Religious Minorities and Struggle for Recognition

Editors

Christophe Monnot and Solange Lefebvre

COGITATIO

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Editorial

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Abstract
Religious minorities are increasingly present in the public sphere. Often pointed out as a problem, we argue here that the establishment of these minorities in Western societies is happening through struggles for recognition. Communities or individuals belonging to different minorities are seeking recognition from the society in which they are living. In Section 1, we present, briefly, our perspective, which differs from the analyses generally presented in the sociology of religion in that it adopts a bottom-up perspective. In Section 2, we present and discuss articles dealing with case studies in the cities of Barcelona, Geneva, and Montreal. In Section 3, we discuss two articles that present a process of individualization of claims for recognition. Finally, we present an article that discusses the case of an unrecognized minority in the Turkish school system.

Issue
This editorial is part of the issue "Religious Minorities and Struggle for Recognition" edited by Christophe Monnot (University of Lausanne, Switzerland/University of Strasbourg, France) and Solange Lefebvre (University of Montreal, Canada).

1. A Bottom-Up Perspective

The context of secular society and diversity in the 21st century presents new challenges. In the latter half of the 20th century, secularization relegated a portion of religiosity to the background of social issues. Then, the plurality of diversified populations from multiple origins resulted in a disturbing resurgence of religious issues. Mixed populations—consisting of a wide range of cultural and religious minorities with diverse demands—now exist throughout Europe and other regions of the world, mainly in urban areas. Diversity is thus becoming "super-diversity" (Vertovec, 2007), with a multiplicity of factors that affect the space and lifestyle of citizens (Becci, Burchardt, & Casanova, 2013).

Many individuals and communities are presently adopting new religious norms, spiritual practices, and discourses. Religious diversity has become clearly visible on a daily basis. In order to live appropriately, different minorities are also seeking recognition from the society in which they are living. Issues related to religion are increasingly present in the public sphere: For instance, religious or social actors easily use religious vocabulary instead of political or social vocabulary when putting forward claims for recognition. On one hand, sociologists of religion have documented numerous processes of religious diversification. We should note, for example, the studies of Kim Knott (2005) who explored the Hindu diaspora in British districts in regard to the opening of places of worship, but also the dynamic transformation this implies for the district with the establishment of clothing shops and Indian or vegetarian restaurants. However, in the sociology of religion, religious plurality has mainly been analyzed from the viewpoint of state regulation of religion.

Instead of understanding diversity from a top-down perspective, namely regulation by political or public authorities, this volume proposes to look at the bottom-up perspective, i.e., how and where communities are established, strategies of actors to make a place for themselves in society, and so on. More specifically, the goal of this volume was to gather contributions about two sets of issues; the first being the struggle for recognition by actors/communities belonging to religious diversity, while the second involves issues about the contexts in which claims are put forward. Interestingly, we received three articles explicitly related to urban settings, and three others examine respectively differences between generations, the way marginalized groups are using social networks to affirm themselves, and the struggle of an ethnoreligious minority to be recognized in the public school system.

2. The City Where New Struggles for Recognition Emerge

The three contributions related to the city complement and respond to each other in an interesting way. Julia Martínez-Ariño (2020) argues that spatial practices of contemporary Jewish organizations in Barcelona's medieval Jewish neighborhood represent claims for public recognition. These Jewish organizations claim their presence in the medieval Jewish neighborhood of the city through a series of spatial practices, mainly heritage production, renaming of streets, and temporary marking of spaces with Jewish symbols. For the author, this constitutes a strategy of "place-recovering" (Martínez-Ariño, 2020), a creative process by which historical narratives and past myths play a crucial role in gaining visibility and obtaining recognition of Jews, a small and rather invisible minority.

Solange Lefebvre (2020) asserts that spatial dimension is a key aspect to understand tension with religious minority communities. The author analyzes the decision-making process resulting in a failure to modify zoning regulations in order to welcome new places of worship in a borough of Montreal. She shows how, in the City of Montreal, a few actors are exploiting provincial regulations in order to oppose public decisions seeking to establish new spaces for Muslim minorities, such as cemeteries or prayer rooms, using a process for approving amendments to zoning bylaws by way of a referendum. While analyzing administrative and legal aspects, the author exposes the complexity of the social and spatial dynamics at play. She brings attention to the perverse effect of some local participatory procedures, whereby a few actors maneuver to mobilize citizens, in order to resist religious pluralization of space. Martínez-Ariño (2020) and Lefebvre (2020), in their respective research about Jews in Barcelona and Muslims in Montreal, reflect on problems encountered by religious minorities when it comes to finding a place or space in the city, while documenting the various actors' perceptions and uses of these places and spaces.

