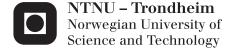Christian Stokke

A Multicultural Society in the Making

How Norwegian Muslims challenge a white nation

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Abstract

This doctoral thesis explores the current process of Norway becoming a multicultural society, more specifically when Norwegian Muslims challenge 'white' perceptions of the nation. I apply Tariq Modood's theory of political multiculturalism to analyze this process in terms of public sphere negotiations between a politically mobilized assertive minority, the majority population and state policy responses. I analyze four empirical cases from the 'integration debate' in national newspapers between 2006 and 2010; the cartoon affair, the hijab debates and debates on secularism and the role of 'native informants'. I theorize these as 'discursive struggles' and identify four competing ideological positions; a confrontational and a dialogical liberalism on the majority side, and a dialogic antiracist multiculturalism and forms of communitarianism among the minority. The two dialogue positions correspond to the distinction between state multiculturalism as diversity management and a bottom-up multiculturalism that starts with critical minority perspectives on racism. Both see liberal and Muslim values as open to interpretation and thus compatible, but the antiracist perspective combines dialogue with resistance against dominant anti-Muslim discourses. The thesis combines detailed empirical data from Norwegian public debate, comparisons with similar debates in other European countries, and a comprehensive theoretical discussion of multiculturalism, postcolonial perspectives on anti-Muslim racism, politicized Islam and Muslim feminism, and secularism and the public sphere.

Sammendrag

Doktoravhandlingen handler om den pågående prosessen der Norge utvikler seg til å bli et flerkulturelt samfunn. Jeg fokuserer på norske muslimers økende deltakelse i integreringsdebatten, og har valgt ut fire casestudier fra debatten i riksavisene i perioden 2006 til 2010; karikaturstriden, hijabdebattene, sekularismedebatten og den såkalte kokosnøttdebatten. Disse analyseres i lys av britisk multikulturalistisk teori, nærmere bestemt Tariq Modoods teori om politisk multikulturalisme forstått som en forhandlingsprosess, der minoriteter utfordrer dominerende forestillinger i offentligheten, og majoriteten og staten gradvis kommer dem i møte. Fire ideologiske posisjoner identifiseres i debattene; en konfronterende og en dialogorientert liberalisme blant majoriteten, samt en dialogorientert antirasistisk multikulturalisme og en form for kommunitarisme blant minoriteten. De to dialogposisjonene gjenspeiler henholdsvis en statlig strategi for å håndtere mangfold ovenfra, og en minoritetsbevegelse nedenfra som tar utgangspunkt i antirasistiske perspektiver. Begge disse posisjonene oppfatter liberale og muslimske verdier som åpne for tolkning og dermed som forenlige, men minoritetens perspektiv kombinerer dialog med motstand mot dominerende forestillinger om en sivilisasjonskonflikt mellom vesten og islam. Avhandlingen kombinerer detaljerte empiriske data fra norsk integreringsdebatt, sammenligning med debatter i andre europeiske land, og en omfattende teoretisk diskusjon av multikulturalisme og rasisme, politisert islam og muslimsk feminisme, og sekularisme i offentligheten.

Acknowledgements

All translations from the Norwegian language appearing in this thesis are my own, except where otherwise stated.

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PART I

THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Multiculturalism has been a hotly debated topic in Europe and North America in the last two decades. While anthropologists have made important contributions, much of the academic debate has taken place within the field of normative political theory. A major disagreement among political philosophers is about how multiculturalism relates to liberalism. A prominent advocate of a liberal version of multiculturalism, Will Kymlicka (2002:336-337), notes that until 1989, multiculturalism was usually equated with communitarian philosophy which disputes the liberal concept of the 'autonomous individual'. According to him, it has become widely recognized that except for a few 'communitarian' groups, most ethnic minorities in Western societies want to be equal participants in liberal society. Thus, debates are in most cases "debates amongst liberals about the meaning of liberalism", i.e. debates among people who "endorse the basic liberal-democratic consensus, but who disagree about the interpretation of these principles" (ibid, 338-339).

On one side of the debate, liberal critics of multiculturalism such as Brian Barry (2001:5-34), hold on to the classical liberal doctrine that every individual should have the same legal and political rights without regard to group membership, and reject the multiculturalist idea that justice requires accommodating religious beliefs and cultural practices. Philosophically, he defends what has been called the "Enlightenment project" (ibid, 16) as expressed by John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice*, against the politicizing of group identities advocated by multiculturalism. (It should be noted here, that historical Enlightenment thinking defended pluralism against church and state hegemony; while contemporary defenders of 'Enlightenment values' protect status quo against challenges from marginalized groups; see Bangstad 2011:258; Titley & Lentin 2011:155.) Arguing that equal opportunity matters more than equal outcome, Barry defends the notion of state neutrality towards cultural diversity. Further, he regards state promotion of voluntary assimilation to national identity an appropriate policy (Barry 2001:72-80), as long as the majority is "difference-blind", i.e. ceases to identify immigrants by ethnic or racial criteria and accepts them as equals. This position comes close to the 'French' model of the civic nation (ibid, 80).

Kymlicka (2002:344-346) argues that the liberal principle of state neutrality expressed in this model of 'strict separation' and 'benign neglect' is appropriate to religion, but misleading when applied to ethnocultural diversity. He writes that the description of 'civic nations' like the United States as only demanding adherence to neutral

constitutional principles, and thus as indifferent to ethnocultural identities, is inaccurate when taking into account that actual US policies have followed a 'liberal-nationalist' strategy of creating a national culture with a common language and institutions (though pluralistic in other regards such as religion). Though common American culture is admittedly 'thin', Kymlicka (2002:347) points out that it is 'far from trivial' and that "attempts to integrate people into such a common societal culture have often been met with serious resistance". More specifically, immigrant minorities do not resist majority nation-building as such, but want to "negotiate the terms of integration" and demand a more multicultural approach (ibid, 354). Kymlicka notes that minorities no longer accept to be silenced and marginalized as they were in the era of assimilation policy. Instead they demand "a more inclusive conception of citizenship which recognizes (rather than stigmatizes) their identities, and which accommodates (rather than excludes) their differences" (ibid, 327).

While Kymlicka agrees with the liberal-nationalist view that nation-building promotes distributive justice and deliberative democracy (ibid, 364), he also accepts Charles Taylor's claim that "nation-building inescapably privileges members of the majority culture" (cited in Kymlicka 2002:348). Linking multiculturalism and nation-building, Kymlicka proposes that injustices resulting from majority nation-building can be compensated by granting minority rights. Thus, minority rights and nation-building will lend legitimacy to each other, in a similar way as the welfare state provided social rights to "integrate the working class into a national culture" (ibid, 328) to ensure their loyalty to the state rather than to 'foreign ideas' like communism. From a state perspective, the inclusion of social rights into an extended notion of citizenship was an instrument of nation-building; minority rights can serve the same purpose. Willing to grant minority rights to protect a group against assimilation pressure ('external protection'), but also committed to individual autonomy, Kymlicka (2002:341-342) is concerned that those 'exceptions' among minority groups that remain 'illiberal' will seek minority rights that restrict the freedom of their own members for the sake of group solidarity ("internal restrictions"). He is skeptical of accommodating conservative religious groups, and focuses on 'isolationist' religious sects in North America, but also mentions 'arranged marriages' among British Muslims and their attempts to restrict blasphemy in the Rushdie Affair. Kymlicka (1992:38-39) argues that these groups "want the power to restrict the religious freedom of their own members", and suggests that minorities must be internally liberal in order to have a legitimate claim to minority rights (2002:230-239). Based on a concern for women's rights, Susan Moller Okin (1999:22-23) goes further than Kymlicka, and suggests that assimilation may be better for minority women than protecting minority cultures that oppress them.

In his later writings, John Rawls argues that the appeal to a liberal conception of individual autonomy is 'sectarian' because it is not widely shared even in democratic societies (cited in Kymlicka 1992:50). More willing than Kymlicka to accommodate

religious pluralism, the late Rawls continues to defend individual rights by appealing to "a 'political' conception of the person as free and equal" (cited in Kymlicka 1992:54); a strategy which Kymlicka sees as a failed attempt to accommodate communitarian minorities, because it obscures the "potential conflicts between liberal principles and illiberal groups" (2002:230) while being no more sympathetic to the latter's demands for internal restrictions (1992:54). In his 'political liberalism', Rawls (1999:176-179; 2003:140) abandons the 'comprehensive doctrine' of "Enlightenment liberalism" (which he places on a level with religious doctrines; see 1999:143-148) in favor of a more pluralist notion of an 'overlapping consensus'. He argues that there are "many liberalisms" with various interpretations and different political conceptions of basic principles of freedom, equality and justice (ibid, 141), which are supported by a number of reasonable secular and religious doctrines (with regard to Islam, Rawls (ibid, 151 n. 46) refers to Abdullahi A. An-Na'im's interpretation of shari'a as an ethics that supports constitutional democracy.).

British theorist of multiculturalism Bhikhu Parekh (2000:13-15; 107) agrees with Kymlicka (2002:239) that the distinction between political and comprehensive liberalism is overstated, but argues that a multicultural society cannot be adequately theorized from within the framework of any particular political doctrine, including liberalism, understood as "a substantive doctrine advocating a specific view of man, society and the world and embedded in and giving rise to a distinct way of life" and thus representing a particular cultural perspective (Parekh 2000:14). Instead, he suggests a theory of political dialogue (similar to Habermas' deliberative democracy) between liberal and nonliberal cultures, which has a liberal orientation, but engages critically with liberalism, and departs from it in some aspects. Similar to Rawls' theory of an overlapping consensus, Parekh (2000:132-141; see also Modood 2005:174) believes that there is a consensus on universal values such as freedom, equality and justice as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which, while retaining a liberal bias, was born out of cross-cultural dialogue. These general universal values are not absolute, and need to be interpreted, prioritized and balanced in the context of particular societies with their different balances between the individual and the community. He takes into account that in any society, including liberal democratic ones, the danger remains that political leaders misuse their interpretative freedom to undermine these values.

Parekh (2000:84-90; 200-204) characterizes the models of public deliberation developed by the later Rawls and Habermas as modified versions of civic assimilationism, which argue that a political community needs a shared *political* culture, while allowing diversity in civil society. In Parekh's view (ibid, 89), Rawls' approach is preferable to Kymlicka's liberal nationalism (see Parekh 2000:101-104), but still leaves too little room for diversity for the following three reasons; (1) the private-public division discriminates against religious people who want a public role for their religion;

(2) it fails to take into account that the shared political culture reflects the consensus of a given time and is revised as a response to the challenge of new ideas, including those forwarded by minorities; and (3) that a monocultural public sphere based on a historical consensus among the majority exerts an assimilationist pressure on civil society. More specifically, Parekh argues that Rawls derives his political liberalism from a comprehensive liberalism without taking into account that those holding other reasonable comprehensive doctrines may want to give different definitions and priorities to the basic liberal values of the overlapping consensus. While retaining his own comprehensive doctrine, Rawls asks those holding other doctrines to reinterpret these in the light of public reason; thus putting pressure on communitarian or religious persons to articulate their doctrines in standard liberal language in order to qualify as 'reasonable'. Thus, Rawls' restrictions on public reason do attempt to settle certain principles in advance, putting minorities at a disadvantage if they would want to renegotiate the consensus and redefine and reprioritize basic liberal values. Being largely individualist with universalist pretensions, political liberalism cannot accommodate demands for differential treatment.

To sum up, Parekh (2000:109-111, see also Modood 2005:172-173) appreciates the attempts by thinkers like Rawls and Kymlicka to reinterpret and redefine classical liberalism to make it more hospitable to cultural and religious diversity, but criticizes them for continuing to absolutize liberalism (to varying extent). Although theirs is a thin liberalism with minimum content, Rawls and Kymlicka still demand that nonliberals must accept it in order to be tolerated. Parekh argues that this view is flawed; either this minimum content is essentially liberal, in which case making it a universal requirement violates the moral autonomy of nonliberals; or it is universally binding, in which case there is nothing particularly liberal about it except that liberals happen to appreciate it more than others. Instead, Parekh (2000:111-112; see also Modood 2005:174) suggests a "critical but sympathetic dialogue" that moves beyond tolerance and takes other perspectives as "conversational partners in a common search for a deeper understanding" of "the good life". This requires a distinction between the universal and the liberal as discussed above, as well as a distinction between liberal society and western society, which includes many nonliberal groups including conservatives and socialists besides ethnic and religious minorities. Equating western society with liberalism means turning one particular but important aspect of society into its defining feature, and to give liberals a monopoly on defining which views are legitimate and to reshape society in their image. In the postcolonial literature, this conflation of the liberal, the western and the universal has been termed Eurocentrism, which according to S. Sayyid (2003) consists in an attempt to claim a Western monopoly on defining universal values, by presenting Western interpretations as universal while seeing all other articulations of values as particular. In other words, liberalism universalizes itself while particularizing all other ways of life (Parekh cited in Modood 2005:172). Parekh

is committed to a (thin) moral universalism which cannot be equated with liberalism, but as Tariq Modood (2005:181-182) points out, "his dialogical multiculturalism seems to presuppose and build on an already existing liberal culture" and it is thus "difficult to judge to what extent it is "beyond" liberalism and to what extent, especially in practice, it is a more open and less individualistic liberalism".

Objectives and research questions

My aim here is to do an empirical analysis of public sphere debates at a particular time and in a particular national context, namely Norway in the period 2006-2010. More specifically, I will analyze four cases where Norwegian Muslims challenge dominant discourses of integration, all of which address the relationship between Islam and liberal values. Case studies of the Cartoon Affair (chapter 2), the 'coconut debate' (chapter 3), the hijab debates (chapter 4) and the 'secularism debate' (chapter 5) will throw light on particular Muslim interpretations of values such as, respectively, free speech, individual freedom, gender equality and secularism. I will discuss these empirical cases in relation to normative theories of multiculturalism, analyzing them in the light of each other. As a general framework, I find Tariq Modood's (2005; 2007) sociological theory of political multiculturalism most suitable, because this approach emphasizes the importance of grounding multicultural theory in specific empirical contexts analyzed with a comparative methodology, rather than deriving ideal models for public deliberation and policy from abstract philosophical concepts (Modood & Favell 2003:490-492; Modood 2005:187-188). A context-sensitive empirical approach may avoid the "unchallenged reproduction of anecdotal facts usually taken from newspapers, everyday discussion, or other theorists" (Modood & Favell 2003:493) which characterize much normative theorizing about multiculturalism, and may instead bring out "how certain issues of liberal principles become quite different from what they appear" (ibid) when taking into account the dimensions of inequality, cultural essentialism and racism (see also Phillips 2007:8-9; 21-31).

Modood emphasizes the importance of national contexts (his own theory is based on the British one), especially when importing and applying theories developed in North American countries to a western European context with different multicultural experiences (Modood & Favell 2003:487; 493-494; Modood 2005:171; 189). He argues that the case of Britain is interesting because it bridges the experiences of North American 'immigrant nations' that have been culturally diverse from the start, and the presumably homogenous 'old nations' of Europe, where multiculturalism has become an issue as a result of more recent non-European immigration, of which a significant share come from Muslim countries (Modood 2007:2-9). Britain's historical self-image is that of an 'old nation' but more accurately it is a union of four ethnic nations, including the Scottish, Welsh and perhaps Irish in addition to the dominant English. Due to Britain's imperial past, it has a diverse minority population consisting of three

main groups, Caribbean and African Blacks; Indians; and South Asian Muslims. Like in the United States, minority issues have been understood within a paradigm of "race relations" focused on color racism (Modood 2007:9), and the Black American struggle has inspired British minority movements (ibid, 40). While ethnic minorities constitute a larger proportion of the general population in some continental European countries, Britain is regarded the most multicultural society in Europe, not simply in terms of state policy but because of much higher minority participation in the public sphere than in countries like France and Germany, whose models of the 'civic' and 'ethnic' nation are less inclusive of minorities, and where public integration debates largely consist of majority persons speaking *about* minorities. Modood also argues that unlike the 'state multiculturalism' of Canada and Australia, British multiculturalism has mainly developed as a result of the political mobilization of minorities in social movements from below.

Drawing on British experiences, his political theory of multiculturalism is empirically based in real-world political struggles, negotiations and debates, often led by second-generation immigrants (ibid, 18-19), and is particularly concerned with the experiences of British and European Muslims. As opposed to the more philosophical theories of multiculturalism of Kymlicka and Parekh, which start with an abstract theoretical concept of culture, what matters to Modood (ibid, 37-40) are those identities and differences that are empirically important to minorities as expressed in their political mobilization. Thus, he avoids an essentialized notion of 'culture' as a defining property of minority groups, and instead uses the notions of 'difference' and 'identity' as socially constructed through the interplay of ascription and self-definition. He defines multiculturalism as a process of negotiation and dialogue, consisting of minority assertiveness, mobilization, protest and political struggle, as well as the state's pragmatic accommodation of some of their concrete political demands in policy and institutional reforms. Minority mobilization typically starts with challenging negative differences ascribed to them by dominant discourses, and, following the American 'Black pride' movement, tries to turn a "negative difference into a positive difference" to be proud of (ibid, 39). In this process, a minority group claims the right to speak for itself, to define itself in positive terms, but also the power to analyze and redefine the way it has been inferiorized and oppressed by the majority (ibid, 41-42). For example, British Asians have redefined color racism to articulate the cultural racism they experience, Black women have modified feminist theory to take into account the intersections of racism and sexism, and Muslim women challenge majority feminists' claims that religion is necessarily oppressive. Since the Rushdie Affair, British Muslims have started asserting their Muslim identity in a similar way, and in the process they theorize their experiences of what has been called Orientalism (Said 1979; Yegenoglu 1998), Islamophobia (Runnymede Trust 1997; Esposito & Kalin 2011) or anti-Muslim racism (Modood 2005:41).

While the British antiracist movement in the 1980s rejected state multiculturalism (Gunew 2004:15; 41), critical multiculturalists argue that multicultural policies must be explicitly linked to antiracism (ibid, 43), and British multiculturalism in the 1990s not only incorporated part of the antiracist critique, but also started taking the Muslim challenge seriously (Modood 2007:15-17). Antiracist protest and struggle has thus been a central part in the British process of becoming a multicultural society, and Modood argues that each minority's resistance to racism is the primary means of real mutual integration; minorities challenge public discourse and political institutions, which respond and adjust to accommodate them (ibid, 50). Such a 'critical multiculturalism' from below is thus not primarily interested in 'culture' but in politicized ethnic identities, and in turning these from a stigma into a positive part of society (ibid, 43), resulting in the formation of hyphenated identities such as 'Black American', 'British Asian' or 'Norwegian Muslim'. In a multicultural society, these identities are seen as a legitimate basis for political mobilization and lobbying rather than regarded as divisive or disloyal to the nation (ibid, 49).

While Modood (ibid, 24-26) shares some of the same concerns as Kymlicka discussed in the introduction, namely that 'state neutrality' tends to privilege the majority in a way that puts an assimilationist pressure on minorities, which can in turn be compensated by accommodating minority demands, his multiculturalism shares with other critical theories of racism the emphasis on grounding analysis of hegemonic discourses in the perspectives of "conscious minority persons" as discourse analyst Teun van Dijk puts it (1993:18; see also Frankenberg 1993:5; 206). Modood (2007:64-68) argues that minorities have a distinct knowledge which can hold a "critical mirror" up to larger society; not only do they have primary knowledge about the marginalization and discrimination they experience, but they may also contribute with different perspectives on their shared society and its discourses, and he emphasizes that multiculturalism is about openly discussing such critical perspectives on attitudes, values and practices, and about allowing minorities to influence these. While Modood focuses on multicultural negotiations and minority mobilization, other theorists direct more attention to problematizing the dominant discourse. Applying American paradigms of critical race theory and whiteness studies to analyze Norwegian majority discourses, anthropologist Marianne Gullestad (2002; 2006:209) has analyzed how 'white hegemony' is challenged by minority voices, then re-articulated and reasserted in integration debates.

Like Parekh, who emphasizes an "open-ended dialogue" among "culturally mediated interpretations of all universal principles" (cited in Modood 2005:183-184), Modood (2007:7-8; 64-68) takes existing liberal democracies as empirical context for his theory, but does not use liberalism as a framework marking the limits of multicultural politics, as Kymlicka does. Thus, Modood rejects the idea of liberal principles as a 'package' to be either accepted or rejected, as is sometimes argued, and favors a "respectful and critical engagement". Agreeing that Parekh's philosophy offers a basis for dialogue

between cultures on a global level, Modood (2005:183-184) questions how it fits with the empirical reality of immigrant minorities where the second and third generations may no longer be organized communities with different belief systems and practices, but move in the direction of either hybrid lifestyles or develop into ethno-religious communities living in societies where secularism is hegemonic.

Like Rawls, Modood operates with a political conception of multiculturalism which does not depend on any particular comprehensive philosophy. He argues for the compatibility of 'moderate' liberalism and 'moderate' multiculturalism, as well as 'moderate' Islam and 'moderate secularism'; and is critical of their 'ideological' forms, which favor ideal models over empirical reality, and which have a dichotomizing and dualistic view of the world that makes dialogue, mutual respect and negotiated accommodation difficult (Modood 2007:130-132). The major obstacles against reconciling multiculturalism and liberalism today are the ideologies which speak of a clash of civilizations between the West and Islam. This dichotomizing view is found on both sides, in anti-Muslim discourses in the West as well as in radical Islamism, but the relationship between them is asymmetrical in terms of political and military power as well as intellectual support. Modood (ibid, 7) argues that his theory is compatible with both liberalism and postcolonialism (as well as others), and he is thus modest with regard to explicit postcolonial deconstructions of Eurocentrism (ibid, 124-125), though critical multiculturalism partly overlaps with such critiques (Gunew 2004:27; Titley & Lentin 2011:124). An important distinction often overlooked by advocates of incompatibility goes between critiquing Eurocentrism and rejecting 'Western culture'. Postcolonial critique of Western exceptionalism is not anti-western, in much the same way as Parekh's dialogical multiculturalism does not reject liberal values, but contests the presumption of liberal superiority (ibid, 87).

Applying a British theory of multiculturalism to a Norwegian context demands a discussion of national differences and similarities. An obvious historical difference is between Britain's imperial past and Norway's traditional self-image as an ethnically homogenous nation (Eriksen 2011:3), though this difference should not be overstated; Norway has officially recognized national minorities, notably the indigenous Sami, who were subjected to assimilation until the 1970s. The country also participated in colonial practice and discourse (Gullestad 2006:40-43) as one of the world's big shipping nations since 1850, through missionary activity and through close cultural and political ties with Britain. Norway's colonial complicity (Keskinen et al 2009) remains largely unacknowledged, and unlike in Anglophone countries, speaking of 'race' (and to some extent, racism) is taboo for similar reasons as in continental Europe, particularly Germany. In postcolonial Britain, racism in its various forms has been problematized more than elsewhere in Europe, while the concepts of 'new racism' and 'cultural racism' (where 'race' is rhetorically replaced by 'culture') are not widely accepted in Norway (Bangstad 2011:252).

Contemporary Norway is a rapidly multiculturalizing society, due to non-European immigration. Norway is becoming more similar to Britain in terms of ethnic diversity, but also policy and public debate. In both countries, public integration debates have focused on the alleged incompatibility of Islam, although British debate has focused more on terrorism and economic costs of immigration, while Norwegian debate has taken a stronger cultural turn with a special focus on gender equality (Eriksen 2011:3). Until recently, minority voices were marginal in Norwegian debate, but this has changed in the last decade and since the cartoon affair in 2006, assertive Norwegian Muslims have been important contributors to public debate. No longer simply defending themselves against problems ascribed to them, Muslim voices have starting setting the agenda and criticize dominant discourses. The cartoon affair seems to have had a similar effect as the Rushdie Affair had in Britain, in changing a majority-dominated integration debate in the direction of negotiations about how the majority can accommodate Muslim minorities (Cesari 2011:39).

While British theories of multiculturalism (Modood 2005; 2007; Parekh 2000) will serve as general framework; I will combine these with postcolonial perspectives in anthropology (Hage 1998, Mahmood 2005, Mamdani 2004, Asad 2003), also used by an increasing number of Norwegian anthropologists (Thorbjørnsrud 2003, 2005; Gullestad 2002, 2006; Jacobsen 2011, Bangstad 2008, 2009, 2011). For the analysis of specific case studies, I will also draw on insights from theories of new racism (Hervik 2004, 2006, 2008, 2011), media studies (Kunelius, Eide, Hahn & Schroeder 2007; Eide, Kunelius & Phillips 2008; Eide & Nikunen 2011; Titley & Lentin 2011) and critical discourse analysis (Wodak & Reisigl 2001; Richardson 2004) in chapter 2, Black postcolonial theory (Fanon 1967; Malcolm X 1989) and sociology of religion (Bromley 1998) in chapter 3, postcolonial and Muslim feminism (al-Hibri 1999, Abu-Lughod 2002, Razack 2008, Yegenoglu 2006, Göle 1996, Mir-Hosseini 2006, 2007) in chapter 4, and theories of secularism (Asad 2003, Casanova 2009, Bader 2009, Habermas 2005, Rawls 1999) in chapter 5.

Theorizing public debate in a multicultural society

In Habermasian theory of the public sphere, public deliberation is seen as central to the legitimacy of democratic governance. The idea is that rational debate between free and equal citizens serves as a continuous link between public opinion and formal political decision-making, and assures that government is responsive to public opinion also between elections. In a multicultural society, the public sphere takes on additional importance, by being the site for dialogue and negotiations between minority, majority and the state (Husband & Moring 2009:140). In contemporary European societies, public sphere deliberation mainly takes place in the mass media (Preston & Metykova 2009:36), which acts as a gatekeeper deciding who gets access to public debate. This depends on the kind of media; while the political elite has regular access to television

news and debate programs, the more democratic internet has opened up arenas for ordinary citizens to express their opinions (including undemocratic opinions like racism, e.g. the growing network of anti-Islamic websites). The opinion pages of national newspapers seem to be the preferred arena for European intellectual elites and a main site for academic analysis of public debate (including my own study, which draws its empirical material from Norwegian national newspapers). The relationship between the public sphere and public opinion goes both ways, public opinion is represented in the media, but the media also shapes public opinion. The relationship is not straight-forward; but depends on other factors; studies have shown that in societies where there is little personal contact between majority and minority population, media portrayal has a strong influence on majority perception of minorities (Hervik 2004; IMDI 2009). Important is also the question of minority representation in public debate; a democratic multicultural public sphere requires that a wide diversity of minority voices are represented, not only voices with sensational opinions or those most favored by mainstream media. Media access alone is insufficient to exercise free speech, as Husband (2000:207-208) argues, it must be accompanied by a "right to be understood".

Habermas is aware that not everyone is equally represented in the public sphere, and a critical normative question for public sphere theorists regards criteria for contributing to the public sphere. While there is agreement that debate should be open to all citizens, most theorists argue that there need to be restrictions on the kind of legitimate contributions, to assure a rational and democratic debate. Habermas' ideal speech situation (also known as the domination-free dialogue) has come to resemble Rawls' idea of public reasoning (Modood & Favell 2003:490). Both theorists emphasize that contributions should ideally be made in a 'language' that is generally accessible to all citizens (Habermas 2005:14; Rawls 1999:152), and arguments grounded in religious doctrines seem to be particularly problematic in this regard, as they are not necessarily seen as relevant arguments by non-believers and believers of other religions. Thus, religious arguments need to be 'translated' into secular language (Habermas 2005:15) of public reason (Rawls 1999:143). Importantly, both Habermas and Rawls (ibid, 142-144) distinguish between the informal public sphere (public debate) and formal political institutions (parliaments, courts and administration), where the former is fully open to any kind of contribution, whereas only arguments that meet certain criteria should be allowed to cross the institutional threshold and influence policy and law-making (Habermas, ibid). However, Rawls' (1999:135) argues that citizens should ideally engage in public reasoning as if they were legislators, and Habermas' discourse ethics promotes an ideal of rational argumentation where every citizen is equally entitled to participate, and where the strength of the better argument alone should prevail, regardless of individual participants' social position or background. According to Rawls (ibid, 171), defining participants as 'citizens' means viewing them as free and equal individuals, assigning to each the same political position disregarding their social

situatedness in terms of class and 'comprehensive doctrines'. Thus, this model of public deliberation places certain constraints on public reasoning and excludes certain kinds of contributions as illegitimate (Bader 2009).

Feminist, postcolonial and multiculturalist critics have argued that this ideal is unrealistic; because someone's knowledge is inevitably influenced by that person's social position, personal experiences, identities and beliefs (Collins 2000; Harding 2000) which cannot be abstracted away and 'left at the doorstep' when entering public debate. Rationalist models of the public sphere have also been criticized for failing to take sufficient account of asymmetries in power and hegemony (Modood & Favell 2003:490; Bangstad & Vetlesen 2011:339), particularly in a multicultural society where marginalized minorities have a structural disadvantage, having limited political power and presence, lacking easy access to the media, and not always being well-versed in the language of dominant discourse (Parekh 2000:306). Using the Rushdie Affair in Britain as example, Parekh (ibid, 304-313) problematizes the Habermasian and Rawlsian models. He points out that in a multicultural debate, participants tend to "talk past each other", defining issues in mutually unintelligible terms and having limited knowledge of each other's background. British Muslims, as a "recently arrived immigrant minority" (ibid, 304) at the time, had few "biculturally literate" intellectuals and found it difficult to "articulate their reasons in a liberal language" (ibid, 312) although they did try (they did not primarily use Islamic arguments, but appealed to the British law against blasphemy). Unable to gain sympathy for their view in public debate, they turned to protest, which Parekh argues should be seen as a legitimate part of political deliberation alongside rational dialogue. In his view, dialogue should not only be an instrument to reach agreement on political issues, but also develop mutual understanding between groups, requiring both sides to critical examine and modify their assumptions. In the Rushdie Affair, British liberals were unwilling to concede that their fears of public religion might be unjustified and that Islam may not be a threat to freedom; while Muslims were unwilling to distance themselves from Khomeini's fatwa, and unwilling to appreciate that religion changes over time, and that commitment to free speech is not necessarily equivalent to endorsing 'Islamophobia' (ibid, 311). In contrast to Rawls, Parekh (ibid, 307-310) argues that 'public reason' is not a presupposition for political debate, but a product of it, which is "constantly reconstituted and pluralized by it", and consensus should be seen as a dynamic process rather than a given. He further argues that persuasion relies not only on presenting the weightier argument in rational terms, but also involves emotions, moral values and identity, as well as the character and reputation of the persuader. Arguments are given weight on the basis of moral values, experiences and judgment, and are articulated in particular languages which cannot be 'purified' of their cultural associations.

In their post-secular turn, both Rawls and Habermas accommodate some of these criticisms, particularly the objections from religious citizens. Habermas (2005:13-16)

acknowledges an 'asymmetrical burden' on religious citizens and emphasizes mutual 'learning processes' where both religious and non-religious citizens need to develop 'self-reflective attitudes'. The latter, Habermas (2005:16-20) argues, should abandon a stubbornly rationalist attitude towards religion and instead help translate the 'possible truth content' of religious contributions. Habermas' assumption that the translation requirement implies an asymmetrical cognitive burden for religious citizens seems not to take sufficient account of the extent to which contemporary religion, especially religious minorities in societies where secularism is hegemonic, are already self-reflective and pluralist (Bader 2009:113-114) and that today, well-integrated and highly-educated second-generation European Muslims do have 'biculturally literate' intellectuals as Cora Alexa Døving (2012:40-43) argues with regard to the Norwegian hijab debates, where Norwegian Muslim participants merged religious and secular argumentation in a way that suggests that the theoretical division between religious reasons on one hand, and universal values and secular language on the other, is an artificial distinction.

Rawls (1999:140-141; 151-154) recognizes to a greater extent than Habermas that religious doctrines, including Islamic ones, can endorse an overlapping consensus on constitutional democracy, while interpreting and articulating liberal values in different ways; and that citizens should have mutual knowledge of each other's religious and non-religious doctrines. Veit Bader (2009:113-116) argues that the late Rawls', who recognizes that there can be many legitimate interpretations of liberalism so that public reason must always remain revisable, holds a more inclusive position that comes closer to an 'open model' of deliberation, which encourages "as many voices as possible to be raised, listened to and responded to". While the 'post-secular' revisions take into account the importance of learning about each other's comprehensive doctrines through dialogue, and the need for critical self-reflection on all sides, Parekh (2000:312) still thinks that neither Rawls nor Habermas seem to sufficiently appreciate that political deliberation is always contextual and culturally embedded, is never based on rational arguments alone, and cannot be turned into a single universal model that fits all societies.

Bader (ibid, 126) argues that only an open, inclusive model of public reason can challenge the particular interpretations that hide behind a fixed 'universal' version of public reason (the attempt to claim universality for particular interpretations corresponds to Eurocentrism, see Sayyid 2003). Habermas' idea of 'constitutional patriotism' is somewhat ambivalent with regard to the extent of 'assimilation' that can be required from immigrants. On one hand, he writes that the state must "preserve the identity of the political community, which nothing, including immigration, can be permitted to encroach upon, since that identity is founded on the constitutional principles anchored in the political culture and not on the basic ethical orientations of the cultural form of life predominant in that country" while on the other hand, as a result

of immigration, "as other forms of life become established the horizon within which citizens henceforth interpret their common constitutional principles may also expand" (Habermas 1994:139-140; quoted in Modood 1997:17). While Modood (ibid) rejects Habermas' distinction as invalid because political principles inevitably reflect the shared values of a society, Christian Rostbøll (2008) interprets constitutional patriotism as an open model, and uses this to challenge the argument that free speech is non-negotiable presented by the defenders of publishing the Danish cartoons. Presenting constitutional patriotism as a non-nationalist form of loyalty to the liberal state that accommodates cultural diversity, Habermas argues that "constitutional principles will and should be interpreted on the basis of a particular nation's historical experience" (cited in Rostbøll 2008:25). Rostbøll interprets 'historical experience' as including "the experience of becoming a multicultural society" so that "interpretation is (and should be) a product of *debate* and can be altered by future debates among *all* members of the political community" (ibid, 24) including the Muslim minority. He argues that the particular Danish political culture and its interpretation of free speech should not be seen as a given, which immigrant minorities cannot question and simply have to assimilate, but argues that the political culture itself should be an object of democratic deliberation (ibid, 26).

This open and inclusive view, in line with Parekh (2000:237) and Bader (2009:113-116), challenges the view taken by defenders of the Danish cartoons, who defined free speech as an absolute and non-negotiable value placed beyond democratic deliberation. In their rhetoric, both Jyllands-Posten and the Danish government saw free speech simultaneously as a universal value and a particular value of the Danish national culture, thus conflating the abstract idea of free speech with the Danish interpretation of it. This view, Rostbøll (ibid, 5-6; 18) argues, excluded Danish Muslims from taking part in public deliberation about society's shared laws and principles; they were denied the status as equal citizens and were offered only one way to be liberal, i.e. assimilation to Danish culture. In line with Parekh's (ibid, 312) insistence that political deliberation is always contextual and culturally embedded, Rostbøll (ibid, 9) also argues that there is no culturally neutral way of interpreting liberal principles. The theoretical challenge is to reconcile the universality of liberal values with the acknowledgement that they are always connected to culture, but not to any specific culture. His solution is to think of liberal principles not as a non-negotiable given, but as dialogically constituted. This means that they are subject to "continued democratic deliberation, reinterpretation and revision"; any formulation of them is always provisional and can be improved in the light of new insights (ibid, 10). Such a view allows immigrant minorities to contribute with their own perspectives to the democratic process of improving the understanding and application of universal values. This process multiculturalizes liberalism rather than making it culturally neutral (ibid, 17-18).

In his analysis of Australian integration debates in the late 1980s, Ghassan Hage (1998:233-246) describes a situation where public debate neither included minority voices nor had much effect on policy until the populist One Nation party and the conservative Howard government transformed it into a political force in the 1990s. Integration debates were initiated by white Australians, who called for debate about what they perceived as minority problems, notably their 'lack of integration'. Debates would take place among the majority, between nationalists and liberal multiculturalists who disagreed on how much diversity they could tolerate, but shared the belief that the white majority should supervise the integration process. In Hage's analysis, a central function of the debate was to construct minorities as problematic objects that need to be managed by white national subjects. Regardless of whether the nationalist or liberal side dominated the debate, it depended on what Hage calls a "white policy fetishism" (ibid, 235); that is, an exaggerated belief that the white majority 'chooses' which policy to lead towards minorities. He points out that the Australian government's decision to formulate a policy of multiculturalism, among the first countries in the world in the 1970s, did not primarily depend on a white decision, but on realizing that assimilation could no longer work and that only recognizing diversity could keep the nation united.

'On the ground', a process of multicultural integration (as a two-way process) had been going on regardless of official assimilation policy. Hage argues that the tendency towards integration, including a degree of change in majority society, is inevitable and minimally affected by government decisions. A comparison of the wide differences between minority policies of various European states would show that certain policies may facilitate or slow down the integration process, but they have a rather limited effect; differences in the extent of real integration are small. Hage thus argues that when nationalists worry about minorities' 'lack of integration', what they want is "more supervised integration" (where minorities have to prove their loyalty to the nation), while they actually fear "real integration", where minority persons become equal and politically active citizens defining their belonging independently. Rather than as a meaningful instrument for formulating policy, Hage sees integration debates as a "ritual of white empowerment" (ibid, 241), which provides the majority with a sense of control over the nation; he argues that the presence of unchecked white nationalism assures the continuation of white hegemony, while white liberals can condemn nationalist populism as irrational, and claim for themselves a responsible "middle ground" as managers of diversity.

A European 'crisis of multiculturalism'

While multiculturalism as a state policy was first developed in Canada and Australia (and the United States to some extent, primarily in education policy) in the 1970s, European countries have chosen widely different policies towards minorities. Some countries, including Britain, the Netherlands and Sweden (Modood 2007:3), followed

the lead of Anglophone immigration countries, while others, notably France and Germany (Modood 2007:9), with their specific models of civic assimilationism and the ethnic nation respectively, but also countries like Denmark, never implemented a multiculturalist policy (Triandafyllidou, Modood & Meer 2011). Despite these differences, a European consensus has developed, where multiculturalism is seen as a "failed experiment" that needs to be replaced by a model of 'civic integration' focused on social cohesion and adherence to 'national values' (Modood 2007:11-12; Phillips 2007:4-5, 21-22; Titley & Lentin 2011:2-3; 201). Examples abound, recently German chancellor Angela Merkel declared 'multiculturalism has failed' and British Prime Minister David Cameron said 'multiculturalism is dead' (see Modood 2012:39). The narrative of a "crisis of multiculturalism" (Modood 2007:10-14; Phillips 2007:4-8) became dominant in Britain during the years 2001-2005, but it was the Netherlands which saw the most dramatic policy reversals (Titley & Lentin 2011:202), initiated by influential right-wing politicians, including Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Geert Wilders (Fekete 2006:3-5). Public concern with 'Muslims' started with the Rushdie Affair in Britain and the hijab affair in France, both in 1989 (Modood 2012:49). Anti-multiculturalist sentiment spread to the center-left as Muslims became associated with terrorism and the oppression of women, through a series of violent events during the first few years of the new millennium (including riots in English cities in 2001 and 2004, terror attacks in New York and Washington in 2001 and in London in 2005, and the murders of Fadime Sahindal in Sweden in 2002 and Theo van Gogh in Amsterdam in 2004), for which multiculturalism became a scapegoat (Phillips 2007:3; Titley & Lentin 2011:3). These violent events then served to single out problematic populations that were targeted by changes in policy and legislation across several countries; anti-terrorism measures in Britain, hijab bans in France and Germany, citizenship tests in the Netherlands and other countries, and restrictions on family reunification in Denmark (Razack 2008:129; Fekete 2006:2; Titley & Lentin 2011:126; 201-202; Cesari 2011:27-31). Despite anti-multiculturalist rhetoric, most European countries including Germany and France have enacted multiculturalist policies; e.g. recognizing Muslims as a religious minority, though the creation of Muslim councils can be partly seen as "top-down efforts to control Muslims or channel them in certain directions" (Modood 2012:40). Multiculturalist accommodation in fact *accelerated* in the years 2000-2010 (ibid).

Gavan Titley and Alana Lentin (2011) analyze how mediated events across Europe are linked to form a cumulative, pan-European crisis; drawing on insights from Hage on how integration debates are disconnected from the reality on the ground, construct minorities as problematic objects and attempt to prevent real integration. The two researchers apply Michel de Certeau's concept of 'recited truths' (the production of social facts through narrativization and repetition; ibid, 21) to describe the gap between the narrative of a "failed experiment" of multiculturalism (understood as a unitary doctrine), and an empirical reality where multiculturalism was never adopted as official

policy, as in Merkel's repudiation of a 'German multiculturalism' that never existed (Titley & Lentin 2011:2), and in the Danish rejection of multiculturalism, which is more a retreat from tolerance (ibid, see also Hervik 2004, 2011). However, this partial and erroneous crisis narrative is not simply unrelated to empirical reality, but used to delegitimize 'lived multiculture' (Titley & Lentin 2011:21). As a proxy for rejecting 'lived multiculture' (ibid, 17), the attack on multiculturalism can be understood as a coded form of racism, and a central point in Titley and Lentin's (ibid, 3-4) analysis is how this rhetoric simultaneously repudiates and reshapes racism.

Media plays a central role in internationalizing integration debates by framing and linking local issues to international events (ibid, 125). In response to particular events, framed as evidence of 'bad' or excessive diversity (ibid, 134), politicians and other public figures call for debate, which is never seen as 'open' and 'honest' enough (ibid, 6). While being justified with reference to Habermasian ideas of public deliberation, these repeated calls for integration debate have little influence on policy, and are better understood as 'ritual debates' (ibid, 128-131) in Hage's sense. As such, integration debates become a ritual of exclusion (ibid, 200); a technology to problematize minority populations that serves to reassure the majority of its control over the nation. With reference to Hage's argument that practices of both racism and tolerance confirm majority power to control and set limits for diversity, Titley and Lentin (ibid, 31) argue that Muslim minorities now challenge these 'fantasies' of national management. Either the state accommodates or seeks to contain such challenges, it responds pragmatically to 'lived multiculture' relatively independent of what currency the term 'multiculturalism' has in public opinion at a given time (ibid, 42).

According to Titley and Lentin (ibid, 195), contemporary European integration discourses combine cultural racism with 'assertive liberalism', thus equating 'integration' with cultural homogeneity and the superiority of Western values. Drawing on the topos of a 'clash of civilizations' (Samuel Huntington's idea that after the cold war, global conflicts would no longer be along economic or ideological lines, but between cultures or 'civilizations' defined primarily by religion; this view singled out Muslims as the new 'enemy' of the West), integration rhetoric opposes 'real integration' in line with Hage's suggestion that "worrying about migrants who do not integrate, or integrate enough, may in fact be a fear of real integration" (cited in ibid, 196). In this view, European integration politics is fixated on the role as manager of integration, multiplied by the European self-image as supervisor of civilization. While its contemporary form differs from classic nation-building and cultural homogenization, 'integration' discourses always combine nationalism and liberalism, and are primarily a matter of control, of the government's need to demonstrate its ability to manage diversity (ibid, 201-204).

Parekh (2006:186-187) agrees that part of the explanation for complaints about Muslim minorities' 'lack of integration' can be found within the 'totalist' logic of the integration discourse. European Muslims are generally well-integrated in the economic and political sense, but allegedly fall short of the expectation to internalize what is often called 'Western values'. He argues that nationalists and liberals share an assumption that the political unity of the state requires a culturally unified nation. While nationalists openly demand assimilation, the liberal concept of 'integration' tolerates diversity in the private sphere, but still promotes a more or less monocultural public sphere. The distinction is less clear in practice, as there will be a pressure to align the private sphere with public values, justifying state intervention in the private lives of minorities and requiring them to internalize public values. Further, politicians often mean 'assimilation' (a one-way adjustment where minorities do not 'disturb' mainstream society and become as much as possible like the majority) when talking about 'integration' (a mutual process where also the majority is expected to make changes to accommodate minorities) (Modood 2012:27; 2007:47). Theorists like Parekh, Modood, Hage, and Titley and Lentin, have argued that integration debates are out of touch with empirical reality on the ground. Significantly, the perception of Muslims who 'fail to integrate' has no basis in empirical evidence (Parekh 2006:180-187; Modood 2007:153-154). Feminist theorist of multiculturalism Anne Phillips (2007:23-24) criticizes the cultural essentialism of those rejecting multiculturalism, and argues that they overstate the degree of value difference when identifying groups as 'liberal' or 'illiberal'. While people differ individually, culturally and in terms of class and gender, "these differences do not map onto simple binaries like liberal or nonliberal, Western or non-Western", and in Europe at least, 'deep' value conflict is rare (ibid, 65).

A number of surveys of Muslim attitudes seem to confirm this view. John Esposito and Dalia Mogahed's (2007) worldwide Gallup poll on Muslim views shows that a vast majority of Muslims (as opposed to the extremist minority usually highlighted by Western media) see 'Western' and 'Muslim' values as compatible, and support free speech, democracy and gender equality, which most women and the majority of men see as compatible with their religion. However, rather than declaring adherence to "Western values", they justify these principles with reference to Islam. They are nuanced in their criticism of the West; they admire Western democracy, but lament the breakdown of traditional (family) values and criticize specific (foreign) policies. They do not reject "Western culture", but want their own model of democracy, which may include sharia (in its diverse interpretations) as a source of legislation, but reject that religious leaders should have a role in law-making (theocracy). They want to improve relations with the West, but are asking for greater respect for the Islamic religion.

Surveys among Muslim minorities in Europe show similar results; a majority of French Muslims associated Islam with peace, tolerance and the protection of women, in contrast to majority perceptions of Islam as fanatic, violent and oppressive of women

(Phillips 2007:23). European Muslims may be more secular than their counterparts in Muslim countries, but are generally more religious than the majority population (Cesari 2011:40-41); a vast majority of British Muslims say that religion is of personal importance to them (Modood 2005:160). For Norwegian Muslims, mosque attendance is lower than in Britain, and only a small minority support sharia laws or think society is immoral; but Pakistanis and Somalians, the two largest groups, say that religion is very important to them; while Norwegians as a whole are among the least religious in Europe (NOU 2011:14; p. 315). (While Christians tend to define themselves as either religious or not; religious practice is more of a gliding continuum among Muslims, who are less likely to be 'atheist'; see Vassenden & Andersson 2011:587). Attitudes towards the "West" are similar to the global poll; 90 per cent want more integration and support gender equality and free speech; at the same time as they were overwhelmingly opposed to publishing the Mohammed cartoons (which indicates that respect for Islam matters to them), and significantly critical of military interventions (TNS Gallup 2006; NOU 2011:14, p. 313-319). What most Muslims want, if we can generalize, is neither assimilating "Western values" nor separating from the West, but to integrate the two with each other.

Thus, the conflict between Western and Muslim communities is political rather than cultural; it is more about policy than about principles (Esposito & Mogahed 2007:xi). Further, the poll indicates that the conflict is asymmetric in the sense that the majority of Muslims are more open towards the West, and more nuanced in their criticism of the West. While Muslim 'extremism' is relatively marginal, the idea that 'Islam' and 'the West' are incompatible 'civilizations' is widespread in the West, in the media, politics and public opinion (Modood 2012:16). About 40 per cent of the French, German and Norwegian populations perceive Islam as a threat to national identity (NOU 2011:14; p. 315); and an annual Gallup in Norway over the years 2005 to 2010 shows that more than 50 per cent of the Norwegian population think that Islamic values are incompatible with basic Norwegian values (IMDI 2010:22). A similar proportion also say that immigrants should assimilate (NOU 2011:14; p. 317). Given that a large majority of Muslims want to integrate and think that their religion is compatible with liberal values, why does every second "Westerner", even theorists like Taylor, Barry (2001:27) and Kymlicka, share a misperception that the two have incompatible values?

Theorizing anti-Muslim discourses

Discourses constructing Muslim values, culture and religion as incompatible and inferior to those of the West have played a major role in the widespread rejection of multiculturalism, and have been theorized under various concepts including Islamophobia (a form of xenophobia expressing an unfounded and irrational fear of Islam; see Runnymede Trust 1997; Esposito & Kalin 2011), Orientalism (the colonial construction of the Muslim world as the West's negative mirror image; see Said 1979;

Yegenoglu 1998), and as anti-Muslim racism (a form of 'new racism' or 'cultural racism' that constructs Muslims as essentially different and inferior and discriminates against them on this basis; see Modood 2005; Abbas 2011). The concept of 'Islamophobia' has become an increasingly common term in the last two decades to describe the 'clash of civilizations' thinking that posits Islam as an 'enemy' of 'Western civilization', particularly in popular debates about multiculturalism. While remaining controversial both theoretically and politically in many European countries, the concept has become relatively widespread and accepted in Britain not only as a 'lived experience' but also as an analytical term (ibid, 63-64; Cesari 2011:21-23). Edward Said (1985:99) referred to it in his 1985 essay "Orientalism Reconsidered", and Modood (1993a:87-90; 1993b:97-99) used it when criticizing Kymlicka's assumption about British Muslim 'fundamentalists' who wanted 'internal restrictions' in the Rushdie Affair. Here, Modood defined it as 'ignorance' and 'prejudice' appealing to 'taken-for-granted stereotypes' which may be unintended, but often found among Western intellectuals. The term was popularized through a series of reports on the discrimination of European Muslims, starting with the British *Runnymede Trust* report in 1997, followed by *The European Monitoring Centre on Xenophobia and Racism* (EUMC 2002) and the 2004 United Nations conference *Confronting Islamophobia: Education for Tolerance and Understanding* (Esposito 2011:xxii-xxiii).

The Runnymede Report defines Islamophobia as "the dread, hatred and hostility towards Islam and Muslims perpetrated by a series of closed views that imply and attribute negative and derogatory stereotypes and beliefs to Muslims" and which results in exclusion, discrimination and false presumptions that the Islamic religion is a violent political ideology with values incompatible and inferior to those of the West (cited in ibid). The report identified seven features of Islamophobia; Islam is constructed as (1) monolithic, (2) substantially different, (3) threatening, and (4) politicized. Further characteristics are that (5) any Muslim criticism of the West is rejected, (6) fear of Islam is mixed with anti-immigration racism, and (7) Islamophobia is considered 'natural' and unproblematic (Abbas 2011:65). Besides political objections that the term exemplifies a form of 'political correctness' that censors opinions and stifles critical debate, as an analytical concept it has been criticized for generalizing various forms of anti-Muslim hostility into an "irrational fear" and for exclusively focusing on religion at the expense of the multiple forms of discrimination (such as anti-immigrant, class and racial discrimination) with which it overlaps (Cesari 2011:22-25). Fred Halliday (1999:898) argues that the attack is directed at Muslims as a people, not against Islam as a faith. Thus, it seem problematic to conflate ignorance and fear of Islam (analogous to 'xenophobia' and 'homophobia') with open hostility towards Muslims (which may be better theorized as a form of racism) and the legitimate criticism of radical forms of Islam (Abbas 2011:64). With regard to the latter criticism, it has been pointed out that the concept can be misused to impose restrictions on internal dissent within Muslim

communities (as Kymlicka has argued) and more generally, that it can be used to discredit legitimate criticism of religion (see Bangstad 2011:254-255). Bangstad (ibid) argues that the fact that an analytical concept is inaccurate and can be misused is no reason to reject it; and recommends 'Islamophobia' to be used in a restricted sense. Even so, he notes how widespread and naturalized the phenomenon of Islamophobic speech is across the political spectrum in Norway, at the same time as the liberal elite mostly sees the analytical concept as an attempt to stifle legitimate criticism of religion rather than as identifying a form of racism (ibid, 247).

Referring to a "modern and secular anti-Islamic discourse" (Cesari 2011:21) appearing in public integration debates, triggered by Muslim immigration, the Iranian revolution, and terrorist acts, contemporary Islamophobia in popular culture, politics and media partly reproduces and builds on academic 'Orientalism' (Zebiri 2011:173) as expressed by Bernard Lewis, a widely recognized Middle East expert and American foreign policy advisor who originally coined the term 'clash of civilizations' popularized by Hungtington. Said (1985:98) criticized Lewis as a "main spokesman" of Orientalism, and he appeared as a prominent example in Said's (1979) classic book. Drawing on Foucauldian discourse theory and Gramsci's theory of hegemony, Said (1994:1-7) defines 'Orientalism' as the western construction of "knowledge" about the 'Orient' which is inextricably linked to Western domination over the Middle East, which is the place of Europe's richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant and its most significant 'Other'. As such, the 'Orient' has helped define Europe as its contrasting image, and Orientalist discourse rests on this fundamental distinction between the West and the East. Being relatively independent of any correspondence with a 'real Orient', Said argues that this Western knowledge tradition 'creates' or 'Orientalizes' its object of knowledge, and that rather than being a veridic discourse about 'the East', Orientalist knowledge is primarily a sign of western dominance and hegemony which consistently constructs Europe as superior to the Other. Said (ibid, 300-301) summarizes the "principal dogmas of Orientalism" which "exist in their purest form" today in studies of Islam; (1) an absolute difference between a rational, developed, humane and superior West and an inferior Orient, (2) abstractions about the Orient are always preferred to contemporary empirical reality, (3) the Orient is eternal, uniform and incapable of defining itself, thus Western generalizations are 'objective', and (4) the Orient is fundamentally to be feared or controlled. As feminist theorists like Meyda Yegenoglu (1998) have pointed out, Orientalism is gendered and operates with particular stereotypes of the exotic and submissive Muslim woman and the irrational and fanatic Muslim man (see also Abbas 2011:74). These images are reproduced in contemporary hijab debates (my chapter 4), where the Orientalist exoticization of Muslim women and the desire to unveil and 'liberate' them has reemerged (Maira 2011:113), and on the other side the hijab has become a symbol of resistance to assimilation (Abbas 2011:72). As Kate Zebiri (2011) points out, gender

and violence have been persistent themes in anti-Muslim discourse, as reflected in the focus on violence against women, but also in the cartoon affair, where the most provocative cartoons depicted the prophet as a terrorist surrounded by women in burqas.

While constructions of Islam as a negative contrast to the West date back to the colonial era and before, they have been revived after the end of the Cold War, when Huntington popularized the idea of a 'clash of civilizations'. In Lewis' version, the primary conflict is within the Muslim civilization, between "good Muslims" and "bad Muslims". In the "war on terror", this idea became the driving force in American foreign policy intended to liberate "good" Muslims, defined as those who share the "Western" values of secularism, freedom and democracy, from those "bad" Muslims who were perceived as "fundamentalists" and "anti-modern" (Mamdani 2004:20-24). The distinction between two categories of Muslims, defined culturally as either westernized or anti-Western, as the dominant framework for understanding current international politics, opens up for perceiving non-assimilated Muslim minorities in Western countries as an 'enemy within' and has been used to justify assimilation policy in some countries and underlies integration rhetoric in others (Razack 2008:108). When the discourse of good Muslims and bad Muslims is linked to a neo-nationalist ideology that links culture to descent and sees Muslims are unassimilable, individuals of 'Muslim descent' are faced with the impossible task of repeatedly proving themselves to be 'integrated enough' in terms of loyalty to 'western values' (ibid, 122). Contemporary Orientalist discourse builds on, but does not simply reproduce, earlier constructions of Islam as the 'Other' of Western modernity, civilization and Christianity (Maira 2011:10; Abbas 2011:65). A significant development is that the Christian aspects of historical Islamophobia have been replaced by secular ideas (Zebiri 2011:174-175). While the characteristics ascribed to the Other have changed (when serving as the negative mirror of Christianity, Islam's sexual morality was demonized for being too liberal; today's secular discourse favors sexual liberation and demonizes veiling), there is also continuity; the themes of gender and violence remain central, and like historical Orientalism served to justify colonialism, it still serves to justify specific Western political interests such as the war in Afghanistan (ibid; Fekete 2009:193).

Contemporary anti-Muslim discourses are fueled by a number of sources, including the media, secular skepticism about religion, anti-Muslim political forces and intellectuals. While not openly Islamophobic (with some exceptions), mainstream media plays an important role because sensationalist news coverage leads to an exaggerated focus on violence at the expense of more positive stories (as I will further discuss in chapter 2). In European media coverage of Muslim minorities, this means that there are far fewer stories about successful integration and the daily life of Muslims than about incidents of violence against women, terror threats and extreme opinions (Cesari 2011:33-34). Even in British media (which did not reprint the Danish cartoons, as opposed to newspapers in many other European countries), the dominant view of Muslims focused on their

'failure to integrate', 'unreasonable demands', 'mixed loyalties', 'support for extremism', 'obscurantism' and the incompatibility of values; and notably, this view corresponded closely with public opinion (Zebiri 2011:177). As a large part of European majority populations has little knowledge of Islam, their perceptions are influenced by stereotypical portrayal in the media even when this image is not representative of most Muslims (Abbas 2011:71). While not necessarily anti-Muslim, a widespread ideological form of secularism (see my chapter 5) which draws on Enlightenment ideals and rhetoric and sees religion in largely negative terms, also contributes to a lack of understanding and sympathy with Muslim demands, which cannot be accommodated from this viewpoint (Esposito 2011:xxvi). Part of the explanation for the widespread fear of Islam is that contemporary Islam is believed to represent a European past (the Middle Ages), where religion was powerful and oppressive (Zebiri 2011:187). In a Norwegian study of the links between whiteness and secularism, drawing on Goffman's theory of the 'stigma', Anders Vassenden and Mette Andersson (2011) argue that in secularized Europe, and especially Scandinavia, secular beliefs are normative while religious belief is stigmatized. Parallel to the dynamics of whiteness, Christians may 'pass' as non-religious since their stigma is non-visible, while being Muslim is a visible stigma, signified by 'race' as a 'sign given off' as well as by the hijab as an intentional 'sign given' in Goffman's terminology.

On the other hand, anti-Muslim racism is actively promoted by a network of anti-Muslim organizations, politicians, intellectuals and activists, often on the internet (Ali et al. 2011). The more explicitly Islamophobic among these, like Geert Wilders (see Fekete 2009:200), Daniel Pipes (see Said 1985:96-98; Ali et al. 2011), Bruce Bawer and Bat Ye'or (see Bangstad 2011:249-250), propagate the idea that Muslim migrants are colonizing Europe and threaten to turn it into a totalitarian Islamic state, "Eurabia". These writers rhetorically conflate the distinction between Islam and Islamism, and draw an analogy between Islam and fascism (Bangstad 2011:248), thus construing European Muslim minorities as a disloyal 'fifth column' or 'enemy within' (Abbas 2011:74), accompanied with a view that left-wing 'multiculturalists' have betrayed Western nations by opening their borders. While such an ideology led to the July 22, 2011 terror attack against the Norwegian Labor Party's youth camp, much of the same ideas are shared by more mainstream intellectuals like Paul Berman and Lewis, who has argued that multiculturalism means a European 'surrender' to Islam (cited in Esposito 2011:xxv). Right-wing populist parties in many European countries including the Norwegian Progress Party, also draw on these discourses to varying extent, carefully balancing their appeals to both extreme-right and more moderate voters (Bangstad 2011:257). Ex-Muslims or individuals from a Muslim background (such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali) play an important role in validating these ideas of an Islamic threat (Maira 2011:120; Ali et al. 2011:56). Following Lewis' distinction of the good, Westernized Muslim versus the bad, fundamentalist Muslim (see Mamdani 2004), Western media,

politicians and the anti-Islam network actively recruit and promote 'native informants' or what Hamid Dabashi (2011) calls 'comprador intellectuals'; among presumably 'good' i.e. secularized Muslims (to be further discussed in chapter 3).

In Norway, these international figures have inspired not only right-wing extremist groups like Stop the Islamization of Norway (SIAN) and the Norwegian Defense League (NDL), but also a number of more mainstream anti-Muslim activists and intellectuals, including Hege Storhaug's Human Rights Service, Hans Rustad's Document.no, and Walid al-Kubaisi (Bangstad 2011:248-254). In a study of the Norwegian anti-Muslim network and its international connections, Lars Erik Berntzen (2011) found a level of mutual recognition between the Progress Party, Rustad and Storhaug, who cites Lewis as a source of inspiration. These three mainstream players distance themselves from the more explicit racial rhetoric of Ole Jørgen Anfindsen's Honestthinking.org, who cites Pipes as inspiration; and express ambivalence towards SIAN, which they regard as too extreme and thus undermining their cause. Instead, Storhaug and the Progress Party emphasize the connections to the Danish Conservative Party of former Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen; and to 'secularized' Muslims like Hirsi Ali and al-Kubaisi (ibid, 85-88). Having repeatedly been granted public funding after pressure from the Progress Party (see *Fri Tanke,* November 24; 2011), Storhaug is arguably one of the most influential activists seeking to restrict the role of Islam and 'Muslim culture' in the Norwegian public sphere, as her rhetoric focuses on feminism, individual freedom and national loyalty, and she also reaches out to other political parties including the conservative wing of Labor (Berntzen 2011:86; I). Her organization, the Human Rights Service, has been described by the Antiracist Center as a *cornerstone in the domestic hate industry* and *one of the most prominent producers of hate and prejudice in Norwegian society in recent years* (*Dagbladet,* March 26, 2010). I will further discuss her role in chapter 3, which analyzes the political role of 'native informants' in the light of postcolonial theory (Fanon's theory of colonial mentality and Malcolm X's critique of Black Americans who have 'internalized racism'), theories of multiculturalism (Kymlicka, Parekh and Phillips on 'internal dissent' and 'exit') and the sociology of religion (David Bromley's theory on different forms of (politicized) exit from religious groups), and in chapter 4 on the hijab debate, where I will problematize 'white feminism' in the light of postcolonial and Muslim feminist criticism.

Anti-Muslim racism

Modood (1997:4) regards the term Islamophobia as 'somewhat misleading' because contemporary anti-Muslim prejudice is "more a form of [cultural] racism than a form of religious intolerance". While anti-Muslim prejudice is often seen as a form of 'new racism' or 'cultural racism' characterized by a rather recent shift in rhetoric from 'race' to 'culture' (Hervik 2004:151), biological racism was already in the colonial era intertwined with Orientalist discourses (Said 1994; Maira 2011:110). What has been

called the 'racialization of culture' (Titley & Lentin 2011) and the 'culturalization of politics' (Mamdani 2004), which underwrites current Western hostility towards Muslim immigrants and the 'war on terror', thus has significant continuities with colonial racism. In one of few articles on Islamophobia in Norway, Bangstad (2011) discusses under what conditions Islamophobia can be understood as a form of racism. Drawing on Mattias Gardell (2011), he argues that the basis of Islamophobia is an 'essentialist differentiation' combined with an idea of 'civilizational inferiority' which is common to other forms of racism. Essentialist differentiation means that it is assumed that the way Muslims think and act is *determined* by their religion, with the implication that persons categorized as 'Muslim' may be targeted regardless of their individual beliefs and religious practices (Bangstad 2011:250-251). To distinguish 'Islamophobic speech' from legitimate 'criticism of religion', Bangstad (ibid, 258-259) suggests the following criteria; it is (1) based on an essentialist idea of Islam that supposedly determines the thought and action of Muslims, and on (2) an idea of civilizational inferiority; and it is (3) obviously incorrect and hateful with the intention to stigmatize or discriminate. Two of these criteria, essentialist differentiation and ascribed inferiority, correspond to criteria of 'new racism' as defined by several researchers, including Peter Hervik, Michel Wievorka and Tariq Modood, who all emphasize that racism necessarily consists of a combination of these two. Bangstad's third criterion, requiring an *intention* to discriminate, is more in line with current hate speech legislation rather than with antiracist theory which argues that consequences matter rather than intentions. Notably, Norwegian government policy also defines discrimination by its *effect*, regardless of racist motivations which are hard to evaluate (see St.meld. nr. 49 (2003-2004), p. 64). Thus, acts of racism do not depend on intentions, but on the *power* to translate racialized thinking into acts of discrimination. Hervik (2004:151-153) defines 'new racism' as requiring three elements; (1) a dichotomy between us and them, where (2) the Other is made inferior and incompatible, and (3) power to translate racialized thinking into racist acts. This definition includes both differentiation (a dichotomy between 'us' and 'them') and 'inferiorization' (of the Other's culture) as necessary criteria, in addition to the power to transform racialized thinking into negative social consequences for minorities. 'Power' in this sense refers to "the institutional power to control access to the labour market, political office, education, and the media, but also the power to use symbolic resources to engage institutional power" (ibid, 153); thus including the media's power to shape public opinion.

It is sometimes held by 'colorblind' anti-racists that differentiation (a dichotomy between 'us' and 'them') per se is racism. Against this view, Hervik argues that such a distinction is part of any identity formation, and only constitutes racism when combined with inferiorization. Discussing 'cultural racism', Wievorka (1997:141-148) argues that Islamophobia is racist only "if Muslims themselves are constructed as a natural category, and their behavior, real or imagined, is presented as informed in some way or

another by an essence, by innate attributions or an almost genetic cultural heritage" (Wievorka 1997:142). He agrees that racism, whether in a 'classical' or 'new' form, necessarily combines two distinct discourses; a differentialist and segregationist discourse that defines the Other as irreconcilably different, and a "universalist" or assimilatory discourse that defines the Other as inferior. In a given empirical situation, one of them may dominate, as in the comparison of French and British colonial racism, which emphasized assimilation and difference, respectively. Wievorka writes that anti-racism has often become trapped in the contradictions between universalism and differentialism; leading universalist anti-racists to reject multiculturalist movements demanding the right to be different, while differentialist anti-racists have neglected the universal rights of individuals (ibid, 147-148). In multicultural debate, these two groups of self-identified anti-racists have called each other racist, as exemplified in the Black American division between Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'colorblind' humanism in the civil rights movement, which argued that all humans are equal and entitled to the same rights regardless of color; and the color-conscious anti-racism of Malcolm X, which created a politicized Black identity that promoted positive difference (Modood 2005:29-30).

Rather than defining 'new racism' as replacing 'race' with 'culture', Modood (ibid, 27-33) argues that cultural racism builds on biological racism; and points out that ideas about the Other's cultural inferiority were also part of the biological racism in colonial times. He suggests:

> While biological racism is the antipathy, exclusion, and unequal treatment of people on the basis of their physical appearance or other imputed physical differences, saliently in Britain their non-whiteness, cultural racism builds on biological racism a further discourse that evokes cultural differences from an alleged British, civilized norm to vilify, marginalize, or demand cultural assimilation from groups who also suffer from biological racism (ibid, 28-29).

In this view, cultural racism is a combined, or two-step, racism that presupposes 'racialization' of the group which is stereotyped as culturally inferior. While the new nationalist rhetoric in Europe no longer emphasizes whiteness, but instead promotes so-called 'Western values', Modood (ibid, 37) points out that "it is much more likely that the hostility against perceived cultural difference will be directed primarily against non-whites rather than against white minorities". While racialized groups are identified by physical markers such as skin color, it is not implied that their 'culture' is biologically determined. There may however be an assumption of cultural determinism which raises doubts about the possibilities for assimilation, despite the fact that certain non-white individuals are defined as exceptions to general stereotypes applied to the group as a whole (ibid, 38-39). Modood (ibid, 8-18) discusses whether there can be cultural racism only with universalism and inferiorization, where "assimilated or hybrid Asians, those not strongly identified with Asian culture, might not experience exclusion by whites"

(Modood 2005:8). He concedes that a discourse which makes an absolute distinction between cultural behavior and physical ancestry, and only discriminates against those people perceived to be culturally different, may be better defined as culturalism rather than as racism; in practice however it is more likely that "discrimination would be exercised against all people of Asian ancestry, regardless of their fit against the image of Asian culture", a situation which would be cultural racism because "nearly all of a group, identified by color and descent, are being judged by an essentialized image of a group" (ibid). Modood further argues that since cultures are internally diverse, a non-religious Muslim would still be targeted as a cultural Muslim, and a non-cultural Asian would be targeted as an Asian by background, i.e. birth and ancestry.

A number of scholars including Modood (ibid, 10) draw a parallel between anti-Muslim racism and anti-Semitism. Anti-Jewish attitudes among Christians changed from religious prejudice to racism when forcedly converted Jews began to be suspected of not being true Christians in 16th century Spain, where a doctrine developed that "their old religion was in their blood" and that conversion was impossible. Later, in the Nazi version, anti-Semitism was detached from religion and became instead a paradigmatic case of biological racism. Contemporary anti-Jewish prejudice has again been detached from biology (except in Neo-Nazi ideology) but it is generally accepted that anti-Semitism is a form of racism, while anti-Muslim prejudice is often seen as "religious intolerance". Modood thus argues that "religion can be the basis of racialization as long as the religion of a group can be linked to physical ancestry and descent" (ibid, 11), often marked by physical appearance as in "Muslim-looking people" or by a Muslim family name. Physical appearance and names form the basis of racial profiling in anti-terrorism measures (Razack 2008:29-34). Muslims are thus 'racialized', visually identified by (South Asian or Arab) appearance, names and dress, and then ascribed cultural and religious stereotypes like fanaticism, unwillingness to integrate etc. (Modood 2012:50).

A common argument against the concept of 'cultural racism' is expressed by George Fredrickson (cited in Modood 2005:14-16), who argues that it is not racism because it allows for assimilation; assuming that members of a stigmatized group can voluntarily change their identity. Modood argues that this view is mistaken; not primarily because religion or culture is unchangeable, but because 'race' also opens for assimilation. Even classical anti-Black color racism (as in the USA) makes exceptions for assimilated 'mixed-race' individuals who could 'pass for white'. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2003:278-280) thus argues that contemporary US racism is better understood as a continuum with an intermediary group of 'honorary whites' that are partially assimilated and share the political attitudes of white superiority. On the other hand, the idea that religion is about beliefs that can be voluntarily given up, has been characterized by Modood (2007:70-71) as "sociologically naïve and a political con", because being identified as a Muslim is not primarily about individual beliefs, but about ancestry. Being born into a Muslim

family, or being born into a society where 'looking like a Muslim' or being Muslim creates suspicion, hostility or discrimination, has little to do with individual choice; although Muslims do respond differently to this situation, some will resist and others will "try to stop looking like Muslims" (ibid). In this context, a religious identity is not primarily about beliefs and practice, but is an ascribed and self-identified communal identity; sometimes less open to individual choice than 'passing for white', as when Muslims are singled out as the most unassimilable group in Europe (Modood 2005:16-17). Contemporary anti-Muslim racism holds contradictory views about assimilation; Muslims are expected to assimilate into majority culture, but at the same time they are often considered 'unassimilable' because their religion supposedly determines their thought and action. This particular combination is effectively oppressive, because whatever Muslims do in order to successfully assimilate, they may be suspected of not being assimilated 'enough'.

British anti-racism in the 1980s was modeled on the African American struggle, and did not take into account the cultural racism directed against Asians, who did not easily identify as Black (ibid, 30-33). While some antiracists condemn the assertion of minority identities such as Asian, Indian or Muslim as 'culturalist' or even 'racist', Modood (ibid, 104-106) argues that authentic antiracism for Muslims inevitably will have a religious dimension, because "their sense of being and their surest conviction about their devaluation by others comes from their historical community of faith and their critique of the West" (ibid, 104). Thus, antiracism needs to accept oppressed groups on their own terms rather than ignore their lived identities and impose on them a spurious identity as 'blacks'. On the other hand, Muslims also need to rethink antiracism, since the classical Muslim view of racial equality has the same shortcomings as the 'color-blind' universalism associated with Martin Luther King Jr. An effective anti-racist alliance would require that radical anti-racists recognize the importance of culture and religion, while culturally stigmatized minorities need to recognize the existence of color racism. Theoretically, this means taking into account both the positive, self-defined identity ('mode of being') and the negative, ascribed difference ('mode of oppression'). These two aspects of identity are not equivalent even in the case of Black Americans, who also go beyond a purely political black consciousness and draw strength from recovering African cultural roots.

Hegemony and resistance

In his analysis of western discourses that misrepresent Islam and construct it as an inferior 'Other', Said employs the Foucauldian notion of power as "governmentality"; an impersonal force that seeks to control its subjects by "re(-)forming" them and making them conform to their place in the social system (Moore-Gilbert 1997:36), and where the key instrument of power is 'knowledge'. He adapts the Foucauldian idea that 'discourse' as the medium of power 'constructs' the objects of its knowledge (ibid).

However, Said recognizes to a greater extent the role of agency, both in terms of intention and the possibility of resistance to the dominant discourse. Thus, for him, Western domination is a "conscious and purposive process governed by the will and intention of individuals as well as by institutional imperatives" (Moore-Gilbert 1997:37) rather than an impersonal force. From Gramsci, Said employs the idea that 'cultural hegemony' works alongside material forces of power such as government and the law, and both theorists focus on discourses in 'civil society' as the "medium through which power operates most effectively" (ibid, 38). Analyzing Said's classical work, Bart Moore-Gilbert (ibid, 49) argues that Foucault's pessimistic view about the possibilities of resistance seems to dominate over Gramsci's more optimistic view, and that this is a weakness in Said's conception of Orientalism. Said pays insufficient attention to how hegemonic discourses reproduce, why they arise, and the struggles they go through to become and remain dominant. Gramsci's theory of hegemony and resistance is better suited to understand hegemony as a process in concrete historical events, where power relations are continuously reasserted, challenged and modified in discursive struggles. A Gramscian perspective takes account of the process of resistance from counter-discourses which challenge, contest and negotiate power, as well as the internal contradictions within the dominant discourse (ibid, 49-52). Theorists of new racism often apply the Gramscian notion of hegemony and counter-hegemony (Werbner 1997a:13; Gullestad 2006b:25), and study the discursive struggles between hegemonic discourses and counter-discourses (Modood 2005:9, 44; Amir-Moazami 2004:7-10; Hervik 2004:249; Steien 2007:44). These perspectives take into account both agency and structural power; hegemony is understood as unstable, always challenged by counter-discourses, but also rearticulated and reaffirmed. Various theorists differ in emphasizing the power of dominant discourses or the dynamics of negotiations, and this is closely related to the empirical situation in the countries they have studied.

Modood's (2006:40-41) focus on public sphere 'negotiation' reflects the British context where minorities in general and Muslims more lately have achieved a strong voice and a degree of influence. He describes the public sphere as "essentially contested and indeed created through ongoing discursive contestation and political struggles" (ibid) and regards this as the primary means of "integration", which "flows from the process of discursive engagement as marginal groups begin to assert themselves confidently in the public space, and others begin to argue and reach some agreement with them" (ibid). He argues that policy and legislation may be less important for integration than public debate, which "allows for the changing of certain attitudes, stereotypes, stigmatizations, media images and national symbols" (ibid). While some legislation against racism may be necessary, the multicultural goal of respect goes beyond the scope of the law and relies on "the sensitivity and responsibility to refrain from what is legal but unacceptable" (Modood 2007:57). Through minority protest in public debate, the dominant group may learn what is offensive to others and develop empathy.

In France and Germany, Muslim minorities have had less access to the public sphere and a smaller impact on challenging dominant discourses than in Britain, as shown by Schirin Amir-Moazami's (2004:8) study of the hijab debates, where Muslim women's counter-discourses are mostly expressed in a separate sphere and less openly challenge dominant discourses of media and public intellectuals (ibid, 22-23). Hervik's (2004:249) study of new racism and new nationalism also describes a more 'Foucauldian' situation, where the dominant political discourse has become hegemonic through media influence and has largely displaced the competing discourse of tolerance among ordinary Danes. In her study of Norwegian debates, Gullestad (2006b: 195-215) sees public debate as a discursive struggle, where majority hegemony is challenged by counter-hegemonic ideas when minority voices join the public sphere, but hegemony is rearticulated and reconfirmed when minority voices are marginalized and majority opinions emerge as 'neutral'.

Discursive struggles between four ideological positions

Applying the theoretical perspective on discursive struggles between hegemony and resistance to multicultural debate, four distinct ideological positions can be identified according to two cross-cutting dimensions. First, there is a distinction between dominant (majority) positions and resistant (minority) positions, and second, between confrontational or separatist positions based on cultural essentialism, and dialogue-oriented positions emphasizing shared values and compatibility. While there are nuances within each position, a degree of overlap between them, and a possibility of in-between positions, both the empirical as well as theoretical material suggests that various debate contributions can be distinguished in terms of these four categories. In their analysis of the cartoon affair, Risto Kunelius and Elisabeth Eide (2007:16-18) and Kunelius and Amin Alhassan (2008:90-95) identified four different positions based on philosophical criteria; (1) liberal fundamentalism, (2) liberal pragmatism, (3) dialogic multiculturalism, and (4) religious or ethnic fundamentalism. These are distinguished by two cross-cutting dimensions; between 'universalism' and 'cultural relativism' (Kunelius & Eide 2007:17) or 'contextualism' (Kunelius & Alhassan 2008:90), cross-cut by a distinction between 'communication within cultures' ('fundamentalism') and 'communication between cultures' ('dialogue'). There is significant correspondence between these and my own categorization; and I agree with the way there have defined the latter dimension as a distinction between a tendency to define values as non-negotiable aspects of their 'culture' (which makes intercultural communication difficult and may lead to conflict) as opposed to a pragmatic approach that understands values as (to varying extent) subject to political negotiation.

Taking my empirical material as a point of departure rather than starting with philosophical criteria, I think the former dimension is more accurately defined in terms of majority and minority perspectives. This distinction should not be understood in a

culturally essentialist or deterministic way which would imply that individuals from the majority or minority necessarily hold these positions; a strong standpoint epistemology of this kind would be ideological rather than reflecting empirical reality, and would fail to take into account how hegemony and resistance works. Rather, my distinction between majority and minority perspectives reflects the feminist and postcolonialist argument that knowledge is situated and socially positioned in structures of power (Gunew 2004; see also Harding 2000; Collins 2000) and reflects the experiences and interests of the knowing subject. This theoretical claim finds strong empirical support in the integration debates I analyze, while at the same time being able to account for the highly significant exceptions where minority individuals support majority perspectives (e.g. so-called 'native informants') as well as majority individuals who support minority perspectives (notably the antiracist position which takes minority perspectives as point of departure for critical analysis). Thus, what has been called 'universalist' perspectives is more accurately understood as attempts by the dominant social group to claim universality for its own perspective while marginalizing minority perspectives as 'particularist'. The postcolonial criticism of such 'false universalisms' as Eurocentrism (Sayyid 2003) is paralleled by feminist critiques of the male bias hiding behind gender-neutral concepts in much contemporary liberal theory (Phillips 2007:32-33).

Thus, defining the distinction between majority and minority positions in terms of universalism and relativism is misleading (though the term contextualism is more accurate). In this regard, I agree with Phillips (ibid) and Rostbøll (2008), who argue that the dichotomy between universalism and relativism is unhelpful because universal values are always expressed in particular contexts. Taking into account these critical perspectives on power and hegemony, the dialogic minority position (3) is more explicitly identified with antiracism and critical multiculturalism. In my analysis, I have called the four ideological positions (1) 'confrontational liberalism' (which speaks of a clash of civilizations and argues that liberal values such as free speech are absolute and non-negotiable), (2) 'dialogical liberalism' (which takes a more pragmatic approach to liberal values as subject to political negotiations), (3) 'antiracist multiculturalism' (which represents a critical, dialogical engagement with dominant discourses) and (4) 'minority communitarianism' (in different forms, including cultural and religious conservatism and traditionalism, but also 'political Islam'; which to various extent share an idea of cultural autonomy, separatism or self-sufficiency and are skeptical of Western influence).

