
This book is about what Nina Clara Tiesler, following Tomas Gerholm e Yngve Georg Lithman, calls the “New Islamic Presence (NIP)” in Europe, and its main thesis is that “Muslim minorities’ politics of identity in Europe are a reaction to those of non-Muslim social majorities” (p. 11). The book is organized into four major chapters. The first presents a short history of the Islamic presence in Europe, while the second discusses Muslim minorities in Europe today. The third chapter conceptualizes the NIP, identity, and diaspora, and the fourth, finally, debates the NIP through the perspectives of a few well known Muslim scholars.

The NIP is defined in contraposition to a “traditional Islamic presence (TIP)” and to a “Historical Islamic Presence (HIP)” (p. 44, 45). According to the argument, the HIP is the older presence of Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula, and the lack of historically continuous Islamic presence in the Iberian Peninsula rightfully justifies the absence of a bolder discussion on the HIP in the book. The TIP, by contrast, refers to Muslim presence in the southeast of Europe (Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Albania, Poland, and “parts of the ex-Soviet Union”) left by the “last phase of Muslim domination in Europe,” which finished with the Karlowitz Treaty of 1699. But, while the existence of this “minority” is acknowledged in the first chapter, it is presented almost as an exception. That is, this Muslim population is not directly taken into account (p. 44) because the main aim of the book is to defend the thesis that there is a new, much more influential and general, pattern of Muslim presence in Europe: the 15 million strong NIP (p. 37).

The NIP is slightly ambiguously characterized in *A Morada de Ser*. Sometimes it is portrayed as having started after 1974 (p. 25), and especially after 1989 (p. 18; 42; 25; 90; 193). At other times, it is portrayed as having started as a post-1945 wave of seasonal labor migration from Muslim majority countries (p. 68). At still other times, it is portrayed as immigration linked to “post-colonial movements and their perception in European societies and academic discourses” (p. 21), or simply as a “historical phenomenon of recent migration” (p. 71).

With the exception of two passages (p. 78; 90), Tiesler practically ignores converted European Muslims, considering the NIP as almost exclusively an immigration phenomenon. Despite this limitation, in a more positive reading of the book, it is not difficult to understand that Tiesler defines the NIP as a social process encompassed of two different yet not

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2) In the book the date of the Karlowitz Treaty figures as 1969, which can be fairly attributed to mistyping.

3) Albania figures in this passage among the countries in which Muslims are a minority in Europe (p. 59), but today’s numbers are leaning toward the recognition that they are at least half of the population. Tiesler confirms this in an earlier passage (p. 58). This and the earlier inconsistencies and typos are rare but present in *A Morada de Ser*.

4) Tiesler this time is citing the words of Gerholm and Lithman (1988).
neatly separable phases. The first phase begins with the beginning of the post-1945 unskilled, seasonal, rural, male labor immigration to Europe. The second phase starts when this same immigration becomes permanent, especially after the 1974 oil crisis that ended with the continuation of the flux of labor to Europe this time authorizing family reunion, the end of the Cold War, and, particularly, the first veiled polemic in France and the Rushdie affair in 1989. That is, the NIP is presented as much as a “product of new global interests and the European context” (p. 194) as a social consequence of the immigrant family reunion, which in itself turned the immigrant’s return to his country of origin into a “myth” while casting the “old land in clear light” (p. 190).

The NIP was very much changed with (or “defined by”) the new European political debate, especially regarding Muslims, after 1989. According to Tiesler, three main social processes arose with the NIP. On one hand, there was a concomitant Europeanization of Islam and Islamization of European Muslims, while on the other hand, there was an “Islamizing orientation of debates” about Muslims in Europe. Although the first two happened within the Muslim population itself and are mainly justified and illustrated in the book through the thought of preeminent Muslim writers, the third process was engendered first by the European media and then by the European public.

Because Tiesler focuses on these wide historical processes, she does not treat other European Muslim categories of belonging with the same level of relevance as Islam. Nationalist feelings, ethnicity, political views, and social class are all treated almost only when tangent to Islam. That is not to say that they necessarily deserve the same weight as other variables, but I find it hard to agree that such disparity is generic to all European Muslim subjects. For instance, Tiesler seems to go in the same direction as Ernst Gellner when she states that for Muslims the *Umma* can be the “very nation” (p. 168).

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5) The 1979 Iranian Revolution is also incidentally brought up in the book, sometimes in conjunction with both 1974 and 1989. A major omission in terms of dates is the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack in New York, which is brought up in almost all recent studies of the relation of Muslims in the USA and Europe.

6) Although there is a passage in which Tiesler states that the Islamizing orientation of debates started with the *dawa* (“piety” or “call” in Arabic) movement since European Muslims wanted to know how it was to be “a good Muslim” (p. 183). Just how much this contributes to the Islamizing orientation of the debates in the non-Muslim European media and public is not clear in the book.

7) In this sense, I myself have shown how, among Palestinian refugees (especially camp dwellers), Palestinian-ness tends to dominate over other variables of belonging – although other variables can be as important as Palestinian-ness. See Leonardo Schiocchet, *Between the catastrophe and the promised return: Palestinian refugee trajectories and conceptions of time in Lebanon*, IWM Junior Visiting Fellows’ Conferences, Vol. XXIX (Vienna: IWM, 2011), http://www.iwm.at/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=424&Itemid=125.

8) The *Umma* is the imagined community of Muslims throughout the world.