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# 'Making the Margins of Europe': Marginalization, Europeanization and Islam in the contest for Public Space.

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## Abstract

This article intervenes into the debate around European identity, political Islam, and Turkey's potential accession to the European Union through treating Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" as a bordering discourse. The article argues that the 'clash thesis' highlights uncertainty around cultural change in Europe as well as a tension within European Integration itself between the Nation *as* State and the Nation as political and cultural *identity*. Discourses which position specific groups as being unEuropean, or less European can be linked to the shifting meaning of Europe in light of political and economic integration and its affects on the *Nation* as titular owner of the State. The article argues that the debate around the compatibility of Islam and Europe and therefore, also the debate around Turkey's accession to the European Union must be situated within the context of boundary formations driven by im/migration to Europe and within Europe and the rise in public visibility and assertiveness by second and third generation Islamic communities, thereby moving the debate beyond the Self /Other dichotomy upon which the 'clash thesis' functions by understanding the boundaries of Europe as negotiable and culturally situated within a publicly mediated discourse about 'Europe'.

**Introduction**

Samuel Huntington's provocative 1993 essay, "The clash of civilizations?" appeared at a time of tremendous geopolitical, social and intellectual change. This was especially true of Europe during the 1990s with the reconfiguration of Western Europe's political, legal and economic space through the signing of the Maastricht Treaty and the creation of the European Union. In many respects, the Maastricht Treaty had the effect of creating a 'core' of European integration, and alongside it, arguably also created a core of 'Europe.' As new states emerged in East-Central Europe, South-Eastern Europe violently exploded in ethnic violence. The stark dichotomy between 'Western Europe' and 'Eastern Europe' was transformed into new distinctions between 'European' and 'un-European' amid a renewed debate about *Europe* as a cultural and political space.

The political and perhaps cultural definition as well of Europe increasingly seems [*] to be one defined in terms of proximity in geography as well political and economic practices to Western Europe – or the core of Europe and European-ness. As a new geopolitical definition of Europe was framed in the 1990s, Eastern European countries looking to secure their independence and reassertion of their national trajectories as 'European' countries began their 'return to Europe' by seeking membership in Western Europe's political, economic and security arrangements to both re-establish their 'European' credentials as much as to benefit from Western Europe's economic strength (Iankova, 2006). In effect, 'Europe' as a political and cultural space and as an identity

category is produced by interactions between dominant and subordinate discourses

(Kuus, 2004:472,474: Lefebvre, 2001).

Amidst this period of change, Huntington's essay connected two important

themes: first, a cultural and geopolitical imagination of Western Europe – and the United

States – as the bastion of progress, rationality and order, in essence of modernity, or

simply put as the benchmark of modern civilization, and secondly, his essay mapped out

new geopolitical boundaries for a European world where national and cultural identities

were increasingly questioned and where the perceived threat posed by immigration and

integration to redraw the imagined character of nations raises fundamental questions

about the place of the state, religion, and the nation in the complex relationship that is

sovereignty. The immigration debate has become one of the central questions confronting

the European Union; indeed, as a special issue of the *Journal of Common Market Studies*

on migration and minorities in Europe succinctly put it,

> The current political context in Europe – between the first and second round of the EU's eastward enlargement and at a time when the whole notion of a EU constitution and future enlargement (in particular in the case of Turkey) have been called into question by the French and Dutch rejections of the Constitutional Treaty makes discussion about minorities and migration issues particularly relevant (Sasse and Thielemann, 2005:655).

In the case of migration and the growth of the Muslim population in European States

there is an increasing sense among some that Muslim culture and European – or Christian

– culture constitute opposing projects. One pair of observers have gone so far as to

comment that "[g]eopolitics are increasingly being interpreted as a clash between the

secular west (Europe and America) and societies in which religion plays a more

prominent role in public life" (Rogowski &Turner, 2006:13). Likewise, Reza Aslan has

written that conflict between the West and Islam is not a Clash of Civilizations but rather

a 'clash of monotheisms' (2005:xv). Aslan raises one of the central questions posed by

migration, enlargement and European integration as a cultural and political project: where is Europe, what is Europe and who is European?

