

Respect, fair treatment and Community power: working with the Muslims of Granada

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Abstract

Towards the end of the year 2001 we started to work out a research-action project with the objective of developing our knowledge about the situation of the Muslim communities which have settled in Granada, to know more about their more or less problematic contacts with the institutions of the local government and the associative fabric of the greater part of society. This initiative was taken in response to an invitation sent to us by our Belgian colleagues who were eager to set up a mainly European transnational network

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“Europa tendrá que acostumbrarse a la idea de que la cultura musulmana y el Islam no son un referente lejano que España extirpó de sus raíces en los albores a la Edad Moderna, sino a rasgo consustancial de nuestras sociedades” M. Castells¹³ (2003).

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¹³ “Europe should get used to the idea that the Muslim culture and Islam are not remote references that Spain has eradicated from its roots at the dawn of the Modern Age, but a constitutive trait of our societies” Migration Letters, Volume: 2, No: 3, pp. 239 – 264. December 2005

Towards the end of the year 2001 we started to work out a research-action project with the objective of developing our knowledge about the situation of the Muslim communities which have settled in Granada, to know more about their more or less problematic contacts with the institutions of the local government and the associative fabric of the greater part of society. This initiative was taken in response to an invitation sent to us by our Belgian colleagues (IRFAM) who were eager to set up a mainly European transnational network

The attacks on the World Trade Center in New York took place two months before the start of the Granada project. In this "global village" which has received a great deal of media attention, the events had an impact on the conscience of the people and the communities "in real time"; in this globalized world, where everything has an effect on everything, where everything has a more or less obvious connection, where the effects of "here" respond to the causes of "over there", the local level cannot be explained without the global one. In this permanence and continuity of the processes, the physical and moral safety of the actors, scientific work and the intervention practices must comprehend contingency, that part of the unpredictable and the unsuspected "event": either the scientist takes refuge in the bureaucracy of academic research and cynically shuns any type of commitment to values, or adjusts himself in one way or another to the multiform and multidirectional requests made by people, groups and communities to have social improvement. One way in which the second option can be adopted is to engage in applied social research applied or even research-action, in direct contact with the populations and their problems, and with the professionals in social assistance, education, mediation and orientation. In this case, it should be understood that projects have their own logic, not completely foreign to the intentions of the researchers, but which, to a great extent, escape them because of diversification of the partners and because they are linked to the unstable realities of social action, thus transforming, in a certain manner, research-action into a "process without a subject"¹⁴.

The project undertaken with the Muslim communities of Granada went through several readjustments during the course of its realization. We thus had to adjust the first action proposals to the expectations and requests of the actors involved (local Islamic

¹⁴ For example, Althusser, 1969.

community, mainly), to the development of the thought process within the team (researchers and mediators who were not experts in Islam, even if they were knowledgeable on “related topics” like social policy, social exclusion, migration, social work, Community action), and finally, to the dynamics of the local government. We also had to modify our research and action strategies and even had to resort to tactical measures on the question of the thought process reflection and non-action. Two events that produced multiple effects forced our hand in a way: they were the war in Iraq (2003) and the violent attacks in Madrid dating back to 11 March 2004. These events and their repercussions left their mark on the Granada project staff right from the outset until the very end of the final drafting¹⁵.

1. Granada: socio-urban and historical context

The town of Granada belongs to the current autonomous Andalusian Community. This area enjoys a high degree of self-government in a decentralized country like Spain is today the organization which is close to the federal state. It is one of the most important Spanish cities from the historical point of view being given its Hispano-Muslim past.

The Nasride Kingdom in Granada was the last Islamic state in Western Europe and it surrendered to the troops of the Catholic Kings of Castille and Aragon. The latter, after having conquered the city, drew up a project “for national unification” based mainly on the Catholic religion thus bringing about one of the first Nation-States of modern times, which very quickly became an Empire. The last Muslims of Al-Andalous, the Granadians, had to convert to Catholicism or leave their country after having occupied it for more than seven centuries¹⁶. However, the pact for the maintenance of Islamic worship, signed between Isabelle, Ferdinand and

¹⁵ On 12 July 2004, in the publication entitled ‘Ideal’ one reads that the head of Al Qaeda in Europe sued for the 11-M and 11-S attacks, lived in Granada during the 90’s. El Pais dated 21 October 2001 published a report entitled “Albaicin in the shadow of Bin Laden: the war in Afghanistan throws doubt on the relations in the Granada neighbourhood dominated by the Muslim community”.

¹⁶ The Muslim State of Granada was founded by Zawi ben Ziri, founder in chief of the Ziri dynasty which governed the ‘taifa’ in Granada from 1013 onwards. The dissolution of the Cordou Caliphate in the tenth century gave rise to the setting up of several similar reigns.

the Nasride king Abú' Abd Al Muhammad (Boabdil), on November 25, 1491¹⁷ were the stakes for handing over the city to the invaders¹⁸ after a long siege. The conquerors entered the city after it had been abandoned by the vanquished party on 2 January, 1492¹⁹.

¹⁷ Reference is made to the "Capitulations of Santa Fe" for the handing over of Granada, from the name of the village situated close to the city which, today, is integrated into the greater metropolitan area. It is the place where the invaders settled down and the signature of the treaty, as well as the place where Christopher Columbus received the support of Isabella of Castilla for his maritime adventure.

