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# Interventions against forced marriage: contesting hegemonic narratives and minority practices in Europe

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Muslims in western countries are routinely depicted as non-liberal minorities through representations of homophobia, honour killings and forced marriage within their communities. This presents a practical challenge to face up to non-liberal practices where they do exist, but without demonising an entire faith community. It also raises conceptual questions about mainstream western values. In the context of forced marriage, liberal principles (such as an individual's right to choose their own marriage partner and to decide whether to marry) appear to clash with postcolonial sensibilities including a valorisation of multiculturalism (which might recognise the rights of minorities to practice different marriage customs). These questions are examined through a case study involving Stichting Platform Islamitische Organisaties Rijnmond (SPIOR), a Muslim-identified organisation that works against forced marriage. Based in the Netherlands and active in six other European countries, SPIOR has worked with people potentially affected by forced marriage and also communicated its projects – and the progressive vision of Islam they advance – to wider audiences. Its experiences suggest that tensions between secular majorities and Muslim minorities, and between liberal and postcolonial values and sensibilities, are less fundamental than they sometimes appear, and more navigable.

**Keywords:** forced marriage; Muslim; sexuality; Orientalism; postcolonial; Europe

An article, published in 2006 by a mainstream British newspaper, illustrates how sexuality and gender are mobilised in representations of Muslim minorities in western countries, with profound consequences for the individuals and groups involved. It tells a story of forced marriage, and of a young woman who narrowly escaped it by running away from her family and changing her name.

> As a terrified and unworldly 16-year-old, Inshana once faced a marriage to a middle-aged cousin 33 years her senior. She says: 'The memory still makes me feel physically sick. If I shut my eyes I can almost smell him and see him sitting opposite me, licking his lips with delight. Incredibly, in the eyes of the Muslim community, this appalling union was going to bring honour to my family'. (Cable and Connolly 2006)

Inshana managed to escape this fate and make a marriage of her own choosing, depicted in a wedding picture on her mantelpiece. This 'shows her dressed in a designer white gown, holding a traditional bouquet and laughing outside a quaint church with her bridegroom, Jonathan. It's a typical image of a quintessential English bride – the likes of which adorn millions of homes across the country' (Cable and Connolly 2006).

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This story portrays English, British or perhaps European or western liberties, in the form of rights to romantic love and/or expressions of individual sexuality, which are ostensibly threatened by Islamic religion and culture. The *Daily Mail* is a conservative newspaper with a substantial female readership; to the extent that it champions women's rights, as it does in the story of Inshana's marriage, it does so in a particular – some would say a narrow – way. Still, this story presents and actively celebrates a woman's right to a particular form of marriage, setting this against a culture in which a girl could grow up 'believing women were second class and had to do what they were told' (Cable and Connolly 2006). Sexuality is deployed as a marker of difference.

Though the *Daily Mail* has its own take on this story, it should not be singled out too much, because the picture it paints is more general. To begin with, other newspapers have covered the same sorts of stories: about forced marriage and a broader set of issues, from honour killings to homophobia, which are portrayed as evidence of Islamic intolerance and non-liberalism. And in its representations of Muslims as a non-liberal minority, the *Mail* finds some unlikely political bedfellows. These include figures whom its editors, journalists and readers generally prefer to keep at arms length: European liberal feminist-identified cultural critics such as Unni Wikan, for instance, whose narratives of forced marriage and prescriptions for interventions in favour of its victims may be less sentimental and sensational than their own, but broadly in agreement (Wikan 2002); and queer and human rights activists such as Peter Tatchell who have spoken out against Islamist regimes and Muslim leaders, clashing variously with the government of Iran and the Muslim Council of Britain over the treatment of homosexuals and the subject of homophobia.[1] So, while it bears the hallmarks of a particular newspaper, the story with which I began this article is not unique to that title or its readers. On the contrary, it finds various allies and speaks through a broader discursive structure, in which sex is deployed as a marker of Islamic otherness, and sexual attitudes ascribed to Muslims are cited as threats to 'core European values' (Fekete 2006, 2). Homosexuality, like forced marriage, is used to represent Muslims as non-liberal others, whose sexual attitudes and practices render them different and out of place in liberal western societies. For example, in March 2009 the *Daily Mail* sensationalised alleged Muslim attitudes to homosexuality under the headline, 'All homosexuals should be stoned to death says preacher of hate' (Greenhill 2009, 23). These comments were made at a press conference, called by Muslim leaders to justify their controversial protest against soldiers returning home from Iraq. Reporters pressed one of the speakers on their religious and political views, and shifted the agenda from Iraq and Afghanistan – an area where the speakers would have struck a chord with many other members of the British public – to a subject where they appeared more isolated. Once again, attitudes towards sexuality were mobilised to define and widen gaps between Muslims and others.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the vociferous and controversial critic of Islam, has gone so far as to identify sexuality as the most important marker of Islamic otherness, arguing that the Muslim who wishes 'to liberate him- or herself … must *first* come to think differently about sexuality' (Hirsi Ali 2006, 24, emphasis added). Entertaining such claims, it would be easy for this article to develop into another elaboration of contemporary Orientalism and Islamophobia. I want to use this opportunity for something more positive and nuanced: disentangling the defence of sexual rights, which I welcome, from encoded reassertions of sexualised and gendered Orientalism, which I do not. This means facing up to the sorts of abuses I have touched upon: acknowledging, interrogating and confronting them where they do exist, while at the same time addressing the uneven field through which they are represented. It means confronting specific problems without holding entire communities

and/or religions responsible, or fuelling incendiary 'debates' about minority problems or the limits of multiculturalism. It means recognising attempts that are already being made to confront these abuses and prejudices on a practical level, while also opening up possibilities for further interventions, which are both practically and conceptually progressive. These questions and imperatives suggest an agenda, which this article unpacks and elaborates. It does so conceptually in the first instance, with reference to debates about sexuality and Orientalism, and then empirically through a study of how one particular Muslim-identified organisation has acted on multiple levels to confront forced marriage. Stichting Platform Islamitische Organisaties Rijnmond (SPIOR) had been working within Muslim communities in Rotterdam, where it is based, for four years before rolling out its campaign in 2008 throughout the Netherlands and six other European countries: Belgium, Spain, UK, France, Germany and Italy.[2] In these countries, SPIOR and its national and local partners have worked primarily with young would-be brides and grooms and their families, aiming to support young peoples' choice of marriage partners and to ensure that marriages are entered into freely and happily, or not at all. The organisation also devotes considerable attention to media campaigns, complementing its work on forced marriage with press releases and a public relations campaign, the fundamental aims of which are to publicise the organisation's work among potential clients, and to communicate progressive and reformist movements within European Muslim communities to the wider society.[3] These interventions are examined in this article through an empirical study of SPIOR's work that includes interviews with the organisation and some of its key partners, and monitoring of media coverage of its work.

