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"Door to door with our Muslim sisters": intercultural and inter-religious conflicts in Granada, Spain

Introduction: migration and Islam in Spain

In the last fifteen years, Spain has experienced a remarkable increase in its immigrant population (Cornelius, 1994; Izquierdo, 1992) which Maghrebin Muslims make up a significant percentage of Spain's "new" immigrants. Parallel to that, since the end of the Franco regime, a strong tendency for conversion to the Islamic religion has been observable in Andalusian cities like Granada and Cordoba. In the face of these two phenomena, anti-Islamic and anti-"Moorish" attitudes reflecting the combination of ethnic, religious and nationalist dimensions of discrimination now prevail amongst large sectors of the Spanish general public. These attitudes in fact are deeply-rooted and can be interpreted in one sense as nothing less than historically transmitted stigmatisations of "the other". As Stallaert (1998) shows in detail, since 1492 and the process of the so-called *reconquista*, when the "Christian reconquest" of the Iberian peninsula from the different Muslim ruling dynasties was accomplished with the final fall of the city of Granada after its lengthy siege by the "Catholic kings", the Spanish nation-state project has been founded on a mixture of ethnically-based "arabophobia" and religiously motivated "muslimophobia".[1] The construction and imposition of a common Spanish-Castilian hegemonic identity has always relied on

[1] In the English language the normal term is "islamophobia" (Runnymede Trust, 1997); however we prefer the term "muslimophobia" since it corresponds to the Spanish term.

measures of religious persecution – such as the institution of the *Santa Inquisición*, invented in Spain – as well as of "ethnic cleansing", implemented since 1492 through "laws of blood purity" which constantly blur supposedly biological, ethnic and religious terminology.

Particularly affected by this newly emerging muslimophobia is the Muslim woman, whose social function, in the opinion of the majority society, is reduced to motherhood and obedience to her husband. For several centuries now not only Islam as such, but above all Muslim women, have been perceived, used and mis-interpreted as an opposite frontispiece of the West's self-portrait as a modern, secularised and inclusive civilisation (Martín Muñoz, 1999). Independently of their age, profession, ethnic or social class background, their citizenship and their migrant or native status, Muslim women tend to be focused on as the stereotypical representatives of the West's prototype of "otherness". Reflecting the recent feminisation of Maghrebin migration (García Castaño, 2001; Ramírez Fernández, 1998), and contrary to the traditional pattern of female North Africans migrating from rural areas as dependents on their families/husbands, in recent years many Moroccan women from urban contexts have been migrating alone to Spain.[2] Now it is especially the Muslim *woman* who is becoming more and more an important protagonist in the process of forming a Muslim community.

Methods, actors and local setting

[2] One third of the approximately 140,000 Moroccans legally residing in Spain are women. Approximately 85% of the Moroccan women are from urban backgrounds in northern or central Morocco, whereas fewer women emigrate from the rural Rif region (García Castaño, 2001). The broader context and the general tendencies of changing migration patterns in the Mediterranean region are analysed by King (2000).

This ethnographic study[3] addresses the largely unknown daily life-world of these "different" female migrants living within a secularising, but still mainly Catholic southern Spanish society. Their life-worlds are profoundly shaped by different, but often overlapping and mutually reinforcing sources and forms of discrimination and exclusion. Gender-related, citizenship-based, ethno-national and religiously motivated discriminatory attitudes and forms of behaviour are simultaneously at work – both from the "outside", non-Muslim majority society and from within Muslim minority communities. Accordingly, in the present research, emphasis is laid on the *emic* perspective of the actors themselves (Geertz, 1983).[4] The (all-too-seldomly studied) awareness and self-definition of discriminatory attitudes and practices, as perceived by the Muslim women, constitute our principal focus of interest, whereas the legal, political and societal macro-level contexts will only be considered as a general framework in which the individual and collective experiences are to be situated and interpreted. Apart from the ethnographic interviews, participant observation and informal conversations and discussions carried out in the Muslim women's neighbourhoods as well as inside their community associations have been used as a second source of data.[5] The observational data, which reflected our own, outsider or *etic* perspective, have only been used to cross-check the *emic* data obtained through the interviews and through informal discussions. In the case of our main source of information, the Muslim women themselves, from the very beginning of the research we have

[3] This study formed part of a transnational project on "Multilevel Discrimination against Muslim Women in Europe", co-ordinated by Dr. Jochen Blaschke, financed by the Commission of the European Union (project no. VS/1999/0659) and carried out in different European cities between 1999 and 2000 by the *Berliner Institut für Vergleichende Sozialforschung* (Berlin, Germany), the *Danish Centre for Migration and Ethnic Studies* (Esbjerg, Denmark), *Università degli Studi di Firenze* (Florence, Italy), the *Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations* (Warwick, United Kingdom) and the *Laboratorio de Estudios Interculturales* (Granada, Spain); for its final report, see Blaschke *et al*. (2001), and the Spanish part see Dietz *et al*. (2001).

[4] Slightly pre-structured, open and dense ethnographic interviews have been conducted with the following three main actors considered in this study: immigrant as well as convert Muslim women, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and immigrant associations dealing with them, and public institutions in charge of looking after them.

[5] The team which carried out the data collection was made up of experienced ethnographic researchers, teachers and anthropologists who are pursuing postgraduate studies at the University of Granada and who have been participating in several previous migration-related projects of the *Laboratorio de Estudios Interculturales*; for methodological details, see Dietz *et al*., (2001).

been seeking interview partners who, taken together, would be as heterogeneously composed as possible. The variations followed the criteria of age, region of origin, nationality, ethnicity, civil status, residential/household pattern, educational background and training, current ocupation, level of income and, finally, the way of relating to Islam. Combining and varying these criteria, 25 women were chosen. In the case of the 13 NGOs and immigrant associations studied, we have distinguished between organisations mainly run by Spaniards – volunteers as well as employees – and those formed mainly by immigrants, all of them volunteers. Additionally, we obtained access to seven public institutions that deal with women in different areas of social security, health care, education, employment promotion etc. These three different samples of actors we interviewed were chosen in such a way as to ensure a highly diversified picture of variations, experiences and policies, rather than strict statistical representativeness.

Granada was the local setting of the research. In this Andalusian city of approximately 300,000 permanent inhabitants, a highly differentiated migrant population has arrived and settled during the last two decades. The main reasons for choosing this city are economic. Granada is the principal commercial city in eastern Andalusia, with market relations both with the northern province of Jaén, dominated by olive monoculture, and the eastern province of Almería, which has been transformed over the last decade into one of Spain's most vigorous agricultural export regions. Since the first non-European immigrants started to settle down in Granada in the second half of the 1980s, a complex economic pattern of urban construction work (dominated by Moroccans), and urban informal trade (controlled by Senegalese) and seasonal migrations to the olive harvest in the north as well as to the tomato plantations in Almería, has evolved (Dietz and Peña García, 1999). Further advantages of Granada derive from its character as a university city. On the one hand, the flat market responds to the 60,000 students' demand for cheap rental property, from which the migrants also profit; on the other hand, the university has

attracted highly skilled immigrants. Meanwhile the "orientalist" legacy (cf. Said, 1978) of the city has turned it into a point of confluence for Muslim converts as well.

