Editorial

The second issue of *JOME* of 2021 opens with an article by Murat Akan about the decision by the Turkish government to turn the Aya Sofya (Hagia Sophia) in Istanbul from a museum back into a mosque. Almost a century ago the government of the new Turkish republic made the building into a museum. Since then, the status of the Aya Sofya has been a pivot in Turkish politics. Akan argues that the decision to re-open the Aya Sofya for religious services is more than a trivial pragmatic move by an otherwise secular government; it is indicative of the trajectory of the current AKP-led Turkish government of ‘waqf-izing’ the Turkish state, as he calls it.

Kholoud Al-Ajarma and Marjo Buitelaar provide an intriguing account of representations of the pilgrimage to Mecca by comparing experiences of “ordinary” Muslims in Morocco and the Netherlands, as they are posted on various social media platforms. They show that, in the accounts by Moroccan Muslims, the way the hajj is framed in national media is contested. Self-representations by Dutch Muslims deconstruct dominant images of the Muslim in society as the “other” by connecting the meanings they attribute to the pilgrimage to Mecca to universal issues.

Nedim Begovic analyses the case law of the European Court of Human Rights on accommodation of Islamic observances in the workplace. Begovic proposes that such accommodation should be provided within a national legal framework. Although the author focuses on the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, his findings are certainly also relevant for other European countries. All too often demands articulated by Muslims in this regard are dismissed by administrative authorities by the “religious neutrality” argument.

Saleema Burney, although focusing on the UK, also addresses issues that are relevant in other countries. The systematic documenting of the voices and concerns of individual Muslim women, which has started only recently, reveals fascinating accounts that debunk the politicised and institutional agendas of governments and the dominant social images of these women’s expectations and outlooks. The author expresses hope that their public interactions as religious women will provide prospects for a more plural Britain, built on a convivial and interactive model of integration.

Semiha Sözeri, Hülya Altinyelken and Monique Volman analyse the pedagogic methods applied in Turkish mosque classrooms in the Netherlands. Based

on fieldwork in two mosques affiliated to *Milli Görüş* and *Diyanet*, respectively, they identify three different pedagogies practiced in the mosque classrooms: a pedagogy of national identity building, unorthodox pedagogies of bonding, and pedagogies of moral education. Although the general intention of the providers of this education and the common denominator for the pedagogies is to create a pious and/or nationalist diaspora youth, this in no way legitimises the alarmist comments made by politicians about these activities.

All the articles in this issue deal in one way or another with questions of images and counter images. They show, not very surprisingly, that only by immersion in specific cases and systematically exploring them, is it possible to critically take issue with these images and debunk dominant assumptions.

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