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Changing Parameters of Citizenship  
and Claims-Making:  
Organized Islam  
in European Public Spheres

YASEMIN SOYSAL

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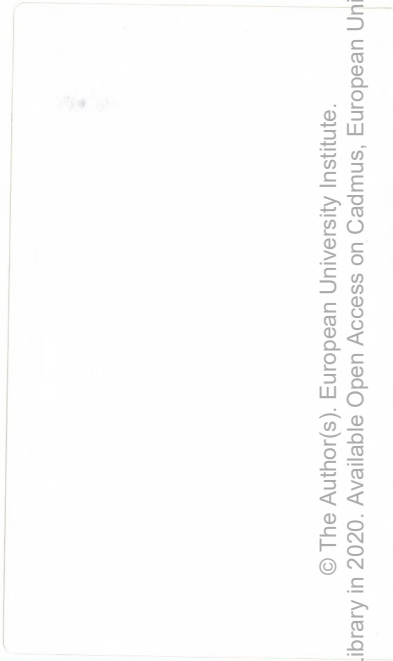
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**Changing Parameters of Citizenship  
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Organized Islam in European Public Spheres**

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A significant outcome of the postwar labor migration has been Europe's rediscovery of Islam. Along with a vitalization of religious associational life among immigrants, there has been a visible interest in Islam as an object of political, cultural curiosity and scientific inquiry. On the axis of Birmingham, Marseilles, and Berlin, the Pakistani, Maghrebine, and Turkish migration experience provides researchers, politicians, and the popular mind with the contours of 'Muslim' community formation in the midst of European democracies. At issue is the compatibility of Islam--its organizational culture and practice--with European categories of democratic participation and citizenship. Formations of Islamic community are marked either as a divisive, anti-democratic threat or contribution to the political and cultural plurality of Europe.

Whether European states recognize Islam as an official religion or not, Islamic groups are allowed to organize under public law as regular associations. One consequence of this has been the proliferation of religious organizations that practice and advocate Islam in its most radical forms. Another consequence, however, has been the recasting of Islam as an ethnicized political identity through attempts to foster a collective existence within the categories of European states. Although they can operate through informal congregations or, simply, unofficial places for prayer, Islamic groups opt to organize formally. Some function as ethnic interest groups, making claims and demands not only for the right to religious life, but also for the political, social, and economic rights of their members. To obtain grants for their activities, secure allowances for their particular religious practices, and assert their collective identity, they become participants in local and national politics. Like their secular counterparts, they take stands on such migrant issues as racism, discrimination, and integration. Some others are involved in economic activity, usually small-scale enterprises, such as local broadcasting stations, travel or insurance agencies, driving schools, import-export shops, cafes, bakeries, butcher shops, and grocery stores. They

also operate as social clubs, and are involved in nonreligious cultural activities, such as courses, gatherings, and sports activities for women and youth.<sup>1</sup>

How does this extensive associational activity translate into participation in and integration into the public sphere? How does such collective engagement contribute to the practice of citizenship and workings of a democratic society? Certainly, the community formation that takes place around the Islamic associational activity does not purely confine itself into the private sphere but extends claims about the public sphere. On the one hand, Islamic organizational activity can be construed as creating alternative 'moral communities' that are foreign to the normative categories of European democracies and, hence, a threat to the functioning of a civil society.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the 'dense network of associations' can bring Muslim communities closer to the host society public life, encourage their civic participation, and, thus, foster cooperation and solidarity among the citizenry (Putnam 1994).<sup>3</sup>

However, to subjugate the debate over Islam to these opposing formulations would be to overlook the wider implications of Muslim activity for an inquiry into the changing patterns of citizenship, claims-making and participation in Europe. My intention in this paper is to transgress the customary parameters of the debate over the compatibility of Islam with European norms of citizenship and undertake such an inquiry.

As much as defining certain rights and duties (Marshall 1964), citizenship also denotes participatory practices and contestations in the public sphere (Anderson 1991, Orloff 1993, Somers 1993, Soysal 1996, Tilly 1995a). Through their collective associational, relational activities (formal or informal) in the

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<sup>1</sup> Islamic populations in western Europe has been estimated to be 10 to 13 million, with concentration in France (5 million), Britain (1 million), and Germany (2 million). The associational activity is in rise among Muslim immigrants, but this does not necessarily correspond to increased religious practice. According to a recent survey of 13,000 foreigners in France, 68 percent of those from Algeria consider themselves to have no religion and only 10 percent practice Islam regularly (survey conducted by the National Institute of Demographic Studies in France, *NY Times*, 5 May 1995). Another study reports that 40 percent of Maghrebians surveyed in France and 30 percent of Turks in Germany report that they are 'nonbelievers' of God (Bozarlsan 1996). A similar trend has been observed in the United States. Americans' engagement with organized religion has increased (Wuthnow 1994) despite a decline in membership in congregations and church attendance (Putnam 1994, reporting from General Social Survey data).