Islam between discourse and practice

Despite their often completely different political and ideological backgrounds, the representatives of public institutions as well as of NGOs agree in their rather stereotyped perception of Muslim women. All representatives mention the gap which supposedly exists not only between Islam and Christianity, but also between Islam and modernity. Even those who reject the simplifying opinions about the supposedly oppressive character of Islam in its "impact" on Muslim women, tend to stress the cultural difference between "backward" or "underdeveloped" Muslim regions of the world on the one hand, and the "modern" parts of the world on the other hand. Muslim women are viewed as – real or potential – victims of their own religion and its *machista* practices. Political authoritarianism and religiously legitimated oppression against women are "two sides of the same coin", as one NGO activist stated.

This homogeneity of external definitions and views expressed by members of the non-Muslim majority society contrasts completely with the huge diversity of self-definitions and identity discourses offered by the Muslim women themselves. The religious identity expressed by Muslim women in the course of the interviews is strongly shaped by their socialisation, which for most of them has taken place before emigrating to Spain. Those women who come from an Arab – mostly Moroccan – and from a more or less religious background, tend to perceive Islam as a "normal" part of their identity and self-definition (cf. Geertz, 1968). Since adolescense, the religious prescriptions and rituals like praying and fasting, which were transmitted as part of a family's and/or community's cultural heritage, have been integrated into the women's daily life routine. As a woman of Pakistani origin explained, for her Islam is just "a system

of organisation" which helps to structure daily routines and to organise one's own life according to certain guiding principles of morality and "respect" towards each other. Thus, most of the women associate their distinctively Muslim as opposed to Christian religion to a mere coincidence or "fate" of geography. Religion is not perceived as a matter of choice, but of inheritance. The close link which is supposed to unite Islam as a religious system, on the one hand, and the Muslim women's particular cultural and even national backgrounds, on the other hand, is only questioned by two rather different types of interviewees: those women of Spanish nationality and Catholic religious and cultural origin who have converted to Islam in the course of their adolescence or early adulthood ;[6]

and those women who have migrated from the north-eastern part of Morocco or from northern Algeria and who identify themselves in ethnic terms not as Arab, but as Amazigh .[7]

Without any exception, the Spanish converts stress the particular gap dividing Islam and Christianity. The personal experience of religious conversion is always expressed in terms of "liberation" from tradition. The process of conversion is remembered as a profound and very personal identity crisis and as an "awakening" from past superficiality and merely pragmatic religiosity. Quite a lot of former Catholics converted to Islam in the transition period from the Franco dictatorship to democracy, a period during which Catholicism was perceived as an empty relic of pre-modern times. In their process of searching for new forms of belief, Islam becomes a tool for struggling not only against the superficiality of traditional Catholic rites practiced in their own families of origin, but also against the prevailing *machismo*. In the converts' view, sexist and authoritarian attitudes towards women are part of Catholic religion, as customarily practiced in southern Spain. Islam, on the contrary, promotes "mutual respect between both sexes". Since, for the converts, Islam is not an integral part of family traditions, they claim that there are two different

[6] Allievi (2000) analyses the role generally played by converts in re-interpreting Islam.

[7] The influence of Amazigh culture and identity on the northen Moroccan Rif region is described in detail by Hart and Raha Ahmed (1999).

ways of practicing Islam: the "religion of the immigrants", on the one hand, where culture and religion are supposedly "mixed up"; and "bare Islam", on the other hand, which should not be associated with any culture in particular. The regional diversity and ethnic distinctions that prevail inside Islam (Lippman, 1995) are thematised as well by the Amazigh, be they from Algeria, from Morocco or from the North African Spanish enclave of Melilla. They tend to concur with the converts in pointing out that a large amount of distinctive religious practices, beliefs and rules is not of Muslim, but of Arab or other ethnic origin. Otherwise the struggle for presenting Islam as a culturally "neutral" and contemporary "way of life" is only observable with young urban upper- and middle-class women, who in several cases now pursue university studies in Spain. All other Muslim women, who come from rural or lower class urban contexts, tend to identify Islam with tradition.

Because of the obvious differences in the personal and cultural backgrounds, further differences can be observed in the way Islam is perceived and lived by the converts, on the one hand, and by immigrants, on the other. For the vast majority of Muslim migrant women, religious instruction is not remembered as a distinctive aspect of the process of socialisation. Their descriptions of religious life and its institutional setting still closely relate to the country of origin. While the women's home is mentioned as the main place and institution in charge of religious orientation, the mosque and the school are recalled as minor socialising agents. The mosque, as a public meeting-point and as a religious community institution, is frequently associated with male attributes. A woman from Nador in Morocco even feels uncomfortable praying in the mosque, as it is "more suitable for men". Apart from that, most of the women admit that their knowledge of the Holy Quran is rather selective and reflects very pragmatic attitudes. Spanish converts, on the other hand, often criticise this pragmatic attitude towards religious belief. They have experienced conversion as an initiation in the most classical sense of a *rite de passage* (Van Gennep, 1966), and therefore require the support

of an initiated person or community in order to acquire basic notions not only of the Arabic language and Islamic theological literature, but especially of the Holy Quran.

Descriptions of and opinions about religious beliefs and practices provided by Muslim women through the interviews once again present a highly diversified scope of attitudes and experiences. With the exception of the converts, it is always the family of origin which shapes the particular rites and habitual practices (Rippin, 2001). Most women remember the role of the father as being crucial in the first years of participation in religious life, while continuity of religious practice is associated more with the mother, and not any more with the father, who seems to have acted as an often absent, but always supervising authority (cf. Geertz, 1968). In the overwhelming majority of families, religious obligations have always been practiced in a rather flexible way. After emigrating from Morocco, Algeria or other Muslim countries, what has been until then a more or less routine practice frequently becomes a serious problem or at least a challenge for one's sense of duty. Different strategies are developed in order to cope with these challenges. Some of the women try to compensate the lack of context and of cultural embeddedness by increasingly internalising their belief. A young woman from Nador in northern Morocco explained that since living in southern Spain she has got to know "that Islam is located in the heart, not in the family or neighbourhood". In many cases, however, the suddenly missing framework of the family and kinship networks and a deep feeling of personal isolation weaken the willpower for the daily practicing of Islam. This – supposedly only temporary – loss of social support is deepened by the lack of an existing migrant community in many of the cities or villages of immigration. If anything the now-emerging "religious infrastructure" of mosques, community meeting points, shops which offer *halal* food as well as products from the region of origin, etc. that is obsevable in cities like Granada and Cordoba, strengthens even more the impression of losing the "naturalness" and embeddedness which formerly characterised religious

belief. In contrast to the converts, who welcome the "changing face of their city" as a development towards its "oriental legacy", some of the migrants even feel somehow "instumentalised" by orientalist tourism policies. The sense of the above-mentioned loss is also promoted by the surrounding social context. Members of the Spanish and Catholic majority society are frequently reported to show not just "mere" rejection, but complete ignorance and a lack of interest when interacting with Muslims. Accordingly, some women abandon certain customs like daily prayers, Ramadan or wearing the headscarf. Finally, several younger women have developed "double standards" in order to face the challenge of bridging the expectations of their own family and those of the majority society. This strategy, however, is not only a result of migrating to Spain; since adolescence many of the interviewees were found to systematically change codes of conduct when spending time outside their parents' direct sphere of influence.