¹⁸ In the treaty it is stipulated that the reign of Granada will be integrated into "Las Espanas" a political entity formed by the reunion of the crowns of Aragon (Ferdinand V) and Castilla (Isabella I). The reigning dynasty was to guarantee, under the terms in the "Capitulations Treaty" the right to live and to physical integration of the population, to freedom of worship and practice of religion as well as other personal and communal rights, as, for example, conservation of property and income. The dynasty claimed to maintain the administrative and legal structures as well as Islamic law which were followed by the majority of Muslims in the city. However, a short while after Boabdil and several thousands of Grenadines crossed the Straits of Gibraltar, the agreement was rejected on the pretext that there was resistance on the part of Islamic Grenadines, known as the "Moors". The ethno-religious cleaning thus went on through the Inquisition tribunals with legal and religious repression, war waged on the rebels and expulsion of those populations to the Maghreb region who refused to convert to Catholicism. The last expulsion of the kind dates back to 1609 (Dominguez Ortiz and Vincent, 1985).

¹⁹ Later on, the Spanish State initiated a politico-military celebration in Granada at the local level: "the Day of the Capture of Granada", a symbol of national unity exalted during the Franco dictatorship by both the army and the Catholic Church. Since Spain became a democratic entity and towards the end of the 70's, the settling of the first Muslim Sufi communities made up of converts, each year there is an important citizen movement taken up by the medias and sometimes echoed in the streets, where alternative acts are celebrated to oppose this official celebration, questioning the meaning, the symbols and the permanent quality of such events, which are still being organised by the municipality. If we examine the historical significance of the Granada attack, we could agree with Vincent (2002) when he states that: "The European world has lost track of the rupture that the event of 2 January 1492 signified. The disappearance of the last Muslim State in western Europe not only upset the political equilibrium in the Mediterranean world, but also imperilled the future of the minority populations and the transmission of an extremely rich source of knowledge".

Thus in this city, where the Catholic Kings are buried, there is one of the monuments of medieval Islam of great international reputation, Alhambra. The political buildings (Royal Palace), urban buildings (Medina), agri-recreational buildings (Generalife) and the defence buildings (Alcazaba) of this architectural structure are both the emblem of national unity (and of nationalist Catholicism) and the last Western bastion of Dar-Al-Islam in the minds of Muslims and Arabs.

According to statistics dating back to the end of 2003, 237 663²⁰ people live in the Municipality of Granada (Raya Lozano et Al, 2001). Granada has achieved significant growth over the past twenty years, creating around it a vast residential area thanks to the progressive growth of the municipalities that are situated not very far away and which fulfill a residential function. The overall metropolitan area today has a population of more than 450 000 inhabitants and in the whole of the province there are 828 107 people.

Granada is characterized by a “process of intra-metropolitan duality” (Castells, 1987, 49-51): one notes the coexistence of spaces and populations, on the one hand, dynamic and blessed with a certain economic prosperity that owes its existence to certain opportunities (tourism, conferences, university,...), and, on the other hand it is marked by a certain vulnerability, and even exclusion. Granada is thus a city that shares certain characteristics specific to Andalusia²¹. Its population is made up of groups that are in the grips of social problems of marginalisation and a particularly high rate of un-qualified young people who have failed a great number of times at school and who come from marginal backgrounds resulting from marginal, “racialized” groups, discriminated against like the Gipsies and, more recently, like the Maghrebians. The city has also a very low activity ratio in particular with regard to the female population with abundant numbers of young women without school education and single-parent families. One notes a short-

²⁰ Of which 127 246 are women; 19.84% are young people under 20; 17.30% are persons over 65. There is a total of 5 974 foreign residents, but it would appear that this figure must be multiplied by 4 to include illegal immigrants and those who do not possess residence permits.

²¹ The most recent data available for the province of Granada (2003) show the following results: a total activity rate standing at 49.82%, with a total unemployment rate of 14.79%. Gender differences show that the activity rate for men is 63.46% and for women 37.12%; the total unemployment rate for men stands at 11.22% and for women, the figure climbs to 20.46%.

age of educational, economic and social resources for women and there is a permanent incidence of ill-treatment towards them.

Granada is city which suffers from a lack of housing and one part of the population is itinerant especially the new immigrants, the majority of whom are Muslims with no official residence documents from the Maghreb and sub-Saharan regions.

Granada also has a university with one of the highest attendance rates in Andalusia which greatly attracts students from the European Union and Morocco²². However, these students experience great difficulties in finding jobs as is the case with all young people. There is a service economy in the city and one observes the development of an "informal economy" which is rapidly expanding particularly in the field of tourism. The province of Granada has one of the lowest occupation and activity rates in Andalusia, in general much lower than those found in the other regions in Spain. The rate of unemployment is slightly higher here than in the whole of Andalusia. In Granada, the women have lower occupation and activity rates as compared to men.

From the demographic point of view, there has been a steady decline in population numbers in the centre of Granada for several years now. This can be explained by the exodus towards the suburban areas and also by the falling birthrate figures, even if these figures are currently slowing down thanks to the fertility of the gipsy population (present in the area since the XVI century) and the new immigrant population essentially made up of extra-community Muslims. An important change has taken place in the age structure of the local population which is fast ageing. Before 1998, the migratory flows from the provinces were slightly negative but after this date the trend is being slowly reversed.

Within this general context, one can easily identify the dualisation of urban space. The northern part of the city is experiencing the gravest difficulties, namely the lack of job security on the labour market, drug dependancy, delinquency, ethnic stigmatization, ill-treatment of old people and women, a high incidence of HIV-AIDS, and the collapse of family units. Three districts in this area are particularly affected: Almanjayar, La Paz and Caseria de

²² Within the European Union, the University of Granada is the one that attracts the highest number of scholarship students who participate in the Socrates-Erasmus mobility programme (in 2002-2003 there were 1 581 out of a total of 59 853 students).

Montijo. On the whole, it is estimated that 6 000 people in this part of the city have important social problems. They belong to Spanish gipsy families and are not the (“payas”) gipsies. Extreme situations are also found in the districts of Molino Nuevo and Las Parcelas (approximately 2 000 people). The Muslim population in this region (Maghrebian immigrants) lives mainly in La Paz and Caseri de Montijo.

