Introduction

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The articles we have gathered for this themed issue look at the subject of religious assistance in European prisons from the perspective of Islam as a newcomer religion and as a test case for the adaptability of national schemes of religious governance to religious pluralism.[1] National narratives of religious diversity in Europe take very different forms. While in France, public discourse is guided by the principle of *laicité*; in the UK, the approach to religious diversity is informed by multiculturalism; other countries, such as Germany, Switzerland, Italy, or the Netherlands, operate on a principle of state-neutrality combined with selective cooperation with officially recognized religions. All of these countries and political systems are secular (or operate, as is the case in the UK with the Anglican state church, in a neutral way vis-à-vis other religions), but they spell out the secularism of the public sphere and of public institutions in different ways. All of these countries are, furthermore, respectful of human rights. The politics of the state must respect the human right to religious freedom and must not jeopardize the individual's right to practice his or her religion.

Under conditions of modern secularism, state institutions across Europe face similar challenges in meeting religious pluralism. In particular, penitentiary institutions and the military, being, in Goffman's famous characterization, "total institutions," are interesting cases in point, because in these institutions, the regulation of religious diversity is exclusively at the hands of direct state control. The place of religion in these total institutions is defined by the two aforementioned principles: national cultures of regulation of religious diversity and the universal human right to free religious practice. The first principle accounts for a static picture of historically entrenched institutional path-dependencies. The second principle represents the dynamic element that interrupts particularistic patterns from the vantage point of universally justified demands.

When we started thinking about Islam in European penitentiary and military institutions along the lines of this static-dynamic binary, what puzzled us was the recurrence, both in the literature and in the field, of the term "chaplaincy." Was the recurrent use of this Christian term

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[1] The articles present findings from a workshop which took place at the European University Institute Florence in February 2013. The workshop was financed by the European Research Council in the framework of the research-project ReligioWest.

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and its application to non-Christian forms of religious assistance a sign that the new openness of secular institutions to religious pluralism was in reality a "formatting" of newcomer religions according to a (secularized) Christian model?

The findings from the workshop partially confirmed and partially unsettled this initial suspicion. What got confirmed was that spiritual assistance in European penitentiary institutions largely follows the Christian model of chaplaincy and that religious communities, confronted with the task to provide suitable personnel, are pressured to work out a specific kind of theology and institutional structure that is similar to their Christian counterpart. What became unsettled, however, was the assumption that this process is best described as formatting. The authors in this themed issue prefer other terms, such as "adaptation," "re-formatting," or "contextualization," in order to highlight that this process of accommodation is experienced by the newcomer religions not as a passive, but as an active process.

What we want to do in this short introduction is to pick out the common points in the five articles presented here and to place these findings in the larger context of debates about religion and secularism in Europe. We invite the reader to bear in mind that, even though all the articles share a focus on Islam as a "newcomer" to established European systems of religious governance, some articles include in their analysis and case study also other confessions (Buddhism, Orthodox Christianity, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Evangelical Churches in the articles by Valeria Fabretti and Irene Becci). The articles also share a focus on prisons, with the exception of the article by Andrew Todd, which includes also the topic of military chaplaincy. His article is a reminder of the original setup of the workshop, which was comparative, and of the second set of publications that has resulted from it.[2]

First, the findings in the articles confirmed our initial idea that the process of accommodation of Islam to pre-existing structures of chaplaincy is as much the result of pressure from above as the seizure of opportunities from below. This observation is valid both for penitentiary institutions as well as the military: Muslims are pushed to enter into an institutional framework that is closely related to the Christian model of chaplaincy, but in exchange, they receive recognition and some sort of equality. The obvious benefits which arise from this situation explain why in all the countries, we looked at the actors in question accepted the terms "Muslim chaplain" or "aumônier musulman" as correct a designation of their profession. The term is not perceived as improper, but understood to carry both dignity and equality (see in particular the article by Mohamed Ajouaou & Ton Bernts in this issue).

