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Chapter 16
Gender, Diversity and Mediatized Conflicts of Religion: Lessons from Scandinavian Case Studies

Abstract: Drawing on empirical data from the Scandinavian project Engaging with Conflicts in Mediatized Religious Environments (CoMRel), this chapter analyses the findings from case-studies in: classrooms, online communities, public service media (PSM) production rooms, local news outlets, and interreligious dialogue initiatives. Gender and ethno-religious diversity receive particular analytical attention. We discuss the multiple ways in which various social actors in Scandinavia engage with mediatized conflicts about religion, and the ways in which dominant media frames are replicated, contested, and nuanced. A main finding is that mediatized conflicts about religion are symptomatically entangled in a dichotomy between good or bad religion, and that social actors in the diverse settings are often cast in the role of 'the ideal citizen' or 'the religious other'. Despite attempts at going beyond enmeshed discourses of immigration and othering, and a general awareness of the dominant media frame 'Islam as a bad religion', the frame proves difficult to overcome.

Keywords: gender dimensions, ethno-religious diversity, mediatized conflicts, media frames, securitization of Islam, Scandinavia, emblematic religion, othering

16.1 Mediatized Conflicts

In *Contested Religion: The Media Dynamics of Cultural Conflicts in Scandinavia*, we examine how media condition public engagement with contested issues about religion in a variety of social settings in Scandinavia. Our case studies in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark are founded on conceptually driven comparisons. The strength of our research is that we approach the case studies with a range of epistemological backgrounds and methodological tools and across a variety of social settings, yet are interested in overlapping questions and conceptualizations of media, religion, and conflict. Our methods include a quantitative survey, participant observation, qualitative interviews, focus group interviews, analysis of media content, multi-sited fieldworks, and an online ethnography.

Our unique and rich data are collected from various media-saturated environments in Scandinavia, such as classrooms, online communities, public service media (PSM) production rooms, local news outlets, and interreligious dialogue initiatives. Drawing on the entire body of case studies, in this chapter we ask the following: In what way and to what extent are media implicated in conflicts about religion in Scandinavia? This chapter moves across the different case studies in the book. We discuss and analyse the findings of the previous chapters, and highlight the commonalities and crosscurrents that we find across the empirical cases. We delimit our discussion to the ways in which the intersection of gender, diversity, and media frames of religion play out across the case studies described in previous chapters. In particular, this chapter reflects on how gender dimensions and the management of diversity are implicated in mediatized conflicts in the various studies. The chapter also reflects upon the theories of mediatization of religion and the mediatized conflicts outlined in the first part of the book (see Chapters 3 and 4). The further development and revision of the mediatization theory based on our case studies will nonetheless be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 17.

By management of diversity, we refer to the social practices of addressing, supporting and framing ethnic and/or religious minorities. We delimit our discussion of the management of diversity to the empirical findings from our cases (Chapters 5 – 15). The interrelation between media, culture, social life, and politics, is one of mutual influence and thus important to analyze (Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby 2015; Eskjær, Hjarvard and Mortensen 2015). Put simply, media, shape culture, social life and politics – and vice versa – as media brings about dual functions, reflecting and shaping issues occurring within these three domains. A fundamental theoretical premise across the case studies is that frames direct our perception, thought, and action during social and media events (Goffman 1986, 10 – 11) for which reason control and distribution of frames is a prime concern in the operation and analysis of management. What emerges is a highly mobile manner of directing collective conduct, which traverses and correlates social spaces with frame spaces (Jacobsen 2016, 30). Framing processes involve processes of selection and salience and tend to promote problem definitions, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation for the people and incidents described (Entman 1993, 52, See Chapters 11, 15). In other words, media frames, framing and frameworks illustrate how communicative 'texts' exercise power (ibid.) and, thus, framing processes inadvertently bring about implicit forms of governance that may be analytically excavated.

Frames are more salient when certain aspects of the frame resonate with an individual's cognitive schema or themes already established in public discourse,

such as 'Islam = bad religion'. According to Ettema (2005, 133), the success of a frame relies on the ability of a frame to 'strike a responsive chord' and 'draw upon a cultural repertoire of themes and stories'. Still, in our case studies, we also find that dominant frames do not go uncontested in the various social settings we study, although some counter-frames are less successfully crafted than others (see Chapters 8 and 11), or receive less consideration than the dominant frames (see Chapter 6). At times, the salience and appeal of certain frames lead to a disproportionate amount of attention to a news story such as in the case of 'the Swedish handshake' (see Chapter 13).