This article intervenes into the debate around European identity and enlargement, political Islam, immigration and the potential accession of Turkey to the European Union not by discussing Turkey's economic, political and social structure, or by taking on Huntington's loaded analysis, but rather approaches enlargement by considering the *idea* of Europe as a political and geographical project in which space, culture and religion are bound up in describing and locating 'Europe' and European society. By understanding boundaries as negotiable, shifting and situated within a publicly mediated discourse about the place and meaning of 'Europe,' these questions take shape within the context of the cleavages between the European political integration project and the Nation-State, and between migration and local particularity and the imagined national character of the State. Adrian Hastings captures this succinctly in his 1996 Wiles lectures:

> A nation-state is a state which identifies itself in terms of one specific nation whose people are not seen simply as 'subjects' of the sovereign but as a horizontally bonded society to whom the state in a sense belongs. There is thus an identity of character between state and people. … In it, ideally, there is a basic equivalence between the borders and the character of the political unit upon one hand and a self-conscious cultural community on the other (Hastings, 1996:3).

Europe's challenge is two-fold challenge: first, negotiating its external boundaries, of which Turkey is a prime example; and second, negotiating its internal cultural dimension of which the questions of religion, migration, and the Muslim population are core issues (Delanty, 2006:139; Dittmer, 2005:78; Scott, 2005:432). It is increasingly possible to speak of multiple Europes that correspond to neither the discursive framework of membership in the European Union nor the core boundaries of the European Nation-state (Kuus, 2005:567).

**Making *Modern* Europe?**

The very idea of *Europe-ness* or belonging to Europe, and, therefore, questions about Turkey and Islam in Europe, "involves a demarcation with respect to the non-European" (Strath, 2000:405). The speed at which Eastern and Central Europe was incorporated into the European discourse as 'returning to Europe' starkly contrasts Turkey's efforts to join first the European Community (EC), and now, the EU. While Turkey applied for membership in 1987 to the then-EC seven years prior to the Central and Eastern European Countries' (CEEC) applications to join its successor, it was only in October 2005 that Turkey began accession talks while the CEECs, the Mediterranean countries of Cyprus and Malta, and the former Soviet Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania had already gained membership (Nugent, 2004:39). It is perhaps accurate to say that the project of European integration is underwritten by a fundamental question that defines both Eastern enlargement as well as the potential geographic and cultural limits of Europe: Is 'Europe' a political, a geographically defined or a cultural/ civilizational project? Valerie Giscard D'Estaing, formerly the chair of the Convention for the Drafting the European Constitution, somewhat famously remarked "that an unbridgeable cultural divide existed between Turkey and Europe"; his assertion that Turkey is not a European country and that its membership would bring about the end of the EU highlights such a civilization or cultural imagination of Europe (WRR, 2004:15,22).

Western Europe's sizable and growing Muslim population and the association of Islam in general with fundamentalism form key elements of Europe's internal tensions; Reza Aslam has hinted that there is the fear the growing presence of Muslims in Europe

may in fact be reshaping Europe as both physical and cultural spaces in a way that challenges European assumptions of cultural and political superiority (Baker, 1997:33; Glavanis, 1998:392). In many senses this is the key question within which the Turkish question must be situated. Jocelyne Cesari notes that the changing demographic make-up of Europe and a growing Muslim population has forced European society and Europe as a cultural space to reopen an issue long considered 'case-closed' – the relationship of religion and the public sphere within officially secular society (Cesari and McLoughlin, 2005:3). Roger Ballard has argued that the categories 'European' and 'Muslim' are built upon constructed categories of oppositional cultural characteristics: European society is liberal and Muslim society is fundamentalist, European society as progressive and modern while Muslim society is traditional and backward-looking, democratic versus authoritarian, etc (Ballard, 1996).

The perceived conflict between Islam and western society was dramatically catapulted to the forefront of the European public sphere with the debate over multiculturalism and Islam in Europe in the wake of the publication of Salman Rushdie's novel, *The Satanic Verses*. Europe's self-identification with a rationalist and humanist heritage was confronted by European Muslims' expressions of outrage over the depiction of Islam and the Prophet as a false religion. At nearly the same time, the headscarf issue which would endure throughout the next decade and into the present day first emerged as a political and cultural debate in France following the 1989 expulsion of three Muslim girls from a French school for wearing the traditional headscarf.

The debate over the wearing of the Islamic headscarf in French schools – and the headscarf ban eventually passed by the French Assembly–revealed how closely narratives

of national identity are connected with notions of culture and identity. *L'affaire du voile*,

or *L'Affaire Foulard* carried with it a sense – certainly one played up by right leaning

politicians – that *French* society, cultural identity and even the French Republic itself

were under attack by minorities who not only refused to be *French* but were intent on

undermining French identity (Neilson, 2004:18-19; Baban, 2006:186).

