat to liberal citizenship with regards to Muslims living in European countries, but it does question the liberal theoretical position regarding how communities are formed, presenting challenges to individualism. The presence of a conscious Muslim diaspora in liberal European countries serves Muslims in distinguishing between obligations towards God (*ibidat*) and obligations to community (*mu'amalat*), in two senses: the community of the transnational *umma* and the community of location or the established communities in which Muslim citizens find themselves. The heart of the chapter tackles the double identification of belonging – in both the local or particular setting and in the transnational sense, in which the *umma* was always

intended – essentially investigating the tension between the *umma* as a notion of communal participation and the liberal notion of individual-ist citizenship. The chapter begins by relating imperial memories of the concept of the *umma* and then proceeds with a discussion of liberal citizenship, before interrogating the two understandings of community and asking whether and how there can be mutually beneficial borrowings and plural accounts of community.

To use the term 'imperial' in contemporary political discussion has almost become a form of blasphemy, as it automatically connotes historical European colonialism. Blasphemous or not, this chapter will nonetheless utilise this term, resurrecting the pre-Marxist usage and reclaiming the concept on the basis that not all empires and imperial processes were European or Western. A vast array of historical political assemblages were based on imperial polities, and to shy away from the term due to European embarrassment would be Eurocentric at best, but at worst ignore and render invisible political and communal legacies remembered in the fabric of communities originating outside the Western domain. Thus, the concept of imperialism utilised in this chapter broadens its employment from the economic model dominant in Marxist literature. While economics was a powerful aspect of Islamic imperialism, historically the role of law and religious ethos dominated.

It must be emphasised that using the analogy of imperial memory is not to claim that the *umma* wishes the recreation of an empire. Nor does it necessitate an immovable set of concepts and beliefs. On the contrary, collective memories are malleable and can be re-imagined to meet new conditions, as voiced by Evans and Phillips when they proclaim:

> Time is layered upon time so that one buried layer of history seeps through to the one above . . . the cumulative impact of these different layers is a past that is permanently present.
>
> (Evans and Phillips, 2007, p. 25)

A return to what Michel Foucault describes as a 'pre-liberal' voice, here the Muslim *umma* may prove impossible, given the 'totalizing discourse of Western, capitalist modernity' (Shani, 2010, p. 210), but the dominance of liberal ideas of citizenship should not blind the onlooker to the existence and value of alternative frameworks that persist in its shadow.

The *umma* rests on collective identity that exists in at least three forms: texts, practices, and memory. Texts range in existing literature from the Qur'an, *Hadiths* (sayings and doings of the Prophet), and diverse legal literature to written histories of Islamic empires and

Muslim peoples. As Mandaville states, 'to read is, of course, to *interpret*' (Mandaville, 2001, p. 155). In this way, the reading of the past is contextualised by the needs and conditions in which they are being read. The second enduring legacy of Islam's imperial past is the continuance of Islamic institutions and practices. These contain the performance of obligations to God (*ibidat*), which include the five pillars and other forms of pious practice that persist across the contemporary world wherever Muslims reside. These practices do not fit neatly into the liberal nation state structure: they assume solidarities that do not privilege the individual. Islam continues to be practised on a collective, rather than individual, basis. The continuance of Islamic practices, such as *zakat* (obligatory alms), although partly in the 'private' domain, spill over to the public arena, causing problems for secular liberalism. Finally, Islam's historic past remains prevalent in the memories of Muslim peoples. This is not to argue that memories are remembered in the same way by all Muslim people or even in the same way by a Muslim person throughout their lifetime. Aspects of history are emphasised, while others are glossed over or forgotten in relation to present needs, allowing memory itself to assist in the contextualisation of the present (Fortier, 1999, p. 46). Texts, practices, and Islamic memory all originated and have developed from the early Islamic polities which emerged within an imperial context. Using the analogy of imperial memory is merely to posit that historical texts, Islamic practices, and rememberings are historically imperial in character and inherently emphasise collectivist and religious practices that work contrary to liberal concepts of individual citizenship.

The Western imposition of the nation state did not destroy preexisting assemblages in Muslim countries, but was superimposed upon existing political and social arrangements. Memories of historic Islamic imperial understandings of sovereignty, just governance, and community formations are being reawakened by a more politically conscious *umma* and diasporic Islamic networks to meet the challenges of the specific temporal conditions in which they operate. The *umma* is problematic to liberal notions of citizenship, as a popular notion exists that Islam is 'repellent and strange . . . The notion commonly associated with it is the Sharia . . . which would seem to be incompatible with the rules of enlightened reason' (Van Ess, 2006, p. 1). Islam may overlap geographically with liberal 'spheres of influence', especially in the case of Muslim diasporas in Europe, but operates 'relatively independently of the circuits and networks that define the structure of global liberalism' (Adamson, 2005, p. 548).

To identify why liberalism would view the *umma* as 'strange', this chapter employs Scott's notion of spaces of 'illegibility' (Scott J. C., 1998), which are spaces of public life that are not easily accommodated into pre-existing state categorisations, that is, categorisations aimed to simplify and make 'legible' the actions of state citizens.

> State simplifications can be considered part of an ongoing 'project of legibility', a project that is never fully realized. The data from which such simplifications arise are, to varying degrees, riddled with inaccuracies, omissions, faulty aggregations, fraud, negligence, political distortion, and so on.
>
> (Scott, 1998, p. 80)

That which the state cannot simplify is either not 'seen' or found to be irreconcilable. The *umma* is but one of many examples where the state's attempts at simplification render their actual mechanisms 'illegible'. Attempts to read the lived experiences and community behaviours of the *umma* through the lens of liberal nation state frameworks renders them apparently illegible, or they become a special case in political theory. What follows first outlines that which is seemingly readily legible in the European nation state, the concept of liberal citizenship, and then moves on to the illegible, that is, the *umma* in historical and contemporary articulations.

Liberalism and the notion of individuality

Liberalism is singled out in this discussion not because it is the only location of friction concerning the *umma* but because it is often argued to be the most problematic. Michael Doyle (1986, p. 1152) wrote in the late 1980s, '[t]here is no canonical description of liberalism'. Yet, the entire Western political system is founded on its principles, derived from the European Enlightenment (Ramsay, 2004, p. 1). The fundamental pillar of liberalism is the respect for individual autonomy (Haider, 2008, p. 7). This respect leads to a collection of rights pertaining to individuals that are seen to epitomise the liberal state; these include, but are not limited to, 'equality before the law, free speech and other civil liberties, private property, and elected representation' (Doyle, 1986, p. 1151). Islam and liberalism are perceived to provide competing discursive opportunities (Adamson, 2005, p. 548). To assess the validity of such positions this section critiques the ontological groundings of liberalism.

According to contemporary liberalism, 'it is the rights and duties of citizenship which constitute the shared bonds of political community'

(Chandler, 2009, p. 62). The idea of Kant's sovereign human being, a rational actor fully able to articulate and realise his wants and needs, heavily underpins liberal thought. When free, these individuals can come together and form society later. For Islam, the *modus operandi* is reversed: society is assumed to exist already – an Islamic society, that is – and its aim on the social level is to bring individual Muslims into that society (Labeeb, 2007, p. 72). Maureen Ramsay (2004, p. 32) sees Kant's 'abstract individual' as a fallacy; it is not realistic to believe in the existence of an 'asocial, atomistic, solitary and self-sufficient individual'. The idea of individuals as 'sole generators of their wants and preferences' (Ramsay, 2004, p. 253) is misleading and critiqued by various theoretical paradigms, as individuals are, at the very least, influenced by their surroundings as much as they constitute them. For Ramsay, a liberal theory that pursues individual freedom with such a 'radical conviction' (2004, p. 253) may undermine the cause of justice.

Contemporary debates on liberalism centre on agreement or disagreement with John Rawls' concept in *Political Liberalism* (2005 [1993]). Whether one agrees with Rawls or not, his theory 'dominates the field', as writers on liberalism who disagree with Rawls have to justify why they do so (Kymlicka, 2002, p. 55). For Rawls, access to resources, education, and wealth, for example, affects social justice (Kymlicka, 2002, pp. 299–300). Therefore, some measure of redistribution is required by way of the state, which impinges on an individual's absolute freedoms to provide equity in society. In essence, Rawls' theory aims to provide a 'level-playing field' for all individuals of society, so that those less advantaged might achieve their worth. Consequently, this concept of freedom 'directly derive[s] from views of what constitutes a self, a person, a man' (Berlin, 1969, p. 134). The liberalism typified by Rawls derives its theory of equality not from a transcendental source of rights, but from the rationality of an individual. In this way, Rawls' liberalism moves away from a universalised 'ideal'. Ramsay (2004, p. 253) caricatures Kant's 'solitary and self-sufficient individual', who by some abstract rationality comes to consensus with other abstract individuals. Rather, Rawls engages in a thought experiment that might still be abstract, but accounts for different notions of individuality, grounded in community (not everyone is assumed to have the same rationality when entering into Rawls' thought experiment, but must instead take steps to mitigate their position in society).

For Hamid Haidar (2008), Rawls' liberalism is therefore more tolerant of alternative ideologies, and in particular Shi'a Islam. Haidar asserts that removing the secularism from liberalism helps to reconcile it with Islam.

As liberalism is concerned with 'tolerance, individual liberty, and rights' and secularism with 'separating life or politics from religious concerns', a less secular liberalism may be easily reconciled with an Islamic liberalism (Haider, 2008, p. 21). The dominance of liberal ideals in the notion of citizenship means that the debate is almost always one of either 'how best to raise Islam to a level whereby it is compatible with liberalism', or a zero-sum conceptualisation whereby *only* liberalism *or* Islam can exist in contemporary discussions of transnationalism. Such an embrace of teleology, wherein liberalism represents an inevitable stage of advancement for all peoples, problematically (and ironically) removes notions of pluralism from any such discussion, and imbues Europe and European heritage with a 'pioneering agency' (Hobson, 2012, p. 13) which non-Europeans are destined to emulate, but not innovate.

John Schwarzmantel, by contrast, is very critical of any merging of religion in politics; for him, religion and liberalism are challengers for the same ontological space, incapable of living together as religion offers 'illusionary consolations for poverty and misery in the real world which could in fact be cured by human action' (2008, p. 120). In the teleological world view of liberalism, ever marching on towards progress, religion represents a 'reversal of the modernist Enlightenment project', and something to avoid (Schwarzmantel, 2008, p. 121). Schwarzmantel's preference for secular ideologies rather than religious ones lies in the fact that he sees religion as a particularly divisive form of cultural identification, undermining the unity offered by secular positions (Schwarzmantel, 2008, p. 123). Arguing that we live not in an age of 'post-ideology', but in an age of postmodern rejection of grand narratives, Schwarzmantel maintains that '[a] more accurate view sees such post-ideological diversity as existing within and contained by a more pervasive dominant ideology of neo-liberalism' (2008, p. 168). Such a teleological view of progress is problematic as by singling out religious ideology as being divisive, he does not acknowledge the divisiveness of secular ideologies. Here, we argue rather that the focus of any perceived incompatibility between liberalism and religion can be more correctly attributed to a notion of universal individualism inherent in the liberal ideology, not to liberalism's secular nature. The absolute priority of the individual undermines the cause of social justice, and so Ramsay concludes that '[t]o bring forward the emancipatory project of liberalism once embarked upon, we can retain the respect for the equal worth of each individual, but we must jettison the liberal conception of that individual and all that follows from it' (2004, p. 254).

Imperial memories and alternative citizenship: The *millet*

Historical treatment of minority communities highlights the difference between the individualism practised by modern liberal states and the communitarianism of historical Islamic polities, wherein group tolerance was preferred over individual autonomy. The different minority groups in the Ottoman Empire, for example, were 'permitted to practice their religions and earn their livelihood, as long as they deferred to Muslim authority and kept a low profile' (Deshen and Zenner, 1996, p. 15), recognising that generally, with some contextual exceptions, only the other Abrahamic faiths, the *ahl al-kitab*, People of the Book, were afforded such a status. Perhaps one of the most striking aspects of contemporary Muslims is the apparent compatibility with loyalties both larger and smaller than that to the nation state; both transnational and local. In part, these compatible loyalties can be explained by a sense of religious solidarity with the *umma* and a shared legal code which transcends nation state boundaries. However, there are also memories of historical imperial political systems that both allowed and encouraged differing loyalties to flourish under one political framework.

The enormous geographic expanse of the Ottoman Empire incorporated many ethnic groups of differing religious orientations. Even those of the same religion had traditions that, in practice, differed substantially from one area to the next. In order to accommodate the vast array of peoples, the Ottomans preserved the existing laws and codes of religious communities called *millet*s. In creating the *millet* system, the Ottomans created a dual loyalty to the Ottoman Sultan and the Empire on the one hand while retaining original loyalties to existing religious and geographic groupings on the other (Shaw, 1962, p. 617). The example of the Prophet and *al-rashidun* (the Prophet's immediate successors) served as the basis for the institutionalisation of the *millet* system by Ottoman law, derived from the Constitution of Medina and the contract established between the Prophet Muhammad and People of the Book. Islamic sanctioning of the *millet* system was granted from the Qur'anic ruling that People of the Book should be entitled to, and granted, protection (Toynbee, 1955, p. 122). The Ottoman Empire was not the only Islamic assemblage to utilise the precedent of the Constitution of Medina, but as one of the largest and most enduring Islamic empires, the legacy of the *millet* system is profound.

People of the Book could expect the right of protection and autonomy within their *millet* on the proviso that they carried out their duty of

respecting the laws of the empire outwith their individual communities and paid their due taxes to the sultan's government. The *millet* system comprised non-territorial autonomous groups, intermingled geographically throughout the extensive territory of the empire. It is important to note that the *millet* system did not offer equality. Different rights and obligations existed for Muslims and non-Muslims. Within the *millet* system the fusion of religion and politics was evident. The religious leaders of the various *millet*s were recognised in the Ottoman capital as political rulers of their communities. This imperial memory contains within it a blueprint for legal pluralism, but one which is hierarchically structured. The hierarchy evident in Islamic legal pluralism may seem to contradict the egalitarian assumptions of liberal pluralism, although arguably the latter too contains a silent hierarchy,[1] whereby the individual is privileged over the collective group and the secular deemed more 'rational' than the publicly religious practitioner. The form of group tolerance shown by the *millet* system did not privilege the rights of the individual; while autonomy was granted within groups legally and culturally, the individual *had* to be affiliated to a community. If a person denied all faith and thus became *kufr* (an unbeliever), it was a crime punishable by death. In this regard, Will Kymlicka describes the Ottoman method of rule over minorities as 'antithetical to the ideals of personal liberty' (2002, p. 231). However, a degree of historical symmetry is neglected by Kymlicka. Regarding the equality of persons and personal liberty in the *millet* example, it is clear that the egalitarian nature of Islam is as chequered as that of political liberalism. While Islam freed people of the Middle East from the authority of kings hundreds of years before Europe did the same, it quickly reverted back to hereditary royal authority. Likewise, Islam provided an unheard-of level of women's and minority rights at its inception, although these rights are often perceived as stagnant and insufficient with the advent of social or democratic liberalism. Until the advent of the twentieth century, however, they still remained far greater than those offered by Europe in relation to property and divorce.

To hold up the record of historical Islamic governance against that of modern-day liberalism is a fallacy, as liberalism too has its dark periods (not least the Jewish pogroms, European witch-hunts, colonisation, racial segregation, and women's subordination). Domenico Losurdo points out, for example, that '[s]lavery is not something that persisted despite the success of the [eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European and American] liberal revolutions. On the contrary, it experienced its maximum development following that success' (2011, p. 35). Political liberalism has matured over hundreds of years, yet even now is argued

by Mark Duffield to have maintained large zones of exception across the world, which ensure 'our' liberties by denying 'theirs', whoever they may be (Duffield, 2007, p. 192), much in the same way that 'exception clauses' (Losurdo, 2011, p. 342) have allowed for 'liberal' slavery and 'liberal' colonialism. The notion of the individual so venerated in the liberal tradition was historically a limiting term that did not cover various peoples, from non-white peoples to women, to those who did not own property. In short, despite the place of *dhimmis* as subordinated under Islamic rule, Islam has a strong egalitarian current that maintains that '[m]ost noble among you in God's eyes is he who fears God most' (Qur'an, 43:13). This Qur'anic verse is often used to show that there is no social distinction between Muslims, except that of piety.

Approaching an Islamic citizenship through the *umma*

For many, the *umma* is simply a body of pious believers distinct, and separate, from temporal political practice and thought. Yet, in an era of globalisation, issues concerning identity and community formations spill into the political domain both intentionally and unintentionally. It is salient to note Juergensmeyer's account of Western nationalism as espoused by theorists Kohn and Emerson:

> When Kohn and Emerson used the term *nationalism* they had in mind not just a secular political ideology...but a particular form of political organization: the modern European and American nation-state. In such an organization individuals are linked to a centralized, all embracing democratic political system that is unaffected by any other affiliations.... That linkage is sealed by an emotional sense of identification with a geographic area and a loyalty to a particular people and identity....
>
> (Juergensmeyer, 1994, p. 14)

Striking is the assumption of supreme loyalty to the territorial nation state. The individual is presumed to be incorporated into one political assemblage which is 'unaffected by any other affiliations' (Juergensmeyer, 1994, p. 14). The concept of the *umma* therefore adds confusion into the heart of theoretical frameworks that take for granted supreme loyalty to the state. Despite the apolitical stance of many Muslims, the *umma* is deemed a political 'problem' in relation to liberal citizenship and transnationalism, and thus the community of believers becomes a political issue regardless of whether the community wishes

it to be so. This issue has become even more pronounced over the last several decades with the rise of Islamism.[2]

Despite the nation state framework dominating many theories on Islamist ideologies and practices (Esposito, 2002; Kepel, 1994; Kramer, 1996; Roy, 2004), an imperial paradigm may be more appropriate. Islamist movements repeatedly refer to the Islamic imperial framework through references to the model of the first Islamic polity formed by the Prophet and the early Islamic community:

> They call for a return to Islam. Behind this call was the belief that it was Islam that had united the tribes under Muhammad, inspired the early expansion and conquests, informed the glories of Islamic empires and civilizations, and served as a motivating force in revivalist reforms . . . the lessons of faith and history were clear . . . . Coping with modernity did not require new, foreign-inspired alternatives when the community (*umma*) had a tried and true faith and way of life.
>
> (Esposito, 1998, p. 161)

If the *umma* 'had a tried and true faith and way of life', what then might it look like, as inspired by the Prophet and his earliest followers? And, more pressingly for the discussion at hand, why is it perceived as antithetical to liberal citizenship?

Majid Khadduri describes a dual agreement amongst the Muslims of Medina to explain the transition of sovereignty from the Prophet Muhammed to his successors. He explains:

> Under Muhammad not only the executive, but also the legislative and judicial functions of Allah were united . . . In more precise terms we may argue that only the possession of sovereignty resided with Allah, while its exercise was delegated to Muhammad.
>
> (Khadduri, 1955, p. 10)

During the Prophet's lifetime, a single contract sufficed to justify a Muslim's loyalty to the Prophet. As Muhammed's authority was synonymous with God's, granting sovereignty to Muhammed was tantamount to granting sovereignty to God. With the death of the Prophet, those who had interpreted their contract to lie with Muhammed sought to reject the authority of Medina, the capital of the nascent Islamic polity. Those who interpreted their contract to lie with God were left to appoint a successor to Muhammed, 'entrusted with the execution of the divine

commands which were still binding upon the Muslims' (Khadduri, 1955, p. 10). Using an example derived from imperial memory, the *riddah* wars fought under the *caliph* Abu Bakr between 632 and 634 set the precedent for punishment for apostasy as death (Ayoub, 2004, p. 74). Importantly, punishment was not immediately executed and allowed a period for repentance (Peters and De Vries, 1976–1977, p. 6). This example demonstrates the importance of the contractual agreement with God.

Khadduri identifies the two contracts used to delineate sovereignty in the period of the *rashidun*, following the death of the Prophet and the end of a singular contract. These were as follows: first, a contract between the Muslims and God and Muhammed, represented by submission to Islam, the declaration of faith, *shahadda*; and second, a contract between the Muslims and the Caliph (or approximate leader), the Muslims empowering the Caliph to enforce the divine law (Khadduri, 1955, pp. 9–12). These two contracts, and the inference that a Muslim polity necessarily enforces divine law, lie at the heart of what makes overlaying the imperial assembly over the notion of liberal citizenship so problematic. There can be no space in liberal citizenship for the enforcement of divine law if that enforcement undermines the autonomy of the individual. Equally, it underlines tensions within liberal theory. If the right of the individual, including the right to personal religious freedom, is to be taken seriously, then the right to practise religious law collectively, at least in the private domain, has to be accommodated.

Abdul A'ala Maududi, the founder of Jamaat-e-Islami in British India in the 1940s, identified a distinction between a 'Muslim' and 'Islamic' state (Ayubi, 1991, p. 128). These two concepts coincide with Khadduri's two contracts, but Maududi articulated them in the form of two different kinds of sovereignty, political and legal. 'Political sovereignty thus naturally means ownership of the authority of enforcing legal sovereignty' (Maududi, 1960, p. 18). Here, Maududi introduced a hierarchy to the dual contract. The one pertaining to legal sovereignty is superior to the one pertaining to political sovereignty. Legal sovereignty is also referred to as the 'Divine Code' or *hakimiyya* ('the sovereignty of God') by Maududi, and in this way he finds space for God, through the *shari'a*, to legislate in the state. The political sovereignty he describes is that of a 'vicegerent of God', and therefore, 'the scope of its activities will naturally be restricted within the limits ordained by the Almighty Himself' (Maududi, 1960, p. 27). In this way, he does not contradict the Qur'anic injunction in chapter 2, verse 229, '[t]hese are the limits ordained by God; so do not transgress them' (Qur'an, 2:229).

If Muslims, by virtue of their *shahadda*, automatically abide by the first contract with God and the prophet Muhammed, then does this ensure that the Muslim diaspora, in feeling a sense of solidarity with other Muslims through the *umma*, must pose a threat to liberal citizenship? Not necessarily. Referring to imperial memory once again, the authority of the *rashidun* was 'indistinguishable from the public body' (Rahman, 1979, p. 79) in their time, but under the Umayyad dynasty of the seventh and eighth centuries, authority became distanced from civil society. The death of the Prophet and an end to direct access to divine guidance for Sunni Islam meant that the need for a second contract to legitimate authority in the Islamic polity was evident (a legitimation achieved in Shi'ism through the Imams).

The second contract is an explicitly political contract compared to the first, which is overtly religious in nature. The second contract relates to life in the temporal world. The distinction between the temporal and the transcendental is one that recurs in Islamic discourse. Much of the ambiguity about political guidance in Islamic source texts centres on temporal and transcendental aspects of the *shari'a*. The first contract is grounded in religion and is an authority that 'will be useful for life in both this and the other world' (Rahman, 1979, p. 79). The second is an authority that is based on an 'intellectual (rational) basis' (Rahman, 1979, p. 79) and is only of benefit to this temporal world. When Muslim contractors agree to the second contract, they are agreeing primarily to prevent anarchy that would lead to the demise of humanity. As an ideal, they are empowering the Caliph to enforce the divine law as agreed in the first contract. This second contract is built on the first, in the hierarchy that Maududi alludes to. The first, *shahadda* contract, binds Muslims to the law, and '[t]he law ... precedes the state: it provides the basis of the state' (Khadduri, 1955, p. 16). Does the *shari'a* restrict the ability of the polity to function, or of Muslim citizens in European countries to be part of a liberal citizenry should they wish?

Here, it is argued that in certain circumstances the Muslim contractor, in agreeing to the second political contract, is not necessarily advocating or asserting the enforcement of divine law. In such circumstances, the political authority has perhaps succumbed to the evils that can result from it, 'such as tyranny, injustice, and pleasure-seeking' (Ibn-Khaldun, 1958, p. 391). If such a case was not possible, then for what reason does Ibn-Khaldun, a Muslim proto-sociologist of the fourteenth century, expound upon a taxonomy of the various authorities in Muslim lands? In fact, there is a difference between a caliph (or 'imam', which Ibn Khaldun uses as an approximate term) and a sultan or mulk (king).

The former satisfies *both* contracts with the Muslims and the latter only the second in its purely temporal nature. Both are possible, and it is conceivable for Muslims to consent to both types of authority. If a Muslim is able to practise their faith, then the first contract is upheld. That the second contract is not used to its full advantage, to uphold and enforce Islamic values in a given territory, does not mean that its lesser function, that of maintaining government, is not of value. Upholding government is necessary for Muslims to practise their faith.

A second argument countering the blending of religion with politics is contained within the work of Piscatori, who uses Qur'anic verse and historical precedent to show how Islam endorses a pluralistic political life, thereby nullifying the universalism of the *faith* in the realm of the *political*. Among many verses used by Piscatori to this end,[3] the most poignant is chapter 42, verse 8, which states, '[i]f God had so willed, He would have made them one community'. This verse lays the foundations for ideological and political divisions in Muslim territory, where law, politics, and territory need not be contiguous. On historical precedent, Piscatori references the pacts made by Muhammed with the Jews of Medina (as in the *millet* system), the Christians of Aqaba and the polytheists of Mecca. After the period of *al-rashidun* he points to the Umayyads' relationship with the Byzantines, where one caliph established truce and tribute with the Byzantines and another accepted aid from them to decorate the Prophet's Mosque and the Great Mosque in Damascus. 'The Abbasids rather more routinely concluded treaties with foreigners' (Piscatori, 1986, p. 49), and during the Crusades several formal treaties were established between the Muslims and the European, Christian kings. Piscatori concludes that, against the perceived universality of Islamic politics, 'Muslim rulers found no difficulty at all in having formal diplomatic dealings with non-Muslims when it was necessary to do so' (Piscatori, 1986, p. 49). Despite the current dominance of the nation state system which presumes a singular centralised political system, past and present political assemblages allow for the possibility of multiple political configurations to exist in the same place simultaneously for reasons of expediency. Therefore, if Sunni Islamic social contract does not *always* demand that political authority apply the *shari'a* at state level, so long as that authority does not impinge on Muslim rights to adhere to the primary tenets of *shari'a* on a personal level, then from this reading the ideological, political, and territorial universality of Islam are not as absolute as we might believe.

There is one further reason to contest the idea that it is the potential mixing of religion and politics within Islam that is problematic to liberal

citizenship. Mohamed Arkoun makes reference to 'secular religions' like Marxism and Fascism and believes that secularism and religion have common features (Arkoun, 1998, p. 218). John Gray elaborates on these common features and comments on the similarities between the religious fundamentalism of al-Qaeda and other Western, secular, political ideologies. It is not, for Gray, religion that causes what is considered 'irrational' behaviour, but rather the characteristics of political modernity that do so. Al-Qaeda's assertion that they can create a perfect order on earth is a peculiar myth shared by Nazism, Communism and liberal positivism (Gray, 2003, pp. 1–4). The only difference between religious brutality in the past and contemporary religious or ideological brutality is that previously damage was done to individuals and society for the sake of life after death, whereas now it is done for the sake of an idealised utopia that can be realised in the here and now (Gray, 2003, p. 117).

Can the *umma* and liberal citizenship be compatible?

Having explored two frameworks of citizenship, one liberal and the other Islamic, this final section explores the way in which the two historical systems, when placed alongside one another, need not be perceived as entirely conflicting arrangements, although important differences remain. Liberal and Islamic notions of citizenship equally derive from an embrace of the value of pluralism, necessitating a truncating of both liberal individualism and the Muslim call to the 'oneness' (*tawheed*) of the Islamic message in the practice of politics. An overemphasis on the universalism of both liberalism and Islam leads to the conclusion that the two positions are necessarily the basis of 'clash'-based politics (Huntington, 1996, p. 253). Conversely, an understanding of the pluralism also embedded in liberalism and Islam can help to conceive of them as spaces to move within, rather than fixed points to clash over (al-Ghannoushi, cited in Esposito, 2001, p. 174).

Michael Walzer's communitarian argument in *Spheres of Justice* argues for an inherent plurality in the notion, or better put, *notions* of justice (1983, p. 4). Speaking directly to the atomism of liberalism, he claims that '[w]e cannot say what is due to this person or that until we know how these people relate to one another through the things they make and distribute. There cannot be a just society until there is a society' (Walzer, 1983, pp. 312–313). However, Walzer's communities and societies are idealised, generally culturally homogenous ones that deny the historical and contemporary violence needed to create them as such

(Bader, 1995, p. 217). There is a conspicuous lack of recognition that societal structures sometimes perpetuate themselves not through consenting agents, but rather though 'mirror[ing] the balance of power of the various groups within them and the conventions and customs of the economic and political practices in which their members are engaged' (Bellamy, 1992, p. 249). Veit Bader (1995) highlights that Walzer is over-reliant on the state to provide a sense of 'closure' to his community and to prevent the splintering of people into smaller and smaller groups. The state, for Walzer, is 'necessary and legitimate to defend shared meaning, values, and ways of life' (Bader, 1995, p. 213). Such an argument, however, 'clings to the superposition of ethnic, cultural, and national identities and citizenship' (Bader, 1995, p. 213). This notion sits uncomfortably with the concept of the *umma* which is perceived to exist *despite* the individual units of territorial states and not because of them.

So, on the one hand liberalism's universalism denies cultural or 'lived' truths, while on the other hand a communitarian perspective alludes to a community that bears little resemblance to multicultural realities. If it is true that '[j]ustice is relative to social meanings' (Walzer, 1983, p. 312), then operationalising that dictum is proving difficult in the contemporary world. For example, when an individual considers a practice within the community they are a part of unjust, does that imply that the individual is – or should be – no longer part of that community? Such a view would see a gradual splintering of 'community' into 'a thousand petty fortresses' (Walzer, 1983, p. 39). The notion of Islamic citizenship through the *umma* can circumvent this problem by the emphasis on a dual contract between the individual and government, which can be applied specifically in circumstances that would otherwise lead to community friction and fragmentation.

Recalling the dual contract following Majid Khadduri, one contract is between Muslims and God through the declaration of faith (*shahadda*) and a second between the Muslim and a temporal authority. Arguably there is a third contract. The *shari'a* distinguishes between explicit obligation to God (*ibidat*), which entails the performance of the five pillars and obligations and duties towards the community, and to humanity as a whole (*mu'amalat*). The *mu'amalat* refers to the broad range of activities and behaviours that are commanded, forbidden, and allowed within society. A plethora of activities and behaviour is subsumed in this contract, including the forbidding of murder, the duties of economic welfare, and proper conduct towards animals and the environment. It is therefore unnecessary for Muslims fully to succumb to liberal ideas of citizenship in order to be active and participating citizens of society:

the practice of *mu'amalat* already ensures this. Such a separation of sovereignty allows for Muslims who live in non-Muslim territory, as long as the temporal authority does not impede upon the individual's ability to fulfil the first contract. Likewise, employing this reading, in Muslim territory any method of government is acceptable and does not contravene God's sovereignty, insofar as the Muslim temporal power respects the commitment to the first agreement.

Connecting the discussion of liberalism and communitarianism to the citizenship of the *umma*, it is noted that the first agreement, between the Muslim and God, resembles the universalism of liberal notions of justice in two ways. First, just as liberalism is a broad and contested tradition, a Muslim's concept of what constitutes his or her agreement with God in his or her declaration of faith is also contested beyond the five pillars. Second, both liberalism and the *shahadda*, while contested, assume a certain agreement in what constitutes the *core* tenets of those terms. The extent of this agreement may well be thin and certainly does not extend to separate 'doctrines', be they between the market liberalism of Friedrich Hayek and the communitarian liberalism of John Rawls (Bellamy, 1992, p. 218), or the Sunni–Shi'a divide. The significance of both a commitment to liberalism and the Muslim's declaration of faith lies in the shared universalist tendency that tries to give both concepts meaning detached from the social context in which they are used. The second of Khadduri's contracts, between the Muslim and the temporal ruler, resembles the communitarian commitment to deriving meaning from social context. As Muslims need not be bound under Khadduri's second contract by any transcendental commandments about the institutional practice of the economy[4] or governance, it is up to human ingenuity to develop a model for the pragmatics of politics.

There is, however, a great difficulty in trying to accommodate both the universalism of the *shahadda* and the specificity of the different cultural and religious practices of Muslims. Islam can be interpreted to rest on certain truths, broadly understood as the universal pretensions of Khadduri's first contract (with God), in other words, divine truths that exist independent of social context. On the other hand, the interpretivism of Islamism and the different communities within which Muslims find themselves living broadly maps on to the cultural specificity of communitarianism and is inherently bound to and reliant upon social context. While separating the two notions in a dual contract allows the resolution of this tension theoretically, in practice these Muslim contractors are asked simultaneously to embrace universalism and particularism and to keep the two conceptually separate as they

go about their lives. Such a situation is not without precedent in the imperial assembly, a legacy from *al rashidun*. Local custom and law were accommodated in the expansion of the nascent Islamic polity, so long as they did not contradict the pillars of Islam.

Conclusion

The history of alternative political assemblies in the Muslim world is one that is carried by Muslim diasporas as they settle in regions of the world, like Europe, that do not share their heritage. However, the feeling of community with other Muslims, the transnational *umma* identity that Muslims can access, creates a conundrum for the secular, liberal identity of state citizenship. When we examine the place of the individual in liberal citizenship, we see that the notion of deriving values abstractly and applying them universally does not adequately account for the communal construction of those values. In this respect, the *umma* sits on the other end of this spectrum, insisting on the presence of community before establishing the values that constitute the basis of that community. Taking another unit of analysis as the base point of society – the community rather than the individual – is not unique to Islam and is inherent in many religious and non-religious paradigms (Durkheim, Marxism, feminism, post-positivist theories). In some ways there is a clear basis to the *umma*, the Muslim's declaration of faith, but if the Muslim's duties to the *umma* are defined as *mu'amalat* (obligations to the community), then what is less clear is how to articulate these duties in a de-territorialised, uncentralised *umma* that shares its members with the nation state.

Using the historical foundations of Islamic imperial rule, this chapter has demonstrated how the notion of community has played a historical role in the formation of Muslim identity and its values. Muslim memories of this 'alternative' practice of citizenship, explored through the *millet* system of the Ottoman Empire, centred on communal tolerance, rather than individual freedoms and thus may be seen as incompatible with liberalism. Comparing the imperial system with contemporary liberal citizenship suggests that there may be a beneficial exchange between members of a transnational diaspora and the particular communities they live in. For members of the Muslim diaspora, accommodation to aspects of liberal citizenship can help distinguish between those aspects of the faith that are transcendental and those aspects that are subject to re-interpretation in different geographies and temporal settings. In this respect, the experience of the European

Muslim living within the contemporary confines and obligations of the nation state, while simultaneously embracing the memory of alternative (religious and communal) forms of citizenship, works to undermine the notion of a 'monolithic' Islam that is singular in purpose and meaning, and always at odds with liberalism. It also challenges liberalism to take seriously the individual right to religious freedoms and to confront the contradictions within itself.

Notes

1. All are equal so long as the division between public and private is maintained, thus ensuring liberal secular notions remain dominant.
2. The authors note the difficulty of defining 'Islamism' but utilise it here to broadly describe a variety of differing movements that have arisen in response to the challenges of secular modernity, and specifically the decline and eventual abolition of the Caliphate. Islamism is not a monolithic movement so crucial difficulties arise in utilising a singular category to describe movements with divergent aims and strategies, and yet the familiar link between them all is the consciously held ideological position that Islam requires political expression, thus providing an overt rejection of secularism. Contemporary Islamism has its roots in the eighteenth century, but the number of groups advocating Islam as the political solution to modern challenges has increased particularly with the rise of globalisation from the 1970s onwards.
3. See Qur'an, 49:13, 4:59 and 42:8, and Piscatori, 1986, pp. 45–46.
4. Certain economic commandments are contained within the first contract, such as zakat, but the institutional practice of this differs across Muslim polities and communities.

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Part II
Associations

5
Negotiating Settlement: Senegalese Muslim Immigrants and the Politics of Multiple Belongings in New York City

Ousmane Kane

In the modern period, two great waves of international migration brought over 50 million immigrants to the United States. Immigrants of the first great wave (1881–1930) were predominantly European, but most of those who came during the second great wave (1965–2000) originated from the developing world. Latin America and Asia alone supplied 80 per cent of the immigrants admitted in the United States in the 1980s (Hirschman et al., 1999, p. 1). America has also been a destination for African immigrants, particularly Anglophone West Africans. Throughout the twentieth century, Ghanaians, Nigerians, Gambians, Liberians, and Sierra Leoneans have come to the United States to pursue education and/or employment opportunities, and many have made very successful careers. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, over a million continental Africans lived in the United States. They have ranked among the groups with the highest academic achievement in the United States, as almost 50 per cent of foreign-born Africans (predominantly Anglophones) have had a college degree (Arthur, 2000, p. ix).

In contrast, West Africans from French-speaking countries had a long tradition of immigration to France. The beginning of their presence in France can be traced to the mid-nineteenth century (Manchuelle, 1997), but it peaked in the aftermath of the Second World War when Europe was in need of an enhanced workforce for its reconstruction. France and Britain, the two major European imperial nations, facilitated the immigration of nationals of their former colonies. South Asians from

India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, and West Indians and West Africans from former colonies of the Crown were admitted to Britain. Likewise, large contingents of North and West Africans (Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians, Malians, Senegalese, Togolese, Ivoirians) were welcomed to France. Some were students who attended French colleges and universities and returned home to occupy well-paid jobs. But the majority were labour migrants. Living as single men in housing designed for bachelors, they occupied menial jobs that the French people typically did not want. Their goal was to save enough money to secure a decent living in their homeland. Initially, neither these African immigrants nor the host country anticipated that they would stay long, but most settled down in France for long periods of time. Some were able to sponsor the immigration of spouses from the homeland, and others married in France and set up households and started raising children. By the 1980s, a 'second generation' of African immigrants was growing in the French suburbs (Kepel, 1987).