<sup>2</sup> To find such arguments, it is enough to peruse the debates around the 'Rushdie affair,' Gulf War and 'Islamic jihad,' and the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York. Huntington's (1993) 'civilizational wars' argument is a more sophisticated version.

<sup>3</sup> In Putnam's (1994) terms, such 'civic engagement' and 'connectedness' constitute the basis for 'social capital'--crucial for the successful realization of a civil society--and sustain 'wider collaboration and solidarity.'



public sphere, individuals mobilize and advance claims. In that sense, a shared public space, within which social actors interact and mobilize, is essential for the exercise of citizenship.

The predominant conceptions of citizenship are predicated upon nationally defined political communities.<sup>4</sup> They take axiomatic the existence of actors whose rights and identities are presaged by the boundaries of national collectives. As such, these bounded and coherent national collectives establish the normative basis for rights and social solidarity, and are the 'authentic' sites for the realization of an active citizenry and integrated civil society. Not taken into account are the shifting boundaries of the political vis-a-vis citizenship, the global entrenchment of the 'individual rights' discourse, and the changing narratives of belonging and identity, all of which manifest reconfigurations in the organization and ideologies of the postwar European system.<sup>5</sup>

These transformations pose a challenge to our conceptions, and current prescriptions, of citizenship as to how the boundaries of the public sphere are defined, who are its proper referents as participants, and what is the basis of social integration within its boundaries. What this challenge entails is that public spheres are realized intra- or transnationally; solidarities are shaped beyond national boundaries; and the referent is no longer exclusively the national citizen, but increasingly an abstract individual entitled to claim the collective and bring it back to the public sphere as her 'natural' right.

In terms of claims-making, these changes render two significant constellations. I contend that a) nationally bounded social spaces can no longer be assumed self-evident; political communities shape and take place independent of nationally delimited collectives and at different levels (local, national, transnational). Simply put, the social and political stages for claims-making proliferate within and without the nation-state. b) There are emerging forms of community, participation, and solidarity, which connect the claims of individuals and groups to broader institutionalized agendas and globally dominant discourses, rather than engendering simple reinventions of cultural particularisms. Not only claims are justified by referral to universalistic parameters, but also legitimated with an appeal to loosely-defined notions of public good and cast in a language that facilitates a host of similar claims by Others. In my paper, I show that Islamic groups appeal to universalistic principles of human rights, draw upon the

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<sup>4</sup> Marshall's (1964) theory of the formation of citizenship, a foundational template for the scholarship on citizenship, presumes the existence of national communities. Much of the recent work simply overtakes this assumption. See Soysal (1994) and Somers (1993) for a critique.

<sup>5</sup> See Hobsbawm (1990), Tilly (1990), Meyer (1994), Soysal (1994), Jenson (1994), and Sassen (1991).

host-country and world-level repertoires of making claims, and traverse and bridge a diverse set of public places.

These assertions structure my discussion of the changing parameters of collective claims-making and participation in public spheres. To substantiate my arguments, I derive empirical evidence from the postwar migration experience, of Muslims in particular, in Europe.<sup>6</sup>

In the following sections, I discuss three specific processes that have introduced new dynamics for collective claims-making and organizing, thus practicing citizenship, in postwar Europe. I suggest that to provide a meaningful understanding of contemporary formations of citizenship, we need to incorporate these changes into our analytical 'tool-kit.'

### **Valorization of Personhood and Individual Rights: Shifting Boundaries of the Political vis-a-vis Citizenship**

In the nation-state mode of political community, public and people overlap with nation (Calhoun 1994, Habermas 1995). This postulate strongly figures into our understandings of the legitimacy of claims to rights and participation. National belonging constitutes the source of rights and duties of individuals; and nationally circumscribed public sphere constitutes the locus of their claims and contentions. The postwar era however has witnessed an increasing recasting of (national) citizenship rights as human rights (Soysal 1994; see also Seligman 1992:133).<sup>7</sup> Rights that were once associated with belonging in a national community have become increasingly abstract, and defined and legitimated at the transnational level.

The intensification of transnational discourse and instruments on individual rights crystalizes around the idea of personhood. It involves a conception of human persons in abstract, universal terms, supported by legal, scientific, and popular conventions. As a social code, personhood is not an idealistic, Hegelian notion, but one rooted in highly structured discourses, economies, and politics. This scientifically encoded human personness comprises the normative basis of expanding rights. In the postwar era, the rationalized category of personhood, and its canonized international language, Human Rights, has become an imperative in justifying rights and demands for rights, including even those of nonnationals in national polities.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The evidence is based on my on-going research on 'the changing institutional dynamics of collective claims-making and organization in Europe.'