In similar events to the controversy over the publication of *The Satanic Verses*,

the so-called Cartoon Crisis, which recently swept throughout Europe, is a further

indication of tensions between cultural identity, multiculturalism, and pluralism. As with

the rise in popularity of France's far right *Front National* during the 1990's in the wake

of the continuing controversy of the headscarf, Heiko Henkel observes that the recent

electoral success in Danish elections by the centre-right *Ventsre* Party was, in part, a

result of the party's electoral promises to address the problem of immigrants who refused

to integrate into Danish society. Henkel observes, "Danish society, with its traditionally

strong ethos of equality and social proximity, have found it difficult to come to terms

with the challenges of cultural heterogeneity produced by transnational migration"

(2006:3). These events are central to looking at migration and European political

integration as the Nation-state remains, despite post-national claims around belonging

and citizenship (Soysal, 1994), the bedrock foundation of the European project; the

Nation-State and tensions between national identity and integration are likely to play out

on the pan-European level, as the French and Dutch rejections of the Constitution Treaty

reflect.

Anthropologist Paul Silverstein notes, "Muslims in Europe remain racially

suspect (like the Jews and Gypsies before them) as "witches", as potential enemies

within, with states and scholars speculating on the orientation of their ultimate loyalties,

whether towards European host polities or towards particular Muslim homelands (or a

more general *Dar al-Islam*) geographically and imaginatively located

elsewhere"(Silverstein, 2005:366). Tariq Ramadan has noted that to be critical of

Western European or American treatment of Muslims and be a Muslim is discursively

redacted into a oppositional binary, that is to say, one is more Muslim then French, or

Dutch, or American, for example, and thus closes off the debate about multiculturalism

into questions of loyalty and the maintenance of the cultural and political status quos

(Silverstein 2005:29). On the national and local levels, the construction of mosques, the

shift in demographics, and the emergence of assertive migrant communities making

spatial and identity claims create not only ethnic spaces and reshape the local face, they

also reshape national space from the local level upwards (Hudson, 2000:409-10). As

Muslim activist Abdelaziz Eljaouhari acutely illustrated:

> …France's so-called "Republican model," he said furiously, means in practice "I speak French, am called Jean-Daniel, and have blue eyes and blond hair." If you are called Abdelaziz, have a darker skin, and are Muslim to boot, the French Republic does not practice what it preaches. "What *égalité* is there for us?" he asked. "What *liberté*? What *fraternité*?" And then he delivered his personal message to Nicolas Sarkozy, the hard-line interior minister and leading right-wing candidate to succeed Jacques Chirac as French president, in words that I will never forget. "*Moi*," said Abdelaziz Eljaouhari, in a ringing voice, "*Moi, je suis la France*!"(Ash, 2006)

That simple, yet striking evocation, "Je suis la France," gets to the core of Europe's

identity crisis. Alongside migration from former colonies in North African and South

Asia to the United Kingdom, France, and The Netherlands and labour migration to

Germany from Turkey changes in Europe have redrawn the political and cultural

formations of both the locality as well as the national identity. Anssi Passi points out a

tendency to speak of Europe and the European Union as one and the same entity. This is

revealing of how deeply the discursive framework of Europe and producing Europe has

been enveloped within and in some senses been taken over by the political and economic performances of Europe as a social, geographic and cultural space linked with European integration (Passi, 2005:582). The civilization question notwithstanding, Germany's Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer, has commented that, "European enlargement will have to end somewhere" (Hudson, 2000:411). On a continental level the accession of Turkey would expand the European Union's political and geographical borders creating a shared border with Iran, Syria, the Republic of Georgia and Armenia. Such a wide reaching expansion holds important ramifications for the imagination of Europe's physical and cultural boundaries. As the borders of Europe are pushed further from the 'core', questions about a European identity are being pushed to the forefront.

On the national level, the immigration question has intensified debate about the social and cultural practices that define national identity, just as enlargement has done politically for Europe. Henkel has argued the growing presence and practice of religious Muslims, and the growth of Islamic religious/cultural associations and institutions has advanced an "extraordinary provocation" to liberal society already anxious over their Muslim populations (Henkel, 2006:2-3). Like Henkel, Barbara Thériault and Frank Peter argue that Muslim practices, such as religious rules on the slaughter of cattle, demands for Muslim confessional schools and Mosques, and the growth of Muslim representative bodies all raise important questions about the role of religion in the public sphere (Thériault and Peter, 2005:261). The increasing visibility of Islam evokes fears that European secularism as a cultural norm, and thus potentially *European-ness* is under attack (Cesari, 2005:4). Taking into account that Europe currently has a population of approximately 23 million Muslims, or comprising around 5% of Europe's population, the

addition of Turkey would only bolster that figure to around 15% (Savage, 2004:26-27).