SPIOR's interventions, specific and contextual as they are, speak to wider struggles over the place of Muslims in European and other western countries (Halliday 1999). Conflicting representations and polarised debates about forced marriage identify tensions between various western values, most generally between liberal assertions of universal principles (such as the right to choose a marriage partner) and postcolonial sympathies for cultural relativism and multiculturalism (such as the rights of minorities to practice different marriage customs). Key objectives of this article are first to describe the tension between these competing and apparently contradictory values, and then to explore – primarily through the practical examples provided by SPIOR – ways in which they may be navigated and resolved. Addressing broad debates, but doing so largely through particular contexts, this article is grounded in a series of geographies, and another objective of this article is to illuminate these spaces, given their significance for debates about liberalism and postcolonialism, and their more specific importance for the Muslims that inhabit them (Aitchison, Hopkins, and Kwan 2008; Hopkins and Gale 2008), including the women and young people in Muslim communities who are most affected by issues such as forced marriage (Dwyer 1998; Falah and Nagel 2005; Lewis 2007; Bhimji 2009; Hopkins 2009). The geographies that come into particular focus in this article are the national, cross-border and European spaces in which Muslims are both represented and represent themselves (Mandaville 2001; Ramadan 2004). SPIOR illuminates the ways in which geographies do not necessarily or simply constrain or contain groups and identities, but potentially liberate, in its concentration upon 'geographies of possibility' (Phillips 2009).

## Intolerant others: almost a European invention?

To begin to steer a course between polarised positions, one of which dismisses the sorts of stories printed in the *Daily Mail* as contemporary Orientalist fantasy, the other accepting their claims as straightforward truths about European Muslims, it helps to go back to the

very first page of *Orientalism*, which summarises a nuanced account of the colonial imagination, neither dismissing it as fantasy nor accepting it as fact. There are three keywords in Edward Said's foundational claim that the Orient is 'almost a European invention' (Said 1978, 1). Of these, the most influential and well taken is the last, the claim that the Orient is invented, discursively constructed. I begin this section by interpreting intolerant others – who force their daughters and sisters into forced marriages, and sometimes kill those who refuse or who break their codes of honour – as inventions of this type.

Inshana's story mobilises a set of discursive conventions, which characterise and divide people and places through a simple binary system. In stories of forced marriage, this differentiates people who impose instrumental and exploitative relationships from those who encourage and sustain romantic and fulfilling love. It differentiates cultures dominated by the collective (the overbearing extended family, for instance) from those that value and nurture the individual. It distinguishes those characterised by primitive, 'barbaric' and even sickening traditions from others that embrace modern ways of life, defined by the pursuit of individual happiness. Facing these binaries as stark choices, Inshana 'prides herself on being' or rather becoming 'a thoroughly modern Englishwoman'. This revolves around consumption: 'with her fashionably-streaked hair, elegantly-painted nails and designer wardrobe of must-have designs, she looks every inch the part' (Cable and Connolly 2006). This is fundamentally a story of Islam and, though Britain is no longer a predominantly religious society, Christianity: Inshana's moment of liberation from 'the Muslim community' and her 'strict, Muslim family' is symbolised by the 'quaint church' in which she marries, and the faith she has adopted and continues to practice as a 'born-again Christian' (Cable and Connolly 2006). These are familiar binaries, which can most generally be identified with sexualised and gendered forms and expressions of Orientalism (Stoler 2002; Butler 2008).

Constructions of European identity have long been articulated through an imaginative logic that sets West against East, and western majorities against eastern and/or Muslim outsiders and/or minorities, constructing the latter as morally and sexually different (Kabbani 1986; Massad 2007). Sexualised Orientalism has changed over time: while Europeans once depicted a world of sensual harem-dwellers and pederasts, they now focus on examples of moral rigidity and homophobia, though there is continuity in their attention to moral and sexual attitudes and customs, and their assertion that sexual attitudes lie at the heart of a gulf between East and West, North and South, and Black and White (Krishnadas 2006; R. Phillips 2007). This gulf is articulated through a series of representations and debates: about marriage, veiling, female circumcision, polygamy, women's roles and same-sex sexuality. These are currently expressed through everyday cultural forms including news media and the Internet (Graham and Khosravi 2002). Muslim minorities in western countries are routinely constructed as non-liberal others through stories about their moral and in particular their sexual practices and attitudes, which can be summarised as intolerant and careless of individual rights with respect to sexuality and relationships (Murray and Roscoe 1997; Whitaker 2006).

Orientalist rhetoric is mobilised in particular contexts for specific reasons. Though a highly conventional and thus somewhat timelessly Orientalist narrative, the story of Inshana's marriage was retold at a particular moment for specific political reasons, which were made explicit:

> Inshana's story was given added resonance yesterday when it emerged the government has backed down over plans to make forced marriage a criminal offence. It's thought protests from Britain's Muslim community led to the dropping of proposals announced two years ago.

> Ministers this week admitted they feared such a law would be 'resented as an intrusion into minority cultures and religions'. But charities and campaigners opposed to forced marriage voiced bitter disappointment. For now at least, the scores of young Muslim girls who go through such marriages every year will find no protection in the law. (Cable and Connolly 2006)

The story concludes with contact information for the Home Office Muslim Youth helpline. On the surface, this was a positive enough initiative, which may have helped ensure that the British government went ahead with its proposed legislation: the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act (2007) made 'provision for protecting individuals against being forced to enter into marriage without their free and full consent and for protecting individuals who have been forced to enter into marriage without such consent'.[4] Whatever the merits of this legislation, the *Daily Mail*'s endorsement of it was problematic: presenting forced marriage as an intrinsically and exclusively Muslim issue, it allowed an evidently good cause to become embroiled in an open-ended attack on Islam: a form of Islamophobia.

So we need to recognise these representations for what they are: hegemonic constructs, first and foremost, which are embedded in broader systems of power and politics. Social scientists have sought to decode and unsettle these constructions on two fronts: (a) through challenging the widespread perception that Muslims are hostile to western values of personal liberty and tolerance (Yip 2004, 2009); and (b) demonstrating empirically that the majority in western and European countries do not live up to their inclusive, respectful and tolerant self-image (Ghannoushi 2007). Gill Valentine has demonstrated empirically that – contrary to Wikan's assertions – the non-Muslim majorities in European countries are rarely positively respectful and tend to be barely, grudgingly tolerant of others (Valentine 2008). Similarly, Richard Sennett argues that 'Modern society lacks positive expressions of respect and recognition of others' (Sennett 2003). These findings undermine claims about the moral difference attributed to minorities. Seemingly intractable 'questions' about 'how non-liberal cultures can fit into mostly liberal societies' (as Craig Calhoun put it in his foreword to Modood (2005, xii)) and about whether 'liberal states should impose liberal norms on illiberal minorities' (Kymlicka 1995, 8) may therefore be defused.

> But Said did not argue that the Orient is entirely constructed; there are two other keywords in his analysis that this is 'almost a European invention' (Said 1978, 1): the 'European' and the 'almost'.