In the following, I will elaborate on what distinguishes the positions from each other. According to Phillips (ibid, 22-23), the contemporary rhetoric of 'integration' and 'community cohesion', accompanied by a preoccupation with identifying 'core values' that characterize each nation and which minorities need to accept in order to become citizens, implies that minorities are unfamiliar with core principles of democracy and equality. While not necessarily openly nationalist or assimilationist, this form of

assertive liberalism "invokes a stereotypical contrast between Western and non-Western values that replays monoculturalism in a more political guise" (Phillips 2007:23). As Phillips points out, the generic values of democracy and human rights cannot be claimed to belong to any particular nation nor are they exclusively liberal, European or Western as if non-Western immigrants are unfamiliar with and need to be taught about human rights. Instead, the idea that such values are 'European' "draws on and reinforces stereotypical distinctions between liberal and illiberal, modern and traditional, Western and non-Western cultures" (ibid). This view differentiates between 'us' and 'them' and makes it clear that 'our values' are superior.

As a European paradigm of national identity, 'confrontational liberalism' (position 1) draws quite explicitly on ideas of a clash of civilizations; and somewhat less openly on anti-Muslim discourses. While strictly speaking not 'liberal', such 'illiberal' liberalism can be understood as a neo-nationalist appropriation of liberal rhetoric. In this populist discourse of European identity politics, liberal values are claimed as part of European identity and in each country particularized as part of a national culture into which immigrants are expected to assimilate. Statistics from Norway indicate that half the population agrees that immigrants should "strive to become like Norwegians as much as possible" (cited in St.meld.nr. 49, 2003-2004, p. 67). Also referred to as 'identity liberalism' (Titley & Lentin 2011:116-121), this view claims to defend liberal values against the threat of illiberal forces (mainly represented by Muslims) allegedly accommodated by multiculturalism. Analyzing the new nationalism and new racism in Denmark, Hervik (2011:236-241) points out how this position combines ideas of cultural incompatibility and inferiority with neoconservative ideas inspired by Carl Schmitt, who argued that politics is about identifying and confronting your 'enemy'. Thus, the public sphere is seen as a battlefield, and willingness to dialogue, negotiate and accommodate is seen as a sign of weakness. In line with this thought, parts of Danish media constructed Danish national identity as against a Muslim enemy, and the government rejected the Muslim ambassadors' request for dialogue and refused to offer a (genuine) apology. Similar confrontational views have been expressed in academic comments on the Rushdie and cartoon affairs; Brian Barry (2001:31) writes that "the right to mock, ridicule and lampoon is inseparable from the right to free speech" while Randall Hanssen (2006:8) argued that Muslims "cannot be accommodated through a revision of those norms and principles".

Dialogical liberalism (position 2) clearly rejects the two basic characteristics of 'confrontational liberalism', i.e. the idea of a 'clash of civilizations' and the Schmittian idea of confrontation. Instead, it draws on ideas of deliberative democracy, arguing that dialogue can generate an intercultural consensus on core values (Phillips 2007:41). Theoretically, this more pragmatic approach corresponds to Kymlicka's multiculturalism and Rawls' pluralism, which provide liberal arguments for accommodating cultural and religious minorities, respectively. As discussed earlier,

these theorists agree that minority groups mostly share liberal values, although they may interpret them differently. While accepting that there is more than one way to be liberal, these theorists remain within a liberal framework thought to be neutral, but which justifies certain limits to tolerance and restraints on public reasoning. From a minority perspective, these approaches have been criticized for exaggerating the scale of value conflict (see Phillips 2007:41) and for being less liberal than they appear (Modood 2005:19-20). Parekh (1995:97), for example, comments that liberals speak of an open-minded dialogue, but remain skeptical about others' beliefs and dogmatic about their own. While agreeing that not all differences can be tolerated, Parekh criticizes liberals for conducting dialogue on their own terms, without taking a critical look at their own assumptions. Instead of excluding some voices as 'unreasonable', he argues that the determining principles should be dialogically derived and consensually grounded, not imposed by a narrowly defined liberalism.

The difference between 'dialogic liberalism' and 'antiracist multiculturalism' (position 3) lies less in their underlying philosophies than in how they are politically situated; and the limits of 'dialogical liberalism' can be understood by paying attention to how it is positioned in power relations between majority and minority. Sneja Gunew (2004:5-17; see also Titley & Lentin 2011:14-15) distinguishes between 'state multiculturalism' understood as "a set of government policies designed to manage cultural diversity" (ibid, 5) and 'critical multiculturalism' "used by minorities as leverage to argue for participation, grounded in their difference, in the public sphere" (ibid, 16-17). As a state policy for diversity management, as in Canada and Australia, multiculturalism is co-opted by the state for its nation-building projects and linked to practices and discourses which police and control diversity. In this discourse, a main issue is which differences are compatible with liberal culture. Consequently, minorities tend to be constructed as problems and their illiberal practices contrasted with Western values. Thus, she argues that state multiculturalism is often complicit with assimilation policy and racism because it is based on a liberal pluralism which fails to take account of power structures and implies a 'hidden white norm' from which minorities diverge, in the sense theorized by critical analysts of whiteness (Frankenberg 1993; Garner 2006). 'Whiteness' can be understood as the 'unmarked' identity of the dominant social group, which appears neutral from a majority perspective but becomes visible from a minority perspective (ibid, 259-262). Ruth Frankenberg (1993:1) defines whiteness as referring to a position of structural advantage (white privilege); a perspective or 'standpoint' from which white people look at the world (Eurocentrism); and "a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed" and which are assumed to be normative, neutral and universal (ibid, 202-204). Whiteness is thus "an invisible perspective, a dominant and normative space against which difference is measured" (Dyer cited in Garner 2006:259). The normative 'content' of whiteness is linked to ideas that allegedly characterize (Western) 'civilization'; including individualism, rationality and secularism.

Critical multiculturalists point out that liberalism is closely linked to the state; it is state-centered in the sense of taking the perspective of the state and approaching issues of multiculturalism in the way of an ideal legislator or policymaker (Modood & Favell 2003:493-494). Historically, liberal philosophy provided ideological justification for the state's dismantling of traditional communities and the creation of an individualist political culture (Parekh 2000:34). Identifying with and speaking from the perspectives of the state and of the national majority, and being insufficiently aware of the implications of this position, 'dialogical liberalism's claim to neutrality is betrayed by its (often unconscious) reflections of the dominant culture and by being insufficiently open to minorities, who are more often 'tolerated' than accepted as equal partners in a genuine dialogue conducive to mutual learning. Antiracist multiculturalism makes no claims to neutrality, but argues that minorities must be equal participants in negotiating, defining and interpreting common values and principles, and explicitly starts with critical minority perspectives on hegemonic discourses.

From such a perspective, Pnina Werbner (1997:262-263) argues that multiculturalism and antiracism must be combined in order to recognize the complementarity of the universal and the particular, of our commonalities and differences. She criticizes liberal theorists of multiculturalism for failing to see how cultural racism denies commonalities across difference, e.g. when Taylor and Kymlicka through factual errors create an impression that mainstream Islam is incompatible with liberalism, thus reproducing an anti-Muslim bias that is prominent in elite discourses (Modood 1997:3). The difference between state multiculturalism and critical multiculturalism can be further illustrated by comparing Kymlicka's perspective with Modood's. While Modood's theory starts 'from below' with those differences that are important to minority groups as expressed in concrete demands and political mobilization, and understands multiculturalism as the process of negotiation (between minority, majority and state) which may result in pragmatic state accommodation, Kymlicka tries to derive an ideal model for appropriate state policy from an abstract, often reified, concept of culture. While arguing that some minority demands should be accommodated, Kymlicka (2002:342-347) writes from a state perspective where he sees multiculturalism as a government strategy to justify nation-building, where the state gains legitimacy among minorities by accommodating some of their demands. His historical parallel to social democratic accommodation of working-class demands, in order to create loyalty to the state, integrate workers in the national culture, and prevent them from supporting foreign ideas such as communism (ibid, 328-329), indicates a nationalist strategy of containment, especially if accommodation is modest and does not address structural issues (see Titley & Lentin 2011:15).

While Kymlicka assumes that "in most cases, ethnocultural groups in Western democracies are not in fact seeking to limit the basic liberties of their own members, and are not seeking to prevent their members from questioning and revising traditional

practices and customs" (2002:342), he remains skeptical about 'conservative ethno-religious groups' and demands that minorities must be 'internally liberal' in order to claim legitimate minority rights. While pragmatically accommodating cultural minorities, Kymlicka's theoretical argument is more concerned with defining the 'limits of tolerance'. As Modood (2007:63) has argued, the liberal concept of 'tolerance' falls short of multicultural recognition, acceptance or respect, since it implies refraining from taking action against a difference one disapproves of. As such, the concept of tolerance implies a negative attitude towards difference, and the power to choose between tolerance and intolerance. In his discussions of 'internal restrictions' among European Muslims, Kymlicka (ibid, 340-341) seems to exaggerate the extent of value conflict. As Modood points out, Kymlicka's assumption that European Muslims try to gain state support to restrict the legal right of individuals to heresy, apostasy and to refuse arranged marriages, seems to be derived from majority discourses about Islam as an illiberal other, rather than from actual political demands made by Muslims. While Modood (2006:52) recognizes that the state must protect the rights of minority individuals oppressed within their own communities, he criticizes Kymlicka for generalizing the point about internal restrictions into a "fundamental principled constraint upon multiculturalism" (Modood 2007:29), which means that liberal theory serves as a non-negotiable standard against which minority practices are to be evaluated. Kymlicka can thus be seen as reflecting a top-down approach rather than entering into critical dialogue with minority individuals, which would offer a more accurate diagnosis of existing problems (Al-Hibri 1999:42).

While recognizing that 'state neutrality' is unfair to cultural minorities because it inevitably privileges the dominant group, Kymlicka defends 'neutrality' towards religion. Modood argues that a radical secularism (which insists that religion should have no public role) cannot be neutral between religions; it inevitably favors privatized religion, which is primarily about personal beliefs and conduct as in Lutheran Protestantism, over those that include communal obligations and political action. A radically secular state consequently demands that religions with public ambitions give them up, thus contradicting the principle of neutrality. Some liberals solve this contradiction by making explicit that the liberal state should encourage individualistic religions over communalistic ones; with the consequence that the state is seen as unjust by members of communalistic religions (Modood 2005:144). While what Modood calls 'radical' or 'ideological' secularism' is often taken for granted in liberal theory; Rawls gives a more reasoned justification. However, Modood (ibid, 19-20) argues,

> This secularism is less liberal than it seems and is part of the political culture and policy assumptions that make it difficult for Western societies to be just to Muslims. It is an obstacle to seeing the problems of Muslims and sympathizing with them, to seeing aspects of the oppression of Muslims, to recognizing

Muslims, and to offering solutions to them similar to those given to other oppressed and disadvantaged groups.

Instead, he suggests ensuring that those marginalized by the dominant ethos are given access to the public sphere so their voices can be heard, and points to the 'moderate secularism' found in India, where the state does not identify with any religion, but supports religions and allows a public role for them (Modood 2005:145). In such a 'moderate' form of secularism, Modood argues that the challenge is to find a way for people of different religions as well as non-religious persons to reason with each other in public debate and be able to reach conclusions that have legitimacy across faiths; and to avoid conflict by mutually limiting criticism of each other's fundamental beliefs (ibid). Instead of 'neutrality', Modood (ibid, 147) advocates including religious views in the public sphere, with an ideal that they will be translated into nonreligious considerations so that contributions to political discourse can be seen as relevant to all. Modood's view is similar to the later Rawls and Habermas, who in their post-secular turn distance themselves from what they call 'Enlightenment liberalism' (Rawls) and a 'secularist stubbornness' (Habermas 2005:20), and instead allow religious arguments into public debate *provided* that they get translated into a political language that is accessible to all, before crossing the institutional threshold between the informal public sphere and state institutions such as parliaments and courts (ibid, 14-15). While the late Rawls no longer defines this political language as 'secular reason', Habermas continues to equate public reason with secular reason. However, Habermas (ibid, 16) suggests that,

> The requirement of translation is even a cooperative task in which non-religious citizens must likewise participate, if their religious fellow citizens are not to be encumbered with an asymmetrical burden. Whereas citizens of faith may make public contributions in their own religious language only subject to the proviso that these get translated, the secular citizens must open their minds to the possible truth content of those presentations and even enter into dialogues from which religious reasons then might emerge in the transformed guise of generally accessible arguments.

Habermas (ibid, 18) thus asks secular citizens to give up an ideological secularist view that "perceive[s] religious traditions and religious communities as archaic relics of pre-modern societies", and which "can obviously not be expected to take religious contributions to contentious political issues seriously" in favor of a more open view that helps to assess religious contributions for possible truth content that can be translated into secular language and justified by secular arguments in legislative and policy-making institutions. The Rushdie Affair (in Britain), where liberal secularists rather than Christians were most strongly opposed to Muslim protest (Modood 2009:174), serves as an example of this translation process, where Muslim protestors initially argued in terms

of religious concepts of apostasy and blasphemy, before settling on demanding a ban against religious discrimination parallel to legislation against racial and ethnic discrimination (Modood 2007:142). Similarly, in the cartoon affair, Muslim protests included arguments about blasphemy (reflecting the position I have called 'minority communitarianism') and arguments about anti-Muslim racism (reflecting the position I have called 'antiracist multiculturalism'). Modood (2005:142) argues that it is only in their radical, ideological forms that Islam and secularism clash, while mainstream, moderate secularism is not only compatible with mainstream, moderate Islam, but the two moderate versions are also philosophically closer to each other than either one is to its radical versions. In mainstream Islam, there is sufficient separation between private beliefs and the public sphere to facilitate dialogue across religions; there is thus no reason to exclude Muslims from participation in public debate on the grounds that their politics are not secular enough.

Another strand of 'dialogical liberalism' is 'cosmopolitanism' (associated with Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall in Britain, and Thomas Hylland Eriksen in Norway); an attitude that accepts difference, celebrates diversity and cultural hybridity, and sees values as emerging from intercultural dialogue and embedded in particular contexts (see also Phillips 2007:69-70). The cosmopolitan approach emphasizes a sense of 'multiculture' where people have fluid and multiple identities which they combine in individual ways in various contexts, with British Caribbeans as a typical example (see Modood 2011:5). The cosmopolitan approach rejects nationalism and speaks about the creation of a more inclusive "new we" (see ibid, 3; in Norway, this rhetoric is expressed by Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre). While cosmopolitanism goes beyond 'individualist integration' (which has no place for minority identities in the public sphere) in the sense that it positively values diversity and seeks to dethrone the dominant culture in favor of cultural mixing, it is primarily an attitude rather than a policy. As a politics, it does not differ much from 'individualist integration' (ibid, 5-7; 2012:33). Thus, 'cosmopolitanism' falls short of multiculturalism. For Phillips (2007:69-70), the cosmopolitan perspective (in practice, if not always in theory) tends to reproduce a hierarchy of cultures by seeing cultural hybridity as more characteristic of Western culture, thus reproducing the problem of dominant group claims to 'universalism'.

Modood goes beyond the individual diversity of cosmopolitanism and advocates the accommodation of minority group identities and values in the public sphere (2011:5-8). Taking British South Asians, who tend to be more culturally conservative than Caribbeans, as his point of departure, he argues that multiculturalism must have room for both individual diversity and ethno-religious communitarianism, and emphasizes that individuals should be free to choose between assimilation, cultural mixing or cultivating group membership. While acknowledging that there may be a genuine concern about some groups becoming too inward-looking and not interacting enough with others, he criticizes those who promote one single model of integration (either that

is assimilation, individualist integration or cosmopolitan diversity) for all minorities, and then complain that 'Muslims' continue to be visible as a distinct group when they should not be, and attributing this to a separatist tendency allegedly encouraged by multiculturalism. He argues that such separatism has never been part of any theory or policy of multiculturalism, it represents a fundamental anxiety among critics of multiculturalism, who sometimes see separatism as a defining feature of it (Modood 2012:36-37). To the contrary, the multicultural theories of Taylor, Kymlicka, Parekh, Phillips and Modood himself, as well as policies in Canada, Australia and Britain all aim at 'integration' (ibid, 41).

The differences between multiculturalism and separatism, or between the positions I have called 'minority communitarianism' and 'antiracist multiculturalism' can be illuminated with a further discussion of cultural essentialism and hybridity. From their various positions, critical multiculturalists like Phillips (2007:15) and Modood as well as Gilroy, as a theorist of hybridity, take a nuanced position which rejects both cultural essentialism and the kind of anti-essentialism of opponents of multiculturalism, who promote a 'culture-blind' approach and argue that 'groups do not exist'. While more skeptical of group-based multiculturalism than Modood, Phillips (ibid, 8-9; 29) defends a 'multiculturalism without culture', i.e. a 'revised' multiculturalism that does without essentialist or reified ideas of culture, which tend to explain the behavior of minority individuals as determined by their culture in contrast to the supposedly rational, autonomous western individual. Like Modood, she criticizes political theorists such as Kymlicka for not taking sufficiently into account the anthropological and sociological critique of the concept of culture (ibid, 16-19) and the now widespread agreement among theorists that "cultures" are not isolated, homogenous wholes as was sometimes claimed by classical anthropology. She argues that both supporters and critics of multiculturalism have exaggerated the "unity and solidity of cultures" and the extent of value conflict, thus mistaking contextual political issues for cultural conflicts.

Neither Gilroy (1993:100-102), theorizing hybridity grounded in the British Caribbean experience, nor Modood, theorizing group-based multiculturalism based on British Muslim experience, defend the cultural essentialism found in certain forms of Black Nationalism and radical Islam, which promote cultural separatism over multicultural integration, i.e. the position I have called 'minority communitarianism' (which may also include less ideological and more traditionalist views which hold that the cultural community should limit (Western) influence from the outside). While promoting an ideal of hybridity, Gilroy criticizes the anti-essentialist position for its "arrogant deconstruction of blackness" (ibid, 100), which effectively denies the specificities of the Black experience of racism. Thus, while skeptical of Black cultural essentialism which emphasizes African roots, Gilroy defends a political concept of Black identity that is based on the experience of racialization. Similarly, but going further than Gilroy, Modood criticizes the politics of anti-essentialism used to deny Muslim claims for

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group rights. Those who oppose political demands in the name of 'culture' (including forms of state multiculturalism, Black Nationalism and Muslim 'fundamentalism') have often claimed that "'cultures' or 'groups' do not exist in the ways presupposed by multiculturalism" (2007:92). Opponents of multiculturalism have appropriated anti-essentialist rhetoric and claim that multiculturalists see minority cultures as "discrete, frozen in time, impervious to external influences, homogenous and without internal dissent" and see 'culture' as determining the behavior of people with a certain ethnic background and origin (Modood 2007:89-97). Against this construction of a straw man, Modood points out that neither political multiculturalism nor minority mobilization depends on cultural essentialism; "the political uses of ethnicity or culture do not depend upon erasing […] change and internal complexity – upon believing that a culture has a primordial existence or a singular, deterministic, essential quality" (ibid, 93). Instead, 'cultures' can be understood more like languages; "there can be identifiable, distinct cultures even under conditions of dominance, interaction and hybridity, and multiculturalism can be a political response to such a legacy" (ibid, 95). Group coherence is "neither a fiction nor an essence but more akin to family resemblance" (in a Wittgensteinian sense).

Modood (ibid, 97-114) argues that while multicultural discourses are based on a variety of claims about culture, some of which are essentialist and others are not, theorists of anti-essentialism are themselves essentialist when attributing a false importance to elements of essentialism in those discourses. In other words, the essentializing move lies in the misguided search for discursive coherence more than in the political phenomena that are accused of essentialism. Theoretical critiques of group identities are usually suspicious and antagonistic towards the concept of groupness employed by ethno-political entrepreneurs, but Modood points out that there is nothing fictitious about unity achieved through political mobilization by these entrepreneurs, although the degree of successful mobilization may vary. To illustrate, he draws a parallel to the Marxist distinction between a 'class-in-itself' and a 'class-for-itself' and argues that "politics can play a large role in creating a certain kind of collective identity and action but would be unlikely to succeed if some element of shared circumstances and/or ways of living were not already present and could be drawn upon to weave a political project" (ibid, 112). This does not imply that each individual is a member of a group or member of only one group, and the political consciousness and organization will depend on the external social circumstances as well as on internal features, so that in one context, individuals may prioritize membership in the working-class and in others, a Muslim identity. While ethnic identity entrepreneurs do have political motives, anti-essentialists have their own political agenda when they selectively apply anti-essentialist critique to undermine certain group claims. Historically, anti-essentialism has been used as a political rhetoric against feminism and blackness; today it is most often used to deny Muslim demands (ibid, 114).

Modood (2005:18-19; 208) recommends that multicultural policy recognizes the legitimacy of both hybrid pluralism and cultural mixing, as well as the development of ethno-religious communities like Muslims, especially in a context of liberal, secularist bias in favor of the former. His position draws on the empirical situation of British South Asian Muslims, who tend to be more culturally conservative than other minority groups such as British Caribbeans. While there is great individual variation with regard to behavioral conformity with cultural and religious practices, the vast majority has a strong primary group identity as Muslims (Modood 2012:35; 2007:106-109). This shared Muslim identity does not mean the same thing to each individual; for some, being Muslim is simply a background, for others, it can be primarily about personal religious faith and practice, a matter of community membership, or a political counter-ideology to Western modernity. While the demand for recognition concerns Muslims as a religious group rather than Islam as a faith; this does not mean that religious leaders and their discourses are less legitimate as community spokespersons than other Muslim voices (ibid, 133-136).

The empirical field: National contexts

Despite the existence of a transnational European public sphere, defined as involving "common issues debated at the same time by a variety of actors and located in different places which virtually recognize and interact with one another", the national media plays a unique role as the main carrier of these negotiations of different ideas and values (Krzyzanowski, Triandafyllidou and Wodak 2009:5-6). As a general rule, public debate takes place within the frame of national media, with significant differences in how specific events and values are interpreted in specific countries (ibid, 265-267). Characterized as a "transnational media event" (Eide et al 2009), the 2006 cartoon affair represents an exception, where a domestic integration debate in Denmark developed into a 'media-constructed' (Triandafyllidou et al 2009:239) pan-European international political crisis. Even in this case, debates took place in the national media of each country, where coverage was framed by national political elites (ibid, 38). Thus, specific integration debates always originate with specific 'events' that are intensively debated by media and politicians in a particular national context (Fekete 2004:19), and can be understood as transnational when 'imported' into another national context by media or by specific political interests, including governments, minority activists and anti-Muslim organizations (Hervik 2011, Fekete 2006, Razack 2008). When specific debates travel from one country to another, the general public may be unaware of the original context so that the issue can be selectively represented and manipulated by 'spin doctors' (Hervik 2011), who adjust the arguments to suit the new national context, for example when the hijab debate, originating in a French context of radical secularism, was translated into an issue of gender equality when debated in Norway (Jacobsen 2005:164).

While central features of public integration debates, including a dominant 'integration' rhetoric, right-wing populism, secular hegemony (Modood 2005:19) and widespread anti-Muslim sentiment (Modood 2009:164), are shared across a number of European countries, they also vary significantly between particular national contexts. In the following, I will locate Norway in comparison to significant other European countries (Germany, France, Britain, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden) with regard to models of the nation, right-wing populism, forms of secularism, minority populations and multicultural policy. Norway is an interesting case as it is located at the crossroads of different tendencies found in some or all above-mentioned countries; and despite not being a member of the European Union (though a member of the European Economic Agreement (EEA) and the Schengen agreement on border control), Norway is far from insulated from European debates on multiculturalism.

Norway is often characterized as being positioned somewhere in between the French model of the 'civic nation' and the German model of the 'ethnic nation', sharing some features of both. While contemporary France and Germany both diverge from these ideal models, France has traditionally been conceived of as a homogenous nation constructed through nation-building and assimilation of citizens into French culture, a model also expressed in French colonial policy, which emphasized the 'civilizing mission' and where (at least in theory) immigrants from the colonies could become French citizens and acquire equal rights if they acquired French culture. France is characterized by a centralized state with a 'colorblind' approach to minorities, who are recognized only as individual citizens and not as members of any group (Melotti 1997:75-77), in contrast to a pragmatic and decentralized British model, also linked to the colonial policy of indirect rule, which took differences for granted (ibid, 78-79). The German nation, on the other hand, is traditionally defined by ancestry and immigrants cannot easily become German; rather they tend to be defined as 'foreigners' even after generations of residence. Germany does not see itself as a 'country of immigration' and 'guest workers' were until recently excluded from citizenship (Modood 2009:165); they were not expected to 'integrate' but to preserve their language and culture so that they may return to their home country in the future (Melotti 1997:80-83).

While official Norwegian integration policy and citizenship law today is closer to the civic nation model, popular conceptions of Norwegian national identity tend to emphasize ethnicity. Like Germany and Denmark (until 1973), Norway was until 1975 open to labor migrants defined as 'guest workers'. Despite the presence of national minorities and indigenous people on Norwegian territory, the Norwegian nation has traditionally been conceived of as an ethnically and culturally homogenous community. Like in Germany and other Scandinavian countries, the concept of 'race' is 'taboo' (Hervik 2004:149; Vassenden & Andersson 2011:579) and while 'skin color' is sometimes used as a substitute (Gullestad 2006a:73), 'white Norwegians' are usually referred to as 'ethnic Norwegians' in contrast to 'immigrants' which in popular

discourse most often refers to non-white people (Gullestad 2006b:44). According to the Norwegian Language Council, supposed to reflect 'normal' language use, the term 'ethnic Norwegian' is defined by descent and descendents of immigrants, even if born in the country and holding Norwegian citizenship, cannot become Norwegian in this sense; however "one does not have to be 'ethnic Norwegian' to refer to oneself as a Norwegian or to be called Norwegian" (Lane 2009:214-220). A distinction is thus drawn between 'Norwegian' and 'ethnic Norwegian', where the former is open to immigrants who integrate into Norwegian culture and acquire citizenship (as in the French model), while the latter category is reserved for those of Norwegian ancestry (as in the German model) (see also Jacobsen 2011:51). In Norway, the term 'ethnicity' is thus used roughly equivalent to the 'racial' distinction between 'white' and 'non-white' in English-speaking countries, and differs from Eriksen's (2002:4) *cultural* definition of ethnicity as "aspects of relationships between groups which consider themselves, and are regarded by others, as being culturally distinctive". As Gullestad (2006a:70-73) points out, 'racial' characteristics are linked to 'culture' when visible makers of foreign ancestry such as 'non-Norwegian appearance' and foreign-sounding names are taken as indications that a person does not share basic Norwegian values. Thus, Norwegian national identity is configured as white (ibid, 87), and with the rise of the 'new nationalist' (Gullestad 2006b, Hervik 2006) discourse in the 1990s, the nation was increasingly defined 'ethnically' in terms of ancestry and descent, drawing an opposition between an 'us' (majority Norwegians belonging to the nation), and 'them' (immigrants defined as 'guests').

Similar to a number of other European countries, including France (Front National), the Netherlands (several parties), and Denmark (Danish People's Party), Norway has a large and influential right-wing populist party that combines neoliberal and anti-immigrant policies. Le Pen's *Front National* has been characterized as a prototype of European neo-nationalist parties. While in France, the entire political spectrum rejects 'Anglo-Saxon' multiculturalism (Amir-Moazami 2005:22; Modood 2007:13), the Dutch and Danish radical right has provided parliamentary support for center-right governments in exchange for influencing policy in an anti-multiculturalist direction. With important media supporting the anti-immigrant agenda, these two countries have seen a remarkable change in dominant political attitudes towards minorities and Muslims in particular. In Norway and other countries, social democratic parties have responded to the rise in right-wing populism by taking over and implementing neo-nationalist policies (Hervik 2004:153). The Netherlands was a pioneer of multiculturalism with its minority policy from 1983 (Modood 2007:12-13), but has in the last two decades seen policy reversals and very explicit anti-Muslim rhetoric (Fekete 2006:4). In 1994, Frits Bolkenstein (VVD; Conservative party) won the elections after using anti-multiculturalist rhetoric, Pim Fortuyn's party list, using anti-Islamic rhetoric would have done well were he not assassinated days before the 2002 election (Cesari

2005:48; Sniderman et al 2004:46). In 2004, filmmaker Theo van Gogh was murdered by a Muslim fanatic for making an anti-Islamic movie, the script of which was written by Somali refugee-turned-right-wing politician, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who holds that Muslims have to assimilate into a superior Western culture (Fekete 2006:11). After the 2010 elections, the center-right government is backed by Geert Wilders anti-Islamic Freedom Party. From 2001-2011, Denmark was ruled by a center-right coalition led by conservative Anders Fogh Rasmussen, backed by the Danish People's Party. The 2001 election campaign was dominated by anti-Muslim rhetoric (Hervik 2006), and the government accommodated the Danish People's Party's demands and introduced one of the strictest immigration laws in Europe; which is particularly restrictive on family reunification (Fekete 2006:6; Razack 2008:129). As Hervik (2006; 2011) shows, the Danish right has actively cooperated with various newspapers to mobilize voters; in 1997, Pia Kjærsgaard of the newly founded Danish People's Party worked with the tabloid *Ekstra-Bladet* in a campaign against immigrants, and in 2005, *Jyllands-Posten* printed the Mohammed cartoons, aligning itself with the government's anti-Muslim position (Modood 2009:218). While Denmark was never multiculturalist, the populist-media alliance managed to displace the previously dominant discourse of 'tolerance' in favor of an intolerant approach to cultural difference (Hervik 2006; 2011).

Norway is often characterized as somewhere in between nationalistic Denmark and more multiculturalist Sweden. Comparing the three Scandinavian countries, Tore Bjørgo (1997:56-57) points to the general legitimacy enjoyed by nationalism in those countries that were occupied by the Nazis during World War II. In Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands, right-wing populists can evoke the positive associations of nationalist liberation and resistance against occupation (Muslim immigration is frequently compared to the Nazi invasion, supported by multiculturalist 'traitors') in a way they cannot in former expansionary great powers like Sweden (which was neutral during the war), Britain and Germany, where 'nationalism' is now routinely equated with racism and xenophobia. In the latter countries, however, Neo-Nazi extremists are more active, in part because these countries did not experience the Nazis as occupants and national traitors during the war. The Norwegian populist right and anti-Muslim network have partly succeeded in importing debates, policy proposals, rhetoric and provocations (Fekete 2006:13-14), including the French hijab ban, Dutch anti-Muslim films, and Danish cartoons and immigration restrictions. The cartoon affair showed the limits to such influence, when the Norwegian center-left government chose dialogue over confrontation (Steien 2007:44-45) and arranged a reconciliation meeting between Muslim representatives and the right-wing evangelical editor who had republished the cartoons. As in Britain (but unlike Germany and France), Norwegian mainstream newspapers did not print the cartoons; they did however promote heated public debate, giving access to both anti-Muslim rhetoric and increasingly also critical Muslim voices.

In the process of becoming a multicultural society, it has been argued that Norway follows one generation behind Britain, where second-generation immigrants have criticized a white cultural hegemony, which exaggerates and contains ethnic and racial difference in a subordinate position (Melotti 1997:80). In British debates, antiracist and multiculturalist perspectives are prominent and minorities with 'double identities' are more active participants than in countries like France and Germany (Modood 2009:164; 2005:190). More specifically, it seems that the 2006 cartoon affair played a similar role in Norwegian debate about Muslims as the 1989 Rushdie affair did in Britain. In 1989, British media focused on Muslim extremists, while moderate Muslims were largely absent from public debate. At the time, there were few self-identified Muslims in the media, only persons with a Muslim background (ibid, 203), but in the early 1990s, British Muslims started asserting themselves in the public sphere (Modood 2009:167). While Muslims had failed to get any support for their protest against *The Satanic Verses*, their opposition to the 'war on terror' from 2001 onwards was shared with a large proportion of the British population. Modood (2005:203-204) argues that by 2001, there was a "greater political maturity among British Muslims" which opened for alliances with the political left and other sections of the population. After the 9/11 terror attacks, moderate British Muslim contributors and public intellectuals took collective self-criticism, denounced extremism and called for a "reinterpretation of Islam".

In notable ways, the Norwegian Muslim minority population is more similar to that of Britain than those of France and Germany. While the two latter countries have larger immigrant populations, these are not only predominantly Muslim but of a single ethnic origin; Turkish in the case of Germany and Maghrebi (Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian) in France. In Britain, South Asian Muslims represent one of three large minority groups (Indians and Blacks being the other two) (Modood 2012:15). Like Denmark and the Netherlands, Norway has a much more diversified non-European minority population (about 7 per cent of the total population in 2012). Muslims, from a variety of countries, constitute about half of non-European immigrant minorities (4 per cent of the total Norwegian population have a background from Muslim-majority countries, while 2 per cent are registered members of Muslim congregations). An important parallel to Britain is that the largest Norwegian minority group is Pakistani (followed by Somalians and Iraqis). Like their British counterparts (Modood 2005:105-106) a decade or two earlier (British borders were open to postcolonial migration until 1962), Norwegian Pakistanis starting arriving as labor migrants in the 1960s and 1970s (borders were closed in 1975). Later, the Norwegian Pakistani minority has grown through family reunification and today represents the largest 'second-generation' (followed by Somalians); particularly in the capital Oslo. While European Muslim minorities are mostly working-class (as opposed to the United States, which actively recruits highly educated immigrants), second-generation British and Norwegian Muslims have statistically higher levels of education than their counterparts in France,

Germany and the Netherlands (Modood 2010:70-73; Cesari 2011:26-27). Education is an almost necessary qualification for successful participation in public debate, and many 'assertive Muslims' in the Norwegian public sphere are well-educated second-generation Pakistanis (often young professionals or students of medicine or law). Unlike first-generation immigrants, who in a new country may feel more like 'guests' who should not make excessive demands upon their 'hosts', these Norwegian-born women and men confidently demand the same right to define their Norwegian identity and citizenship, and influence their shared society, as 'ethnic Norwegians' do. As Modood (2005:191-192) points out; this sense of entitlement is more common among minorities in the US, where the right to settle is not an issue (for African Americans, anyway), and Britain, where imperial history gave colonial subjects the right to entry, and where public debate was influenced by American minority discourses. British discourses have also been introduced to Norwegian debate by Pakistanis with links to Britain.

While Muslim contributors to the debates I have analyzed are diverse in terms of ethnic background, they mostly belong to what Christine Jacobsen (2005:157) describes as an "aspiring middle class". While their parents migrated to Norway from a rural background where practice of Islam was intertwined with cultural traditions (ibid, 158; see Modood 2005:103-106 for British Pakistanis), the younger generation often criticizes these cultural traditions and search for an 'authentic' Islam emphasizing individual reflection. As Jocelyne Cesari (2005:5) points out, young European Muslims increasingly distrust religious mediation by clerics, religious leaders or organizations, and focus on living in accordance with 'Muslim values' rather than observing prescriptions for specific religious practice such as prayer rules. The Muslim Student Society (MSS) in Oslo, where a number of publicly assertive Muslims are members, is characterized by an "Islamist revivalism" that asserts the public relevance of Islam as a "complete way of life" rather than as a secularized and privatized personal faith. Like Muslim youth and student organizations in other European countries, notably Britain and Sweden, the MSS engages with questions of how to live a Muslim life in a European society, with a special focus on political participation and gender equality (Jacobsen 2005:157-158). Jacobsen (ibid, 159) writes that,

> Defending Islam from what is experienced as a systematic misrecognition by Norwegian society, and especially the media, has come to be seen as one important part of their religious practice. Countering negative images of Islam in the media, in politics […] is seen as a religious duty as part of the greater jihad.

This form of Islamic revivalism can be understood in terms of Muslim resistance to majority hegemony, and as an attempt to separate Islam from the cultural traditions of the parental generation and the imams. Instead of emphasizing ethnic identity, they identify as Norwegian and transnational Muslims (ibid, 160-161). As a result, several young Muslim women with an MSS background have emerged in public debates as

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'Muslim feminists' defending the right to wear the hijab as a personal choice (to be discussed in detail in chapter 4). Increasingly, the younger generation is making its voices heard in the public sphere, criticizing anti-Muslim racism in mainstream society, but also criticizing the older generation, which still dominates among the imams and leaders of Muslim congregations, for being too defensive and passive on important political issues in Norway. Such a generational divide, often reflecting the distinction between 'minority communitarianism' and 'antiracist multiculturalism', is common in European Muslim communities (Jacobsen 2005:157). Modood (2009:166) theorizes European Muslim assertiveness as a "catching-up" with the discourses of anti-racism and feminism, which are modified to suit the specific marginalization experienced by Muslims.

As a religious group, Muslim minorities challenge the European hegemony of secularism, understood as the separation between church and state but more importantly the idea that "religion and religious groups should not play a role in politics" (Modood 2005:19). Secularism is practiced differently in various national contexts. In the US, the constitution guarantees strict separation of church and state, but there is a strong Protestant, evangelical fundamentalism, religion plays an important role in American civil society and it is common for politicians to speak publicly about their religious beliefs. In Europe, a radical or ideological secularism that advocates an absolute separation between religion and politics is found only in France, while other European countries practice moderate forms of secularism which can be characterized by a relative separation between state and church; a pragmatic "historically evolved and evolving compromise with religion" (ibid, 142). The French form of radical secularism, *laïcité*, not only demands strict separation between state and church, but the state also promotes the privatization of religion (Modood 2009:178). This served to justify the hijab ban in schools in 2004 (ibid, 165), combined with other arguments including that the hijab is a symptom of Muslim self-segregation (Cesari 2005:47), and the protection of women's rights (Fekete 2006:16-17). Beginning with three Muslim girls wearing a hijab in school in 1989, the headscarf affair started a debate about the incompatibility between Islam and the French principles of assimilation and laïcité (Fekete 2004:20; 25-27), a debate which finally resulted in a legal ban in 2004 (Kastoryano 2006:57-59). In Germany, the relationship between church and state is characterized by cooperation rather than conflict as in France (Modood 2009:179-181; Amir-Moazami 2004:20; 2005). There, headscarf debates were less heated than in France, and resulted in bans for teachers in state schools in some German states. At the same time, German Muslims have been able to institutionalize a public space for Islam by demanding equal status with Christian Churches, which have a privileged role in Germany as compared to France. Also in the Netherlands, Muslims have achieved state funding for religious schools and Muslim media, in line with the Dutch model for dealing with organized religion, based on the historical principle called 'pillarization' (Modood 2009:181).

With regard to secularism, the Norwegian situation most closely resembles that of Britain, which has a state church, close links between state and church, and public funding for minority religions, but at the same time the population is among the most secularized and least religious (discussed in more detail in chapter 5), and politicians usually do not speak about their personal faith (Modood 2009:177). While most people consider religion a private matter, there is a significant minority of American-style right-wing evangelical fundamentalists (including *Magazinet*, which brought the Danish cartoons to Norway; see Engebrigtsen 2010:82), which holds conservative views on family values, supports Israel and is skeptical of Muslims.

A policy analysis of twenty-one countries (cited in Modood 2012:40 n. 12) shows that accommodation of minorities has actually accelerated since 2001, during the period of widespread anti-multiculturalist and anti-Muslim rhetoric. Even those countries which never followed a multicultural policy, such as France, Germany and Denmark (Triandafyllidou, Modood and Meer 2011), have in practice accommodated Muslims based on existing models of secularism. Thus in 2003, the French government established a national Muslim Council (*Conseil Francais du Culte Musulman*) to represent French Muslims. While such a council can partly be seen as a "top-down effort to control Muslims" (Modood 2012:40), it also implies recognizing a religious group, and as such represents a form of multicultural accommodation that is incompatible with French principles of assimilation and *laïcité*.

Britain has continued to accommodate Muslim demands in the last decade, despite the rhetorical retreat from multiculturalism among British center-left intellectuals and New Labour politicians, who blamed multiculturalism for promoting cultural separatism and segregation and allowing Muslim radicalism and extremism (Modood 2007:10-12). Modood (2005:207-208) describes British multiculturalism as "a social, bottom-up movement", where political mobilization and protest has been a means of integration, understood as a two-way process where "public discourse and political arrangements are challenged but adjust to accommodate and integrate the challengers". Modood (2009:169-173) argues that while Muslims make their own distinctive demands, including the public recognition of religious identities, these build on previous advances made by anti-racism and feminism, and follow a western liberal-democratic logic rather than being derived from Islamic discourses. While a minority of British Muslims have expressed support for extremists like the Taliban and Osama bin Laden, the majority of Muslims condemned the terror attacks, but were equally opposed to the British-American wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (Modood 2005:199), which are the main cause of political extremism. When domestic Muslim assertiveness is linked with international solidarity with anti-imperialist struggles (Modood 2007:136-139), political Islam parallels pan-African Black Nationalism as an internationalist expression of Muslim resistance against Western dominance (Modood 2009:173). British accommodation of Muslim demands includes a legal ban on religious discrimination in employment from

2003, which gives Muslim women the right to wear a hijab; state funding for some Muslim schools; and new legislation protecting against "incitement to religious hatred" passed in 2006. Unlike the ban on inciting racial hatred, the former requires "an intention to stir up hatred", which may be hard to prove. Nevertheless, during the cartoon affair, British newspapers voluntarily refrained from publishing the cartoons, in Modood's words (2007:57); they recognized that "they had the right to republish the cartoons but that it would be offensive to do so". While these policies may seem disturbing to secularists, they parallel existing British anti-discrimination policies protecting other groups (Modood 2009:170-173).

Norwegian integration policy

In the most recent policy document (St.meld.nr. 49; 2003-2004), presented by the center-right Bondevik government in 2004, Norwegian integration policy is defined not as a form of 'multiculturalism', but as in line with a 'diversity policy' that has developed in several other European countries. (The center-left Stoltenberg government has announced a new white paper on the topic in 2012; expected to continue the emphasis on community cohesion, loyalty to shared values and accept for diversity, but also focus on employment and belonging.) Seeking a balance between individual diversity and shared values, such a diversity policy recognizes complex identities and "multiple ways of being Norwegian" (ibid, 33). While emphasizing "loyalty to the fundamental values of Norwegian society, like democratic procedures, human rights and gender equality" in line with Habermas' 'constitutional patriotism', these values are defined as "shared political values, which are not particular to Norway" (ibid, 61). In line with Rawls (1999), the white paper sees these values not as static, but states that everyone has the right to "seek to influence the content of these fundamental societal values through political and civil processes". Rather than seeking a broad consensus on values, the policy paper supports a minimum definition of shared values, which protects the right to difference, but limited by respect for human rights (St.meld.nr. 49; 2003-2004; p. 34). In case of conflict between different human rights, individual rights should take precedence over group rights (ibid, 41).

In the government's view, the content of basic values must be discussed over time in relation to concrete issues (ibid, 34); many of which should not be politically regulated, but left to civil society (ibid, 39). This is in line with the liberal American model (supported by Rawls), which distinguishes between state and society and leaves questions of the good life to the 'cultural marketplace' of civil society. But the Norwegian social democratic state also has a more 'perfectionist' tendency, which sees issues of the good life as subject to political deliberation and state action (in line with the early Habermas' critical project). This more communitarian view, where social issues should be politicized (see Kymlicka 1989 for a more detailed discussion), is also expressed in the white paper. Namely, the Norwegian state wants to stimulate processes

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in civil society (St.meld.nr. 49; 2003-2004, p. 39), encourage minorities to become more visible in the public sphere (ibid, 66), and exert normative influence on people's choices where these are unsuitable for legal regulation. In the case of gender equality, the law is expected to have a "normative function" in the private sphere (ibid, 50), in agreement with Okin (1999). While sometimes reflecting value conflicts, the government believes that certain "unwise or oppressive" practices may result from "lack of knowledge" (St.meld.nr. 49; 2003-2004, p. 47). "Dialogue" is seen as the preferred strategy to make policies more legitimate by promoting minority participation and influence in civil society; aimed at giving voice to a variety of interests, independent of group membership (ibid, 48). While recognizing the risk that contemporary integration policies, e.g. with regard to the best interest of children, may repeat historical mistakes from the time of oppressive assimilation policies towards national minorities, the government emphasizes in line with Kymlicka, that there are fundamental differences between national minorities, who are entitled to group rights, and immigrant minorities, for whom the "preservation of their own culture" is mainly a "private and voluntary issue" (ibid, 50).

In a critical analysis of the policy paper, Randi Gressgård (2005) notes that the government is less concerned with the tension between individual rights and group rights, which was the main focus of the previous white paper on integration (St.meld.nr. 19; 1996-97; analyzed by Gressgård & Jacobsen 2003). Instead, cultural diversity is (almost exclusively) recognized on the individual level and posited against community cohesion and shared values, making 'integration' or 'inclusion' of individuals into the larger Norwegian community, the main political challenge (thus replacing the dichotomy of communitarian minorities and individualistic majority, with individualist minorities and a communitarian larger society). Gressgård (2005:74) argues that cultural recognition is primarily seen not as a goal in itself, but as a means to achieve integration, in ideological continuity with the previous policy document, where 'multicultural dialogue' is primarily an instrument to increase legitimacy and loyalty to shared values, thus resembling a Norwegian monologue. When universal values are turned into symbols of political loyalty to Norway, the white paper suggests that immigrants lack knowledge about human rights, democracy and gender equality, while Norwegian citizens are constructed as carriers of universal norms. Gressgård identifies this as an instance of Eurocentrism. Further, she criticizes the state paternalism in the government's intention to influence people's choices and educate minorities about 'their own good' (ibid, 76); and analyzes this 'empowerment policy' as an instance of the Foucauldian concept of governmentality; a form of indirect rule where self-reflective individuals are 'responsibilized' (see also Titley & Lentin 2011:44; 176) and guided to realize 'their own good'. State expectations are internalized as part of what individuals demand of themselves; merging individual self-discipline and state control (Gressgård 2005:77); a characteristic of neoliberal governmentality (to be further discussed below).

While the 2004 policy document to a greater extent emphasizes a dialogue on the interpretation of shared political values along the lines of Rawls and Habermas, it also shows continuity with the previous white paper from 1997, which focused on the dilemma between group rights and individual rights with regard to gender equality, and was characterized by Gressgård and Jacobsen (2003:76) as representing a Norwegian monologue, where goals are defined in advance by the majority; a one-way process in line with Okin's (1999) suggestion that assimilation may be better than multiculturalism with respect to minority women's individual rights. Here, the Norwegian Gender Equality Act not only serves as a non-negotiable framework for integration, but the government seeks to assist the liberation of minority women by educating them about what gender equality means in 'Norwegian everyday life' (Gressgård & Jacobsen 2003:73-76). This white paper lumped together universal human rights, Norwegian ideals and practices on one side, contrasted with undesirable minority practices including female circumcision, forced marriages and veiling; thus reproducing an essentialist cultural dichotomy between a liberal Western culture and patriarchal minority cultures; which disregards differences between practices and ideals and competing interpretations of ideals on both sides (to be further discussed in chapter 4). In a more theoretical discussion about multicultural dialogue, Gressgård (2010) elaborates on her criticism of the liberal pluralist approach to 'diversity management' as expressed in Norwegian white papers. Following Wendy Brown, she identifies a key problem in using 'tolerance' as a tool to manage, regulate and incorporate the 'threatening other within'. Minorities are invited to dialogue only insofar as their influence legitimizes policy (ibid, 6), based on pre-defined notions of integration assuming that majority values are universal (ibid, 11). As such, the Norwegian approach can be characterized as a 'pseudo-open' monologue, which continues dominating the 'other' through assimilation and culturalization, rather than as a genuine dialogue, open to truth claims of others, which allows prevailing norms and categories to be challenged by a 'resistance' which demands that dominant forms become aware of their own limits and recognize that they represent one among many different ways (ibid, 106-137; drawing on Hans-Herbert Kögler's and Christopher Falzon's theories of dialogue).

Analyzing the Norwegian government's response in the cartoon affair in 2006, Ada Engebrigtsen (2010) characterizes Norwegian practice as "ambivalent multiculturalism". She argues that until the cartoon affair, ethnic and religious minorities in Norway have been few and powerless, and the Sami protest movement in the 1970s was the only time that a minority had challenged majority hegemony; this conflict ended assimilation policy and resulted in their recognition as an indigenous people. In Engebrigtsen's (ibid, 68-70) view, the Sami conflict taught the state and majority a lesson that influenced subsequent minority policy, which may henceforth be described as "ambivalent multiculturalism", a dual approach of individual integration and collective recognition (e.g. public support for minority organizations), which

combines aspects of 'equality as sameness' (Gullestad 2006b:170) with recognizing cultural differences. She argues further that Norway's relative homogeneity has prevented the development of an explicit multicultural policy, and despite a shift towards understanding integration as a mutual process of accommodation, the idea that "Norwegianness is superior to most other ways of life, values and practices is still present" (Engebrigtsen 2010:71) alongside government initiatives to bridge perceived cultural divides, including a state-sponsored, institutionalized inter-religious dialogue between Christians and Muslims. The cartoon affair showed that Norwegian Muslims had become a powerful minority group that could mobilize if necessary, and which the government had to take seriously (Leirvik 2006). Engebrigtsen (ibid, 82) sees the Norwegian management of the crisis as exemplifying an "emerging multiculturalist praxis" between the government and Muslim leaders, which signaled a recognition of the minority as Norwegian citizens first, and secondarily as Muslims demanding equal respect. Thus, the cartoon affair does not represent a clash of civilizations, but rather a "decisive instance" in the process of integration towards a situation where Muslims are no longer marginalized (ibid, 79). Many Norwegian Muslims felt that this compromise did not go far enough in recognizing the way they had been hurt by the cartoons as part of broader anti-Muslim sentiments (this is the focus of chapter 2).

Phases in Norwegian integration debate

From the late 1980s onwards, the populist right set the agenda for integration debates. The term "integration policy" had its breakthrough in public debate in 1993, when the Progress Party made it a central part of their policy and rhetoric (Hagelund 2003; Gullestad 2006a:81). While such rhetoric was initially perceived as racist by politicians of 'respectable' parties, it soon became part of the mainstream, which took over the underlying frames of interpretation (ibid, 82). Established in 1973 as a neoliberalist protest party against taxes and public spending, the Progress Party had its breakthrough in the 1987 local elections, after turning to anti-immigrant rhetoric (see Hagelund 2003). During the campaign, party chairman Carl I. Hagen presented a letter allegedly written by a Muslim immigrant in Oslo by the name of Mustafa, which declared that Muslims would take over Norway and establish an Islamic state. Though media soon revealed that the letter was false, the party won 12 per cent of the votes (see Bangstad 2011:257). Despite this early example of Islamophobia, anti-immigrant rhetoric in the late 1980s and early 1990s was still dominated by economic arguments and had not yet been culturalized in terms of defending western liberal values against Muslim fundamentalism (Gullestad 2006a:78). The rhetoric against 'excessive generosity', which spread from management literature, via the populist right to the Labor Party, and then to anthropologists, is an interesting illustration of the ideological links between neoliberal attacks on social democracy and anti-immigrant attitudes.

The term 'snillisme' ('excessive generosity', also translated as 'foolish generosity' by Gullestad 2006a:81) was introduced into Norwegian political debate in the campaign for the 1989 national elections by Conservative leader Jan P. Syse and Progress Party chairman Carl I. Hagen, before it was taken over by Labor Party politician Rune Gerhardsen in 1991. However, the term occurred in a book on business management a few years earlier, when Gisle Espolin Johnson (1987) criticized 'excessive generosity' as a key feature of social democracy, which accommodates the "weak", settles for the mediocre, and above all, is "a serious obstacle for result-oriented, efficient and profitable work" (ibid, 24). According to the author, 'excessive generosity' is the "misunderstood" softness, consideration and willingness to compromise, which dominated in the 1970s, when "the goal of a business was not to make profit, but to deal with people" (ibid, 14). Johnson argues that the democratization of work relations and general society which resulted from the accommodation of demands from diverse social movements, be replaced with a return to the old values of authority, discipline, duty and hard work that characterized the Protestant work ethic (ibid, 25-27). The attack on 'excessive generosity' is described as a "reaction against the one-sided softness and understanding […] towards persons who do not want to contribute anything, or who deliberately exploit their freedom. A reaction against the democratization…" where "everyone is heard" and "everyone is entitled to an opinion" (ibid, 26).

While Johnson focused on business management in his book, Labor Party politician Rune Gerhardsen's (1991) book applies the term to criticize aspects of Norwegian social democracy that he wants to reform. His campaign against 'excessive generosity' entails strict demands on immigrants to learn the language and adjust to Norwegian society, on welfare recipients and on criminals (ibid, 10). Gerhardsen targets various marginalized groups, and emphasizes that they have to do their "duty" before they can demand their "rights" (ibid, 21). He describes 'excessive generosity' as a political ideology and practice where all demands, needs and interests are accommodated; something which undermines individual responsibility (ibid, 29). With regard to immigrants, he specifically criticizes the "system and practice that has uncritically accommodated the demands and desires of immigrants", which allows them to cheat on welfare (ibid, 53), and instead demands that they respect Norwegian laws, norms and values (ibid, 54). Similar rhetoric was later reflected by social anthropologist Unni Wikan (1995; 2002). In her book "Generous Betrayal" (Wikan 2002), she argues that the welfare system undermines the capacity of refugees to become self-sufficient and autonomous citizens and creates poorly integrated welfare clients (see Djuve 2011:118), and advocates making "demands on immigrants" (Wikan 2002:4). In line with Progress Party rhetoric that immigrants exploit the 'excessive generosity' of the Norwegian welfare state (Djuve 2011:118), these books call for a reassertion of the power of economic and political management, justifying stricter demands from above, and attacking the legitimacy of demands from below. In this sense, the critique of 'excessive

generosity' captures the key ideas of the neoliberal reaction against democratic advances made by social movements such as the labor movement and multiculturalism. While neoliberal discourse pathologizes lower class behavior and immigrant behavior in similar ways, Steve Garner (2010:4; 19) notes an important difference in his study of British whites' sense of entitlement; white persons are assumed to be entitled to benefits until they prove otherwise individually; immigrants are collectively suspected of being 'asylum-seekers' who are unwilling to integrate and choose to receive undeserved benefits, until they individually prove the opposite.

In their discussion of the links between neoliberalism and anti-multiculturalist rhetoric, Titley and Lentin (2011:162-163) draw on David Harvey's understanding of neoliberalism as a political project "to restore the power of economic elites" and Wendy Brown's analysis of neoliberalism as a discourse which reduces politics to economics and judges everything from individual action to state policy in terms of economic rationality and profitability. The neoliberal form of 'governmentality' constructs subjects who are expected to manage themselves according to the costs and benefits of certain actions. Disregarding structural constraints of power and discrimination, 'integration' is constructed as an individual responsibility, as a choice (ibid, 3; Garner 2010:13). Those who 'choose wrong' or fail to become autonomous are themselves to blame and subjected to discipline by the state (Titley & Lentin 2011:168-170), as reflected in paternalistic 'welfare-to-work' programs. Eriksen (cited in ibid, 175-176) has pointed out how neoliberalism distinguishes 'good diversity', which reflects individual autonomy and is "economically profitable and morally harmless", from 'bad difference', which opposes individualist rationality, e.g. headscarves and family solidarity that impede personal freedom. Thus, neoliberalism can support individual diversity, but opposes group-based multiculturalism. Within this top-down logic, multiculturalism can be misrepresented as the majority's well-meaning, but misplaced generosity and concessions to minority demands, while minority struggles and social movements are made invisible (ibid, 186), as exemplified in the Norwegian books attacking 'excessive generosity'.

Anne Britt Djuve (2011) sees the changes in Norwegian integration policy in the 1990s in the context of a broader shift in social policy, from a situation where no conditions were enforced on welfare recipients towards a stronger emphasis on obligations. She found that the Norwegian discourse of social inclusion through employment (corresponding to the "work line" in social policy) has achieved broad political support by appealing both to the left and the right, combining a discourse of empowerment and rights with a neoliberal discourse that seeks to control behavior through economic sanctions (ibid, 116-121). In contrast to British social policy, which has a stronger neoliberal orientation, Norwegian integration policy remains more social democratic, being influenced by ideas of empowerment and gender equality; however, as in other European countries, Norwegian social democrats have also embraced the neoliberal "no

rights without duties" rhetoric (Djuve 2011:122), as exemplified by Gerhardsen. The combination of a discourse of empowerment with neoliberalism is also evident in Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg's comment on International Women's Day in 2012, when he said that women's employment rate, which at 75 per cent in Norway is 16 points higher than the OECD average, has contributed more to the national economy than the entire Norwegian oil industry (*Klassekampen,* March 9, 2012). In state feminist discourse, it seems that economic profitability takes normative precedence over women's individual right to choose how to live their lives. The 'work line' approach sees 'culture' as obstacle to women's participation in the labor market, disregarding that due to structural discrimination, fulfilling 'career' choices may not be available for many working-class and minority women, who may find staying home with children more rewarding than the physically demanding and low-paid jobs they have access to, as May-Len Skilbrei (2004) has argued.

Around the turn of the millennium, the integration debate entered a more polarized phase in connection with a series of 'violent events' in the years 2000-2005 (Titley & Lentin 2011). Internationally, the threat of Muslim terrorism became a major issue after 9/11 2001, while Norwegian debate focused more on violence and oppression of women within Muslim minority communities (Gullestad 2006b:50) and Islam was held responsible for female circumcision, forced marriages and honor killings. Parallel to Okin's theoretical arguments; Norwegian debate was dominated by feminist rhetoric against multiculturalism, which argued that "integration" was the solution to these problems. Two prominent proponents were Storhaug and Wikan, whose position has been described by Razack (2008:107-144) as "racism in the name of feminism". Specific cases received widespread and sensationalist media coverage and caused a public debate characterized by a 'moral panic', including the Kadra documentary on Muslim leaders' alleged support for female circumcision in the autumn 2000, stand-up comedian Shabana Rehman's campaign against forced marriages, and the honor killing of Fadime Sahindal in the winter of 2002 (to be discussed in more detail in chapter 4). Violence against women within minority communities was interpreted in terms of a culture clash between Western values of individual freedom and gender equality, and "Muslim fundamentalism", and led to proposals across the political spectrum to stricter immigration control and force those already here to "integrate". According to postcolonial feminist Sherene Razack (ibid, 5), these majority responses exemplify a racist logic of the "white savior", where "civilized Europeans" allegedly liberate oppressed Muslim women from dangerous Muslim men; a colonialist logic that has been revived to justify current Western imperialism under the guise of the "war on terror". At this stage, a number of young minority women joined public debate as 'native informants' (to be discussed in more detail in chapter 3) providing first-hand evidence of oppressive practices. As these women focused primarily on oppression of women within minority communities, mostly supported majority positions and did not

address the problem of racism, they did not challenge 'white public space' (Gullestad 2006b:51). Rather, they became media stars and were treated as "honorary Norwegians" (Gullestad 2006a:74; 2006b:51). In 2002, Gullestad publicly criticized Rehman's role in the media, for diverting public attention and crippling critical awareness (ibid, 56). While minority women who had assimilated white hegemonic politics became celebrities and 'honorary Norwegians', critical voices were silenced and ridiculed, particularly conservative Muslims, but also minority feminists who had been working for women's liberation without distancing themselves from their cultural and religious background and communities.

Drawing on Hage (1998), Ali Esbati (2009) comments that Norwegian integration debate is dominated by a rhetoric that "we must dare to have a debate about the problems" (ibid, 44). This rhetoric is not only used by the populist right, but also by newspaper editors, commentators and politicians who take distance from anti-Muslim rhetoric. While calling for debate appears rational and embodies ideals of free speech, independent media and liberal democracy, employed to analyze and solve existing 'problems', Esbati writes that this is not the case with public integration debate, which is not intended to solve any problems, but rather the description of problems is a goal in itself. Public debate "divides the world into a 'we' without problems, which discusses a 'them' which has problems" and further, "a 'them' who are a problem" (ibid). Despite immigration critics' claims to be courageous, immigrants are described as problems all the time, and the only risk associated with 'daring' to criticize is being called racist. Paralleling Titley and Lentin's (2011) analysis, Esbati (ibid, 45-47) points out that across Europe, right-wing populists call for 'debate' intended to construct immigrants as problems. The alleged 'problems' do not need to have a basis in (Norwegian) empirical reality; instead a constant repetition of mistaken and generalized claims about Muslims, conveniently based on horror stories that took place in other countries, gradually turns into 'truth'. For example, the 'honor killing' of Fadime in Sweden in 2002, was in Norwegian debate linked to Islam, even if the Kurdish girl's family was actually not Muslim (Gullestad 2006a:88, Dessau 2003).

Hage's claim that the constant problematization of minorities in integration debates is really about preserving white control; is supported by Progress Party spokesman for integration policy, Per Willy Amundsen (quoted by Esbati 2009:49-51): "It serves no good just talking about how great it is to have a multicultural society. Someone needs to take charge and manage". Esbati goes on to argue that rather than a disagreement among equals, institutionalized integration debate can be characterized as a powerful elite harassing and bullying minorities (ibid). While calls for debate are often justified by the claim that problems posed by immigrants are something "ordinary Norwegians" are concerned about, Esbati draws on van Dijk's (1993) research on elite racism and argues that when ordinary people's everyday prejudices are carried over into the public sphere and uttered by powerful persons, it becomes racism; though media and other

elites claim to be exercising free speech. An example of such "denial of racism", where minority complaints about racism are rejected as aggressive and over-sensitive (Gullestad 2006b:47-48) is when debate editor Knut Olav Åmås of *Aftenposten* (September 27, 2010) writes that a lesson to be learned from the cartoon affair, is the need to become more *thick-skinned*, more insensitive and not be so easily offended. *One of the scariest things taking place today*, he argues, are the ongoing UN attempts to extend protection against racism to religious groups. He argues that words and actions are completely separate, and believes that restrictions on free speech will lead people to violent acts. After the 2011 terror attack in Norway, Arne Johan Vetlesen, Bushra Ishaq, Sindre Bangstad and Thomas Hylland Eriksen (*Aftenposten,* August 22, 2011) take a different view. Drawing on J.L. Austin's speech act theory, they point out that *insisting on an absolute distinction between words and actions is to abdicate from any moral responsibility for the reality that can be and is created by hate speech,* and point out that historically, genocide is prepared ideologically through *systematic dehumanization of "the enemy".* Thus, terrorism cannot be prevented by giving voice to extremists in the media; increasing public tolerance of hate speech is more likely to reinforce such views. After 7/22, we are thus obliged to *struggle against Islamophobia and racism*.

The Norwegian Directorate for Integration and Diversity (IMDI 2009) reports that media analysis confirms that Muslims in particular are portrayed as a problem in generalizing and stereotypical ways, and for many majority persons, media is still the primary source of knowledge about immigrants. For those without personal relationships with immigrants, media is likely to have strong influence; opinion polls indicate that half of the Norwegian population thinks that 'integration' has failed (ibid, 14). In Norway as elsewhere in Europe, Muslims experience more discrimination than other minorities, while being 'better integrated' than other minorities in terms of employment and education (ibid, 12). At the same time, significant developments indicate that Norway is becoming a more multicultural society; media coverage has become more diverse, with positive stories alongside problem-oriented ones (ibid, 5); people living in more multicultural cities of Norway have more personal relationships with immigrants and are more positive towards cultural diversity (ibid, 11). Statistics show that social integration, defined by language skills, education and employment is quite successful in Norway, with higher levels of minority employment and education than in other European countries. The second-generation, *especially women*, are more likely to attend higher education than white Norwegians (ibid, 3).

In relation to these developments towards a more multicultural society, integration debates have also entered a new phase. As IMDI (ibid, 9) notes, "the perhaps most noticeable change in the last few years is that more and more people with immigrant background are active and visible participants in public debate". Since the 2006 cartoon affair, many educated and assertive Norwegian Muslims have become participants in public debate, often criticizing the terms and form of the integration debate and

challenging majority hegemony. The integration debate is no longer primarily a ritual where majority persons worry about the lack of Muslim integration (Hage 1998; Esbati 2009; Titley & Lentin 2011), but has become a become a multicultural debate where politically assertive minority persons challenge white hegemony and attempt to negotiate the terms of integration by making political demands from the majority and the state (Modood 2007). Critical minority voices not only challenge majority hegemony, but also the majority's role as supervisor of integration. Thus, Norwegian Muslims have started worrying about white problems (Hage 1998:247) and public debate has itself been identified as a problem. One of these new voices, medicine student Mohammed Usman Rana (quoted in IMDI 2009:9) worries that the increased participation of assertive Muslims may backfire by strengthening anti-Muslim sentiments. Many Norwegian Muslims have pointed out that public opinion is becoming increasingly hostile, a perception supported by reports from the Council of Europe's commission against racism and intolerance (ECRI 2004).

Case studies and methodology

These critical interventions in public debate by Norwegian Muslims, and the multicultural negotiations and discursive struggle they give rise to as they protest, challenge and resist anti-Muslim racism and assertions of majority hegemony, form the empirical focus of this thesis. The chapters are organized around four empirical case studies of debates on specific topics. Each chapter is built up chronologically; first I provide a background of the international and Norwegian national context of the debates in question (the Rushdie Affair in Britain and the Cartoon Affair in Denmark in chapter 2, criticism of the role of 'native informants' (such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Salman Rushdie) in supporting ideas of western superiority in chapter 3, international debates about gender and Islam, feminism and multiculturalism; and the hijab debate in France in chapter 4, and the debate about secularization, secularism and Islam in chapter 5).

In terms of methodology, I will mostly use an anthropological approach characterized by comparative, contextualizing 'interpretive analysis' (Gullestad 2006b:194-195) to analyze contributions to the *opinion pages* of national newspapers. In chapter 2, I will also analyze newspaper *coverage* of Muslim protest, drawing on Ruth Wodak's critical discourse analysis (CDA), which has been used by a number of researchers in the study of racist discourse. CDA is a critical methodology which aims at delegitimizing discourses identified as hegemonic; i.e. those backed by institutionalized power, including the state and media; by bringing out what is implicit in the text; e.g. how a positive self-presentation implies a negative mirror image, even when not mentioned explicitly. My use of CDA has a more limited purpose of critical anti-racist analysis, without necessarily subscribing to the wider normative position drawn from Habermasian theories of discourse ethics and rational deliberation (Wodak & Reisigl 2001:263-271). In other words, it is not my purpose to distinguish 'good reasons' or

rational arguments in Habermas' sense (Wodak & Reisigl 2001:265) from illegitimate discriminatory rhetoric and fallacious argumentation, but I use the methodology to identify racist discourses. While CDA has often been used in contexts where the dominant discourse is not directly challenged by critical counter-discourses, both Wodak and Teun van Dijk (1993:18), studying elite discourses in Austria and the Netherlands, emphasize that a CDA approach to racist discourses should take as a starting point the counter-hegemonic perspectives of 'conscious minority persons'. Wodak and Reisigl (ibid, 45-85) have developed a five-step methodology for the linguistic analysis of racist discourses, where they investigate five types of discursive strategies; (1) referential terms for individuals and groups such as 'white' or 'Muslim', and (2) predicational terms which attribute positive or negative characteristics to those groups; these two can identify dichotomies between 'us' and 'them' as well as the inferiorization that occurs when the Other is ascribed negative characteristics. Further, they employ linguistic categories from (3) argumentation theory, such as implicit connotations called "topoi" and violations of the rules of rational discourse, called "fallacies" that are used to justify discrimination; as well as (4) perspectives from which statements are expressed, and (5) whether statements are intensified or mitigated. For reasons of clarity, I have chosen to limit the use of linguistic terminology in my analysis (I have done a detailed linguistic analysis of this material elsewhere; see Stokke 2009).

With regard to media coverage of Muslim minorities, John Richardson (2004) has used CDA to study the representation of Muslims in British newspapers. His comprehensive approach combines textual analysis with the wider context of social and discursive practices, including the discourses of 'Orientalism', racism and 'Islamophobia'; as well as the characteristics of journalism, such as sensationalism as a 'populist' means to increase sales, the presence of minority journalists and the use of sources (ibid, 4-47), as well as the intended audience (ibid, 229-230). Richardson's textual analysis draws on the work of Wodak and Reisigl (2001), who focus on how actors are named and characterized (Richardson 2004:56-57) in order to identify the 'positive self-presentation' and 'negative other-presentation' typical of racist stereotypes. Richardson (ibid, 55; 69) employs van Dijk's concept of an 'ideological square' of stereotypes and prejudices that frame news reporting on Muslims, which can be identified in the texts through the terms used to name and divide 'us' and 'them' and ascribe positive and negative characteristics to the two opposed categories (ibid, xx). Drawing on argumentation theory, Richardson follows Wodak and Reisigl's method of identifying rhetorical *topoi*; i.e. parts of argumentation that remain implicit, and finds several stereotypical *topoi* that help construct Muslims as a threat; including the threat of 'Muslim political violence' and extremism, the threat to democracy posed by authoritarian Muslim leaders, and the threat of gender inequality (ibid, 75-93). Implicit references to a 'clash of civilizations' are also referred to as a *topos* (ter Wal, Triandafyllidou, Steindler & Kontochristou 2009:246). In the coverage of Muslims,

'hidden' argumentative schemes typically reinforce Orientalist dichotomies between the West as 'rational' and 'democratic' and Muslims as 'fundamentalist' and 'violent' (Richardson 2004:69-75). Thus, Richardson (ibid, 8) argues that knowledge of Orientalist scholarship, and its modern counterpart Islamophobia, is central to understanding contemporary journalistic and academic representations of Islam and Muslims. While 'fear' of the 'Islamic Other' is a key ingredient of Orientalism (ibid, 6), Richardson follows Halliday and Modood in preferring the term 'anti-Muslim racism' to emphasize that we are primarily analyzing aggression against Muslims rather than the fear of a religion (ibid, 22-23).

In the remaining case studies, I do not analyze media coverage, but selected contributions to debates where minority voices are present, so that the dynamics and negotiations between hegemonic discourses and counter-discourses can be studied in discursive interaction. I use a more anthropological approach, which Gullestad (2006b:194-195) describes as "interpretive analysis" where she selects typical arguments that show the dynamics of discursive interaction. A central aspect of this method is to contextualize the material on different levels. An analytical point of departure is the criticism emerging from discursive interaction, which I interpret in the light of relevant theory, as well as contextualize within wider discourses and compare with other cases and settings. In this way, my analysis stays closer to empirical reality, and avoids imposing interpretations which do not take seriously what people actually say. I follow Modood (2005:5) when he seeks "to achieve an understanding of society that is anchored in the comprehension of agents themselves". This does not imply merely descriptive analysis which ignores the motives behind certain discourses, but my theoretical interpretation will illuminate the perceptions of actors, including social structures which also depend on how actors understand it.

My empirical material consists of news articles including interviews, and contributions to the debate pages, from major national newspapers in Norway in the period 2006-2010. Since this study does not have quantitative ambitions, the material is selected according to the criteria of relevance to the four 'debates' I have chosen as case studies. I have selected the following cases primarily because they constitute empirical data of an emerging Muslim assertiveness in Norway, which can be theorized in terms of the perspectives on multiculturalism and anti-racism discussed above. There are important differences between the empirical data of the four cases; two cases have been selected because they are Norwegian versions of major European debates; the cartoon affair (chapter 2) and the hijab debates (chapter 4). These two 'affairs' have been widely covered and debated in all major national newspapers, moving in and out of media attention in periodic cycles over several years. The other two cases are clearly demarcated debates among contributors to the *opinion pages* of Norway's largest newspaper, *Aftenposten*, and lasted for a couple of months each. These are interesting because both started with op-ed contributions written by Norwegian Muslims, who

criticized dominant media discourse, and in return attracted hostile reactions in the form of other contributions. In chapter 3, I analyze the so-called 'coconut' debate started by Iffit Qureshi; and in chapter 5, I analyze the debate on secularism started by Mohammed Usman Rana.

In chapter 2, I will analyze two demonstrations in Oslo in February 2006 in response to the Norwegian republication of the Danish cartoons, and an interestingly replay in February 2010 after a Norwegian newspaper published its own Mohammed cartoon. This case will be analyzed on two levels; first the media coverage of the Muslim protest (using insights from CDA), and second, an analysis of the discursive struggles between the four ideological positions discussed earlier. In the cartoon affair, the two opposed majority perspectives were quite explicit; the confrontational approach that dominated in Denmark and the dialogic approach of the Norwegian government. Among the Muslim protesters, a multiculturalist tendency that saw the cartoons as racist can be distinguished from a more religiously conservative tendency to define them as blasphemy (which I categorize as 'communitarian' because it refers to norms internal to the Muslim community). An interesting struggle was the one between Muslim leaders, who accepted the government position, and 1500 Norwegian Muslims who defied their advice and marched through the streets.

Chapter 3 analyzes a much smaller debate in *Aftenposten* in the spring of 2006, which started with an op-ed article by a Norwegian Muslim (or rather, Scottish Pakistani as she prefers to identify herself), Iffit Qureshi, who criticized those minority persons who have assimilated anti-Muslim sentiments and have become 'native informants' to anti-Muslim political interests. The 'coconut debate' was about minority persons who demonize their own background and use new racist and assimilationist rhetoric, and took place among a few regular participants in public debate. Beyond this, it attracted little attention despite this being a controversial topic that deserves more attention in theoretical debate about multiculturalism and racism. While both the phenomenon and the criticism of 'native informants' is widespread, it rarely becomes the subject of critical public debate or academic analysis. Drawing on Malcolm X and Fanon, Qureshi's arguments belong to the discourse of political anti-racism, but her debate opponents from the confrontational camp, Storhaug and al-Kubaisi, ascribed to her a cultural conservative view that opposes cultural mixing and demands ethnic loyalty.

In chapter 4, I analyze the hijab debates in 2007 and 2009. Following the French hijab ban in 2004, the Progress Party and Storhaug called for Norway to follow suit. My analysis focuses on the debate about Storhaug's (2007) book on the hijab. While many individual politicians supported her views, Storhaug was criticized in the media by Muslim women and by feminist academics familiar with postcolonial feminist critique. This debate will be compared to another hijab debate in 2009, after a young Muslim woman wrote a letter to the government asking if she would be able to wear the hijab if

she decided to become a police officer. The government initially gave a positive response, but backed down after heated public debate. Following this decision, the Muslim feminist perspective, emphasizing a woman's right to wear the hijab and make her own career choices, had a breakthrough in public debate. The hijab debates can be seen as a discursive struggle among feminists representing the confrontational and antiracist positions. Notably, many majority feminists supported the Muslim feminist position (as in other European countries, see Fekete 2006:18), and while 'white feminism' found some support among politicians, Storhaug's position became difficult to defend after assertive Muslim women got access to speak for themselves.

My last case study, in chapter 5, is a national debate stirred by Mohammed Usman Rana's award-winning op-ed in *Aftenposten*, where he criticizes a 'secular extremism' that is opposed to religion in the public sphere. Speaking partly from a conservative and partly from a multiculturalist viewpoint, Rana wrote that Norway is faced with a choice between French and American models of secularism. Though he personally favors the American model (which would imply abolishing the state church), he was perceived as an 'Islamist' by secularist critics. The article attracted many responses, both hostile and supportive, and gave rise to academic discussion about the meaning of secularism in a Norwegian context (notably Bangstad 2008; 2009). This debate will be analyzed in the light of Rawls' and Habermas' theories about religion in the public sphere, and conclude with some comments on the relationship between secularism and Islam, and whether religious revival can make a positive contribution to contemporary society.

All four cases will be analyzed within a general framework of multicultural negotiations, white hegemony and anti-Muslim racism. In all of these debates, Muslims do not reject liberal values, but protest against absolutist interpretations of those principles. Muslims do not reject free speech, individual freedom, gender equality and secularism, but demand to negotiate their meaning, scope and limits. What they protest against are attempts to monopolize definition and absolutist construction of liberal values (Parekh 2006:185), despite the fact that these values and principles take different forms and are restricted in different ways, in different western countries. Case studies will deal with these negotiations of values; free speech, racism and religion (chapter 2); internal dissent, communal solidarity and betrayal (chapter 3); conceptions of gender equality in relation to racism and religion (chapter 4); and moderate and radical forms of secularism, and the public role of religion (chapter 5).

PART II

CASE STUDIES

CHAPTER 2

The Cartoon Affair

The cartoon affair was a significant event in Norway's process of becoming a multicultural society, marking the beginning of Muslim assertiveness in the public sphere and indicating that Muslims had become a powerful minority that could mobilize politically and had to be taken seriously (Leirvik 2006; Engebrigtsen 2010:82). As such an event, it can be compared to the British experience of the Rushdie Affair (Modood 2005:203-204; 2007:37-50; 2009:167), which raised similar issues regarding the principle of free speech and its limits in terms of blasphemy and racism. In this chapter, I analyze Norwegian newspapers' coverage of the demonstrations against the Mohammed cartoons that took place in Oslo in February 2006 as well as a 'second round' in February 2010. Key issues include how protesters were represented, which voices were heard and highlighted in the media, how the intended message(s) of the demonstrators were understood and responded to in the public sphere. I also discuss the specific demands raised by protesting Norwegian Muslims in the context of political multiculturalism, and analyze how the four ideological positions identified in the introduction were expressed in these debates. Before turning to the empirical data, I provide a brief background of developments leading to the Norwegian cartoon debate, including the Rushdie Affair in Britain and Norway, the cartoon affair in Denmark and its escalation into an international crisis, and a review of the cartoon affair in Norway.

The Rushdie Affair

While the Rushdie Affair in 1989 had a significant impact on multicultural debates in Britain, and is one of the reasons why British newspapers did not reprint the Danish cartoons in 2006 (Modood 2006:6), it was an important event also in Norway. Here it impacted less on debates about multiculturalism and integration, which were still largely undeveloped at the time (as discussed in the introduction), but played a role in subsequent debates about free speech and religion (Austenå 2011; Bangstad & Vetlesen 2011:338). After Khomeini's 'fatwa', Norwegian publishers, writers, editors and intellectuals strongly defended the right to free speech, and in 1993, there was a still unsolved assassination attempt on publisher William Nygaard, which is generally seen in connection to the Rushdie Affair (ibid). I am less interested in the Iranian death sentence, and instead focus on Muslim minority protests. British Muslims had been protesting against Salman Rushdie's book *Satanic Verses*, which was published on September 26, 1988, for several months before the ayatollah issued his infamous fatwa on February 14, 1989 (Modood 2006:6). There are a number of similarities between the

Rushdie affair and the cartoon affair; notably both cases involve publications which Muslims perceived as 'deeply offensive' (Parekh 2000:298) and insulting their prophet. Both cases escalated gradually from local Muslim protests in European countries to international interventions by Muslim countries; and both publications were framed by European liberals as a matter of free speech, while Muslims saw them as blasphemy and racism. A notable difference is that Rushdie was also accused of *apostasy* or "turning his back on Islam" (this issue will be discussed in chapter 3).