In this chapter, we explore the interplay between media, religion, and conflict across a range of social settings, and take into consideration that media audiences are not simply uncritical recipients of media frames. Audiences engage with and contest media stories and events, but are nonetheless affected by dominant media frames. We have looked into the multiple ways in which social actors in Scandinavia engage with conflict and dominant media frames – ways that include contesting media frames, as well as replicating and nuancing them.[1] In the World Values Survey, Scandinavia counts as the most secular corner of the world. The levels of personal religious practice and religious self-identification are low. However, the majority of the population in all three countries are members of the national Lutheran Church. For most members, the affiliation to the church is more of a cultural belonging than matter of personal belief (see Chapters 2, 4, 6, and 10; Marzouki et al. 2016). While, there is a broad historical Protestant Christian tradition in Scandinavia (see in particular Chapters 1 and 2), today, this region comprises a greater diversity of religious and secular worldviews. While there are commendable attempts at ensuring a broader and unbiased representation of religious and ethnic minorities in Scandinavian media, minorities are often under-represented or stereotypically portrayed in the media at large (Axner 2016, 2015; Jørndrup 2017; Figenschou and Beyer 2014). The chapters in this book on 'contesting religion' focuses precisely on controversies and mediatized conflicts about religion that arise with diversity.

16.2 Managing Diversity

Religious and ethnic diversity can be managed in a variety of ways.
Interestingly, all the empirical findings from our case studies and survey demonstrate that in a Scandinavian context, Islam is repeatedly pitted against either

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1 On framing, see Chapter 3 and Chapter 7.

Christianity or secularism – rendering other belief systems close to irrelevant. As previous chapters have elucidated, contestations of religion are enmeshed in discourses about immigration and othering, and majority and minority population relations (see Chapters 6 – 15). Here, we reflect on how religious diversity is managed in a variety of Scandinavian contexts, based on the empirical findings presented in the previous chapters. While our analysis across the Scandinavia case studies focuses primarily on how issues of framing, gender, and diversity are managed with regards to primarily Islam and Christianity, we are in no way suggesting that there are no other important belief systems or minority religions in the region. Nor is our purpose to make a normative claim about what ethno-religious diversity essentially entails. Instead, we reflect on the multitude of empirical ways (See Chapters 1– 15) in which mediatized contestations of religion play out in present-day Scandinavia. The omnipresence of 'dominant negative media frames' is palpable in our study. Such frames depict Islam as an authoritarian, oppressive, and violent religion, which clashes with so-called 'Scandinavian values'. Dominant frames are remediated in a variety of Scandinavian social settings (see Chapters 6 – 15), and shape the ways in which diversity is managed in everyday social interactions.

A striking similarity across many of the case studies is the manner in which dealing with the dominant media frames about Islam head-on is considered a necessary – and perhaps somewhat courageous – act of facing 'the elephant in the room'. 'Conflict and Islam, that's the elephant in the room,' says a secondary school teacher (Chapter 15), when describing how she feels obliged to talk about the negative media frames about Islam. Yet, by repeatedly referring to news coverage with the purpose of countering dominant frames about Islam, teachers may unintentionally serve to reinforce and confirm the association of Islam with controversy. We argue that despite a general awareness of dominant media frames, they nonetheless seem difficult to overcome. Indeed, the dominant images of Muslims and Islam are continuously reproduced, remediated, or renegotiated in *all* of the Scandinavian settings we have studied.

This dilemma is partially addressed by some of the social actors we study, for instance by the teachers and PSM producers in Chapters 7, 13, 14, and 15, which suggests that teachers and PSM producers believe they cannot ignore the dominant negative frames, yet at the same time they struggle with *how* to talk about their content in a manner that neither offends religious minorities, nor contributes to giving such frames more momentum. Coupled with this self-awareness is the fear of cementing the idea that Islam is a 'bad religion'. Essentially, the teachers, PSM producers, social media users, and participants in inter-religious dialogues all face the same predicament. On the one hand, they feel compelled to interact with the dominant frames – without condoning them –

and on the on the other hand they are acutely aware of the fact that they may unintentionally come to reinforce the image of Islam as a 'bad religion' and Muslims as less than ideal citizens. For instance, in the interreligious dialogue meetings or religious education (RE) classes, by stating that Muslims are 'not just terrorists', one simultaneously reinforces the idea that many Muslims *are* indeed terrorists (Lakoff 2014, as discussed in Chapter 15; see also Chapter 11).