<sup>7</sup> I use the term 'human rights' in its broader and abstract sense, not necessarily referring to specific international conventions or instruments and their categorical contents.

<sup>8</sup> See Soysal (1994:41-44) for a more elaborate discussion on personhood and rights.



The valorization of personhood and individual rights expands the boundaries of political community by legitimating individuals' participation and claims beyond national definitions and imbuing them with 'actorhood' (Meyer 1994) independent of membership status in a particular nation-state. With the breakdown of the link between the national community and rights, we observe multiple forms of citizenship that are no longer unequivocally anchored in national political collectivities.<sup>9</sup> These forms, which I called 'postnational' elsewhere (Soysal 1994), can be explicated in the membership of the long-term noncitizen immigrants in western countries;<sup>10</sup> in dual citizenship (which violates the traditional notions of loyalty to a single state); in European Union citizenship (which breaches the link between the status attached to citizenship and national territory); and in regional/local citizenship (which includes collective rights in culturally autonomous regions in Europe).

The postwar reconfiguration of the institution of citizenship has significant implications for claims-making and participation in the public sphere. As the old categories that attach individuals to nationally defined status positions and distributory mechanisms become blurred, the nature and locus of struggles for social equality and rights change. Postnational forms of membership expedite new solidarities and ways of claims-making, further problematizing the assumed affinity between national unity and the expansion and acquisition of rights (see also Cohen and Hanagan 1995).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Historically, multiple forms of citizenship were prevalent within the jurisdiction of particular polities. The active and passive citizenship status during the revolutionary regime in France is an example (Tilly 1995b). But in time the concept and practice of national citizenship converged on a (formally) unitary status.

<sup>10</sup> The membership rights of noncitizen immigrants generally consist of full civil rights, social rights (education and many of the welfare benefits), and some political rights (including local voting rights in some countries).

<sup>11</sup> The transformations in national citizenship are not only to do with the global intensification of individual rights, but also of liberal ideologies and institutions of free market and trade (Jenson 1994, Sassen 1991). Together, they generate paradoxical consequences for the institution of citizenship. While, the ideologies of individualism and liberalism contribute to the dismantling of the welfare state and the elimination of the policy categories based on the collective (e.g., affirmative action and welfare propositions), at the same time, they facilitate the claims of various groups for the collective as justified on the basis of individual rights. Thus, the same transnational processes that lead to new marginalizations and exclusions also create the grounds for new forms of claims-making and participation.

## Naturalization of Collective Identities: Changing Narratives of Belonging

Identity is commonly assumed as something prior to the constitution of citizenry and belonging to the private domain.<sup>12</sup> Identity formation and politics is not considered as part of the processes of public sphere (Calhoun 1994). The postulate of relegating identity to the private and nonpolitical does not readily hold against another postwar development--the redefinition of identities as rights.

Promoted by the works of UN, UNESCO, Council of Europe and the like, as well as the discipline of anthropology, universal right to 'one's own culture' has gained political legitimacy and collective identity has been redefined as a category of human rights.<sup>13</sup> What are considered particularistic characteristics of collectivities--culture, language, and standard ethnic traits--have become variants of the universal core of humanness and selfhood. Identity represents the 'unchosen'--thus the naturalizing language of kinship, homeland, and territory.<sup>14</sup> One cannot help but have identity. And collective cultural rights belong to individuals, since culture is inherent in the individual (see Parekh 1995).

As a natural attribute and right, identity is exercised in individual and collective actors' narratives and strategies (Abu-Lughod 1991, Somers 1992). In turn, identities proliferate and become more and more expressive, authorizing ethnic nationalisms and non-ethnic subcultures of various sorts (youth, feminist, gays and lesbian, the deaf). Identity emerges as an ever pervasive and meaningful discourse of participation, and is enacted as a symbolic and organizational tool for creating new group solidarities and mobilizing resources in national and world politics.

Universalistic prescriptions of identity and particularism contest the assumed dichotomy of public and private.<sup>15</sup> Human rights discourse occasions

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<sup>12</sup> See for example Smith (1986). See, on the other hand, Anderson (1991) and Hobsbawm (1991) for a critique.

<sup>13</sup> A set of transnational legal conventions and institutions guarantees the right to claim identities and self-determination. See for example, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The first article of both covenants proclaims that 'all peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development' (quoted in Dinstein 1976:106).