In the Rushdie Affair, Western Muslims started protesting immediately after the book was published, first by writing to the publishers requesting a dialogue; the publishers rejected with a reply that Muslim outrage was due to their "misunderstanding" that the book was a work of fiction which did not describe historical events. Several Muslims wrote detailed critiques of the book; few of these were published because, in the words of one Muslim critic, Shabbir Akhtar (1989:37), the "press stereotyped the peaceful Muslim protests as anti-intellectual, indeed fascist, attempts to curtail democratic freedoms of speech…" Muslims argued that the issue was not free speech versus censorship, but a distinction between legitimate criticism and slander, and that free speech should be exercised with responsibility (ibid, 39). When, in Parekh's (1989:62) words, their "noisy but peaceful protests" and "fairly large but mostly unreported demonstrations", got them nowhere, British Muslims decided to burn a copy of the *Satanic Verses* in front of the Bradford City Hall on January 14, 1989 (Akhtar 1989:42-43), This attracted media attention, and as Parekh (1989:62) reports, "Muslims were called 'barbarians', 'uncivilized', 'fanatics', and compared to the Nazis". After some British Muslims tried to internationalize the issue by appealing to leaders of Muslim countries (ibid, 63), Khomeini pronounced his death sentence against Rushdie. While the fatwa was rightly condemned by liberals, it also led racist stereotyping of British Muslims (ibid, 68; 2000:301), who were "portrayed as trouble-makers refusing to 'assimilate'…" (Akhtar 1989:45) and newspapers started questioning tolerance and multiculturalism (Parekh 1989:65). The British government dismissed Muslim demands, stating that free speech was a 'fundamental' and 'non-negotiable' principle (Parekh 2000:302).

Akhtar (1989), who played a central role in British Muslim protests, defends a "fundamentalist" Muslim perspective. He emphasizes that respectful criticism of the Islamic tradition is ok; Rushdie's book however is abusive to the extent that it may serve as a "litmus-paper test for distinguishing faith from rejection" since "any Muslim who fails to be offended" ceases to be a Muslim (ibid, 35). Although a work of literary fiction, Rushdie's characters are recognizably close to historical events involving the Prophet Mohammed, his family and companions; the book draws on common tropes of Orientalism, and is written in abusive language. Notably, the name of Rushdie's main character is *Mahound*, a derogatory name for the Prophet Mohammed used by Christians in the Middle Ages. Akhtar (ibid, 4-6) saw the book as a "calculated attempt

to vilify and slander Mohammed", which describes the prophet as an "insincere impostor", his household as a brothel, and the Koran as "a confused catalogue of trivial rules about sexual activity and excretion". Additionally, the *Satanic Verses* is written with "the knowledge of an insider" including the "insider's awareness of the outrage such a portrayal would cause" (Akhtar 1989:27) as Rushdie has a Muslim background, and even described himself as "a courageous and liberal Muslim daring to confront the obscurantism and rigid authoritarianism of a fundamentalist minority" (ibid, 39).

Following the fatwa, Norwegian Muslims protested against the planned publication of a Norwegian translation of the book. According to *VG* (February 23, 1989), an "Islamic Defense Council" was set up to represent about 20 000 Norwegian Muslims originating from a range of countries with Pakistanis as the largest group. They emphasized they would use *all legal means* to stop the Norwegian edition of the *Satanic Verses;* appealed to Aschehoug Publishers' director William Nygaard and to government, hired a lawyer to prepare a lawsuit under Norwegian blasphemy legislation, and considered appealing to the International Human Rights Tribunal, as imam Alama Mushtaq Chisti said; *it is a human rights violation to offend billions of people*. The imam refused to comment on Khomeini's fatwa, saying that they *only want to speak about the Norwegian edition*, but also made it clear that *we do not encourage any Muslim to break Norwegian law.* On February 25, they gathered 3000 people for a peaceful demonstration (a high number considering the size of the Norwegian Muslim population at the time), which *VG* (February 27) called *the biggest Muslim event ever held in Norway.* The newspaper quoted the slogans *Stop the book in Norway; Do not insult Muslims*; and noted that *at no time was direct support for ayatollah Khomeini's death sentence expressed. Aftenposten* (February 27) noted that, *it was made clear that the protest was directed at Aschehoug Publishers […], not against the government or the Norwegian people*, and quoted Chisti; *we support free speech, but Rushdie has used very abusive language and insulted a billion Muslims worldwide with his book.* While this 'moderate' protest was covered in news reports, media also highlighted the 'extremist' Syed Bokhari, a Norwegian Pakistani and local Labor Party politician, who caused outrage among politicians with his public support for the fatwa; *VG* (February 23) quoted him; *any Muslim must be willing to kill the author if he gets a chance.* According to Chisti, Bokhari had no relations to protest organizers. Aschehoug did meet with the Muslims' lawyer, but refused to stop the planned publication. Four years later, on October 11, 1993, Nygaard was seriously injured in an assassination attempt; the crime was never solved but it is widely assumed to be a result of the fatwa. Later, the Rushdie affair became the immediate reason for appointing a governmental *Commission on Freedom of Expression.* Being dominated by majority individuals, this commission did not see much reason to restrict free speech (see Bangstad & Vetlesen 2011:338).

In his assessment of British debates after the Rushdie affair, Parekh (2000:303) describes much of it as focused on the death threat, while Muslim demands were

dismissed as 'fundamentalism' incompatible with 'freedom'. After things calmed down, the situation changed and both sides became more willing to accommodate each other. Akhtar argued that the book "should be banned because it reinforces prejudice against an already maltreated religious minority" (1989:49). While he had been interpreted as an apologist for fundamentalism, he now used a political argument about racism rather than a religious argument. Akhtar noted a change on the other side; where "self-proclaimed defenders of freedom of speech as an absolute right" (ibid, 52) acknowledged that Muslims did have a legitimate case. By May 1989, two claims were generally accepted; that Muslims of a variety of opinions had been offended, and that free speech is a negotiable rather than absolute value in a liberal democracy (ibid, 53; 58-59). In Britain, the Rushdie affair thus led to public debate about whether and how existing laws can be used to restrain offensive expressions, including blasphemy, racism and libel (see Parekh 2000:313-321; Modood 2005:113-130; Akhtar 1989b). The preferred Muslim position, expressed by Akhtar (1989a:57-58; see also 1989b), settled on demanding the same legal protection for "the collective dignity" of religious groups as the one given to groups defined by 'race' and gender; seeking an amendment to laws against racial hatred rather than blasphemy legislation. Parekh (1989) takes a critical view of Muslim protesters, "whose leaders did not know how to handle the media and speak in idioms intelligible to their white fellow citizens" (ibid, 68). While acknowledging Akhtar's "more sophisticated line" (ibid, 68-69), Parekh criticizes his defense of 'fundamentalism' and focus on 'apostasy' as unpersuasive. In Parekh's (2000:305) analysis, Muslim spokespersons initially "found it extremely difficult" to "articulate their reasons in a liberal language", but gradually developed more coherent arguments; that the book misrepresented Islam, spoke about the Muslim religion in abusive language, and reinforced anti-Muslim prejudice (ibid, 299; 1990:699).

Peter van der Veer (1997:101-102) argues that the angry reactions of British Muslims were justifiable and not necessarily 'fundamentalist' but rather can be seen as "political resistance to the assimilative tendencies of the nation-state". Their demand for extending blasphemy laws can be understood as "their own cultural project for living hybrid cultural lives in a non-Islamic nation" (ibid). Modood (2005:104) describes Muslim protests as mainly "spontaneous working-class anger and hurt pride" (at this time, there were fewer educated minority persons), and points out that their anger was "not so much a Muslim response as a South Asian Muslim response" (ibid, 106). As such, their reactions had little to do with fundamentalism, which is primarily a movement among the educated middle class, but more with a traditional South Asian cultural reverence of the prophet, which is strongest among the rural working class (ibid, 106-107). Edward Said, while defending the right to publish the book, questioned whether it was "intellectually fair and politically wise" for someone with a Muslim background to join Orientalist discourse and reinforce western prejudices about Islam (cited in Parekh 1989:69). Modood (2005:119) notes that rally posters and interviews

with British Muslims, referred to "honor" and "dignity" more often than to "blasphemy", and that these issues "cannot be understood as a narrowly theological matter". He also points out that while representatives from Muslim countries spoke mostly of apostasy, Western Muslims preferred the blasphemy argument, as an adaptation to Western legal systems which recognize the latter but not the former (Modood 1993b:97-98). Akhtar (1989b:24) concluded that "in a secular society like Britain, the Muslim's best bet is to campaign for a law making certain kinds of conduct or publication socially unacceptable as opposed to religiously offensive" and that, rather than the blasphemy law, "the Race Relations Act needs amendment", extending the definition of ethnicity to cover groups identified by religion. According to Modood, the Rushdie affair was thus "an attempt by Muslims […] to press their claim to be recognized as an oppressed group in British society, as a group whose essential dignity must be respected by the rest of society". It was "a demand to be incorporated with the same kind of legal protection as other oppressed groups" (ibid, 124), such as women, ethnic and racial minorities (as discussed in the introduction, their demands have been partly accommodated in Britain).

Jyllands-Posten's cartoons

The Danish cartoons of Mohammed were published in the country's largest newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* on September 30, 2005. Twelve cartoons were printed under the headline *Faces of Mohammed*. The most provocative and widely debated of them portrayed a bearded man with a bomb in his turban, and the Islamic creed (the *shahada*) written on the bomb (Alhassan 2008:40-41; Levey & Modood 2009:218). Several other cartoons signified Muslim violence and oppression of women; but some were critical comments on the cartoon affair (see Alhassan 2008 for a comprehensive analysis of all twelve cartoons); one of them showing a schoolboy writing in Persian on the blackboard: "The journalists of Jyllands-Posten are a bunch of reactionary provocateurs" (Alhassan 2008:45). In Erik Bleich's (2006:17-18) analysis, the cartoons range from positive portrayals of Muslims to some that are not only offensive but can be classified as "hate speech that should be sanctioned by law". *Jyllands-Posten*'s editors explained that they invited cartoonists to submit drawings of Mohammed in order to stop 'growing self-censorship' in the Danish public sphere, where people are too 'politically correct' and afraid of hurting the feelings of religious minorities (Kunelius & Eide 2007:10). Some weeks earlier, Danish newspapers had reported on Kåre Bluitgen's difficulty finding artists to illustrate his children's book on the Prophet Mohammed (ibid, 9; Levey & Modood 2009:217; Hervik, Eide & Kunelius 2008:31). This account of illustrators' self-censorship due to fear of Muslim repercussions was repeatedly told as a reason for *Jyllands-Posten*'s cartoon publication, but it was rarely mentioned that Bluitgen was already known for previous "controversial publications and provocative attacks on Muslims" (Boe & Hervik 2008:216; see also Carens

2006:36); although two of the cartoons depicted the drawing assignment as a PR stunt for advertising Bluitgen's book (Alhassan 2008:42).

The cartoons were accompanied by the following text, written by the newspaper's culture editor Flemming Rose (quoted in Kunelius & Eide 2007:10);

> The modern, secular society is rejected by some Muslims. They demand a special position, insisting on special consideration of their religious feelings. It is incompatible with contemporary democracy and freedom of speech, where you must be ready to put up with insults, mockery and ridicule…

On previous occasions, the newspaper had argued that criticism and ridicule of religion were necessary provocations to 'speed up' the integration of Muslims (Boe & Hervik 2008:213). This justification explicitly refers to an 'incompatibility' between 'secular society' and 'some Muslims' who want 'special consideration' of their 'religious feelings', thus reflecting the topos of a 'clash of civilizations'. Rose echoes Barry's (2001:31) comment on the Rushdie Affair; that "the right to mock, ridicule and lampoon is inseparable from the right to free speech", thus constructing free speech as absolute and non-negotiable. Framing consideration of religious feelings as incompatible with free speech, *Jyllands-Posten* sought in advance to deny the legitimacy of possible Muslim protests, which could be construed as a 'rejection' of 'modern, secular society'. Thus, *Jyllands-Posten*'s position is in line with 'confrontational liberalism' as discussed in the introduction.

On October 9, the Islamic Society in Denmark demanded an apology from *Jyllands-Posten* and a withdrawal of the cartoons. Five days later, between 3000 and 5000 Muslims peacefully demonstrated against the cartoons in Copenhagen. At the same time, two of the cartoonists received death threats (Levey & Modood 2009:219; Kunelius & Eide 2007:10; Hervik, Eide & Kunelius 2008:32). In a letter dated October 12, eleven ambassadors from Muslim countries asked to meet Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen to discuss the situation of Muslims in Denmark, using the cartoons as an example of a problematic issue. A week later, Rasmussen turned down their request, insisting that the government could not interfere with press freedom (Kunelius & Eide 2007:10; Hervik, Eide & Kunelius 2008:33). In December, the cartoon affair developed into a diplomatic crisis after two delegations of imams from the Islamic Society in Denmark travelled to Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries to gain support for their case from Arab political leaders. This delegation's lobbying efforts in the Middle East contributed to a boycott of Danish goods and recalling of ambassadors (Levey & Modood 2009:219). By this time, the Council of Europe criticized the Danish government's handling of the issue (Kunelius & Eide 2007:10-11), and a group of retired Danish diplomats publicly criticized the refusal to meet the ambassadors as an "unheard of diplomatic act" (Hervik, Eide & Kunelius 2008:34). Towards the end of January 2006, *Jyllands-Posten* and the government made an effort to show sympathy

with offended Muslims, but did not apologize for the publication (Hansen 2006:9). The situation escalated and culminated in early February with massive protests in the Middle East; several Danish embassies were attacked and on February 4, the embassies of both Denmark and Norway in Damascus were put on fire. Many Western governments expressed solidarity with Denmark, and newspapers in countries like France and Germany showed solidarity by printing the cartoons (Levey & Modood 2009:219, Hervik, Eide & Kunelius 2008:34).

In international media coverage, the notion of a 'clash of civilizations' became a key phrase, mentioned explicitly in many opinion pieces and implicitly framing much news reporting (Kunelius & Eide 2007:12). Editors and columnists often criticized this idea as a prediction that might become a self-fulfilling prophecy thanks to extremists, while most people on both sides wanted to avoid such a situation. At the same time, news coverage tended to reproduce the clash thesis by highlighting extremists and violent demonstrations (ibid, 19). Kunelius and Eide (ibid, 20) point out that domestic politics impacted strongly on the tone of debate, especially when national political elites had made diplomatic efforts to calm down the situation. French, British and Swedish media started with a cautious and diplomatic approach in line with their governments, but later switched to a more confrontational defense of free speech that distinguished their own position from the government. French newspapers republished the cartoons, while media in more multiculturalist Britain and Sweden did not (ibid, 13).

The cartoon affair soon gave rise to academic debates. Randall Hansen (2006) defended the publication on liberal and secularist grounds. Rejecting the 'clash of civilizations' thesis and the view that Muslim and Western values are incompatible (ibid, 8), he argues that the cartoons are not racist. While they do represent "hatred of a religion" (ibid, 12), religion should be a "fair target" of criticism, mockery and ridicule in a liberal democratic society. He argues that free speech is non-negotiable (ibid, 16); thus Muslims "cannot be accommodated through a revision of those norms and principles" (ibid, 8). While accepting the possibility that the cartoonists, editors or Danish society may be hostile to Muslims (ibid, 11), he argues that "this offence is the price of living in a liberal society" (ibid, 15) which Muslims are free to protest, but they cannot demand criminal sanctions (ibid, 16). Hansen thus rejects the argument that the cartoons qualify as hate speech. Brendan O'Leary (2006:25-27) presents a similar argument, but makes the additional claim that Muslim outrage was "manufactured" by "Islamists" referring to the imam delegation that traveled to the Middle East, including in their portfolio more offensive cartoons that had not been printed in *Jyllands-Posten*. In a more nuanced analysis, Jytte Klausen (2009) emphasizes the Egyptian government's role in the escalation of the crisis (see also Engebrigtsen 2010:74); "Egypt had been building a diplomatic offensive against the Danes for months, and the imams had never made it to Cairo if they had not been invited" (Klausen 2009:8, see also 35-38; 63-82). Klausen (ibid, 147) also discusses the Danish government's motives for refusing to meet with

Muslim diplomats, seeing this in the context of Fogh Rasmussen's alignment with US foreign policy under President George W. Bush and American neo-conservatism, and his dependence on parliamentary support from the Danish People's Party, which uses a nationalist rhetoric of a 'culture war' between Danes and Muslims (Klausen 2009:148-165).

While further discussion of the international aspects falls beyond my scope, it is necessary to distinguish and explain the Danish confrontational approach and the Norwegian dialogue approach in their national contexts, as reflections of already established policies. The Danish government had been the first to invite Rushdie in 1996; and in 2004, Fogh Rasmussen's Liberal Party gave its annual liberty prize to Dutch politician Ayaan Hirsi Ali (Meer & Mouritsen 2009:338). Per Mouritsen (2006) analyzes the Danish government's confrontational mode of defining free speech as non-negotiable (ibid, 70) as culturalizing universal liberal values, claiming them as the property of a particular nation (ibid, 73). In Denmark, with little support for any notion of multiculturalism, opinion is split between a "national or communitarian liberalism" (Meer & Mouritsen 2009:337) represented by the right, and a more tolerant "universalistic or colour blind liberalism" (ibid) represented by the left. The dominant Danish understanding of 'constitutional patriotism' was not pluralist in Rawls' sense of allowing different versions of liberal universalism, but instead represented a 'comprehensive liberalism' linked to a particular Danish culture, seen as superior and genuinely liberal and democratic (Mouritsen 2006:84-86). Thus, the Danish model is not open to "deliberative contestation of the specific particularity of liberal political cultures, indeed for the very acceptance of alternative views as reasonable in a debate" (ibid, 88) and excludes the emergence of a new generation of Muslims who "frame identities by presenting democratic and liberal credentials as part and parcel of a religious outlook" (ibid).

While *Jyllands-Posten*'s framing of the cartoons as an issue of free speech under threat was often taken for granted in public debate (Eide, Kunelius & Phillips 2008:18), Hervik and Clarissa Berg (2007:25) see the cartoon affair in the context of the "re-politicization of the press" and emphasize that Danish newspapers took differing positions. While Jyllands-Posten aligned itself with the government, the social-democratic *Politiken* was critical of both *Jyllands-Posten* and Fogh Rasmussen (Meer & Mouritsen 2009:339). It would thus be inaccurate to see the cartoons as a result of a particular Danish view on free speech threatened by Islam; they are better understood as situated in the context of a politicized national media landscape (Hervik & Berg 2007:36-37; Hervik 2008:59). Having studied Danish media coverage since the 1990s, Hervik (2006:228-229) notes that much of *Jyllands-Posten*'s coverage "constructs an image of Islam as the enemy", and culture editor Rose has previously expressed his sympathies for neo-conservative and anti-Islamic writers such as Lewis, Hitchens and Fukuyama (Hervik 2008:72).

Hervik (2008) also analyzes the Danish government's use of 'spin doctors' to influence media coverage (spinning refers to a form of political communication to the media, to manage and control the news by formulating rhetoric with a certain angle on the truth; see ibid, 62-63). In his response to the ambassadors' letter, Fogh Rasmussen selectively focused on free speech and the cartoons; while the ambassadors had in fact requested a meeting to discuss their general concern about widespread negative focus on Muslims in Denmark. As a result of this spin strategy, the letter was instead interpreted as a request for legal intervention with *Jyllands-Posten*, which could legitimately be rejected (ibid, 65). In an interview with that newspaper on October 30, 2005, carrying the headline: *Fogh: Freedom of Speech Must Be Used for Provocation*, the Prime Minister said; *I will never accept that respect for people's religious convictions should lead to constraints on the possibilities of the press for bringing critique, humour or satire*, and *enlightened and free societies are more successful than un-enlightened and non-free societies, exactly because some dare to provoke and criticize authorities* and *I must say that the terrorists' aim is to make us all so scared that we give up the fundamental values of our society* (quoted in ibid, 66-67). Here, the clash of civilizations topos appears, contrasting our 'enlightened and free' society with the 'un-enlightened and non-free' societies of 'the terrorists'. In Hervik's (ibid) analysis, the international crisis was a fact after Fogh Rasmussen had rejected the ambassadors and from then on, his strategy aimed at damage control, trying to put himself in a favorable light and blaming Muslims for escalation; by (1) insisting that the issue is about free speech; (2) expressing personal disagreement with the publication; (3) regretting the offense caused; (4) blaming the imam delegation; and (5) placing responsibility on Muslims.

The Norwegian approach

Whereas Denmark had "no formalized consultation between Muslim communities and the state" (Mouritsen 2006:74), the Norwegian government's choice of dialogue can be explained by three factors; (1) the existence of an institutionalized inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and Christians (Engebrigtsen 2010:80; Leirvik 2006, 2012a); (2) a foreign policy emphasizing dialogue, peace and reconciliation (Eide, Kunelius & Phillips 2008:12; Steien 2008:41), and (3) an integration policy with a strong focus on dialogue (as discussed in the introduction). While Oddbjørn Leirvik (2006) emphasizes the role of interfaith dialogue between mainstream Christians and Muslims in civil society as an important factor in countering the tendencies to a Christian form of Islamophobia resulting from an alliance between the 'new Christian right' and the Progress Party, the two latter policy factors may be more significant; in contrast to Denmark's neo-conservative government, Norway had a newly-elected social-democratic government which had expressed a positive view of multicultural society (Engebrigtsen 2010:80). Among these three forms of dialogue, civil society interreligious dialogue probably comes closer to genuine dialogue open to mutual change (Grung cited in Leirvik 2012a:19) than the two other cases of dialogue as a

policy instrument. As a state strategy, dialogue is necessarily asymmetrical and may be better understood as an instrument of persuasion; which may legitimize policy and can thus be more effective in bringing about results than the confrontational alternative. As a policy instrument, dialogue may be used as a strategy to teach the 'other' about liberal values such as free speech (Vetlesen & Bangstad 2011:338).

Soon after the small, conservative Christian journal, *Magazinet*, republished the Danish cartoons on January 10, 2006 (Kunelius & Eide 2007:11) and before the international escalation of the conflict (Steien 2007:41), the Foreign Ministry responded by providing its Middle Eastern embassies with a list of arguments regretting the offense to Muslims caused by the cartoons, which were seen as creating unnecessary conflict. While stating that free speech is a fundamental right, it mentioned legal restraints on hate speech; the latter point was criticized by the opposition after the diplomatic checklist was leaked to the media (Engebrigtsen 2010:75-76). In early February, Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre (who most explicitly emphasizes dialogue over confrontation as a social democratic approach to promote peace, reconciliation, democracy and universal human rights both internationally and domestically, see *Dagsavisen,* March 10, 2006) and Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg publicly regretted the publication of the cartoons, while making it clear that the government could not interfere with free speech (Engebrigtsen 2010:76). Støre met with the Norwegian Islamic Council, which "promised to use its contacts to support the Norwegian government's case" (ibid) in Muslim countries. The government supported a delegation of members from the established Muslim-Christian interfaith dialogue to meet with Yusuf al-Qaradawi, head of the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ibid, 77; Leirvik 2012a:13). On February 10, Minister of Labor and Social Inclusion Bjarne Håkon Hanssen facilitated a 'reconciliation meeting' between *Magazinet* editor Vebjørn Selbekk and Islamic Council leader Mohammed Hamdan (Steien 2008:46-47), where Selbekk regretted the *consequences* of the publication and Hamdan accepted his 'apology'. The Islamic Council called off further protests (Engebrigtsen 2010:77), the government successfully calmed down the situation, but also turned *Magazinet*, representing the "new Christian right" and a rather marginal publication in Norway, into a scapegoat (ibid, 80-82; Steien 2008:41-42). The same day as the reconciliation meeting, the Antiracist Center together with 60 other organizations, although none of them Muslim, arranged a peace demonstration, where about 300, mostly non-Muslim, persons attended, including several members of government and other politicians.

An independent group of Norwegian Muslims, who called themselves "The Volunteers", however, decided to go through with their planned rally against the cartoons on February 11. This group was not satisfied that the government held only *Magazinet* responsible, while not addressing anti-Muslim sentiments in general. Neither were they happy that community leaders accepted this solution and cancelled further protest. A peaceful demonstration counting 1500 Norwegian Muslims took place

although all Muslim organizations had advised against participation. This rally became an opportunity to let their voices be heard for many ordinary Norwegian Muslims, who had not previously gained access to the media, and whose views were not represented by their leaders either.

Analysis of media coverage

Solveig Steien's (2007:44-47) analysis of editorials notes that mainstream Norwegian newspapers started on a more confrontational line of defending free speech as an absolute value (although they did not print the cartoons), but switched to a position of dialogue after the violence in the Middle East and the government-facilitated 'reconciliation'. The free speech frame dominated western media internationally (Eide, Kunelius & Phillips 2008:18), and also Norwegian media often reduced Muslim complaints about the cartoons to complaints about blasphemy, which could be easily dismissed as illegitimate in a secularized society. Steien (ibid) notes that Norwegian newspapers made attempts to open up debate, in particular debate editor, Knut Olav Åmås, of Norway's largest newspaper *Aftenposten*, who actively sought out minority contributors to the opinion pages during the cartoon affair. While a variety of Muslim voices were represented in the media, minority contributions that were published tended to support hegemonic views. Media coverage of the demonstration showed that many Norwegian Muslims did not only frame the cartoons as blasphemy (ibid, 45), but also within a wider context of anti-Muslim racism in the media.

Bolette Blaagard (2010:1-4) notes that media played a central role in reviving nationalism and racism in several European countries including Denmark, where the cartoons were published as a contribution to a domestic integration debate before it became a 'transnational media event' (Eide, Kunelius & Phillips 2008:11-13). In my analysis of media coverage of Muslims protests, an initial impression based on empirical data and Steien's (2007) and Phillips' (2008) studies, is that Norwegian newspapers gave more access to a variety of Muslim viewpoints than some other European national media, although stereotypical coverage was also present. Shawn Powers (2008:351-352) argues that media coverage of demonstrations and protests is highly revealing of media's ideological positioning, as framing of protests is often aligned to editorial outlooks. His study of how British media covered Muslim protests against the cartoons, found that while Muslim leaders mostly attempted to protest in very 'western' ways, newspapers chose to emphasize the most violent demonstrations, and picked out the more extreme slogans and banners from the crowd of protesters. Powers points out that emphasizing violence and extremism is part of a strategy to dramatize and sensationalize news, which increases collective perceptions of threat and public fear (ibid, 354), which in turn make audiences crave for more information and increase media consumption. Sensationalist coverage thus contributes to escalate cross-cultural tensions and make dialogue more difficult.

Richardson's (2004) study of British newspaper coverage in the late 1990s found that British Muslims were categorized as non-British mostly through an implicit contrast with 'British' characteristics and occasionally through explicit ascription of 'Islamic' characteristics, in conservative and liberal newspapers (ibid, 113-117; 152-153). An international comparison of news coverage (ter Wal, Triandafyllidou, Steindler & Kontochristou 2009) found that while Dutch (like Italian and Greek) newspapers frequently employed the 'clash of civilizations' topos, British newspapers focused more on the need to 'mediate' in the conflict between 'the press' and 'Muslims'. This study (ibid, 248-249) concluded that British coverage avoided dichotomies between Europeans and Muslims, represented a diversity of views and quoted different sources, including British Muslims. In a more detailed analysis, Angela Phillips and Hillel Nossek (2008) note that British newspapers initially did not cover the cartoon affair, but after the cartoons had been republished in major European media, they unanimously "condemned the European press for stirring up anger amongst "their" minorities" and defended their own decision not to print the cartoons with reference to "tolerance and restraint" (ibid, 239; see also Phillips & Lee 2007:68), which reflected an allegedly superior, British way of 'diversity management' (Phillips & Nossek 2008:246), followed up by a statement by British foreign secretary Jack Straw, who denounced the reprinting in other European countries as "gratuitously inflammatory" (ibid, 240).

On February 3, 2006, the 'extremist' group Al-Ghuraba gathered a few hundred people for an angry and provocative demonstration in London, using extreme slogans threatening 'Europe' with terrorism (Phillips 2008:105; Abbas 2011:70). British editors responded in anger as if the demonstrators had betrayed their tolerance and restraint (Phillips & Nossek 2008:246), condemned the demonstration and demanded that the protesters be arrested for "incitement to murder" and possibly deported (Abbas 2011:70; Phillips 2008:240). Despite the non-violence and small size of this protest, it received massive negative coverage. More moderate Muslim organizations unanimously denounced the 'extremists' and organized bigger demonstrations, which were barely reported and even dismissed (ibid, 241; see also Phillips & Lee 2007:74; 77). Among these, 5000 Muslims took part in a peaceful rally directed not only against the cartoons, but also against the previous protesters, under the slogan "United against Islamophobia, united against incitement, united in our love of the Prophet" (Abbas 2011:70). But news reports emphasized extreme voices among British Muslims and showed little interest in more moderate viewpoints (Phillips & Lee 2007:68-70), and changed the dominant framing from 'dialogue' to 'confrontation', while the discourse of 'antiracism' or 'dialogical multiculturalism' was given space only as a minority discourse (ibid, 77; Phillips & Nossek 2008:246). By letting extremists speak for British Muslims in general, the newspapers promoted the 'clash of civilizations' discourse (ibid, 241-242). Together with the London bombings six months earlier, the cartoon affair also marks a turning point in British debate, a shift away from multiculturalism (ibid, 246; 250).

Phillips (2008) discusses to which extent media in different countries opened for debate about the cartoons, and whether Muslim voices were heard. In her comparison of debates in Canada, Sweden, Britain and Norway, she notes that in Britain (and Sweden), where the cartoons were not printed, the level of 'tolerance' decreased as the crisis escalated. In most European countries, debate was dominated by the two hegemonic positions of 'confrontation' and 'dialogue'; Canada seemed to be the only western country were an antiracist, multiculturalist perspective was given sufficient space in the media to challenge hegemony. While most British Muslim contributors and left-wing intellectuals argued from an anti-racist position, Norwegian (and Swedish) Muslim commentators (e.g. Shabana Rehman) tended to argue from a 'liberal fundamentalist' position (ibid, 107-109). The 'Muslim fundamentalist' view which was emphasized in news reports was rarely ever seen in debate pages. Phillips found that Norwegian (and Swedish) newspapers were more open to a diversity of Muslim voices than British newspapers were. A significant difference was that British Muslim voices were included to represent "the Other" and argue against the cartoons, while Norwegian Muslim voices were included to represent the 'liberal' view and defend the cartoons. In Swedish newspapers, which had the greatest representation of Muslim voices, a contrast was apparent between Muslim journalists who defended 'confrontational liberalism', and Muslim intellectuals, who like their British counterparts argued against the cartoons from an anti-racist position (ibid, 111). Phillips concludes that in each country, minority voices tend to be positioned to confirm dominant discourses; British 'multiculturalism' sees Muslims as primarily different (either negatively as 'extremists' or positively as 'antiracists'), while Norwegian integration policy favors 'assimilated' Muslims (ibid, 112-114). Phillips and Nossek (2008:250) note that when minority persons accept the majority-assigned role, they are praised by media; otherwise they are 'condemned'.

Elisabeth Eide and Kaarina Nikunen (2011:9-11) found that while Norwegian media recently gives space to a variety of minority voices, these tend to be fitted into polarized categories such as the 'Adaptive Hero Other', referring to 'assimilated' individuals who are "represented favorably in the media due to their adherence to 'European-ness' and their critique of backward and negative practices within their 'own' minority" (ibid, 9); the 'Villain Other' who are represented negatively, and include also "conservative leaders without a record of abuse" and "conservatively dressed Muslim women" (ibid, 10), and the 'Dialogic Other' emphasizing the normality of hyphenated public identities and "the need to accept and respect people who want to preserve their religious traditions" (ibid, 10-11). Many Norwegian Muslims resist being classified as 'spokespersons' for their ethnic or religious community (Eide 2011:73; 76-77), as in Britain, where minority persons tend to be defined as representing their community in the public sphere (Phillips & Nossek 2008:245). Phillips (2008:113) notes that in Norway, critical Muslim voices spoke primarily through street protests; and asks; were they heard or misrepresented by the media? Below I attempt to answer that question.

Empirical analysis

For detailed analysis I have selected 14 news reports from major Norwegian newspapers in the period from February 3 to 12, 2006; starting with the initial call for demonstration and including reports published the day after the protest. Half of the articles came out before the demonstration, and cover a variety of opinions about whether or not to join, expressed in interviews with Norwegian Muslims. The remaining articles are news reports covering the 'peace demonstration' on February 10 (2 articles), and the Muslim protest on February 11 (5 articles). This sample includes most reports covering the protests in the following national daily newspapers; *Aftenposten*, the largest subscription newspaper, with a conservative political orientation and circulation of approx. 300 000; *Dagsavisen*, a social-democratic subscription newspaper with circulation of approx. 30 000 (but widely read among the 'political elite'); *Klassekampen*, a left-wing subscription newspaper with approx. circulation of 10 000 (also widely read in 'political' circles); *Dagbladet*, a liberal tabloid with approx. circulation of 200 000 (with a tendency to cater to a female audience), and last but not least; *VG*, the largest tabloid with a 'populist' and sensationalist orientation, circulation approx. 350 000. At the time, *VG* had Norway's most comprehensive and updated online newspaper (most printed articles are also published online), from which I have included a few articles.

Contrary to the polarized situation in Denmark, and more similar to the British press (Meer & Mouritsen 2009:339), Norwegian newspapers share a national consensus on minority issues (to promote 'integration'), and I did not find much systematic correlation between the newspapers' political orientation and a more or less favorable coverage of minority voices. However, political 'broadsheets' such as *Aftenposten* and *Klassekampen* report less about everyday minority issues, but instead promote *debate* about these issues. Other papers show more interest in reporting and interviewing minority persons (*Dagsavisen* and *Aften*; which is *Aftenposten*'s evening edition serving as Oslo's local newspaper). Among the tabloids, *Dagbladet* reports and debates about minority women's issues, while *VG* is more interested in crime, terrorism and war. All main newspapers have a few journalists with minority background; many of them Muslims. These are often asked to report on minority issues (see Richardson 2004:41-44 for a critical discussion), as they are thought to have greater knowledge of issues and broader networks in their communities; giving access to more sources. Several articles in my sample are written by journalists with a Muslim background, and while minority journalists may experience a conflict between loyalty to the media and loyalty to their ethnic community (ibid, 42-43), it seems that their reports sometimes do show a more nuanced understanding and let minority voices be heard to a greater extent.

Media representation of protest organizers

While newspapers' heavy reliance on official and 'expert' sources tends to privilege and reproduce dominant views, for example when 'white' academics are quoted as 'experts'

on minority issues, Richardson (2004:45-47) points out that any news organization can produce "oppositional news" that challenge the dominant ideological framing. In particular, the 'event-centric' nature of news can accommodate the reporting of counter-hegemonic demonstrations, as well as give access to, quote and 'foreground' oppositional sources. The first article that mentions the plans for a Muslim demonstration is an example of such 'oppositional news'. Written by a journalist with a Muslim background, and published in *VG*'s online edition (it did not appear in the print version) on February 3, 2006, this article is positive in its representation of protest organizers. The headline, *Inviting to a demonstration*, and story lead; *Norwegian Muslims distribute flyers in mosques on Friday to invite people to a demonstration against the Mohammed insults*, uses terminology with positive connotations. The call to protest is represented as an 'invitation', implying that this is not a closed activity of a religious minority, but that the general public is welcome to join. Organizers are referred to as 'Norwegian Muslims', the hyphenated identity which is the preferred term of self-identification for many Norwegian Muslims (Eide 2011:76-77) and as such, the 'correct' term to use (Reisigl & Wodak 2001:69), which avoids reproducing the opposition between 'Norwegian' and 'Muslim' (Richardson 2004:113).

In terms of framing, use of direct quotes expresses involvement rather than distance (Reisigl & Wodak 2001:81). The article quotes from a flyer distributed at Friday prayer at an Oslo mosque, the Islamic Cultural Center; *Because of the insults against the Prophet, we hold a demonstration on Saturday 11 February at 2.30 p.m. at Grønlands Torg*. The exact time and place is quoted, thus *VG* helps the organizers mobilize. Few other reports repeated this information, which could enable readers without a network in the Muslim community to join. Slogans are also quoted directly; *Are you fed up with media's abuse of free speech?*; *How long shall they offend and provoke to divide society?*; and *Unite and show how respect should be*. In a later section, I discuss the content of slogans; suffice it for now to note that they reverse the dominant positive self- and negative other-presentation; the protest is directed against the 'media', which is described with a range of negative terms; 'abuse', 'offend', 'provoke', 'divide'; while Muslim organizers present their own agenda in positive terms; 'unite' and 'respect'. Quoting slogans assures that the protesters' agenda is represented accurately. The organizers are identified by their signature on the flyer; *The Volunteers*; a term with positive connotations of agency, initiative, social responsibility and generosity.

The journalistic norm of 'balanced reporting', which requires quoting other sources with competing views (Richardson 2004:45) is met by interviewing an imam, Mehboob ur-Rahman, at the mosque where the flyer was distributed. While not advising against the demonstration (yet), he calls on Muslims to keep their calm; *Muslims must not get agitated. Evil must be fought with good. Use your head and control your emotions*. This quote is ambiguous; it contains implicit references to the cartoons as 'evil', but also

describes 'Muslims' as potentially 'emotional' (irrational) and 'agitated' (aggressive), reflecting common stereotypes (Reisigl & Wodak 2001; Richardson 2004:121). The statement may be interpreted as 'patronizing' by those who want to join the protest, but can also be interpreted as a religious appeal. Understood this way, the imam counters another stereotype; that unlike Christians, Muslims tend not to 'turn the other cheek' (or 'fight evil with good') but respond with violence. More interesting in a political context, is that the imam reportedly met the Foreign Minister the same day. In contrast to the *Volunteers*, ur-Rahman is *extremely satisfied with the* [government's] *response*, and *fully understands their reaction*. Using intensifying terms such as 'extremely' and 'fully', he appears to uncritically accept the government position, including its framing of the crisis as the work of *one man* [Selbekk] *and not Norway*; reflecting an argumentative strategy of 'blaming' or 'scapegoating' (Triandafyllidou et al. 2009:243) the *Magazinet* editor. The imam's attitude towards the government can be understood in the context of previous media debates where Muslim leaders were blamed for unwanted minority practices such as female circumcision in the Kadra case (Talle 2003).

On February 6, *Dagsavisen* prints an article with the headline *Norwegian Muslims want to demonstrate on Saturday*; also a mostly positive angle. The story lead reads; *Via SMS, Muslims are called to demonstrate against the Mohammed cartoons on Saturday. Several mosques support the plans*. The slogans on the organizers' flyer are quoted directly, and it says that the same message was spread via SMS. The actual content of the article, however, is more ambiguous with regard to 'several mosques support[ing] the plans'. It says that the 'World Islamic Mission' mosque wants to follow the Islamic Council, whose leader Mohammed Hamdan is quoted; *We know about the plans to demonstrate and have told our youth that this must be done peacefully and not end up with violence or incidents. If violence occurs, it will only help the extremists*. The Islamic Council leader does not express a clear position in support of the protest; but calls on the 'youth' to protest peacefully, otherwise 'it will help the extremists'. At this stage, it is not clear whether this refers to Muslim extremists, white racists or both.

A member of a Muslim congregation, who later became secretary-general of the Islamic Council, is quoted in support of the protest, but he clarifies the next day that he did not speak on behalf of the mosque. The article reads, *Spokesperson Mehtab Afsar at the congregation Minhaj-ul-Quran says they urge Muslims to take part in the demonstration*. Afsar is quoted; *We do this for two reasons: First, we think it is important to send a signal to larger society about how offended Muslims are by this case, and second to show that it is possible to use peaceful means such as the right to demonstrate*. This article uses direct quotes and allows the 'spokesperson' to explain why he wants to demonstrate. He speaks a political language, using a phrase from political debate; 'to send a signal'. Like the imam above, he seeks to counter the stereotype of Muslims as violent and aggressive, by proving that 'it is possible to use

peaceful means'. He invokes 'the right to demonstrate' which is part of the discourse on free speech, thus emphasizing that he supports this principle. The interview with Afsar also exemplifies the problematic issue of minority 'spokespersons'. While *Dagsavisen* assigns to him the role of 'spokesperson', he clarifies his role the next day (*Dagsavisen*, February 7); *as a private citizen, I think all Muslims are entitled to take part in a peaceful demonstration, and I will also do so myself.* As an example of resisting classification as community 'representative' rather than as an individual (Eide 2011:73), he makes clear that he speaks as a 'private citizen', and not as 'spokesperson'. Media has tended to treat minority individuals willing to be interviewed as spokespersons of their community, regardless of whether they hold formal leadership roles (for a minority critique of the role 'spokesperson', see also the young lawyer and politician Abid Raja's (2008) autobiography titled "Spokesman"). More significant to the political dynamics around the anti-cartoon protest, Afsar is quoted; *It is not the mosque* [Minhaj-ul-Quran] *that is behind this demonstration, and the congregation board has not taken a position.* As of February 7, four days before the demonstration, no official spokesperson or community leader has yet taken a position for or against the announced protest.

Fear of 'extremists on both sides'

To understand the reluctance of Norwegian Muslim organizations to support the demonstration, we need to take into account the general sense of crisis which culminated this week (Triandafyllidou et al. 2009:239-240), described by Steien (2007) as "A Norway almost at war". Moderates on both sides feared escalation after two violent incidents had taken place on February 4. In Damascus, Syria, protesters had burned down the Norwegian Embassy. Although this act of 'Muslim violence' took place in the Middle East, it contributed to pre-existing fear of Muslim extremism, which in turn incited right-wing extremists to respond with threats of violence. Later that day, framed as an 'act of revenge' in the media, a Palestinian had been stabbed by two 'ethnic Norwegians' in Skien. According to local newspaper *Varden* (online, February 6), one of them had asked *why do you burn our flag in the Middle East?* during the attack. Police chose to see the incident as a drunken row rather than as an act of racism, but leader of the Antiracist Center, Nadeem Butt, told *Dagsavisen* (6 February) that the incident frightened Norwegian Muslims, and that the Islamic Council had received death threats from right-wing extremists. Council leader Hamdan is quoted; *Now that a man has been stabbed, I am of course scared that extreme-right groups will turn to violence and do more than just making threats.* These worries were shared by Prime Minister Stoltenberg, who told the newspaper that he is afraid that '*extreme forces on both sides'* will flourish.

In the days before the protest, several articles carried headlines focusing on 'fear' (*VG*, February 6, and *Dagbladet*, February 11), and another focused on 'boycotting the demonstration' (*Dagsavisen*, February 11). All three texts reported that Muslim leaders

had decided to advise against participation, because organizers were 'unknown'; 'no responsible organization' backed the protest and it could lead to violent confrontation with right-wing counter-demonstrators. Two other articles (*Aften*, February 8, and *Klassekampen*, February 10) instead focused on the *International Socialists*' decision to support and join the demonstration in solidarity with young Norwegian Muslims. In the following section, I analyze the three negative reports; the latter two will be discussed in the section about possible alliances with non-Muslim antiracists.

VG's article written by minority journalist Kadafi Zaman appeared in print and online on February 6, and seems more up-to-date with events. It contradicts *Dagsavisen*'s article the same day (discussed above), which claimed that several mosques support the demonstration. Under a sensationalist headline, *Norwegian Muslim leaders fear a mass battle, VG* reports that fear of extreme-right activists has caused Muslim leaders to advise against the announced demonstration. The story lead states that, *Muslim leaders have tried to stop a demonstration in Oslo organized by the unknown group "The Volunteers" for fear of violent clashes.* In contrast to the early articles with a positive framing discussed above, this text uses a series of negative terms; 'fear', 'mass battle' and 'violent clashes'. The 'Volunteers' who had been portrayed positively before, were now constructed as an 'unknown group' and a possible party to 'violent clashes', which may appeal to the readers' 'fear of the unknown' and contribute to make the public suspicious of the organizers' intentions and agenda. The dramatic language of the headline and story lead may not have been written by the journalist but added by editors to increase the article's news value, and exemplify what Richardson (2004:47-49) identifies as a common stereotype in the coverage of minorities, who are routinely linked with "threat, hostility and violence" especially in headlines. In his study of the British press, he found that coverage of minority demonstrations often emphasized violence between opposing extremist groups, and tended to represent anti-racist protesters as a more immediate threat and cause of racist hostility, thus problematizing the minority rather than prevailing racist hostility. This is just what the headline and story lead does here; it mentions 'Norwegian Muslim leaders' and 'The Volunteers' as the actors involved, but the main content actually problematizes 'right extremists', 'nationalists' and a 'neo-Nazi group' who threaten Muslims.

The main content uses more moderate language, and does not omit who might incite trouble; *key Muslim leaders have tried to stop the event for several days, because of fear that right extremists will incite trouble, as happened in Denmark.* The article notes that, *the young Norwegian Muslims who are behind the initiative refuse to be stopped,* and the information about the time and place of the demonstration is repeated. The main part of the article reports about *rumors on the internet* that 'nationalist' group 'Vigrid' (which unsuccessfully ran for parliament elections in 2009) will burn the Qur'an in front of protesting Muslims. It reports that the Islamic Council has received death threats from a 'neo-Nazi group'. These details reverse the dominant image of majority

fear of Muslim extremists by reporting concrete cases of 'white threats' and the resulting fear among Norwegian Muslims. The only (reported) incident of violence in the cartoon affair in Norway was the stabbing in Skien. As a consequence of these threats, leader of the Antiracist Center, Nadeem Butt, leader of the Islamic Association, Basim Ghozlan, and deputy leader of the Islamic Council, Senaid Kobilica, all advise against participation. Butt is quoted; *we must not contribute to being presented as extremists. Now we have to calm this down. We have in the last few days received several signals that right-extremists are mobilizing their forces.* The antiracist leader is probably aware of prevalent reporting patterns and knows that if the right incites violence, Muslims and antiracists are likely to be presented as extremists, as Richardson's (2004) study found. In the past, left-wing antiracist groups have repeatedly confronted neo-Nazis on the streets in Oslo, and events have usually been portrayed as 'clashes between opposing extremists'. Norwegian Muslims had no history of political rioting until 2009, when a joint protest with left-wing groups against Israel's war in Gaza developed into stone-throwing and window-smashing.

On the morning of the demonstration, *Dagbladet* (online, February 11) publishes an article whose headline focuses on 'fear' and constructs Muslim protesters as possible threat; *Fearing faceless prophet-demo*, followed by the lead; *Police refuse to say who has called for today's demonstration against the drawings of the prophet Mohammed.* Highlighting the anonymity of organizers with the word 'faceless' followed by 'police refuse to say', the newspaper plays on public 'fear of the unknown' and contributes to make majority readers suspicious of the protesters' agenda. The rather uncommon word 'faceless' not only denotes 'unidentifiable' and suspicious, but carries specific connotations with regard to a Muslim tradition of depicting Mohammed without facial features to comply with a ban against idolatry (drawing images of the Prophet), and to a custom of covering the face among conservative women (*burka* or *niqab*) and male extremists not wanting to be identified. This term contributes to stereotype organizers as conservative, 'fundamentalist' or even extremist, which further contributes to perceptions of 'threat'. As in *VG*'s article above, the headline omits information about *who* fears the protest. The only actors mentioned in the story lead are the 'police' whose spokesperson says quite the opposite of what the headline suggests in the interview; that police have a 'dialogue' with organizers and 'no indications of trouble'. *Dagbladet*'s headline and lead thus selectively highlight negative parts of the content and could possibly mislead readers to believe that police 'fear' a 'faceless' demonstration.

The headline is actually based on a quote from Aslam Ahsan, leader of the *Association for Pakistani Children*, who is also interviewed. He has been a 'spokesperson' since the 1970s and is known in the media as a "well-integrated" immigrant who usually does not challenge majority views, but emphasizes that immigrants should 'adjust' to Norwegian society. As such, he exemplifies media preference for minority voices that support hegemonic positions. At the beginning of the article, he is quoted; *I will most strongly*

advise anyone against participating in the announced demonstration because it is faceless and frameless. In this tense situation, this may be scary. Ahsan characterizes the demonstration in negative terms ('faceless' and 'frameless') and thus 'scary'. He uses an intensifying term ('most strongly') to state his opinion ('advise against') in what seems to be one of the most negative quoted statements about the demonstration, which the article 'balances' by repeating the more moderate rejection by the Islamic Council before stating the announced time and place of the protest, as well as quoting slogans from the flyer and SMS message.

In the same article's next paragraph, we learn that organizers are not as 'faceless' after all, at least not to the newspaper, which has found out who they are; *not a homogenous group that insists to demonstrate despite the warnings. It is allegedly a mix of young people of Pakistani, Kurdish, Somali and Moroccan background calling themselves "The Volunteers"*. (Note confrontational terms such as 'insist', 'despite' and 'warnings' which may construe organizers as stubborn and disobedient; rather than simply young people making an independent political decision that differs from the opinions of authority figures; see Richardson (2004:121) on confrontational language to characterize Muslims). The journalist also *contacted one of those assumed to be among the organizers*, but was rejected and *threatened to be reported for harassment if we* [he] *called again*. The newspaper has thus been able to identify organizers, but their request for an interview was turned down. *Aften* (on February 8) reports a similar experience, as it *talked to one of the organizers*, who confirmed that they are determined to go through with the planned demonstration, but refused to give an interview as; *he has to follow the strict guidelines of the group which forbid talking to journalists*. Note again the words 'strict' and 'forbid' that correspond to a perception of Muslims as authoritarian. In place of an interview with organizers, *Dagbladet* has another "well-integrated" spokesman, Farid Bouras of the organization *Youth Against Violence*, who *also urges people to stay away* from the demonstration, explain why organizers did not want to talk to the press. He is quoted; *the reason for the rejecting attitude is probably that they think the media is to blame for disseminating the Mohammed cartoons which they think offend their beliefs*. Bouras uses the mitigating terms 'probably' and 'they think', which distance him from the protesters' view and imply that he does not blame the media nor find the cartoons religiously offensive. A possible reason why media prefer to speak to regular sources who confirm dominant views, is that they have access to these, while those more critical are more often reluctant to speak to media because their views may be misrepresented (Gullestad 2006:48-67).

Towards the end of the article, police inspector Johan Fredriksen explains in an interview why they 'refuse to say' who is behind the demonstration; *we have a policy not to inform about it* [who has applied for permission to demonstrate] *because those who arrange the demonstration own their message and their own audience. We have a dialogue with the organizer and agree on the framework that should apply. This is how*

we make the organizers responsible and uphold free speech. Using 'neutral' bureaucratic language, the statement from the police avoids negative characterization of organizers and even uses positive terms such as 'dialogue', 'agree', 'responsible' and 'free speech', reflecting the government's 'liberal' vocabulary. In the next quote; *we hope the reconciliation contributes to make our job easier. However, we are aware that this is a tense situation, but so far there are no indications of trouble. We don't have an enemy image of the organizer*; he acknowledges that the situation is 'tense' but also explicitly refutes the reasons for fear ('no indications of trouble') and suspicion of organizers ('we don't have an enemy image'). The statements from police contradict the logic of a 'clash of civilizations' suggested by *Dagbladet*'s headline.

Muslim leaders advise against the demonstration

The same day (February 11), *Dagsavisen* highlights opposition to the demonstration, under the headline; *Boycotting the demonstration,* followed by the lead; *Muslims no longer have any reason to demonstrate after Vebjørn Selbekk's regret.* The article reports from the Islamic Council press conference after the 'reconciliation meeting' with Selbekk. Here, the Islamic Council reportedly issued an *unusually clear* statement (note the term 'unusually clear' implying that Muslim leaders' statements are usually not considered clear enough by the press; they have regularly been accused of 'speaking with two tongues' when refusing to condemn other Muslims' bad practices, or have tried to find a middle ground reconciling conservative views with liberal principles); *We advise against participating in demonstrations not backed by any responsible organization.* Islamic Council leader Hamdan specified*; this applies to the demonstration that has been called via SMS. Some are likely to be upset that we advise against participation, but we represent 46 religious organizations in Norway when we say no.* The council, an umbrella organization for the majority of Norwegian Muslim congregations, seeks to present itself and its member organizations as 'responsible' in contrast to the organizers of the demonstration, who are implicitly construed as 'irresponsible'. Several members of the Islamic Cultural Center emphasize that they *accept Selbekk's regret*, and that *everything is forgiven*. They go even further in discrediting those who still want to demonstrate; *those who show up are not serious Muslims,* and *those who do not accept the regret are not serious*, justified by the religious imperative to forgive when people admit they have made a mistake. The position reflected here also accepts the government's version, where Selbekk became a scapegoat while mainstream media go free of criticism.

After the demonstration, several Norwegian Muslims criticized the Islamic Council's acceptance of this position, and this was covered in two newspaper articles after the demonstration. In *Dagsavisen*'s news report from the demonstration (February 12), this was the main framing and content. Under the headline, *-Politicians put pressure on the imams*, followed by the lead; *1500 Muslims defied the imams' advice not to*

demonstrate. The organizers claim politicians have put pressure on the imams and the Islamic Council, we read that; *organizers of the demonstration suggest that political pressure was the reason when the imams asked people to stay away from the demonstration.* One of the organizers who spoke at the rally, Roqayya Kalaycy, is quoted; *politicians try to influence the mosque communities far too much, and we do not like that.* Organizers emphasized that *they do not represent any organization or political orientation, but want to be a voice for Muslims in Norway.* An unnamed representative of the Islamic Council rejects that they were pressured by politicians; *we operate independent of politicians. No politicians participate when we have meetings and make our decisions.* However, it seems clear from news reports that Muslim leaders had at least two 'dialogue meetings' with members of government; and that the government's intention was to calm down the situation and avoid escalation. The Islamic Council accepted *Magazinet*'s regret, and decided to advise against the demonstration. Regardless of formal procedures of 'independence' and what was explicitly said by politicians, Muslim leaders worried about possible escalation and were eager to reach an agreement that could prevent this.

"Political pressure" can be subtly exerted when parties realize their relative positions of power, as minority journalist Wasim K. Riaz (*Aften*, February 16) captures in a commentary with the headline, *Imams on the defensive*. He notes that Muslim leaders cooperated with the government from an early stage to find a 'quiet' solution; they accepted Magazinet's regret and prevented escalation. In the process, they failed to represent their own members, and this internal disagreement was played out in the media, perhaps for the first time. Riaz concludes that the imams, who have *been criticized by Norwegian authorities, politicians and by their own for so to speak every single negative act committed by a Muslim*, should be happy that they were publicly defied, because this helps break down stereotypes;

> *It turns out that the same imams do not have as much power over Muslims as politicians and media would have it. When more than 1000 Muslims publicly defy the imams and the Islamic Council, there is reason to believe that several thousand Norwegian Muslims put their own thoughts and ideas higher than what an imam says. Only naïve politicians believe that the imam is everything in a Muslim's life.*

The perceived and actual power of imams in Norway has been critically discussed by several researchers (Jacobsen 2011:260-262; Leirvik 2012b:222-223; Døving 2012:26-33). A series of media cases focusing on crime, violence, terror or unacceptable cultural practices, including the Kadra affair in 2000 and the debate after the murder of Theo van Gogh in 2004 (Døving 2012:26-31; see also chapters 3 and 4 in this thesis) created a public image of imams as "generally authoritarian, traditionalist and out of touch with Norwegian realities" (Jacobsen 2011:262), while their actual importance in authorizing

particular Islamic practices is often limited (Jacobsen 2011:260), as young Muslims increasingly turn to internet clerics for advice (Døving 2012:44; see also further discussion in chapter 4). In the cartoon affair, Muslim leaders were praised in the media for their willingness to dialogue, but media also focused on their disagreements with the younger generation (Døving 2012:30), but for the first time, the imams and the Islamic Council were publicly criticized for being 'too loyal' and too compromising with the government (Leirvik 2012b:223). As Muslim leaders become increasingly 'integrated' in the public sphere and recognized through institutionalized dialogue with the government, which strengthens their power, Leirvik (2012b:222-223) comments, the more the ever-more 'moderate' leadership will be challenged by a more 'radical' internal opposition, as seen in the cartoon protests. A survey (TNS Gallup 2006:17-18) shows that while 50 per cent of the general population believes that Muslims generally follow the advice of imams, only 25 % of Norwegian Muslims agreed. Public disagreement between leaders and youth may thus have helped to correct majority misperceptions about authoritarian Muslim leaders, who lack loyalty to Norway, and young Muslims as either conservative, obeying religious leaders, or rebellious, defying religious leaders as part of rejecting religious traditions.

Coverage of the 'white' demonstration

Klassekampen (February 10) reports that in connection with the 'reconciliation meeting', the Antiracist Center, supported by *the Church, faith and aid organizations, human rights organizations and the traditional peace movement*, on short notice took initiative for a demonstration emphasizing *the need for dialogue, respect, peace and nonviolent conflict resolution* to take place in the afternoon of February 10. The article's headline, *White and broad for respect and dialogue,* links the racializing term 'white' with three positive attributes; 'broad', 'respect' and 'dialogue', reflecting a positive self-presentation of the 'majority' (Reisigl & Wodak 2001:58). The main content focuses on the absence of Muslim organizations, which means that this is a majority demonstration; hence characterized as 'white' as opposed to 'Muslim'. Implicitly, the headline also serves to discredit the announced Muslim demonstration the next day because a negative other-presentation can be inferred, where the 'non-white' protest is attributed the opposite characteristics of 'narrow' and 'confrontational'. While certainly representing the 'majority' and its dominant ideology of 'dialogue', the term 'white' is also misleading since the leader of the Antiracist Center, who organized the demonstration, is Nadeem Butt, a Norwegian Pakistani.

It is reported that *no Muslim organizations are joining this afternoon's peace demonstration*, and quotes Butt's statement at a press conference the day before, where he explains the absence of Muslim organizations; *the Islamic Council says that in the current situation, they will not participate in any kind of demonstration. Other Muslim organizations say the same.* The antiracist leader further elaborates on what they mean

by the 'current situation'; *during his 30 years in Norway, he has never experienced such a widespread fear among Muslims of what awaits them if the conflict about the cartoons escalates further*. He is quoted; *for the first time, many people who have never before been scared, including myself, ask ourselves whether we have a safe future here in Norway.* It is noteworthy that in a situation where Muslim organizations are afraid of joining a broad 'majority' demonstration expressing the government's dialogue position because they fear racism, the Antiracist Center chooses to represent only the government's focus on 'dialogue' and 'peace', and does not address the problem of racism, which seems to be the main concern of Norwegian Muslims.

Two newspapers (*Dagsavisen* and *Dagbladet*, both February 11) printed news reports from the 'peace' demonstration; both focused primarily on the main speech given by finance minister and Socialist Party leader, Kristin Halvorsen, and the small number of people who had turned up. Under the headline, *Socialist leader praises Selbekk and Hamdan*; *Dagsavisen* reports; *Finance Minister Kristin Halvorsen and integration minister Bjarne Håkon Hanssen took the lead in the demonstration for peace, free speech and religious respect. The peace demonstration that was supposed to unite the citizens of Oslo across religions yesterday afternoon was dominated by white Norwegians. Among the 60 organizations that supported the demonstration, none were Muslim. The leader of the Antiracist Center was disappointed that Muslim organizations did not support the event…* The quoted text contains a positive self-presentation linking two members of government with positive values such as 'peace', 'free speech' and 'religious respect'; further describes the demonstration as 'dominated by white Norwegians'. The term 'white' most often appears in the media when the absence of minorities is criticized, whether this is due to exclusionary majority practices or because of minority unwillingness to 'integrate'. In this case, 'white' presence is linked to positive qualities and contrasted to the 'disappointing' absence of Muslims. Explicitly, the 'disappointment' is attributed to Butt, but the newspaper adopts his perspective as its own, exemplified by phrases such as 'supposed to unite' rather than more distancing terms. *Dagbladet*'s (print version) article carries the headline; *Only 300 for peace*, where the word 'only' can be interpreted as expressing disappointment, since we know that Norwegian media supported the 'dialogue' position. The article notes, with a certain amount of journalistic self-irony, that; *at first, there were almost as many reporters as demonstrators present,* before quoting the police's crowd estimate at 300 people. The demonstration as well as its coverage may thus be interpreted as the liberal elite's self-congratulatory celebration of its tolerance, which Muslims should have joined if they wanted to avoid disappointing the 'host'.

Both reports quote extensively from the main speaker, finance minister and leader of the Socialist Party at the time, Kristin Halvorsen, who represented government. *Dagsavisen* notes her praise of the 'reconciliation' between Selbekk and Hamdan. She is quoted; *In particular, the way the Islamic Council leader accepted the regret, gives me hope.* [...]

This is how we will create peace and reconciliation. It is noteworthy that Halvorsen praises the Muslim leader's forgiveness rather than the editor's regret, which may be interpreted that making Muslims accept what the government says, is 'how we will create peace and reconciliation'. It is further reported that; *Kristin Halvorsen admitted that the reactions in the Middle East have affected Norway's international self image, but stated that we should not let extremists define our worldview*. This statement implies that the government is determined to continue its dialogue policy in line with Norway's self-image as a 'peace nation' and not be influenced by 'extremists' to view the world in terms of a 'clash of civilizations'. *Dagbladet* quotes more from her speech, which shows the government's positionality. The socialist leader said; *we Norwegians are used to be seen as peaceful and welcome. Now we are threatened, she said, and emphasized the importance of not letting a small number of extremists set the agenda.* While it may have been intended to include Norwegian Muslims, the term 'we Norwegians' works as a reference to 'white Norwegians' because it is difficult for many Muslims, having often been treated with suspicion, to identify with being 'used to be seen as peaceful and welcome'. According to the literature of critical whiteness studies (see Frankenberg 1993:1), being 'used to be seen as peaceful and welcome' is characteristic of 'white privilege' and an experience often not shared by non-white persons in a white society that treats them with suspicion.

Similarly, when she says 'now we are threatened' this may be intended to refer to both majority and minority Norwegians, given the reports of widespread fear among Norwegian Muslims. However, this is where she focuses;

> *100 persons threw stones at the Norwegian embassy in Tehran. We have to remember that there live at least ten million people in Tehran who did not join the attack. And if a small minority tries to harass Muslims in Norway, we must remember that 4.5 million people do not wish to do the same.*

In this quote, she refers primarily to the 'threat of Muslim violence' (Richardson 2004:75; 78) in the Middle East, and emphasizes that most Muslims did not attack Norway. With this specification, it is reasonable to interpret her statement about 'not letting a small number of extremists set the agenda' as an appeal to the majority not to generalize about Muslims and violence. In the next sentence ('and if a small minority tries to harass Muslims in Norway'), phrased as an afterthought beginning with 'and', she acknowledges that there are 'extremists on both sides' as the Prime Minister had said before. While the description of a moderate mainstream and a limited number of extremists on both sides has some fit with empirical reality, it plays down the asymmetrical relationship indicated by a number of surveys showing that about half of the majority population has negative perceptions of, and attitudes towards Muslims (discussed in the introduction). With regard to the cartoons, a survey (TNS Gallup 2006:9-12) shows that 90 percent of Norwegian Muslims opposed the cartoon

publication (42 per cent wanted to punish the publishers); while only 48 per cent of the general Norwegian population thought it was wrong to publish the cartoons (and 14 per cent wanted to criminalize it).

Halvorsen's statement minimizes anti-Muslim racism with a series of mitigating terms (the word 'if' expresses doubt about whether harassment of Muslims takes place; 'small' and 'minority' minimize the extent; and 'tries' expresses doubt about whether it has consequences), and claims that almost the entire Norwegian population ('4.5 millions') do not 'wish' to harass Muslims. Thus, she distances herself from the perspective of Norwegian Muslims who would be protesting against perceived racist harassment by the media the next day, and in effect, this constitutes a classic example of argumentative 'denial of racism' (Richardson 2004:120). In this regard, Bangstad and Vetlesen (2011:339) have noted that majority individuals, who due to their background and social position hardly ever risk being subjected to hate speech; often do not reflect over asymmetric power relations; a shortcoming that seems to be reflected also in the Habermasian approach to dialogue which dominates Norwegian debate. When minority experiences of racism are not taken into account, the government's dialogue position is not perceived as neutral, but rather as a majority monologue that is not open to take seriously and accommodate critical minority perspectives (Gressgård 2005:74; Gressgård & Jacobsen 2003:76; Gressgård 2010:106-137), which it instead labels 'extremist'. Halvorsen's use of the term 'Muslims in Norway' rather than 'Norwegian Muslims' indicates that she does not include Norwegian Muslims in her sense of 'we Norwegians' (see Richardson 2004:113); this helps explain why few Norwegian Muslims showed up for a demonstration dominated by politicians who did not represent their experiences and interests.

Halvorsen's use of 'we Norwegians' can be contrasted with demonstration organizer Nadeem Butt, quoted in *Dagsavisen; We Norwegians have together experienced the Mohammed cartoons here in Norway, and the reactions in the Middle East. We have been in agreement that free speech is a right we must use with good sense, and we have taken distance from the burning of our flag.* He uses an inclusive 'we' (marked by the word 'together'), acknowledges that 'extreme' acts have taken place on both sides ('the Mohammed cartoons' and 'the reactions in the Middle East'), but emphasizes that moderate people from both majority and minority agree not to support these acts, and instead 'use free speech with good sense' and 'take distance from burning our flag'. While employing the discourse of 'extremists on both sides', Butt avoids the division between 'Norwegians' and 'Muslims' and, while not explicitly addressing anti-Muslim racism, he acknowledges the position that free speech should be used 'with good sense'.

In her speech, it is not quite clear whether Halvorsen perceives the government as a 'neutral' facilitator of reconciliation between Norwegian Christians and Norwegian Muslims; or as a party to a dialogue between 'Norway' and 'Muslims' (especially when

referring to Muslims in the Middle East). This ambivalence is characteristic of 'dialogical liberalism' which tends to conflate the universal and the national, and deny its own partiality (as discussed in the introduction). Much of her speech, as analyzed above, reveals that she speaks from a 'white' perspective, reflecting the experiences and interests of the 'majority' (Frankenberg 1993:202-204). She marginalizes minority perspectives and constructs herself and the government's position as neutral (Gullestad 2006:194-195), by assuming a middle ground from which they can facilitate 'dialogue' between 'extremists on both sides', but without letting the 'extremists' influence their worldview. To achieve this, she uses the strategy of 'scapegoating' (Triandafyllidou et al. 2009:243) and blames the conflict on a 'small number of extremists' on both sides; notably in Muslim countries, but perhaps also among the Norwegian majority. This argumentative strategy denies that many mainstream Norwegian Muslims criticize anti-Muslim racism without being extremists; and that many of them experience harassment at the hands of mainstream media and politicians.

Coverage of the 'Muslim' demonstration

The Muslim demonstration on February 11 was widely covered with online articles in *VG* and *Dagbladet* (February 11), as well as articles in the printed Sunday editions of *Aftenposten, Dagsavisen*, *VG* and *Dagbladet* (February 12). (*Klassekampen* does not come out on Sundays.) Coverage varied in extent, from two full and well-illustrated pages in *Dagbladet*'s print version to shorter articles in *Aftenposten* and *VG*. Content and topics that were highlighted were remarkably similar across newspapers, with the exception of *Dagsavisen*, which foregrounded the political pressure on the imams discussed earlier. *Dagbladet* (print) had the most negative angle, followed by *VG* (print), while the online articles of both tabloids to a high extent let the protesters speak for themselves by quoting from speeches and interviews.

All articles except VG's print version reported that about 1500 persons joined the protest march from the inner city neighborhood of Grønland where many Norwegian Muslims live, to Parliament. *Dagbladet* (online) substantiates the crowd estimate with a reference to information chief, Unni Grøndahl at the Oslo Police. Most articles noted that the demonstration had been organized by *private citizens* (*Aftenposten*), who did *not represent any organization or political orientation* (*Dagsavisen*), but wanted to be *a voice for Muslims in Norway* (*Dagsavisen*). *VG* and *Dagbladet*'s print articles simply referred to the organizers as *The Volunteers*, while *VG* (online) reported that they were *ordinary Norwegian Muslims* and quoted the female lead organizer, Roqayya Kalayci; *We held this demonstration because we wanted the voice of Norwegian Muslims to be heard*. In the latter report, her concluding remarks after the demonstration are quoted;

> We have faced a lot of opposition, and there were many who wanted us not to hold this demonstration. But we think it is important that ordinary Muslims get to say their opinion. I am satisfied with our demonstration.

The same statement is also quoted in the newspaper's print edition (*VG;* February 12);

> *There has been so much opposition, so many attempts to stop us from doing this, both from mosque communities and politicians. But today we were able to say what we wanted. I am very satisfied.*

Note the difference in wording, indicating that what newspapers present as 'direct quotes' may be paraphrased citations which differ significantly from what was said.

With regard to the attempts to stop the demonstration, *Dagbladet* (online) and *Aftenposten* noted that Muslims leaders had *warned* against the demonstration, *Dagsavisen* wrote that the demonstrators had *defied* the imams' *advice against* participation, and *Dagbladet* (online) even claimed that they had *defied the great imams* (sic)*. The latter newspaper's print version quotes Hamdan, who sounds 'defensive';

> *This is their choice. They express themselves and there is freedom of expression in this country.* [...] *We have urged people to calm down, and we have asked them not to join demonstrations we don't know who is behind. This has been an advice from the imams and not an order. That means people have a free choice.*

All newspapers noted the heavy police presence, described in detail by *Aftenposten*; *a formidable police force followed the demonstration. Mounted police and commando cars flanked the march, anti-terror patrols were positioned in strategic places and large amounts of civilian-clothes officers with earplugs mixed with the crowd*; and Dagsavisen; *Police had turned up in great numbers, with special forces, a helicopter and armoured vehicles*. Neither neo-Nazis, who had announced counter-demonstrations, nor Pakistani gang members, who said they would join the protest, showed up. *VG* (online) quotes Unni Grøndahl at the Oslo Police, who said they were *very satisfied* with the demonstration, and had a *good dialogue* with the organizers, who were well-organized with their own guards to control the crowd. She said; *there are no reports of any incidents at all. This was well done, both by the organizers and the police*. Also *Dagsavisen* quotes the police; Tor Langli of the Oslo Police said; *we are very satisfied with the organizers*. Media focus on police presence, absence of criminals and counter-demonstrators, and police praising organizers, indicates that violence was expected, as *VG* (print) notes; *there prevailed a certain nervousness that individuals would use the occasion to fire guns or explosives to cause riots*. As discussed before, media coverage of minority protests often highlights violence (Richardson 2004:49) and may use an argumentative strategy of the 'topos' of threat of 'Muslim political violence' (ibid, 75).

Most newspapers described the demonstration with variations of the phrase 'noisy, but peaceful'. *Dagsavisen* incidentally used these exact words, the same as in Parekh's (1989:62) description of British anti-Rushdie protests. *Aftenposten* carried the headline; *Calm, but noisy*. *Dagsavisen* and *Dagbladet* (online) described protesters as *angry*. Both

'noisy' and 'angry' are terms often attributed to minorities in 'racist discourse' (Reisigl & Wodak 2001:55; Richardson 2004:121). While demonstrations in general tend to be 'noisy', news reports (*Dagsavisen*; *Dagbladet* online also in the story lead) mention that demonstrators shouted *Allahu akbar* or *God is great*; thus emphasizing the religious (and 'exotic'?) aspect of the protest. *Dagbladet* (print) refers to a named protester, who marched in front, *shouted loudly and waved the Qur'an.* Two 'white' bystanders are quoted; *it is frightening that it does not take more than a few cartoons to start all this* (in a highlighted quote); reflecting a fear of Muslim fanaticism.

VG's (print) article carries the headline; *Demonstration leader stops trouble*; followed by the lead; *Here, Roqayya Kalayci, leader of the Mohammed demonstration in Oslo, stops the young and short-tempered from taking over the event.* It is reported;

> *A group of young Muslims tried to incite the crowd by shouting Allahu akbar! (Allah is great) in their highest pitch and several repetitions. Before it boiled over, the female demonstration leader, Roqayya Kalayci grabbed her microphone and appealed to all those wanting a peaceful demonstration without violence or confrontations: – I don't like someone not in charge trying to derail this demonstration. Let's put that on the account for boiling youth blood.*

Dagbladet (print) also refers to this 'attemped coup' by a group of young people, some of them wearing masks, who were *quickly put in their place* by the demonstrators' own guards. Two newspapers reported this minor event in a way reflecting the 'topos of threat' of Muslim extremism (Richardson 2004:75).

Newspapers also commented on the place of women in the rally. *Dagbladet* (online) writes in the story lead, *Women walked at the back of the protest march*, and note further down; *the demonstrating women had their own section at the back of the march.* The article substantiates this claim by showing a picture of a group of veiled women, with the text; *separate women's section at the end. Today's demonstration had all the men in front. Dagbladet*'s printed article repeats these claims three times; in the lead, at the end of the main body, and below a picture of veiled women, where it says that about 100 women walked in a separate section. *Dagsavisen* briefly mentions the same, while *Aftenposten* contradicts this and reports; *the women walked in front.* Apparently there was a 'women's section' at the back of the parade, as in the annual Labor Day parades, where women's organizations walk at the back, but women also join other sections. Given that the lead organizer was a woman, it seems *Dagbladet* made a 'hasty generalization' (later repeated by *Dagsavisen*) to support a preconception about Muslim gender segregation and women's oppression; employing what Richardson (2004:75; 89) calls the 'topos of threat of Muslim gender inequality'. In the Norwegian context, where gender equality is defined as a key national value, this claim discredits the demonstration as 'reactionary'. Mariette Lobo of the International Socialists, the only political group in Norway that supported and participated in the protest, shares this

interpretation writing in their magazine, *Gnisten* (no.4, 2007); *Media discredited the demonstration. [...] Newspapers wrote that women were forced to march at the end of the parade. Talk about confirming prejudice. In reality, the demonstration was led by a woman, and women could march wherever they wanted.* Reading partial news reports together, we learn that women were present among the leaders, at the front; and at the end of the parade.

So far, analysis shows that the liberal newspaper *Dagbladet* had a more negative angle reflecting more Orientalist topoi than other newspapers. *Dagsavisen* and *Aftenposten* take a more moderate and 'neutral' approach, while *VG*'s online articles stand out by extensively interviewing and quoting protesters, focusing on the political message rather than on negative descriptions. My findings partly corresponds to Richardson's (2004:229) findings from Britain, where broadsheet newspapers, in order to retain their educated, 'white' middle-class readers, adopt a 'white' perspective that speaks 'about' Muslims rather than 'to' them. In Norway, this would apply to *Aftenposten* and *Klassekampen*, which report less from the demonstrations, but promoted debate *about* Islam. Richardson (ibid, 230) notes that elite broadsheet newspapers, whose journalists and readers are more highly educated, are *more* likely to place threatening, violent, sexist and intolerant activities of Muslims into a stereotypical frame of cultural conflict between the West and Muslims, drawn from a 'collective cultural memory' (Connerton, cited in ibid). This may partly explain the differences between the liberal middle class-oriented *Dagbladet* and the more 'populist' *VG*, which gave more voice to Norwegian Muslim perspectives and relied more on interviews with 'ordinary people' rather than elite sources. In Britain, the liberal middle-class broadsheet, *The Guardian*, stood out as having the more extensive coverage of the cartoon crisis, more focus on extreme Muslim voices in news reports (Phillips & Lee 2007:70; Phillips 2008:109), and more strongly condemned 'extremists' in its editorials (Phillips & Nossek 2008:240-241).

Analyzing the protesters' message(s): blasphemy or racism?

For an analysis of Muslim demands, and whether protesters got their message through or were misrepresented in the media, newspaper articles contain four sources; (1) direct quotes from flyers and other messages distributed to mobilize for the demonstration; (2) selective quotes from speeches given at the rally; (3) interviews with organizers and participants; and (4) pictures (especially picture series published online) show posters carried by protesters, and allow us to identify more than 20 different slogans, some of which were quoted and commented in news reports. These slogans showed great diversity in form and content; performing a range of speech acts, from 'truth claims' defining reality from the protesters' perspective, via denouncements of certain acts, to ethical appeals and legal demands that made specific requests to the majority, media or politicians. The content ranged from religious declarations of faith, via slogans expressing liberal ideals of 'freedom of religion' and 'mutual respect', and appeals for

responsible use of free speech directed at the media, to denouncements of hate speech and demands for protection against it. Key words such as 'the cartoons', 'blasphemy' and 'racism' were rarely expressed, but could be inferred. In the following, I analyze the various messages expressed in the protest in more detail, before linking them to theoretical discussions about the politics of multiculturalism.

As mentioned, the slogans on flyers and SMS messages distributed by organizers were repeatedly quoted directly in newspaper reports. In the coverage after the demonstration, they were again quoted by *Dagsavisen* and *Dagbladet* (online);

> *Are you fed up with media's abuse of free speech?*
> *How long shall they offend and provoke to divide society?*
> *Unite and show how respect should be*.

These slogans indicate the key message of the protest; 'media' is their main target. The protesters want an end to a problem defined as 'abuse of free speech' to 'offend' and 'provoke', resulting in a 'divided society'. As a solution, they suggest 'unity' and 'respect'. Notably, Norwegian Muslim protesters identify media as the responsible party, unlike the widely-reported London 'extremists', who directed their protest against 'Europe' (Triandafyllidou et al. 2009:246; 249). While *that* Muslim protest used extreme slogans such as "Europe is the cancer and Islam is the cure", "Free speech, go to hell" and "Europe will pay, your 9/11 is on its way" (Hansen 2006:10; Bleich 2006:20), which promoted a 'clash of civilizations', Norwegian Muslims distanced themselves from such rhetoric, rejecting a 'divided society' and promoting 'unity'. Further, they make it clear that they support the principle of 'free speech' but argued that it should be restricted if 'abused' to 'provoke to divide society' – a paraphrase of 'incitement to hatred'. This means that flyer slogans are phrased in 'secular' language; while mentioning 'insults against the prophet' as immediate reason for the protest, slogans refer to liberal principles; 'free speech' must be accompanied by 'mutual respect'. Several slogans on posters carried by protesters emphasized 'mutual respect'; compatible with a 'dialogue' position;

> *Mutual respect, please*
> *You and yours, me and mine*
> *Do you want a sweet life? Stop making it sour for others!*
> *Building a good society takes time, tearing it down takes seconds*

The first three slogans emphasize mutuality, consistent with a multiculturalist understanding of 'integration' as a two-way process (Modood 2007:48). The last slogan points out that building such a society is a time-consuming process, while breaking it down by creating conflict, as the cartoons and 'clash of civilizations' rhetoric contribute to, can happen quickly.

The cartoons are only mentioned implicitly; instead protesters refer to a general problem beyond the cartoon issue. The words 'how long' and 'fed up' indicate that media has 'offended' Muslims and 'incited hatred' against them also before printing the cartoons. In this respect, Modood (2006b:5) argues that the cartoons are a trigger rather than the main issue; this "handful of humiliating images" becomes a symbol for a wider context where Muslims feel disrespected; including discrimination, economic marginalization and the 'war on terror'. *VG*'s online report (February 11) quotes extensively from speeches outside Parliament; including one speaker, Abdul Latif, who says;

> *You may wonder why we are here. Can we not accept an apology? Yes, we accept the regret, but we protest against how media deliberately puts Muslims in a bad light. We feel harassed, and we are here because we demand that Norway tolerates us.*

The speaker emphasizes again that the main target is the media, which 'deliberately' portrays Muslims in a negative way. Norwegian Muslims 'feel harassed' by media and have gathered to 'demand' that they be 'tolerated'. He clarifies that the protest is not directed against 'Norway' or 'Norwegians'; *We have nothing against you. We are grateful to all those who have wished us welcome, and we thank Norwegians for listening to us today.* Saying this, Latif counters the stereotype of 'ungrateful immigrants' who make 'excessive demands'.

