KONRAD-ADENAUER-STIFTUNG 4|2017

INTERNATIONAL REPORTS

Religion

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Dear Readers,

The announcement by U.S. President Donald Trump that Jerusalem will be recognised as the capital of Israel and the subsequent reactions from various political and religious gropus have once again shown: both spheres – politics and religion – have always been closely interwoven, not only in Christianity, but also in Islam, Judaism, and other religions. Even in the 21st century, it is hard to imagine politics without any religious dimension, and religion without politics, in many parts of the world.

Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, for example, can look back on an eventful history of political interference with their faith. Nevertheless, they have succeeded in preserving their religious identity under various political systems in the face of what were sometimes dire circumstances, as Dževada Šuško's article reports.

In Senegal, a predominantly Muslim country, the separation of state and religion is a constitutional principle. At the same time, however, local religious leaders, the Marabouts, are demonstrating increasing political will. Thomas Volk's article analyses the role of the Sufi Brotherhoods and what that role has to do with the growing influence of Islamist groups.

Some of the evangelical churches in Latin America, whose ranks have swelled by around 15 per cent in recent decades, are also taking a stronger political position. The highly fragmented movements have not yet developed a common, transnational political agenda. Yet, in light of demographic developments, the evangelical voter potential – and thus its voice in politics – is likely to increase further in the future, as José Luis Pérez Guadalupe and Sebastian Grundberger explain in their article.

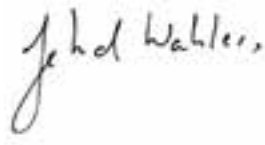
A glance at Asia shows the considerable influence of religion in legal, social, and political matters. In her article, Dian A. H. Shah examines the question of how religion, legislation, and political calculation interact in their entirety and the extent to which politics is influenced by populist religious elements in particular.

Finally, Otmar Oehring uses the example of the persecution of Christians in Iraq by the so-called Islamic State (IS) to illustrate the inhumane consequences that political interpretation of fundamentalist religious ideologies can still have today. IS atrocities have contributed decisively to the exodus of Iraqi Christians. Although Christian settlements in the Nineveh plain have been freed from IS, the risk of a complete end to Christian presence in Iraq remains.

Especially in the context of armed conflicts and violent repression, the significance of religious freedom cannot be estimated highly enough. On the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, Chancellor Angela Merkel once again pointed out that the preservation of religious liberty throughout the world is a central task for which political and religious authorities share responsibility. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung will continue its international commitment to religious freedom as a fundamental human right as well as religious dialogue in the future.

I wish you a stimulating read.

Yours,



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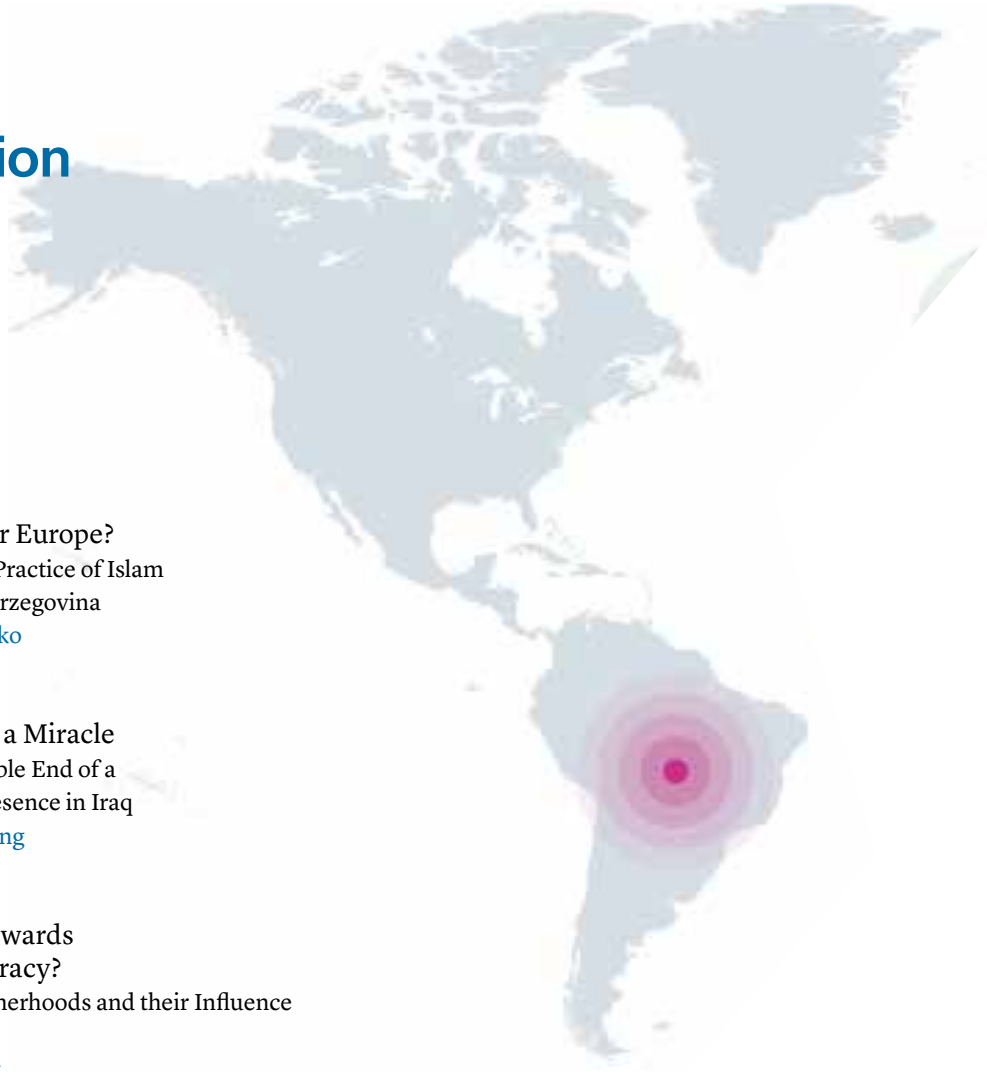

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Religion

A Model for Europe?

History and Practice of Islam in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Dževada Šuško

Bosnia-Herzegovina can look back on an eventful history of social upheaval and armed conflicts in which especially Bosnian Muslims were frequently the victims. It is therefore rather surprising that Bosnian Islam is characterised by a relatively high degree of cosmopolitanism and liberalism that might even serve as a model for European-style Islam.

The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina[1] practice what can be called "Islam of a European character". This means that the Bosniaks' understanding of Islam[2] is based on liberalism, desire for peace, reconciliation, and openness to the world. The Islamic Community, the representative body of Muslims in Bosnia and the diaspora territories they inhabit, has been pursuing its religious life in harmony with the ruling legal system for 135 years, clearly stands for the separation of state and religion, finances itself, is economically and organisationally independent, offers a high degree of transparency in the face of various monitoring mechanisms, organises itself according to democratic principles, and affirms a pluralistic democratic system of government. It also always emphasises the European identity of the Bosniaks, which includes acceptance of coexistence with other religions based on the Community's own experience.[3]

In order to explain this assessment in more detail, this article first seeks to illuminate some of the particularities, developments, and characteristics of the history of Bosnia and the Bosniaks that have shaped the Bosniaks' understanding of religion to this day. An overview of the history of Islamic institutions, thought, and everyday practice in Bosnia since 1878 follows. An examination of a few recent influences on the teachings of Islam and the current situation of the Islamic Community round off the article.

The Bosniaks and Religion: Historical Peculiarities and their Repercussions

In the Middle Ages, Bosnia was already an established kingdom. For example, one of the princesses from the Kotroman family married a count from southwest Germany and imperial adviser at the court of Charles IV.[4] The medieval kingdom has had a great symbolic value for Bosniaks since the Habsburg period (1878-1918), as indicated by the state coat of arms chosen in 1992 – an aspect of Bosniak historical consciousness which stands in marked contrast to the hegemonic discourse in Arab countries and Turkey.

The development of this regional identity was promoted, among other things, by the fact that "Bosnia" was also preserved as an administrative unit under the rule of the Ottomans (1463 to 1878). Thus, the transitions to Islam are obviously connected with the existence of a pre-Reformation "Bosnian church" and its persecution by the Popes – not least as a result of a typically European crisis situation. In any case, it seems doubtful that the region's Islamisation was coercive in nature, especially as regards the Balkan countries (Serbia, Greece). Instead, as the westernmost province of the Ottoman Empire, Bosnia developed into a country characterised by religious diversity – with Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Islam, and Judaism all represented.

Bosnian Muslims had careers in the political and military apparatus of the Ottoman Empire, making decisive contributions to developing their country and strengthening its reputation. In the final phase of the Ottoman Empire, the strong position of military commanders in the border provinces favoured separatist tendencies, such as the autonomy movement of Husein-Kapetan Gradaščević – the "Dragon of Bosnia", still popular today – in the 1830s.

After revolts in Serbia and Montenegro triggered the Great Eastern Crisis in 1876, the European powers met at the Berlin Congress in the summer of 1878 and agreed to grant those territories independence, although Bosnia itself was to be administered by Austria-Hungary. While this occupation was something of a shock to Muslims, the majority of them remained in their homeland and began the process of integration into the new political system. For four decades (1878 to 1918), the country was part of Central Europe; modernisation processes took hold in society, economy, infrastructure, and education; and Bosnian Muslims also gradually moved away from the Ottoman Empire and oriented themselves towards Central Europe. This influenced their lifestyle, clothing, and university education, for example, but also the interpretation, practice, and teachings of Islam itself. The Habsburg monarchy succeeded in gaining the loyalty of the Bosniaks, but it was conditional on religious freedom and a sensitivity to religious needs of the affected – of those in the military, for example. For example, the 1882 Military Law defined rights and religious freedoms explicitly and in detail: Muslims in uniform were allowed to perform their daily prayers and Friday prayers and were entitled to a separate diet that was free of pork and lard. Moreover, imams were engaged to hold Friday and holiday prayers.[5] The First World War confirmed the Bosniaks' identification with the Habsburg monarchy – the members of the elite Bosniak Regiment were regarded as "Austria's bravest sons".[6]

The 1914 assassination by Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip of Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the throne, and his wife Sophie was regarded in Austria-Hungary as a radical expression of Serbia's insistence on its territorial demands. When, in 1918, Bosnia and Herzegovina were appended to the "Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes" (SHS) led by Belgrade, that kingdom ignored the Bosniaks programmatically in its very name. It also implemented an immediate "agricultural reform" that ruined the landowners. The state was also hostile to most of its neighbors and made official harassment seem a normal part of life.[7] The Bosniaks aspired to self-organisation in order to preserve the territorial integrity of their homeland, Bosnia, and their religious identity within the Islamic faith. The name "Yugoslavia" goes back to the introduction of dictatorship in 1929, which was

followed by an administrative reclassification that destroyed Bosnia as an internal administrative unit. The Second World War brought the Bosniak population in Eastern Bosnia mass executions and expulsions, especially by "royalist" Serbian military units called *Chetniks*.[8] The total proportion of civilian victims in Bosnia was eight to ten per cent. The victory of the communist partisans under Joszip Broz Tito was followed by the removal of non-communists

"Return of genocide": The massacre of Srebrenica is seen as the most serious war crime on European soil since the Second World War. Source: © Damir Sagolj, Reuters.

from offices and functions: believers and dissidents were met with an aggressive policy of atheisation and repression. Some laws and ordinances targeted Muslims specifically – the ban on veils, the nationalisation of property belonging to the Islamic Community, the closure of Islamic schools and Sufi orders, and the prohibition of religious literature are just some examples. Bosniaks were strongly represented in precisely those urban middle classes which, after 1945, were considered social enemies who did not fit into communist society. They were characterised, among other things, by independent craftsmen and merchants as well as members of the conservative, educated middle class. The Islamic Community was placed under state control, its property – mosques, schools, real estate – was largely nationalised, and its personnel were often directed by the secret service. On the other hand, socialism contributed to industrialisation and urbanisation. Primary education for girls was compulsory, and women were better represented in the labor market. The regime attempted to exploit Muslims within the framework of non-aligned policies in pursuit of foreign policy goals vis-à-vis socialist dictatorships in the Arab world such as Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Iraq.[9] With the help of a powerful secret service and indoctrination, the communist ideology conquered the public space and permeated private life. Religious life often withdrew into the private sphere, and for a few decades, the religious life of many Muslims took place under a glass bell jar. During this time, the Bosniaks learned to mobilise their own forces and to promote their own Bosniak way of reading and practicing theology. Secularisation was subsequently forced and pushed ahead by means of open or informal pressure in the context of broader social transformation processes. In a survey of 600 Bosniaks, religious sociologist Dino Abazović found that 60 per cent preferred to treat religion as a private matter. Only a minority performed the five daily prayers.[10]

After the retirement of the head of secret service Aleksandar Ranković in 1966, a process of political opening began and lasted until the 1970s: mosques could be built, the Islamic girls' school was reopened, Islamic books could be printed again, foreign studies in Cairo and other places were approved, and more. In 1968, the Bosniaks were also recognised as an equal nation, but under the misleading name of "Muslims in a national sense". Tito's death in 1980 led to a renewed intensification of repressions. The condemnation of 13 intellectuals, including Alija Izetbegovic, in a staged trial in 1983 was intended to intimidate, but instead displayed the irrationality of the regime on the international stage.

Due to reprisals during the Communist dictatorship, religious life mainly took place in private.

Slobodan Milošević, who became head of the party in Serbia in 1986, sought to re-centralise Yugoslavia. The party organisations in Slovenia and Croatia fought back and after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1990, an absolute majority of the people of these republics voted in referenda to leave Yugoslavia. When Bosnia followed this model in 1992, the Belgrade regime reacted with a brutal deployment of the Yugoslav People's Army, which became complicit in participating in the extermination policy: although the war was primarily over territory, it also represented a war of annihilation on the civilian population, Islamic cultural assets, and on architecture, especially mosques. Brutal acts such as cutting crosses into the skin of prisoners led many Bosniaks to believe they were being attacked only because of their religious convictions – although the majority of them scarcely involved religion in their daily routine, but lived Islam at best according to the principle of "belonging rather than believing".[11] Apart from the war itself and all that it entailed, the effect of such – albeit paradoxical – attributions seems to have led the Bosniaks to an interest in their own origins that has since continued to grow.

In the summer of 1992, American journalist and Pulitzer Prize winner Roy Gutman spoke of a return of genocide to European soil. The discovery of mass graves had confirmed the massacre of the civilian population in the meantime. The collective execution at Srebrenica was only one of many prominent war crimes. Expulsions and deportations to concentration and rape camps had been routine since the spring of 1992. The Security Council had also imposed an arms embargo on Bosnia. When Tuđman and Milošević concluded a pact in 1993 with the aim of dividing Bosnia between Croatia and Serbia, the Bosniaks were attacked by both sides, although many Bosnian Serbs and Croats fought in the Bosnian army for the country's independence and territorial integrity.[12] Iran deserves the credit for undermining the arms embargo. It should be emphasised that the arms deliveries were made in coordination with the U.S. According to Helmut Kohl, who was Chancellor at the time, Germany, then in "critical dialogue" with Tehran, also "ignored" the embargo from 1994 onwards.

Of European Character:
The Islam Practiced by the Bosniaks

Bosniaks are indigenous European Muslims who are part of Europe not only geographically, but also historically and culturally. Islam in Bosnia is rooted in the Sunni tradition, Hanafi school of law, and Maturidi theology, in which various Sufi orders represent a mystical interpretation of Islam.[13] An important part of religious practice is intercessory prayers performed at places of pilgrimage (*dovišta*). The practice itself comes from pre-Islamic times, from medieval Bosnia, where followers of the heretical sect gathered to pray on the hillsides and river banks. Even today, believers and representatives of the Islamic Community meet on fixed days to maintain this tradition. A reformation movement for the revival of Islamic thought became an important element of the Bosniak Muslim identity. In view of the intensive encounters and experiences with various political, social and economic systems, religious scholars felt compelled to find solutions to new living conditions, especially in the late 19th century, when Bosnia was under the administration of Austria-Hungary and when Islam and Muslims were brought into close proximity with European culture. Progressive modernists or reformists such as Mehmed Teufik Azabagić, Mehmed beg Kapetanović-Ljubušak, Mehmed Džemaludin Čaušević, Husein Đozo, and others accepted the current challenges and adapted their interpretation of Islam to the changed living conditions. Even in the "first Yugoslavia", when the Bosniaks were no longer recognised as a people and the property of the Islamic Community was largely nationalised, the reformist tradition of scholars made their contribution to the preservation of religious life and of Bosnian identity. A school of thought arose which, based on the sources of Islam, the Quran and *Sunnah*, sought ways to enable Muslims to live in various secular state systems without abandoning their own religious identity. The experience of finding their way in different social systems and living in close proximity to other religions and nations while at the same time reinterpreting Islam contextually on the basis of legitimate sources – again, the Quran and *Sunnah* – with the help of legitimate means (*ijtihad*),[14] promoted the experience of diversity and strengthened the adaptability of the Bosniaks.

As a central authority in religious affairs, the Islamic Community has clearly positioned itself against an extreme interpretation of Islam.

The Islamic Community:
A Repudiation of Extremism and Violence

An essential part of Bosniak religious identity is the Islamic Community (*Islamska zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini*, or IZ), which was founded in 1882 during the Austro-Hungarian era, and

Light in the darkness: Many Bosniaks who have been traumatised by war and genocide regard Islam as a religion of freedom, promises of happiness and tolerance. Source: © Dado Ruvic, Reuters.

represents the Bosniaks' official religious organisation. This Bosnian form of Islamic organisation is considered exemplary for Europe today. The Islamic Community is independent of the state and other organisations, finances itself, and has an elected head (*Reisu-l-ulema*), a semi-democratically elected legislature (*Sabor*),[15] a constitutional court that ensures that the Islamic Community's work complies with the constitution, and an administrative apparatus (*Rijaset*). Most of the income is from membership fees, taxes (*zekat, sadakatu-l-fitr*), and foundations (*vakuf*). The community is responsible for mosques, trains and appoints imams and religious teachers, draws up legal opinions (*fatwa*), and is responsible for religious instruction and for theological studies at three universities.[16] The Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo, which is responsible for the education of imams, theologians, and Islamic scholars, has clearly positioned itself against any extreme, violent interpretation of Islam. The Islamic Community sees itself as the central Islamic authority for Muslims in Bosnia and abroad, including imams who pray in Bosnian mosques in Germany, Australia, or the U.S. They are appointed in their entirety by the *Reisu-l-ulema*. This central organisation of the Islamic

Community, with the imams, religious teachers, and theologians trained in their educational institutions (*madrasas* and faculties), is considered a model for Muslim organisation, leadership, and representation. This centralisation has proved to be beneficial and stabilising, since there have been no cases of radicalisation in the mosques controlled by the Community itself. According to its own statute (constitution), the Community bases its activities on the Quran and *Sunnah*, the Bosniak Islamic tradition, and current needs. This tradition is understood to be the way in which Bosnian Muslims have practiced, interpreted, and taught their religion in Bosnia for about 600 years. The Islamic Community has repeatedly affirmed the principle of the separation of religion and state.[17] There has therefore been no explicit demand for the introduction of Sharia, the Islamic law. The attitude of the Bosniaks, who respect the law and whose lifestyle tends to be European, can also be observed in the fact that polygamy has never been practiced. Xavier Bougarel, for instance, calls the Bosniaks "irreversibly secular".[18] The Islamic Community is based on democratic principles. Office holders, starting with *Reis-u-l-ulema*, are elected by ballot. Their terms are limited to a period of four to seven years and can be extended by a maximum of one term. This also reflects a European-coined understanding of Islam. The religious sociologist Merdjanova, who dedicates herself to researching Islam in the Balkans on the basis of comparative studies, has found that the Islamic Community of Bosniaks is playing a key role in conveying a positive image of Islam and that it can serve as a model for Muslims in Europe.[19]

Revival of Islam:
Causes, Dangers, Opportunities

The processes of democratisation in the late 1980s and 1990s led to the collapse of the communist system. Since human rights and therefore religious freedom are among the values of a democratic society, religion could again be practiced in public. The newly formed political parties appealed to the national and religious identity of their people, which in most cases quickly resulted in nationalism. Among the signs of the growing presence of religion in the public sphere were, among others, the introduction of religious instruction in schools, the increasing use of places of worship, headscarves on women, weddings in mosques, and the opening of Islamic schools and faculties. As in other post-communist societies, a revival of religions began.

Additionally, the war in Bosnia from 1992 to 1995, in which the Bosniaks became the primary victims of genocide, mass destruction, expulsions, and rape, also led to a growing return of Muslims to God and religion. The influence of globalisation processes, multimedia networks, social media, and internet forums also played a role. They facilitated the rapid dissemination of new ideas and interpretations of Islam. There is now a wide range of self-appointed preachers who post their sermons online, but also questionable Islamic (online) legal opinions of dubious origin, composed on the basis of inadequate theological knowledge.[20]

Even though Western countries, especially Germany and Austria, provided humanitarian aid during the Bosnian war and sheltered and supplied refugees, there was no discernible strategy on the part of the EU or the U.S. for ending the armed conflict in Bosnia. Thus, the Bosnian army was on its own, and Bosnians felt abandoned by the Western world, the UN, the EU and the major powers. The people of Bosnia had firmly believed that the West would not allow a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country with its numerous historical monuments to be destroyed right under their noses. Disillusionment was swift. The Bosnian government sought help from countries that were willing to provide weapons, money, and food. The primary benefactors were Iran and Saudi Arabia.[21] Other countries, such as Libya and Syria, were cautious, and Gaddafi even received a medal from Milošević for oil deliveries to Serbia during the war. Aid for Bosnia from these countries included fighters and Islamic missionary aid organisations, which also distributed complementary Islamic literature. This

included translations from Arabic, which propagated a perspective on the correct way of life according to Islam, and interpretation of Islam itself, which was previously unknown to the Bosniaks. According to this literature offered, the Muslims in Bosnia were too irreligious, having drifted far away from the "true" Islam. Scholarships for theological studies in Cairo, Medina, Damascus and Amman were awarded to graduates, some of whom, on their return home, brought a new understanding of Islam back with them. Majority Muslim countries, especially those, such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, that had been avoided by the communist regime, also contributed a great deal to the reconstruction of demolished Islamic architecture. To this day, various organisations are still active with their cultural centers, offering language courses or similar assistance. This led to a pluralisation of the Islamic scene in Bosnia. On the one hand, the formal structures of the Islamic Community changed as they opened to other schools of law; on the other, informal changes resulted from globalisation processes. Beyond the control and influence of the Islamic Community, this led to a propagation of an alternative, sometimes literal, non-contextual interpretation of Islam. Many Bosniaks, traumatised by war and genocide, perceive these new ideas as attacks on the traditional Bosnian understanding of Islam, rejecting their rigidity as an attempt to replace a religion of peace, happiness, and tolerance with one of dissatisfaction, darkness, and exclusion.[22] There is even talk of a secret war between Iran and Saudi Arabia over long-term influence on political, religious, and security-related institutions in Bosnia.[23] Turkey's influence has increased in the form of Turkish governmental and non-governmental organisations, especially since the AKP came to power. Many Bosniaks welcomed this development as a counterbalance to the Salafists and emphasised the relationship with the Ottoman Turkish culture as an integral part of the Bosniak Islamic tradition. This has manifested itself both in the practice of Islam and in the development of a secular understanding of the state since the time of *Tanzimat*, the era of the modernisation initiated by the Ottoman Empire in the 1830s, which stands in contrast to developments in Saudi Arabia or Iran. In fact, in addition to the indigenous Bosniak understanding of Islam, a competition has developed between Turkish and Saudi Arabian interpretations of Islam.[24]

The Islamic Community's strong position makes it harder for radical Islamic groups to establish themselves in Bosnia.

Other Islamic groups that operate among the Bosniaks in Bosnia and the diaspora communities they populate, but outside the Islamic Community itself, are *Shia*, *Ahmadiyya*, Bahá'í and *Sufi* Orders, and the followers of Fethullah Gülen (*Nurdschije*). They are not covered in the media even though they have followers among the Bosniaks. *Shia* organisations in Bosnia such as the *Ibn Sina* Institute, the *Kewser* women's organisation, the *Mulla Sadra* Foundation, the *Djulistan* pre-school and primary and secondary school, the *Znakovi vremena* journal, the *Sahar* TV channel, etc. are financed by Iran. They address all levels of society in Bosnia and have the potential to import a new religious practice. The *Ahmadiyya* and the *Bahá'í* movements are active in Bosnia through peace-building education projects, although there are also various other Islamic movements and educational institutions, including those from Turkey. These include the new *Sufi* orders (*tariqat*), the government-friendly International University of Sarajevo (IUS), several primary and secondary schools (*Bosna Sema*) and a university (International Burch University) founded by Fethullah Gülen and the humanitarian organisations of religious origin associated with him (*Hizmet*). However, the media attention is mainly directed towards foreign "fighters" and Salafists. Nationalist politicians, such as Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović and Czech President Miloš Zeman, make use of populist rhetoric when they accuse all Bosniaks of being radical Islamists and a threat to Europe, contributing to

the current uptick in intolerance towards Muslims in the Balkans and Europe.