This pragmatic and selective approach towards Islamic traditions and obligations (cf. Lippman, 1995) is completely absent in the case of the converts. They perceive their religious duties not as something negotiable with and against the "forces of tradition" and/or the "surrounding social context", but as the result of an individual choice. In the same way as the conversion itself is narrated in rather mystical terms, religious life is seen as a unique opportunity of encountering divinity in daily routine.

Another frequently discussed issue is the significance and necessity of wearing the headscarf. Despite the fact that in Spain there have been no major public conflicts around the issue of the headscarf [8] – women are "even allowed to wear it when taking a passport photograph", as one Moroccan interviewee gratefully acknowledged, nevertheless the veil is seen as an obstacle when searching for employment or trying to rent a flat. The institutions and NGOs see the "problem" of veiling as a major indicator of the host society's "racism". And yet, although tolerance

[8] For a sketch of this conflict as it has manifested itself in different European countries, see Verlot (1996); El Guindi (1999) presents the evolution and diversity of country-of-origin interpretations and uses of veiling.

towards the habit of veiling is always expressed, some institutional representatives say that Muslim women "should not exaggerate" and should not look "just as if they were in Morocco", as this would make it difficult for their Catholic neighbours to "accept" them. A social worker dealing with Muslim women even claimed that some of them are covering their head as a means of "self-isolation".

In order to avoid this kind of discrimination, some migrant women in certain situations strategically take the headscarf off, something that of course does not counter the underlying equation of headscarf, phenotypical distinction, muslimophobic attitudes, and the overt rejection of people of Moroccan origin. While the majority of women regard wearing the veil as an integral part of their identity (not only religious but also sexual), and therefore as an unquestioned part of their traditions, a minority of women, mainly of Amazigh origin, reject the headscarf, which they identify as "something imposed by the Arabs" and above all by "the *machista* attitude of Muslim husbands". For them, the preservation of an archaic religious symbol that has nothing to do with higher or lower degree of religiosity, prevents Muslim women from liberating themselves. This interpretation, which is astonishingly similar to the Spanish mainstream public perception of Muslim women as victims, is sharply contradicted by other women, who emphasise the variability of veiling customs that are just as exposed to changes and fashions as any other "piece of clothing". Several Muslim women, immigrants as well as converts, even claim the *hijab* serves as an erotic device, while Christian Spanish women are criticised as boringly "naked".

However, in the migration context of a non-Muslim host society, some women understand the headscarf not as a question of custom or fashion, but as a strictly religious symbol of identifying oneself *vis-à-vis* the Christian "other". This attitude is shared by the Spanish converts, who, while being dressed modestly, cover their heads in order to be recognised as Muslims. This tendency of using the *hijab* as a religious distinction or even as an "ethnic marker" (Eriksen, 1993) in inter-religious contexts,

however, is openly rejected by other Muslim women. In their view, it turns the issue of veiling into a superficial question of belonging to a religious minority without regard to the individual faith and attitude towards one's own religion.

Despite these differences in perceiving and practising Islam, nearly all the women we interviewed highly appreciated their religion as a source of security and confidence in their current situation of suddenly belonging – due to migration or conversion – to a religious minority. As an Arab woman told us, her own religious conviction has actually increased in the migration context in the sense that she has started feeling much closer to the presence of God.

When asked about the relation between religion and gender and, particularly, about the Islamic norms and values directly referring to women, the interviewees do not agree at all. Generally it may be stated that most of the women acknowledge the necessity of distinctive gender roles. They accept the assignment of different social and economic, public as well as private, tasks according to gender differences as something "natural" or "practical". Above all the converts comment on their impression of being liberated from the male omnipresence and the inter-sex competition which according to them characterises Christian societies. When comparing female roles, rights and duties, only very few of the interviewed women – all of them of Amazigh ethnic background – identify Islam as such as a source of sexual discrimination and *machismo*. In contrast, in the eyes of the majority, it is not Islam in itself, but Muslim males, who are generally claimed to be the perpetrators of sexual discrimination. Accordingly, for them it is the social control which mainly through "mere gossip" succeeds in transforming the differentiation of roles into female submission. Thus, all converts as well as many Moroccan women insist on the necessity of distinguishing between Islam as a belief system, on the one hand, and its realisation in different cultural and geographic contexts, on the other.

A gendered life-cycle

For nearly all of the non-Spanish women, their whole childhood has been focussed on the family, on close kinship relations and on the neighbourhood, which is recalled as everpresent, often supporting, but at the same time surveying, the girls' upbringing. The majority describe their first menstruation as the major event in their young lives. The taboo associated with the female period becomes a decisive part of a woman's sexual identity in her behaviour towards and her interaction with male counterparts. For many women reaching puberty is remembered as a real turning point; since then the male members of the family, their father and/or elder brothers, start to intervene directly in their education. Another crucial factor in the process of socialisation is the question of access and continuity in the home country's educational system which, according to the description of several women, had an impact on the personal awareness of gender-related issues and has promoted therefore the process of increasing consciousness in general and "liberation" from the family's tutelage. In those cases where the parents enabled their daughters to attend higher schools, often far away from their family homes, schooling and migration mutually reinforced each other. Due to this interrelation between education and migration, a relatively high level of professional qualification – gained in the country of origin – characterises most of those female Muslim immigrants who entered Spain neither as students nor in the course of family regrouping. Only the migrant women from the poorest strata had never attended school, because they had to support their parents' economic activities from an early age. The vast majority who did attend school were educated at state or public schools. In several families of urban middle and higher strata, the religious instruction provided in these schools was supplemented by a specific Quranic instruction. Due to the former Spanish "protectorate" (Salas Larrazabal, 1992), in northern parts of Morocco there exists a

further type of school, namely Spanish-speaking or Spanish-Arabic bilingual schools maintained either by the Spanish government or by Catholic religious orders. Even though they do not provide any religious instruction for Muslim pupils, these schools seem to be highly attractive for the upward-striving middle classes, as they offer a combined Spanish-Moroccan *baccalaureat*, which often constitutes the first step for university studies in southern Spain.[9] So, as can be seen, Islamic instruction did not play a major part in the education of many migrant women. Contrary to that, all converts, besides pointing out the "oppressive" nature of their traditional socialisation inside their Catholic families, criticise the overwhelmingly confessional orientation inside the schools they attended. After their process of conversion, most of these women are nowadays highly and overtly suspicious about the Spanish school system and fear the strong influence of the non-Muslim surroundings as a potential risk for their children's long-term adherence to Islam – a fear which is not shared by any of the immigrated Muslim women.