Several newspapers acknowledge that they were the protesters' target. *Dagbladet* online (February 11) uses part of a slogan as its headline; *Shame on you, media*, and notes below a picture that protesters were *angry at media*; quoting the slogan shown on the picture; *Shame on you, media, for making hate speech* (I return to the content of this slogan below). *Dagsavisen* (February 12) reports that; *the demonstrators protested also against how Norwegian media handled the Mohammed cartoons*; quoting the above slogan as well as another saying; *Media, mouthpiece of lies*. Without quotations, *Aftenposten* (February 12) reports that; *slogans expressed that Muslims in Norway have long felt harassed in the media and that now it's enough*. The latter comment captures the message that the cartoons are part of a larger picture of negative media focus on Muslims. The following poster slogans explicitly mention the *media*:

> *Shame on you, media, for making hate speech*
> *Media, stop terrorizing us and our lives*
> *Media, mouthpiece of lies*
> *Politicians and media, this is the result of your irresponsibility*

In terms of speech act analysis, the first slogan 'condemns' the media for 'making hate speech'; the second represents an appeal, requesting media to stop 'terrorizing' Muslims (the term 'terrorizing' used as a variation on the word 'harassing' used by a speaker); the third slogan is a descriptive 'truth claim', arguing that media is spreading 'lies'. The

last slogan 'blames' the affair on the 'irresponsibility' of media and government. It also appeared in another version, placing blame on the government; *what we witness now is the government's arrogance and irresponsibility*. Three other slogans implicitly address media by mentioning 'free speech', and elaborate on this message;

> *What we witness now is the result of misused freedom of expression*
> *Your freedom of expression ends when you step on my feet*
> *The caricatures are lying, freedom of expression is to say the truth*

Media's 'irresponsibility' can be interpreted as their 'misuse' or 'abuse' of free speech, and the three latter slogans are variations on calls for 'responsible' use of free speech. The first refers to 'misuse', a variation on the flyer slogan about the 'abuse' of free speech. Two others specify appropriate limits or restrictions on free speech; 'when you step on my feet' can be interpreted as a colloquial way of referring to the line between 'respectful' and 'offensive' speech. The last slogan is interesting, being the only that explicitly mentions the cartoons, and elaborates on the 'media, mouthpiece of lies' above. The distinction between 'lying' and 'truth' implicitly reflects the liberal justification for free speech as an instrument in the search for truth, which is reflected in libel laws; reports that publicly defame a person are only protected by free speech if they are true; otherwise newspapers can be sued and punished for libel. The slogan claims that the caricatures are 'lying', e.g. misrepresenting Muslims as terrorists, and are thus guilty of group defamation and libel.

In addition to the above-mentioned slogan that condemns media for 'making hate speech', three others also refer to 'hate speech';

> *Stop the hate speech*
> *Stop the war! Stop the racist harassment!*
> *Muslims demand protection against hate speech and bullying*

The second of these, used by the *International Socialists*, is the only explicit reference to 'racism', which is understood in the context of 'the war' in Iraq and Afghanistan. (I return to a discussion of the role of this political group in the section about alliances with non-Muslims.) While the first slogan implicitly appeals to media to 'stop the hate speech', the latter demands protection from the government. This slogan is significant, as the only explicit demand on the government to enforce hate speech legislation. Under Norwegian law, hate speech (in Norwegian, the law refers more formally to 'hatefulle ytringer' rather than 'hets' as used in the slogans. Both mean 'hate speech' but the Justice Ministry found the former more 'informative' (Ot.prp. no. 8 (2007-2008), point 10.7.4.1); Swedish and German legislation use linguistic equivalents of the latter) is a punishable offense, defined in article 135a of the Penal Code, popularly known as the "racism paragraph". Similar to legislation in other European countries, the law protects against "threatening or scornful" speech as well as against promoting "hatred,

persecution or contempt" of someone on the basis of skin color, national or ethnic origin, *religion* and homosexual orientation. On paper, the law should protect Muslims against hate speech, but in practice it is rarely and restrictively enforced. Bangstad & Vetlesen (2011:336) argue that this lack of enforcement has weakened minority individuals' protection against racism, at the same time as hate speech has become more widespread in the public sphere. This means that the slogan 'Muslims demand protection against hate speech' does not ask the government to change the law, but to enforce existing legislation.

Besides hate speech legislation, Norway had a "dormant" blasphemy law, article 142 in the Penal Code, which on paper protects the beliefs of *all* legally recognized religions against "insults"; in contrast to British law, Norwegian legislation also protects Islam. The Norwegian blasphemy law, however, has not been enforced since 1933, although some Norwegian Muslims have asked for its revival. News coverage of the protest reported that; *the protesters demanded that Parliament protects Muslims by reviving the dormant blasphemy paragraph* (*Dagsavisen*, February 12). Organizers expressed this demand in a letter to be sent Parliament when they have collected enough signatures. This letter was read aloud by one speaker, Sehraz Anjeem, quoted by *VG* online (February 11); *we wish to be protected against the insults and harassment we have experienced in recent weeks. We hope that the dormant blasphemy paragraph will be revived, so that it may protect us*. *Aftenposten* (February 12) reports that Anjeem appealed to revive the blasphemy law; *so that it may protect Muslims against religious hate speech* (sic). It is interesting that the speaker wants the blasphemy law to protect 'Muslims' (as a group of believers) against insults, harassment and hate speech; rather than to protect religious beliefs as such.

Protesters made no reference to the *concept* of blasphemy, neither in slogans, interviews or speeches – they only refer to the blasphemy law. Analyzing the Rushdie affair, Parekh (1990:698) argues that Muslim protesters used the concept of blasphemy "because it made most sense to their intended audience and because it enabled them to take advantage of the existing law against it", although blasphemy is a Judeo-Christian concept with "no exact equivalent" in Islam (Levey & Modood 2009:223). Akhtar (1989:70-72) elaborates that a notion of blasphemy exists in Islam, but it is not punishable under Islamic law, which mostly prescribes penalties for 'social crimes' as opposed to 'personal' offenses. If committed by a Muslim believer, blasphemy may lead to suspicions of 'apostasy', which has traditionally carried a death penalty if aggravated by "treason" to the Muslim community. In an essay on the cartoon affair discussing Western and Muslim concepts of blasphemy, Talal Asad (2009:36-41) notes that Arabic speakers used a secular term for 'insult' rather than any of the Arabic terms commonly translated as 'blasphemy'. Compared to liberal ideas, he argues that in the Islamic tradition, the limits of individual freedom are articulated differently in relation to private and public spaces; Islam regulates public behaviour more strictly, but protects

private space more strongly. In line with this, Islamic law guarantees personal freedom of belief, but not the public expression of any belief with the intention of converting people. In the Christian tradition, thoughts alone can be blasphemous, while for Muslims, social practices matter more than individual beliefs. The Islamic concept of blasphemy is thus defined by its social consequences, and better understood as an 'insult' against the religious community, in contrast to the liberal conception of blasphemy as attack on ideas or beliefs.

Geoffrey Brahm Levey and Tariq Modood (2009) discuss the cartoons (primarily the one showing a bomb in the turban) within a liberal framework of legal restrictions to free speech, and identify three analytically separate dimensions of blasphemy and racism (ibid, 217; 220); (1) breach of the Muslim prohibition against depicting the prophet, (2) attack on religion, suggesting that Islam is violent, and (3) attack on a religious group, suggesting that Muslims are violent (ibid, 222-242). With regard to the first, this prohibition in Islamic law does not apply to non-Muslims, and is not covered by Western blasphemy laws, which require 'insult' or 'ridicule'. None of the statements of Norwegian Muslim protesters indicate that they protested the depiction of Mohammed per se, but rather the negative misrepresentation ('lies' about the prophet). Even if Muslims tend to perceive an attack on Islam as an attack on Muslims, the authors (ibid, 229-230) argue that these two analytical dimensions should not be automatically conflated, but require detailed empirical analysis. Relevant legislation in liberal democracies has developed from banning the former, blasphemy, to a ban on the latter, religious hate speech, which recognizes incitement to religious hatred as a form of racism. The authors support this move, which narrows the definition of the offense, and regard the targeting of Muslims as a religious group a more serious offense; it is a form of racism that possibly justifies legal action. With regard to the 'worst' cartoon, Levey and Modood (ibid, 238-239) argue that this exceeds the appropriate limits for caricatures, and can be seen as negative stereotyping, reinforcing prejudice and demonizing Muslims. A challenge to the claim that the cartoons are racist is the argument that Muslims are a religious group, not a 'race', and thus cannot be victims of racism, presented by Hansen (2006:12) and O'Leary (2006:26) in a debate with Modood (2006b; 2006c:55-57) and Bleich (2006:17), who argue that cultural and religious groups can be 'racialized' and that the cartoons are part of a current process of racializing European Muslims (Levey & Modood 2009:241). Bleich (ibid) defines 'racialization' as "essentializing of an entire group based on a primordial identity marker, and the classification of such a group as inherently dangerous and inferior". He defends criticism of religion, but argues that the two cartoons portraying the prophet with a sword and with a bomb qualify as punishable hate speech (in contrast to British and Norwegian hate speech laws, Danish legislation does not include groups based on religion; Bleich 2006:21), because they cast "Mohammed, the spiritual forefather of the entire group, as inextricably linked to violence"; thus linking all Muslims to violence.

Several statements from Norwegian Muslim protesters defy an easy distinction between blasphemy and racism, and ask for respect and protection of both Muslim believers and their values, some explicitly argue that in order to respect Muslims, it is necessary to respect their religion. *VG* online (February 11) quotes the lead organizer, Roqayya Kalayci, in the headline; *Respect our values;* again in the story lead and more fully at the beginning of the main text; *we wish [...] that our lives and values be protected and respected*. In *Dagbladet* online (February 11), Issam Kahloul explains why they are protesting; *our integrity is attacked every day. We are peaceful people and want everyone to respect our religion*. Several poster slogans emphasize that beliefs and believers may be intimately linked and cannot easily be detached;

> *Respect our faith; then you respect us!*
> *Peace and respect for our values*
> *Values exist because they are valuable*
> *Freedom to practice our religion*

Discussing the Rushdie affair, Modood (2005:121) argues that the distinction between beliefs and believers is problematic in the case of "beliefs that form the self-definition of a group". More specifically, he argues that "a defamation of the prophet is indeed a defamation of Muslims", because Muslims believe that their honor and good name depends on upholding the honor of the Prophet. This view was expressed by several interviewed protesters; Trond Ali Linstad, a convert to Islam, is quoted in *Dagbladet*'s print version (February 12); *from certain camps there is a strong attack on the prophet and Muslims. This is a protest against those attacks*. Similarly, the same article quotes Saleh Abdolbasset; *we are marching here to show that the Prophet is precious to us*. *VG*'s online article (February 12) quotes Abdul Latif; *Mohammed is more important to us than our selves. Even if he is dead, he is alive in our hearts.*

Saba Mahmood (2009:66-67) argues that framing the cartoon affair as a clash between 'free speech' and 'blasphemy' means accepting certain preconceptions about what kind of offense the cartoons caused, and how it might be addressed in liberal society. She criticizes the "immediate resort to juridical language" by both sides, which privileges the state and the law in solving matters of religious difference at the expense of ethical and political questions. While some dialogue-oriented liberals acknowledged the racism behind the cartoons, they were troubled by the religious dimension of Muslim protests (ibid, 68). Mahmood argues that Muslims' intimate relationship with the Prophet differs from the secularized Protestant understanding of religious symbols as separated from individuals who *choose* to believe in them; "Muhammad is regarded as a moral exemplar whose words and deeds are understood not so much as commandments but as ways of inhabiting the world, bodily and ethically" (ibid, 75). This means that those who love the Prophet try to emulate and realize his behavior. Mahmood suggests that the sense of moral injury felt when the prophet is insulted, is distinct from the idea of

blasphemy; rather than a violation of law, it is a "perception that one's being, grounded as it is in a relationship of dependency with the prophet, has been shaken" and this cannot be properly expressed in the juridical language of rights or in the political language of street protests (Mahmood 2009:78).

Mahmood (ibid, 79-81) discusses Modood's widely-supported framing of the cartoons in terms of racism, in order to appeal to hate speech laws. Arguments about 'racialization' of Muslims have met opposition from critics who argue that religious identity is categorically different from racial identity, as 'race' is allegedly biological and thus unchangeable, whereas religion is a matter of 'choice'. Similar to Modood (2007:70-71; see my discussion in the introduction), Mahmood problematizes the idea that religion is 'a matter of choice'; which she identifies as resting on a distinctly Protestant conception of religion as "private belief". On the other hand, she argues that European Muslims' appeals to hate speech laws in order to protect their religious beliefs will in turn regulate, transform and 'secularize' their beliefs, and suggests that, if they want to preserve a distinctly Muslim imaginary of relating to their Prophet, and promote greater understanding of their 'religious difference' among the majority, European Muslims should turn to ethics rather than to the law (Mahmood 2009:87-89). As we have seen in the Norwegian Muslim protest, ethical appeals for 'respect' and 'responsibility' were perhaps more central than demands for legal protection.

From a public order perspective, it makes sense to ban cartoons that are considered racist in order to avoid the kind of crisis that developed in the cartoon affair. On the other hand, a legal ban would deny the majority an opportunity to learn about the sensibilities of a minority. Modood (2006b:4) argues that legal intervention is sometimes necessary; especially when there is a risk of incitement to hatred, a risk to public order, or it would lead to reinforce prejudice and discrimination. In most cases, however, he does not support banning racist speech and images, and argues that "where matters are not or cannot easily be regulated by law one relies on protest as well as empathy" (ibid) – that is, through public debate and protest, majority individuals and institutions learn what is offensive to minorities (Modood 2006a:41; 2007:57; see also Bleich 2006:19; 22). From a more liberal rather than antiracist perspective, Carens (2006:34-35) argues that the cartoons do not qualify as hate speech and should be legally permissible; however, he argues that "most liberal newspapers [...] generally acknowledge some responsibility to exercise discretion [...] in what they publish". Exercising self-restraint when aware that something would offend a minority group, is compatible with a liberal norm; to treat minority groups in a democratic society with due respect (ibid, 37). Appeals to be treated with 'respect' seemed to be among the most frequently used slogans in the Norwegian Muslim demonstration.

Besides slogans drawn from liberal and antiracist discourses, some poster slogans were phrased in a clearly religious language; others can reasonably be interpreted as such;

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Islam is the truth
We condemn the lies about the prophet
When truth comes, lies disappear
Lies end, truth doesn't

The first slogan is literally a 'religious truth claim'. Leirvik (2006) comments that this slogan may indicate the presence of Islamists, but such statements are to be expected from a proselytizing religion. The second slogan implicitly condemns the cartoons as 'lies about the prophet' and as such can be interpreted within a discourse of free speech as truth-seeking. The last two are more ambiguous; a reasonable interpretation is that they refer to the cartoons as 'lies' (misrepresentation) about Muslim violence, while 'truth' is represented by peaceful Muslim protesters. While these slogans, and particularly the first, are likely to be interpreted as expressions of 'religious fundamentalism', Modood (2005:122) argues that as a group with a primarily religious identity, Muslims "draw strength from the [non-secular] sources of their group pride" in order to resist discrimination and defamation. Attacks on this source are particularly devastating; Muslims often regard insults against the Prophet as worse than other forms of harassment, and even non-practicing Muslims tend to show solidarity with their religious community when the Prophet is under attack. Modood (ibid, 123) concludes that abusive attacks on Prophet Mohammed such as those found in the *Satanic Verses* and among Jyllands-Posten's cartoons, are not "part of the healthy clash of ideas that all beliefs ought to be subject to", but rather represent "incitement to community hatred, based on an intimate knowledge of what will hurt and set the communities apart".

The protesters' messages reflect several of the ideological positions discussed in the introduction. Slogans calling for 'mutual respect' and referring to limits of 'free speech' are compatible with 'dialogical liberalism'; slogans appealing to stop 'hate speech' are consistent with 'antiracist multiculturalism', while calls to revive the blasphemy law can be seen as more consistent with a 'minority communitarian' position which refers to community-specific norms (although it translates a Muslim offense into a Christian concept in order to appeal to a Norwegian norm that is now widely seen as obsolete). Statements from all three discourses were represented in newspaper coverage, but there was a tendency to highlight religious language, e.g. news reports over-represented the shouting of 'allahu akbar', the slogan 'Islam is the truth' and the call to revive the blasphemy law. Several slogans indicate that the distinction between 'blasphemy' and 'racism' is not necessarily as clear-cut to Muslim believers as it is to some liberal thinkers, as expressed in the slogan 'respect our faith, then you respect us'. As Cora Alexa Døving (2012:42) notes in her analysis of the hijab debates (to be discussed in detail in chapter 4), religious arguments may be indistinguishably merged with universal values and dominant secular language, something that is overlooked in Habermas' (and to a lesser extent Rawls') model, which operates with an artificial division between religious and secular languages that require 'translation'.

As a contribution to public debate, the purpose of street demonstrations goes beyond declaring one's religious faith; it is intended to appeal to a non-Muslim general public. As discussed by Modood (2005:118-204; 2007:142) and Parekh (1989:68; 1990:699; 2000:299) in their analyses of the Rushdie affair, this may imply some extent of 'translating' religious arguments into a 'generally accessible language' (Habermas 2005:16-18). It appears that Muslim protesters in Oslo succeeded comparatively well, indicating that organizers had a well-thought-out political strategy aimed at getting across a nuanced message that showed a diversity of opinions among Norwegian Muslims, allowing them to combine slogans drawn from a religious discourse with both liberal and antiracist discourses. Probably expecting that media would quote selectively and try to portray them as 'religious fundamentalists', the strategy of using a large number of posters with a diversity of slogans seems to have worked, as those slogans were visually quoted in pictures, bypassing journalistic and editorial interpretation.

In a highly secularized society, where many intellectuals and contributors to public debate show what Habermas (2005:20) has called a "secularist stubbornness", statements in a religious language that simply express 'religious truth claims' are unlikely to be taken as serious contributions to political debate and more likely to convince the majority that those expressing them, are 'religious fundamentalists'. In order to mobilize non-Muslim Norwegians to show solidarity against anti-Muslim racism, to have their demands accommodated by the government, and to make a successful appeal to the media to show restraint in exercising free speech, it is necessary to articulate these appeals and demands in a generally accessible language. While this may not represent a 'cognitive burden' on religious citizens as Habermas (2005:16) suggests, there are empirical examples that correspond to his call on secular citizens to 'open their minds' and assist in the translation process.

Leirvik (2012a) argues that interreligious dialogue; as a genuine dialogue which may include atheists, focuses on social life rather than theology (ibid, 19), and is characterized by mutual openness to attitude change; may lead to an ethical consensus expressed in a general language of shared human values rather than particular religious interests. As such, Habermas' translation requirement is fulfilled (ibid, 15), as religions meet in a pluralist overlapping consensus (Rawls) on universal human rights (ibid, 18). Leirvik believes that the language of human rights is not only a secondary shared language, but that it transforms religions (ibid, 18) in the direction of a shared humanist ethics (ibid, 22), which he calls 'secularity' (which is distinct from more ideological 'secularism' (ibid, 7-9) and corresponds to Rawls' 'public reason' and Habermas' 'post-secular reason'; ibid, 16). Below, I discuss two empirical examples of such 'translation'; the alliances between Muslims and secular antiracists when the *International Socialists* supported and participated in the Muslim protest; and an attempt by the Norwegian government to transform blasphemy legislation into hate speech legislation.

Alliances with non-Muslims

Three news reports focus on non-Muslims' support and solidarity. Before the rally, *Aften* (February 8) and *Klassekampen* (February 10) interviewed members of the *International Socialists* declaring political support, and after the protest, *Dagsavisen* (February 12) interviews professor of social medicine, Per Fugelli, who joined on ethical grounds. Fugelli is known for fronting controversial issues in public debate, and defending the views of marginalized groups in particular. Under the headline, *Healthy to demonstrate,* quoting Fugelli, *Dagsavisen* reports that the professor took part in the protest march. The newspaper notes that *the overwhelming majority of yesterday's demonstrators had a Muslim background,* and Fugelli was *one of few with an ethnic Norwegian background who participated.* We learn that he lives in the predominantly Muslim neighbourhood of Grønland, and wants to support his neighbors. He is quoted;

> *I was there to show solidarity with Norwegian women and men who feel that their god and their dignity had been stepped on. There were many neighbors who participated, and they are people we have learned to appreciate. They deserve support when they feel that someone is harassing them.*

Fugelli does not justify his solidarity in political terms, but in an ethical language of care for fellow human beings who 'deserve support' when they are 'harassed' and their 'dignity' is 'stepped on'. He refers to them not primarily as 'Muslims', but as 'neighbors', 'Norwegian women and men' and 'people we have learned to appreciate'. He clarifies that *he does not support the demand to revive the blasphemy law*, but thinks *it is great to see that young people speak up when they've had enough*. He elaborates;

> *It took courage and independence. Old authority figures were against the demonstration, and larger Norwegian society feared violence. Nonetheless, they marched for what they believe in. One could tell from those who marched, it did them good being able to express frustration after years of feeling insulted had been suppressed.*

Here, he speaks as a doctor (or psychologist), when saying that it is healthy to express long-suppressed frustrations. He praises the 'young' for their 'courage' and 'independence' to stand up for their beliefs, against disapproval from authorities and fear of violence. Fugelli hopes the protest can be a *turning point*, and lead to *people learning to become curious about each other;* implicitly drawing on a discourse of multicultural dialogue and mutual learning. In a final quote, he makes a political remark about not letting the Progress Party create conflicts, but primarily, he exemplifies a public expression of empathy with Norwegian Muslims in non-political terms.

Under the headline, *Supports controversial demonstration*, *Aften* reported that the International Socialists in Oslo support the young Muslims and join the rally. The

International Socialists are a non-party political group, constituting the Norwegian branch of the International Socialist Tendency led by the British Socialist Workers Party. They were the only political organization in Norway that had consistently addressed, analyzed and confronted anti-Muslim racism, as reflected in numerous articles in their monthly magazine *Gnisten*. *Aften*'s article interviews board member Randi Færevik; *I think it is about time to show support for the Muslims in connection with what has happened – including the war in Iraq and the stabbing of a Muslim in Skien after the cartoons were printed.* Færevik places the cartoon protest in a wider political context that includes the Iraq war. Representatives of the International Socialists are also given space in the left-wing newspaper, *Klassekampen;* under the headline, *Support the Muslims!,* it is reported that *Norwegian left activists will support the young Muslims' demonstration at Grønland in Oslo.*

Editor of *Gnisten,* Andreas Ytterstad, says in an interview; *When some of the Muslims in Oslo dare to stand up against the hate speech, they deserve full support. We share the Muslims' anger at the oppression they suffer, and we will join to call attention to the war and the racism that underlies this entire conflict.* Like Færevik, he primarily points to the wider context of the 'war on terror' and racism, and elaborates; *ever since 9/11, right-wing forces have tried to convert political conflicts into religious war.* He mentions President Bush's use of the term 'crusade' and draws a link to the cartoons;

> *Jyllands-Posten has continued this conversion, and far too many are deceived and speak about reconciliation and dialogue without addressing the political conflicts. Many people say that the cartoons were the drop that made the cup run over, but few speak about the cup...*

Ytterstad's analysis refers to what theorists have called the 'culturalization of politics' (discussed in the introduction) where the 'clash of civilizations' thesis is an example, and moves on to criticize the government position of 'reconciliation' and 'dialogue' for unintentionally reproducing this neo-conservative discourse while attempting to build bridges between 'cultures' or 'religions' without addressing underlying politics. On the other hand, he uses a somewhat narrow definition of 'the cup' that runs over, referring only to military conflicts; the 'war on terror', Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine.

In an editorial (republished in a shortened version as an op-ed article in *Klassekampen* on February 23) of their magazine, *Gnisten* (no. 2/2006), where the cartoon protest was the main topic, Ytterstad elaborates on 'the cup' that ran over; *this was the drop of insult that made the cup of racism, demonization and the 'war on terror' flow over* (Interestingly, this line was left out in *Klassekampen*'s version). This means that the International Socialists recognize anti-Muslim racism as a problem, seeing it in the context of Western imperialism in Muslim countries. However, referring to the cartoons as a 'drop of insult' perhaps plays down the significance of the (religious) offense and disrespect felt by Muslims. Ytterstad writes on behalf of the International Socialists;

We were disappointed to see how few people from the Norwegian left who attended. And let's be honest, it wasn't because they feared unrest, neither was it blind faith in Jonas Gahr Støre's diplomatic skills. The left was reluctant to participate because they were influenced by the demonization of Islam.

While the Norwegian left may have been influenced by anti-Muslim racism (a number of left-wing intellectuals have joined the confrontational rhetoric); Modood (2006b:5-7) suggests two reasons for the lack of sympathy for Muslims among Europeans, including left-wing antiracists. First, a lack of recognition of the existence of anti-Muslim racism, arguing that the way Muslims are treated is 'only' hatred of religion, not racism; and second, that religion is (and should be) a fair target for mockery and ridicule (Hansen 2006:12). With regard to the former, the International Socialists do acknowledge that Muslims are subject to racism. In a commentary in the same issue of *Gnisten*, Jon W. Sandven elaborates on their understanding of anti-Muslim racism;

The caricatures cannot be seen as separate from the enemy image that has been created of Islam and Muslims after 11 September 2001. [...] Islamophobia has become the most visible and "respectable" form of racism in the West after September 11. The drawings that depicted the prophet as a terrorist must be seen in this context.

While placing the cartoon affair in the *context* of Western imperialism and anti-Muslim racism, the International Socialists seem to go further in 'translating' Muslim religious sensibilities into material politics. With regard to Modood's second reason, Ytterstad writes that many socialists' skepticism of religion rests on a superficial reading of Karl Marx' line "religion is opium for the people", while Marx' and Engels' critique of religion was more nuanced; "religious suffering is simultaneously an *expression* of real suffering, and a *protest* against real suffering". Ytterstad argues that while religion may be used by political power to justify oppression; *political protest can also be expressed within a religious framework*. In another commentary in *Gnisten*, Susan Lyden, explains the Muslim call to revive the blasphemy paragraph;

A racism paragraph exists, but is not used to stop the demonization. When anti-discrimination laws fail, it is perhaps not so strange that some Muslims have wanted to revive the blasphemy paragraph.

This quote suggests that Lyden sees racism as the primary issue, and interprets appeals to blasphemy legislation as a subsidiary argument 'when anti-discrimination laws fail'. Ytterstad rejects the idea that Muslims are more deeply religious than Westerners. In the terminology of Habermas (2005:20), the International Socialists make a contribution to translate religious language into political arguments, but does this translation fall short of a 'mutual learning process' which also accommodates the Muslim request for 'respect' of their religious feelings? It seems that the International Socialists partially

overcome the "secularist stubbornness" common on the political left, and recognize political arguments behind a religious guise, but they also seem to reproduce a distinction between political and religious that is less clear-cut among Muslims.

Analyzing the Rushdie affair, Modood (2005:103-107) notes that many British antiracists who wanted to show solidarity with Muslims, carried the slogan 'Fight racism, not Rushdie'. This approach failed to understand Muslim reactions, because addressing the problem of racism does not in itself lessen their religious pain. Seeking to answer why "the most socially deprived and racially harassed group" could bear the material deprivation and "explode in anger only on an issue of religious honor" (ibid, 104), Modood suggests that the failure of mutual understanding is rooted in antiracists' blindness to issues of culture and religion, while Muslims do not think of themselves as suffering racism based on skin color. As Muslims feel their oppression most in the dimension they value the most, and resist it from the dimension that gives them the greatest psychological strength, "authentic "antiracism" for Muslims [...] will inevitably have a religious dimension and take a form in which it is integrated with the rest of cultural concerns" (ibid).

In the Rushdie affair, British antiracists acknowledged racism but were ignorant of the living realities that racism obscures. Modood suggests that antiracism should begin by "accepting oppressed groups on their own terms". Antiracists need to learn from the Muslim minority they want to show solidarity with, but at the same time, Muslims have something to learn from antiracists as Muslim thinking on racial equality is a 'color-blind' approach "unable to sanction any program of positive action to tackle the problem once it is acknowledged to exist" (ibid, 105). Alliances between Muslim minorities and white anti-racists (as well as other non-white groups) need to start from a minority's self-asserted identity, and combine this with an analysis of racism (ibid, 106-107). Since the Rushdie affair, British antiracists have developed their understanding about anti-Muslim racism and no longer reject talk of Muslim religious identity as irrelevant to politics, and have built alliances and coalitions with left-wing groups (Modood 2005:205-206). Linked to the British Socialist Workers Party, the Norwegian International Socialists' analyses and practices draw on British experiences as indicated by Mariette Lobo (2007), who writes that the British left has recognized Muslims as potential allies, while the Norwegian left is "not quite there yet".

Despite certain shortcomings in understanding the importance of religious identity to Muslims, their political analysis of the government's dialogue position is sophisticated. The International Socialists position themselves in the discursive struggles between the four positions, and their own ideological framing illustrates the differences between the antiracist and the dialogue position. On behalf of the International Socialists, Ytterstad supports the Muslim protesters who defied Muslim leaders, the government and mainstream media; all representing a *hegemonic* 'dialogue' position. He writes;

"When Selbekk and the Islamic Council leader can build bridges, everyone can," Bjarne Håkon Hanssen said at the "reconciliation meeting" [...] "Let's remove the last drop of the Magazinet editor, and forget the cup that runs over."

Ytterstad criticizes the government for narrowly defining the conflict as one between *Magazinet* and the Muslim minority. This strategy blamed only *Magazinet,* turned Selbekk into a scapegoat who had to 'apologize' and let Hamdan accept the apology on behalf of Norwegian Muslims. This framing focuses only on the trigger, absolves mainstream media of responsibility for anti-Muslim racism, and ignores the Muslim protests in a wider context. Susan Lyden accurately phrases this criticism;

There has been an attempt from the Norwegian government to distinguish itself from the Danish by emphasizing that here, we want reconciliation and dialogue. Imams and young Muslims are called to meetings; they have to accept "our" freedom of expression, refuse to support resistance shown by other Muslims, and pacify their own ranks.

Lyden criticizes the 'dialogue' position as a 'top-down' approach where the government dictates the terms of the 'dialogue'; Norwegian Muslims have to accept the dominant position on 'free speech' and suppress resistance in their own communities; 'pacify their own ranks'. This is not a genuine dialogue, characterized by mutual accommodation, but reflects a white perspective that denies mainstream racism and blames the minority for extreme forms of racism (when Muslims were asked to remain calm in order not to provoke right-wing threats); *only if minorities remain passive towards racist expressions, we can prevent an increase in racism;* i.e. an argumentative strategy that blames the victim (see Richardson 2004:48). While 'antiracism' is a critical bottom-up approach starting with minority perspectives, as Ytterstad implies in the following statement; *a condition for credible dialogue is solidarity – and participation in the struggle of the oppressed*; the 'dialogic liberalism' position is a political strategy used by the government to maintain hegemony and contain minority resistance. Doing so, it may be a more effective strategy of 'diversity management' (Gunew 2004:5-6; 15-17; Hage 1998:233-244) than the 'confrontational' approach.

Government response: proposal to change blasphemy and hate speech laws

On December 19, 2008, the government announced in a press release (no. 155-2008, Ministry of Justice) that it would provide "better protection against hate speech" in a law proposal for a new Penal Code. The government wanted to extend the Hate Speech Act (§ 135a) to include "qualified attacks on religion" and replace the dormant Blasphemy Act (§ 142), which would be abolished. The proposal is justified with reference to "preventing serious conflicts in society"; as attacks on minority *religions* "can be perceived as attacks on minority *groups* more easily now than before". For blasphemous speech or "qualified attacks on religion" to be punishable, it would be

required that they are "ridiculing" or "strongly insulting", "far from any factual argumentation" and "not part of processes facilitated by free speech; the search for truth, democracy and free formation of individual opinion". Expressions of atheism and criticism of religious faith would be protected by free speech.

The law proposal (Ot.prp. no. 22 (2008-2009), section 13.2) argues that the emergence of a multicultural society in Norway could give the Blasphemy Act new relevance; and explicitly mentions the cartoon crisis as leading to EU discussions of blasphemy legislation. The proposal argues that while the Blasphemy Act "presumably" protects individuals' *religious feelings* as opposed to the Hate Speech Act's protection of *individuals and groups based on their religious faith*, the distinction is not clear-cut in practice, and there are no decisive legal precedents. Taking into consideration the opposing views of both the Commission on Freedom of Expression (1999), which recommended abolishing the Blasphemy Act, as well as of the preceding center-right Bondevik II government (2003), which argued that qualified attacks on religion should be equally punishable as attacks on religious believers, the Ministry of Justice concludes that free speech must be balanced with other considerations, and recognizes that religious faith is often attached to strong emotions and deeply anchored in a person's identity, so that attacks on religious faith may negatively influence a person's everyday life. It suggested that the current Hate Speech Act only partially protects religious minorities, and should be extended to cover "qualified attacks on religion", as a compensation for abolishing the Blasphemy Act.

About a month later, a massive protest campaign against the law proposal emerged in the media. *VG* reported on January 23 that a group of professors, including former free speech commission leader Francis Sejersted, anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen, popular authors, and 'Islam critics' (including Lars Gule, al-Kubaisi, Sara Azmeh Rasmussen, Gunnar Skirbekk and Storhaug) started a signature campaign called "No to punishment for criticism of religion". They linked the law proposal to the cartoon affair and even the Rushdie affair; author Roy Jacobsen noted that; *it looks like it is designed to prevent the kind of expressions like the Mohammed cartoons*. The next day, editorials of *VG*, *Aftenposten* and *Klassekampen* joined the protest. *VG* expressed no doubt that the cartoon affair was the reason behind the law proposal, argued that there is a *fundamental difference* between insulting a person and attacking a religion; and noted that it is sensational that the government cannot guarantee the legality of the Mohammed cartoons. *Aftenposten* called for the proposal's withdrawal, and noted that Justice Minister Storberget, who had expressed his personal opinion that none of the cartoons should be banned, would leave it to courts to decide, thus *obscuring fundamental principles* of free speech. On the other hand, the newspaper praised the decision to abolish the Blasphemy Act; *the limits of free speech towards religion must be defined by ethical awareness, a sense of responsibility and empathy – not by the law*.

On January 28, newspapers revealed that government parties Labor and Socialist Left opposed the proposal; which was the outcome of a horse trade with the Center Party – the only coalition partner which wanted to maintain the Blasphemy Act. Put this way, it was not consideration for Muslim feelings, but of traditional Christian voters of the agrarian Center Party. On February 2, Prime Minister Stoltenberg was still determined that the decision was final; Labor would vote unanimously for the law proposal in Parliament. The next day, after Christian Democrat leader Dagfinn Høybråten declared that his party would not support the law, which would serve Muslims more than Christians as he saw it, Stoltenberg held a press conference in a failed attempt to clear up confusion and appease critics. On February 4, Center Party leader Liv Signe Navarsete, on behalf of the government, gave in to massive criticism and withdrew the proposal to extend the Hate Speech Act, admitting that; *we made a mistake. We messed up...* The proposal to abolish the Blasphemy Act passed Parliament in May 2009.

While reservations in the law proposal indicate that the government did not necessarily intend the law to be enforced as strictly as to make publications such as the Mohammed cartoons punishable, the chosen wording went beyond what both Christians and Muslims had asked for, as Leirvik notes in an op-ed (*Dagbladet*, February 28, 2009). Especially the lack of a clear distinction between protecting religious believers and religious beliefs as such, while perhaps correctly reflecting empirical reality, opened the law proposal to criticism from secular defenders of free speech and from Islam critics, who claimed that the proposal gave in to 'fundamentalist' demands. My analysis of Muslim demands indicates that Norwegian Muslims primarily sought protection as a religious group, and that this demand could have been accommodated by a stricter enforcement of existing hate speech legislation (as discussed earlier), without extending the wording of the law to include 'religions' rather than 'religious groups', a distinction that is not clear-cut in practice, but may be analytically and theoretically useful.

The second Norwegian cartoon affair in 2010

On February 3, 2010, *Dagbladet*'s front page showed a cartoon of Prophet Mohammed as a pig, to illustrate a story that someone had posted a link to such a cartoon on the Facebook pages of the Police Security Service. The specific drawing reportedly originates in Israel, where it caused riots in 1998, and a woman responsible for it was convicted for racism in an Israeli court. *Dagbladet*'s source was Arfan Bhatti, a Norwegian Muslim with extremist views, who later took part in organizing the demonstration. In the following days, Muslim shop-owners protested by refusing to sell *Dagbladet*, and about 1000 of Oslo's mostly Muslim taxi drivers went on strike. On February 9, Amir Sheikh, Oslo City Council member for the Conservative Party, took the initiative for a dialogue meeting between *Dagbladet* editor Lars Helle and imam Mehboob ur-Rehman. The editor refused to accommodate the imam's request for a statement of regret, telling *Aftenposten* (online, February 9); *we knew that the*

publication of these cartoons would cause reactions, but we chose to publish it anyway. People have been angry with Dagbladet since 1869 [when the newspaper was founded]*, so we are used to it. It's not our thing to be conciliatory*. Sheikh thus described the meeting as *without results*, and said; *I think Dagbladet's editor should have been more humble in meeting the imam, and I think he could have expressed regret as well as greater sympathy with Muslim views*. *Dagbladet,* which was the most negative in its 2006 coverage of Muslim protests, now shifted to more confrontational rhetoric.

A demonstration was called to be held on February 12, organized by a diverse group of six Norwegian Muslims; Qasim Ali, Waqas Sarwar, Per Bartho Hansen a.k.a. Youssef Assidiq (an ethnic Norwegian convert), Itrat Zishan (who was not quoted in the media), Arfan Bhatti and Mohyeldeen Mohammad. The two latter have been unanimously identified as 'extremists' by mainstream Norwegian Muslims, and by the security police. Before the demonstration, media focused mostly on the involvement of Bhatti, who is known to the public for his criminal past, and figured as main suspect in Norway's only case of 'Muslim terror' where prosecution failed to produce evidence that he was in fact planning an act of terror and not simply an armed robbery. On the morning of the demonstration, Qasim Ali is interviewed by the national public broadcaster, *NRK* (online), expressing that the organizers don't want to be called 'radicals' or 'extremists'. He says that Facebook had closed down the group's pages because of 'hate speech'. He says that; *it is just sad that an impression has been created that we want to cause trouble,* and that they have worked hard to find and approve guards to keep order during the demonstration, and have a good dialogue with the police. Shoaib Sultan at the Islamic Council says that they have *good contact* with organizers and rejects that they are extremists.

As in 2006, Muslim leaders advised against the demonstration; Islamic Association leader Basim Ghozlan said to *Klassekampen* (February 11); *I fear that certain individuals exploit this demonstration to create division and conflict. These are persons with little interest in Islam, who want confrontations with mainstream society*. Islamic Council secretary general Shoaib Sultan said the demonstration was *not advisable*. On behalf of organizers, Qasim Ali rejects the above, saying that this was a *spontaneous movement, independent of organized circles*. He criticized Muslim leaders, saying that; *I am sorry that those who are supposed to take charge fail to do so. That leaves us young people to do the job*. Vice-President of the Norwegian Parliament, Akhtar Chaudry, initially advised against the demonstration, claiming that; *this is a group of angry, young men who don't have broad support in the Muslim community*, later however he changed his mind and expressed support for the demonstration. Several editors of the national media said that it was *unwise* to publish the cartoon, but defended *Dagbladet*'s right to do so. *Aftenposten* (February 12) noted that the Norwegian Muslim community is *unusually unison* in criticizing *Dagbladet* for publishing this cartoon; persons as diverse as Conservative city council member Amir Sheikh, debate

contributor Mohammed Usman Rana (see chapter 5), author Amal Aden, who has written several books strongly criticizing negative practices in her own Norwegian Somali community (see chapter 3), and Shazia Sarwar, editor of the internet magazine X-plosiv, were all provoked and insulted.

Three thousand people joined the demonstration, twice as many as in 2006. It was covered with double pages in both *Dagsavisen* and *Dagbladet. Dagsavisen*'s article has a positive angle; the demonstration is described as peaceful; it is noted that two local politicians, Athar Ali (former Red Electoral Alliance) and Khalid Mahmood (Labor), took part, and several slogans are quoted; *Islam condemns terror*; *Dagbladet and the PST* [Police Security Service] *divide the nation*; and *Stop publishing the cartoons.* As in 2006, slogans were directed at the media, for publishing the cartoons and harassing Muslims. One of the speakers, a sharia student with extremist viewpoints, Mohyeldeen Mohammad, is quoted; *we don't want to restrict free speech, but we want an end to being harassed in the media.* He continues with a 'warning' that otherwise, there might be 'a Norwegian 9/11' – adding; *this is not a threat, it is a warning.* Even *Dagbladet*'s coverage had a more positive framing than in 2006, although it focused largely on the absence of violent incidents and relied on interviews with police, as organizers refused to speak to their journalists. Some slogans were quoted; *Stop hate speech against Muslims*; *Islam is a part of Norway*; and *Islam condemns terror*. None of these news reports sensationalized the 'terror threat', which came into focus in the coming days.

After the demonstration, the so-called 'terror threat' became the main focus in the media, and was condemned by Foreign Minister Støre and other politicians, as well as by the Islamic Council, and several editorials. *Klassekampen* (February 16) put the quote in context, as a 'warning, not a threat' and quotes from Mohyeldeen's speech;

> When will Norwegian authorities understand that this is serious? Maybe not before it's too late? Maybe not until we get a 9/11 or 7/7 on Norwegian soil? This is not a threat, but a warning.

Peace activist Reza Rezaee points out that there is nothing controversial about this 'warning' as there is widespread agreement that provocations such as the cartoons may increase the risk of terror. As a warning, it is in line with official security assessments given by police. *Klassekampen* editor Bjørgulv Braanen agreed with this interpretation, and criticized his colleagues in *VG* and *Aftenposten*, who condemned this statement. While this statement is no proof of 'extremism', Mohyeldeen expressed more unacceptable views in an interview with *Klassekampen;* defending killing gay people and claiming Islam is incompatible with democracy. These statements reveal that he holds extreme views, unanimously condemned by Norwegian Muslims, including Liberal politician Abid Raja; Shoaib Sultan, Basim Ghozlan, and fellow protest organizer Youssef Assidiq, who all emphasize that Mohyeldeen's extreme views are marginal and do not represent the views of Norwegian Muslims (*Klassekampen*,

February 17). In *Dagsavisen* (February 19), head of Muslim Student Society Bushra Ishaq says she was harassed by Mohyeldeen for not wearing a hijab. Ishaq had a high profile during the hijab debate in 2009, when she defended Muslim women's right to wear the hijab, even though she does not wear it herself (see chapter 4).

On February 13, some Muslim community organizations held their own demonstration, with three hundred participants. Organizer Fatima Khalil said to *Klassekampen* that it is independent from the larger demonstration, but the message is the same; *Stop hate speech against Muslims.* She is skeptical about Bhatti's involvement, and wants her protest to be child-friendly. She says they demand that *anti-discrimination legislation be used to follow up cases such as the one in Dagbladet. If not, hate speech against Muslims will be repeated over and over.* She also criticizes the Islamic Council; *instead of asking people to stay away, they should rather ask people to show up and make sure things remain calm. This only proves that the Islamic Council doesn't represent all Muslims.* On February 18, *Aftenposten* reported from a dialogue meeting between Muslim leaders and youth, held at the Islamic Association. Youssef Assidiq said; *no one remembers that it was a fantastic peaceful demonstration gathering 3000 people.* [...] *what everyone talks about now is one speech* [by Mohyeldeen]. Assidiq pointed out that organizers were inexperienced, and several others said that *if the Islamic Council* [...] *had listened to the young and joined the demonstration* [...] *a speech of this kind would have been prevented.* Being called, Asghar Ali of the Islamic Council apologized to young Muslims for not listening to them.

In an op-ed published in *VG* (February 24), Waqas Sarwar writes on behalf of organizers, that the only thing they shared was a desire to protest against hate speech and ridicule of Muslims. Mohyeldeen had already formed a Facebook group, before the organizing committee was formed and the other five men became co-administrators. Sarwar clarifies the diversity of opinions among them;

> *Several disagreements, both ideological and strategic, had to be put aside in order to organize the demonstration. The negative media focus was always present. We were categorized as ex-criminals, gang members and radicals. Some Muslim spokespersons used the description extremists.*

Sarwar explains that Mohyeldeen's views were known and discussed by the others; however he was enthusiastic and wanted to speak; *he was told not to air his personal opinions and was given a written script. Co-organizers were thus as surprised as the audience when the warning about 9/11 on Norwegian soil came...* Mohyeldeen quoted the Police Security Service as source of the warning and said he was personally against terrorism in Norway. Sarwar points out that organizers are 'sad' that media focused on words that should not have been said, and distracted from the focus of the protest.

The day after the demonstration, Progress Party leader Siv Jensen referred to it in her speech at the Oslo Progress Party's annual meeting. In *VG* online, she is quoted;

> *These are extreme groups who think we should not have free speech in Norway. It is incomprehensible to me why they come to Norway to demand to introduce the oppression they fled from in their home countries. Now it is time that the silent majority among the integrated Muslims also speak up clearly.*

Jensen's statement is framed within a discourse that sees free speech as absolute; she generalizes Norwegian Muslims as 'refugees' (a category to which the largest group, Pakistanis do not belong), and stereotypes protesters as extremists, drawing a contrast to a 'silent majority' among Muslims, who are 'integrated' and do not protest against the cartoons. She takes this as evidence for her claims about an allegedly *dramatic development,* where *Norwegian values are under ever stronger pressure,* and *Islamization is going on for full.* She also picks up on the reference to 'a Norwegian 9/11' and criticizes the government;

> *And as if this is not enough, we were served a threat that Norwegian society can be hit by terror attacks modelled on 9/11 if we do not ban criticism of religion. Now we need politicians who stand firm, not shy away like the government.*

Taking a position close to the *Jyllands-Posten* editors and the Danish government, Jensen argues that the Labor Party has failed to stand up for free speech since the Rushdie affair, when *fear of retaliation entered Norwegian reality.* Foreign Minister Støre counters her accusations by saying that *Jensen plays politics with the help of horror images and uses a rhetoric that judges all Muslims for the actions of a few extremists.* He points out that; *Norwegian democracy is strong and guarantees free speech, human rights and legal procedures for everyone, including Muslims and Progress Party people.* In an interview with *NRK* (online, February 12), Conservative Party leader Erna Solberg called the 'terror threat' *a serious setback for integration.* Solberg continues; *today Norwegian Muslims got to use free speech to say they were morally outraged. They have a right to do so. But when this hinders open and liberal dialogue by* [causing] *fear of terrorism, it is very wrong,* she implicitly claims that the speaker at the rally 'abused' free speech. In *VG* (February 22), Labor Party secretary Raymond Johansen strikes back at the Progress Party, who wants to fight 'extreme Islamism' with 'stricter integration policy'. The Labor representative defends 'dialogue' as solution, drawing a parallel to how 'we' *fought* a 'totalitarian, radical movement' in the 1970s (referring to the Maoist 'Workers Communist Party') *using words, debate and free exchange of opinions*. This time, Solberg agrees with Labor, saying that prohibitions and sanctions combined with not respecting their religion will radicalize 'young frustrated Muslims'. The Conservative leader seems to agree that there might be a link between the cartoons and Muslim radicalism, as Mohyeldeen suggested.

Conclusions

A decade ago, Norwegian media were frequently criticized for talking *about* Muslims rather than *with* them, it seems that *access to the media* was no longer the main problem for Norwegian Muslims at the time of the cartoon affair, as there has been a breakthrough for well-integrated Norwegian Muslim voices in public debate, indicating that Norway is becoming a more multicultural society. The analysis of newspaper coverage of Muslim protests showed diversity in coverage, with little systematic differences corresponding to the political positioning of various newspapers. If any, liberal newspapers were more negative and populist ones more positive in their coverage. Early reports about plans to protest gave voice to Norwegian Muslims; later focus changed towards more negative coverage focused on fear, threat, violence and gender inequality, reflecting argumentative strategies typical of racist discourse as identified by Wodak and Reisigl (2001) and common stereotypes also found by John Richardson (2004) in his study of British media. These were evident in the coverage of the protest, which was represented as more 'conservative' and more 'religious' than more detailed analysis can justify. The diverse message of the protesters reached the public through pictures showing slogans on posters. These suggested that media coverage of Muslims was a main target of criticism; the cartoons were seen in the context of a generally negative focus on Muslims. There was considerable diversity with regard to how this should be dealt with; ranging from ethical appeals to the media to use free speech responsibly, to requests to government to revive the blasphemy law or protect Muslims against hate speech. Some demands were phrased in a liberal language of freedom of religion; in a multicultural language of mutual respect; in an antiracist language of hate speech; and in a religious language of blasphemy. While 'translation' from religious to secular language in Habermas' (2005) sense was evident in efforts by the International Socialists and later also by the government, the slogans indicate that Norwegian Muslim protesters merge these discourses in ways that defy an easy distinction between 'secular' and 'religious' language, which corresponds to Modood's (2005:104) point that antiracism for Muslims inevitably will have a religious dimension.

More stereotypical coverage was found in headlines, while content was often more moderate, especially when written by minority journalists. News reports gave voice to Norwegian Muslims, but media tended to favor those who supported dominant views, while misrepresenting those who challenge majority views; conservative Muslims in particular are often negatively portrayed. Disagreements between Muslim leaders and the younger generation played out in public, perhaps for the first time as noted by Lena Larsen (*Dagbladet,* February 13, 2010), to the possible benefit of both. The imams and the Islamic Council, who had previously been criticized for being authoritarian, traditional and un-integrated, were now criticized for cooperating too closely with the government after a government-sponsored reconciliation meeting where they shook

hands with the editor who published the cartoons and called off further protests. The younger generation, who used to be portrayed as facing a choice between obeying community leaders and rejecting their religion in favor of assimilation, now showed the public that they could defend their religion while criticizing both minority and majority leaders. Coverage of the 2010 protest focused disproportionately on two extremist individuals among protest organizers. However, a wide range of Norwegian Muslims were interviewed; they disagreed on whether to join the street protest, but left a general impression of unanimous criticism of the cartoon, as well as unanimous rejection of extremism. As *Aftenposten*'s commentator Inger Anne Olsen noted (February 3, 2012) after these two extremists again organized a small demonstration condemned by other Muslims; *larger society's perception of where the Muslim danger lies has been altered*; and the Islamic Council is no longer seen as an enemy but as a stable cooperation partner of the state.

The cartoon affair can be analyzed as a number of discursive struggles between four ideological positions identified in the introduction. Internationally, it appeared to be primarily a clash between 'confrontational liberalism' which claimed that free speech is absolute, and a 'religious fundamentalist' position that condemned the cartoons as blasphemy (Mahmood 2009:66). Analysis of national contexts shows that discursive struggles went on within majorities, where hegemony shifted between the confrontational position and 'dialogic liberalism' which acknowledges ethical and legal limits to free speech. The Norwegian majority was evenly divided between the two; Press secretary Per Edgar Kokkvold and the Progress Party sided with the Danish government's confrontational approach, insisting that free speech included the right to insult. Mainstream newspapers, with the exception of *Dagbladet* in 2010, followed Foreign Minister Støre and the government's contextual understanding of free speech. With the Muslim protest, an antiracist counter-discourse emerged in public debate; protesting Muslims showed a range of opinions on whether the cartoons were primarily blasphemous or racist, or simply showed lack of respect. Thus, a discursive struggle can be identified between a 'communitarian' position which wanted to ban blasphemy, and 'antiracist multiculturalism'. As Basim Ghozlan (2008) comments, the government's position was well-received by many Muslims (ibid, 96), being compatible with a Muslim view that sees the cartoons as hate speech (ibid, 99-100). This shows that Norwegian and Muslim values may be quite similar and that majority and minority may agree that free speech is not absolute and non-negotiable, but contextual and subject to limitations. The discursive struggle between these two dialogic positions corresponds to Werbner's (2012) distinction between a top-down state multiculturalism or diversity management, and a critical antiracist multiculturalism from below, where the latter demands that the former takes into account the antiracist perspective.

While the dialogue approach can be characterized as a form of ambivalent multiculturalism (Engebrigtsen 2010) because it consults with Muslim leaders and later

sought to extend hate speech legislation, it is also open to criticism as a form of diversity management that seeks to contain minority resistance. Such shortcomings became clear when sixty mainstream organizations held a peace demonstration which only gathered 300 people, many of them high-profile politicians and most of them white, but no Muslims. Analyzing the speech given by the Socialist Party leader shows that she spoke from a majority perspective which did not sufficiently take into account minority perspectives, and which played down the extent of anti-Muslim racism. The message that such cartoons can be seen as anti-Muslim racism or hate speech was more explicit in 2010, when it was expressed by a variety of individuals, including non-practicing Muslims. The relative absence of fear and threat, as evidenced when *Dagbladet* editor John Olav Egeland could stand in the middle of the protest and *did not feel threatened* (*Dagbladet* online, February 12), and the absence of an international crisis allowed the 2010 rerun to be framed more as a domestic 'integration debate'. This contributed to more nuanced coverage, where the discursive struggle between 'dialogue' and 'antiracism' played a greater role, allowing majority and minority to accommodate each other in a multicultural learning process, even though media again highlighted a few 'fundamentalist' voices, and 'confrontational' politicians discredited the protesters as extremists.

While public debate has become more diversified and multicultural, policy and legislation are lagging behind despite a government initiative to extend hate speech protection to religious groups. While the law proposal reflected that the protection of religion is not easily distinguishable from the protection of religious believers in practice, Muslim protesters may have called for ethical restraints more than legal prohibitions. This proposal was withdrawn because of massive opposition from the media, politicians and public opinion. As suggested by Modood (2007:57), the ethical dimension including mutual respect and empathy may be more important in the development of a multicultural society than policy and legislation. Public debate plays a central role as a place of a learning process towards mutual understanding, when minorities challenge majority ways and the majority responds by taking minority sentiments into consideration. While the need to take minority perspectives into account remains controversial among the majority population, the cartoon debates have contributed to a more nuanced understanding of Muslim views as compatible with liberal principles while remaining religious.

CHAPTER 3

The 'Coconut Debate'

In this chapter, I analyze a debate started by Iffit Qureshi in *Aftenposten* in 2006 that was called the 'coconut debate' by the newspaper. While this debate did not attract a lot of attention in itself, it addresses and problematizes an important issue; the widespread use of minority persons as 'native informants' to validate an anti-multiculturalist agenda and criticize minority cultures and religions. While the term 'coconut', which Qureshi used to describe these persons, is sometimes used to refer to 'assimilated minority persons' in general, and conflated with stereotypes against 'over-integrated' persons within minority groups (Andersson 2000:249-262), she used it in a specific sense reflecting Fanon's theory of internalized racism and Malcolm X's criticism of the 'Uncle Tom' figure.

When Muslims accused Rushdie of apostasy, Kymlicka (1993b:93) interpreted this as meaning that the British Muslim community sought to limit its own members' freedom to individual dissent. Arguing that this account is misleading, Modood (1993b:97-98) writes that the charge of apostasy as expressed by Ali Mazrui (1989) among others, had "not to do with private beliefs, but of a betrayal of one's community. The charge was more like that of a 'coconut' (brown on the outside but white inside) or 'class traitor' or 'collaborator'." In other words, Muslim protesters were not concerned with "mere belief or apostasy proper" but with how Rushdie's book contributed to Western domination over Muslims. While Kymlicka (1993b:93) defined apostasy as an "intra-community matter – a kind of internal treason or betrayal", sociologist of religion David Bromley (1998c:vii) defines it in a sociological rather than theological sense as a "highly politicized form of exit" that is distinct from mere 'defection'. Not unlike the Islamic understanding of apostasy as a political rather than theological offense (Akhtar 1989), Bromley's sociological concept refers to exit in a situation of conflict between a religious group and larger society, where the exiting individual joins hostile political forces that see the religious group as 'subversive' (Bromley 1998a:23-25).

Liz Fekete (2009:125-129) discusses how 'defectors' from Islam have been used as 'native informants' on Muslim groups construed as 'subversive'. She writes that in remarkably similar ways across European countries, persons of Muslim background who have "integrated into European values" have been officially promoted. Drawing on Gullestad's (2006) analysis of how Norwegian media has privileged minority voices that support assimilationist agendas, Fekete mentions the young women Kadra Noor

(later Kadra Yusuf) and Shabana Rehman, who became media celebrities after cooperating with the organization Human Rights Service (discussed in the introduction), while other, more 'conservative' Muslims have been silenced and ridiculed. Internationally, minority politicians such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali in the Netherlands (discussed below) and Naser Khader in Denmark (who has also been criticized as an 'Uncle Tom' and 'coconut' by young Muslims, see Hervik 2011:155), and Professor Bassam Tibi in Germany, have been celebrated as 'assimilated' Muslims in contrast to the negative reception in the public sphere of 'conservative' Muslims such as Danish politician Asmaa Abdol-Hamid and Swiss professor Tariq Ramadan (discussed below).

In European integration debates, assertive Muslims have often been suspected of being 'closet fundamentalists' and asked to denounce terrorism, violence and sharia law. In 2007, Abdol-Hamid, who wears a hijab, ran for Danish Parliament and faced a hostile media campaign (Andreassen 2011:164-168). Khader described her as someone "who confirms all the prejudices about a Muslim speaking with two tongues" (*Information*, October 12, 2007). Comparing Denmark and France, Boe and Hervik (2008:214-215) found that in public debates in both countries, what they call the 'Civilized Other' emerges as a cultural figure; "a person of Muslim background, who has embraced "Our" values and denounces Islam and "Islamism"". They argue that persons like Hirsi Ali, Rushdie and Khader present themselves, or are represented, as 'Civilized Others' and function as an 'ethnic warranty' in criticizing multiculturalism (ibid, 227);

> their judgments on "the dangers of Islamism" in any manifestation of Islam are often harsher and less nuanced than other international public intellectuals whose background does not protect them as well from criticism, as being identified as having a Muslim heritage does. (Boe & Hervik 2008:227)

In other words, they let white critics of Islam hide behind 'native informants' whose Muslim background protects them against accusations of racism (ibid, 230). Because of Khader's background, Danish journalists and politicians refer to him as if he were a spokesperson for the Muslim minority (ibid, 228).

Hamid Dabashi (2011) uses postcolonial theory to criticize the role of 'native informants' like Rushdie and Hirsi Ali (ibid, 17) in propagating contemporary ideas of a clash of civilizations between Islam and the West. He extends Gayatri Spivak's critique of the role of 'native informant' in anthropological ethnography (ibid, 13) and elaborates on what Said called the 'aye-sayers' among 'intellectuals in exile' (ibid, 22). Further, Dabashi adapts Fanon's theory of colonial mentality and internalized inferiority in the context of colonial color-racism to the contemporary context of anti-Muslim racism at the imperial center (ibid, 21-37). Drawing on these theories, Dabashi analyzes the role of those Kwame Anthony Appiah called 'comprador intellectuals' and Malcolm X called 'house negroes' (ibid, 38-45) in validating contemporary Orientalism and

Islamophobia to a white audience, and contributing to the enemy image of Muslims in order to legitimize American imperialism (Dabashi 2011:17-20). In the following, I pursue the theoretical perspectives most relevant to analyze the politics of racism and multiculturalism, and I focus less on individual psychology. As a background, I discuss the political views of Malcolm X and Hirsi Ali, which Qureshi refers to, and outline a theoretical distinction between a liberal 'colorblind' position towards racism and a 'color-conscious' minority perspective. I also review an earlier Norwegian debate about similar issues, when Gullestad criticized Rehman in 2002. Then I turn to the empirical material from the 'coconut debate', before discussing the question of individual dissent and exit in multicultural theory, and Bromley's theory of 'apostasy' as 'politicized exit',

My analysis focuses on three theoretical issues. The first is the issue of 'internalized racism' which has been a theme in African American postcolonial literature (Fanon 1967; Malcolm X 1989). These theorists draw on Gramsci's concept of a hegemonic ideology, which legitimizes the power structure of society and serves the political interests of the dominant group, and is disseminated through civil society institutions controlled by this group, including the education system and the media. This ideology is internalized by some individuals of the subordinated group, who then rationalize and accept their inferior position rather than assert their collective interests. The theory of 'internalized oppression' may apply to various dominated groups such as workers, women and racialized minorities in Marxist, feminist and postcolonial theory. It represents a political analysis of dominance which often treats 'culture' as a secondary phenomenon.

A second issue, often raised as an objection against the 'coconut' concept is the question of 'internal restrictions' (Kymlicka 1995:35-44) and individuals' 'right to exit' (Phillips 2007:133-157) from their group, in contrast to demands for 'loyalty to culture' (Parekh 2000:154-162). Qureshi and others do not appeal to the state to restrict these persons' right to criticize their group (e.g. hate speech laws); but seek to morally discredit them to limit their influence. Such interventions in public debate can be seen as a form of 'ideological struggle' to delegitimize dominant ideologies; this is also part of 'multicultural negotiations' beyond Kymlicka's and Phillips' focus on rights. Public criticism and protest can be seen as attempts to demand 'protection' against threats to minority interests by ethical rather than legal means. Those who promote so-called 'coconuts' as models for successful 'integration' tend to perceive criticism as a threat to these persons' individual freedom. The question of 'exit' and the relationship between individuals and groups is central in many theoretical discussions of multiculturalism, and I discuss the perspectives of Kymlicka (1995), Modood (2007), Parekh (2000) and Phillips (2007). Kymlicka frames the relationship between individual rights and group rights by his distinction between 'external protections' and 'internal restrictions', where only the former type can be justified as legitimate in liberal terms. Also Phillips prioritizes individual rights, while Parekh seeks to 'balance' individual and group rights,

seeing claims about 'loyalty' to one's cultural community as legitimate. Parekh also explicitly discusses the question of 'coconuts', while Modood is less concerned with possible conflicts between individual and group interests, as his focus lies more on mobilization and debate than on legal rights.

A third question concerns the way anti-multiculturalist organizations use 'native informants' politically to validate their views. Multicultural theories have mostly been concerned with possibilities and conditions for exit, rather than problematizing the politics of exit and what these individuals do politically upon leaving. Here, I draw on Bromley's (1998) analysis of the 'politics of apostasy' as a specific form of exit from religious groups. Studying exit from American 'new religious movements', Bromley has problematized how 'anti-cult groups' rely on 'apostates' to validate their claims against these religious movements. His analysis throws light on key aspects of the role played by 'native informants' in contemporary anti-Muslim discourse.

The 'Black consciousness' of Malcolm X

Malcolm X played a central role in the African American 'Black consciousness' movement which has inspired minority mobilization elsewhere. As the best known and most respected Western Muslim besides Muhammad Ali (the boxing champion), he is a role model for minority activists and his political views have influenced European Muslim assertiveness, especially in Britain (see Modood 2007:158). Being influenced by Fanon, Malcolm X (1989:25-46) speaks about 'coconuts' or more specifically about the African American equivalents 'Uncle Tom' or 'house negro'. Giving a speech to a white audience at Michigan State University in 1963, he pointed out that those African Americans whites usually listen to, don't represent Blacks; "they're not speaking for Black people, they're saying exactly what they know the white man who put them in that position wants to hear them say" (ibid, 26-27). He calls them the 'Uncle Tom' type; who "never opens up his mouth in defense of a Black man" but only "in defense of the white man, in defense of America, in defense of the American government" (ibid, 36). Like the 'house negro' during slavery, who as domestic servant was closer to the white master than those working the fields, "he always identified… [as] his master identified himself" (ibid, 29), "speaks the same phraseology, the same language" and "tries to speak it better than you do" (ibid, 30). The 'Uncle Tom' type is "ashamed of being Black" (ibid, 28) and never identifies as Black. Usually, "he hates Black and loves white. He doesn't want to be Black, he wants to be white" (ibid, 32). Malcolm X holds white racism responsible for this condition; it is "not his fault; he is sick" (ibid). Paraphrasing Fanon, he argues that the 'Uncle Tom' or 'coconut' type has internalized white superiority and black inferiority; he says; "this is the result of 400 years of brainwashing here in America; you have taken a man who is black on the outside and made him white on the inside" (ibid, 31). The education system is partly responsible; 'Uncle Tom' believes what he learned in school, where he was taught nothing about

ancient African civilizations; only that before he came to America, "he was a savage in the jungle" (Malcolm X 1989:37). However, the Uncle Tom type is a small minority among Blacks, they are "usually the handpicked Negro [sic] who benefits from token integration" (ibid, 27); who is "begging to be integrated into American society despite the fact that the attitude and actions of whites are sufficient proof that he is not wanted" (ibid, 32). This situation is perpetuated by whites who "pose as a liberal and pretend that the Negro should be integrated, as long as he integrates into someone else's neighborhood" (ibid, 33). In contrast, there is what Malcolm X calls a "new type" of assertive Blacks; "the type that the white man seldom ever comes in contact with" and who white people think are "Black supremacists or racists or extremists who believe in violence" (ibid, 38). They reject "token integration" (i.e. assimilation) and instead want "separation" (i.e. self-determination). He specifies that what he means by 'separation' is contrary to 'segregation' which is "forced upon inferiors by superiors" (ibid); "separation is when you have your own; you control your economy; you control your own politics; you control your own society" (ibid), as white people do in white communities and the Chinese do in Chinatown.

Malcolm X's speech is still relevant for minority struggles 50 years later, with Muslims now in the role of Blacks. Now as then, minority persons promoted in the white public sphere often do not represent their communities. These individuals identify with whites rather than with their own group, and frequently use the same rhetoric as white nationalists, while assertive minority persons who make demands instead of begging for acceptance, are seen as 'extremists'. While many European Muslims are inspired by Malcolm X's analysis of racism, they do not generally endorse his 'separatism' but insist on negotiating the terms of integration and demand a degree of self-determination in reforming their religious traditions.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali, one of the most prominent voices in contemporary anti-Muslim discourse, came as a refugee from Somalia to the Netherlands, where she became a politician for the right-wing People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) in 2003. In 2006, she resigned from Parliament after media found she had given false information in her asylum application, and risked losing her Dutch citizenship (Phillips 2007:8). Hirsi Ali then moved to the US, where she joined a conservative think tank, the American Enterprise Institute. She is a well-known author of several books; *The Caged Virgin: An Emancipation Proclamation for Women and Islam* (2004), an autobiography called *Infidel* (2006), and *Nomad: From Islam to America. A Personal Journey through the Clash of Civilizations* (2010). She also wrote the script for the short film *Submission*, whose producer Theo van Gogh was murdered in 2004 (see introduction). In Dutch politics and in the above publications, she has been a strong critic of multiculturalism, holding Islam responsible for violence, against women in particular (Phillips 2007:7).

Dutch anthropologist Halleh Ghorashi (2003) writes that as a refugee from Iran, she could initially identify with Hirsi Ali's approach to the emancipation of Muslim women. However, Ghorashi soon found that Hirsi Ali's views were dogmatic and had no room for nuances, and that she had become "a welcome mouthpiece for the dominant discourse on Islam in the Netherlands that pictures Islamic migrants as problems and enemies of the nation" (ibid, 163); an exclusionary discourse operating with a dichotomy between 'their culture' which is blamed for problems among immigrants, and 'our culture' into which immigrants should assimilate. Immigrant women are construed as passive individuals, who need to be saved from their family, community, religion and 'culture'. Ghorashi writes that even as an atheist and former Marxist who "came to the Netherlands from Iran with much hatred towards Islam" (ibid, 169), she still found it "necessary to defend Islam in the face of such a homogenizing and patronizing approach" (ibid, 168). Among Muslims, there is a diversity of views on gender equality, including religious and secular forms of feminism (as discussed in detail in chapter 4); Ghorashi (ibid, 170) points out that many of these are more "conscious of their rights" and more well-versed in feminist theory than some of their 'enlightened' Western counterparts.

Promoting a Norwegian translation of *Nomad*, Hirsi Ali was interviewed in *Aftenposten, Dagbladet* and *Dagsavisen* (November 16, 2010). *Dagsavisen* quotes from her book; *Western civilization is superior*; and *Islam is permeated by violence and encourages violence.* When asked if she thinks we are moving towards a clash of civilizations, Hirsi Ali says; *This is a clash […] I am convinced that it is through confrontation and conflict that real assimilation takes place.* To her, assimilation is a positive concept that means *replacing submission to Allah's will with freedom.* In *Aftenposten*, she continues;

> *The only solution is that Muslims give up their clan and tribal thinking and completely assimilate into European societies […] To achieve this, we have to liberate Muslim women from the power of their husbands, fathers and male family members*, and here, *Western feminists should have a major responsibility.*

Dagbladet quotes from the book that Hirsi Ali has no faith in reforming Islam along the lines of the Christian Church's gradual acceptance of 'Enlightenment ideals'. When asked why she rejects and ridicules internal Muslim reformers and Muslim feminists, she says; *the only thing that can open their* [Muslims'] *eyes is external pressure.* To elaborate, the interviewer again cites her book;

> *In addition to a military battle against Islamism, a massive propaganda campaign must be started to win the "hearts and minds" of Muslims. A key part of this […] is a missionary offensive directed at Muslims. Like missionaries once had "such a strong civilizing force in Africa", the Church, led by the Pope, must now join the war against Islam. Christians worldwide should "map Muslim*

societies" so that they can "convince Muslims that the challenges of life can best be overcome with traditional Christian values" [...] "Teach them hygiene, discipline, work ethics and what you believe in".

When asked to explain her sudden turn to Christianity, Hirsi Ali says; *I don't think the Church should do this alone; they have to do it together with feminists, humanists and atheists.* The political views expressed in these interviews include statements of Western superiority, generalizations about Islam, belief in confrontation, demands for assimilation, calls on 'the West' to 'save' Muslim women, and support for the 'civilizing mission' that are remarkably explicit. Such views have been characterized as 'recycled Orientalism' (Thorbjørnsrud 2005:42) and similar rhetoric used by a white person would certainly be met with charges of racism.

Six months before, when the English edition of *Nomad* appeared, *Aftenposten* debate editor Knut Olav Åmås (May 18, 2010) had recommended Norwegian publishers to 'take a break' from Tariq Ramadan, and instead translate books by Hirsi Ali and Paul Berman. Åmås questions why Hirsi Ali is 'condemned' while Ramadan, a Muslim reformer who argues Islam is compatible with 'Western values' has become a hero among Muslim minorities and some Western intellectuals. Apparently, only internal reformers are trusted to influence the development of the Islamic religion, while atheists are dismissed, as are Rehman and Sara Azmeh Rasmussen in Norway. Regardless of whether they enjoy support in their communities, Åmås seems to prefer Muslim defectors over reformers, and agrees with Berman's characteristic of Ramadan as 'a wolf in sheep's clothes'.

Arun Kundnani (2008) discusses how Hirsi Ali and Ramadan serve as examples of 'good Muslims' and 'bad Muslims' in the rhetoric of confrontational liberals inspired by Bernard Lewis' dichotomy between 'modern, secularized and westernized' Muslims and 'fundamentalists and potential terrorists' (see Mamdani 2004:20-24). This American foreign policy discourse has been translated into European debates on multiculturalism, where the 'war on terror' is reinterpreted as "a cold war against Islamism, defined as a totalitarian political movement analogous to fascism or Stalinism" (Kundnani 2008:40). Contemporary "culture war" is modeled on McCarthy-style anti-communism campaigns, including the use of compliant intellectuals, media campaigns, loyalty pledges, removal from employment, deportation, harassment and surveillance of those who are suspected of supporting an 'evil ideology' (ibid, 41). Those who defend 'Enlightenment values' and enlist 'ex-Muslims' in their struggle against 'Islamists' (ibid, 42), typically operate with an ambiguous distinction between 'Islam' and 'Islamism'. They tend to see Muslim minorities as a "potential fifth column for Islamism" and argue that Europe is infiltrated by secret networks and organizations wanting to 'Islamicize' Europe (ibid, 44). In Norway, this rhetoric has been used by Progress Party leader Siv Jensen. In media coverage, the discourse of Islamist threat

conflates extremism with Muslim minorities in general, who are suspected of being "extremists hidden behind a moderate façade" (Kundnani 2008:44).

Rather than 'a wolf in sheep's clothes', Kundnani (ibid, 51-52) argues that Ramadan shows how ideas derived from Islamism can be adapted and reworked to play a positive role in European society, promoting an active European citizenship. More specifically,

> By going back to the original sources, Ramadan argues, universal Islamic values, after being separated from the particular immigrant cultures they are bound up with, are found to be entirely compatible with the sort of values that British [or European] society is meant to be based on. This provides an Islamic basis for active citizenship and engagement for social justice, rather than a one-sided adaptation to British [or European] norms. (ibid, 58)

Seen this way, Ramadan's project is to detach 'original' Muslim values from particular cultural norms and show that these are compatible with universal values promoted by the West. This line of thinking is attractive to the younger generation who are asserting themselves as 'European Muslims' and distancing themselves from their parents' ethnic cultures. A sort of fundamentalism ('going back to the original sources') can thus become a road to integration, and a strategy to challenge oppressive cultural traditions (discussed in more detail in chapter 4). While those who believe in incompatibility of values see manifestations of politicized Muslim identity as 'subversive', most European Muslims do not want an 'Islamic state' but a democratic, multicultural one.

The Shabana Rehman debate

Norwegian media has also tended to fit Muslims into polarized categories, favoring the 'assimilated' over the 'conservative' (Eide & Nikunen 2011:9-11; Phillips 2008:112-114). During the early years of the new millennium, newspapers focused on practices in Muslim minority communities that oppress women, such as female circumcision, forced marriages and honor killings. A few minority women went public with negative experiences within their communities. Known by their first names, young women like Shabana and Kadra were celebrated in the media as heroines struggling against patriarchal traditions (Gullestad 2006b:50-56).

In 2002, Gullestad (2006b:63-66) publicly criticized Rehman's media role in an op-ed article in *Aftenposten*. In one of her first appearances as a new celebrity in January 2000, Rehman was pictured naked with a Norwegian flag painted on her body while throwing away her Pakistani clothes, an act Gullestad (ibid, 52) analyzed as a dramatization of an ethnic "conversion" from 'Pakistani' to 'Norwegian'. She argues that such persons become media stars in a 'white public space' because they transcend their minority background and become 'honorary Norwegians' by identifying with hegemonic values (ibid, 51). Drawing on Aihwa Ong, Adriana Valdez Young

(2009:179) has defined 'honorary whiteness' as an extension of white privilege to non-whites. She writes;

> 'Honorary whiteness' differs from ethnic or racial whiteness in that it is conditional. […] individuals who gain 'honorary whiteness' must continually defend their status by actively excluding others and repressing parts of themselves – as a result, perpetuating political inequality and psychological instability.

In Gullestad's analysis, Rehman's legitimate project of "individual emancipation against patriarchal and religious oppression" where she "defends her right to choose her own life" (2006b:52), leaves out her minority group's collective interests in struggling against racism (ibid, 53). In Kymlicka's (1995:35-44) terminology, she focuses only on 'internal restrictions' but not on a minority group's need for 'external protections'. She "usually formulates her criticism of oppressive practices in the name of religion in ways that contribute to stigmatizing stereotypes and paternalist attitudes in relation to the Muslim minorities in Norway" (Gullestad 2006b:54). While Kymlicka (1995:43) argues that "laws that are justified in terms of external protection [such as hate-speech laws] can open the door to internal restrictions", Gullestad's analysis of Rehman shows that a focus on internal restrictions can undermine demands for external protection.

Gullestad (2006b:56) concludes that the result of turning "a handful of immigrant women who explicitly distance themselves from their background" into "media stars" is a "diversion of public attention and a crippling of critical awareness" where the media "silence[s] or ridicule[s] voices with other points of view, in particular the voices of conservative Muslims". More specifically;

> [Media] have not appreciated the voices of the women who for a long time have worked for the very same causes within the various minority social circles without allowing their opposition to truly harmful practices to be used as a reinforcement of paternalist and denigrating majority-minority relations. (ibid.)

Commenting on the debate between Rehman and Gullestad, Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2006:78-82) notes that "Rehman's views could easily be appropriated by people who demanded cultural assimilation from immigrants" (ibid, 80). He explains Rehman's popularity with the 'coconut' term;

> The reason, to put it more bluntly than Gullestad did in her very polite article, was that Rehman functioned as a female 'Uncle Tom' or, as they say in Britain, a 'coconut' – black on the outside, white on the inside. (Eriksen 2006:80)

Elsewhere, Eriksen (2004a:189) has defined the term 'coconut' as "people who look black but imitate white people's culture and ways of being" [my translation] and as

paraphrasing Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967)*,* which analyzes the inferiority complex internalized by blacks subjected to ideas of white superiority. Beyond these anthropological interventions, the widespread criticism of 'coconuts' within minority groups is not well understood by the majority. In the 'Shabana debate', most minority persons supported Gullestad's analysis while white Norwegians tended to defend Rehman (Eriksen 2006:81; Gullestad 2006b:67), indicating systematic differences between majority and minority perspectives.

Shortly after this debate, anthropologist Cicilie Fagerlid wrote about how the 'coconut' term is used among British South Asians, in *Klassekampen* (September 3, 2002). She writes that the term is *frequently used by dark-skinned people about other dark-skinned people to refer to and reveal a form of "racial treason"* as an *ethnic equivalent to "class treason"*. As such, it expresses *criticism* of and *contempt* for those who *turn their back on their own* group. Beyond Eriksen's focus on cultural imitation, Fagerlid emphasizes a political sense of the term, 'turning their back on their group'. She adds that *the sense of betrayal lies not in the dark-skinned person's joining an enemy, but that the person seems to regard whites as better to such a high extent that they wish to become like them*. Despite an implicit reference to Fanon's concept of 'internalized inferiority', Fagerlid does not seem to acknowledge that accepting a racist discourse may be seen as equivalent to 'joining an enemy'. She understands the term as expressing a 'cultural essentialist' view which claims that a 'coconut' has *done something that is natural for whites to do, but that is inappropriate for non-whites,* as when *ethnic Muslims do not acknowledge that they are Muslim*. She points out that this call to be proud of one's identity may be abused when *directed at individuals who want to go their own ways in choosing friends, partners, religion, education and jobs*. With implicit reference to Shabana, she writes that *Norwegian Pakistani girls that are criticized for being "too Western" often see the criticism rather as an attempt to oppress them than a well-meant advice to be proud of their own background.* In such cases, she argues, *accusations of "racial treason" may be attempts to abuse power and demand rigid conformity*. Similar to Kymlicka, Fagerlid sees the issue as primarily about 'cultural defection' rather than 'politicized exit'. While these two meanings may sometimes be conflated in empirical criticism of 'coconuts', the specific sense of 'coconut' as describing a *political* betrayal in the antiracist struggle is analytically and theoretically distinct from a generic and somewhat misleading account of 'coconuts' as *culturally* assimilated individuals.