Christophe Monnot (2020) shows that in a specific city, past responses to the emergence of the "first" instance of diversity determine the path for current regulation of religious diversity. From the history of Geneva, he contends that top-down regulation of religion responds to one or more bottom-up strategies of religious communities to find legitimacy in a constraining environment. This historical perspective provides the consistency of current governance of religious diversity, illuminating the struggle for recognition of minority groups. The article, studying the case of Geneva, complements the one by Lefebvre (2020). Both show the process of interaction between claims by minorities, regional regulations, and diverse strategies of local actors that favor or block sustainable diversity, with each of them maneuvering in very complex ways in relation to the legal regimes in place.

From a theoretical angle, this section presents rich perspectives, helping to reflect on diverse locations, spaces, and the way individuals and groups belonging to minorities are competing to regain, share, get a piece of those spaces and places, feel welcome, and be fully recognized despite their minority status, culture, and practices. It also explores the ways in which so-called majorities and well-established minorities structure their responses to those needs through regulations and negotiation strategies, showing that a variety of actors are interacting with conflicting visions of shared spaces. The Jewish group's strategies for recognition in Barcelona are executed through several "spatial practices" in the medieval Jewish neighborhood. While spatial dimensions rarely constitute an analytical category, this aspect is nevertheless a continual source of tension in relation to religious diversity, as the case of Muslims in Montreal demonstrates with obstacles faced relating to claims for Muslim cemeteries and places of worship. The historical perspective has to be taken into account in order to understand how past responses to diversity are still shaping contemporary decisions, as the case of Geneva specifically highlights.

3. Claims for Recognition as Individual Beings

In the next section, two contributions draw attention to how young people from religious minorities use different strategies to assert their groups' particularities. First, Martin Baumann and Rebekka Christine Khaliefi offer a comparative analysis of two generations of Buddhists and Muslims in Switzerland, showing how the greater importance of the individual among young people modifies these strategies and the relationship with public space (Baumann & Khaliefi, 2020). In Switzerland, immigrant minorities have established cultural and religious associations to maintain cultural and religious traditions from their country of origin. In contrast to the first immigrant generation, the second generation has had concurrent social influences from the regular Swiss school system and the cultural-religious traditions of

their parents. The authors argue that not only are outward changes of religiosity observable among second-generation youths, but also that despite an intensified degree of individualization, some of their newly founded youth associations are struggling for social recognition through civic engagement.

Second, Rodríguez-Puertas and Ainz-Galende (2020) have been researching a private Telegram channel for young women who wear the full Islamic veil in hostile Western environments, and the way they support each other to reinforce and assert the deep meaning of their choice to do this, insisting on freedom and individuality. Having overcome the difficult access to these women and their discourses, the authors analyze how demands are articulated through the channel, and how actions are organized. They show that these are mainly related to a claim for recognition as autonomous and political individuals, who are connected virtually through a social network.

The theoretical perspective of Baumann and Khaliefi (2020) provides an insightful reading of generational differences within a specific minority, showing notably that associative strategies of youth are more individual. Religious claims take a back seat, and it is civic engagement that takes precedence in the second generation of religious minority immigrants in Switzerland. This observation responds to Rodríguez-Puertas and Ainz-Galende (2020), who also observe a claim as individual and political beings from women wearing the full Islamic veil, done through a private channel that creates new forms of community and claims for recognition.

4. What About a Despised Minority?

Lastly, an article by Sakız, Ekinci, and Baş (2020) explores the feeling of parents and pupils, excluded from the school environment, as they are members of an ancient Syriac Christian minority. It critically addresses public policies of inclusion being limited to individuals with disabilities and a few officially recognized minorities. Through their study of the way parents and pupils from an ethnoreligious minority feel in their public-school environment in Turkey, the authors show how multiculturalism is inspiring a growing number of people to affirm their specific culture, despite historical resistance. They underline the key role of the educational system in this process. They emphasize the importance of schools

around the world taking into consideration increasingly diverse school populations, with a particular focus on cultural and religious diversity.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Jewish Spatial Practices in Barcelona as Claims for Recognition

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Abstract
In this article, I argue that the spatial practices of the contemporary Jewish organisations in Barcelona's medieval Jewish neighbourhood represent claims for public recognition. As a small and quite invisible minority within the diverse city population, Jewish groups increasingly claim that their presence in the city should be recognised by political authorities and ordinary citizens alike. They do so through a series of spatial practices around the medieval Jewish neighbourhood, which include (1) heritage production, (2) the renaming of streets and (3) the temporary marking of urban spaces with Jewish symbols. I have grouped these practices under the umbrella concept of 'place-recovering strategies' because all of them attempt to 'recover' the lost urban environments inhabited by their Jewish predecessors before they were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. By recovering I do not mean a mere passive restoring of urban spaces and places but rather a creative process in which historical narratives and myths of the past play a crucial role. Drawing on qualitative fieldwork, I argue that these place-recovering strategies are part of a quest for the visibility, legitimacy and recognition of Jews.