Across the case studies we see how social actors, even those who attempt to do otherwise, may get entrapped by stereotypical representations. In Chapter 11, Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking's (2011, 275) term 'banal securitization' is used as a signifier of the ways in which the securitization of Islam[2] affects the everyday lives of Scandinavian Muslims in highly tangible ways (see also Chapter 12). 'Banal securitization of Islam', as defined in Chapter 11, denotes everyday practices in which people and themes are categorized in stereotypical terms in response to macro-events with local ramifications. Thus, the banal securitization of Islam applies to the ways in which Muslims are perceived by scores of others in light of global media events. Teachers (Chapters 13 – 15), PSM producers (Chapters 7 and 8), as well as social media users (Chapters 6 and 9), irrespective of their own personal faith or inclination towards secularism or atheism, all contribute to the 'banal securitization' of religion.

Still, PSM producers, school teachers, participants in interreligious dialogue programmes – are all acutely aware of the risks of reinforcing negative stereotypes about Muslims and go to great pains to try to fashion counter-narratives about Islam. Members of the Danish PSM production team in Chapter 7 explicitly state that they feel cornered into a choice between the entrenched positions of being either an Islam basher or an Islam apologist, neither of which appeals to them. In their efforts to stay clear of both, the Danish PSM producers downplay the religious identity of their participants, which may well result in a depiction that transcends 'the religious other' ascribed representation (Nadim 2017). While, this strategy provides more nuanced representation of religious and ethnic minorities, it nonetheless demonstrates how Danish PSM producers are locked into a dialectic relationship with the dominant media frames that posit Islam as a 'bad religion'. PSM producers may inadvertently end up reinforcing the negative stereotypes about Muslims as well as the dominant media frames that posit Islam as a 'bad religion', For instance, Swedish PSM producers aim to present an alternative to the dominant negative media discourses by providing

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2 Jocelyne Cesari (2013) and others have coined the term 'securitization of Islam' for the rhetorical tropes, partly induced by the media, that depict Muslims in Western countries constitute as a threat to national security.

a platform for the equal representation of Christianity and Islam (Chapter 8). Nonetheless, they end up reinforcing dominant frames about Islam as a problematic religion to be associated with violence and extremism. Despite the producers' initial intent to provide a more nuanced representation of Islam, the programme *Människor och tro* (People and belief), ends up portraying Christianity as a 'good religion', which in turn is contrasted to Islam.[3]

Intriguingly, the lack of viable positions and the sense of entrapment is evident in many of the case studies. Even in the case of the *Yes to wearing the cross whenever and wherever I choose* (YWC) Facebook group, in which participants appear to have a wider spectrum of ideological positions, we find that ultimately one must choose being either for or against Islam – but also – for or against Christianity and religion in general, respectively (see Chapter 6; Abdel-Fadil 2017). When taking the case studies together, it seems that completely escaping the 'good vs. bad religion' dichotomy is close to impossible. Downplaying religion altogether may well be an attempt at overcoming this good vs. bad religion dialectic (see Chapter 7), but might not necessarily resolve all tensions.

16.3 Moulding the Ideal Citizen

The good vs. bad religion frames are circumvented by Danish PSM producers' attempt to portray minority citizens in a different light (Chapter 7). Yet, in our view, rendering religion invisible, plays into the moulding of an ideal minority citizen, particularly when the alternative is 'bad religion'. A similar dynamic is in play when the inclusion of more diverse voices is attempted in the various arenas (see Chapters 5 – 15). Religious and ethnic minorities experience greater access to the media, when cast as 'the ethnic/religious other' (Nadim 2017). As exemplified in the PSM case from Sweden minority voices have unequal access (see Chapters 8). More importantly, a rather narrow space for the idealized citizen with a minority religious background is carved out (Schinkel 2008; van Es 2016).