Fagerlid objects to the term on the grounds of a cultural rather than political analysis; she argues that it reflects a *sort of cultural relativism that says Africans should stick to their cultural heritage, or else they lose their identity and dignity,* a view she compares to South African apartheid and finds *very frightening*. Kymlicka (1995:36) notes that such a reference to apartheid as a possible outcome of minority demands to 'preserve their culture' is characteristically used by critics of 'collective rights'. In a follow-up

(*Klassekampen*, October 22, 2002), Fagerlid elaborates; *"coconut" is a racializing term that makes distinctions between skin colors and ascribes essential differences to this distinction.* Further, *the term coconut is based on the existence of objective criteria for "white" and "dark-skinned" behavior,* while Fagerlid *rejects race as an objective category.* While Fagerlid is right to reject cultural essentialism and is aware that not *everyone using the term coconut subscribes to race theories*, she seems to exaggerate elements of essentialism implied when the term is used empirically (Modood 2007:97-98). Anti-essentialist rhetoric has been used politically to deny minority claims for group rights, and Modood (ibid, 89-97) points out that the *political* use of culture or ethnicity (in minority assertiveness and mobilization) does not depend on a belief in cultural essentialism (see introduction).

With regard to debates on multiculturalism, Fagerlid writes that she does not believe in *"preserving cultures"* and wants people to be *free from ethnic categorizations* and *skin color to be irrelevant.* This is a common position among 'dialogical liberals'; a 'colorblind' perspective that supports cultural hybridity but opposes minority assertiveness. From the perspective of critical whiteness studies, Frankenberg (cited in O'Brien 2000:43-44) identifies three discourses on race, which she calls (1) 'essentialism', i.e. the classic 'racist' view that sees racial differences in a prejudiced and discriminatory way, (2) 'color and power evasive', i.e. a colorblind approach that evades or denies racial differences, and (3) 'race cognizant', i.e. a color-conscious approach (such as Malcolm X's perspective) which recognizes racialized power structures. The 'colorblind' perspective, which rejects 'race' as an objective category and argues that skin color should be irrelevant, as Fagerlid does, dominates among white Americans, who reject racial essentialism by claiming that "seeing" skin color is a 'bad' or 'offensive' thing to do. The colorblind approach rests on a narrow definition of racism, which rejects racial/cultural essentialism, but ignores the question of political power; thus making it possible to accuse assertive minorities of "reverse racism". The colorblind ideology sees 'difference' (as opposed to diversity) as a problem and as potentially racist. According to Ashley W. Doane (cited in O'Brien 2000:44), the colorblind ideology perpetuates racism by masking white interests as everyone's interests and discrediting minority experiences of racism. Among African Americans, the color-conscious perspective is widespread. As a key advocate of this perspective, Malcolm X was often framed by white media as a 'reverse racist' who hated white people. While he did agitate against white liberals, who adhere to a colorblind ideology, he recognized white antiracists who broke with this perspective and acknowledged that equal treatment falls short of recognizing difference (O'Brien 2000:42).

The 'Coconut Debate'

The 'coconut debate' started with an op-ed article by Iffit Qureshi, a minority activist and regular contributor to public debate. A woman of Pakistani origin, she grew up in

Scotland and has lived in Norway for over 20 years. She prefers to identify herself as a British or Scottish Pakistani rather than as a Norwegian or Norwegian Muslim. Qureshi's public contributions have been primarily antiracist rather than expressing Muslim identity politics. Her article criticizing 'coconuts' was phrased in a 'postcolonial' language resembling the rhetoric of Malcolm X, and stirred a debate. Hostile responses came from 'Islam critics' and from those she had called 'coconuts', while Norwegian Muslim spokespersons supported her. I focus only on those contributions from regular participants in public debate (there were some others).

Qureshi's article in *Aftenposten* (May 24, 2006) responds to a text by Shakil Rehman (Shabana's brother), whom she criticizes and describes as a 'coconut'. She writes;

> *"Coconuts" or "Uncle Toms" are terms used in Britain and the US for ethnic minorities who have internalized racist attitudes and denigrating views of larger society. And because of lack of insight and negative experiences with for example child-rearing methods of their parents or with media's exaggerated negative coverage, they have developed ethnic self-hatred and seek belonging and acceptance from majority society. Rehman and other minorities that are given space in the media in integration debates use the same generalizations and stigmatizing rhetoric as anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic parties and organizations such as the Progress Party and Human Rights Service.*

Qureshi places the concepts of 'coconut' and 'Uncle Tom' in an American and British context, where they are used by African Americans and British South Asians as addressed by Fagerlid and Malcolm X. She defines the term as having 'internalized racist attitudes', a perspective in line with the 'Black psychology' tradition inspired by Fanon (1967), which argues that non-white minorities in a 'racist' society have internalized hegemonic ideas about their own group's inferiority and thus 'developed ethnic self-hatred'. Some of Qureshi's arguments reflect the position of Malcolm X, who said that the 'Uncle Tom' figure "hates Black and loves white" (1989:32), that they use the same rhetoric as whites and even "tries to speak it better than [whites] do" (ibid, 30) and that they defend white interests rather than minority interests (ibid, 36). Speaking about these persons who 'are given space in the media', she refers to media preference for those who confirm the dominant discourse (see Eide & Nikunen 2011:9-11; Phillips 2008:112-114; Gullestad 2006b:50-56). She also reflects Malcolm X's argument about 'handpicked' individuals who benefit from 'token integration', who say "exactly what they know the white man who put them in that position wants to hear them say" (Malcolm X 1989:26-27).

While Malcolm X had explained 'internalized inferiority' as "the result of 400 years of brainwashing" (ibid, 31) through the education system and other institutions which disseminate ideas of a superiority 'white civilization' and portray non-whites as

backward, Qureshi adapts the Black American perspective to a contemporary situation, where media plays a larger role, and focus is on oppressive practices in Muslim families. 'Internal restrictions' and oppression of women and children in minority communities are central to contemporary discourses about Muslims, and personal experiences with such practices may also provide a 'motive' for individuals to leave their communities and try to assimilate into larger society. Qureshi elaborates;

> *These "coconuts" have long since left their representative* [sic] *minority communities. Some of them have also misused their cultural background and the prejudices of larger society to promote their own position among the majority. They profit from media images of Muslims as scary characters. They believe that if "we" assimilate, discriminatory practices will disappear. They do not see the unjust balance of power that exists, and that prevents minorities from being included in society. Neither do they see that skin color, name and religion will always be a barrier regardless of how good citizens they try to be.*

Here, Qureshi notes that these persons have 'left' their communities, thus raising the question of 'exit' that I take up in more detail later. Arguing that 'some of them' have 'misused their cultural background', she points to an aspect that opens up for accusations of betrayal; i.e. the combination of leaving one's cultural community *and* taking the role of a 'native informant' who uses her inside knowledge of the community for the benefit of hostile outsiders. The combined rejection and use of one's ethnic background is discussed by Gullestad (2006b:51-52) and Boe and Hervik (2008:227-230), in their analysis of Rehman and Khader (see above). While they identify with the majority, their 'ethnic' background enables them to become 'native informants'. This analysis parallel Bromley's (1998:39-43) discussion of how the American 'anti-cult movement' used 'apostates' to validate an enemy image of new religious movements.

Towards the end of her article, Qureshi writes that; *these people do not understand that they are being used as pawns in a bigger political game that is more about stricter immigration policy and less about human rights*. Qureshi constructs these persons as both active and passive; they 'use' their cultural background, but cannot necessarily control the political circumstances where they are often 'used' by hostile forces. While Malcolm X argued that 'Uncle Tom' is "brainwashed" (1989:31) and that it is "not his fault" (ibid, 32), some of those Qureshi calls 'coconuts' are also active players with various motives; to 'profit' and 'promote their own position'. Norwegian Muslims have criticized those persons as attention-seeking and as trying to gain popularity with the majority at the expense of minorities. On the other hand, Qureshi also seems to acknowledge assimilation as an individual strategy to escape discrimination; 'they believe that if "we" assimilate, discriminatory practices will disappear'. However, this strategy fails if 'skin color, name and religion will always be a barrier' regardless of how much an individual tries to assimilate. The point that assimilated individuals may

still be discriminated against has been made by theorists such as Phillips (2007:15), Modood (2005:9) and Parekh (2000:162; 198) in discussions of racism and assimilation.

The degree of political insight and control varies among these individuals. It is greater for Hirsi Ali, who chose to become a right-wing politician, than for the stand-up comedian Shabana, who primarily drew attention to problems in certain Muslim families and was celebrated as a person fighting for individual freedom by the media, and less for Kadra and other young girls, who later felt that Storhaug had taken advantage of their vulnerable position to promote her own political agenda (to be discussed later). Qureshi takes Hirsi Ali as a prototypical example;

> *Ayaan Hirsi Ali is a good example of one of these "coconuts" or "Uncle Toms". She quickly discovered that in order to make a breakthrough in the Netherlands, she had to exploit society's prejudices by lying about her past and use the same Islamophobic rhetoric that was used by the majority. She profited from the suffering of vulnerable Somali women. Rehman, Hirsi Ali and I may have the same views on women's liberation and loathe oppression and violence. But I strongly dislike that they use their own negative experiences to define the situation for all minorities.*

Hirsi Ali's political moves are described as deliberate; she 'exploited' majority prejudice to become popular, and she 'profited' from the suffering of other women in the Somali community she turned her back on. This places Hirsi Ali at one end of a continuum from 'native informants' to 'defectors' who merely change their individual identity and practices without seeking conflict and politicizing their negative experiences in a group. Bromley (1998:19-48) distinguishes between three ideal types of exit; the 'apostate' who joins the enemy, the 'whistleblower' who appeals to external authorities in his struggle against certain internal practices, and the 'defector'. In his analysis, the forms of exit also depend on the group's relationship with mainstream society, the degree of conflict and the group's legitimacy in larger society; i.e. when the group is seen as 'allegiant' and legitimate, defection is more likely; when it is seen as 'contestant' and subject to external regulation, whistleblowing is an option; but only when a group is considered 'subversive' and illegitimate, the politicized form of exit called 'apostasy' may take place.

Responses from 'Islam critics'

The first responses to Qureshi's article came from activists critical of Islam. Hans Rustad, editor of a website called "Document.no" (where the terrorist Anders Behring Breivik was active), is dedicated to the struggle for individual rights against 'leftist' group thinking and cultural relativism. His main targets are multiculturalism, antiracism and Islamism. The second response came from Storhaug, one of Norway's most

influential lobbyists against multiculturalism. She is the leader of the organization *Human Rights Service*, which describes itself primarily as a think tank, but has also acted as a feminist support group for young Muslim girls in conflict with their families.

Rustad (May 27) writes that Qureshi's article *violates some of the most fundamental […] standards of civilized debate*. Putting aside the implied characterization of Qureshi as 'uncivilized', he may have a point when he characterizes her writing on internalized racism as *condescendingly psychologizing*. It is a tendency in psychology (and she draws on the psychiatrist Fanon) that analysts ascribe motives to individuals and offer explanations which are rejected by their objects of study; psychologists call this 'denial'. More interesting for a political analysis is Rustad's argument that Qureshi *labels people based on skin color and group belonging* – something that would qualify as *"racism"* if *the claim had been made the other way around*. This can be interpreted as an argument that using the 'coconut' term represents 'reverse racism' especially in the light of Rustad's following elaboration;

> *Qureshi uses the term "coconut" about Shakil Rehman: brown on the outside and white on the inside. Rehman is judged based on his skin color. If his opinions differ from Qureshi's, he has betrayed his skin color! This is the mark of racism. People are defined by their skin color.*

Rustad refers to a definition of 'coconut' as 'brown on the outside and white on the inside' (see Modood 1993b:98; Eriksen 2006:80; Malcolm X 1989:3). This definition was not given by Qureshi herself (who instead focused on 'internalized racist attitudes'; see above), indicating that Rustad is familiar with the term. However, he takes the definition quite literally; as 'defining people by their skin color' which qualifies as 'racism' in his view. Such an understanding of racism reflects a 'colorblind' perspective (Frankenberg 1993; cited in O'Brien 2000:43-44) common among white majorities. This view holds that skin color should be irrelevant and sees the use of racial categories as 'offensive' (Rustad's view). Accusations of 'reverse racism' can be made because this perspective leaves out the structural dimension of dominance, and mistakes 'color-conscious' minority perspectives as implying 'racial essentialism' (as discussed earlier).

Rustad also notes the accusation of 'betrayal'. In a follow-up article (July 27), Qureshi specifies that the focus of her first article was primarily on *internalized racist attitudes* and *lacking insight into the balance of power*, and she hoped to *move beyond the "coconut" concept*, to focus on 'attitudes' and 'lack of knowledge' rather than on whether these individuals 'betray their own group' or are 'brown on the outside and white on the inside'. Although she did not use the two latter phrases, which her opponents tended to emphasize, a sense of betrayal and focus on skin color can reasonably be inferred from her content and ideological references. It seems that Qureshi wanted to move beyond ideas of 'racial betrayal' and instead problematize that

these persons support a dominant discourse hostile to minority interests. The same terms are interpreted differently depending on the ideological frames; from a liberal colorblind perspective, reference to skin color is seen as an indicator of cultural/racial essentialism, whereas in radical antiracism, 'race' is seen as socially constructed, but the concept is used to critically analyze racialized social structures.

Rustad also objects to Qureshi's expression 'misused their cultural background', which leads him to ask if there are *rules for how to use one's cultural background*, and if there are *ways that are forbidden?* Rustad's own answer is that *this is group-based self-jurisdiction, contrary to all individual liberation and autonomy.* Here, he translates a debate on the ethics of using inside information for the benefit of hostile outsiders, into a legal discourse of individual versus collective rights. His position is clear; he sees any reference to collective interests as placing the group over the individual. According to Kymlicka (1995:35; 44-47), rhetoric about individual versus collective rights represents a false dichotomy which is irrelevant if the 'source of threat' is external to the group. Instead of granting priority to one kind of rights, he distinguishes between 'internal restrictions' and 'external protections'. Only if a group seeks protection against insiders, there may be a conflict between individual and collective rights. The distinction between inside and outside sources is central to the 'coconut' problematic. Following Kymlicka, it is legitimate for a minority group to defend itself against 'threats' posed by external forces ('external protection'). If a 'coconut' or 'apostate' is defined as a person who has left their group to become part of a hostile external force, then the threat is external. However, with regard to Rushdie, Kymlicka (1993b:93) defined apostasy as an internal betrayal. The argument that demands for protection against these individuals constitutes illegitimate internal restrictions (Rustad's view) can be made because these individuals are still identified along ethnic lines despite the colorblind rhetoric and their efforts to assimilate. It is their ambiguous status as 'ex-members' which protects them against accusations of racism in the dominant discourse, allowing them to use stronger rhetoric than members of the majority could legitimately do. In contrast to Rustad's anti-essentialist rhetoric, where group thinking as such is construed as racist, Parekh (2000:154-162) defends a notion of 'loyalty to culture' that goes beyond Kymlicka's (1995:36) concept of group solidarity, which he sees as a possible basis for individual oppression. I return to a more detailed discussion of the group and individual in multicultural theory after analyzing the remaining debate contributions.

Storhaug's response (June 2) begins with stating her opposition to multiculturalism. On behalf of the *Human Rights Service*, she writes; *We work politically for a well-functioning multiethnic and multi-religious society. We don't want a multicultural society.* Note that she not only opposes multiculturalism as a policy, but also rejects a multicultural society. Her acceptance of a 'multiethnic' and 'multi-religious' society can be interpreted as tolerating ethnic backgrounds and religion in the private sphere. In the following elaboration, Storhaug makes clear that her ideal nation resembles the 'French

model' which does not recognize minority identities and seeks to assimilate minorities into a culturally unified nation. She writes;

> *A precondition for creating and maintaining a peaceful nation-state like Norway is a strong national community;* […] *A community with high degree of trust and unity among citizens. A social cohesion built on a "we", where "we" is based on shared language, fundamental values and central cultural characteristics. Where the population supports secular Norwegian democracy built on gender equality, equal dignity, religious freedom, free speech and pluralism.*

When Storhaug argues that a 'peaceful nation-state' requires a 'strong national community', she implies that a multicultural society necessarily leads to conflict. She argues that citizens need to share a common language and 'fundamental values' like secularism, gender equality and free speech. This is emphasized also in official Norwegian integration policy (see introduction), but a difference lies in interpreting these values, and Storhaug has made it clear elsewhere that she thinks Islam is incompatible with these values. However, she goes beyond official policy in demanding 'shared cultural characteristics' indicating that assimilation is her ideal. So far, she has expressed relatively moderate views (with the exception of rejecting 'multicultural society'). Her support for a 'civic' nation of the French type is clarified in the following (note the paternalist language when speaking about her 'little friend' from the 'jungle');

> *To be a Norwegian citizen has nothing to do with ethnicity. One may thus be born in the jungle in Gambia, like my little friend* [name deleted] *and have a strong sense of belonging to Norway, and be a citizen as good as the members of the royal family.*

Storhaug goes on to promote Hirsi Ali as a role model for 'good immigrant citizens';

> *The greatest European of our times, Somali-born Ayaan Hirsi Ali, is the clearest example that ethnicity and birth country is not a precondition for living as a full-fledged citizen in Europe. I claim that not a single person in contemporary Europe has made a stronger contribution to manifest that equal dignity and human rights shall apply to every citizen here.* […] *I am personally humbled and grateful for Hirsi Ali's contribution to the European struggle for freedom – the new battle against totalitarian religious forces that want to deny freedom and human dignity to women in particular. As a European I am proud to be able to identify with a real European like Hirsi Ali.*

Here, the language is no longer moderate; Storhaug describes Hirsi Ali as 'the greatest European of our times' – a 'freedom fighter' against 'totalitarian religious forces'. When stating her ideological position, she used general terms that most people can agree with ('democracy', 'gender equality', 'free speech'), but that are open to diverse

interpretations. By praising Hirsi Ali in such exaggerated language, Storhaug lends her support to Hirsi Ali's explicitly anti-Muslim rhetoric analyzed earlier. It may thus be argued that Storhaug 'hides' behind a 'native informant' who validates her views. Elsewhere she has used much more explicit rhetoric (see chapter 4). There is little doubt that Storhaug and Hirsi Ali are allies in a 'confrontational liberalist' offensive against Islam (see also Fekete 2006:13-16; 19). Storhaug finds it *disturbing* that Qureshi defines Hirsi Ali as a *traitor,* who *should not be listened to*. Storhaug writes that she *feels a fearful numbness and shame* when Qureshi *claims the right to exclude voices from the most important debate of our times; the debate about what we want for the future of Norway and Europe.* She agrees with Rustad that calling Rehman a 'coconut' implies that he has *betrayed his ethnic Pakistani origin by joining the* [national] *community.* In line with her ideas of a culturally unified nation, she interpret the 'coconut' term as presenting minority persons with a choice between remaining in their communities, or join the national community and be seen as traitors. While both Rustad and Storhaug claim to reject group thinking and argue that it constitutes racism when *citizens are classified according to ethnic and religious roots,* their view on nationality and ethnicity is better described as conflicting loyalties rather than as individualism. It seems that their individualism and rejection of group thinking is restricted to criticism of ethnic minorities, while supporting nationalist communitarianism at the state level.

As discussed in the introduction, racism requires the elements of differentiation, inferiorization and power (see Hervik 2004:151-153), and assimilation represents part of the problem rather than a solution to it (Modood 2005:14-17). Even classical anti-Black racism allowed for "selective assimilation, the degree and kind determined by whites" (ibid). Modood points out that several contradictory views on assimilation can be compatible with racism; (1) that a group is unassimilable because of its religion; (2) that forced assimilation is necessary; and even (3) a policy of voluntary assimilation which puts (subtle) pressure on a racialized group to "voluntarily" assimilate to a majority culture believed to be superior. Storhaug writes from an ideological position that sees Islam as incompatible with 'Western values', demands assimilation and holds a belief in Western cultural superiority. This form of 'new racism' (Hervik 2004:151-153) typically denies that this is a form of racism. Using a liberal rhetoric that only recognizes individual rights, this definition of racism is detached from structural analysis of power relations between majority and minority, and racism is narrowly defined as categorizing individuals into groups based on skin color, ethnicity or religion. Thus, multiculturalism can be rejected as 'racist' and minority demands dismissed as illegitimate attempts to deny individual rights of minority women.

Responses from 'native informants'

The next two responses came from those who had been called 'coconuts'. Shakil Rehman (June 3), who was mentioned in Qureshi's article, followed by Walid al-

Kubaisi (June 8), a state-funded writer of Iraqi origin. For many years, al-Kubaisi has been an active participant in public debate, as a secularist and an opponent of the antiracist movement. Rehman writes that Qureshi tries to discredit him by calling him racist, and writes that she should apologize for having insulted the Norwegian majority by calling them racist. Rehman's main point is that instead of "pulling the racism card" when Muslims are criticized, self-styled minority spokespersons should *listen to constructive criticism of tradition and religion*. Qureshi on the contrary, seems to *see the majority as an enemy when religion or tradition is criticized*. Rehman rejects that he has developed 'ethnic self-hatred' and presents himself as *someone who wants respect and clean up our traditions that cause us public ridicule, give us a bad reputation and create xenophobia.* Here, he does not distinguish between legitimate criticism of religion and culture on one hand, and anti-Muslim racism on the other. Further, he holds Muslim minorities responsible for racism against them, thus 'blaming the victim'. These are examples of using 'the same rhetoric as the Progress Party'. He criticizes Qureshi for pointing out that discrimination does not disappear when minorities assimilate, and calls this a *pessimistic, demoralizing statement that prevents integration,* and which encourages immigrant youth to stick together and avoid whites. Rehman thus places responsibility for integration exclusively on the minority, and identifies the obstacles to integration not in majority racism, but only in minority self-segregation. This rhetorical move combines 'denial of racism' and 'blaming the victim'. In short, Rehman thinks that minorities should assimilate and pretend that racism does not exist, rather than defending their religious and cultural identities. In an attempt to support this argument, he draws a comparison with the Christian Reformation;

> *When individual Christians started criticizing hierarchy, power and Christianity because of superstition and exploitation of people in the name of religion 400 years ago, they were also harassed and many were burned alive. Were they racists, did they have "ethnic self-hatred" and* [were they] *"coconuts"* […] *?*

While the secularization process in the Christian religion in earlier centuries has sometimes been construed as a parallel to contemporary attempts to reform Islam, a key weakness of this comparison becomes obvious when Rehman suggests that medieval Christian 'heretics' may have been construed as 'racist'. Here, he disregards a fundamental aspect of racism as a relation of dominance between racialized (or ethno-religious) groups. The reformation of Christianity was a process internal to European history, while contemporary attempts to reform Islam, although also driven by internal forces, cannot be seen apart from external pressure from the West. Internal Muslim reformers must thus avoid being seen as agents of the dominant West, if they want to have legitimacy in Muslim communities.

Al-Kubaisi claims that Qureshi *transfers these derogatory terms* ['coconut' or 'Uncle Tom'] *from religious communities to the public sphere.* In his view, these persons are

the brightest spot in the immigrant community, namely persons that have integrated, developed their individualist reflection on immigration and with courage and strength have managed to hold a nuanced view of both the immigrant community and larger society.

His claim that the accounts of 'native informants' are nuanced is betrayed by his own article, where he presents many of the same arguments as Rehman, often more explicit; that *Muslims themselves are to blame when the fear of Islam is confirmed as legitimate, and no longer is an illusory Islamophobia*, and that minority communities need to be criticized; *revealing negative aspects of immigrant communities is courageous loyalty to immigrants first, and then to the majority*. In contrast to Rehman, al-Kubaisi's rhetoric is structured around a dichotomy between the cultures of immigrants' home countries, characterized by *cruel traditions like forced marriages, female genital mutilation, gang crime, religious fanaticism and Islamist proselytizing;* and Norway, *a civilized and democratic society,* with a tradition of self-criticism, *tolerance and respect for people of a different opinion.* Instead of learning from this good Norwegian tradition, Qureshi is accused of exercising a *medieval* tradition of intolerance *automatically transferred from our home countries.* In al-Kubaisi's view, the prime distinction between 'Norwegian' and 'immigrant' culture is a dichotomy between *individual freedom* and the *religious community;* his criterion for successful "integration" is whether minority persons have 'developed individualist reflection' and do not defend their 'religious community' against criticism. Al-Kubaisi sees such individuals as an exception to a general picture of *failed integration*, characterized by *the immigrant community's 40 year-long stagnation*. While Shakil Rehman, like his sister Shabana, is primarily concerned with 'constructive criticism' and reform of minority practices (though he demonstrates a weak analysis of racism), al-Kubaisi's rhetoric is closer to Hirsi Ali's confrontational position. Al-Kubasi is an ideological secularist, and his 'clash of civilizations' rhetoric reflects anti-Muslim discourse.

Responses from Norwegian Muslims

Omar Tanweer and Shoaib Sultan, later secretary-general of the Islamic Council Norway (2007-2010), summarize the debate in a commentary (June 26) formulated in a more modest language than Qureshi and her critics;

Shabana Rehman and other Islam critics of Muslim origin are praised in Norway. They have little support from ethnic communities, but it may seem that the larger society needs them to confirm their own prejudices.

They write that the integration debate has become more polarized and "more brutal" in the last decade, at the same time as new voices have emerged; some are praised, others are attacked. In line with research discussed earlier (Eide & Nikunen 2011:9-11;

Phillips 2008:112-114; Gullestad 2006b:50-56), they note that *larger society indeed wants more immigrant voices, but prefers that these think, speak and act like them, and support their own worldview.* They continue;

> *One voice who obviously does not do this, and who has annoyed a number of people, is Iffit Qureshi. Her contribution to Aftenposten on May 24 triggered a landslide of criticism. Her fresh writing style and brutally honest descriptions have obviously been heavy to digest for many. Predictably, most of those who have criticized Qureshi belong to the camp that usually supplies the media with Islamophobic contributions.*

Sultan and Tanweer support Qureshi's observations if not necessarily her writing style, which they describe as 'brutally honest'; *Even for many people of other ethnic origin than Norwegian, Qureshi's article is hard to digest. But they nevertheless feel that she says what they don't dare to say themselves.* In the remainder of their piece, Sultan and Tanweer discuss whether Qureshi's claims, which are supported by many minority persons, are correct. They take the case of Shabana Rehman as an example; the Norwegian public praised her as a representative of "oppressed Muslim women": *That most "oppressed Muslim women" did not want Rehman as spokeswoman, did not matter much. They don't know their own good…* The Muslim writers further point out;

> *It is not Rehman's opinions as such that are the problem; she may think whatever she likes. It is rather that larger society embraces these opinions, which is difficult. What the Rehman siblings say is not interesting to most Muslims in this country. What matters is that they do not represent us. It may seem that these are "perfect immigrants", people who think and act Western, but who are a little brown on the outside. Thus, they also become a perfect alibi for anti-immigrant parties and their integration program. This is clearly the type of integration Hege Storhaug of the Human Rights Service talk about…*

Here, the two Muslim spokespersons argue that the main problem with 'native informants' is not that they have 'internalized racism' as Qureshi focused on, but how they are used to validate anti-immigrant politicians and activists, as when Storhaug calls Hirsi Ali a 'real European'; *a badge of honor you apparently get only for attacking Islam and Muslims in the hardest possible way,* as Sultan and Tanweer observe.

They criticize the logic of al-Kubaisi's article, which constructs a dichotomy between Western individualism and Muslim religious collectivism. For al-Kubaisi, they write;

> *Individualism apparently means to take over a number of objections against a given group. […] Individualism is reduced to apply to one specific viewpoint. If you criticize Islam, you are an individualist, an integrated, well-functioning and*

bright example. Those who defend Islam and Muslims are automatically perceived as brainwashed…

They point out an important contradiction in the rhetoric about individualism; criticism of religion is conflated with critical individualism and 'free thinking', even though secularism is now hegemonic and taken-for-granted in many European countries rather than a conscious choice between alternatives. Defense of religion, on the other hand, is conflated with being "brainwashed". Sultan and Tanweer here agree with Jeff Spinner-Halev's (cited in Modood 2005:179-180) analysis, where members of marginalized conservative religious minorities "cannot be characterized as lacking autonomy or "knowing no better" in a society with constant temptations of a dominant liberal lifestyle. Rather, commitment to religion is a "constant choice" in the midst of a powerful secular-liberal mainstream that leaves no one unaware of its existence as an alternative. Back to the 'coconut debate', the two writers conclude;

> *You may think what you want about Qureshi's terminology, and it may have been too strong. But the debate she raises is of decisive significance. Qureshi deals with one aspect of the issue, that is how individuals acquire opinions that give them credibility and popularity in larger society. Another and perhaps more important problem is the larger picture, that is, that larger society creates a need for such persons. Either you call them coconuts or well-integrated individuals, it is very clear that parts of society have a preference for them. These Norwegians use the viewpoints of assimilated persons to confirm their own prejudices.*

This paragraph suggests that Sultan and Tanweer's approach differs from Qureshi's. Where Qureshi focuses on criticizing minority persons who have taken over racist rhetoric; Sultan and Tanweer emphasize majority society's preference for minority persons who confirm their prejudice. While Qureshi focuses on individual agency, and holds minority persons who seek majority acceptance at the expense of their group, responsible, Sultan and Tanweer's focus is structural; the main problem is the majority's assimilation pressure on minorities. As Parekh (2000:204) writes in this regard; "Subjected to the relentless assimilationist pressure of the dominant culture", members of minority cultures, "especially youth, internalize their inferior status and opt for uncritical assimilation".

In an interview in the left-wing weekly magazine *Ny Tid* (November 17, 2006), Qureshi is interviewed about the 'coconut debate'. Here, she says; *obviously I hit a sore spot. A friend of mine thinks I should never have used the word coconut. I should have called them ass-kissers*. She continues; *I get almost exclusively positive feedback from the immigrant community. Several people have told me that I write what they themselves feel, but have never dared to say in public*. Members of the majority, on the other hand,

have claimed that she denies free speech to her opponents, and that she is brainwashed by her own community. She tells the following example;

> *I have been stopped on the street and scolded: "How do you dare say this to Hege Storhaug?" a man told me after I had written in the newspaper. I answered back that he had bad manners. "Are you trying to prevent me from using my freedom of expression?" he said…*

Qureshi emphasizes that she supports free speech. Neither is she a conservative Muslim. Unlike some other Norwegian Muslims, she rarely refers to religion, though she joined the 'hijab brigade' to defend Muslim women's right to wear the hijab (see chapter 4).

Theoretical discussion: groups and individuals in multicultural theory

Possible conflicts between the interests of groups and individuals have been a central issue in theories of multiculturalism. According to Kymlicka (1995:47), this dichotomy is only relevant in cases of 'internal restrictions' while in cases of 'external protections', i.e. when a minority group seeks protection against racism and majority pressure to assimilate, there is no conflict between the interests and 'rights' of the individual and group. 'Native informants' criticize the oppression of individual rights within minority groups, and have often had negative personal experiences with practices such as forced marriages and female circumcision, which Kymlicka (1995:40-41) discusses as examples of traditional cultural practices a minority group may want to impose on its members. Defenders of group interests are often accused of wanting to deny these individuals the right to criticize and revise traditional practices, i.e. impose restrictions on internal dissent. In her article, Qureshi wrote that she supports 'women's liberation' and the battle against 'oppression and violence', but emphasized that this is an internal struggle. Many minority women work against these practices within their communities, in contrast to the 'generalizing and stigmatizing rhetoric' of 'coconuts' who use 'their own negative experiences to define the situation for all minorities'. 'Native informants' are not criticized for their 'internal dissent', defined by Kymlicka (1995:35) as for example, "the decision of individual members not to follow traditional practices or customs", but for joining external forces hostile to community interests. As such, they can be understood as part of larger society, whose racism and assimilation pressure minority groups may legitimately ask protection against. Qureshi criticizes 'coconuts' for *leaving* the group rather than working for change internally; reflecting Albert Hirschman's distinction between 'exit' (flight) or 'voice' (fight) strategies. Many feminists argue, as does Hirschman himself, that 'voice' is a better strategy than individual exit if the goal is to generate internal change (Phillips 2007:139-140).

Kymlicka (1995:36) notes that critics of group rights typically focus on "theocratic and patriarchal cultures" which may seek to impose restrictions on the individual freedom to

choose one's religion and to break with traditional gender roles. He acknowledges that group rights justified in terms of external protections may also be used to impose internal restrictions, depending on the circumstances (Kymlicka 1995:37). Kymlicka discusses this possibility with regard to indigenous people, immigrant groups and religious minorities. It has been claimed that Native American groups may want to control internal dissent and oppress individuals "in the name of group solidarity or cultural purity" (ibid, 39), but many members of these groups "insist that this fear of sexual oppression reflects misinformed or prejudiced stereotypes about their cultures". They argue for self-determination not because they want to restrict individual freedom, but because they worry that white authorities will "impose their own culturally specific form of democracy, without considering whether traditional […] practices are an equally valid interpretation of democratic principles" (ibid).

Kymlicka (ibid, 41) argues that while the threat to individual rights from internal restrictions is real enough, existing multicultural policies consistently endorse some external protections but reject internal restrictions. Furthermore, he argues that very few immigrant organizations have sought policies that impose internal restrictions; and that those groups who do demand internal restrictions are typically *religious* communities. Kymlicka argues that such demands are rare (ibid, 42), and his examples are primarily Christian sects like the Amish (which he categorizes as 'isolationist religious groups'), and which may also want to restrict their members' ability to 'exit', but he also refers to British Muslim leaders seeking legal recognition of sharia law in family affairs. Most interesting for our discussion, Kymlicka (ibid, 43) mentions British Muslim demands to extend hate speech laws to protect religious groups in the Rushdie affair, and argues that such laws "can also be used to restrict the spread of blasphemy or apostasy within a religious community". Citing the Rushdie Affair as an example, Kymlicka argues that; "there is reason to think that some Muslim leaders seek such laws primarily to control apostasy within the Muslim community, rather than to control the expression of non-Muslims". Here, it seems Kymlicka identifies Rushdie as simultaneously an *apostate* (who left Islam) and still a *Muslim*. This apparent contradiction can be explained if we note that Rushdie still identifies as a Muslim, while Muslims see him as an apostate. Constructed this way, Rushdie did not leave the Muslim community as much as he was excluded because of how he wrote about Islam. This view is in line with Phillips (2007:137), who argues that a more common problem than groups denying individuals the 'right to exit' is that "people, who continue to identify with their group, but break some of its cultural prescriptions, may find themselves excluded against their wishes".

Concept of community in the Muslim tradition

Beliefs and practices are increasingly individualized among young European Muslims, who transform their *inherited* Muslim identity into a personal choice (Jacobsen 2011:373). At the same time, Muslim identity also remains a communal identity; either

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it is thought of as belonging to a worldwide Muslim community, the *umma* (Jacobsen 2011:107-109), or to traditional ethnic and cultural communities of the parental generation (ibid, 371). Modood (2005:16) points out that in the South Asian context, persons who define themselves as atheists are still categorized as Muslims; and "giving up one's religion is likely to be seen as a form of selling out". Renouncing one's Muslim *identity* is then less about individual religious belief, and more like light-skinned African Americans 'passing for white' rather than asserting their Black identity; similar to the 'Uncle Tom' figure.

Mazrui (1989:80-81) argues that according to many Muslims, Rushdie was guilty of "cultural treason"; Rushdie had not merely rejected or disagreed with Islam, but abused the religion and in return for this, was praised, rewarded and financed by hostile critics and enemies of Islam. Mazrui attempts to explain the concept of 'apostasy' as almost synonymous with 'treason to the religious community' (the *umma*), and makes a parallel to the concept of 'treason to the state', which can be generally defined as collaboration with the enemy, usually in times of war or a war-like situation. In order to make the Islamic tradition of capital punishment for this kind of treason understandable to Westerners, he cites an example from the McCarthy era in the US, when two American communists were executed for treason. Whether they were actually Soviet spies or merely American dissenters, is not clear.

Akhtar (1989:71-79), in his discussion of the Rushdie affair, gives a more detailed elaboration on the concept of 'apostasy' in the Islamic tradition. Given that the early Islamic state in Medina at the time of Prophet Mohammed was in a state of war with external political forces, the Qur'an contains detailed discussions of punishments for 'traitors' against the Islamic state and other collaborators with the enemy. In Akhtar's understanding, the holy book does not prescribe a penalty for apostasy *alone*; however, it prescribes the death penalty if *aggravated by treason* in a military context, breach of treaty with a Muslim party, ideological or physical enmity to Muslims, or attempts to bring Islam into disrepute. Although there are Islamic jurists, including contemporary Islamists, who have demanded the death penalty for "privately committed apostasy", Akhtar argues that "only those suspected of spying are likely to face execution for broadly political (as opposed to religious) considerations of security" (ibid, 73). There is no consensus among learned authorities on a 'correct' attitude towards apostasy; many reject the view that apostasy is a capital offence, while some Islamists see conversion as a one-way street, allowing "no way out" of Islam. The latter tend to define "Muslim" as including any self-identified Muslim individuals regardless of whether they practice the religion, as many Muslims fail to fulfill religious obligations. Akhtar (ibid, 76) points out that suspected apostates are often forgiven, and sums up that this means in general;

> Muslims who privately commit apostasy are not harassed by the Islamic establishment. However, those who publicly insult the Prophet or launch abusive

attacks on the contents of the Koran and the […] Islamic tradition are almost always taken to task for it.

Further, he notes that "enlightened Muslim opinion" now recognizes that many individuals are Muslims by chance rather than by choice, and that the fear of apostasy must be balanced with due regard for freedom of belief; "if there is a God, it can be safely assumed that he wants a voluntary response born of genuine conviction" and would prefer 'apostasy' to "hypocritical attachment to orthodox opinion out of the fear of public sanctions" (Akhtar 1989:76).

In Rushdie's case, Islamic jurists have interpreted his attack on Islam as an act of treason because his "privately committed apostasy" was "aggravated by a public declaration of ideological enmity" (ibid, 77); many Muslims have known that Rushdie was an apostate and atheist for many years, but few criticized him or threatened his life until the publication of the *Satanic Verses* (ibid, 78). Numerous other individuals of Muslim background have repudiated Islam, and been tolerated by Muslims. In Akhtar's view, people like Rushdie are entitled to reject or reinterpret Islam as a "personal" option, as well as to publicly criticize Muslim individuals, such as fundamentalists, but when publicly attacking an entire religion and reviling things held sacred, they should be aware of the risk that Muslims will react.

The Islamic concept of apostasy can thus be understood in a restricted sense as "cultural treason" or in a broader sense including private defection from the faith. In either sense, it is understood less as a matter of individual freedom of belief, and more in terms of leaving the Muslim community; some strands of Muslim thinking are reluctant to allow this individual 'right to exit'. Returning to our discussion of multicultural theories, here the 'right to exit' is "one of the few uncontested rights" (Phillips 2007:136) and usually suggested as one possible solution when individual and group interests are in conflict. The point of theoretical disagreement is not whether individuals should have the right to leave their cultural community, but whether the 'right to exit' offers enough protection against "cultural pressures" (ibid, 137) or 'internal restrictions'.

The 'right to exit'

From a feminist perspective, Phillips (ibid, 138-139) is skeptical of relying on 'exit' as a solution to internal oppression, and identifies two main difficulties; (1) that the 'right to exit' may be unrealistic in practice because the individual costs of exit are high, and (2) that favoring the 'exit' solution discourages change, as internal dissenters leave rather than fight for reforms. Both of these objections are relevant to empirical example from British (and Norwegian) government initiatives to fight forced marriages, which have tended to focus on 'exit'; helping individuals to escape from their family and community. Phillips (ibid, 149) argues that the 'exit' approach offers these individuals

with a choice between 'two evils'; when rejecting an unwanted marriage partner comes at the cost of losing one's family, cultural identity and religious community, the costs are too high, and many "rescued" individuals have drifted back to their families because of loneliness. The second objection is that the 'exit' approach encourages Okin's view that some minority women would be better off if they assimilate and their 'culture' becomes extinct. This individualist approach offers no solution to most young minority individuals, who wish to stay members of their cultural or religious groups, while wanting to change certain oppressive practices (Phillips 2007:157). Phillips thus discusses the problems of the 'exit' approach as a solution for *individuals* seeking to escape internal oppression, but does not address 'external protections' against racism. This individualist focus allows her, among other things, to discuss Storhaug and the Human Rights Service as an organization helping minority women against forced marriages (ibid, 175) without problematizing its racist views (Razack 2008).

Like Modood, Phillips seeks to defend an anti-essentialist version of multiculturalism without reducing it to a cosmopolitan celebration of hybridity (Phillips 2007:68-70), but her "multiculturalism without culture" differs from Modood in being restricted to recognizing individual rights, not group rights (ibid, 162-165). Phillips (ibid, 161-164) is critical of versions of multiculturalism understood as negotiations with cultural communities because this 'dialogue' approach relies on consulting with and accommodating interests of male community leaders, who falsely represent themselves as spokespersons of their group. Modood's (2007) version of multiculturalism is not based on an essentialist concept of culture (ibid, 93-97), but nevertheless defined as recognizing group interests, where groups are based on 'politicized ethnic and religious identities' rather than 'culture' (ibid, 43). He argues that there is nothing fictitious about the "unity" resulting from a minority group's mobilization on the basis of shared interests (ibid, 111-114); and that recognizing Muslims as a group does not necessarily mean promoting religious leaders as spokespersons of the community (ibid, 133-136). Modood's perspective thus focuses primarily on minority groups' political mobilization against racism, and while recognizing a diversity of viewpoints within each group (2007:133-136), he has less to say about the relationship between individual and group interests.

Parekh (2000) is skeptical of politicized ethnic and religious identities (ibid, 199), but defends the collective interests of cultural communities against those who give primacy to individual rights (ibid, 213-216). Contrary to theorists like Modood and Phillips who reject the concept of 'culture', Parekh defends a more nuanced understanding of the term. He distinguishes between two related dimensions of a "cultural community"; i.e. "culture" and "community" (ibid, 154). To illustrate that these two aspects are distinct, he mentions minority individuals who "cherish their culture, but leave their community" because they find it oppressive; or who "reject their culture, but remain deeply attached to their community" in cases where the community tolerates dissent. In the latter case,

traditional cultural practices of a community may change while it retains its ethnic identity (Parekh 2000:155). Growing up in a cultural community means being deeply influenced by its cultural content, which shapes individual identity; and develops a sense of belonging and communal solidarity with a group of people (ibid, 156). Parekh acknowledges that "every culture includes several, sometimes conflicting, strands of thought and is subject to contestation and conflicting interpretations" and thus rejects an essentialist view of homogenous and unchanging cultures that determine thought and practice of its passive members (ibid, 157).

'Loyalty to culture'

Parekh discusses Rushdie's "lack of loyalty" (Said's view) or "cultural treason" (Mazrui's view) in the context of the African American terms 'coconut' and 'Uncle Tom' which criticize those who "fail to stand up for their community, turn their backs on it, or go over 'to the other side' and feed the cultural and racist prejudices of the white majority" (ibid, 159). He uses this as a starting point for discussing individual obligations to their community (ibid, 158-162). He acknowledges that the idea might appear strange, but explains that 'loyalty to culture' is no different from being "true to the central values and ideals" of science or art, religion or the liberal tradition. Unless we think that our culture is worthless, oppressive and has distorted our intellectual and moral development, we feel a sense of loyalty which generates a duty to preserve and pass on to the next generation the aspects we find valuable, defend it against "perverse misrepresentations" and "protect it against wanton attempts to destroy or discard it" (ibid, 160). Loyalty to culture also involves the duty to develop it further, including criticizing and removing its defects and injustices.

Loyalty to community is similar to loyalty to family, and includes being grateful for a network of support and solidarity. The obligation of loyalty is stronger if the community faces an external threat; Parekh argues (ibid, 161). This aspect of loyalty generates duties owed to other community members rather than to ideals, and these duties may persist even if one rejects the culture. Parekh argues that members of a cultural community have a duty to resist the temptation to "circumvent cultural and moral constraints in pursuit of narrow self-interest or gratification of fleeting impulses" since this will destroy the cultural community. Parekh (ibid) explicitly criticizes 'coconuts';

> [Community members] have a duty to defend it against mischievous misrepresentations and not to allow themselves to be used by others for such purposes, a point made by many African Americans against those of them who readily endorse anti-black prejudices in the hope of material and other rewards.

With regard to the 'coconut debate', Parekh places responsibility on minority individuals "not to allow themselves to be used" by hostile forces among the majority.

However, this does not mean that individuals should not criticize negative practices in their communities. On the contrary, he emphasizes that the 'duty to respect culture' is similar to the duty to respect other persons; it "does not prevent us from judging and criticizing their choices and ways of life" based on a "sympathetic understanding" after "careful consideration and listening to their defence" (Parekh 2000:176). We may insist on respect for human dignity and personal choice, but should not confuse these with liberal individualism and full-scale autonomy. Parekh criticizes both mono-culturalist universalism, which argues that some cultures are superior and have the right to impose themselves on others and thus ignores a community's right to its culture; and cultural relativism, which argues that we are not entitled to judge, criticize or press for changes in beliefs and practices. In cases where we find these beliefs and practices "outrageous and it seems incapable of changing them", Parekh reminds us that every culture has reformist tendencies and its beliefs and practices are best changed from within, as the outsider is "unlikely to fully understand its complexity" (ibid, 177).

Parekh criticizes the assimilationist view expressed by Storhaug in the 'coconut debate', which "takes the nation state as its ideal and believes that no polity can be stable and cohesive unless its members share a common national culture, including common values, ideals of excellence, moral beliefs and social practices" (ibid, 197). In this view, minorities are faced with a choice between becoming equal members of society, in which case they have to assimilate; or insist on retaining their separate cultures, in which case they should not complain about exclusion and discrimination. Parekh emphasizes that "there is nothing wrong with assimilation. If minorities freely decide to assimilate into the dominant culture, their decisions should be respected and they should be given every opportunity and help to do so", but imposing assimilation by making it a condition for equal citizenship is not only "indefensible and likely to provoke resistance", but also misguided, as the larger society is rarely as homogenous, coherent and unified as the assimilationist assumes (ibid, 197).

While Parekh argues that individual rights can be used to destroy communities, and defends the right of cultural communities to resist assimilation, he recognizes that group rights may also threaten individual rights, as when a group wants to "enforce moral conformity or expel its members or deny them the right to exit" (ibid, 216). He seeks to 'balance' the interests of individuals and groups (ibid, 216-219), and suggests a "trade-off between these [collective] and individual rights in cases of conflict". While outsiders do have a right to sympathetic criticism of cultural beliefs and practices, these should preferably be reformed by internal forces. On the other hand, Parekh acknowledges that cultural communities may be "internally oppressive and refuse to change" (ibid, 219), and insists that a collectivity's internal decision-making process should enjoy broad support from its members, provide them with an acceptable mode of redress, and allow them the right to exit "without excessive cost" since "individual rights are just as, or even more, important and deserve to be safeguarded" (ibid, 218-219).

Parekh (2000:161-162) criticizes a liberal tendency to reduce cultural communities to voluntary associations like "clubs, political parties and pressure groups" which individuals can easily 'exit' from (see also Phillips 2007:134), and insists that they are "wholly misunderstood if conceptualized as such". The decisive difference relates to the question of individual choice and the possibility of exit; while individuals freely join and leave voluntary organizations according to their personal interests, membership in a cultural community is usually by birth rather than by choice, and whereas exit is possible, it tends to be partial rather than complete, as individuals have internalized the values and ideals of the cultural community they have grown up in.

The 'politics of exit'

Parekh thoroughly discusses the cultural aspects of the 'coconut' problematic, but he does not offer a political analysis of power relations between majority and minority, which is central to a structural understanding of individual exit. Sociologist of religion, David Bromley, offers such an analysis of different 'exit roles' and the specific phenomenon of exiting individuals who join hostile external forces. He defines "apostasy" as "a contested and highly politicized form of exit" from religious groups in conflict with larger society, which construes them as "subversive" (Bromley 1998c:vii). His empirical data is primarily drawn from "new religious movements" in the United States, which tend to be more 'isolationist' than immigrant minorities like European Muslims, who generally want to 'integrate' (Kymlicka 2002:353-357; Parekh 2000:178). Theorists of multiculturalism frequently use "religious sects" like the Amish (Kymlicka 1995:41; Phillips 2007:141-143; Parekh 2000:217) as example to illustrate dilemmas between individual and group rights, and a comparison of European Muslims and "religious sects" (as already suggested by Kymlicka) may offer additional insights into the often conflictual relationship between Muslim minorities and majority society. Specifically, Bromley's study of how exiting 'sect members' are used by hostile 'anti-cult' groups to support their political agenda parallels the use of 'native informants' by anti-Islam groups. Bromley (1998a:19-48) distinguishes three types of exit, which correspond to three types of 'organizations' based on their degree of tension with, and legitimacy in, mainstream society. The typology can in principle be applied to any social organization, but Bromley's empirical focus is on religious groups and more specifically, on "new religious movements" or "religious sects" (ibid, 19). These three types are understood as ideal types along a continuum (ibid, 21), and specific religious groups may move from one type to another over time, and more importantly, the same group may simultaneously fit various ideal types depending on political circumstances, as was the case with the Mormons and Catholics, who have moved over time from 'subversive' to 'allegiant' in the US, but are still seen as 'contestant' in certain contexts (Bromley 1998b:6; see also Mauss 1998:53).

"Allegiant" groups (Bromley 1998a:21-22), such as mainstream churches (e.g. Catholics in contemporary secular-protestant societies), have a low degree of tension with mainstream society; their interests coincide to a large extent with majority society, which takes a neutral or allied position towards them. Enjoying legitimacy, they are able to exercise a high degree of autonomy in resolving disputes internally. The typical exit role from allegiant groups is the "defector" (ibid, 27-31), who negotiates exit with group leaders without challenging the group. Individual exit is common to all three types of religious group, and most cases do not involve public conflict between group and individual; allegiant groups are most likely to be able to prevent public conflict. As Bromley points out, most 'organizations' including religious groups have internally accepted negative practices that may lead to internal conflict, and which may discredit the group if disclosed to the general public. In allegiant groups, these practices usually remain unexposed, since disputes are resolved internally, either the 'organization' reforms its practices or "punishes" the dissident. In the latter case, the dissident is faced with a choice between 'loyalty', 'voice' or 'exit' in Hirschman's terminology.

"Contestant" groups (ibid, 22-23) have a moderate degree of tension with larger society, where they find both allies and opponents. They are deemed legitimate, but also subject to challenge and constraint. Thus, they have limited autonomy, and are subject to external regulations. The typical exit role from contestant groups is the "whistleblower" (ibid, 31-35), defined as an individual member who forms an alliance with an external regulatory unit, and offers personal testimony of negative practices that is then used to sanction the organization. These individuals can be thought of as internal "heretics" who involve external parties in a conflict in order to achieve internal change, but who often end up leaving the group, because leadership perceives them as disloyal. In most cases, individuals accept negative practices because they do not want to take on the risk of whistleblowing. To external regulatory units, whistleblowers play an important role because of the inside information they can provide, and are often seen as heroes. Bromley notes that whistleblowing is uncommon in religious organizations, which are usually not subject to this type of external regulation, but there are exceptions like the recent sexual abuse cases in the Catholic Church, which were taken to the media by victims not satisfied with how cases were handled internally. When official regulatory units are absent, independent groups often assume the task, focusing on sectarian churches in particular.

"Subversive" groups (ibid, 23-25), typically "religious sects", have a high degree of tension and low degree of shared interests with the larger society. They often subscribe to alternative versions of social order, are resistant to the dominant order, and have strong internal solidarity. By opponents seeking to discredit them, they are stigmatized as subversive, dangerous and threatening, even as "essentially evil". There are largely seen as illegitimate and face continuous opposition; they are likely to be targets of social control measures "designed to contain, suppress or destroy" them, including

"covert surveillance, planting of undercover agents, or even instigation of provocative incidents by agents provocateurs" (Bromley 1998a:24). The counter-subversion ideology of their opponents constructs these groups as secretive, conspiratorial and rapidly growing; and their goals and principles as opposed to those of the legitimate social order. Groups labeled subversive face great difficulties defending themselves against coercive control measures, as their spokespersons are often denied access to the public or their claims are publicly denounced. The typical exit role from subversive groups is the "apostate" (ibid, 35-39), a term which in Bromley's usage does not include religious exit in general, but is reserved for oppositional exit. An apostate can be defined as "a role that is constructed when an organization is in a high state of tension with its surrounding environment and that involves an individual exiting the organization to form an alliance with an oppositional coalition" (ibid, 19). In the process, the apostate "undertakes a total change of loyalties" (ibid, 36). The only distinction from a traitor is that the apostate is constructed as having no other choice than to "escape" from an "essentially evil" group.

Despite the small number of individuals, apostasy is a significant social phenomenon, as these individuals form an important part of a political campaign to control a religious group, their accounts are prominent in the media and heavily influence public opinion to mobilize opposition to a religious group and impose sanctions on it (ibid, 20). In its prototypical form, apostasy is thus

> created in a situation of intense conflict and power imbalance where claims of subversion are advanced against a group […]. This form of claims-making is employed to authorize an expansion in the scope and severity of social control measures. Dramatic, compelling evidence of the alleged evil is imperative to mobilize and sustain an opposition coalition and neutralize potential resistance. Apostates play a pivotal role in creating such evidence, offering personal testimony in which they attest to witnessing and being compelled to participate in the target movement's nefarious activities. The role is constructed in interaction between the individuals exiting putatively subversive movements and one or more parties in the oppositional coalition. (ibid, 20-21)

Exiting members of subversive groups find a large number of external parties to whom they can turn for support; these even actively recruit exiting individuals into the oppositional roles, and provide "social networks through which exiting members can reinterpret personal troubles as organizational problems" (ibid, 36). Bromley notes that given the polarized situation and power imbalance, there is strong pressure on individuals who exit from subversive organizations to negotiate a narrative with the oppositional groups (ibid, 37). Yet only a few exiting individuals turn their negative experiences into a moral campaign against their former group, and pursue "apostate careers" as "professional ex-members" aligned with a countermovement (Wright

1998:97). These apostates polarize their former and present identities, and their exit is framed as a conversion; a "darkness-to-light personal transformation". The countermovement ideologically constructs members of subversive groups as "enemies of freedom" or of the state, and their leaders may be cast as terrorists (ibid, 98-99), but it has a special role for ex-members, who often take a "victim" role, as a person to be "helped" rather than punished. Drawing on Bromley's theoretical perspective, Stuart Wright (1998:100) argues that the apostate role is constructed by the countermovement and exists independently of specific individuals who are expected to perform the role as defined by the countermovement, which provides "help" to transform personal trauma into a political campaign against the religious group (ibid, 101). Apostate narratives are typically structured around "captivity" and "escape" or "rescue". Ex-members renounce their previous loyalty, and warn the public of the dangers of the group they were part of. Often, they pursue "apostate careers" where they use their personal experiences from inside the group to support the opposition; often modifying their story to appeal to specific interests among the opposition (Bromley 1998c:38). Bromley writes that "apostates must completely renounce the former organization even while their careers depend upon highlighting and displaying their former membership as the basis of their credibility", and thus "their participation in mainstream society is predicated on preserving their prior identity" (ibid.).

Anson Shupe (1998:210-211) points out that "new religious movements" are not the only religious groups seen as subversive by counter-movements which used apostate narratives of personal experiences with 'evil' practices to legitimize their ideology, and draws attention to nineteenth century anti-Catholic and anti-Mormon hate literature. American anti-cult literature appeared in the 1970s in the form of local newspaper and magazine reports, creating public awareness of a "cult problem" and influencing public opinion, followed by autobiographical accounts in book form, before experiencing a decline in media interest in the 1980s, when it became clear to anti-cult activists that the US government would tolerate these religious groups (ibid, 214), atrocity stories were undermined by empirical research (ibid, 215), and "new religious movements" became more mainstream (ibid, 216).

Muslims as a subversive group

With the emerging new enemy image of Muslims after the Cold War, a new category of apostate narratives became popular, i.e. the "behind-the-veil" genre about oppressed Muslim women, which is characterized as "recycled Orientalism" by Thorbjørnsrud (2005:42), who discusses how Muslim women are constructed as "objects of pity"; they are described as oppressed by "barbarian" Muslim men and thus in need of "help" or "rescue" from the majority; these discursive constructions revive Orientalist stereotypes about Muslim women, which served to legitimize colonialism (Thorbjørnsrud 2003:134-137; see also Abu-Lughod 2002; Razack 2008). Forced marriages, physical

abuse and other forms of oppression are serious problems for a significant number of Muslim women; however, they are not "typical" of Muslim society as these generalizing narratives and media stories would have us believe (Thorbjørnsrud 2003:139). She describes the "behind-the-veil" genre of books as "soap documentaries" about personal tragedies of Muslim women, a genre that has become widely popular also in Norway since Betty Mahmoudi's *Not without my daughter* from 1988. These books, written by Muslim women who have "escaped" their predicament, are often introduced as being about Muslim women in general, as revealing the truth about "life behind the veil". In newspaper reviews, such books tend to be praised as the most important book published, as if each book is a groundbreaking new revelation of a truth that has not been discussed before (ibid, 140-142). Thorbjørnsrud (2005:42) points out that in relation to such books, publishers and reviewers "seem often to lose any form of normal critical distance", as these accounts are usually fictionalized and sometimes even based on fabricated stories (ibid, 42-49). The literature about women escaping oppressive Muslim communities shares central features of apostate narratives as discussed by Daniel Carson Johnson (1998:115-138; see also Bromley 1998b:8-9), who describes them as a "distinctive literary genre" balancing a thin line between fact and fiction (Johnson 1998:116). While some accounts are demonstrably fabricated; the fictionalization of personal history and religious context varies in extent, but usually goes beyond the selective reconstruction of an individual life story in most other autobiographies, because apostate narratives are shaped by a political concern to make the religious group look as bad as possible (ibid, 118-119). Further, the narrative is spatially and temporally separated from its readers, making it difficult to determine whether the accounts are true. To increase their credibility, they are typically accompanied by political statements denouncing the religious group as 'subversive'.

While the anti-Muslim discourse in media and politics construes Muslims as subversive, the relationship between Western majorities and Muslim minorities is more diversified and complex. Applying Bromley's typology to Muslim communities in contemporary Norway, we may say that their position is politically contested and they fit different types in different political settings. Most Norwegian Muslims would want their religious community to be seen as "allegiant" and emphasize the shared interests with the mainstream. From a multiculturalist perspective, which recognizes groups, Muslim communities should enjoy legitimacy and autonomy, and let individuals exit without public attention. The position of the Norwegian government, for some years increasingly concerned with negative practices that violate individual rights, and consulting with "whistleblowers" like Kadra and Amal Aden, probably fits best with framing Muslim communities as "contestant" groups, subjected to external regulations. This view would be in line with a liberal multiculturalism along the lines of Kymlicka. The anti-Muslim network of populist right parties and various organizations, including

the Progress Party and the Human Rights Service, construe Muslim communities as 'subversive', and use 'apostates' like Hirsi Ali to validate their views.

The contemporary European network of "Islam critics" constructs Muslim minorities as potentially subversive; allegedly adhering to values incompatible with those of Europe, and see Muslim leaders as "closet Islamists" who threaten to "Islamicize" European societies (Kundnani 2008:40-44). Their ideology and practice shows several parallels with Bromley's (1998b:39-43) analysis of the American anti-cult movement's organized campaign against "religious sects". Like the anti-cult movement, which styled itself as a "social control organization" that successfully shaped public opinion and lobbied the government to increase control measures against "cults", the Human Rights Service has investigated and exposed negative practices in Muslim communities, reported suspected instances of female circumcision and forced marriage to authorities, influenced public opinion and successfully lobbied the government to tighten regulations on family reunification and stricter integration policy. They have also recruited several young Muslim women, whose "apostate narratives" construct them as escaping or being rescued from internal oppression by their families and communities and their "evil" practices. Storhaug's construction of veiled Muslim women as "brainwashed" individuals who do not know their own best interest (discussed in chapter 4) parallels the ideology of the anti-cult movement as described by Bromley.

While most exiting members do not get involved in a conflict between a religious group and mainstream society, public debate tends to be dominated by a small number of apostates that have been recruited by oppositional forces. In certain aspects, Storhaug's methods of "helping" young Muslim women resemble practices of the anti-cult movement, especially at the more voluntary end of a continuum ranging from "counseling" to "deprogramming". Bromley notes that while apostates occasionally function as whistleblowers, offering evidence of negative practices that can become a basis for legal action, generally their primary function is moral condemnation of the group they have left. Their personal narratives typically recount personal captivity and witnessing atrocities, and highlight media reports and countermovement lobbying campaigns. This moral condemnation of 'fundamental and massive' violations serves to create a hostile public opinion which discredits any defense from the religious groups; whose contented members are dismissed as 'brainwashed'. In the final section of this chapter, I discuss some empirical examples of politically contested exit in Norwegian public debate.

Politically contested 'exit' from Norwegian Muslim communities

In 2004, Kadra and two other Muslim girls who had been "helped" and collaborated with Storhaug and her organization, went public in *VG* (February 28; in an article written by Kadafi Zaman) and criticized Storhaug for having exploited girls in a

vulnerable position to promote her own political agenda. Kadra, who had revealed certain imams' attitudes towards female circumcision using a hidden camera and microphone in a TV documentary in 2000, said to *VG*; *Hege Storhaug* […] *talks about protecting young girls, but that's not what she does. At times, she made my life hell*. Nadia, who was brought to Morocco against her will to be forcedly married, says; *I don't want to have anything to do with the Human Rights Service or Hege Storhaug anymore. After my personal experiences with them, I also warn other girls against contacting the organization.* Saynab, who was taken to Somalia to be circumcised when she was eight years old, says; *The Human Rights Service has pressured girls to tell exaggerated stories and reveal secrets from the community, so that the foundation can get even more money from naïve politicians.* She also says that organizations such as the Human Rights Service draw an 'exaggerated image of misery' of Norwegian Muslim communities, and that they seek out women's shelters to actively recruit young minority girls. This was neither the first nor last time the organization's ethics had been criticized; already in 2002, the *Center for Gender Equality* had received similar complaints about the organization anonymously from minority girls, and alerted the Ministry. Similarly, Tove Smaadahl, leader of the Women's Shelter Secretariat, also received complaints about the organization's activities.

All three young women say that they want to continue fighting against forced marriages and female circumcision on their own terms, without pressure from Norwegian organizations, and want to prevent that Storhaug exploits other vulnerable girls in the future. In the interview with *VG*, Saynab acknowledges Storhaug's efforts to put the problem of female circumcision on the agenda, but argues that they do it all wrong;

> *HRS criticizes our entire culture and religion, and only finds faults. I decided to go public against female circumcision; not because I hated my own culture, but because I wanted to correct wrongdoings. There are many* [others] *who put things on the agenda, and who help women in need, but they don't make girls feel contempt for themselves.*

The strongest allegations against Storhaug came from Amal Aden, a young Norwegian Somali woman, in 2009. A year before, she had assumed the role of a whistleblower, publishing a book that strongly criticized practices among Norwegian Somalians. Now, she presented herself as a whistleblower against the Human Rights Service, alerting authorities and the general public about the organization's unethical practices. Having worked for the organization for three months, Aden could reportedly document that they tried to pressure her to go 'undercover' to obtain information from Muslim congregations, asking her to pretend she had "returned to Islam" and wanted to have her daughters circumcised (similar to Kadra's undercover mission in the 2000 TV documentary). Aden further claims that the HRS has offered money to minority girls who say they have been circumcised or threatened to use a hijab (she cannot document

the latter claim, which is denied by Storhaug). In *Klassekampen* (June 13, 2009), Aden says she never stopped being a Muslim;

> *I don't look like a Muslim on the outside, because I don't cover myself. But inside me, I am a Muslim. I am deeply insulted when it is taken for granted that I have left Islam.* […] *They* [the HRS] *have told me: "You shall be our weapon in our struggle to exterminate Islam".* […] *I wrote the book "See us" to help Somali children and women; not to harm the Somali community. To the contrary; I love my community. But unfortunately, certain individuals have misinterpreted my book to mean that I distance myself from my community and my religion.*

Whether Storhaug used the words 'You shall be our weapon in our struggle to exterminate Islam' is unclear; but rhetoric of a "war against Islam" is used by her role model Hirsi Ali. In Bromley's terminology, Aden makes it clear that she is not an apostate, who has left her community and turned against it; and that she is insulted when Storhaug wants to use her in a struggle against Islam. Rather, she portrays herself as a whistleblower, exposing negative practices in order to get external help to change them. This distinction is important in the discussion of 'native informants'; Hirsi Ali may be a typical apostate, while Shabana Rehman, Kadra and Amal Aden may be better described as whistleblowers. Even though they were recruited by the Human Rights Service, they primarily sought roles as whistleblowers to alert the public and the government about negative practices in their communities, but seem to have underestimated Storhaug's hostility towards Muslims and their need for 'native informants' or 'apostates' to support their agenda.

Aden also complained to the Ministry, and filed a police report against the Human Rights Service for illegal surveillance of employees. In *Dagbladet* (July 2, 2009), she claims that *Storhaug had put vodka in her coffee, and served her pork at a visit in the organization's office.* Storhaug dismisses the accusation with the comment; *if you have non-Western immigrant background, it seems much easier to make the strangest claims in the press;* and says that she considers a counter-lawsuit. However, Storhaug confirms another incident taking place during a visit to Copenhagen, where Rustad also took part, for talks with representatives of the Danish government. In Denmark, Storhaug brought Aden to an open meeting in the 'Society for Press Freedom', where a Dutch artist, Gregorius Neckshot, previously arrested on blasphemy charges, presented cartoons of Prophet Mohammed having sex with animals. Storhaug's comment was that she also 'reacted' to the cartoons; she was *not impressed* with these *amateur* drawings. In Aden's words, Storhaug justified all these acts as attempts to *"test how integrated I* [Amal Aden] *am".* As 'tests of integration' these alleged events resemble "exit rituals" used by the American anti-cult movement discussed by Bromley, where ex-members are expected to denounce their former religion and 'convert' to mainstream society.

Aden's complaints led to an investigation of the Human Rights Service by the Directorate for Integration and Diversity, but authorities concluded in June 2010 that documentation was insufficient to stop public funding; however it did ask the organization to review its ethical guidelines. Bureaucrats and politicians are aware of repeated criticism of Storhaug, but the Progress Party has guaranteed public funding in state budget negotiations. Storhaug has played a central role as a policy advisor to the Progress Party on integration issues, and her lobbying also influenced policy initiatives of the Labor Party minister for gender equality (2000-01 and 2005-07), Karita Bekkemellem, who sees them as a valuable contributor and advisor on integration. In *Klassekampen* (August 1, 2009), Aden criticizes the police, who had already dropped her case, and the Ministry, which had not yet concluded, for discrimination;

> [Minister of Labor and Social Inclusion] *Dag Terje Andersen listened to my criticism of immigrant communities. Why is he not listening when I criticize the Human Rights Service?* […] *I understand that the police don't always have capacity, but when Hege Storhaug calls them about an immigrant family, they put 15-20 persons on the case. When I report the HRS, they drop the case. This* […] *says something about how Norwegian society works.*

Aden's criticism of government institutions emphasizes that her criticism is not one-sided (she also criticized the Mohammed cartoons, see chapter 2), as in the case of 'native informants' who only criticize the minority and defend majority society. While HRS is controversial, public officials, politicians and public opinion continue to be more sympathetic to its claims than to minority counter-claims, another parallel with the US cult controversy (Bromley 1998b:14-15).

Using the example of US "cults", James Richardson (1998:171-189) discusses the role of apostates and whistleblowers in exerting social control over minority religious groups. Social control includes official legal or regulatory actions as well as media impact on public opinion. Trying to make a case for public intervention, organizations hostile to a certain religious group seek to turn exiting individuals with traumatic experiences into apostates and whistleblowers despite their own ambivalence towards the group (Bromley 1998b:13). Using inside knowledge, apostates-turned-whistleblowers tell "atrocity tales" about events that "violate some fundamental cultural values and which evoke moral outrage to the extent that social control actions against the group perpetrating the event are warranted" (Richardson 1998:173). These accounts may be self-serving as well as serving the interests of those seeking to discredit a religious group. Besides claims about terrorism and violations of individual autonomy, accusations of child abuse made in the media effectively create a 'moral panic' provoking immediate government action, such as intervention to remove children from their parents. False accusations have severe consequences to a religious group, even when parents are acquitted and children returned to them, their public image will be

damaged (Richardson 1998:182-183). In Norway, the Kadra documentary on female circumcision in 2000, created such a moral panic, forced politicians to increase social control, and demonized Muslim religious leaders.

Conclusions

The term 'coconut' is often used by members of minority groups to criticize and discredit minority individuals who give in to majority pressure to assimilate and take over racist attitudes. As a concept referring to persons who are 'racially' black but have internalized ideas of white superiority, it reflects the positions of Black theorists like Frantz Fanon and Malcolm X. The 'coconut debate' can be understood as a discursive struggle between majority and minority perspectives about the legitimacy of the political position of individuals so categorized, as well as over meanings and implications of the term. Persons from the majority side tend to see the term as 'racist' because it allegedly classifies individuals according to their skin color, and expects them to behave in certain ways, representing a form of 'minority communitarianism' imposing 'internal restrictions' (Will Kymlicka) on their freedom to criticize cultural practices, or denying the 'right to exit' (Anne Phillips) from their cultural community.

While the term itself is controversial, it corresponds to the postcolonial concept of the 'native informant' who provides empirical evidence to validate Orientalist discourses. The criticism entailed in the concept can thus be defended from an antiracist position that understands racism in Gramscian terms of hegemony. Defending a notion of collective interests, Bhikhu Parekh distinguishes between the individual right (and obligation) to criticize negative practices within a cultural community, and even their right to leave the community and assimilate, on one hand, and allowing oneself to be used by hostile external forces who want to destroy the community. David Bromley's concept of 'apostasy' as 'politicized exit' captures the postcolonial meaning of 'native informant', the meaning of apostasy in traditional Islam and the 'coconut' concept, which all refer to a form of political betrayal when an exiting individual forms an alliance with hostile external forces.

While the concepts of 'coconut' and 'apostate' are sometimes used inaccurately to refer to individuals who merely leave their culture or religion in favor of assimilating into the majority (without getting involved in a political conflict), the defining characteristics of such concepts are grounded less in 'loyalty' to a cultural or religious community, and more on the external, political alliances with racist and assimilationist forces among the majority. While defending the right of minority individuals to criticize cultural and religious practices of their group as well as their right to leave the minority group and assimilate into the majority, when these individuals politicize their negative experiences with the group and lend their support to ideas of 'white' cultural superiority and assimilation policy, they become legitimate targets of antiracist criticism.

CHAPTER 4

The hijab debates

When feminism is reduced to taking off clothes, and integration to atheism, oppression is hidden behind a mask of liberation rhetoric.

Ambreen Pervez, Iffit Qureshi, Nazia Parveen, Javaria Tanveer, Fazila Mahmood and Sophia Hussain (*Aftenposten,* March 8, 2010)

Questions about gender and Islam have played a central role in criticism of multiculturalism in the last two decades, especially since Okin (1999:9-24) asked "Is multiculturalism bad for women?" in a 1997 essay. Here, she discusses what should be done when minority demands for group rights clash with liberal norms of gender equality. She argues that feminists ought to be skeptical of multiculturalism, also of those versions that only support collective rights for internally liberal groups (like Kymlicka) because gender oppression often takes place in the private sphere of the family, where religious and cultural minorities control women through customs related to marriage and child-raising, e.g. in practices of veiling, polygamy, female circumcision, forced marriages and honor killings. Okin argues that cultural minorities tend to be more patriarchal than surrounding majority cultures, and that most demands for group rights and 'cultural defenses' in criminal cases relate to gendered practices. Extending Kymlicka's requirement for internal liberalism to the private sphere, Okin argues that traditional religious groups that control women within the family, cannot legitimately claim group rights. She argues that minority women

> might be much better off if the culture into which they were born were either to become extinct (so that its members would become integrated into the less sexist surrounding culture) or, preferably, to be encouraged to alter itself so as to reinforce the equality of women – at least to the degree to which this value is upheld in the majority culture (ibid, 22-23)

Okin suggests that assimilation could be in the interest of minority women, and as a preferable solution; she suggests that Western liberal states should 'encourage' minority cultures to change towards gender equality, using majority culture as a standard. In order to protect women's interests in negotiations about group rights, Okin argues that the state should listen to younger minority women rather than to the older generation who are often "co-opted into reinforcing gender inequality" (ibid, 24).

When Okin published her essay, these ideas were already reflected in Norwegian integration policy (Gressgård & Jacobsen 2003:73-74). In a white paper (*Stortingsmelding* no. 17 on Immigration and Multicultural Norway, 1996/97), the government promotes a form of 'multiculturalism' which mentions neither group rights nor public recognition of cultural identities. It goes beyond Kymlicka's demand that minority groups should be internally liberal, and is concerned with women's daily life in the private sphere of the family. The document mentions female circumcision and forced marriages (which were already illegal in Norway) as examples of unacceptable and oppressive traditions, and suggests that minority cultures should adopt majority norms. The Norwegian Gender Equality Act is taken as a non-negotiable framework for integration policy; turning women's liberation into a question of integration. The government argues that equal opportunity for minority women requires educating minority communities about "what gender equality between men and women means in Norwegian daily life" (quoted in Gressgård & Jacobsen, ibid). Minorities are expected not only to comply with the law, but also adopt Norwegian everyday practices. Gressgård and Jacobsen (ibid) conclude that this is in effect an assimilation policy.

Critics have pointed out several problems with this approach to minority women's rights. First, underlying this perspective is an essentialist understanding of culture (Amir-Moazami, Jacobsen & Malik 2011:2), which fails to distinguish between ideals and practices, and ignores that in every culture there are competing norms and ideals, competing interpretations of these, and a variety of practices that may or may not comply with norms and ideals. Okin and especially the Norwegian policy document make unwarranted generalizations; the Gender Equality Act is taken to reflect 'Norwegian values', without problematizing whether everyday practices comply with the law, or which feminist ideals are reflected in it (Gressgård & Jacobsen 2003:74-76). Religious practices like veiling are lumped together with criminal practices such as forced marriages and honor killings, and construct an image of essentially patriarchal minority cultures. Such generalizations depend on leaving out internal struggles, notably efforts of Muslim women who reject religious justifications for abuse in the name of culture, and emphasize that Islam prohibits violence against women (al-Hibri 1999:41-46; see below). In other words, a 'comparative slip' is committed when 'Western' ideals are contrasted with (worst) practices among 'non-western' minorities.

A second problem is that majority ideals are constructed as a superior realization of universal norms, while negative minority practices are particularized and 'culturalized', i.e. explained as resulting from cultural values falling short of the universal standard (Gressgård & Jacobsen 2003:71). This 'Eurocentric' confusion of the universal and the culturally specific (Sayyid 2003) depends on silencing minority voices (al-Hibri 1999:42) and reinforces ideas of western cultural superiority. In Gressgård and Jacobsen's (2003:76) view, the Norwegian white paper's approach can be characterized as a monologue, where goals are already defined as non-negotiable by the majority.

Such a one-way process is characteristic of assimilation rather than integration, which implies a mutual process of adjustment through dialogue between majority and minority, which is open to discuss how to interpret different values. Phillips (2007:36-37) argues that there may be universal agreement on fundamental principles, but much disagreement on how to interpret these, resulting in different versions of gender equality, e.g. equal opportunity to make choices (a common Western interpretation), equal representation of men and women in politics, professions and business boardrooms (a dominant ideal in Norway), or equal division of paid work, housework and childcare (supported by many feminists including Okin). In contrast to interpretations of gender equality that take male practices as a standard for women's liberation, 'difference feminism' (a view often supported by Muslims, Catholics and some strands of western feminism) emphasizes that men and women are 'different, but equal' and favors gender complementarity (e.g. fathers support the family and mothers care for young children), and degrees of segregation in some contexts. Muslim feminist Azizah al-Hibri (1999:42) argues that Okin's inaccuracies and erroneous generalizations about Islam as hostile to women's rights could have been avoided if she had approached Muslims in a dialogue that takes Muslim feminist arguments seriously as contributions to debates about women's liberation. Norwegian anthropologist Tordis Borchgrevink (1997; 2002) takes into account Muslim feminist perspectives of Shaheen Sardar Ali and Ziba Mir-Hosseini in a nuanced theoretical discussion, which still remains caught up in a 'dilemma' between women's individual rights and minorities' collective rights.

A third problem is that when a range of practices from veiling to mutilation and murder are generalized as examples of the same phenomenon, religious norms, cultural norms and universal norms are confused and conflated. Forced marriages and honor killings violate universal human rights, and are better seen as criminal excesses of South Asian and Middle Eastern traditions of arranged marriages and family honor, rather than as a part of those cultural traditions. Female circumcision is a traditional African custom that is gradually being abandoned. Al-Hibri (1999:43-45) points out that some of these practices have been tolerated by Islam because the religion accepts cultural diversity, but none of them have to do with religion per se. Seen as instances of violence against women, they are punishable under Islamic law. Muslim feminists emphasize working within a religious framework against oppressive traditions; because in order for Muslim communities to accept women's liberation, it needs to be sanctioned by religion. They emphasize each individual Muslim man or woman's right to *ijtihad* (jurisprudential interpretation of religious texts) to reinterpret sacred texts in accordance with contemporary society. Their strategy is to distinguish between religious and cultural practices; reexamine traditional jurisprudence to identify cultural elements from past times; and provide modern interpretations reflecting contemporary Muslim society. In short, they argue that practices like female circumcision, forced marriages and honor killings that have been construed as 'Islamic', are either cultural traditions or result from

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patriarchal interpretations of the religion. Such practices violate both human rights and Islamic law, and Islam is a possible ally in the struggle to end them. Western and Muslim feminists agree on fighting these practices, but disagree on strategy and the role of religion. Veiling practices are quite different; they may violate a particular Western interpretation of gender equality, but as a religious practice, they are protected by freedom of religion. Relations between veiling and individual freedom of Muslim women are far more complex than the view of some 'white feminists' who equate hijab with oppression. As al-Hibri (1999:46) and Gressgård and Jacobsen (2003:72) point out; there is nothing essentially liberating about wearing a mini-skirt, nor anything essentially oppressive about wearing a hijab. Excluding veiled women from education, as in France or Turkey, or from certain types of work, as in Norway, may be as oppressive as when veiling is imposed by a government like Iran or by a woman's community (ibid, 72-75).