Apart from schooling and education, the question of marriage has an important impact on the life of all Muslim women. Since nowadays love and friendship are the motives most frequently stated to explain the choice of the partner, specific conflicts arise in the migration context. For many of the younger women who emigrated on their own and who had reached a fairly high educational level before deciding to migrate to Spain, a major problem consists not only in finding an adequate partner in the isolated situation which they are suffering in the migratory destination, but above all in resisting the indirect, but ongoing pressure and criticism by their parents, kin and neighbours back home as far as their "age limit" for marriage is concerned. Beyond that, serious problems are mentioned when marrying non-Muslim partners. Instead of achieving some kind of inter-religious exchange on the basis of Christian-Muslim beliefs and convergences, women who have passed through these experiences remember sensations and feelings of "ritual loneliness", of just being

[9] For details on this see González Barea and Dietz (1999) and González Barea (2000).

"tolerated" by their partners. Sometimes an even greater problem for inter-religious marriages, however, is their lack of formal recognition in the Muslim country of origin. Therefore, a strategy of "double standards" between the host society and the context of origin is developed by some Muslim women in order to hide the inter-religious reality from their families back home. An Algerian woman who had been married to a Spanish Catholic said that her father never knew about her marital relation. Since the converts criticise and refuse the concept of love as "Western" and "romantic", the issue of getting married for them seems to be less conflictual. According to their statements, the criteria for choosing a spouse, and a prerequisite therefore for a successful partnership, are "rational" and not "emotional" ones.

Struggling for community formation

Above all unmarried migrant women, and even many of those young Muslim women who study at a Spanish university and normally feel well integrated, suffer from loneliness, and especially isolation from their families. Their feelings of isolation also reflect the poor community relations which characterise their daily lives in southern Spain. To some extent, the problem can be countered by an emerging "transnational" and "trans-Mediterranean" kind of migration network, i.e. by frequent visits from and to the family in the region of origin.[10] On the other hand, even married women who migrated in the context of a family reunion opportunity complain about difficulties in establishing more stable social and neighbourhood relations. This is due to their heavy dependence on their husband's social and work relations or on their own employment in the shadow economy (more on this below). While the necessity of community building in the migrant situation is reflected in all of the

[10] The concept of "transnational migration networks" has been applied to the study of migrant women in Spain and their integration into "long-distance" kinship and household units by Gregorio (1998); González Barea (2000) extends the concept to Moroccan students living between the northern and southern Mediterranean shores.

interviews conducted, immigrant community life is still strongly fragmented and departmentalised according to the needs of the first immigrants, mainly unmarried male employees. The immigrant sections of the two major Spanish trade unions (*Unión General de Trabajadores* and *Comisiones Obreras*) that still dominate associational life (Watts, 2000), are only controlled by male representatives, and their union activities are accordingly focused on sectoral issues relevant above all to male employees. And the religious organisational life emerging through newly-established mosques and recently-created bodies like the *Consejo Islámico de Granada* at the local level or the *Comunidad Musulmana de España* at the national level (Moreras, 1999; Rosón Lorente, 2000), are also dominated by men. These organisational frameworks therefore cannot satisfy the requirements of migrant women, who most of all just seek possibilities of meeting each other, of knowing other Muslim women, of exchanging practical information and of holding informal encounters without the presence of men. The participation of Muslim women in certain activities carried out by migrant associations and/or by Spanish NGOs supporting them is actually very weak, either because they are not allowed to by their husbands or because they simply have no contact with or knowledge about these associations or NGOs. Otherwise the "assistentialist" connotations conferred on such institutions often produce feelings of being somehow "stigmatised" when turning towards them – an attitude that is promoted by the often-criticised "charity" approach explicitly used by several NGOs of Catholic background (Dietz, 2000). Similar attitudes are expressed concerning social services offered by the Spanish welfare state to its citizens. Apart from those women who have never even heard of the existence of such services, all female migrants deploy strategies of simply ignoring and/or explicitly avoiding them. According to one social worker's opinion, this resistance stems from the "illegal" immigrants' fear of being denounced and deported with the aid of the public institution.

Nevertheless, both sides, NGO representatives as well as many Muslim women, tend to agree that the Spanish-dominated associational spaces for encounters, on the one hand, should be supplemented by the migrant women's own associations; and that, on the other hand, migrant women should be incorporated into the work process of these NGOs – as a first step in the attempt to overcome the "huge culture conflicts going on daily". According to the Muslim women, the most important topics these emerging associations are supposed to address are, first of all, legal and bureaucratic issues, such as "legalising" residence and work permits as well as the situation of divorced, abandoned women and single mothers, and secondly the issue of accesibility to literacy and language instruction, above all for older women.

While many women criticise the NGOs' frequent praxis of "diverting" them from one organisation or institution to another, the difficulties described by NGOs while interacting and cooperating with Muslim women's groups and associations are due to the lack of stability, continuity and accountability shown in their daily work. In the opinion of the director of the Albayzín neighbourhood's Community Social Services Centre, it is still the Muslim communities' organisational diversity which prevents them from having a stronger impact on local issues. Apart from internal divisions and sectarianism, the main distinction that still divides Muslims in Spain is that between migrants from Muslim societies of origin, on the one hand, and Muslim converts, on the other hand. Due to their different approaches to and perception of Islam noted above, most converts implicitly distance themselves from the Maghrebin immigrants. In fact, they are the only Muslim group that succeeded in building up strong and stable, although rather small communities. This difference seems to be related to the process of conversion itself, which takes place not only as a personal revelation, but in parallel as a "voyage" of initiation into the midst of a community of already-initiated fellow travellers. Besides, the strength of the convert communities is also a result of the necessity of

compensating one's own experience of de-rooting from the complete set of family, kin and social relations which existed before conversion.

The only Muslim women who feel they completely form part of their local host society are those who hold Spanish citizenship: e.g. a woman who acquired dual Spanish–Moroccan citizenship after marrying a Spanish Muslim, and above all the Muslim migrant women from the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. However, even the latter describe a feeling of bewilderment when exposed to the "strange" and "exaggerated" southern Spanish Catholicism, with its cults of holy images, processions and other public rites.

Niches and segments of labour market integration

Concerning work activities, there is a basic distinction to be made between married and unmarried Muslim women (Ramírez Fernández, 1998; 1999). The majority of the unmarried ones work above all in domestic services and – to a lesser degree – in the tourism-related service sector, e.g. in the kitchens of bars and hotels. The interviewees describe dense informal networks which regulate and control the access, distribution and sub-contracting of domestic cleaning, child-care and related activities, carried out in mainly Spanish middle-class families. Many of these women complain about the lack of social security provisions, the exploitation they suffer by their employers, the lack of formal employment contracts and the instability and changing nature of the jobs they do. According to several NGOs and associations which try to advise and protect the affected migrant women, these shadow "niches" of the economy (including also prostitution) increasingly seem to grow together in an intertwined complex of informality, illegality and lack of protection; a trend which is reinforced by the fact that the official governmental "regulation campaigns" for "illegal" migrants do not cover these sectors.