<sup>14</sup> See Anderson (1983), Appadurai (1991), Yanagisako and Delaney (1995), Douglas (1966, 1986), Herzfeld (1992), Malkki (1992), Gupta and Ferguson (1992), and Soysal (forthcoming).

<sup>15</sup> It is argued that public/private distinction has always been challenged in the history of modern nation-state and identity formation has always been a constituent of public sphere (Calhoun 1993, 1994; Somers 1993, Tilly 1995b). I agree with this contention, but I want to



ever increasing demands on maintaining distinct group identities and collective claims. Once institutionalized as natural, the discourse about identities creates the ground for the entry of these collective identities and claims to the public sphere, expressively packing the political with identity.

### **Emergence of Multi-level Polities: Transgressing Conventional Loci of Participation**

The uniformity and territorial boundedness of public spheres are either taken for granted or asserted as a precondition for functioning participatory democracies.<sup>16</sup> Historically, the national principle links internal democracy with national self-determination, thus with territorially bounded and culturally integrated communities.<sup>17</sup> In that, the nation-state, and its institutions, delimits the terms of associational, participatory life, and the practice of citizenship. The emergence of multi-level polities, as we observe with the unfolding of the European Union, alters the topography of participation and facilitates new projects of citizenship in the countries of the West.

In its developing form, the European Union exemplifies a political entity, in which authority is increasingly dispersed, sovereignty is shared, and jurisdictions overlap.<sup>18</sup> To the extent that the nation-state no longer has the sole monopoly of sovereignty, the locus of interest aggregation and articulation (which are historically linked to the nation-state) also shifts. The existence of multi-level polities engenders new frameworks for collective mobilizing and advancing demands within and beyond national boundaries. The diffusion and sharing of sovereignty among local, national, and transnational political institutions, enables new actors, opens up an array of new organizational strategies, and facilitates competition over resources and definitions. Transnational courts and the institutions of the European Union, as well as various nation-state agencies, national courts, subnational (local) governments, become targets for diverse claims and political action. Despite this gradual but nevertheless notable advent of multi-polities, our conceptual formulations are still confined to the territorial integrity of public spheres; and, changes in the locus of claims and participation are kept out of analytical agendas.

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make a further point that collective identities are now defined as natural rights of individuals, thus comprise an inevitable component of their existence in the public sphere.

<sup>16</sup> See for example Habermas (1962).

<sup>17</sup> On the relationship between the principle of nationality and public spheres, see Calhoun 1994.

<sup>18</sup> See Schmitter (1992) and Marks and McAdam (1993) for the prospect of European Union as a multi-level polity. Closa (1995) provides a more cautious account.

In the rest of this paper, I will elaborate on the implications of the above mentioned processes for our concepts and contemporary enactments of claims-making, civic engagement, and political participation, by deriving examples from organized Islam in Europe.

### **Organized Islam Enters European Public Spheres**

Islam in Europe has come to be associated with highly publicized ‘affairs’ of dramatic content, such as foulard affair or Rushdie affair. What compounds these affairs, and debates around them, is an organized Islam concerned with community-formation and moral boundaries, invoking religious symbols to make political interventions. This politicized Muslim identity poses a manifest difficulty for the elemental principles of liberal democracy, which project public spheres constituted by harmonious political discourses and free of private identities.

One of the main premises in theorizing democratic society is that networks of civic engagement and associations should foster collective ‘trust’ and ‘solidarity’ by cutting across social cleavages (see Putnam 1993). However, especially in the postwar era, it is exactly on the basis of these ‘social cleavages’ that the mobilization of civil societies takes place. Authorized by a global discourse on identities as rights, Islam, like other religious belief communities, ethnic and regional identities, enters into the public sphere as a collective form of making claims. Moreover, the very terms within which national citizenship is construed, by institutionalizing ‘nation’ as a naturalized cultural entity, inescapably underwrites the engagement of other cultural identities (including Islam) as political agents in the public realm.

The assertive presence of Islamic groups in European public spheres delineates two specific features of the emergent modes of collective claims-making and participation: First, in making claims, the groups that partake in the public realm deploy identity narratives, couched within the axiomatic verities of universalistic discourses. Second, the terms of their participation extends beyond the confines of the national, span multiple localities, connect (and simultaneously construct) transnational communities, thus, diversify the ‘spaces for and of politics.’<sup>19</sup>

#### **a) *Universalistic Discourses of Rights and Identity as the Basis of Public Spheres***

While Islamic groups increasingly mobilize around claims for particularistic identities and group specificities, they connect their claims to broader institutionalized agendas and transnationally entrenched discourses, such as human rights. Consider the following examples. In 1989, the issue of Islamic

<sup>19</sup> I borrow the phrase from Jensen (1993:138).



foulard erupted into a national crisis and debate in France, when three North African students were expelled from school for insisting on wearing their veils in class. The affair revived concerns about the 'laicism principle' of the French state, the definition of freedom of religion in the public school system, and the questions of the integration of immigrant communities. During the debates, the head of the Great Mosque of Paris declared the rules preventing wearing scarves in school to be discriminatory on the grounds of individual rights. His emphasis was on personal rights, rather than religious traditions or duties: 'If a girl asks to have her hair covered, I believe it is her most basic right' (*Washington Post*, 23 October 1989). In this case, Muslim identity, as indexed by the headscarf, was asserted and authenticized by the very categories and language of the host society.