From the mid-1970s, a host of tough immigration laws stopped the open-door immigration policy in France. An entry visa and a residence permit became required to enter and work in France. To further check immigration flows, the French police conducted stop and search procedures on a large scale, targeting North and West African immigrants (Jobard et al., 2009), and the undocumented immigrants among them were deported on a regular basis. In addition, the economic crisis and its corollary – unemployment – made life even more difficult for African immigrants in France. With two million unemployed in the 1980s in France, even menial jobs became scarce and the native French competed with immigrants for those jobs. Prominent among the other challenges faced by African immigrants at the time was rising xenophobia. The 1980s witnessed the rise to prominence of the right-wing party National Front (FN), which blamed immigration for all France's problems: unemployment, insecurity, and alleged threats to national identity. Over the years, its anti-immigration rhetoric was embraced by large segments of the French population and politicians.

Since most immigrants brought to France in the post–Second World War period were Muslims, Islamophobia has been growing in France in particular and Europe in general. A poll conducted in 1992 in France revealed that two-thirds of the French population feared the presence of Islam (Asad, 2003, p. 159). Although European countries guaranteed the freedom of religion, the settlement of millions of Muslims striving to carve out a niche for Islam was a serious challenge to secularising Western societies that strongly resisted the institutionalisation of what

was to them a new religion. This was clearly reflected in the debate about the Muslim headscarf or veil, the building of new mosques, and the demands for recognition of their religious rights (Fetzer and Soper, 2005). It was in this context that West African immigrants started to consider alternative destinations, and the United States emerged as a new major destination for these immigrants during the 1980s.

Between the mid-1980s and the late 1990s, thousands of immigrants from French-speaking countries of West Africa had settled in the United States. Among them the Senegalese predominated, followed by nationals from Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, and Mauritania (Kane, 2011; Stoller, 2002). This chapter examines the process of settlement of the Senegalese immigrants in New York City in the last quarter of the twentieth century. It argues that New York offered a relatively immigrant- and black-friendly environment that enabled these predominantly non-documented immigrants to join the labour force and institutionalise their presence. I first discuss the routes and socio-economic characteristics of the Francophone West African Muslim migration (nationality, gender, age, occupations). Next, I look at the efforts in community building in New York City, and finally, I analyse the ways in which these immigrants have negotiated multiple citizenships in the United States while cultivating ties with the homeland.

The first question is, 'When and how did the formation of Senegalese communities take place in the United States?' There were several migratory strategies. In the 1980s, most Senegalese entered with tourist visas and overstayed their allotted time, hoping to regularise their residency along the way. Initially, tourist visas were obtained in the US consulate in Senegal. Later, as the US consular services in Senegal noticed that large numbers of Senegalese were overstaying their tourist visas to practise street vending in upper-class neighbourhoods in New York City, getting a visa became more difficult in Senegal, and Senegalese candidates for migration looked for visas in other African countries, notably Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire, and Cameroon (Ebin, 1996). The US Immigration Control Reform Act of 1986 provided amnesty to millions of illegal aliens who could prove that they had arrived in the United States before 1982 and had worked as agricultural labourers. Although very few Senegalese fulfilled those requirements, many were resourceful enough to provide the documentation and gained permanent residency and a path to citizenship.

In the 1990s, migration strategies became more diverse. Quite a few were admitted as refugees. Following a border dispute between Senegal and Mauritania in 1989, thousands of black Mauritanians had been

deported from their country. The United States gave thousands of visas to Mauritanian refugees, many of whom had been deported to Senegal. Among the beneficiaries, many were Senegalese who produced documents stating that they came from Mauritania. The Diversity Immigrant Visa Program was another source for Senegalese migration to the United States. In 1990, the US Congress passed the Immigration Act that opened lawful immigration to countries with low rates of immigration to the United States: starting from 1995, 55,000 visas were annually offered on a lottery visa. Those Senegalese admitted to the United State under the visa lottery programme enjoyed full benefits of permanent residency upon their arrival in the United States.

Senegalese immigrants included a small minority of students who, after receiving higher education in the United States, secured permanent residency. But the majority of Senegalese immigrants residing in the United States entered with a tourist visa and overstayed as undocumented immigrants. Until now, there are no reliable statistics on the demographics of the Senegalese in the United States. According to the statistics of the Immigration and Naturalization Service of the Department of Homeland Security, about 10,000 Senegalese lived in the Unites States as permanent residents in 2000. However, the number of Senegalese people residing in the Unites States dwarfs this by a significant margin. Based on remittances sent from New York City, a Senegalese journalist estimated that in New York City alone, some 30,000 people might have been sending remittances back to Senegal in 2001.[1] According to my own research, the majority of worshippers in selected African mosques I attended in the first decade of the twenty-first century were not documented.

In the 1980s, most Senegalese immigrants were young adult or middle-aged men. Most had probably not completed high school. During the 1990s, female migration increased considerably. Some of these women were sponsored by a spouse. Many came on their own, leaving their family behind. Unlike the well-educated Anglophones who worked as professionals, most Francophone immigrants took blue-collar jobs, particularly street vending. This required neither a degree nor English proficiency, and vendors paid little or no tax. It had great flexibility for documented vendors in particular. They could travel back to the homeland and stay long months with their families. The second most common profession was cab driving. In the 1980s and 1990s, yellow cabs did not serve some parts of Harlem and the Bronx because of the prevailing insecurity, but the Senegalese provided gypsy car taxi services.

The majority of women worked as hair braiders (Babou, 2008). Hair braiding required no particular training for women since most Senegalese women already knew how to do it. It was relatively profitable in the 1980s and 1990s in New York City. Women could easily make an average income of $2,000 a month, which was higher than the income of most men working as cab drivers and street vendors. However, the work schedule was quite challenging since most customers attended hair braiding salons at the end of the workday or on the weekend. Thus, hair braiders typically work till late at night. Other Senegalese women worked in the food industry as grocery store owners or employees, or in the many ethnic restaurants that the Senegalese opened in the enclaves they created in Harlem, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. Finally, a few Senegalese women opened day care centres accepting exclusively children of their co-ethnics and offering very affordable services (Kane, 2011).

In the course of the 1990s, Senegalese immigrants arriving in the Unites States included a large number of professionals. Some resigned from their jobs in Senegal to pursue the American dream. Quite a few among them were college educated, but since they had no US degree and no English proficiency, and many were undocumented, they tended to take blue-collar jobs. Thirty years after the settlement of the Senegalese, a US-born and raised second generation is now joining the labour force. Some are entering highly skilled and technical jobs, but this second generation has not been researched enough and is not the focus of this chapter, which looks at how the first generation of Senegalese negotiated their settlement in the United States and New York City in particular in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Carving a space in New York City

New York City was the port of entry of Francophone West Africans in general and the Senegalese in particular. The first comers in the early 1980s did not intend to stay. They lived frugally. Many shared a room or a small apartment in Harlem, the Bronx, or Brooklyn. Originally, they alternated in cooking and cleaning their room/house. The demand for food led to the growth of an ethnic food industry largely monopolised by Senegalese women. Some women owned restaurants, and others cooked in their residence and would send the food to designated places where customers would purchase it.

The affordability of rental rates in the Upper Westside neighbourhood and the proximity of Muslim places for worship in a black-friendly

environment were an incentive for settlement in Harlem. Two African American mosques welcomed the Senegalese. The first was the Malcom Shabbazz Mosque founded by Malcom X in the early 1960s on 116th and Lenox. The second was the Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood founded by Sheikh Tawfiq (d. 1988), located on 113th and Seventh Avenue (Curtis, 2009, p. 62). In both mosques, Francophone West Africans were welcomed by officiating imams. By the early 1990s, the Senegalese, Ivoirians, and Mauritanians continued to settle in fairly large numbers in South Harlem between 110th and 125th street, but predominantly on 116th street between Frederick Douglas Avenue and Adam Clayton Powell. Most had rented apartments and rooms in the buildings of 116th street and opened a large number of immigrant stores at the ground-floor level facing 116th street. Although some continued to pray in African American Sunni mosques in Harlem, they gradually opened their own mosques in the neighbourhood, including Masjid Aqsa and Masjid Salam mosques in which French would be a language of communication and preaching. Several grocery stores and restaurants serving African food were opened by Senegalese and Guineans. A few African-owned taxi bases offered limousine car services in Harlem. By the early 1990s, the neighbourhood was transformed by the West African presence to the extent that it was referred to as Little Senegal or Little Africa.[2]

Next to Harlem, the Bedford Stuyvesant neighbourhood in the North Central portion of the New York Borough of Brooklyn received a large number of immigrants from French-speaking West Africa. Unlike Little Senegal in Harlem, the Brooklyn neighbourhood was predominantly inhabited by Pulaar speakers from Fuuta, a region that straddles Senegal, Mali, and Mauritania. Pulaar-speaking people from Senegal, Mauritania, Guinea, and Mali settled in Brooklyn in a process very similar to Little Senegal and created a Pulaar enclave on Fulton Street. They first rented dozens of buildings in the Bedford Stuyvesant neighbourhood, then opened mosques and other informal places of worship, and then a number of other businesses to cater to the needs of their ethnic compatriots. Finally, a third area of New York to receive Francophone West Africans was the Bronx, where they opened a few restaurants and places of worship. By the end of the 1990s, a fairly large community of Senegalese and other West Africans had settled in New York City. A few had also moved from New York to other cities throughout the United States, including Washington DC; Los Angeles and San Francisco, California; Detroit, Michigan; and Cincinnati and Columbus, Ohio. The majority of them had left their spouses in their home countries, but quite a few had got

married and were raising children in the United States. In the process of settlement, the Senegalese and other West Africans strove to build a strong community, but they also engaged different stakeholders in New York City: the city authority and resident communities in New York City, Muslim and Non-Muslim African Americans, other Africans, and Arab and South Asian Muslims.

Building a strong community to face insecurity

The lack of documentation has not been an obstacle to joining the labour force, and most Senegalese immigrants in New York City have accessed income-generating activities to support themselves and remit money back home. Most leading international firms in banking, securities, insurance, accounting, law, management, and advertising have had a strong presence in New York City. These firms created a market not just for white-collar jobs but also for unskilled jobs to cater to the needs of middle- and upper-class professionals (Foner, 2001, p. 106). However, since most Senegalese were undocumented, they had no employment benefits, and those who suffered health problems could generate no income. They survived only with the support of friends, relatives, and other community members.

Another issue was criminality, which was quite high in Brooklyn, Harlem, and the Bronx in the 1980s. Dozens of West Africans working in gas station or driving cabs were murdered. Typically, the remains of deceased community members were repatriated to their country of origin for burial. Since many did not have health insurance or had not left nearly enough money to pay for the repatriation of their remains, closest friends and relatives residing in New York shouldered the financial responsibility of repatriating their bodies. Senior members of the Senegalese community led a fundraising effort among other community members to raise the thousands of dollars needed in each case. Community members also provided legal assistance when needed. Although the Senegalese had not been targeted by the same stop-and-search police practices as in France, unlicenced street vendors and others had issues with law enforcement agencies and needed legal assistance.

To maximise their chances of survival, the Senegalese created a large network of self-help associations, and many belonged to more than one association. The religious associations, 90 per cent of which are Sufi, count among the most popular organisations created by the Senegalese in the United States. Sufi societies purchased several places of worship that served as mosques for the five daily Muslim prayers, attracting

Muslims from different denominations. These served also as meeting places for the practice of rituals specific to each Sufi order. Tijani affiliates have created mosques in the Bronx, in Harlem, and in Brooklyn where five daily prayers are offered, as well as the recitation of Tijani litanies. They sponsored lectures aimed at providing religious education to the community. The Murid Islamic Community of America, acting as an umbrella organisation of various Murid associations, acquired a big building in Harlem that has served as the headquarters for various spiritual activities.

In addition, the Senegalese have created village-based associations, regional organisations, caste-based associations, and rotational credit associations. These started as informal self-help associations, but as the Senegalese became aware of the legal environment, the largest among these organisations have been formalised as charitable organisations under the Internal Revenue Service Code 501 C 3 to enjoy a tax-exempt status. As such, they were officially recognised in the host society and could acquire property such as places of worship in their name. After they were registered, these associations were able to network with other welfare associations. They raised their resources partly from member contributions and partly by partnering with other American charitable organisations, such as the Food Bank of New York to provide food and the African Services Committee to provide health care to immigrants regardless of legal status. In general, formalised associations and others have provided a variety of services to members facing challenging times. They have provided a source of income to sick members who could not work, or paid for the repatriation of dead and dying members, affordable health care, English-language classes, and legal assistance. In addition, those associations have sponsored a variety of development projects in the homeland.

The Senegalese have also created a national Senegalese association (the Senegalese Association of America, or ASA in French), bringing together all Senegalese irrespective of sectarian and linguistic affiliation. The ASA has become the most successful West African immigration association, providing a variety of services to Senegalese: health care, food pantries, legal assistance, and housing and employment guidance. To connect community members living in New York, most Senegalese associations broadcast a weekly radio programme on the radio station WPAT, headquartered in Paterson, New Jersey, at the 930 AM frequency. Through these radio programmes, community members are regularly updated about news from the homeland, job opportunities, as well as challenges that community members have faced in the settlement

process. The Senegalese have also engaged two large all-African associations – the United African Congress and the African Services Committee – that service the African and African American underprivileged community in Harlem and the Bronx.

Engaging city authorities

As they started to settle in Harlem in the 1980s, Senegalese immigrants tried to gain recognition as a community in the area. The largest community of Senegalese Murids based in Harlem was the first to establish contacts with African American political leaders. With the help of African American friends, they approached the authority of the Borough of Harlem, of which former NYC mayor David Dinkins was the president. In recognition of the contribution of the Murids to the rehabilitation of Harlem in the 1980s and that of their leader Ahmadu Bamba[3] to the cause of black people in general, in 1989 the Borough of Harlem declared 29 July Cheikh Ahmadu Bamba Day.

Since then, thousands of West African Muslims, but predominantly Murids, parade every 29 July to celebrate Ahmadu Bamba Day. The parade starts on 110th street from Central Park. From there Murids chant religious songs holding pictures of major religious figures, but also the American flag. They continue up Eighth Avenue until they reach the Adam Clayton Powell Building or Government House on 125th and Adam Clayton Powell Street. At their arrival at Government House, leaders of the group are received at the Office of the Representative of the Borough of Harlem. The well-organised parade participants include representatives of Murid delegations from virtually all states of the Unites States, but also from many Western countries with a sizeable Senegalese diaspora. Every year a VIP delegation comprising Murid religious leaders, as well as ministers and members of parliament, arrives from Senegal to attend the parade. By 2003, the Murid parade had become one of the highest profile immigrant public performances in Harlem, so much so that it was covered in the front page of the *New York Times* (Sachs, 2002, pp. 1–4). The parade, it must be noted, is just one of the many events organised throughout the month of July by the Murids in New York City to celebrate Muridism.

If the city authorities have declared 29 July as Ahmadu Bamba's day, the Murids celebrate their identity during the whole month of July. They devote significant time and resources to spiritual activities throughout the stay of the Senegalese Murid delegation in the United States. The VIP delegation arrives from Senegal at the beginning of the month, and

from their arrival until the Murid Conference organised every year in the headquarters of the United Nations on 30 July, Murids organise lectures, nightly vigils, and religious chants, and most Murid residents in New York or other parts of the United States take significant time off from work to participate in as many of these events as possible.

For the Murid leadership in Senegal as well the Murid residents in the United States, this proclamation of Ahmadu Bamba Day, and the parade in the heart of New York City was a significant achievement. Interviewed about the significance of this event, the former vice president of the Senegalese National assembly and historian Iba Der Thiam, who participated in the 2002 parade, stated that it was a miracle of the saint that Muslims are able to parade praising the Prophet of Islam and Ahmadu Bamba right after 11 September in the heart of New York City. The institutionalisation of the Murid presence in New York through the parade and more generally during the Murid month has great significance for the Murid community in Senegal and the Senegalese diaspora worldwide. It fulfills what they believe is Ahmadu Bamba's promise that Murids would achieve prominence in the whole world.

Other Senegalese shaykhs who travelled regularly to the United States to visit their disciples have had days named after them, including Murid Shaykh Murtada Mbacke in Atlanta Georgia (Kane, 2011, p. 97) and Tijani Shaykh Shaykh Hassan Cisse (d. 2008) in Washington DC (Kane, 2011, p. 99). For borough or city authorities, these proclamations are one way to integrate immigrant communities (potential American citizens) into their constituency. However, for the immigrants and particularly their home country communities, such events are interpreted as carrying national – and diasporic – significance. Thus, the diaspora comes to play an important role in boosting the prestige of these communities in the homeland. For the immigrant communities, these performances served to integrate them into American society. The many American flags that Murids hold in the parade also send a message that the immigrants are peaceful Muslims who are grateful for American hospitality. They thus navigate between African, Muslim, and American identities for the sake of all those constituencies.

Relations with African American Muslims

The first community that the West Africans encountered upon their arrival in the United States was the African American resident communities in Harlem, and then those in the Bronx and Brooklyn. It is with them that these immigrants interacted most, but their relations have

been at best ambivalent. Like most immigrants, West Africans have a very apolitical orientation towards American society. They did not experience similar racial oppression in any significant way prior to arrival, nor did they take part in the civil rights struggle of the 1960s and 1970s. They tend to have no political agenda other than 'making it' in America. They engaged African American political leaders and community leaders to promote their own immigrant interests (creating associations, gaining recognition as a community in New York City, lobbying for the regularisation of their immigration status), but in general they have not been committed to civil rights as such. In contrast, African Americans have a vivid memory of Jim Crow and related forms of racial oppression. They know too well that it took a long civil rights struggle to desegregate American society and open opportunities to people of colour, a fact that many West Africans take for granted. When they faced serious issues, as was the case with the murder cases of two Africans (Norbert Zongo and Amadou Diallo) in 1998–1999, West Africans sought support from African American civil rights organisations and were indeed supported (Kane, 2011, p. 105). But for the most part, the first generation African immigrants at least made no serious commitment to fight against racial oppression. In addition, mutual stereotyping has been an obstacle to strong collaboration between Africans and African Americans. Although a sizeable black middle class settled in Harlem in the late twentieth century at the same time as Francophone West Africans, the latter tend to identify the majority of African Americans with the social pathology of the inner cities (criminality, drugs, and living on welfare). Many African Americans in turn have a negative view of West Africans, believing that their own ancestors were sold to Europeans by fellow Africans.

The same apolitical stance has affected relations between West Africans and some African American Muslims. Although African American Muslims welcomed their West African brothers and sisters in their mosques in Harlem, they did not have the same understanding of Islam. African American Islam tends to combine spirituality and political struggle (Turner, 2003), whereas African Islam is strictly mosque-based. West African mosques are filled with worshippers for the daily prayers, but very few among those worshippers will speak publicly against racial oppression. For this reason, very few African Americans would join their spiritual activities and vice versa. This apolitical stance enabled West Africans to engage white people easily, and apparently they have been favoured in access to housing, jobs, and promotion not just by white people but also by other racial groups like Korean and Chinese immigrants (Foner, 2005, p. 51; Kirschennan and

Neckerman, 1991; Waldinger, 1997). This in turn has fuelled further tension between them and their African American brothers. Although quite a few continental Africans have married African American partners and obtained lawful residency in the United States, many such marriages have ended in divorce, and in general the relations between first generation Senegalese and African Americans have been relatively distant and tense.

Relations with Arab and South Asian Muslims

Next to African Americans, the largest Muslim communities in the Unites States are South Asians and Arab Muslims. Settling in New York, the Senegalese had also to engage these communities. But, there were tensions in relation to the practice of their spirituality. Most Arab and South Asian Muslim mosque communities do not view the practice of Sufi rituals favourably. Since the Senegalese are overwhelmingly Sufi, they were not welcome to practice their rituals in predominantly Arab or South Asian mosques. As a result, they created their own mosque space in which they could practice Sufi rituals. However, the Senegalese overcame the familiar divide to collaborate with South Asians and Arabs in creating mosques and providing Muslim education to their children. One interesting example is the Masjid al-Ta'awun al-Islami in the Bronx. Created in response to the insecurity prevailing in the Bronx, the mosque was initiated by the Senegalese. But unlike most other Senegalese mosque communities established in New York City, this mosque banned all sectarian affiliation and all sectarian activities. Interestingly enough, most Senegalese members are Sufi affiliates and participate in Sufi rituals in other mosques in New York. However, their anti-sectarian position has succeeded in building a strong constituency: they have attracted a sizeable membership of Arabs, South Asians, and other Muslims who typically would not attend Sufi mosques.

Relations with the homeland

The Senegalese have maintained very close ties with their homeland. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Senegalese diaspora worldwide represented 300,000 people, roughly 4 per cent of the total population. However, their remittances in 2003 represented half a billion dollars (Tall, 2005, p. 56). In North and Central Senegal, which send a large proportion of Senegalese migrants outward, the diaspora contribution has been critical not just for survival but also for development.

The majority of households have relied on remittances to live decently. Remittances have provided a livelihood and support the housing, health, and education of family members in Senegal. The first goal of immigrants was to improve the housing of their family. They have renovated and extended their natal family houses and built further houses where their spouses and children left behind resided. Immigrants would often also seek a house in their religious city. One such city is Touba, the capital of the Murid order. Touba was just a hamlet founded by Ahmadu Bamba in the late nineteenth century, but by the late twentieth century it has become the second largest Senegalese city (Guèye, 2002). Murid immigrants have contributed greatly to Touba's rise to prominence. Many of them have built houses in Touba, where they seek the blessing of the founding saint.

That Senegalese first-generation immigrants have invested most of their earning in the homeland is due partly to the fact that most of them left their families behind. These immigrants have ambivalent attitudes towards America. They see America as a land of economic opportunity where success comes with hard work. But there is much that they fear in American society. They have strongly resisted the gender and generational cultural norms on the ground. In their view, women and children enjoy too much freedom in the United States. We have seen that Senegalese women joining the labour force often enjoy a higher income than their spouses. Because they have worked in the food industry or as hair braiders, many have worked very late at night. This has resulted in tensions and high divorce rates among Senegalese couples in the United States.

Another challenge has been to provide what they believe to be a good education for their children. Religious education is believed to be an important component of a child's education, and parents believe that the Unites States does not provide a suitable environment for Islamic education. As a result, many Senegalese-born children were left behind by the parents and most American-born Senegalese children are sent back to the homeland for a few years to receive a 'proper' religious education and cultural immersion before the parents feel confident enough to bring them back to the United States.

In addition to individual remittances, various migrant organisations created in the United States have contributed to local development in their village or region of origin. Either alone or in partnership with international NGOs, migrant associations have raised funds to build wells, schools, clinics, and cemetery walls (Kane, A., 2002a, 2002b and 2006). Whenever natural disasters such as drought or floods have happened,

they have raised funds to help homeland communities. For all these reasons, Senegalese immigrants have maintained strong connections with the homeland and have sent money on a regular basis to support those left behind.

Conclusion

I have argued in this chapter that the relatively successful settlement of a largely undocumented immigrant population from French West Africa – specifically Senegal – has owed much to the strength of the New York economy that provided them an opportunity to work, and to the relatively accommodating law enforcement agencies that have tolerated them as undocumented workers, but also to their capacity to mobilise and to reach other groups with which they have shared common denominators. As they have tried and managed relations and straddled tensions with city authorities and resident communities, the Senegalese have organised themselves along familiar divides. They have created hometown and regional associations and others based on caste. However, they realised the importance of numbers and quickly learned to organise across those divides. They have networked with larger all-African associations such as the African Services Committee and the Pan-African Congress. The Senegalese in the Bronx are predominantly Sufi and have established Sufi lodges in New York where they regularly meet. But they have also joined with other 'Salafi' Muslims, who often tend not to look as favourably on Sufi understandings of Islam, in order to create organisations that support all Muslims. As they have established engaged welfare associations, they have also started to serve a food pantry and a mobile caravan of health care for the underprivileged communities in the Bronx and Harlem.

One unintended consequence of the formalisation as charitable bodies of Senegalese associations registered under the IRS code 501 C 3 is that it has altered their initial mission. Initially, these organisations were created to serve specific ethnic constituencies. For example, the Senegalese Association of America started as a self-help association for Senegalese regardless of ethnic or sectarian affiliation, as did the Pulaar Speaking Association as a pan-ethnic association for Pulaar speakers from all West Africa. As these organisations needed resources, they partnered with local welfare associations that served all underprivileged areas of the Boroughs of Manhattan, the Bronx, and Brooklyn. As a result, they have become hybrid associations. The core constituency of these associations is still the original ethnic group, and the content of

their radio programmes remains focused on immigrant and homeland issues, but their programmes of food pantries and health care target the most underprivileged communities of New York City.

The future of the Senegalese enclave communities in New York City is hard to predict. The gentrification of Harlem is now threatening low-income groups. The two main places of worship that were distinctly West African (Masjid al-Aqsa and Masjid al-Salam) have been taken over by their American owners. In their place, expensive apartment buildings are being built. A few immigrant stores have also closed. Although the area is still known as Little Africa, gentrification has forced many West African residents to move from Harlem, and there is no indication that they are being replaced by new immigrants. Another issue is generational change. Second-generation Senegalese are now joining the labour force. They are not involved in any significant way in the associational life of their parents or even in the enclave activities. In all likelihood, they will pursue their professional activities. Since they live in greater security than the first generation, they rely less on associational life than their parents did. American citizenship is acquired by birth regardless of whether the parents are legal or illegal residents; thus, many Senegalese are undocumented, but all their children born in the United States are American citizens and as such have greater possibility to integrate into American society.

Notes

1. Dame Babou personal communication 2002.
2. A movie titled *Little Senegal* narrating the presence of these Senegal was produced by Rashid Bouchareb in 2001.
3. Born in Senegal, Bamba (d.1927) is the founder of the Sufi order of the Murids, one of the very few Sufi orders that is purely African in origin. After suffering harassment at the hands of the French colonial administration, he was exiled for many years and held under house arrest until the end of his life. As a result, Ahmadu Bamba has been celebrated as a national hero in Senegal. Murids, who have been quite successful in postcolonial Senegal, attribute their success to the blessing of Ahmadu Bamba. Ahmadu Bamba is indeed regarded as an anti-colonial hero in Senegal (Babou, 2007).

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6

Reconfiguring the Societal Place of Religion in Finland: Islamic Communities Move from the Margins to Partner in Civil Society

Tuomas Martikainen

Introduction

Studying religion in diaspora has become a prominent part of the study of contemporary religion and public debate since the early 2000s. The research field emerged somewhat differently in North America and Europe. The Americans were initially more interested in immigrant congregations and their activities in all their variety (e.g. Warner and Wittner, 1998), whereas Europeans focused much more selectively on Muslim immigrants, although still with a focus on their religious organisations (e.g. Nielsen, 1992). The field was soon influenced by the growth of globalisation and transnationalism studies (e.g. Beyer, 1994; Levitt, 2001). More recently, political science has provided insights about the role of the nation state and the wider social and political implications of this new religious diversity in the global age (e.g. Laurence, 2012). The question is, does something beyond the sheer emergence of this new level of religious diversity in the West, and its often problematic association with global conflicts since 9/11 especially, make it politically more important than it seemed in preceding decades?

The Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden) have since the Reformation been majority Lutheran Christian societies. The relationship between the state and the church has been close, even though somewhat differently organised in the five countries, but it has continuously loosened over the last century and a half. The role of religious minorities has been relatively small and numerically insignificant until recently. The cultural hegemony of the Lutheran

churches has been visible as a kind of civil religiosity in the form of religious belonging, even though the Nordic societies are also well known for their low formal religious participation. The image and ethos of religious and cultural national uniformity have slowly weakened, largely because of growth in international migration but also due to processes of privatisation, individualisation, new forms of spiritual practice, and a common diminution of interest in religion. The Nordic countries are social democratic welfare states, whereby many duties elsewhere conducted by churches and civil society organisations have been moved to the state's realm of authority and activity (Christoffersen, Modéer, and Andersen, 2010; NJRS, 2011).

This chapter analyses how it has become possible for a minority religion – Islam in this case – increasingly to operate in partnership with local and national public authorities in Finland, when such a tradition has not existed before. Rather, most minority religions have historically been located in the societal periphery with little or no impact on the wider society. This pattern seems to have changed, and while not only related to the growing presence of Muslims, Islamic organisations provide our entry into the debate. The chapter proposes that while societal threats associated with Islam have motivated the state to co-operate with and monitor Islamic societies in Finland, the specific forms such co-operation takes are better understandable from the viewpoint of a changing welfare state, whereby civil society is increasingly functioning as an extension of the state. This process is part of the wider neoliberal trend that has transformed Western states since the 1980s. In short, the chapter suggests that societal developments outside the religious realm are central to the evaluation of contemporary debates about religion in diaspora. Firstly, the chapter discusses recent changes in the Finnish welfare state, religion, and international migration. Secondly, it briefly surveys the Muslim population of Finland. Thirdly, it presents snapshots of novel developments in state–Muslim relations in Finland. Finally, it discusses the role of Islam and other minority religions as actors in civil society in Finland.

The welfare state, religion, and international migration

Since the Reformation, Finland has been a majority Lutheran society, even though a minority (Russian) Orthodox population has lived on its territory since early times. The Lutheran heritage comes from Finland having been a part of Sweden until 1809, after which it was a grand duchy of the Russian Empire until 1917. During that time, the social and

legal status of the Orthodox Church was improved. After the independence of Finland in 1917, both of the churches were defined as national, 'folk' churches and were treated differently from other religions. The Orthodox Church was also fennicised after independence.[1] Full religious freedom was established in 1923, allowing all minority religions to organise and gain state recognition, but they did not receive all the benefits granted to the two national churches. Religious diversity has slowly grown, especially in the post–Second World War period. In 2011, official membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland accounted for 77 per cent of the population; 1 per cent of the population were officially members of the Orthodox Church of Finland; 2 per cent identified as belonging to other religions, and 20 per cent were non-affiliated. The largest minority religions were Pentecostalism and Islam, both similar in size to the Orthodox Church.[2]

The Lutheran Church played a central role in society after the Reformation, but since the late nineteenth century many of its tasks have gradually moved to the responsibility of the state. These have included services related to municipal governance, education, and poor relief. As the state has modernised and urbanised over the last 150 years, the Church has increasingly become a specialised institution focusing mainly on religion. In particular, the development of the welfare state in the post–Second World War period led the state to take care of most rudimentary services to the people. The Lutheran Church has, nevertheless, over the same period, developed many new types of service, has maintained its traditional role in services for children, and has retained a stronghold in the provision of life course rituals (baptism, confirmation, marriage, and burial). Other religions, especially Protestant and Pentecostal minority churches, have also been active in various forms of social relief, but their scope has remained small.

However, the Finnish welfare state has undergone significant changes that started gradually in the late 1980s and have deepened since the end of the cold war in the 1990s (Anttiroikko, 2010). Towards the end of the 1980s, Finland started to implement changes in public administration that were inspired by New Public Management, leading to the outsourcing and privatisation of formerly state-run activities. One of the consequences of these reforms was an increasing use of projects and networks, in addition to market-based solutions, in public administration. These became even more common as Finland joined the European Union in 1995, and since then the 'projectification' of public administration has deepened (Heiskala, 2006, pp. 22–23, 31–34; Ryynänen and Uoti, 2009, pp. 220–21). Some Finnish social scientists have called the

welfare state transition a move from a 'planning economy' to a 'competition economy' (Alasuutari, 2006), the latter captured in notions such as 'competitiveness society' (Heiskala, 2006) and 'project society' (Sulkunen, 2006). Risto Heiskala (2006, p. 37) summarises some central aspects of the transformation as follows. The aim of the state has shifted from regional and social equality to economic efficiency, innovation, and economic growth, and citizens are increasingly conceived of as customers. Governmental coordination has moved from hierarchical planning to market mechanisms, including network management and privatisation. Previously homogeneous cultural values and preferences, collectivism, and national protectionism have been replaced by heterogeneity, individualism, cultural openness, and international competition.

State–church relations have formed the dominant lens through which the relationship between religious organisations and the state has been analysed. This approach usually focuses on the legal frameworks of how different religious organisations have been recognised and treated by the state (cf. Robbers, 2005). While this approach is obviously important, it is not entirely clear that classical church–state studies are able to identify transitions in power relations, if they take place outside the traditional area of focus of these studies. With the emergence of a network-based 'project' society, it seems plausible to expect that this has also affected how religions are regulated and governed. The impact and scope of the neoliberal shift for religious actors has hitherto not been widely analysed, but from emerging evidence it seems clear that religions have not been unaffected by it (Martikainen and Gauthier, 2013; Gauthier and Martikainen, 2013). Based on comparative European studies – including Finland – on the role of churches in welfare provision, it seems clear that privatisation and 'projectification' have led to many churches developing a stronger role in tasks previously done by the state (e.g. Pessi, Angell, and Pettersson, 2009). We can also make the case that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland is increasingly seeing a disparity between the state and the people, the 'folk' it understands herself to represent. This mental change from seeing herself as a state department of religion, to being seen as the people's moral guideline and authority at the time of the nationalised church, to understanding herself as a critical voice standing up for the people against the state is a remarkable set of historical shifts (Jalovaara and Martikainen, 2010, pp. 37–39).

The changes in the Finnish welfare state have taken place at the same time as the country has become a destination country for international migration. The number of foreign born grew from 1 per cent in 1990 to

5 per cent in 2012. About two-thirds of migrants to Finland have arrived from the neighbouring countries of Estonia, Russia, and Sweden and, to a lesser extent, the rest of Europe, but many have arrived from culturally and religiously more distant origins (Statistics Finland, 2012). Even if the numbers are low in a comparative European framework (see Eurostat, 2011, p. 24), the proportion of immigrants is much higher in several urban metropolitan areas, and – perhaps more importantly – immigration is seen as an important domestic, political issue. In religious terms, up to two-thirds of all immigrants are of Christian background; Muslims are the second largest group, constituting about 20 per cent of all immigrants (Martikainen, 2011).

Muslims in Finland

The history of settled Muslim communities in Finland dates back to the 1870s, when the so-called Tatar Muslims from Central Russia started to move to Finland. At the time, Finland was a grand duchy in the Russian empire. Over the following decades, the community grew to several hundred members and settled in a few cities in southern Finland. The community gained state recognition as a religious community in the aftermath of national independence and the introduction of religious freedom in 1925. The arrival of Tatars stopped in the 1920s due to the tightening of the Soviet borders. The Tatars built an infrastructure to support their community, and the socialisation of the following generations that included five mosques, two mosque associations, some other associations, and the active production of literature. As merchants, they had the financial means to support such activity. They also invited an imam from abroad to take care of religious needs when their own resources were insufficient. They remained, however, a little-known minority, and it was only in the 1970s that they organised the first exhibition to present themselves to Finnish society (Leitzinger, 2006).

Some Muslims continued to migrate to Finland even after the 1920s, but it was not until the late 1980s when newcomer Muslims became interested in forming a new, non-Tatar Islamic society. Prior to that, and even today, all Muslims have been welcome to Tatar prayer meetings, but have not been granted membership in the society, and the Friday sermon has only been preached in the Tatar language. Muslim migration grew quickly from the early 1990s onwards, due to both increasing international migration in general and growing numbers of refugees from Muslim majority countries in particular. The number of Muslims grew from a few thousand in 1990 to an estimated 60,000–65,000 in 2012.

Alongside growing numbers, Muslim communities also started to organise into mosque associations, as well as into other forms of collective body. The new Muslim population is ethnically and religiously diverse, consisting of both Sunni (ca. 85 per cent) and Shi'a (ca. 15 per cent), as well as of multiple ethnicities, the largest of which are Somalis, Arabs from a number of countries, Kurds, Turks, Bosnians, Kosovan Albanians, and Persians, as well as smaller groups from around the world, and converts (Martikainen, 2013).

The vast majority of new Muslims are people of refugee background, and many of them have stayed in the poorest segment of society, with high levels of unemployment. The group is also demographically young, and the second generation is primarily under the age of 20. Only with their entry into the labour market during the current decade will it be seen how the socio-economic position of the majority of Muslims is likely to develop. Most Muslims live in the metropolitan Helsinki region and a few other larger cities (Martikainen, 2013). Finnish public opinion of Islam as a religion in recent years has been very critical; almost two-thirds of the population express reservations about the Islamic faith and seem to associate it with the unequal status of women, terrorism, and social problems (Ketola, 2010).

Locating state–Muslim relations in Finland

Official state–Muslim relations are based on the Finnish constitution, the Freedom of Religion Act, and in some specific cases on other particular laws. The laws do not identify Muslims as such, but are rather directed at regulating all minority religions. However, as indicated above, the guiding nature of the legal structure may have weakened as a result of the growth in networks and projects as particular forms of governance. During the last two decades, public authorities in different areas of society have established practices to deal with Muslim clients. The practices seem to have grown mainly in an ad hoc fashion, as practical solutions to identified problems. For example, in some schools, places for prayer have been found, whereas it has been problematic in others (Lehtinen, 2007). In general, public authorities have been sympathetic to Muslim demands, even though there are still unresolved issues. There is no single or strong activist Muslim lobby, even though Muslims are becoming increasingly mobilised and well organised. In the following section, two cases of public authority–Muslim relations are discussed that highlight important developments during the 1990s and 2000s.

The Islamic Council of Finland

The need for an Islamic representative association was recognised by Finnish Muslims by the mid-1990s due to increasing contacts with public authorities on a range of issues, including the treatment of religious questions in school, health care, and other public services.[3] After an initially unsuccessful attempt, the intra-Muslim plans were reintroduced in the early 2000s, but they proceeded slowly. At the same time, and unaware of existing negotiations among Muslim activists, the Ombudsman for Minorities initiated a similar discussion that eventually led to the successful organisation of the Islamic Council of Finland (abbr. SINE) in 2006.