It is often said that Said was guilty of some of the things he alleged in others: over-generalising about constructions of Self and Other. A particular charge is that, when he described the Orient as 'a European invention', and when he cited mainly British and French authors to illustrate and develop his case, Said Occidentalised: constructed Europe as a homogeneous, taken-for-granted, historically and geographically undifferentiated cultural whole (Lewis 1996). Leaving aside debates about whether or not it is fair, this criticism does raise some productive questions about the *European* construction of non-European minorities. These questions are energised by an understanding of Europe, not as a static cultural whole, but as a patchwork and a network of regional and national cultures, embedded in a series of cross-border relationships and dynamics. Discourses about the sexual and moral attitudes of minorities have regional and national geographies of their own, which variously converge and conflict, prioritising different liberal and ostensibly European values. For example, bringing different inflections to conversations about liberality and sexuality, the British (despite some recent back-tracking) have tended to speak as champions of multiculturalism (A. Phillips 2007), the Swedes of gender equality, the Dutch of tolerance towards sexual orientation (Roggeband and Verloo 2007).[5]

These observations and speculations raise questions about the extent to which contested discourses of the intolerant and non-liberal other converge into an over-arching European invention, the extent to which they remain distinct, and their consequences for the minorities they construct. This article goes on to investigate and develop these themes empirically, but first I want to acknowledge the crucially important, final keyword in Said's analysis.

'Almost' a European invention, the Orient, with its complement of exotic people and places, was and is not entirely an imaginative construct. On the contrary, Orientalist rhetoric derives its power from its resonance with common sense and experience: what people observe and think they know about the world. This means that a robust interrogation of this hegemonic construct depends, in part, on some recognition that there is no smoke without fire: Muslims do not always share mainstream attitudes to sexuality and tolerance, for example with respect to marriage and homosexuality (Siraj 2009). It also depends on a willingness to openly and critically address problematic sexual attitudes and customs among the minorities in question – something that liberal defenders of multiculturalism and members of minorities can be reluctant to do, for fear of playing into the hands of their critics.

This means treading a difficult path between polarised positions. Debates about forced marriage among Muslims (like those about homophobia) divide confrontationally between those who speak out on the subject, and those that accuse them of Islamophobia for doing so, or rather for the way in which they do so. This makes it difficult to intervene against abuses without seeming to take sides with some unsavoury characters on the Islamophobic right. Governments in Europe are beginning to face up to this problem, commissioning studies of abuses such as forced marriage and homophobia in minority communities (UK Government Working Party on Forced Marriage 2000; Müller, SandraGlammeier, and Oppenheimer 2004; EU Directorate General of Human Rights 2005; Federal Ministry for Family, Seniors, Women and Youth 2007). Still, few dare to tread in this difficult political ground. Unni Wikan, a Norwegian feminist who does, condemns the reluctance to robustly confront forced marriage as a 'generous betrayal' borne of misplaced cultural sensitivities. Wikan argues that this undermines human rights, most acutely those of ethnic and religious minority women, but also those of European majorities. She endorses Alain Finkelkraut's claim that 'The apostles of multiculturalism have quite consistently destroyed the spirit of Europe' (Wikan 2002; quotes Finkelkraut 1995, 108, 103). Wikan speaks reasonably and defends liberal values with which it is difficult to disagree. And yet, I would argue, her interventions shift the debate too far in the direction of singling out and criticising members of this minority, constructing them as intolerant others, reproducing constructions of their otherness. This is divisive and counter-productive. It challenges us to carve out a middle way between the polarised positions that variously disregard and overstate abuses of sexual rights in minority communities.

## Forced marriage: counter-hegemonic discourses and practices

The remainder of this article examines attempts to face up to forced marriage within European Muslim communities, while attempting to disentangle the realities of this social problem from the discursive fog in which it is named and embedded.

Before going any further, it is necessary to attempt some definition of this subject. This is difficult, since forced marriage will ultimately be defined in different ways by different people, and it is important to acknowledge this if we are to resist the trap of prematurely circumscribing understandings of this phenomenon, or privileging one perspective on it.

The UK Working Group on Forced Marriage, which reported in 2000, defined this as: 'A marriage conducted without the valid consent of both parties where duress (emotional pressure in addition to physical abuse) is a factor' (UK Government Working Party on Forced Marriage 2000). This definition has been adopted and quoted by some grassroots campaigners, such as the Henna Foundation (2008) in the UK. Henna (2008) not only quotes but also qualifies and elaborates the government definition of forced marriage, stressing in particular that forced marriage must be neither confused with arranged marriage (on the distinction between these, see for example: Straßburger 2003; Mirbach, Müller and Triebl 2006) nor placed alongside it among social evils, as Kelek (2006) has insisted on doing. Other individuals and groups continue to define forced marriage in other ways, some subtly different, others deeply at odds, as for example in the sensationalist account printed in the *Daily Mail*.

So it may not be possible to demythologise forced marriage, to cut through competing and contradictory definitions to reach a singular reality. Still, by recognising that this is an ideological and divisive construct, it should be possible to recognise its reality, albeit a reality that means different things to different people. This will clear the way for measured arguments about how forced marriage must be tackled: through practical interventions, which support the young women and men who are affected by it, but also through representational politics, which contest the hegemonic discourses through which entire communities are implicated and marginalised. This suggests a series of research questions, concerned with the extent to which forced marriage exists among Muslims in European and other western countries, and the extent to which it is a 'European invention' that constructs Muslims as outsiders or others. These questions have been investigated within the context of wider ethnographic studies and social surveys investigating how Muslims and members of other religious groups live their sexual lives and conduct their marriages, accommodating competing and sometimes contradictory demands where necessary and possible (Yip 2004). Framed within this broad research context, this article is focused more specifically upon the following:

- How is forced marriage within European Muslim communities being tackled through practical interventions?
- How are hegemonic constructions of Muslims as non-liberal others – characterised through practices such as forced marriage – being contested through representational politics?

I develop these themes and explore these questions by asking how one particular Muslim-identified organisation – SPIOR – has acted on two levels: through practical efforts to help Muslim would-be brides and grooms and representational interventions to inform public understandings of Muslim attitudes towards marriage and liberty. This article asks how SPIOR's messages have been received in different national contexts, and considers the extent to which this organisation has challenged and unsettled hegemonic constructions of Muslim otherness.

This project was conducted with the involvement of two Research Assistants: Naima Bouteldja and Nina Műhe in August–September 2008. I interviewed Marianne Vorthoren, a SPIOR spokesperson and a project manager, at the organisation's Rotterdam offices, while Nina interviewed Lydia Nofal, a representative of Inssan, who was SPIOR's main German partner in the forced marriage campaign.[6] Both were happy to speak on the record and gave permission to be quoted. Nina, Naima and I surveyed media coverage of SPIOR's forced marriage campaign during its European outreach programme in Spring and Summer 2008, while Marianne also kindly provided me with copies of SPIOR's own

newspaper cuttings and media-monitoring files. The aims of the interviews and documentary research were essentially to examine the ways in which SPIOR had worked with the media and through its public relations channels to communicate with wider audiences, and then to examine the extent to which its messages got across: how they were received, filtered, altered and communicated.

Speaking in her capacity as SPIOR press officer, Marianne told me that, in her wider experience of working with the press, many journalists have come to her with clear ideas about what they want to write. 'We want this message, we want this story', they seem to say; 'if your message is not the same we leave it out'.[7] This is born out by a closer look at coverage of the forced marriage campaign, which is mediated by a mixture of broad, Orientalist conventions about the otherness of Muslims, and more specific, national version of this, with their different preoccupations and perspectives. Through a selection of these, we begin to see constructions of Islamic otherness as a differentiated and dynamic European cultural process. The important rejoinder is that, though Marianne said she is pessimistic about two-thirds of the enquiries she receives, she is happy to help with the others, believing that a significant minority of journalists are seeking some kind of understanding, which goes beyond clichés and Orientalist conventions.