In yet another episode of the foulard affair, veiling was presented and defended with adherence to laicism and liberty principles of France. As reported in Kepel (1995:191-192, 288-291), on February 5th, 1994, about 1500 students staged a demonstration in Grenoble to support the hunger strike of a Muslim girl Shehrazad and her newly-converted French Muslim 'sister' Sandra. Shehrazad was expelled from highschool because of her refusal to take off her scarf in gym classes. The center-piece of the protest was a short street performance to highlight the discrimination directed to Muslim girls. With a twist on multiculturalism, the performers enacted the headmaster's refusal of Shehrazad's scarf, while he warmly welcomes to school a punk with multi-colored hair, a Catholic in a brown-robe, and a Jew with his kipa. The point was not to be missed. The play ended with the slogans of the protesters: 'Yes To Laicism, and To My Scarf!' and 'France Is My Liberty, So Is My Scarf!' For Shehrazad, wearing scarf was her moral duty as a Muslim; it was a 'natural' act and did not bother her at all. So was her Frenchness. Her protest was framed by the credo 'We are French, Yes! And, Muslim, Too!' along with 'Allah'u Ekber--God is Great!' Shehrazad and her supporters did not see any contradiction between Islamic and French secular values, and mobilized their Muslim identity as a political expression.

When urging Islamic instruction in public schools and the recognition of Muslim family law, during the 1987 national elections, the Islamic associations in Britain asserted the 'natural' right of individuals to their own cultures to justify their demands. In their election program, to frame their position, they directly invoked the international instruments and conventions on Human Rights. As such, theirs was a claim for difference affirmed by universalistic and homogenizing ideologies of human rights. And by doing so, they participated in the host country public space and appropriated host country discourses as they mobilized on the basis of their 'difference.'

The closing statement of the fourth European Muslims Conference (July 1990), among other demands, advocated the rights of Muslim women, and the

'psychological' and educational needs of Muslim children. In the declaration, the participants employed a discourse that appropriated the rights of the individual as its central theme. They made an appeal for the rights of Muslims as 'human beings' and 'equal' members of European societies. Concurrently, they vocalized their demands around a Muslim identity, forming solidarities that are based on being unlike others.

On the 12th of November 1995, which corresponds to the birthday of Fatima (the daughter of the prophet Muhammed), the Shi'ite Ehlibley mosque in Berlin invited 'all Muslim women' to a celebration of World's Women's Day. Speakers to the meeting included not only the (male) clergy of the mosque but 'Muslim' women of different nationalities, Turks, Arabs, and Germans. The focal point of speeches given was to highlight women's equality and emancipation, locating the gender issue within religious moral realm. Islamic vision, as presented to the audience of about 200 women, encapsulated the very terms of the contemporary gender discourse. Throughout the meeting, all speakers sought to explicate various social identities of women (as wives, mothers, sisters, workers, and professionals). The keynote speaker, a young imam, traced 'the question of woman' to the Qur'an: 'We need to identify and investigate the meanings given to social (gender) identities in Islam [Qur'an]... and then discuss the equality of men and women.' Then, by way of a theological reinterpretation, he placed gender equality into the original script, the creation story: 'We reject the contention that Eve was created from the rib of Adam. This only serves to accept that women come second to men. This is purely a defamation. Adam and Eve were created independently, from the Earth!' Finally, he referred to the Beijing Conference on Women, and claimed the assertion, 'women rights are human rights,' as an original teaching of Islam and its culture. He declared indignantly: 'In the Beijing conference, when someone said, 'women's rights are human rights,' thousands of women cheered and clapped. What were they cheering for? We already said that 1400 years ago! That is our word!' The meeting was an instance of linking Islamic moral realm to contemporary concerns and discourses about women--speaking to and through them.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Establishing linkages between Islamic belief systems and contemporary discourses is not specific to the congregation mentioned above. Alevites, another important Islamic group in Germany, incorporate secularism and equality as essential components of their culture and religious ideals. The prevalence of gender discourse in presentations of Islam is not coincidental, either. Not only the leaders but also Muslim women derive heavily from the feminist discourse, particularly when they talk about their own identity. In an interview, 23 year-old Fatemeh Amin emphasizes that, through her veil, she 'represents [her] true personality' and avoids being a sexual object. She also puts the blame for the failures of Islamic countries regarding women on the wrong interpretations of Qur'an by men (*die tageszeitung*, 4 October 1995).