The role of the Ombudsman for Minorities was crucial for the birth of SINE. The Office of the Ombudsman for Minorities was established in 2002 in the Ministry of the Interior. Its role was 'to advance the status and legal protection of ethnic minorities in Finland and to prevent and tackle ethnic discrimination' (Ombudsman for Minorities, 2013). From its inception, issues related to Islam were present on the agenda. According to the Ombudsman, questions related to Muslim practices did not constitute a major part of his work, but were still significant enough to demand a recognised, representative partner with which to discuss these issues. Key concerns included male and female circumcision, Islamic religious education in schools, Muslim burial, questions about mosque premises, and Muslim practices in working life.

As no Muslim representative body – but rather dozens of independent Islamic and ethnic associations – existed, he started to look for an opportunity to help facilitate the creation of one. Being aware of similar efforts and their problems elsewhere in Europe (cf. Laurence, 2012), he wanted to work in close co-operation with the existing Muslim communities. As the Ombudsman has reflected of this time:

> The first issue that opened my eyes was boys' circumcision, and I saw how precarious the position of these people was in our society. I also understood that they have to be involved if we are going to solve these problems. The solution cannot come from above, but it needs to come from the inside. But they also need help in the form, let us say, of a sympathetic partner, as a kind of midwife. (...) The process started in January 2004. I was in London in an informal seminar of public authorities and specialised bodies on equal treatment [referring to activities based on EU Directive 2000/43/EC] in Member States. I had asked a colleague of mine to introduce me to someone from the Muslim Council of Britain, as I had heard that such an

organisation exists. (...) So, when I returned I wanted to start this process and continued discussing it with my two contacts. (...) The process took longer than expected, because at the same time we were amidst the implementation of the Non-Discrimination Act.

The historical Tatar community also helped in the process, but did not want to become a member of the council. Eventually the council was founded in November 2006 and officially registered the following year. SINE received state funding from early on, as the prime minister's office pushed various ministries to provide seed money (Martikainen, 2007). Later, the funding was stabilised into the budget of the Ministry of Education and Culture. In December 2012, SINE represented 25 Muslim organisations in Finland, covering most of the large mosque associations with the exception of the Tatars, who had decided to remain outside the association. SINE is overseen by a Shura that annually selects SINE's governing board. There are five committees (burial, education, legal, media, and youth) within the association, and it has arranged, among others, two Islam Expos to showcase Islamic religion and Muslim life to non-Muslims (www.sine.fi).

All in all, SINE has played an important role in stabilising questions of Muslim representation in relation to public authorities. Since its foundation, SINE has become involved in various forms of negotiations with the Finnish state and other relevant actors, including discussions about Muslim burial grounds with the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Moreover, it has become a partner and member in several networks, including the Advisory Board of Ethnic Relations (established in 1998) and the Advisory Board for Minority Issues (established in 2005). The Advisory Board of Ethnic Relations is run by the Ministry of the Interior and aims to further good ethnic relations in Finland. The Advisory Board for Minority Issues is part of the organisation of the Office of the Ombudsman for Minorities, and organisationally also part of the Ministry of the Interior. Both organisations can be seen as instruments to deal with increasing religious and cultural diversity in Finland. Neither of them, however, has significant direct power, but rather their influence is based on networking and bringing together, among others, bureaucrats, religious civil society organizations, and politicians.

The entry of SINE into various public–civil society networks has been quite effective, and now it is already a well-known partner for many public authorities and for religious organisations. The development as such is not unique (cf. Laurence, 2012), but rather part of a Europewide process to create closer contacts with Muslims and public authorities

in the post-9/11 world, where Islam has often been seen as both a social and security threat. There are three central ways in which SINE is related to state interests. Firstly, its founding, including the format it adapted, was centrally influenced by the intervention of the Ombudsman for Minorities. Secondly, through continuing funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture, public authorities can follow its development and, at least, expect goodwill from SINE regarding their interests. Thirdly, through its inclusion in several state-led initiatives, various state authorities can influence the agenda of SINE, and at the same time its own expert opinion can be consulted. So, contrary to Laurence's (2012, p. 13) characterisation of the role of representative Islamic councils in different European countries as extensions of state–church relations, I argue that SINE's position in relation to the state cannot be understood in that context. Rather, its inclusion in the state's sphere of influence follows the logic of New Public Management, where through funding, partnership, and networking SINE's activities are directly and indirectly guided. As a matter of fact, the Freedom of Religion Act – the legal instrument in state–church relations – does not and could not even recognise SINE as a religious organisation.

Co-operation of religions

The co-operation and dialogue of religions across faith borders beyond Christian ecumenism have for some time been an interest among theologians (e.g. Mortensen, 2003), but have provoked less attention among social scientists (see, however, Halafoff, 2013).[4] Co-operation of religions takes multiple forms, from abstract discussions among the learned to grass-roots networks dealing with social issues. Common to various types of dialogue is respect for the other's faith while simultaneously standing firm in one's own tradition; dialogues are seen to foster tolerance and mutual understanding in an increasingly plural world. Hence, they are platforms of learning about oneself and others. What is less often noted is that forums of co-operation and dialogue can also be efforts to monitor, steer, and govern societal anomalies (cf. Dornhof, 2012; Tezcan, 2007). Although this aspect has become an integral aspect of post-9/11 efforts to tame Islamic terrorism, it has not so often been asked how such dialogues can act as elements in the governance of religion.

Religious dialogue was in the hands of a few enthusiasts until the early 2000s in Finland. There were occasional meetings in different cities, and some associations were formed. The longest-standing, continuous process was launched by the Evangelical Lutheran Church's Church and

Islam Committee, which has met twice a year with Muslims from 1996. Additionally, several discussion events were organised and local grass-roots organisations founded (Martikainen, 2009). As the immigration of Muslims continued over the same period, issues related to Muslims were increasingly on the agenda of many organisations. It is significant that these associations and networks rarely included any central figures from the majority society.

However, after 9/11 things changed. The most significant new initiative came from the president of Finland, Tarja Halonen (in office 2000–2012), who launched meetings between 'religious leaders' from Christian Churches, as well as the Jewish and Muslim communities (Illman, 2006). These meetings eventually led to the creation of The Co-operation Forum between Religions in Finland (USKOT-RESA) in 2011. USKOT-RESA has arranged high-level seminars and sent press releases on controversial issues dealing with religion, as well as starting to produce material for interfaith activities. Tarja Halonen has also been active in the Alliance of Civilizations, which in Finland falls under the umbrella of a unit in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Kerkkänen, 2013).

On the basis of many discussions with both religious activists and public authorities on these issues, it seems clear that nationally the key turning point was the Danish Muhammed cartoons controversy in 2006, as through it the 'Muslim question' entered Nordic consciousness more concretely than through the more distant, though politically highly influential, events of 11 September 2001 (cf. Archer and Malkki, 2013). It can thus be claimed that, with a few exceptions amongst the national elite, it was not until the mid-2000s that co-operation and dialogue between religions started to be seen as a very serious priority. Since those times, the level and intensity of co-operation between religions have increased, and a whole 'multifaith' sector has started to develop (Melasuo, Pesu, and Tomperi, 2011).

Whilst the political and administrative (also security, see Archer and Malkki, 2013) interest in co-operating with Muslims and including them in various networks has gradually grown during the 2000s, the growth of the multifaith sector – that is, co-operative associations between religions and on interreligious questions – has coincided with this development. The growth of multifaith associations has taken two main paths. On the one hand, some already existing organisations have started to shift their attention to multifaith questions. For example, the Finnish Ecumenical Council was not particularly focused on co-operation with non-Christian religions, but this concern became significant in the foundation of USKOT-RESA. In 2010, the Kristillinen

kulttuuriliitto ('The Christian Cultural Federation') changed its name to the Forum for Culture and Religion FOKUS, and shifted its activities more directly to interreligious dialogue. On the other hand, several new associations have been founded. Some of the new associations are part of international movements or their local branches, including the Anna Lindh Foundation and United Religions Initiative. It is at times difficult to distinguish particular associations and projects, as there is much overlapping membership, and it is not entirely clear how continuous all activities are (see also, Melasuo, Pesu, and Tomperi, 2011).

While the multifaith sector has not yet been systemically studied in Finland, it seems evident that the majority of these new associations are concerned to emphasise the positive role of religion in society and the rise of religious diversity, especially Islam, in the West. They also aim to counter xenophobia, religious hatred, and stereotypical representations of other faiths. Individual Muslims or Islamic associations often form part of these societies, and through their participation questions related to Islam are among the targeted areas of activity. Muslims have also founded such associations, and a few play a central role in the networks that unite many of these initiatives. Participants are generally involved because of personal motivation, as is often the case in civil society activism. Public authorities are not generally as visibly present as in the case of SINE, but through various kinds of links between associations and other mechanisms they can be, as in the case of USKOT-RESA, where the role of the president of the Republic was crucial in setting the process in motion. However, the distance between many of the religious civil society organisations and public authorities is not great. Several key individuals in the associations are also central players in other contexts, including the Advisory Board of Ethnic Relations and other religion-related organisations, where public interests are presented.

Thus, it seems that multifaith co-operation and dialogue associations have both emerged due to grass-roots demand and have also in part been influenced through state-led initiatives. This is comprehensible in light of the fact that over the past two decades there has been a substantial growth in religious diversity and of the Muslim population in particular (Ketola, 2010). Moreover, across Europe there have been popular and political debates on religion over the same time period. Both grass-roots activists and public authorities were taking note of the same changes in social reality. As networks and partnerships have become a central mode of co-operation, centrally influenced by New Public Management, it was only natural that they have become the dominant mode of organisation in the multifaith sector over the last decade.

From the margins to the mainstream

This discussion of aspects of state–Muslim relations in Finland has aimed to highlight how relations between public authorities and Islamic communities have recently started to take shape. Beginning from haphazard, uncoordinated, local, and spontaneous encounters in the early 1990s, a somewhat systematic, planned, national, and organised web of relations has emerged. There is no direct historical model for these new state–Muslim relations; they have rather grown out of a complex political adaptation of available forms, and they have become incrementally more institutionalised along the way. More importantly, this process has not solely been about public authorities and Muslim communities, but rather a multiple interaction of key public officials, religious entrepreneurs, interested individuals and (often) sympathetic co-religionists, and others from a variety of institutional backgrounds. A side effect of the activities has been that a number of Muslim activists and organisations have been identified as central interlocutors for the 'Muslim cause' in Finland. For them, it has been a learning process that has opened doors to influence and participation in crafting an institutionally multireligious Finland. Moreover, a selected number of non-Muslims have become important partners for Muslim activists and trusted persons in different kinds of negotiations, as it is common to find a small number of key individuals behind events and actions taken by different organisations.

Two main characteristics make it legitimate to call this a new form of religious governance: the role of networks and new types of partnership with the state and other authorities. First, while the official status of Islamic religious organisations is obviously regulated by law, the locus of the activities described above is not what the law directly regulates. Rather, various kinds of intermediary, ad hoc solutions have emerged to create platforms of negotiation and regulation. If these interactions are later turned into national law or more thoroughly institutionalised via other means (e.g. national interfaith councils), they will also change the rationale of previous state–church relations. While no clear indication from the state's side has yet been taken to formalise these networks, some of them (e.g. SINE) nevertheless do have close contacts with public authorities. Since there is no 'Muslim Church' that could work as a central representative body, these networks pose a necessary and novel organisational structure by which state–Muslim relations are organised.

Secondly, minority religions, and in this case Islam, are treated and recognised as civil society partners, or more precisely partners in

the *new* civil society of 'project' society (cf. Herbert, 2009, p. 231). Whereas almost all religious minorities were at one time positioned in a marginal and distant relationship with the state, there has been a partial acknowledgement of religious organisations' benefit to social cohesion and the general welfare of the population. Moreover, new relationships have been formed in several different societal institutional spaces, including education, health care, and immigrant integration, and they often include various types of – more or less explicitly spelled out – partnerships. It is these partnerships that bring Muslims, organisationally speaking, from the societal margins to a more central position. Thus, religious activity is extended from the spheres of the family and community to the public realm.

Even though the reasons for this raising of the profile of religion in the case of Muslims is obviously related to concerns about immigrant social integration and national security, it nevertheless legitimates and gives a firm standing for those 'moderate' Muslims involved in dialogue of sorts with the state authorities and other religious institutions. There are also initial signs that at least some other minority religions have already been involved in the same networks. For instance, the small Jewish community in Finland has become part of many of the same networks as the newcomer Muslims. If this trend continues and becomes more systematically implemented, it could lead to a more comprehensive repositioning of minority religious organisations in Finnish society. This in turn would likely provide pressure for a more equal standing for all religions in Finland, thereby questioning especially the privileged position of the Lutheran Church. The leadership of the Lutheran Church is well aware of the eventual impact of growing religious diversity, and seems to hold a delicate balance between protecting its own position and being sympathetic to minority religion concerns. For example, in September 2013 the Lutheran Archbishop Kari Mäkinen stated in a newspaper interview that also other churches beside the Lutheran Orthodox should have the right to collect church tax (Keskisuomalainen, 9 September 2013).

Conclusion

The chapter has discussed how the societal position of Muslim organisations in Finland has changed in recent history. Whereas Islam was not seen as a significant religion before 1990, the situation has gradually changed during the 1990s and 2000s so that state authorities are increasingly aiming to influence Muslim organisations, as well as

to co-operate with them. The chapter argues that the development is best understood in the framework of a changing welfare state, in which civil society organisations in general are gaining new prominence as the state's partners. Whereas efforts to govern Muslims are based on an effort to counter tendencies of radicalism and terrorism, the chapter argues that this approach brings further changes that both empower Muslim activists and enhance their role in civil society. The impact of the change over the long term is yet hard to estimate, but so far it has strengthened the role of religion as an important aspect of social integration.

The implication of the inclusion of Islam and other minority religions into a closer relationship with the state may be far reaching. It would weaken the cultural hegemony of the majority church and set it more on a par with other religions. It would also widen the public visibility of all religions in society and state activities and thereby make religion societally a more important issue. Furthermore, it would elevate the role of representative, interreligious, and multifaith organisations to a central place in the regulation of religious diversity, whereas historically state–church relations have focused on particular religious organisations. So far the changes have been rather small in legal terms, and further developments remain to be seen. However, the Lutheran Church is aware of existing pressures, but so far it has not produced a systematic agenda on how to secure its position or to deal with future challenges. The more the pressures grow, the more will the Lutheran Church be required to make its own position and agenda explicit.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. The Finnish government took active measures to free the Finnish Orthodox population from contact with the Russian Orthodox Church, which after the October Revolution was under Soviet influence. In the process, an autonomous Orthodox Church of Finland was established that severed ties with the Russian Church and established new ones with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. See Nokelainen, 2010.
2. Official membership figures do not equal religious affiliation or identity. They denote membership in a religious community recognised by the state. The issue is more problematic in some religions than others, and generally the

religious affiliation of people of immigrant background, including Muslims, is under-reported. See Martikainen, 2011.
3. This section is based on interviews with Finnish Muslim activists during the 2000s.
4. This section is based on an ongoing study of interfaith associations in Finland and a previous study of one interfaith action. See Martikainen, 2009.

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7

The Voice(s) of British Sikhs

Jasjit Singh

While undertaking research into the religious identities of young British Sikhs at a Sikh camp in London in 2007, I found them making enormous efforts to learn about the Sikh tradition. This was in stark contrast to statements I had often heard from the stages of gurdwaras (a Sikh place of worship; literally 'the Guru's house'), where speakers complained that young Sikhs were no longer interested in religion and were failing to maintain Sikh identity. The particular camp I attended attracted around 120 attendees, was held outside a gurdwara, and demonstrated little involvement from the older generation. The majority of the camp organisers and attendees were aged between 18 and 30 and were British-born, with the lectures and discussions being presented in English. These observations immediately raised a number of questions. How were these Sikh camps linked to established Sikh organisations? Apart from these camps, how were young British Sikhs engaging with Sikhism? And most specifically, why were young Sikhs organising events outside gurdwaras when a number of large purpose-built gurdwaras now exist across the United Kingdom?

To date, few scholars have examined the religious lives of young Sikh adults, even though, according to the 2011 census, 25 per cent of the 423,158 Sikhs currently living in England and Wales (or 105,985 people) are between the ages of 15 and 29. Indeed, for Singh and Tatla (2006, p. 207), 'the culture of young British Sikhs today remains an area of darkness for the community and a testing ground for its uncertain futures'. Those who have commented on the lives of young Sikh adults sense that new arenas of religious transmission – including camps – are becoming increasingly significant. Thandi suggests that alongside Sikh camps, Sikh student societies are increasingly important for raising religious and cultural awareness, and that both of these developments

have also led to the appearance of new youth organizations such as BOSS (British Organization of Sikh Students) which attempt to provide a college and university wide network of contacts for Sikh students with the objective of promotion of Sikh culture . . . It is organizations such as BOSS which are most likely to provide the future generation of Sikh leaders.

(Thandi, 1999, p. 355)

In this chapter, I examine these predictions, particularly those relating to the role of Sikh organisations. Grounding my analysis in a wider discussion of the role of established Sikh organisations and institutions in Britain, I focus on understanding how young Sikhs associate with their tradition through Sikh youth organisations, Sikh camps, and the Internet. The chapter addresses the ways in which young Sikhs engage with various arenas of transmission; considers how these diverse modes impact on religious and civil bonds for Sikh youth; illustrates how Sikh organisations in Britain have evolved over the years; and demonstrates that new technologies, including the Internet, are impacting on the ways in which minority communities engage with the British state.

British Sikh organisations

Those watching the funeral of Margaret Thatcher on 17 April 2013 might have been surprised to see a host of orange flags supporting the symbol of the Sikh Khanda waving in the background as the funeral cortege drove past Downing Street.[1] The flags were part of a political street protest organised by 'Kesri Lehar' (literally, the 'Saffron Wave' or 'Wave of Justice'), a grass-roots campaign focusing on human rights abuses of Sikh political prisoners in India. On 6 August 2013, it was announced that the 117-day protest would be coming to an end, as it had succeeded in ensuring that the Minister of State at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office would be taking up the issue of Sikh political prisoners with the Indian Government.[2] This very recent example highlights the continued impact and influence of Punjabi homeland politics on British Sikh political engagement. 'Kesri Lehar' was formed on 12 April 2012 following the dismissal of an appeal for clemency on behalf of Professor Daviderpal Singh Bhullar, who had been convicted for plotting a car bombing in New Delhi in 1993.[3] Focusing on the fact that the conviction was based on a retracted confessional statement,[4] the campaign began with a drive to gather 100,000 signatures in order to instigate a debate in the British parliament on human rights abuses in India. The completed petition was presented outside Downing Street

on 10 December 2012, leading to a debate in the House of Commons on 28 February 2013 and another in Westminster Hall on 13 March 2013.[5]

Why was there a need to establish a grass-roots campaign that circumvented many of the already-established British Sikh organisations, and how does this campaign relate to previous British Sikh mobilisations? In their analysis of British Sikh political engagement, Singh and Tatla (2006, p. 94) observe that many British Sikh organisations have some link to the politics of the Punjab, and as the political system in the Punjab is based on leaders controlling factions, factionalism is endemic in many Sikh organisations and institutions in Britain, ensuring that most 'have a short shelf-life, regularly undergo multiple reincarnations or reinvent themselves with grandiose titles' (Singh and Tatla, 2006, p. 95). They also note that as British Sikhs have to date failed to establish national and local institutions that command legitimacy across the whole community, collective action usually takes place on single issues, because these are more likely to reward a leader and a faction with status in the community while simultaneously undermining other factions and groups.

Despite this factionalism, however, Sikhs have managed to occupy a distinctive position in the history of multiculturalism in Britain, becoming 'the paradigm case of a special-interest group that can always negotiate an opt-out from general rule making' (Singh and Tatla, 2006, p. 126), in particular negotiating opt-outs from laws restricting the wearing of religious symbols, including, for example, the turban. Mandair (2013, p. 193) notes that the ebb and flow of Sikh political representation can be usefully divided into three phases: the pre-1984 stage, the Khalistani phase 1984–1992, and the post-Khalistani and post-9/11 phase. What follows examines how Sikhs in Britain have engaged with politicians and policymakers through these three phases and explores how the organisations best placed and the individuals most trusted to speak for British Sikhs have varied considerably through these three periods.

The pre-1984 phase: The politics of religious symbols

The very first Sikh organisation in Britain, the Khalsa Jatha of the British Isles (KJBI), was established in 1908 and was responsible for setting up the first gurdwara in the United Kingdom (at Shepherd's Bush), which remained the focal point of the Sikh community until the mass migration of Sikhs to the United Kingdom following the Second World War. The increase in the number of turbaned Sikhs entering the labour market in the late 1950s and 1960s led to tensions relating to the accommodation of turbans in company uniforms. The campaigns involving

Gyani Sundar Singh Sagar in Manchester in 1959 and Tarsem Singh Sandhu in Wolverhampton in 1967, both of whom wished to continue wearing their turbans while working for bus companies, were the first mobilisations around markers of Sikh identity, with both individuals being supported by their local gurdwaras. Sandhu's case was also supported by the emerging UK branch of the Punjab-based political party, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), and the local Indian Workers Association (IWA) (Singh and Tatla, 2006, p. 127), as the IWAs began to establish their reputations as the most influential organisations supporting Indian workers at this time. The stakes were raised even further when Sohan Singh Jolly, one of the leaders of the protest movement, threatened self-immolation if Sandhu was not allowed to wear his turban to work (Feldman, 2011, p. 282). However, Jolly's actions were clearly not supported by all of the British Sikh community at this time, with Dr A. K. S. Aujila of the 'Supreme Council of Sikhs in the UK' stating that he would 'wage relentless war on the idea that individuals can take this sort of action involving the whole community and very likely lead to a worsening of community harmony in Britain'.[6] As this chapter demonstrates, Sikh 'leaders' have often expressed differences of opinion on Sikh issues due to the fact that no one organisation has been able to claim legitimacy to represent all Sikhs.

These turban victories were relatively short lived, as in 1973 the government introduced a law making it a compulsory requirement for all motorcyclists to wear a helmet. Those mobilising against this law included MPs of constituencies with large numbers of Sikhs, in particular Sidney Bidwell, the MP for Southall (Singh and Tatla, 2006, p. 130). In his speech to parliament on 28 January 1975, Bidwell recalled that he had become aware of the issue following a visit from representatives of the Singh Sabha gurdwara in Southall, both of the Shiromani Akali Dal parties, and the Sikh Missionary Society (UK). In this speech, Bidwell also noted that 'the Sikh has never been called upon to discard his turban in favour of the war hat or tin helmet worn by other soldiers under battle fire';[7] his reference highlighted one of the main reasons why Sikhs were so successful in negotiating opt-out clauses relating to the turban, as many of the policymakers and general public in the 1970s and 1980s retained a collective memory of turbaned Sikh soldiers fighting for the British in the First and Second World Wars. Indeed, Feldman (2011, p. 294) notes that a number of speakers and letter writers of the time supported the Sikh cause for this very reason, as:

> Sikhs had never been made to wear regulation helmets in the British
> army but had been allowed to keep their turbans in place, often with

a regimental insignia on the front. If Sikhs wearing turbans had been prepared to die for Britain – and Britain had been happy to accept their sacrifice – then it was only right that Sikhs should be allowed to ride motorcycles and work on building sites similarly wearing their turban.

These cases were both forerunners for arguably the most important legal case in British Sikh history, on which many subsequent cases have relied: Mandla v Dowell Lee. The case arose in 1978 when a Sikh student, Gurinder Singh Mandla, was refused admission to Park Grove School in Edgbaston, Birmingham on the grounds that his turban was not in accordance with the school uniform. The main outcome of the Mandla case was the defining of the Sikhs as an ethnic group, meaning that they were, like Jews, brought under the protection of the Race Relations Act. Also involved in the Mandla case was Indarjit Singh (now Lord Singh) of Wimbledon, who has become one of the most important Sikh personalities in the UK. A civil engineer by profession, Indarjit Singh first came to prominence as the assistant editor of the *Sikh Courier* before establishing the *Sikh Messenger* in 1984, having found no public forums available in the early 1980s to discuss the treatment of Sikhs in India.[8]

The Khalistani phase 1984–1992: The politics of the homeland

The events of 1984 that culminated in an attack on the Golden Temple by the Indian army during Operation Bluestar sent a shock through Sikh circles.[9] For many Sikhs, Operation Bluestar and the violence against Sikhs in Delhi following the assassination of Indira Gandhi permanently changed their relationship with the Indian state. Reflecting the state of Punjabi politics, a number of Khalistani Sikh organisations assumed the leadership of the Sikh community in Britain at this time, in particular the Council of Khalistan (COK), the International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF), the Babbar Khalsa (BK), and the Dal Khalsa (DK), with the ISYF in particular taking control of a number of gurdwaras across the country.[10] These organisations were primarily concerned with influencing British government policies towards India and with organising protests against the visits of Indian politicians to the United Kingdom (Singh and Tatla, 2006, p. 109). Through their close links with groups and leaders in the Punjab, many of these organisations also provided financial help to the Khalistan movement and to the families of those killed by the security forces (Singh and Tatla, 2006, p. 112). As the activities of

the UK-based Khalistani organisations had became a major issue for the Indian government by the mid-1980s, an extradition treaty and a ban on fundraising were signed between the British and Indian governments in September 1992 (Singh and Tatla, 2006, p. 115).

The post-Khalistani and post-9/11 phase: The politics of recognition

The suppression of the Khalistan movement in the Punjab by Indian security forces in the early 1990s impacted on British Sikh politics and led to a decline in the influence of the Khalistani Sikh organisations. Following this reconfiguration between Sikh organisations and the Indian state, a number of new networks and organisations emerged in the 1990s, some of which focused on ensuring that policymakers and statutory organisations were aware of the needs of British Sikhs. The Network of Sikh Organisations (NSO), established by Lord Singh in 1997, for instance, became involved in work relating to the representation of Sikhism in education curricula, the wearing of Sikh symbols in schools, and the Sikh chaplaincy service.[11] Other organisations, many of which emerged from the Khalistani organisations, focused on the politics of 'victimhood' (Singh and Tatla, 2006, p. 118) and on arguing for the Sikhs' right to self-determination. These included the Sikh Human Rights Group (SHRG) established by the ex-president of the ISYF, Dr Jasdev Singh Rai, in response to the increasing number of human rights abuses in the Punjab reported by Amnesty International.[12]

The rise of hate crimes against Sikhs and the overnight banning of the *kirpan* by the British Airports Authority[13] in the aftermath of 9/11 led to the establishment of a number of organisations wishing to engage with policymakers, including the British Sikh Consultative Forum (BSCF). The ISYF, banned by the British government after being branded a terrorist organisation,[14] re-emerged as the Sikh Federation (UK) (Singh and Tatla, 2006, p. 120) and facilitated the establishment of an All Party Parliamentary Group for British Sikhs, which was officially launched on 12 July 2005 (Singh and Tatla, 2006, p. 120). Many of these post-9/11 organisations have presented themselves to the Sikh community as having strong links to politicians and policymakers by regularly organising events in the Houses of Parliament.[15] A number of other British Sikh organisations, including United Sikhs, have emerged in the post-9/11 period. Led by its director, Mejindarpal Kaur, United Sikhs have fought a number of legal cases, in particular pertaining to the wearing of the *kara* and *kirpan* in British schools.[16]

The growing number of issues related to the wearing of Sikh religious symbols in schools and workplaces and the recognition that there was a lack of awareness about the legal position of these symbols led to the establishment of the Sikh Council in 2010, a 'democratically elected accountable national organisation which was inaugurated on the 11 December 2010 following 6 months of consultation with Community Leaders across UK'.[17] The Sikh Council was recognised in the parliamentary debate of 13 March 2013 when the MP for Warwick and Leamington, Chris White, stated that 'the Government should take the opportunity to work with organisations such as the Sikh Council UK, which seeks to act as a national advocate for British Sikhs'.[18] This need for a Sikh national representative organisation appears to be modelled along similar lines to the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) in that it presented policymakers with a single point of contact with which to engage the 'Sikh voice'. In addition to these organisations, the Sikh media have started to carve out space in representing Sikhs, with the establishment of the Sikh television stations Sikh Channel and Sangat TV, which campaigned for recognition of the turban following the introduction of manual checks at airports across the European Union in February 2011.[19] This culminated in the Sikh Channel organising a *Dastaar* (turban) day protest outside the Houses of Parliament on 25 September 2011.[20]

Thus, since Sikhs arrived in Britain, there have been multiple individuals and institutions claiming to present the Sikh voice. It seems that in the Sikh case, there are a number of different types of representative organisation – those campaigning on single issues (e.g. Kesri Lehar), those offering professional expertise (e.g. the legal expertise of United Sikhs), those providing services to government (e.g. the NSO providing Sikh Chaplaincy Services), and those seeking to raise Sikh issues with policymakers (e.g. the Sikh Council). It is important to note that few of these organisations have individual members; rather they claim a status among Sikhs by linking themselves to gurdwaras, the Sikhs' principal religious institutions (Singh and Tatla, 2006, p. 69). Few Sikhs formally become members of Sikh organisations or even their local gurdwaras. Therefore, organisations that claim the support of large numbers of Sikhs by affiliating with gurdwaras are in fact claiming to have the support of large congregations by proxy rather than through formal membership.

Gurdwaras

For early Sikh migrants, gurdwaras 'served to alleviate the loneliness, heartache, and sense of unease that came from being in an alien land'

(Helweg, 1979, p. 81); they acted as places of worship and as symbolic centres for Sikh temporal and political authority. Since the establishment of the Central Gurdwara (Khalsa Jatha) in London, which was the only one in the United Kingdom until 1951, the number of gurdwaras has proliferated. In terms of their emergence in Britain, Singh and Tatla (2006, p. 72) describe how

> the gurdwaras movement has followed a common trajectory: initially the renting of a house or hall for communal gatherings (1950s/1960s); the purchase of larger, inner-city premises (1960s/1970s); the construction or modification of existing premises for all-purpose gurdwaras and the creation of *separate* institutions by disgruntled factions within the original founding body or by castes (1980s); and more recently, at the turn of the millennium (1990s/2000s), the emergence of imposing grand 'new cathedrals'.

Although most gurdwaras are similar in that they are run by elected committees (Helweg, 1979, p. 82), some are run by charismatic individuals (sants), who play an important role in selecting committee members. Early gurdwaras established in Britain served as important places for Sikhs to congregate for both religious and cultural events, leading some to create function halls, with Kalsi noting that the Ramgarhia Board in Leeds was originally established 'as a social centre to entertain wedding guests . . . [with] no restrictions on the use of alcohol and meat' (1992, p. 121). This status of the gurdwara as a combined religious and cultural centre is now being challenged by some young British Sikhs who believe that certain Punjabi cultural practices go against Sikh religious teachings and should not take place in or near gurdwara premises as this is disrespectful to the Guru Granth Sahib, the embodied Guru of the Sikhs.

A recent example of this mobilisation is the *Satkaar* [Respect] campaign that emerged in response to events at the Grays gurdwara in Essex where, in June 2010, the *sangat* [congregation] voted in favour of allowing alcohol, meat, and tobacco in a hall owned by the gurdwara. Those participating in the *Satkaar* campaign saw this decision as in contravention of an Akal Takht edict from 2006, which banned the use of meat, alcohol, and tobacco on gurdwara premises.[21] Things came to a head on 16 October 2010 when a party was due to be held in the social hall next to the gurdwara. A demonstration was organised at the gurdwara to protest against the party, after which the committee in Grays disallowed the use of meat and alcohol on their premises.

This meeting of young Sikhs from all over the country at Grays led to the establishment of the *Satkaar* movement, which was formalised

on Saturday 16 October 2010 'when hundreds of concerned members of the UK Sikh Community – young and old, male and female – travelled from far and wide to peacefully protest against a proposed party at Grays gurdwara in Essex, UK, which would see alcohol, tobacco and meat permitted on gurdwara premises' (Satkaar, 2011a). Since the protest at Grays successfully changed the practices at the gurdwara, the Satkaar campaign has subsequently stopped the use of meat and alcohol at the Guru Nanak gurdwara in Edinburgh (Satkaar, 2011b), the Maharajah Jassa Singh hall run by the Ramgarhia Sikh Temple in Birmingham (Satkaar, 2011c), and a party hall run by the Guru Nanak Singh Sabha gurdwara in Dudley (Satkaar, 2011d). This campaign follows on from the earlier R4G (Respect for Guru) campaign of 2005, during which young Sikhs demonstrated against the practice of taking the Guru Granth Sahib to party halls or hotels for wedding ceremonies (Booth, 2005).

Much of this mobilisation occurred online, a pattern which has been repeated for the R4G, *Satkaar*, and an even more recent campaign against mixed marriages in gurdwaras (Snell, 2012). Thandi (2012, p. 25) notes that those partaking in these campaigns tend to be 'sections of second generation Sikhs…developing a more militant and agitational stance on cultural practices they see as detrimental to Sikh religion and their religious sentiments'. I suggest that these recent campaigns have all developed as a result of the earlier mobilisation against the *Behzti* (dishonour) play which was performed at the Rep Theatre in Birmingham in 2004. On Saturday, 18 December 2004, over 400 Sikhs protested against the fact that the *Behzti* play depicted rape and murder in a gurdwara. This protest eventually turned violent, leading the Rep to cancel all performances. Even though the theatre had consulted with established 'community leaders' from the Council of Sikh Gurdwaras Birmingham (Singh and Tatla, 2006, p. 139), who had requested that the play be altered to change the setting of controversial scenes from a Sikh temple to a community centre (O'Neill and Woolcock, 2004), these pleas were ignored and the play was performed setting these scenes in the gurdwara. Although those responsible for staging the play were under the impression that a consultation with 'community leaders' would be sufficient to alleviate any concerns that British Sikhs might have with the play, this approach clearly had no relevance to those young Sikhs who mobilised online and who took part in the demonstrations. Indeed, Stuart Rogers, the theatre's executive director, stated that 'the board had no option [other than to cancel the performances] after Sikh community leaders could not give them assurances there would be no repeat of the violence'.[22]

The common thread in all of the campaigns from the *Behzti* affair onwards is that many of those participating believe that they are placing the sanctity of the Guru Granth Sahib and of the gurdwara at the core of their expressed identity, against what they consider practices that dishonour their Guru. Although these protests may also have political concerns and relate to struggles for power and influence within Sikh circles, they cannot be understood in full without taking these religious justifications into account. It is also clear that, in the Internet age, local issues can quickly become national issues, especially given the size of the British Isles and that the majority of the Sikh population in Britain live between Birmingham and London. The organisations established and led by the first generation of migrants do not appeal to the younger generation who are looking for ways in which to articulate issues relating to being British-born Sikhs. As the next section of this chapter shows, these combined social processes have led to the formation of a number of British Sikh Youth organisations which, unlike many of the established organisations described above, have few links to gurdwaras.

British Sikh youth organisations

Although the exact process by which the British Organisation of Sikh Students (BOSS) came about is lost in time, and there is 'little documentary recording of the early history' (Gilliat-Ray, 2000, p. 128), it is apparent through interviews with a number of the activists involved in its formation that BOSS was established in 1992. At this time, as with any university student society, the establishment of early Sikh student societies was solely dependent on whether or not a Sikh activist attended a particular university. As many young Sikhs were attending their local institutions, it is not surprising that the majority of Sikh societies were initially set up in London and the Midlands, although societies were also set up as far north as Sunderland. BOSS sought to ensure that Sikhs were sufficiently represented on university campuses and also saw the need for Sikh societies to act as spaces where Sikh students could be united, bridging 'the age-gap, which restricts youth activity at the gurdwara' (BOSS, Sikh Society Handbook). Interestingly, however, although the events of Operation Bluestar in 1984 had occurred less than a decade before the formation of BOSS, it appears that it was the Rushdie affair rather than the events of 1984 that inspired young British Sikhs to mobilise. This local activism can be explained by the simple fact that, unlike the events of 1984, the Rushdie affair took place on British soil. Although 1984 caused many members of the British Sikh community to start wearing turbans and keeping beards, the fact that the Rushdie

affair raised the profile of Muslims in British society subsequently caused young British Sikhs to feel the need to mobilise and to develop their own organisations to ensure that they were being correctly represented. It is for this reason that other young non-Muslim South Asians started forming organisations of their own at this time, including the National Hindu Students Forum (NHSF).

In its early years, BOSS described itself as 'a non-political, non-profit making, independent body which acts as an umbrella organisation help-ing to develop, assist and support Sikh youth groups...in particular those aged 18–30, of whom a significant proportion are at institutions of further and higher education' (BOSS, 'About BOSS'). Its original mission statement from 1997 describes how, through organising discussions, workshops, and cultural events, and providing literature throughout universities, colleges, and local gurdwara groups, BOSS was 'trying to increase an awareness of the "Sikh identity", and its moral/ethical val-ues amongst the youth and to highlight certain misinterpretations of the Sikhs in the western world' (Waheguru.demon.co.uk). The fact that this statement identifies the Western world as the intended audience indicates that young Sikhs at the time felt that it was their place to educate non-Sikhs about the Sikh tradition, as this integrative approach had not, in their view, been sufficiently carried out by the existing Sikh organisations.

As well as assisting Sikh societies in universities all over the United Kingdom and organising a camp for young Sikhs, Sikhi Camp, BOSS in its contemporary form also runs a store selling CDs, clothes, books and DVDs, both online and at various events around the country. Indi-vidual Sikh societies are free to choose whether or not they affiliate with BOSS. In 2010, the Sikh societies that did affiliate to BOSS were managed through three subcommittees based in the North, Midlands, and South of England. These groups met once per semester to share best practice and to help coordinate and organize events and 'Sikhi weeks' during which a series of events would be organised across a number of differ-ent higher education institutions in a similar geographical area (North, Midlands, South). In recent years, the influence of BOSS on student Sikh societies appears to have waned somewhat, partly, it seems, because Sikh societies prefer to organise themselves locally. In London, for instance, 2011 saw the establishment of Nishaan, an organisation 'consisting of Sikh Societies across London and the South East of England whose motto is "for the students by the students" ' (Nishaan, n.d.). Nishaan has no formal links to BOSS and organises pan-London university events.