Fourth, postcolonial theorists (Abu-Lughod 2002; Razack 2008; Yegenoglu 1998; al-Hibri 1999:45) have criticized western attempts to liberate Muslim women from their culture or religion, and argue that current feminist justifications of using western state power to control minority communities, repeat colonial history. In her essay "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?", Lila Abu-Lughod (2002:783-790) discusses how contemporary western discourses about Muslim women resonate with colonial and missionary rhetoric. Specifically, she points out how the Bush administration's attempt to justify military intervention in Afghanistan with rhetoric about liberating Afghan women from the Taliban parallels British and French 'colonial feminism' in Egypt and Algeria (see also Thorbjørnsrud 2004:39-41). In these historical cases, the colonial powers where 'obsessed' with the Muslim veil as a sign of oppression. Abu-Lughod (ibid, 786) criticizes this reductive interpretation where veiling in itself is made to stand for lack of agency. Like al-Hibri (1999:44-46), she argues that many veiled women, especially those wearing the modern headscarf or hijab, are well-educated women who have made reflected choices about how to practice their religion. Western pity for veiled women is perceived as patronizing and condescending (ibid), and depends on ideas of western superiority (Abu-Lughod 2002:788-789). Drawing on Spivak's notion of 'white men saving brown women from brown men' (quoted in ibid, 784; see also Razack 2008:17), Razack (2008:108) criticizes rhetoric about 'saving' Muslim women from patriarchal culture as a 'racist logic' consisting of three figures; the dangerous Muslim man, the imperiled Muslim woman, and the civilized European. In a feminist reading of Orientalism, Meyda Yegenoglu (1998:40-44) explores the gendered fantasies of this discourse, where a Western 'desire' to unveil Muslim women is linked to imperialism. Drawing on Fanon's essay "Algeria Unveiled" (1989:35-67), she discusses how the veil resists European control by making Muslim women unavailable to the western gaze.

Schirin Amir-Moazami, Christine Jacobsen and Maleiha Malik (2011:3-4) point out that while contemporary debates about veiling or forced marriages are framed by particular

contexts; feminist arguments similar to Okin's have been transformed into populist rhetoric against multiculturalism across Europe. These debates have been placed in a 'clash of civilizations' paradigm, where oppression of women is described as a feature of Muslim traditional culture, in contrast to Western liberal society. Thus, it becomes urgent that Muslim women are "integrated" into the latter. When women's liberation is equated with 'integration' in this way, violence against women is culturalized and racialized, and anti-Muslim racism can be disguised behind legitimate concerns for minority women.

Focus of this chapter

In this chapter, I draw on the above theoretical perspectives to analyze Norwegian hijab debates in the period 2004-2010, including debates on a hijab ban in 2004 and 2007, the debate about hijab in the police in 2009, and the debate about the so-called 'morality police' in 2010. While early debates were dominated by a white feminist perspective, Muslim feminist voices gradually emerged. Theoretically, my analysis draws primarily on postcolonial and Muslim feminist theory (Göle 1996; Yegenoglu 1998; Razack 2008). Besides problematizing western feminism, I discuss the relationship between the hijab and 'Islamism' as expressed by Muslim student movements that combine religious revivalism with multiculturalist identity politics (Jacobsen 2011). In Norway, which has a national self-image as *the* nation of gender equality, women's issues have figured as the main argument against multiculturalism since the 1990s. As a background to the hijab debates, I shortly discuss these debates about Muslim women. Narrowing down focus to the hijab issue, I then review the French hijab affair in 1989, which eventually resulted in a ban in schools in 2004, and triggered debates in other countries, including Norway and Germany, where several *Länder* (states) have banned the hijab for teachers.

In Norway, attacks on multiculturalism in the name of concern for minority women started in the early 1990s and made a breakthrough in 1995, when anthropologist Unni Wikan (1995) set out to try to change integration policy (Wikan 2002:1; see also Borchgrevink 1997:31). By 2002, Wikan (ibid) noted that "much has been achieved" in terms of her political project. Critics described Wikan's contributions to political debate as reinforcing the populist rhetoric of the Progress Party and other anti-immigrant forces (Borchgrevink 1997:33-34; Fuglerud 2002:248; Hervik 2002:253). While Wikan (1995) does not use the term 'multiculturalism', she attacks what she calls 'cultural fundamentalism' or 'identity politics' and the concept of 'culture' itself, and rejects 'cultural relativism' and 'political correctness' (see also Jacobsen 2008:35-44), which she describes as the government's "generous betrayal" of minority women. Wikan's target is not Islam as a religion, but the traditional culture of Muslim societies. Wikan (1995:88-90; 183-190; also cited in Gressgård 2010:35-36) draws up a dichotomy between Western liberal culture, which is 'inclusive, neutral and universal' and minority cultures, which are 'reactionary, traditional and collective'; and asserts that "all

reasonable, rational individuals with a free will must choose to adapt to western values" (cited in Gressgård 2010:36). Her criticism of minority cultures and multicultural policy goes beyond Okin, and draws explicitly on the civilizational paradigm when she writes about a 'culture clash' between patriarchal and oppressive minority cultures and 'Norwegian values' of gender equality and individual freedom (Razack 2008:117-125).

Media attention on these issues peaked in the years 2000-2002, with widespread coverage of the personal stories of several young Muslim women (see also chapter 3, and Gullestad 2006b:50-56). In October 2000, a TV documentary 'revealed' that some imams in Norway support female circumcision. The research for this documentary had been done by journalist Storhaug, who had been working on these issues since 1992, and was also behind two documentaries on forced marriages in the Norwegian Pakistani community in September 1999 (see Wikan 2002:230). A young Somalian girl, Kadra Noor (later Yusuf) was equipped with a hidden camera and microphone, and sent to private consultation with several imams. She was asked to act as an 'agent provocateur' (see chapter 3) and tell the imams a false story that her parents wanted to have her circumcised, and that she sought advice on whether to do it or not. One of the imams, Kebba Secka, at the time leader of the Islamic Council, advised the girl to obey her parents. This caused a 'moral panic' among the general public, the Muslim community was blamed for endorsing the practice, which had been banned in a specific new law in 1995, and Secka was forced to resign. Media demanded immediate action from the government, which devised an action plan against the practice. The documentary won journalistic awards, but researchers criticized its manipulative and ethical aspects (Talle 2003:87-99; Dessau 2003; Gylseth 2001; Thorbjørnsrud & Johansen 2000).

In January 2002, the honor killing of a Kurdish girl, Fadime Sahindal, in Sweden, attracted widespread media attention in Norway. According to Nazneen Khan-Østrem (2005:223-224), what became known as the 'Fadime case' had a greater impact on Norwegian Muslims than the 9/11 terror attacks. Although Fadime's family was not Muslim, Norwegian media placed her murder in the context of the abovementioned girls that had escaped female circumcision and forced marriages (Jacobsen 2005:168). The murder was erroneously linked to Islam, and Norwegian Muslims held accountable and asked to publicly declare that they oppose such practices. As the Christian Democrat Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik said in *Dagbladet* (January 27, 2002);

> *I warn those fathers and brothers who think that a family's honor can be preserved by killing female family members: Such attitudes are not acceptable in Norway.* […] *In our culture, murder is a crime and a shame. Everyone living in Norway must acknowledge that. Communities that have a different perception must clean up their backyard.*

Here, the Prime Minister draws up a contrast between minority communities that presumably justify such criminal acts in the name of culture, and 'Norwegian culture'

where this is unacceptable. He warns minority communities and demands their compliance with Norwegian norms. Oslo bishop, Gunnar Stålsett, also links the crime to culture or religion, and asks *Muslim leaders* to take a stand; *Take responsibility before it is too late. No religion or culture can be allowed to glorify or defend a misdeed like that in Sweden* (*Dagbladet*, January 27, 2002).

These demands led to two separate demonstrations in February 2002 (Jacobsen 2005:155); both with about one thousand participants and both were described as 'historical' by the media. The first one was initiated by Shabana Rehman (see chapter 3) and joined by Kadra and other media celebrities, who protested against the parental generations' attempts to restrict their children's freedom. This march was dominated by white Norwegians (ibid), including high-profile politicians such as Minister for Children and Family Affairs, Laila Dåvøy (Christian Democrat), Socialist Party leader Kristin Halvorsen, and Trond Giske (Labor Party), who later became minister of culture. Muslim leaders reportedly stayed in the background, trying to convince the majority that they also wanted to solve these problems, but that it had nothing to do with religion (*Dagbladet,* February 3, 2002).

A week later, the Islamic Council, representing 26 mosques, held its own demonstration led by Abid Raja from the World Islamic Mission. The demonstrators condemned oppression of women, honor killings and forced marriages, but pointed out that these acts of violence had nothing to do with the Islamic religion, and denounced the generalizations, harassment and hatred against Muslims (Jacobsen 2005:155). Specifically, they protested against negative media coverage. As Jehangir Bahadur said in *Aftenposten* (February 10, 2002);

> *We take distance from coercion and oppression [...] but such acts are based on culture and tradition, not religion. The recently created media image of Muslims gives an impression that all Muslims support coercion and oppression. That is incorrect. That is why we want to show that we are fed up with generalizations.*

He emphasized that *Shabana Rehman does not represent immigrant women in Norway. The fact that she had it difficult does not mean all Muslim girls experience the same.* The European Commission on Racism and Intolerance (ECRI 2004) later supported the Muslim view that public debate on these issues used unwarranted generalizations that stigmatized Muslims.

While violence against women is a serious problem for those affected, it is not generally accepted and much less publicly defended by the Muslim community. Minority feminists like the MiRA Resource Center have been fighting these practices within their communities before the issues were addressed by the media. Minority and majority agree that these practices are unacceptable, but disagree on how to explain and fight them. Muslim communities were put on the defensive as they had to convince an

outraged and impatient majority that they made enough effort. Gradually, Muslim spokespersons, minority feminists and researchers succeeded in educating the public that these practices are not 'Islamic'. They also criticized Wikan's and Storhaug's attempts to use the issue of forced marriages as an argument to tighten immigration regulations on family reunification. In the proposal for a new immigration law in 2007, the government dropped the widely-criticized 'Danish rules' on family reunification, which Storhaug had lobbied for (see Razack 2008:129; Fekete 2006:6; 13-14). Instead, they increased the income requirement (see Gudbrandsen 2011:378-379) to a level that makes family reunification difficult to obtain for many couples, with possible negative consequences for more families than the restrictions in Denmark.

When Storhaug (2007) moved on to campaign against the hijab with her book *Veiled. Unveiled*, Norwegian Muslims were no longer on the defensive but mobilized to assert their religious identity. The hijab issue differs from the practices discussed above; it does not violate human rights, but can be defended with reference to freedom of religion. Unlike violent excesses of certain cultural traditions, veiling is a religious practice that has become a central part of Muslim women's identity. In my analysis, I focus on Muslim women's responses leading to a 'breakthrough' for Muslim feminism in the public sphere in 2009. My analysis is restricted to debates about the headscarf or hijab, and does not discuss calls to ban the less common 'burqa' and 'niqab' that cover the entire face. (Opposition to these forms of veiling is backed by stronger arguments, e.g. that covering the face prevents communication and identification, and mainstream Muslims do not defend these. There is thus less to debate, besides the important issue of whether it is wise to criminalize these rather marginal forms of veiling.)

The French hijab affair

The first Norwegian hijab debate was directly inspired by the French ban in 2004, the end result of *l'affaire du foulard* (the 'headscarf affair') which started fifteen years earlier and is regarded, together with the Rushdie Affair in Britain, as one of two public controversies in 1989 that marked the start of a European turn against multiculturalism. The controversy started when three North African Muslim girls wore hijabs to school in Creil outside Paris. The headmaster argued that this violated the principle of *laïcité* (the French version of secularism) and suspended the girls. Other Muslim school girls showed solidarity by wearing hijabs, taking a local controversy to the national level. The Socialist Education Minister Lionel Jospin referred to the *Conseil d'Etat* (Supreme Court), which ruled that the hijab did *not* violate *laïcité*, provided it was not an act of "pressure, provocation, proselytism or propaganda". Whether it was, should be decided by local authorities from case to case (Parekh 2000:249; Kastoryano 2006; 57-59).

Some years later, veiled girls were again expelled from school, followed by acts of solidarity by other Muslim girls. In 1994, Conservative Education Minister Francois Bayrou ruled that while wearing "discreet" religious symbols was acceptable, the hijab

was an "ostentatious" symbol that in itself contains elements of proselytism or discrimination, and it was banned as a matter of public policy (Kastoryano 2006:59; Parekh 2000:250-251). This decision resulted in a national debate, where one side advocated the right to difference and negotiations with Muslims, while the dominant position defended strict *laïcité* and was hostile to compromises with Muslims. As described by Parekh (ibid), the majority position was that;

> France was a single and indivisible nation based on a single culture. The school was the central tool of assimilation into French culture and could not tolerate ethnic self-expression. The hijab was particularly objectionable because it symbolized both a wholly alien culture and the subordinate status of women. Wearing it implied a refusal to become French, to integrate…

This position implies that opposition to the hijab is not only based on *laïcité* but also linked to the French model of the nation, with its policy ideal of assimilation (see also Amir-Moazami 2004:89-91). As Riva Kastoryano (2006:61-62) points out, *laïcité* is a central part of the French republican model, and described in the constitution as assuring equality to all citizens regardless of "origin, race or religion". In this model of the nation, the public sphere is supposedly neutral with regard to religion, while the state tolerates religion (as belief or practice) and culture (including religious identity) as long as they are exercized by individuals in the private sphere. The presence of Islam challenges this model in several ways; as a religious minority with a public expression in a country where both religion and minorities should have no public role. The hijab affair constructed Islam as incompatible with (Western) secularism and Muslims as an unassimilable minority (ibid, 58). The universalist French model sees assimilation as basis for equality, and public schools have a central role in "unifying the nation" (see also Freedman 2004:10). Like the American model, the French republic rejects the 'German' emphasis on ethnicity and ancestry and defines belonging to the nation primarily in terms of citizenship. But unlike the United States, which publicly recognizes cultural communities, the French model is individualist and seeks to assimilate its citizens (Kastoryano 2006:62).

Jane Freedman (2004:16-17; see also Amir-Moazami 2004:117-118; Plesner 2004:160) points out that there have always been different interpretations of the concept of *laïcité*, with an important distinction between a more "strict" version that seeks to keep religion strictly in the private sphere, and a more "open" or "inclusive" version with more room for pluralism. Throughout post-revolutionary history in France, the strict form of secularism has tended to be intolerant and hostile to religion, at times restricting individual rights to religious freedom, persecuting believers and placing congregations under state surveillance and control. In the hijab affair, political opinion was divided across party lines; only the *Front National* unanimously supported a ban in line with public opinion according to polls. The Socialist Party was especially divided, which

explains why Jospin turned to the *Conseil d'Etat* to make a decision*,* which turned out to reflect an 'open' version of *laïcité* (Freedman 2004:13-19). Also conservative politicians, including Bayrou in 1989 and Nicolas Sarkozy (who later became President, 2007-2012) in 2003 initially favored an 'inclusive' version of secularism that would allow the hijab, but later turned towards a strict interpretation. When the ban was passed in 2004, it was backed by an overwhelming majority in Parliament, which Freedman (ibid, 19) interprets as a 'return' to strict *laïcité* and assimilation.

Drawing on Sartre and Fanon, Max Silverman (2007:59-75) seeks to "unveil the hidden ideology" of the French model, and focuses on the paradox of denying 'race' and racism while simultaneously racializing difference. He argues that the ideology of Enlightenment universalism which claims to assure equality through cultural assimilation, in practice essentializes difference when individuals of certain backgrounds need to be liberated from their particular cultures in order to become equal, while natural-born Frenchmen do not. Despite stated intentions not to see difference, highlighting the hijab as a "threat to secularized, Western civilization" (ibid, 67) that needs to be outlawed, stigmatizes veiled Muslim women, and makes them more visible in the homogenizing French public sphere than in pluralist Britain and the US, where such 'difference' is seen as 'normal'. While French republicans claim that British and American multiculturalism leads to racial segregation; France itself is a deeply divided nation with a racialized underclass.

French assimilation policy is historically linked to the colonial strategy of the *civilizing mission*. In Algeria, French colonizers were intent on unveiling Muslim women in the 1930s. In Fanon's (1989:37-38) words, their political doctrine was;

> "If we want to destroy the structure of Algerian society, its capacity for resistance, we must first of all conquer the women; we must go and find them behind the veil where they hide themselves and in the houses where the men keep them out of sight".

Fanon argues that the colonial power tried to break down traditional Algerian society by targeting women for assimilation and exposing them to the colonizer. There are two justifications behind this desire to unveil; first the veil represents or symbolizes tradition, and second, it also hinders assimilation efforts by 'hiding' women from the colonizers' supervision (Thorbjørnsrud 2004:38). The strategy to 'conquer the women' also seems to inspire Storhaug's organization *Human Rights Service*, whose strategy of "feminine integration" builds on the idea that women play a key role in 'integration' as noted in their slogan: "If you integrate the mothers, two-thirds of the work is done, because she will integrate the children" (see HRS website). Given that the organization favors assimilation and opposes veiling, it can be seen to reflect ideas from French colonial policy.

Rather than challenging the republican model, French Muslims argued in the hijab affair that they were not treated equal to other religious groups like Catholics and Jews. Bayrou defended the ban by arguing that the hijab could not be compared to symbols of other groups; first, it is proselytizing because it puts pressure on other Muslim girls; second, it represents oppression of women; and third, it is an "ideologically motivated assertion of religious identity" (see Parekh 2000:251) inspired by 'Islamism'. Other politicians justified unequal treatment with reference to liberating girls from patriarchal traditions (ibid, 253), emphasizing that the state should protect individual freedom (Kastoryano 2006:60). Parekh (ibid, 251-253) argues that religious symbols cannot be discussed as abstract equivalents, and emphasizes that the validity of arguments needs to be assessed empirically. The hijab affair was not settled until 2003, when President Jacques Chiraq appointed a commission led by Bernard Stasi, which suggested that the hijab, along with other 'conspicuous' religious symbols, should be banned in public schools. The new law was passed early in 2004 (Kastoryano 2006:59). These French events were a direct pretext for debates in other European countries.

Germany also had national hijab debates, although less intense than in France, resulting in at least seven German states banning the hijab for school teachers (Amir-Moazami 2005:269; Phillips 2007:115; Rottmann & Ferree 2008:491). German Muslims, mainly of Turkish origin, are largely working-class and poorly educated, and even younger educated Turkish women find limited work opportunities (ibid, 489). As they have been perceived as 'guest workers' who would return home, their 'integration' has been largely treated with indifference (Amir-Moazami 2005:269). In the German public sphere, religion plays a significant role as a result of church and state co-operation, which represents a German model of secularism in-between strict French separation and British establishment (ibid, 270). German debates started in 1998 when a hijab-wearing teacher, Fereshta Ludin, lost her job. Here, the hijab was perceived as a sign of 'cultural segregation' inappropriate for public servants. Unlike France, where 'neutrality' is understood in universalistic terms; in Germany, a 'neutral' public sphere is perceived as one being based on the 'Christian-occidental' character of German society (ibid). A prominent German 'secular Muslim', political scientist Bassam Tibi, argued that the hijab represents 'segregation', while 'integration' requires a secularized and depoliticized "Euro-Islam" adapted to a European *Leitkultur* ('guiding culture') (ibid, 273-275). German hijab debates tended to be framed in terms of a clash of civilizations discourse, where Islam is perceived as incompatible with Christian-Western values, including gender equality (ibid, 271). Susan Rottmann and Myra Marx Ferree (2008:487-488) note that the dominant form of German feminism is based on an idea of gender difference and skeptical of liberal notions of equality as sameness; a view shared with Muslim feminism. However, in German feminist discourse, Turkish and German cultures are seen as opposed (ibid, 495); the former seen as 'oppressive' and the latter as 'liberated'. Many German feminists supported a hijab ban, using arguments similar to

Okin in calling for state intervention to protect Muslim women's individual autonomy against 'Islamic patriarchy' in the private sphere (Rottmann & Ferree 2008:497-500). Some also argued that wearing a hijab should be seen as a 'free choice' but this view was rare in German public debate.

In neither France nor Germany did hijab-wearing Muslim women have a strong voice in public debates. A study (cited by Phillips 2007:117 and Killian 2003:572) among French Muslim women found three main reasons for wearing a hijab; (1) older immigrant women who had been wearing hijab since they were young, saw it as part of their ethnic or cultural identity; (2) young women who started wearing the hijab to assert their religious identity, often against parents' advice; and (3) younger girls who complied with parental pressure, in return for being allowed to go out alone and continuing education. Caitlin Killian's (2003) study among Maghrebi women in France, who are for the most part poorly educated and few have acquired French citizenship (ibid, 569) found that while older North African immigrants were often opposed to the hijab as "a lack of discretion by immigrants living in a host country" (ibid, 573), younger women, more likely to be educated and French citizens, wore the hijab as part of negotiating between parental cultural traditions and French society. They reject pressure to assimilate and demand recognition as both Muslim and French (ibid, 572; see also Amir-Moazami 2004:240-252), and defend the hijab as a matter of individual choice and respect for difference (Killian 2003:573). Killian (ibid, 586-588) distinguishes between three categories of Muslim women; (1) older and less educated women, either pro- or anti-hijab, did not engage with French arguments on secularism but saw religion as a personal matter that should not affect French public space; (2) young educated women criticized French racism and assimilation policy and used a discourse of individual rights and religious freedom; while a third group (3) supported the dominant French view and adopted majority arguments.

Comparing Muslim women's voices in these two countries, Amir-Moazami (2004:176-177) found that intense debate and general hostility towards Islam in France has "not encouraged women to opt for the headscarf in public spaces or to speak about the issue", which made it "more difficult to find interview partners in France than in Germany, where covered women have become a common part of the public life in larger cities". From hijab-wearing women's standpoint, the German public sphere seems more tolerant than the French (ibid, 197-198), especially for Turkish women who compare Germany favorably to the Turkish state's 'intolerance' (ibid, 236). Analyzing German debates, Rottmann and Ferree (2008:500-501) note that Muslim women's voices were not common in mainstream media, except two prominent anti-hijab advocates of Turkish origin (Seyran Ates and Necla Kelek), while hijab-wearing women "only seldom and reluctantly" joined debate. Studies show that mainstream German newspapers rarely quoted assertive Turkish voices in the 1990s, but Muslim voices have been publicized in 'alternative' smaller-circulation media (Amir-Moazami 2005:268).

Discussing British Muslims, Werbner (2007:126-129) notes that veiling can be a traditional practice as well as a strategic act, where "being observant Muslims empowers […] young men and women" to for example choose marriage partners against their parents' will. Also there, young Muslims criticize the parental generation's cultural traditions, which are seen as distortions of a 'true' Islam that stands for gender equality and gives them personal freedom. In Norway, a similar Islamic revivalism takes place among Muslim students, some of whom have been among the foremost public defenders of the hijab (Jacobsen 2005:155-162). The more multicultural and pragmatic British state has preferred persuasion and dialogue rather than legal prohibitions in relation to minority women's issues (Werbner 2007:120-121; 126-129). There, the hijab is seen as an expression of ethnic identity and protected by anti-discrimination laws; in contrast to France, which defines veiling as religious and linked to Islamism and oppression of women. In Norway, veiling is perceived as a religious rather than ethnic practice, and usually framed in terms of freedom of religion. While Parliament has passed special laws against female circumcision (1995) and forced marriages (2003), both of which were already illegal under existing legislation as law professor Anne Hellum points out (*Aftenposten,* April 12, 2005); in other cases politicians have shared the British reluctance to use the law in matters of 'integration' and rather relied on dialogue. Storhaug's lobbying for restrictions on family reunification and for a hijab ban have thus been unsuccessful, although her position is supported by a significant political minority, also within the ruling Labor Party.

Norway: First round of the hijab debates, 2004

The "first round" of Norwegian hijab debates took place early in 2004, when French arguments to ban the hijab in schools were introduced to Norway (Larsen 2004:52; Døving 2012b:28-30). Storhaug and the Progress Party praised the French ban, and proposed a ban against "religious symbols" in Norwegian schools (Eriksen 2004:98). In an interview with *Klassekampen* (December 16, 2003), Storhaug argues that the hijab *in itself oppresses women*, and rejects that a ban would be discriminating as the French law applies to all religions. She argues that; *hijab is ok after school hours, but not in school,* adding that; *not that it is ok after school hours, we still have the problem with women's oppression, but it is harder to control what people do in private.* She argues that the hijab indicates an increasing influence of immensely powerful religious forces. Unless the hijab is banned, she fears that;

> *large groups of second- and third generation immigrants will have primary loyalty to Islam and secondarily to their grandparents' home country. In other words, we will have a situation with lack of integration and develop a new underclass…*

Here, she implies a conflict of loyalty between Norway and Islam, where wearing a hijab means choosing Islam over Norway. In an interview with *Dagsavisen* (February 7, 2004), she elaborates;

> *Hijab is a political uniform that stands for a totalitarian, antidemocratic and fascist ideology. And if you wear the hijab, you directly or indirectly sympathize with violent Islamists [...] : Al Qaeda, the Muslim Brotherhood, Mullah Krekar.*

Here, she portrays Islam not as a religion, but as a political ideology, and uses arguments typical of anti-Muslim rhetoric. She blurs the distinction between Muslim religious practice and identity on one hand, and political Islam, which she equates with extremism and terrorism and compares to fascism (see Kundnani 2008:40-44; discussed in chapter 3). She implicitly refers to 'Islamo-fascism' which is common in the 'Eurabia' literature (see chapter 1), makes unwarranted generalizations about Muslim women and essentializes the hijab. In the same interview, she explicitly compares the hijab to political uniforms such as the *swastika* and the *Ku Klux Klan hood*. In these quotes, she also uses arguments from the French anti-hijab campaign; (1) that the hijab is essentially oppressive, (2) that it is a political symbol of Islamism, and (3) that it is an obstacle to integration.

Also in the winter 2003-2004, Ambreen Pervez, a 25-year-old Norwegian Pakistani student lost her part-time job at a furniture store in Oslo, A-møbler, because she chose to wear a hijab at work. She complained to the ombudsman for gender equality, who supported her and rejected the employers' arguments about neutral dress code (*Aftenposten*, January 18, 2004; see also Jacobsen 2011:162). Eventually, she was allowed to resume her job (see also Eriksen 2004:99). On January 17, 2004, Muslim demonstrations took place in major European and Middle Eastern cities to defend the right to use the hijab and oppose the French law proposal. In Oslo, young women from the Muslim Student Society mobilized for the demonstration, in cooperation with mosques and the Centre against Ethnic Discrimination (SMED). Some hundred people protested against the French ban, suggestions to ban the hijab in Norway, and workplace discrimination of hijab-wearing women (Jacobsen 2011:160-162). They emphasized that the hijab is about freedom of religion, and that it is an individual choice and not a sign of oppression (*Aftenposten,* January 18, 2004), as expressed in slogans quoted by Jacobsen (ibid): "Don't touch my hijab", "Hijab is my dignity", "Language is the key, hijab is no hindrance", "Hijab is our pride and joy", "Do not get blinded by my beautiful hijab", "Let the children know their parents' religious convictions", "I'm intelligent and qualified", "My hijab hurts no-one", "Media creates harassment and much ado. They do not decide what we shall do", "Hijab is my identity" and "Stop the Islamophobia". These slogans mostly reflect a language of anti-racism and freedom of religion, but also reflect what Modood (2007:39) called 'turning a negative difference into a positive identity' which is central to multiculturalism (Jacobsen 2011:162-163).

Eriksen (2004) summarizes what we might call the "first round" of Norwegian hijab debates that took place during the winter months of 2003-2004. He notes that the Progress Party was the only political party that followed up Storhaug's suggestion for a ban (ibid, 99; see also Jacobsen 2011:161-162). In major newspapers, editorials and commentaries were almost unanimously opposed to a ban, while contributions to opinion pages were split in the middle between pros and cons. Eriksen's (ibid, 100-110) content analysis shows that Storhaug's arguments were widespread among the majority; most common was that the hijab oppresses women, followed by claims that it prevents "integration" (as expressed by the Progress Party), symbolizes Islamism (also Progress Party), and threatens Western civilization (philosopher Nina Karin Monsen). Even majority Norwegians opposed to a ban, tended to see veiling as "unfortunate" and were "provoked" that Muslim women did not want (or were not allowed) to "be free". Some Muslims supported a ban, but most Muslim women defended their right to wear a hijab as a personal choice and expressed pride of being Muslim in the face of stigmatization.

Second round: *Veiled. Unveiled*, 2007

In the autumn of 2007, Storhaug published the book *Veiled. Unveiled*, where she supports a hijab ban for school children and public servants. The book stirred a debate in national newspapers, including *Aftenposten, Dagbladet* and *Klassekampen*. In an article targeting *Dagbladet* journalist Zakia Ahmed Akkouh, who wrote that she freely chooses to wear a hijab for religious, not political, reasons (*Dagbladet* online, 5 October 2007), Storhaug summarizes her main arguments under the headline; *Anti-human hijab* (*Dagbladet Magasinet*, 9 October 2007). Starting with a reference to the *Enlightenment* as the *midwife of democracy* with its revolt against *religious dogma and oppression*, she argues that the hijab *symbolizes an ideology that stands for an outright darkening* [a reference to the Dark Ages] *of our society and destruction of human rights.* She argues that either hijab-wearing women are aware of it or not, the hijab is *constructed by* […] *Islamists* […] and its *essential values are the totalitarian ideology of Islamism and a state ruled by sharia;* and specifies that she refers to an *antihuman ideology* and *barbarian sharia law*. Hijab is accompanied by *"a full package" of demands for gender segregation* […] *and women's rights are restricted* […] *in most areas of life.* Finally, *hijab breeds hijab. Hijab breeds un-freedom for the individuals involved, and increases the pressure on our values of freedom.*

Here, we can identify three arguments also used by the French education minister, as discussed by Parekh (2000:251). To start with the latter two; Storhaug claims that 'hijab breeds hijab' i.e. it is proselytizing, and it is linked to oppression of women. It appears that a third argument is more important to Storhaug; that the hijab represents a 'barbaric' and 'anti-human' ideology from the Dark Ages that threatens the values inherited from the Enlightenment; e.g. freedom, democracy and human rights. Critical reviewers in *Dagbladet* (October 5, 2007) and *Aftenposten* (October 7) focused on

Storhaug's perception of *Islam as a threat* (*Aftenposten*) and her *irrational fear of Islam* (*Dagbladet*), resulting from generalizations and lack of nuances, where she equates Muslim religious practice with political Islam, and political Islam with extremism. Both reviews note that her current *crusade* (*Dagbladet*) against hijab (Storhaug 2007) repeats many arguments of her previous *polemic against Islam* (*Aftenposten*) in the book *But the Greatest of These is Freedom* (Storhaug 2006). In this book, a chapter on "what went wrong" with Islam (ibid, 157-167) is based on the writings of Lewis, who Storhaug characterizes as "perhaps the most prominent academic expert on Islam" (ibid, 157). Lewis argues that the 'absence of secularism' explains the gap between Islam and modernity, and is the cause of current problems in Islamic civilization characterized by "lack of freedom". While recognizing a struggle among Muslims, Lewis essentializes Islam as an "unchanging doctrine" and uses the West as a standard against which to measure which Muslims are doctrinal and "fundamentalist" and which ones are modern, secular and westernized (see Mamdani 2004:20-24).

In *Orientalism*, Said (1994) discusses Lewis as an example of an academic who "purports to be liberal [and] objective" but is in fact "aggressively ideological" in his "propaganda *against* his subject matter" (ibid, 316), and who has an "extraordinary capacity for getting nearly everything wrong" by "distorting the truth" and "making false analogies" (ibid, 342). Orientalist scholarship essentializes Islam; Muslims are Muslims, they never change, and they need to be "watched" because they hate and threaten the West (ibid, 317-318). According to Said, Lewis uses "extreme levels of generalization" which ignore differences among Muslims; he insists that Islam never secularized, and warns Westerners against the "threat of an enraged, congenitally undemocratic and violent Islamic world" (ibid, 342). Said notes the exchange of ideas between academic Orientalism and politicians' and journalists' rhetoric about Islam (ibid, 343). Storhaug follows a historical pattern of European "combination of fear and hostility" (ibid) towards Muslims.

In the debate that followed in *Aftenposten*, *Dagbladet* and *Klassekampen*, most contributors were critical of the book. Several Muslim women argued that wearing the hijab is a matter of free choice and religious practice, while some individuals from both majority and minority defended Storhaug's position. Among the latter was Sara Azmeh Rasmussen (*Klassekampen,* 1 November 2007). Most contributions focused on the claim that the hijab represents political extremism; an argument that was pursued in two different ways. One focused on Muslim women, their degree of choice in wearing the hijab, and the complex relationship between hijab and political Islam, which can neither be equated nor dismissed. Another category of contributions problematized generalizations and negative portrayal of Islam, and sought to explain why some western feminists were provoked by the hijab, by placing that position in a larger political context of an alleged 'clash of civilizations'. In the following, I analyze selected contributions to newspapers' opinion pages, starting with those problematizing

the 'clash of civilizations' thesis in light of postcolonial theoretical perspectives (Razack 2008, Yegenoglu 1998, Göle 1996), before returning to the question of 'Islamism' and discuss Muslim women's contributions in light of Muslim feminist theory and contemporary Islamic revivalism (Jacobsen 2011; Mahmood 2005).

Problematizing Western imperialist feminism

Several contributors, including Iffit Qureshi (*Dagbladet,* October 18, 2007), anthropologist Kristin Engh Førde (*Klassekampen,* November 3, 2007) and philosopher Morten Lyngeng (*Dagbladet,* December 3, 2007), question Storhaug's feminist credentials and argue that her campaign is better understood in the context of nationalism and the "clash of civilizations" ideology. *Aftenposten*'s reviewer also wrote that *Storhaug is embraced by the anti-immigrant right, which has suddenly and unexpectedly become an advocate of* […] *women's liberation, gender equality and secularism.* These critical contributions indicate that in 2007, there was greater awareness in the Norwegian public sphere of postcolonial feminist positions that reject both traditional patriarchy and western imperialism, than in debates three years earlier. While postcolonial perspectives are implicit in many minority contributions, international scholars like Razack (2008:83-106) and Fekete (2006) have discussed contemporary alliances between western feminists and the anti-Muslim right. Fekete (ibid, 15) argues that "an assimilationist, monocultural society needs its feminist cheerleaders" and Razack (2008:84) identifies the "culture clash logic" as a factor that enables "blatant racism to be articulated in the name of feminism". Like Razack (ibid, 107-144), Fekete (2006:14) discusses Storhaug's role in Norwegian debates, and notes that she "marshals feminist sentiment to support giving the state additional powers to enforce assimilation".

In an explicitly postcolonial feminist contribution Qureshi writes that practicing Muslim women are currently fighting for the right to make their decisions independent from *self-appointed guardians like Hege Storhaug,* who marginalize and stigmatize them. She argues that the main problem does not lie in Muslim practices, but in the fact that;

> *politicians and organizations like the Human Rights Service* […] *create a one-sided and erroneous image of Muslims as barbarians who oppress women, while inciting enough media attention to spread a wave of fear throughout society.*

Similarly, Førde, who did fieldwork among young hijab-wearing Muslim women in Oslo during the 2004 debate, quotes a young Muslim woman; *Muslim women don't need Muslim men to oppress us* [when] *we got Hege Storhaug.* Another 'informant' said; *if she* [Storhaug] *had been on our side, she would listen to what we say.* Førde argues that it is unlikely that Storhaug's attack on the hijab is motivated by solidarity with Muslim women, and points out that while she had previously succeeded in presenting herself as a protector of minority women; her real concern is obvious in the

new book (Storhaug 2007); *she perceives the presence of Islam in the West in itself as a threat to modern democracy,* and reduces Muslim women to a battleground in a 'culture war'. Førde argues that the claim that Islamists force women to wear the hijab is empirically incorrect. Most young women make their own choice to wear the hijab; some are encouraged by their parents, while others do it against parental advice. They all justify wearing hijab with reference to religion; some take religious practice very personal, while others express a collective identity as Muslims. While acknowledging that some justifications for the hijab are problematic from a feminist viewpoint, Førde never heard anything that can be interpreted as a rejection of human rights. She argues that Storhaug's incomprehension of Muslim feminism would not make sense if women's liberation were her objective, and concludes that *hijab is probably a greater problem for the majority than for Muslim women.* Førde thus agrees with Razack (2008:143) who argues that feminists should focus on racism rather than on multiculturalism as a greater problem for minority women.

Qureshi explicitly criticizes *Storhaug's Eurocentrism* and *Huntington's "clash of civilizations"* thesis and discusses historical links between the Enlightenment and imperialism; a point often made by postcolonial theorists. Drawing on Charles Taylor's discussion of secularism, Bangstad (2012:56-57) discusses the modern myth of the Enlightenment as a transition from darkness to light, from religious irrationality to a secular rationality with a privileged status in the public sphere. He refers to "dogmatic and simplistic" perceptions of European Enlightenment in secularist rhetoric of al-Kubaisi and Hirsi Ali, who have "monopolized the Enlightenment for use in anti-Islamic discourse" (ibid). Drawing on Todorov, Bangstad argues that it is a myth that the Enlightenment should imply liberal standardization of religious others; instead, historical Enlightenment thinkers recognized both universal values and cultural pluralism. Yegenoglu (1998:95-96) argues that key humanist ideas from the Enlightenment, such as progress, modernization and universalism, legitimized the colonial civilizing mission. The roots of 'clash of civilizations' thinking can be traced to Enlightenment thinking, which constructed an irreconcilable opposition between the West as a model for modern civilization, and traditional ways of life. Citing Sartre, Yegenoglu emphasizes that the connection between humanism and imperialism is more than a historical coincidence; rather, the universal humanist ideal depends on a racist construction of the other as 'uncivilized'. Similarly, Spivak (cited in ibid) writes that the Western sovereign subject defines itself as human, civilized and universal by constructing the other as 'backward' and traditional, and thus as temporally distant. Pushing other cultures back in time enabled the West to construct itself as the subject of history; as the most developed and superior civilization it is entitled to dominate and impose its version of modernity universally.

Orientalist scholarship contrasted the Muslim world with the West, seeking to demonstrate that the Muslim world lacks freedom, progress, humanism and secularism.

Yegenoglu (1998:97-99) argues that the status of women became a prime indicator of Oriental backwardness. In colonial discourse, the veiled Muslim woman became the "concrete embodiment of oppressive Islamic traditions" (ibid), which prevented the Muslim world from catching up with Western progress. Criticism of cultural and religious practices in Muslim societies as oppressing women became central in ideological justifications of colonialism, and enabled liberal feminist rhetoric to be used in the service of imperialism. As a temporal contrast between tradition and modernity is essential to the difference between the West and the Muslim world, Orientalist discourse remains committed to proving that Muslim communities do not change. Assuming the situation of Muslim women to be the same today, contemporary feminist rhetoric shows remarkable similarities with colonial rhetoric, notably in a persistent desire to unveil Muslim women. As a highly visible marker of religious tradition, the veil is "taken as the sign of the inherently oppressive and unfree nature of the entire tradition of Islam and oriental cultures" (ibid). Political actors like Storhaug use Enlightenment rhetoric in contemporary integration debate, where, in Fekete's (2006:8-9) words; "non-western immigrants must cast off their 'backward culture' and assimilate into the modern, secular values of the Enlightenment". Fekete argues that an "Enlightenment fundamentalism" which understands the Enlightenment as a "sacred, finished process" not open to interpretation or adaptation, has become a dominant ideology in the wake of the "clash of civilizations" thesis, which European right-wing populists adapted in their rhetoric about a 'culture clash'.

In the hijab debate, Lyngeng (*Dagbladet,* December 3, 2007) suggests that rather than debating Muslims we should ask what functions stereotypical images of Muslims serve for a Norwegian national self-image. He argues that Storhaug does not hold these stereotypes because she is genuinely concerned about Muslim women and children, but because she is worried about Norwegian society. As expressed in her previous book;

> Focus must be on the national community – how we maintain the citizens' sense of belonging to Norwegian society; how this unity must be continued, through common language, shared basic values, knowledge about our history and culture; the glue that keeps us together as a people (Storhaug 2006:258).

In Lyngeng's analysis, Storhaug is primarily a nationalist rather than a feminist. Drawing on Lacanian psychology, he suggests that the "glue" keeping the nation together in Storhaug's imagination, is a stereotype of an anti-Western Muslim who represents a negation of all things Norwegian. Even if the nation were purified of all Muslim influence, the national self-image would still depend on the fantasy of the demonic Muslim; *it is not the actual presence of […] women's oppression that is the cause of […] Islamophobia, but one's own need to maintain a fantasy that simultaneously contrasts and confirms one's own self-image.* What Lyngeng describes resembles the 'Orientalist fantasy' analyzed by Yegenoglu (1998:106), who argues that

the sub-text of feminist desire to liberate Muslim women from oppressive traditions was to achieve a self-representation as sovereign subjects. Drawing on the Lacanian notion of 'fantasy' (Yegenoglu 1998:4), she examines the unconscious psychological processes of Orientalism as "a set of discursive effects that constitute the subject" (ibid, 2). In other words, she discusses how one becomes a Western subject through a process of imagining oneself within a collective fantasy of belonging to a "Western culture" (ibid, 4). The idea of the modern "subject" has been criticized by feminists for universalizing the category of "man" while marking "woman" as a radically different other with characteristics opposed to those of the subject (ibid, 6). Following this analysis; since the universal has been appropriated by men, women can only achieve this subject position by denying their difference and assuming a masculine position (ibid, 105). One way of doing this is for western feminists to take on the 'white woman's burden' to civilize Muslim women, which places them in a dominant position of power towards other women, while evading the issue of women's oppression in the west. Yegenoglu suggests that Western women seek to achieve a status as sovereign subjects by imitating the masculine act of imperialism. In Razack's (2008:86) words, the Western subject becomes a subject by signifying the Other as different, and the veiled Oriental woman confirms the Western subject position. Unveiling Muslim women, as an act of imperialism, constitutes western women as colonial subjects (ibid, 109).

In public debate about Storhaug's book, critics pointed out that her ideal is the *extreme secularism* (Førde) found in France and Turkey (*Aftenposten*'s review). While I return to a more detailed discussion of moderate and radical secularism in chapter 5, the case of Turkey as a Muslim country with a westernizing ideology is illustrative. Yegenoglu (1998:122) discusses how Orientalist discourse was reproduced in nationalist projects within Muslim countries. Like in the Algerian liberation struggle, the question of women and the veil is turned into a battleground also in the Turkish struggle between 'Islamism' and the 'Westernist' ideology of the state (see also Göle 1996:31; 50). Yegenoglu (ibid, 126) notes that the Turkish nationalist project, led by Mustafa Kemal, took Westernization as its ideology and emphasized the principles of the European Enlightenment in the construction of Turkey as a modern secular nation-state. In Kemalist ideology, to be civilized was equated with Westernization, and progress was measured by distancing from Islam (p. 131; see also Göle 1996:16), which was blamed for keeping women in the dark ages. Turkish reformers took over a Eurocentric concept of civilization that implies Western superiority and attributes universality to the Western model (ibid, 58), or more accurately, to the cultural model of European upper classes (ibid, 13) and denounced traditional Islamic values while glorifying western humanist notions of rationality, progress and freedom. Kemal was very specific about women's dress and behavior; the new Turkish woman was supposed to be unveiled, educated and Westernized. On the other hand, she should not imitate western women, but retain "feminine virtues" and authentic cultural traditions (Yegenoglu 1998:134). On the

Islamic side, the decline of the Ottoman Empire was blamed on the "contamination of Islamic values by Western culture" (Yegenoglu 1998:128). On either side, women did not have an autonomous subject position from which they could speak as women; rather, both Westernist and Islamic ideologies sought to define women's behavior in terms of 'true' national identity. When women took part in debate, it was always within terms "already established by the discursive polarization" (ibid, 130).

In her analysis of the "veiling movement" that emerged among Turkish students who mobilized to protest the ban against headscarves in the universities in the 1980s, Nilüfer Göle (1996:82-85) notes that the question of women has once again emerged at the center of political polarization, but this time, women are no longer simply objects and symbols of political struggles, but became active participants and political subjects. In contemporary 'Islamist' movements, veiling emerges not only as a "symbol of Islamization" but as a "political claim asserted by women" (ibid, 83). Göle rejects the dualistic framework that sees Islamist movements as anti-Western, anti-modern, traditionalist and reactionary (ibid, 137), and determined by external factors, either a cultural-religious essence or a political context of oppression and poverty (ibid, 8-9). Instead, she approaches them as 'social movements' with their own complex internal dynamics (ibid, 87), as active movements asserting Muslim identity and resisting homogenizing forces of Western modernity expressed in the Kemalist "civilizing project" which equated modernity with Western culture. Göle argues that in their criticism of Enlightenment modernity and the universalizing forces of Western civilization (ibid, 17), Islamic movements are similar to 'postmodern' social movements in the West, including feminism, environmentalism and particularly Black identity politics that rejects assimilation into white culture and turns 'difference' into a source of empowerment (ibid, 138). The politicization of Islam offers a religious way of life as an alternative to 'western' lifestyle (ibid, 92). Questions of gender and sexuality are central to this critique of Western modernity (ibid, 1).

Göle (ibid, 88-92) argues that contemporary veiling cannot easily be explained as enforced by men, as a rural tradition or as an effect of religious education, but primarily becomes a symbol of asserting Muslim 'difference'. It can be understood as the "outcome of a new interpretation of Islamic religion", by educated and "intellectual" young Muslim women and men, who reject their parents' traditional interpretations of Islam as well as a "secular way of life" (ibid, 17), and whose decision to veil often goes against the will of their families. Rather than passively accepting traditional norms and practices, veiled university students are assertive women who emerge in the public sphere seeking modern opportunities through education, "reappropriate" the Islamic faith in a radical way to reject traditional interpretations and seek a "true" Islam by returning to original scriptural sources (ibid, 4-5). In this sense, fundamentalism is used to criticize tradition and construct a vision of modernity different from the Western version (ibid, 104).

Islamist students argue that in a utopian "Golden Age" of Islam, there was gender equality, and that gender roles and oppression of women result from misinterpretations (Göle 1996:104-105). They draw on religious scriptures to argue against traditional misinterpretations, pointing out for example that the Prophet did housework and that women worked as traders. Nevertheless, in Islamic tradition, veiling represents a social order based on gender complementarity and segregation (ibid, 93-95). Islamist women conform to this Muslim ideal of hiding their sexuality, and criticize Western feminist ideals, arguing that "sexually liberated" western women are exploited in capitalist economy (ibid, 101), paralleling claims by western radical feminists. They question a Western ideal of working women, sometimes with reference to economic exploitation. On one hand, politicized Islam promotes a traditional ideal of gender segregation that emphasizes women's modesty and morality and assigns them to the private sphere, but on the other hand, Islamism moves women to the political scene and replaces a traditional image of passive Muslim women with an image of a politically active, outspoken and militant Muslim woman (ibid, 21; 84). Educated Islamist women's political participation in the public sphere thus challenges traditional gender segregation with its separate gender roles that assign women to the private sphere (ibid, 1).

The 'fundamentalist' return to a 'true' Islam provides the movement with a utopian vision of an ideal society and an alternative lifestyle. However, there are different ways of interpreting original scriptures and reappropriating 'true' Islam, and that results in different political positions within the movement (ibid, 108). Drawing on Gilles Kepel, Göle (ibid, 108-110) distinguishes between two main directions within radical Islamism, which both advocate a 'return to the sources' to revive Islam; which she calls "political Islam" and "cultural Islam". Political Islam focuses on a "revolutionary" struggle against an external enemy of Western "imperialism" and prioritizes seizing state power to implement change top-down, with the Iranian revolution and establishment of an "Islamic state" based on sharia law as example. "Cultural Islam" also has a political dimension, but focuses on individual empowerment. Its relationship with the West is defined in terms of "interaction" rather than "reaction", and rather than changing the political "system", this direction aims at bottom-up 'Islamization' understood as "inner transformation" of individual religiosity and moral values of a community.

'Political Islam' provides women with an "activist-missionary identity" (ibid, 112-114), which empowers them to claim individual freedom but falls short of questioning traditional gender relations. The cultural orientation focuses on the individual and opens up for "transformative forces of intellectual Muslim women" (ibid, 127) including Muslim feminists who "identify Muslim men, instead of the Western world or traditions, as the main source of oppression and domination of women" (ibid, 129). While veiling becomes a basis for perpetuating gender segregation, Islamic women simultaneously enter the public sphere via political movements and initiate an

irreversible process of individualization within the movement, where they question the "private sphere" and transform existing gender relations (Göle 1996:139-140). Göle (ibid) concludes;

> Gender relations will be the key determinant to whether the Islamist movements evolve towards pluralism, which recognizes individual rights and civil society, or to the terrain of countersociety, which produces totalitarian tendencies.

Similarly, Ziba Mir-Hosseini (2007:1) distinguishes between a "neo-traditionalist" tendency associated with political Islam, which is "absolutist, dogmatic and patriarchal" and "makes little concession to contemporary realities and the aspiration of Muslims", and a "reformist" tendency (including Muslim feminism), which is "democratic, pluralist and rights-based" and makes "room for these realities and values, including gender equality". Rejecting a dualism between 'secularized Muslims' and 'fundamentalists', Mamdani (2004:38) emphasizes that the main distinction within 'Islamism' goes between those who are society-centered and democratic, and those who are state-centered and authoritarian. He argues that the position on 'ijtihad' – "the institutionalized practice of interpreting the sharia to take into account changing historical circumstances and, therefore, different points of view" – is the decisive issue that distinguishes democratic, society-centered and progressive Islamists from authoritarian, state-centered and reactionary ones (ibid, 60); in the former view, every Muslim individual has the right to interpret scriptures (as emphasized by Muslim feminists like al-Hibri; 1999:43-45), while the latter view reserves this right for a small elite of clerics. Mamdani (ibid, 50) links this distinction to two meanings of 'jihad'; a Muslim duty to make a spiritual, social, personal and political "effort" (or "struggle") to create a just and egalitarian society. The 'greater jihad' refers to a personal struggle for piety; the effort of each Muslim to become a better person; while the 'lesser jihad' can be defined as a "just war" (rather than holy war) against an external enemy. Since Islam sanctions rebellion against unjust rulers, Islamists like Abul A'la Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb have reformulated 'jihad' to mean military struggle to seize state power (ibid, 54). Mawdudi founded Jamaat-i-Islami, a religious movement and a Leninist-style authoritarian political party in Pakistan. While Mawdudi's ethical and intellectual vision was influential among the young, educated middle-class, the party did not gain much support in elections. However, it did become a conservative religious legitimizer of Zia's military dictatorship (see Modood 2010:24).

Hijab and "Islamism" among Norwegian Muslims

Those warning about the dangers of Islamism usually fail to distinguish between these two tendencies within the movement. Drawing on an essentialist understanding of Islamism as inherently anti-democratic, Storhaug (2006:182-183) claims that Islam practiced in Norway is a "mirror image" of Islam preached in Muslim countries, and that not one single Norwegian Muslim congregation promotes gender equality. In

particular, she focuses on how Norwegian Pakistani congregations, the Islamic Cultural Center and Idara Minhaj ul-Quran, are Norwegian representatives of Jamaat-i-Islami (Storhaug 2006:177-182); and on Ramadan's link to the Muslim Brotherhood (ibid, 171-177), echoing Berman's claim that he is an "Islamist in sheep's clothes" (ibid, 173). In *Aftenposten* (October 13, 2007), anthropologist Inger Lise Lien sums up Storhaug's project in the book *Veiled. Unveiled* as speculating on *links between Islamism, hijab and moderate religious congregations,* a claim that is *too serious to be ignored*. With regard to Idara Minhaj ul-Quran, Lien notes that; *if the most moderate of moderate mosques is a bunch of Islamists, then we have a problem*. Lien writes that *we know too little* about Islamist influence among Norwegian Muslims, and wants to know; *Are they against democracy? Do they want sharia law and the caliphate?* In the following (and in chapter 5), I investigate these questions.

In *Aftenposten* (November 2, 2007), spokeswomen Mariam Javed and Bushra Ishaq responded on behalf of the Muslim Student Society in Oslo, seeking to *nuance the image of Muslims in Norwegian society.* They argue that; *many of the values implied by liberal society are already present in Islam. We follow the Islamic way of life when we are integrated as good citizens,* and *we are good Muslims only if we are good citizens.* In other words, they argue that liberal and Muslim values are compatible. They attribute the erroneous public image of anti-democratic Muslims to media, which give space to *extremists* like Storhaug, who *creates polarization,* rather than to *experts, researchers and practicing Muslims,* who could *provide understanding and knowledge*. They argue that Storhaug is anti-liberal since she *wants to restrict individual freedom by proposing bans,* and that she *stigmatizes and condemns Muslim organizations that work for a well-integrated society*, when she *presents Minhaj as an extreme organization, while the mosque actively works against [...] forced marriages [...] and for greater participation of Muslim women in employment*. Javed and Ishaq argue that liberalism and Islam have many shared values, that following an Islamic lifestyle means integrating as active citizens of society, and that extremists like Storhaug work against integration by promoting an erroneous image of Islam as opposed to liberal society.

Storhaug responds in the same newspaper (November 5, 2007), and argues that *integration is particularly about internalizing core values of the society one lives in*, and challenges them to answer whether they follow Norwegian law because they are integrated, or because Islam requires them to do so. In other words, her understanding of 'integration' is closer to 'assimilation', and she insists that they have to choose whether to have primary loyalty to Norway or to Islam; and that they cannot be both at the same time. She questions Javed's and Ishaq's definition of themselves, of Minhaj ul-Quran and of Islam as "liberal", and describes the Muslim Student Society as a *conservative* organization that *invites Islamists to give lectures* (November 23, 2007). Storhaug (November 5, 2007) challenges the two Muslim students to answer a number of specific questions where sharia is supposedly in conflict with liberal notions of

gender equality; whether they defend that young girls should wear the hijab, if unrelated boys and girls can have joint social activities, if Muslim girls can marry non-Muslims and Muslim boys can marry girls from non-monotheistic religions, if Muslim women can work closely together with male strangers, and whether women have a duty to obey their husbands. Ishaq and Javed answer (November 8, 2007) that; *if Muslims work for an integrated society based on their duty* [both] *as citizens and as practicing Muslims,* this reflects a *double obligation* which should be welcomed as positive. In other words, they reject that one has to choose a primary loyalty. With regard to the other questions, they reply that they *work for the right* [of Muslim women] *to decide for themselves and the freedom to self-realization as independent individuals.* Storhaug (November 13, 2007) repeats the questions because she is not satisfied with this answer. Ishaq and Javed (November 20, 2007) elaborate;

> *The questions asked by Storhaug are completely irrelevant with regard to integration and Norwegian law. Like everyone else in a liberal society, Muslims have the freedom to decide their own social activities and dresscode. [...] When the individual right to independent choices is upheld and there is no coercion, one may practice one's beliefs as one wishes, of course provided that one fulfills one's duties as a citizen.*

Ishaq and Javed here use liberal arguments, particularly the individual freedom to choose how to practice one's religion. They answer the questions about following specific sharia prescriptions, by emphasizing that this should be the decision of each individual Muslim. They refuse to impose religious prescriptions on others, but at the same time defend the individual right to choose to comply with such prescriptions. In other words, they assert their individual right to make choices that differ from Storhaug's cultural preferences. Ishaq and Javed position themselves within the "progressive" tendency in the Islamic movement, promoting the practice of Islam as an individual choice, in contrast to those who try to impose their own interpretations on others (Göle 1996:140; Mamdani 2004:60; al-Hibri 1999:43-45).

While some Norwegian Muslim congregations have organizational links to the Pakistani Islamist party, and distribute Islamist literature such as Mawdudi's (Storhaug 2006:181; Jacobsen 2011:18; 64), it is not clear whether an ideological influence of Mawdudi or other Islamist writers is reflected among its members. Jamaat-i-Islami is also established in Britain, and has some idealist supporters, but otherwise little influence among politically pragmatic and non-ideological British Pakistanis (Modood 2010:23-24). As with other organizations, we can expect to find a diversity of viewpoints expressing various degrees of engagement with different writings rather than strict ideological adherence. Thorbjørnsrud (2004:48) argues that while the hijab as an ideological symbol (still) exists, it would be mistaken to claim that it necessarily implies Islamist sympathies for most hijab-wearing women. While the meanings of the hijab are

complex, what Thorbjørnsrud calls "the new veil" is always a marker of a woman's religious identity. Leaving these congregations aside, I focus on the discourse in the Muslim Student Society in Oslo, because several of the organization's leaders, including Mohammed Usman Rana (2007-08), Mariam Javed (2008-09) and Bushra Ishaq (2009-10), would emerge as high-profile debate contributors in the years 2008-2010. Rana started the 'secularism debate' (see chapter 5) in 2008, while Ishaq was central to the public breakthrough of Muslim feminism in 2009. While the political, cultural and religious context in twenty-first century Oslo differs from 1980s Turkey in important ways, there are interesting parallels between the Islamic revivalist student movements as analyzed by Jacobsen (2011) and Göle (1996), respectively.

The 'hijab-in-the-police' debate in 2009

A third round of Norwegian hijab debates, which led to the public breakthrough of Muslim feminist perspectives took place in February 2009. The debate about hijab in the police (see also Døving 2012b:30-33) started when a young Muslim woman who wanted to study at the police academy, Keltoum Hasnaoui Missoum from Sandnes wrote a letter to the Police Directorate asking whether she would be allowed to wear a hijab with the police uniform. From September 26, 2008, the issue was covered by the regional newspaper *Stavanger Aftenblad*, a newspaper which, according to editor Tom Hetland (2009:63) has a "positive attitude towards multicultural society" and from the start supported Missoum, arguing that allowing female Muslim police officers to wear a hijab with the uniform, as they do in Sweden and Britain, would promote integration. Until February 2009, *Stavanger Aftenblad* was alone to follow the case, reporting on various viewpoints and following up authorities' processing of the request. Both the Police Directorate and the Justice Ministry refused to answer questions from the media. On February 4, 2009, a recommendation from the Directorate to the Ministry, dated November 10, 2008, was publicized. In the letter, the Directorate emphasized that in order to maintain trust among all sections of society, the police force should reflect diversity; and "it is hardly decisive for […] police neutrality that one cannot show one's difference by religious headgear, but only by diversity based on other, non-uniform-related aspects" (quoted in Spigseth 2010:43). The same day, the Ministry confirmed in a press release that "police uniform regulations will be changed to allow the use of religious headgear together with police uniform" (Hetland 2009:64; Spigseth 2010:45). In a letter to the Directorate dated February 10, the Ministry wrote that the hijab should be "adapted to the uniform" and "be neutral" (quoted by ibid, 48).

This decision caused massive protest, from the Norwegian Police Union represented by leader Arne Johannessen to politicians from coalition parties and opposition, not least the Progress Party. Massive public pressure caused the government to retreat, first calling for a more thorough exploration of the issue, and then, on February 20, Justice Minister Knut Storberget announced at a press conference that the decision to allow the

hijab had been a "mistake". The initial press release of February 4 was withdrawn, and replaced by a new one, quoting Storberget that "debate has shown that such a change can weaken perceptions of police neutrality", and that;

> "In light of public debate that has taken place in recent weeks, I have concluded that general trust in perceiving the police as neutral, must carry more weight in this issue. I have thus requested that the further process in the Police Directorate be stopped." (Ministry of Justice, February 20, 2009).

It also says that "in the period after requesting further exploration of the issue, it has become clear that there is little support within the police force, in the general population and in Parliament, to make changes to Police uniform regulations" (ibid). Discussing the neutrality argument in these debates, Bangstad (2012:60-61) argues that these concerns are speculative because so far, there are no hijab-wearing Muslim women in the police or courts who may undermine perceptions of neutrality. Notably, countries like Sweden and Britain have allowed hijabs without perceiving it as a threat to neutrality. Later, the Ministry explained to the Equality and Anti-Discrimination ombud, which had requested further justification, that "in recent public debate [there] have been different perceptions about whether the hijab is only a religious headgear. It has been claimed that hijab is also a political symbol" (quoted in Spigseth 2010:47). The ombud recognized that the neutrality argument was valid, but argued that a ban on religious headgear is unnecessary to maintain neutrality; it is "hard to see that the Justice Ministry has justified its position that it is necessary to ban the use of religious headgear in order to appear as neutral and impartial towards the public" (quoted in ibid, 50). Concluding that the decision against police hijabs violates Gender Equality *and* Anti-Discrimination Acts, the ombud agreed with the Ministry's original position, that hijab is compatible with neutrality. In its final reply to the ombud, the Ministry writes that; "Trust is […] based on the fact that Norwegian police is perceived by large parts of the population as a neutral agency and not an instrument for specific interests, nor religious congregations or faiths" (quoted in ibid, 52). The exchange shows that 'neutrality' is about perceptions; for one side, it is assured by reflecting diversity, while from another perspective, what counts as 'neutrality' is determined by public opinion, favoring the majority and discriminating minorities (see Modood 2007:24-26).

In official justifications, the Justice Ministry acknowledged that it had changed its position as a direct result of public debate. Analysts agreed that the government gave in to public pressure because they were not "prepared to handle the principled and ideological aspects of the hijab issue" (Hetland 2009:65). Leirvik (*Dagbladet,* February 28, 2009) draws a parallel to the same Ministry's turnaround on the blasphemy issue two weeks earlier (see chapter 2), and comments that *the government chose the cowardly way out when resistance came. Partly out of fear for losing voters to the Progress Party (one would believe), the proposal was withdrawn.* Before the

withdrawal, election researcher Bernt Aardal (*Aftenposten,* February 18, 2007), also noted this parallel, and predicted that the Progress Party would have most to gain from this debate, regardless of the final outcome. By this time, former Progress Party leader Carl I. Hagen had already linked the hijab in the police to *snikislamisering* (literally, 'sneak-Islamization' or 'subtle Islamification' as translated by Jacobsen; 2011:169; 197). He argued that countless Muslim demands for *special treatment* are *frightening* (*Aftenposten*, February 15, 2009). At the party's national congress a day after the government's retreat, party leader Siv Jensen, who had already started campaigning for the September 2009 national elections, repeated Hagen's warning against accommodating Muslim demands for 'special treatment'. She also characterized the request for a police hijab as 'subtle Islamification' of Norwegian society (*Dagsavisen,* February 21, 2009). From this perspective, the government was quietly trying to accommodate Muslim demands, but two controversial attempts (the blasphemy law and the police hijab) were stopped by public watchdogs.

In March, Labor party secretary Martin Kolberg announced that Labor would take up the battle against 'radical Islam' and was criticized within the party for using Progress Party rhetoric. At the same time, the Progress Party became the largest party in some opinion polls, with up to 30 per cent of votes. The party leader attributed the strong polls to the hijab debate, as did *Dagsavisen*'s political editor Arne Strand; *Labor's fall started when the justice minister tripped over the Muslim headscarf and Labor politicians went a long way to support Progress Party views* (*Dagsavisen*, March 18, 2009). The hijab debate demonstrated a division within Labor over issues of multiculturalism, where Justice Minister Storberget, Foreign Minister Støre and the Labor Youth League (AUF) are positive to accommodate minority demands, while party secretary Kolberg and the party's women's group are against. These tendencies within Labor were criticized by Islamic Council secretary general Shoaib Sultan (*Dagsavisen,* March 18, 2009), who said; *we expect something else from Labor than from the Progress Party. Kolberg's statement* […] *was perceived as Labor jumping on the bandwagon of Progress Party rhetoric.*

Ambreen Pervez and Farah Khan (*Aftenposten,* March 1, 2009) criticized the government for *condoning xenophobia* with its retreat on the hijab issue. They mention former minister of gender equality (2005-07) and Labor Party women's movement leader Karita Bekkemellem's comparison of the hijab with female genital mutilation; and Labor MP Marit Nybakk's underestimation of hijab-wearing women, as examples of anti-Muslim attitudes in the social-democratic party. They write; *we are hurt that the party that has for decades fought for justice in Norway, has powerful politicians who do not want to extend justice to thousands of Norwegian Muslim girls.* They emphasize that *we don't need to swear to western feminism and women's liberation in order to realize ourselves as modern and independent women,* and; *we do not need forces like Ayaan Hirsi Ali* […] *in order to become successful Western women.* Pervez and Khan were two

among many assertive Muslim women who joined public debate in the aftermath of the hijab-in-the-police debate, fought for the right to be 'different, but equal' and demanded to be accepted as modern and independent Norwegian (even 'Western') women, while practicing Islam, wearing a hijab, and asserting a public identity as Muslim women.

This emergence of Muslim women in public debate was noted in *Klassekampen* (February 23, 2009), where Socialist Left politician Reza Rezaee commented that this debate marks the start of Norwegian Muslim women fighting for their rights on their own terms. Even though the government rejected the request for a police hijab, Rezaee argues that; *this has contributed to raise consciousness. Muslim women now use their voice in larger society to strike back.* Abid Raja, who had now become a Liberal Party politician and organized 'dialogue meetings' at the Literature House in Oslo, agrees; *even if the girls lost the battle, they have won a place in public debate.* He adds; *we now see five to ten new strong hijab-wearing Muslim women's voices. I think this can no longer be controlled by politicians nor anyone else.* One of the most visible Muslim voices was the new leader of the Muslim Student Society, Bushra Ishaq, who does not wear a hijab but defends other women's right to do so.

Public emergence of Muslim feminism

The term 'Muslim feminism' had occasionally been mentioned in Norwegian media, for example when covering Iranian anthropologist Ziba Mir-Hosseini's attendance at a conference in Oslo. On this occasion, she was interviewed in *Klassekampen* (June 11, 2008) by Amal Wahab, and a shortened version of Mir-Hosseini's lecture was printed in *Dagbladet* (June 4, 2008), translated by Marte Michelet. (It is no coincidence that these two journalists were respectively a Muslim woman (Wahab) and a radical feminist (Michelet). In her text, Mir-Hosseini writes about the polarized debate between western feminists and Muslim women, where *being a feminist implied being against hijab and everything it stood for, including "Islam"* and on the other side, *choosing hijab implied being religious – or seduced by political Islam – and thus, it was impossible to be feminist.* Like Göle, Mir-Hosseini argues that this dualistic debate fails to see that *political Islam contributed to create a space, an arena, where Muslim women could unite their faith and identity with a "feminist" battle for gender equality* (see also Mir-Hosseini 2006:639). This was not because Islamist leaders offered an egalitarian interpretation of religious texts, but because *their main agenda, "returning to sharia", gave Muslim women a language and legitimacy they needed to overcome a dominant discourse where demands for women's liberation were seen as a Western agenda* (see also Mir-Hosseini 2007:23). Islamist attempts to turn patriarchal and anachronistic interpretations of sharia into law, provoked women to criticize and argue that there is *no contradiction between Muslim faith and feminism.* In the early 1990s, Mir-Hosseini (ibid) writes, a new discourse on gender emerged that was

"feminist" in its ambitions and demands, and simultaneously "Muslim" in its language and source of legitimacy. Some versions of this new discourse have been labeled "Muslim feminism" – an expression that is disturbing both to many Islamists and to some secular feminists.

Mir-Hosseini emphasizes the potential of Muslim feminists to *contribute to rewrite the conventional narrative about Islam,* which is *a necessary first step for a meaningful debate about the place of Muslims in Europe,* as an alternative to unconstructive Western support for women like Hirsi Ali, who *confirm Euro-American colonial policy, perceptions about moral and cultural superiority, and a narrative where Muslim women are presented as captives that must be saved from outside,* but who *read the holy scriptures of Islam in an equally patriarchal and dogmatic way as the Taliban they loudly and self-righteously condemn.* Mir-Hosseini (2006:632) argues that Muslim women struggle against two opposed ideologies, an Islamic 'fundamentalism' that glorifies Islam without acknowledging abuses in its name, and a secular 'fundamentalism', which condemns Islam by equating it with those abuses. Both these ideologies, like Muslim traditionalists, share an essentialist understanding of Islam (ibid, 641) as incompatible with feminism. Muslim feminists emphasize that "human understanding of Islam is flexible" (2007:23), and distinguish between 'sharia' understood as revealed law or a "totality of God's will as revealed to the Prophet Mohammed" and 'fiqh', the "science of jurisprudence". Sharia is sacred and universal; fiqh is subject to change (2006:632-633). Fiqh is often equated with sharia, but what Islamists present as sharia is actually their own patriarchal interpretations of God's will.

In *Dagbladet* (June 9, 2008), Qureshi supports Mir-Hosseini's position. She points out that the central argument in the *Klassekampen* interview is that Western secular feminism inspired Muslim women in the 20th century, but has nothing more to offer. Now, Muslim women define their own feminism, and since Muslim societies are religious, *only a women's movement that starts with religious texts will be able to leave an impact on Muslim societies* (see also ibid, 644). Mir-Hosseini writes that she has regular dialogue meetings with Iranian religious leaders, who are open to and respect her as a Muslim feminist. She argues that the situation for Iranian women is improving; two-thirds of Iranian students are women, women increasingly participate in the public sphere, and a women's movement is growing.

In Norway, Muslim feminism emerged primarily among students, and many 'new voices' in public debate have a background from student organizations in Oslo; including Ambreen Pervez, leader of the Pakistani Student Society (PSS) in 2006-07; Ilham Hassan, leader of the Somali Student Association (2007); and Mariam Javed and Bushra Ishaq, leaders of the Muslim Student Society (MSS) in 2008 and 2009, respectively. When Pervez, who became known to the public in 2004, was elected PSS leader, she was interviewed in *Aftenposten Aften* (November 3, 2006). Here, we learn

that all six PSS board members were female, because more Pakistani girls than boys study and girls are more interested in organizational work. In the interview, she says that she identifies as both 'Norwegian' and 'Pakistani', but primarily as 'Muslim'. She does not use the word 'feminism', but uses Islam to argue for the importance of higher education, and to criticize negative aspects of 'Pakistani culture' such as forced marriages; a common strategy among Muslim feminists (al-Hibri 1999:43-45; Göle 1996:88-92).

When Javed became the first female MSS leader, *Aftenposten Aften* (May 27, 2008) highlighted the fact that seven of nine board members were girls, all of them Pakistani. Under the sub-heading *Growing feminism,* it says that MSS girls don't want to emphasize gender, but acknowledge that they serve as role models, showing that Muslim girls can be active in the public sphere. On the other hand, they reportedly want to prioritize family over career, even though most of them do master's degrees. In this sense, there is a parallel with the Turkish student activists studied by Göle (ibid, 92-95; 99-100), who pursued higher education and were active in the public sphere while upholding aspects of traditional Muslim gender segregation and wanted to prioritize family over career, despite having higher education. In an interview in *Klassekampen* (May 21, 2008), Javed elaborates on her views on gender equality;

> *I support terms like equal dignity* [likeverd] *and difference feminism more than equal status* [likestilling]. *There should be room for a way of thinking that upholds differences between genders. When we go beneath a simplistic idea of equal status and see that we are different, that's when we respect each other.*

Here, she explicitly favors 'difference feminism' over forms of feminism that hold male practice as a standard for women. In practice, this implies that *in most circumstances,* she sees it as a matter *of course that women and men participate equally*, but supports gender segregation during prayers; *it is a Western idea that there should be equal status in every context. When we pray, focus should be on God. It is much easier to be separate, because then you can focus on God in peace and quiet.* While not identifying as a feminist, Javed discusses different versions of gender equality and tries to define an interpretation that is compatible with Islam. Anthropologist Christine Jacobsen (2011:270-271), who studied the Muslim Student Society, notes that the organization's members commonly criticized gender injustice and argued that gender equality is a 'fundamental principle' in Islam, but most often did not identify with 'feminism', which they associated with western feminists' patronizing attitudes towards them (see also Thorbjørnsrud 2004:41). They used Muslim feminist strategies of criticizing patriarchal 'interpretations' and based their criticism of gender injustice on a return to sacred scriptures to recover 'true' Islam and separate the 'cultural' from the 'religious' (Jacobsen; ibid). At the same time, they maintained a traditional Muslim view that there is an "essential and God-given difference between men and women" (ibid), reflecting a

discourse of "gender complementarity" (Jacobsen 2004:7-8), but the MSS was also a pioneer among Norwegian and European Muslim organizations to have mixed-gender religious activities rather than following traditional principles of segregation (Jacobsen 2011:89).

After the debate about the police hijab, *Klassekampen* (March 7, 2009) reported that a group of *Muslim feminists* had started a *hijab brigade,* and were going to participate in the Women's Day parade *to protest against the government's dropping the proposal for a police hijab.* The group was started by former head of the Somalian Student Association, the hijab-wearing Ilham Hassan, on Facebook and has mobilized about a hundred hijab-wearing women as well as male and female sympathizers, including Pervez, who mobilized for the hijab demonstration in 2004, and Qureshi. Pervez and Hassan call themselves feminists, and Hassan elaborates in the *Klassekampen* interview;

> *We ourselves have to define the meaning of feminism.* […] *Feminism means equal rights and equal opportunities for all, regardless of gender. Equal pay for equal work is important* […] *as is the right to decide over one's own body. Feminists before us fought for the right to choose abortion and the right to control pregnancy. But the right to decide over one's own body is also about being able to decide what to wear.* […] *For me, the right to wear hijab has become an issue to fight for.*

Hassan links Muslim women's struggle for the hijab to previous feminist struggles to decide over one's own body, and frames the hijab issue as a matter of women's rights to choose what to wear. She elaborates; *I support women's right to decide for themselves, not to be forced to do one thing or the other, either that means as little clothes as possible or as much clothes as possible.* She refers to western feminism in the 1970s, and argues that white and black women should together fight against the use of women's bodies in marketing, which puts pressure on teenage girls. She explains;

> *I do not think that western women are whores. I think we should stand united. We may disagree and still not judge each other. It is up to me to define feminism for me, and up to you to define it for yourself. It is such a pity that western women see a Muslim woman on the street and think she is oppressed.*

She argues; *Hijab is not oppressive, as long as it is chosen, as it is for most women.* […] *People claim they have read the Qur'an and found that it oppresses women, but that means they have read it from a negative angle, like the devil reads the Bible.* She acknowledges that some girls are forced to wear the hijab by their families, and says; *there are Muslim women who are oppressed and experience domestic violence. But this is not particular to Muslims. It is a serious social problem, which feminists are very concerned about.* She emphasizes that it is not 'religion' that oppresses women, but 'men'. Pervez also emphasizes the other side of their struggle, against patriarchal

cultural traditions of the parental generation; *Our women's struggle is not just to be able to wear the hijab, but also to focus on those who are being forced to wear it. We need to educate our parental generation about Islam. There is no coercion in religion. Thus, they must not force their children into marriage, female circumcision or veiling. That is an un-Islamic custom.* She points out that for many of them, the struggle with the parental generation is also about being allowed to wear hijab; *many of us have experienced that our parents are against hijab. They are afraid that we will be discriminated* […] *that people will think they are conservative and un-modern.*

Hassan builds her feminism on Islam, and says; *I am not a Muslim scholar, but I know that the Qur'an gives rights to women. In many Muslim countries, these rights are taken away. We have women's movements in those countries fighting day in and day out to get those rights.* She compares the situation in Muslim countries to Norway;

> *Here in Norway, where the general women's struggle has come much further, Muslim women's struggle is about discrimination women face everyday because of gender and religion. We have gender equality and anti-discrimination laws. Nonetheless, hijab-wearing girls cannot get the education and job they want.* […] *Hijab is allowed in* […] *low status jobs. But when talking about a profession that symbolizes power, it becomes a problem.*

On Women's Day 2009, the hijab was not only defended but also literally attacked by a secularist with a Muslim background, Sara Azmeh Rasmussen, who went on stage and burnt a hijab after the official program finished. Perceiving hijab as a *very strong symbol of oppression,* she argues that women who choose to veil, have to accept that by making that choice, they limit their options; *Women's right to choose the veil does not mean that they are necessarily entitled to wear it everywhere and in every context. The veil is a strong religious signal, which is not appropriate everywhere* (*Aftenposten,* March 8, 2009). Reportedly, some pro-hijab activists threw snowballs at Rasmussen.

Public recognition of Ishaq's debate contributions

Most media attention was given to medicine student Bushra Ishaq, who made many debate contributions during the year she was MSS leader. While defending Muslim women's right to wear hijab, she does not wear it herself; something that may have contributed to her popularity with media, in addition to sophisticated writing and position as student leader. In March 2010, she received the Freedom of Expression Prize from the Norwegian Freedom of Expression Foundation (Fritt Ord), with the justification; "Bushra Ishaq has, with her firm grounding in the Muslim faith and community, and with her reasoning and bridge-building approach, helped further a general understanding of what it means to live in today's multi-cultural society" (see also Døving 2012b:25). In her reception speech, printed in an edited version as an op-ed article in *Dagbladet* (May 11, 2010), she said;

*I have defended women's right to realize herself as an independent individual –
in a secular and pluralist context that also includes the right to religious self-
realization, in a free democratic society without coercion. I have argued in terms
of principles based on Norwegian values such as equal dignity, equality before
the law and gender equality. Because I have supported religious expressions and
defended the Muslim faith, I have been judged as an Islamist, fundamentalist and
accused of wanting to subtly Islamize Norway. I have been met with threats and
harassment like many other Muslim contributors who dare to join debates,
perhaps even more so because I am a woman.*

In the speech, she clarifies her position that combines women's individual self-
realization with practicing the Muslim faith. Although she supports 'Norwegian values',
she has been accused of supporting 'Islamism'. She explains this as a consequence of a
public discourse, where rhetoric is dominated by demagogy and populism. She refers to
Esbati (2009; see chapter 1), who draws on Hage (1998) and describes a form of debate,
where *description of a problem is a goal in itself, where debate as such and the affective
mood it produces, is the purpose*;

*In contemporary debate, a perception is cultivated that Muslims constitute a
problem simply by their existence, and are static carriers of certain
characteristics that imply social problems – a sort of racism that stigmatizes and
judges Muslim children before they are born.*

In a polarized climate of anti-Muslim racism, she questions the purpose of her own
contributions;

*Following my faith as a practicing Muslim, I am supposed to strive for peace
and thus abstain from activities that may contribute to increase the level of
conflict in society. My purpose has thus been to introduce the values of dialogue
into the debate arena – listen to my opponents with an open mind, respect and
neighborly love despite disagreement.*

Here, Ishaq not only presents a positive image of Islam as a peaceful religion, but also
makes a case for the relevance of religious perspectives in the public sphere, illustrating
how faith, as an ethical guide for public behavior, can make a positive contribution to
society in the public sphere (see also Jacobsen 2011:340). Ishaq's perspective also
represents a dialogue approach from below, from the minority side, and can be
characterized as 'antiracist multiculturalism'.

In other contributions, she elaborates a critical perspective on public debate. In an op-ed
in *Dagsavisen* (May 4, 2009), she argues that the 'hijab-in-the-police' debate went far
out of proportion. Rather than debating generalizations about Muslim women and
integration, the debate should have concentrated on the real issues; police neutrality and

Muslim women's choice of profession. Ishaq criticizes the government for failing to discuss the issue as a value question in a multi-religious society, where *we have to discuss where the limits of religious practice should be when defining ourselves as a liberalist and democratic society,* and instead leaving the scene open to polemics and polarization. She argues that there is a general tendency in political rhetoric that *the issue of integration is not taken seriously, but turned into a populist argument with big words without concrete suggestions.* In this case, *the government's conclusion to say no to hijab is a demand for assimilation, not integration, where one has to change one's religious practice in order to pursue a career.* She places the government's response to the police hijab in the context of integration policy, which has turned gender equality into a question of integration. This approach universalizes a Norwegian version of gender equality which it expects minorities to assimilate to (Gressgård & Jacobsen 2003:73-74). Ishaq points out that among young Norwegian Muslims; women perform better than men in statistical measures of integration, such as education and active participation in society.