With these examples, I aim to show that Islamic groups actively take part in public spheres, making (moral) claims and inserting their identities. Their claims, however, are not simply grounded in the particularities of religious narratives; on the contrary, with an appeal to justifications which transcend the boundaries of particular groups. The terms they engage are embedded in universalistic principles and dominant discourses of equality, emancipation, and individual rights. In that sense, particular and universal are not categorically opposed--the particular is interpreted by the universal.<sup>21</sup>

Let me insert a caveat here: Muslim groups in Europe, obviously, do not speak in a uniform discursive framework--though most studies on immigrants take the uniformity of Islamic discourse as granted. The above mentioned examples by no means exhaust the range of narratives employed by Islamic groups. Again, speaking for Islamic veil, a Turkish imam in Nantua declared the practice as 'God's law,' which led to serious divisions among Turkish immigrant community--and to his deportation from France. It is also possible to find Islamic positions which base their claims on religiously codified family laws that sanction status disparity between genders. These proclamations point to alternative legitimating discourses and scripts.<sup>22</sup> My point here is to delineate, and incorporate the implications for our theoretical vistas, the prevalent universalistic forms of making claims by identity groups, which are commonly overlooked.

As the examples I provided evince, through the narratives of identity, Islamic groups attach themselves to available macroframes and repertoires of making claims and devise strategies of participation. Such narratives, be they personal or collective, are means for partaking in and contributing to the realization of public spheres. By so doing, Islamic groups saturate the public with private, infuse the public realm with 'competing moral claims' and 'inharmonious' difference. Hence, the public expression and mobilization of their identities inevitably appear as a threat to civil society. However, the outcome is not necessarily a public arena devoid of shared meanings, or an arena of disengaged, disintegrated moral claims. What is shared and what constitutes the

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<sup>21</sup> See Hart (1995) for a similar observation on the religious organizations' deployment of local and universal discourses in making social demands (such as public housing and resources for inner city in the US). Also see Lamont (1995) for a critique of the scholarly practice of taking the universal/particular dichotomy for granted. Obviously the particular/universal distinction is not new. Societal groups always use broader discourses than their specific interests (they claim for the public good). But here the distinction refers to something else. Historically, for the nation-state model, and for the bourgeoisie involved in nation-building, universal meant the whole citizenry, bounded by the national. What is different I argue is that claims are no longer confined to this limited universality, but expand beyond it.

<sup>22</sup> See Parekh (1995) for a discussion on the range of strategies and arguments that can be employed to legitimate Islamic practice of polygamy.

(moral) basis of public is the universalistic discourse of rights, and within this framework, the recasting of identity as the natural good.<sup>23</sup> This shared basis is what makes interaction in the public space possible, even when identities are multiple, particularized and set in opposition. What is not possible is that this public being defined as an expression of a closed, bounded community; the emerging public spheres disrupt national constellations. But I will come back to this in the next section.

Here it might also be useful to reinsert an insight into the discussion from the 'new social movements' theory: Identities are not apriori defined but in part constituted through participation in public spheres. By a process of interaction, negotiation, and contestation, shared identity definitions and markers are constructed.<sup>24</sup> In liberal democracy arguments, identities are assumed to be distinct and fixed, thus in conflict as they enter the public sphere ('threat' of incompatible civil identities). This I reckon has to do with the dominant understandings of identity.

In conceptual formations, otherness and difference are essential corollaries of identity. Identity connotes similarity only when one's own community is considered; it becomes inclusionary to the extent that it creates boundaries to exclude the ones who are not alike. This conceptualization rules out the common grounds and discourses that identity politics generates across collective groups. The process of collective identity formation concurrently assumes and facilitates shared discourses and public spaces. Furthermore, through participation, identities themselves are revised and homogenized. Difference is formalized with reference to common themes, comparable modes of presentation, and routine markers and attributes of culture.

As it is apparent from the cases I cited, Islamic activists redefine and reconstruct religious symbols, such as veiling, as cultural or political expression, and defend them on the grounds of human rights, thereby reproducing and contributing to the host society and global discourses. As they engage in political conflicts and public debate, they join in the same 'discursive medium and frames,' and use the same 'symbolic packages' that are available as public discourse independent of their original carriers (Eder 1995:5). These discourses

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<sup>23</sup> Note that here I am not talking about shared 'values' on rights and identities. Jepperson (1991) usefully clarifies the distinction between shared values and shared discourses.