Although there are no data on the numbers of young Sikhs in higher education, Singh and Tatla note that 'Sikh students are now entering

British universities in greater numbers than ever before . . . partly because of the expansion of higher education and the rise in Sikh student numbers, especially since the 1990s, coincides with their overwhelming concentration in the post-1992 "new" university sector' (2006, p. 159). A Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) report on student ethnicity based on data collated in 2002–2003 (HEFCE, 2010, p. 2) highlights some illuminating data, which, although not applying to Sikh students specifically, illustrate some of the trends relating to minority ethnic students. The report found that at least 20 per cent of young entrants in each minority ethnic group came from London and studied in London, compared with just 3 per cent of white entrants. In addition, minority ethnic entrants were concentrated in a smaller number of institutions compared to white entrants.

The types of events organised by Sikh societies and the perspectives of members and committee leaders of Sikh societies indicate that these societies are as much a place for social interaction as for learning about Sikhism. But it is important to note that different kinds of Sikh societies exist in different institutions. As Gilliat-Ray describes (2000, pp. 22–46), higher education institutions engage with religion in different ways depending on their history, which then affects the resources provided to faith societies, and possibly the motivation or political orientations of the students who are likely to join them.[23] In addition, different types of institutions attract different types of students. For instance, Thandi observes significant over-representation among Indian students in the 'new' university sector and notes that 'there is much evidence to suggest that the entrants into "new" universities are usually those students who have a lower "A level" score or those who have gained admission through some other non-standard qualification' (Thandi, 1999, p. 357). Consequently, university Sikh societies are very diverse collectives with differences relating to the locality and background of the institution. The local context in which these societies operate is thus very important, especially in higher education institutions, which draw many of their students from their immediate localities. If the Sikh society comprises a group of local attendees from a particular gurdwara, the social experience will be very different to that of a society which comprises committee members from all over the country.

Sikh camps

In addition to university Sikh societies, many young Sikhs engage with their tradition through Sikh youth camps, the first of which was organised by the Sikh Missionary Society in April 1978 at the Sikh Temple,

Kent Road, Grays in Essex (Grewal, 1987, p. 9). This first camp, which lasted one week, catered for 11–18-year-olds and attracted campers from as far as Leicester, Manchester, Liverpool, Southampton, Coventry, High Wycombe, and London. Subsequent Sikh Missionary Society camps catering for this age group have taken place in gurdwaras all over the country, including London, Bristol, Southampton, Walsall, Bradford, Birmingham, and Wolverhampton (Grewal, 1987, p. 9). Nesbitt notes that these Sikh children's camps offer their attendees exercises, prayers, seminars, games, discussions, and also the opportunity to participate in religious practices that they may not otherwise have the chance to carry out (Nesbitt, 1990, p. 1). This model of camp has been replicated at a local level by many gurdwaras, and it is now common to observe Sikh camps for children and teenagers during school holidays in gurdwaras in most large cities in the United Kingdom. These camps are usually well attended, with around 200 children attending a camp held in the summer of 2009 in Leeds.

Whereas children's camps run in gurdwaras are usually non-residential and run for between one and seven days, a number of residential camps have emerged in recent years to cater to young Sikh adults over the age of 18. These camps usually run for up to a week and are held outside gurdwaras, often in activity centres. While numbers are still relatively small, the very fact that camps are now being organised for young Sikhs between the ages of 18 and 30 correlates with the wide variety of events being organised for emerging adults across a number of religious traditions, such as the development of evangelical Christian 18–30 holidays (Owen and Griggs, 2008), religious music festivals including Greenbelt, religious instruction classes for emerging adult Hindus run by the NHSF, and the Christian Alpha course. Given the enormous efforts required to organise an event catering for between one and 200 young adults – arranging food, advertising, lecturers, and accommodation – it is not surprising that most of the camps for young Sikh adults have not been offered consistently over the years. Since the mid-1990s, five camps have run at various times: Khalsa Camp, Sikhi Camp, Sikh Student Camp, 'The S.I.K.H. Camp', and the 'Sikh to Inspire' Camp (Singh, 2011). Some of these camps are organised by particular ideological groups with large memberships and continue to run to this day, while others fold due to having no group to fall back on and consequently suffering from a lack of new volunteers (Singh, 2011). Indeed, by analogy with the Alpha course, which Guest views as 'an attractive channel for the revitalisation of Christian identity, rather than an effective means of transmitting religious ideas to the uninitiated' (2009,

p. 660), Sikh camps are best regarded as arenas of revitalisation for those already engaging with their tradition.

As well as providing religious reinforcement, the camps offer their attendees the opportunity to be part of a young Sikh congregation, which overwhelms all other aspects of the camp experience. Indeed, many of the young Sikhs who staff these camps do so as they see it as a way to contribute to their community in a meaningful way and are offered experiences that they may not come across in the outside world (Quraishi, 2006, p. 208). These events enable young Sikhs to meet the lecturers and camp organisers who then serve as accessible young role models who are close to the attendees in age and who choose to adopt a positive religious identity (Quraishi, 2006, p. 207). Singh and Tatla note that many of these camps are 'increasingly developing a transnational character, with coordination in North America, Europe and India' (2006, p. 89), although they also claim that 'the strong ideological content of most of these camps . . . has proved unattractive to most Sikh youth and remote from their everyday concerns in the Western diaspora' (2006, p. 90). In my own research on the camps being organised for 18–30-year-old British Sikhs (Singh, 2011), I found, conversely, that many of the young Sikhs attending were affiliated with the particular Sikh groups organising the camp, and they had often come into contact with these groups at their local gurdwaras. In this regard, camp attendance is influenced as much by family background or membership of local peer networks as an independent wish to follow a particular ideological position. Indeed, those attending the local gurdwara events being run for children often then attended the camps being run for young adult Sikhs. Attendees may in fact have engaged with these role models previously at gurdwaras or youth groups and then simply follow them to a camp. Therefore, although these camps may not constitute a major movement for Sikh youth, they certainly are attractive for those young Sikhs whose families affiliate to particular traditions or ideological positions.[24]

The Internet

Although many young Sikhs now engage with their tradition through camps and Sikh societies, the impact of the Internet as a means of religious engagement surpasses both of these arenas in terms of its reach and significance. An area in which the Internet has challenged traditional structures and organisations is in its capacity to mobilise like-minded individuals behind particular causes, including the *Behzti* affair, the R4G campaign and the *Satkaar* campaign. Of the various

online Sikh forums, it appears that the sikhsangat.com forum is the most active in relation to mobilisation. On 13 December 2004, a thread was started about the *Behzti* play. An analysis of this thread demonstrates that although a number of local protests occurred in the days leading up to the opening of the play (Sikhsangat.com, 2004a), a larger national protest was organised online for the weekend of Saturday 18 December 2004, with messages on the discussion board encouraging protesters to demonstrate (Sikhsangat.com, 2004b). It appears that messages on this particular discussion thread helped facilitate the organisation of coaches from cities outside Birmingham, including Leicester and Coventry (Sikhsangat.com, 2004b), to participate in the larger protest, which made headline news (O'Neill and Woolcock, 2004).

As with the *Behzti* affair, other mobilisations, including the R4G and *Satkaar* campaigns, have begun with a posting on sikhsangat.com identifying miscreant individuals or institutions. Campaigns against the consumption of meat and alcohol at an event held in the same complex as the Leamington gurdwara (Sikhsangat.com, 2004c) and against the positioning of Guru Granth Sahib in the same space as Hindu idols at the Ek Niwas *dera* in Wolverhampton also began this way (Sikhsangat.com, 2006). Indeed, a member of the *Satkaar* team explained to me that they are usually made aware of any 'indiscretions' through online forums, primarily sikhsangat.com.[25] In terms of the impact of the Internet on religious authorities, these mobilisations all demonstrate how it is now possible for issues to be quickly raised at a national level, and for those interested in tackling them to mobilise at very short notice. Indeed, given the geographical proximity of cities in the United Kingdom, as compared to the United States or Canada, it could be argued that the impact of this type of mobilisation has been felt most strongly in the United Kingdom.

In this regard, it is the Internet that now appears to be setting the agenda for many of the issues which British Sikh organisations set out to address. A recent example of this power in the public sphere concerns a series of letters relating to the events of Operation Bluestar in 1984, which were disclosed under the 30-year rule and uncovered by the Stop Deportations website on Monday 13 January 2014.[26] A key paragraph in one of the letters, dated February 1984, indicated that a British SAS officer had assisted in the planning of the raid with the agreement of the then British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher.[27] On Tuesday 4 February 2014, the foreign secretary, William Hague, made a statement in which he explained that, although the then British government had indeed sent a military officer in February 1984 to provide the Indian government with operational advice on plans to regain

control of the temple complex, this advice had not been followed in the operation itself. Immediate reactions to the disclosures on social media from British Sikhs highlighted feelings of betrayal, with young British-born Sikhs in particular stating that they were now reassessing their Britishness. Many mentioned the contribution that their grandfathers and great grandfathers had made to the First and Second World Wars, and expressed shock that these contributions could mean so little. Having rejected their Indian identities as a consequence of the events of 1984, many stated that they now did not feel totally British either, despite the statement from the foreign secretary. This case highlights how identification with a nation state is contingent on that state being seen to protect the interests of those citizens. British Sikhs have labelled themselves as such, because to date the relationship with the British has been of mutual benefit, with Sikhs contributing fully to British society and Britain providing Sikhs with opportunities to do so. The disclosure of the Operation Bluestar material challenged that view.

Conclusions

As this chapter has shown, since Sikhs arrived in Britain there have been several individuals, institutions and organisations all claiming to present – and represent – the Sikh voice. Despite the vast number of organisations which already exist, there appears to be no respite in the development of new ones. Young British-born Sikhs are now forming their own organisations with few links to those which already exist. The City Sikhs Network, for instance, consists of young City of London-based Sikhs who are forging relationships with the Football Association and who recently released a 'British Sikh Report'.[28]

Unlike the organisations established by the first-generation migrants, few of these newly formed youth organisations look to link with gurdwaras. Instead, they use social media and organise events outside gurdwaras to gain influence. Yet it has been demonstrated that gurdwaras with their large congregations and guaranteed income from donation boxes continue to play an important symbolic and political role, although their influence tends to be more local than national. Although increasing numbers of events catering for children are organised in gurdwaras, these tend to be organised by youth volunteers with little involvement from gurdwara committee members. As young Sikhs rarely become involved in gurdwara management, either having been put off by the inherent factionalism they observe in the gurdwara committee system, or because they do not have the time or inclination to become involved, many channel their religious activism

into creating organisations that operate either on single issues (e.g. the *Satkaar* campaign) or on a national level. These new organisations and those individuals responsible for establishing them are becoming increasingly influential. Indeed, when looking for a Sikh voice, the BBC Asian Network now regularly turns to young Sikhs, including Kirat Raj Singh, who is heavily involved in student activities,[29] Harwinder Singh Mander, who set up the Sikh radio station Naujawani.com,[30] and Jagraj Singh, a young Sikh who preaches in English on Youtube.[31]

So who does speak for the Sikhs? From the analysis above, it seems that the answer is nobody and everybody. Given that Sikhs are regularly referred to as Sardars (leaders), and that the Sikh Gurus strongly promoted egalitarianism, this is not surprising. Identifying as a Sikh means representing oneself and the whole Sikh community at the same time. Thus, the opinion of any Sikh individual becomes as valid as that of any other. As the Gurus challenged those in power and encouraged their Sikh followers to do so, any sort of hierarchy established within Sikh circles is by definition bound to be challenged at the earliest opportunity, most probably by Sikhs themselves. Although they are happy to campaign on particular issues, Sikhs remain fiercely independent, and consequently it is unlikely that any one organisation will be representative. The need for statutory bodies and public organisations to be seen to engage with a diversity of voices often leads to these organisations taking on representative roles even though they have no democratic mandate to do so. Those who wish to engage with 'the Sikh voice' should try to engage with a variety of different 'Sikh voices', and with those Sikh organisations that encourage new generations of activists to emerge: it is these organisations that seem to be proving the most successful.

Notes

1. A photo of the flags behind the cortege can be found here: http://dalkhalsa. blogspot.co.uk/2013/04/sikhs-protesting-against-death-sentence.html [Accessed 31st July 2013].
2. The full press release can be found here: https://www.facebook.com/photo. php?fbid=10151585618997081&l=0488007e58 [Accessed 15 August 2013].
3. For further details about the case, see http://www.indianexpress.com/news/ supreme-court-rejects-devinderpal-singh-bhullars-mercy-plea/1101423/ [Accessed 10 August 2013].
4. This was also recognised by an Indian public prosecutor – see http://articles. timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-04-18/india/38646410_1_home-ministry-m-b-shah-terror-case [Accessed 10 August 2013].
5. For details about the petition, see http://www.kesrilehar.co.uk/100000-petition.html [Accessed 3 August 2013]. For details about these debates, see: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130228/ debtext/130228-0002.htm [Accessed 3 August 2013] and http://www.

publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130313/halltext/130 313h0001.htm [Accessed 3 August 2013].

6. See '1969: Sikh busmen win turban fight' available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/ onthisday/hi/dates/stories/april/9/newsid_2523000/2523691.stm   [Accessed 13 February 2014].

7. For the full text of the speech, see: http://www.sikhmissionarysociety.org/ sms/smspublications/theturbanvictory/chapter1/#SPEECH%20on%2028th% 20JANUARY,%20197 [Accessed 13 March 2013].

8. Indarjit Singh, Sikh Channel Interview, 08/11/2012 – available at http:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4J2TW8C-oA [Accessed 13 August 2013].

9. For further details about the events of 1984, which included the storming of the Golden Temple by the Indian Army in June, the assassination of the Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi in October, and the subsequent troubles in Delhi leading to the death of many Sikhs that followed immediately after, see Shani (2008) and Nesbitt (2005, pp. 81–83).

10. For an excellent analysis of these groups, see Chapter 5 of Singh, G., Tatla, D.S., 2006. *Sikhs in Britain: The Making of a Community*. Zed Books Ltd.

11. See http://nsouk.co.uk/publications_item.asp?NewsID=25 [Accessed 13 February 2014].

12. See http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA20/011/1991/en/1898adad-ee56-11dd-9381-bdd29f83d3a8/asa200111991en.pdf [Accessed 13 February 2014].

13. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/720475/Air-security-poses-threat-to-Sikh-beliefs.html [Accessed 13 February 2014].

14. http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2001/mar/01/ukcrime.humanrights [Accessed 13 February 2014].

15. For instance, see this event organised in Parliament by the Sikh Federation: http://www.sikhsangat.com/index.php?/topic/68716-30-october-event-in-the-uk-parliament-about-the-november-1984-genocide [Accessed 11 March 2014] and this one organised by the BSCF: https://www.facebook.com/ events/212003922150016/ [Accessed 11 March 2014].

16. For instance, see http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/8304088.stm [Accessed 21 November 2013] and http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/south_ east/7083315.stm [Accessed 29 May 2013].

17. According to the Sikh Council website http://sikhcounciluk.org/.

18. See: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130 313/halltext/130313h0001.htm [Accessed 19 June 2013].

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22. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/1479519/Play-seeks-new-venue-after-Sikh-protests-closed-show.html [Accessed 12 August 2013].

23. For recent research outlining the different ways in which universities engage with religion, see the 'Religious Literacy Leadership Programme'. Available at: http://religiousliteracyhe.org/ [Accessed 11 October 2010].

24. For an overview of the different ideological groups which are now present in the United Kingdom, see Singh (2014).

25. Quoted from a telephonic interview with member of the Satkaar campaign who wished to remain anonymous. Interview held on 15 January 2011.

26. http://stopdeportations.wordpress.com/2014/01/13/revealed-sas-advised-1984-amritsar-raid/ [Accessed 15 January 2014].
27. See http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/14/david-cameron-inquiry-british-role-amritsar-attack-sas [Accessed 4 April 2014].
28. http://www.britishsikhreport.org/ [Accessed 14 March 2014].
29. http://www.bcusu.com/blogs/blog/Kirat%20Raj%20Singh/ [Accessed 13 February 2014].
30. http://www.naujawani.com/harwinder-singh-mander [Accessed 13 February 2014].
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8

State-Level Representation versus Community Cohesion: Competing Influences on Nepali Religious Associations in the United Kingdom

Florence Gurung

Introduction

Patterns of religious identification in Nepal have long been influenced by ethnic politics. Nepal was for many years a Hindu state, and until recently the vast majority of the population identified as Hindu, at least in official contexts. Since the 1990s, however, there have been increasing demands for equality of representation and opportunity among the numerous minority ethnic groups, many of which now claim a non-Hindu origin.[1] This movement directly challenges the state-promoted vision of national identity that apparently privileges the culture of the Hindu high castes and marginalises those groups that, historically, may have followed Buddhism and/or their own tribal religion. In this context, asserting a Buddhist identity can be a statement of belonging to a particular ethnic group, or of solidarity with other minority ethnic groups, in defiance of alleged Hindu domination and oppression, as much as a purely 'religious' statement. It may, or may not, reflect the nature of actual religious practice and belief (Hausner and Gellner, 2012).

In addition, while most of these groups are agreed on being not Hindu, there are debates within some as to what religious identity they should assert instead. There is, nonetheless, widespread agreement that each group should have a 'religion of identity' and that they should be able to claim one particular religious tradition as a distinct part of

their ethnic culture. For example, while a large proportion now claim a Buddhist heritage, many have also preserved some shamanic or animistic practices, and there are sections within some groups who argue that these should be revived and reclaimed as their indigenous religion or religion of identity in place of either of the two world religions on offer. While many individuals have retained elements of these traditions, and continue to follow them alongside Hindu or Buddhist practices, the idea of claiming such local customs as a primary religious identity is a comparatively new one and, to many, a somewhat alien concept. Those who do so, therefore, tend to be relatively politically aware. In other words, the explicit assumption of a Bon (Gurung) or Kirati (Rai/Limbu) identity, as opposed to the less explicit or self-conscious following of elements of that tradition in a person's daily life, has only become a possibility because of a particular political context. In practice, as has been much commented on before, Nepalis, like many South Asians, can be religiously quite mixed (Carrithers, 2000). Many individuals follow elements of Hinduism, Buddhism, and some kind of shamanic tradition in different contexts. However, the idea that, at least at an official level, one should claim a singular religious identity, and that that identity is at least partly defined by *jat* (caste/ethnic group), is now widely accepted.[2]

In the United Kingdom, formal associations have been established on the basis both of *jat*[3] and of religious affiliation. While clearly influenced by political agendas in various ways, most claim to be non-political. Their stated aims, more often, are to do with the needs of the diaspora community. They are formed to bring the community together, and to provide welfare and support, financial or emotional, to those struggling in the United Kingdom. They also aim to preserve religious or cultural traditions, so that they might retain their ethnic identity and so that the younger generation, brought up in the United Kingdom, may not lose the connection with their ancestral land and cultural heritage.

This chapter looks at the ways in which the form and priorities of Nepali religious associations in the United Kingdom have been influenced by these two spheres: Nepali ethnic politics, on the one hand, and the needs of community-building in the United Kingdom, on the other. I explore the ways in which these two rival influences both support one another but also conflict. At one level, they seem to be much in congruence for they promote similar interests: both encourage the recreation and preservation of threatened cultural traditions and the uniting of a community that shares them. However, there are areas in which they appear to clash, where political issues create divisions within religious or

social groups, or where social divisions obstruct political unity. Where conflict is identified, it sometimes reveals a degree of tension between openly declared and tacitly pursued goals. Contrary to what might be expected, this is by no means always a case of stated religious or social priorities masking deeper political motivations. While there is a sense in which the political context has influenced conceptions of religion and religious identity in such a way that it is very difficult for purportedly religious or social organisations to divorce themselves from politics absolutely, there are also cases where essentially political goals are subverted by the realities of local community needs.

I begin by providing some background on the range of Nepali associations operating in the United Kingdom. I discuss the continuing salience of *jat*, or ethnicity, as a basis on which such associations are formed and the way that religion is understood and utilised in defining and expressing ethnic identity. I then introduce the Gurungs as the representative ethnic group on which this discussion is based and the principal associations in which they are involved. I continue with a discussion of the debates between the major Gurung organisations, Tamu Dhee UK and TPLS UK, over the proposed joint Lhosar, or New Year, celebrations, considering the ways in which political concerns and the needs of the diaspora community both supported and obstructed the cause. I then turn to an examination of the Buddhist Community Centre UK, considering how far its rejection of ethnic concerns in favour of what it regards as the religious needs of the diaspora population really represents a distancing from politics and the concerns of the Nepali state. The research is based on participant observation and in-depth interviews with leaders of the various associations and members of the Gurung community carried out over two years of fieldwork in Farnborough, Hampshire.

Nepali associations in the United Kingdom and the continuing salience of *jat*

The Nepali diaspora in the United Kingdom is a relatively new one. Although there have been a few Nepalis settled in the United Kingdom since the 1960s and 1970s, significant numbers only started to arrive after the government granted ex-Gurkhas the right to settle in the United Kingdom in 2004, with a further boost after that right was extended from only those who had retired after 1997 to all ex-Gurkhas with at least four years' service, in 2009. As the population has expanded, numerous associations have sprung up with the aims of strengthening social networks, providing mutual support and

welfare, and preserving cultural traditions. Some of these associations bring together people from a particular region or district in Nepal (Lamjung Samaj, Ilam Samaj, etc.), or a smaller geographical area, be it a single village or group of villages (Kolma Bahakot Samaj, Mardi Khola Samaj, etc.). Others represent all the Nepalis living in a particular area in the United Kingdom, most common or at least most active in areas where there are relatively few Nepalis (Nepalese Community Winchester, Tonbridge Nepalese Community, etc.). There are also professional organisations (Nepalese Doctors' Association UK, Society of Nepalese Engineers in the United Kingdom) and many ex-Gurkha associations, including both campaigning organisations such as the Gurkha Army Ex-Servicemen's Association (GAESO) and the British Gurkha Welfare Society (BGWS), and less formally structured groupings of *numberi*, those who joined up in the same year, which do little more than hold annual get-togethers. A few are defined specifically by religion, such as the Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dharma Society, the Buddhist Community Centre UK, and Shiva Culture, but many of the largest and most influential associations in the United Kingdom are those defined by *jat*. Tamu Dhee UK, an organisation expressly for Nepali Gurungs, for example, is one of the only Nepali associations in the United Kingdom to own property, a hall in Mytchett used for a variety of Nepali community gatherings, and is also responsible for organising two of the most widely attended events in the Nepali social calendar: the Gurkha Cup and the Nepali Mela. All of those *jats* most highly represented in the United Kingdom (so all those traditionally favoured for Gurkha recruitment)[4] have their own *jat* association (Tamu Dhee UK, Magar Sangh, Kirat Yakthung Chumlung [Limbu], Kirat Rai Yayokha, etc.), and there are now smaller associations of sub-*jats* (the Ghale Samaj, or Lila-Phung UK) and even of clan (Pachyu Bhai Khalak).

The salience of *jat* organisations in the United Kingdom is related to (although not fully explained by) the growth of ethnic politics in Nepal.[5] As stated above, ethnic rights and equal opportunities for all Nepal's ethnic groups have been big political priorities since the first People's Movement of 1990, which introduced multiparty democracy in Nepal. For much of the country's history, Nepal was officially a Hindu state and citizens were encouraged to adopt and assert a Hindu national identity. In addition, government and the professions had been dominated by Hindu elites (*bahun* and *chhetri*, or Brahmin and Ksatriya, castes), and the *janajati* (a term that emerged during this period to describe hill ethnic groups most of whom claim a non-Hindu origin but have been gradually 'Hinduised' over the years) claimed to have

been marginalised and oppressed. Following the 1990 movement, they pressed for Nepal to lose its status as a Hindu kingdom (finally achieved in 2008) and to recognise the many religions practised in Nepal, for *janajatis* to get equal representation in the government and equal opportunities in education and employment, and for their languages and cultures to be recognised and preserved alongside mainstream Nepali culture.[6] In order to lobby for such rights, ethnic associations were formed to press the government for recognition but also to enable and encourage these groups to rediscover and preserve lost or disappearing traditions. Part of their demand for greater representation was based on the claim that these groups are indigenous to Nepal, that Hindu populations entered Nepal later, and that their own cultural traditions are thus more authentically Nepali than those that had been promoted as the national culture in recent years.

In this way, notions of Nepali citizenship have come to be tied up with notions of ethnic identity: a distinctive ethnic culture was viewed as evidence of indigeneity and of belonging to the land, and representation at the level of government has increasingly been through *jat*, with *jat* associations apparently best able to stand up for collective interests. The culmination of this trend is seen in the current demands for ethnic federalism. Under this system, each ethnic group would be responsible for governing its own ethnically based state where it is argued that the interests of that *jat*, including the preservation of its unique language and culture, could be best served (Hangen, 2007).

Notions of religious identity have also been moulded by this discourse. As noted above, while in reality many Nepalis are quite mixed in their religious practice, following aspects of Hinduism, Buddhism, and sometimes their own tribal religion, the discourse around ethnic rights assumes that each ethnic group has a distinctive and singular religious identity. This logic is in part related to the rejection of Hindu domination, as *janajati* groups insist that their indigenous religion is something other than Hinduism. However, more than simply rejecting Hinduism, there is an expectation that each *jat* should be tied to an alternative religious tradition that forms an integral part of its ethnic culture. While some have found it difficult to agree on what religion that should be, there is nonetheless a general consensus that agreement should be sought, and that each ethnic group must have a single religious identity that defines them and distinguishes them from other ethnic groups. Indeed, the umbrella organisation Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) has made this requirement an explicit criterion of membership. It states that in order to be recognised

as an indigenous nationality, each ethnic group must have their 'own language, culture and religion different from the rulers'.[7]

While the *jat* associations in the United Kingdom are, by and large, not directly affiliated with their Nepal-based counterparts, the inclination to organise along *jat* lines, and the principal objectives of the preservation of ethnic culture and identity are clearly influenced by the centrality of ethnic issues within Nepali political life. Some are also influenced by debates going on within Nepal-based ethnic associations regarding the nature of their indigenous culture, as the process of reasserting and rediscovering lost history, customs, and religious practices has, in many cases, caused considerable controversy. Either way, *jat* associations feel impelled to identify a singular religion as one source of their shared identity.

The Gurungs

In this chapter, I focus on one ethnic group, the Gurungs, as one of the most highly represented groups in the United Kingdom and one with a very mixed religious heritage, and on three quite different associations in which they are involved. First, Tamu Pye Lhu Sangh (TPLS) UK is primarily a *jat* association: its membership is (almost) entirely Gurung and its principal aim is the preservation of Gurung culture. However, it may also be described as a religious organisation, as Gurung culture is defined according to the oral texts of the Gurungs' traditional shamanic priests, the *pachyu* and *klyepri*. It is the only one of the three organisations discussed here that is a branch of a Nepal-based (although now transnational) organisation and so, in some ways, is most closely tied to the Nepali ethnic political agenda. Although the Nepal-based organisation also claims to be non-political, its formation in 1990 was very much a product of the political climate of that time, and it has been instrumental in the rediscovery of Gurung history and consequently in determining how Gurung ethnic identity should be represented at the national level (Pettigrew, 1995). While strongly connected to TPLS headquarters in Nepal, however, the UK organisation is also a community organisation, formed to meet the needs of Gurungs in the diaspora. The initial impetus for its establishment was the conviction of a few individuals that Lhosar, the Gurung's major annual festival, was not being celebrated according to proper Gurung tradition, but they also wished to support *pachyu* and *klyepri* (Gurung shamanic priests) in the United Kingdom, making it possible for them to officiate at life cycle rites and other Gurung ritual occasions.

Secondly, Tamu Dhee UK is the other major Gurung *jat* association. Although avowedly non-religious, and non-political, the majority of its membership identify as Buddhist. Its relationship with the other major *jat* organisation, TPLS, is also determined by religious questions: the two associations disagree as to how Gurungs should represent their religious identity, whether Tibetan Buddhism or Bon (as TPLS now term the religion of the *pachyu* and *klyepri* priests) is their indigenous religion, and even whether their indigenous religion and religion of identity need be the same. These debates were recently brought to the fore as the two associations attempted to come to an agreement over how to celebrate Lhosar together, united as one *jat*. Attempts to unite the community in this way made reference to the need for unity in order both to secure rights and representation in Nepal and to provide mutual support in the United Kingdom. However, competing views about the place of religion within ethnic identity – as well as the mechanics of how communities actually form in the diaspora – created barriers to unity and ensured that the two associations continued to act independently and to celebrate Lhosar in their own separate ways.

Finally, the Buddhist Community Centre UK at first sight appears to be at a much greater remove from the concerns of Nepali ethnic activists. It is quite firmly a religious and not a *jat* association, and explicitly tries to be pan-Nepali, appealing to and welcoming all *jats*, although a large proportion of the membership is Gurung. However, there are ways in which it too is shaped and influenced by political concerns. Its responses to those concerns however, differ considerably.

Tamu Pye Lhu Sangh UK, Tamu Dhee UK, and the campaign for Tamu unity

Tamu Pye Lhu Sangh UK and Tamu Dhee UK both represent the Gurung (or Tamu)[8] *jat* in the UK. While Tamu Dhee is primarily a social organisation, Tamu Pye Lhu Sangh is more concerned with the preservation of traditional Gurung religion, the traditions of the *pachyu* and *klyepri* priests, and research into, and the dissemination of knowledge about, Gurung history and culture. Although adamant that the existence of two major *jat* organisations is justified as they fulfil different roles, there has been some uneasiness that it may appear to some (British-born or raised Gurung children, as well as members of other *jats*) that there is a split within Gurung society and that they are publicly divided.[9] The fact that each organisation hosts their own separate, and apparently competing, community event to celebrate their most important festival, Gurung Lhosar, has added to this impression.

Consequently, in 2011, a number of influential Gurung community leaders got together and began a campaign for Tamu unity. The chief proposal was that the two organisations should come together for the celebration of Lhosar, and organise a joint event for all Gurungs. Lhosar has become, both in Nepal and the United Kingdom, the main occasion at which to display and celebrate publicly Gurung culture. It is slightly ironic that it is considered a uniquely Gurung festival, given that Lhosar, in some form, is also celebrated by a large number of other *janajati* communities, who have also adopted it as the appropriate opportunity to display and celebrate their own unique culture.[10] A large, public Lhosar celebration, to which political leaders can be invited, has become almost a requirement of any significant *janajati* group in Nepal as well as the United Kingdom, and such events have quite overtly political aims. The *Everest Times*, a Nepali language newspaper in the United Kingdom, ran an article which stated quite explicitly the political relevance of Lhosar celebrations. The headline ran, 'For obtaining our rights: Lhochhar festival', with the subheading, 'Lhochhar is also a festival for putting pressure on the state'.[11]

Lhosar marks the changing of the *lho*, the animal year according to the Gurung, or Tibetan, calendar and so is often described as New Year. It is celebrated with various rituals to cast out the bad planetary influences of the year before, and to bring health and prosperity in the coming year, but as important as the ritual elements in the new Lhosar celebrations are the official and cultural programmes which follow them. In the former, members of the community are felicitated on their own personal achievements, such as exam successes or their contributions to the association or the wider Gurung community, while in the latter, guests are entertained with cultural performances, particularly celebrations of Gurung (and Nepali) song and dance.

The campaign for Tamu unity proceeded with articles in the Nepalese press, discussion at community events, and private meetings among the leaders of the respective organisations, and culminated in an open meeting in Reading to negotiate whether and how to proceed with the plans for a joint Lhosar. In emphasising the importance of achieving unity within the community, campaigners referred both to the political situation in Nepal and to the needs of the Gurung community in the diaspora. With regard to the former, the campaign made explicit reference to the proposed formation of a Tamuwan state, an ethnically defined self-governing federal state in Nepal, if and when proposals for ethnic federalism are agreed. It was argued that unity was vital in order to win sufficient seats in the federal government, and even to govern their own state effectively. A Gurung community leader summed

up the urgency of realising Gurung unity in an article for the *Everest Times*:

> If Tamuwan is established, as long as we are not united it seems that it will not be possible for us to get, on the cultural level, the identity that we have been searching for, on the political level the necessary representation, and on the economic and policy level, a state formed on the basis which we need for progress and growth.[12]

These same issues were being discussed in Nepal, and a similar campaign for united Lhosar took place there. In Pokhara and Kathmandu, various Gurung *jat* organisations did manage to celebrate Lhosar together, although most would hesitate to declare that Tamu unity had been achieved.

In the United Kingdom, the campaign also emphasised the benefits of unity for the diaspora community. For many campaigners, it was the support that could be offered to fellow migrants if the whole Gurung community were brought together that was at the heart of the campaign. One campaigner explained to me that if the Gurungs were united, they could support each other in the United Kingdom instead of pulling each other's legs (*kutta tannu*),[13] and resenting each other's successes. The Gurung community could provide a support network, as many of the smaller organisations and kinship groups were already doing, helping fellow Gurungs find work or housing and coming together to provide financial or other support in times of crisis such as death or ill health. In this way, the political situation in Nepal and the needs of the diaspora appear to be in support of one another. Both point to the benefits of Tamu unity, and of forming a broad and cohesive community of mutual support and shared interests along *jat* lines. These activists accept notions of citizenship based on ethnic identity, and encourage that sense of identity to be maintained in the diaspora. Ultimately, however, unity was not achieved. The reasons for this can be related to both spheres – the political landscape and the social exigencies of being in the diaspora – which have held up the achievement of this goal in different ways.

Barriers to unity

From an analysis of the public discourse, it would appear that the campaign for unity failed because the two associations were unable to agree

on how Lhosar should be celebrated, which itself was the result of a failure to agree on a common vision of Gurung culture, and how it ought to be displayed on this symbolic public occasion. The lack of consensus was purportedly over religion. As noted above, there has been an ongoing debate among the Gurungs as to whether their indigenous religion and/or their religion of identity should be Tibetan Buddhism or Bon (the religion of the *pachyu* and *klyepri* priests). Tamu Pye Lhu Sangh argued that as a uniquely Gurung festival, the Lhosar ritual should be performed by *pachyu* and *klyepri* priests only and that Buddhist lamas should not be invited to participate. They reasoned that as Gurung Lhosar was not a Tibetan festival, it would be inappropriate to invite a Tibetan lama, equivalent, they suggested, to inviting a Hindu pandit or imam to officiate at a Christmas service. Tamu Dhee, on the other hand, argued that the majority of their members are now Buddhist, and so to deny any role to the lamas would be to alienate large parts of the Gurung community.

Some individuals suggested that religion might be left out of the whole affair, and that Lhosar could be marked together as a celebration of culture without any ritual performance. However, for representatives of Tamu Pye Lhu Sangh, religion could not be so easily separated from culture. For them, the religion of the *pachyu* and *klyepri* priests is the very foundation of Gurung culture. The knowledge contained in their oral texts is the key to Gurung ethnic identity and thus to celebrate their major festival in a purely secular fashion would be to devalue their own traditions and deny their unique identity. In this way, the two associations agree on the way in which ethnic identity defines a citizen's relationship with the state, that ethnic associations can and should represent the collective interests of an ethnic group, and that members of the group have common interests because they share a history, a cultural identity, and a similar experience of marginalisation, but they disagree on the place of religion within that shared identity. Tamu Dhee sympathisers say it can be separated: we are Gurungs and share a culture, but our faith is our own personal/individual concern; TPLS argue that religious traditions define that shared culture and without them identity is lost.

While the terms of this public discourse represent a significant aspect of the barrier to unity, there were other undercurrents which arguably had an equal part to play. One of these has to do with the way that community building actually occurs in the diaspora, and the way in which people gravitate towards and associate with particular organisations. The immediate goal of the unity campaign was a joint Lhosar, but the

deeper goal was greater co-operation, cohesion, and support between all Gurungs in the United Kingdom. The apparent division within Gurung society was represented by the existence of two Lhosar events, but many suspected this was the outward manifestation of a deeper division related to *jat*. There are a large number of Gurung sub*jats*, or *thar* (176 identified by TPLS), and these form two endogamous clan groups. There has been a great deal of controversy in the past as to the terms used to describe these clan groups and whether there is any hierarchy among them. The general consensus now is that there is no hierarchy and that any hierarchy that existed in the past was not indigenous but was a corruption of Gurung culture, introduced by the Hindu rulers as a strategy of divide and rule.

Although there has been a concerted effort to erase this aspect of the Gurung past, and to combat any lingering prejudice or discrimination, the mechanics of community building in the diaspora appear to be undermining these efforts. In the United Kingdom, networks form primarily through clan and kin connections. The majority assert that their primary allegiance is to their village society or *bhai khalak* (clan or patrilineage) and that involvement in either of the larger Gurung associations is relatively superficial. When asked why they attend one or the other of the Lhosar events, almost all referred to family commitments. Some claimed that one of their *aphno manche* (own people) had a leadership position in one association and invited them, others merely that they knew that this particular Lhosar was where they would meet others from their extended family or clan. Very few related that it was the presence of a Tibetan Lama or *pachyu* and *klyepri* that decided their attendance. As a result, it is very difficult for either association to claim to represent all Gurungs, or to satisfy all parts of the community that they are not intentionally exclusive or discriminatory in their membership. Both organisations claim to represent all Gurungs and to reject and oppose any hint of hierarchy or inequality. Many individuals among the unity campaigners would even promote greater intermarriage between the two groups, insisting that all Gurungs are one and there should therefore be no division, hierarchical or not. However, this goal is obstructed by the tacit goals of many community members. For many, kin and clan ties, and the sense of belonging that such connections help to create, have an immediacy and relevance to their lives, with which the pan-Gurung leadership, in their attempts to strengthen a much broader Gurung community, cannot compete.