Due to the informality of most of the jobs, hardly any of the Muslim women we interviewed had access to trade union advice or protection, or has ever obtained official unemployment payments offered by the central government's employment agency, the *Instituto Nacional de Empleo* (INEM). Because of the constant fear of losing the current, though informal job, many women enter a vicious circle. They accept bad working conditions, discriminatory treatment and exploitation[11] not only out of financial necessity, but because they hope meantime to stabilise their status. Only those immigrants who can prove for a certain number of years – this amount varies in each of the "regularisation campaigns" – that they haven been employed formally or informally, will get the opportunity of legalising their residence and working permits.

A new "Muslim employment" sector is currently emerging in the course of the "orientalist" fashion of the local tourism policies developed in cities such as Granada. Tourist entrepreneurs as well as converts, who are regaining control over the historically Muslim quarters and who are upgrading these formerly deprived neighbourhoods through "oriental" tea shops, ethnic food restaurants, handicraft stores etc., offer jobs mainly to Moroccan migrants and above all to Moroccan students who work in shops and give Islamic instruction as well as Arabic language classes.

It is almost impossible for migrant women to find employment according to their prior qualification. On the one hand, academic titles and professional training acquired in the country of origin are generally not recognised in Spain; and on the other hand access on equal terms to the Spanish labour market is legally restricted. This is why almost all interviewees experience professional frustration after having migrated to southern Spain, something that always implies a parallel sensation of social class downgrading.

As for married migrant women, they tend to support their husbands' often informal economic activities, working as street-vendors,

[11] "Slave-like exploitation" is an apt description of the so-called *internas*, migrant women who are forced to live in the same private homes in which they are offering their domestic services, and whose very existence as employees is not even recognised by the social security institutions.

shopkeepers or agricultural labourers. In most cases they lack their own working permit, which can only be acquired if in the course of the next "regularisation campaign" they can prove that they have been working and earning money on their own. Anyhow, Muslim women frequently state that they themselves give higher priority to child-raising than to employment outside their home. Therefore they focus their own work on activities that can be performed at home, like handicrafts, preparing food for restaurants or shops, or taking care of other families' children.

If a woman lacks a working permit, she furthermore cannot be included in the employment search databases administered by INEM. This is the reason why a whole network of informal and informal job opportunity files and databases has been created by Spanish NGOs supporting so-called "illegal" migrants (García-Cano Torrico, 2000). In addition, free-of-charge services with the aim of offering intermediation services concerning work possibilities are provided by the *Oficina de Atención Integral al Inmigrante* (OAIM), an office recently started by the city council of Granada. Besides employment promotion and qualification opportunities (such as language training) offered to Muslim women by NGOs and voluntary associations, migrant women's associations have created informal child-care projects through which the women can leave their children with other women while participating in courses or other leisure activities.

Institutionalised muslimophobia? Muslim women in search of the Spanish state

When asked about their general impressions of the institutional network of public as well as non-governmental agencies supposedly in charge of addressing the needs of migrant and/or minority populations, nearly all women complain about the chaotic and bureaucratic way in which these institutions function. As Spanish institutions seem neither understandable nor efficient in their service-provision functions, many women – even those who are rather well integrated in the host society and who have a

good command of Spanish – avoid attending them. Only in extreme situations of emergency, such as certain diseases, a deadline for "regulating" migration-related documents or a threat of deportation, are they willing to ask for "help". This attitude of resignation and avoidance is conditioned by experiences of generalised institutional discrimination and in a few cases even direct racist and sexist attacks by official bodies like police officers. Despite the fact, that several women – mainly those who have never suffered from periods of "illegality" – deny any personal experience of being rejected or ill-treated by public institutions due to the mere fact of their nationality, especially the converts agree that all reported forms of official discimination merely reflect the institutional perception of threat, according to which both conversion and immigration will end in a "new invasion of Granada".

In the perception of institutions' and NGOs' representatives, the migrant population as such "is a problem". They complain about "submissive" Muslim women always being accompanied by a male friend or by their restrictive husbands, which deprives them from expressing their own skills and possibilities of communicating and from establishing a personal and direct contact with the institutional counterpart – something that therefore only holds them back from overcoming their linguistic difficulties and communication barriers. As a consequence of this perception, which turns migration into an institutional problem *per se*, both public institutions and their NGO counterparts seem to have agreed on "splitting up" the already weak social services provision into a "generalist" and a "particularised, minority-oriented" branch. The non-problematic segments of the majority society would thus be covered by public institutions, whereas specific problems of migrants or other minority communities such as the Andalusian Roma population would be better solved when treated by particular, mostly non-governmental bodies (Dietz, 2000). As the president of *Granada Acoge*, the main local NGO admits, this division has a "negative impact on the quantity and quality of the services, since non-citizen migrants … are passed over to private charities, which try to deliver

the highest quantity of services while having the lowest financial resources".

Another major problem for migrants constitutes the issue of the Spanish public health care system, from which Muslim women are officially excluded if they lack residence and working permits. In the case of those women who accompany their husbands or who join them through a family reunion measure, they will only have the benefit of health insurance if their respective husbands are employed in the formal sector of the economy, which is often not the case. Foreign (e.g. Moroccan) students obtain health care coverage only up to the age of 28, in spite of the fact that many need more time to finish their university studies, because they often first have to take language courses.

In order to solve this urgent problem, the main NGOs, in agreement with the the Andalusian Regional Ministry of Labour and Social Security, have recently become entitled to issue a special personal identification document for persons with "irregular coverage". This *tarjeta sanitaria* gives access to hospital facilities. However, this possibility is restricted to "cases of extreme emergency" and is often still not recognised by local doctors, according to the representative of the Spanish Red Cross.

While some of those women who have a health insurance stress above all the positive impact of information campaigns concerning preventive medicine, others complain about "permanently being sent around in the building when asking about special doctors or units", and even about rude treatment by the hospital staff – an attitude that once again seems to be related to the lack of language skills. Paradoxically, the same hospital staff who insist on their clients' obligation to bring their husbands with them as "translators", criticise Muslim women for "crowding the waiting rooms" with their children. In addition, hospital attendants emphasise Muslim women's unwillingness to adapt to the health system's "official rules" and to the hospital's timetable. They attend medical services either too late and often show up "in the middle of the night", or they refuse to accept

the differentiated functions of the district doctors, the specialists residing in the hospital and the chemists' providing the prescribed medicine.

Another problematic aspect perceived by many Muslim women when making use of the Spanish health institutions is the scarcity of female doctors, particularly in the units of gynaecology and obstetrics, since being examined by male physicians is perceived to be highly unusual and shameful. Furthermore, the circumcision rite also seems to create conflicts. According to a Spanish convert, some anesthetists refuse to serve their Muslim clients in order to prepare them for circumcision, arguing that they do not support any form of "child abuse". This interviewee interprets such a refusal as an act of religious discrimination.