It was risky for SPIOR to publicly address forced marriage as a Muslim issue, even if it would have been riskier not to do so, given the kinds of allegations about Muslim attitudes towards this practice that I have already illustrated. Speaking in a House of Commons meeting room at the UK launch of the campaign (known as the European Campaign Against Forced Marriage), Tariq Ramadan (a prominent Islamic theologian, Oxford University professor and public intellectual) said Muslims had been in a 'state of denial' and that it was important to face up to this.[8] This was backed up with reference to statistics. For example, Marianne pointed to estimates that in 2007 there were 109 cases of honour-related violence in the Netherlands alone, and that half of these were related to forced marriage, and she explained that 'psychological pressure' was experienced by many more who were not directly affected by this issue. By confronting this issue, Ramadan and his fellow campaigners hoped to regain a voice on the subject. Their message was put across through press releases, on SPIOR's website, at the national launch events, in media interviews and in SPIOR's high-quality booklet, which has been widely and freely distributed in multiple languages. The message is that forced marriage is a Muslim issue, and one which is being confronted, though as Marianne puts it, this issue is: 'Not just about Muslims. Not about all Muslims'.[9] SPIOR stressed this point. As a typical press release puts it, 'As far as Muslims are concerned, it is often thought – by Muslims and non-Muslims alike – that forced marriages are a part of Islam. However, Islam actually forbids forced marriages'. This source added that SPIOR's message – 'that Islam actually forbids forced marriages' – was 'eye-opening' for many who heard or hear it.[10]

In the interests of a balanced picture, I will begin by acknowledging some of the negative coverage of SPIOR's campaign, before going on to consider some more positive ways in which its messages and interventions have been received. My observations of British, French and German media attention are suggestive, illustrating differences in coverage which may reflect a mixture of national preoccupations and prejudices, though I do not want to portray these stories as representative in any formal sense; the differences within national media are surely as great as those between them. Rather, I use these sources to illustrate some of the different ways in which different European journalists have covered this subject, and in so doing have variously reproduced and contested Orientalist conventions and specific stereotypes.

**Orientalist clichés about forced marriage**

A series of inter-related objections were expressed, whether explicitly or in more coded terms, to SPIOR's forced marriage campaign. These objections revolve around a series of overlapping Orientalist clichés, which are elaborated in this section, and which revolve around the depiction of Muslims as outsiders, associated with extremism and with alien cultural practices, which are at odds with national and/or pan-European secularism and liberalism.

First, and most generally, Orientalist assumptions about Islamic otherness – that Muslims do not share the values of the majority – make it difficult to advance messages about progressive Islam. Conscious of this obstacle, SPIOR has explicitly defined common values and common ground, which it shares with other members of the society. Tariq Ramadan has stressed that the project 'is all about common values, that freedom is a common value, that these are values that we all have'.[11] This message does not always get through, as Lydia Nofal, a representative of SPIOR's German partner organisation, explained:

> Still these people criticise us and watch us with distrust. They say, 'Generally it is good' that they do something – but they don't really want to do something against forced marriages, they just want to keep the control over the girls, or whatever. You can say what you want, you can do what you want, they never believe, that you share the common values. You can even be a German, but as soon as you convert to Islam, you have in their eyes left the basis of common values. And if you then engage in something, that this society holds important, they don't believe you – not only in this issue – with everything we (Muslims) do.[12]

A second, related but more specific obstacle to SPIOR getting its message across is the assertion that Islam, as a form of religion, is best left in the private sphere, kept out of public life and politics. This objection attracts support from very different quarters: on the one hand conservative Muslims, and on the other secularists who oppose the public recognition of Islam (and, ostensibly, other religions). Progressive Muslims such as Ramadan had to confront arguments and sensitivities associated with the former before they could advance this movement within their own communities. Open criticisms of SPIOR's campaign have generally come, instead, from secularists, and these arguments have been stronger in parts of Europe where public expressions of religious identity are more controversial. While Marianne and other representatives of SPIOR could appear modestly dressed (wearing a headscarf, or *hijab*) on platforms in Britain, doing the same in Germany and France attracted criticism, which threatened to undermine their campaign. *Tageszeitung*, a Berlin daily newspaper that covered SPIOR's launch event in Berlin, was distracted by the presence of what it called 'veiled women' on the platform (amOrde 2008). Its article was framed with references to Necla Kelek, a Turkish-born sociologist and writer known in Germany for her criticisms of marriage customs among Turkish Muslims (Kelek 2006).[13] Kelek turned her attention to SPIOR in an article published in the leading national daily newspaper, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* in July 2008 (Kelek 2008). In this article, Kelek quoted the *Qur'an* and argued that Islamic marriage prioritises the interests of the family and community over those of the individual. She then went on to quote SPIOR's booklet on forced marriage. Or, according to Marianne Vorthornen's response to this article, to misquote the booklet and distort its claims. Here is an extract from Kelek's article, translated into English by Naima Boutleldja:

> When, in 2005, I demonstrated in my book *The Foreign Bride* that Muslim women were being married by arrangement or by force and imported to Germany as wives, there were protests amongst Muslims, Turkish people and their political friends. I was blamed for exaggerating

> individual cases, and female politicians from Turkish background publicly stated that they had married for love, only to prove to me that forced marriage were alien to their culture and to Islam . . . .
>
> By now, it is undeniable that every year thousands of Muslim women and men in this country are forced into marriage by their families. Shelters for female victims of violence are full up because young people are afraid of being married off during holiday breaks in the country of their parents. (Kelek 2008)

So, when newspapers such as *Die tageszeitung* framed their own discussions of the forced marriage campaign with reference to Kelek, they allowed an unsympathetic critic to set their agenda, and establish the exclusively secular tone of articles that implicitly presented 'veiled women' and their religion as the problem, not the solution (Schmidt 2008). And, if this particular newspaper expressed its discomfort in subtle ways, others did so more explicitly. For example, the polemical website, *Politically Incorrect*, praised Kelek for confronting the Islamic religion on the subject of forced marriages,[14] and further afield the French-language communist website communisme.wordpress reprinted a translation of Kelek's article with an introductory endorsement.[15]