Meeting the ideal requires a particular vernacular and a specific vocabulary and conduct. In this sense, diversity is encouraged but only in specific and highly governed ways. Intriguingly, it seems that the projection of the ideal religious minority citizen shapes interactions in several of the settings, not least in the interreligious dialogues, classrooms, and everyday interactions both on- and off-

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3 See also Mahmood Mamdani's famous article 'Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: A Political Perspective on Culture and Terrorism' (2002). Here, Mamdani deconstructs cultural explanations of political results, such as the events of September 11, and (re)situates the terrorist events in a historical and political context.

line (See Chapters 6, 8, and 11–15). Still, there appears to be an implication that all citizens ought to hold similar views. We would argue that by sidestepping discussing religion (Chapter 7), Danish PSM producers showcase articulate, idealized, minority citizens, whose real or imagined religiosity, is downplayed in an attempt to overcome representations as the 'religious other' (Nadim 2017). Still, the idealized Scandinavian citizen can take the shape of a more explicitly religious persona, albeit in governed ways. In effect, the idealized citizen must choose between 'good religion' or 'no religion', in order to avoid being associated with 'bad religion'. Despite their attempts at diversifying the participants and speakers in their shows, the Scandinavian PSM programmes still provide uneven and unequal access to religious minorities (see Chapter 8), and those who participate in public debates and interreligious forums are stylized to fit a mould of an ideal citizen (see Chapters 7, 8, 11) who is knowledgeable, peaceful, articulate, and compassionate.

In Chapter 11, Gullestad's concept of 'prototypes' is referred to and in Chapter 4, the authors write about 'emblematic' renderings of religion. What we see across many of the case studies is what can be called 'emblematic prototypes', renderings that come to reproduce the symbolic, emblematic facets of religion while simultaneously replicating prototypes – or what Amin Maalouf (2012) refers to as 'essentialized identities'. For instance, a woman who wears the hijab is reduced to 'Muslim' or the piece of cloth she wears on her head, rendering her individuality and other facets of her identity entirely irrelevant. Thus, Scandinavian Muslims do not seem to be able to escape the ways in which mediatized frames of 'Islam' seep into their everyday lives. Yet, 'emblematic prototypes' also shape the everyday interactions of the conservative Christians and atheists in YWC where there is a strong symbolic attribution to either faith or non-faith.

Across the various cases, we find the construction of the ideal Scandinavian citizen, particularly as a mould for the Muslim but also for other citizens to conform to (Liebmann 2017). Interreligious forums offer a prime space for displaying the self as the peaceful, egalitarian, rational, civilized, tolerant, empathetic – and thus idealized – citizen. Although this might be most evident in terms of moulding the ideal Muslim participant, it also goes for the other citizens (see Chapter 11). When considering the case studies together we can detect traces of how all citizens are governed in a way that is aimed at transforming them into more idealized versions of themselves and their respective citizenships whether they identify as atheists, Christians, secularists, Muslims, etc. This way, we detect the ways in which media condition processes of what in a post-Foucauldian governance sense may be referred to as 'citizen formation' (Rose [1999] 2010) in relation to religion.

In Chapter 8, we see how, somewhat surprisingly, the Swedish police academy student Donna Eljammal, posing in uniform and a hijab, was met with mostly positive feedback in the online comments to the posting of her image. Her occupational commitment to Sweden is commemorated and Donna Eljammal is framed as a national symbol of how a young Muslim woman ideally should take part in, and contribute to, Swedish society. Thus, the mediated Donna Eljammal in this rendition, comes to represent the civic ideal for a Muslim woman in Sweden.

The Norwegian PSM show *Faten tar valget* (Faten makes her choice) follows the 22-year-old (non-fictional) Faten Al-Mahdi Hussaini, a Muslim hijabi woman while she makes up her mind about which political party to vote for in the Norwegian parliamentary elections of 2017. While Swedish Donna Eljammal was for the most part hailed, Norwegian Faten Al-Mahdi Hussaini received many hateful comments about both her and the hijab, including death threats.[4]