Perhaps the most moving figures for a civilization bordering of Europe, besides the

history of Europe which reveals that Muslims have long been a part of Europe, are

figures that suggest upwards of half of Western Europe's Muslim population were in fact

born *in* Western Europe and therefore *are* by a geographical definition '*Europeans*'

(Savage, 2004:28).

Robert Leiken, Director of the Immigration and National Security Program at the

Nixon Center writes in the same journal that catapulted the "clash thesis" to fame,

"Muslims of western Europe are likely to be distinct, cohesive and bitter" (Leiken,

2005:120-35). The bitterness Leiken points to hints at the frustrations of Muslims in

Europe as they engage in the social and political emancipation processes through which

minority groups attempt to acquire a place within the Nation-State. Muslims, Thijl Sunier

argues, are obliged to organize themselves as *Muslims* in order to bring the associational

and community aspects of their identity together to pursue political goals relative to their

position in the host society (2005:321).

National identity and European identity are locked into a binary; migration is

changing the National character as upward pressure on the nation-state while European

political integration compresses the traditional markers of the State while perhaps also

framing new external boundaries that supplant the nation-state's (Asad, 2002:217). The

public sphere where identity is presented and debated is conceptualized by Liberal

idealism as a value-neutral space, but is, in fact, quite the opposite. It is a space framed

by discourses of national, cultural and even continental imaginations, such as the

imagined nature of the community and the nation (Sunier, 2005:325; Wimmer 2002:85-87).

**France**

If boundaries between cultures are lenses through which 'Europe' should be understood as a discourse, then the Muslim question might be best situated and understood within the cultural context of the Nation. Here France is an excellent example. One of the key aspects of French political culture and identity is a strict separation between the pubic sphere and the religious sphere. The strong assimilationist ethos of French political identity demands the ultimate loyalty of the citizen to the French State; on the surface this discourse asserts that individual identity is first and foremost constituted, regardless of ethnic, religious or cultural differences, as French. In a larger sense this is part of what Jørgen Nielsen describes as the liberal myth of Europe, the social reality of a multicultural Europe and the reality of cultural encounter in Europe (2004:154-55).

Modern day France's Muslim population can be traced to waves of migration from the North African colonies as a result of both decolonization and French industry's demand for cheap unskilled labour during the 1950's and 60s. These waves of migration increasingly altered the physical landscape of French society by creating 'ethnic' communities isolated from the surrounding political and cultural landscape. From an original influx of around 846,000 Algerians, 270,000 Moroccans and 150,000 Tunisians, Muslims now number between four and six million, or about 8% of France's total

population. They are also the largest and fastest growing minority population and France's second largest religious denomination (Pauly, 2004:33,36).

This migrant body brought with them their religious and cultural traditions, and, given their marginalization in French society, the retention of these identities, especially in the face of exclusion, was central to both individual as well as the community's integrity and survival (Pauly 2004:37; Neilson 1999:8). As France's foreign labour immigration policies changed in response to the economic stagnation that swept through Western Europe in the 1970's, the majority of migrant workers permanently settled in France and increasingly made use of provisions under French law to reunite their families, creating a permanent Muslim population (Pauly, 2004:37).

The first generation of Muslim migrants saw themselves as outsiders and placed more emphasize on maintaining their cultural community than in attempting to break down the barriers against inclusion into a society that rejected them as culturally different. Their exclusion led to the rise of immigrant associations and communities concentrated in the suburbs around major metropolitan cities. It is essential to note the structural basis of French citizenship and naturalization laws at this junction for they become increasingly relevant. France's *Jus soli* citizenship model grants automatic French citizenship, regardless of the parent's residency and citizenship status to children born in France provided they remain throughout their adolescence. Children born on French soil gain French citizenship at the age of 13 by the request of their parents, at 16 by their own request and automatically at age 18 (Benhabib, 2004:157). In contrast to first generation Muslims, second and third generations of Muslims, raised, educated and socialized to the values of French society and culture, were less wiling to abide continued

marginalization and wrestled with being both French by citizenship and Muslim by

religion and culture (Pauly, 2004:49). As French-Algerian writer Sadek Sellam points

out, having seen the way their parents were received in French society and, likewise, how

they as second- and third-generation Muslims were received, they advanced a

fundamental challenge to the French political identity by demanding and asserting a stake

in that identity through political, cultural and social institutions which paralleled and even

began to challenge French institutions (Pauly, 2004:49).