In fact, the radical movements from abroad have an implementation problem in Bosnia, so that their influence on everyday Islamic life is limited: Bosniak parents use their educational institutions for their children, take part in the language and computer courses they offer, and are grateful for humanitarian aid. However, the imams and teachers of religion are still being trained and appointed by the Islamic Community. Islamic literature is published and distributed by the *El-Kalem* publishing house, and the Islamic Community's educational institutions also retain the greatest influence.

The Phenomenon of Foreign Fighters and Salafists

The foreign fighters of the war years largely represented a different understanding of Islam, one which was also the basis of the Salafist movement, which represented the greatest challenge to traditional Islam. With their claim of practicing "true" Islam, the Salafists appeared from the outside to be a monolithic construct from Saudi Arabia, but are actually at odds with each other. A distinction is made between four political groups,[25] each of which is entirely represented in Bosnia: The *Taqlidiyun* stand for a conservative interpretation of Islam, even though they are explicitly non-political and distance themselves from violent extremism. For example, they see Osama bin Laden as someone who merely brings disorder and confusion. Nonetheless, they criticise the way the Bosniaks practice Islam and by no means accept the authority of the Islamic Community. Instead, they advocate segregation from society. The *Sahwa* (resurrection) have the largest following inside and outside of Saudi Arabia. Their focus is on education, although their ideological (non-militant) confrontation with secular and liberal values has opened themselves up to precisely these Western values. They take a stand against violence and respect the state of Bosnia and the Islamic Community, even if there are controversies. In Bosnia itself, they have a presence in Internet portals, NGOs, TV broadcasts, publications, and educational institutions. *Jihadists* are the third group. They represent the militant branch of the Salafists, considering war as a religious duty of all Muslims, provided that Muslims are attacked and the enemy is clearly definable, as was the case in the war against Bosnia. That is why they speak of "legitimate jihad". The fourth and most militant, extreme, and dangerous group are the *Takfirists*.[26] The term is considered synonymous with Al-Qaeda, ISIL, or the *Al Nusra* Front in Syria. *Takfirists* claim the right to declare Muslims, Muslim societies, politicians, intellectuals, and anyone who does not identify with their idea to be unbelievers and apostates and to liquidate them.[27]

For 25 years, this complex Salafist scene has been trying to establish itself in Bosnia, albeit against the resistance of the Islamic Community and most of the Bosniaks. Only individual groups were active in small parallel groups (*para-džemat*) or live secluded in two villages. In 2016, the Islamic Community called for the so-called parallel groups to be dissolved and structurally integrated into the community. The result varied according to the understanding of Islam of the group in question: some groups represent a conservative but non-violent form of Islam that challenges the secular society with the aim of change, while others, who are more militant extremists, view almost all Bosniaks, including the *Reisu-l-ulema*, as unbelievers.[28] The former were finally integrated into the Islamic Community, but the militants reject such a concession: Of 38 groups working parallel to the Community, 14 joined. The Bosnian state is now dealing with the anti-integration activists, however, with little interest on the part of the authorities in monitoring these micro-groups closely and ensuring that they comply with the legal requirements of non-governmental organisations and religious institutions, or to ensure that their activities are carried out in accordance with the law, or to close them down in the interests of internal security if they are not.

The influence of these parallel micro-groups should not be underestimated, even though

there is great animosity on the part of traditional Bosniaks towards the Salafists.[29] These groups are by no means purely spiritual, but represent a risk to society and security, because they attack wherever the state shows weakness. Corruption, nepotism, incompetence, unemployment and other political obstacles are worth mentioning here.[30] These groups were also the ones who sent fighters to the Middle East. While fighters came from the Middle East to Bosnia during Bosnia's war, Bosnians are currently fighting in the wars in Iraq and Syria. For several years now, a mobilisation has been under way in Bosnia, but also in other Balkan countries such as Kosovo, Albania, and Macedonia – with all the associated security risks.[31] It is estimated that 164 Bosnian citizens (men and women) have so taken the field in Iraq and Syria.[32] According to Azinović, security expert at the University of Sarajevo, this figure is considerably lower than that of other Western European countries, for example.[33] Recent studies have shown that these fighters are often former criminals – unskilled, unemployed, often from broken families or marriages and in poor health or a precarious mental state. Their motives are manifold: in addition to personal problems, ideological orientation is a driving force.[34] Personal contact and exchange with people from radicalised circles plays an important role in recruitment. The core issue here is separation from the familiar and integration into a new, ideological family, one that offers respect, care, support, a sense of belonging and meaning, and also often money.[35] The aim of these militant Salafist groups is to undermine the cultural and ethnic identity of the Bosniaks, marked by a tradition of tolerance and coexistence that reaches back for centuries, instead emphasising an illusory global and religious community – the Umma – which must be fought for.[36] The motives are manifold, ranging from the idea of a religious duty to emigrate to an "Islamic state" to the urge to experience an adrenaline rush.[37]

Among the Bosniaks as a whole, the number of adherents to extreme interpretations of Islam is low, as studies by Evan Kohlman and Juan Carlos Antúnez Moreno, religious extremist experts, have shown. The Bosniaks tend to be reluctant to embrace new interpretations of Islam, but open to a civil, non-violent, peaceful Islamic way of life: "The main obstacle to the spread of radical Islam in Bosnia is not NATO or the European Union or any other international organisation, but the Muslims of this country. [...] Bosnian Muslims are not a threat for Europe, they are an opportunity."[38] In recent times, the Bosniaks' relations with the Muslim world have enjoyed many commercial ties, but in the religious milieu the relationship is characterised by emotion in the sense of a religious, but not a political, bond.[39] Feelings of belonging to Europe or the West on the one hand and to the Muslim world on the other are no longer mutually exclusive because, in the course of globalisation and modernisation, the West must find its way in the Muslim world, just as Islam must find its way in the West. EU counter-terrorism expert Gilles De Kerchove said in an interview with the Spanish newspaper *El Mundo* in September 2017 that Britain had the highest number of extremists with a figure of at least 20,000, followed by France with about 17,000, Spain with 5,000, and Belgium with 2,000.[40] Measured against this figure, the number of adherents to violent Islam in Bosnia appears to be negligible – despite the fact that the absolute majority of the population in Bosnia are Muslim Bosniaks.

Radical Islamists have also travelled from Bosnia to Iraq and Syria to fight.

Setting Limits, Taking Preventive Action, Working Together

In 2014, Bosnia became the first state in the region to change its penal code to make participation in foreign paramilitary and para-police organisations a punishable offense. This means that participation in the war in Iraq and Syria will be prosecuted. It is important that the state does not operate separately from society in this

Authority: According to prevailing laws, only the Islamic Community is authorised to teach and interpret Islam in Bosnia. Source: © Dado Ruvic, Reuters.

respect, but that both sides are involved in prevention and security preservation issues.

According to the current legal situation in Bosnia, the Islamic Community is the only organisation authorised to teach and interpret Islam there. Since the emergence of alternative Islamic doctrines, the Community has initiated and implemented many measures, only a few of which can be mentioned here: As early as 1993, in the midst of the war, the *Reisu-l-ulema* of that time prepared a legal opinion which established the teaching of the Hanafi school of law as a generally binding standard for rituals in mosques, prayer rooms, and *tekkes*, at religious events, for example. The Islamic tradition of Bosniaks became an integral part of the statute of the Islamic Community. In a 2006 declaration, Europe was recognised in the Islamic theological sense as a "house of peace and security", and the signatory Muslims committed themselves to the rule of law and democracy, tolerance and human rights in accordance with the principle of a social treaty. 2006 also saw a resolution on the interpretation of Islam: Since then, numerous continuing education seminars, discussions, and conferences on alternative interpretations of Islam, moderation in Islam, youth work, etc. have been organised with the aim of providing clarification, prevention, and

information.[41] In 2007, there was a further declaration that any interpretation of Islam must be institutionally anchored. In 2008, the Institute for Islamic Tradition of Bosniaks was founded. Through research projects, publications, conferences and similar activities, the Institute scientifically explores and processes its understanding of Islam, thus consolidating it. In 2012, the Center for Intra-Muslim Dialogue (*Vesatijja*) was founded. It has translated several books focusing on Islamic moderation, religious abuse, and violent extremism from Arabic into Bosnian. The platform on the cooperation of the Islamic Community and the organisations of Islamic orientation was also a guide in these efforts. In 2015, 37 influential Bosniak representatives from state, political, religious, scientific, and cultural institutions signed a joint declaration condemning violent extremism and religious abuse. In 2016, the Council of Scholars (*Vijeće muftija*) issued instructions on the integration of individuals and groups who are active in Islam but not members of the Islamic Community. *Reisu-l-ulema* was firm: "We will not allow others to teach us Islam."[42]

Summary

In summary, the history of the Bosniaks has always been bound up in the context of European history. The Bosniaks have always lived together with members of other religious faiths and ethnic groups. In spite of circumstances that were difficult at times, they learned to integrate into different states and systems, preserving their faith in Islam, but also to adopt ideas and concepts, such as human rights and democracy, from their surroundings. However, instead of "tolerance" (sufferance by an absolutist central state), many Muslims in Bosnia nowadays prefer the concept of acceptance, as it more clearly reflects the experiences of pluralistic coexistence (*suživot*). This and the intensive exchange with members of different ethnic groups and religions fostered adaptability and acceptance of diversity – despite migration, repression, and the struggle for physical and cultural survival. The history of Yugoslavia (1918-1992) in particular was repeatedly marked by discrimination and setbacks, especially for the Islamic faithful, but also for Bosniaks as a group. On the other hand, the desire to maintain the Bosnian language, Bosnian territorial integrity, and religious identity (though perhaps not in daily practice) as a cultural heritage, became ever more pronounced. Despite repression, the Bosniaks neither resorted to violence nor revised their own understanding of Islam, which is based on freedom and peace.

The democratisation processes initiated with the end of socialism facilitated the anchoring of human rights and religious freedom. Later, globalisation and the internet allowed a lively exchange with new ideas and an understanding of Islam different from the one Bosniaks had previously held. But the war of annihilation against Bosnia, and especially against the Bosniaks, and the indecisiveness of the Western powers when it came to ending the war, opened the door to other Muslims who supported their brothers and sisters – including by missionary means. The pluralistic Islamic scene since the 1990s has put the monopoly of the Islamic Community into perspective. Even if the Community is the only recognised Islamic authority in Bosnia, it must respect democratic principles and religious freedom. More than 20 years after the end of the war, the state of Bosnia is still in a transitional phase. Corruption and incompetence, shortcomings and a lack of sense of responsibility in politics, nepotism and high unemployment, an economic crisis and a dysfunctional administration still harbor the danger of radicalisation and may lead to violent extremism. The failure of state and social structures is seen in the circles susceptible to such extremism as proof that people with no divine order or absolute submission to God are unable to build just, functioning systems.

For this reason, it is essential that the EU and NATO renew their interest in Bosnia and make that interest more obvious if the forces working towards destabilisation are to be thwarted. The primary objective here must be to strengthen the rule of law and to support a policy aimed at integration, one which firmly anchors the

values of dignity and equality, in order to maintain stability, security and prosperity in the region and secure them over the long term.

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1 For the sake of simplicity, references below will be to Bosnia instead of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

2 The national identity of the Bosniaks goes back to medieval Bosnia. Bosniak was the name given to all the inhabitants of Bosnia, regardless of their religious identity. During the Ottoman Empire, the population was identified by the *Millet* system on the basis of religious affiliation, making the Bosniak identity irrelevant. Even Serbian nationalists such as Dositej Obradović and Ilija Garašanin referred to Catholic and Orthodox Bosniaks. But in the course of the Serbian and Croatian nation-state movements of the 19th century, school teachers were sent to Bosnia to educate future generations so as to make them no longer be Orthodox or Catholic, but Serbs and Croats. Thus the term "Bosniak" remained for the Bosnian Muslims, for whom the preservation of religious identity was far more important during the various political and social upheavals. Cf. Bringa, Tone 1995: Being Muslim the Bosnian Way, Princeton et al., pp. 21, 33-36.

3 Cf. Bringa, ibid., pp. 30-32.

4 For example, Elizabeth of Bosnia was married to King Ludwig of Hungary. Their daughter Hedwig was crowned the first queen of Poland. She is referred to as Jadwiga of Anjou. She is buried in Krakow with the Polish royal dynasty.

5 Cf. Šuško, Dževada 2014: Bosniaks & Loyalty: Responses to the Conscription Law, in: Hungarian Historical Review 3:3, pp. 529-559, here: p. 536.

6 Cf. Neumayer, Christoph / Schmiedl, Erwin 2008: Des Kaisers Bosniaken. Die bosnisch-herzegowinischen Truppen in der k.u.k. Armee, Vienna. Schachinger, Werner 1994: Die Bosniaken kommen! Elitetruppe in der k.u.k. Armee 1878-1918, Graz et al.

7 The Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye prescribed the protection of minorities, but the Kingdom of SHS did not honor the prescription.

8 Chetniks are military units that were mainly active in the Second World War as a "Yugoslav army in their homeland" and in the 1992-1995 Bosnian war as allies of the Yugoslav army. Their ideology is based on Serbian nationalism, the defense of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Greater Serbia, in which ethnically homogeneous territories were to be created. They therefore engaged in ethnic cleansing of Catholics and Muslims in Bosnia. The Chetnik ideology is still present in Bosnia and represented by the organisation *Ravnogorski pokret*, among others. For example, public gatherings and uniformed marches are held through ethnically cleansed cities such as Višegrad and Srebrenica. See Ramet, Sabrina P. 2006: The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation 1918–2005, Bloomington.

9 In fact, Belgrade's preferred partners in the Middle East were precisely those regimes over which the Soviet Union exerted influence in the region.

10 Cf. Abazovic, Dino 2011: Bosnian Muslims at the Beginning of New Millenia. Lecture at the Akademie der Diözese Rottenburg-Stuttgart, 18-19 Nov 2011, pp. 1-15, here: pp. 10-15, in: http://bit.ly/2iiaq1i [24 Nov 2017].
11 Cf. Sorabji, Cornelia 1993: Bosnia's Muslims: Challenging Past and Present Misconceptions, London, in: http://bit.ly/2Af0lc5 [24 Nov 2017].
12 The chief generals of the Bosnian army in the Bosnian war were a Serb, Jovan Divjak, and a Croatian, Stjepan Šiber.
13 The Hanafi law school (*fikh*) is the most widespread school in Islam. Its influence extends from China and India to Central Europe to Bosnia. It is based on the teachings of the Islamic scholar Ebu Hanife, who was the first to write down Islamic law and categorise it thematically. Maturidi was his disciple and places a great deal of emphasis on reason, or the idea that the primary consideration in interpreting the sources of the Quran should be common sense. The dissemination of the Hanafi school of law and the Maturidi theology is the result of more than four centuries of being a part of the Ottoman Empire.
14 *Ijtihad* is a term from Islamic legal theory and means "effort" and "exertion". The point here is that Islamic jurists study a problem or question based on the sources (the Quran and *Sunnah*) and often draw new conclusions that have not yet been clearly addressed in the sources. The method of *Ijtihad* opens up the possibility of reinterpreting Islam under different circumstances of life. See Al-Beirawi, Abu Ismael 2007: Understanding Usul Al-Fiqh. Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, New Delhi, pp. 75-78.
15 The *Sabor* represents the interests of the members of the Islamic Community. One third of the members are imams or employees of this community, while two thirds come from the civilian population.
16 In Bosnia, religious education is offered in primary and secondary schools. There are also six Islamic grammar schools (*madrasas*) and three universities (Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo, Islamic College of Education in Zenica and Bihać).
17 Cf. Vijeće Muftija Islamske zajednice u Bosni i Hercegovini 2015: Nacrt platforme Islamske zajednice u BiH za dijalog, in: http://bit.ly/2BjFHVe [24 Nov 2017].
18 Cf. Bougarel, Xavier 2005: The role of Balkan Muslims in Building a European Islam, EPC Issue Paper No. 43, European Policy Centre, in: http://bit.ly/2BkELjI [24 Nov 2017].
19 Cf. Merdjanova, Ina 2011: Whither European Islam? Muslims in the Balkans and in Western Europe Compared, in: Stoycheva, Katya / Kostov, A. (eds.): A Place, a Time and an Opportunity for Growth. Bulgarian Scholars at NIAS. Sofia, pp. 33-41, here: pp. 38-39.
20 Cf. Bećirović, Edina 2016: Salafism vs. Moderate Islam. A Rhetorical Fight for the Hearts and Minds of Bosnian Muslims, Sarajevo, here: pp. 44-50, 61-65.
21 At that time, Germany also pursued a different policy towards Iran, because a critical dialogue was expected.
22 Cf. Kavazović, Husein 2016: Bošnjaci nemaju kompleks zato što su muslimani i Evropljani "Bosniaks have no complexes, due to them being Muslims und Europeans", Lecture at the Universtiy of Pécs, 29 Apr 2016, in: http://bit.ly/2zvzR2D [24 Nov 2017].
23 Cf. Jusić, Muhamed 2016: The Complex Narratives and Movements in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in: Azinović, Vlado (ed.): Between Salvation and Terror: Radicalization and the Foreign Fighter Phenomenon in the Western Balkans, Sarajevo, pp. 43-57, here: p. 44.
24 Cf. Öktem, Kerem 2010: New Islamic actors after the Wahhabi intermezzo: Turkey's return to the Muslim Balkans, Oxford.
25 Cf. Jusić 2016, n. 23, pp. 48-50.
26 In Arabic, *Takfir* means "to declare someone an unbeliever".
27 To point out the danger of this group, especially the abuse of fundamental concepts of Islamic doctrine, the Islamic Community published a book which disputes this movement's theological basis. Key terms such as Jihad, *Takfir,* and Sharia are contextualised and logically explained in language that is easily understandable. See Islamska zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini 2017: Ideologija tekfira i nasilni ekstremizam (Takfir ideology and violent extremism), Sarajevo, in: http://bit.ly/2j0BUWf [24 Nov 2017].
28 The *Reisu-l-ulema* even received death threats. Cf. TV1 2017: Prijetnje reisu Kavazoviću, osujećeni planovi terorista, in: https://youtu.be/ydWCt2n8tN4 [24 Nov 2017].
29 Cf. Bećirović 2016, n. 20, p. 59.
30 Cf. Jusić 2016, n. 23, p. 56.
31 Cf. Azinović, Vlado 2017: The Foreign Fighter Phenomenon and Radicalization in the Western Balkans: Understanding the Context, 2012-2016, in: Azinović, Vlado (ed.): Between Salvation and Terror: Radicalization and the Foreign Fighter Phenomenon in the Western Balkans, Sarajevo, pp. 9-20, here: pp. 9-11.
32 Cf. Džidić, Denis / Jahić, Amer 2016: Balkan Jihadists. The Radicalisation and Recruitment of Fighters in Syria and Iraq, Sarajevo, in: http://bit.ly/2i0nMLN [7 Nov 2017].
33 Cf. Azinović 2017, n. 31, p. 10.
34 Cf. ibid. p. 12.
35 Cf. Bećirović 2016, n. 20, pp. 66-72.
36 Cf. Azinović 2017, n. 31, p. 15.
37 Cf. Azinović, Vlado 2015: Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Nexus with Islamist Extremism, AI-DPC BiH Security Risk Analysis, Policy Note 5, Sarajevo, in: http://bit.ly/2j01RFl [24 Nov 2017].

38 Cf. Nikšić, Sabina 2009: Bosnian Muslims: Threat or Opportunity? With their European culture and Islamic faith, Bosnian Muslims want to act as a bridge between East and West but instead feel rejected, Balkan Insight, 18 Oct 2009, in: http://bit.ly/2zQ2Gej [24 Nov 2017].

39 Today, the Islamic Community's relations with other Islamic countries are being followed and commented on in a democratic society by a critical press. There was no comparable transparency in former Yugoslavia's intensive contacts with dubious regimes. To this day, the ideological communities of the Tito era are among those who influence the perception of the Middle East, for example. This should be reflected upon and examined or processed as self-critically as is typical of academic theology. Today's business relations with Arab countries are characterised by investments in Bosnia itself. They and the large number of tourists from those countries are an economic boon. Nevertheless, even Bosniaks have reservations about these guests – and the fact that these reservations often have to do with foreign ways of covering women is a testament to the European context of debates in Bosnia, which includes self-righteous populism and bourgeois grumbling. On the other hand, "Islamism in Bosnia" includes, for example, those ascetic-post-materialistic "freaks" and eccentrics who are "searching" for "Eastern" wisdom in Western cities, including Sarajevo, in this case from Islam. In the same way, for example, the "fighters" who grew up in Austria are also to be understood in the context of a long tradition of "romantic revolutionary" idolisation of the Orient by young Europeans.

40 Cf. Tanner, Marcus 2017: Bosnia's "Islamist Hub" Tag is Complete Nonsense: The EU's anti-terror chief says the UK probably has more Islamist extremists than anywhere else in Europe – so why do people keep going on about Bosnia?, Balkan Insight, 4 Sep 2017, in: http://bit.ly/2wxvzca [24 Nov 2017].

41 These seminars are generously supported by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Sarajevo and by other international representatives such as the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway and the OSCE.

42 Radio BIR 2015: *Reisu-l-ulema*: Nećemo dozvoliti da nas drugi uče islamu (Grand Mufti: We will not allow others to teach us Islam), 10 Dec 2015, in: http://bit.ly/2AhJDqb [24 Nov 2017]. See also Al-Jazeera's interview with *Reisu-l-ulema* by Mulić-Softić, Snježana 2015: Reis Kavazović: Zabrinutost zbog zloupotrebe islama i njegovog učenja (Reis Kavazović: Concerns about Abuse of Islam and its Learning), Al Jazeera Balkans, 2 Jan 2015, in: http://ajb.me/9sfjp [24 Nov 2017].

Source: © Goran Tomasevic, Reuters.

Religion

Hoping for a Miracle

On the Possible End of a Christian Presence in Iraq

Otmar Oehring

Iraq is one of the countries generally referred to as the cradle of Christendom. Since 2003, the number of Iraqi Christians has, however, fallen dramatically. Whether Christianity has any sort of future in Iraq is currently impossible to divine.

Christians in the Multi-Ethnic State of Iraq – a Diminishing Minority

It is unclear what proportion of Christians made up the Iraqi population in the past. One source quotes a total of 1.4 million Christians in 1980 (equal to 10.25 per cent of the total population)[1]; another specifies a figure constituting seven per cent of the population.[2] According to Sarkis Aghajan Mamendo[3], the number of Christians in Iraq had already fallen to 800,000 (3.1 per cent of the total population) before the invasion in April 2003,[4] with numbers continuing to fall in the years that followed. It would therefore be surprising if there had been 800,000[5] (2.96 per cent) or 700,000[6] (2.59 per cent) Christians still living in Iraq in 2006. It might in fact have been 500,000[7] (1.85 per cent), of whom half would have been based in Baghdad.[8] The proportion of Christians in the population continued to fall dramatically even after 2006. Data to the contrary are not credible. Nevertheless, in 2011 a report alleged that the Christian population in the still stood at three per cent[9] (956,032 of 31,867,758 inhabitants[10]). In its report in 2012 on religious freedom in Iraq, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) refers to Christian leaders in Iraq in speaking of 400,000 to 850,000[11] Christians (1.21 per cent or 2.57 per cent). Compared with this, according to a statement by the Chairman of the Chaldean Democratic Union Party, Ablahad Afraim, fewer than 400,000[12] (1.17 per cent) of Christians were still living in Iraq in 2013, and USCIRF reports, referring to some Christian leaders, that the proportion of Christians remaining supposedly stands between only 300,000 and 250,000[13] (0.79 per cent or 0.55 per cent). By contrast, at the end of 2015, Iraqi bishops did not want to rule out the number of Christians still remaining in Iraq standing at only approximately 200,000, if not even fewer.[14] These figures were confirmed at the end of 2016 by Iraqi bishops, whereby it also became clear that a further – possibly even an accelerated – exodus of Christians was likely to occur, as long as the conditions they had stipulated for returning to their former places of residence remained unmet.[15]

Causes: the Consequences of the Invasion in 2003

The Iraqi constitution of 1970 did not stipulate religious freedom in the sense of Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Prior to 2003, however, under the dictator Saddam Hussein, there was considerable room for manoeuvre for the non-Muslim minorities in some instances, albeit this was limited strictly to the practice of religion. The sharp decline in this section of the population since the invasion of 2003 is due in no small part to the general developments in Iraq after 2003.