Considering this volume's aim of examining how various media condition public engagement with contested issues about religion, it is worth reflecting on why two seemingly similar incidents in Norway and Sweden may have spurred such different responses. *Faten Makes Her Choice* evidently stirs up negative emotions among what Michailidou and Trenz (2015) call 'enraged fans'. And in this context, insisting on the removal of a young Muslim woman's hijab to prove that she is wearing it of her own free will is considered a legitimate demand. The irony of intimidating and forcing a young woman to remove a hijab in order to demonstrate that her attire is voluntary is considerable. However, what complicates the picture somewhat is that in both Norway and Sweden a number of the positive public reactions to Faten Al-Mahdi Hussaini and Donna Eljammal, respectively, emphasized how it was the *individual* and her civic engagement, not her hijab or her religion, that came to the foreground. It would seem, then, that mediation of civic engagement and participation in the democracy as an ideal citizen holds the potential to overshadow the at times near obsessive focus on the hijab in other contexts. Thus, under particular circumstances, the individuality of a media player may trump her 'ascribed representation' of a religious or ethnic group or her being cast as an 'ethnic other' as has been found to be the case in recent studies (Nadim 2017, Midtbøen 2016).

To what extent can the different responses in Sweden and Norway be attributed to differences in the debate climate, timing, medium, or stratified audien-

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4 Faten Al-Mahdi Hussaini since repeatedly addressed the vile comments in public videos and expressed her claim to both Norwegianness and the hijab – but also exposed her vulnerability and sadness about this turn of events.

ces? Contextual factors such as the timing of the Norwegian show just before the parliamentary elections in September 2017 may have amplified the conflict around Faten Al-Mahdi Hussaini, while the predominantly middle-aged, well-educated audience of *People and Belief,* on which Donna Eljammal appeared, may have subdued the level of conflict in Sweden. Yet, there seems to be more at play. In retrospect, the massive negative response to *Faten Makes Her Choice* was perhaps more about the context of the 'cross case' and the emblematic Christianity of identity it inspired than the hijab itself. As described more in detail in Chapter 6, the cross case was a controversy in 2013 over the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation's (NRK) decision to bar one of its news anchors from wearing her cross pendant while hosting an NRK evening news programme.

The fact that in 2017 NRK received more than 5,000 complaints about *Faten Makes Her Choice* before the show had even been aired raises suspicions that this response was coordinated. The complainers accused NRK of a double standard: NRK was allowing one form of religious attire, the hijab, but not another, the cross, on their TV programmes. In other words, the engaged, and enraged, publics were in fact primarily critiquing the neutrality policy in the NRK cross case (see Chapter 6). By extension, Faten Al-Mahdi Hussaini and her hijab are understood as a threat to the cross and its visible presence. For conservative Christians and others who see Christianity mostly as a form of belonging, rather than believing, the NRK cross case comes to symbolize the deterioration of 'Christian values' on PSM while Faten Al-Mahdi Hussaini gets to flaunt her hijab. The conflation of the principle of neutrality for news bulletins with the less strict policy for hosts of all other types of programming has been an integral part of the cross controversy from the very start, as has the erroneous perception that the cross is banned but the hijab is not in PSM programming. Regardless, both Donna Eljammal and Faten Al-Mahdi Hussaini are fashioned into prototypes of 'Muslim women' imaginaries who either conform to 'the ideal citizen' or its antithesis.

More importantly for our purposes, the brief comparison between Donna Eljammal and Faten Al-Mahdi Hussaini's experiences aptly demonstrate how mediatized conflicts about religion can be amplified, transformed, and multiplied into new conflicts based on the perseverance of particular social actors. Moreover, it demonstrates how one side of a debate may succeed in getting a disproportionate amount of attention on one particular aspect.

In some of the case studies we see a co-dependant dialectic between Islam depicted as a 'bad religion' and Christianity portrayed as a 'good religion'. But we also see that within a religion, certain renderings are deemed more desirable than others, often in accordance with or as an extension of a conceptualization of an ideal citizen. Faten Al-Mahdi Hussaini's ideal citizenship was even con-

doned by the prime minister of Norway who, not insignificantly, chose to high-light how Faten Al-Mahdi Hussaini has contributed actively to anti-radicalization programmes.[5]

The sense that religion comes to be more about belonging than believing cuts across several of the case studies. We repeatedly see how media condition both the culturalization and securitization of religion (see Chapter 4), most no-tably with regards to Islam (see Chapters 8, and 11–15) and Christianity (see Chapters 6 and 10). Within this framework, the hijab becomes emblematically linked to Islam, and the cross becomes emblematically associated with Christi-anity and nationhood and we see several examples of how Islam is cast as a 'bad religion' and Christianity is cast as its opposite, a 'good religion'. However, in some instances, we observe that Christianity is being contested from within (see Chapters 6 and 10) where tensions between 'golden rule Christianity' and Christianity as identity clash. Yet, in some cases it is religion per se that is cast as the villain (see Chapter 6). This draws a web of components that the ideal citizen is expected to adhere to and promote.