The broader point, here, is that the public presentation of religious identity is read as a mark of otherness, particularly in countries that officially sanction secularism, stronger forms of which curb the public expression of religious identity and refuse to recognise or make allowances for religion, for example, in education and family law (A. Phillips 2007). The geographies of secularism do not map neatly onto those of Europe or Christendom – Turkey is a secular state, for example, whereas the UK is not – though secularist and Orientalist discourses nevertheless converge in constructions of 'veiled women' as outsiders. Islamic dress is read as a symbol of otherness, within a sexualised Orientalism that reads scarves and veils as marks of confinement but also – and this is particularly important in the context of the forced marriage campaign – violation. As Sherene Razack argues, 'The body of the Muslim woman, a body fixed in the western imaginary as confined, mutilated, and sometimes murdered in the name of culture, serves to reinforce the threat that the Muslim man is said to pose to the West' (Razack 2004, 130). A longer discussion of Islamic dress is beyond the scope of this article, but it is important to note the world of difference between meanings ascribed to scarves and veils by the majority society and by the women who dress in this way, many doing so with agency and self-possession: not only to express their faith but also their youth, femininity and style (Lewis 2007). Still, some observers continue to read even the most unobtrusive *hijab* as a mark of otherness, allowing this to form a barrier between the woman on the platform and her audience: the subaltern may be speaking, but she is not being heard.[16]

Kelek's secularist arguments seemed to resonate with wider claims that Islam is a causal factor in forced marriage, and that it privileges religious dogma at the expense of women's rights and the rule of law. A group of French feminist and humanist organisations including Association de Solidarité avec les Femmes Algériennes Démocrates (ASFAD) and Groupe d'Action Contre les Mutilations Sexuelles (GAMS) presented this case in an intervention dated 21 May 2008.[17] Posting a statement on the web, they made it clear they were not interested in working with those who were confronting forced marriage from within their religious communities. Still, they publicly complained when SPIOR and its partners failed to consult and offer to work with them:

> Over the last 10 years, we, the associations of ASFAD, GAMS, Elélé, MFPF, the network 'Agir avec elles' and Women's Voices (Voix de femmes) have struggled against forced marriages.

> We welcome and assist both women and men forced to endure painful family ruptures to escape this violence. This work is done under the strictest respect for the opinions and choices of the people involved.[18]

This statement goes on to set French organisations against what are portrayed as the intrusions of a foreign and/or European organisation, which not only wears its religion on its sleeve in an ostensibly alien manner, as discussed above, but also 'breathtakingly ignores the field work that has been undertaken by French associations and in all probability the work of organisations in other European countries'. To be fair, as Marianne admitted, SPIOR did roll out its European campaigns at breakneck speed, without taking time to properly survey the field or make contact with all other organisations that may have been working in this area for years or decades, so some genuine offence may have been caused.[19] But, even when SPIOR did make all the right approaches and diplomatic gestures, they were frequently rebuffed. In Berlin, for example, members of *Arbeitskreis gegen Zwangsheirat* (Working Group against Forced Marriages) objected to the name chosen by SPIOR's partner there, *Aktionsbündnis gegen Zwangsheirat* (Action Alliance against Forced Marriages), complaining that the names were confusingly similar.[20] Once again, Muslims and a Muslim organisation are constructed as outsiders, at odds with the secularism and/or liberalism endorsed by some organisations (such as the feminist and humanist groups mentioned in this paragraph) and governments, intruders in the European political landscape.

A number of organisations and activists, who did claim to be interested in working with Muslims, insisted that this should be on their own, secular terms. The French organisations, quoted above, issued this uncompromising proposal: 'Working in partnership, we believe, is essential and can no longer go ignored on such sensitive social issues as this'.[21] There are obvious double standards here: in accusing Muslims of failing to join secular campaigns, and in mobilising stereotypes of them as aloof outsiders, while declining to work with them as *Muslims*. These criticisms bite, in the final instance, through the assertion that Muslims are not simply approaching forced marriage from the wrong direction, but that in doing so they are undermining the efforts of others. A number of hostile bloggers and journalists accuse SPIOR and its partners of trying to circumvent secular assistance to young would-be brides/grooms. *Jungle World*, a leftist weekly based in Berlin, quotes Kelek's assertion that the initiative was the 'obvious attempt to withdraw Muslim girls, who have become more self conscious, from the public help centres and women's houses to bring them to an Islamic guidance' (Schmidt 2008). *Politically Incorrect* accuses Tariq Ramadan of masterminding an attempt to keep Muslim girls away from public and private places of refuge and to hold them within the Islamic community, and it accuses the state of being complicit with this. It complains – along the lines illustrated above with reference to secular feminists such as Wikan – that 'the Commissioner on Integration of the red-red Senate in Berlin' has supported this, before praising Necla Kelek for 'proving the causality of Islam concerning the phenomenon of forced marriages'.[22]

This website's gloves-off assault on SPIOR illustrates two final sticks with which this organisation has been beaten, sticks that have been directed against Muslims in other contexts. On the one hand, Ramadan and SPIOR are both undermined through association with an organisation that is identified vaguely and suggestively with Islamist extremism: the Muslim Brotherhood. This transnational organisation has had violent and extreme moments, but it consists of a loose and eclectic network, which in most times and places is best described as moderate in its politics and practices (Leiken and Brooke 2007). Nevertheless, this allegation has been widely echoed. *Die tageszeitung*, the Berlin daily

newspaper, euphemistically described Ramadan as 'umstritten' (controversial) and noted his family relation to the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood. In the same article, it stated that two of the organisations collaborating with SPIOR in Berlin – Inssan and Muslim Youth – are affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. Rather than listening to them, or tracing what this affiliation might mean, it dismisses them through association (amOrde 2008). This reflects a broader conflation of Islamism and extremism, which underpins and legitimates discriminatory attitudes and practices, which Meer and Modood (2009, 344) read as socially acceptable racism.

The spurious but strategic identification of forced marriage with Islam, regardless of other social, cultural and personal factors, is illustrated particularly sharply in the *Daily Mail* article, discussed at the beginning of this paper. That article goes on to acknowledge that the family of the young woman in question was not just Muslim, but also Bangladeshi with some mixed ancestry (her mother was Bangladeshi and her father of mixed Bangladeshi and Polish background), and that her father's temperament was also a factor in her difficult childhood (he 'had a vile temper, and he made our daily lives hell'). And yet, their 'silent misery' and 'drudgery' are put down to one thing: their religion (Cable and Connolly 2006). Liberation from forced marriage, for Inshana, is portrayed as synonymous with liberation from Islam. Escaping her family, she says: 'I … literally tore off my hijab and flung it down'. This symbolic act is followed up by a change of faith. 'Within a year of new-found freedom, Inshana made another life-changing decision – dropping her Muslim upbringing to become a born-again Christian'.