Unemployment among France's Muslim youth, with unemployment rates high

among French youth in general as the recent attempt to introduce the first contract laws

reflect, are strikingly higher and increasingly seen as racially motivated among Muslims;

for them, the *Banlieues* become spaces of exclusion (Pauly, 2004:55). Here in the

*Banlieues* the contest for space takes center stage: the contest for Mosques and the

attendant spiritual requirements of Muslim faith. The building of a mosque is a visual and

architectural statement that French society has changed permanently. James Corbett has

argued that France has never been a multicultural society: foreigners are expected to fit

into the French model (Pauly, 2004:46). The Mosque as both physical and cultural space

is therefore a reshaping of the visible face of the local community as Islam moves from

the private sphere to the public. Jocelyne Cesari writes the "mosque is central to Islam's

urban visibility and is the centre of Muslim communal life. It is not only a space for

prayer but also a "community centre; where pre-existing social networks of solidarity

come together…"(Cesari, 2005:1017). The building of a mosque reflects not only a

community centre, physically, but also a claim on permanence and presence. Cesari

argues that the act of requesting space, that is seeking building permits, or engaging in

the bureaucratic process of purchasing land for a purpose built religious space represents a dialogue between Islamic and secular society. As France's Muslim population has grown beyond the confines of prayer rooms in the back of stores and private homes the necessity of larger purpose built religious spaces began to reshape the public's awareness of Islam. In the case of *Mantes-la-jolie*, stiff resistance against the purchase of space within the town core and tensions within the local community and among local politicians was the most significant factor in the contest for space. The successful negotiation of space and building of the Mosque, complete with an 18 meter high minaret, in this instance, represented not only a combination of personal and political entrepreneurship between representatives of the local Muslim community and the mayor, but also a realization that the contest for space involved a recognition that the community's ethnic and cultural make-up had changed.

The Mosque represents not only the local Muslim community's presence it also represents the evolutions of French society and the Muslim community. Second and third-generation Muslims have led this shift from private and small prayer rooms to the building of public Mosques. Although notable reservations and resistance to the changing of local space have culminated in specific incidents such as the destruction of a local prayer room in one town or the refusal of the Paris city council to allow the expansion of the Addawa mosque in the 19th *arrondissement*, Muslims are increasingly and successfully changing the particularities of local space as their community grows and they enter into a dialogue with French society, and likewise as French society enters into a dialogue with the Muslim community (Cesari, 2005:1028). In a striking paradox, Cesari has shown that conflict and competition to lead the community between Muslim groups,

backed by different traditions within Islam and also affiliations with foreign religious organizations and countries of origin, have proven in two specific cases the larger obstacle to the building of a mosque than local levels of government. Since the Rushdie and headscarf affairs, the building of mosques in France has actually increased with the local community as well as national levels of government being increasingly more involved in negotiating the boundaries of space. The creation of a Muslim advisory council by the Minister of the Interior further contributed to reshaping the public perception and visibility of Islam in France by bringing Islam into dialogue with the State. It is worth reflecting that the effort to create a privileged interlocutor between the State and the Muslim community also carries with it efforts to bring some form of French political control over Islam in French society, a clear departure from the established policy of *Laïcité*. (Ferrari, 2005:17). Increased dialogue, as well as the rise of a professional body educated and steeped in the cultural specificity of French society and able to speak to French society in its own terms of references has started to change French perceptions of Muslims and resistance to the visible representation of Muslims in French society.

Indeed, it seems remarkably ironic that efforts to build a new large mosque in Marseilles were stalled not by mainstream French society and politicians but rather by a rift between Muslim groups over control of the mosque. It is even more striking that local non-Muslim politicians played the role of intermediary and mediator between two separate Muslim groups (Cesari, 2005:1032). In the case of Marseilles, during the peak of controversy and tensions between French society and Muslim society, the local mayor voiced strong support for the building of a large mosque. He was widely attacked from

across the political spectrum and especially by the far right for his position (Neilson, 2004:165). The *Front National*'s leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen, argued against inclusion and allowing, to say nothing of creating, a visible presence for Muslims by advancing a notion of Muslims as the threat within, whose loyalties rest outside of France:

> there are six million Muslim citizens who are recent arrivals. They entered in civilian dress, in jeans. They would never let six million people with weapons enter our territory. But a person in jeans can become a soldier. If, despite their French citizenship, these Muslims feel an affiliation with another entity, they naturally become suspect in the eyes of those who one day will be compelled to confront them. (European Islam, Http://www.euro-islam.info/pages/france.html (accessed June 1, 2007.)