16.4 'The Muslim Woman'

Despite being a trope across many of the book's chapters, none of the chapters is solely devoted to what has become the most prominent symbol of cultural and religious encounters, and subsequent societal tensions, in present-day Scandina-via: 'the Muslim woman'. Muslim women have during the last 20 years repeated-ly been placed at the centre of public debates in Europe and would seem an ob-vious point of departure in a book that explores the media dynamics of cultural conflicts in Scandinavia. The fact that the contributions in *Contested Religion* do not dwell on this matter does not mean that gender dimensions are not an inter-related part of the various case studies.

The many public debates related to the female Muslim body, clothing, and lifestyle testify to the status of the notion of what is taken to be a highly religious and oppressed – primarily Muslim – woman symbolizing what many perceive as the restraining effect of religion. Tied in with this widespread imaginary is the dominant media frame (see Chapter 3). Mass media tend to frame Islam as a dis-tinct threat to women's rights and gender equality, thus giving way to notions of Muslim women as emblematic of religiously motivated violence. However, an al-

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5 Espen Alnes and Hanna Huglen Revheim, "Solberg: – Faten fortener ikkje hetsen," *NRK*, 23 Aug 2017. https://www.nrk.no/kultur/solberg_-_-faten-fortener-ikkje-hetsen-1.13655103

ternative media frame is gradually emerging in part as a response to the dominant media frame and widespread stigmatization of young Muslims as threats to national security in Western societies. Especially public service media, as analysed in Chapters 7 and 8, employ alternative frames comprised of three strands: first, a frame consisting of young Muslim women as symbols of tolerance; second, a human-interest frame in which personalization, stories, ideal cases, and emotions are deployed in the dramaturgy of the media; and third, representations of 'ordinary Muslims' with an inherent focus on Islam as (everyday) lived culture.

The focus on ordinary Muslims is a tendency which has its equivalent in the focus on lived religion as a distinct field of study within academia, a research strand that has developed over the last three decades and affords attention to everyday religion as it is lived, and practised, by millions of people (see Dessing et al. 2013; McGuire 2008).[6] But how does this alternative and budding media frame impact the way gender and religion are approached in public service media? As seen in Chapter 7, in relation to Islam, gender may, on one hand, work as a trigger theme in relation to Islam that can easily activate tensions and conflicts. On the other hand, the chapter also demonstrates how conscious planning of debates – and drawing on available professional resources in public service media – may allow gender issues such as sexuality to be addressed in relation to religion in ways that create intense debates but at the same time allow new voices and marginalized arguments to be heard – at least in comparison with traditional news agendas on Islam. One aspect of this strategy is to downplay the explicit religious dimensions of gender issues and instead discuss them as generational and cultural issues.

The much-contested trope of 'the Muslim woman', particularly when adorned with the hijab, is, as mentioned earlier, depicted as posing a threat to the idealized citizen. The hijab becomes a highly visible and emblematic symbol of Islam, and is intrinsically tied to the negative mediatized framing of Islam as a source of conflict and gender-based oppression, leading to construing a woman's active choice to wear a hijab as 'false consciousness' and in consequence 'the oppressed Muslim woman' for whom concern is expressed, is simultaneously stripped of agency by her alleged saviours (Abdel-Fadil 2006; Abu-Lughod 2013).