Albaicin is the second region that is saturated by social problems, especially in the low lying part known as Zenete, the districts of San Ildefonso, San Pedro, Haza Grande, and in the caves situated on the highlands of Sacromonte where mainly itinerants and beggars have recently taken up residence. There is also a flourishing handicraft import trade, managed mainly by young Maghrebians (students, immigrants and illegal residents), who, together with the Spaniards who have been converted to Islam, have organized a dynamic ethnic trade here (commercial activities, butcheries and “halal” restaurants). These activities constitute tourist attractions and are contributing to a rapid urban restoration of the area. The new Muslim communities, the majority of which is made up of immigrants, are trying to settle here and progress in this urban environment filled with contrasts in the difficult socio-professional environment in Granada.

2. Legal, political and institutional context

The political context in which the Granada chapter of the religious and social cohesion project went ahead was constituted, in general, by socio-economic globalisation and its effects on populations (migratory movements, weaknesses), on work (the model of the wage earning society in crisis), on the culture (cultural diversification) and on institutions (loss of importance of the Nation-State, emergence of new political actors). At a secondary level, one notes the recurrent question of identity in the political debates²³. In the Granada context, this means:

²³ “(...) social and political trends characteristic of the 90's favours the construction of social and political actions on the basis of primary identities be they historical or geographical in nature or even if they correspond to recent construction in the search for meaning and spirituality. The first steps taken by information societies seem to be characterised by the pre-eminence of identity as an organisational principle” (Castells, 1998, 48).

- Citizenship which not only has the Spanish State as its reference base but also, on a lower level, Junta de Andalucía (many Granadins are Spanish and Andalusian; some feel rather more Andalusian than Spanish). One also finds the Municipality on the lower rungs of the political hierarchy, and it is called upon to provide more services and skills on a daily basis. And finally, above this entity “with variable geometry” that one calls Spain²⁴, there is the Union European which brings in new stimuli, discussions and resources.

- Serious political tensions exist within the social fabric and in the electorate because of the various ways of designing management strategies for globalisation and its cultural and religious impact. This tension is present between the “conservative right” and the “pluralist left”, without forgetting “democratic nationalism”, even, in a very minority situation, the “terrorist ethno-nationalism” to which we can add, since the 11-March, religious terrorism²⁵.

- There is difficulty of coordination and consolidation among citizens and institutions that are caught in the trap of diversification of identity references.

From a legal point of view, the intervention framework is made up of the Spanish Constitution guaranteeing religious freedom (1980), the agreements between the State and the Islamic Community of Spain (1992²⁶), and the strong administrative decentralization of the State in favour of a regional power (Junta de Andalucía) and a local institution with widening legal and political powers (Municipality of Granada).

But these institutions have different and sometimes contradictory ways of designing and interpreting this legal facet: they have, for example, public policies that do not align with the principles of respect, equal treatment and integration of the Muslim communities. Thus, the conservative government of the Popular Party had

²⁴ The debate on national identity is becoming complicated in Spain owing to the “Basque problem” and also because of the demands made by the nationalists, as is the case in Catalonia.

²⁵ More so because, historically speaking, unity based on regional identity has entered the fight against “infidels” and “barbarians” and in this case, “Christianity” is being pitted against an “infidel Islam”.

²⁶ A Cooperation agreement signed by the Spanish State and the Islamic Commission of Spain (approved by the Law 26/1992 of 10 November, B.O.E. of 12 November).

maintained a policelike perception of migration and had joined hands with the most conservative sectors of the Catholic Church.

It is necessary to bear in mind this background in order to examine the research-action carried out with the Muslim communities to identify their problems and their dynamics, together with the specific type of religious discrimination that they encounter, in a city where conservative Catholicism is predominant and, to a lesser extent, a form of militant secularism. In the light of these statements it is possible to understand how the political and social contexts determine the results of the actors's work and their interactions.

In this local project five principal types actors will be described:

- The-target-actors (Muslim people of Granada), immigrants and converts²⁷;
- Public (local government);
- Actors engaged in social and sociocultural action (associations, non-profit-making entities), mediation professionals;
- Communication bodies;
- and scientific experts.

The target-actors are both participants and beneficiaries of the project. They are organized in "Islamic religious entities" around premises meant for the exercise of prayers (mosque or oratory). We have taken into account the Muslims who manage the mosques and those which take part in all kinds of activities that arise from these places of worship. Men and women, adults and young people were included. These religious entities are:

- The mosque "Al-Taqwa" or "Del Al Temor";
- The "Omar" mosque;
- The foundation "Mosque of Granada";
- The "Assalam" or "La Paz" mosque;
- The "El Centro islámico oratory of Granada";

²⁷ "(...) an adequate analysis of Islam in Europe must take into account the characteristics of the host society and the treatment meted out to the Islamic population. It should not forget to analyse cases where people have chosen Islam and the significance of this choice" (Wieviorka, 2003, 180).

- The “Masalikal Yinan” or “Jinan” mosque.