Terror of Radical Islamist Groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Years from 2003 to 2010

Between 1970 and 1990 there was significant migration from northern Iraq to conurbations such as Basra, Baghdad, Kirkuk and Mosul as a result of developments in the oil industry. Violent attacks by al-Qaeda and associated groups between 2003 and 2009 triggered a return migration to northern Iraq. Many returning Christians have already permanently left Iraq in large numbers, due to the lack of prospects in their ancestral settlement areas on the Nineveh Plains and in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).

Christian Churches in Iraq

Up to 80 per cent of Christians in Iraq[16] – other sources claim two thirds, or maybe even only 50 per cent[17] – are said to belong to the Chaldean Catholic Church, approximately one fifth to the autocephalous Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East[18] and possibly just ten per cent to the two Assyrian churches.[19] Other churches in Iraq are the Syriac Catholic and the Syriac Orthodox Church, the Armenian Orthodox and the Armenian Catholic Church, the Greek Orthodox and the Greek Melkite Catholic Church. If we start from the premise that around 50 per cent of all Christians in Iraq belong to the Chaldean Church and around ten per cent are members of the Assyrian churches, then the remaining 40 per cent are attributable to the Syriac Orthodox and Syriac Catholic Church.[20]

The number of believers in Protestant and evangelical (free) churches comes to approximately 5,000.[21] If we assume a figure of around 250,000 Christians remaining in Iraq, we can extrapolate the breakdown as approximately 125,000 (equals 50 per cent) or 166,650 (equals two thirds) to 200,000 (equals 80 per cent) Chaldean Catholic Christians; approximately 100,000 Syriac Catholic or Syriac Orthodox members; and approximately 25,000 Assyrian Christians (equals ten per cent). If we assume a figure of only around 200,000 Christians in Iraq, this would mean approximately 100,000 (equals 50 per cent) or 133,333 (equals two thirds) to 160,000 (equals 80 per cent) are Chaldean Christians; approximately 80,000 are Syriac Catholic or Syriac Orthodox members; and approximately 20,000 are Assyrian Christians (equals ten per cent). Today, the overwhelming majority of Christians in Iraq live in northern Iraq, primarily in the KRI. A maximum of 25,000[22] Christians are thought to still be living in Baghdad – figures from the Chaldean Patriarch Louis Sako, according to whom up to 150,000 Christians[23] are supposedly still living in Baghdad, have no basis in fact.[24]

After the fall of Saddam Hussein, Christians were vilified and persecuted as being "collaborators" with the invaders.

After the fall of Saddam Hussein, Iraq threatened to descend into civil war, in which radical Islamist groups associated with al-Qaeda not only took action against the western invaders, but also against the native Christians, whom they accused of collaborating with the West. In point of fact, many Christians were willingly commissioned by the invading forces due to their high level of education and good language skills. As "collaborators with the Christian invaders" they therefore inevitably became targets of the radical Islamist groups alluded to. In this situation, not least out of self-defence, a section of Iraq's Muslim population began to harass and persecute not just Christians but also those of other religious minorities, and to appropriate their possessions. The consequence was a huge refugee movement from Iraq that included Christians, although the leaders of the Christian churches in Iraq – first and foremost the former Patriarch of the Chaldean Church, Emmanuel III. Cardinal Delly[25] – took a stand against it and initially did not even want to accept their believers' right to freely decide to leave the country.[26] The focus was on the concern for the continued existence of the indigenous Christian churches present in Iraq, such as the Assyrian, Chaldean and Syriac Orthodox Church, which would find no, or at least no adequate organisational

structures in the secularised host countries of Europe. There were concerns that the Iraqi Christians might join other churches there, or follow the example of the secularised populations in these countries and turn away from the churches completely. Some Iraqi church leaders are, meanwhile, cautiously optimistic now that in Germany, for example, suitable church structures are being developed. The Syriac Orthodox Christians can find a new spiritual home in the numerous Syriac Orthodox communities, which were set up as early as the 1980s by refugees from Turkey. Since then, some Chaldean communities have also sprung up, e.g. in Essen,[27] Stuttgart[28] and Munich.[29]

Expulsion in 2014 by the Terrorist Militia Islamic State

The expulsion of Christians from their ancestral settlement areas on the Nineveh Plains and in Mosul as part of the campaigns of conquest by the group known as Islamic State (IS) in summer 2014, accelerated the exodus of Christians from Iraq. The Nineveh Plains form part of those areas that have been disputed for centuries by the Iraqi central government and the government of the KRI. The Nineveh Plains have, nonetheless, been controlled for a long time by the Kurdish Peshmerga. However, they withdrew as IS advanced in the summer of 2014, which was seen as a betrayal by Christians. The Christians, though, unlike the Yazidis, were fortunate in that they had time to travel to the KRI in safety, where they also found acceptance.

The campaigns of conquest by IS accelerated the exodus of Christians from Iraq.

According to data from the Chaldean Archbishop of Erbil, Bashar Matti Warda, around 100,000 Christian refugees from Iraq are currently living as refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.[30] In mid-2016, around 18,500[31] in total were living in Jordan, while in Lebanon the figure was approximately 4,200 families (equalling up to 42,000 people).[32] At the end of 2015 there were approx. 48,000 Christian refugees from Iraq (over 90 per cent) and Syria (under ten per cent)[33] registered with UNHCR and KADER[34] in Turkey; at the end of 2016 this came to around 50,000.[35] We can therefore assume that, in both 2015 and 2016, an equally large number of Christian refugees, though probably far more, passed Turkey without registering there. In recent years, their stay has lasted up to several years, with strongly fluctuating numbers due to illegal onward movement, or as a consequence of relocation programmes implemented by the UNHCR and IOM to Australia, Canada and the USA and, most recently, to New Zealand as well.[36]

Prospects

Change in the Denominational Power Structure in Baghdad after 2003[37]

After the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime, the denominational basis of the power structure in Baghdad was reversed. Where the regime of Saddam Hussein – himself a Sunni – had had to buttress itself with the support of the smaller of the two large ethno-religious groups within the population (the Sunni Muslims making up an estimated 17 per cent of the population) the present-day government is based on the majoritarian Shiite population, with a proportion of 58 to 63 per cent. While Saddam Hussein forged alliances with Christians to secure his power, integrating them into his machinery of power (though without giving the Christians any real political influence), the Shiite-dominated governments do not require the assistance of the Christians and other non-Muslim minority groups. Nevertheless, the leaders of the so-called Christian parties in Iraq seem to still be in denial that the basic parameters have changed. The Christians hold five seats in the Iraqi parliament (328 seats), but are by no means a cohesive group. In the elections to Iraq's parliament on 30 April 2014, seven Christian parties were included on five lists and there were also two independent

Christian candidates. In light of the above, the Christian representatives in Parliament have no influence of any sort and are therefore not taken seriously by the Iraqi church leaders either.

Christians in Iraq today, who lack any political clout, can therefore no longer count on the protection and consideration that they received under Saddam Hussein.

The Relationship between the Christians and the Arabs or Kurds

The relationship between Christians and Kurds is ambivalent. This does not belie the fact that church leaders living in the KRI regularly sing the praise of the region's government in public – this is the nature of the business. Conversely, the government of the KRI, which is dominated by the Democratic Party of Kurdistan and led by Masud Barzani, has regularly presented itself as the protector both of Christians in the KRI and those living for instance on the Nineveh Plains. The former Christian Finance Minister (2006 to 2009) of the KRI, Sarkis Aghajan Mamendo, supported this position by apportioning considerable funds from the USA and the Netherlands for the benefit of the Christian churches. It is likely that both sides profited from this: the KRI government, since it was able to present itself to the West as protector of the Christians; and the Christian churches, who benefited from the financial donations.

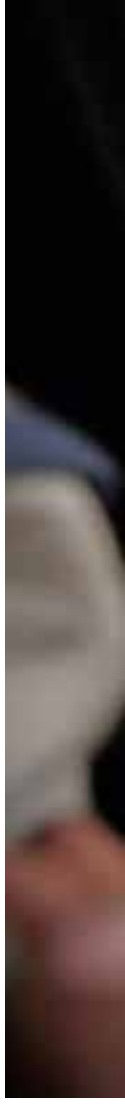
Despite all the negative experiences with the Kurds, when questioned, the Christians in the KRI and on the Nineveh Plains always emphasised that they preferred to live under the control of the Kurdish government than under that of the Arabs or the Iraqi central government. The fact that the government of the KRI, which is dominated by the Democratic Party of Kurdistan led by Masud Barzani, was seen as a secular government doubtless also plays a part, while the Iraqi central government is seen as a government dominated by Shiites and Shiite Islam; and one which many Christians allege has committed to the Islamisation of Iraq. This is also attributed to the subordinate government representatives in northern Iraq – such as the Governor of Mosul and the representatives of the governorate of Nineveh (Mosul), who are all Sunni Muslims. The Christian stance must also be understood in this context: "If Masud Barzani is no longer President of the KRI and the Barzanis in the KRI have nothing more to say, I'll be leaving the country within 24 hours."[38] Whether the resignation of Masud Barzani from his position of President of the KRI[39] will speed up the exodus of Christians, is not yet possible to determine.

The Christians would favour a Kurdish government over the Iraqi central government.

Notwithstanding this, Christians in Iraq have always lived side by side with Shiite and Sunni Arabs or Sunni Kurds and members of other, smaller ethno-religious groups in the same place or region. This is also the case on the Nineveh Plains. Nevertheless, Christians often report on the living conditions in these areas as if only Christians lived there. However, the Nineveh Plains, too, have always been an area settled by Muslims and members of other ethno-religious groups, e.g. the Shabak people. Thus, even prior to the conquest of the Christian settlements on the Nineveh Plains by IS militias in summer 2014, it is thought that only 22 to 23 per cent – others believe around 40 per cent – of the population was Christian. In terms of the future, it is estimated that Christians will make up a maximum proportion of ten per cent at best.[40]

Destruction and Reconstruction of Christian Settlement Areas on the Nineveh Plains

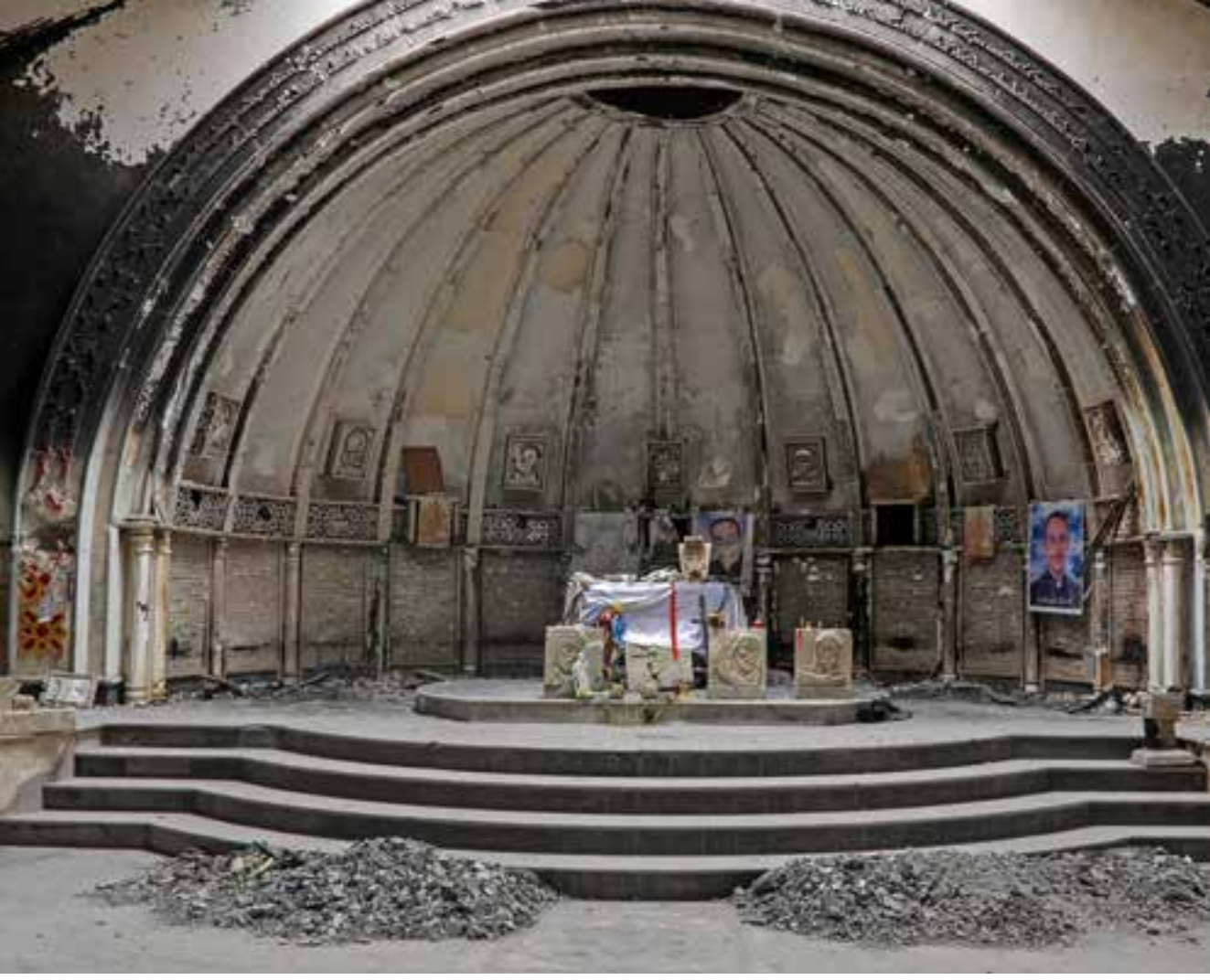
Christians' hopes of a possible return were raised following the reconquest or liberation of the Christian settlement areas of Bartella, Qaraqosh and Karemlash at the end of October 2016. These hopes were short-lived, however, after church members investigating the



The bereaved: Millions of people have been displaced due to the advance of the terrorist militia IS and the escalating combat operations in large parts of Iraq. Source: © Zohra Bensemra, Reuters.

situation in Qaraqosh and Bartella reported that between 75 and 85 per cent of the buildings in both places had been so severely damaged by the impact of the fighting and air strikes, that they would probably need to be torn down. Many buildings that appeared largely intact from the outside, were burnt out and it was doubtful whether the shell of the building could be retained. In the opinion of the Syriac Catholic Bishop of Mosul, Yohanna Petros Mouche, the pillaging was a clear message to Christians not to come back.[41] In any case, the reconstruction would take at least three to four years, swallow an enormous amount of money and could not be achieved by the local Christian population without foreign aid. Christian diaspora groups, particularly in the USA but also church aid agencies such as *Kirche in Not* (Church in Need), have not let the questionable political prospects in the region discourage from contributing to the reconstruction of the ruined Christian settlement areas on the Nineveh Plains.

In point of fact, some Christians have already returned. However, the parameters have changed so much following the referendum of 25 September 2017 that many are now fundamentally rethinking their intention to return.



After the destruction: The reconstruction of destroyed Christian settlement areas in the Nineveh Plains has begun despite uncertain political prospects. Source: © Marko Djurica, Reuters.

Smouldering and Potential Conflicts

Even before the reconquest of Mosul in 2016/17, numerous conflicts in northern Iraq flared up, which could now break out at any time. The first conflict, which had been smouldering for a long time between Baghdad and Erbil over disputed territory[42] – including the Nineveh Plains, also populated by Christians – which predominantly concerned Iraqi Kurds' desire for independence,[43] became extremely acute immediately after the referendum of 25 September 2017. The most affected are those Christians who want(ed) to return to their ancestral settlement areas on the Nineveh Plains east of Mosul. However, Christians are also at risk of being affected by potential conflicts that could arise out of the interests of Iran (land bridge between Iran and northern Syria)[44] and Turkey (PKK, Mosul, Sunnis)[45] in northern Iraq.

Returning to the Nineveh Plains – a Question of Safety

The Nineveh Plains are an area of Iraq that lies outside Kurdistan and which is disputed territory between the central government and the Kurdish regional government. A prerequisite for Christians to return to this area is for their safety there to be guaranteed. The central government is by rights responsible, but has

shown no presence there as yet, in contrast to the Kurdish Peshmerga. However, after the referendum of 25 September 2017, the Peshmerga were forced to withdraw by the Iraqi army and the Shiite militias allied with it. Whether the central government will now ensure order and security remains to be seen. There is no legal basis for international security guarantees – often demanded by Iraqi Christians – since Iraq, which would be responsible for providing protection, is a sovereign state. The expectation that Christian and Yazidi militias could guarantee protection is equally unrealistic, since they are too small to do so, as well as being poorly equipped and having virtually no training. Furthermore, the governments in Baghdad and Erbil are hindering their deployment. Moreover, they are in part allied to the Iraqi army, in part to the Shiite-dominated people mobilisation militias or the Kurdish Peshmerga and, consequently, thoroughly fragmented.

Is there a Future for the Presence of Christians in Northern Iraq?

It is virtually impossible to give an unequivocal answer. The prospects have certainly not improved following the referendum of 25 September 2017. In a joint statement dated 1 October 2017, the leaders of the Christian churches in the region of Kurdistan[46] gave their view[47] on the precarious situation following the referendum. With regard to the current problems they are advocating dialogue between the Iraqi central government and the government of the KRI. At the same time, they accuse both governments of failing to defend Christians' interests and to protect their rights, which they claim has led to the migration of many Christians. The bishops lament the fact that there are no indications of Christianity having a future in Iraq, where it has existed since the 1st century. They say that the situation has become very serious for Christians and that the parishes are no longer in a position to oppose the emigration of those who have remained thus far. Should the present disputes continue, Christians would increasingly decide to emigrate, which, they say, would lead to there ultimately being no Christians in Iraq anymore.

Therefore, it cannot be ruled out that we will see the end of a Christian presence in Iraq in the near future.

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Religion

Heading towards Maraboutcracy?

Muslim Brotherhoods and their Influence in Senegal

Thomas Volk

Senegal is considered a stable democracy and a role model for religious tolerance in West Africa. 90 per cent of Senegalese are Muslim and belong to one of the country's four brotherhoods. These have always been significant in shaping Senegal's political, economic and social structures. But over the last few years, the brotherhoods' political influence has strengthened significantly.

"Work for me, and I shall pray for you."[1] This was the headline of an article in the weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* about Islam in Senegal, published in 1985. The subheading of the article by Hille van Eist read "Even the president is powerless against the influence of the religious brotherhoods", referring to Abdou Diouf, the second Senegalese president to take office since the West African country gained independence from France in 1960. Senegalese Islam is traditionally associated with brotherhoods, i.e. Islamic communities of faith, which are aware of their power and exert influence over the political class. Today, more than three decades later, the political, economic and social influences of the brotherhoods in Senegal are undisputed and their presence throughout the country is a clear indication of the deeply-rooted acceptance of their role within the population.

In all Senegalese cities, signs of the public presence of Islamic brotherhoods are discernible. In the capital Dakar, the streets are filled with colourful minibuses, so-called *cars rapides*, with religious inscriptions, which characterise the cityscape. In cities such as Mbour, Thies, St. Louis, Kolda and Kedougou, one encounters street vendors sporting portraits of caliphs, high-ranking Muslim clerics, on their necklaces, and taxis displaying pictures of saints venerated by the brotherhoods on their windscreens or number plates. In the inner-city districts, one cannot help but notice groups of young men who wear long colourful robes and are accompanied by vans blaring out suras of the Quran and religious songs. These are the *Baye Fall*, who collect alms to fund the organisation of religious rallies of the Mourides, a brotherhood founded in Senegal – one of its most important. More recently, pictures of Senegalese caliphs have also been appearing in graffiti form on bridges, the walls of houses and freestanding walls.

The obvious religious – predominantly Islamic – devotional imagery in public spaces may seem surprising, particularly as Senegal has a decades-long tradition of secularism. But as indicated by findings of the U.S. research institute PEW, published in December 2015, religion plays a key role for Senegalese people. 97 per cent of the Senegalese respondents in the representative PEW survey said religion was very important in their lives.[2] This places Senegal second in the PEW ranking, directly behind Ethiopia, followed by Indonesia, Uganda and Pakistan. Atheists and agnostics are regarded with particular bewilderment. The extent of religiosity among the Senegalese has also been documented in a study by the Timbuktu Institute published in the autumn of 2016.[3] According to its findings, the majority of the Senegalese respondents ages 18 to 35 are more familiar with the history of ideas relating to sharia than to secularism.

The key results of the Timbuktu study are significant as they affirm that religious authorities are held in higher esteem than state institutions by Senegal's younger population. To many respondents, the imam, acting as the religious leader of a community, has greater credibility than representatives of state institutions. The study also documented the popular view among respondents that it is, in fact, the state that

drives young people towards radicalisation as its representatives engage in corrupt practices and fail to take effective action to reduce unemployment and poverty. In its conclusion, the study states that Senegal's young population are distancing themselves increasingly from the state and turning towards religious movements. The brotherhoods play a crucial role in this. Nearly 90 per cent of Senegalese consider them the proper representatives of Islam, according to the study. It is therefore hardly surprising that Macky Sall, who has been president since 2012, makes a point of stressing the role of religion and eulogising the religious authorities. For example in the following statement made in June 2017: "The state cannot function without religion."[4]

Secularism under Pressure?

How secular can a state still be whose first citizen highlights, and even politicises, the role of religion in this fashion? How can one explain the strong influence of religions on Senegalese society as well as the country's political and economic development? And what are the distinguishable characteristics of Senegalese Islam and its successful coexistence with the democratic development of the West African country? These are questions this article seeks to address by describing Senegal's idiosyncrasies and the most essential underlying component of its community spirit – religion. The discussion will focus mainly on Islam rather than on the influence of Christian churches in Senegal.

Aside from ethnic and linguistic diversity – seven national languages are spoken and French serves as the official language – there is also religious diversity in the country. At least 90 per cent of the 14.5 million Senegalese are Sunni Muslims, but there are also a few Shiite communities in Senegal due to a large Lebanese diaspora. Officially, between five and seven per cent of the population are Christian, mostly Catholic. A further one to three per cent are followers of traditional African (nature) religions. These are established particularly firmly in the Casamance region and emphasise strong links with nature, frequently recognising local kings as spiritual leaders.

Interfaith marriages between Muslims and Christians are no longer readily accepted.

Senegal is a good example of practiced religious tolerance. Both Muslim and Christian religious holidays are public holidays and representatives of the two religious communities visit each other for important religious celebrations, such as Christmas and Tabaski, the Muslim Feast of the Sacrifice. While interfaith marriages did not cause much of a stir in the past, there have lately been an increasing number of reports about plans for such marriages encountering problems. According to Islamic doctrine, Muslim men may marry Christian women, but a Christian bridegroom would have to convert to Islam before he would be allowed to marry a Muslim woman. In the past, this rule, which is generally adhered to in nearly all Muslim countries in the world, was not taken very seriously in Senegal. But an increasing number of men are now being persuaded to convert before marrying a Muslim woman.

Senegalese Islam is generally viewed as being liberal, but external influences have furthered the proliferation of a more orthodox Islamic doctrine. As polygamy in accordance with Islamic law is permitted in Senegal and Muslim men can marry up to four women, men who publicly oppose polygamy are finding themselves increasingly ostracised in certain circles. And while not all Muslim women in the capital Dakar wear a headscarf, the number of young girls who are only allowed out with their head covered is rising significantly in rural areas. At the same time, many Muslims struggle with the adherence to some of the religious rules. Although fasting during Ramadan, for instance, one of the five pillars of Islam, is obligatory for every Muslim, there are many Muslims in

Source: © Sebastian Gil Miranda.

Senegal who do not adhere to the fasting regime. But these Muslims are increasingly coming under pressure from conservative groups and certain imams and are pilloried as not being proper Muslims. They are stigmatised in their immediate environment and can experience social exclusion.

Democracy and Islam – Lived Reality in Senegal

The Senegalese are proud of their democratic tradition of openness. The first post-independence president, Léopold Sédar Senghor, a Catholic, was elected in a predominantly Muslim country and governed Senegal for twenty years until 1980. Senghor is still held in high regard today. His election was linked directly to the goodwill of the Senegalese brotherhoods, which never advocated the introduction of a theocracy in Senegal, but always accepted secular law. The poet president, as he is frequently referred to, deliberately sought proximity to the influential brotherhoods and frequently stayed in rural areas – knowing full well that elections were decided away from the political elite in Dakar. While his successor in the role of president, the technocrat Abdou Diouf mentioned earlier, tended to keep his distance from the brotherhoods until the end of his term in 2000, they became more influential as rarely before under his successor Abdoulaye Wade (2000 to 2012). Wade, who was referred to as *président talibé*, made a point of appearing in public in a boubou, the traditional garment, and made a show of his allegiance to the Mouride brotherhood. During his time in office, marabouts received diplomatic passports to facilitate their

Source: © Sebastian Gil Miranda.

travelling, were exempted from paying taxes and allowed to purchase land rights at greatly reduced prices.