In two other op-eds, she positions herself in relation to 'Muslim feminism'. Before the hijab-in-the-police debate culminated, she wrote in *Dagbladet* (January 31, 2009); under the headline *Western monopoly on feminism,* where she argues that feminism is essential to a just society, and should *not be restricted to apply only in a western context, but also in a multicultural and religious perspective.* However, *Western ideological dominance creates problems,* and feminism is often rejected in Muslim societies because it is seen as secularist. Ishaq writes that *every Islamic expression in favor of feminist values is played down with a reference that feminism can only exist in a secular context.* This makes emergence of feminism among Norwegian Muslim women particularly interesting; and she points out that; *the Muslim adaptation of feminism will differ from the Western one. Islam facilitates gender justice and equal dignity more than equal status.* Ishaq's position is in line with 'difference feminism' argued by the former MSS leader Mariam Javed above, which Jacobsen (2011:270) found was widespread in the MSS. But, despite theoretical differences, Ishaq emphasizes that;

> *The practical approach, however, is not necessarily so different. A Muslim woman will, in the same way as Western women, demand the right to realize herself as an independent individual, and the Norwegian Muslim tendency is a concrete example that this is possible.* […] *Many feminist values can be justified by Islamic theology. A feminist message can thus be mediated in a religious language that seems more constructive in a multicultural society than the secular form.* […] *For those of us not starting with definitions like secular or Islamist-reformist feminists, but belong to a category of practicing Muslims with a pragmatic approach, feminism is not about well-defined theoretical arguments.*

Ishaq emphasizes that her own position is pragmatic more than theoretical. She does not defend one specific theoretical approach, but draws on various Muslim scholars and activists who share a view that the Qur'an can be used to defend women's rights. About the Muslim view on women, Ishaq writes;

> *Woman in Islam is responsible for a child's primary care because she has a natural capacity to carry the child into the world and later breast-feed. But in no way is she required to do housework, and may, equal with other citizens, participate actively in society and employment when her primary responsibility is fulfilled.*

Here, she argues that women in Islam are entitled not only to pursue education, but also to take paid work outside the home. She justifies this view with reference to scriptures, and points out that Prophet Mohammed's wife Khadija was a business woman and the Prophet himself was her employee after they married. Ishaq goes further in the direction of women's 'equal status' with men than the students interviewed by *Aften* in 2008, and the Turkish students studied by Göle (1996:99-100), who wanted to prioritize family over career. Like them, Ishaq also goes back to scriptural sources to defend her position. In an interview with *Dagsavisen* (February 7, 2009), Ishaq praises the initial decision to allow hijab with the police uniform, emphasizing that this decision gives Muslim women the opportunity to pursue a career in the police. Muslim women's engagement in this debate shows that it is important to them to be able to combine (conservative) practice of religion with pursuing a career in a profession of their own choice.

In an attempt to offer politicians a more nuanced understanding of gender and Islam, she elaborates on Muslim feminists' dual struggle in *Aftenposten* (September 5, 2009). Ishaq relates the high numbers of minority women in education, to a more critical attitude towards cultural traditions in parents' countries of origin. She acknowledges a positive influence from Norwegian culture, and credits 'Norwegian culture' for the emergence of Muslim feminism;

> *Without the fundamental influence from Norwegian culture and the values of the welfare state, which gives equal rights to all citizens, the emerging Muslim feminism would not have existed.* […] *When additionally, one finds theological justifications for the right to pursue higher education and paid work, the battle against a strongly traditional parental generation has become easier.*

Ishaq reflects a key characteristic of Muslim feminism; the differentiation between culture and religion, where Islamic theology is used to criticize cultural traditions of the parental generation. Ishaq emphasizes employment, not only as compatible with practicing Islam, but also as an entry point to active participation in society and thus 'integration'. This is where educated Muslim women face a second obstacle; not from their parents' conservative traditions, but in the form of majority discrimination. Ishaq

writes that, *economic independence for Muslim women is important not only for integration, but also for the battle for gender equality and degradation of traditional gender roles where women belong in the home.* Because integration is a mutual process, she argues, larger society must be willing to open the labor market to include Muslim women. She concludes that; *Muslim women are […] fighting a double battle for the right to employment, one against the attitudes of larger society, and the other within minority communities.*

Regarding the internal struggle, she argues that gender equality is on its way, and that *much is going on inside Muslim communities, which are about to shape Islam in a new age. Influence from Western culture, and steady pressure to explain one's identity as a Muslim, on one hand awakens an increasing interest in faith that we might call neo-conservatism, at the same time as theologians are pressured to provide new arguments that contribute to change attitudes.* According to Ishaq, more and more Muslim clerics now openly say that women do not belong at home. She argues that when the Muslim Student Society invites foreign theologians, they consciously select those with an academic background who are familiar with Western culture. What young Norwegian Muslims seek, is *logical theological arguments expressed in a Western language and cultural framework that we recognize, and which equips us to become well-integrated individuals with a strong faith.*

Islamic revivalism among Norwegian Muslim students

In *Aftenposten* (February 7, 2010), Ishaq discusses Ramadan's book *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation*, a *call for radical reformation in Muslim communities*. She describes Ramadan as *one of the strongest voices in our time* who argues that women are *independent individuals* and criticizes *prevailing male chauvinist cultural norms*. He points to *the earliest traditions from the Prophet's time when women appeared as powerful players in society.* According to Ishaq, Ramadan argues that Islamic reformation is not a new phenomenon, but has always been part of the 'authentic' scriptural tradition. Thus, *Ramadan stands for traditional Islam and is not open to new interpretations, but his opinion is that one needs to take into account the society where religion is practiced and thus talks about "context".* While Western supporters claim that he "Europeanizes Islam" and critics claim that he wants to "Islamicize Europe", Ishaq comments;

> *Ramadan is described as a prominent reformist, but he himself does not want to be a Martin Luther – he is opposed to arguing for anything that may conflict with the Qur'anic text or the tradition of the Prophet Mohammed.*

While rejecting criticism of Ramadan as an 'extremist' speaking with a 'forked tongue', she writes that his approach is criticized by theologians like Abdul Hakim Murad and Hamza Yusuf, who have been invited by the MSS and are preferred by Norwegian

Muslims. These are *more influential than Ramadan within Western Islam,* and argue that *all tools for evolution and reform exist within traditional methodology.*

Jacobsen (2005:157; 2011:64) writes that the dominant MSS discourse can be described as a form of Islamist revivalism called "post-ikhwan" ('ikhwan' is the Arabic term for 'brotherhood'), which according to Anne Sofie Roald (2005:25) refers to practicing Muslims who hold ideas similar to those of the Muslim Brotherhood, but are not part of the organization and more open to new interpretations. Typical for this tendency is a pragmatic interpretation of scripture based on contemporary perspectives, while seeking to return to 'pure' sources. As this tendency sees Islam as a "complete way of life", Roald (ibid) characterizes it as "to some extent" Islamist, defined as "Muslims who regard Islam as a body of ideas, values, beliefs and practices encompassing all spheres of life, including personal and social relationships, economics and politics" (quoted in Jacobsen 2011:63). Scholars like Olivier Roy (cited in ibid) reserve the term Islamism for those seeking to establish an Islamic state, and refer to the more individualist tendency among young European Muslims as "post-Islamism". Jacobsen (2005:157-158; 2011:65-67) writes that the MSS does not follow any coherent position or particular scholar, but rather an eclectic approach that changes over time, and that individual views of members vary. She argues that "young Muslims' relationship to the Islamic tradition is not individualized in the sense of being disembedded from […] Islamic authorities" (ibid, 13) but rather that, through MSS activities, individual members encounter and engage with certain "aspects of Islamic discourse" including authoritative sources of inspiration like the Muslim Brotherhood (ibid, 64), Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Ramadan (Jacobsen 2005:157-158; 2011:179); Hamza Yusuf as well as Turkish philosopher Fetullah Gülen and Egyptian television preacher Amr Khalid, who focus more on personal ethics than on political Islamism (ibid, 66). Rather than adhering to one ideology, the MSS' reformist discourse is 'experience-near' and encourages individual rational reflection (ibid, 67). According to Jacobsen (2005:155-156), they emphasize "individual reflection" in religious questions and construct Muslim identity as an individual choice. Drawing on Jocelyne Cesari, Jacobsen (ibid) argues that this individualization can take two forms; a 'secular' one that sees religion as a private matter, and a 'collective' one that links the individual to the 'umma', the global Muslim community. The latter tendency sees Islam as a "total way of life" with public and political relevance. MSS members tend to identify both as "Norwegian Muslims" and as part of a global Muslim community (ibid, 161). This tendency to detach Islam from ethnic cultures and identify with a global Muslim community is common among the 'second-generation' in Europe (Jacobsen 2011:69), and the MSS' orientation parallels Muslim student organizations in other European countries, notably Sweden and Britain (Jacobsen 2005:157). Despite Muslim revivalist attempts to differentiate 'authentic' religion from the parental generation's cultural traditions, for many young Muslims, religious identity remains linked to ethnic and cultural belonging.

Islamic revivalism is dynamically situated between two analytically distinguishable, but "in practice inextricably intertwined" dimensions (Jacobsen 2011:10); the "politics of piety" (Mahmood 2005) and "politics of identity". Saba Mahmood (ibid, 193-194) studied the Egyptian piety movement, and criticizes the 'identity politics' approach for paying insufficient attention to a religious dimension that is more central to this strand of 'Islamism' than are political questions of identity, rights and recognition. While concerned with shaping themselves as pious subjects through reviving and reforming Muslim traditions, young European Muslims to a larger extent politicize Islam as a form of multiculturalist identity politics. While Islamists in Muslim countries often perceive the West as a threat, European Muslims interact with majority culture and seek to differentiate 'universal' Islam from ethnic and cultural traditions. The MSS identifies itself as "modern" and "liberal" in contrast to the "conservatism" and "traditionalism" of the parental generation (Jacobsen 2011:82), although they avoid direct confrontation. Instead, they describe inter-generational relations as "continuity and a gradual process of change" and see themselves as mixing Norwegian culture with their parents' culture (ibid, 85-86). Jeanette Jouili and Amir-Moazami (2006:618-619) describe a similar tendency among young Muslims in France and Germany, where educated Muslim women combine 'politics of piety' with identity politics, and seek to resist pressure to assimilate by engaging in a "counter-discursive strategy" to rectify negative images of Islam in the public sphere (ibid, 625). Like the MSS, they distinguish between 'pure Islam' and cultural traditions of the parental generation, criticize restrictions imposed by families (including forced marriages) and demand the right to work and study (ibid, 628-629). While these young Muslims seek theological justifications for individual choices, Jouili and Amir-Moazami (ibid, 631-632) write that 'Muslim feminism' is (still) a marginal phenomenon, which "did not seem to attract the majority of the pious Muslim women" they interviewed, especially in Germany. It may seem that educated Muslim women in Germany tend to be more conservative than their Norwegian counterparts. Amir-Moazami (2004:217) writes with regard to educated Muslim women in Germany; "the [Muslim] tradition of clearly outlined gender division is […] rhetorically maintained, but in practice negotiated."

With regard to the dimension of 'identity politics', Jacobsen (2011:180-181) describes the MSS as a "context in which youth mobilize a politics of identity on the basis of the experience of being treated, seen and talked about as the Other". Because 'Muslims' have been categorized on the basis of their religious 'difference' as a "quasi-ethnic" group marked by "foreign origin", Muslim identity politics is energized by a combination of an ascribed identity and the shared experience of being treated as the Other, and broader processes of Islamic revival drawing on religious values. This understanding of Muslim mobilization corresponds to what Modood (2007:39-43) describes as a feature of antiracist multiculturalism, where minority groups turn an ascribed, stigmatized 'difference' into a positive self-defined 'identity'. The MSS seeks

to change 'negative images' of Muslims in Norwegian public debate by affirming a positive group identity that Muslims could be proud of (Jacobsen 2011:183). Like Modood (2007:50), Jacobsen (2011:184) argues that Muslim identity politics can be seen as a form of integration, which implies that minority members mobilize to negotiate and contest dominant public discourses. Islamist identity politics sometimes reverses the West vs. Islam dichotomy, and characterizes the West as 'materialistic' and 'egoistic' i.e. as a negative mirror image of Islamic virtues. In Western countries, this reversal is necessarily asymmetrical since the public sphere is structured by majority discourses (ibid, 185). More typical for MSS discourse is a recognition of a multiplicity of identities such as religion, gender and race/ethnicity, thus avoiding to reproduce essentialist images of Islam and the West. The identities which young Muslims want to be publicly recognized are thus "inherently contested and continually negotiated" (ibid, 186). The intertwining of religious practices and identity politics illustrates Modood's (2005:104-106) point that antiracism among Muslims will inevitably have a religious dimension, as their 'mode of being' from which they draw strength to criticize the 'mode of oppression' and as basis for a positive identity in which they take pride and with which they counter ascribed negative differences. Jacobsen argues that when religious ideas and practices like 'jihad' and 'hijab' are mobilized in identity politics, the latter becomes part of religious practice. Thus, political resistance against majority hegemony and defending Islam against public misrecognition is defined as part of a 'greater jihad' (Jacobsen 2005:159-160). Countering negative representations of Islam, through debate contributions in newspapers, street protests, knowledge distribution or simply being a good role model are understood as 'religious practices' (Jacobsen 2011:188). Because of dominant assumptions about Muslim women as passive and oppressed, they have additional reason to take an active public role to counter this image (ibid, 194). Jacobsen (ibid) writes that when educated Muslim women choose to wear hijab, it represents a strategy that resists and displaces the dichotomies between modern, secular individualism and traditional, religious collectivism. While the hijab is primarily a religious practice central to a 'politics of piety' (ibid, 367), it is also politicized as symbol of defending Muslim identity (ibid, 195). Jacobsen (ibid, 312-313) writes that hijab use is generally encouraged in the MSS, primarily as a symbol of modesty appropriate for pious Muslim women, although in practice, about half of female members did not regularly wear it, and neither was it required in organizational activities. Although the hijab is seen as important, imposing it or wearing it out of habit was discouraged as representing "cultural traditions" rather than 'true Islam', understood as a personal relationship between individual and God. Thus, it may matter more why one wears a hijab than whether one does, and the 'better' reason is religious self-discipline, in line with an emphasis in Islamic tradition that religious practice should be accompanied by a certain state of mind (ibid, 314-316), i.e. that the practice should be 'sincere'. Wearing a hijab, as a visible sign of religious identity, also comes with a responsibility to act in accordance with Islamic ethics (ibid, 200).

Debate about the 'morality police'

In January 2010, *Aftenposten* initiated a debate about a 'morality police' based on a series of anecdotal reports about anonymous 'Muslim men' harassing gay men and 'immodest' young women on the streets of Grønland, a multicultural neighborhood in Oslo. This form of moral or social control exerted by "bearded men" was constructed as a 'religious police' and several politicians joined the debate (see Bangstad 2012:47-51). Labor MP Hadia Tajik (*Aftenposten,* January 12, 2010) saw the 'morality police' as representing

> *a conflict between traditional and modern values. In other words: Between a way of thinking that favors the collective, and one that gives room for individuals. It is reinforced by religious, cultural or social communities. It exists in rural Norway and in Grønland.*

This view defines the problem of social control as a remnant of traditional, collectivist societies, and acknowledges that it exists among the majority as a phenomenon found in traditional villages, but has no place in modern, individualist society. This dominant view is based on a dichotomy, where hegemonic liberal and secular values are under pressure from conservative and religious norms (ibid, 47). Jacobsen (2011:376) argues that in dominant discourse in Norway, 'free choice' is linked to the modern and secular, while the traditional and religious is associated with coercion. In the hijab debates, this construction of free choice often prevented majority members from understanding how Muslim women could 'choose' to 'submit' to religion, indicating that "only some choices are considered as properly free within the majority discourse on autonomy" (ibid, 381).

Bangstad (ibid, 50-51) argues that there was a monological consensus among media commentators, politicians and academics that understood social control as a Muslim problem, based on a secular-religious dichotomy. However, a minority view was expressed by Hassan (*Morgenbladet,* January 15, 2010), Pervez (*Aftenposten,* January 22, 2010), Qureshi (*VG*, January 23, 2010), Ishaq (*Dagbladet*, January 25, 2010) and leader of the MiRA Center, Fakhra Salimi (*Klassekampen*, February 11, 2010), who describes herself as a 'Black feminist' in the tradition of bell hooks. These minority feminists all acknowledge that social control exists and represents a problem. However, they criticized media coverage for being biased and exaggerated; Qureshi emphasizes that the morality police consists of a few individual men, whom Ishaq describes as *people who are not integrated and do not follow media;* and thus, the debate will not reach them anyway. Hassan speaks of *individual cases that cannot be called organized moralizing activity.* She gives an example of how an elderly Somalian man reacted negatively to her becoming a student leader, and recommends girls to answer back to those *controlling bullies who are not used to being stood up to.* They all link criticism of the morality police to criticism of moralizing attitudes among majority Norwegians.

Most explicitly, Hassan directs attention to the social control exerted by *"modern" moralists*, who want *a world free from hijab and modesty.* She mentions an incident where an elderly lady on the subway lectured her about democracy and suggested that she burn her hijab. Hassan argues that the greater problem of social control comes from the majority; *there are others than Muslims who elevate themselves to a morality police and try to impose their values and morality on others.* […] *These moralists not only stand along the street pointing fingers, we* [Muslim girls] *see them on TV, in the newspapers, in schools, behind desks, at work and everywhere else in public space.* Qureshi argues that the debate about 'moral surveillance' should also focus on *hundreds of* […] *Muslim and Indian girls that are harassed based on their clothing and visible religiosity.* Ishaq writes that *various types of social control are also exerted by ethnic Norwegians* […] *for example women are spat on because they wear hijab*, and emphasizes that this is as serious. Similarly, Pervez points out that *Muslim women wearing hijab are scolded and physically attacked,* and criticizes that media ignores that *ethnic and religious minorities experience social control all over the city and country.* Pervez and Hassan suggest that we all need to 'respect differences'. Salimi says; *Minority women are being observed all the time, in the West End* [a mostly white part of Oslo] *they look at the way they dress, and almost want to pull off your hijab, in the East End* [mixed or mostly non-white areas]*, you get critical looks because you don't wear hijab. The judgmental looks restrict women's freedom.*

In debates about multiculturalism and feminism, the exercise of social control within minority groups has been theorized in terms of 'internal restrictions' while moralizing attempts from the majority are seen as undue 'pressure to assimilate' against which minority groups may seek 'external protections' (Kymlicka 1995:35-44). The arguments from minority feminists suggest a different reading. Seeing themselves as full-fledged members of Norwegian society, they see exercise of social control by majority members and state institutions not primarily in terms of majority-minority relations, but as 'internal restrictions' imposed on members of the national community. Like minority leaders have been suspected of seeking 'external protections' to restrict individual freedom (see chapter 3), European states justify restrictions on citizens' hijab use in terms of protecting 'national values' (like secularism in France and Turkey) against an external threat of 'Islamism'. While the claim of an external threat is questionable, the European Human Rights Court accepted this argument when ruling that the Turkish hijab ban is legitimate. Citing Asad, Bangstad (2012:52) points out that secularism expresses the sovereign power of the nation-state, and in Norway, where state and society are closely linked (in contrast to the US and many other countries), the secularity of the state is easily absolutized to imply secularism in civil society.

The phenomenon of a 'morality police' cannot be mapped on to a dichotomy between traditional and modern. It appears that 'liberal' individuals and institutions are equally concerned with controlling behavior. The state and majority also exercise a form of

collectivism that restricts individual freedom. In his analysis of the morality police debate, Bangstad (2012:47) points out that rather than reflecting a secular-religious conflict, the debate illustrates a distinction between ideological, absolutist ideas of secularism, and an open, pragmatic and dialogical secularism. In ideological versions of secularism, liberals are concerned with imposing liberalism on others rather than finding a platform for pluralism (ibid, 62). Jacobsen (2011:13) also questions a dualistic understanding of modern individual choice contrasted to traditional conformity with community norms. Instead, she suggests a Foucauldian approach that links normative emphasis on autonomy, freedom and choice to the making of "individualized self-regulating subjects" in modern forms of governance and discipline (ibid, 376). Jacobsen describes how Norwegian integration policy, which emphasizes "teaching" minority women and children "the right to individual freedom", imposes a particular, secularist understanding of freedom (ibid, 382), and thus represents a 'morality police' in an institutionalized form. With regard to hijab-wearing women, this restricted understanding of individual freedom implies a logic where "either you are oppressed by some external force and not free to choose or you are properly free and can thus choose to take the hijab off" (ibid). Jacobsen (ibid, 380) writes that hijab-wearing women

> often experienced how state agents such as teachers and welfare workers took it upon themselves to teach them (or in some cases enforce on them) individual freedom, for instance by insisting that they should not wear the hijab.

Political responses

The idea that individual freedom needs to be taught or even enforced on Muslim women was expressed by politicians both on the left and right in the aftermath of the hijab debates, when political parties discussed whether hijab use in certain contexts should be regulated by law. A ban in schools, following a French example, was discussed and rejected by the government parties in 2010. The Progress Party then presented a law proposal in Parliament, which all other parties voted against. In 2011, the ruling Labor Party discussed whether to allow hijab in the police and courts, as in Britain, but a majority voted against.

While the Progress Party is the only Norwegian party that wants to follow the French example and ban the hijab in primary schools, the debate cuts across all three government parties. While having reservations about whether a liberal society should legislate dress codes, Socialist Left leader Kristin Halvorsen is quoted in *Dagbladet* (February 24, 2010) as follows;

> *In my opinion, hijab for children is absolutely unwanted because it prevents children's development and their opportunity to make independent choices. […] The important thing is that we as a society must be clear that we don't want hijab in primary schools.*

While Halvorsen does not want to enforce dress codes, she argues that the state should teach minorities individual freedom. Ola Borten Moe (*VG,* June 6, 2010), a Center Party politician, also argues that the hijab doesn't belong in primary school. In the Labor Party, deputy leader Helga Pedersen said she considers supporting a ban, while Prime Minister Stoltenberg (*Dagbladet*, February 25, 2010) rejects the proposal, arguing that there is no need for a national ban since any possible problems can be solved locally (reflecting a British rather than French approach).

Norwegian Muslims publicly criticized these politicians. Hassan pointed out that *a hijab ban is as bad as a hijab requirement* (*Dagbladet,* March 8, 2010), in line with arguments by Gressgård and Jacobsen (2003:72), who describe French and Iranian legislation as equally coercive. Pervez (*VG,* March 3, 2010) writes with reference to Halvorsen that; *it is disappointing that socialists copy right-wing populism's problematization of Muslims to attract voters,* and refers to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Children, which guarantees parents the right to raise their children as they want within the limits of protecting human rights. Former MSS leader Rana characterized Borten Moe's view as representing a *neo-nationalist fear of Muslim visibility* (*VG,* June 6, 2010). He also criticizes Pedersen for wanting *the state to act as a morality police* (*Dagbladet,* February 24, 2010). Deputy leader of the Conservatives and former Governing Mayor of Oslo, Erling Lae (*Dagbladet,* February 24, 2010), defends Muslims' individual freedom against state interference in line with conservative rhetoric. He argues that Norway should learn from the American approach to diversity;

> *This comes close to harassment of Muslims. Hijab has never been a problem in Oslo schools. This is a condescending attitude and a misunderstood idea of equality.* […] *A hijab ban is an expression of a narrow-minded and patronizing attitude that comes close to bullying.*

In late 2010, the Progress Party presented a law proposal to Parliament for a total ban on hijabs in primary school (see Bangstad 2012:59-60). In the proposal, it reads; *when children are forced to wear hijab, they are taught gender apartheid, which preaches that women are inferior and have to cover in order not to arouse men's uncontrolled sexual lust. Blaming women for rape in such a way is serious…* (*Aftenposten,* December 6, 2010). Progress Party MP Mette Hanekamhaug adds, in line with French arguments, that; *primary school must be an arena where culture and religion is left at home,* and that; *hijab is a cultural symbol of women's oppression, which the Christian crucifix is not. Neither is the crucifix big and conspicuous, nor does it prevent participation in swimming classes.* All six other parties in Parliament rejected this proposal, arguing that *there is a distinction between what one dislikes, and what one wants to ban. The battle against totalitarianism can soon become totalitarian itself* (*Dagsavisen,* March 16, 2011). Liberal Party leader Trine Skei Grande, who headed the processing committee,

said that; *personally, I think it is disgusting to see a hijab on small children, but I don't want to ban it by law.*

On April 10, 2011, the Labor Party's national congress passed a resolution not to allow visible religious symbols for police officers, public prosecutors and judges (see Bangstad 2012:60). It was passed with a majority of 163 against 125 votes; the opposition included the Labor Youth League. Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, who has advocated a more inclusive Norwegian national identity, and who leads Labor's integration committee, said he is *a little bothered by the dilemma* that many hijab-wearing law students will be denied careers as prosecutors and judges. He explained there had been tough internal discussions before arriving at a *compromise where we say that there is a high threshold in a society like ours for regulating dress code, but that there should be a neutral uniform in the police, and no visible religious symbols among public prosecutors and judges.* In this regard, Bangstad (ibid) comments that Labor Party decisions have been influenced by a public opinion favorable to hijab bans.

Conclusions

Early hijab debates can be seen as "ritual debates" as Titley and Lentin (2011:128-129) describe recurring and repetitive integration debates (see chapter 1). Drawing on Hage's (1998:233-244) analysis of Australian debates before the emergence of Pauline Hanson's populist party, they argue that contemporary debates in Europe can be primarily understood as a performative "ritual of white empowerment" (ibid, 241; Titley & Lentin 2011:130), where nationalists and liberal multiculturalists from the majority discuss the limits of their tolerance towards 'problems' posed by minorities; in a debate of "recited truths" (ibid, 21-22) largely unrelated to empirical reality and with little impact on policy (ibid, 130). While this may accurately describe Norwegian debate in 2004, when majority members set an agenda by importing French debate into Norwegian reality, and Muslims mainly responded with street protest; later developments indicate a closer fit between public debate and the empirical reality of an emerging multicultural society -- notably because debates are no longer conducted among the majority speaking about minorities as 'problems', but have, as a result of increased minority participation, moved towards what Modood (2007:18-19; 39) describes as 'negotiations' of political multiculturalism, consisting of minority mobilization on concrete policy issues and state responses to these. Taking into account specific government attempts to accommodate minority demands, as well as pressure from a right-wing populist party, politicians cannot be described as "unresponsive" to debates in 2009-2010.

The debates did not result in changes of policy or law, not because politicians are unresponsive, but rather because of compromises within the ruling party between those wanting to accommodate minority demands, and those wanting to accommodate right-wing populism. A fraction of the Labor Party, including Foreign Minister Støre, Justice

Minister Storberget and the Youth League, was willing to accommodate Muslim requests to allow the hijab in the police and courtrooms, while other Labor politicians supported the suggestion to outlaw the hijab in schools. In the cartoon affair (see chapter 2), Støre was a main advocate of dialogue, and Storberget proposed legislation that would protect religious sensibilities. In both cases, the Justice Ministry gave in to public pressure and internal opposition, and reversed its decisions (see also Bangstad 2012:60). While political responsiveness to public debate can be seen as a feature of deliberative democracy in Habermas' sense, it is problematic when the government is unable to publicly defend its decisions and gives in to pressure from a public discourse hostile to minorities, and influenced by right-wing populism.

Multiculturalism is not only about law and policy, which according to Modood (2006:41) may be less important than political debate, which may lead to change in attitudes, media representations and national symbols as a result of discursive struggles in the public sphere. In terms of the four ideological positions (chapter 1; see also Kunelius & Eide 2007:16-18; Kunelius & Alhassan 2008:90-95), 'Muslim feminists' represent 'antiracist multiculturalism'. As such, they position themselves against 'minority communitarianism' whether conservative cultural traditionalism or reactionary forms of Islamism. They also criticize 'confrontational liberalism' among the majority, negotiate with the government to allow a police hijab and reject a hijab ban in schools proposed by the Progress Party. Politicians from coalition parties are faced with a choice between a pragmatic and dialogical liberal approach, which accommodates minority demands as the Justice Ministry originally did, or to accommodate 'confrontational liberalism' (see Bangstad 2012:62-63). Politicians from all three coalition partners either supported, or considered supporting, a hijab ban in primary schools. The government thus seems caught in a 'liberal dilemma', as reflected in Okin's and Kymlicka's theories.

At the same time, public debate has changed as media and particularly mainstream newspapers have given increasingly more space to voices representing 'multiculturalism from below', i.e. assertive Muslim voices that seek to negotiate the 'terms of integration' and meanings of liberalism. In the early years of the new millennium, debate was dominated by a few voices of secular minority women criticizing their own communities and validating anti-Muslim views. When Storhaug published *Veiled. Unveiled* in 2007, practicing Muslim women's voices started to be heard and public opinion was more critical towards Storhaug; her agenda was increasingly seen as anti-Muslim rather than feminist. In 2009, public voices explicitly defining themselves as Muslim feminists, started asserting themselves against negative images, and turned the hijab, which in majority discourse was a symbol that stigmatized Muslim women as oppressed, into a symbol of pride in Muslim identity in an act typical of 'antiracist multiculturalism' that Modood (2007:39) calls "turning a negative difference into a positive difference".

Comparing the 2004 and 2009 debates, Døving (2012b:28-33) found that in 2004, the debate was mainly among the majority, between feminists opposed to the hijab and newspaper editorials and reports with a positive angle. A few Muslim contributors rejected white feminist claims that equated hijab with oppression, and emphasized that they are proud of their choice to wear the hijab. Significant differences in 2009 were an increased presence of Muslim women, but also an increased focus on Islamization, notably by the Progress Party (ibid, 32). While the free speech award for Ishaq was justified with a reference that there should be room for religious expressions in the public sphere, Døving (ibid, 25-27) questions whether Muslim contributors actually expressed themselves in a religious language. She argues that increased Muslim presence in the public sphere is not necessarily religious, as Muslim contributors to the hijab debate primarily used a secular language of human rights, which however may be authentically religious. Muslim women defended the hijab mostly with reference to gender equality and freedom of religion, combined with occasional references to the Qur'an and Islamic discourses (ibid, 30; 34-38). Døving (ibid, 38-44) questions whether this is necessarily a result of a 'translation' from religious to secular language. Their fluency in secular language indicates that discourses of identity and human rights can be seen as their first language. Importantly, religious arguments may be indistinguishably merged with dominant secular language, thus challenging the secular-religious distinction of liberal theorists like Rawls and Habermas. While Muslim contributors support a secular state and argue in a language of 'public reason', they challenge Rawls' division between the political and private spheres when demanding state recognition of religious identity. But they do not ask the state to comply with Islamic norms or to take a stand on whether the hijab is a religious requirement.

While my analysis found a greater presence of 'religious arguments' and references to the Qur'an than Døving's, I agree with her conclusion that Muslim feminists merge religious and secular arguments in a way that defies dominant dichotomies. This finding is also in line with Jacobsen's (2011) analysis of the Muslim Student Society as combining identity politics and religious revivalism, and Modood's (2005) point that antiracism for Muslims will necessarily have a religious dimension. In the hijab debate, Muslim women appropriated and negotiated the free choice rhetoric, and emphasized that wearing hijab was simultaneously an "individual choice" and a "religious obligation" albeit one that individual Muslim women 'choose' to comply with when "ready" to take this step in a process of self-realization as a pious subject (Jacobsen 2011:306-311; 373). Obviously, choices are not made in a social vacuum (ibid, 307) but encouraged or discouraged in different social contexts, which exert 'discipline' in a Foucauldian sense (ibid, 312-314). Drawing on Mahmood, Jacobsen (ibid, 326-328) argues that Muslim women may achieve "self-fulfillment" by 'submitting' to God's will and try to resist 'egoistic' desires, or by negotiating liberal-secular and Muslim understandings of self-realization. As the debate on the 'morality police' illustrates,

communitarianism in Muslim communities is assumed and defined as a problem. From an Islamic viewpoint, Muslim feminists reject moralizing, and criticize social control exerted through notions of 'honor' and 'shame' in ethnic communities (ibid, 339; 372-373), arguing that moral conformity is an individual responsibility (ibid, 359).

From the vantage point of being a religious minority in a society where secularism is hegemonic, they recognize that also the majority, despite ideological adherence to individualism, attempts to impose certain moralities and thus exercises collectivist control to discipline individuals. Kymlicka (2002:338) may be right that debates about multiculturalism are not between individualists and collectivists, or between a liberal majority and communitarian minorities, but "debates amongst liberals about the meaning of liberalism". Individualist and collectivist tendencies coexist empirically among both minority and majority, and the debate about the 'morality police' suggests that debate is sometimes amongst communitarians using liberal rhetoric. In any case, they defy the dichotomy between a modern Western culture promoting individual autonomy, and a collectivist Muslim tradition preventing self-realization (Jacobsen 2011:326).

The emerging Muslim feminist perspective challenges hegemonic dualist thinking that constructs secular and religious, and individual and collective as hierarchically opposed, where the former is seen as positive and claimed to be 'Western' and the latter is defined negatively and ascribed to the Muslim Other. Their public breakthrough has consequences beyond media as it provides a newspaper-reading public with a more nuanced understanding of these issues, making it more difficult for promoters of a culture clash ideology to retain legitimacy. Media, often seen as an agent for spreading anti-Muslim prejudice, have changed the discursive field in favor of multiculturalism by giving access to Norwegian Muslim voices. Politicians have followed up to a lesser extent, and Ishaq's characterization of not allowing the police hijab as 'a demand for assimilation, not integration' indicates that policy is still framed by Okin's and Kymlicka's perspective (see Jacobsen & Gressgård 2003:73; Gressgård 2005), despite ambivalent attempts at multicultural accommodation (Engebrigtsen 2010) and a rhetorical turn towards 'inclusion' and 'dialogue' which allows for pluralist interpretation of liberal values (Rawls 1999). Legal regulations of hijab use are not settled once and for all, and are likely to be reconsidered at some point in the future. It is likely that the presence of hijab-wearing women in the public sphere becomes more 'normalized' and public opinion becomes more favorable to accommodate Muslims.

CHAPTER 5

The secularism debate

A number of scholars have noted a recent revival of religion in many parts of the world, and started questioning the long-held 'secularization thesis' (Berger 1999; Sardar 1999:44-48; Asad 2003:181; Habermas 2005:11-13; Levey 2009:1). The secularization thesis has been described as a simultaneously descriptive and normative theory (Asad 2003:181), which holds that secularization is central to the development of modernity (Bangstad 2009:37; Modood & Kastoryano 2006:162; Sardar 1999:52). As a process, secularization consists of three elements; structural separation of religion and politics, privatization of religion, and declining social significance of religion (Casanova cited in Asad 2003:181; Bangstad 2009:38). Veit Bader (2009:110) argues that two of these elements, an allegedly inevitable decline and privatization of religion; do not fit with empirical evidence (see also Bracke & Fadil 2008:8-9). José Casanova (cited in Yegenoglu 2006) uses the term 'deprivatized' to describe modern religions refusing to accept a marginal role ascribed to them by secularization theorists. Casanova (2009:143-144) acknowledges an increasing religious decline in Western Europe, but questions the interpretation of this development as a "normal and progressive" consequence of becoming "modern and enlightened". Rather than understanding European secularization as a teleological process linked to modernization, he suggests that it can better be explained in terms of a rising "hegemonic knowledge regime of secularism" (see also Yegenoglu 2006). With significant variation among individual countries, contemporary Western European societies can generally be characterized as secular societies, where a majority of the population no longer takes part in traditional religious practices like attending church, although many continue to privately hold religious beliefs and maintain a Christian cultural identity. These two tendencies have been characterized as "believing without belonging" and "belonging without believing" (Davie cited in Thorbjørnsrud & Døving 2012:12), indicating that Christian identity (and/or church membership) has been detached from personal beliefs. This situation may be more accurately described as "religious individualization" rather than as secularization.

Secularism as a political doctrine for separating state and religion is distinct from secularism as a comprehensive worldview or ideology, and it is primarily the latter which insists on privatization of religion (Bangstad 2009:20-21). Secularist ideology constructs a dichotomy between those who favor secularism as a political doctrine calling for separation of religion and politics, and those who reject it (Sayyid 2009:186-

187). From this perspective, secularism is defined as "progressive, liberal and modern" and contrasted with an image of (conservative) 'religion' as "reactionary, fundamentalist and anti-modern" (Casanova 2009:147); parallel to a dichotomy between 'the West' and 'Islam' in contemporary 'culture clash', e.g. Lewis' claim that "absence of secularism" is a key defining characteristic that sets Islam apart from modernity (Mamdani 2004:23; Sayyid 2009:189; Yegenoglu 2006; Bangstad 2009:103; for Islam as secularism's 'Other', see also Casanova 2009:147-148; Harding 2008:48; Sardar 1999:48; Said 1979). As discussed by Sarah Bracke and Nadia Fadil (2008:2-14), academic use of concepts like 'fundamentalism' and 'secularization' plays a central role in sustaining a construction of Islam as the essentialized 'Other' to modern, Western secularity. Rather than being a universal aspect of modernization, secularism as a political doctrine arguing strict separation of religion and politics emerged in response to a particular European historical experience, which includes absolutist theocracy and the Inquisition, the Enlightenment and conflict between science and church; Protestant Reformation; religious wars and the peace at Westphalia; and the French Revolution (Bangstad 2009:29-35; Modood & Kastoryano 2006:162; Sayyid 2009:190-191). Based on European experience, it is argued that secularism is a precondition for scientific progress, for ensuring peace, and for democracy (ibid, 188). Thus, secularism is central to the definition of modernity as a narrative of western exceptionality.

While the secular-religious divide is not so clear-cut in the Muslim tradition (ibid, 197), mainstream Islam distinguishes between human and divine spheres; thus science can peacefully coexist with religion (ibid, 191). In the Muslim world, there was no counterpart to historical European absolutist theocracy, where the state appropriated religious power, until modern Islamist intellectuals developed the idea of an Islamic state (Sardar 1999:48). Drawing on Reinhard Schulze, Mamdani (2004:46-48) argues that due to the absence of an institutionalized religious hierarchy in mainstream Islam, there was no conflict between religious clergy and secular power, and secular thought could develop within Islam rather than in opposition to it. Thus, Islamic religious movements are not necessarily anti-secular; and modern Islamist discourse is largely secular in the sense of being concerned with political issues in a context of colonialism rather than with spiritual concerns. Mamdani points out that with the exception of Ayatollah Khomeini and Iranian theocracy, Islamism was not developed by religious scholars but by secular intellectuals, who argued that Islam should be a political identity in addition to a religious or cultural identity. Among these, Mawdudi turned Islam into a political ideology and advocated for an Islamic state, while many other Islamist intellectuals, including Muhammad Iqbal, Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Ali Shariati, preferred secular democracy; even Sayyid Qutb's revolutionary ideology is far more society-centered than Mawdudi's idea of an Islamic state (ibid, 53-59).

Contemporary religious revivalism, whether Islamic or other, primarily challenges the privatization of religion, an aspect of secularization that has become taken-for-granted

in European self-understanding as modern, secular societies (Casanova 2009:148). Most provoking to European secularists is the reassertion of Islam in the public sphere (Sayyid 2009:187), in other words, the "deprivatization" of religion associated with European Muslim revivalism and mobilization of collective identity, which demands a legitimate role for religion in the public sphere. This is partly because Islam is 'the Other' not only of Europe and Christianity, but in addition because Muslim religiosity has been defined in contrast to European secularity (Casanova 2009:148). Contemporary western debates on secularism thus tend to focus on the need to secularize Muslim minorities (Sayyid 2009:187). While some Muslims advocate a "secular Islam", many remain critical of aspects of secularism (ibid, 189), which in the history of the Muslim world has most often meant de-Islamization imposed by colonialism or Kemalism (ibid, 192). In this context, contemporary secularist rhetoric is less about separating religion from politics to ensure democracy and pluralism, and more about depoliticizing Muslims and maintaining western hegemony (ibid, 199).

Looking to American secularism as an alternative to versions dominant in Europe, Casanova (cited in Asad 2003:182-183) argues that religion "can play a positive political role" in modern, secular society, and that politicized religion may be fully compatible with modernity depending on *how* it becomes public. Asad (ibid) observes that religion is allowed to enter the public sphere on the condition that it accepts "assumptions of liberal discourse" and engages in rational debate to "persuade rather than coerce" opponents. He argues that the liberal-democratic public sphere, as theorized by Habermas, "systematically excludes various kinds of people, or types of claims, from serious consideration" (ibid). This is because exercise of free speech in the public sphere presupposes not merely the ability to speak, but also to be heard and understood. As such, political debate is not equally open to all, and upon entering it, a religious discourse "may *have* to disrupt existing assumptions [in order to] be heard" (ibid, 184). In a pluralist society, the question remains "how a deprivatized religion can effectively appeal to the consciences of those who don't accept its values" (ibid, 186).

In "Religion in the Public Sphere", Habermas (2005:12-13) acknowledges that the supposedly 'normal' model of secular modernity may not be universal, but restricted to the special-case of Europe, and more specifically, the European educated elite (see also Sardar 1999:44-48; Casanova 2009:143-144). Advocating a more inclusive attitude towards religion in the public sphere, Habermas (ibid, 18) now speaks of a "post-secular society" where secular citizens must make an effort to take religious contributions seriously; i.e. "open their minds to the possible truth content" (ibid, 16) of religious contributions, and overcome "secularist stubbornness" (ibid, 20). This seems to imply that Habermas now acknowledges that ideological secularism may be as dogmatic and absolutist as religious 'fundamentalism' (see also Rawls 1999; Sayyid 2009:196; Bangstad 2009:21).

The Norwegian debate

In the winter of 2008, debate editor Knut Olav Åmås of Norway's largest subscription newspaper *Aftenposten* called for contributions to a contest for young writers of op-ed articles. The winning piece was titled *The Secular Extremism* and written by medicine student Mohammed Usman Rana, former head of the Pakistani Student Association (2006) and later head of the Muslim Student Society (2007), and published in *Aftenposten* on February 25, 2008. This article turned out to be controversial and stirred a heated debate, with several responses printed in the newspaper's opinion pages every day over a period of several weeks. The debate attracted widespread attention beyond the opinion pages of this newspaper, and on March 31, 2008, *Aftenposten* organized a debate meeting over the topic "Is Norway hostile to religion?" at the Literature House in Oslo, where Rana faced former secretary-general of the Norwegian Humanist Association, Lars Gule, secularist activist Sara Azmeh Rasmussen and Minister of Culture and Church Affairs, Trond Giske, in a panel debate led by Åmås. *Aftenposten's* journalist Ulf Andenæs wrote in a commentary (April 3, 2008) that the meeting was packed, but noted that there were very few Muslims, Christians and 'Islam critics' among the attendants. He describes the meeting as *sounding like a gathering in the Norwegian Humanist Association,* which is the largest non-religious 'life-stance' organization, with most members being atheists or agnostics. The debate also attracted academic attention, notably from anthropologist Sindre Bangstad, who has done research on secularism and Islam. In the wake of this debate, academic seminars and conferences on the topic of secularism were held at the University of Oslo, often taking Asad's (2003) "anthropology of the secular" as a starting point. As a public debate about public debate, the 'secularism debate' directly engaged with theoretical issues discussed above, both as a discussion about and as an empirical example of, religious contributions to the public sphere in a secularized liberal democracy. My main focus is on *how* the Muslim student leader's views, as an instance of contemporary Islamic revivalism (see chapter 4), challenge specific aspects of hegemonic secularism.

I organize the chapter around four distinguishable but interlinked points that can be identified in Rana's article, and more explicitly in a follow-up article (March 2, 2008). Only some of these points were picked up and discussed in subsequent public and academic debate, while others were largely dismissed or ignored. Rana argued that (1) conservative religious people tend to be stigmatized as 'fundamentalists', and their contributions seen as illegitimate, in Norwegian public debate; thus (2) Norway can be characterized as a secular hegemony, dominated by an extreme form of secularism similar to the one found in France and Turkey, where the state controls and disciplines religion and religious expressions are banished from the public sphere. As an alternative, he promotes a (3) moderate form of secularism (or religious pluralism) found in the US, where religious expressions are commonplace in the public sphere, and where religious congregations are independent from the state; and finally, he argues that

(4) religious viewpoints can make positive contributions to public debate, primarily by promoting a (conservative?) ethics grounded in religion.

In subsequent debate, a dominant frame was based on a dichotomy between 'Islamism' and 'secularism' rather than on different versions of each and nuances within. In other words, Rana was widely perceived as an 'Islamist' rejecting 'secularism', despite his explicit preference for one version of secularism (a moderate American one) over another (an extreme, French one). Most contributors focused on the first two points. With regard to Rana's lament that conservative religious views were stigmatized and deemed illegitimate, some contributors supported his view, but most disagreed. For the most part, Rana's opponents did not argue against his observations of public debate, but labeled him 'Islamist' or demanded that he distances himself from 'Islamism'; thus confirming his analysis that conservative religious persons do tend to be stigmatized. A number of other contributors engaged with the claim that Norway is a secular hegemony; most disagreed with the claim and argued that Norway is not secular (enough). Rana's analysis was supported by *Aftenposten*'s political editor Harald Stanghelle, a member of the jury that chose his text as winner, and by journalist Ulf Andenæs. While several Christian leaders or spokespersons defended Rana's views, most contributions came from what Bangstad (2008) called Norway's "liberal and secular intellectual elite", many of them academics. Hardly any contributor picked up Rana's suggestion of the US as a model of moderate secularism, indicating that American public religiosity is generally seen as inappropriate in Norway. The suggestion that religious values could represent a positive contribution to public debate was mostly dismissed by those who engaged with this point, partly because (conservative) religious ethics is primarily identified with traditional family values seen as intolerant of homosexuality, divorce and abortion.

Bangstad (ibid; see also 2009:127-131) offered an analysis of the debate, which was published in a shortened version as an op-ed in *Aftenposten* (May 26, 2008). Here, the anthropologist supports Rana's first two points; that religious people tend to be stigmatized in a secular Norwegian hegemony with absolutist and intolerant tendencies. Bangstad (2008:21) writes that the Norwegian intellectual elite's view that religious arguments in the public sphere are illegitimate is based on the earlier writings of Habermas, whose "post-secular turn" has gone largely unnoticed, and much less accepted, in Norway. Unlike other debate contributors, Bangstad (ibid, 24-25) picked up Rana's preference for the American version of secularism, although he has difficulty understanding how a Muslim can seek alliances with conservative Christians, and promote George W. Bush's America as an ideal. Differences between American and various European versions of secularism, as related to various ways of multicultural accommodation of Muslim minorities, have been discussed by Casanova (2009) and Modood; the latter's argument is similar to Rana's; that French "ideological secularism" is an obstacle to multicultural integration, while moderate secularism (as in the US and

most of Europe) is compatible with "moderate Islam" (as Modood defines it, "moderate" does not imply "privatized").

The 'Islamist' label

Rana claims in *The Secular Extremism* that religious persons are systematically marginalized and stigmatized in the Norwegian public sphere;

> *In debates in modern Norway, there is an accelerating tendency that religious people, who wish to lead a life centered on God, are marginalized and characterized as "brainwashed and narrow-minded fundamentalists".*

Like Qureshi in the 'coconut debate' (chapter 3), Rana draws attention to how Muslims are divided into categories of 'good' and 'bad' in the Norwegian public sphere. Gullestad (2006:50-56), Eide and Nikunen (2011:9-11) and Phillips (2008:112-114) have found that media (perhaps decreasingly) tends to fit Muslims into polarized categories, favoring 'assimilated' individuals over conservative believers. Unlike Qureshi's antiracist perspective, Rana discusses this tendency not in terms of assimilation, but in terms of secularism, something which enables him to draw parallels to how conservative Christians are treated in the media. While noting that public debate about religion tends to focus on Muslims, who *are faced with demands to tone down their religiosity in public and modernize and ignore fundamentals of their faith*; Rana gives examples of how Christians, who defend biblical principles, are *reprimanded* in the public in contrast to *modern and politically correct theologians, who condone the trends of society and are praised as "progressive forces of the State Church".* Rana identifies a *national project to "liberate", "moderate" and "secularize" Muslims;* and he opposes those *forces – consisting of media persons, politicians and ex-Muslims – who aim to redefine Islamic theology,* and reduce the religion from *a complete lifestyle* to *a semi-secular, relativistic and cultural message.* Rana claims that Norwegian public sphere is dominated by a hegemonic value relativism, accompanied by *strong antipathies against worldviews that promote the existence of a truth defining right and wrong.* Instead of trying to qualify as a 'moderate Muslim' according to dominant definitions, which would imply abandoning religious prescriptions such as bans on alcohol and pork, Rana insists on holding on to moral values based on religion.

In a series of contributions from Storhaug (February 26, 2008), professor Asbjørn Aarnes (February 28, 2008), Arild Audin (February 28, 2008), Sara Azmeh Rasmussen (February 29, 2008), Knut Michelsen (March 5, 2008) and lawyer Sverre Blandhol (March 6, 2008), Rana is more or less explicitly accused of being an 'Islamist' or 'religious fundamentalist'. Bangstad (2008:21) writes that in order to understand the emotional reactions provoked among his opponents, we need to go beyond what Rana actually wrote and realize how he challenges a self-understanding of liberal and secular hegemony, where religious expressions in the public sphere are seen as illegitimate.

Unlike some other Norwegian Muslims, including Rehman, al-Kubaisi and Rasmussen, whose media appeal consists, according to Bangstad, in confirming the worldview of Norwegian liberal and secular hegemony, Rana insists on "grounding his public expressions in his religious convictions", i.e. a speech act that violates the *classical* Habermasian ideal of stepping out of one's religious garb before entering public debate.

The most intolerant and absolutist expression of secularist ideology (Bangstad 2008:21) is shown by Storhaug, who under the headline *What a Ghastly Betrayal* gives the first response to Rana. Storhaug not only labels Rana 'Islamist' because he allegedly fails to distance himself from sharia-sanctioned killing of gays in Iran and because the MSS has invited Islamists to give lectures, but she accuses *Aftenposten* of betraying 'the struggle for freedom'. She writes;

> *I take it for granted that Aftenposten's panel […] thinks that Rana contributes with important reflections and values. In that case, their judgment is frightening. […] Islamism is advancing in Norway, with good help from Aftenposten. It is almost unbelievable. That the debate editor, who is openly gay, promotes a person that almost wants to kill him makes the situation completely absurd and ghastly.*

Bangstad (ibid, 22) comments with regard to *Aftenposten's* alleged 'intellectual treason' that the choice of letting Rana win the competition was a brilliant move that served to promote the newspaper's debate and opinion pages, while supporting a "radical-liberal understanding of the principle of free speech" associated with Voltaire; to be willing to die for others' right to free speech, even when fundamentally disagreeing with what they say. Rana (March 2, 2008) characterized Storhaug's accusations as *an example of what logicians call 'argumentum ad hominem' – where the opponents' arguments are not argued against, but instead met with irrelevant personal attacks.* Bangstad (ibid, 23) discusses two stigmatizing and excluding strategies; the accusation that Rana promotes 'Islamist' views, and the "demand that he personally distances himself from any abuse committed by Muslims in the name of Islam anywhere in the world". He argues that the debate strategy of Rana's opponents was obviously to attack the person rather than the argument, and concludes that "as a rhetorical strategy for labeling and exclusion this is quite effective, but the characterization [of Rana as an Islamist] doesn't satisfy reasonable demands of relevance".

A series of contributions exemplify variations of the technique of labeling Rana a 'fundamentalist' and I mention them summarily; Aarnes writes that he *can't remember to have read a more cunning and dangerous article*; and *asks if the intention is not to defend religious practice that allows stoning and bodily mutilation.* Audin quotes Danish Socialist leader Villy Søvndal, who told *those who want to live in an Islamist society ruled by sharia laws* to "Go home!" Rasmussen expresses *'thank and praise'* that *narrow-minded fundamentalists are met with skepticism in Norway.* Michelsen, a

language teacher, comments; *when we peel away the inaccurate and partly poor language of Rana's op-ed, there can be no doubt that we have to do with a religious fundamentalist.* Blandhol argues that Rana speaks with a forked tongue; while praising pluralism, *Islamic fundamentalism lurks in the background.* Blandhol's text evokes a contrast between 'Islamic fundamentalism' and 'the West' as defined by 'secularism'; he juxtaposes *Islamic fundamentalism based on a fundamental perception that there is no distinction between religion and politics;* which leads to *enforced standardization, tyranny and extremism,* and *Western societies, where both Norway and the US count as members, based on a doctrine that there is a distinction between religion and politics.* He also argues that religions can be compatible with values such as *diversity, democracy, human rights, science and pluralism;* and criticizes Rana for not touching upon this point. In a response (March 14, 2008), Rana writes that; *It is liberating and encouraging to know that I don't fit into Blandhol's well-defined Muslim categories;* when advocating for *more room for religion in the public sphere, simultaneously with a moderately secular nation.* In this regard, Jacobsen (2011:25) writes that in the discourse of (ideological) secularism, Islam is often seen as 'incompatible' with secularism because it allegedly fails to distinguish 'religion' from 'politics'. Those Muslims who speak publicly of Islam as 'a way of life' relevant to culture, economics and politics beyond the spiritual domain, are accused of 'Islamism' or 'fundamentalism' since they fail to differentiate 'religion' from 'politics' as secularists do.

Several contributors also criticized the way Rana was stigmatized, and supported his observations about how conservative religious people are treated in Norwegian public debate. They variously characterized these rhetorical strategies as *intolerance against religious groups* (secular writer Frode Barkved, February 27), *secular bias; intolerance; demonizing; devaluing; discrimination* and *ridicule* of religious minorities (historian of religion Hanne Nabintu Herland, February 28), *generalizing, insulting and in part extreme statements about ethnic minorities and Islam* (immigrant activist and politician Athar Ali, March 4), and *contempt*; *liberal, humanist hate; condemnations;* and a tendency towards *humanist tyranny* (Rolf Bjarne Luneng, March 4). Theologian and spokesman for the Norwegian Lutheran Mission, Espen Ottosen (March 11) criticizes the *condemnation* and *enforced standardization* ['ensretting'], and comments that; *it is a democratic problem that those who defend classical Christian ethics are labeled as recalcitrant, unenlightened and intolerant.* He accepts that as a Christian, he belongs to a minority, but *expects to be met with arguments, not hate speech.* In a follow-up article (March 2), Rana concludes; *Last Monday I warned against that religious people are marginalized exactly with such anti-democratic master suppression techniques* ['herseteknikker', see Berit Ås 1979] *in the public sphere. In the name of arrogance, I can only conclude that I was right.* Both opponents and supporters of Rana contributed to confirm his observations about how religious views are received in the Norwegian public sphere.

Distancing from 'extremism'

Other contributors, including Karine Nygaard (February 27, 2008), Jon Ole Whist of the Conservatives (February 29 and March 4, 2008), and Håkon Haugli from Labor (March 4, 2008) ask Rana to distance himself from oppression in Muslim countries, particularly they ask him to condemn the death penalty for 'practicing homosexuality' in Iran. In a general response to demands to distance himself from oppression in the name of Islam, Rana (March 2, 2008) writes;

> *Since some contributors have demanded answers from me, and I have learned from my mistakes, I will use the opportunity to go on autopilot, stand corrected and hereby confirm my distancing from persecution of Islam critics, un-Islamic oppression of women and un-Islamic harassment of dissidents. Regarding my unambiguous distancing from the death penalty against homosexuals I refer to 'Universitas' of November 14 last year. And for the sake of clarity: In God's name, I distance myself from all injustice that may be committed in God's name in the foreseeable future.*

On March 4, Whist demands a principled answer, because he finds Rana's statement in *Universitas* 'ambiguous and unsatisfactory'. In the Oslo University newspaper, Rana had said *"I personally distance myself from the death penalty against homosexuals, but I don't want to enter into discussions about what other countries do. I am not a theologian or Islamic scholar. I am a Norwegian citizen and follow Norwegian laws.* Rana (March 5) elaborates; *pointing out that "I am a Norwegian citizen" is of utmost relevance and importance, since I do not want to be held responsible for actions of other countries again and again.* This exchange illustrates how demands of distancing are negotiated. Those who respond insist on rephrasing, which the demanding party refuses to accept. What matters to Whist is a 'principled' answer, a universal condemnation of the death penalty as is typically issued by western countries, while Rana points out that although he agrees, it is not up to him to decide for other countries, and importantly, that as a Norwegian citizen, he is not responsible for what Muslim countries do. While the issue of homosexuality remains problematic in relation to Islam (Gressgård & Jacobsen 2008; Bangstad 2009:131-137), mainstream Muslims often 'solve' the dilemma by upholding religious disapproval, while tolerating the individual right to a different lifestyle; in a way comparable to how secularists may tolerate religion as a "private vice" (Modood & Ahmad 2010:89-91).

Jacobsen (2011:77) discusses a tendency among Muslims to "distance themselves from each other" in response to calls made by European politicians and in public debates on 'moderate' Muslims to take distance from those defined as 'extremists' (see also Modood & Ahmad 2010:78-79 on 'moderate' British Muslims' 'self-criticism'). Jacobsen (ibid) writes that responses from the Norwegian Muslim community have been diverse; some make public declarations to be 'moderate', others challenge a

"common perception of 'moderate Muslims' as those who do not practice Islam or reject its fundaments". Many young Muslims respond by claiming to be 'moderate' while negotiating the meanings of categories such as "moderate, conservative, extremist, radical, liberal and traditionalist" (Jacobsen 2011:77). Discussing the meaning of the term 'moderate Muslim', Modood and Fauzia Ahmad (2010:80-83) point out that it serves to contrast them from 'non-moderates' including those who invoke Islam in militant political rhetoric and defend terrorism, but also those versions of Islam defending dogmatic interpretations (which is not the same as 'fundamentalism'). 'Moderate' or 'progressive' Muslims reject the clash of civilizations thesis, and seek positive interaction and multicultural integration between the 'West' and 'Islam', something that distinguishes them also from those persons of Muslim background who are hostile to Islam. Some 'moderate' Muslims reject the term 'moderate' as a way of distancing themselves from the latter, and regard it as a divisive term imposed by media and politicians to sort 'good' from 'bad' Muslims (ibid). One way of redefining the distinction between 'moderate' and 'extreme' relates to a distinction between democracy and violence rather than a distinction between secularist and fundamentalist (Mamdani 2004; see also chapter 4). This political rather than religious distinction makes it possible to speak of 'moderate Islamism' (Bangstad 2009:100-101), a term sometimes used about the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, who have gradually developed more pragmatic attitudes towards aspects of liberal democracy. Even more so in Europe, 'moderate Islamists' inspired by the Muslim Brothers do not want to create an 'Islamic state', much less turn sharia into state law, but are more concerned with maintaining identity, culture and religion combined with participating in the existing liberal democratic system (Bangstad & Høigilt 2011:131).

Renegotiating the meaning of 'moderate' in such a way, Rana (*Morgenbladet,* September 16, 2011) defines himself as a *spokesman for Norwegian Islam,* where it is possible to be *both fully Muslim and fully Norwegian.* He emphasizes that *Islam can function in a liberal constitutional state* and *draws inspiration from many European and American Muslims,* including Ramadan. But Rana points out that he is *not a "disciple" of Ramadan,* and that developing a Norwegian Islam has *nothing to do with the Muslim Brothers.* In short, he defines his position as follows (*Aftenposten,* December 20, 2010);

> *I have always defended a secular Norway and liberal democracy – including the right to be open about one's faith. There is no opposition between being a visible and practicing Muslim and being a loyal and proud European.*

While Rana's debate contribution reflects his personal views (he was no longer MSS leader at this point), his views can be understood in context of discourses within the Muslim Student Society (see Jacobsen 2011 and chapter 4). He refers to Islam as a 'complete lifestyle', which resonates with revivalist emphasis on Islam as a "complete way of life". Whether Islamic revivalism should be understood as a form of (moderate)

Islamism is primarily a matter of definition (see chapter 4), but the distinction matters as 'Islamism' is widely associated with violent struggle to establish an 'Islamic state' where sharia is institutionalized as state law. In *The Secular Extremism,* Rana explicitly criticizes a tendency in public debate that *social and moral conservatism among Muslims is equated to political radicalism and rejection of democracy.* Bangstad (2008:23-24) draws on a "classical understanding of Islamism" as movements that "want to establish an Islamic state, and/or implement sharia", and concludes that Rana, as an advocate of "moderate secularism" and American religious pluralism, cannot be characterized as an Islamist in this sense, even though "human rights, democracy and respect for pluralism" have become integral to 'moderate Islamism' and 'post-Islamism'. Neither can Rana be fitted into the Christian category of 'fundamentalism' (a misleading term for Islamic movements, see Mamdani 2004:36-37); instead Bangstad (ibid) describes him as a "serious and quite religious young man who refuses to relegate his God to the private sphere" and "a moderate and conservative Muslim".

While acknowledging the importance of Rana's criticism of secular hegemony, not least because his contribution paves the way for other young Norwegian Muslim voices to join public debate in the future, Bangstad (ibid, 27-28) is concerned that the 'secularism debate' may contribute to reinforce a widespread perception among the public that Norwegian Muslims in general are religious conservatives. He argues that Rana's conservative views are not representative for a large portion of Norwegian Muslims, who instead show great variation in the extent of religious practice, often hold an ambivalent position towards religiosity and secularity, and prefer more hybrid identities than being primarily defined as the 'Muslim Other' of Norwegian secularity. Similar to Modood's criticism of turning hybridity into an ideal for multicultural integration (see chapter 1), Jacobsen (2011:31) has reservations about how cultural mixing and openness is "constructed in hierarchical contrast to an assumed category of 'reactionary' or 'fundamentalist' ethnic and religious movements", e.g. when Eriksen contrasts "creolized Muslims" who "drink beer and eat roast pork" and "go to the mosque one day and to a disco the next" with "cultural puritanism and identity politics", where the latter allegedly results in "lack of integration" and "personal frustrations" (Eriksen 1999:19; quoted by Jacobsen 2011:31) when faced with individual choices of modern hybridity. Jacobsen argues that such a dichotomy between 'pure' and 'mixed' identities is unhelpful for understanding religious revitalization; it takes for granted "liberalist and secular" conceptions of modern individuals detached from traditional memberships and moral values, and ignores 'modern forms of power' involved in celebrating individual choice (ibid, 32).

A survey (Sandbu 2007:5) indicates that Norwegian Muslims are in fact less religious and less conservative than believed by the majority. The average Norwegian believes that two-thirds of Norwegian Muslims attend religious ceremonies weekly (62 %), see mainstream society as immoral (66 %); and that almost half of them (43 %) want to

implement sharia laws in Norway. A comparative survey among Norwegian Muslims (TNS Gallup 2006:9; 29) shows that only 18 % attend religious ceremonies weekly; 15 % think society is immoral; and 14 % want sharia laws. While Progress Party voters are most mistaken, and Socialist Left voters most accurately guessed actual Muslim views, differences were small; and ignorance and misperceptions widespread among all sectors of the majority (Sandbu 2007:16-17). Interestingly, 20 % of the general population think that Norwegian society is immoral, as against only 15 % of Muslims (TNS Gallup 2006:9; 11). The survey also found that 30 % of Norwegian Muslims attend religious ceremonies monthly, compared to 19 % of the general population (ibid, 29). For comparison, a survey of British Muslims showed that nearly two-thirds attended religious ceremonies weekly, compared to only 25 % of white Britons who attend monthly (Modood 2005:160). Nearly all British South Asians said they have a religion, and 90 % that it was "of personal importance". Among the British majority, one-third said they don't have a religion, and only 13 % said religion was of personal importance. Even among youth, two-thirds of British Pakistanis and Bangladeshis said religion was "very important to how they led their lives" compared to only 5 % of young whites. These statistics indicate that Norwegian Muslims may be more 'secular' than their British counterparts, but attending religious ceremonies says little about individual practice, personal belief and religious identity. When asked about the 'importance' of religion, Norwegian Pakistanis and Somalians score as high as their British counterparts (NOU 2011:14; p. 315). It may thus be more accurate to say that Norwegian Muslims' religious practice is more 'individualized' than in Britain. Studies indicate that minorities in general (not only Muslims) perceive religion as more important in their lives, have a stronger sense of belonging to a religious community and take more part in religious activities than the Norwegian majority (Thorbjørnsrud & Døving 2012:14).

Bangstad (2009:27) also points out that Rana's 'appeal to the Christian Right' may not be shared by many Norwegian Muslims, whose voting pattern suggests that economic considerations carry far more weight than conservative values, as an overwhelming majority votes for parties on the left; 52 % for Labor and 31 % Socialist Left (compared to 33 % and 12 % for the general population) in the 2005 parliamentary elections (TNS Gallup 2006:22-23), when a center-left coalition formed a majority government. Since then, coalition parties, and the Socialist Left in particular, have lost substantially in opinion polls. John Rex (cited in Modood 2010:24) notes a similar political pragmatism among British Muslims, who vote overwhelmingly for Labour (based on their material interests) despite sharing family values and sexual morality with the conservatives. On the other hand, economic redistribution and caring for the poor are also religious values for Muslims (expressed in one of the 'five pillars'; 'zakat'), thus social democracy corresponds to an aspect of Muslim ethics, in line with Ramadan's suggestion that democratic non-Muslim governments may be more "Islamic" than authoritarian governments run by Muslims (cited in Jacobsen 2011:126). According to this view, also

expressed by some Norwegian Muslims, contemporary Norway comes closer to universal Muslim standards of good governance than most Muslim countries (Jacobsen 2011:126-127). With the exception of a few extremist individuals like Bhatti and Mohyeldeen (see chapter 2), no Norwegian Muslim spokesperson has publicly suggested institutionalizing sharia, not even in a restricted sense as a council for conflict mediation as in Britain (ibid, 212; Zimeri 2011:114). Young Norwegian Muslims' skepticism towards institutionalizing sharia as state law is shared by Muslim feminists like Mir-Hosseini (Vogt et al. 2009:210; 214-215), and reformers like Ramadan, who are concerned that patriarchal, conservative interpretations would prevail if sharia is sanctioned by the state, even though they argue that sharia in itself is compatible with human rights and gender equality (Zimeri 2011:117). Among Norwegian Muslims, both Ramadan, who rethinks sharia in the context of European democracies, and al-Qaradawi, who offers non-binding authoritative advice based on sharia, are considered well-respected authorities (Jacobsen 2011:125-126).

Scholar of Islamic law, Abdullahi An-Na'im (2009), argues from a religious perspective against the idea of an 'Islamic state' that implements and enforces sharia as state law. An-Na'im distinguishes between secularism understood as separation of religion and state, and as separation of religion and politics. He argues that a widespread negative perception of secularism among Muslims is due to confusing these two aspects; which "leads to the assumption that the separation of Islam and the state can only mean the total relegation of Islam to the purely private domain and its exclusion from public policy" (ibid, 146). An-Na'im advocates a 'moderate' understanding of secularism (or "pluralism") as "religious neutrality of the state"; which "does not mean that Islam and politics should be separated" but on the contrary, "would make it possible to implement Islamic principles in official policy and legislation through general political deliberation, but not as imperative religious doctrine" (ibid, 145). Theorizing the distinction between state and politics, he draws on (the late) Rawls' concept of "public reason", which implies that;

> Muslims and other believers should be able to propose policy and legislative initiatives emanating from their religious beliefs, *provided* they can support them in public, free and open debate by reasons that are accessible and convincing to the generality of citizens, regardless of their religion. (ibid, 156)

Citizens must be able to "make counter-proposals through public debate, without exposing themselves to charges of disbelief, apostasy or blasphemy" (ibid, 149), because "the whole process of formulating and implementing public policy and legislation is constantly subject to human fallibility, which means that it can always be challenged or questioned without violating the direct and immediate divine will of God" (ibid, 152). An-Na'im argues that institutional separation of state and religion is necessary for sharia to have a proper positive role in society, since "the premise of Islam

is that each and every Muslim is personally responsible for knowing and complying with what is required of him or her as a matter of religious obligation" (an-Na'im 2009:151). While individual Muslims usually consult Islamic scholars in order to know what is required in a given situation, any scholarly understanding of sharia is always the product of 'ijtihad' i.e. "the meaning and implementation of these ['sharia'] sources in everyday life is always the product of human interpretation ['fiqh'] and action in a specific historical context". Granting the authority of interpretation to any institution is "dangerous because that power will certainly be manipulated for political or other reasons" (ibid, 154). Hence, the idea that sharia principles can be enforced by an Islamic state is a dangerous illusion (ibid, 148), because

> whatever is enacted and enforced by the state is the political will of the ruling elite, not the normative system of Islam as such. Yet, such policies and legislation are difficult for the general population to resist or even debate when they are presented as the will of God. (ibid, 156)

Moreover, "compliance [with sharia] must be completely voluntary because it requires pious intention […], which is negated by the coercive enforcement by the state". Thus, when properly understood as ethical principles to be freely observed by individual believers, "sharia principles can and should be a source of public policy and legislation, subject to the fundamental constitutional and human rights of all citizens, men and women, Muslims and non-Muslims equally and without discrimination" (ibid, 155). A positive public role for sharia principles requires that certain traditional interpretations ['fiqh'] are reformed (ibid, 156), as "the consensus of previous generations cannot be binding unless it is accepted as such by every generation for itself, with all due critical reflection and debate" (ibid, 153), but this "should not mean the wholesale and uncritical adoption of dominant Western theory and practice" (ibid, 158).

Islamic revivalism in Norway focuses on how to lead religious lives in a non-Muslim society rather than being concerned with 'Islamic law' (Jacobsen 2011:213). This means that behavioral rules as outlined in the sharia are seen in terms of individual ethics rather than laws to be implemented by the state (ibid, 339), in line with Asad's (cited in ibid, 109) argument that in the classic theological view, the 'umma' as a worldwide Muslim community was not imagined as analogous to a modern nation-state, but rather as a global network of interconnected "self-governing but not autonomous" individuals with "a capacity to discover the rules of sharia" and conform to these as a "morally binding" system of practical reason. Public behavior guided by Islam can be described as political because it makes Muslim identity relevant for the public exercise of active citizenship (ibid, 208), and is expected to influence the public sphere. As such, it "challenges one particular secularist understanding of the relationship between religion and politics" (ibid, 340), i.e. the view that religion should be kept strictly private. Being simultaneously a religious Muslim and an integrated Norwegian citizen, like Rana,

represents a "politicization of religious identity" (Jacobsen 2011:34) that challenges a hegemonic Norwegian ideology of 'egalitarian individualism' which understands equality as sameness (ibid, 214-216; see also Gullestad 2006b:169-170).

Secular hegemony

Rana's second point is that Norway is a secular hegemony with tendencies towards an 'ideological secularism' of the French type. He writes (February 25);

> *The development in this country regarding the degree of acceptance for exercise of religion has several parallels to France and Turkey.* […] *There are attempts in these countries to make public exercise of religion extinct, so that secularism and atheism achieve a special position in society.* […] *The secular paradigm of France and Turkey expresses a type of extreme and fanatical 'enforced standardization' that undermines intellectual diversity in general and the individual right to practice one's faith in particular.*

In his second article (March 2), Rana adds that; *several debate contributions give a thorough lesson in exactly what I describe as an extreme-secular tradition in Norwegian debate.* Debate contributions confirmed Rana's observations of how religious people are treated in public debate, mostly by using marginalization and stigmatization techniques that themselves are examples of what Rana criticized.

More 'serious' contributors argued against Rana's analysis which describes Norway as a secular hegemony tending towards an ideological form of secularism. Rather than speculating on Rana's links to 'fundamentalism', these contributors focused on his arguments and discussed the degree and form of secularism in contemporary Norway. 'Islam critics' Gunn Hild Lem (February 28) and Ingvild Heier (March 6) simply stated their disagreement; the former argued that; *the term secular extremism is becoming ever less characteristic of Norway, and to the contrary, the fact that Usman Rana won the competition, shows how religious arguments unfortunately are gaining legitimacy again.* She agrees with Rana that it is not the business of non-believers to change theology, but concludes that if *popularly elected leaders should stay away from religion, however,* [it] *requires a more rather than less secular society.* Heier writes that; *it is still unclear what he* [Rana] *thinks is the problem with today's secular society;* and argues; *when religious fundamentalists, either they are Christian or Muslim, face opposition in public debate it is because there are many out there who disagree with them. There is no organized "hate"* [or persecution] *against them and no one has denied them the right to speak;* implying that Rana's description of Norwegian society as 'secular extremist' is unjustified.

From a Christian perspective, priest Knut Sand Bakken (February 27) comments; *there is a lot of religiosity in Norwegian society,* and *persons of faith are certainly not*

marginalized. Further, *when Christian faith influences some politicians' decisions in legislation, for example, this is of course fully legitimate.* Also from a Christian perspective, two representatives of the Inter-Church Council for the Church of Norway, Gard Lindseth and Sven Thore Kloster (March 28), provide a nuanced argument against Rana's description of the status of religious expressions in the Norwegian public sphere;

> *The Enlightenment heritage often causes us to see the secular as universal, and the religious as something particular that must be subordinated. Secular absolutism, however, is equally intolerant and excluding as a religious one. At the same time, we are not so sure that Rana's claim that religious people are marginalized in the public sphere is a correct analysis, or at least an accurate analysis.* […] *we think there are many examples that normative arguments grounded in religion are taken seriously and even listened to, in the public – at least if others can also support them on different grounds. This applies to political issues like biotechnology, euthanasia, solidarity and human rights, responsibility for the poor and weak, as well as Protecting Creation. The interesting question is rather when are religious arguments not heard in the public. Often this relates to ethical questions about gender, family and sexuality. Rana is right that value-conservative arguments in these ethical fields tend to be degraded in public dialogue.*

The writers acknowledge that 'secular absolutism' is problematic, but disagree with Rana's analysis that this perspective is dominant in Norway. They argue that religious arguments play an important role in many political debates, with the exception of conservative views on gender and family issues, which do tend to be marginalized. (I return to the issue about religious ethics as a positive contribution to public debate in the final section.) Under the headline *Norway is not secular,* Jens Brun-Pedersen representing the Humanist Association (February 26), argues that the description of Norwegian society, which has *a state religion and strong traits of a dominant majority religion,* as 'secular extremist' depends on one's perspective. He argues that there is much that makes sense in Rana's text, but a major objection is that; *Norwegian society is to an equally high extent characterized by religious 'enforced standardization'.* From his perspective, Brun-Pedersen agrees with Rana that the state church should be abolished, but for a different reason; so that the state can become properly secular.

While these writers disagree on whether Norway is secular enough (Christian contributors Bakken, Lindseth and Kloster, as well as Heier are satisfied with status quo, which they in contrast to Rana, see as allowing religious expressions in political debate, while Brun-Pedersen and Lem want a more secular society by abolishing the state church), they all shared the perception that religion has a significant presence in Norwegian society, also in public debate, and that a 'secular extremist' view that religion should be kept strictly private cannot be said to hold hegemony in Norway.

There is a tendency towards 'secular extremism' among some parts of what Bangstad called the 'secular intelligentsia'. Rana's point about Norway being faced with a choice between a 'moderate' ('American') and an 'extreme' ('French') form of secularism can thus be understood as referring to an ideological struggle for hegemony between these two positions.

Rana's analysis of a secular hegemony was picked up and elaborated on in commentaries by *Aftenposten*'s political editor Harald Stanghelle (March 1) and journalist Ulf Andenæs (April 3, 2008). Stanghelle notes that; *it is long since so many, so intensely and so angrily have felt the need to distance themselves from a social observation,* and suggests that this may be because Rana hit a blind spot in Norwegian public debate. He argues that Rana, from his standpoint as a conservative believer, *sees some traits of our own society more clearly than many others;* and thus offers a *sharp and observant social analysis*. The political editor writes that; *we may not always be aware of it, but nonetheless we live in an age and a country with a secular and liberal hegemony;* something which implies freedom from dictates of moralism, but *may also mean contempt for those who refuse to accept dominant trends of society*. Recognizing that popular liberation movements, whether communist, Islamist, nationalist, or secularist and liberalist, always risk becoming as oppressive as their predecessors when they become dominant, Stanghelle notes how an intolerant pressure to conformity has developed in the name of tolerance. To explain how this happens, he takes a historical perspective and reminds us of how recent the European trend of secularization is. While a *liberal life-stance and a liberal lifestyle dominate our age,* especially in media; many of today's opinion leaders grew up in a different era, when Christian moralists; now *so easily caricatured as "obscurantists", really had an influence in this country*. Thus, *many of today's opinion leaders have a problem seeing that yesterday's power of faith has become devalued to examples of powerlessness,* since *power of definition in society today belongs to the liberal majority;* and they *continue pounding at the minority as if it represents a superior power that must be challenged. In this way, the liberal majority may become indistinguishably alike the moralizing majority it defeated a long time ago.* He concludes that the 'liberal age' cannot be taken for granted; whether it provokes a counter-reaction partly depends on how liberals handle their newly-won victory. Stanghelle's view corresponds to Jeff Spinner-Halev's (cited in Modood 2005:179) characterization of a 'liberal mainstream' and 'marginalized conservative religious minorities' (to be discussed later). Similarly, Ulf Andenæs describes Rana's article as *an observant description of how a Muslim perceives a secularized society in Northern Europe, where religious faith has been pushed aside;* and adds that; *there should not be much here with which readers with a degree of religious feelings can be much in disagreement*. He argues that what matters to religious Christians or Muslims like Rana, is not whether the state subsidizes religion, but that; *laws and norms of society are decreasingly based on religious teachings, and correspondingly more on thoughts and*

models with a secular basis. With regard to the state church, Andenæs writes that while it used to mean that *"the public religion of the state"* was a guide that gave direction to *social arrangements, not least in ethics and family law; today the state church means that an authority freed from religion, continues to govern a church with less room in public, and imposes on the church some of its partly secular-based decisions.* Thus, many religious people *do not feel that a state religion guarantees a state committed to religion*, but rather that *state religion is restraining the church*. I discuss Rana's views on the state church in greater detail below.

National versions of secularism

In order to discuss the role of secularism in Norwegian society compared to other countries like France, Britain or the US, it is necessary to distinguish between different versions of secularism. Here, it is important to distinguish between institutional separation of church and state, and the insistence that religion should be privatized and disconnected from politics (an-Na'im 2009:146). For a comparison of different versions of secularism in different countries, and how these relate to various forms of multicultural accommodation of Muslim minorities, I draw on Casanova (2009) and Modood (2005; 2007; Modood & Kastoryano 2006).

Starting with a distinction between absolute and relative separation between religion and politics generally, and state and religion more specifically, Modood (2005:141-142) argues that when discussing the (in)compatibility of Islam and secularism, we need to distinguish between 'moderate' and 'ideological' versions of each; i.e. between theocracy and mainstream Islam, and between a 'radical' or 'ideological' secularism arguing for an absolute separation between religion and politics, and mainstream European forms of 'moderate' secularism with relative separation (Modood 2010:127). Criticizing a view even held by Charles Taylor, that Western liberal societies cannot extend recognition to Muslims because mainstream Islam does not separate politics and religion, Modood argues that while there are Muslim ideologists who want to subordinate politics to religious leaders (as in Iranian theocracy), mainstream Islam has historically distinguished between political rulers and spiritual leadership, although Islam had an official status and was a basis of jurisprudence. While secularism is hegemonic across Western Europe today, it is characterized by a moderate and pragmatic, "historically evolved and evolving compromise with religion" with significant institutional links between state and church, rather than by a radical ideology of "absolute separation of religion and politics" (Modood & Kastoryano 2006:162). Modood (2005:143-145) argues that 'radical secularism' is not neutral, since it would "suit and favor private religions" focused on "the inner life or personal conduct or individual salvation" over those that include "communal obligations, a public philosophy, and political action". Historically, Protestantism, with its individualized, intellectualized, and (usually) privatized, view of religion, has played a central role in

the secularization process (Bangstad 2009:31), and in contemporary Europe, Protestant countries tend to be less religious than Catholic countries, with the exception of France (Casanova 2009:143). In much the same way as Catholicism was historically seen as incompatible with secularism, today Islam is seen as the greatest challenge to secular hegemony, as Muslim minorities demand to be included in the renegotiation of historical compromises between state and church (Modood & Kastoryano 2006:162).