It will be noted that if several of these institutions were fully consolidated at the beginning of the project (Al-Taqwa and Omar mosques), others were stimulated by the project on “Faiths and Social cohesion” in their structuring (La Paz). In addition, the “Granada mosque”, already known before the period 2002-2004, carried out important architectural work during the duration of the project (inauguration of an important building with a minaret, park and Islamic arts centre in July 2003), this constitutes one of the highlights of the initiative and an international meeting was organised there. Yet others, which existed only as religious organizations, seized the opportunity to become mosques during the process of the research-action. Mezquita de Granada or Mezquita Mayor is located in the upper part of the district of Albaicin, very well known for its medieval Hispano-Muslim origins, was declared a Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. The initiative for its construction - partly financed by the United Arab Emirates - was taken by a local Islamic community the majority of whom were Europeans converted to Islam belonging to a tariqa (Murabitun). The Al-Taqwa mosque has a majority of Maghrebian people even if the director is a converted Spaniard. The Assalam mosque (or La Paz) and the Omar mosque are managed by Arab immigrants (Palestinian and Moroccan respectively); they essentially are for immigrants, especially Maghrebians, even if there are some converts among the faithful. The most recent is the Masalikal Yinan mosque. It is made up mainly of Senegalese immigrants and remains in contact with a Senegalese tariqa. All the mosques follow the Sunnite teachings and almost all of them adhere to malekite jurisprudence. Finally, an oratory deals mainly with prayer (salat) and is used as a place for meetings. It is an informal structure. The project did not take into account other existing places of worship in the city since they were mainly residential places or neighbourhood places, often located in private houses.

The public partners in the project are mainly representatives of the Municipality of Granada who supported it officially. At the beginning of the project, the Spanish Workers' Socialist Party, the United Left and the regionalistic Andalusian party managed the commune. The two municipal departments directly involved in the initiative as co-financiers were the department of education and the labour and social welfare department. These departments changed their political colours in May 2003, after the local elections

gave the majority to the Popular Party. This had repercussions on the work being carried out.

The civil society actors were essentially involved in field work. They were associations and non-profit organizations which had direct relations with the Muslim communities or which manifested an interest in the integration of the Islamic religion in Spanish life (ecumenical associations, anti-racist associations, etc). The work with the associative world was very intense at the beginning of the programme, was temporarily neglected later on and was revived finally with the objective that sought to create a system of networking to combat religious discrimination:

- The Albaicin residents association brought the citizens of this historical district together with an important Muslim presence;

- The Granada Acoge association belongs to a network of Andalusian support associations intended for immigrants;

- The Caritas organization is a body for social action of the Catholic Church;

- Cruz Roja Española renders humanitarian services (welcome service for immigrants “without papers”, for example), orientation services for immigrants, with offers of socio-professional integration;

- S.O.S-Racismo Granada is an association that combats racism;

- Trabajadores Sociales Sin Fronteras brings together various social workers in the framework of a non-governmental organization which is active in the field of cooperation and development and inter ethnic and intercultural relations. Its origins are to be found in training work in the School of Social Work of the University of Granada. This association was specifically given the responsibility of exploring the roles of social and community action which the mosques and other Islamic entities are engaged in, in the city of Granada;

- Last but not least, the Asociación de Mediadores Interculturales (ASMIN) was the partner responsible for the concrete management of the project. It is composed of social workers and mediators, the majority of whom are immigrants. Its sphere of activity extends across Andalusia and its objectives are to develop intercultural mediation. Its members hold certificates of expertise in intercultural mediation delivered by the Centre for Continuous Train-

ing of the University of Granada, directed by the Department of Anthropology and Social Work.

The local press was regarded as one of the partners of the project. The local media in Granada have a great influence on public opinion. These are especially the television channels (Localia, TV-Ideal, Telenieve, etc) and the written press (La Opinion de Granada, Granada Hoy and, especially, the oldest and most influential: Ideal). The media watchdog easily understands that treatment of the questions related to Islam is often marked by ignorance which can be surprising in view of the historical past of the city. One will note for example the confusion between, the words "islamist" and "Islamic", sometimes even "islamologist"... This increases confusion and becomes the source of prejudice against the Muslim population. Careful attention was therefore paid to these public actors.

The final category of actors concerned are the professors and the students studying for a doctorate at the Seminario de Estudios para Intervención Social y Educativa (SEPISE) who are active in the fields of social welfare, migrations and social exclusion as perceived from a practical point of view. This team does not include experts in islamology, even if some had "initial" knowledge of the history of this religion. However, "the new social panorama (defined by ethnic and cultural heterogeneity at the time of the globalisation) must acquire knowledge through research instead of through ideology" (Alsayyad and Castells, 2003, 24). Thus, research becomes essential to social action because the answers to the dilemmas that exist are different for each country, and often, for each region inside a country.

3. Principles, processes and products

Four major concerns of the research-action Granadian team were thus transformed into basic postulates:

-Empowerment of the religious communities. The fight against discrimination and for integration or respect of fundamental human rights (Sennett, 2003) implies the empowerment of people, groups and communities. However, if this action that seeks to liberate those concerned falls within the competence of the people concerned, who are in situations of fragility, institutional and sociocultural discrimination, internal conflicts with groups and there is an unwillingness to move out of one's own culture, supervision

or help from legitimate actors can be a determining factor to increase inter and intracommunity cohesion and to surmount obstacles.

- Media Visibility of religious aspects. In a context of latent racism, xenophobia or spreading islamophobia, visibility of actions, explanations of practices in worship and the significance of religious worship, as well as cultural practices are of primary importance. Local means of communication must be used.

- Awareness building as regards religious and ethnic discrimination. In the Spanish situation, it must be pointed out that anti-discriminatory awareness is not very developed within the population. It is not present either in the legislation, or in public policies, or even in the research practices, especially with regard to discrimination of an ethnic or religious nature (the first initiatives of this type date back to the Nineties). An anti-discriminatory project in research-action in the religious field must thus make researchers, field personnel, decision makers and social mediators aware of this, as well as the Muslim communities themselves. In this matter, the dissemination of information on the legal framework and the realities in other countries is necessary, as well as the personal accounts of people who have been victims of discrimination.