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1. Introduction

Across European cities, old Jewish neighbourhoods have become sites of struggles for the recognition of Jewish minorities. The Council of Europe has pushed for the role of the Jewish people in European history to be acknowledged and Jewish heritage preserved. Research has taken up the increasing public interest of Jews and non-Jews in the reconstruction and reinvention of Europe's Jewish past and culture (Gruber, 2002; Lehrer & Meng, 2015). In this article, I examine the spatial practices of Jewish organisations around the old Jewish neighbourhood of Barcelona.

Barcelona had a rich cultural, economic and religious Jewish life in the Middle Ages until the 1391 pogrom erased all traces of communal life (Rich Abad, 1999). My research asks how contemporary Jewish organisations—including religious communities, cultural and heritage associations and small Jewish-owned businesses—in Barcelona interact with the space and memory of the old Jewish neighbourhood and how this interaction plays out in the contemporary claims for public recognition of this minority. In so doing, I contribute to a more exhaustive understanding of the emplacement and quest for recognition of minority religious groups in contemporary European urban contexts.

This intersection between religion and space and, in particular, the spatial strategies of minority religious groups in urban settings have attracted the interest of scholars of religion. In their work, Vásquez and Knott (2014) and Eade (2012) analyse the influence of religion in immigrant place-making strategies in their destination cities. More recently, Becci, Burchardt, and Giorda (2017) have proposed a typology of spatial strategies for studying how religious groups, both immigrant and non-immigrant, strive to find a place in the city. The au-

thors distinguish between place-keeping, place-making and place-seeking strategies.

Although this typology makes a very significant contribution to the study of urban religion and its spatial regimes, I argue that it fails to capture the strategies of religious groups that were formerly expelled from a territory and are now 'coming back' to those spaces and 'recovering' them after a period of absence. This is the case for Jewish communities in many European cities since the Second World War, but also previously for the Jewish communities that were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492. Jews in Spain, and the European Jewry more broadly, therefore occupy a special position: They are neither established majority religions 'keeping' their places in urban contexts, nor entirely new immigrant religions 'making' new religious places, nor urban dwellers 'seeking' spiritual places.

Drawing on empirical research, in this article I propose a fourth category that I call 'place recovering.' By place recovering I refer to the spatial strategies and practices of minority groups that, having been expelled from a certain urban context, draw on reconstructions of the past in order to recover the lost urban environments of their predecessors or themselves. One might also adopt a broader understanding of this concept to include the engagement of diasporic communities in the recovery of places without their necessarily having experienced expulsion or persecution. Place-recovering strategies thus include a variety of practices whereby these groups seek to re-appropriate and re-signify places that were of significance to those communities in the past as a means to claim recognition.

Giving greater centrality to the symbolic, discursive and aspirational dimensions of religious groups' spatial strategies (Burchardt & Westendorp, 2018), this fourth category allows these practices to be distinguished from those involved in the making of entirely new places. While this conceptualisation acknowledges that place recovering is not merely a passive restoring of past urban spaces and places, but rather a creative and constructive process, I argue that it also entails a relationship to urban space that is different from one that exclusively creates completely new places. Place-recovering strategies appeal to, and produce, historical narratives and myths that provide meaning and grant historical legitimacy to the current struggle and aspiration for visibility and recognition.

The recovery of the Barcelona *call* (the Catalan word for a medieval Jewish neighbourhood) through the spatial practices of diverse Jewish initiatives, including cultural and heritage associations, businesses and some religious communities, must be understood against the background of a wider international interest in that past and a proliferation of memorialisation projects. Initially led by state institutions and non-Jewish organisations, for some years now these projects have also taken their lead from Jewish groups (Clark, 1999). My interest in this article is in the strategies pursued by the latter in an attempt to claim their voice and gain public recognition.

This research is a case study that combines semi-structured interviews, document analysis and spatial observation in Barcelona. I interviewed six representatives of the local Jewish organisations involved in the medieval Jewish neighbourhood. I interviewed them not as individual Jews but as representatives of organisational efforts around the *call*, namely two cultural and heritage associations, two small business and two religious communities. Since I conducted my PhD research on the Jewish communities of Catalonia (Martínez-Ariño, 2012a), I could access these persons easily. Some of them I had interviewed for my doctoral research; with others I had contacts in common. Thus, while I am an outsider—not being a Jew myself—I have been in close contact with the Jewish institutional milieu for some years. The interviews took place in a relaxed atmosphere both for my interviewees and myself. All interviews lasted between 40 and 90 minutes, were audio-recorded and transcribed literally. I conducted an inductive thematic analysis to identify the most salient topics relevant to my research question and objectives that emerged in these conversations.