<sup>24</sup> See Larana, Johnston, and Gusfield (1994), McAdam, McCarthy and Zald (1988), and Melucci (1989) for an introduction to and Gamson (1995) for a review of this literature. Tambini (1996) provides an illuminating analysis of this process in his study of identity constructions in nationalistic political movements in Ireland and Northern Italy.



serve as important elements of social construction and presentation of identity, whether they reflect 'complete or unbiased' picture of existing practices.<sup>25</sup>

Islamic organizations I study do not justify their demands by reaching back to irredentist religious teachings or traditions, but through a language of rights, thus, citizenship. By using the 'rights' language they exercise civic projects and link themselves to the broader public good. The projects of citizenship in which they engage however are not necessarily nationally bounded; they are both spatially and symbolically multireferential.

### **b) Participation Beyond the Bounds of National Spaces**

I have so far argued that what increasingly characterizes public spheres is multi-connectedness of symbols and discourses as opposed to the 'horizontal connectedness' among members of civil societies (Putnam 1993). The 'ties that bind' (Kymlicka 1995) manifest themselves through participation in and by vertical connection to common, universalistic discourses that transcend national idiom of community. When Islamic associations make demands about veiling in schools, theirs is not a claim for belonging to an existing 'French collectivity' but to the educational system, which they behold as their most natural right. This is not necessarily disengagement from the collective life but the collective is no longer bounded by a preordained national community. Their claims concomitantly redefine the national and extend beyond its bounds.

I see two complementary aspects to this process of 'extending beyond the national.' First, Islamic organizations initiate and target different level public spheres in making and pursuing their claims. The mobilization and participation of Muslim communities entail multiple states and political agencies, and trans- and subnational institutions. For example, Islamic *foulard* issue was not simply a matter confined to the discretion of a local school board, but has traversed the realms of local, national, transnational jurisdictions--from local educational authorities to the European Court of Human Rights. Similarly, in 1990, when the local authorities refused to permit the opening of another Islamic primary school, the Islamic Foundation in London took the issue to the European Court of Human Rights. And, more and more, Muslim associations elevate their operations to the European level, establishing umbrella organizations and forums to coordinate

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<sup>25</sup> By emphasizing the commonality of discourses and strategies, I am not taking a naive position and assuming that individuals or groups will bond together and arrive at agreeable positions. Here I diverge from the Habermasian project, according to which the discursive process, when rational, serves to bring reason and will together and create consensus without coercion (Habermas 1992:12). Public sphere necessarily involves conflicts, contestations, and incoherent outcomes, however rational. In that sense, the role of the discursive participatory process is to focus on agendas of contestation and provide space for strategic action, rather than consensus building (Eder 1995).

their activities and pursue a Europewide agenda (Soysal 1994, Kastoryano 1996).<sup>26</sup>

Second, Muslim groups have claims on and attach themselves to multiple communities, intra- and transnational. Muslim immigrant communities are not diasporas in the classical sense. Not only they transgress the confines of a unitary national community, both in country of residence and origin, but also connect to intensified transnational social spaces, both imagined and otherwise. Recent anthropological work observes that Muslim economic and political activity while linking immigrant communities to their homelands, at the same time establish 'transnational communities'.<sup>27</sup>

The transnational connectedness of immigrant communities interestingly reveals itself in their mobilization for voting rights. During the 1995 local elections in Berlin, there was a visible activity among immigrants from Turkey, even though a large percentage of them lacked voting rights.<sup>28</sup> Their mobilization followed an agenda beyond the immediate act of voting and electing their own representatives. Turkish immigrant groups not only made demands for the right to vote in German and European Union elections but also used Berlin elections as a leverage for the elections in Turkey. Their election platforms particularly focused on the recognition of dual citizenship, eradication of racism and discrimination, extension of Europewide voting rights and free movement rights, along with other local issues relating to youth, education, and elderly.<sup>29</sup> One consequence of this heightened activity around elections was to reignite the debates about the rights of immigrants and re-place them on Berlin's public agenda. Another was the

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<sup>26</sup> Examples of these trans-state networks include the Directorate of Religious Affairs' Turkish Islamic Union, European National Vision Organization, the Federation of Alevite Unions in Europe, and various other Europewide informal networks of mosque organizations.

<sup>27</sup> See Kepel (1994) for transnational Muslim communities between Algeria and France, Werbner (1990) between Pakistan and Britain, and Wolbert (1995) between Turkey and Germany. For others, see Watson's (1975) study on the economic activity and associations of extended Chinese families, spanning London and Hong Kong; Levitt's (1995) study on the mutual transformation of church associational life of Dominican Republicans in Boston and in their villages of origin; and Sassen's (1991) work on global cities.