- Social Participation of the religious leaders. A research-action project for social participation and the non-discriminatory treatment of the Muslim communities must insist on direct participation of the communities concerned, and also the participation of its institutional and religious leaders or Community leaders. This process is complex and difficult, involving dangers of distortion of the scientific work realised during ideological or theological debates bearing on religious dogmas. But these steps are enriching and realizable if a "translation" of the religious principles is done in context making it possible to separate the social and institutional contents if each person maintains his independence of mind in the respect of diversity.

From these postulates, the project "Faiths and Social cohesion. The Muslim communities of Granada" developed over a period of nearly three years in various contexts, like the mosques of Granada.

3.1. Intervention in the mosques and Community centres: moving towards towards a federation

The mosque has a complex function to fulfill as an Islamic institution in the everyday life and the spiritual life of Muslims. In a migratory and minority context, it is, in addition to being a place of worship, an area of social organization, emotional resourcing and Community reinforcement. It offers Muslims the possibility of taking various initiatives and obtaining information without too much difficulty. The mosque can also be a place of representation and mediation, for example, in intracommunity conflicts. In short, it is about an area of socialization and (re) production of ideas and power (Moreras, 1999; Vercellin, 2003). Direct contact with the communities makes it possible to reinforce and clarify these first observations²⁸. According to our Muslim interlocutors, one should avoid confusion in the terms “Muslim association” and “mosque”. The first can be purely formal: an association exists from the moment it is registered with the Ministry for Justice²⁹. The second requires minimal installations, regular responsibilities and an organization which supports a series of varied and continuous activities. Apart from the practical difficulty of identification of mosques and Muslim associations in the city and subsequent clarification of their roles and resources, it is necessary also to underscore the fact that Muslim communities had the feeling, for the very first time, that they were “subjects” of a research project. At the beginning of the intervention, this was an obstacle because it was necessary to overcome mistrust and replace it with respect for the university institutions. But later on, the Muslim institutions participated fully in the project. Convinced of the interest of the project, they could

²⁸ Details of the methodological aspects of the research-action developed in Granada can be found in a Spanish publication shortly to appear in the Maristan editions. The part describing the work done in the context of the Granada mosques is based on the report by Sophie Garaicochea entitled “The Granada Mosques”.

²⁹ Registration is a voluntary act; however, the Spanish constitution and the Organic Law on Religious Liberties, LOLR (7/1980), guarantee freedom of worship and protect the development of religious activities, without insisting that the persons concerned form an association. However, if the activities have to be supported and for the agreements and the conventions to be signed, “Churches and Religious Communities” must set themselves up as associations and register with the Ministry of Justice (General directorate of Religious Affairs), in order to acquire a legal personality (article 5, 6 & 7 of the LOLR). This initiative also exempts them from paying municipal taxes.

be qualified as actors and progressed in the consolidation of Muslim life in Granada, respecting its diversity, like the institutionalization of mosques as components of the urban and socio-cultural landscape. Work was undertaken with each of the mosques and associations, but also collectively, bringing together several mosques at different times for: the purpose of surveys and collecting information; to negotiate with the Municipality; to analyze the economic situation (for example, after the attacks of March 11); to organize Islamic festivals (Id Al Fitr, November 2003) and cultural initiatives (international symposium on "Islam and Secularity" on January 29, 2004; etc).

The associative dynamics, the management style of the Community leaders, activities, speeches, objectives pursued and positions taken up with regard to public institutions, as well as the total social fabric were analyzed for a better understanding of Islam in Granada, taking account of the social conditions, the political positioning and the ethno-national origins of the groups. The difference observed between the immigrant Muslims and the Muslim converts thus showed up like a deep dividing line: the analysis emphasises the role of the converts in the future of Islam in Europe. "The idea seems to offer a liberal variety of Islam which appears acceptable to the Muslim immigrants as well as to European civil societies, by the fact of adapting to ideas of secularity and individual citizenship that are in keeping with modern democracy. Saying all this in another way, Euro-Islam is a culturally acceptable religion, adapted to the civic culture of modernity (...). The policy of Euro-Islam would not permit, in any case, a complete assimilation of Muslims, but it would suppose the adoption of forms for a civil society that could produce an illustrated and open Islamic identity, compatible with European civic culture" (Bassam Tibi, 2003, 64-65).

The project "Faiths and Social cohesion" also made it possible to legitimise the mosque in the eyes of the local authorities, civil society and the media, as an entity for worship and culture. Paradoxically, it was also necessary to carry out the same efforts of valorization within the Muslim communities. Thus, intercommunity dynamics were created: it raised contradictions and debates within the Muslim communities themselves, which resulted in tensions, but also in reflections on the various roles that Islam could play in Granada, Spain and Europe. If we saw positions appearing which challenged the interference of the Spanish State or civil society which is in a majority position, in the life of the Mus-

lims – or the possibility of Islamization of the host country -, one notes also that there were less “critical” speeches, and a more favourable attitude for the adaptation of Islam to the general institutions in Spanish democracy, within the framework of a policy in favour of citizenship. But, one stresses the importance of the fact that the policy in favour of citizenship must indeed guarantee freedom and support for religious practices. It will be noted that the questions specifically related to religious discrimination took time to emerge at the level of the persons in charge of the Muslim communities: one of them recognized the fact that the research-action was truly revealing in the matter.

At the end of the debates, the Muslim communities concluded that it would be necessary to build the “Granada City Council of Mosques” to benefit from increased assistance and also to increase their visibility as legitimate and qualified actors and citizens. Four mosques thus decided to set themselves up as a federation, creating mechanisms for representation. The Foundation Mezquita de Granada did not accept the idea of formalization, but remains open to the idea of regular meetings with other actors on concrete topics of common interest. This process of Community organization was put forward in the course of the research-action by various factors including co-operation with the Municipality, but also because of the attacks of March 11 and the need to have a representation in the media, in order to prevent islamophobia. One thus noted that there was mistrust among the Muslim associations themselves; the cause of this could be the registration or not of the associations with the one of the two Spanish Islamic federations which form the Islamic Commission of Spain (ICS). It is noted that those which do not form part of it are especially converts from the Foundation “Mosque of Granada”.