In contrast to voices from the right, such as Le Pen, who constantly evoke an anti-migrant anti-minority platform, the election campaign of Jean-Claude Gaudin for mayor of Marseilles 10 years later made completing Marseilles' large mosque a central goal of his administration. The building of mosques has another dimension in French politics: the growing size of the Muslim electorate and its ability to force local mayors through the power of the ballot box to, if not cater to their concerns, at least give heed to them. This has been reflected not only in the rise of *Halal* butchers and a body among France's Muslim society to certify meat as *Halal*, but also in the creation and sectioning off of Muslim only sections in local cemeteries.

The public contest for space over mosques also plays out on a individual level; the headscarf affair is a prime example of this, for the contest for space is not just individual, but also social and self-identification in that the visible representation of religion challenges the French political sense of *laïcité*, as well as national identity in ways which the building of a mosque may not. The headscarf is frequently mobilized by anti-Islamic discourses as a symbolic representation of the rejection of progress, of female

emancipation and Islam's fundamentally backward nature and anti-modern character. In short, it is the characterization of Islam as the antithesis of French society.

In September 1989 three Muslim students at the Collège Gabriel Havez were suspended from school for wearing the headscarf. Nilüfer Göle writes, "the public school is the pillar of the formation of citizenship in the republican French sense; it is in the school that individuals are distanced from their local attachments, class origins, regional accents, ethnic differences, and religious convictions in order to embrace a universal knowledge and become French citizens" (Göle, 2006:252). Ironically, the initiation point for the headscarf Affair had little, if anything, to do with Muslims; it was the small town of Creil when the local school board passed a ban on overt expressions of religion as a response to the routine absence of pupils from the local Jewish community for the first 10 days of the school year and from Saturday classes on religious grounds.

Quite quickly a debate emerged on the national level which culminated in the passage in November 1989 of a national law on secular society which articulated that public officials must remain religiously neutral though remained silent on whether the wearing of religious symbols by students or users of public services contravened the principles of the Republic (European Commission, 2004:15). The issue was quickly raised to the *Conseil D'Etat* (the French Supreme Court), which ruled that the State must allow personal freedom on conscience but placed the power to define when the wearing of religious symbols was disruptive of public order and the learning environment back into the hands of local schools. The larger issue posed by the headscarf in the public realm was its perception as a direct attack on secularity and the public school as a tool for the integration of migrants into French school, and the transforming of the public school

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into a site for the maintenance of difference (Neilson, 2004:165). This debate continued through many interventions and culminated after fifteen years in the passing of a bill in 2004 banning ostentatious religious symbols from public schools. The place of the headscarf and the trajectory of *L'Affaire du foulard*, the building of mosques and the role of religion in French society are all interwoven and have came to represent the 'dilemmas of French national identity' in light of increasing cultural diversity, French traditions of *laïcité* and an emerging European level of citizenship which breaks down the barriers of strictly *national* citizenship and identity as they force a retelling of the national myth in which the stakeholders have changed (Benhabib, 2004:190). Nations do not exist in time eternal, but rather must be imagined and reaffirmed constantly (Anderson, 1983; Billig, 1995). As the demographic and cultural make-up of French society changes and as second and third generations of Muslims increasingly take a more active role and engage in the public discourse of French society, the visible, physical, and architectural face of French society and the public sphere is likewise changing.

**Holland**

In Holland, the contest for public space, as in France, is equally intertwined with the changing shape of the nation and debates over whether Muslims can belong to the Nation, and if so, can they maintain their own cultural and religious identities within the public sphere (Sunier, 2005:319). The parallels with France are striking, as religion in the Netherlands is increasingly being pushed from the public sphere as the defining character of the Nation – it is worth recalling the Calvinist heritage of the Netherlands – the growth

of the Netherlands' Muslim community and the emergence of Islamic communities and associations have increasingly placed religion back on the public agenda.

As in France, the local Muslim community tends to live in the poorer suburbs of larger cities, in the *achterstandswijken,* or backwards neighbourhoods where they have developed and utilized a network of private and communal arrangements to cater for personal and community needs, such as private prayer rooms that emerged first to cater to temporary migrant workers (Sunier, 2005: 326). The turning point was reached when both the Muslim community and local governments realized that the 'myth of return' was exactly that, and that the Netherlands' Muslim population was a permanent fixture.

Muslim migration into the Netherlands, as was the case in France, initially stemmed from The Netherlands' former colonial possessions and economic migration. Turkish migrants comprise the largest source of Muslim immigration, and as in France, the migrant body has used family reunification laws to reunite families in the Netherlands. Dutch statistics placed Holland's foreign born Muslim population at 405,000 in 1989, a decade later those numbers had grown to 700,000, with those from Turkish extraction making at the largest segment at 285,000 (Savage, 2004:32). Over two-thirds of Dutch Muslims now hold citizenship (Neilson, 2004:63). There are some key differences in terms of the contest for space: first of all, unlike German and French citizenship models, the Dutch model grants city-voting rights to those who have been resident in a city after five years. This translates into non-nationals, such as migrants or those on work contracts, after five years obtaining a stake in shaping the local political environment, and through the local level influencing the national level (Benhabib, 2004:157-58).