Responding explicitly or implicitly to this sort of narrative, SPIOR and its spokespersons and partners have repeatedly explained that, while forced marriage affects many European Muslims, particularly those with South Asian backgrounds, this problem is neither intrinsically Islamic, nor is it exclusive to Muslim communities, nor universal within them. This message – corroborated by a range of independent researchers (e.g. Samad and Eade 2002) – has been advanced clearly, prominently and repeatedly, challenging essentialist claims about forced marriage that mistake historically specific customs for religious values and doctrines (Fakir 2007). These researchers argue that, where forced marriage does exist, it emanates not from Islam – nor indeed from any other mainstream religion, since all major world faiths regard consent as a condition of valid marriage – but rather from contextual solutions to practical problems related to the maintenance of livelihoods and the reproduction of social structures (A. Phillips 2007, 65). SPIOR's booklet communicates this in lay terms, explaining that Muslims have entered into different forms of marriage in different historical and geographical contexts (SPIOR 2008). If these arguments have not always been received and understood, then this is sometimes because the message fails to convince – which is fair enough – but sometimes also because people are not receptive to it or open to its implications. Lydia Nofal summed up the hostility she had anticipated and indeed experienced with respect to SPIOR's message. The young Imam who participated in the launch event in Berlin was 'covered very negatively in the media', she told us, before paraphrasing a German proverb. 'You can see in his case, what happens, when they make just one step towards the society. They lunge at you like vultures!'[23]

## Messages about progressive Islam/progressive messages about Islam?

But if messages about progressive Islam are ignored and repelled in some quarters, they are nevertheless getting through in others. Before exploring where and how this is taking place, it is important – in the interests of a critical rather than naively celebratory account

of SPIOR's work and influence – to make some critical observations of this organisation and its agenda, which I have been portraying as progressive. For some, progressive Islam is an oxymoron. For example, Hirsi Ali argues that Muslims have failed to acknowledge the oppression that exists within their own communities, and that their emancipation must therefore come from outside, through liberation from (rather than within) their own 'community of the faithful' (Hirsi Ali 2006, 24). This sweeping argument is falsified through evidence about Muslims and Muslim organisations such as SPIOR that have confronted these issues, and that identify as progressive in their efforts to build a pragmatic dialogue between faith and everyday life, which seeks change and advances emancipatory social and political projects. Of course, identification with progressive and emancipatory projects does not render organisations or projects above criticism, so it is essential to qualify SPIOR's achievements with reference to its own limitations and blind spots.

First, it could be argued that this organisation's interventions have been conservative, too concerned with consensus and anxious about potential conflict, notably in its concentration on mediating between parents and children in the latter's choice of marriage partner, rather than addressing the possibility that they may not want to marry or that they may wish to find a same-sex partner. Second, as noted above, some of SPIOR's tactics have been described as clumsy and insensitive to national and local contexts, since the organisation expanded very quickly out of its base in Rotterdam, ruffling feathers as it went. Third, SPIOR mobilised Muslim identities within particular political contexts, in which some national and city governments were actively seeking out Muslims with whom to work (Dwyer and Uberoi 2009). Thus, for example, SPIOR was funded by the City of Rotterdam and feted by the UK government, which hosted its launch in a House of Commons meeting room, an honour it did not extend to some differently organised interventions against forced marriage, which like the Bangladeshi Support Group (Basug) were organised around national and ethnic rather than religious lines. Organisations such as SPIOR are by no means mere puppets for the governments that fund and work with them, but neither are they entirely autonomous, since their activities and prominence are framed by a broader political context, which demands some critical awareness. The limited successes of SPIOR's interventions should be seen in this light.

To begin to recognise the difference SPIOR may have made, it helps to recall Marianne's estimate that two-thirds of journalists who approach the organisation are simply looking for new facts to flesh out old stories; this means that the one-third may have more open minds and agendas. So, while it is important to understand how some of SPIOR's messages are blocked and derailed, this should not get in the way of appreciating those that are received and embraced. SPIOR has been praised for confronting forced marriage as, if not exactly a Muslim issue, an issue that affects Muslims and can be combated in part through Muslim communities. *Jungle World* grudgingly praises SPIOR for ditching the 'mantra' that forced marriage 'has nothing to do with Islam' (Schmidt 2008). *Politis*, a French left-wing weekly, published a warmer endorsement of SPIOR's campaign. In an article entitled 'No to forced marriages', it praised Muslims for publicly confronting their private problems, acknowledging that for many this was a difficult and challenging move:

> This campaign is an ambitious and a risky bet. Rather than demanding full citizenship rights for European Muslims or deconstructing the Islamophobic overtones of certain public polemics, Muslims engaged in this campaign envisaged dealing publicly about an issue related to the private sphere. A sphere marked by the weight of cultural legacy and the contradictions of painful migratory itineraries/experiences.[24]

So not all of SPIOR's positive messages were drowned out or ignored, and even when explicitly condemned it seems they may not have been entirely wasted or lost. Marianne

Vorthoren responded to the newspaper that printed Necla Kelek's article, 'Freedom beyond the laws', on 29 July 2008, repudiating many of her claims and exposing her misquotations, and her letter was duly published in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on 12 August of that year. Translated by Nina Műhe, the letter signed by Mareia Albrecht, Edien Bartels and Marianne Vorthoren (all of SPIOR) reads as follows:

> The Rotterdam Initiative against Forced Marriages is a common initiative of the city of Rotterdam and the umbrella organisation Spior. Mrs Kelek's quotations from the guidelines of the Rotterdam Initiative are extracted from essays, which are included within these guidelines and which treat the issue from a scientific point of view but in no case reflect the attitude of the Initiative or the 'Action Alliance Forced Marriages' – the German cooperating partner of the Rotterdam Initiative.
>
> It should have hardly escaped Mrs Kelek' notice – who has both read the guidelines and visited the event in Berlin – that we consider it a Human Right, that every person can chose his partner freely. And this Human Right coincides with the fact, that Islam prohibits the forceful contracting of a marriage or any kind of pressure in this affair.
>
> We suggest everybody, who is earnestly concerned about the phenomenon of forced marriages and wants to learn more about the possibilities how to fight this problem together and how to strengthen every person's right to freely chose his partner and personal autonomy, to read our guidelines and to form his own opinion.[25]

Lydia Nofal told us she would have been happy if SPIOR had decided to sue the newspaper. Still, she reflected, all was not lost, as the controversy had drawn attention to an issue, upon which many people would make up their own minds. 'It had the effect that many different people from all over ordered the leaflet with us. So they can see that Mrs Kelek did not write the truth'.[26]

Finally, while some newspapers and websites concentrated – as they generally do, on most subjects – on stirring controversy, others seemed content to simply relay messages about progressive Islam, put out by the Dutch organisation and its partners. A long article printed in the French newspaper *Liberation*, describing the campaign launch on 6 June, notes that the launch in Paris was thinly attended, but otherwise relays facts and arguments as set out in SPIOR press releases and pamphlets, and provides local contextual details and contact information.[27] The original article was followed up with a series of five related articles, two of which mentioned SPIOR, which were published on 26 July. Largely reporting rather debating or sensationalising SPIOR's campaign and its messages, *Liberation* simply allowed some messages about progressive Islam to get through to their intended audiences.

## Conclusion and research agenda

I began with two main research questions and a series of objectives, and will now return to take stock of these. The questions were as follows:

- How is forced marriage within European Muslim communities being tackled through practical interventions?
- How are hegemonic constructions of Muslims as non-liberal others – characterised through practices such as forced marriage – being contested through representational politics?

Through SPIOR, it was possible to address both questions, the second in more detail. This organisation illustrates how non-liberal practices are being combated through Muslim identities and Muslim-identified organisations, not necessarily against them, as some secular critics argue is necessary. SPIOR also illustrates how hegemonic constructions of Muslims are being contested, and how some of the most negative and

pessimistic expressions of contemporary Orientalism are being falsified, through practical projects. In short, some of SPIOR's messages about progressive Islam are getting through to some audiences some of the time. This organisation's visible interventions are contradicting assertions that Muslims are always and everywhere ignoring problems within their own communities (Hirsi Ali 2006, 7), just as its non-Muslim partners and supporters are contradicting assertions that 'liberals' are failing to support vulnerable – young, female – members of Muslim communities.