The Buddhist Community Centre UK

The Buddhist Community Centre (BCC) UK appears to represent an attempt to steer away from this *jat*-based view of community membership and to distance itself from Nepal's ethnic politics. The organisation is dominated by Gurungs: of the 18 Executive Committee members for 2009–2011, 10 were Gurung (16/20 area representatives); 23 out of 27 members of the *aammaa samuha* (women's group) were Gurung (and all eight of their area representatives); and Gurungs made up around two-thirds of trustee members (those who had donated £1000 or more).[14] The *aammaa samuha* comprised mainly women from the *aamaa samuha* of the Gurung's main *gompa* (temple) in Pokhara (Ram Ghat/Bouddha Arghaun Sadan); a number of leaders of Tamu Dhee, which is overtly non-religious, are also involved with BCC UK. However, BCC UK is decidedly not a *jat* association and has made every effort to welcome all *jats* and represent all Nepalis. The chairman, who was also one of the founders of the organisation and the main mover behind many its activities, is a Sherpa; the organisation approached many of the UK *jat* associations to ask them to send a representative to sit on their committee so that they might be truly representative of all *jats*. The high number of Gurungs is at least partially explained by the disproportionate number of Gurungs within the Nepali community in the United Kingdom.[15]

If BCC UK saw itself as involved in the maintenance and preservation of culture, it was pan-Nepali culture, rather than that of any particular ethnic group. There were some indications that it did see Buddhism as a unifying feature of Nepali culture and viewed itself as a Nepali cultural association. Buddhism was associated with Nepali national identity in a number of ways. First, much was made of the status of Lumbini as the birthplace of Buddha, and this was regarded as a source of national pride. When it was discovered that a London museum had stated that the Buddha was born in India, there was much concern and discussions about what action should be taken. Individual members had also suggested to me that their own attachment to Buddhism, and to the association, was influenced by the fact that Lumbini 'belonged to' Nepal. They felt that Nepal had a special connection with Buddhism and with the Buddha Sakyamuni in particular.

Secondly, one of the first actions taken by BCC UK when it was established was to campaign (and this campaign was ultimately successful) for the appointment of a Buddhist lama to the Brigade of Gurkhas. Until that time, the religious needs of the brigade were served only by a

Hindu pandit; in the past, Gurkha soldiers had been required to register as Hindu and to follow Hindu customs, such as the celebration of Hindu festivals, while in the army (Uesugi, 2007). The BCC sent numerous letters to the Ministry of Defence to convince them that the majority of Gurkhas are Buddhist, not Hindu. They collected statements from many of the *jat* associations in the United Kingdom (including Tamu Dhee, alongside groups representing the Tamang, Sherpa, Magar, and others), asserting that their respective *jat* historically followed Buddhism and not Hinduism. The point they were attempting to make was that Nepal may have been, until recently, a Hindu state, but a large proportion of its citizens, especially those traditionally recruited to the Gurkhas, are Buddhist.

In presenting itself to the world beyond the Nepali community, the BCC was also often happy to be represented as a Nepali cultural association. On one occasion, when asked to have a stand at the Surrey fair, a local community event, the BCC first proposed organising a performance of Nepali cultural dance. This idea was only dropped when someone pointed out that the Greater Rushmoor Nepalese Society were already doing this and that it might therefore be better to create a display purely about Buddhism instead. The assumption was that their organisation was viewed from without as representative of Nepali culture and they were initially prepared to accept this characterisation. When the Dalai Lama came to speak in Aldershot in June 2012, the BCC's largest and most high-profile event to date by far, they arranged for each Nepali *jat* group in the United Kingdom to perform its own cultural dance while the audience awaited the Dalai Lama's arrival. These performances were seen as an opportunity to showcase for the wider community Nepali cultural diversity, while also showing that these diverse groups were united by a common attachment to Buddhism.

The BCC UK also recognised the wider relevance of Buddhism, readily acknowledging its status as a World Religion, with adherents in many different cultures. It forged links with Japanese and Thai Buddhists and invited speakers representing a range of Buddhist traditions to their annual celebration of Buddha Jayanti. There were also intimations that many members, while proud of Nepal's connection with the historical Buddha, had particular respect for Buddhism because of its international following. It was compared favourably with Gurung Bonism, which some considered only 'culture', because it appeared that the truth within Buddhism had been recognised across the globe and, crucially, because it was a textual religion with ancient, and apparently authoritative, scripture.[16]

To return to the central dichotomy between the demands of Nepali ethnic politics and those of community building, however, it must be noted that the main stated aims of the organisation concerned the needs of the Nepali Buddhist community, rather than the representation of Buddhism or Nepali culture to the world beyond. These aims were to promote Buddhism and to provide the resources to enable Nepali Buddhists in the United Kingdom to continue to practise according to their traditions. The most important and urgent goal was to purchase a property to establish a *gompa* and bring a lama from Nepal to reside there. This *gompa* would be a place where Buddhist Nepalis could carry out life cycle ceremonies, especially death rites, according to their traditions, and would also be an important meeting place and teaching centre.

Many emphasised how important it could be for the elderly especially, a place where they could congregate for *puja* (worship), meditation, and religious instruction. There are a large number of elderly migrants within the Nepali community, and there is much concern that with little knowledge of the English language and, in many cases, no family in the United Kingdom they could easily become isolated. At present, many meet at English classes provided by the council, churches, and others and gather in the parks on summer evenings because, as one lady sadly pointed out, they have nowhere else to go. The *gompa* would provide that community base, and purposeful activity appropriate to their stage of life, which so many of them need. Many described how their lives in Nepal, particularly those living in Pokhara, were filled with visits to local *gompas* for various religious programmes. For those who had leisure time, religious activity was their main occupation and the way they connected with others in their community. It was this kind of social activity which many reported they missed on coming to the United Kingdom.

It is tempting, therefore, to see the BCC UK as a purely religious organisation, as it asserts itself to be, which works to bring together the Nepali diaspora community, or the Buddhist-leaning sections of that community, to preserve shared customs and encourage a strengthening of knowledge in and attachment to shared religious teachings. But it is also clear that however non-political it claims to be, it is still influenced and shaped by the Nepali state's – and civil society's – understanding of the relationship between ethnic and religious identity. It is significant that the BCC endeavours to be not just pan-Nepali but specifically multi-*jat*. In seeking to be inclusive and open to all, it has insisted on finding representatives from each *jat*. Both in its calls to the various *jat*

associations for representative trustee members and in its request for letters to present to the Ministry of Defence, the BCC is tacitly accepting both the proposition that religious affiliation is tied to ethnicity and the idea that *jat* groups are best able to protect or represent the interests of their members.

At the same time, it is of note that, while BCC claims to include all Nepali *jats*, only certain *jats*, all of which are among the *janajati*, are associated with Buddhism. In linking Buddhism with Nepali national culture, they are making a claim that the *janajati* are the true representatives of Nepali national culture and that Hindu culture should not be seen as dominant. This implication, while not explicitly stated, is inherently political. The letters to the Ministry of Defence are more markedly so, for here they are dealing with a policy of the British government that was formed in conjunction with the Nepali state. It was the Nepali government that first demanded that Gurkhas continue to follow Hinduism while in British service; this demand formed part of the Tripartite Agreement of 1947, which set out principles of Gurkha terms and conditions of service (Uesugi, 2007). The campaign that set out to prove that the majority of Gurkhas were in fact Buddhist was thus a direct challenge to this historical construction, and a contradiction of the Nepali state's previous characterisation of national identity.

Conclusion

Each of the associations discussed in this chapter claims to be non-political. Each further claims to exist, primarily, to encourage the creation of new and the preservation of existing social bonds within the Gurung or Nepali community in the United Kingdom, to help community members support one another, and to enable them to preserve valued traditions and some sense of ethnic or religious identity. The expressed goals are thus focused inwards, on the diaspora community and its social and religious needs.

While none is political in an overt sense – none is affiliated with any political party, nor has actively lobbied the government on any particular issue – each is influenced by the political context in Nepal and the way that that context has shaped conceptions of Nepali citizenship, as well as the connection between that citizenship and ethnic and religious identity. The very form of Tamu Dhee and TPLS as *jat* associations is an outcome of the predominance of ethnic politics in Nepal; even the BCC, which attempts to be pan-Nepali, accepts the assumption that religious affiliation is, to some extent, determined by *jat*.

Occasionally, the concerns of the state impact more directly on the priorities of these diaspora associations, as in the negotiations regarding the organisation of a joint Lhosar celebration and the campaign for Tamu unity. In this case, direct reference was made to the process of state formation in Nepal and the importance of showing a united front if the Gurungs, seen as a unit with the same political interests, are to get the representation and economic advantages they seek. Here, Lhosar was publicly acknowledged to be not only an opportunity to share and celebrate traditional Gurung culture for the sake of creating a sense of belonging in the diaspora but also a chance to demonstrate to the wider world, and particularly those in positions of power in the Nepali state, the strength, unity, and unique indigenous culture of the Gurung *jat*. The debates over the religious aspect of ethnic identity, both over what religion the Gurungs should claim as their own, and whether religion is central or peripheral to ethnic identity, are shaped by past and current debates over the form of the future Nepali state.

Very often the respective influence of political concerns and the needs of the diaspora community can be hard to disentangle as they support and reinforce one another. Preserving or recreating endangered cultural traditions and instilling a sense of belonging to a broadly based Gurung community with an awareness of a shared culture are aims of diaspora community leaders hoping to unite a disparate community in the United Kingdom, but are likewise the aims of Gurung ethnic activists in Nepal. The achievement of Tamu unity was seen to have tangible benefits both for the community trying to establish themselves in the United Kingdom and for the Gurung leadership in Nepal, hoping to gain leverage in political negotiations at the centre. While most of the campaign leaders would argue that community concerns were higher on their agenda than political ones, many were doubtless influenced by both to some degree.

Occasionally, however, these two influences clashed. In Nepal, the Tamu unity campaign, seeking to do away with outdated notions of division and hierarchy between different Gurung clans, required people to abandon clan loyalties in deference to a loyalty to a broader conception of the Gurung community, united by a common culture and identity. However, in the diaspora, it seems that kin and clan connections matter to people a great deal, and it is on the basis of these kinds of association that communities naturally form in the United Kingdom.

For those associations that see themselves as purely religious, involvement in politics is viewed as inappropriate, and yet they cannot divorce themselves entirely from the political context that has encouraged the

development of particular religious identities. TPLS is adamant that the issues that have prevented their union with Tamu Dhee are purely religious, representing only a difference of opinion about the authentic way to celebrate their primary religious festival, and yet that fixation with authenticity, indigeneity, and antiquity is itself a product of the discourse on ethnic rights. The BCC, meanwhile, scorns any kind of association with Nepali ethnic politics, emphasising instead the broad appeal of Buddhism which cuts across *jat* distinctions and unites adherents even of different nations. But its championing of a national identity based on a common commitment to Buddhism has strong overtones of political activism. An examination of religious practice at the individual level may reveal a different picture, a picture of immense diversity within and across the various ethnic and religious categories. However, the religious associations operating in the United Kingdom, although overtly aimed at meeting the needs of the diaspora community, can only imagine those needs within a frame dictated by a political context where ethnic rights, religious affiliation, and national identity are inextricably tied together.

Notes

1. There is a vast literature on Nepali ethnic politics since 1990. See, for example, Des Chene (1996), Gellner, Pfaff-Czarnecka et al. (1997; 2008), Fisher (2001), Minami (2007), Lecomte-Tilouine (2009), Hangen (2010).
2. Gellner and Hausner (2013) have demonstrated that while most Nepalis (in the United Kingdom) are ready to claim a singular religious identity when asked, assuming this to be expected or required in official contexts, when given the option of a multiple religious identity ('Hindu-Buddhist' or 'Hindu-Kiranti', for example), a significant number will take it.
3. The term *'jat'* can be used to signify 'caste' in the Hindu sense (with the understanding of hierarchy) but in many contexts can also be translated as 'tribe' or 'ethnic group' or even 'clan'. Literally, it means 'species' or 'type'. Because of the ambiguity of the term, and the sensitivity around the appropriate English term to use (many do not consider their own *jat* do be part of the caste system), I will use the Nepali term throughout.
4. The British army has been recruiting Nepalese soldiers into a special wing, the Brigade of Gurkhas, since 1815. In the past, the British would only recruit from certain ethnic groups, those they regarded as 'martial races' (Caplan, 1995). This criterion excluded Bahun/Chhetri castes and favoured, particularly, Gurungs, Magars, Rais, and Limbus. Although there is now apparently no caste discrimination in the recruitment process, it is still predominantly those *jats* with a history of Gurkha service who seek to join up. The majority of Nepalese migrants in the United Kingdom are ex-Gurkhas and their dependents (around 60 per cent) and consequently these *jats* are,

proportionately, more highly represented in the United Kingdom than they are in Nepal.

5. It is noteworthy that *jat* distinctions are not of equal importance in all parts of the Nepali diaspora. In Belgium, for instance, while *jat* associations do exist, associations with links to Nepali political parties are more salient (Gellner, Hausner et al. forthcoming).

6. The development of a mainstream Nepali culture, in which Nepal's status as the world's only Hindu kingdom was a central feature, and an attempt by the state to inculcate a sense of Nepali national identity through such a shared culture, only really began during the Panchayat period. See Burghart (1984) on the historical development of the concept of the nation state in Nepal. See, for example, Onta (1996) and Pigg (1992) on the Panchayat style of nation building.

7. www.nefin.org.np [Accessed 1 October 2013].

8. 'Tamu' is the Gurung word for 'Gurung'.

9. There are two largely endogamous clan groups within Gurung society, and it has been alleged in the past that these groups were castelike, in that there was hierarchy between them, and that this hierarchy has been the cause of considerable tension in some regions (see, especially, Messerschmidt [1976], whose claims about caste tension within Gurung society were publicly refuted by Gurung leaders). These claims are now extremely controversial. Most are adamant that today all Gurungs are equal.

10. Holmberg (2012) has described the revival of Lhochhar among the Tamang community, where it has also been raised to the status of the Tamang's major annual festival, replacing other local ritual occasions. He observes that in most Tamang accounts 'the revival of Lhosar is directly tied to the push for a multi-cultural Nepal and the de-Hinduization of the state' (7) and that it is also linked to the movement to boycott Dashain, the major Hindu festival celebrated in Nepal.

11. *Everest Times*, Thursday 8 December 2013, pp. 10–11.

12. *Everest Times*, 25 October 2011, p. 6.

13. A common Nepali expression, meaning to attempt to hold your peers back from getting ahead; to begrudge and obstruct the achievements of others.

14. www.bccuk.co.uk [Accessed 1 June 2013].

15. Gurungs comprise 22.2 per cent of the Nepali population in the United Kingdom but only 2.4 per cent of the population of Nepal.

16. The denigration of local traditions regarded as 'merely culture' and elevation of those apparently global traditions that are thought to legitimately fall into the category of 'religion' by some Gurungs, parallels the findings of Jacobsen (1997) regarding the attitudes of Muslim Pakistani youths in Britain.

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Part III
Symbols

9

The Veiling of Religious Markers in the Sahrawi Diaspora

Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh

Introduction

States play key roles in promoting and controlling religious symbols, and yet Soares and Osella note that 'insufficient attention is devoted to how the state intervenes to promote, co-opt, thwart, or isolate various forms of Islam and ("good" or "bad") Muslims' (2009, pp. 10–11). In turn, even fewer studies have analysed the ways in which religious symbols have been strategically mobilised by non-state actors. This chapter addresses this lacuna by examining the case of a non-state actor which has de facto control over a specific refugee population. I explore the ways in which Sahrawi refugees' political representatives – the Polisario Front and their related government-in-exile, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) – have engaged in a range of representational strategies which ultimately 'veil' religious symbols such as mosques, *madrasas*, and especially the *milhafa*, arguing that the Polisario Front/SADR does so in order to maximise diverse short- and long-term benefits both inside and outside the Sahrawi refugee camps. More specifically, I argue that the purposeful distantiation from (or 'veiling' of) Islamic religious symbols has been enacted during interactions with secular humanitarian audiences to demonstrate the 'ideal' nature of the Sahrawi camps in order to ensure the continuation of humanitarian and political support, which both keeps refugees alive in their refugee camp homes and simultaneously maintains international support for the Sahrawi quest for political self-determination (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2014). In addition to engaging with feminist postcolonial debates surrounding the mobilisation of religious symbols such as the *hijab* in discourses of 'good' and 'bad' Muslims, the chapter also complements emerging studies vis-à-vis the multidimensional relationships between

religion and faith-based humanitarianism by specifically exploring the role of religious symbols in humanitarian encounters between 'secular' humanitarian actors and one group of Muslim refugees and their political representatives.

Indeed, the relationship between religious identity, belief, and practice on the one hand, and processes of forced migration on the other, has received increasing attention since the 2000s (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2011a). Over the past decade, a number of journals have convened special issues that focus not only on particular dimensions of this relationship, including the extent to which state and non-state actors may persecute individuals on the basis of their religious identity (i.e. religion as a potential cause of forced migration; see Mayer, 2007), but also on how state and non-state actors draw on or challenge religious beliefs and practices as they negotiate and respond to forced migration (see Gozdziak and Shandy, 2002). More recently, attention has turned to the ways in which faith principles have provided the foundations for humanitarian responses to displacement (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2011a; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Ager, 2013; Ager, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, and Ager, 2015), exploring the role of religious traditions in the historical development of concepts and practices of sanctuary and protection (Marfleet, 2011); the secularisation of discourses of humanitarianism originally developed upon the foundations of particular religions (Ager and Ager, 2011, 2015); and the ways in which contemporary humanitarian institutions may be considered to have become a form of 'religion' in and of themselves (i.e. Hopgood's 2006 analysis of Amnesty International).

Despite this increased attention, the ways in which religious symbols have been strategically mobilised by non-state actors such as the Polisario Front/SADR as a means of negotiating interactions between refugees and humanitarian donors have been under-represented in academic and policy-relevant studies alike. This chapter thus draws upon the case study of the Sahrawi protracted refugee situation to explore the role(s) that religious symbols play in humanitarian interventions between Sahrawi refugees in their Algerian-based refugee camps and across the refugee diaspora in countries including Spain and Cuba, and European and North American humanitarian actors who purport to be secular in nature.[1] In so doing, I identify some of the ways in which purportedly secular humanitarianism is nonetheless deeply implicated in state and non-state discourses and practices pertaining to religious identity and practice, especially in light of contemporary geopolitical concerns regarding 'Islamism' and 'terrorism' in North Africa.

Scripting the Sahrawi refugee camps

While almost entirely dependent upon externally provided support, the Sahrawi refugee camps have been managed by the Polisario Front since the camps' establishment in 1975 (for a detailed history of the conflict over the Western Sahara, see Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2014). In February 1976, the Polisario established the camp-based SADR, the Sahrawi 'state-in-exile', which has been recognised by over 70 non-Western states and is a full member of the African Union (formerly the Organization of African Unity). The Polisario/SADR is 'the only authority with which camp residents have regular contact' (Human Rights Watch, 2008, p. 9), and it has developed its own constitution, camp-based ministries, police force (and prisons), army, and parallel 'state' and religious legal systems, which implement a Maliki interpretation of Islam.

The Sahrawi 'state', law, and religion are thus intimately interconnected in the camps, with Islam identified in the Sahrawi Constitution as the explicit fundamental source of the Sahrawi legal system (Art. 2 and Art. 3 of the 2003 and 1976 SADR Constitution, respectively), and the Ministry of Justice and Religious Affairs having joint functions. Despite these interconnections, however, the Sahrawi refugee camps have habitually been heralded by European and North American observers as 'ideal' spaces and locales of 'best practice' through explicit reference to the 'secular' and 'democratic' nature of the camps (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2010a, 2010b, 2014). Indeed, elsewhere I have argued that during encounters with European secular and Christian audiences, the Polisario mobilises two intersecting strategies: first, it has a tendency to silence and render invisible the multiple, and at times contested, roles of Islam in the camps; second, on those occasions when religion is mentioned, the Polisario systematically projects an image of 'secular Sahrawi Islam', which is resolutely different from any Other Islam (ibid.). The Sahrawi refugee camps can thus be conceptualised as stages from which particular discourses and political campaigns are projected internationally to convince non-Sahrawi audiences of the justifiability and necessity of their support for the Sahrawi 'struggle' for self-determination (ibid.). Simultaneously, they emerge as microcosms in which contemporary and shifting debates and dilemmas surrounding the 'acceptable' face of Islam and the desirability of inter-faith relations are enacted (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2011b).

Public declarations made by and on behalf of the Sahrawi people apropos their 'secularism' and 'religious tolerance' must therefore be viewed not only in relation to the current geopolitical (in)security

context and intensified rejection of Islam in the West, but also in relation to more localised concerns about an 'Islamically dominated North Africa', 'Islamic fundamentalism' in the Saharan desert and Maghreb (see Keenan, 2004; Zoubir, 2002), and the purported emergence of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (see Darbouche, 2007, p. 2; del Pino, 2003). Directly opposed to these characterisations of the region as inherently imbued with threats and danger, the Polisario and its supporters explicitly present the Sahrawi as fulfilling all the non-economic priorities associated with contemporary notions of 'good governance' ('peaceful', 'secular', and 'democratic'), and therefore as a prototypical example to be followed by other actors in the international arena (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2014, 2015). The Polisario have therefore successfully projected the Sahrawi camps as 'ideal' spaces inhabited by 'good' refugees, in part by reflecting mainstream European normative preferences for the development of a 'good' and 'progressive' Islam. In some instances, this has led to the purposeful distancing of the Sahrawi Self from Islam and specific religious symbols, three of which I shall discuss in the remainder of this chapter: mosques, *madrasas*, and the *milhafa*.

Before turning to the ways in which these symbols have been 'veiled' by the Polisario, it is important to reassert that this representational strategy must be viewed in relation to the Polisario's dependence upon aid provided by external actors, and in particular the material significance of Sahrawi refugees' connections with civil society groups. These cannot be overstated, with the World Food Programme identifying the 'very vulnerable households' of the camps as those that 'had not built any contacts with the civil societies of Spain and of other countries that provide support to refugee families' (WFP, 2008, p. 3). It is this palpable connection and physical proximity to the people who provide them with much-needed material and financial assistance, alongside social capital, which leads the Polisario, as well as many Sahrawi families, to recognise the significance of the solidarity network. This is in contrast with those less visible, and more taken-for-granted humanitarian projects that are, according to my research, marginalised in both the popular and the 'national' imagination.

European visitors and invisible mosques and *madrasas* in the Sahrawi refugee camps

The international celebration of the success of the Sahrawi refugee camps is, in many ways and through many means, directly associated with and even dependent upon the concealment, or discursive

minimisation, of everyday Muslim identity, practice, and institutions (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2010a, 2014). For instance, although European and North American humanitarian and political visitors to the camps are typically taken by official Sahrawi guides on a 'tourist route' of 'secular' Sahrawi institutions including the National Parliament and National Hospital, buildings associated with Islam, such as the camps' established mosques, are in fact excluded from such tours.

One of the clearest examples of this policy's success is that many visitors, including the journalists and humanitarian visitors Brazier (1997), Ryan (1999), Bryant (2004), and Thorne (2004), have all erroneously declared that there are 'no mosques' in the camps. My own interactions with Spanish *solidarios* in the 27 February Camp indicate that the majority of those 'in solidarity' with the Sahrawi were unaware that the yellow and green building facing the entrance to the National Women's School was a mosque (Figure 9.1).

When I informed them of its purpose, many Spaniards who had visited the camps on numerous occasions were confused by its existence, with one Canary Islander asking me 'but … why do they have a mosque here?' (27 February Refugee Camp, April 2007).

Figure 9.1 The 'invisible' mosque in 27 February Refugee Camp, South-West Algeria. Photo Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh

Indeed, a further example of the Polisario/SADR's apparent success in hiding Sahrawi religion includes Cazón's reference to a Spanish host family who had been 'in solidarity' with the Sahrawi for over a decade before 'discovering' that the Sahrawi are Muslim. After the Spanish host mother was reportedly warned by a Sahrawi man to 'remember that we, the Sahrawis, are also *moros* [Moors]' (2004, p. 59; my translation), she lamented, 'That man was right. The religion of the Sahrawis *is* the same as that of the *moros*' (ibid., p. 95; my translation). Her shock that the man was correct – that Sahrawis are, after all, Muslims – suggests that, in her imagination, as in many other Spaniards' minds, the Sahrawi were until then not truly associated with Muslim identity and practice.

In addition to the 'invisible' mosques in the camps, Polisario/SADR and Western accounts have also repeatedly failed to document the existence of 'modern religious schools' (*madrasas*) which are attended by students interested in expanding their knowledge of Islam following, or in parallel to, their 'national' education in the camps (Gimeno-Martín and Laman, 2005, p. 23). Despite the fact that the SADR Ministry of Justice and Religious Affairs authorised the creation of two Qur'anic schools in Aaiun, Smara, and Dakhla, and one in Ausserd (ibid., p. 32), these schools are not labelled and heralded as 'national' institutions by the Polisario/SADR, and are therefore rarely explicitly made visible to Western visitors.[2]

It is admittedly the case that the mosques and religious schools established in each refugee camp are not frequented by the majority of camp inhabitants (as is the case in many if not most Middle Eastern and North African countries), and access to institutionalised forms of practising Islam and learning the Qur'an is mainly limited to those who can afford to pay the relevant fee. Nonetheless, it is common to see Sahrawi refugees praying in their tents or in open spaces, and numerous children attend extracurricular Qur'anic classes. Furthermore, the presence of SADR jeeps outside the 27 February Camp mosque during Friday Prayer indicates that some Polisario/SADR officials attend these same mosques, despite habitually rendering them 'invisible' to Western visitors to the camps.

In addition to the 'invisibilisation' of mosques and *madrasas* during official tours of the camps, the *milhafa* is a third major religious symbol that is concealed despite its apparent visibility to external observers. Examining 'the veiling' of 'the Sahrawi veil' will enable us to explore how and why the Polisario has engaged in this particular representational strategy vis-à-vis public and private Sahrawi religious symbols.

Veiling and unveiling the *milhafa* in the Sahrawi diaspora

Throughout my research with Sahrawi youth and adults in the Sahrawi refugee camps and further afield in Cuba, Spain, Syria, and South Africa, a set of common claims[3] were systematically made vis-à-vis Sahrawi women's situation in the refugee camps: 'not being veiled', having freedom of movement, and not only being able to divorce freely and 'unilaterally', but even celebrating this event via a 'divorce party'. Although I have examined the centrality of this intersecting set of mutually reinforcing images and conceptualisations, which re-create Sahrawi refugee women as uniquely liberal, secular, and empowered refugee women for particular political purposes during interactions with humanitarian donors elsewhere (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2014), in the remainder of this chapter I focus on the first of these elements: that of Sahrawi women 'not being veiled'.

In the case under consideration, the Polisario's mainstream representation of Sahrawi refugee women's position and identity in the camps is founded upon the separation of Sahrawi women from Other Muslim women in the 'Arab World', with a particular reliance on creating and maintaining a distance from Islam and religious identity for strategic reasons. The portrayal of the long piece of fabric (the *milhafa*) which loosely covers the head and body of Sahrawi women in the camps[4] therefore emerges as a highly politicised one that I consider to be part of the broader 'politics of survival' of the Sahrawi, providing a further example of the ways in which religious symbols are mobilised (or in this case rendered invisible) by state and non-state actors to ensure the continuation of humanitarian networks that are explicitly or implicitly based on non-economic conditionalities and geopolitical preferences vis-à-vis 'good' and 'bad' Islam.

The *milhafa*: Invisible religious symbol or hypervisible traditional dress

The two most different nations in the Arab world are the Mauritanian and the Sahrawi societies, which are *the only nations where women do not cover their faces or hands*. In *other places in the Arab world, you can only see the woman's eyes, but the Sahrawi women wear the milhafa, and people ask them their opinions and listen to them.*

(Interview with a 29-year-old male Biology student, Havana, November 2006, my translation and emphasis)

The veil has so frequently been centrally positioned in Western analyses (and historically, in Western colonial projects), that it is unsurprising that descriptions of Sahrawi refugee women, qua Muslim women, should also include references to veiling. Fanon's identification and analysis of the 'precise political doctrine' of the French colonisers to 'unveil' Algerian women as a means of conquering the colonised society (Fanon, 1965, pp. 37–38) have been the foundation of much feminist postcolonial work which has examined Orientalist representations of both the veil (El-Guindi, 2003; Lewis, 2003; and Woodhull, 2003), and the extent to which unveiling women has frequently become a 'convenient instrument for signifying many issues at once, i.e. the construction of modern [national] identity' (Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 132). In certain historical contexts, we are reminded, the veil has 'carried connotations of Muslim backwardness' in the eyes of both Western Orientalists and Middle Eastern and North African nationalists (ibid.). Indeed, as stressed by Kandiyoti (1991) and Yegenoglu (1998, p. 135) with reference to Atatürk's reforms in Turkey, processes of unveiling women as a means of demonstrating the 'marginalisation' or displacement of Islam have historically been central to the development of 'secular' modern nationalist discourses.

Contemporary popular and political debates concerning the place of veiling in 'secular' European states have emerged as a result of many Muslim girls and women, as well as their families and broader communities, demanding that Muslim women should have the right to wear the veil (be this the *hijab*, *chador*, or *niqab*) in schools – both as students and as teachers – and other public places. Major disputes have taken place since the late 1980s in European countries including France (Abu-Rabia, 2006; Blank, 1999; Hamdan, 2007; Scott, 2007), Spain (EFE, 2007; Vargas-Llosa, 2007), and the United Kingdom (Sturcke, 2006; Tempest, 2006). The veil in the aforementioned analyses has often been identified as being the most visible (or public) sign of difference between Muslim and Western societies, with such 'difference' usually being negatively evaluated by Western audiences, who have directly equated the veil with the oppression of women, and often claimed that (neo)colonial intervention has been necessary to save 'brown women from brown men' (Spivak, 1993, p. 93).

In more recent popular debates in Western and non-Western states, many Muslim women and men have framed 'veiling' within a discourse of rights, arguing that the veil can enable and empower women rather than unequivocally 'oppress' them (Hoodfar, 1991; Zuhur, 1992). In these and other historical and contemporary cases, veiling has often

become a symbol of personal, communal, and national resistance and identity, directly opposing ethnocentric and Orientalist assumptions, stereotypes, and 'unveiling' desires. Importantly, the personal, religious, social, and political significance of the veil for Muslim women and their communities has not been denied or rejected, but rather emphasised, by those who argue that girls and women should have the right to veil, if they so wish.

In a radically divergent approach to the direct confrontation to and rejection of essentialist (mis)understandings of the veil, the mainstream discourse projected by the Polisario Front/SADR to Western observers with regards to Sahrawi women is permeated with claims that, unlike other Arab/Muslim women, they 'did not veil' either during, before, or after the colonial era. Hence, in his Sahrawi novel/historiography, the Polisario/SADR representative to the Middle East discusses the position of Sahrawi women during the colonial era, stating that 'she does not veil' (Kuttab, 2002, p. 63) ('*hiya la tatahajjab*', where *hajaba* is the Arabic root of the verb 'to conceal' or 'to veil', my translation). Equally, like other visitors to the camps, Harrell-Bond was told by informants during her visit in the 1980s that 'Our women were never veiled and they always worked' (1999, p. 156), and, following an interview with Zahra Ramdan (executive member of the Polisario's Women's Union and its Spanish-based International Relations representative), Feo also indicated that 'the Sahrawi woman is not obliged to veil' (2003, my translation). Such official accounts of Sahrawi women 'not veiling' either in the past or in the present appear to be largely incongruous on many levels (Figure 9.2).

First and foremost, it is 'unthinkable' for a Sahrawi woman not to wear the *milhafa* in the camps, as young women returning from studying in Cuba have encountered upon their arrival (Fiddian, 2002). During their studies in Algeria, on the other hand, young Sahrawi women tend to wear headscarves, rather than the *milhafa*, as demonstrated in photographs shown by many of my female informants in the camps. Further, although many Sahrawi women living in the diaspora in the Canary Islands and other parts of Spain continue to wear the *milhafa*, others decide either to wear headscarves or to leave their heads uncovered (personal observations, 2001–2015). In contrast, in the Algerian-based refugee camps, all women wear the *milhafa*, although the way in which it is worn varies throughout women's life-cycles, with older women veiling less strictly than younger, fertile, and supposedly more attractive women (also see Mernissi, 2003, p. 493). The *milhafa* is therefore directly related to curtailing the risk of *fitna* (temptation or its

Figure 9.2   Sahrawi women wearing 'invisible' *malahif* as they wait to attend the 2007 Conference convened by the National Union of Sahrawi Women, 27 February Refugee Camp, South-West Algeria. Photo Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh

related chaos), with older women seen as being less 'tempting' to men than their younger counterparts. This move towards 'looser' or more 'relaxed' veiling with age is in accordance with the Qur'an (*sura* 24:60), which indicates that women who are 'past the age of bearing children' and 'have no hope of marriage' may even 'take off their outer garments', although they should remain modestly clothed and 'not display their charms'.

Clear confirmation that the *milhafa* should be considered a veil is derived from one of my research visits to the camps in 2007. Given that all Sahrawi women wear the *milhafa* in the camps, upon my arrival I was clearly dressed in a different fashion to the majority of women there, but I still considered myself to be 'modestly covered' since I was wearing a headscarf and loose-fitting long-sleeved shirts and trousers. While living, working, and conducting research in other countries with majority Muslim populations, this attire had even been sufficient to enter mosques that required non-Muslims to observe/respect veiling requirements (such as the Al-Azhar mosque in Cairo). Many women and girls in the camps, however, clearly did not consider me to be 'covered',

with adolescent girls in particular repeatedly asking me, 'Why aren't you *muhajjaba*?' (veiled, f. sing.). On several occasions during my first weeks in the camps I was confronted quite aggressively by three older women (between their late fifties and early sixties) on this matter. While they, like many older (usually post-menopausal) women in the camps, wore relatively loose-fitting and 'revealing' *malahif* (pl. of *milhafa*), frequently with only a 'skimpy' top underneath which allowed their arms and shoulders to be seen, they were adamant that I, like all other young women in the camps, should be *muhajjaba*. After a short time in the camps, I eventually decided to wear the *milhafa* rather than a headscarf, resulting in older women immediately ceasing to challenge me on this matter. Equally, the young girls (who I believe were expressing more widely held views) instantly stopped asking me why I was not *muhajjaba*. This direct cessation of daily confrontations demonstrated that, for these adult women and female children alike, the *milhafa* is clearly a form of hijab, or veil, and, further, that in their opinion women should be *muhajjabat* (veiled, f. pl.).

It may appear self-evident that the *milhafa* is a traditional item that fulfils common interpretations of the Qur'anic requirements of veiling/covering, and therefore should be understood as a 'veil', and yet conventional Sahrawi representations of this item of clothing to Westerners both in the camps and in Spain purport to distance the *milhafa* from religious obligations or connotations, even overtly declaring, as indicated above, that Sahrawi women 'do not veil'. In effect, Western observers are often informed by Sahrawi men and women that the *milhafa* is a *traditional* or *national* item of clothing, rather than a religiously motivated one. This is reflected in the response offered by Khira Mohamed, a young Spanish-educated Sahrawi doctor based in Spain at the time of her interview, when asked by an *El País* (Spain's leading national newspaper) journalist if she had ever worn *el velo* (the veil):

> I am a Muslim, a believer, but I do not wear it [the veil]. There is no obligation to wear it. In the camps I do wear the traditional Sahrawi clothes and the melfa [sic], which is a long scarf, different from that which other Arab women wear.
>
> (Alberola, 2003, my translation)

The ways in which journalists writing for *El País* from the 1980s onwards have defined the *milhafa* (variously written *melhfa*, *melhhfa*, or *melfa*) to their readers is of note here: in 1985, Martín refers to 'the traditional melfa (women's clothing)'; in 1997, Sanz describes an encounter

with 'a woman covered in the traditional melhhfa (tunic)'; and in 2001, Velázquez-Gaztelu met with a woman who was 'wearing a melhfa, the traditional clothing of Sahrawi women' (my translations).

In all of these descriptions, which are based on visits to the camps and interviews with Spanish-speaking Sahrawis there, the *milhafa* appears as a traditional dress,[5] making no reference to which parts of the body it covers, and, in Sanz's case, vaguely describing it to the reader as a 'tunic'. In other cases, Sahrawi women are described as being 'wrapped in col-ored saris' (AFP, 2004). Such an understanding of the *milhafa* clearly makes no connection to any possible religious motivations or require-ments, with references to Sahrawi women's Muslim identity either being entirely absent or marginal in these pieces. This representation fails, for instance, to recognise that Sahrawi women who attend the mosque on Fridays ideally wear a newly washed *milhafa* when they do so, and that all women carefully adjust their *malahif* before praying to ensure that their heads and hair are covered accordingly (personal observations, 27 February Camp, March–May 2007). Indeed, not only do Sahrawi refugee women 'veil', but the typical assumption in the camps is that all Muslim women are Islamically obliged to wear some sort of veil (despite Khira Mohamed's declaration to the contrary),[6] and that if they are Sahrawi women, they should specifically wear the *milhafa*. Although I have elsewhere explored the diverse ways in which the official dis-course creates and maintains a distance from Islam (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2010a, 2011b, 2014), what is of interest in the context of this chapter is the separation that is created by the Polisario Front/SADR, for a Western audience, between 'the veil' and the *milhafa*.

Veiling or unveiling in the public sphere?

The identifiers 'veil', 'veiling', and 'unveiling' are omnipresent through-out analyses of women in the Middle East, and yet the meanings of these terms often remain unexplored or undefined, despite authors referring to the heterogeneity of practice and significance given to veiling by women themselves and by the communities they live in.[7] Lewis and Mills' anthology (2003) contains a section specifically dedicated to the 'Harem and the Veil', composed of six articles by Mernissi, Graham-Brown, Lewis, Yegenoglu, Woodhull, and El-Guindi. In this collection, it is only El-Guindi who explicitly differentiates between 'veiling in two feminisms' (referring to the experiences and politics of Sha'rawi and Nasif), thereby exploring alternative forms of both veiling and unveil-ing. In the remaining pieces, the authors all make reference to the 'veil',

'veiling', and/or 'unveiling' without defining precisely what it is that they are describing. In so doing, it appears that the authors assume that their readers will a priori know what 'the veil' is, understand its multi-faceted purposes, interpretations, justifications, and regulations, as well as its physical nature, including what it covers or leaves exposed. The Sahrawi claims that 'they do not veil' while wearing the *milhafa* lead us to explore precisely these questions in greater detail.