<sup>28</sup> Of 423,000 foreigners living in Berlin, only 54,000 had voting rights (*die tageszeitung*, 14-15 October 1995). Of 180,000 immigrants from Turkey, about 10,000 were eligible to vote and 12 were elected to office from various political parties (*Hurriyet*, 24 October 1995). As non-EU foreigners, Turkish immigrants do not have a right to vote in local elections in EU member countries. Neither can they participate in Turkish elections unless they are physically present in the country at the time of election.

<sup>29</sup> In their annual meeting, which coincided with the elections in Turkey, Turkish Federation, an umbrella immigrant association with a sizable Muslim following, listed similar issues as the demands of 'European Turks' (*Turkiye*, 6 November 1995).



initiatives taken by the Turkish government to facilitate the participation of Turkish citizens abroad in national elections. Thus, through their politicized mobilization, immigrant groups brought together and affected multi-level agendas, as they positioned themselves in local public spheres.

The cultural expressions of Muslim youth is yet another enactment of transnational affiliations and social spaces. Second-generation immigrants appropriate their identity symbols as much from global cultural flows as host or home country cultural practices. As 'youth subcultures,' they are increasingly part of the global, in many ways bypassing the national or traditional (Hannerz 1992, Hebdige 1979, Willis 1990). Immigrant Rap groups, such as Berlin-based Islamic Force and Cartel, evoke symbols and employ language that replicate Black Rap culture. They identify with 'resistance,' 'brotherhood,' and 'assertion of the self' in the 'universal' message of HipHop. They do not limit themselves to Turkishness or Germanness, or to Islam per se.<sup>30</sup> As such, they belong to 'diversely spatialized, partially overlapping or non-overlapping collectives' (Gupta and Ferguson 1992).

National citizenship rights are seen as an instrument to bring political communities into closure (Brubaker 1992). But as the universal individual becomes the norm, and identities are defined as rights, the national closure of political communities (and the public spheres in which they are realized) presents a formidable task. Neither the range of 'legitimate' discourses are solely delimited by national political communities; nor these discourses are reserved only to groups who belong to the national collectivity. Thus, nationally coded public spheres do not hold; new participants permeate public spheres and alter its participational forms, expediting mobilizations and claims for equity.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> HipHop community itself is transnationally organized, though invisible to many of us. A 'world conference' of B-boys (a sub-section of international HipHop community, whose members in Berlin are mainly immigrant youth) is scheduled to be held in Santa Barbara, California, in April 1996. Europewide competitions and networks of HipHop and Rap embrace immigrant youth from England, France, and Germany. The 'Turkish' group Cartel, whose members include three Turks, one German, and one African Spaniard, has brought together the HipHop scene in Turkey and Germany, while at the same time aiming to be an international success (see the interviews with the group in *Sddeutsche Zeitung Magazin*, 1 December 1995, and *Spex* 1995).

<sup>31</sup> Clearly my assertion is not that new participatory projects (based on transnational rights and discourses) indiscriminately supplant the previous forms of claims-making (based on and framed by national collectivity). Rather, I am arguing that these emerging forms, and their prominence, should be taken into account in our analyses and theoretical statements, if we want to capture the current dynamics of citizenship.

## Conclusion

The experience of organized Islam in Europe indicates a diversion from the classical forms of participation in the public sphere, mobilizing identities, and making claims. Much of the decolonization and civil rights movements of the 1960s and the early women's movements were attempts to redefine individuals as part of the national collectivity. Similarly labor movements were historically linked to the shaping of a national citizenry. It is no coincidence that the welfare state developed as part of the national project, attaching labor movements to nations (as in Bismarkian Germany). However, the emergent formations of associational activity and collective participation (that is, mobilization of civil societies) are less and less nationally delimited citizenship projects. New collective movements set their agenda for realization of (individual) rights and enhancement of participation through particularistic identities, which are embedded in, and driven by, universalistic and homogenizing discourses of human rights. This shift in focus from national collectivity to particularistic identities does not necessarily signify a decrease in the importance of participation in a 'common civic sphere.' Rather, it points to the emergence of new basis for participation and the proliferation of forms of mobilization at various levels of polity, which are not imperatively defined by national parameters and delimited by national borders.

Our concepts and theories have yet to incorporate the changes in the institutions of citizenship, rights, and identity, and respond to the challenge posed by emergent actors, border-crossings, and non-conventional mobilizations. Only then can citizenship serve as a meaningful analytical tool for our understandings (and enactments) of effective civic participation.

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