Non-confessional schools as confessional battlegrounds

As the settling of whole families of migrants is a very recent phenomenon in southern Spain, the domain of education and training is only now becoming a major focus of attention for migration-related issues. Many of the schools concerned with the challenge of receiving, integrating and educating the children of migrants lack any experience in the field of bilingual and/or intercultural education (see García Castaño *et al*., 1999). Only a very few schools, located in neighbourhoods with a relative clustering of migrant communities, include any activity supposedly targeted at migrant pupils. The real intercultural character of these activities is, however, highly dubious. For the headmaster of a primary school in the Albayzín quarter of Granada, for example, including pupils and parents of other religions when celebrating festivities such as Christmas is seen as a sufficient contribution to the "intercultural curriculum" of his school and to eradicating discrimination among children and grown-ups!

On the other hand, Muslim mothers – while admitting that neither multicultural education nor bilingual classes promoting the language and culture of origin of migrant pupils are implemented in the schools – still

hold rather ambivalent opinions about the necessity of interculturalising the school activities. Several Moroccan women interviewed seemed rather satisfied with the *de facto* division between the completely different educational roles and tasks performed by the migrant family, on the one hand, and the public school, on the other. They insist on the usefulness of distinguishing between their own task of transmitting their mother tongue and their cultural and religious background, and the Spanish school's task of offering access to the majority society's most important linguistic and cultural tools. In contrast to that, serious school-related problems and conflicts are mentioned by Muslim convert mothers. Many of them reject the legal obligation of schooling all children until they reach the age of sixteen either in public or in recognised private – mostly Catholic – primary or secondary schools. They complain about overt discrimination against their children – above all against their daughters – by non-Muslim fellow pupils, who constantly mock them, stigmatising them as "Moors" and thereby provoking feelings of isolation and passive resistance. This discriminatory attitude seems to be deepened by the lack of intercultural knowledge and sensibility often shown by the schools' personnel, who for example might completely ignore Muslim prescriptions in lunch catering services for the pupils or on festival occasions. Furthermore, convert mothers criticise the monolingual tradition which still strongly shapes the Spanish educational system; they also suspect the Spanish public schools to be implicitly but intrinsically confessional and potentially missionary in their orientation – something that is also recognisable by the simple fact that religious instruction is offered only for the Catholic confession.

As a reaction to these experiences of implicit partiality shown by a supposedly "neutral" public school system, three years ago a group of convert parents from Granada and its surroundings started to shift from their usual criticism to more propositional action. They decided to develop a "pilot project" through which, in one of the public primary schools, (the afore-mentioned Albayzín school), the curriculum would be adapted in order to offer Islamic religious instruction and Arabic language classes as

an alternative for the Muslim pupils, who would be “co-educated” with the non-Muslim pupils in all other subjects. Furthermore, the Islamic dietary prescriptions would be respected in an alternative lunch menu. After a very brief first exploratory phase, during which a Spanish teacher, who also had converted to Islam, was in charge of the Islamic instruction and the Arabic language classes, the project was suddenly cancelled by the Andalusian Regional Ministry of Education. The motives expressed above all by the Catholic residents and parents for stopping the enterprise lay in the fear that this multi-religious school would attract too many Muslim pupils from other neighbourhoods, which would then run the risk of “ghettoisation”. This attitude once again reflects not only the majority society's, but even the administration's historical fear of “a return of the Moors”. The educational authorities, on the other hand, retrospectively interpret the cancelled project as a partisan attempt of one single Muslim convert group of gaining control of the public school in the neighbourhood. In the Ministry's view, as long as the Muslim communities settling in Andalusia do not succeed in “speaking with one voice” and negotiating access to public religious instruction through a single legitimate and representative body, their projects will be denied any official support.

When the project was rejected, the solution chosen by the Muslim convert mothers was rather drastic. By means of a concerted action, all Muslim pupils suddenly disappeared from the state primary school in Albayzín and entered a newly created, private Islamic school, which lacked official recognition. After the parents had been threatened with legal and police action to enforce their children's right to education, the local Community Social Services were chosen as intermediary in the negotiations. The social worker in charge finally succeeded in convincing the parents to “hand back” their children to those schools where they were originally registered before the pilot project started.

Multiculturalising the neighbourhood?

Next, discriminatory attitudes in the local and personal contexts of their immediate neighbourhood are reported by many Muslim women. Overt or subtle rejection is experienced when addressing the initial challenge of renting a flat. According to the public institutions and NGOs, the major factor preventing migrant families from renting a well-equipped flat is the impossibility of paying simultaneously the first month of rent and the deposit. Due to that factor and to the stereotypical opinion that Moroccan immigrants "don't clean" and "leave flats in a mess", real-estate owners feel very insecure when dealing with migrant people. In addition to the financial factor, the public institutions also perceive "cultural differences" as a source of "misunderstandings" between local owners and immigrant tenants. Moroccan students' are said to "lack tolerance" towards Spanish fellow students, particularly regarding drinking, diet and sexual habits when sharing a flat with them. Another supposedly "cultural" factor is their refusal to accept the local urban habit of many older people who want to rent them a room in their flat, but who share the flat with their domestic animals.

From the point of view of all the Muslim women who were interviewed, these obstacles do not seem to be completely "culture"-based or economically motivated, but related to a generalised, historically-rooted muslimophobia. The fear of, and scepticism towards, their ethnic and religious "otherness" are also felt by Muslim women in the neighbourhood as the main sites of daily interaction with members of the majority society. Converts and immigrants alike feel permanently observed and scrutinised. They become bored and tired of "proving" to their neighbours through their day-to-day behaviour that they are "different" from the general prejudices existing about them. This permanent requirement of arguing and justifying one's "difference" *vis-à-vis* the mainstream society – according to an Algerian woman – often leads into self-restricting leisure activities and social relations only with other Muslim women or families instead of striving for "integration" into the social networks of their non-Muslim Spanish neighbours. Meanwhile, in the perception of the majority

society and its institutions, this phenomenon of self-isolation is seen as an undesirable enclosure and "self-ghettoisation".

Between gender, religion and ethnicity: experiences of discrimination and racism

Following our methodological choice of privileging an *emic* perspective in analysing the issue of discrimination in its multiple expressions and functions, our approach moves far beyond an *etic*, external point of view of merely distinguishing between "real" and "perceived" phenomena of discrimination. This stance contrasts not only with other academic approaches (for instance Moller and Togeby, 1999), but also with the view of several majority-society institutions and organisations which tend to stress an alleged "over-sensitivity" as the reason for Muslim women feeling continuously discriminated against. Muslim women generally define "discrimination" as synonymous with "inequality", a conscious and often explicit ill-treatment of a certain minority group, based on arbitrarily making artificial distinctions where there should be none. In their view, discrimination, which fundamentally takes place on a personal and not on an institutional level, may range from mere joking and stereotyping in daily interaction to legal distinctions between Spaniards and aliens, and finally to overtly racist threats or attacks. For several interviewees it is not sufficient to explain the discriminatory experiences they are currently suffering by reference to the host society's simple ignorance and lack of knowledge about the immigrants' region or culture of origin. Especially the converts stress the negative impact of the Spanish mass media in producing a generally bad and often completely false picture of the Muslim-Arab world, full of religious, phenotypical, culture- as well as gender-related stereotypes which inevitably guide the perceptions and interactions of the local majority society.[12] Many women said how fed up