Alongside the growth of the Muslim community was a growth in what Sunier has termed 'entrepreneurs' who actively advocated for the *pillarization* of Islam in Dutch society, and alongside it the educational and social infrastructure necessary for the inclusion of Muslims into the fabric of Dutch society. As in France, the physical face of Dutch society was the touchstone for a serious reevaluation of the place of Muslims in Dutch society in light of a proposal to build a large central Mosque in Amsterdam. The Amsterdam mosque was a political as well as cultural lighting bolt, bringing the local Muslim community and local government into conflict with the local Muslim association (Mili Görüsh) not only over the construction of a foreign or Islamic symbol in the heart of the *Baarsjes* neighbourhood but also into conflict with the local government's plans for urban renewal and the addition of more housing, which the presence of the mosque would have blocked. As the debate dragged on obstentiously over urban planning, the comprise that was reached is telling about the underlying issues: the visual representation of Islam and the creation of Alien or ethnic geography in the heart of Amsterdam. As one representative put it, after nearly two decades of conflict over the building the mosque:

> We do not want an ugly big white pastry in our neighbourhood, like you sometimes see when they build a new mosque. Our mosque will be completely in style of the 'Amsterdam school' (architectural style) so that it fits perfectly in the neighbourhood and becomes a real Dutch mosque (Sunier, 2005:325).

The decision to design the mosque in line with the Amsterdam school of design represents as much Dutch local fears and resistance to the *Islamicization* of Amsterdam as it does a conflict over the use of the particular site (Sunier, 2005:88).

In Rotterdam, the local Muslim association's plan to build the "biggest mosque in Europe" likewise ignited a heated debate not only about architecture and visible space, but also the core identity of Dutch society and the place, if any for Islam in Dutch society

(Sunier, 2005:325). In terms of religious infrastructure, data from 1999 places the number of purpose-built mosques in The Netherlands at 30. This is in large part to earlier Dutch experiments in the *pillarization* in which the Dutch state actually gave money to various Muslim associations for the express purpose of constructing purpose built mosques. This policy ended in the mid 1980s as the Dutch state and Dutch society shifted towards a form of *Laïcité* (Neilson, 2004:64). The larger number of Mosques is also joined by a number of Muslim confessional schools (some 32 had opened by 2000). The debate over space in the Netherlands therefore differs substantially from the French case, given earlier state involvement and management through labour contracts with third countries; it does, however, have the same context, as the debate over national identity as urban renewal projects illustrates. It is striking, however, that the engagement and dialogue between the local Muslim community and Muslim associations and local government was seen as essential in order to bring the government's urban renewal pans to fruition. This raises important questions about the demographic shift and likewise the shift in electoral power.

The active engagement with Muslim associations and the Muslim community was a bargaining or negotiating process in which the local Rotterdam government reached an agreement for the building of large purpose built mosque in exchange for change in architectural design, and a reshaping of urban space through an agreement to build one large mosque rather than the creation of smaller mosques throughout the neighbourhood. This process reflects both a politics of recognition as well as a politics of space. In this example, the local Dutch community accepted the visible place of Islam within Rotterdam and the Muslim community accepted that space, through the public dialogue

and agreement between the local government and the Muslim community on building a number of big mosques and restricting the construction of smaller mosques, as a mediated location in terms of both physical, cultural, architectural space as well as social space in which co-existence and cooperation was not only possible but preferable.

The discursive space of national inclusion and national identity is continually fraught with disjunctions, and for some, the sentiments evoked during the Rushdie affair of Muslims as a 'fifth column' or potential threat (*ala* Le Pen) came flooding back into the discursive narrative of Europe and the cleavages between societies with the events of 2001 and the subsequent war in the middle-east directed at Muslim fundamentalism, the assassination of right leaning politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002, and the assassination of Theo Van Gogh by a Moroccan immigrant (Sunier, 2005:324). These events shifted concerns about migrants and Islam back onto the level of national identity, with laws now in place to restrict the import of Imams from outside of the Netherlands over concerns that imported Imams will bring non-Dutch perspectives and fundamentalism into Holland and radicalize Muslims in Dutch society (Sunier, 2005:92). Space, visibility and the contexts of national and pan-national identities are still deeply contested; the 'politics of cultural avoidance,' as Nilufer Göle has termed it, can no longer work in either the Netherlands, nor in France, nor in the European Union (Göle, 2006:11). In a sense, during a debate with a representative of the Christian Democrat Party, a representative from the Arab League summed up the new reality: "We [Muslims] are no longer asking for something as if we are guests. We demand our place in society as equal citizens, whether you guys like it or not." Unless European countries, and the European Union as an overarching body, are willing to conscience stripping Muslims of their citizenships, as

Jean-Marie Le Pen has advocated in the case of France, the question of Turkey and cooperation and co-existence between differing religious and cultural traditions is best framed in terms of governance capacity, electoral and institutional design than as a clash of civilizations.