3.2. The intervention around the question of the Muslim cemetery³⁰: towards the recognition of rights

The dossier on the question of the cemetery was one of the problems concerning municipal management in the context of Islam and this was taken into account by the initiative. It is about a fundamental set of themes prone to controversies within the Mus-

³⁰ This part is based on the report drawn up by Pietro Soddu, who is a doctorate student at the University of Granada and José Antonio Muñoz, a lawyer and manager of a municipal firm responsible for the Granada cemetery (EMUCESA) The contributions made by the latter have been of vital importance. We would like to thank him for his collaboration.

lim communities themselves as well as between them and the Municipality: it has the merit of testing the limits of the degree to which the Islamic difference is accepted or not in Spain. This topic had been discussed at the beginning of the project, but its practical aspects were considered only later on, given the dates of the negotiations between the Muslim community and the Municipality of Granada. It will be noted that the transactions between the Muslims and the municipality in connection with the Muslim rites of burial had already been discussed before the research-action began. The arrival of the University and the mediators as new actors in this dossier showed up the resistance of the Muslim leaders because the appearance of the new actors questioned their capacity as “representatives”.

In Granada, there is a secret cemetery that exists since the Franco period. It is situated beside the municipal cemetery, on the hill of Alhambra. Franco had received help from the Moroccan soldiers during the Spanish Civil war (1936-1939). The government which took power after a military coup then built, at the height of the war, together with the municipal decision makers of the “national zone”, several cemeteries for the Muslims killed on the battle field. These facts are the reason for the current demands being made by the Muslims in the city. Thus, the historical and legal examination of this file reveals important facts: according to law 49 of November 3, 1978, for example, “communes’ are obliged to see that the burials which are carried out in their cemeteries are done without discrimination of any kind for religious or any other reason” (art 1). Similarly, according to law 26 of November 10, 1992 (art 2-5), “the Islamic cemeteries enjoy statutory rights. It is recognized that the Islamic communities, belonging to the Islamic Commission of Spain, are entitled to use the burial grounds reserved for Islamic burials in the municipal cemeteries, and have the right to have their own Islamic cemeteries. Suitable measures will be adopted for the conservation of the Islamic traditional rites relating to the burial, burial places and burial rites which will be carried out with the intervention of the local Islamic community”.

If the Muslim community in the town of Granada insists on its prerogatives on the basis of these historical reports, many administrative obstacles could be raised. For example, only Muslims in the Islamic Commission of Spain or in one of its local representations, in theory, have this right. Thus several representatives of Muslim communities constituted the “Islamic Council” as a local antenna of the Islamic Commission of Spain and signed a convention with

the Municipality on October 25, 2002. This agreement envisages the installation of a "patio" that would border the municipal cemetery of Granada where the stated historical burials and the later clandestine burials took place, but the non federated Muslim groups are not included in this scheme.

In addition, the local public authority had, for this reason, to modify its rules with regard to the adjudication of territories for burial purposes, bearing in mind the fact that due respect had to be given to the customs, beliefs and rites of the Islamic religion. It was a question of modifying the legislation on the "funeral policies" and public health which depend on the Autonomous Community of Andalusia. The global modifications to the Agreements came about in 1992 between the State and the Muslims, but the local legislative adaptation was carried out in Andalusia after the demands were made by the Granada Muslims to the city Municipality.. This shows how Islam has modified certain aspects in Western societies. It must be noted that the Catholic Church continues to exert its influence on the question of funerals in the cities and must be included in discussions on any modification of this type. However, the cemetery file will start to move forward when the municipal public company EMUCESA will be set up in Granada - its principal objectives are to remove all religious considerations in public administrations thus aligning them with the constitutional norm, showing that the defence of the minorities and cultural and religious diversity can be managed in a non-partisan way, thus setting itself up as an arbitrator for the different groups that make up civil society.

It should however be pointed out that there is a disagreement concerning the property rights of the land concerned, because the Alhambra site is laying claim to it acting under the authority of the Spanish State, and so is the Municipality whose Junta Andalusia holds the land in trust. Lastly, the development of this site is linked to the structural financing accorded by the EU.

Internal divisions within the Muslim community are part of these obstacles. Initially, the Granadian Muslims have difficulties in understanding the institutional dynamics of a public administration and in particular the emergence of the public company EMUCESA which they wrongly tend to confuse with a commercial undertakers' business. Secondly, there is a question of symbolic importance which is more bothersome to the converts than to the immigrants. What will be the name of this new burial ground? Will

it be autonomous or integrated into the San Jose cemetery where the origin of the name dates back to the time, not so far away, where the Catholic Church managed public cemeteries? It emerges, in the final analysis, that it is difficult to maintain the a-denominational character of the State: since the existence of the public enterprise EMUCESA, there is a funerarium made up of rooms and modulable spaces which apply to all types of rites: Jewish, Catholic, Buddhist, etc, but does not offer specific areas for each community. One suspects in view of all this beating about the bush that there is the non-verbal desire on the part of the Muslim community to avoid being influenced by the Muslims of Spanish extraction and to obtain a private cemetery solely for the Islamic community... (AlSayyad and Castells, 2003).