His successor Macky Sall, Senegal's fourth president, who has been in office since 2012, announced before his election that he would see to it that marabouts would become "normal citizens" under his presidency. It seems that this promise no longer holds. As his predecessor did before him, Macky Sall seeks proximity to the brotherhoods and has even introduced a special project for the modernisation of religious buildings with state funds as part of the Senegalese development plan (*Plan Sénégal Émergant*, PSE), which he initiated in 2015. Since then, several million euros of state money have been spent renovating or building churches, but especially mosques, throughout the country. This has secured him the goodwill of the marabouts. In September 2017, the appointment of the president's brother, Aliou Sall, as chief executive of the *Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations*, a high administrative position dealing with the government's tax income, elicited considerable political debate. Ever since, there has been speculation about the role of Thierno Madani Tall in this connection; he is an influential marabout who is well-known throughout the country and said to be the president's personal marabout.

Critics maintained it was no coincidence that Tall pointed out that "true charity begins in the family", while preaching at Dakar's largest mosque just before Aliou Sall's appointment.

The first article of Senegal's constitution makes very clear: "Senegal shall be a secular, democratic and social Republic. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race, sex or religion. It shall respect all beliefs."[5] This clear statement, closely modelled on the French constitution and to be understood accordingly, also accounts for the fact that political parties with religious affiliations are prohibited in Senegal and that no parties may be founded along religious or ethnic lines. In keeping with the idea of religious equidistance, the state and its institutions should therefore keep their distance from all religions and not interfere in religious affairs. But the reality is somewhat different: The degree to which the principles of secularism are applied may vary in different countries and does not go as far in most countries as it does in France, where no religious symbols are permitted in public institutions. But the commingling of state and religious activities, mutual dependencies and mutual legitimisation of state and religious authorities in Senegal make it increasingly pressing to question whether the Senegalese state is, in fact, fulfilling the spirit of Article 1 of its constitution. In a secular system, the state does not fund churches and mosques. Secularism, the separation between state and religion, which was established in France based on anti-clerical rather than fundamentally anti-religious grounds, is currently not practiced consistently in Senegal. The influence of the brotherhoods on the country's political class is so strong that political figures only have limited prospects of success without their backing. We shall now examine ways in which politics and Islam consolidate each other's power.

Arabic on the Advance as a Language Spoken in West Africa

The widespread geographic presence of Islam from West Africa to South East Asia also explains its cultural and linguistic heterogeneity. Arabic, the holy language of Islam, is now on the advance on the African continent as well. One trend that can be observed throughout Senegal is the expansion of Arabic-speaking Koranic schools as well as Franco-Arabic schools. 28 per cent of respondents in the above-mentioned Timbuktu study believe it would be sufficient for their children to be educated exclusively in a Koranic school.[6]

In the future, an Arabic-speaking elite may hold the most important positions in politics, business and academia.

Almost 90 per cent advocate for a combination of state school (based on the French curriculum) and Koranic school. Increasing numbers of parents are sending their children to the Franco-Arabic schools the state began setting up in 2002. There, the children are taught Arabic in addition to the subject-based content taught in French. Currently, the Arabic language skills are still mainly limited to memorising suras of the Quran and rarely reach a level required for good communication. Many observers believe in a few years an Arabic-speaking elite will hold the most important positions in politics, business and academia in Senegal. Some fear these individuals may in the long term decide to abandon French as the official language and incidentally adopt the social model predominant in most Arab countries – partly to mark a symbolic break with the language and the customs of the former colonial power. Subliminally, this debate also reflects the concerns of some that the Sufi interpretation of Islam, which is considered liberal, may be replaced by the Arab social model

The *Talibé* System

Some 80,000 children aged between five and 15 are thought to roam Senegal's streets as beggars. Dressed in rags, barefoot and only carrying a tin to collect money, the children walk around for several hours every day, mostly in groups, begging for money. Many of them come from the neighbouring countries of Guinea, Guinea-Bissau or Mali and were sent like their Senegalese peers to Koranic schools, the *daaras*, by their parents in order to be instructed by marabouts in the Quran and learn how to live a life to please God. Not all marabouts who teach the Quran in the approximately 6,000 *daaras* throughout the country send the children to the street to collect alms. But there are still too many marabouts who send them out to beg to cover their own basic needs, to maintain the *daara* and to provide an income for the marabout. After UNICEF had called attention to the deplorable state of affairs in *daara*, the government announced measures to improve the situation of the *talibés* in 2002. Since then, the Ministry of Education has kept a closer eye on the *daaras* to end the perfidious system of child exploitation by marabouts.

in Senegal and that the country may in time come to subscribe to a more orthodox religious interpretation. Prime Minister Mohamed Ben Abdallah Dionne, who was re-elected in August 2017, has repeatedly stressed the importance of the Arabic language for Senegal and announced an expansion of Arabic courses at all state universities.

Brotherhoods Determine the Nature of Islam in Senegal

A particular feature of Senegalese Islam is the fact that it is constituted by four distinctive Sufi brotherhoods. These faith communities "represent more of an identifying parameter than ethnicity and level of education in Senegal"[7] and have a clear hierarchical structure. Each brotherhood is headed by a caliph-general as the religious leader. He is followed by his spokesmen and various dignitaries venerated as saints at a local level, who are referred to as marabouts or sheikhs. The marabouts rely on donations from their followers and alms collected by their religious students, the *talibés*, and act as religious authorities in society. Their advice is sought ahead of decisions in professional or private matters, they act as arbiters in disputes and they are viewed as agents imparting religious knowledge and local traditions. There are several caliphs and thousands of marabouts in Senegal. Many Muslims outside the country criticise these vast numbers of religious authority figures as Islam (with the exception of the Shiites) does not in principle have a clergy or clerical hierarchy.

In the past, the brotherhoods exerted their political power at election time by making recommendations in favour of specific candidates to their supporters. For decades, the system of *ndigël* (command in Wolof) caused political figures to compete for the benevolence of the caliphs and marabouts. This state of mutual dependence between public and religious representatives can be viewed as a special Senegalese social contract. The religious recommendations of the most important caliphs were instrumental in the election victories of most presidential candidates. Some changes have been noticeable in this area since the 1990s. Since that time, the brotherhoods have no longer relied solely on election recommendations in favour of candidates who had close links to them, but have increasingly turned into political actors themselves, putting forward candidates of their own for political mandates during elections.

Sufism represents a special movement within Islam that is characterised by ascetic, spiritual

and mystical elements. A Sufi searches for the deeper meaning of the Quran and seeks to achieve the greatest possible proximity to God through hours of daily meditation, the so-called *dhikr*, dance and ecstasy. The personal and direct relationship to God is at the centre of all of a Sufi's actions, which means they put their own desires second and dedicate themselves to leading a life that is pleasing to God. Love – including love towards others – plays a central role, which explains the fundamentally pacifist stance of Sufi Muslims. Brotherhoods practice the veneration of saints and celebrate the tradition of their sheikhs, who, according to Sufi belief, have a direct family connection to the Islamic prophet Muhammad. Besides the spiritual component, brotherhoods form a close-knit social network that includes mutual (financial) assistance and can represent a social control and security network. As follows are Senegal's four major brotherhoods.

The Oldest

The oldest of the brotherhoods active in Senegal is also worldwide the most strongly represented one. It has followers not only in West and North Africa but also in the Balkans and in South East Asia. The Quadiriyya brotherhood was founded in the eleventh century in Baghdad, where its headquarters remain to this day. It became established in Senegal via Arabic-speaking traders – mainly from Mauretania. Its following is concentrated in the north of the country, in the area around St. Louis, the former capital of French West Africa. Some ten per cent of Senegalese Muslims are followers of this brotherhood.

The Smallest

The followers of the Layene represent the smallest brotherhood in Senegal. It was founded in 1884 by the fisherman Libasse Thiaw, better known to his followers as Seydina Limamou Laye, as an "imam by the grace of God". The followers of this brotherhood venerate Libasse Thiaw as the reincarnation of the prophet Mohammad. They believe he appeared as the *Mahdi*, the reborn prophet, to lead Muslims towards ultimate salvation. His son is venerated as the reborn Jesus Christ, which is why the Layene celebrate Christmas as an important religious feast and include bible stories in their religious practices in addition to the Quran. Because of the syncretic character of this brotherhood its followers appear to be heretics, at least in the eyes of many Muslims from other countries. Most of them are found among the Lebou ethnic group in the capital Dakar.

The Largest

The largest of the four major brotherhoods are the Tijaniyyah. It accounts for around 50 per cent of the country's Sunni Muslims. Its origins go back to 1780 in Algeria, where it was founded by Sidi Ahmed Al-Tijani and from where it subsequently spread throughout West Africa. While the brotherhood initially took an anticolonial stance and was not averse to violence on occasion, it became a peaceful organisation under the leadership of the Senegalese El Hadj Malick Sy (1855 to 1922) and is still willing to engage in dialogue to the present day. The brotherhood's followers come from virtually all countries of West Africa as well as from the Middle East and Indonesia. It is deemed to be the largest brotherhood in West Africa.

Aside from the Quran and the Sunna, the handed-down deeds and dictums of the Prophet Mohammad (570 to 632), the followers of the Tijaniyyah brotherhood focus on service to the community. They reject asceticism, but the recitation of certain religious formulae after the five standard daily prayers represents an important idiosyncrasy of this brotherhood. In Senegal, the brotherhood has several branches or "houses", represented by different caliphs in different cities. The "house" of Sy is deemed the most important branch of the Tijaniyyah, as its representatives are seen as the legitimate heirs to the first Senegalese to head the brotherhood. After the death of the 91-year-old caliph-general Sheikh Ahmed Tidiane Sy "Al Makhtoum", his brother, Abdoul Aziz Sy "Al Amine", was appointed the new caliph-general and leader of

the brotherhood in the spring of 2017. Since the unexpected death of "Al Amine" in September 2017, just six months after his brother's death, the 85-year-old cousin Mbaye Sy Mansour has been heading the brotherhood as its seventh caliph. President Macky Sall, almost the entire cabinet as well as a delegation representing the King of Morocco travelled to Tivaouane, the family's ancestral home, directly after the caliph's death, thereby emphasising the family's importance.

Several hundred thousand pilgrims travel to Tivaouane each year to celebrate the Prophet Mohammad's birthday by reciting verses of the Quran and phrases to praise him. This spectacle, which the Tijani refer to as *Gamou*, represents one of the country's most important religious festivals. Besides the Sy family in Tivaouane, the most significant family branches are the Tall and Niasse, the latter are based in Kaolack. One branch located in Medina Gounass is known to be particularly orthodox as it demands strict application of Islamic law. Men and women strictly lead separate lives and do not shake hands by way of greeting.

The Most Influential

Unequivocally, the most influential of the four brotherhoods is the Mouride brotherhood, founded by Sheikh Ahmadu Bamba in Senegal in 1883. Although only approximately 35 per cent of the country's Muslims belong to this brotherhood, it is nevertheless one of the fundamental factors of power in the country due to its economic, political and social influences. In 1887, Bamba, who was born in Mbacké, founded his own "holy" city of Touba, which has enjoyed special status in Senegal ever since. At the centre of Mouride ideology is the glorification of labour and the belief that hard physical work will bring one closer to God. A well-known saying among Mourides is: "Work as if you were going to live forever, and pray as if you were going to die tomorrow."

The Mourides' caliph-general, since 2010 Sheikh El Mokthar Mbacké, is considered the country's most influential public figure. Even the president kneels before him in public and willingly permits this image of absolute subordination to be disseminated by the media. The Mourides have always cooperated closely with state institutions; during the colonial era, the colonial rulers took advantage of the Mouride work ethic by employing them in their peanut cultivation enterprises. Today, followers of the Mouride brotherhood practically dominate the country's entire private transportation system, running a large network of companies and even a chain of petrol stations, *Touba Oil*.

Even the president kneels before the Mourides' caliph-general, Sheikh El Mokthar Mbacké, in public.

Senegal's Islam – Sufism or Salafism?

Since the 1990s and especially since the turn of the millennium, Sufi movements around the world – also in Senegal – are coming under pressure from Salafist preachers. The Wahhabi royal house in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states have been increasing their presence in numerous predominantly Muslim African countries since the 2000s, particularly through the construction of mosques and Koranic schools and by providing scholarships. Iran has also increased its presence in Senegal although only 30,000 to 50,000 of the 14.5 million Senegalese are believed to be Shiites. The Al-Mustafa International University in Dakar, which is funded by Iran, awards 150 scholarships to young Senegalese each year, in the hope that this will strengthen the Shia and Iran's influence in Senegal.

Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states have been intensifying their financial engagement in Senegal for years. The Islamic Development Bank, over which Saudi-Arabia has a significant

influence, supports numerous infrastructure projects in Senegal and had invested around 200 billion U.S. dollars in the country by 2016. At the same time, Saudi banks promote bank accounts conforming to Islamic principles in Senegal; as half of all Senegalese do not yet have a bank account, the Senegalese market is deemed to be particularly attractive in the medium term.

Associations from Saudi Arabia and other Arab Gulf states also award several hundred scholarships to Senegalese every year. The Islamic Preaching Association for Youth (APIJ), which was founded in 1986 by university students returning to Senegal from Saudi Arabia, is financed by Saudi Arabia and now runs over 200 mosques all over Senegal. The association was officially recognised by the state in 1999 and is deemed to have a Salafist orientation. Wahhabi literature is distributed at APIJ mosques and Salafist ideology is preached. In addition to mosques and Koranic schools, ultraorthodox preachers who follow a Salafist ideology and try to attract followers in other Senegalese mosques are also frequently funded. It therefore comes as no surprise that many Senegalese joined internationally operating terrorist organisations such as the so-called Islamic State (IS), Boko Haram or "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb" in the past.

Fundamentally, the increasing trend of Iran and other Gulf states investing in Muslim-dominated countries of West Africa is to achieve ideological supremacy and a monopoly on the interpretation of Islam practiced in the region. While the Twelver Shia that is practiced as the state religion in Iran does not have many followers in Senegal, the Wahhabi-inspired interpretation of the Islam of Saudi-Arabia reflects an ultraorthodox world view that claims to be based on the origins of Islam and rejects any deviation from this original Salafist era as forbidden innovation. Neither social model corresponds to the tolerant interpretation of Islam that has been followed for decades in the Senegal of today, which in many places is a syncretic interpretation including elements of local African religions. However, as the majority of the Senegalese population are Sunni, Sunni preachers with a Wahhabi or Salafist bent are making an effort to promote their ideology and stigmatise the Islam prevailing in Senegal as corrupted by the colonial powers and as inauthentic.

With the investment in West African states, Iran and the Arab Gulf states seek ideological supremacy and a monopoly on the interpretation of Islam in the region.

Salafism is the fastest growing Islamic movement of our time and highly heterogeneous. While the political and jihadist version of Salafism (so far) appears to have no particular relevance in Senegal, purist Salafist movements are clearly on the rise. Purist Salafists are non-militant and do not engage in an offensive strategy of immediate political transformation. However, they do follow the Salafist ideology that places God's rule above the sovereignty of the people and categorically reject any secular laws that deviate from the fundamental principles of Sharia. The transitions from purist all the way to jihadist Salafism can be fluid, which probably explains why 15 imams have already been imprisoned for propagating Islamist content in Senegal.

Salafist preachers are increasingly putting the Sufi brotherhoods under pressure by denouncing their veneration of saints as well as their wearing devotional objects and the dhikr with its singing and dancing as "un-Islamic". The Senegalese state is taking action and backs the Sufi brotherhoods. In 2016, an action plan against terrorism (*Plan d' action contre le terrorisme*, PACT) was adopted in collaboration with France, controls at the borders to neighbouring countries – particularly Mauretania and

Mali – have been strengthened, and President Macky Sall proposed a ban on women wearing full body veils, the burka, by law because it was not in line with Senegalese culture.

The brotherhoods are positioning themselves unequivocally against the use of violence in the name of Islam.

The Senegalese government is aware of the risks and security challenges that international terrorism poses and has been holding the Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security in Africa every year since 2014. At this conference, high-ranking experts from politics, academia and the military discuss ways of how to deal with terrorist threats. Such measures indicate how nervous the Senegalese government is about potential terrorist threats nowadays. Senegal is still considered the anchor of stability in West Africa. The government has expressed its commitment to the Sufi brotherhoods which are acting peacefully, thereby underscoring the strength of its bond with the traditionally influential brotherhoods in the country. The brotherhoods for their part have positioned themselves unequivocally and repeatedly against the use of violence in the name of Islam and acknowledged their responsibility in the fight against violent Islamist groupings. For this reason, the "Islamic-African Forum for the Fight against Terrorism" was founded in March 2017, in which all the country's most important brotherhoods are members.

Democracy or Maraboutcracy?

Senegal is a stable, democratic country in West Africa that has succeeded in establishing an impressive harmony between different ethnic groups and religions. The Sufi brotherhoods are making an important contribution to this. At the same time, the country is facing a number of challenges. International terrorism arrived in the region quite some time ago; poverty, a lack of prospects and corrupt elites are causing young Senegalese people to contemplate emigration and has made them become vulnerable to radicalisation as well.

Source: © Sebastian Gil Miranda.

The vitality of the Senegalese democracy was last demonstrated at the parliamentary elections on 30 July 2017. With a turnout of 54 per cent, the number of Senegalese making use of their civil right to vote was at its highest since almost 20 years ago. At the same time, the PUR (Party of Unity and Integration), which has some religious aspects to it, made fourth in the elections.[8] The party stresses that it does not pursue any religious aims, but openly declares its support for the Moustarchidine movement that was founded in Iran in 1979 in the course of the

Islamic revolution there. The party is still small and does not have a great deal of influence, but it is already showing confidence in doing well in the 2019 presidential election. It will be interesting to see how the party attempts to make an impact during the 13th parliamentary term.

The number of marabouts on the 47 lists for the parliamentary seats in the National Assembly during these last elections was larger than ever before in Senegal's history since independence. This is a clear indication of the growing self-confidence of many of the brotherhoods' representatives and, in the meantime, the willingness to shape politics has also been revealed by their political positions. Some of the marabouts were elected deputies and will do what they can to assert the interests of their brotherhoods even more directly in parliament in future. They will be assisted in their efforts by a number of newly founded Islamic associations and media portals.

The motivation and agenda of the marabout politicians can be very different from each other. But there is one constant: an unequivocal political will to further the interests of their respective brotherhood. They no longer rely on their indirect political and economic influence, but are turning into actors of the political process themselves. Mansour Sy Jamil for instance, an influential marabout of the Tijaniyyah brotherhood and party founder, tends to use populist anti-establishment rhetoric and focuses on championing the land rights of the followers of his brotherhood. Other marabout politicians, such as the three PUR deputies, demand the restoration of (Islamic) public ethics, oppose the consumption of alcohol and stress the value of the family in society.

Besides socio-economic and geopolitical challenges, the ideological dimension represents a further aspect on the list of possible threats to Senegal's stability. The decades-long cooperation between politics and the brotherhoods, characterised by their mutual benefit, could lead to Senegal's religious class developing into distinct entities. It is no longer only the demands of deference of political decision makers towards marabouts, the renovation of mosques and the maintenance of privileges that the brotherhoods have come to acquire. The marabouts are becoming political actors themselves, form political parties and associations, organise, and formulate political messages with religious overtones. The brotherhoods are challenging the country's secular system – albeit without openly formulating the vision of the system to be based on Islamic law.

However, the greatest ideological challenges by far come from Islamist movements that threaten the state and repress the Sufi brotherhoods. The government under Macky Sall has made clear that it intends to take decisive action against Islamist protagonists. But the strong financial engagement of the Gulf states in the construction of mosques and Koranic schools as well as the granting of scholarships for university studies in Arabic-speaking countries is resulting in the emergence of an Arabic-speaking elite that could, in the long term, take an anti-Western stance in their ideology. To date, the brotherhoods are still believed to act as a buffer against the influence of Islamist groupings and guarantee the country's stability. They can (still) be seen to play a positive role. They make a significant contribution to the peaceful understanding of Islam and to religious dialogue, and are the guarantor of social cohesion in Senegal.

The close cooperation between politicians and the brotherhoods could lead to the development of a distinct class of the religious leaders in Senegal.

With their syncretic and mystical outlook, the brotherhoods are more influential in Senegal than in any other West African country. This strong influence has advantages and

disadvantages. The influence of the marabouts is of concern as they are increasingly engaging in political activities as religious representatives, which will in the long term undermine the country's secular system. That said, the success of the democratisation process in Senegal over the last few decades has been in part due to the fact that the peaceful Sufi brotherhoods resolutely supported the state – of course also to benefit from state privileges.

In a world of multidimensional challenges, reliable partners are definitely important, and as the brotherhoods have the necessary authority to help curb Islamist ideologies, it will be prudent to closely follow their future engagement and not condemn them prematurely. With its democratic culture, Senegal is a role model for West Africa. The alliance with the peaceful brotherhoods has so far proved successful in the battle against destabilising factors. The preservation of freedom and security can only be guaranteed by democracy, and not by the rule of religious figures, maraboutcracy.

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The images in this article are part of the report "In the Name of Koran" by photographer Sebastian Gil Miranda. They depict the every-day life of pupils in Islamic boarding schools, the *daaras*. The entire photo series is online at: http://sebastiangilmiranda.com/in-the-name-of-koran-talibes-in-senegal.

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Source: © Brian Snyder, Reuters.

Religion

Between God and Emperor

On the Political Influence of Evangelical Churches in Latin America

José Luis Pérez Guadalupe / Sebastian Grundberger

The fast-expanding evangelical churches in Latin America are increasingly striving for political influence. So far, however, they have not yet been able to develop a common agenda. On the contrary, they are characterised by a high degree of fragmentation. In view of the growing evangelical voter potential, the influence of evangelical forces may continue to increase in the future.

"Everything begins with mysticism and ends in politics"
Charles Pierre Péguy

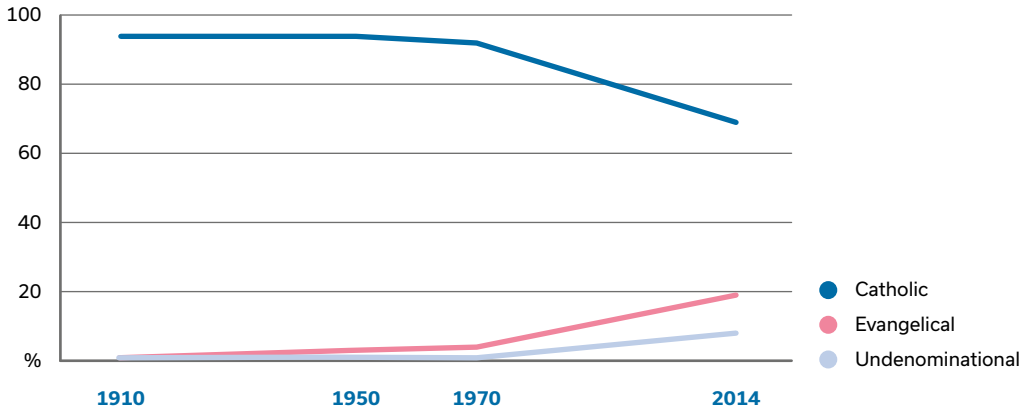
The missionary work on the American continent was the result of a political event five centuries ago.[1] Irrespective of whether it is considered a "fusion" or a "collision" of different cultures; whether we speak of "evangelism" or "conquest" – the Christianising of Latin America occurred in close collaboration with the Iberian colonial powers through the exercise of top-down political power. The fast-growing modern evangelical[2] movements have taken the opposite route in recent decades. Through intensive missionary work at the grass-roots level and with the use of sometimes thoroughly questionable methods they have "conquered" societies from the bottom up. In the process these "evangelical conquerors", who are strongly influenced by the New Pentecostal teaching, hold ever stronger economic and political control centres in various Latin American countries. They therefore contrast with their predecessors, who were influenced by European Protestantism and who for many years formed a social and religious minority on the continent and were largely disregarded by public opinion and the social elite.

After some remarks on the expansion and heritage of the evangelical churches in Latin America, this paper will discuss the logics of action that these new evangelical actors follow in the political arena. The study will examine both the strategies and the main features of the evangelicals' political actions and attempts to give a brief outlook for the future.