**Conclusion**

In terms of mediating conflicts between Islam and 'European' society, neither Europe, nor the civic nation-state, as in the case of France, provides a neutral public sphere. The resistance to change, both in the sense of public recognition of differing cultural traditions nor in creating the space for entering into an equal dialogue are underwritten by value assumptions which new culturally distinct groups, such as Islamic migrants are forced to contend with. Central and Eastern Europe, in the context of European integration and 'returning to Europe,' did not enter into negotiations as equal partners, nor have Muslims entered into a dialogue with European society as equal partners. As William Connelly remarks, "[i]dentity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference in order to secure its own self-certainty" (1991:64). This is in part both 'Europe' and the European Nation-States' dilemma.  The National Identity, which immigrants are expected to purchase, or buy into, in fact requires the constant evocation of the national identity, in effect the constant performance of being French or Dutch or British and even European as an identity. Immigrants and European integration challenge that reenactment by changing the participants. Europe is more than an economic and political space; Europe is also a space where ideological and modernization have highlighted differences with *Others*, and produced borders and boundaries through which

to secure self-identity. However, as Anssi Paasi notes, territories and their meanings are created and made by human beings; certainly the European Project is perhaps one of the best examples (2005:580).

The accession of a country of nearly 70 million Muslims, the shifting and artificial and discursively constructed boundaries of Europe, a markedly higher birth rate among Muslims, the building of mosques and the wearing of the headscarf in the streets, in the classrooms and the presence of Islam in the public sphere is changing the visible and demographic face of Europe and directly contests a Europeanization agenda by asking 'what is Europe?' Change on the local level, as the contest for Muslim space within French and Dutch society illustrates, is challenging the National identity myth and European identity while the expansion of a political order above the National order, and to which the Western European Nation-state is both legally and given the political experience of Europe in the twentieth society, perhaps morally bound too, is likewise challenging the Nation-State definition illustrated by Hastings. Europe and the meaning of Europe are constantly shifting discursively and publicly negotiated identity category rather than a given and fixed a culturally or civilizationally situated category. One researcher has commented, "Turkey can provide a vital bridge between Islam and the West and try to reduce the threat of religious extremism between the West and East" (BBC, 2007). The accession question is not a one-way dialogue, dominated by European debates about whether or not to admit Turkey, but also a debate about the place of Islam and Muslims in European identity. Tensions and uncertainty in Western Europe over the presence of Muslims in Europe and the potential accession of Turkey to the EU is not indicative of a 'clash of civilizations' but rather is indicative of Europe's internal identity

crisis. The religious and racial markers that have been mobilized to produce otherness is a context for space both at the National level as it is Europe wide as the discursive framework of 'Europe' continues to evolve and is shaped by cultural interaction. Defining Turkey as Europe's new '*Other*' would, in all likelihood, produce a sharp border between 'Christian' Europe and Islamic Turkey that would continue to play out as further tensions between Europe and the Muslims within Nation-States (Passi, 2005:581). In a 1995 interview, the Polish diplomat Tadeusz Marowiecki, following his resignation as the United Nations Representative for Human Rights in Bosnia with the outbreak of Civil War, when asked if as a Pole and a Christian he found it strange that he should be defending the rights of Bosnia's Muslims, expressed no surprise at the premise, that as a Eastern European by geography, and a Christian by faith he should stand up and criticize the international and European Community for failing Bosnia's Muslims. His comment, "It bodes ill for us...if, at the end of the twentieth century, Europe is still incapable of coexistence with a Muslim community" stands as a warning to 'Europe' as a community, as an emerging pan-national political body and as a political culture for the future (Asad, 2002:213). The clash of civilizations thesis is constantly evoked to reduce the cultural meaning of Europe as a space into a new binary of European /modern and Islam/backwards as Europe grapples with the external boundaries of both the nation-state and the political integration project. Boundaries are negotiated spaces both on the individual and the international level. The debate over Turkey is perhaps the mirror image of Europe's efforts to find itself in a changing world.

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