3.3. The social action of the mosques³¹: moving towards mutual knowledge

Mosques are institutions of worship but, just like certain Catholic parishes, they can become Community centres and therefore a social resource for the districts in which they are established. In addition to this, the **zakat** which is a solidarity tax, is one of the five pillars of Islam; it concerns the demonstration in religious terms, of the horizontal relationship that exists between a believer and his neighbour, and this bond is apparent in the sharing of goods according to the rules laid down (Vercellin, 2003, 228). The problems of the poor and the down trodden is one of the major themes of what Vercellin (2003, 313 and S.) calls "the Islamic social wellbeing". The development of this system of religious solidarity in European civil societies appears to be of great importance for the socio-cultural integration of the Muslim communities.

In addition, it is also a question of highlighting the work which the mosques and their authorities realise in the area of resolution of family conflicts, in their being able to guide firstwave-migrants (with or without official residence papers), natives, children under 18 who are in difficulty, or objective services in intercultural mediation and translation which they make available to organizations or to professionals engaged in questions of health, for example. Discussions carried out with persons in charge of mosques, persons in charge of social services, as well as several sessions of focus groups realized with Muslim women have shown that mosques try

³¹ Contribution from Maria Angeles Blanco, researcher from SEPISE and Director of the Municipal centre for community services for Albaicin, in collaboration, with the Trabajadoras Sociales Sin Fronteras Association.

to solve a number of problems with meagre resources. One discovers the following problems, among others:

- Difficulties of immigration: regularization of residence permits, search for housing and employment, helping in mobility, training in Spanish, etc the Muslim immigrants are numerous among the users. Unadapted or inefficient social services that must be compensated for, establishing trust among the faithful, etc are the factors which reinforce the role of the mosques.

- Intra-family conflicts: in cases where families are caught up in a crisis situation or where there is a break in family relations, the mosques are accustomed to intervening actively while offering them legal knowledge necessary to resolve the conflict, according to the Islamic law and jurisprudence. In cases of divorce, for example, the persons in charge of a mosque appoint a judge to intervene in the divorce proceedings, the question of the custody of the children, etc If the person designated as the judge is not recognized by one of the parties, or if the ruling is disputed, the case is then referred to the Spanish legal administration. Some practices thus developed are contrary to those that are in use in Spain and this poses a question particularly with regard to the condition of women. It should be noted that women are never given any responsible post in the mosques, they do not obtain information on the organization and the management of the latter and hardly put across their opinions on any activities, excepting those which are assigned to them: for example, the cleaning of the buildings, the preparation of the festive meals and women's group meetings for the study of Koran. When they carry out other activities, like teaching, they are relegated to subordinate positions. Curiously enough, it is among immigrant Muslims rather than among the converted Muslims that criticism is made concerning the domination of the men in Community life. This dispute on the question of male domination is strongest among the Muslim university students who, for this reason, do not go to the mosque.

At the beginning of the project "Faiths and Social cohesion", collaboration between public social services and mosques was practically non-existent, except in rare cases. We were aware of the existence of profound ignorance and great mistrust of the Muslim communities with respect to the public network, especially among the immigrant Muslims. In this context, connecting the two worlds required a certain amount of work to be done. Among the professionals engaged in social work, it was necessary to develop skills

to establish contact with the multi-ethnic and religious circles. As regards the mosques, it was necessary to identify and develop social services and cultural activities. It was also necessary to develop skills to distinguish the religious aspects from the socio-cultural ones. Finally, it was necessary to consider the role of Community and family mediation to be undertaken by the mosques, certainly from the Islamic point of view, but also in the absolute respect of the constitutional laws that govern all the residents. Another major objective was the distribution of public resources for Muslim citizens. It is indeed a fact that the Muslim public immigrant does not possess sufficient administrative knowledge to easily access the services available. Information work was thus completed on the possibilities of public social assistance, as well as in the private and informal sectors of social actions.

3.4. Perceived religious discrimination: Setting up a local platform to combat it

Focusing the project on the concept of religious discrimination and anti-discriminatory practices made it possible to progress in the description of this phenomenon and the evaluation of the actions launched to fight against islamophobia. It should be noted that this process was slow and the initiative taken to try and understand the concept of religious discrimination will crystallise only in its final phase, as analytical work is still on going. Progress on this particular question was made possible through a series of talks with persons in charge of mosques and Community leaders. Discussion groups were also created with the faithful, i.e. adult Muslims who regularly went to the mosque. The objective was to create awareness within the group concerned with regard to acts of exclusion and denial. It was also a question of identifying real and perceived acts of discrimination, and their impact in order to alert public opinion and local political institutions to the dangers of such practices. Such discrimination is anti-constitutional and complicates the process of integration of the Muslim minorities concerned.

The results thus pointed to the existence of various types of discrimination against the Muslims of Granada, for example, with regard to access to employment and public services. If this discrimination is directly aimed at individuals, the injustices suffered as “a Muslim community” have an impact on the everyday life of the faithful: thus, one is aware of an obvious inequality of treat-

ment in public administration matters against Islam, in comparison to the treatment reserved for the majority who belong to the Catholic Church. The latter itself does not respect the constitutional provisions nor the legislation on the question of religious freedom. We also noted internal discriminations within the Islamic communities: the Muslims do not seem to enjoy the same rights and possibilities according to their gender, their age, their origins or whether they possess Spanish nationality or not.