From a Minority to a Powerful Factor

Demographic surveys present a clear picture of a strong increase in significance of evangelical movements in Latin America in recent decades. According to data from the *Latinobarómetro*[3] survey, the Catholic faith continues to be the dominant denomination on the subcontinent. Yet, with around 68 per cent of the population identifying themselves as Catholic today, the number has fallen significantly since 1970, when the number was still around 92 per cent. Parallel to the decrease of the proportion of Catholic Christians in Latin America, the proportion of evangelical believers has grown by a similar margin. In some countries, evangelical believers are almost as strongly represented in numerical terms as Catholics. This is more or less the case in Honduras (41 per cent evangelical and 47 per cent Catholic Christians), Guatemala (40 and 47 per cent respectively) or Nicaragua (37 and 47 per cent respectively). In Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico over 20 per cent of the population professes to belong to evangelical movements; in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela the number is over 15 per cent. In Brazil, the country with the largest number of Catholics worldwide, the proportion of Catholic believers in the population between 1995 and 2013 decreased by 15 percentage points, while the number of evangelical Christians rose by equal shares during the

Fig. 1: Share of the Denominations in the Total Population of Latin America



Just as in the article, "evangelical" is used here as an umbrella term for various Protestant groups. The numbers include 18 Latin American countries and the Spanish-speaking U.S. territory Puerto Rico. Source: World Religion Database, official governments figures, Pew Research Center 2014. Compilation: José Luis Pérez Guadalupe.

same period. Today, Ecuador and Paraguay are the only countries on the continent with a Catholic population of over 80 per cent.[4]

In terms of the political activities of the evangelical churches in Latin America, roughly three historical phases can be identified:

1. *Liberal Protestants*: The first Protestant missionaries came to Latin America in the mid-19th century. These represented traditional and historical trends that emerged from Protestant movements and which were dedicated both to evangelism and education. These liberal Protestants joined forces in most countries of the region on a national level with established political movements (for instance with the originally social-reformist APRA party in Peru) and actively supported issues such as religious freedom, the separation of Church and State, civil marriage and other liberal axioms. The weak point of these Protestant movements was, however, their marginal political significance in virtually all the countries on the continent. Even a century after their missionary activities began, the liberal Protestants in the 1950s made up less than one per cent of the population. As a consequence, their political influence was restricted to the role of an admonishing social voice and ally for liberal political movements critical of the supremacy of the Catholic clergy.

2. *Conservative missionaries*: In the mid-20th century a new type of Protestantism emerged. It was more conservative in political terms and, in the context of the Cold War, anti-communist in sentiment and was more explicitly against any rapprochement with the Catholic Church. In contrast to their predecessors, these new conservative missionaries succeeded in attracting a significant number of followers owing to their clear strategies on evangelising, and the use of modern communications and information technology. This second wave of modern missionaries, evidently influenced by North American evangelicals, also contributed to anchoring the evangelical churches firmly in society. In doing so, the missionaries often concentrated their activity on economically and socially disadvantaged segments of the population, such as indigenous groups, which in many cases led to new forms of religious but also economic dependency.

From this point on they were no longer termed Protestants. Instead, the concept of the "Latin American evangelical corps" was coined. During this phase the Pentecostal communities expanded particularly rapidly. These groups had already been present in most countries in the region during the previous decades (especially in Brazil and Chile), but at that point they were operating in a largely isolated and anonymous manner, like other evangelical churches as well. In this second phase of the evangelical movement, a significant transition took place. Formerly the Protestants were groups that were strongly identified with foreign missionaries and immigrant communities, the new evangelical missionaries were increasingly native to the country and linked the religious with a stronger nationalist discourse. This new national aspiration of the churches at a time of booming follower numbers later formed the basis for their political ambitions. With this aspiration evangelical actors also began to take on a more pronounced role in the economy of their countries.

3. *Evangelical conquerors*: Lastly, in a third phase, a new social and political evangelical force emerged across the whole continent from these evangelical movements in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as from those groups already rooted in Latin America. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the anti-communist stance of these mostly conservative evangelical conquerors became less significant. Gradually, and owing to its own growth and increased self-awareness, the strongly anti-Catholic attitude also declined. Today, the modern evangelical churches have a large number of believers and significant voter potential. In contrast to Catholic believers, evangelical believers typically support their church overall with greater commitment, and identify with it more strongly. Instead of the erstwhile "backyard churches" many evangelical communities erected modern and spacious church buildings in affluent neighbourhoods and increasingly gained a foothold among the middle and upper social classes. The increasing adaptation towards a "wealth gospel" discourse, often advocated by the New Pentecostals, also acted in part as a theological door-opener in these strata. This way of thinking was developed in the USA in the 1960s and assumes that, because they are children of God, all Christians are destined to reign over the world and all available goods and possessions. For the faithful, wealth is therefore claimed as compensation for their beliefs and trust in God. If a believer fulfils his duty and is faithful to God, God will accordingly grant him all types of blessings in return, including financial. Conversely, poverty and sickness can quickly be seen as a curse and punishment to be overcome through stronger faith and trust in God. These mindsets formed the theological justification for the emergence of evangelical veritable controlled business empires, which can be found in Brazil in particular. Probably the most prominent example in connection to this is the *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God), which has one of the largest media empires in Brazil and follows a strategy more similar to a company with consumers than that of a church with believers.[5] The church is expanding this model in other countries too. In Peru, for example the *Igreja Universal* operates under the name of *Pare de sufrir* (Suffer no more). The founder of this church, Edir Macedo, who advocates for an offensive offertory collection from his often poor church members, was named on the billionaire's list in Forbes magazine in 2015 with assets of 1.1 billion U.S. dollars.[6]

Evangelicals as Political Actors

The political transition of the evangelical churches in Latin America over time was drastic. While the first Protestant missionaries wanted to improve society in Latin America through the Gospel, without really playing a fundamental political and social role, the evangelicals of today no longer talk of the "if" but only about the "how" of their political actions. Key influences of this stronger orientation

towards politics derived from the growth of the charismatic church movement and the New Pentecostal Church within the historical evolution of the church spectrum, not to forget the evangelical movement in the United States. Especially in New Pentecostal circles there is a reliance on patterns of legitimation from "Reconstructionism". This political arm of "prosperity theology" sees Christians as destined to stand at political and social control centres.

The new evangelical movements, which belonged more to the conservative end of the political spectrum, no longer sought to practice their religion undisturbed from an escapist perspective (*fuga mundi*), but aspired increasingly to penetrate the political circles in their societies. This led to a redefinition of the positioning of the evangelical churches across the entire continent – away from rejecting politics to moving towards using it for evangelising. This Christian motivation melded over time with the worldly interests of evangelical leaders, which in some cases resulted in political support for dictatorships or non-constitutional governments in Latin America.

While Protestant Christians at the start of the last century only called for constitutional guarantees regarding freedom of religious worship, evangelicals today demand equal treatment with regard to other denominations. It is evident that the evangelical churches are thus not only preparing to break through the five-hundred-year denominational monopoly of the Roman Catholic Church, but also call into question its religious and political hegemony on the continent. The growth of the evangelical church communities from the ground up, accompanied by the strong roles of the respective clerical leaders and with the explicit support of the believers, consequently means that, on a political level, some evangelical leaders also want to assert their religious leadership politically. They are thereby attempting to capitalise politically on their hard-won religious followers.

Within this new political and religious environment, governments and parties in various Latin American countries are considering the pros and cons of an informal or formal rapprochement to evangelical churches. The political assessment politics makes of evangelical churches therefore follows a different pattern in comparison to the case of the Catholic Church. While the strict Catholic hierarchy and tradition offer politics the advantage of greater stability and the Vatican's diplomatic service with its many years of experience in international negotiations, the political weight of the modern evangelical churches is that of a rapidly-growing number of often very active religious followers, which thereby adds great voter potential. In addition, the leading evangelical figures are to a great extent able to influence the individual members of their church communities directly.

The voting behaviour of evangelical Christians can tip the electoral balance, as the recent past demonstrates.

The strong growth of the voter potential of evangelical Christians became clearly evident in several recent Latin American electoral processes. The Colombian government was also defeated in the referendum over the peace agreement in 2016 because it did not succeed in its communication to dispel the doubts of evangelical groups over many socio-political aspects of the agreement. At the same time, evangelical leaders mobilised "their" believers in significant numbers to reject the peace agreement at the ballot boxes.[7] Also in 2016, Marcelo Crivella, a bishop at the *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus*, was elected mayor of the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro. In 2015 the evangelical former television entertainer Jimmy Morales was the clear winner of the presidential elections in Guatemala, also due to his strongly moralising discourse and public display of his religious affiliation.

On the decline: Over the last decades, the amount of Catholics in Latin America has fallen by about 25 per cent, while the amount of evangelicals has increased substantially. Source: © Andrew Medichini, Reuters.

Moralists instead of Administrators

Despite a few exceptions, especially in Brazil, the political influence of evangelical Christians in Latin America focuses more on the mobilisation of votes than entering politics actively themselves. Up until now evangelical churches have rarely been able to or wanted to establish structured and stable political parties of their own. One reason for this is undoubtedly the weak cohesion of various evangelical churches and the competition between them, which is further reinforced by the strong personality-based nature of many churches. Despite their strong growth, the evangelicals in Latin America remain a heavily fragmented religious movement, both in organisational and pastoral terms, which is also manifested in their socio-political ambitions and patterns of behaviour. Evangelical political engagement is mostly driven by individual leaders (pastors or laymen) rather than by the churches themselves. It certainly should be noted that the evangelical churches in Latin America are an important religious, social and political factor, but, on the other hand, that they are not in any sense a unified body that can be directed like a cohesive (political or religious) organisation.

Despite this, it can be observed how different political forces in all the countries in the region are showing a growing interest in garnering the votes of evangelical believers for themselves. This leads to a significant influence of

evangelical churches on how parties and governments structure their manifestos. Time and again, political parties, including those of a Christian-Democrat orientation that are more closely aligned to the Catholic Church, seek to tap into this reservoir of voters for themselves. Parties are often under the mistaken belief that the evangelical churches are structured in a similarly hierarchical way to the Catholic Church; or, still further from the reality, that the voting behaviour of this group of voters is purely linked to their denomination and therefore relatively simple to influence.

The political behaviour of evangelical Christians in Latin America to date can be roughly categorised into three basic models. As already mentioned, the founding of evangelical parties as agglomerative political movements for evangelical believers has so far had no resounding political success. The model of inclusive political movements led by evangelical Christians but also encompassing other people is a template that evangelical churches frequently aspire to, but which has not been very successful to date. The most common model thus far has been the 'evangelical faction' in the form of an

Inner contemplation: The new evangelical movements no longer aim for an undisturbed practice of their own religion within the framework of escapism, but increasingly aspire to gain political influence. Source: © Nacho Doce, Reuters.

evangelical group operating from within a larger party or political movement not led by evangelical individuals and thereby gaining a certain level of influence over the party manifesto. Each of the three options mentioned has its limits and weaknesses, however. Some experts therefore believe future political action by evangelical Christians could be to set up – in a national context of even several – evangelical minority parties that could tip the balance of power and thereby assert their own interests. In contrast to the idea of an agglomerated evangelical party, this type of approach would accommodate the extremely differing political history of the evangelical movements in Latin America and their diverse approaches to issues of faith, development, organisation and their vision for the future more effectively.

On examination of the political concerns of evangelical churches, the promise of an ethically flawless, moral government leadership and the head-on fight against corruption stands out. Of course, this is of great importance in all Latin American countries, but it does not in any way form a sufficient basis for a government programme. Moreover, the majority of evangelical movements are united by what is known as the "moral agenda". This includes a commitment to a traditional understanding of marriage and family, the rejection of abortion and same-sex marriage, as well as a mission against so-called "gender ideology". The aspects that are usually absent from evangelical political movements include policies for the economy, society, culture, security, etc. that could form the basis of a possible government programme; not least, the urgently required expertise in these areas for leading a government. Over the past, nothing developed that came close to a unified evangelical social doctrine. Evangelical candidates in elections are less experienced professionals than religious leaders who promise to moralise politics instead of governing more efficiently. They are, therefore, moralists rather than administrators. If the outcome is negative for them, many evangelical candidates will withdraw from politics after the elections and return to their churches until the next election. In principle they therefore primarily remain "soldiers of the church" rather than becoming "party soldiers". This constitutes an important difference compared to the Catholic Church in Latin America, which supported the development of political programmes based on the Church's social doctrine and encouraged Catholic believers to set up political parties on this basis. Institutionally independent of the Church, these consequently won the presidency in their countries.

The question remains whether the entry of the evangelical churches into politics, at present mainly with a "moral agenda", could lead to a more broadly diversified movement in future – similar to the pattern of the "green" parties, who, at the start of their political career trajectory, likewise concentrated on a single issue but then broadened their approach and underwent a process of political growth. Despite the history of aversion between the evangelical churches and the Catholic Church, recently, at least on a political level, rapprochement can be seen between these two spheres. This is occurring between an important sector of the Catholic Church and the more conservative evangelical movements, with the aim of defending and promoting "Christian values" publicly in society and politics. At the same time, evangelical church communities are converging with some of the most elitist social groups in the region, who have long observed and disregarded these evangelical movements from afar. These sorts of historically unexpected twists are often only brought about by politics.

Fragmentation as Opposed to a Monolithic Electorate

In conclusion, we can observe that the evangelical churches in various countries in Latin America have abandoned their original philosophy of spiritual escapism and are now preparing to conquer the social, economic and, increasingly, the political arena as well. While they have deferred their pure focus on evangelism with this change of heart, evangelical groups were so far not in a position to develop a political platform that goes beyond a "moral agenda". Undoubtedly,

however, they succeeded in influencing the political arena and public opinion with their concerns, especially in countries in Central America and Brazil, but also in countries like Colombia.

The strong fragmentation of evangelical movements has hampered the formation of evangelical parties so far.

What remained an important basic pattern is the marked fragmentation that characterises all religious and political actions of evangelical Christians in Latin America, which so far appears to be in the DNA of all evangelical movements on the continent. This has as yet hampered any shared political strategy of evangelical believers, as well as the formation of joint evangelical political movements. At best, some evangelical leaders succeeded in attaining a certain degree of (not always flattering) national prominence outside the four walls of their church. Even though the proportion of evangelical churches within Latin America's population has been able to expand significantly at the expense of the Catholic Church, and they have established themselves increasingly at the heart of society, their marked religious and political fragmentation resulted in a wide chasm between their own political demands in the eighties and nineties and their present successes. If the evangelical churches want to achieve their aim of gaining political clout in society they will need to develop new strategies.

What is certain is that the political representation of evangelical Christians in Latin America, with the exception of Brazil, does not (yet) represent the proportion of population. In the region's elections it is, therefore, virtually impossible to establish a clear correlation between the numerical strength of the evangelical population and voting behaviour. Also the successful control of evangelical citizens' votes by their churches is not empirically verifiable. Nonetheless, evangelical swing voters certainly have the opportunity to strategically support certain candidates who make concessions to their moral convictions, irrespective of which party they belong to. Evangelical voters can, therefore, transform themselves into a "voter force" that has a pivotal influence on electoral processes, as was the case with the referendum on the Colombian peace agreement.

It is certainly to be seen positively when citizens of a nation, for various reasons, avail themselves of their civic rights and responsibilities instead of adhering to sectarian philosophies of spiritual escapism. History has so far shown that the great majority of evangelical citizens in Latin America – just like the majority of all Latin Americans – do not act like a monolithic electorate at all, but are definitely capable of separating their religious denomination from their political behaviour. Opportunistic politicians as well as religious leaders should heed this insight.

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1 The conclusions of this paper are predominantly based on the findings of Pérez Guadalupe, José Luis 2017: Entre Dios y el César – El impacto político de los evangélicos en el Perú y América Latina (Between God and Caesar: the political influence of evangelical churches in Peru and Latin America), Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, office Peru / Instituto de Estudios Social Cristianos (eds.). This publication was presented in Lima on 26 Oct 2017.

2 In this article all Christian Protestant groups in Latin America are termed "evangelical", as they are dedicated to a greater or lesser extent to evangelism or the conversion of people to their faith. Regardless of their different respective doctrines, "missionary churches" with voluntary followers, "groups centred on Christ" and "groups centred on the Bible" are included. Within these categories we find more traditional churches that have emerged historically, e.g. Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist, but also Pentecostal, New Pentecostal and Free Churches (or independent churches).

3 All data quoted in the present paper come from the *Latinobarómetro* survey 2014.

4 In addition, Latin Americans who profess no denomination are the second fastest-growing segment of the region's population. According to *Latinobarómetro*, in some countries on the continent the proportion of those professing no denomination is growing even faster than the proportion of evangelical believers, especially in Uruguay, where 38 per cent of the population does not belong to any faith community.

5 On the Pentecostal church in Brazil cf. Lingenthal, Lukas 2012: Pentecostalism in Brazil: Churches, Businesses and Political Parties, in: KAS International Reports, 1/2012, pp. 41-58, http://kas.de/wf/en/33.29975 [5 Dec 2017].

6 Cf. Antunes, Anderson 2015: Brazil's Richest People: Facts and Figures, in: http://bit.ly/2knloD6 [30 Oct 2017].

7 Cf. Cosoy, Natalio 2016: El rol de las iglesias cristianas evangélicas en la victoria del "No" en el plebiscito de Colombia, BBC, 5 Oct 2016, in: http://bbc.in/2AxFHly [30 Oct 2017].

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Religion

Law, Religion, and the Social Divide in Asia: Contexts and Challenges

Dian A. H. Shah

This article discusses how religion, law, and political calculations all interact to define religious policies and discourse in Asia. It also demonstrates the extent to which religious populist elements have influenced emergent policies and practices that affect citizens' rights and interests.

Introduction

The first six months of 2017 proved to be particularly challenging times for religious harmony in Indonesia.[1] There were two significant events. The first was the highly divisive and religiously-charged gubernatorial elections in Jakarta, which saw the defeat of the incumbent, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok). Once a popular Governor – known for his tough anti-corruption stance and overzealous efforts to transform Jakarta and improve public service efficiency – Ahok's final months in office were plagued by criminal prosecution for blaspheming Islam. Less than a month after losing the "DKI 1" seat,[2] the North Jakarta State Administrative Court convicted Ahok for committing blasphemy and sentenced him to two years imprisonment. These two events tested the limits of religious harmony in Indonesia, but they were also significant for two reasons. First, they raised questions about the strength and development of the rule of law in the country. Second, the massive social mobilization (purportedly to "defend Islam") that ensued in the lead up to the elections and Ahok's conviction showcased deep-seated social schisms that are not necessarily driven by religion alone, but also by economic, class, and political differences.

Within the same period, other countries in the region faced their fair share of controversies. In Sri Lanka, for instance, there was a spike in anti-minority hate crimes in May, after what seemed like a period of diminished activity by hardline organizations since the political change in January 2015. There were similar incidents of inter-religious and sectarian tensions in India driven by populist politics. Meanwhile, in Malaysia, the tabling of a bill to enhance the punitive powers of the *syariah* courts reignited debates on whether "Islamic" criminal punishments (including *Hudud* i.e., "punishments fixed in the Quran for crimes considered to be against the rights of God") could eventually be implemented in the country. These concerns were compounded by unresolved issues surrounding state policies on the unilateral conversion of children caught between disputing Muslim and non-Muslim parents. As if to deepen religious animosities and further constrict the religious discourse, a ministerial directive banned a book containing a collection of academic essays examining the role of Islam in the context of Malaysia's constitutional democracy. The reasons were that the book propagated ideas associated with liberalism and pluralism and that it posed a threat to public order.

These cases are examples of how religion is competing for authority in the public sphere and how it is co-opted and contested within the socio-political contexts of countries like Malaysia and Indonesia. However, to comprehend recent developments implicating law and religion in these two neighbouring countries and why they have turned out the way they did, we must first understand the conditions that generated or facilitated these events. This article discusses how religion, law, and political calculations and compromise all interact to define religious policies and discourse in both countries. It also demonstrates the extent to which religious populist elements have influenced emergent policies and practices that affect citizens' rights and interests.

New Controversies, Old Stories?

In April 2017, the leader of PAS – an Islamic opposition party – tabled a bill to increase the punitive powers of the *syariah* courts in Malaysia. Debates and anxieties surrounding the bill had been lingering for almost two years, triggered by the Kelantan State Assembly's amendment of the state's *Syariah* Criminal Code. The amendment introduced a range of criminal punishments for Muslims in the state of Kelantan, but these could not be implemented because of a federal law which limits the range of punishments that could be meted out by *syariah* courts.[3] To pursue the full implementation of Kelantan's *Syariah* Criminal Code, PAS pledged to table a private member's bill to amend the federal law.

The Malaysian society is characterised by polarisation and religious tensions.

With religious tensions still raw after the "Allah" saga, the proposed bill polarized the society further. The "Allah" case involved a ministerial ban on the Catholic Church from using the word "Allah" in its weekly Malay-language publication. The Court of Appeal upheld the ban, and subsequently the church's leave to appeal was rejected by the Federal Court. For the Christian community, in particular, this series of events was worrying. Although PAS's bill was packaged as an initiative to empower and raise the profile of *syariah* courts and to prevent moral degradation among Muslims, sections of the population – particularly the non-Muslims – were suspicious about the motivation and consequences of the bill. The Muslim community, to be sure, is also divided on this issue, but the call to rally behind the bill aimed at their religious sentiments: it was emphasized, for instance, that Muslims had a duty to safeguard the dignity of Islam as the religion of the Federation and that Muslim judges within the *syariah* branch deserved equal status (and thus, equal remuneration) with their counterparts in the civil branch. In October and November 2016, the bill was tabled twice but never debated. Although the dominant party in the ruling coalition has pledged to support the bill, its progress and fate remains uncertain. It would appear, therefore, that there are overlapping social, political, and economic considerations underpinning this legislative initiative.

There are other examples demonstrating potential for laws (or proposed laws) regulating religion to reinforce societal cleavages. In Sri Lanka, an anti-conversion bill proposed in 2004 was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. The bill would have adversely affected the freedom to practice and express one's religion, as it targeted propagation and proselytism activities commonly associated with minority religions. However, despite the declaration of unconstitutionality, the court noted that the criminalization of "improper proselytism" is a permissible restriction under the constitution. In Indonesia, although there is a Blasphemy Law, it is not a recent invention. It was enacted through a Presidential Decree in 1965, and it provided the basis for the criminalization of blasphemy under the Indonesian Criminal Code. The law had its roots in the state's desire to safeguard public order and national unity. The growth of groups promoting teachings or doctrines that are contrary to "established" religious principles was regarded as a threat to national unity and to existing religious groups in the country.[4] A law that prevents the abuse or desecration of religion, it was believed, would further religious harmony and ensure that Indonesians are free to worship according to their own religion.[5]

Ironically, blasphemy prosecutions have only grown rapidly since the fall of Soeharto's authoritarian administration in 1998: 89 out of the 97 blasphemy cases took place in the post-*Reformasi* era.[6] Ahok is probably the first high-profile public official to be convicted for blasphemy, but the publicity and toxicity that accompanied his case has empowered intolerant forces. A doctor from West Sumatra who – on social media – questioned the integrity and credibility of Rizieq Shihab (the leader of the *Front Pembela Islam*,

who was one of the masterminds behind the anti-Ahok mobilization) faced persecution and intimidation from FPI members, to the point that she was forced to temporarily seek refuge in Jakarta. She was deemed to have insulted Islam and the *ulama* (body of Islamic theological and legal scholars). Rizieq himself is under investigation for a number of criminal offences including blasphemy and violations of the Anti-Pornography Law. He has yet to be charged, but his supporters have staged demonstrations in several cities to "defend the *ulama*" from what they believe to be a state-led witch-hunt.

The Historical Context: Religion in the Constitution, Contests, and Compromises

The salience of religion in the legal, social, and political spheres in Asian countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and India is not a recent development. The degree of its significance evolves across different times and contexts, but its presence and struggles for prominence have always been evident.