The same *suras* (24:30, 31 and 33:53 and 59) and examples from the *hadith* are habitually drawn upon by members of contemporary Islamic movements when they defend the Islamic bases for specific dress and behavioural codes (El-Guindi, 2003, pp. 588–589; Küng, 2007, p. 621ff), and yet the religious requirement to veil remains a debated issue within Muslim communities, which partly explains the variety of veiling practices around the world. In the Qur'an, the terms *hijab* (mentioned seven times), *jilbab* (33:59), and *khimar* (24:31), respectively refer to an item/piece of cloth which broadly conceals or separates (in this case) women from men, 'an outer garment' used by decent women when in public, and, lastly, a long head-covering (Küng, 2007, p. 621ff). While not included specifically in the Qur'an, many other types of veils are worn by Muslim women, including the *burqa*, *chador*, *haïk*, and *niqab*, all of which cover different parts of women's heads (including their necks and faces) and are worn in combination with modest clothing, often with gloves and socks (El-Guindi, 2003).

Only one of the Qur'anic terms, *khimar*, specifies that the woman's head in particular should be covered, since *hijab* was initially used to refer to a curtain or barrier separating men's from women's spaces (Küng, 2007, p. 622). Indeed, it is perhaps this notion of spatial segregation from men, rather than covering women's heads and faces, which travellers such as (the fourteenth-century traveller) Ibn Batuta may have referred to when stating that 'Maure' women in North West Africa '[did] not veil themselves' at the time (in El-Hamel, 1999, p. 74). The reflexive nature of this term ('veiling themselves' rather than 'veiling') could lead to such a reading. It was only later that the *hijab* became associated with a woman's head-covering more specifically (Küng, 2007, p. 622), and in some accounts the *hijab* and 'the headscarf, which covers head and neck', are in practice used interchangeably as synonyms for 'the veil' (such as Heng, 1997; Küng, 2007, p. 622; Scott, 2007). When Khira Mohamed indicated that she has never worn 'it', with specific reference to 'the veil', while admitting that she does wear the traditional *milhafa*, it appears clear that she is directly equating the *hijab* or headscarf with 'the veil'.[8] In the five articles mentioned above, by simply using the term

'veil' rather than explaining whether the author is referring to a *chador*, *niqab*, *jilbab*, or *hijab*, not only are the various types of 'veils' worn by different Muslim women elided, but so too is the significance of the terms 'veiled' and 'unveiled'.

El-Guindi's discussion of the significance of the veil in two case studies of Muslim feminism is particularly relevant at this point. With reference to a 'public political feminist act' in which Sha'rawi 'unveiled ceremonially', she reminds us that

> The phrase used in the discourse surrounding the context of lifting the 'veil' was *raf' al-higab* (the lifting of the hijab). Ironically, what secular feminists lifted was the traditional face veil (*burqu'*), which is rooted in cultural tradition and history rather than Islamic sources, not the hijab . . . When Huda Sha'rawi dramatically cast off the veil in 1923, it was the face veil she removed, not the hijab.
>
> (2003, p. 596)

As this case clearly demonstrates, it is possible to 'remove the veil' and yet 'remain veiled', since there are different degrees and forms of veiling that Muslim women may don. Such insights appear to be absent from Graham-Brown's usage of the term 'unveiled' in the caption that accompanies a late nineteenth-century photograph of three women in Egypt:

> The unveiled woman in the foreground, gazing directly at the camera, is contrasted with the two veiled women in the background . . . However, she draws her head-veil slightly across her face in the presence of the man behind the camera.
>
> (2003, p. 507)

As indicated in the caption itself, 'the unveiled woman' is in fact wearing a 'head-veil', and the briefest examination of the photograph demonstrates that the term 'unveiled' refers solely to the absence of a face veil, since the three women are all wearing loose clothes which cover their bodies, necks, heads, and foreheads.

It is thus precisely through recognising the different ways in which 'veiling' and 'unveiling' can be conceptualised, and by asking who and what Sahrawi women and the *milhafa* are being compared with when Spanish *solidarios*, journalists, and academics declare that they 'did not [or do not] veil', that we can best understand the official Sahrawi representation apropos veiling in the camps. Hence, if compared with certain groups of Bedouin women who wear face-veils, or Muslim women who wear the *niqab* or *burqa*, it might be valid to note that Sahrawi women

did not, and do not, cover their faces (major exceptions being when women protect their faces from the sun or the sand). Such an understanding is offered by the Cuban-based MA student quoted above, who claimed that the only Arab women who 'do not cover their faces or hands' are Mauritanian and Sahrawi women who wear the *milhafa*. During our interview, he continued by (equally unfoundedly) stating that 'in other places in the Arab world, you can only see the woman's eyes', leading us to recognise that, if one considers face-veiling to be 'veiling' per se, one might in fact reach the conclusion that Sahrawi women 'did not veil' in the past or 'do not veil' in the present.

The above discussion does not purport to claim that all analysts or visitors to the camps consider Sahrawi women to be 'unveiled'. Yet many observers who accept that Sahrawi women 'use the veil as ordered in the Qur'an' often rely on interviews with women who report that, even if do they veil, they do so 'with a great deal of tenderness' and as a sign 'of identity and pride' (Petrich, 2005, my translation). Claims to this effect were made during several of my interviews with Spanish solidarity workers and visitors in the camps. By including these quotations and references, the Western observer is immediately led to contrast the Sahrawi *milhafa* with the ways that Other Muslim women veil: if Sahrawi women unequivocally embrace their identity-enforcing *milhafa* with 'tenderness', we are led to understand that non-Sahrawi Muslim women wear it with regret, or are violently forced to wear the veil against their will.[9] Accordingly, 'other Muslim women' must experience this practice as a violent curtailment of their rights, and have their identity and pride subjugated as a result.

In conclusion, while the *milhafa* may, as a matter of fact, be a traditional item of clothing, and while it is admittedly neither a *hijab* (qua headscarf) nor a *niqab* or *burqa*, the *milhafa* is nevertheless a 'veil' in religious terms. As indicated earlier, nationalist movements have often promoted the 'unveiling' of women in an attempt to both distance themselves from Islam and to create a 'secular' (and therefore 'modern') national identity. This construction leads us to question the determination with which Polisario Front/SADR spokespeople have distanced themselves from the veil as a visible sign of Muslim identity in their portrayals of Sahrawi womanhood both in the camps and in Spain, just as they have rendered mosques and *madrasas* invisible in the former. I would suggest that by doing so, the Polisario Front's official discourse fails to confront ethnocentric understandings of both the veil and Islam; equally, it is simultaneously based on, and in fact reproduces and solidifies, such rhetoric for strategic reasons that are intimately related to the Sahrawi politics of survival in this protracted refugee context.

Concluding remarks

As the Polisario Front/SADR is acutely aware, the potential to alienate Western solidarity groups, upon whom Sahrawi refugees physically and politically depend, is an ever-present possibility. In a context where the negative representation of Islam (and the position of women within Islam) by the media and politicians throughout the West prevails, distancing the Sahrawi Self from Islam appears to be strategic in nature, as well as intimately related to the Polisario Front/SADR's politics of survival. While historically characterising many nationalist movements in the past, separating the Sahrawi Self from Islam becomes increasingly urgent given the current geopolitical setting and related rejection of Islam in the West.[10] Indeed, global events such as the First Gulf War (1990), invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq (2001 and 2003, respectively), attacks on/in the United States (2001), and the Madrid and London Bombings (2004 and 2005, respectively) have further solidified Western conceptualisations (i.e. 'rejection') of Islam. This discourse may explain the particular urgency with which non-state actors such as the Polisario/SADR have attempted to distance themselves from Islamic identity and practice during interactions with Western observers, including through what I have referred to as the 'veiling' of religious symbols such as mosques, *madrasas*, and the *milhafa* itself.

Combined with more localised concerns about an 'Islamically dominated North Africa', and 'Islamic fundamentalism' in the Saharan desert and Maghreb, the prospect of creating a secular, modern state is an attractive one actively offered by proponents of Sahrawi self-determination to non-Sahrawi audiences (also see Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2011a, 2015). Importantly, public declarations made by and on behalf of the Polisario must be viewed in relation to not only global shifts in the 1990s and 2000s but also, more specifically, high-profile (and thus far unsubstantiated) accusations made by Moroccan officials that the Polisario Front is a terrorist organisation tied to Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (Darbouche, 2007, p. 2; del Pino, 2003). The kidnapping of Spanish and Italian NGO workers from the administrative capital of the Sahrawi refugee camps (Rabouni) in October 2011, purportedly by members of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, reignited such accusations, which have in turn been vehemently opposed by the Polisario and Sahrawi refugees in the camps and across Spain.

Such public declarations include that of a Spanish *solidario* who addressed the UN General Assembly in 2007, declaring that a free Western Sahara 'could be an example for the world', 'peaceful, respectful

of women, freedom-loving, and allied in the struggle against terrorism' (UNGA, 2007).[11] In this way, the SADR directly posits itself as an example to be followed by other nations, fulfilling all of the non-economic priorities associated with contemporary notions of 'good governance': 'peaceful' = 'democratic' = 'secular'.

In such a context, the term 'secular' is both explicitly and implicitly invoked throughout Polisario and Spanish accounts of life in the camps. Such claims may be made indirectly by the Polisario and by Sahrawi individuals through distancing Sahrawi women from a range of Muslim identities and practices that are considered in the West to be oppressive. Indeed, as indicated above, the 'unveiling' of women and officially distancing the national Self from the 'Islamic veil' has frequently been interpreted as one of the clearest symbols of secularism (Gökariksel and Mitchelli, 2005; Kandiyoti, 1991; Yegenoglu, 1998, p. 135). Furthermore, these claims have also been made explicitly by declaring that 'our women do not veil' and implicitly by 'veiling' the existence of mosques and *madrasas* in the camps, thereby portraying the camps as 'ideal' humanitarian spaces inhabited by 'ideal refugees' worthy of humanitarian and political support by 'secular' NGOs and civil society networks alike.

Notes

1. On interactions with Evangelical donors, see Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2011b and 2015.
2. It is not my intention to characterise camp life either solely or primarily in religious terms, but rather to note that a heterogeneity of religious practice and belief exists among different groups of Sahrawi refugees, varying according to multiple factors, including refugees' generation and an exposure to different approaches to Islam through the study abroad programme. This is a multiplicity which is rendered invisible by the official discourse projected to European *solidarios*, and yet it is a highly significant reality in the camps.
3. I use the term 'official discourse' to refer to this interconnected body of meanings and images produced by certain social and political actors for a particular non-Sahrawi audience.
4. The term *milhafa* is derived from the verb *laḥafa*, meaning to cover. A *milḥafa* is literally a dress/layer that is worn over another dress/layer.
5. It appears probable that Khira Mohamed does not personally consider the *milhafa* to be a religious item, since, while she may wear 'traditional' clothes in the refugee camps, she does not wear the *milhafa* while in Spain, nor (given the journalist's question) does she wear the *hijab*. Veiling has been common among Christian, Jewish, and Muslim women in the Arab world (El-Guindi, 2003, p. 595) and elsewhere (Küng, 2007, pp. 620–621), thereby highlighting the cultural and religious significance of the veil beyond Islam.

6. Both before and after donning the *milhafa*, I discussed different forms of veiling practices and interpretations of the Qur'an with the women and girls who were determined that I should veil. Referring to my experiences of working in Egypt and Syria, I indicated that some Muslim women and men in the Middle East and Europe believe that, while Muslim women should dress modestly, they were under no obligation to wear the veil. The response to my proposal was categorical: I was told that all Muslim women are obliged to veil, and that it is *haram* (prohibited) not to do so.

7. Lindisfarne-Tapper and Ingham provide a detailed examination of the diversity of clothing and veiling in the Middle East (1997).

8. In the Spanish context, the term *velo* is commonly used to refer to both 'the veil' in the abstract, and the *hijab* qua veil more specifically. Hence, Vargas-Llosa directly equates the *hijab* with what he refers to as the 'Islamic veil' (2007).

9. Any recognition of (for instance) Tunisian laws passed since 1981 against Muslim women wearing the veil in public institutions (including universities) is absent from the official discourse.

10. On representations of Islam in the Western media, see Said (1997). 'Islamophobia' is a long-standing phenomenon, despite having been used as a printed term only since 1991 and included in the *Oxford English Dictionary* since 1997; on Islamophobia before and after September 2001, see Sheridan (2006).

11. If the Taliban and Al-Qaeda have been associated with 'terrorist misogyny' (Ayotte and Husain 2005, 124), the official discourse appears to directly equate the Polisario/SADR with feminism and/or women's empowerment.

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10
'Islam Is Not a Culture': Reshaping Muslim Publics for a Secular World

Katherine Pratt Ewing

Material objects such as the headscarf, practices such as broadcasting the call to prayer from loudspeakers on mosque minarets, and various categories such as 'Salafi' and 'Sufi' have become key symbols of cultural difference in controversies about the place of Muslims as minorities within Europe and North America. As symbols, they have taken on new layers of significance that go beyond the intentions of Muslims who engage with these objects, practices, and categories in their daily lives. For example, many pious Muslim women experience the headscarf only as a bodily practice to realise the will of God (Mahmood, 2005) and may be unaware of or downplay how the headscarf has been taken up as a polysemic symbol in political discourse.

Similarly, scholars and the general public often use the term 'culture' as a category to describe and analyse specific and diverse modes of human living. Yet the term 'culture' itself has also become a politically powerful symbol in discussions among Muslims about how to practise Islam as a minority in a world understood to be simultaneously Judeo-Christian and secular. For example, the Swiss-born Muslim scholar Tariq Ramadan[1] has inspired large audiences of Muslims living

in Europe and North America with his assertion that 'Islam is not a culture' (Ramadan, 2005).[2] Variations of the idea have been taken up as an important issue by other Muslim scholars and leaders. Though anthropologists may dismiss this formulation as nonsensical in terms of anthropological concepts of culture, which view all human activities including religion as cultural, the aphorism has grown in popularity among diasporic Muslims.

Making a distinction between Islam and culture is a speech act that does important work for many second- and third-generation migrants, who face at least three overlapping challenges: first, reconciling the sometimes considerable differences between family expectations and the habits of everyday life in their new homes; second, negotiating life and Muslim identity in a post-9/11 world at a time when the fear of terrorism has metamorphosed into the idea that Islam is a threat to Western civilisation; and third, working out for themselves and articulating specific orientations to both Islam and what they consider to be the secular. Muslim women have found the distinction between Islam and culture to be an especially powerful tool for asserting the equality of women while simultaneously criticising how both 'traditional' Muslim and 'degenerate' Western cultures treat women.

But the distinction between Islam and culture – as intended by Ramadan, and as interpreted by many transnational practitioners – does even more: it provides Muslims with an analytic tool for challenging the claimed universalism of the historically and culturally particular contours of secular modernity as it is practised in American and European countries and exported to the rest of the world. In sum, Muslims have deployed the concept of culture as a device for identifying local practices, policies, and laws in European and North American societies that masquerade as universal, secular values. Muslims in Germany, for example, have challenged regulations that require school children to take showers in open locker rooms after gym class, arguing that these regulations reflect culturally specific German ideas about the 'healthy' exposure of the naked body and violate Muslim concerns about privacy which are specified in the Qur'an for both men and women (see Ewing, 2008, pp. 190–98). Law suits filed by Muslims against the banning of headscarves in the classroom also rest on Muslim challenges to the assumption common among secularists in many parts of the world that women who expose their bodies are liberated and that women who wear a headscarf are oppressed. Some Muslims have also pointed out that the ban on polygamy in the United States and Europe, which is now usually justified in terms of women's equality, is a practice that has

its cultural roots in the Greco-Roman world and Christianity and, therefore, should not be enforced as a law applicable to all in a secular state. Such challenges have led some scholars to argue that the accommodation of Muslims is moving some countries to a 'post-modern legality' in the form of legal pluralism (e.g., Merry, 1988; Yilmaz, 2002). 'Islam is not a culture' allows Muslims to frame new understandings of citizenship and new strategies for belonging that place Islam on an equal footing not only with other religious claimants to public space such as political Christianity, but also, in some senses more notably, with forms of secularism that oppose the visible presence of religion in public life.

Yet trying to develop an Islamic way of life as a Muslim minority by stripping both Islam and secularism of their cultural particularities generates its own dilemmas and debates among Muslims about the relationship between Islam and culture(s). This approach throws open the question of what, precisely, is true Islam and who has the authority to decide. As the concept of culture becomes a 'loaded word' for many diasporic Muslims (Abd-Allah, 2013, p. 25), debates have emerged among Muslim thinkers about the relationship between Islam and culture.[3] Making a distinction between Islam and culture, though it has opened up new modes of integration for many diasporic Muslims, can also be an exercise of power that is not always associated with a toleration of difference. For example, distinguishing Islam from culture has been used for over a century as a strategy for criticising many Sufi practices, which are frequently framed as corruptions of Islam through cultural contamination. On the other side, some defenders of Sufism argue that Islam is realised only through specific cultures (e.g., Abd-Allah, 2013) and may accuse their opponents of interpreting the Qur'an superficially or too 'literally'.

Though a number of scholars and observers have posited an epistemological divide between 'liberal Muslim thinkers' whose approach to the Qur'an is consistent with modern secularism ('good Muslims') and Qur'anic literalists ('bad Muslims),[4] I argue that when we consider how 'Islam is not a culture' has been taken up by Muslim thinkers, media figures, and publics, a divide between secularists and Qur'anic literalists breaks down. The assertion that Islam is a religion somehow separable from its cultural features ironically links these two positions through their shared assumption that culture-free universals exist. Seriously engaging and problematising Muslim distinctions between religion and culture allows new possibilities for rethinking the publics and counterpublics that are constituted by secularism and Islam in its various forms. Viewing Islam as a universally applicable set of doctrines and practices

distinct from any particular culture is a process parallel to imagining secularism as consisting of universal principles that all societies should progress towards.

The concept of culture

The anthropological concept of culture has moved so completely into public discourse that even George W. Bush used it in his 2002 State of the Union address to lay out the foundations of his administration's foreign policy and justify the US entry into Afghanistan:

> America will lead by defending liberty and justice because they are right and true and unchanging for all people everywhere. We have no intention of imposing our culture, but America will always stand firm for the non-negotiable demands of human dignity, the rule of law, limits on the power of the state, respect for women, private property, free speech, equal justice and religious tolerance.
>
> (Bush, 2005, p. 135)

Bush drew a contrast between 'our' locally delimited 'culture' and the universal rights that it is America's global duty to protect. These 'demands' or principles are closely linked to secularism, which is itself grounded in the troubled separation between religion and politics. As many scholars have pointed out, secularisms are historical constructs that involve diverse, complex, and politically contingent relationships between the religious and the secular, 'church' and 'state'.[5] Yet the implication of Bush's distinction is that the universal rights promoted by secularism are culture-free, absolute, and outside of history. In other words, 'secularism is not a culture', according to Bush's usage.[6] In this case, secularism is functioning as an ideology that generates an array of universalised principles and values.

Tariq Ramadan has postulated a conceptual division analogous to Bush's when he has stated in numerous settings that 'Islam is not a culture' but a body of ethical principles and universal values, or a Credo, or 'religious teachings…that fashion a disposition of mind and heart' (Ramadan, 2009, p. 188). His argument is that 'Islam allows us to integrate into Britain's [or France's or American] shared national culture' (Ramadan, 2005). Both Bush and Ramadan have asserted universal values that can be separated out from the particularisms of cultures. The negative formulation that 'Islam is not a culture', as well as Bush's distinction between universal values and 'our culture', are complex rhetorical positions that draw on an anthropological concept of culture,

as it has filtered into popular discourse. Culture in these discourses stands in for that part of humanity that is variable.

This concept of culture has a specific history associated with the discipline of anthropology and its colonial past (see Stocking, 1996). It can be traced back to German Romanticism and Herder's idea of the Volksgeist (the 'spirit' of a people), a distinct and incommensurable world view that characterises each ethnic group. By way of Franz Boas, the term became central in American anthropology, refocused by the interpretive anthropologist Clifford Geertz to mean 'an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols' (Geertz, 1973, p. 89), including religious symbols and meanings.[7] A pluralised concept of culture was a way that anthropologists could characterise social difference without immediately imposing an explicit hierarchy of value, as the word 'civilisation' does. It opened up a conceptual space for cultural relativism.

Both Bush and Ramadan were using culture in something like the relativistic sense of a 'Volksgeist', and both also created a contrast between a range of equivalent local cultures and a set of universalised ethical principles. Whether Bush and Ramadan were drawing on the same universalised principles, and whether at some level they participate in the same globalised discursive order or episteme, is a matter of bitter public debate, especially for those who see Ramadan as a Muslim fundamentalist and consider his accommodation to Western secularism as a deceptive strategy in the civilisational clash between Islam and the Christian/secular West. These parallels in their use of the concept of culture suggest that, far from being representatives of two incommensurable worlds, Bush and Ramadan were operating within the same discursive order and that Islam is very much a part of a single modern civilisation.

Samuel Huntington's prediction that a rising 'clash of civilisations' would replace the twentieth century's clash of political ideologies (Huntington, 1993) became a self-fulfilling prophecy with the attacks of 9/11 and the instigation of the War on Terror, which has intensified the fear of Islam among those who see Western universalism and Islamic universalism as irreconcilably opposed. Tariq Ramadan's push to remove culture from Islam is in some respects an effort to reconcile Islam and Western secularism in a response to Huntington. Huntington made no distinction between the operation of culture and the operation of religion and argued that cultural characteristics are more immutable than economic or political ones.[8] But for Ramadan, Islam is a 'religion' based on universal principles and is thus more mobile and adaptable – like any global agenda – than cultures and ethnicities.[9]

The idea that Islam is not a culture has been used by Ramadan and others to argue that Islam need not clash with American or European cultural practices. For example, in the wake of 9/11 the American Muslim academic Vincent Cornell asserted:

> For the Muslim who holds a universal perspective, there can be no war between 'Islam and the West.' Qur'anic Islam is not a culture. As a universal religion, it perfects the cultures that embrace it ... There is no reason why a Muslim cannot be fully American, fully English, or fully Danish and be as much of a Muslim as one who is Arab, Pakistani, or Iranian.
>
> (Cornell, 2002, p. 332)

Ramadan advocates a similar position, arguing both that Islam promotes universal values and that a Muslim can also be fully culturally American or European and participate comfortably in a liberal democracy. The theme 'Islam is not a culture' now echoes across the Muslim world, especially among young diasporic Muslims growing up in the United States, Europe, and other countries where Muslims are a minority.

'Islam is not a culture' as an integration strategy

To examine some of the practical aspects of the idea that Islam is not a culture, I draw primarily on my research among Muslim youth, especially young women who participated in mosque-based study groups in the United States and Germany in the months following the attacks of 9/11. The way that the statement 'Islam is not a culture' has been taken up among these two widely separated groups of young people suggests a transcontinental flow of ideas and practices across communities of diasporic Muslims who are otherwise quite different in their backgrounds and life situations. The US group was composed of students of Pakistani background. Most of their fathers had come to the Unites States for higher education. The German study group was of Turkish background and was associated with the Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görüs (IGMG), which had its roots in Islamist politics in Turkey. The parents of these young women had come to Germany as guest workers from rural Turkey and had little education.

It is not surprising that women in both groups criticised certain aspects of Western culture that are so visible on university campuses and city streets, such as sexual promiscuity, skimpy clothing, and drinking. Elements of American or German culture inconsistent with their

understandings of Islam – the consumption of alcohol and pork and Western patterns of dating and bodily display being among the most salient – are obviously to be avoided and rejected within an explicitly Islamic setting such as the mosque. Perhaps the more challenging project for these daughters of immigrants has been to figure out what aspects of life in these non-Muslim environments are to be embraced. The concept of culture has become a tool for being selective about which cultural elements of their environment are acceptable and which are to be rejected as un-Islamic. In this process, the young women in both groups seemed to find that many of the practices that shape their daily lives in Germany or the Unites States are actually more Islamic and universally applicable than are the cultural practices of their families, especially in the case of practices that promote gender equality.

Youth who are moving beyond the boundaries of insular minority communities typically struggle with the problem of cultural difference. A conversation posted on a University of Cape Town, South Africa, blog site in 2004 demonstrates a common way that one concept of culture is used and transmitted by young diasporic Muslims who struggle with discrepancies between family expectations and the demands of fitting in. The posting, entitled 'identity Angst', was written by Kamilah, a 20-year-old Muslim female film and media student from a family of South Asian background in South Africa who felt as though she was caught between two cultures, struggling to maintain incompatible 'identities' (University of Cape Town, South Africa, blog, 2004). The responder to her post, whom we shall hear from later, was a self-styled 'Westernized Muslim chick'.

Kamilah wrote:

> I find myself smack-bang in the middle of two completely different cultures, unable to find peace with either of the two. It's the classic Western vs. tradition type argument, in my case being that I am a muslim living in a Western world...And even though muslims in S. Africa are much more liberal than most of their mid-eastern counterparts, most of my family belong to a much older generation, which often results in a few skew glances when I mention that I'm studying Film & Media (the two most influential products of the Western world of course!). As a result, when I'm in the presence of any 'traditional' muslims, I have to dress differently and become my other persona, and so I find myself constantly switching between my two identities.

> But getting one thing clear: I do have the deepest love for and pride
> in my religion, and I do consider myself a practicing muslim in
> many respects, but conforming to muslim ideals is not without its
> difficulties as well ...

> Some who can relate have suggested finding the best of both worlds.
> But in between two cultures that are so different, I can't seem to find
> that common ground ... so for now, I don't quite know where it is
> I belong just yet.

In this post, Kamilah does not make a clear distinction between Islam as
a religion and the cultural practices of her Muslim community. But she
conceptualises cultures as bounded entities that are completely different
from one another. On one side is the 'Western world', manifest in her
Film and Media studies and a style of dress she adopts when she goes
to campus. On the other side are 'tradition', 'traditional Muslims', and
a different style of dress associated with her participation in her family
and local community. Kamilah has characterised 'traditional Muslims'
as embodying a 'culture' or 'tradition' that stands in opposition to the
West. She is more ambiguous about whether she views Islam itself as a
culture: she takes pride in it as a 'religion' but seems to associate it with
the world of tradition and non-Western culture. She is caught between
these two cultures and identities. Her friends have suggested forming a
kind of hybrid identity – the 'best of both worlds' – but she can't seem
to find 'common ground', a viable position where these two distinct
cultures overlap.

   The metaphor of hybridity has become a common way of thinking
about identity across many diasporic communities. 'Hybridity' focuses
on cultural in-betweenness. Like the concept of culture itself, it first
emerged in academic discourse, but has been taken up in popular cul-
ture.[10] Though young Muslim women do speak of the importance of
blending Muslim and American or European identities, the model of
hybridity does not actually fit because they stress how important it
is not to compromise either identity in the process. The constituent
elements should be kept clear, in contrast to the process of hybridity,
in which cultures are mixed into a new product. For these Muslims,
bringing together Islam and American or German culture emphatically
did not mean combining two cultures, as a model of hybridity might
suggest. Over and over again, youth expressed frustration at the all-too-
common conflation of 'cultural' and Islamic values. Like Tariq Ramadan,

they emphasised that Islam is not a culture. Thus, for them, it is not a matter of being half-Muslim and half-American or half-German. Rather, Islam and a specific national culture are incommensurable categories, and one can be fully both.

In the Cape Town blog post, Kamilah lamented that she was caught between two worlds or cultures and found it difficult to be hybrid. The 'Westernized Muslim chick' who responded to Kamilah recast both culture and Islam, first taking up a more recent anthropological understanding of culture than the one Kamilah seemed to be using. She asked, 'Isn't culture dynamic? And isn't the fact that you find yourself bridging two sometimes conflicting traditions in itself a valid cultural position?' This is, in effect, a model of cultural hybridity in which culture is fluid and Muslim minority youth occupy a third space of creative activity.

But she then went on to articulate quite a different strategy for handling difference and culture:

> We have to realize that Islam is not a culture, it's a way of life, and unlike the western society u speaking of, islam is not culturally bound as there are reasons for all that we do, as you know. it became easier for me to wear a headscarf when i decided to empower myself with knowledge about what my parents have taught me. i reached a point where blind faith just wasn't cutting it no more so i decided to explore. what i found was that our parents and their parents have become bogged down in technicalities and cultural aspects of religion. whereas islam as you know is merely complete submission to the will of God. thus it is your intention and heart that counts and once this is totally submitted to God, wearing a scarf does not become something you do as a muslim but something you do to please God.

Not only did this woman distinguish Islam from the idea of culture, in general terms, but she explicitly separated Islam from the 'technicalities' and cultural practices of her parents. She described acquiring knowledge of Islam on her own, instead of relying on what her parents had taught her. Distinguishing her own approach from that of her parents, she focused on an unmediated relationship with God that comes from an interior intention – a specific form of subjectivity based on interiority. The emphasis on intention has always been a fundamental aspect of Islamic prayer, but this 'Muslim chick' articulated it in a way that resonates with what we might call the 'Protestantisation of Islam' (although this Islam – stripped of 'technicalities' – is not the same as secularised notions of religiosity that reduce religion to an interior

experience of spirituality stripped of ritual such as prescribed forms of prayer or visible body markers [see Asad, 1993]). In particular, the Muslim chick's argument that 'complete submission to the will of God' naturally gives rise to the desire to wear a headscarf reflects forms of piety that have become widespread in Islamic revival movements across the Muslim world. By this logic, wearing a headscarf is not a cultural practice, but a direct manifestation of submission to God.

Islam as a modernising strategy

The relationship between Islam and culture has implications for issues of intergenerationality, identification with a 'homeland', and processes of assimilation to the 'culture' of the majority, particularly for young women struggling to recast gender expectations. The statement 'Islam is not a culture' operates as an ethical prescription for moulding one's everyday life and social relationships.[11] This ethic plays out in relationships between parents and children, shaping the integration process itself as it affects how the social and cultural gaps between first and second generations in migrant families are experienced, interpreted, and managed.

Sitara, the leader of the Raleigh group, described her own father to the girls in her group: 'He refuses to clean up after himself. He leaves banana peels on the coffee table, and then calls the four women in the house to throw them away for him. That's definitely *not* the way of the Prophet'. 'That sort of behaviour', volunteered a participant, 'is all cultural.' The other young women resoundingly agreed. In this case, they were arguing that a Western/American cultural practice of gender equality in which women should not serve men is actually closer to the Prophet Muhammad's practice and thus to Islam than is a South Asian practice. By arguing that South Asian practices are merely cultural and an adulteration of Islam, they have a powerful justification for rejecting the everyday practices of their families.

Both groups of women echoed the theme of gender equality. Sitara emphasised the freedoms afforded to Muslim women. She stated that there is nothing in Islam that prevents women from being educated. Twenty-year-old Shahin, a university student in Raleigh, stressed that women should be educated for the sake of Allah:

> I go to school because I want to educate myself and increase my knowledge for the sake of God ... It's not really a selfish job. It's more like, that's my ultimate reason for why I'm here. If He created me

and put me here for this, then that's my job. It's taking it in with that intention.

<div align="right">(Ewing and Hoyler, fieldnotes, 2006)</div>

Among the women in the Berlin group, the need for Islamic teachings to protect them from their families occasionally emerged in a way that I did not hear in the United States, reflecting their class-cultural background as daughters of guest-workers from rural Turkey. A young woman with whom I talked in Berlin described how she had learned from her teachers at the mosque to resist some of the demands of her father:

> My father wants me to marry a boy in Turkey (not a relative), but I don't want him, and my mother doesn't want him. (Q: Why not?) I want someone who practices Islam and prays. Also, my father talked with him and made the decision but didn't ask me beforehand. Then when he asked me, I told him I didn't want him. I want to talk to the boy before making a decision. My father is a person who makes a decision, and no one can change what he thinks.

> My father makes problems at home. This thing that my father insisted on made me psychologically ill – I couldn't listen to it anymore. I didn't want to accept my father's wish that I marry that boy. But I heard from the life of the Prophet how someone should marry, and who decides. For example, the Prophet talked to his daughter, and the Prophet was emotional, in tears. He said, 'I want you to marry Ali, but you must make the decision; I cannot.' This is an example, so you can see that the father cannot make the decision.

This was a woman who had had particular trouble with her father and found support to resist him within the mosque.[12] She saw Islam as an alternative to the traditional customs of rural Turkey, which she and her friends considered an archaic culture that has no place in the modern world. She reported that she was able to assert herself without threatening or alienating her mother, in part because she wore a headscarf. Here, 'Islam is not a culture' functions as a symbol that can have significant effects on the everyday lives of diasporic Muslim youth who are struggling with family expectations that do not fit with their own efforts to be German or American.

In practical terms, the German-based Islamic organisation IGMG claims as one of its major goals the improvement of relationships between immigrant parents and their children. The organisation seeks

to establish social services in which girls can seek help without creating a total rupture with the family. To accomplish this goal, they first discourage marriages with relatives still in Turkey, because they feel that this pattern increases problems in the marriage; second, they educate girls about their rights, including how to interpret the Qur'an as a defence against even the father's authority to decide the future of his daughter; and third, they provide a support structure outside the family that escapes positioning as the threatening 'modern' or 'Western'.

Participants in the Berlin women's group, though they rejected the term 'feminist', which they associated with negative stereotypes of man-hating bra-burners, did see themselves as part of a movement to protect women's rights and thus participated in a universalised human rights discourse that they saw as Islamic. They discussed how their religious education was making them more aware of their rights in Islamic law. One of the women had recently married, and she said that she had known to sign a contract before marriage that gave her the right to divorce and the right to alimony. In this context, they discussed how important it is to separate out Turkish custom from Islamic law or principles.

One of the women also distinguished between Islamic principles and specific laws meant for particular historical situations and argued that much of German law is consistent with Islamic principles. This is a point that I also heard made by male leaders of IGMG, the Islamic organisation that sponsored one of the German mosque groups. A key example of this frequently cited commensurability is the Qur'anic verse (2:282) which states that two women must serve in the place of one man as a witness, a verse that is interpreted by many to mean that the testimony of a woman is worth only half that of a man. One of the Berlin women, echoing an argument made by one of the male leaders of IGMG, explained that this particular passage referred to a business situation in which women were not typically expert at that time and thus were more likely to become uncertain or confused. In another historical context, where women were equally educated and employed, this principle would not apply. In this discussion, they stressed the congruence of Islamic law and German law.

Discussions within these mosque groups often involved a process of inserting self-conscious reflection into the habitual routines of everyday life, and members training themselves in new bodily habits as they self-consciously engaged in the ethical project of becoming pious Muslims (see Ahmad, 2010; Jouili, 2009; Mahmood, 2005). Distinguishing Islam from 'culture' allowed mosque group members to imagine and shape

themselves into pious Muslims who were also American or German by altering their relationship to the cultural patterns of their parents and other relatives. They sought to move away from Islam as habitual practice to subject positions as rational actors who study Islamic sources and can apply reason to come to a correct understanding of real Islam.

The study groups encouraged participants to articulate and critique the everyday habits of their families, replacing them with consciously articulated guides for behaviour. 'In order to be a Muslim', said Sitara in Raleigh, 'you're supposed to *think*.' By this she meant that it is not enough to simply adopt the practices of one's parents and grandparents because many of these reflect local customs that either have nothing to do with Islam or are actually un-Islamic. In a discussion of proper gender relations and modesty, one girl asked, 'Is it all right for grandfathers to pat their granddaughters on the head?' The other young women smiled at the question and laughed at the group leader's answer: 'Yes', she said, because 'really, really old people don't matter in that sort of thing.' When another young woman questioned the propriety of an uncle's regular attempt to shake her hand, the group reasoned that such contact is improper. In this case, there was a strongly expressed sentiment that the young woman's uncle ought to know that himself: as one girl adamantly stated, 'people should *know* their own religion!' From her perspective, people back in Pakistan and or Turkey mistakenly think that these customary habitual practices are a part of Islam.

But some women questioned going too far in the direction of Western gender practices. Aziza at the Raleigh mosque said, 'Many Muslims only have Western ideas of equality. Who's to say that's right? In Islam, the woman follows her husband, but the child follows the mother. It's a delicate, intricate balance.' The ensuing conversation explored this delicate balance, charting a course between South Asian family practices and 'Western ideas'. Sitara told the girls circled around her: 'We can keep all we earn. The man of the house must pay the bills.' The Muslim wife also has recourse in instances of domestic abuse. If she is mistreated by her husband, a Muslim woman can leave a marriage with impunity: 'She shouldn't be scorned as a result.' Sitara said that while marriage is 'a very important part of life', it should not be their 'whole life'. Women should never be judged on the 'number of children we have, or on the best dish we can cook'. Her instruction displayed a careful sifting out of the cultural from the Islamic, between the principle of gender equality and forms of Western feminism that seemed to her to overemphasise the sameness of men and women.

Other group participants criticised Western gender roles in much the same way that Western feminists do. In a separate interview, Sara disparaged the New Jersey neighbourhood in which she passed her elementary school years. She likened it to '1950s Pleasantville suburbia' (referring to the film *Pleasantville* [Ross, 1998]) in which the women played their 'traditional role' of 'staying at home, baking cookies, and planning birthday parties'. The girls in the study group may have a more 'Western' sense of gender relations than their parents do, but they consciously locate the roots of this model in Islam and distinguish it from the errors of American cultural practices. In this process, American cultural practices are at times viewed as more socially conservative than the principles of Islam.

Who decides what is true Islam?

In both groups, the theme of children educating their parents was a frequent topic, one that emphasised the young women's efforts to distance themselves from those old cultural practices of their families that do not work in their new social worlds. One young woman in Raleigh said, 'It's up to us kids – my sister and I constantly sit my parents down and we're like, "this and this you do, did you know, it's actually culture, it has nothing to do with the religion". And they're like, "oh, really?" The kids are educating their parents about religion.' Most of the Muslim women at the study groups in Raleigh and Berlin spoke with confidence about true Islam.