Second, all the articles highlight the important role of institutions for facilitating or impeding the integration of Islam into established structures of religious governance. Institutions play a crucial role as gatekeepers: Irene Becci's and Valeria Fabretti's articles demonstrate the strong discretionary power of institutional actors in the under-regulated systems of Italy and Switzerland; Andrew Todd highlights the facilitating capacity of formalized chaplaincy structures in the British system. All the articles show that when it comes to religious freedom, administrations act under concrete and immediate constraints: In France, it was the large number of young Muslims in jail and the growing influence of radical self-proclaimed imams who were themselves inmates that has been a primary motive for the prison authorities to recruit Muslim chaplains. Numbers played a role also for development of Muslim military chaplaincy: As the French and British armies have been recruiting increasing numbers of soldiers among young second generation Muslims while operating in Muslim countries against jihadi groups (Afghanistan, Mali), the command structures recognized the need for a legitimate religious counter-radical narrative. The task was delegated to the Muslim chaplain, who thus

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[2] Forthcoming themed section on Islam and military chaplaincy in *Religion, State and Society* (December 2014).

became a professional figure created on demand. By doing so, the secular state institutions contribute to shaping and orientating the long-term development of Islam in Europe.

The article by Ajouaou & Bernts exemplifies how a Muslim community can react constructively to this demand for a religious counter-radical narrative from the side of state institutions. They show that the internal institutionalization in view of a unitary representation of Islam on the national level facilitates the inclusion of Islam in state policies, whereas the articles by Fabretti and Becci show that the absence of such a representation (in Italy and in Germany) hinders it. The question of unitary representation and "endorsement" is, as the article Farhad Khosrokhavar demonstrates, a thorny issue for most Muslim communities. Khosrokhavar shows that there exists a struggle within Islamic communities in Europe today over the right attitude to the secular state, with radicals on the one side, moderates on the other side, and traditionalists in the middle; and the Muslim prison population reproduces and to a certain extent accentuates these divisions. Against this background, the issue of religious leadership—and this is the third observation which all the articles share—becomes crucial, because the struggle over the right interpretation of Islam in the European context is also a struggle over religious leadership, loyalties, and authority.

Fourth, the articles elaborate and make use of different theoretical frameworks: Pierre Bourdieu's theory of frames in Todd's, Émile Durkheim's, and Michel Foucault's theories of punishment and social order in Becci, Jürgen Habermas' idea of post-secular society in Fabretti. Taken together, these articles offer a comprehensive theoretical toolbox for the study of religion in state institutions. The articles also consistently draw on literature in the field of prison studies, sociology of religion and political theory, thus consolidating the relevant body of literature on the topic.

In the final analysis, the articles confirm our initial assumption that in Western European countries, a consensus regarding a public normative commitment to religious pluralism is emerging. This commitment is institutionalized in varying degrees of efficiency in the different countries (the UK appears at the front line, Italy as a late comer). However, one aspect highlighted in all contributions is that the main motive for accommodation of Islam in prisons, notwithstanding lip-service being paid to religious pluralism, is security. The discrepancy between normative commitments on the one side and rational security-calculation on the other side raises important questions as to the interpretation of what we are actually witnessing: The gradual opening up of the Western secular public sphere to the presence of religions in the plural (this would be the post-secular hypothesis, put forward in particular by Fabretti) or the hyper-secularization of religion which turns religion into a mere psychological trait ("spiritual health") and subordinates it to other goals (security) (this would be the neutralization-hypothesis, advanced by Becci). The process remains ambivalent, but what becomes clear through the findings in all five articles is that in Europe today, the boundaries between religion and the democratic state are not only shifting in order to include religious newcomers, but also they are actually being drawn ever more narrowly around what in the framework of secular public institutions is considered as "acceptable public religion." Inclusion, we conclude, is not always a sign of recognition.

We dedicate this special issue to the memory of our colleague and friend Massimo Rosati (1969–2014). Massimo participated in the workshop that initiated this publication and directed the research on the Italian case study. He has left us much too early, but his work on religion, ritual, and pluralism in post-secular societies will continue to inspire us.