In Indonesia, *Nasakom* – an abbreviation for *Nasionalisme* ("nationalism"), *Agama* ("religion"), and *Komunisme* ("communism") – was a popular manifesto during the Soekarno's administration. Soekarno coined the concept in the late 1950s in a bid to reconcile the ideological conflict that was brewing in society,[7] but it became the basis of his political programs. For instance, Soekarno fused his policies on press freedom with *Nasakom*, resulting in a controlled press that became part of the state's propaganda machinery.[8]

The religious affinities in law and policy-making, to be sure, had manifested even before *Nasakom* was introduced. In the constitution-making process that preceded independence, questions on the role and position of religion featured prominently in debates on the foundation of the state (*dasar negara*). A faction in the constitution-making committee (The Investigating Committee for Preparatory Works for Indonesian Independence, known as the BPUPKI) was adamant in establishing an Islamic state. However, there were others – Muslims and non-Muslims alike – who preferred a secular state; among other reasons, they were motivated by the idea of an "integralistic" state that does not identify itself within any particular religious or ethnic group. For them, there was a need to advance unity in what was already a fragile and divided nation. In what he thought was a reasonable compromise, Soekarno introduced the *Pancasila* as the philosophical basis of the state. The *Pancasila* contained the following five principles: Indonesian nationalism (*kebangsaan Indonesia*), humanitarianism (*peri-kemanusiaan*), representative democracy (*demokrasi mufakat*), social justice (*kesejateraan sosial*), and the belief in God (*ketuhanan*). Still, this sat uncomfortably with the faction insistent on an Islamic state. Prominent figures in that faction thought this was an obvious solution for a country whose population was overwhelmingly Muslim and whose anti-colonial consciousness was strongly driven by the unifying force of Islam.[9]

What we see in the *Pancasila* and religion clause today – "belief in the one and only God" – is the result of a complex series of political compromise. Before this arrangement came about, there was an agreement between competing factions that the soon-to-be-independent Indonesia would be based on "belief in God, with the obligation of carrying out Islamic laws for its adherents". However, this arrangement fell through on the eve of independence, due to threats of secession from non-Muslim nationalists from the eastern islands of Indonesia. The phrase that would have imposed state-sanctioned *Syariah* on Muslims was removed, as were a few other elements in the constitution that were deemed to be favouring Islam. A hastily engineered compromise saw the Muslim faction eventually agreeing to these changes, but not without conditions. First, Mohamad Hatta (Indonesia's first prime minister) and Soekarno assured them they would be able to pursue their demands in the future and that they could later amend the constitution if they so wished. Second, the faction proposed the phrase "belief in the one and only God" as the first *sila* (principle) of the *Pancasila*.

Diversity: The handling of religious pluralism still presents a challenge to many Asian countries.
Source: © Beawiharta Beawiharta, Reuters.

For some, this formulation is significant because it resonates with the monotheistic principles of Islam.[10] However, for Soekarno and Hatta, the compromise – imperfect though it might be – was driven by greater considerations: securing national unity and stability, and ensuring the constitution was finalized and Indonesia was on track to achieve its independence. Given the prevailing circumstances, the arrangement they adopted, they believed, would best address the interests of all groups and protect religious freedom and plurality in Indonesia.

A comparable story unfolded in neighbouring Malaya just over ten years later, when religion emerged as one of the main sticking points among political elites and the constitution-making body tasked to draft a constitution for an independent Malaya. The questions they faced were not dissimilar to those confronted by their Indonesian counterparts: Should there be a role for Islam – the religion of the majority – in the constitutional order? What are the competing demands implicating religion? What are the consequences of choosing one path over another?

The Malaya experience appeared to be heavily – though not exclusively – shaped by competing political interests and considerations. The Alliance party, a political coalition comprising parties representing the Malay, Chinese, and Indian communities, faced demands from sections of the Malay-Muslim grassroots who sought some form of special constitutional recognition for Islam. Given Islam's deep historical roots in the Malayan society and government (particularly the sultanate), it was thought that such special recognition was only fitting. The constitution-making body (the Reid Commission), which comprised five prominent Commonwealth jurists, were largely opposed to the idea of Islam as a state religion. Then there were the Malay rulers – the nine sultans of the nine Malay states – who retained exclusive control over Islam in their respective states. They rejected the idea of establishing Islam as the religion of the Federation of Malaya, fearing that federal power would encroach on their centuries-long authority over Islamic matters in their territories.[11] The non-Malays, too, were anxious about the consequences of a state religion. They feared, for instance, that the citizenship rights would later hinge on conversion to Islam, but they had more pressing concerns with respect to the overall constitution-making process: obtaining *jus soli* citizenship and retaining linguistic and educational rights in their mother tongue.

In the end, as in the case of Indonesia, the reaching of an agreement necessitated multiple layers of compromise: amongst the Alliance's multiethnic leaders; between the Alliance and the rulers; and between the Alliance and the Reid Commission. Within the Alliance it was agreed that Islam would become the religion of the Federation, and in return, the non-Muslims were assured the right to freedom of religion, and

that the non-Malays were to obtain citizenship and retain the right of education in their mother tongue.[12] The Alliance also assured the Malay rulers that the federalized system of administering Islam would remain; that the rulers' authority would be unaffected; and that even if a federal department of religion were to be established, it would only take on a federal-state coordinating role. The Alliance then assured the Reid Commission that the arrangement would not create a theocracy, nor change the secular character of the country. More importantly, the constitution itself cements the provision that the establishment of Islam shall not diminish other constitutional provisions and protections.

Negotiating a middle course has proven a feasible way of ensuring inter-religious stability.

The interaction and compromises between different political actors facilitated a middle course between those favouring a stronger role for Islam in the state and those preferring the complete exclusion of religion from the state. These arrangements have – at various points – proven to be a feasible way of ensuring inter-religious stability. They have ensured that religion is accommodated in public life, up to a certain extent. Thus, when there were demands to expand the scope of religious laws beyond personal law matters, the Indonesian Constitutional Court stepped in to affirm that national laws must conform to the *Pancasila*, which is a basis for Indonesia's religious tolerance.[13] When there were claims that the death penalty for drug offences was unconstitutional as it did not reflect Islamic laws and principles, the Malaysian Supreme Court[14] reiterated the limited role for Islam in the constitutional order.

Religious Populism and Politics

In countries where religion continues to be highly salient, policy-makers and political elites have had to grapple with the same question: how far should the state step in to manage and regulate religious affairs? Consider, as a starting point, how countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and India have fared according to the Pew Research Centre's Government Regulation of Religion Index (GRI).[15] From 2010 to 2013, Malaysia and Indonesia have consistently recorded "very high" GRI scores, while India and Sri Lanka consistently recorded "high" GRI scores. The regulations include restrictions on public preaching; limitations on proselytizing and conversion; regulations on the wearing of religious symbols; and state-enforced bans on particular religious groups.

Many of these policies are pursued on the pretext of maintaining public order and religious harmony. Competing claims on religion – be they between different religious groups or within the same religious group – are seen as potentially destabilizing. Such concerns are, of course, not to be taken lightly, especially since these countries have experienced ethnic and / or religious conflict at various points in their history.

Yet, precisely because religion is intimately linked to local politics, competing claims on religion and the ways in which these claims are subsequently resolved have not only deepened societal divisions, but they have also unsettled the core compromise underlying the constitutional arrangements on religion. In Malaysia, the establishment of Islam is now widely perceived to mean the state is obligated to prioritize the interests of the majority religion and its adherents. In Indonesia, the *Pancasila's* "belief in the one and only God" is interpreted to mean the state must outlaw acts or expressions that may be deemed an insult against a particular religion or a deviation from a religion's established doctrines.

What lies beneath many of the cases and contests implicating religion is a strong undercurrent of mistrust of the "other" and fears that the majority group – though demographically and politically dominant – is faced with an

existential threat. In Malaysia and Indonesia, for instance, some sections of the society believe a larger "Christianization" agenda exists and it is manifested, chiefly, in religious proselytization targeting Muslims. Similar fears have driven majority-minority tensions in Sri Lanka. Sometimes, this perception is reinforced by state officials who – through a variety of public outreach initiatives – have sought to caution against perceived Muslim and/or Christian expansionism. There have also been instances where similar rhetoric is used against Muslim minorities such as the Shias, whom some believe are not only heretics, but are also on a mission to undermine the majority, the Sunnis, in the country.

A fundamental aspect of inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts is an undercurrent of mistrust of each other.

It would be a mistake to disregard such mobilization of populist sentiments as mere exercises of political rhetoric. There is evidence that popular mobilization along religious (and ethnic) lines could significantly impact the rule of law. One striking example is the blasphemy prosecution against the former Jakarta governor, Ahok. In the wake of Ahok's allegedly blasphemous speech, a series of mass demonstrations were held in the Indonesian capital to pressure the government to prosecute and convict Ahok. The speed at which Ahok's case proceeded – from investigations to trial and, finally, to his conviction in May 2017 – indicates the government could not ignore the groundswell of public animosity toward Ahok. But those behind the anti-Ahok campaign went further. In the lead up to the court's verdict, they turned to the judges and the court, pressing them through public statements that justice should be upheld; that the court should be independent of the government (who is perceived as supportive of Ahok); and that Ahok should be found guilty. The ways in which such mass mobilization has exerted pressure on the Indonesian justice system raise concerns about the direction and strength of the rule of law in the country.

There was a similar pattern in Malaysia at the height of the "Allah" case. Demonstrations and public pressures bent on ensuring that "Allah" remains a term exclusive to Muslims arguably shaped subsequent state responses to the issue. It then became clear that the issue could not exclusively be dealt with on objective, academic reasoning. At stake was the continued political support of the Malay-Muslim community, which hinged on whether or not the state was willing to address its concerns and interests. Even as the battle went to the country's highest courts, majoritarian pressures were evident. Various activists and civil society organizations congregated on court grounds to remind the court of its duty to protect Islam. In light of the court's expressed concerns about public disorder and aggravation of the majority's religious sensitivities, it is not inconceivable that such pressures may have had some bearing on the court's calculations.

Political actors have, at times, been quick to foment religious animosities. Religious campaigning – often by portraying oneself as the champion or defender of the majoritarian interests or by demonizing the religious "other" – is an easy tool to reach voters' consciousness. For one, it helps deter discussion on pressing issues such as corruption or systemic governance problems. A study of local (mayoral) elections in two cities in Indonesia, for instance, found that religious campaigning and anti-minority rhetoric proved to be profitable – in both cases, the victors thrived on campaigns convincing Muslim voters it was religiously forbidden to vote for non-Muslim leaders, and these also helped overshadow other scandals that surrounded them.[16] The impact of political mobilization along religious lines was also evident in the recent Jakarta gubernatorial elections. Ahok eventually lost the elections – an outcome which many expected – but it is also significant that during the height of the mass rallies in Jakarta from October to December, Ahok's electability

ratings steadily decreased.[17] This was despite an opinion poll suggesting that voters regarded "honesty" and "corruption-free" as important traits for a gubernatorial candidate and that 59 per cent of the respondents were satisfied with Ahok's performance as governor.[18]

All this is not to say that religion or religious considerations are always the sole determining factor in driving electoral outcomes or in shaping subsequent policy choices. There are often multiple factors and elements at play. In Indonesia, the character and policies of a candidate matter. During the recent Jakarta elections, for instance, various opinion polls and analyses highlight that while there were sections of the electorate who appreciated Ahok's efforts to transform Jakarta and root out corruption, they also took issue with his tough-talking style and "arrogant" persona. In the conservative district of Tebet, a community leader revealed that Ahok's character also drove voters in that district away from him in the elections.[19]

Religious considerations are not the sole determinant of electoral outcomes.

Political calculations matter in defining policy choices and outcomes. Consider the Malaysian case as another example. The desire to maximize Malay-Muslim votes and maintain political power has led ruling coalitions – at various points in time – to take a majority-centric approach in dealing with politically-charged issues implicating religion. This was particularly marked in the build up to and during the 2013 elections. To eliminate its competition for Malay-Muslim votes, which, at that time, came in form of PAS, the UMNO-led ruling coalition pursued political rhetoric and policies to bolster its religious credentials.[20] The ways in which the "Allah" case was handled, in particular, is symptomatic of this exercise of pragmatic politics. If it was once seen as unthinkable that UMNO would go at it alone and form a heavily Malay-centric government,[21] the result of the 2013 elections appears to have strengthened the ruling party's belief that its grip on power is dependent on appeasing majoritarian sensibilities. The tabling of a bill to expand the punitive powers of the *syariah* courts, talks of a political alliance between UMNO and PAS, and sometimes tacit tolerance for organizations inciting bigotry, are all manifestations of how electoral calculations involving the majority could inform policy-making that affect minorities.

Conclusion

The conflation of law, religion, and politics – in its worst form – may spur violent conflict. There is much evidence to suggest that religious populism may undermine the rule of law; and that advancing policies that alienate minorities may deepen societal divisions and encourage religious intolerance. Politics are driven by pragmatic considerations, but its negative effects are magnified in countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka due to the ways in which pragmatism is pursued. This strategy has seen parties co-opting or supporting, overtly or covertly, right-wing movements. In local elections in Indonesia, there were cases where candidates struck mutual agreements with hardline organizations to pursue specific "religious" policies in return for electoral support.

Be that as it may, it would be a mistake to assume that religion (i.e. doctrines), religious extremism or "Islamisation" (as some have called it) is the only driving force behind recent law and religion issues. Religious affinities and affiliations are important in the society, but the patterns and trajectories that are unfolding must be understood and addressed in the context of broader political, economic, and even psychological insecurities in both countries. This is where the real challenge lies.

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1 This article draws on research that underpins the author's recently published book, "Constitutions, Religion and Politics in Asia: Indonesia, Malaysia and Sri Lanka" (Cambridge University Press, 2017), and on an analysis of more recent developments on law, religion, and politics in Indonesia and Malaysia.

2 DKI 1 is the colloquial term for the post of Jakarta Governor.

3 *Syariah* Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act 1965. The law only authorizes *syariah* courts to impose a maximum of three years imprisonment, fine not exceeding Ringgit Malaysia (RM) 5,000, and / or six strokes of the cane.

4 Cf. Elucidation on Law No. 1 of 1965 on the Prevention of Abuse and / or Desecration of Religion (translated from Indonesian), in: http://bit.ly/2AzD3vq [24 Nov 2017].

5 Cf. ibid.

6 Cf. SETARA Institute 2017: Vonis Terhadap Basuki Merupakan Kasus Penodaan Agama ke-97 (Basuki's Conviction is the 97th Case of Religious Insult), press release, 9 May 2017, in: http://bit.ly/2iYT1Lb [24 Nov 2017].

7 Cf. Assyaukanie, Luthfi (ed.) 2009: Islam and the Secular State in Indonesia, Singapore, p. 132.

8 Cf. Wiratraman, Herlambang P. 2014: Press Freedom, Law and Politics in Indonesia: A Socio-Legal Study, Zutphen, p. 80.

9 Cf. Anshori, Ibnu 1994: Mustafa Kemal and Sukarno: A Comparison of View Regarding Relations between State and Religion, Master of Arts Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, McGill University, Montreal, Sep 1994, p. 60; Salim, Arskal 2008: Challenging the Secular State: the Islamization of Law in Modern Indonesia, Honolulu, p. 51; Picard, Michel 2011: "Agama", "Adat", and the Pancasila, in: Picard, Michel / Madinier, Remy (eds.) 2011: The Politics of Religion in Indonesia: Syncretism, Orthodoxy and Religious Contention in Java and Bali, London / New York, pp. 1-20, here: p. 9.

10 Cf. Testimony by Professor Dahlan Ranuwihardjo, 7th Meeting of Ad Hoc Commission I (13 Dec 1999) in Sekretariat Jenderal Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Republik Indonesia, Risalah Perubahan Undang-undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945: 1999–2002 (2002) (Reports of the Amendments of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia: 1999–2002); Fleming Intan, Benyamin 2006: "Public Religion" and the Pancasila-Based State of Indonesia: An Ethical and Sociological Analysis, Bern, p. 43.

11 Cf. Proposals of Their Highnesses the Rulers Made to the Constitutional Commission (12 Sep 1956), CO889/8/3.

12 Cf. Harding, Andrew 2010: Sharia and National Law in Malaysia, in: Otto, Jan Michiel (ed.) 2010: Sharia Incorporated: A Comparative Overview of the Legal Systems of Twelve Muslim Countries in Past and Present, Leiden, pp. 491-528, here: p. 499; Fernando, Joseph M. 2006: The Position of Islam in the Constitution of Malaysia, Journal of Southeast Asian Studies 37:2, pp. 249-266, here: pp. 249, 253.

13 Cf. Constitutional Court of Indonesia, Decision No. 19/PUU-VI/2008, Examination of Law No. 7, Year 1989 on the Religious Courts as amended by Law No. 3, Year 2006 (12 Aug 2008).

14 Cf. Che Omar bin Che Soh v. Public Prosecutor [1988] 2 Malayan Law Journal 55. The appellant in that case argued that according to Islamic law, drug offences do not constitute offences that are punishable by death. He sought a declaration that the law (the Firearms [Increased Penalties] Act 1971) is unconstitutional as it was contrary to Islamic law.

15 The Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life has published a series of studies on the restrictions on religion. A complete set of the reports can be found here: http://pewrsr.ch/2Av885A [24 Nov 2017].

16 Cf. Aspinall, Edward 2017: Interpreting the Jakarta election, New Mandala, 16 Feb 2017, in: https://shar.es/1M49bk [24 Nov 2017].

17 Cf. Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting (SMRC) 2017: Peluang Calon-calon Gubernur dalam Pilkada Provinsi DKI Jakarta: Temuan Survei 3-9 Februari 2017, press release, http://bit.ly/2koPHcB [24 Nov 2017].

18 Lembaga Survei Indonesia (LSI) 2016: Likeability is Electability? Kualitas Personal Calon dalam Pilkada DKI Pasca Al-Maidah, pp. 13, 59.

19 Cf. Raslan, Karim 2017: What if Ahok's Loss in the Election Wasn't All About Islam and Anti-Chinese Feeling?, South China Morning Post, 21 Apr 2017, in: http://sc.mp/iE3e8n [24 Nov 2017]. Another frequently cited reason for Ahok's downfall is his policies, especially those that affect poor and economically disenfranchised voters. Raslan highlighted Ahok's slum-clearing initiative. My own observation and conversations on the ground also point towards the same factor. These policies, while appreciated by sections of the population, have not necessarily gained universal appeal.

20 UMNO (United Malays National Organisation) is a Malay nationalist party in the multiethnic ruling coalition (*Barisan Nasional*). It is the most dominant partner in the coalition.

21 Cf. Horowitz, Donald L. 2011 (reissue): Ethnic Groups in Conflict: Theories, Patterns, and Policies, Berkeley, pp. 415-416.

Source: © Yannis Behrakis, Reuters.

Other Topics

Failing State

Libya as a Supraregional Security Threat

Canan Atilgan / Veronika Ertl / Simon Engelkes

Ex-U.S. President Barack Obama once described the United States' and its allies' lack of success in ensuring stability in Libya following the fall of the Gaddafi regime as one of the biggest failings of his time in office. Indeed, the country is sinking ever deeper into chaos. Now, the action plan by Ghassan Salamé, the United Nations' new Special Representative for Libya, is expected to revive the peace process. If this does not succeed, the security situation risks escalating further – with far-reaching consequences both for neighbouring countries and Europe.

Introduction

Six years after the former Libyan ruler Muammar al-Gaddafi was overthrown, hopes of democracy, stability and growth in Libya have not come to fruition. The country is descending into chaos. Politically and territorially fragmented, with a plethora of rival state-run and non-governmental actors and alliances, porous borders and little prospect of imminent stabilisation, Libya represents a security threat for its neighbouring countries, the wider Mediterranean region and Europe.

The UN-led peace process, which resulted in the Government of National Accord (GNA) in December 2015 under Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj, has so far been unable either to consolidate its control over Libyan state territory, or to make noticeable improvements to the living conditions of the Libyan people. Furthermore, the government's authority is openly contested by both of the other self-proclaimed parliaments in Libya – the House of Representatives (HoR) in Tobruk in the east of the country and the General National Congress (GNC) in Tripoli – as well as by a number of non-governmental armed factions. De facto, there is no government that controls the whole of the Libyan territory.

In the absence of a united national army, various actors are competing for power and resources. Armed factions are gaining a foothold at the local level. In many cases, this is accompanied by control over illegal economic activities, especially the smuggling of goods and people. This all creates a situation that offers room for manoeuvre for extremist organisations too, such as the group known as Islamic State (IS). These organisations recognise and exploit the national power vacuum as a convenient opportunity to expand their activities and even local territorial control in Libya.

Political and Territorial Fragmentation

Looking Back: Revolution and Civil War

In contrast to the rebellions in the neighbouring countries of Tunisia and Egypt, the 2011 protests in Libya escalated within the space of a few days and developed into an armed conflict between the forces loyal to the regime and those rebelling against it. The overthrow of the Gaddafi regime, which was accelerated by the support of the international powers, gave the loose consortia of rebels no opportunity to develop their organisational structure or a programme for the future of Libya and the transition process. The absence of influential, political and civil society leaders who could have filled the power vacuum after the fall of Gaddafi, contributed to the chaos following the revolution.[1]

The government elected in 2012, the GNC, likewise failed to stabilise the security situation. Instead, the armed groups were integrated into a form of parallel security sector and from that

point on received salaries from the state to prevent an escalation of the security situation. To date, none of the three Libyan governments has succeeded in curbing the influence of these informal armed groups and transferring control to a state-controlled security unit.

Libya does not have a unified, nationally controlled army.

Nonetheless, further escalation of the simmering conflicts was prevented until 2014. The fragile stability ended with the parliamentary elections in June 2014, which, marked by violence and low voter turnout, meant a clear defeat for the Islamist forces and which were subsequently annulled. The elections took place in the context of the simmering conflict between General Khalifa Haftar's groups from the east, consolidated under Operation Dignity, and the Libya Dawn coalition from the west formed as a counter-response. The confrontation culminated in a civil war that claimed thousands of victims, turned almost half a million people into internally displaced persons and brought the country's economy to a virtual standstill. After the defeat of the Operation Dignity coalition around the strategically important airport in Tripoli, the elected parliament, the HoR, moved back to the eastern city of Tobruk. Meanwhile, the GNC reconstituted itself as a rival government in Tripoli.[2]

"Libyan Political Agreement" and Perspectives

The negotiations in favour of a political agreement for the creation of a unity government that would end the conflict between the rival parliaments began in January 2015 under the direction of the UN. This government was set up to guarantee the drafting of a new constitution and the holding of elections; and to act as a trusted partner in the fight against IS. The process resulted in the signing of the "Libyan Political Agreement" (LPA), which envisaged the creation of a Presidential Council that would assume the formation of a Government of National Accord and, until then, would replace the existing governments. The intention was to involve members of the Tripoli based GNC in a newly created advisory institution: the High Council of State. The HoR in Tobruk was to remain in existence as the single national parliament. A binding Cabinet agreement by a parliamentary vote of confidence was determined in order to secure democratic legitimacy for the new government.[3]

However, some central questions remain unanswered, especially as regards the regional balance of power and the configuration of the security sector. Due to the ongoing deterioration of the economic and security situation, the danger posed by the spread of IS as well as international pressure on account of increased migration flows, a speedy signing was ultimately preferred to further negotiations. In the following months, these unresolved questions led to a loss of legitimacy of the Presidential Council and the newly formed government. To date, the HoR has not given the vote of confidence necessary for legitimising the new government. Both General Haftar and the GNC withdrew their support for the GNA unity government, established themselves as rival governments in Tobruk and Tripoli respectively, and consolidated their respective power bases through military initiatives by loyal, armed groups.

Meanwhile, the new government also lost public support in the face of the worsening living conditions in the country. According to UN estimates, 1.3 million people, a fifth of the Libyan population, are dependent on humanitarian aid, while the number of internally displaced persons is rising.[4] Ongoing displacement, a collapse of the markets, and plummeting production have made the food shortage more acute; and electricity and water are also only available in limited quantities across the country. Additionally, the healthcare system has collapsed: 60 per cent of the infrastructure functions only in part or not at all and there is a lack of medicine and clinical equipment.[5] The public administration has almost completely crumbled and

Under attack: In Libya, numerous groups are struggling for power following the fall of Gaddafi. Source: © Esam Al-Fetor, Reuters.

the banks experience a shortage of cash. Due to the unstable security situation, most humanitarian organisations are forced to operate from the neighbouring country of Tunisia and aid services often do not reach all those affected. These daily challenges fuel the conflict further.

More than one and a half years after the signing of the LPA, the implementation of the "Political Agreement" appears to be infeasible in its current form. Renegotiations of the key elements with the involvement of those actors who have so far been neglected, seem unavoidable in order to overcome the political blockade and prevent further escalation of the conflict. This realisation has sparked a new willingness to negotiate.[6] To the surprise of many international observers, a meeting between the GNA Prime Minister al-Sarraj and General Haftar on 25 July 2017 brought about an agreement to hold a ceasefire, as well as parliamentary and presidential elections at the start of 2018. It is assumed that a structural change to the Presidential Council underlies the agreement, which would reduce the institution to three members and secure Haftar a central role in Libya's political system along with al-Sarraj and HoR President Agila Saleh.

At the end of September 2017, the new UN Special Representative for Libya, Ghassan Salamé, presented a new action plan for reviving the peace process. The plan envisages a revision of the "Libyan Political Agreement" by a committee, before a national Libyan conference votes on the individuals responsible for the new

Fig. 1: Libya with Areas Held by State and Non-State Actors

Areas shown as of Sep 2017. Source: Own illustration based on Risk Intelligence, World Energy Atlas; cf. Stratfor 2017: The U.N. Hits Reset in Libya, 21 Sep 2017, in: http://bit.ly/2Dc4Hzu [19 Dec 2017]; Natural Earth ©.

executive. The conference under the direction of the UN Secretary-General will aim to bring all previously excluded or under-represented stakeholders to the table. Members of the High State Council and Islamist-spectrum militias allied with the GNA had feared marginalisation within the framework of a renegotiated LPA. It now remains to be seen how successful the renegotiation of the balance of power in Libya will be.