However, rapidly developing access to new media such as Islamic websites that post 'authoritative' information about Islam and its teachers has created a shifting terrain of religious authority and intense debates about what is true Islam. Young diasporic Muslims turn to an array of resources, many of them high tech, to further their Islamic education as they turn away from the teachings of their families. Guidance about how to navigate these resources is provided in the mosque study groups, which are typically led by a slighter older woman. Within these study groups, participants often mention resources that they have found and may raise questions about. They may also be guided by word of mouth through friends and Muslim student groups on college campuses. Some retailers market printed books through sponsored Google links such as www.onlineislamicstore.com. Free e-books can be downloaded through sites such as http://www.islamicbook.ws, which offers links to PDFs of books in over 30 languages.[13] YouTube has become a particularly powerful tool for raising the visibility and popularity of a new

Islamic leadership, and for debating specific points such as the relationship between Islam and culture. Anyone can post a lecture or sermon on YouTube and have a global audience that builds quickly through word of mouth and name recognition. Video recordings of Islamic teachers of all orientations speaking in local languages in many countries are readily available. Tariq Ramadan himself is a major public figure and is featured (in both French and English) in many videos posted on YouTube, as are other popular speakers such as Hamza Yusuf and Umar Faruq Abd-Allah, both of whom are American converts to Islam. While they may be relied upon to guide discussions about the truth of the tradition, these public figures have significantly different approaches to Islam.

Inspiration for critiquing the culture of one's immigrant parents may come particularly clearly from Muslim converts whose own family backgrounds are American or European and have experienced the disjunction between Islam and their cultural background. An Islamic website features the comedian Baba Ali, who is an American convert to Islam. One of his short videos, also available on YouTube and marketed as a DVD, is entitled 'Islam and Culture' (Ali, 2006). It is ostensibly targeted at immigrant parents and features Baba Ali lecturing parents about the non-Islamic, cultural aspects of their own behaviour that alienate their children and drive them into unhealthy, even anti-Islamic Western cultural practices such as drinking. He offers amusing caricatures of their efforts to keep their children under control (though he does it through gestures and accents that sound more like the Yiddish immigrants of an earlier generation than today's South Asian or Arab Muslim parents, revealing his own cultural roots). He begins:

> Many Muslims, when they come from overseas, they leave Islam back in their home country. I mean, they bring their traditions, they bring their culture, but their traditions have nothing to do with Islam. For example, the idea of a forced marriage, where a woman gets married without her consent, Islam doesn't allow that! Plus it's totally messed up, man! Islam liberated people from this ignorant way of thinking. But some Muslims, they love their culture more than they love Islam. And that's why they're willing to compromise their religion for the sake of their culture. Joke! Joke! Joke!

> Now I'm not saying that all culture's bad. There's a lot of great things we can learn from different cultures. There's tasty food. Beautiful artwork. Rich languages. And so much more! I'm referring to the parts of the culture that conflict with Islam.

Like Sitara of the Raleigh study group, Baba Ali distinguishes Islam and culture, carefully sifting out and rejecting what he considers un-Islamic cultural practices, focusing particularly on the treatment of women. But, even more importantly for a young American Muslim audience, he demonstrates an insider's knowledge of American cultural practices. He models how to be a 'cool' American Muslim. His hyper-American personal style foregrounds the distinction between a culturally specific mode of communication and the universalisable principles of Islam.

Slippage between universals and culturally specific practices

For many diasporic Muslim youth, discerning true Islam from cultural practices and distortions has become a central aspect of their religious practice. But the assertion that Islam is not a culture can be deployed in ways that generate disputes among Muslims about correct Islamic practice. These disputes are manifestations of financially and politically well-supported proselytisation and education movements that promote (culturally) specific interpretations of Islam as universal and culture-free.

A culturally specific style of wearing the headscarf or *hijab* that is associated with a Salafi[14] interpretation of Islam is often promoted in the West as the only correct way for a woman to protect her modesty. Women who adopt the headscarf in the conscious way characteristic of the Islamic piety movement also follow specific guidelines about how it should be worn. These guidelines are based on a style of headscarf, the *hijab*, that has developed in Arab regions and spread to areas such as South Asia, Southeast Asia and Muslim diasporas since the 1970s, along with Saudi-influenced ideas about Islamic reform. Thus, most of the young women in both the United States and Germany wore a style of headscarf that was more characteristic of Saudi Arabian culture than of Pakistan or of rural Turkey. Young women in both groups expressed the opinion that the styles of head covering worn by older women in their communities (often including their mothers) were incorrect and un-Islamic, dictated by ignorance and traditional culture, in contrast to their own sartorial style.

This use of the idea that Islam is not a culture to support a specific interpretation of true Islam that includes wearing *hijab* in a particular way is certainly one that an anthropologist would be expected to contest. There are Muslim scholars of Islam who also contest this use of the concept of culture, which seems to claim that only one style of wearing *hijab* is Islamic and therefore not cultural. Ebrahim Moosa, for example, has argued that 'religion *by necessity* incorporates culture' (Moosa,

2006, p. 143). By Moosa's logic, any specific practice that conforms to Islamic guidelines is *also* cultural. This approach distinguishes universalised guidelines from any specific human practice, and allows that Islam will take form in a particular cultural context. When, in contrast, practitioners claim that their own practices are culture-free because they are manifestations of true Islam, they are conflating a specific cultural practice, the Saudi-style headscarf, with the universalised ethical principle that women must cover themselves. Though the claim that Islam is not a culture does not necessarily lead to this conflation, this slippage is rhetorically powerful and has become a key source of disagreement among Muslims.

The Muslim women in the German and American study groups did not express concern with this conceptual slippage in the case of the headscarf. They were more concerned with the liberatory possibilities that the argument that 'Islam is not a culture' opens up, especially when combined with the practice of wearing a headscarf that is, above all, *not* South Asian or Turkish in style. They pointed out that the headscarf enhances their freedom vis-à-vis their traditional families. Their parents are not as worried about them when they go out. In many cases, they also gain power and authority over their parents, ideally without disrupting the family's basic authority structure – always a potential problem in the relationship between first and second generations in migrant families. They learn to argue that the practices advocated by Islamic reformers are true Islam and that the 'village Islam' of their families has by contrast been corrupted by local culture and is practised out of habit rather than out of a relationship with God.

Yet one of the oft-repeated laments heard among Muslims is the bitterness with which Muslims argue among themselves about the proper practices of Islam and the procedures for deciding what is Islamic. There have been disagreements within the Raleigh mosque about the acceptability of certain Sufi practices such as *zikr* (group recitation) and whether these acts can be performed in the mosque. In these disputes, the declaration that Islam is not a culture can be used as a rhetorical strategy for promoting a vision of Islam in which some or all Sufi teachings and practices are rejected as cultural corruptions of Islam.

The sensitivity that has developed around the issue of Sufism as a cultural corruption of Islam can be seen in a public lecture (available on YouTube) by Hamza Yusuf, a highly visible Muslim leader in the United States who has had clear ties to the Sufi tradition.[15] In many diasporic Muslim settings, the label 'Sufism' is now associated with cultural practices deemed un-Islamic. When asked directly, 'Are you a Sufi?'

in a lecture, he said, 'Definitely not' (Yusuf, 2012), though he does not deny the importance of having a spiritual teacher, which is a key aspect of Sufism. In his lectures, Yusuf draws a fine line between spiritual teaching and 'a lot of craziness in the Muslim world that is called *tassawuf*, like graves . . . and it's more like a folkloric Islam' (Yusuf, 2012). In other words, he emphasised that cultural accretions have corrupted much of what now passes as Sufism, mirroring the discourse that culture can muddy true Islam.

Before 9/11, Yusuf had preached that modernity and its nihilistic materialism were spiritually destructive and urged Muslims in the United States 'to place themselves into a studied quarantine from the secular world' (Yuskaev, 2010, p. 187). But Yusuf's position on the relationships among American culture, secularism, and Islam explicitly shifted in the weeks following 11 September 2001. Shocked by the violence of 9/11, he began to actively work to enhance the integration of Muslims into American society. He drew on the distinction between Islam and culture to distance diasporic Muslims from conditions in Muslim countries that incite violence:

> Many people in the west do not realise how oppressive some Muslim states are – both for men and for women. This is a cultural issue, not an Islamic one. I would rather live as a Muslim in the west than in most of the Muslim countries, because I think the way Muslims are allowed to live in the west is closer to the Muslim way. A lot of Muslim immigrants feel the same way, which is why they are here.
>
> (O'Sullivan, 2001)

He told his audiences that American ideals are consonant with Islamic ideals and, like Tariq Ramadan, drew parallels between the Qur'an and the Constitution (Yuskaev, 2010, pp. 188, 196), thereby asserting the compatibility between Islam and secularism because of the universal principles that both espouse. This is particularly striking because of the differences between Yusuf's and Ramadan's approaches to Islam in diaspora, with Yusuf incorporating more of the Sufi tradition into his teachings. Ramadan has been more focused on modernising Islamic scholarship through *ijtihad* (independent interpretation): 'we cannot rely on scholars of the text. We need to bring on board scholars of the *context* if we want to be serious about contemporary challenges' (Ramadan, 2010).

From a different angle, another American convert to Islam whose teaching has become increasingly popular among diasporic Muslim

youth, Umar Faruq Abd-Allah, has articulated concern about Muslim 'cultural phobia' – a tendency to see anything cultural as un-Islamic (Abd-Allah, 2013, p. 25). Instead of stressing that Islam is not a culture, he has emphasised that Islam is like a clear river, 'the waters of which reflect the bedrock (indigenous culture) over which they flow' (Abd-Allah, 2013, p. 10). Sympathetic with immigrants' concerns that their older cultural patterns have become irrelevant, he has argued for the sustained development of an American Muslim culture as the new foundation of Muslim community, to be achieved by educating first and second generations through 'authentic scholarship' rooted in the Islamic traditions and schools of law.[16]

The scholar Ebrahim Moosa has drawn on a similar image of Islam. Moosa has focused much of his scholarly research on the ways that the Islamic theologians Shah Waliullah (d. 1762) and al-Ghazali (d. 1111) sought to build bridges between theology and the cultures they inhabited. He has argued that according to Waliullah, the Prophetic revelations themselves were mediated through specific 'cultural maps' (Moosa, 2013). In a review of one of Ramadan's books, he wrote, 'one does not know what to think of his vociferous pronouncement that, "Islam is not a culture" '. Moosa has called Ramadan's articulations of Islam an example of 'designer fundamentalism', a Protestant form of Islam that urges Muslims to become autodidacts by directly interpreting Islam's core texts themselves. Quoting Ramadan's characterisation of Islam as 'a body of principles upon which are founded faith, spirituality, practice, and ethics', Moosa argues that the result is an 'idolatry of principles' (Moosa, 2006, p. 143; Ramadan, 2003) and that Ramadan's approach 'uncritically equates notions of universality in Muslim thought with Enlightenment universality' (Moosa, 2006, p. 143). I take this to mean that Moosa is sceptical of the very possibility of identifying culture-free universal norms. Moosa, positioned as a scholar in an American university, takes a stance closer to the anthropological understanding that all human practices are cultural.

Islam, secularism, and universals

Muslim youth who use the strategy of 'Islam is not a culture' are engaging in critique from within an Islamic rather than a secular framework. Arguing that Islam is not a culture is a reformist approach that, like other returns to fundamentals, throws open new possibilities for sources of religious authority as Muslims discard established sources of tradition and authority and turn to new leaders and new media for guidance.

It also generates profound disagreements about what the essentials of Islamic practice are. Many Muslims find it liberating to disentangle Islam and cultural traditions, taking an approach that creates a space for individual Muslims to exercise the freedom to interpret the Qur'an and its guidelines for ethical practice. When Islam takes the form of specific principles that have been derived from the Qur'an, and the primary source of an individual's moral compass and experience of God is the act of submission to God, then the individual has the moral authority and autonomy to be critical of anything that they come to believe is not consistent with Islam. They may claim universal status for practices that have culturally specific sources and denounce aspects of Muslim practice that others consider to be an essential element of Islam. This is a discursive process that closely parallels debates about secularism.

A number of scholars have recognised that secularism is not the end of history, the culminating achievement of modernity, but rather an array of diverse and complex normative-ideological state projects that come in multiple historical/cultural forms and yield complex relationships between the religious and the secular. José Casanova has considered how secularism functions as the 'taken-for-granted normal structure of modern reality', a *doxa* (Casanova, 2009, p. 1051), while Charles Taylor identified secularity as a historically specific structure of feeling – the phenomenological experience of a life-world that has a specific history shaped, not by science and rational proof, but by habits of thought and a restrained self rooted in Protestantism. By particularising secularity, he challenged the 'immanent frame' that assumes that secularity, and secularity alone, is based on reason and science (Taylor, 2007). Secularity, then, is a culture. Nevertheless, like George W. Bush, politicians and their publics have little difficulty arguing for universals that claim to rise above Western cultural particulars.

Scholars intimately familiar with the world of Islam such as Talal Asad and Saba Mahmood have challenged Taylor's Christian-centric universalism, in part by identifying analogous but significantly different strands within Islamic traditions (see Asad, 2003, p. 2; Mahmood, 2010, pp. 289–290). Nevertheless, Taylor has opened a space for seeing new options as something other than 'religions' narrowly defined in opposition to secularism, suggesting that these new forms are being articulated in ways that are compatible with secularism. In this rearticulation, Islam, too, need not be defined as incompatible with secularism. Many Muslims would emphatically claim that Islam is not only compatible with reason and science, but provides the foundation and inspiration for scientific inquiry.

If, in fact, we can identify universals that are not merely trivial, a possibility that legal theorist Richard Posner (2002) has questioned, the voices and perspectives of Muslims striving to adapt their practice of Islam to life in European and American secular societies should be taken seriously, at least as an emerging discourse that often throws into relief the cultural particularity of universals presumed by these societies, including the principle of secularism itself. When Muslims who stress that Islam is not a culture find equivalences between secular principles and their understanding of Islam, this correlation becomes the foundation for their claims that these secular/Islamic principles are culture-free and universally applicable, thereby building a Muslim public that is deeply embedded in American and European life.

Notes

1. Tariq Ramadan, grandson of the Egyptian founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, has played a considerable role in shaping current transnational discourse on the process of integration of Muslims into European societies. Having been barred from entering the United States to take up an academic position at the University of Notre Dame in 2004, he is currently Professor of Islamic Studies at Oxford.
2. The phrase existed in public discourse prior to Ramadan's use of the term, but Ramadan has made it central to his interpretive approach to Islam.
3. For an insightful discussion of American Muslim scholars' perspectives on the relationship between Islam and culture, see Hermansen 2009. Hermansen also contextualizes these debates by identifying classical Islamic scholarly strategies for managing local cultural practices.
4. Mahmood Mamdani (2004) has articulated the effects of this common view, which reinforces a characterisation of Muslim literalists as radically other. Nevertheless the distinction tends to recur even among scholars sensitive to the stigmatisation of Islam.
5. For related examples, see Ewing (2000); Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, and Van Antwerpen (2011); and Hurd (2012).
6. 'Secularism' has variously been defined as an ideology, parallel to other ideologies such as humanism and atheism, and as a state apparatus of legal constructs and institutions.
7. The concept of 'cultures' has since been recast in two important ways that disrupt the premise that cultures are wholes analogous to texts or organisms: by, first, including bodily practices and other implicit aspects of human activity that cannot be readily articulated as texts, and, second, focusing on dynamic cultural processes rather than on self-perpetuating bounded entities or static patterns. Most anthropologists have not given up on the concept of culture itself but now focus on culture as a process resulting in complex, ever-shifting 'webs of significance' (Geertz, 1973) that link people in different locales through processes of negotiation and conflict.
8. See 'Tariq Ramadan: Clash of Civilizations?' Available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-z0_3Y_Uhk, posted 11 July 2012.

9. Recently, Etienne Balibar has expressed discontent with anthropological reductions of religion to culture in the Geertzian tradition and has attempted to rearticulate a meaningful distinction between religion and culture (Balibar, 2013).
10. 'Hybridity' has been both used as an analytic term and critiqued in studies of the cultural adaptations of diasporic communities (see e.g. Ewing, 2006; Werbner and Modood, 1997).
11. Saba Mahmood (2005) has influentially analysed the women's piety movement in Egypt as an ethical practice, cogently arguing that these women are active agents who constitute themselves as religious subjects through acts of submission, which take the form of bodily practices such as covering and prayer that gradually become habitual.
12. She emphasised, though, that most women she knew had not experienced such pressure from their fathers, no doubt in response to the horrific stereotypes in the German media about the abuse of Turkish women by their fathers and brothers (see Ewing, 2008).
13. Accessed 18 October 2013.
14. The term 'Salafi' is generally used to refer to Sunni Muslims who aim to purify Islam by following the example of the earliest Muslim community, but exactly which approaches and who is to be included under this rubric have been a matter of considerable disagreement.
15. Yusuf is an American-born Muslim convert and preacher who became a liaison to the US government after 11 September 2001 and is quite popular with young Muslim audiences.
16. He wrote a PhD dissertation at an American university on the origins of Islamic Law and studied with 'traditional Islamic scholars' in the Middle East (see Nawawi Foundation n.d.).

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11
Hope, Margin, Example: The Kimbanguist Diaspora in Lisbon

Ramon Sarró

Towards an anthropology of diasporic expectation

Over the last decade, there has been an 'expectations turn' in anthropology. Anthropologists have produced a substantial body of literature on aspirations and hope (Crapanzano, 2003; Eggerman and Panter-Brick, 2010; Miyazaki, 2004); on uncertainty and 'waithood' (Honwana, 2013); and on futures (Appadurai, 2013; Cole, 2010; Cole and Durham, 2008; Piot, 2010; Temudo and Abrantes, 2015). This development seems in sharp contrast with the previous interest in the anthropology of memory, which tended to overemphasise the power of memory and of tradition to the detriment of creativity and invention (see Berliner, 2005 for a critical review). One of the arguments of this chapter is to suggest that we ought to find a balance, if not a synthesis, between studying the ways in which the past is used in people's search for exemplarity and studying the expectations generated by people's beliefs, education, and socialisation.

A focus on the future is not new, in fact, in the history of anthropology. Original cross-cultural insights on the importance of the future are to be found in the massive anthropological literature on religious movements produced in late colonial settings (millennarianism, messianism, cargo cults, prophetic rebellious moments). Anti-colonial case studies gave rise to very important, now considered 'classic', studies in the sociology of religion, such as *The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of 'Cargo' Cults in Melanesia* (Worsley, 1957), *The Religion of the Oppressed* (Lanternari, 1960), *Millennial Dreams in Action* (Thrupp, 1962), *Magic and the Millennium* (Wilson, 1973), and *Sociology of Hope* (Desroche, 1973). In its day, this innovative literature was very helpful in understanding the importance of hope for many individuals living in oppressed conditions and

in analysing it as a mechanism of resistance. But by the 1980s or 1990s, many had concluded that this literature referred to forms of religion that no longer existed, that charismatic movements based on millenarianism and messianic hopes were a feature of colonised societies, and that their study would not be applicable to postcolonial realities. This is not the case. In fact, by returning to the study of the rise of colonial prophets and agents who encouraged resistance through hope and messianism in colonial days, we may obtain a (historically and sociologically) grounded understanding of the living conditions of many diasporic postcolonial communities for whom hope is, still today, a very powerful resource. Although it is obvious that these communities are not living with a lack of rights or of voices comparable to the colonial situation that this classic literature scrutinised, it can be claimed that, at least in Portugal and certainly in the current economic crisis, the living conditions of many migrants are so precarious that notions of hope for a better future, as well as notions of return to Africa, can become powerful tools to endure suffering and to imagine possible solutions. Prophets promised better futures, and diasporas can reinforce these prophetic imaginations by combining them with territorial notions of homeland and exile (Sarró and Blanes, 2009). Many communities of African origin in Portugal live in the kind of 'diasporicity' described by Klimt and Lubkemann (2002), with attachment to both Africa and Portugal, and a mixture of aspirations relating to the two places. They can thus be considered as paradigmatic cases to revitalise the importance of hope, prophecy, and millenarian expectations and to link today's anthropology of diasporas with the Weberian preoccupations of the early authors who helped us to understand the proliferation of prophetic expectations in the colony.

Kimbanguism: Hope of the world

This discussion of religious prophetic movements and their futurist imagination is based on research conducted in Lisbon from 2006 on Kimbanguism, a religion born among the Bakongo people of Central Africa in 1921, when Simon Kimbangu, a deeply religious man educated at the Baptist mission of Wathen and often described in colonial sources (sometimes respectfully, sometimes scornfully) as a 'prophet', started to heal, to make prophecies, and – or so oral history claims – even to work miracles in Lower Congo, then part of Belgian Congo.[1] He became especially famous after allegedly having brought one dead woman to life on 6 April 1921. Accordingly, this is considered by members of the church

today as the official date of the start of his miraculous activities.[2] The fame of Kimbangu, healing and making miracles on top of the hill of N'Kamba, spread like bushfire throughout the Lower Congo regions. According to some accounts, thousands of people from the entire region of Lower Congo went every day to be healed by him (Mackay, 1985; Vellut, 2005, 2010). People made long pilgrimages, hoping to be healed, and delivering or destroying ritual objects linked to traditional cosmology, in a clear effort to abandon practices and start a fresh society anew, as 'absolute beginners', to borrow the felicitous title of MacInnes' novel about youths in London in the late 1950s (MacInnes, 1959). As soon as the movement started on 6 April, the Belgian government, under pressure not only from its local authorities but also from Catholic and Protestant missionaries, as well as local merchants who feared the movement might have a negative effect upon their activities, decided to ban it. Kimbangu was imprisoned in September 1921, after a two-month fierce search and persecution in the hills and forests around N'kamba. The Kimbanguist movement, however, continued after September 1921, clandestinely and under the cruellest persecution by the Belgian authorities (Diangienda, 1984; MacGaffey, 1983; Mélice, 2009, 2010). Anybody suspected of praying on Kimbangu's name or admitting the belief that Kimbangu was a spiritual figure was captured and sent either to prison or into forced labour in another province of the huge colony, often very far away from their original village.

After a long history of suffering and persecution, the Kimbanguist church was finally recognised by the Belgian State in 1959 (just one year before Independence), and it became one of the two major religious institutions in independent Congo (or, as it would later be known, Zaire, today Democratic Republic of Congo) under Mobutu's reign in the 1960s. Today, it still is one of the major churches in the DRC, as well as a huge international institution. Its members often assert that the total number of Kimbanguists worldwide is around 17 million individuals, but a complete census has not yet been undertaken. At the moment it would be very difficult to achieve objectivity, owing to an internal schism in the church which makes it very difficult to establish precise numbers and memberships (for the schism, see Apo Salimba, 2013; Mélice, 2011; Sarró, Blanes, and Viegas, 2008).

The slogan of the church is 'Kimbanguism: Hope of the World', and indeed its theology is very much based on messianic hope (Sarró and Mélice, 2010; Sarró and Santos, 2011), with a political theology centred on the restoration of the kingdom (identified both with the kingdom of God and with the kingdom of Kongo) around the holy city of

N'kamba (also known as N'Kamba-New Jerusalem). N'kamba was Simon Kimbangu's birthplace and is today the spiritual and administrative centre, as well as the most important pilgrimage site, of the Kimbanguist church. It offers a paradigmatic case for the study of political theology and an ideal case for the making of theoretical comparisons with Israel and other messianic-oriented religious communities based on notions of suffering and the restoration of a divine political Kingdom.

In 1960, Kimbangu's body was transferred from Lubumbashi (Elisabethville, in colonial days), where he had died nine years earlier, to his natal village of N'kamba, where a mausoleum was built. In the late 1960s, the Kimbanguist Church was inducted into the Ecumenical Council of Christian Churches, and N'kamba was officially declared the Church's central headquarters. It would be impossible to summarise, in the space of this chapter, the current configuration and theology of the church (see Mélice, 2011). But it is important to emphasise that the suffering of past Kimbanguists is very present in the liturgy and in the symbolism of the church. Thus, for example, the number of seats of the main temple in N'kamba is said to be 37,000, which equals the number of Congolese families who in colonial times suffered forced displacement and were taken away from their homes by the colonial authorities in a futile effort to put an end to the movement. Today, in each Sunday service, the deported people and/or their descendants have to stand up at a certain point of the worship, while the brass band plays, and are thus duly acknowledged and saluted as living witnesses of the pain endured by Kimbanguists in colonial times.

From its beginnings in the 1920s, but especially through the 1960s and early 1970s (when Congo, later Zaire, was an independent country, but Angola was still a colony), the movement echoed among the Kikongo-speaking population of Northern Angola, despite the most brutal suppression by the Portuguese colonial administration. Under Portuguese rule, the Kimbanguists, perceived as a subversive force linked to illegal political movements, suffered inhuman persecutions. These have not yet been fully documented or investigated, but they are alive in people's memories. Many Kimbanguists disappeared, never to be seen again, and plausible rumours of mass graves where the missing ones are buried abound in the Provinces of Uige and Zaire in Northern Angola.[3] The church was finally recognised by the Portuguese Junta in November 1974, after the Carnations Revolution in the metropolis (25 April 1974), but prior to Angola's fully fledged independence (11 November 1975).[4] Angolan independence meant some freedom, but the first regime of Angola was Marxist oriented and religion was not accepted in the public

sphere. Contrary to their expectations, Kimbanguists thus continued to suffer in Angola in the late 1970s and in the 1980s (Sarró and Blanes, 2009; Sarró, Blanes and Viegas, 2008).

Portugal: The reproduction of an ethos of marginality

From Angola, the movement reached Portugal in 1983 through the arrival of a woman, Fatima Cruz, and a man, Papa Dias. The fact that the Portuguese government in November 1974 had recognised the church in a (then) Portuguese territory helped them to install themselves in the metropolis itself nine years later as a fully legalised Portuguese institution. This created a historical inversion, making Kimbanguism a legalised institution in Portugal while being persecuted by the Marxist MPLA government in independent Angola. Despite the legalisation, there was little the two could do on their own. Fatima Cruz, a half Angolan-half Portuguese woman, was not a Kimbanguist, though her Angolan mother was an important member of the Church in Kinshasa. Fatima was a Tokoist (a Christian church that in many respects mirrored Kimbnaguism; see Blanes, 2014), but, being the daughter of an important Kimbanguist woman, the headquarters of Kimbanguism in Zaire had invested her with the administrative authority to open a Kimbanguist church in Lisbon. Papa Dias was a Kimbanguist, but he was on his own and there was little he could do to establish a church. Besides, he had to abandon Portugal in the mid-1980s.

It was in 1986–1988 that other Kimbanguist migrants (including Fatima's mother, who became a renowned spiritual healer among migrants), and especially Papa Nzau, today the head of the church, arrived in Lisbon and, thanks to the previous efforts of Fatima and Papa Dias, could finally create something of a religious community, although both Fatima and Papa Dias had disappeared from the scene by then (Dias left Portugal; Fatima, not being a Kimbanguist, gave up attending meetings and lost interest altogether; her mother died in Portugal a few years after her arrival). At the beginning, the community was composed of a tiny group of individuals living in a shanty town in the neighbourhood of Prior Velho, Council of Loures (Greater Lisbon). They were all single men, with the exception of one who was married to a Catholic woman (who later converted to Kimbanguism). Little by little, however, some women arrived, and by the mid-1990s there were a solid group of couples, and soon some children too.

The shanty towns of Prior Velho were dismantled later, as a consequence of the PER (*Programa Especial de Realojamento*, special programme

of rehousing), a programme supported by EU policies and monies that allowed for the creation of the many housing projects (*bairros sociais*, 'social quarters') existing today, such as Quinta da Fonte, in Loures, a *bairro* that we shall revisit below. Whereas other shanty towns could wait until the 2000s, those of Prior Velho, situated by the river Tagus, needed to be dismantled as a matter of urgency, as most of them were on the very spot where the construction of a massive bridge (the Vasco de Gama, the longest bridge in Europe) was to start in 1995. The 17 km-long bridge was finished in 1998, just in time for it to be used in the international fair EXPO'98, celebrated in Lisbon. Some of my Kimbanguist interviewees participated in the building of the bridge, together with many more African and other immigrants. In 2008, I attended an official celebration in Sacavém, in the council of Loures, to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the bridge's construction. That day, I learned that four African people working in its construction had died as a consequence of fatal accidents during the building of the bridge. Some of those I met in the celebration were now jobless and in despair (one of them, a man from Guinea-Bissau, asked me if I could hire him to do whatever I might need him for).

The three Kimbanguist men with whom I attended the event, who were also jobless (in fact the three of them have now returned to Angola in search of work), expressed a very explicit mixture of feelings. They were proud of having participated in the making of such an important Portuguese symbol, but they could also remember the suffering of the works, and the dismantling of their neighbourhoods and homes. In all the interviews, it is evident that the dismantlement of Prior Velho was a very painful event for Kimbanguists, threatening to leave many homeless. Even if living conditions were difficult in those Prior Velho years (1987–1995), Kimbanguists had found there the two things they valued the most as a religious group: a place to pray together (a temple, of sorts, even if it was a tin hut) and, most importantly, *kintuadi*.

Kintuadi is a Kikongo word meaning something like 'union' or 'community', very often used in Biblical translations (it is the word used in the Bible in Kikongo to translate the sense of union through common prayer in Acts 1:14). Kimbanguists normally project their own *kintuadi* to the past, creating the nostalgic effect that the perfect sense of unity existed in earlier days, especially in colonial times. Although this seems contradictory, as it was also in those days that the movement was suffering the most brutal attacks from colonisers, suffering together can create a powerful feeling of community. In *The Rebel* (1951), French philosopher Albert Camus presented co-suffering as a trigger of human

solidarity, and indeed 'solidarity' would be a very good translation of *kintuadi*, as my Kikongo-speaking interlocutors confirm.

Kimbanguists worldwide seem to agree that if there was a particular moment in which all Kimbanguists lived in the perfect harmony of *kintuadi*, it was in 1956. They refer to that moment and to the emotions attached to its memory as *bolingo 56* (*bolingo* means 'love' in Lingala, the *lingua franca* of much of Congolese territory and especially of Kinshasa). According to many Kimbanguists I have interviewed in Europe (not only in Portugal but also in the Netherlands, in France, in Belgium, and in the United Kingdom) and in Africa, the Kimbanguist community of Portugal offers an almost perfect example of what *kintuadi* should be like. Portuguese Kimbanguists are very proud of this appreciation. Yet they clarify that even in Portugal the real *kintuadi* was back in the days when they were living together and praying together in the shanty town of Prior Velho, on the margins of Lisbon (itself the capital of a rather marginal little country in Europe, in many aspects an in-between place between Africa and the West).

In those days, they were surrounded by misery, poverty, and violence – as they were in the very days when the movement started, in the hills of N'Kamba, when people were suffering the hard rule of Belgian colonialism, the unfair treatment of administrators, and, probably, the effects of the 1918–1920 pandemic flu (known as the 'Spanish flu'), which hit Congolese regions very badly. This comparison of marginalities underpins my argument. Indeed, in 2009, in an interview with the then national pastor of the Kimbanguist church in Portugal, I was told that 'God always chooses the margins'. The pastor went on to compare the regions of Roman Palestine where Jesus was born to the village of N'kamba where Kimbangu was born, and both of them to Prior Velho and to the *bairro* of Quinta da Fonte. The same comparison emerged in a very recent interview I conducted together with Brazilian archaeologist Bruno Pastre, who was visiting Portugal as part of his research on Kongo history. 'In those days', the current national pastor explained to us, referring to Roman times, 'people said "nothing good can ever come out of Nazareth". Likewise, people later said "nothing good will ever come out of N'Kamba", and today they say "nothing good can ever come out of Quinta da Fonte".'

Between 1995 and 1998, the small group of Portuguese Kimbanguists entered a particularly dark period, being scattered in several places, struggling to get their own homes and especially their own praying space. But fortune did not abandon them. Father Valentim, a Catholic priest known for his social activism among the poorest strata of

migrants, liked them and allowed them to pray in his own church every Sunday after the Catholic mass had finished. This parish is also located in Prior Velho, but not in the shanty towns that were to be dismantled. Meanwhile, Kimbanguists never ceased to try to negotiate with the local authorities in Loures. Things started to change in the early 2000s, probably due, some interviewees say, to the fact that local elections meant the end of the Communist Party rule in Loures. The new local government, some of whose members already knew the Kimbanguist church from a decade before in the shanty town, proved ready to help them. A new project, the *bairro social* of Quinta da Fonte, was being built in Loures, and many Kimbanguists, together with many other people of Prior Velho, were to be housed there, following a census that, many of my interviewees claim, was rushed and poorly conducted, leaving many people unfairly homeless.

However, things turned out quite well in the end. Not only did many Kimbanguists get a flat in Quinta da Fonte, but the Kimbanguists were also leased a place to pray (although the official description was a place to conduct community services). This is a huge space on the ground floor of a council house. So far, they are the only Kimbanguist parish in Europe who do not have to rent a place every Sunday for their meeting. Besides, this arrangement means they can meet whenever they want to, not only on Sundays. They use the place at least three times a week for religious purposes (and sometimes for other events, too). It is a proper temple and a meeting place, and it allows them to enjoy religious activity in a much more fulfilling and sustained way than that lived by other European Kimbanguist parishes.

According to several interviews I have been conducting with Kimbanguists since 2006, what made this almost miraculous offer from the council possible was, first and foremost, God's will. A second factor was the tenacity (but also diplomacy) of the Kimbanguists in maintaining a steady and peaceful conversation with the local authorities over the years, even if, deep inside themselves, they were at points very angry at how the relocation process had been taking place. Third, and very significantly, they insist upon the *exemplary* behaviour they had been manifesting since the early 1990s, when they were in the shanty town of Prior Velho. It was this exemplary behaviour, they also claim, that later impressed Father Valentim and prompted him to let them pray in his Catholic church.

But if things were already in 2000 quite a 'success story' for such a small group of Congolese and Angolan migrants, they were going to be even more successful in years to come. In 2008, the Kimbanguists of

Lisbon were invited to participate in a national pilot programme called 'Local Security Contract'. In this programme, steered by the Minister of Internal Administration, several institutions in Loures were invited to participate in peace-conducive activities. Loures was chosen precisely because many of its *bairros sociais* and shanty towns (some of which still existed up to 2008) were particularly violent places. The Kimbanguists were invited to join the programme because in 2008 they had been playing a central role in mediating in a violent drug-related conflict involving different groups (mostly Roma, or 'Ciganos', as they are called in Portuguese, and Cape Verdians), which lasted almost two months between July and September 2008. The events of that summer were very violent, and several deaths occurred. Quinta da Fonte became such a violent place that not even the police could stop the shooting and killings. One day, some daring journalists entered the *bairro* to shoot some images for TV. It was a Sunday morning. Little did they expect to find a group of religious people going to pray, business as usual. The surprised journalists asked permission to enter into the temple, and filmed inside. A few days later, after two months of violence, the news trickling from Quinta da Fonte into the national press and TV was not about murder and violence but about a group of people dressed in green and white who kept praying and playing in a brass band despite what was happening all around them. In fact, sometime before they came to national attention, the Kimbanguists had organised a massive march in the streets of Quinta da Fonte to promote peace.

The local authorities of Loures were as impressed as anybody else in the country by the Kimbanguists in Quinta da Fonte, though many of them had already known about the group since the early 1990s. 'Yes, they knew us already', confirms one of my interviewees in a recent group discussion in August 2014, 'because back in the days in the shanty-town we used to play the brass band a lot, and people know that when we were playing in the streets there was no disorder. All the kids wanted to come and march with us, and we generated a sense of order'. Another man in the discussion jumped in: 'we also gave food to the kids; the Loures authorities knew about it, they respected us a lot'. It is likely that as soon as Loures started to look for partners for the Local Security Contract, some of those in the council would have had the Kimbanguists in mind. But the publicity for the church in September 2008 certainly triggered the final invitation by the Civil Governor of Greater Lisbon in October 2008. In practice, it meant that for three years the Kimbanguists became a very important agent in the creation of a conflict-free atmosphere in the entire Loures council.

Undoubtedly, the most important event celebrated by Kimbanguists as part of the Local Security Contract was Christmas 2009 (Sarró and Mélice, 2010). Christmas, for Kimbanguists, happens on 25 May, not 25 December. In May 2009 (and then again, though with a lower profile, in May 2010 and May 2011), supported by local and national authorities, the Kimbanguists in Lisbon celebrated Christmas in Portugal. N'Kamba sent instructions to all the parishes in Europe to gather in Lisbon, and in principle even the head of the Church, Simon Kimbangu Kiangiani (direct grandson of the founder, Simon Kimbangu), was expected to fly from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Lisbon, although in the end he did not. His sister, who lives in France, however, did come, and the entire meeting, in which several politicians intervened, was a massive success. More than a thousand non-Portuguese Kimbanguists came from different parishes in Europe, and at least two men from Africa (one from the DRC and one from Angola) were also present. It was a historical and geographical inscription, the coming of age of an African church on European territory.

'Good wine needs no bush': On the doctrine of the exemplary margin

The events of 2009 indicated that the margins where Kimbanguists live could become like an amplifier of the signal sent by the historical administrative centre. Whether a person or a temple, the 'centre' of a religious universe radiates exemplarity, as Weberians like Clifford Geertz (1980) have very well argued.[5] But if the social conditions for the emergence of a movement are those of political, economic, or geographical marginality, and if the movement is based on such a strong ethos of marginality as Kimbanguism is (aiding the poor, praying for those in spiritual and material need, healing the sick), the likelihood is that new conditions of marginality will reproduce better the original religious culture than its now transformed centre. No matter how spiritually important it may be, N'kamba is no longer a marginal, out-of-the-way place in the world, as it was in 1921. Today, one can drive to N'kamba. The road will soon be entirely paved. In fact, there is talk of an international airport in N'Kamba in the not-too-distant future (since September 2014 there has been a small national one), and today there is electricity almost 24 hours a day. Spiritually speaking, N'kamba renewed humanity in 1921 by being Simon Kimbangu's birthplace as well as the place where he started his religious activity, but if Kimbanguism is to make a spiritual difference in the world of today, it is likely to find

something similar to the original social setting in its margins rather than in its centre. In 2009, 2010, and 2011, the Kimbanguists inscribed themselves in Europe through the agency of a very marginal parish in a very marginal country, where the social conditions of hope were similar to those of previous historical places. The comparison insisted upon by the national pastors in Portugal (Nazareth, N'kamba, Quinta da Fonte) is very meaningful. The three places have been economic, social, and geographic marginal places, but – not coincidentally – they have also been sources of hope, renewal, and transformation.