These findings speak to broader issues, specifically to the key objectives identified early in the article: to describe the tensions between competing and apparently contradictory liberal and postcolonial values, and then to explore ways in which they may be navigated and resolved. On the one hand, I have illustrated how the tension between these values has been exaggerated and mobilised by partisan figures and interest groups, asserting particular forms of liberalism in the context of exclusionary expressions of nationalism and national/European identity. On the other hand, I have traced some of the ways in which these values compete and conflict, exposing each as relational and contextual rather than absolute and universal. In practice, as the forced marriage campaign illustrates, it can be possible to negotiate and resolve these tensions in practical ways, and by refusing to build them up too much in the first place.

The significance of context for the articulation and negotiation of liberal and postcolonial values and principles points to another theme of this article, concerned with the material and metaphorical 'place' of Muslims. Through its attention to forced marriage, this article has traced the non-liberal other, constructed and contested through representations and counter-representations of forced marriage, as a '*European* invention'. This 'invention' is textured and structured, produced through a series of European national contexts, which variously contrast, converge and connect with each other. The newspapers examined in this chapter include local and national titles, and like the news and discussion websites cited here they also operate in national languages. Likewise, representations of forced marriage are also brought to bear on national laws governing immigration and marriage (Fekete 2006; HM Government 2009), including specific legislation such as the UK's Forced Marriage Act (2007). The differences between national contexts are instructive. This study – though suggestive rather than definitive in its empirical scope – found that SPIOR's reception varied between European countries, with notable differences between those that are more assertively secular, notably France and Germany, and others that are more accommodating towards expressions of religious difference in public life, notably the UK. But these differences should not be overstated. Studies show that European countries have moved together in some ways, generally stepping back from the multicultural policies that some once embraced and advocated (A. Phillips 2007), and moving in the same – increasingly anxious – direction on the presentation of Islamic identities in public life (Meer and Modood 2009). There have, more generally, been convergences in perceptions and policies, which speak of connections between European countries. For example, Wikan's critique of tolerance of forced marriage in Norway is said to have spilled into Denmark, when the Danish Minister of Integration announced that *Generous Betrayal* was to be his summer reading for 2003, and when his government set their agenda on forced marriage accordingly (Razack 2004). So European countries have influenced and echoed each others' national laws, particularly they sense affinities and common cultural traditions, as for example in Scandinavia (Razack 2004). Where European institutions permit and countries cooperate, cross-border connections have also been formalised through the extension of European Union (EU) powers, such as the anti-discrimination directives that were adopted in 2000 (Geddes and Guiraudon 2004).

Having drawn together the main findings of this article, in relation to questions about forced marriage, liberalism and the place of Muslims in Europe, it only remains to outline some of the implications of this, both for politics and policy, and also for further research on the subject. First, having disentangled real social problems from the discourses that cloud them, it may be possible to speak to practical questions concerned not only with specific issues such as marriage but also broader questions about the governance of diversity. These questions revolve in practical ways around the resolution of apparent contradictions between liberal principles and values, which underpin approaches to diversity: these including principles of equality, protection from harm, tolerance (both between and within communities) and non-discrimination. On a more concrete level, this may be a matter of informing more practical policies, for example with reference to sex education (Bredström 2005; Halstead 2005; Habermas 2006), gender equality and anti-discrimination policy (Roggeband and Verloo 2007), and immigration and asylum cases in which issues such as forced marriage and homophobia are cited (Millbank 2004). And critical debates about forced marriage do not just speak to the governance of minorities; more positively and challengingly, they throw critical light upon majorities. They expose claims and assumptions about mainstream liberalism and particular liberal identified values, such as those concerned with marriage. The *Daily Mail* article was not just about forced marriage, but about other forms of marriage too, above all the individualistic, romantic, consumerist, Christian form of this institution, which Inshana is said to have chosen. This conceals uncertainty and controversy about marriage – what it means and should mean – in the mainstream society (Figes 2009; Waller 2009). This has implications not only for Muslims and other minorities that practice dissenting marriage customs but also for others who are productively rethinking marriage, arguing that its rules and privileges should be changed to include them: siblings who live together, platonically but intimately, as well as same-sex couples who 'are aspiring towards marital-like relationships' (Shannahan 2009, 71). This means asking some challenging questions about the majority society and its supposedly tolerant and liberal ways. It means turning from Muslim minorities to the majority societies that construct and scrutinise their moral difference. It means focusing on what Said called the 'European invention' of the liberal self and illiberal others, the tolerant majority and intolerant minorities.

Though it presents some empirical answers and makes a specific theoretical intervention, this article opens up rather than signs off a research agenda. From these answers and arguments, new questions follow:

- How can progressive sexuality politics be reformulated to mobilise counter-hegemonic and specifically postcolonial constructions of sexualities and moralities?
- How can complacent constructions of majority societies be interrogated, reformulating constructions of liberalism and tolerance?
- How can these theoretical and ideological projects underpin practical interventions to empower vulnerable individuals, such as reluctant young brides and grooms?

I have argued and illustrated that, by drilling through Orientalist constructions of intolerant and sexually and morally different otherness, it becomes possible on the one hand to tackle the problems of forced marriage that are so real to young men and women across Europe, and on the other to advance and to communicate socially progressive forms of Islam. To contest entrenched world views is to begin to reformulate questions about moral and sexual difference, and the ways in which this may be regulated for the benefit of the most vulnerable members of society, as well as for the fairer and more positive representation of the minorities with which they are associated.