The tensions surrounding the hijab surface in many of the case studies. For instance, in Chapter 12 the hijab is what makes the female converts 'visibly Mus-

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6 Studies on lived religion tend to focus on laity, instead of clergy or elites; on practices rather than beliefs; on practices outside religious institutions rather than inside; and on individual agency and autonomy rather than on collectivities or traditions (Ammerman 2016).

lim' and their identity contentious in public space. This is in stark contrast to the Muslim male converts who are not as 'visibly' Muslim. Regardless of ethnicity, women who wear the hijab are not only detectable in public space, but in effect 'hypervisible', to use Gullestad's (2006) terminology. Hypervisibility implies a distinguishability that is inescapable and fraught with tensions, often coupled with a voice that is rendered irrelevant or not listened to, i.e. silencing diversity. As discussed in Chapter 12, Muslim women who successfully wield the image of a hijabi fashionista somehow evade some of the negative projections on the hijab, and inch closer to the ideal citizen; apparently (Muslim) women cannot be all that oppressed if they wear fashionable clothes and an eye-catching lipstick colour, this logic seems to suggest.

16.5 Gendered Interactions

Mediatization implies long-term transformations of social and cultural patterns in media-saturated societies and thus shapes social interactions. However, mediatization does not determine the outcome of the social and media dynamics (see Chapter 3). The ways in which religion sometimes allows for alternative ways of imagining gender does not necessarily overthrow the mediatization thesis but it does underline the complexity of the relationship between religion and media and questions who exactly sets the agenda for how we understand religion and gender (Lövheim 2013a; Sjö 2016, 137).

Chapters 11 and 12 share a focus on the responses by Scandinavian Muslims to the predominantly negative media frames and thus of Muslims' negotiations of belonging in a mediatized society. Hence, these two case studies inhabit representational challenges symptomatic to qualitative studies of this kind. When mobilizing interlocutors – informants – for a qualitative, humanistic, or social scientific study through institutions, organizations, and networks, researchers often wind up with predominantly male participants who thus come to represent various religious affiliations and organizations in a generic sense but with a tacit, gendered bias (Rayaprol 2016). For instance, the Swedish PSM producers inadvertently reinforce traditional forms of religious authority, by inviting chairpersons, imams, and professors, who, in most cases, were male (see Chapter 8). The over-representation of men when attempting to up minority media representation appears to be part of a general tendency in Scandinavia (Jørndrup 2017). Yet, as discussed in Chapter 2, there are several differences between the ways in which men and women relate to religion in general, and with regards to media practices. These differences follow a pattern established in previous studies: female respondents seem to be more supportive of the statement that all religions

should be respected, while male respondents in general seem more critical of expressions of religion in public, especially Islam, and support critical coverage of Islam and Judaism in the media more than women do. Moreover, gender has the strongest significance in the survey analysis when it comes to respondents' willingness to discuss news on religious extremism with others; men are more likely to do so than women (see Chapter 2). Men are also more inclined to discuss religion and in particular religious extremism online. Within these topics, gender is more significant than for example religious self-identification and political position. Besides reflecting persistent gender roles and positions in the Scandinavian context, these gender differences remind us of how research must always be attentive to the way in which divergences between men and women (and other genders), respectively, tie in with how different genders come to grasp, approach, and interpret religion differently.

A number of studies suggest that there is a gendered dimension to the ways in which men and women engage with social media and online debates about sensitive topics like religion and politics (see Chapter 2, 6, 11; Lövheim 2013a, 2013b). Notably, women appear to be less active in online debates and our survey in Scandinavia supports this understanding in that more men state that they frequently discuss religion online. However, the online ethnography of the Facebook page *Yes to wearing the cross whenever and wherever I choose* (YWC) (see Chapter 6) points to the importance of the triangulation of methods. In YWC we find a handful of dedicated women with particularly high levels of activity that are unparalleled by male participants. This suggests that some women may in Miller et al.'s (2016, 178) terminology be both 'doing politics' more, and participating in more *active* ways than some of the men that statistically speaking are very active online. The frequency with which women and men report to participate in online debates reveals little about the level of engagement or the emotional labour involved. Future studies must strive to nuance our understandings of gendered online involvement in mediatized conflicts with all its invisibilities and complexities.

Correspondingly, another gender issue of concern to these, and other, chapters is that of gendered agency. Since the 1980s, a focus on women as religious actors has gradually occurred in response to the predominant view that religious women are passive victims of religious ideologies. In both Chapters 11 and 12, the issues of belonging – and citizenship – can be connected to gender at the intersection of religion and nationality (Sauer 2016, 108). Birgit Sauer argues that a new concept of citizenship is constructed, negotiated and promoted in European countries through the hijab debates (ibid.). This perspective ties in with discussions of how debates on covered women in Europe should be interpreted in the light of an underlying and dominant frame of secular European progress (Wood-

head 2009) and with the post-secular turn in humanistic and social scientific research (Gemzöe and Keinänen 2016, 3).