If the liberal state uses its power to encourage individualistic religions while demanding that religions with public ambitions to shape social structures, give these up, the state is no longer seen as 'neutral', 'just' or 'legitimate' in the eyes of religious believers such as Rana, who want religion to have a public role. Thus, while 'radical secularism' arguing for absolute separation, is incompatible with Islam, and 'radical Islam' rejecting separation, is incompatible with secularism; moderate secularism and moderate Islam are compatible as both views support a relative separation of religion and politics. As "the goal of democratic multiculturalism cannot and should not be cultural neutrality but rather inclusion of marginal and disadvantaged groups, including religious communities in public life" (Modood 2005:147), Muslims "should not be excluded from participation in the multicultural state because their views about politics are not secular enough" (ibid, 142). This implies that radical secularism can be seen as an obstacle to integration and as incompatible with multiculturalism (ibid, 149; 2007:78). In short, Modood (ibid, 85) argues that in order to integrate Muslims, it is necessary to include Muslim identity as a public identity and Islam as an organized religion.

Like Norway and other Scandinavian countries (Bangstad 2009:43; 235; Casanova 2009:143; Thorbjørnsrud & Døving 2012:8), Britain has been described as among the most highly secularized countries in the world, in terms of practice, affiliation and belief (Modood & Kastoryano 2006:164). In British political culture, secularism is hegemonic, especially on the center-left, and there is widespread skepticism towards Muslim identity politics, primarily because it is a "politicized religious identity" (Modood 2005:167). Like the Norwegian 'secularism debate', the Rushdie affair in Britain showed that those "most politically opposed to (politicized) Muslims wasn't Christians or even right-wing nationalists but the secular, liberal intelligentsia," who "frequently criticize [Muslims] in the op/ed pages of the broadsheets" (ibid, 169). This 'ideological secularism' that is currently being developed as "an ideology to oppose Islam and its public recognition", generates "European domestic versions of 'the clash of civilizations' thesis". It represents a challenge to pluralism and democracy, and "has to be resisted no less than the radical anti-secularism of some Islamists" (Modood 2007:85-86).

Despite the presence of ideological secularism among intellectuals, actual institutional arrangements across Europe reflect moderate compromises with various degrees of relative separation between state and religion (ibid, 72-73; 78). While all Western

European countries can be characterized as 'secular', interpretations of secularism as well as institutional arrangements come in a variety of national versions (Modood & Kastoryano 2006:163; 173). The ideology of "Enlightenment rationalism" underpinning secularism takes different forms depending on each country's historical experience; since the French revolution, French Enlightenment thinking has often been against (the Catholic) religion, less so in Germany where Catholic and Lutheran churches became 'partners' of the state. British Enlightenment thinking was not hostile to religion, as the Church of England had less political power compared to the Catholic Church elsewhere (ibid). Furthermore, in each country, Muslims have to some extent been pragmatically accommodated into existing national institutional arrangements (Modood 2007:78-79; Modood & Kastoryano 2006:173); even in France, the state has institutionally recognized Islam (ibid, 174). In the radical French model of *laïcité*, there is no state church, and the state "actively promotes the privatization of religion" (Modood 2007:75). The principle of *laïcité* represents an ideological secularism where the republican state "leads civil society by creating a political culture that is opposed to clericalism, or perhaps even to 'Catholic culture'" in an "active movement" aimed at "extracting the individual from religious constraints and integrating him into the political community as an individual citizen" (Modood & Kastoryano 2006:166). Consequently, there are few signs of religion in the French public sphere or in French civil society (ibid, 165). This applies particularly to state schools, which are seen as agents of secularization and assimilation (see chapter 4). Nevertheless, the state sponsors religious organizations (designed as *cultes* rather than as communities) in an institutional framework that is "as much a form of state control as it is [a form] of recognition and falls short of any kind of social partnership, as in Germany (Modood 2007:75). Rather than recognizing a variety of Muslim voices, the state-controlled French "corporatist" form of inclusion creates a hierarchical structure where Muslims speak with one voice, and where the state imposes upon Muslims "its own template, plans, modes of partnership and chosen imams and leaders" (ibid, 81). Interestingly, this means that the republican ideology, contrary to its stated intentions to be 'blind' to all sorts of 'difference', in practice recognizes religious minorities to a greater extent than any other minority status (Modood & Kastoryano 2006:175).

Casanova (2009:141-143) writes that when seeking to accommodate minority religions, European countries tend to "replicate their particular model of separation of church and state". French *laïcité* thus requires "strict privatization of religion, eliminating religion from any public forum" while simultaneously

> pressuring religious groups to organize themselves into a single, centralized churchlike institutional structure that can be regulated by and serve as interlocutor to the state, following the traditional model of the concordat with the Catholic Church (ibid).

In Germany, internal divisions among Muslims have undermined government attempts to create an official Islamic institution from above. In continental Europe, and particularly France and Germany, a majority of immigrants are Muslims, and the majority of Muslim immigrants come from one country or region (Turkish in Germany; North African in France). In this regard, Norway is more similar to Britain, which has a much greater diversity of immigrants although the largest Muslim group in both countries is Pakistani. Britain, while having a state church, has "historically accommodated much greater religious pluralism" and allows a more decentralized model of a variety of religious associations lobbying for their interests "directly with local authorities" (Casanova 2009:143).

In Norway, 80 % of the population are members of the national church, but there is also widespread skepticism of religion, particularly of organized religion. Public debate is often hostile to religion and religious leaders, and 80 % see religion more as a source of conflict than of peace (Thorbjørnsrud & Døving 2012:7-8). Unlike several other highly secularized European countries, Norway had until recently a state church linked to the monarchy as in Britain. In May 2012, Parliament passed changes to the Constitution that abolished 'state religion'. The state church was converted into a state-funded 'national church' but most practical arrangements remain the same. The 'relative separation' of church and state moved towards disestablishment; notably the government no longer appoints bishops and it is no longer required that half the cabinet ministers are church members. In Britain, bishops sit in the House of Lords, but the Church of England is not directly funded by the state. The Norwegian state continues to support the national church and minority congregations with an equal amount per member (Henriksen 2012:200). Conversely, England has a large number of state-funded religious schools (Modood & Kastoryano 2006:164), while Norwegian social-democratic politicians are skeptical of allowing and funding religious (and private) schools, partly because of the role of the 'unitary school' system in Norwegian nation-building, with some parallel to France. Also resembling the French system where the state controls the church (Bangstad 2008:25-26), Norwegian politicians have actively used their power to 'liberalize' and 'secularize' the church (Jacobsen 2011:22), e.g. in appointing bishops. Disagreements between Muslim leaders and Muslim youth during the cartoon affair (see chapter 2) indicate that the Norwegian government seeks to exert similar disciplinary power on the Islamic Council, although less so than in France (ibid, 124). Like in Britain, Germany and the US, but unlike France, the Norwegian church has played an active role in civil society political movements for peace and social justice (Modood 2007:75; Modood & Kastoryano 2006:163).

Views on the state church

Bangstad (ibid) points out that Rana's characterization of France and Turkey, as allegedly seeking 'to make the public exercise of religion extinct' is inaccurate, as these

two "models" are better described as forms of state regulation and control of religion. Turkish secularism "does not imply a separation between religion and state, but extensive state control and discipline of religion" (Bangstad 2008:25-26), while French secularism is "primarily based on a strict and quite authoritarian control with the exercise of religion among French citizens, but does not prevent the French state from financing religious activities" (ibid). However, Rana's criticism of the French model is consistent with his criticism of privatizing religion, and of the state church as an 'instrument' of state control (February 25);

> It is not exactly far-fetched to regard the state church as an instrument for [agnostic or atheist] politicians and lobbyists with varying and questionable degrees of grounding in the Christian faith. They want a democratization of Christian theology so that in terms of values, it becomes a mirror image of society's latest trends instead of reflecting the teachings of the Bible.

In the follow-up (March 2), he adds;

> The state church is used as an entry point to ritualize, politically dictate and secularize theology, creating an expectation that other Christian denominations and other religions should follow suit. In order not to completely sacrifice diversity and freedom of religion on the altar of political correctness, it may thus be of fundamental importance that state and church are separated, so that the theological independence of congregations can be maintained in accordance with article 18 of the Declaration of Human Rights.

He adds that this does not imply that religious movements *can or should be exempt from well-reasoned criticism in a transparent and democratic society*.

As Jacobsen (2011:21-22) writes, the Norwegian state church system is currently under revision and has been challenged both by those who want to protect the church against "constraints of state power" and by those arguing for a secular (in the sense of 'neutral') state. The 2012 constitutional changes accommodate both these arguments; the Church supports disestablishment because it gives them freedom to appoint bishops independent of government, and appointment of cabinet ministers is now independent of their church membership. In support of establishment, it has been argued that without state control, the church would become more 'conservative'. In this regard, Jan-Olav Henriksen (2012:201) argues that the Church has 'democratized' in order to secure a degree of autonomy from state control. Thorbjørnsrud and Døving (2012:13-14) argue that the general public feels a sense of ownership over the national church, which gives them a right to an opinion on church matters even if they hardly ever attend church. Many also feel entitled to judge on religious issues in other congregations where they are not members. On the other side, it has been argued that disestablishment would "weaken the legitimacy of religion in the public sphere" (Jacobsen; ibid). The Islamic

Council opposed state-church separation because they fear that this would lead to further secularization of the French type (see also Bangstad 2008:24), where religion is relegated to the private sphere; but also because of a concern for a religiously-supported public morality and current financial benefits (which remain unchanged after 2012), where minority congregations receive subsidies according to membership to ensure that all religions are treated equal. Rana's main argument to separate church and state is to protect religion against state control (see also ibid), as (particularly Labor) governments since the 1970s have supported liberals over conservatives within the state church, especially with regard to gender equality, calling on the church to be open towards female bishops and gay ministers (Jacobsen 2011:22). While Rana criticizes similar government efforts to 'secularize' Islam, Jacobsen (ibid, 124) points out that the Norwegian government has been less directly involved in shaping a "Norwegian Islam" in comparison to the French government, although Norwegian politicians and others have repeatedly encouraged Muslims to 'modernize' their interpretations in a more 'progressive' direction. The debate about revising the Norwegian church illustrates that both secularists and religious spokespersons, including the Muslim minority, see advantages and disadvantages with current pragmatic compromises between state and church (Modood & Kastoryano 2006:168).

Modood, like Rana, criticizes French 'ideological secularism' and advocates for 'moderate secularism' and 'religious pluralism'. However, rather than promoting the US model, Modood (2010:128-129) prefers a pragmatic and "accommodative" secularism typical of northwestern Europe, where organized religions are 'social partners' of the state; thus advocating a revised version of the state church system, where state-religion links are gradually pluralized or multiculturalized. Modood (2005:168) points out that religious minority spokespersons in Britain, like the Islamic Council in Norway (Bangstad 2008:24; Jacobsen 2011:21-22) have not challenged the state church or demanded that it be disestablished because it privileges one religion over others, but instead want to maintain and extend state-religion links. As an alternative to disestablishment, Modood (2005:143-145) proposes to "approximate inclusiveness rather than neutrality", which implies compensating marginalized religions by giving them "access to influence so their voices are nevertheless heard". Wishing to ensure state support for minority religions, his preferred form of 'moderate secularism' is closer to the Indian version of secularism than to the American one. Trying to identify "a version of secularism that meets the most important religious objections", Rajeev Bhargava (2009) suggests the Indian model as an alternative to a "very individualist, American liberal secularism" (ibid, 109). According to Bhargava (ibid, 101-107), the Indian version is characterized by valuing not only individual freedom of religion, but also the right of religious communities to preserve their traditions through educational institutions; it is concerned with inter-religious equality and recognizes community-specific rights; it keeps a flexible "principled distance" which recognizes that religion is

important to people and allows public religious justifications (rather than promoting the post-Enlightenment idea of mutual exclusion of religion and politics); it is not hostile to public religion; it combines critique of practices like untouchability and gender oppression with respect for religion (rather than choosing between hostility and indifference); it is open to contextual moral reasoning, allowing differential treatment and encouraging accommodation, letting different societies work out their own secularisms; and represents a modern, but non-western alternative, thus defying dominant dichotomies. In short, "Indian secularism is an ethically sensitive negotiated settlement between diverse groups and divergent values" which attempts to bring together "seemingly incompatible values" (Bhargava 2009:107). For countries with an established state church, Modood prefers "pluralizing the state-religion link" something which is happening to some extent in both Britain and Norway. A reformed state church can thus be one way of "institutionalizing religious pluralism in Britain and similar countries" (Modood 2005:148).

While both advocating 'religious pluralism', Modood and Rana have different aims. While open to 'respect for religion', Modood (2010:132) is more concerned with public recognition of (politicized) religious identity and state support for religious minorities, while Rana, as a religious revivalist, is more concerned with protecting religion against the state (Casanova 2009:151; Rawls 199:166), (individual) religious freedom in civil society, and possible contributions of religious values in the public sphere and society in general. Thus, Modood favors reforming the state church system to include minority religions along lines already underway in Britain, while Rana favors the US, a "deeply religious society".

Multiculturalism and post-secular society

Advocating 'moderate secularism' and 'religious pluralism', Rana points to the USA as a model. He asks (February 25); *Should Norway be a moderate secular nation that maintains freedom of religion, or should society be extreme-secular, where the state and political correctness dominates and defines what Norwegian citizens are allowed to believe?* As an alternative to developments he observes in Norway, he suggests;

> *The American approach to this central identity issue is clearly distinct from the development in Norway. The secular model of the USA represents diversity, but it guarantees individual religious freedom, belief in God is given space in the public sphere, and President Bush can openly promote his Christian views on family forms without being harassed by the media and political opponents.*

Comparing the US to Europe draws attention to a distinction between state and civil society. Like France, the United States has no state church; but unlike the French state, which "actively promotes the privatization of religion" (Modood & Kastoryano 2006:165), the US constitution 'protects religious diversity' (ibid, 164). The difference

between French and American versions of secularism lies not in the constitutional separation of church and state, which is strict in both countries, but in "the place of religion in civil society and its relationship to the state, the interpretation – not its juridical definition – of the principle of separation of Church and state" (Modood & Kastoryano 2006:166). While in France, the state promotes secularism in civil society, in the USA, organized religion seeks to influence politics from civil society (ibid). While some of the most secular countries in Europe have state churches, the United States has been described as a "deeply religious society" (ibid, 164; Modood 2007:73), with higher levels of church attendance than in Europe, and with a politically influential Protestant fundamentalism that is rare in Europe. Modood (ibid, 74) points out that in the US, despite its constitutional "wall of separation" between state and church, "it is not at all unusual for politicians – in fact for President George W. Bush, it is most usual – to publicly talk about their faith, [and] to appeal to religion" while in establishment Britain, where bishops sit in the upper house of legislature, "politicians rarely talk about their religion" and even former Prime Minister Tony Blair, "one of the most openly professed and active Christians ever to hold that office" said that his religious beliefs are "a private matter" (ibid). In the US, organized religion is a powerful force in civil society and seeks to influence politics (ibid, 75; Modood & Kastoryano 2006:164-165). As in Britain, churches and priests have been involved in progressive political movements for anti-racism, social justice and peace, such as the Civil Rights Movement (Modood 2007:75; see also Rawls 1999:154), indicating that religious involvement in politics need not be reactionary (Mamdani 2004:42-44).

Americans in general tend to be more religious than people in Europe or other modern societies (Casanova 2009:148-151). Over 90 per cent of them profess to be religious (Rawls 2003:140), and 68 per cent report that religion is of personal importance in their lives, compared to 28 per cent in Britain (Espositio & Mogahed 2007:47). Interestingly, Americans tend to exaggerate their religiosity, in contrast to a European tendency to play it down; indicating that "Americans think they are supposed to be religious, while Europeans think that they are supposed to be irreligious" (Casanova 2009:150; see also Bangstad 2009:44). Public religious identities play an important role in a "vibrant American religious pluralism" (Casanova 2009:140) that plays a central role in the integration of new immigrants. Significantly, only a small number of immigrants to the USA are Muslims; these are very diverse in terms of countries of origin; and about one-third of American Muslims are African American converts (ibid, 142). The US constitutional principle of separation serves not only to protect the state from religion, but also to protect religion from the state. It differentiates between a political community of citizens and a diversity of religious 'denominations' (ibid, 151). While America was historically defined as a Christian nation and religious pluralism only applied to Protestant denominations; Catholics and Jews were later accommodated and became "American religions" (ibid, 152). Like Islam today, Catholicism was once

stigmatized as a fundamentalist religion incompatible with modern democracy and individual freedom (Casanova 2009:160). And like Catholicism, Casanova argues that Islam is now in the process of being recognized as an American religion (ibid, 161).

While disagreeing with Modood on the role of the state church, Rana also links 'religious pluralism' to multicultural integration; and argues that because of greater acceptance of religion in that country, *American Muslims are far better integrated than their European fellow believers*. He further elaborates on pluralism;

> *It is our duty to work towards Norway remaining a multifaceted and well-functioning democracy, which means that pluralism is invaluable. It should not be forgotten that also religious freedom, political opinions based on religious convictions, and politically incorrect views are part of pluralism.*

In his follow-up article (March 2), he elaborates;

> *Norway should strive towards being a moderately secular nation, aiming to avoid a development towards enforced secular standardization and other forms of majority tyranny. I warn that diversity may become history unless public space in Norway is liberalized so that also references to God and value conservatism are regarded as an integral part of Norwegian democracy.*

He adds that this of course also includes respect and appreciation for non-religious viewpoints. Again, he points to the American model; which *perhaps most closely approaches pluralistic tolerance and harmony;* and *demonstrates compatibility of religion with one of the world's most advanced; progressive, modern and open societies.* Rana invokes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 18, to support the public role of religion, stating the right to *public exercise, missionary activity and manifestation of one's religion.*

Bangstad (2008:24-25) is skeptical of how a Muslim can "promote George W. Bush's USA as a model to follow". Bangstad finds this 'remarkable' because of the Bush administration's attacks on the American 'wall of separation'; arguing that "what Rana sees as positive religious expressions in American politics can […] also be seen as […] instrumentalizing and ideologizing religion with the purpose to promote certain religious and political agendas"; i.e. those of a politicized Christian Right hostile to Islam. It seems that Bangstad may exaggerate the importance of Rana's mention of Bush as example of religious expressions in the American public. Rana may well support the American model as such rather than developments under President Bush.

Religion in the public sphere

Bangstad's op-ed on May 26, 2008, can be seen as a final contribution to the 'secularism debate' in *Aftenposten*. Here, he discusses an intolerant tendency towards

religious expressions in the public sphere among parts of the 'secular and liberal Norwegian intelligentsia' in terms of Habermas' theory of the public sphere;

> *In Norway, it is already from the start 'read and approved' that one need not listen to, nor can learn anything whatsoever, from Islamists and fundamentalists. Rana's op-ed represented a direct challenge to a key idea among members of the secular and liberal Norwegian intelligentsia; namely that religious expressions refusing to dress in a secular language, cannot be legitimate expressions of communicative rationality.*

Bangstad links this hegemonic idea among the Norwegian intellectual elite to the early work of Habermas; since *Habermas' influence on thinking about this issue among Norwegian intellectuals after 1968 can hardly be overstated.* In Habermas' early work on the *domination-free dialogue* (i.e. ideal speech situation), he emphasized that (in Bangstad's words) *religious citizens so to speak "translate" their religious convictions into a secular language when speaking in public.* However, while;

> *Habermas seems to have acknowledged that the idea that religiosity will gradually disappear with modernity is and will remain a secular-liberal utopia,* […] *far from all Norwegian members of the liberal and secular intelligentsia have noticed, much less are willing to accept, Habermas' post-secular turn.*

While Habermas (2005:18-20) has turned away from a "stubbornly secularist" view, Bangstad (2008:21-22) argues that in contemporary Norway, where society is "thoroughly secularized", secularism is *increasingly* understood as something more than a "political doctrine prescribing the separation of church and state and/or privatization of religion". Rather, modern Norwegian secularism is imagined as a 'neutral', "independent political ethic" (Taylor cited in Bangstad 2009:33-34; 128) beyond history and politics; a perception which Rana exposed as a "secular myth". Bangstad (2008:21-22) argues that like religious worldviews, "liberalism as a political doctrine" has an illiberal and intolerant potential if it is made absolute. In other words; "a secular absolutism" emerges, which seeks to "relegate religious expressions to closed rooms at the margins of society" (ibid).

Explaining his 'post-secular turn', Habermas' (ibid, 11-13) notes the revival of religion in many parts of the world, which makes the secularization thesis appear as describing only a special-case scenario of Western Europe. Habermas does not have a particularly positive view of these developments, which he describes as "a provocative issue that bothers many of us" (ibid, 11) and he particularly laments "political revitalization of religion" in the US, which seems to have reverted to religion and abandoned the modernization process towards a more liberal society; "the European states seem now to be moving forward alone down the path they had trodden side by side with the United

States" (Habermas 2005:12). There are good reasons to be critical of American 'culture wars' and the Christian Right, but Habermas also shows a European secularist bias.

Nevertheless, he proposes that in today's 'post-secular society', it is not only religious citizens who have to adapt to challenges of modernity, but also secular citizens need to develop a 'post-metaphysical mentality'; in other words both religious and non-religious citizens need to develop 'self-reflective attitudes' and engage in mutual 'learning processes' to assure cooperation and respect (ibid, 13). Drawing on Rawls's concept of a 'duty of civility' where "citizens owe one another good reasons for their political statements", Habermas argues that political decisions are only legitimate if justified in "a language which is equally accessible to all citizens", regardless of their religion. With regard to "duties of citizens in the political public sphere", he refers to Rawls' 'proviso' (Rawls 1999:152; quoted in Habermas 2005:14);

> Reasonable comprehensive doctrines, religious or non-religious, may be introduced in public political discussion at any time, provided that in due course proper political reasons – and not reasons given solely by comprehensive doctrines – are presented that are sufficient to support whatever the comprehensive doctrines introduced are said to support.

Habermas interprets 'the proviso' as applying to citizens' "public use of non-public, that is religious reasons", which need to be given "secular justification" (ibid). Habermas points out that 'the proviso' is controversial and has been countered by many objections (especially when interpreted as Habermas does, which is neither the only nor most reasonable interpretation of Rawls, as I discuss below). Seeking to accommodate objections from religious citizens, he writes (ibid, 15);

> Every citizen must know that only secular reasons count beyond the institutional threshold that divides the informal public sphere from parliaments, courts, and administrations. But this recognition need not deter religious citizens from publicly expressing and justifying their convictions by resorting to religious language.

The 'post-secular' Habermas allows religious citizens to use 'religious language' in the public sphere, as long as it is later translated into 'secular language', and even acknowledges that non-religious citizens may learn something from religious contributions "under certain circumstances". In order to a alleviate religious citizens from an 'asymmetrical burden', Habermas argues that non-religious citizens must participate in the process of translation (ibid, 16);

> Whereas citizens of faith may make public contributions in their own religious language only subject to the proviso that these get translated, the secular citizens must open their minds to the possible truth content of those presentations and

even enter into dialogues from which religious reasons then might emerge in the transformed guise of generally accessible arguments.

Habermas (2005:16) allows religious 'truth content' to enter political institutions (parliament and courts) if already translated in "the political public sphere". He requires secular citizens to develop a 'post-metaphysical mentality' (ibid, 18) since a '*secularist* consciousness' is insufficient to respect and cooperate with religious citizens. He defines such a "secularist" view as perceiving religions as "archaic relics of pre-modern societies" and freedom of religion only as "the natural preservation of an endangered species" (ibid); such a "paternalistic" (ibid) view of religion "can obviously not be expected to take religious contributions to contentious political issues seriously – or even help to assess them for a substance that can possibly be expressed in a secular language". Instead, secular citizens also have to adapt to living in a 'post-secular society' and develop a self-reflective 'post-metaphysical mentality' that acknowledges "limits of secular reason", and "rejects a narrow scientistic conception of reason" that reduces knowledge to a naturalist world-view. Such a "self-reflective overcoming of a secularist stubbornness" (ibid, 20) resulting in a "more generous post-metaphysical thought" (ibid) means being "prepared to learn from religion while remaining strictly agnostic" (ibid, 19), and "refrain from the rationalist temptation" to unilaterally pass judgment on which parts of religious doctrines are rational.

Habermas' 'post-metaphysical' turn seems to be 'more generous' towards admitting religious contributions; however, his argument about an 'asymmetrical burden' reveals similar 'paternalistic' and 'secularist' views as he criticizes, since it presupposes a hierarchical dichotomy between secular and religious that does not correspond well with empirical realities of contemporary religion (see chapter 4), even in 'fundamentalist' varieties. Habermas (ibid, 17) argues that political liberalism "always already" counts on "large scale mental changes" such as "modernization of religious consciousness" in Western culture since the Reformation and Enlightenment, which means that "traditional communities of faith" face an 'asymmetrical burden' of having to "process cognitive dissonances" which secular citizens are spared. He believes that religious consciousness must "acquire new epistemic attitudes" through a self-reflective learning process within religious traditions, where sacred truths are reconstructed in response to challenges of pluralism, of modern science, and of secular law and morality. This means that they have to "relate their religious beliefs to competing doctrines in such a way that their own exclusive claim to truth can be maintained" and accept the "independence of secular from sacred knowledge and the institutionalized monopoly of modern science" by reconstructing the relationship between "dogmatic and scientific beliefs in such a way that the autonomous progress in secular knowledge cannot come to contradict their faith" and make a "connection between the egalitarian individualism and universalism of modern law and morality and the premises of their own comprehensive doctrines" (ibid). I discuss the latter point later in relation to Rawls.

Habermas reproduces an image of 'traditional religion' as inverted 'Other' of 'modern secularity' in the passages regarding separation and opposition between 'science' and 'religion'. He ascribes 'dogmatism' and 'exclusive claims to truth' to religion, while describing science as 'independent', 'autonomous', 'progressive' and entitled to a 'monopoly'. Ziauddin Sardar (1999:48) argues that a secularist argument that "religious worldviews cannot sustain plurality is parallel to the colonial suggestion that Other cultures are not civilized". Habermas seems to exaggerate the extent to which religion is about mutually exclusive, competing truth claims. To the contrary, it has been argued that pluralism is part of the Islamic tradition (Modood & Ahmad 2010:87-89), and mainstream Islam has a historical record of respect for diversity and other religions, peaceful co-existence with other faith communities and religious syncretism (Modood 2010:130-131), and does not perceive science as in conflict with religion. Contemporary Islamism also emphasizes that Islam is a "rational religion" compatible with science, which differs from American Protestant fundamentalists' promotion of Creationism and rejection of Darwinism. But also Christian fundamentalism can be seen as a reaction against an imposed secular modernity rather than as a preservation of religious tradition (Mamdani 2004:39-41). Thus, actually existing religious worldviews may be less absolutist and more self-reflective, rational and pluralist than Habermas suggests. As Spinner-Halev (cited in Modood 2005:179-180) points out, marginalized conservative religious minorities living in a society where liberal secularism is hegemonic, cannot be said to be unaware of alternative ways of life, and commitment to a conservative lifestyle is thus necessarily a choice. Døving's (2012b:40-44) analysis of Norwegian hijab debates (chapter 4), where Muslim feminists argue that wearing hijab or not should be a matter of individual choice, suggests that religious persons may be better equipped for the task of 'translation' than those who subscribe to a dominant secular worldview, and need not take religion seriously. She questions Habermas' claim of an 'asymmetrical cognitive burden' and writes that when Muslim feminists use 'secular' arguments, this is not necessarily a result of 'translation' from religious to secular language. Rather, their fluency in secular language indicates that discourses of identity and human rights can be seen as a 'first language'. She argues that Habermas underestimates how well-integrated religious citizens are in secular society, and that the assumption of a cognitive burden essentializes religiosity as fundamentally different from secular worldviews. Neither Rawls nor Habermas acknowledge that religious arguments can be indistinguishably merged with dominant secular language. Døving writes that Norwegian Muslim contributors argued as Rawls says they should (in a language of public reason), but at the same time they challenge his division between political and private spheres when demanding recognition of their religious identity while supporting a secular state. However, they did not argue that the state should comply with Islamic principles or confirm that the hijab is a religious requirement. Rather, they referred to individual freedom of religion.

Dogmatism and absolutism are thus not particular characteristics of religion, but result from hegemonic power, e.g. when an ideology (religious or secular) is linked to state power. Bader (2009) argues that "it is crucial not to understand or phrase the conflict between political 'absolutism' (of all sorts) and priority for democracy in terms of 'religious fundamentalism' versus 'secularism'" (ibid, 114). He criticizes political philosophers who "do not seem to trust" liberal-democratic processes to provide enough stability and legitimacy in cases of "deep religious and cultural diversity or 'reasonable pluralism'" and who exclude 'religious reasons' from public deliberation (ibid, 115);

> Fear and distrust of religious reasons is clearly very intense, since the ways that 'exclusionary secularists' seek to control, regulate and discipline 'allowable' reasons and participants in public debate seem plainly incompatible with fairly extensive constitutional freedoms of political communication. (ibid)

Bader argues that "liberal democrats and liberal-political philosophers should not be secularists" (ibid, 111). Drawing on Casanova, he writes that "religions increasingly have learned to bracket the 'truth question' in politics and to resolve their 'fundamentalist dilemma'" (ibid, 113). Bader criticizes Habermas' "misleading" terminological 'confusion' of 'public reason' and 'secular reason' because it "seduces us into justifying the inevitable non-neutrality of liberal democracy in terms of secular-versus-religious arguments" while ignoring "principled religious or theological foundations of liberal democracy", and "directs our criticism of absolutism or fundamentalism in politics in a one-sided and myopic manner against religious or theological fundamentalism and tends to neglect all secular threats to liberal democracy" (ibid). Similar to Habermas' post-secular turn, Bader suggests an "anti-paternalistic mode of decision-making" (ibid, 114) where defenders of any truth, whether religious, philosophical or scientistic, have to resolve their 'fundamentalist dilemma'. Thus, possible "threats to liberal democracy" come not only from religious fundamentalism, but also from secularists; not only from totalitarians, but also from 'scientism' as an ideology; and from "radical and aggressively secularist 'Enlightenment' philosophy"; thus, ideological secularism is "incompatible with reasonable pluralism" (ibid, 111). Bader acknowledges differences between Habermas and Rawls, where the former defends an "independent political ethics" based on 'secular' reason or rationality, while the latter's "political, not metaphysical" theory of an "overlapping consensus" has increasingly "been cleansed of secularist biases by Rawls himself" (ibid, 112).

While the early Rawls' *Theory of Justice* was a "comprehensive doctrine of liberalism" (Rawls 2003:140), his later *Political Liberalism* "is sharply different from and rejects Enlightenment Liberalism" (Rawls 1999:176), and sees such a society as impossible due to a fact of "reasonable pluralism". While any society contains many 'unreasonable doctrines' incompatible with democracy (including, but not limited to, 'religious

fundamentalism'), there is an 'overlapping consensus' of irreconcilable, but reasonable 'comprehensive doctrines' which support a "political conception of justice underwriting a constitutional democratic society" (Rawls 1999:172). The late Rawls proposes 'public reason' as a "way of reasoning about political values shared by free and equal citizens that does not trespass on citizens' comprehensive doctrines so long as these doctrines are consistent with a democratic polity" (ibid, 179-180). Defining persons as citizens means assigning the same political position to each person, and not viewing persons as socially situated in terms of class or 'comprehensive doctrines' (ibid, 171). "Central to the idea of public reason", he writes, "is that it neither criticizes nor attacks any comprehensive doctrine, religious or nonreligious, except insofar as the doctrine is incompatible with […] a constitutional democratic regime" (ibid, 132). The content of 'public reason' is "given by a family of political conceptions of justice, and not by a single one. There are many liberalisms" (ibid, 140-141) which endorse underlying ideas of free and equal citizens in a fair society, but they "can be interpreted in various ways" resulting in "different formulations of the principles of justice" (ibid). Like Parekh (see chapter 1), Rawls argues that citizens should have mutual knowledge of each other's religious and nonreligious doctrines, since the roots of their allegiance to constitutional democracy lie in their 'comprehensive doctrines' (ibid, 153-154). As a "perfect example of overlapping consensus" where a religious doctrine endorses constitutional democracy, he refers to an-Na'im's interpretation of sharia (see above), which argues that traditional interpretations of sharia are based on the Medina period, where the "eternal and fundamental message of Islam" was adapted to a seventh-century historical context. "Now that historical conditions have changed", Muslims should return to an "earlier Mecca interpretation of sharia [that] supports equality of men and women, and complete freedom of choice in matters of faith and religion" (ibid, 151 n. 46).

Habermas (2005) equates Rawls' concepts of 'public reason' with 'secular reason', 'comprehensive doctrines' with religious doctrines, and 'public political forums' with the 'public sphere'; thus arriving at a stricter version of legitimate political discourse than Rawls, who distinguishes 'public reason' from "secular reason" and defines the latter as "reasoning in terms of comprehensive nonreligious doctrines" that are "on a level with religion" (1999:143). He rejects a secularist idea that religious reasons are illegitimate, but that secularist arguments defined as "reflective and critical, publicly intelligible and rational" can justify legislation. Rawls "views all such arguments the same way it views religious ones" (ibid, 148). 'Public reason' applies only to discussions in the 'public political forum', i.e. discourses of judges, government officials, and candidates for public office (ibid, 133). It does not apply in what Habermas calls 'the public sphere' (ibid, 142 n. 28; see also Bader 2009:120 n. 13) which Rawls calls 'background culture', i.e. civil society, where he defends "full and open discussion" (Rawls 1999:134). However, 'public reason' serves as "moral duty" (ibid, 136) rather than legal duty, also for "citizens who are not government officials"

since "ideally citizens are to think of themselves *as if* they were legislators" when reasoning in the public sphere (Rawls 1999:135). According to Bader (2009:119), Rawls is thus ambiguous about whether 'public reason' should apply to public debate. In a 'deliberative democracy', citizens "suppose that their political opinions may be revised by discussion with other citizens" (Rawls 1999:138). Defending 'public reason' constraints against an "open view" (held by Bader), Rawls answers that 'public reason' does not try "to settle political questions in advance" (ibid, 164); rather "reasoning is not closed once and for all in public reason any more than it is closed in any form of reasoning" and "should not always lead to a general agreement" (ibid, 170). He writes that constraints on 'public reason' are "useful primarily when a society is sharply divided and contains many hostile religious associations and secular groups", something which is likely to happen without citizens' allegiance to 'public reason' (ibid, 174). The 'proviso' "still allows us to introduce into political discussion at any time our comprehensive doctrine, religious or nonreligious, provided that, in due course, we give properly public reasons" (ibid, 144).

Rawls distinguishes 'public reason' from 'secular reason' and softens restraints on 'comprehensive doctrines' in public debate (see also Bader 2009:112-113). Replacing a 'comprehensive liberal theory' with a 'political' rather than 'metaphysical' theory, he has, in Bader's (ibid, 116) view, replaced "distrust of all religion" with a "fully open relationship between religion and democracy". Bader (ibid, 117) concludes that "Rawls is no longer an exclusionist 'secularist', and cannot and should not be accused of secularism". Rather, Rawls criticizes Habermas for "sticking to comprehensive, secular moral theories" (ibid, 116 n. 3). Bader writes that despite the 'post-secular turn', Habermas "has consistently refused to take the decisive step […] otherwise he would now be really convinced by the late Rawls and drop his 'post-traditional' and epistemologically rationalist, secularist provisos" (ibid). Bader considers Rawls, following his "shift towards a more inclusive position" as the "most considered version of public-reason restraint arguments" (ibid, 116); and as approaching his own view of a "moderately agonistic democracy" (ibid, 113) which sees deliberation as negotiation, does not discriminate between 'secular' and 'religious' views but "encourage[s] as many voices as possible to be raised, listened to and responded to". Rawls (1999:141; cited in Bader 2009:124) recognizes that there are 'many liberalisms' and 'interpretations' so that public reason cannot be 'fixed' once and for all. Bader argues that only by allowing public reason to be 'inclusive' can we "challenge predominant particularist interpretations hiding behind the 'universal' version of a fixed, predominant idea of public reason" (ibid, 126), i.e. what is called 'Eurocentrism' by postcolonial theorists like S. Sayyid (2003). As these ideas are always contested, "the meaning of the [reasonability] constraints becomes increasingly hollow" (Bader 2009:128) and "less rigidly applied" by political philosophers (ibid, 131). Parekh (2000:312-313; quoted in Bader 2009:132-133) criticizes Rawls' and Habermas'

versions of 'public reason' for having a rationalist bias, with an exclusive focus on what is said rather than who says it, and attempting to universalize a single model (the American one in the case of Rawls) without taking cultural or national contexts into account. Bader (2009:113-115) suggests instead that liberal democracy should be seen as "an open project" where decisions are "always revisable" without "exclusivist 'reasonability constraints'".

Rawls' theory reflects the American model of pluralism (Rawls 1999:144-149; 2003:140), notably when discussing reasons for the US version of separation between church and state (Rawls 1999:166-168); it protects the state from religion, religion from the state, and individuals from their 'churches' (heresy and apostasy are not crimes). Rawls argues that 'political liberalism' is not individualistic because it protects both individual and associational freedom. Further, he argues that it is erroneous to see church-state separation as primarily protecting secular culture; instead, Rawls argues that "the vitality and wide acceptance of religion in America" is because religions are protected from the state and no religion has been able to dominate and suppress others by using coercive powers of the state. Rawls cites Tocqueville that complete separation of church and state is a main cause of strength of religion in the US, while close links between state and church have led to decline of religion in Europe (ibid, 167 n. 76). In other words, European secularization can be seen as a result of religion being corrupted by state power and losing legitimacy in the eyes of the population.

Habermas reflects a secularist hegemony among European intellectuals, while Rawls reflects an American model, where a strictly secular state protects religious pluralism. While Habermas continues to defend liberalism as a 'comprehensive doctrine', the late Rawls rejects ideological "Enlightenment Liberalism" and restricts his 'liberalism' to the 'political' in a similar way as Modood contrasts 'political multiculturalism' from 'philosophical' versions. Discussing religion in the public sphere, Modood's (2005:145-147) emphasis on including religious minorities seems consistent with Habermas' 'post-secular' turn, and Modood also refers to 'translation' of religious language. Agreeing that contributions to public debate should be seen as relevant by all citizens, Modood writes that "religious considerations come to be translated into nonreligious considerations" but this does not imply "relegation of religious views to the private sphere" (ibid). Being more concerned with inclusion of religious minorities than with religious ethics, Modood suggests that religious contributions at least "make it possible for secular thinkers to appreciate the force that other points of view have for those who adhere to them" (ibid, 147). Habermas goes further in asking secularists to 'open their minds' to the 'possible truth content' of religious ethics.

Regarding religious and secular ideologies in the public sphere, Modood holds a 'moderate' position similar to Rawls. He writes that political debate should (ibid, 145);

Be defined so that those of different theologies and those of none can reason with each other and can reach conclusions that are perceived to have some legitimacy for those who do not share a religious faith. Moreover, if people are to occupy the same political space without conflict, they mutually have to limit the extent to which they subject each other's fundamental beliefs to criticism.

Like Rawls, Modood is concerned with an 'overlapping consensus' and agrees that there need be some constraints; with regard to ensuring peace by avoiding criticism of each other's 'comprehensive doctrines'. In Modood's words; while politics can never be completely autonomous from religion, there should be a "constraint on ideology" (ibid). Where ideological arguments can influence specific political issues, "it is not at all clear that religious ideologies are taboo" (ibid). The distinction between a "practical and reasonable nature of politics" and a "totalizing and dogmatic nature of religion" is better understood as "a distinction between politics and ideology" (ibid). Modood argues that there should be constraints on ideological dogmatism in general, not specifically on religion, and points out that ideologically minded religious people are more likely to criticize contemporary secularism when secular ideologies critical of religion, are prevalent. Writing that "all ideologies, secular and religious, are capable of fundamentalism" (ibid), Modood's notion of 'ideology' corresponds to Rawls' concept of 'comprehensive doctrine'.

Religious contributions to public debate

Rana's last point concerns the positive role of religious contributions in the public sphere, or in Habermas' words, the "possible truth content" of religious expressions. This is least elaborated in Rana's articles, and the suggestion that Islamic ethics can contribute positively in terms of offering a critique of certain tendencies in modern, Western society, was largely met with incomprehension in the debate, with some exceptions. Rana (March 2) writes that;

> *For example, Christians and Muslims will fight against greed and materialism, for sanctity and inviolability of life, for solidarity and against egoism, for the family and marriage as framework for children's upbringing.*

A few respondents picked up on this, including Lindseth and Kloster (March 28), who from a Christian perspective considered which parts of normative religious arguments that may contribute to public debate. With regard to what Rana refers to as 'family and marriage as framework for children's upbringing', they write;

> *The interesting question is rather when religious arguments are not heard in the public. Often this relates to ethical questions about gender, family and sexuality. Rana is right that value-conservative arguments in these ethical fields tend to be degraded in public dialogue.*

Conservative family values are shared by conservative Christians and conservative Muslims but have been challenged and redefined by reformists in both religions (see chapter 4). These values are rejected as 'reactionary' in liberal political discourse, although they have some political influence through the New Christian Right, more so in the US than in Norway. Lindseth and Kloster argue that other values, including 'sanctity and inviolability of life' and 'solidarity', contribute legitimately to political debate and are also heard. Such

> *Normative arguments grounded in religion are taken seriously and even listened to, in the public – at least if others can also support them on different grounds. This applies to political issues like biotechnology, euthanasia, solidarity and human rights, responsibility for the poor and weak, and Protecting Creation.*

In many secular countries including Norway, Britain and the US, organized religion plays a role in political movements for solidarity and human rights. One contributor, Oftestad (March 4) suggests that a religious ethics may offer a solution to the ecological crisis caused by materialist society; something that has also been suggested by Muslims. He questions whether a *ruling ideology with its ideals of freedom and equality combined with capitalist market economy is fit* to face challenges from Islam and the ecological crisis, and calls for *something more and something else than to continue the liberal project of emancipation.* This contribution can be read as a (vague) criticism of dominant western ways of thinking.

In this final section, I focus on the aspects of religious ethics least elaborated in the debate, which are nevertheless politically significant; a critique of 'greed', 'materialism' and 'egoism', sometimes seen by Islamists as characteristics of *Western* society, but more accurately seen as characteristics of modern *capitalist* society. Spinner-Halev (cited in Modood 2005:179-180) theorizes conservative religious minorities marginalized by a secular, liberal mainstream, which can be characterized as "individualistic, consumerist, materialist, and hedonistic" and "shaped by a globalizing political economy, the media, and commercialized popular culture". He argues that rejecting this hegemonic culture cannot be described as lacking autonomy or 'knowing no better' as if they are unaware of alternatives. Choosing a conservative religious lifestyle in the midst of temptations from a powerful liberal culture takes commitment and character, and represents a counterculture comparable to other alternative lifestyles. Here lies a potential political alliance between religious revivalists and the radical left.

Exploring how 'Islamist' ideas intersect with criticism within the West, former British diplomat and intelligence agent, now director of the Conflicts Forum which facilitates dialogue with Islamist movements, Alastair Crooke (2009:1-32) writes that 'Islamism' resists a particular "way of thinking" that has become dominant in the West in recent centuries and especially in the decades of neoliberal hegemony. The conflict between 'Islamism' and the 'West' is a struggle of ideas about the "essence of man" rather than a

struggle for political power, although the Muslim world has suffered the consequences of Western domination. According to Crooke (2009:4-5), this is at core a *religious* conflict between two universal visions about human beings' place in the world. A dominant western view sees human individuals as separate and takes individuality as its organizing principle, while Islam sees human beings as connected to a wider existence and takes moral values as its organizing principle (ibid, 29). Islamists criticize the way rationality has been redirected from perceiving truth and values to become an instrument to fulfill materialistic and psychological desires. By eliminating God from society and separating reason from faith, the West has turned toward materialism and away from striving for ethical values (ibid, 14). In a worldview dominated by instrumental rationality, focused on efficiency and disconnected from a deeper vision of life and meaning (ibid, 12), values like justice and human rights are reduced to instruments of domination (ibid, 5; 15). The rejection of a moral dimension to politics is taken to an extreme by authoritarian thinker Carl Schmitt, who holds that politics is about power and survival, and who inspired neoconservative rejection of liberal dialogue in favor of confronting an 'enemy' (ibid, 248-253; see also Hervik 2011:239). A Schmittian view is manifested in the 'war on terror' and 'confrontational liberalism' that perceives Islam as 'enemy' of Western civilization, and seeks to build national unity on fear of a Muslim Other (ibid, 238-241; Crooke 2009:265).

According to Crooke, 'Islamists' reject that Western secular modernity brings real human welfare; they reject instrumental thinking and abuses of power it leads to (ibid, 16). A source of Western abuse of science to rationalize domination in the name of humanity (ibid, 5) can be traced to a distortion of Enlightenment values (ibid, 17), which came to dehumanize people instead of liberating them (ibid, 21). This thinking is reflected in the 'Protestant ethic' (Max Weber cited in ibid, 41; 114), which emphasizes individual choice and advocates pursuit of individual interests free from social considerations and religious constraints, and in economic theories following Adam Smith, which assume that the sum of "rational" individuals pursuing self-interest, creates a stable and harmonious society through a mythical 'invisible hand' of the free market (ibid, 43-46; 110-111; 115-119). Protestants have demonized Catholics and Muslims (both communal religions) as illiberal, absolutist and totalitarian 'enemies of freedom' (ibid, 39-40; 113), as Karl Popper's 'open society' theory demonizes socialism (see ibid, 139-141; 155-156). Aware of a human tendency to dominate others, 'Islamism' proposes that a 'just society' needs to regulate economic and social activities to limit abuses of power (ibid, 6; 119-120). Traditional Islam has been skeptical of "theological speculation" and presents itself as a "reminder" of universal truths and human values (ibid). Islam is primarily an ethical order, where moral values are seen as an intrinsic part of existence. Contrary to a Protestant view that emphasizes an individual act of faith, Islam emphasizes that the way to God and to achieve human happiness is an 'effort' or 'striving' (jihad) to 'restrain the ego' and live the way God

intended, by following an ethics for how to behave towards others (Crooke 2009:15; 58; 120). Islam sees striving for justice, peace, respect and compassion for others and for the environment as a moral duty, because everyone is created by God and thus equal (ibid, 16). Seen this way, Islam puts the human being at the center, arguing that universal human values can be perceived by everyone via conscience, regardless of time and place (ibid).

While a dominant Western perception denies rationality of 'Islamism'; as a 'comprehensive doctrine' it may be more reasonable (i.e. compatible with democracy) than the dominant Western ideology. Whereas neoliberal ideology sees democracy primarily as individual freedom from social constraints, and perceives Islam as restricting such freedom; Islamists (like social democrats) argue that excessive individual freedom leads to domination over others, and insist that democracy requires regulation. According to Crooke, 'Islamist' resistance can be seen as a struggle of ideas to achieve a change in behavior (ibid) which parallels other resistance movements (ibid, 32) and Western 'critical theory' like Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's criticism of consumer society as a depoliticized society of alienated individuals fulfilling their desires with 'free choice' as the dominant value (cited in ibid, 18-20). Crooke draws a parallel to secular critical theorists like Habermas' notion of a critical dialogue to bring about change (ibid, 22); from an Islamist perspective, rational discussion is not enough as long as Islamism is demonized by Western conservatives opposed to multicultural liberalism and critical thinking (ibid, 3-4; 246; 265). Since hegemonic forces do not listen, only resistance can bring about genuine dialogue (ibid, 26; 226). Counter-hegemonic resistance takes many forms, from street protest to discursive struggles that defy constraints on thinking by rejecting hegemonic terms of 'acceptable' discourse and redefining dominant categories (ibid, 262; 272). As Modood (2005:104) writes, Muslim minorities draw strength to resist hegemonic discourses from their religion and its critique of the West. Crooke (ibid, 27-28) suggests that a critique of hegemony within the West, by both Westerners and Muslims, may use Islam as starting point for resistance and envisioning a positive alternative, as the focus on a human center of society and values of justice, equality and respect resonate with secular westerners and are consistent with original Enlightenment aspirations.

In his discussion of discursive struggles between Eurocentric thinking and 'Islamist' resistance, S. Sayyid (2003) points out that hegemony works primarily not by manufacturing consent but by silencing dissent; it makes resistance invisible by considering those who do not speak the language of hegemony, as mute (ibid, xvi; 86). Drawing on the discourse-theoretical aspect of Said's critique of Orientalism, which goes beyond a focus on colonial power relations distorting Western representation of the Orient, and emphasizes "how orientalism actually constitutes the Orient" (ibid, 32), Sayyid (ibid, 32-35) draws on Derrida's description of Western metaphysics as "consisting of a 'violent hierarchy' of binary opposition" where an 'Islamic Other' is

created as negative contrast to the identity of the West. Sayyid points to a weakness in Said's critique of Orientalism, which does not lead to a 'liberating interpretation of Islam' but rather to a negation of Islam itself. In part due to a reliance on Foucault's idea that hegemonic discourse constructs its objects, Said lacks "another place from which to speak", and remains silent about the possibility of an Islam outside of Orientalism.

Discussing whether it is possible to escape western discourse, Sayyid (2003:135-136) argues that the claim that the hegemonic order produces its own resistance that necessarily remains locked in western logic; is itself "the last bastion of Eurocentrism"; the claim that there is nothing outside the western project. Understood as a project to close "the gap between Western cultural formations and universal values" (ibid, xxii), Eurocentrism universalizes the West and claims a Western 'copyright' on things universal. Thus, it is an "attempt to sustain the universality of the western project" at a time when Western universalism is already challenged (ibid, 128-129). "Particularly irritating" to guardians of Western discourse, who try to reduce 'Islamism' to a 'dialect' of the 'universal' language of the West (ibid, 138), is the Islamists' integration of non-Islamic elements while insisting that these are genuinely Islamic (ibid, 136). This feature of Islamism appears incoherent from a perspective that conflates the universal with the West and Islam with particularism. Within this Eurocentric logic, it seems that defenders of particularism are caught in a paradox because they depend on universalism at the same time as rejecting it (ibid, 139). However, if we follow Sayyid and understand 'the universal' as a "product of a successful hegemony's ability to establish its worldview as the reflection of the natural order" (ibid, 143), then "a discourse appears universal to the extent that it is able to erase the marks of its particularity" (ibid, 144). However, no hegemony can become completely 'unmarked' since it would then lose its identity; and "particularity is thus necessary for any attempt at universalism" (ibid). The distinction between a universalistic West and a particularistic Islam ignores that the West is equally particularistic.

Both Islamic and western discourses can be understood as particularist interpretations of universal values. Thus, in Sayyid's words, "it is not so much that some elements are western and others are not, but rather that eurocentrism operates by laying claim to the copyright on some things and rejecting others" (ibid, 148). In other words, Eurocentrism 'polices' universal values by claiming that they are of western origin, an act that depends upon an essentialist view of the West (ibid, 151), and on the Orientalist claim that the 'Other' cannot represent itself without intervention from the West (ibid, 149). Islamism rejects these 'rules of the game' where the West claims copyright on the universal; particularizes Europe and presents an alternative vision of the universal based on Islam. Rejecting westernization but not modernity, Islamism shares with postmodern critics a suspicion of Western metanarratives, but attempts to replace these with its own metanarrative (ibid, 117-118). According to Sayyid (ibid, 156-158), this combination of

postmodern deconstruction of Western metanarratives with a non-western alternative based on a vision of Islam, explains the relative success of Islamist resistance. Unlike certain forms of third-world nationalism, which remain within a Western logic, Islamism argues that universal values can be generated from Islam (Sayyid 2003:xxii).

Conclusions

Mohammed Usman Rana was often seen as an 'Islamist' opposed to 'secularism'. Following a more nuanced understanding that distinguishes between 'moderate' and 'ideological' versions of each, Rana is not an Islamist in the sense of wanting an Islamic state and sharia laws, but a 'religious revivalist' who wants religion to have influence in civil society. In other words, he favors an American model of religious pluralism over a French model of strict secularism. Institutionally, the Norwegian version of secularism can be characterized as 'moderate' with relative separation of state and religion. In the public sphere, there is a secular hegemony but also some room for religious contributions. In the debate, many Norwegian intellectuals expressed an 'ideological secularism' intolerant of religious expressions in the public sphere; a position that is incompatible with multiculturalism according to Modood. A 'moderate' version of secularism is necessary in a multicultural society, not least in order to prevent religion from being abused by state power. In most countries, 'deprivatized religion' is pragmatically accommodated. A politicized Islam, which combines religious revivalism and Muslim identity politics, can contribute positively to the public sphere as long as it reflects the 'democratic' tendency that focuses on personal ethics and civil society as opposed to the state-centered tendency which attempt to use state power to impose its own particular interpretations.

As Modood (2007:64-65; 68) points out, minority perspectives can provide a "critical mirror" to larger society, not only in terms of distinct knowledge about majority-minority relations and processes of marginalization and discrimination, but also by offering alternative perspectives on wider political issues. A religious ethics grounded in Islam may serve as a counter-hegemonic corrective to taken-for-granted dominant ideas, which are also criticized from other standpoints. While more modest than Parekh in this regard, Modood suggests that multiculturalism can lead to mutual learning if critical minority perspectives on majority attitudes, values and practices are openly discussed and allowed influence; including postcolonial critiques of Eurocentrism, of which politicized Islam represents one strand. Values like freedom, equality and justice are universal, but can be interpreted in more than one way. 'Western' attempts to monopolize interpretation and universally impose its version, are no more legitimate than when reactionary Islamists do the same. Democracy implies that everyone is entitled to take part in reinterpretation and renegotiation of values, and the outcome of this never-ending process remains open as an empirical question for the future. It cannot be settled in advance; neither by theology nor by political philosophy.

PART III

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 6

Conclusions

I set out to explore in what ways Norwegian Muslims challenge what has been perceived as a 'white nation'. Analysis of majority and minority discourses in public 'integration debates' (Titley & Lentin 2011; Hage 1998) shows that perceptions of Muslim 'challenge' differ considerably between a widespread majority view that Muslim values are incompatible with Western ones, and a minority perspective arguing that values are compatible as long as Muslims can take part in negotiating them. From this perspective, Muslims do not reject 'universal' values, but Western attempts to monopolize interpretation of these. They also criticize attempts to exclude 'Muslims' on the basis that they are essentially different and inferior (Wievorka 1997:141-148; Hervik 2004:151-153; Modood 2005:27-33), as in various expressions of anti-Muslim racism (ibid; Abbas 2011), which draw on ideas of a 'clash of civilizations' (Kunelius & Eide 2007; Mamdani 2004:20-24) and Orientalist discourses that construct Islam as a negative mirror image of the West (Said 1979; Yegenoglu 1998).

As a general framework, I have used Modood's (2005; 2007) theory of political multiculturalism, which focuses on political negotiations in public debate between minority mobilization and state policy responses (2005:207-208). According to this theory, protest against racism by each minority group is a necessary step along the way to integration (2007:50). A key aspect of 'antiracist multiculturalism' is that minorities turn a negative difference ascribed by the majority, into a positive identity to be proud of (ibid, 43). More important than state responses in policy and law, is public debate which enables majority and minority to learn to know each other, and may help the majority to develop empathy with stigmatized groups and become aware of what is experienced as racism by minorities (2006a:40-41; 2007; 57; 64-68).

Based on analysis of hegemonic and resisting discourses in four empirical case studies from 'integration debates' in Norwegian national newspapers between 2006 and 2010, I have divided majority and minority discourses into 'dialogical' ones that interact and negotiate with each other, and those that use their own interpretation of values as a standard. These four ideological positions I have called 'confrontational liberalism' and 'dialogical liberalism' among the majority, and 'antiracist multiculturalism' and 'minority communitarianism' among the minority (see also Kunelius & Eide 2007:16-18; Kunelius & Alhassan 2008:90-95). While some minority individuals express majority discourses and vice versa, in general majority and minority perspectives are clearly distinguishable in the empirical material.

In the cartoon affair (chapter 2), the editor of *Magazinet* and the Progress Party in Norway, like the conservative government and editors of *Jyllands-Posten* in Denmark, expressed the position I have called 'confrontational liberalism' and asserted that free speech should be absolute and non-negotiable (see Hervik 2006; Klausen 2009; Mouritsen 2006; Boe & Hervik 2008) and include the right to 'mock and ridicule' religion (Hansen 2006:16; Barry 2001:31). The Norwegian government and most newspaper editors represented 'dialogical liberalism' (see also Leirvik 2006; 2012a; Kunelius & Phillips 2008; Steien 2008, Engebrigtsen 2010) which acknowledges that free speech is subject to restrictions, e.g. libel, blasphemy and racism (Levey & Modood 2009; see also Parekh 2000:313-321). As these legal and ethical limits to free speech need to be interpreted, free speech is necessarily negotiable. While Muslim leaders accepted the government position, which facilitated a dialogue between the *Magazinet* editor and the Islamic Council, but failed to address anti-Muslim racism, younger Muslims held large demonstrations directed at mainstream media's negative portrayal of Muslims, and criticized their leaders, who advised against further protest, for being co-opted by the government.

The discursive struggles in the Norwegian cartoon affair resemble those in the Rushdie Affair in Britain in 1989 (Parekh 1989; 2000:298-305); both cases marked the beginning of Muslim assertiveness in the public sphere (Engebrigtsen 2010; Modood 2005:203-204; 2007:37-50; 2009:167) and can be seen as steps in the multiculturalization of these respective societies. Norwegian media coverage of Muslim protest partly reproduced Orientalist and anti-Muslim stereotypes (Richardson 2004), but also opened up for more Muslim voices and as a consequence, coverage of Muslims gradually became more diverse and nuanced (see also Eide & Nikunen 2011:9-11). Two tendencies can be identified in Muslim protesters' attempts to negotiate ethical or legal limits to free speech. The tendency to focus on blasphemy I have called 'minority communitarianism' because it uses arguments based on values internal to the Muslim community, although Muslim religious sensibilities were already translated into a Christian concept of blasphemy used in Western law (Modood 1993b:97-98). The other tendency, which I have characterized as 'antiracist multiculturalism' saw the cartoons in the context of anti-Muslim racism. Some protesters wanted the state to use blasphemy or hate speech laws, while others made ethical appeals on the media to use free speech responsibly (see also Mahmood 2009).

While attacks on religion may be perceived as attacks on religious believers in practice (Modood 2005:21), blasphemy and hate speech are legally distinct. Ethically, legitimate criticism of religion is distinct from mockery and ridicule of believers (Levey & Modood 2009:222-242). Muslim protesters' slogans were mostly expressed in 'secular language' (Rawls 1999; Habermas 2005) and drawn from discourses of human rights, multiculturalism and antiracism, but also combined with religious arguments as anti-racism among Muslims tends to have a religious dimension (Modood 2005:14). While

recognizing that these distinctions may be blurred in practice, the Norwegian government also blurred the legal distinction between protecting beliefs and believers when trying to integrate blasphemy into hate speech legislation in a law proposal that was later withdrawn.

The government's 'dialogical liberalism' was presented as an attempt to reconcile 'extremists on both sides', but it was criticized by Muslim protesters for playing down the extent of anti-Muslim sentiment among mainstream media, politicians and majority population by placing blame only on the editor who published the cartoons. Further, the dialogue approach did not sufficiently acknowledge that not only extremists, but a vast majority of Muslims were deeply offended by the cartoons. Thus, while 'dialogical liberalism' on the majority side and 'antiracist multiculturalism' on the minority side are compatible in the sense of being open to negotiate with each other (Ghozlan 2008), they differ with regard to power and hegemony, and with regard to acknowledging racism. As a minority social movement, 'antiracist multiculturalism' criticizes the dominant majority position of 'state multiculturalism' for failing to take minority perspectives on racism sufficiently into account (Werbner 2012).

In the 'coconut' debate (chapter 3), 'confrontational liberalists' perceived Iffit Qureshi's criticism of 'coconuts' as a form of 'reverse racism' that demanded 'ethnic loyalty' and imposed 'internal restrictions' on minority individuals' right to dissent (see Kymlicka 1993b:93). While the 'coconut' term is sometimes used to refer to culturally assimilated minority persons in general (reflecting a position of 'minority communitarianism'), Qureshi drew on postcolonial and antiracist perspectives of Fanon (1967) and Malcolm X (1989). Her criticism was not directed at individuals who are merely cultural or religious 'defectors', but targeted those who have 'politicized' their exit (Bromley 1998c:vii) from minority groups and become 'native informants' (Spivak cited by Dabashi 2011) who go public with negative experiences within the group, give ideological support to external forces hostile to the group, and validate anti-Muslim perceptions among the majority (Boe & Hervik 2008).

In many European countries, Muslim counterparts to what African Americans call 'Uncle Toms' (Malcolm X 1989:25-46) have become popular with media and are constructed as role models for integration (Fekete 2009:125-129; Gullestad 2006:50-56; Boe & Hervik 2008; Hervik 2011:155), in a reflection of Bernard Lewis' dichotomy between good, secularized, westernized Muslims and bad, fundamentalist, anti-Western Muslims (see Mamdani 2004:20-24; Kundnani 2008). Either 'native informants' are described in antiracist terms as 'coconuts' or in religious terms as 'apostates', these concepts primarily refer to the 'betrayal' implied by joining hostile political forces rather than to personal opinions of dissent (Modood 1993b:97-98; Mazrui 1989; Akhtar 1989; Parekh 2000:159; Bromley 1998c:vii). This form of 'politicized exit' is distinct

from 'whistleblowers', who go public and appeal to the state in order to change negative internal practices (Bromley 1998a:31-35).

In the hijab debates (chapter 4), 'confrontational liberalists' inspired by the French hijab ban in 2004, described the hijab as 'essentially oppressive' to women and a political symbol of 'Islamism' (Kastoryano 2006; Parekh 2000:249-253), and argued for a ban in Norway (Storhaug 2007; see also Eriksen 2004; Jacobsen 2011:161-162). While the French justification was grounded in a strict form of secularism (Freedman 2004; Kastoryano 2006), feminist arguments dominated Norwegian debates (Fekete 2006). Questions about Muslim women's oppression had been high on the agenda in Norway since the 1990s (see Gressgård & Jacobsen 2003), and represented a major argument against multiculturalism (see Okin 1999; Wikan 1995; 2002). A dominant majority perspective perceives Norway as a nation of gender equality, contrasted to an image of oppressed Muslim women. Replicating colonial policy, many Norwegian feminists sought to 'save' Muslim women from their men, their religion and their culture (Fanon 1989; Abu-Lughod 2002; Thorbjørnsrud 2004; Razack 2008).

Already in 2004, Muslim women held a demonstration to defend the hijab (Jacobsen 2011:160-162), which they presented as a symbol of pride in Muslim identity. But it was not until after a Muslim woman's formal request for a police hijab was granted by the government only to be withdrawn as a result of public pressure (Hetland 2009; Bangstad 2012), that Muslim feminist perspectives (see al-Hibri 1999; Mir-Hosseini 2006; 2007) had a breakthrough in public debate (Døving 2012b). While 'white feminist' positions had been countered before from postcolonial perspectives (Göle 1996; Yegenoglu 1998; Razack 2008), the new voices of Muslim feminism merged religious and liberal arguments when defending not only the hijab as an individual choice, but also referred to the Qur'an to assert women's rights to pursue education and choose a career (Døving 2012b; Jacobsen 2011; Modood 2005; Göle 1996).

While the claim that the hijab symbolizes 'Islamism' is inaccurate and misleading (Thorbjørnsrud 2004:48; Phillips 2007:117; Killian 2003; Amir-Moazami 2004; Werbner 2007; Parekh 2000:251), the hijab as well as Muslim feminism is linked to an Islamic revival movement (Jacobsen 2005; 2011; Göle 1996), which can be seen as representing a democratic tendency of politicized Islam, which promotes Muslim values as an individual ethics with social consequences in contrast to authoritarian, state-centered Islamism that seeks to turn sharia into state law (ibid, 140; Mamdani 2004:60; al-Hibri 1999:43-45; Mir-Hosseini 2007:1). In a debate about social control of women in 2010 (Bangstad 2012), minority feminists argued that attempts to impose particular interpretations of morality on women are as widespread among the majority as among the minority, suggesting that communitarian tendencies also exist among the secular, liberal majority; while religious women defended individual choice.

Muslim feminists, representing a position of 'antiracist multiculturalism', not only criticized 'confrontational liberalism' but also traditional cultural practices and interpretations of Islam among their parents' generation, as well as patriarchal, authoritarian versions of Islamism (Mir-Hosseini 2006:632; Jacobsen 2011). The latter can be characterized as forms of 'minority communitarianism' which only refers to minority values and tries to avoid 'western' influence. The hijab debates did not result in changes in policy and law, because politicians across the spectrum were divided on which side to accommodate; the Muslim minority or a public opinion hostile to multicultural accommodation of Muslim demands. Mainstream media increasingly gave access to assertive Muslim women, thus making it harder for 'confrontational liberalists' to defend the position that passive and oppressed Muslim women need to be liberated by the majority and the state (Okin 1999; Abu-Lughod 2002, Razack 2008).

In the debate about secularism (chapter 5), Mohammed Usman Rana criticized a Norwegian tendency towards an ideological secularism of the French type, and instead advocated an American model of religious pluralism (Rawls 1999; Casanova in Asad 2003:182-183). While 'confrontational liberalists' claimed that Rana was an 'Islamist' who rejects secularism, Rana asserted that he supports liberal democracy and a secular state (Bangstad 2008:23-24). At the same time, he can be characterized as part of an Islamic revival movement (Jacobsen 2005; 2011) that promotes a religious ethics in civil society (ibid, 339-340; an-Na'im 2009) and who argues that religious contributions should exert influence in the public sphere.

Rana criticized a form of secularism that demands privatization of religion (see Bangstad 2009:20-21; Casanova 2009:141-143; Modood 2007:75; Modood & Kastoryano 2006; Sayyid 2009:186-187) and stigmatizes believers, while supporting a 'moderate secularism' that is not hostile to religion (Modood 2005:143-145). As such, his position can be categorized as 'antiracist multiculturalism' rather than 'minority communitarianism'. While Norwegian secularism can be described as a compromise with relative separation of church and state similar to Britain (Modood 2007:72-73; 2010:127), the French and American models have a strict institutional separation, while holding opposite views on the role of religion in civil society (Modood & Kastoryano 2006:164-166). While Rawls (1999) and Habermas (2005) in their 'post-secular' turn accept the legitimacy of religious contributions in the public sphere, the latter still reflects a European secularist bias against religion (Bader 2009:113-115; Døving 2012b:40-44) while the former's position is in line with religious pluralism in the US (Rawls 1999:144-149; Bader 2009:116-117), a more religious society than most European countries (Casanova 2009:148-151; Rawls 2003:140; Esposito & Mogahed 2007:47).

As a Muslim revivalist, Rana shares 'Islamist' advocacy of a religious lifestyle and criticism of excesses of liberal capitalist culture, often referred to as 'greed',

'materialism' and 'egoism' (Spinner-Halev in Modood 2005:179-180). As such, Islam offers an alternative vision of universal values that forms a basis for resistance against dominant culture (Crooke 2009). Politicized Islam challenges Eurocentric constructions of universal human values, which take Western interpretations as the only legitimate ones (Sayyid 2003), and offers an alternative 'reasonable comprehensive doctrine' (Rawls 1999) that may be more democratic than the prevailing hegemony. As an oppositional minority perspective (Modood 2007:64-68) rather than linked to state power, politicized Islam has a 'possible truth content' (Habermas 2005) and can play a role as a corrective to dominant and taken-for-granted ideologies.

Multiculturalism from above and below

Official Norwegian 'integration policy' promotes a 'tolerant, multicultural society' through equal rights and duties for individuals regardless of ethnic/religious background, and uses 'dialogue' with minority organizations as an instrument to manage diversity. In a 2004 white paper (St.meld.nr. 49; 2003-2004), the government defined its integration policy as a 'diversity policy' rather than as 'multiculturalism'. Rather than focusing on a dilemma between individual rights and group rights (Kymlicka 1995; 2002; Okin 1999), the government speaks of a dilemma between diversity on the individual level on one hand, and the need for social cohesion and shared values on the other. These shared values are defined in terms of democratic procedures, human rights and gender equality in line with Habermas' 'constitutional patriotism' (Habermas 1994:139-149, cited in Modood 1997:17; Rostbøll 2008:24-26), and it is pointed out that these are not particularly Norwegian, but should be derived from civil society discussions on concrete issues which all citizens are entitled to influence, suggesting a minimum definition of values based on a dynamic overlapping consensus (Rawls 1999). At the same time, the government wants to act as a normative guide to these negotiations, and promote Norwegian conceptions of individual rights and gender equality, but also encourage minorities to become more visible in the public sphere. Dialogue is emphasized as a strategy to make policies more legitimate by including a variety of individual minority voices, regardless of group membership.

The policy paper refers to similar developments in other European countries, and the position resembles the 2008 European Council White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, which expresses a European consensus in political rhetoric on defending diversity while insisting on universal values (Kymlicka 2012). 'Intercultural dialogue' can be seen as a form of state management of diversity which is committed to individual rights and social cohesion (Levey 2012). European governments do not agree on 'interculturalism' but share a political rhetoric of 'integration' which can be interpreted in both assimilationist and multiculturalist directions (Modood & Meer 2012).

Norwegian policy has been criticized for falling short of genuine multicultural dialogue where dominant norms recognize their own particular limits and are allowed to be

challenged (Gressgård 2005; 2010), and for inviting minorities to dialogue only insofar as their inclusion and influence legitimizes policy based on predefined notions of integration which assume that majority values and practices are universal. Turning universal values into symbols of political loyalty to Norway, the government suggests that immigrants lack knowledge of and need to be educated about human rights, while Norwegian citizens are constructed as carriers of universal values. Thus, while emphasizing that universal values are open to interpretation, there is a tendency towards a Norwegian monologue where goals are defined in advance by the majority. As such, integration policy can be seen as a form of assimilation, as Muslim feminist Bushra Ishaq described the decision to deny a police hijab.

Government practice in the cartoon affair has been characterized as 'ambivalent multiculturalism' (Engebrigtsen 2010), an approach that combines individual integration and collective recognition which resulted from Sami mobilization against assimilation policy in the 1970s, the only time that a minority challenged hegemony until the cartoon affair. This ambivalent approach combines ideas of Norwegian cultural superiority with government-sponsored dialogue with minority organizations. The cartoon affair showed that Norwegian Muslims had become a powerful minority that could mobilize for their interests (Leirvik 2012), and government-sponsored dialogue recognized them as Norwegian citizens first and Muslims second. While such institutionalized dialogue implies a sort of multiculturalist group recognition, it represents a form of state multiculturalism that can be seen as a strategy of containment, and which does not take sufficiently into account minority criticism of racism (Werbner 2012; Gunew 2004; Hage 1998).

Multiculturalism as mobilization and negotiations

Norwegian 'integration debate' parallels debates in many EU countries where 'multiculturalism' is under attack (Titley & Lentin 2011). My analysis, which focused on Muslim challenges of majority hegemony, shows that a 'multiculturalism from below' in Modood's (2005; 2007) sense has emerged as assertive Muslims, often Norwegian-born 'second-generation' Pakistanis, have joined public debate and mobilized politically. Contemporary Norwegian debate reflects a 'discursive struggle' between a critical, antiracist multiculturalism from below and an ambivalent top-down state multiculturalism aimed at dialogue and diversity management (Werbner 2012; Gunew 2004; see also Modood 2005, 2007). Since the cartoon affair, mainstream media have promoted a debate open to a diversity of voices, including anti-Muslim views but also actively seeking out critical minority perspectives. The public sphere has thus become more multicultural (see also Eide & Nikunen 2011:9-11), with minority contributions from a range of perspectives including antiracism, Muslim feminism and conservative religion, but policy is lagging behind. In the cartoon affair and the hijab debates, the government attempted to accommodate Muslims. The Justice Ministry

proposed to incorporate the blasphemy law (which was to be abolished) into hate speech legislation, which would be extended to include 'qualified attacks on religions' (not just religious believers). The Ministry also intended to allow a police hijab. Both proposals were withdrawn after pressure from media and opposition. In Britain, similar multicultural policies have been pursued at political cost and against public opinion (Modood & Meer 2012); in Norway, the government gave in to public pressure at a time when the populist Progress Party scored 30 per cent in opinion polls.

Analysis of these debates and policy responses shows that 'dialogical liberalism' and 'antiracist multiculturalism' can be compatible if the government acknowledges critical minority perspectives on racism. In the cartoon affair, the government reflected a white majority perspective, but the dialogue approach paved the way for more critical Muslim perspectives to be expressed first in street protest and later in public debate. Mainstream media have appropriated an idea of dialogue that understands free speech as maximizing debate, giving access to views hostile to immigration and multiculturalism as well as to critical minority perspectives. This 'radical-liberal' understanding of public debate differs from Rawls (1999), Habermas (2005) and Modood (2005:145-147), who defend various versions of restraints on 'ideology' or 'comprehensive doctrines' in order to avoid escalating conflict. Although the government's rhetorical response after the July 22, 2011 terror attacks, was to promote 'more openness', the media's practice of giving access to extreme views has been questioned also in Norway.

Stereotypical media portrayal of minorities has played a major role in contributing to majority prejudice in the past. Likewise, a diversity of voices in public debate may increase majority knowledge about minorities and let them influence mainstream society. This function of public debate is perhaps more important than law and policy in the process of multiculturalizing a society (Modood 2007). A variety of Muslim voices is now heard in public debate, and distinctions between 'secular Muslims', 'traditionalists', 'extremists' and 'antiracist multiculturalists' are available to the general public, opening up for political alliances between Muslims and antiracists in the cartoon affair, with feminists in the hijab debates, and with Christians in the secularism debate. While the dialogue approach currently dominates in Norway, and official rejection of multiculturalism is less explicit than in several other European countries, there is also a confrontational, anti-multiculturalist and explicitly anti-Muslim opposition from the populist right, which reflects a large section of public opinion.

Diversity of opinion in public debate may assure a democratic 'balance of power' and prevent any particular ideological outlook from becoming dominant and oppressing alternative views. Any ideology that becomes hegemonic and/or is linked to state power tends to become dogmatic, narrow-minded and oppressive, as historical examples show with regard to state socialism, state-centered Islamism, ideological secularism and nationalism. Diverse ideologies including communism, politicized religion, secularism,

liberalism, nationalism and multiculturalism, all share a similar agenda that can be summed up in different interpretations and variations of freedom, equality and justice. From a minority position, they can work as necessary correctives and resist hegemonic attempts to standardize and monopolize ways of thinking. Liberalism, secularism and nationalism, although in relatively moderate forms, are currently dominant in Norway, while multiculturalism, socialism and religious perspectives are the challengers.

Critical minority perspectives challenge the dualist thinking characteristic of dominant ideologies, e.g. the essentialist, hierarchical dichotomies between the 'secular' and 'religious', the 'liberal' and 'communitarian', and the 'universal' and the 'particular' where the first term is defined positively and claimed for 'us' while the second term is defined negatively and ascribed to minorities. In a liberal, secular society where conservative religion is marginalized, pursuing a religious lifestyle is a choice that takes commitment and character. Religious persons thus cannot be described as 'unaware of alternatives' (Spinner-Halev in Modood 2005:179-180). Well-integrated Norwegian Muslim women who participate in mainstream society and wear hijab, merge religious values and secular language in a way that challenges dominant liberal dichotomies between the secular and the religious (Døving 2012b:42-43). Rather than facing an 'asymmetrical cognitive burden' (Habermas 2005), they may be better equipped for the task of 'translation' than secular citizens who need not take religious views seriously. The dichotomy between religious dogmatism and secular open-mindedness is thus untenable, indicating a more accurate distinction between dogmatic, absolutist forms and pragmatic, dialogical forms of any worldview (Bangstad 2012:47), corresponding to Modood's distinction between 'ideological' and 'moderate' forms of religion and secularism, and Rawls' distinction between 'comprehensive doctrines' and political forms of 'public reason'.

The empirical material supports suggestions by Rawls (1999), Parekh (2000), Phillips (2007) and Rostbøll (2008) that values such as freedom, equality and justice defined in abstract terms can be characterized as universal, but are always interpreted in particular political and cultural contexts and come in various versions which may differ from principles of 'liberty', 'egalitarianism' and 'fairness' as defined by liberal theorists. While one strand of liberals tries to monopolize these principles (Barry 2001), a more pluralist perspective holds that there is an 'overlapping consensus' (Rawls 1999) around these values, which may be justified by a variety of comprehensive philosophies. Minorities insist on their right to be equal partners in a dialogue about interpretating these values, and my analysis shows some differences between Muslim interpretations and those of 'confrontational liberalists'. Among other things, Norwegian Muslims have emphasized that free speech should be used responsibly, that individual and community interests should be balanced (Parekh 2000), a degree of gender complementarity (Jacobsen 2004:7-8; Phillips 2007), and a moderate secularism with room for public religion. None of these interpretations necessarily contradicts liberal principles.

Minority contributions also resist hegemonic attempts to monopolize these values, for example when they are defined as national values at the same time as they are claimed to be universal. Eurocentrism refers to the construction of Western interpretations as the only legitimate versions of the universal at the same time as alternative versions are particularized (Gressgård 2010; Sayyid 2003); as when 'universal values' are contrasted with 'Muslim values'. When alternative versions of the universal are presented, the dominant western perspective is revealed as one particular interpretation. The problem with dominant discourses is less their particularism than their universalistic pretensions. It is thus more constructive to think of universal principles in terms of an 'overlapping consensus' (Rawls 1999), even though Rawls' pluralism has also been criticized for being too narrowly liberal (Parekh 2000). While Rawls rightly points out that there will always be people holding 'unreasonable' views in any society, the kind of cultural essentialism that ascribes these views to particular groups should be avoided.

While we may conclude that Norway is 'a multicultural society in the making', this does not necessarily imply that anti-Muslim racism is on the decline; rather we may be witnessing further polarization not between majority and minority, but between racist and multiculturalist views. This thesis has focused almost exclusively on Muslims because they have been the most stigmatized *and* most assertive minority in the last two decades. Other minority groups in Norwegian society may have escaped the worst stigmatization, and their integration in a multicultural society cannot be modeled on that of Muslims although they may benefit from Muslim mobilization, like Muslims have learned lessons from the African American struggle (Modood 2005;2007). These other minorities need their own mobilization against the specific forms of racism targeting them. Now that Muslim presence is increasingly 'normalized', it remains to be seen which minority group will be next to take up the struggle.

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