[12] Said (1997) illustrates the extent to which Western mass media contribute to the maintenance and promotion of stereotyped and biased perceptions of Islam.

and insulted they feel when always having to counter allusions to "*machista* Muslim men" and "submissive Muslim women", to the "hideousness" of Arab men and the "lascivity and eroticism of Arab belly-dancers", and answer explicit questions about the supposed customs of "Arab revenge and blood-feuds", or even about the strangely cultivated rumour according to which "the Arabs" are trying to reconquer the "Spanish shores" by sending their pregnant women illegally to the peninsula offering them money for giving birth to "so many *moritos*". The converts, however, who do perceive institutional and structural forms of discrimination, describe these attitudes and questions not as a mere expression of stereotypes, but as a new form of reproducing structurally-rooted historical phobias. Since to the converts' mind a monocultural and mono-religious core persists inside the supposedly secular and "neutral" Spanish public institutions, conversion to Islam is treated as an act of "disloyalty" and "national betrayal".[13]

This permanent confusion between national, ethnic and religious dimensions of identification throughout the Spanish majority society's stigmatised and essentialised view of "the other" is perceived by many interviewees as the main obstacle to establishing and maintaining a genuine intercultural dialogue. In order to systematise the often overlapping and intertwined areas and sources of discriminatory attitudes and practices, in the following a double distinction will be made, on the one hand, between *exogenous* versus *endogenous* forms of discrimination (i.e. between discriminatory attitudes whose principal source is situated *outside* or *inside* the Muslim women's own community); and, on the other hand, between *ethno-religiously motivated* versus *gender-based* discrimination.

On the level of exogenous forms of ethno-religious discrimination, our data show at least five dimensions of distinction, inequality and supposed

[13] For an example of a literary treatment given in the democratic transition period to the *topos* of "national betrayal" through religious conversion to Islam, see Goytisolo (1985).

superiority, which are combined and thematised in the following stereotypes against Muslim women:

- the religious and/or "civilizational" division (Huntington, 1996) between Muslims and Christians/Catholics, i.e. between "Orient" and "Occident";
- the ethnic distinction between "Arabs" and "Castilians", which reflects historical connotations of "them" and "us" (Stallaert, 1998);
- the racialised perception of a supposed phenotypical bipolarity between "non-whites" – either "semites" or "blacks" – and "whites" (Hall, 1996);
- the national and citizenship-based distinction between "aliens" or "non-Spaniards" and "Spaniards" or "nationals", already codified in the Spanish Constitution (Agrela, 2001);
- the dividing line drawn by public opinion between "immigrant" minority communities, who are supposed to be problematic *per se*, and the "sedentary" host majority society, which is in charge of solving these migration-related problems (Dietz, 2000).

The blurring of distinctions between the religious and the ethno-cultural dimensions of being a "Muslim-Arab-Maghrebin" woman are also suffered by interviewees inside their newly-emerging communities, where endogenous forces may also use Islam as an ethnic marker *vis-à-vis* the host society. As a result, incipient minority communities are increasingly "ethnicised" from within as well as from the outside (Rosón Lorente, 2000). In the case of the Muslim women, this frequently means that particular cultural and geographically limited features, customs and traditions – be they of Arab, Amazigh or other ethnic origin – are transmitted and acquired as if they formed part of Islam as such (Jawad, 1998). According to a Pakistani woman, who refuses the simplistic identification of one particular cultural horizon with the supposedly global legacy of Islam, "religion is an easy argument and simply a way of controlling women".

Exogenous forms of gender-based discrimintion have been documented several times in the course of our study and are mainly based on stereotypes about Muslim-cum-Arab men and women, which are shaped by a profound dividing line between the sexes. Whereas Muslim-Arab men are stigmatised as potentially violent, criminal and vindicative, Muslim-Arab women are supposed to be inherently ambiguous. Behind the "mask" of the headscarf, lasciviousness and potential promiscuity are suspected from the sexist perspective of the Spanish male.

Nevertheless, several Muslim women do define certain rules and practices, seen as "female" by the male fellow-members of their own migrant community, as endogenous forms of gender-based discrimination. The younger Moroccan interviewees criticise the unequal treatment, inferior educational opportunities and lack of personal freedom they suffered during their adolescense, compared to their brothers. Those women who acknowledge the existence of discriminatory practices – either in their region of origin or inside their current minority community in the diaspora situation – in general agree that it is not Islam as such which is discriminatory, but the particular application of Islamic traditions and gender-biased interpretation of the Holy Quran by male Muslims which constitutes the source of the problem (Jawad, 1998). A similar view is often taken by converts, whose tendency to completely dissociate Islam from Muslim countries has already been analysed above as a constitutive part of the converts' religious identity project. Finally, convert as well as migrant women concur in identifying male interests as forces which have always (and also in several other different religions and cultures) ended up "manipulating" and re-interpreting an original distinction of gender-differentiated role-sets, which per se are not supposed to have been discriminatory, but which in the course of time have become de facto sources of gender-related discrimination. Accordingly, "the problem of women in Islam is not a religious but a social issue – i.e. religion being used by a patriarchal society" (Martín Muñoz, 1999, p. 13).

Societal responses and institutional perspectives

Finally, these experiences of discriminatory practices are contrasted, on the one hand, with official public definitions of and attitudes towards discrimination, and, on the other hand, with the awareness of ethno-religious discrimination and gender-based exclusion as shown by the NGOs and public institutions. Following Article 14 in the section on "Rights and Liberties" of the Spanish Constitution, which limits legal equality to all those who hold Spanish citizenship,[14] and Article 16, where "the ideological, religious and cult-related freedom of the individuals and communities" is guaranteed,[15] there is neither a particular officialised definition of discrimination and anti-discrimination currently existing in Spain, nor are there distinctive agencies or institutions dedicated to the implementation of anti-discrimination measures. [16] The debate on the necessity of introducing clearly defined anti-discrimination issues in Spanish legislation itself, as has already been accomplished in other EU member states (Fathi, 1998; Schulte, 1995), is only just beginning. Often, this debate is still contained in three different, somewhat isolated domains, whose cross-cutting, overlapping and mutually reinforcing consequences are hardly perceived by the institutional actors:

- As far as legislation to ensure equal opportunities for women is concerned, the currently existing Spanish judicial framework as well as its respective enforcement tools have already incorporated the international standards (UNESCO Comité para la Eliminación de la Discriminación contra la Mujer, 1995).

[14] This article is a major point of departure for debates on the question of citizenship and migration. In juridical practice, however, it is interpreted in inclusive terms as comprising Spanish citizens as well as foreigners, insofar as the corresponding Spanish legislation on foreigners, refugees and immigration does not contradict this inclusive definition (Borrás Rodríguez *et al.*, 1995).