So, what did we learn? We learned that two main aspects are pivotal when reflecting on gender in respect to mediatization, media frames and ethno-religious conflicts in the respective case studies. The first is the representation of gender – understood both as the relative number of participants active in mass and social media, various organizations, and local civic settings, and as the way in which gender is portrayed and comes to be enacted in these arenas. The second aspect is gendered agency in relation to, and as part of, the representations in question. Especially women's religious agency outside a simple frame of oppressor–oppressed in the field of gender and religion (Gemzöe and Keinänen 2016, 8), continues to be of significance.

In important ways, the abovementioned dominant frames and embedded debates form the background of what has been labelled the post-secular turn in humanistic and social scientific research (Gemzöe and Keinänen 2016, 3). This turn involves a questioning of earlier theories based on the premise that religion would gradually (continue to) lose importance as a social force in Europe and in the rest of the world. The turn implies instead that new theoretical frameworks, such as the sub-frames mentioned above nuancing the role of religion and gender in media (and media in gender and religion), are necessary to comprehend what religion is and is coming to be in present-day societies and how religion is related to secularism. In this, the turn also involves revisiting gender dimensions in religion, and not least in Islam. This is a task for further studies on religion and the mediatization of religion.

16.6 The Dynamics of Mediatized Conflicts of Religion

Media production teams and editors make choices that may have far-reaching ramifications of which they are unaware. For instance, they may unintentionally influence and confirm male-dominated religious hierarchies of authority or grant unequal access to social actors in their attempts to manage, diversity. The gendered and unsteady management of diversity plays into the multiple ways in which mediatized conflicts about religion are enacted, by a spectrum of social actors, in a wide range of Scandinavian online and offline mediatized settings (see Chapters 6–15). Across the case studies, we find that minorities are frequently 'ethnicified' and/or moulded into idealized forms of minority citizens (Nadim 2017, 230).

Tensions, controversies, and conflicts have become so integral to both media coverage and audience engagement that they increasingly come to represent normalcy. Many discussions about religion in everyday life are centred around mediatized conflicts, as evidenced in the various case studies in this book. We find that various Scandinavian publics engage and interact with mediatized conflicts about religion in ways that betray an attention economy – where conflict at times is the glue of a given news story.

A striking feature across many of the cases studies is the importance of entertainment and media events. We see for instance how the school teachers lean heavily on both popular culture media products and over-focus on controversies and media events linked to religion, in particular with regard to Islam, in their attempts to reel in the students' attention (see Chapters 13 – 15). Likewise, the choices PSM producers make play into the media dynamics of entertainment and conflict and may in turn attract or put off publics. We must not overlook the fact that dealing full-on with controversies can in itself be viewed as a form of entertainment as evidenced in the classrooms, as well as in PSM production rooms (see Chapters 7 and 8) and in the online debates we examine (see Chapter 6).

Mass media and social media co-construct and condition worldviews and social interactions, as illustrated throughout this volume (see Chapters 3 – 15). *Contested Religion: The Media Dynamics of Cultural Conflicts in Scandinavia* contributes to a refined understanding of mediatization of religion, through theoretical contributions on how mediatization is shaped through social interactions (Chapters 3, 4 and 17), and empirical cases demonstrating how a variety of social actors and media users engage with mediatized conflicts about religion (Chapters 5 – 15). In this chapter, we have provided an analysis of the interplay between media framings and the multitude of ways in which conflicts are enacted and religion is contested based on a range of Scandinavian case studies. We contend that our empirically-grounded analysis, of the gendered and unsteady management of diversity, in mediatized conflicts about religion, provides a platform from which to challenge and further develop the conceptualizations of mediatization of religion (see Chapter 17). Our analysis will, together with the entire volume, *Contested Religion: The Media Dynamics of Cultural Conflicts in Scandinavia*, hopefully inspire further in-depth studies on the complexity of contested religion in mediatized societies.

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