A Country of Regional Contrasts

The country's social divide is crucially important for understanding the political fragmentation in Libya.[7] The east, Cyrenaica, is dominated by tribal groups with links to Egypt and is characterised by a social and religious population that tends to be more conservative. The west, Tripolitania, is more cosmopolitan and oriented towards the Mediterranean. The south, Fessan, is Libya's sparsely populated

hinterland, inhabited by Tuareg and Tubu people who today fight for control of the lucrative border trade, the oil fields and military facilities.[8] Long before the start of the civil war, the depoliticising of public life in Gaddafi's *Jamahiriya* (rule of the masses in the style of Gaddafi) triggered a strengthening of the tribal structures in the regions. The power vacuum after the end of the revolution further encouraged the rise of armed tribal groups and local militias.[9]

In addition to the historical territorial partitioning of Libya, geographical divisions are based in particular on the distribution of national oil reserves. The majority of the oil reserves are located in the "oil crescent", which stretches from Ras Lanuf in the east through the central-northern city of Sirte to Jufra in the south. Irrespective of this, for decades the revenue from the oil sector flowed to Tripoli, thereby giving rise to the sentiment in the east and south of being cheated out of their legitimate income.[10] Since the oil sector makes up around 97 per cent of the Libyan state revenue, control of oil exports represents an important strategic variable for the future of Libya and the influence of various groups.

In the negotiations and implementation of the LPA, it is predominantly the divisions between east and west that play a central role. The rejection of the agreement by important factions and key protagonists from the east can therefore in large parts be attributed to the perception of a power imbalance in the negotiations and the structure of the newly created system in favour of western forces. Because of this, instead of working to establish peace in Libya within the framework of the LPA, General Haftar and his allies tried to cement their position of power in the east and expand their territorial control, in part by co-opting militias and replacing elected communal councils with military governors. The takeover of the strategic oil crescent in autumn 2016 is a clear example of these ambitions, and an important means of political leverage against the GNA.

The Effects of a Lack of State Structures on Regional Security

The context of a lack of state structures offers a fertile breeding ground, especially for the proliferation of extremist groups and, in connection with the country's uncontrolled and porous borders, for increased and irregular migration flows. The consequences of these dynamics in the form of escalating instability therefore constitute a huge challenge for the future of Libya, but also for regional and international stability.

State Without Borders

Libya is traditionally a country of migration and, prior to the revolution, accommodated an estimated two to three million legal immigrant workers from neighbouring countries and the wider continent of Africa.[11] Irregular migration, albeit at a much lower level than at present, was regulated under Gaddafi by a system of selective allocation of unofficial control over border sections and smuggling routes. Following the revolution, these agreements were rendered void and the increasing destabilisation of the country contributed to the rise in the number of irregular migrant flows to and through Libya, as well as to a rapid expansion and professionalisation of smuggling, which had suddenly become deregulated. Accordingly, 95 per cent of the 85,183 people who reached Italy between January and June 2017 via the central Mediterranean route had set out from Libya.[12] In addition to the vacuum of state control in Libya, the aggravated conditions on the eastern and western Mediterranean routes put the country at the centre of migration flows in the Mediterranean area. While UNHCR data speaks of approximately 40,000 people registered in Libya (asylum seekers and refugees), the actual figure is estimated to be considerably higher at between 700,000 and one million people.[13]

In the present situation, neither the GNA nor other state or non-governmental groups have the capacity to effectively put a halt to smuggling activities. Both the 1,770 kilometers long Libyan coast, as well as the 4,348 kilometers

long land borders with neighbouring countries remain porous. A higher concentration of smuggling activities are evident in the south of the country, where there is a lack of state control and alternative economic activities. Therefore, the southern borders and coastal regions in the west of the country form an easy point of departure for smugglers due to the collapse of the former security structures and the GNA's lack of capacities. Since the revolution, this has become a hotbed for smuggling networks to expand, for whom control of this increasingly important economic sector means not only resources, but also securing territorial zones of influence as well as consolidating influence in this volatile power structure.

After the fall of Gaddafi, irregular migration to and through Libya grew enormously.

At the end of 2016, the EU and UN began to train the Libyan coast guard in carrying out rescue missions, combatting smugglers and upholding human rights; and provided them with the equipment to do so.[14] What is problematic, however, is that the Libyan coast guard has emerged from revolutionary militias from the Libyan civil war and has no professional staff. According to a UN report, in some cases the units themselves are involved in criminal smuggling schemes.[15]

In July 2017, the number of migrants reaching Italy from Libya fell by half to 11,459 people and, in August, this figure fell again by approximately 80 per cent.[16] The causes for this dramatic decline are not clearly identifiable. According to various press reports and expert opinions, the expansion of the activities of the Libyan coast guard and their approach against the search and rescue missions of humanitarian aid organisations might have led to this.[17] The withdrawal of international aid organisations has, however, resulted in the operations in Libyan waters becoming even less transparent to observers. International observers and experts accuse the Italian government of supporting an agreement between the GNA and militias that allows for some armed groups to be financed so as to avoid further crossings, and to already intervene on the mainland. Therefore, this decrease appears to be merely linked to the interception of migrants. This does not, however, provide a sustainable solution; and may have the opposite effect with the emergence of alternative migration routes. A challenge of particular urgency is the precarious legal and humanitarian situation of migrants in Libya, which has been documented and criticised time and again by reports from international organisations.

Breeding Ground of Extremist Groups

In conjunction with uncontrolled migration towards Europe, permeable borders and the availability of weapons in the post-revolutionary disorder make Libya a fertile breeding ground for extremism and terrorism. During the revolution, established jihadist factions were already fighting alongside the rebels and, following the overthrow of the regime, took on posts in Libya's political system next to moderate Islamists.[18] However, the continuing state disintegration opened the doors to another actor: the so-called Islamic State. As in other territories, IS turned the undefined power situation in Libya to its advantage and established a territorial presence. Returning fighters from Syria formed the first Libyan IS offshoot and were later supported by IS representatives dispatched from Syria and Iraq in the creation of three provinces (*wilāyāt*) in the east, west and south of the country.[19] IS initially settled in the eastern city of Derna, but was driven out by other jihadist groups. It then moved westwards along the coast and installed itself in the coastal city of Sirte, which became the first region outside of the Levant to fall under the territorial control of IS.[20] Sirte was considered its most crucial base and was retaken following months of fighting by militias and U.S. air strikes.

With regard to the total number of IS fighters in Libya, the estimates fluctuated between 6,000 and 12,000. What is interesting here is that the majority of IS fighters in Libya – up to 70 per cent in Sirte – were made up of foreign fighters, primarily Tunisians. While being displaced from Sirte constituted a heavy territorial defeat for IS, it would be inaccurate to speak of an ultimate victory over the group in Libya. Moreover, the victory over IS provides scope for other Islamist factions to proliferate, which – unless the country is stabilised and gains political peace – presents an ongoing terrorist risk.[21]

Libya's neighbours face cross-border security challenges as terrorist factions spread, especially through the recruitment and training of fighters by groups in Libya and their return to their home countries after the military defeats of IS. Attacks by terrorists trained in Libya, for example in Tunisia in 2015 and Algeria in 2013, also show the increased risk of attacks emanating from Libya as a retreat for these groups. For Europe, too, there is an increased risk of terrorism due to the strengthened international jihadist networks. The Tunisian Anis Amri, who perpetrated the attack on a Christmas market in Berlin at the end of 2016, was in contact with IS in Libya.[22] The Manchester attacker had connections to Libyan IS networks as well. Salman Abedi is thus the latest link in the chain between the situation in Libya and the threat to Europe posed by international terrorism.

The continuing state disintegration facilitates the spread of extremist groups in Libya.

Furthermore, Libya's instability is one of the main reasons behind the internationalisation and growing autonomy of armed factions in the Sahel region. In Mali, the epicentre of Islamist violence in Sahel, in Niger and in Chad, the dissemination of weapons from Libyan holdings fuelled the equipment of insurgencies, which were dominated by Islamists and tribal groups.[23] The tribal areas along the Libyan borders in the south are, moreover, key to regional security.[24] The conflict in Libya has underpinned the crises in Sahel, a region with historically weak governments and widespread zones where the state has little authority.

The lack of state structures in Libya turns the country into a magnet and transfer route for foreign fighters, as well as the logical junction for jihadism in North Africa, given its use as a place for training and retreat for extremists. Unless the situation were to change by means of a political peace process and the construction of a legitimate government with an effective monopoly on power, the activities of terrorist factions will remain a security risk for the region and for Europe. At the same time, however, it must be determined that IS in Libya has no far-reaching control over territories and populations; local support for IS is relatively low. Experts believe that the strong clan and tribal structures are proving to be an important counterbalance to radicalism. The Libyan localism seems to not only be hindering a democratic process, but also a jihadist expansion.

From Fortune to Bankruptcy

Once the country with the highest per capita income in Africa, Libya is now on the brink of national bankruptcy. The country's oil reserves are estimated at 48 billion barrels, making them the largest reserves on the continent and the ninth largest worldwide.[25] In 2012, production of crude oil amounted to 70 per cent of Libya's gross domestic product (GDP), 99 per cent of the nation's exports and 97 per cent of state revenue. As a result of the escalating violence, however, the oil production declined sharply in the subsequent years and is far from being a stable supply since the oil industry in Libya has become part of a pronounced wartime economy.[26] In addition to this, there is the dramatic decrease in the global market price of oil. The banking system has likewise

almost completely crumbled due to the liquidity crisis. The state budget has been put under considerable strain by the appeasement policy of unproductive salary and pension payments. 40 per cent of budgetary expenditure flows into salaries and subsidies respectively and less than half is currently covered by revenue while the remainder comes from depleting currency reserves.[27]

Meanwhile, illegal economic activities, especially the smuggling of people and goods, have developed into a profitable industry. The shadow economy has also been able to greatly expand its capacity by linking criminal networks with territorial access for militias.[28] The war in Libya has led to a reorganisation of the smuggling cartels and turned the country into the regional hub for illegal trade in drugs, medicine, vehicles and people.[29]

The economic collapse of Libya has drastic consequences for neighbouring countries, too.

The economic collapse of Libya has drastic consequences for neighbouring countries, too. Tunisia and Egypt are most seriously affected by the developments. The dramatic economic weakness in Tunisia is therefore ascribed in large part to the crisis in Libya. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) estimates that the chaos in Libya cost Tunisia at least 4.3 billion euros by the end of 2015 alone.[30] After the collapse of the Libyan economy, Tunisia's GDP sank by 3.7 per cent and 3.8 per cent in 2013 and 2014.[31] Furthermore, Tunisia traditionally satisfied 25 per cent of its oil demand with Libyan oil bought at preferential prices. However, this supply was difficult to sustain following the collapse of Libya's oil sector. In the tourism sector, Tunisia saw a slump of 30 per cent in the numbers of Libyan tourists (around 1.8 million annually prior to 2011).[32] A further problem is the return of around 60,000 to 90,000 Tunisian migrant workers.[33] Money transfers from Libya have sunk by one third since 2011.[34] The return of tens of thousands of workers is an additional burden for the country which already has a high unemployment rate.[35]

At the same time, informal trade flows between Tunisia and Libya make up almost half of the trade between the two countries.[36] Almost 40 per cent of the Tunisian economy is informal. Smuggling, as well as other illegal activities often represent the only source of income for people in marginalised border areas. With a revenue of 850 million euros, border trade provides a living for approximately ten per cent of the Tunisian population.[37]

Egypt is similarly affected. The loss of economic advantages for Cairo from its neighbour has further exacerbated the country's economic plight. At 770 million euros at the end of 2014, bilateral trade therefore represented only a fraction of the 2.1 billion euros revenue prior to the Libyan revolution. In 2015, there was an estimated decline in Egyptian exports to Libya of 75 per cent.[38]

Furthermore, the situation for Egyptian migrant workers in Libya is uncertain. Repeated kidnappings of Egyptians and the execution of Coptic Christians by IS have forced many to flee. Before 2011, 1.5 to 2 million Egyptian migrant workers in Libya sent around 28 million euros back to their homeland each year.[39] In 2015, there were only 750,000 migrant workers remaining.[40] A drop in these return remittances harbours the potential for social unrest and further destabilisation in Egypt.[41]

The Role of Regional and International Actors

In addition to the wide-ranging challenges that Libya is facing through political and economic collapse, regional and international actors have also taken on an increasingly active role in the conflict in terms of mediation talks about a peace process, but also through military and

Weapon arsenal: In 2011, the despoliation of Gaddafi's inventory led to the circulation of large amounts of weapons.
Source: © Goran Tomasevic, Reuters.

political support to the individual warring factions. Although almost all states involved have pledged themselves rhetorically to the "Libyan Political Agreement" and the unity government, in many cases it is evident that they are promoting their own interests, thereby impeding the peace process.

Just as in other countries in the region, the U.S. policy of the Trump administration is still unclear with regard to Libya. Based on the statements made by the President and his advisors, U.S. commitment is expected to be restricted to supporting the fight against terrorism and, concomitant with this, a convergence with Haftar, who presents himself as the leader of the war against Islamist and terrorist factions. The recent meeting between Haftar, the US ambassador and the US-AFRICOM commander in July 2017, appears to confirm these expectations and takes place only one day after the announcement that a new diplomatic and military US strategy for Libya is due to be finalised before long. Meanwhile, in the absence of a clear U.S. policy, other international actors have established themselves as major players and, in doing so, have had a decisive influence on the political and military power relations.

With their support for Haftar, Russia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates have facilitated his military successes and territorial expansion. For Egypt and the Emirates in particular, the

ideological component plays a central role here: the two governments see the GNA as linked with Islamist-motivated groups and have grave concerns about this playing a stronger role in Libya's future political system. Haftar's decision to reject and fight against Islamist-motivated factions is thus an appropriate fit with both countries' priorities. In the case of Egypt, its geographical proximity and shared border also play a key role, since Egypt sees itself as having a central part in the shaping of Libya's future due to its security concerns and close economic ties. From the perspective of el-Sisi, too, it is important to prevent a government coming to power that is affiliated with Islamist factions.

Russia has established itself as a further actor in Libya filling the vacuum left by the U.S.; its role has grown in particular over the course of the last year. While Russia nominally supports the internationally recognised unity government, deepened contacts with Haftar and the HoR in the east have become increasingly evident. Haftar has visited Moscow a number of times to campaign for the weapons embargo on Libya to be lifted and to solicit support in the fight against Islamist factions in the east of the country. A UN weapons embargo, in place since 2011, prohibits the export of weapons to Libya, with the exception of the channels controlled by the GNA. However, the visit by Haftar at the start of the year to the Russian aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov, fuelled rumours of arms treaties being transacted and plans for the establishment of a Russian marine base near Benghazi. According to international media reports, Russian military advisors and technical personnel are located in Libya. For many observers there is no mistaking that Haftar could secure not only the backing of Egypt but also of Russia. Without this, shifting the balance of power in Libya in his favour would be out of the question.

In this conflict situation, the EU has limited room for manoeuvre in Libya. The EU is in fact the greatest advocate of the LPA, yet its activities are focused for the most part on regulating the flow of refugees in the Central Mediterranean. This prioritisation by the EU is evident not only through its allocation of significant financial resources to migrant-related projects in Libya via the EU Emergency Trust Fund, but especially through the EU NAVFOR MED Operation Sophia, which began in June 2015. The goal of the operation is to disrupt the business model of trafficking networks and people smuggling rings in the Central Mediterranean area and, in doing so, to reduce the migration flows heading towards Europe. After the second extension until the end of 2018 and a renewal of its mandate, the operation now also includes training the Libyan coast guard, monitoring the waters to suppress illegal oil exports from the country, as well as helping to implement the UN weapons embargo in the waters off the coast of Libya.[42]

While positive results were reported pertaining to saving human lives and capturing smugglers, one current study shows that the aspired destruction of the smuggler networks' business model has not yet been achieved. Thus, in 2016, there was again a surge of 18 per cent recorded in irregular migration to Europe via the Central Mediterranean route compared to the previous year's figure; and the first six months of 2017 saw another rise of 19 per cent.[43] The second EU mission in Libya, the EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM), provides training and advice with the aim of increasing the capacity of the Libyan authorities to secure the borders, and developing and implementing a strategy for integrated border management in the longer term.[44] The mission is, however, severely restricted by the security situation and the limited room for manoeuvre of the GNA. With regard to migration, the southern member states, Italy in particular, feel abandoned by the rest of the EU countries. In reaction to repeated warnings of overload, in early July the EU Commission adopted an action plan to support Italy for greater solidarity in handling the refugee problem in the Central Mediterranean.[45]

Furthermore, a stronger role for the EU seems to be obstructed by discrepancies between its member countries and partially unclear strategies for supporting the peace process. Due to

Italy's key role in the migration issue, but also to the historical and commercial links between the two countries, the former colonial power is the leading actor of European diplomacy in Libya. Efforts to curtail migration flows by means of agreements with Libyan stakeholders have proven to be problematic, however. For instance, an agreement made in February 2017 between Italy and the GNA was annulled by a Libyan court. In parallel to this, Italy is conducting talks with tribes from the south of the country to try to find allies for better control of the southern border regions. The most recent meeting of al-Sarraj and Haftar under the direction of Emmanuel Macron was accordingly met with disapproval in Italy, since the country feels that its diplomatic role is at risk.[46]

So far, the EU has not been successful in positioning itself as a strong geopolitical actor in Libya.

The EU has so far been unsuccessful in positioning itself as a strong geopolitical actor in Libya. In fact, some European countries are following different goals because of their disparate priorities. This is most evident in the dealings with General Haftar. Since the start of 2016, France has supported Haftar's LNA by passing on intelligence information in the fight against Islamist factions in Benghazi.[47] Other countries, too, increasingly see Haftar as a strategic component of a political solution. This dynamic ultimately culminated in a meeting between al-Sarraj and Haftar in July 2017, initiated by Macron. The resulting agreement implies the admission that the GNA has failed and that Libya's political future is only conceivable with Haftar in a key role.

Outlook

What does Libya's future look like in the face of these manifold political, economic and social challenges as well as the latest political developments?

Despite international support, the Government of National Accord under al-Sarraj has not been able either to guarantee the country security or to build up support within the population. Instead, Haftar has consolidated his territorial control and ensured security for the people, brought oil fields under his control and consolidated his demands for legitimacy. Initially anxious to marginalise Haftar, the international community increasingly finds itself in a situation that makes his inclusion in the political process unavoidable. Haftar has won acceptance in Europe with his credo of "Stability instead of chaos" and his fight against IS.

If the plan that al-Sarraj and Haftar agreed on in July in Paris can actually be implemented in this form, the de facto failed unity government – and the two other rival governments – would be superseded by elections at the start of 2018. The demobilisation of the numerous armed factions would be carried out based on the agreed ceasefire. However, the chances of success of this agreement remain low – the potential losses for diverse groups are too great, who, in the absence of strong national structures, have appropriated territorial, economic and political control and are prepared to defend this. In addition, an agreement between the two largest warring factions, the GNA and Haftar, does not appear to be inclusive enough to serve as a point of departure for a comprehensive peace and transition process, and would once again mean the exclusion of a broad spectrum of relevant actors.

An alternative to this is a more in-depth and inclusive renegotiation of the LPA that, alongside the political process, also involves key questions surrounding the organisation of the security sector and the allocation of financial resources; and which includes all the important actors. In the context of the weakness of the UN mission in Libya, there ensues a key role for regional actors such as Tunisia and Algeria to lead such negotiations. The risk of a renewed escalation of the conflicts in Libya and the serious consequences of instability on these countries, also provide a clear incentive to take on such a role.

Dangerous passage: Currently, the instable Libya is considered to be the main transit country for refugees attempting to reach Europe via the Mediterranean. Source: © Darrin Zammit Lupi, Reuters.

At the same time, the involvement of regional and international actors in the context of political and territorial fragmentation in Libya is associated with numerous risks. In the absence of a strong central government, their support of various groups and warring factions led to significant power shifts that have contributed to further conflicts and fractionalisation, impeding the peace process as a result. Any strategy for Libya by external actors should take these risks into account if a further escalation is to be prevented and the stabilisation of Libya is to be made possible.

What Libya needs is a solution for the fragile to non-existent state monopoly on the legitimate use of force that, through the continuing instability, enables the spread of extremist factions and trafficking and smuggling networks, which destabilise the Mediterranean region beyond the borders of Libya itself. A solution of this kind can only be created through an inclusive transition process that establishes a viable power balance between Libyan actors. In order to facilitate effective support for this type of process, the approaches of international actors must be broadened beyond the current focus on migration and terrorism, and enable the construction of stronger state structures.

While Russia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt have contributed significantly to shifting

the balance of power in the favour of Haftar, the EU and its member states – too preoccupied with controlling migration flows – appear to be left without a long-term strategy regarding Libya's future. The fact is, however, that short-term policies fail to go beyond treating the symptoms. This is also true in terms of the uncontrolled migration from the Sahel to Libya. Libya must become a nation-state again. It is therefore imperative that the European states come to a consensus on the priorities, goals and partners in Libya and show greater engagement.

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Other Topics

So Close and Yet So Far

The UK since the Brexit Referendum

Hans-Hartwig Blomeier

The UK's decision to leave the EU based on the so-called Brexit referendum shocked Europe. How did it come to this? What internal rifts and contradictions are the root causes of the referendum result? What expectations, concerns, and fears does the impending separation entail? And what are the prospects for a future relationship?

1. Introduction

Since the referendum of 23 June 2016, in which a narrow majority (52 per cent) of the British voted in favour of leaving the EU, the debate has been dominated by some key questions relating to the future European order and the future development of the EU, but also the UK's self-image,[1] its role and responsibility in Europe and the world, and ultimately its relations with the EU and the other European nations. Even after the EU Commission and the UK have reached a first breakthrough in negotiations and the EU Council agreed to begin with the second phase of negotiations on 15 December 2017, it is still completely open what outcome the recently begun process of extricating the UK from the EU – the so-called "divorce negotiations" – will have and what future relations between the UK and the EU, which are also still to be negotiated, will look like. The referendum, the discussion process it entails and the negotiating positions that have been made public to date have illustrated how distant "the continent" obviously is to many of the British people on the one hand. While showing how close the relationship has come to be over 40 years of EU membership on the other – at least in the hearts and minds of many, mostly young, British people.

The purpose of this article is to analyse how this (seemingly unpreventable) separation could come about, what internal rifts and contradictions in the UK have been revealed along the way, what expectations, concerns, and fears, both in the UK and the EU, are linked to this formal separation, and what prospects there can be for a future relationship.

2. From the Bloomberg Speech to This Day – How Could It Come to This?

Considering the serious implications of the decision of 23 June 2016, a question that is increasingly being asked is whether things had to come this far at all, that is, whether this referendum was a necessary step towards achieving clarity or whether, in fact, it merely reflected an internal power struggle within the Conservative Party. To answer this question, we will need to take a look at the political parties and their positions towards the EU, as well as the social trends and positions in the UK.

The opinion of the British population on EU membership has been and still is split. This was the case before the referendum, and little has changed since then. Surveys[2] indicate that it is merely the number of those who are undecided about the referendum that has fallen significantly, which means that a certain process of opinion-forming has taken place. But there is still a stalemate, with opinions fairly entrenched on both sides.

Before the referendum, the issue of EU membership did not arouse a heated socio-political debate among the general public (although it did within the Conservative Party), nor did it awake passions nearly as much as the debate about migration (which then became a key issue in the referendum campaign), for instance. Consequently, doubts about whether this referendum was a necessary course of action are justified. In any case, there had been no currents in civil society and no campaign in favour of a referendum before it was announced. Instead, what is interesting and relevant here is the correlation

between identity and EU membership. A 2015 study on this issue[3] showed that a separate identity clearly was and remains a dominant interest of the British (some 65 per cent – compared to only 25 per cent in Germany) and that, compared to the citizens of other European countries, only a small number of British (just 15 per cent on average between 1996 and today) identify themselves as European. The stance on this question of identity strongly correlates with people's position on the merit of EU membership.

EU membership has never been close to the heart of the majority of British people.

This appears to indicate that EU membership was never close to the heart of most British people. The decision to join what was then the European Community (EC) in 1972 was made for economic reasons, and the majority of the British still judge that membership on "What's in it for us?" The ratification in the UK in 1975 via a referendum was essentially based on this rationale, particularly as the economic situation in the country was weak at the time and people hoped (not without reason) that joining the EC and the developing Single Market would stimulate the UK economy.