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## Notes

1. Letter to *Guardian* by Hands off the People of Iran (Hopi), published 6 November 2007, 37: Signatories include Peter Tatchell, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/nov/06/iran.leaders andreply. Last accessed 17 July 2009. In another intervention, Tatchell condemned claims by Dr Iqbal Sacranie, leader of the Muslim Council of Britain, that 'homosexuality spread disease and was immoral'. *Metro* (free newspaper, UK) 4 January 2006, p. 4.
2. Tariq Ramadan, the campaign leader, proposed these countries on the basis of their large Muslim minorities, their importance in the European context and their common experiences. Interview with Marianne Vorthoren, SPIOR Policy Advisor and Project Manager of 'Joining Hands Against Forced Marriages', 2 September 2008.
3. SPIOR's partners included Henna Foundation in the UK; Aktionsbündnis gegen Zwangsheirat (Action Alliance against Forced Marriages, a coalition of organisations) in Germany; and in France the Cultural Muslim Centre Tawhid, French Muslim Collective and Radio Pastel (SPIOR 2008).
4. http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2007/ukpga_20070020_en_1#l1g2. Last accessed 14 January 2010. See also HM Government (2009).
5. I am grateful to Mark Graham for suggesting this comparison between different European constructions of tolerance.
6. On 25 August 2008, Nina interviewed Lydia Nofal, a member of the Managing Board of Inssan, the leading member of the coalition that formed SPIOR's German partner organisation, *Aktionsbündnis gegen Zwangsheirat*, Action Alliance against Forced Marriages.
7. Interview with Marianne Vorthoren, 2 September 2008.
8. Ramadan was speaking at the UK launch of European Campaign against Forced Marriage, 'Joining Hands Against Forced Marriages', at Portcullis House, House of Commons, 30 June 2008; quotation from the author's notes on this presentation.
9. Interview with Marianne Vorthoren, 2 September 2008.
10. SPIOR Press release, widely published and distributed, taken here from a Moroccan webzine: http://www.yabiladi.com/forum/read-66-2396687.html. Last accessed 30 August 2008.
11. Lydia Nofal of Inssan, interview with Nina Műhe.
12. Lydia Nofal of Inssan, interview with Nina Műhe.
13. Kelek's book, *Die fremdeBraut (The Foreign Bride)* (2006) was criticised in an open letter, by Yasemin Karaksoglu and Mark Terkessidis, published in *Die Zeit*, and signed by 60 social scientists. This criticised Kelek for allegedly unscientific work, and for amending the findings of her doctoral research for publication in her book, *The Foreign Bride*. Kelek answered the letter and rejected the accusations. See: http://www.zeit.de/2006/06/Petition. Last accessed 30 August 2008.
14. 'Hand in Hand against Forced Marriages', translated by Nina Műhe, http://www.pi-news.net/2008/07/hand-in-hand-gegen-zwangsheirat/. Last accessed 30 August 2008.
15. Tariq Ramadan against forced marriages?, http://communisme.wordpress.com/2008/08/06/tariq-ramadan-contre-les-mariages-forces/. Last accessed 30 August 2008.
16. The translation of terms such as 'veil' and 'headscarf' from one (European) language to the other can lead to confusion. In French literature, for example, the term 'voile' (veil) and 'foulard' (headscarf) are generally used to designate the same thing, i.e. a piece of cloth which covers the head and neck while the term 'veil' in English is generally use to designate a piece of cloth that covers the hair, neck and face (Naima Bouteldja, personal communication, 1 February 2010).
17. A campaign against forced marriages that is not 'hand in hand', 2 June 2008, http://www.siawi.org/article335.html. Last accessed 30 August 2008.
18. A campaign against forced marriages that isn't 'hand in hand', 2 June 2008, http://www.siawi.org/article335.html. Last accessed 30 August 2008. The acronyms and abbreviations refer to the

following organisations: ASFAD (Association de Solidarité avec les Femmes Algériennes Démocrates); GAMS (Groupe d'Action Contre les Mutilations Sexuelles); Elélé Migrations et Cultures de Turquie; MFPF (Mouvement Français pour le Planning Familial).

19. Interview with Marianne Vorthoren, 2 September 2008.
20. Lydia Nofal (Inssan), Interview with Nina Műhe. Schmidt (2008) quotes Petra Koch-Knöbel, the Equal Opportunities Commissioner for the district, saying that she was angry about the initiative being mixed up with her working group against forced marriages, which has been working for several years.
21. A campaign against forced marriages that isn't 'hand in hand', 2 June 2008, http://www.siawi.org/article335.html. Last accessed 30 August 2008.
22. Hand in Hand against Forced Marriages, translated by Nina Műhe, http://www.pi-news.net/2008/07/hand-in-hand-gegen-zwangsheirat/. Last accessed 30 August 2008.
23. Lydia Nofal of Inssan, interview with Nina Műhe.
24. No to forced marriages, *Politis*, 10 July 2008, translated from the French by Naima Bouteldja: www.islamlaicite.org/article924.html. Last accessed August 30, 2008.
25. Letter to the Editor (response to article by Necla Kelek, printed on 29 July 2008), *FrankfurterAllgemeine Zeitung*, 12 August 2008, translated by Nina Műhe.
26. Lydia Nofal of Inssan, interview with Nina Műhe.
27. La campagne contre les mariages forcés à la peine**,** *Libération*, 9 June 2008, online: http://www.liberation.fr/france/010182748-la-campagne-contre-les-mariages-forces-a-la-peine. Last accessed 17 July 2009; see also Les Pays-Bas choisissent la prévention, *Libération*, 26 July 2008; L'été, la saison des mariages forcés, *Libération*, 26 July 2008.

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## ABSTRACT TRANSLATIONS

**Intervenciones contra el matrimonio forzado: la contestación de las narrativas hegemónicas y las prácticas de las minorías en Europa**

Los musulmanes son rutinariamente descriptos en los países occidentales como una minoría no liberal a través de representaciones de homofobia, asesinatos por el honor y casamientos forzados dentro de sus comunidades. Esto presenta un desafío práctico: hacer frente a las prácticas no liberales donde sí existen, pero sin demonizar a una comunidad entera de una fe determinada. También plantea cuestiones conceptuales sobre los valores occidentales dominantes. En el contexto del casamiento forzado, los principios liberales (tales como el derecho del individuo a elegir su propia pareja y a decidir casarse o no) parecen chocar con las sensibilidades post coloniales, incluyendo una valorización del multiculturalismo (el que puede reconocer los derechos de las minorías a practicar diferentes costumbres de casamiento). Estas cuestiones son analizadas a través de un estudio de caso que incluye a SPIOR, una organización que se identifica como musulmana y trabaja contra el casamiento forzado. Basada en los Países Bajos y activa en otros seis países europeos, SPIOR ha trabajado con personas potencialmente afectadas por el casamiento forzado y también ha comunicado sus proyectos – y la visión progresista del Islam que ellos promueven – a audiencias más amplias. Sus experiencias sugieren que las tensiones entre las mayorías seculares y las minorías musulmanas, y entre los valores y las sensibilidades liberales y las postcoloniales, son menos importantes y más abordables de lo que con frecuencia parecen.

**Palabras claves:** casamiento forzado; musulmán; sexualidad; orientalismo; post colonial; Europa

**介入抵抗强迫婚姻：挑战欧洲的霸权论述与少数族裔之实践**

西方国家中的穆斯林向来透过社群中的恐同性恋、荣誉处决以及强迫婚姻等再现方式，被描绘成不自由的少数族裔。此举呈现出一向实际的挑战: 面对真实存在的非自由之实践，但却不彻底摧毁整个宗教信仰社群。此一挑战亦同时标志出西方主流价值的概念化问题。在强迫婚姻的脉络下，自由主义原则 (诸如个人选择其配偶或是否步入婚姻的权力) 似乎与后殖民的敏感性相互冲突，包含维系多元文化主义 ( 亦即认可少数族裔实践不同婚姻习俗的权力 )。这些问题将透过包含SPIOR一个穆斯林认可的反对强迫婚姻组织–的案例研究加以检视之。SPIOR立基于荷兰并活跃于欧洲其它六国，该组织与受到强迫婚姻潜在威胁的人们共同工作，并与更为广大的阅听众传达这些计划及其所提倡的基进的伊斯兰愿景 。她们的经验指出，世俗大众与穆斯林少数族裔间的紧张关系，以及自由主义和后殖民价值与敏感性之间的冲突，其实并不如有时所展现的那般根深蒂固，而是可以驾驭的。

**关键词：**强迫婚姻、穆斯林、性倾向、东方主义、后殖民、欧洲