[15] Nevertheless, in the same article public institutions are obliged to "consider the religious beliefs of the Spanish society", and in this context Catholicism is explicitly mentioned.

- Racism is discussed mainly in relation to *gitano-payo* (gypsy versus non-gypsy) ethnic conflicts and to the periodic violent attacks against the Spanish Roma communities (Calvo Buezas, 1989; San Román, 1996).
- The only context in which discrimination against migrant populations has been explicitly addressed so far is the labour market and unequal treatment of immigrants in the work place (Colectivo IOE, 1995; 1996); in this case, the international pressure and lobbying activities developed by national trade unions, but channelled through the multilateral institutional framework of the International Labour Office has proven to be decisive (ILO, 2000).

Similarly to the International Labour Office precedent, the recent approval of a directive issued by the Commission of the European Union[17] and aimed at harmonising the very heterogeneous national legislations of the member states on equal treatment on the basis of race and ethnic origin will force Spanish legislation to develop its own legal framework on racism, xenophobia, and ethnic, racial and religiously motivated discrimination.

The differentiated and interrelated perception of exogenous and endogenous discriminatory experiences, practices and attitudes, which in the view of Muslim women mutually reinforce each other, is not shared at all by the organisations and institutions. Depending on their governmental or non-governmental nature as well as on their Muslim or non-Muslim protagonists, each of these institutional actors tends to perceive only one aspect, source or dimension of the multi-level phenomenon of discrimination against Muslim women. The representative of the Moroccan immigrant department of the Spanish *Unión General de Trabajadores*even argues that men, not women, are the most discriminated sector of the

[16] A purely consultative organ which is mainly dedicated to anti-discrimination policies in the broad sense is the Ombudsman Office of the *Defensor del Pueblo* named by the National Parliament, whose main task consists of supervising the state institution's treatment of the citizens' fundamental rights and periodically informing parliament about abuses of these rights.

[17] Directive 2000/53/EC.

migrant population, since they have more difficulty in finding employment than women. In his view, which is also shared by most of the male-dominated immigrant associations, discrimination first and foremost is only being inflicted exogenously on Muslims and/or migrants by the host society, and, secondly, this external form of discrimination is racist, not sexist in nature. Contrary to this perspective, the Spanish public institutions dealing with migrant and/or Muslim communities tend to emphasise only the internal and supposedly "culture-specific" gender-based discrimination of Muslim women. In this official view, discrimination does not produce social exclusion, but, on the contrary, it is social enclosure and self-ghettoisation which generate external rejection. While racist attitudes towards the long-established Spanish Roma communities (and not towards the small minority of Muslim migrants) are acknowledged by the host society, representatives of public institutions generally deny any important presence of racist or muslimophobic attitudes inside their organisations. Paradoxically, the same interviewees cling to the same above-mentioned stereotypes about the submissive, passive Muslim woman, "permanently producing children", a view that per se is discriminatory and combines muslimophobic and arabophobic elements.

The perspective of Spanish NGOs which deal directly with migrant populations is more nuanced. Contrary to the public institutions, all NGOs admit that exogenous discrimination against migrant and/or Muslim women does exist and on a rather large scale. The source of this discrimination is perceived to be mainly legal and political. Migrant Muslim women are exposed to legal discrimination because they are deprived of basic citizenship rights, like voting and the benefit of social services. Thus, migration and citizenship, not gender or religion, are the sources of Spanish discrimination against Muslim women. The second most important and distinctive source of discrimination, however, is seen as internally motivated. Reflecting the state institutional perspective, NGOs identify the

unequal treatment of women both in Muslim countries and in Islam as such as a major source of gender-based discrimination.

Through the comparison of the experiences expressed by the Muslim women themselves on the one hand, and by their Spanish institutional counterparts on the other, the complexity of the Muslim woman's particular life-world as part of an emerging minority community inside a non-Muslim environment has become evident. For the Spanish case, this complexity results from a "double dichotomy" to which not only the Muslim women and their male partners but also the Spanish society and its institutional framework are exposed: firstly, the dichotomy of "oriental" religiosity versus "Western" secularism; secondly, the dichotomy of Christian-Castilian versus Muslim-Arab ethno-religious categories.

As the institutional representatives frequently state, the "return of Islam" to the Iberian peninsula challenges the process of secularisation which the Spanish state and society are currently undergoing. In this perspective, a fundamental contradiction seems to reside in the relation between an all-encompassing, comprehensive world-view (formerly Catholicism, nowadays Islam) on the one hand, and Western meta-religious laicism (Waardenburg, 2000), on the other. This perspective, however, is constantly challenged by an ancient rivalry which has been fundamental to the historical emergence and shaping of Spanish national identity (Stallaert 1998), but which still persists today inside the Spanish majority society and culture: the supposed antagonism between Islam, perceived as "Arab" or "Moorish", and Christianity (in general) and Catholicism (in particular), identified with the predominantly Castilian ethnicity. The resulting ethnic, intercultural and/or inter-religious conflicts analysed above have a negative impact particularly on Muslim women. These conflicts shape their life-worlds precisely at the moment when the first generation of Muslim women is starting to establish their own communities and to struggle for their own spaces and networks inside the non-Muslim host context. As reflected in the women's exepriences of both exogenous and endogenous forms of discrimination, ethnicised

perceptions of religious and cultural otherness, and gender-based tendencies of female exclusion and victimisation, mutually reinforce each other and end up restricting the development of flourishing intercultural life-worlds in the midst of the multicultural legacy of *Al-Andalus*.

GUNTHER DIETZ AND NADIA EL-SHOHOUMI
Laboratorio de Estudios Interculturales
Universidad de Granada
gdietz@ugr.es

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Summary

In the last fifteen years, Spain has experienced a remarkable increase in its immigrant population among which Maghrebin Muslims make up a significant percentage. Parallel to that a strong tendency to conversion to the Islamic religion has been observable in Andalusian cities like Granada and Cordoba since the end of the Franco regime. In the face of these two phenomena, anti-Islamic and anti-"Moorish" attitudes, which reflect different dimensions of discrimination, prevail in large sectors of the Spanish general public. These attitudes in fact are deeply-rooted and nothing else than historically transmitted stigmatisations of "the other". Especially afflicted by this newly emerging "muslimophobia" is the Muslim woman, whose social role, in the opinion of the majority society, is reduced to motherhood and obedience to her husband, but who is becoming more and more an important protagonist in the process of forming a Muslim community. This ethnographic study addresses the largely unknown daily life-world of these Muslim female migrants living inside the secularising, but still mainly Catholic southern Spanish society. The paper analyses both the more general, often overlapping and mutually reinforcing sources and forms of citizenship-based, ethno-national and religiously motivated discrimination, and more specifically gender-related forms of exclusion. Such discrimination and exclusion comes both from the non-Muslim majority society and from within Muslim minority communities. Finally, these experiences of discriminatory practices are contrasted with official public definitions of and attitudes towards discrimination as well as with the awareness of ethno-religious discrimination and gender-based exclusion shown by non-governmental organisations and public institutions.