While things have changed significantly for the younger generation thanks to Interrail and Erasmus, there is still no majority support for the EU. The older generation has not lived through the unifying continental European wartime and post-war experiences, which provided significant impetus and acted as a bonding agent for European unity, nor did they forget the initial twofold vetoing of the UK's EC membership by the French,[4] which no doubt deepened the rift. These days, while many in the UK have forgotten that it was, in fact, Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher who advanced key EU efforts, such as eastward expansion and the enhancement of the Single Market, they remember her legendary slogans in connection with the "UK rebate" ("I want my money back"). There is a grandiose episode of the TV series "Yes, Minister" that, succinctly and with typical British humour, summarises the domestic political view about the foundation of the UK membership in the EU.[5]

To answer the above question, it is necessary to consider the political actors involved. Both the Conservative Party and the Labour Party are divided on the question of EU membership, and the issue still evokes disputes within both parties. Only the Liberal Democrats have been consistently pro-EU in recent years, but it has not led to electoral success, as became very clear in 2015 (before the referendum) and in 2017 (after it).

While the Labour Party maintained a pro-EU course backed by the majority of the party (but never all of it) under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, this position has changed markedly under the new party leader, Jeremy Corbyn. In the past, his approach towards the EU has oscillated between reticent and negative, and he kept very quiet on the matter during the referendum campaign. A few Labour MPs, including the German-born Gisela Stuart, were prominently involved in the Leave campaign, but most of them tend to be pro-EU. The party base is also split on the matter, with positions being characterised by regional and sociological differences.

In the Conservative Party, on the other hand, the issue of EU membership has always caused considerable tension and controversy. A radically Euro-sceptic wing including MPs such as William Cash, John Redwood, and Jacob Rees-Mogg, and Daniel Hannan (MEP) made consistent efforts for years (and decades) towards extricating the UK from the EU, speaking out vociferously about the issue within the party.

This group represents a hard core of around 30 per cent of MPs, thereby giving it the power to significantly affect the outcome of party leader elections and parliamentary votes (particularly when there is a narrow majority).

Leave: Due to a lack of success of his Remain campaign, David Cameron had to resign even before the actual Brexit.
Source: © Stefan Wermuth, Reuters.

The Tory MPs who can be considered as more EU-friendly, belonging to organisations such as the Conservative Group for Europe and the Tory Reform Group, are somewhat fewer in number (some 20 per cent of the parliamentary group) and have always been more conciliatory in tone and action and ultimately more loyal to the party. Consequently, they had less political clout. Now, this has changed significantly. Under the direction of Dominic Grieve and Tory veteran Ken Clarke, the group that has been reviled as the "mutineers" by the Daily Telegraph has brought the Prime Minister her first touchy electoral defeat by refusing their allegiance to her in a vote about the parliament's participation in Brexit on 13 December 2017, with only eleven dissenters of their own fraction. The following death threats to some of these delegates show how magnified and aggressive the political climate has become. But the majority of Tories can be regarded as neutral on the question of EU membership and willing to toe the party line and follow the party leader or prime minister.

Things look a little different for the party base. The majority of Tory members are considered EU-sceptic or anti-EU, which matters to MPs in their constituencies, particularly for internal party candidate selection.

But the juncture in the Conservative Party that triggered the Brexit decision came before the referendum. In his efforts to become leader of the Conservative Party, David Cameron promised his Euro-sceptic colleagues that he would

lead the Conservatives out of the EPP-ED group in the European Parliament and create a new, separate group. He defeated David Davis (the present Brexit minister in the May government) in the party leadership contest and went through with the departure from the EPP group after the EU parliamentary elections in 2009, founding the new European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR) in collaboration with Czech and Polish parties. This step, which he would probably have taken before 2009 had he not encountered strong resistance in the EPP and from some of his own MEPs, meant not only weakening the EPP, which lost its majority in the European Parliament, but also giving in to pressure from the Euro-sceptic wing of his party; a position he would have reason to regret in the referendum issue.

The concrete step that led to the referendum was Cameron's so-called Bloomberg Speech,[6] which he delivered in his capacity as Prime Minister on 23 January 2013 in the form of a keynote address on European policy. It contained a

Erasmus generation: Of all people, having to bear the brunt of Brexit in years to come, it is the young generation who voted with a clear majority to remain in the EU. Source: © Dylan Martinez, Reuters.

number of policy definitions regarding the UK's role in and ideas for Europe and the EU and was therefore in retrospect a useful and necessary speech. However, it also included a promise to let the British people vote on EU membership which was ultimately a concession to the Euro-sceptic wing of his party in the hopes of obtaining its approval for his EU strategy or at least temporary relief from pressure.

The speech did not, however, give a timeframe for such a referendum and thus remained sufficiently vague to avoid immediate pressure to act. His opponents within the party subsequently upped the pressure, prompting him to include a referendum promise in the 2015 election manifesto, this time with a concrete deadline (December 2017). If David Cameron banked on using coalition negotiations with the Liberal Democrats (in the assumption that he would fail to achieve an absolute majority once again and be forced to form a new coalition) as an occasion to go back on this referendum promise or postpone its fulfilment indefinitely, he became a victim of his own electoral success: the Conservatives won a narrow absolute majority in May 2015, preventing him from reneging on his promise to hold the referendum. His expectation that the time until the referendum could be used for a broad, objective discussion of the pros and cons of EU membership ("So we will have time for a proper, reasoned debate") proved completely illusory.

No such substantive debate ever took place in the UK; even the run-up to the referendum was characterised, on the Leave side, by a highly emotive, grotesquely simplified campaign punctuated by outright untruths, and by an uninspired, rather technocratic, thoroughly negative one by the Remain side.[7] Prime Minister David Cameron, who headed the Remain campaign, lacked conviction and credibility, mainly because he, like all his predecessors since 1975, had always managed to promote and vigorously defend British interests in Brussels while blaming Brussels for virtually anything amiss or inadequate at home. Conducting a campaign whose theme was "The EU is not really convincing and I personally don't like it either, but staying is not as bad as leaving" was truly not the way to persuade doubters and sceptics in his own country to vote Remain.

One factor that should be mentioned in this context is the role and impact of the British media, most of which had welcomed UK membership in the EC (even the Daily Mail ran the headline "Europe: here we come!"). Its tone has changed markedly over recent years and decades, some outlets going to grotesque lengths in their opposition. There can be no doubt that negative campaigning (even the most sympathetic observer could not call it anything else) by the so-called Murdoch press, (The Sun and The Times, but also crucially the Daily Mail and Daily Telegraph) contributed significantly to the EU's negative image in the UK and therefore had a major impact on the referendum result.[8] Whether Brexit can really be blamed on negative reporting[9] may be up for discussion, however, the Remain side were never able to forcefully oppose this ubiquitous anti-EU mood that spanned several decades. The headline in The Sun (the publication with the widest circulation) on the day of the referendum (23 June 2016) says it all: "Independence Day: You Can Free UK from Clutches of the EU Today".[10] In view of this very one-sided publicity, the lack of empathy with the EU, and a lacklustre Remain campaign, it is almost surprising that 48 per cent of the British voted to remain in the EU, although this assumption about the intent of those voters is just as suspect as the idea that the 52 per cent who voted Leave were exclusively and firmly interested in the UK leaving the EU.

The EU referendum illustrated (once again) how difficult and ultimately misleading the desire to reduce a highly complex matter to a simple question and then present it to the public in a legally binding referendum can be. The fear that voting behaviour will then be influenced by many other factors besides the question posed has been confirmed in the UK, as can be demonstrated by the geographic, demographic and sociological differences in actual voting behaviour. People in cosmopolitan cities such as London, Manchester, and Birmingham, and

young people, who had obviously enjoyed concrete benefits from the EU membership, voted Remain while many older people and those in weaker social groups and in rural areas, who had not yet benefited from globalisation and saw the EU as a distant and bureaucratic foreign institution at best, voted Leave – out of understandable frustration and to punish the government. Scotland linked its own independence debate to the EU membership issue, and the majority of voters there voted to remain (EU membership was certainly not the only issue that determined people's decisions there).

Consequently, neither the 52 per cent who voted Leave, nor the 48 per cent who voted Remain can be identified as exclusively anti- or pro-EU. But the concrete political decision to leave the EU is based on this vote. The rather vague sentiments in the country (anti-migration, loss of control, anti-establishment, etc.) which had a significant impact on the result, were used to come to a legally binding decision; this produced a situation in which, significantly, a private legal challenge was necessary to ensure that Parliament would have its say and a chance to affect the final deal.[11] This is a remarkable state of affairs in the "birthplace of parliamentary democracy".

The UK's EU membership is due to end in March 2019 after 47 years.

3. *Quo Vadis, Britannia?* – Expectations, Illusions, and Concerns regarding Brexit

Since the referendum of 23 June 2016, and especially since the formal beginning of the exit process triggered by the relevant letter of 29 March 2017 from the British Prime Minister Theresa May to European Council President Donald Tusk, the "Brexit clock" seems to be ticking inexorably: after 47 years, the UK's EU membership is due to end in March 2019. This development is lauded by some as "freedom from the bonds of Brussels" and "a return to national sovereignty", but regarded by others with increasing concern due to the looming uncertainties, loss of importance, and international isolation and to the likely economic downturn.

After David Cameron's resignation following the EU referendum, Theresa May, who was Home Secretary at the time, took over as Prime Minister after a remarkable internal party elimination process.[12] She did so with the mandate to implement the referendum result, but also in the knowledge that she would have only a narrow parliamentary majority (17 seats) and a party that was traditionally split on the issue to do it with. Her surprising decision to hold new elections on 8 June was meant as a bid for liberation that was to increase her slender parliamentary majority and thus obtain greater legitimacy in the areas of domestic and foreign policy and to extend her personal mandate beyond Brexit to 2022. At the time, this was a perfectly plausible calculation. The lead over the Labour Party in the polls, some 20 per cent, seemed sufficient for the gambit. The elections of 8 June proved the decision to be a catastrophic miscalculation that lost May her absolute majority and meant that she could only remain in power at all by entering into a (politically complex) alliance with the Northern Irish DUP; she had lost valuable time and, more importantly, a great deal of political credibility. The situation was greatly exacerbated by her disastrous appearance at the Conservative Party conference in Manchester at the beginning of October 2017[13] and the internal party skirmishes, particularly those involving Foreign Secretary Johnson, that preceded it. Since then, she has been viewed not just as wounded, but on borrowed time. This has enormous consequences for the political options and balance of power affecting the possible and necessary compromises in the Brexit negotiations. Theresa May can certainly count as a success that she managed to effectively handle the first phase of negotiations, as well as the EU now being ready to start the second phase after substantial concessions of the British government regarding payments, EU citizens, and the

Ireland issue. However, the initial refusal of the DUP to follow her, as well as the previously mentioned electoral defeat in parliament show how fragile her position continues to be.

In socio-political terms, nothing has fundamentally changed since the referendum and the 8 June election. The Remainers and Leavers are still ensconced in their camps, and there is still no genuine national dialogue about a coherent strategy for the future. There are a number of reasons for this.

For one, the referendum and the election exposed the depth of the many rifts in the country: demographically between old and young; sociologically between globalisation losers and winners and between urban and rural populations; London's extremely centralising special role; the question of independence raised by the Scottish referendum of 2014; and the evermore-acute uncertainty as to whether and how the Brexit process might jeopardise the fragile peace in Northern Ireland.

What form might a social and international reorientation of the UK take?

Although the UK's unity is not being questioned at the moment, what might take the place of the unifying influence of Queen Elizabeth II. is. A return to Empire is the stuff of romantic illusion and no real option. The Commonwealth has never been a truly workable alternative, and is therefore probably not a realistic answer to the central question of what the UK sees as its future role and place. A former world power, the UK has never been entirely happy with its new role as an EU member state, even an important one. The idea of being able to play a special role in the international arena as a junior partner of the USA ("special relationship") briefly appeared feasible after a few overblown announcements by Donald Trump, but has since given way to the sober realisation that, given the current US administration, such a role would be neither desirable nor sustainable.

While the Brexit process was not the cause of all these questions, it did highlight them. Having said that, the discussion process to date gives little cause for optimism. The fractious political situation, a weak government (without a ruling majority and with a prime minister on borrowed time) and an equally weak opposition (with the leader Jeremy Corbyn much strengthened after the election, but a deeply divided Labour Party), so far shows no sign that the broad discussion David Cameron called for in his Bloomberg Speech[14], might be used for a socio-political reorientation and debate of the future.

Big Ben being turned off after the midday chimes on 22 August (to undergo repair work estimated to take four years) has a certain symbolism: the Brexit clock is ticking, but in London time seems to have been made to stand still as if one could simply stop or defer the seemingly unavoidable multiple, complex negative consequences of leaving the EU.

As already mentioned, the negotiations between the EU and the UK have overcome the first round of negotiations. But the differences on the shape of future economic and trade relations and cooperation in areas such as foreign and security policy, science and research, etc. are so great that even inveterate optimists cannot see how a constructive conclusion can be reached in the period leading up to Brexit.

Two elements could, however, dramatically speed up proceedings and lead to a fundamental change in positions, particularly in the UK. On the one hand, political momentum could gain the upper hand. If both sides realise that the technical negotiations are leading nowhere and that political solutions must be sought and found, the negotiations could be turned over to the heads of government. Compromises, even unconventional ones, may allow seemingly irreconcilable differences to be overcome. But this approach would probably fail due to the weakness of the

British Prime Minister, who has lost a great deal of authority, not only in her own party, due to the poor election result and the events before and after the party conference, but also in Parliament, where she could be defeated at any time by the opposition of just ten to 15 MPs of her own party on the pro or anti-EU side – just as in the vote on 13 December – should they not approve of these political compromises.

The other option would be a drastic change in popular mood, but, as has been mentioned, there is currently no sign of that. A dramatic change of economic variables, for instance triggered by the Central Bank increasing the base rate in response to rising inflation with dramatic effects on the population, highly indepted by consumption and mortgages, could provoke such a shift that would drive politicians, particularly the MPs in Parliament, to make a similarly drastic change in their position on the Brexit issue. But time is a limiting factor here. There is currently no indication that such a massive change will happen before the Brexit deadline, and even if it did, stopping the Brexit process would require a cross-party consensus in Westminster (since the hardliners among the Tory Brexiteers have already indicated publicly that they would stick to their stance even in the face of massive economic losses). Cross-party consensus has therefore remained a foreign concept in the Commons to date.

4. Europe and the UK – Prospects for a Complex Relationship

The current discussion focuses primarily on the outlook for the different versions of Brexit. But the opinions on this vary greatly both within government and within the opposition, which makes it very difficult for the EU negotiators to know what the official and valid British negotiating position is. The position papers presented so far were immediately subjected to criticism from the Conservative Party's own ranks and then rejected in Brussels as being too insubstantial. No genuine progress has been observed in the negotiations to date.[15]

The almost romantic idea of leaving the EU, while still retaining as many of the existing benefits as possible through a plethora of agreements is, understandably, not well received in the EU. Half-hearted concessions such as claiming to reject merely the "direct jurisdiction" of the European Court of Justice have been viewed as insufficient by the EU on the one hand, and considered a "betrayal" of the Brexit mandate by Tory hardliners on the other.

The unwillingness to allow a hard border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland which both sides repeat like a mantra, is simply incompatible with leaving the EU, the Single Market, and the Customs Union in order to regain control over the movement of people and goods. A hard external border between Ireland and Northern Ireland is the logical, rational consequence of this decision. Questions arising from the Good Friday Agreement, such as the right to EU citizenship for Northern Irish citizens, pose further complications for which there are currently no solutions.

Where do we go from here? All that is certain is that the status quo cannot continue, and while a reversal remains a theoretical possibility, it is almost certainly not politically feasible before the deadline. A well-balanced solution (probably most closely resembling a soft Brexit) would require considerably more time than is currently available. It is unclear whether an extension of the deadline can be negotiated, since the two sides insist on totally different rules for such matters. The EU would probably agree to a delay during which the current rules – freedom of movement for workers and ECJ jurisdiction – remain in place. Yet, that is precisely what the UK does not want, hoping instead for a longer implementation phase for the new conditions – conditions which have yet to be negotiated. So there seems to be an impasse.

A second scenario would be an abrupt end to the negotiations; a breakdown in relations and the ensuing legal, economic, and political chaos on both sides. This is without doubt the worst-case scenario, but it figures ever more prominently

Discordant: Although the previous negotiation rounds have been able to achieve first advances, the complex questions on future relations are still completely open. Source: © Hannah McKay, Reuters.

in the current debate. UK government circles, the British economy, and economic actors elsewhere in Europe[16] are increasingly bracing themselves for this scenario. All players still profess to be aghast at the idea, but "whistling in the dark" will not prevent it from happening. Pressure applied from the business world on both sides is the primary factor that could and should drive the political players to reach a negotiated settlement that would prevent this scenario.

This leaves the third scenario, one that remains both realistic and sensible: the "clean cut". It would require swift, pragmatic decisions on both sides. With the meanwhile achieved readiness of the British to meet their payment obligations, as well as a realistic clarification of the rights of the EU citizens living in Great Britain, the question of the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland has to be debated first within this scenario, which still remains difficult in spite of all declarations of intent. Additionally, a key point will be to agree upon an ideally comprehensive trade agreement (under discussion are models that mainly follow the Canadian model), the difficulty going to be the sector of the (financial) services. Other aspects of future collaborations in the foreign and security policy areas, as well as science and research are also to be agreed upon. It is illusory to accomplish this until March 2019, the deadline extension thus being an imperative. But for this scenario to play out successfully, both sides will need to realise that the lose-lose situation that Brexit inevitably entails, will only be bearable if the resulting damage is minimised; in turn, who loses less and who loses more is only of minor significance.

The political and economic consequences for the UK have already been alluded to. But it must also be clear to the EU that the UK's departure will entail more than "just" the loss of part of the Single Market or other purely economic consequences. However fractious the UK may have been as an EU member, the EU was and still is stronger as an economic and trading power, and especially as a security and defence power, with the UK than without it.

The concern that the exit of the UK might inspire imitators in the EU, still detectable in the Brexit debate on the EU side a year ago, has subsided; in other words the suspicion voiced in the UK that the EU wants to "punish" the British to deter others, is not justified. But Brexit will substantially weaken the EU, both internally and in terms of external perception. Internally, it will affect the EU budget (the UK was a net contributor despite the "UK rebate"), the flow of goods and services, and the Single Market (after Germany, the UK is the EU's second-largest trading player), as well as the architecture of the financial markets (as a major international finance centre, London is the most important financial service provider within the EU).

Not least, the departure of the conservatively governed UK will shift the regulative balance within the EU. Germany in particular will miss having a partner so strongly in favour of the market economy, despite the differences the two countries have had, including in the business sector.

To the outside world, the relative importance of the EU will decline when the UK leaves with its some 60 million inhabitants and considerable economic clout, and the EU will no doubt be less attractive as a business and trading partner.

Even though the UK will remain a member of NATO, and the British have traditionally been cautious about moves towards joint European security and defect policy and even tried to slow them, the UK has, in fact, lent the EU greater weight in this area too as a significant security and defence power. That will change with Brexit as well.

Brexit is only one of numerous challenges the EU is currently facing.

The EU itself is facing complex and unsolved problems. The gravest of these include the tense relationship with Poland and Hungary; the euro crisis, which has still not been fully overcome and still affects the Italian banks in particular, but also Deutsche Bank; the refugee crisis that has been inadequately controlled through the agreement with Turkey; the strained relationship with Russia; and the complete recalibration of relations with the USA after the power change in Washington and the ensuing consequences for the security architecture in Europe. It is doubtful that these issues will be easier to resolve without the British at the EU table.

The EU will and must keep evolving. This will require answering some fundamental strategic questions. Will this evolution entail stronger isolationism and/or greater internal integration? Will the EU increasingly close itself off from neighbouring European non-EU countries (including the UK after 2019) or will it develop a new neighbourhood concept with relations of varying intensity or different levels of integration? Would this potentially open the way for readjusting the relations between the UK and the EU – it is safe to say not in the immediate future, but in five to ten years' time?

Despite the bafflement and justified irritation about the Brexit decision, the EU must remain interested in a constructive relationship with the UK. But the British must first determine and set out their priorities. The country is at a crossroads: the choice seems to be between "Great Britain" or merely "Little England", according to some acerbic remarks. One hopes that the UK as a nation and its society will find a path

towards its European identity after all – albeit outside the EU for the foreseeable future.

If this were to happen – and there are indications, especially among the younger generation, that it will – it would be in the EU's fundamental interest to help the UK along that path and explore constructive partnership models to shape a new European order in which the UK would be an important, even essential partner.

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1 For the purposes of simplicity and consistency, the designation "UK" is being used throughout the text to represent the full country name of "United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland".
2 Cumulated survey results 1977–2017. Cf. NatCen Social Research 2017: How would you vote in a referendum now on whether Britain should stay in or get out of the EU?, in: http://bit.ly/2zTHDqJ [20 Oct 2017].
3 Cf. full study: Ormston, Rachel 2015: Do we feel European and does it matter?, London, in: http://bit.ly/2zkYFOI [20 Oct 2017].
4 The UK first applied for membership of what was then the EC as early as 1961 and then again in 1967. In both cases, Charles de Gaulle vetoed the move. His reasoning for the first rejection became the stuff of legend: "The Treaty of Rome was concluded between six continental States, States which are, economically speaking, one may say, of the same nature. [...] England in effect is insular, she is maritime, she is linked through her exchanges, her markets, her supply lines to the most diverse and often the most distant countries; she pursues essentially industrial and commercial activities, and only slight agricultural ones. She has in all her doings very marked and very original habits and traditions. In short, the nature, the structure, the economy that are England's differ profoundly from those of the continentals." Charles de Gaulle, 14 Jan 1963, quoted in ETH Zurich, International Relations and Security Network (ISN): French President Charles DeGaulle's Veto on British Membership of the EEC, in: http://bit.ly/2zQP8LN [24 Oct 2017].
5 Cf. scene in BBC 1981: The Devil You Know (series 2, episode 5), in: Yes Minister, https://youtu.be/rvYuoWyk8iU [20 Oct 2017].
6 For the full text of the speech, see Cameron, David 2013: EU Speech at Bloomberg, in: http://bit.ly/2AhaCFl [20 Oct 2017].
7 Cf. detailed analyses about the referendum: Blomeier, Hans-Hartwig / Wientzek, Olaf 2016: Good Bye Britain?, KAS-Sonderbericht, 12 May 2016, in: http://kas.de/wf/doc/kas_45165-1522-1-30.pdf [20 Oct 2017]; Blomeier, Hans-Hartwig 2016: Ein schwarzer Tag für Großbritannien und die EU, KAS-Länderbericht, 24 Jun 2016, in: http://kas.de/grossbritannien/de/publications/45682 [20 Oct 2017].
8 For a more in-depth analysis of this statement cf. Bennhold, Katrin 2017: To Understand 'Brexit,' Look to Britain's Tabloids, The New York Times, 2 May 2017, in: https://nyti.ms/2prA0l3 [20 Oct 2017].
9 Zastiral, Sascha 2016: Der Brexit wurde herbeigeschrieben, Zeit Online, 5 Jul 2016, in: http://bit.ly/2iArfBi [20 Oct 2017].
10 The Sun 2016: Independence Day: Britain's Resurgence – You can free UK from clutches of the EU today, 23 Jun 2016.

11 In a legal challenge brought at the end of 2016/ beginning of 2017 that went all the way to the Supreme Court, the entrepreneur Gina Miller succeeded in forcing the government to involve the British Parliament in the Brexit process and seek its mandate to trigger Article 50. In connection with her actions, Miller found herself the target of verbal abuse and threats, including death threats, and the judges at both levels of jurisdiction were described as "traitors against the will of the people" and subjected to verbal abuse in the above-mentioned news media.

12 For details cf. Blomeier, Hans Hartwig 2016: Weg frei für die neue Premierministerin, KAS-Länderbericht, 12 Jul 2016, in: http://kas.de/wf/doc/kas_45836-1522-1-30.pdf [20 Oct 2017].

13 On this subject, cf. a more detailed report in Blomeier, Hans-Hartwig 2017: Premierministerin May angezählt, KAS-Länderbericht, Oct 2017, in: http://kas.de/wf/doc/kas_50282-1522-1-30.pdf [20 Oct 2017].

14 Cf. Cameron 2013, n. 6.

15 Cf. Department for Exiting the European Union 2017: Article 50 and negotiations with the EU, in: http://bit.ly/2zTM30N [20 Oct 2017].

16 The Federation of German Industries (BDI) spelt it out particularly clearly, advising its members in early October to prepare for this scenario. For a detailed explanation cf. BDI 2017: Deutsche Industrie schaut mit Sorge auf Fortgang der Brexit-Verhandlungen, press release, 5 Oct 2017, in: http://bit.ly/2AWUdSD [20 Oct 2017].

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