Kimbanguists in 2008 reached notoriety by being exemplary. It was their behaviour that caught people's attention, including the attention of the journalists on that Sunday in September 2008. This exemplarity is a conscious element carefully cultivated by Kimbanguists. Unlike other religious groups who spread through active, sometimes described as 'aggressive', proselytising techniques, Kimbanguists are very careful about the ways in which they approach other people with other beliefs. They are explicitly taught to be very respectful of other people's religious culture. In Lisbon, they do a lot of pastoral activity addressed at people belonging to other religions. They pray in houses of distressed people, they visit sick neighbours, and they send pictures to N'Kamba of people in spiritual need irrespective of their religion. They undertake these actions with the hope that the person who is being helped will convert, but they know that this, at least in Europe, rarely occurs. They admit that this lack of conversion is frustrating. Yet, they put up with it, as one more token of the suffering they have to sustain in their daily religious being.

Kimbanguists stress how *hard* being a Kimbanguist is. They have a strict code of behaviour, starting with an impeccable bodily attitude that is moulded from an early age. As they enter adolescence, children adopt their elders' bodily attitudes, marching solemnly for hours and hours at the end of the worship, as elders do. Kimbanguism forbids dancing, but the glory of God and their happiness in it is expressed by engaging in very long marches (in African parishes, they can march for four or five hours at the end of a Sunday meeting; in Europe, marches are a bit shorter). Marching takes place inside their temples, while their brass band is playing. A good Kimbanguist cannot even sleep or take a bath totally naked, and they have to pray several times a day, including twice in the small hours, a demand many acknowledge that they cannot fulfil.

But the hardest challenge is ethical. As Kimbanguists repeatedly emphasise, not everybody is quite ready to love their enemy. And yet, this is what a Kimbanguist is taught to do: love and forgive.

Kimbanguists are convinced that this stance is what kept them going despite their suffering in colonial days. Instead of taking to armed conflict, as other colonised subjects did (in despair, as a Kimbanguist once put it), they prayed and asked God to forgive the colonisers. According to many of them, it was because more and more people followed their example and joined in a conscientious resistance (resistance through prayer, rather than through violence) that the entire country became independent. Prayer and forgiveness became 'weapons of the weak', to use Scott's (1985) famous phrase. If nations are narrations (Bhabha, 1990), then according to the Kimbanguist narration of the Congolese nation it was not the guns of the rebellious groups but the prayers of the Kimbanguists in the depths of the Congolese bush, clandestinely forgiving those who were committing atrocities against their human fellows, that eventually made it possible for the country to become independent.[6]

The Kimbanguist ethos is accompanied by a contentment and calm outlook towards the world. When in 2008–2010 I interviewed authorities of both Loures and national governments in my ethnographic effort to understand why they were allowing such major Kimbanguist events to take place in the streets of Lisbon, it became apparent that many of my interviewees felt an admiration for Kimbanguists that they would never express towards any other religious group. The fact that the Minister of Internal Administration himself came to the Christmas celebration on 25 May (even against the rules, as the government should not be supporting any particular religious group) can only be understood if we take into account the deep imprint that the Kimbanguists had left in the long negotiations between the Church and the Minister's team.

Kimbanguists are well aware that their ethos gives rise to admiration, and they know that ever since the early 1990s they have won the heartfelt sympathies of the local authorities of Loures, without which they would not have been offered a temple in Quinta da Fonte, nor invited to participate in a Local Security Contract. Their hope is that by acting in their particular way other people will be interested in them. They dislike the notion of 'mission' because of its colonial connotations, although they are convinced that their role is to convert the entire world. But this conversion has to be produced 'bottom up' and not imposed from above. People have to observe them, analyse them, and convince themselves that there is something special about Kimbanguism. 'Good wine needs no bush' is a phrase they very commonly use (in French).[7] Its fame spreads by word of mouth. An idiom several of my interlocutors have used in conversation is that of 'contamination'. This apparently

negative concept is used with a positive connotation. People who are 'contaminated' by Kimbanguists are their friends, neighbours, and spiritual clients for whom they have prayed. Contamination is a first step towards conversion, but does not necessarily lead to that outcome. Those who will finally convert are those for whom the magnetism becomes so powerful that they cannot but help initiate a process of external and inner transformation, becoming the example they are following.

The diasporic existence: Bringing memory back in

In the summer of 2014, I held a discussion with some members of the Kimbanguist church in Lisbon, talking, among other things linked to their history, about their notions of 'hope' and eschatological expectation. Because comparisons between Jewish history and Kimbanguist history is a common topic of discussion and scholarship within the church, I cited the words of Jewish scholar Emil Fackenheim: 'If you ask yourself just one simple question, "How come Jews are still around after thousands of years, mostly exiled?" there is only one answer, and the answer is *hope*' (Fackenheim, 1970). They agreed that the connection between hope and survival in difficult conditions (as the ones they experience in today's Portugal) is well captured in the phrase I cited. Yet, Papa Rolo, an intelligent young Angolan man, made a very astute qualification: 'Jews in the diaspora had something else apart from hope. They also had the memory of their ancient past (*tempos antigos*). That was also very important in helping them keep going'. This comment by Papa Rolo qualifies Fackenheim's 'only one answer'. The answer is one ('hope'), but it is, actually, double, because hope is like one side of a coin that has its obverse: memory.

   The qualifying comment by Papa Rolo struck me and triggered connections between data and two lines of reflection: one ethnographic and the other epistemological. Ethnographically speaking, I realised how important it is to highlight that, for Kimbanguists, much as for any other African people whose identity is rooted in pre-colonial polities (and particularly in such prestigious ones as the Kingdom of Kongo), the past becomes a very powerful resource of dignity and pride, and a powerful model of society. Having belonged to the Kingdom of Kongo (which was the case of Papa Rolo's ancestors and most of today's members of the Church) is not only dignifying but also offers a model through which to nurture hope. A Kikongo saying has it that 'the land is broken, but it will be restored again', and, indeed, the many prophetic movements that the

Kikongo-speaking regions have known since at least the seventeenth century, of which Kimbanguism is but only one, have all mobilised images of the restored kingdom in one way or another. As with Judaism, whether the restoration is territorial and political or rather mystical and eschatological depends on the movement. Sometimes even within one single movement one finds different interpretations. In their dreams of restoration, some Kimbanguists are more territorialist (some even fighting for a politically autonomous polity around N'kamba) than their more spiritually oriented sister or brother. For both, however, the future is the restoration of a spiritual unity that Africans have lost owing to the slave trade, colonialism, postcolonial politics, and the lack of a true religiosity.

Epistemologically, I realised a potential pitfall of the developing anthropology of hope. Epistemological ruptures should perhaps be much more dialectical than the abrupt break we appear to be making with our renewed fascination for expectation, no matter how welcome this may be. If we focus too much on how people imagine the future, we may miss a fundamental aspect about how that imagination of the future works. No matter how creative some individuals may be, imagination is not built out of nothing. One needs images, ideas, experiences, 'models of', in order to build new ideas and 'models for'. Images of the future must be built upon images of the past. The Kimbanguists constitute a very hopeful diaspora because they have a very powerful reservoir of past images and memories (whether real, imaginary, or exaggerated) about the Kingdom of Kongo, from which they feel exiled but to which they shall return. For a fruitful anthropology of hope, we should not forget what the anthropology of memory taught us in the 1990s; otherwise we will not understand the source of the Kimbanguists' energy to present themselves as 'the hope of the world'.

Hope and responsibility: Steps towards a future

Ernst Bloch, the philosopher of hope, was criticised by some Marxist and existentialist philosophers who accused him of not realising that hope is 'false consciousness', a prolongation of suffering (as Nietzsche famously defined it), a mere waiting-as-wishful-thinking. Hope is, to many existentialist philosophers writing after such atrocious events as Auschwitz and Hiroshima, a meaningless waiting for a non-coming Godot, a desperate self-deception. Paradoxically, the same tragic condition and reflection on inhuman events that led to disenchantment and despair in some also led to the rise of the so-called 'hope movement' in

Christian theology in the 1960s (Pieper, Moltmann, Tillich, etc.). As a collective representation, religious hope is normally a learning to live the present, not a learning to wait for a distant future that will magically materialise. The essence of hope for Bloch is the *noch nicht* ('not yet'); the essence of Messianism is not the future, but the 'time that remains', as Agamben (2005) has argued, developing Taubes' work on the political theology of Paul (Taubes, 2004 [1995]). The poetry of Mahmoud Darwish, for instance, is oriented towards helping young Palestinians to endure their present ('cultivating hope', as one of his poems has it) rather than engaging in terrorist acts of martyrdom. That would rather be, in Darwish's own words, the work of 'despair' and not the result of any religious eschatological belief.

The eschatological beliefs of my Kimbanguist interlocutors in the diaspora are helping them to live the present and behave as exemplary neighbours in European cities (as opposed to being tempted by crime, drugs, or simply despair and depression). They are also 'cultivating hope', learning to live, as Catholic theology has it, between the sins against hope: the sin of *acedia* (sheer apathic waiting) on one hand and those of *praesumptio* and *desperatio* (trying to provoke the immediate advent of the kingdom against God's long-term plans) on the other (Moltmann, 2010 [1965], p. 29). The role of priests in Kimbanguist communities is to warn against these two extremes and to help people hope without despair and with patient respect for God's schedule.

Hope is, to say the least, ambivalent (Crapanzano, 2003). It can lead to strength; it can lead to non-action and to sheer waiting. But it is the ambivalence that turns hope into such a good thing to think with. Whereas for some hope is 'false consciousness', for others the person without hope risks passivity and the acceptance of whatever injustices might be inflicted upon them, unable to acquire the will to bring about change. Of all the criticisms of the philosophers of hope, maybe the one addressed by Hans Jonas against Bloch is the one that could be used by anthropologists as a fruitful new avenue of research. To Bloch, whose *The Principle of Hope* (1959) put hope at the root of social movements, Jonas (1979) answered with a principle of 'responsibility', arguing that one cannot leave the making of the future to 'hope' only, but to the making of responsible subjects. This call should be taken as a powerful invitation by anthropologists of religion. We have to enquire how notions of a responsible subject are created and socially transmitted and the extent to which the individual is perceived to be the agent of his or her own destiny, despite beliefs in destiny and fate. We have to enquire how the individual and the community consider themselves

answerable for the general well-being of their social and natural environment and how important religion is in this consideration. If we follow these Jonasian invitations, we will probably find that 'hope' is just one principle, but that it cannot be easily isolated, even for philosophical scrutiny, lest we run the risk of presenting the Kimbanguists as blind fatalists. In this chapter, I have related hope to the twin notions of marginality and exemplarity, because these three categories emerge in an explicit form in Kimbanguist conversation, and because putting the three together may help us understand the epistemic condition of a Kimbanguist theology of hope, which sustains their life in diaspora.

Notes

1. Why Kimbagu was considered a 'prophet' (almost always within quotation marks in colonial sources) and whether he can be, sociologically or theologically, considered a prophet (without the quotation marks) is a debate within the Kimbanguist church itself. Today, in any case, Kimbanguists say Kimbangu was the incarnation of the Holy Ghost (Kayongo, 2005); whether he can be considered a prophet or not is becoming a less significant discussion.
2. After more than two decades of almost total invisibility, the literature on Kimbanguism (and its diaspora) produced by social scientists experienced a fresh impetus with the new millennium. See, among other works cited in this chapter, the works of Garbin (2010, 2012); Gampiot (2008, 2010); Mélice (2009, 2010, 2011); Poll (2008); and, especially, the huge number of contributions in the two-volume conference proceedings edited by M'Bokolo and Savakinu (2014).
3. 'Zaire' is the name of a northern Angolan province, not to be confused with the name of the Democratic Republic of Congo between 1971 and 1997, which was also 'Zaire'.
4. According to interviewees, the recognition of the Kimbanguist Church was granted by Spinola, the General who took up the temporary presidency of Portugal after the 1975 Revolution. Spinola was a declared anti-communist, and there is room to suspect that granting official status to religious institutions in Angola was part of a strategy to counterbalance the massive popularity of the Soviet and Cuban-supported MPLA, the Party that by 1974 had the upper hand in the anti-colonial struggle, and the one that, indeed, declared independence a year later. A few years later, a civil war would start between MPLA and other parties (UNITA and FNLA).
5. Exemplarity has preoccupied anthropologists of religion since the days of Max Weber's work on prophets. But it is today a topic of renewed theoretical interest, especially in the work of anthropologists of ethics, and most particularly that of Joel Robbins (2013, 2015). Under the twin influence of philosophers Max Scheler and Alessandro Ferrara (2008), Robbins has been exploring exemplarity as generative of social value.
6. This ideal-type opposition between prayer and arms is, however, a matter of contention in the postcolony. Many people who took to arms insist that their

country (whether DRC, Angola, or any other) became independent thanks to *their* brave actions, not to the prayers of the Kimbanguists. The truth is probably somewhere in the middle, and in fact there were many more negotiations between arms and prayer than is normally accepted by the Kimbanguist official narrative. Both from oral narratives in Northern Angola and from archival data it becomes apparent that many Kimbanguists became brave fighters too, and that many soldiers sung Kimbanguist hymns to empower themselves even if they were not Kimbanguist.

7. While in English the old phrase 'good wine needs no bush' is becoming obsolete (today most English speakers would rather say 'good wine needs no marketing' or 'no publicity'), its French equivalent, *à bon vin il ne faut point de bouchon*, is still relatively common among French speakers.

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12

Green Books, Blue Books, and Buddhism as Symbols of Belonging in the Tibetan Diaspora: Towards an Anthropology of Fictive Citizenship

Abraham Zablocki

Introduction

The past 60 years have witnessed two remarkable reversals of fortune for Tibetans and their religion. First, in 1951, China 'liberated' Tibet; in the years since, the Chinese state has forcefully sought to incorporate Tibetans into the broader Chinese polity, and this has entailed the widespread evisceration or destruction of the religious and political institutions of 'old' Tibet. In the years that followed the Dalai Lama's 1959 escape to India, about 150,000 Tibetans fled into an uncertain South Asian exile, while the millions that remained behind suffered the privations of the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, and powerful economic and political pressures to assimilate to the linguistic, cultural, and moral norms of Chinese society. Few who watched these events unfold doubted that the very survival of Tibet's unique identity was at stake. Indeed, in the years that have followed, despite broad international sympathy for the Tibetans' plight, the Chinese state has largely succeeded in consolidating its control over Tibet.

Yet, while the exiles' goal of an independent Tibetan state remains seemingly elusive, the last few decades have witnessed a second remarkable reversal of fortune: a dramatic global upsurge in fascination with, and sympathy for, Tibetans and their political struggle, their cultural forms, and, especially, their religion. This upsurge has opened up new arenas for the development and expression of Tibetan cultural vitality,

as witnessed by the dramatic global expansion of Tibetan religious culture. It has also transformed Tibetan Buddhism, as new non-Tibetan participants have played important new roles in the religion. Thus, if the events of the mid-twentieth century seemed to threaten the very disappearance of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism, the onset of the twenty-first century finds both Tibetan Buddhism and Tibet itself (or at least a kind of 'Tibet-as-signifier') circulating widely on the global stage. This situation has resulted in the construction of a globalised 'Tibet' that is rooted in loss: Tibetans' loss of their physical homeland and non-Tibetans' loss of an imagined land. Thus, while Tibetans grapple with the displacement and deterritorialisation of exile, struggling to solve the socio-economic and political challenges of their new places, non-Tibetans seek new ways to recreate their version of Tibet, by participating in a Tibetan culture and religion that is, at least partially, the projection of their own desires (Zablocki, forthcoming).

This chapter explores the meaning of citizenship as a symbolic and administrative category of belonging for Tibetan exiles and their international supporters. In particular, I investigate the deployment of strategies for administering citizenship in a social context where the nation state lacks basic elements of governmental power, such as a police force, the ability to control borders, or the ability to enforce the payment of taxes. What does 'citizenship' mean in a context where the state exists only in provisional form? How does the Tibetan government-in-exile use citizenship, in a symbolic sense, to sustain a feeling of nationalist belonging among the members of the Tibetan diaspora? And how does citizenship function, in an administrative sense, for diasporic Tibetans, as they seek to negotiate the complex social spaces of exile? This chapter investigates the Tibetan government-in-exile's use of a created form of administrative paperwork – the Green Book – for documenting participation in the Tibetan polity, in order to understand how it seeks to instil a sense of citizenship among its people.

Further, by analysing a second form of symbolic belonging – the so-called Blue Book – I investigate the ways in which non-Tibetans are invited to participate in the symbolic capital associated with the Tibetan political movement and Tibetan Buddhism. While the Blue Book does not constitute a citizenship document in quite the way that the Green Book does, it nevertheless explicitly draws upon the symbolism of such documents in order to foster a sense of belonging for non-Tibetan allies of the Tibetan diaspora. This sense of belonging is further reinforced for many of the global supporters of Tibetan issues by the growing

popularity of new transnational forms of Tibetan religion. Thus, the Blue Book can be seen as a concrete symbolic manifestation of the participation of non-Tibetans in the Tibetan exile polity and in Tibetan Buddhism. Building upon anthropological ideas of fictive kinship, I refer to this mode of constructed belonging as fictive citizenship. An analysis of these two forms of constructed citizenship – the Green Book and the Blue Book – leads to new ways of understanding Tibetan exile efforts to build and sustain nationalist sentiment in diaspora.

Citizenship in the Tibetan diaspora

One of the fundamental challenges facing Tibetan exiles in their South Asian diaspora is the need to establish a strong sense of national identity despite the loss of territory. This challenge would already be difficult enough, given that there are only roughly 150,000 Tibetan refugees, surrounded by over one billion Indians and Nepalis, and given that the Tibetan communities are spread across the subcontinent. But it is further compounded by the historical lack of a strong sense of central government or national identity in pre-modern Tibet. Prior to the Chinese takeover, most Tibetans were likely to be more strongly invested in identities having to do with region or sect than they were with the Tibetan state. Moreover, Tibetan culture is marked by a strong sense of individual autonomy, which further increases the likelihood that individual Tibetans will often pursue life courses that suit their circumstances, even if this means parting from communal or familial ties.

This tension may be explored by examining the construction of Tibetan citizenship from two perspectives: the nexus between citizenship understood as a kind of identity, or emotional and psychological form of self-definition, and citizenship as a bureaucratic and administrative category. With regard to the former, citizenship as identity, the claim here is that a crucial aspect of citizenship is how we see ourselves. This aspect of citizenship takes shape in our lived experience through, for example, the emotional connection to symbols, such as a flag or certain places. In this sense, it is closely linked to nostalgia, on the one hand, and nationalism, on the other. This aspect of citizenship-as-identity has been apparent throughout the history of the Tibetan diaspora. It is striking how determined most exile Tibetans are to emphasise their sense of themselves as Tibetans, though of course not surprising, given their collective sense of national loss. Frequently, this affective position is articulated through expressions of reverence for the

Dalai Lama as their leader or through expressions of nostalgia for the lost homeland (Castles and Davidson, 2000).

On the other hand, citizenship also operates as a bureaucratic category. From this perspective, citizenship is less about how individuals experience their own sense of identity, and more about the ways in which states categorise the bodies that pass across their borders. This aspect of citizenship takes shape through bureaucratic procedures, but, crucially for my discussion here, is manifested in talismanic bits of paper. The consideration of this paperwork and its symbolic potencies that follow might be characterised as an anthropology of paperwork (Sadiq, 2009).

Yet, for members of the Tibetan diaspora, both of these categories are problematic. Citizenship as a form of identity, or a mode of belonging, refers exiled Tibetans to a place that many of them have never seen, and to the cultural norms of pre-modern Tibet that have been dramatically transformed inside Tibet itself, and which, in any case, are only an element of the complex and hybrid identities that Tibetans who are growing up in South Asia (or, even further removed from Tibet in places like the United States, Canada, Switzerland, Taiwan, etc.) inevitably experience as participants in the cosmopolitan cultural forms of the modern Indian subcontinent. At the same time, citizenship as a mode of engaging with a bureaucratic system in order to facilitate one's life also presents problems for the Tibetans in diaspora, since the government-in-exile cannot always provide the legal framework or documentation that exiles may need as they seek to travel internationally, own property or businesses, or otherwise engage with the modern system of nation states.

In order to understand the relationship between these two aspects of citizenship, I first examine the Tibetan Green Book, which seeks to sustain and build the sense of Tibetan citizenship through the deployment of an exile government-issued ID card. I contrast these efforts with the Blue Book, whereby non-Tibetans are able to purchase a kind of fictive citizenship in the Tibetan social world. As will be seen, while many exiles seek to maintain their sense of Tibetan identity, they are also confronted by the pragmatic advantages of participating in other states' paperwork systems, and these two perspectives on citizenship – citizenship as identity and citizenship as bureaucratic category – do not always integrate smoothly. Taken in tandem, however, the multiple forms of 'citizenship' offered by the Tibetan government-in-exile constitute a collective mode of participation in a relation, a political cause, and the experience of loss of a territorial state.

The Green Book

In 1972, the Tibetan government-in-exile began a system to formalise citizenship in the exile community, through the distribution of the so-called Green Books (*Gyalthon Manyul*), also known as a Freedom Handbook (*Rangzen Lakdeb*). These small booklets were modelled after passports or national identity certificates; they also functioned as tax registries, whereby loyal Tibetan exiles could demonstrate their regular payment of a voluntary tax to the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala. The tax served as a symbolic reminder of the exiles' recognition of Dharamsala's authority. Indeed, it was for precisely this reason that in the 1970s a group of 13 settlements expressed their opposition to Dharamsala by refusing to pay the Green Book tax. This circumstance simply underlined the ways in which Dharamsala lacked the coercive power of other states, which actually control territory, police, tax enforcers, and other instruments of state power.

However, whenever possible, Dharamsala continues to use the Green Book, and its proof of up-to-date tax payments, to confirm the loyalty of its would-be citizens. For example, applications for highly desired scholarships, or jobs within the exile government, are not accepted without proof of a valid Green Book. One Tibetan interlocutor described the necessity of having a Green Book and paying the tax: if someone doesn't do so, 'he will suffer when he wants to go to U.S.A., when he wants to get the permission from Dharamsala. So they will ask, "where is the Green Book?" Sometimes if you need help from the office, they will ask, "where is the Green Book?" So it is very useful'.

Thus, when the US government offered 1,000 Green Cards to Tibetan exiles to resettle in the United States, only those Tibetans with valid Green Books were eligible to apply. There was considerable speculation among the exiles that others – Nepalis, Bhutanese, and other Himalayan peoples – who possessed passports of their own and could thus apply to emigrate to the United States through ordinary channels, were now attempting to secure Tibetan Green Books in order to be eligible for the 1,000 spaces the United States had reserved for Tibetans. That is, non-refugees were attempting to masquerade as refugees, or at least Tibetan exiles feared this was the case. As one interlocutor described it to me, the Green Book 'shows that whoever has got this book, the exile Government recognizes him as a pure Tibetan'.

Although the Green Book has been an effective means of building intra-Tibetan solidarity and strengthening exiles' sense of Tibetan citizenship, its limitations also reveal the relative powerlessness of the

Tibetan government-in-exile, which of course has no control over borders, the movement of people, or the other domains in which nation states normally exert authority over their citizens. This paradox means that as exiles confront the economic challenges of life in India and Nepal, or even more clearly, if they attempt to emigrate to the West, Taiwan, or elsewhere, they are compelled to engage more directly with other states' paperwork regimes. One Tibetan I met in Kathmandu, for example, first told me that he was a Sherpa, that is, a citizen of the Nepali state. It was only later, after we had got to know each other a bit, that he admitted that he was actually a Tibetan, but that he had acquired Nepali citizenship papers when he was child in order to avoid the many legal difficulties that accrue to refugees. 'You're a foreigner', he told me, 'so I can tell you that I'm really a Tibetan. Inside I feel I'm still a Tibetan. If we get independence I'll go back. But there are problems with having refugee status. We can't buy land. We don't get respect.' According to another informant, if a Tibetan wanted to leave India, 'you have to get permission from exile government, and then when the exile government gives permission, then we have to approach the Government of India and they will give ID card [to be able to travel abroad]'.

These issues have become particularly charged in recent years, as an increasing flood of Tibetan exiles have attempted to make their way from South Asia to brighter economic opportunities abroad. Such efforts have dramatically increased in the wake of the US government's decision to allow 1,000 Tibetans to emigrate from South Asia to the United States for permanent resettlement in the early 1990s. This programme emerged from long-standing US aid for the Tibetans and was seen in Congress as an effort to support the Tibetan exile community. Ironically, however, it has destabilised the exile communities in South Asia, as young Tibetans increasingly forgo economic opportunities there for ones in the United States. This situation is particularly ironic since it is often those exiles who are economically and educationally best adapted to life in South Asia – who have in fact prospered – who are best situated to secure the crucial visa to go to the United States. It is also ironic since, given long-standing US concerns about illegal immigration, the US resettlement project has actually had the effect of greatly stimulating Tibetan illegal immigration to the United States, insofar as most of the exiles now have an extended network of kin and friends who have already made it to the United States. Living in the United States illegally is thus now seen as a viable economic strategy, particularly by those who have not yet reached America's shores (Hess, 2009).

The allure of the West also presents challenges for Tibetan exiles, however. For most, the nationalist idea that what they are doing in exile is

working to retrieve their country, has been drummed into them for their entire lives. Thus, there is considerable anxiety about moving to the West – and resentment frequently expressed about, for example, high government officers or other educated Tibetans who have moved to the United States only to work in restaurants. Moreover, life in America is not as easy as exiles in South Asia often imagine, particularly for those without proper papers.

The Blue Book

I turn now to consider the extension of this strategy of invented citizenship to the fund raising technique of the Blue Book. In 1996, the Tibetan government-in-exile pioneered a new fundraising strategy that adapted the Green Book paradigm of Tibetan citizenship to the desire of many non-Tibetans not only to support the cause of the exiles but also to participate and identify with it. Executed by Tibet Fund, a New York-based non-profit that works to raise funds to support Tibetans in exile and is closely associated with the Tibetan government-in-exile, this strategy revolves around the circulation of Blue Books. Like the Green Book, on which it is explicitly modelled, the Blue Book serves both as proof of membership in the Tibetan community and as a registry of funds contributed to the Tibetan community.

The promotional materials for the Blue Book advise that just as Tibetans contribute a voluntary tax to support the work of the exile government,

> The Blue Book is your opportunity to contribute as well . . . [It] recognize[s] individual membership in the Tibetan Solidarity Alliance as well as your support to help preserve Tibetan cultural heritage . . . By being a holder of the Blue Book, you are further strengthening your solidarity with the broad vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The Blue Book itself is designed to look like a passport and includes space for stamps that will be issued each time Tibet Fund receives a donation from the Blue Book holder. The link for online contributions to receive a Blue Book takes one to the 'store' section of the website, where the Blue Book sits just above the $75 Tibet Fund Pendant.

Of course, Tibetans are not the first to attempt to commodify identity; in this sense, it is possible to recognise the Blue Book as simply the latest in a long series of Tibetan fundraising methods, many of which have been remarkably successful. But the Blue Book is particularly noteworthy

because it plays upon the recognition of both Tibetans themselves and their non-Tibetan supporters that Tibetan citizenship exists because its members say it does: this is citizenship of the will, or intention, dependent upon affect. Lacking the apparatus of a sovereign state, and with life in exile conditioned by the continual recollection of the loss of the state, the Blue Book offers friends of Tibet an opportunity to participate in this loss, not only as friends and supporters but as holders of Tibetan paperwork.

The symbolic capital of 'being' Tibetan and Tibetan Buddhism

Why should such identity claims be desirable to some non-Tibetans? And why have Tibetans hit upon and mobilised around such a strategy for fostering a sense of belonging among their friends and allies? The answer to these questions is connected to the growing transnational popularity of Tibetan religion, the global popularity of the Dalai Lama as a figure of international appeal, the exotic allure of 'Tibet chic', and, in some quarters at least, sympathy for the Tibetans' political cause. All these factors combine to make this form of Tibetan citizenship an appealing prospect.

Tibetan Buddhism is booming in Taiwan and the Chinese diaspora; even in the PRC itself, despite stringent state control, Tibetan Buddhism enjoys growing popularity among some Chinese adherents. In India and Nepal, influential members of the Hindu elite may be found sitting at the feet of Tibetan exiles, who had arrived destitute in South Asia only a few years before, while Indian and Nepali Buddhists from remote Himalayan communities have swelled the ranks of these exiles' newly (re-)established monasteries. In Western Europe and North America, Tibetan Buddhism has attracted new converts not only in metropoles such as New York, San Francisco, London, and Paris but also in places like Kansas and Ireland. In the former Soviet bloc, Tibetan Buddhism has established a loyal and growing following of new converts, while it is also undergoing revitalisation – after being suppressed for seven decades – in Mongolia and the Russian republics of Tuva, Kalmykia, and Buryatia. Tibetan Buddhism is even present and growing in South and Central America, in Africa, and in Israel (Zablocki, forthcoming).

In all of these places, Tibet and its religion hold an appeal – a mystique – that is far out of proportion from most people's encounter with, or knowledge of, actual Tibetans. This mystique has been produced through a continued imagining and re-imagining of Tibet, such

that today it exists as a floating signifier. Yet, while the global appeal of Tibetan Buddhism undoubtedly owes much to fascination with the Tibet of the imagination, it is also the result of the hard work of real Tibetans, many of whom have spent much of their lives travelling the world, acting as Buddhist missionaries, cultural ambassadors, and political advocates, and raising funds to rebuild Tibetan culture in exile. Their dramatic success testifies to the degree to which non-Tibetans have found real meaning and value in their encounters with Tibetan exiles. The global appeal of Tibetan Buddhism is not only a product of an imagined Tibet, but is also rooted in the religion's diagnosis of the problem of human suffering, its methods for ending this suffering, and the ability of Tibetan teachers to communicate these ideas and practices across cultural, linguistic, and religious boundaries. While these encounters also tap the power of human imagination, they are not encounters with a 'virtual' Tibet, but with the philosophical views, religious practices, and personalities of living Tibetans. Thus, the Tibetan Buddhism that is taking shape around the world is shaped by the intersection of two Tibets – the virtual Tibet of historical imagination and the 'real' Tibet of the Tibetan exiles – and this intersection is generating a new, and immensely vital, transnational form of the religion.

As Tibetans and their others meet in the global spaces of transnational Tibetan Buddhism, new possibilities of identity unfold. By opening up the subject position 'Tibetan Buddhist' to include non-Tibetans, Tibetans have managed to re-establish their own positions. This move to expand the boundaries of their religious identity in the face of the precarious circumstances of exile has generally served Tibetans well. It is in accord both with Tibetans' historical patterns of engagement, such as the patron–priest relationship, and with Buddhism's universalist orientation. It has also generally served non-Tibetan Tibetan Buddhists well, many of whom have found fulfilling religious practices and satisfying philosophical views within their new religion. Thus, the question of how Tibetans are seeking to affirm a national identity in exile is intimately connected to the strategies they have pursued to gain international support, and these strategies are, in turn, closely connected to the global popularity of Tibetan forms of Buddhism.

Conclusion: Fictive citizenship and symbolic capital

In considering the difficulties faced by Tibetan exiles as they simultaneously seek to sustain the continuity of their Tibetan identity in exile, and adapt to the economic (and other) challenges of that exile, I have

examined Tibetan diasporic identity (and the challenge of constructing a national identity in diaspora) in relation to issues of the construction of citizenship, and its manifestation in the material paperwork through which those citizenship claims are made manifest. When we consider the efforts of Tibetan exiles and of their supporters to frame their identities, as well as those of the Tibetan nation and religion, according to the norms of a bureaucratic state, we see that the Green Book has provided the Tibetan government-in-exile with an ideal symbol for the expression of its would-be citizens' nationalist aspirations. The Blue Book, on the other hand, illustrates the skill with which Tibetan exiles have adapted the patterns of bureaucratic identity back into their own patterns of patronage (that in this case extend across the world), which are themselves rooted in historical systems that were developed for the propagation of Buddhist values and practices.

The Blue Book is also reminiscent of anthropological conceptions of fictive kinship, which refer to kinship ties that are not rooted in the traditional domains of blood or marriage relations. While such affinal and consanguinal links are, of course, central to the kinship structures of every society, it is also common in many societies to find other social relations that draw upon the language and social norms of kinship, even in the absence of such links. The reality of fictive kinship thus underlines the socially constructed nature of kinship systems (and, by extension, of the social order as a whole). Similarly, the existence of the Blue Book as a way of asserting a kind of 'Tibetan identity' for non-Tibetans indicates a comparable mode of belonging, one that draws upon the language and documentation of 'real' – affective and bureaucratic – citizenship to suggest a parallel form of participation. The Blue Book constitutes an effort to create a new category of 'fictive citizenship' that parallels earlier anthropological analyses of fictive kinship, but in which the stipulated shared identity is expressed through the bureaucratic routinisation of shared identity, rather than through the ritualised forms of fictive kinship. And yet, as the earlier discussion of the Green Book has already suggested, this system of asserting and documenting citizenship is also highly contingent and constructed, in ways that – because of the Tibetan government-in-exile's current lack of juridical sovereignty over any actual territory – underline that it too functions through the power of symbolic affirmations to assert underlying truths of bureaucratic authority and nationalistic identity that the members of the Tibetan diaspora would wish to claim as reality.

Citizenship, like every other category of social belonging and identity, is of course constructed. But, like other categories, it often appears

as 'natural'. One of the things that makes the Tibetan diasporic case suggestive for our understanding of citizenship, in general, is that Tibetan exiles have had to constitute their sense of citizenship in a setting where they have no sovereignty, and their administrative powers are entirely delegated by the Indian government. In this sense, to speak of 'fictive' citizenship is not to assert that there is anything 'fictional' or untrue about the identity claims of Tibetan exiles, or of their non-Tibetan allies, but rather to recognise that the complexities of Tibetan diasporic identity reveal the constructed nature of all citizenship claims.

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Afterword

Jane Garnett and Sondra L. Hausner

As we write, in early 2015, fresh manifestations of violence in the name of both religion and the state are taking place, first in France and then in Denmark, in a direct confrontation between what is seen and experienced as a diaspora religion and civil nation states that view themselves as secular. In particular, the terrorist attacks in France of January 2015 will join a litany of twenty-first-century dates marking eruptions of violence in the name of religion in the capital cities of the Global North: 9/11 in New York; 11-M in Madrid; 7/7 in London; and now Charlie Hebdo in Paris. Each atrocity has challenged assumptions about citizenship – about sovereignty, security, rights, and, indeed, religion; each has given rise, on the one hand, to defensive qualifications of liberal values and, on the other, to a recognition of the urgency of developing a more sophisticated understanding of the structures of inclusion and exclusion in the modern world, state, city, and neighbourhood, as well as of the situation of those who inhabit the thresholds and borderlines. Over a million people of different faiths, ethnicities, and nationalities gathered in Paris on Sunday 11 January 2015 to express solidarity and to protest against violence between citizens, between religions, and between different ways of seeing and acting in the world.

In a contemporary political climate scarred by these symbolically charged events, as well as by a host of more particular and differentially highlighted tragedies across the world, the questions raised and debated in this book are a modest contribution to the development of a more robust conversation about definitions, categories, historical legacies, and lived realities of difference. In some cases, the essays anticipate these much more recent events: Ousmane Kane describes a public fear of Islam that has informed the dynamic between native New Yorkers and Senegalese immigrants; Tuomas Martinkainen highlights how the

Scandinavian response to multifaith efforts must be seen against the backdrop of the publication in Denmark in 2005 of cartoons that mocked Islam, the further repercussions of which we are beginning to see. The formal representation of religious interests itself constitutes a process of the state; the recent attacks and the responses to them pose a direct challenge to the ways in which we represent transnational religions in their multiple contexts. Working through suggestive comparison, all these chapters address the conceptual and the practised interplay of different political and religious cultures (and that between religion and culture) within a world criss-crossed by complex diasporic paths, especially when those paths are sometimes defined or informed by religion. Civil values are constructed through tradition and education, but also through committed reflection and debate on experience – one's own and that of others. Attention to vantage point is critical. Such debate can – indeed, should – be uncomfortable, but depends on some measure of agreement on the terms of engagement. The connotations of norms of citizenship are variously understood, and in plural societies are adjudicated by reference both to histories of their practice and to histories of other cultures. The realities of marginality and alienation are constant and insistent; the questions of integration, assimilation, and modernisation – both how to achieve them and if indeed we wish to – are everywhere in Europe and the world.

The French prime minister's statement on 10 January 2015, '*nous sommes tous des Charlie, nous sommes tous des policiers, nous sommes tous des juifs de France*' (we are all Charlie, we are all policemen, we are all Jews of France), was intended to articulate solidarity, yet ironically, through the decision to categorise, and the choice of categories, had the unintended effect of excluding: what about the Muslims of France, who shared the horror? Care about language and thought about how positions taken up, or ideas expressed, might be received by other individuals and other communities, become all the more important. This is where scholarship such as that manifested in this book, has a fundamental role to play. It attends to the historically situated relationships between different forms of solidarity, and to the ways in which faith-based association in diaspora has been constituted by and built on dialogues between different languages – religious, ethical, ethnic, national – to give a distinctive voice and sense of agency to participants in civil society.

Index