It is quite certain that the problems stem from a major complexity which results from the great diversity of the Muslim communities in Granada and the historical past of the city which gives Islam a significant symbolic negative connotation. This history is marked by the **reconquista** and more recently by pro-Franco repression and the omnipotence of the conservative Catholic Church in the everyday life of the citizens. The weakness of the public and institutional conscience of the phenomena of discrimination and its incidence on the life of the people strongly contrasts with the current processes of economic globalisation, increased migratory flows from the south to the north coupled with European construction. In addition to this, the fact that many Spaniards and other Europeans recently converted to Islam have taken up residence in the city shows the attraction exerted by the Hispano-Muslim history of the city, an attraction that must be taken into consideration in the framework of greater flows of European populations emigrating towards the south of Europe, in general, and towards Andalusia, in particular. These major sociological changes precipitate the city towards an undoubtedly multicultural and multireligious destiny, imposing a reflection in terms of democratic management of these diversities and the fight against inequalities. In this post-modern constellation of spaces and identities that are inter-connected and ever changing in a ceaseless to and fro movement between the local and global levels, the still vague contours of Granadian Muslim citizenship, hanging between “community” and “locality” are slowly being defined: “(...) the identity of a place emerges from the intersection of its specific implication in a system of hierarchically organised spaces which are due to its cultural construction as a community or as a locality” (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992).

Within this general framework, the important contributions made by the research-action network “Faiths and Social cohesion” set in place and managed by IRFAM, Belgium are greatly appreciated. Such initiatives are very useful to understand the processes of

configuration of a European Islam in interaction with the way the local or federal institutions look upon it, and the way it is perceived by the majority of the mainly European non-Muslim population. The Muslims of Europe are also building intra-European Islamic networks giving form and visibility to this important religious minority and integrating its development into the project of European construction. Projects such as “Faiths and Social cohesion” are necessary as they offer the possibility of holding meetings and making transnational comparisons which are of help to researchers and decision makers as well as to associative actors of the Muslim faith. As Paul Lubeck (2003, 111) states, “while depending on the localization of its networks and its ethnic and/or national affiliations, Muslims could occupy a number of positions within a given context. The belonging to and/or inclusion in other Muslim globalized networks are due, mainly, to a historical legacy of transnationalism which is invariably expressed as membership to Umma or to world communities of believers”. Just like Turkey, Bosnia, Albania, the remainder of the Balkans, the Cypriot Republic and Andalusia, as well as major regions which attract immigration in the rest of Europe and today are the scene of important challenges for the construction of the identity of a European Islam and for the enrichment of European democracy as a whole, we are of the opinion that all this must be reconciled with its diversity, its past and the multiple religious or secular source of its cultures.

So that this awareness can exist and bear fruit, there was a plan in Granada to set up **a permanent local platform to combat discrimination against the Islamic religion**. The specific approaches used in this dimension of field work were, firstly, sensitizing and informing the political and professional representatives in the Municipality through media initiatives and the creation of events, among them being “ecumenical acts” (a meeting against terrorism and war). Training seminars for professionals in social services were also organized. Secondly, it was a question of cooperating with the non-Muslim civil society. In order to achieve this, the means of action favours the annual organization of a forum against discrimination of Muslims, both men and women. This initiative should gather a broad social and institutional section of Muslims and non-Muslims (NGO’s, trade unions, churches, etc).

4. Conclusion

The experiment shows that the management and integration of thoughts and ideas of social actors, decision makers and research-

ers into the proposals for anti-discriminatory practices in connection with the Islamic religion is very time consuming... Surprisingly, we can say the same about the Muslim communities themselves.

With regard to the non-Muslim actors, "secularity" as a political ideology constitutes a major obstacle with in the light of islamophobic facts. Without this awareness as regards the facts, it is not possible to consider the actions that would serve as antidotes. One thus feels the urgent need to look further into the debate and research on the links between Western society and States on the one hand, and secularity and religious diversity, on the other. There is urgent indeed to adapt the spiritual certainty of some and the philosophical doubts of others to what Habermas calls "delayed modernity" and Castells characterizes it as being the era "of globalisation and information".

Among the Muslims (can we generalize?), the awareness and the practice of Islam (with their cultural, Community and personal dimensions) must be taken into account as such, certainly as inalienable rights and must be defended with the aid of allies of various origins, but also as a modality of possible awareness among others, having the same dignity as the others. In other words, for the religious groups, be they Muslims or not, they must let themselves be impregnated by the "culture" of pluralism and freedom of conscience and religious practice as constitutional laws for ALL. The most important source of friction observed in the field of socio-cultural actions indeed originate in the belief, founded or not, according to which the group "opposite", which has a different conscience, tries to transform, to Islamize, to evangelise or to secularise the others, becomes inward looking and takes refuge in "its ghetto". It appears that the Muslim communities of Andalusia must move away from what with the majority of society is saying as it tries to construct from the outside, and try to build their own identity through an "integral" vision of the religious aspects and its correlative factors, specific racism "islamophobic" or "maurophobic".

We seemed to be able to see, in the case of Granada (can we generalize?) that a certain consolidation of Islamic community life could enable it to be defined as the expression of a religious, heterogeneous but federated minority, especially, protected by the democratic Constitution. The development of this awareness constitutes one of the conditions that are necessary to be able to nego-

tiate its minority religious identities in the eyes of public opinion, and their concrete expressions in the city. Upstream of this socio-political reinforcement (empowerment), it would be useful to consolidate the mosque itself as a space of religious and Community construction. It is a question of organizing, of making visible and reinforcing a place of worship, but also as a meeting place, where debates and analyses can be made on the difficulties of being a Muslim in Europe, a space for progressive development of strategies for institutional and political actions to be able to exist as a practising Muslim citizen, taking part in the negotiation of what may be termed "living together". It is thus a question of thinking up these strategies and of deploying them, for example, through the means of communication, in order to exert a certain control on images and speeches concerning Islam.

All these proposals draw out the contours of an identity development calling upon the conscience of a citizen to be capable of opposing discriminatory ideas and practices. If all these prerequisites were attained, the battle against discrimination would manage to extend beyond the offices of some benevolent public managers and some voluntarist consultants. As in the case of many other social problems, sciences dealing in social actions show us to which point they are useful on condition that they are governed by an epistemological positioning, bringing together research and social and ethical work, involving the actors in the resolution of problems which concern them.

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