I walked along the streets of the *call*, including Carrer del Call, Carrer de Marlet, Carrer San Honorat and Carrer de Salomó Ben Adret and observed their official labelling as parts of the old Jewish neighbourhood. I also participated in one of the tours for Jewish tourists in the neighbourhood, where I got familiar with the history of the quarter narrated from a Jewish standpoint and observed the inscriptions in Hebrew in some buildings in the area. I was also shown around two medieval Jewish houses that currently host Jewish cultural and touristic initiatives. Finally, I collected a substantial number of documents, including websites, Facebook posts, municipal records, newsletters and public speeches by members of the city's Jewish communities and cultural associations, and news items in local newspapers related to the *call*.

2. Heritagisation, Place Naming and Place Marking

In the sociology of religion, authors have theorised the spatial strategies of religious groups in urban contexts of religious super-diversity (Becci et al., 2017). Place-keeping, place-making and place-seeking strategies refer to the ways in which religious groups interact with urban spaces. Place keeping refers to the strategies used by dominant Christian churches to preserve their public presence and significance at a moment when their numerical relevance and hegemony are at stake. In contrast, place-making strategies encapsulate the practices of diasporic and immigrant communities in creating their own new religious places in urban contexts. Thirdly, place-seeking strategies, mostly linked to new spiritual initiatives, refer to strategies "that produce ephemeral and evanescent presences" in cities (Becci et al., 2017, p. 85). This analysis, however, has omitted what I have called 'place-recovering strategies,' as defined above. As I argue below by drawing on the

empirical case of Barcelona and the developments observed around its medieval Jewish neighbourhood, spatial strategies of place recovering mainly materialise in practices of (1) heritagisation, (2) place naming and (3) place marking.

An interest in the socio-political, cultural and economic dimensions of heritagisation processes, as well as their implications, risks and contestations, is growing in the social sciences (Graham, 2002; Zubrzycki, 2012). In the sociology of religion, the focus is on the contested nature of religious heritage, particularly in diverse contexts (Astor, Burchardt, & Griera, 2017). Research on the recovery of Jewish material and architectural heritage has mostly focused on its touristic and economic uses and conservation policies (Krakover, 2012, 2013; Negussie, 2007; Petrevska, Krakover, & Collins-Kreiner, 2018) and less on the role of local Jewish communities in reclaiming these 'lost' places (Corsale, 2017). By focusing on the discursive and spatial practices of Jewish organisations around heritage, I contribute critical insights on bottom-up heritagisation dynamics.

Critical toponymy studies understand the naming of places as practices of remembering certain past events and stories, which are key to the social production of space and the creation of spatial identities (Rose-Redwood, Alderman, & Azaryahu, 2010). The focus on the "cultural politics of naming" allows the negotiations and contestations of naming processes to be captured as part of "struggles for legitimacy and visibility" (Rose-Redwood et al., 2010, p. 457). Place names mark the relationships and emotional attachments between people and places, "even in the face of physical alienation from these very same places" (Rose-Redwood et al., 2010, p. 458; Shoval, 2013). This article examines place naming as a claim for recognition of both a tragic and flourishing past by Jewish organisations in Barcelona.

Finally, the notion of "signs of the sacred" (Sinha, 2016, p. 470) has been coined to study the marking of urban secular spaces with religious symbols, objects, bodies and practices put up, recognised and used by practitioners. These signs can be permanent or temporary markers that create a sort of sacred 'microcosm' and demarcate the boundaries that separate that which is inside from that which remains outside (Saint-Blancat & Cancellieri, 2014; Umashankar, 2015).

Drawing on these theoretical insights, I argue that heritagisation, place-making and place-marking practices are means of claiming public recognition that draw on history as a source of legitimacy. In doing so, I refine conceptual tools to analyse the spatial dynamics of minority religion and its recognition in contexts of diversity.

3. 'Recovering' the Barcelona Jewish *Call*

Barcelona's contemporary Jewish presence remains widely unnoticed (Martínez-Ariño, 2016). While the Jewish population in Catalonia—and Barcelona as its capital city—is estimated at a maximum of 8000 Jews

(Rozenberg, 2010), only about half of them are affiliated to one of the five Jewish communities (one ultra-Orthodox, two Orthodox, one Masorti and one Reform). With all five being located far from the old Jewish neighbourhood, their engagement with it is rather limited. The presence of this highly diverse population—ideologically, religiously and in terms of their geographical backgrounds (Martínez-Ariño, 2012b)—in the *call* is limited to a few religious, cultural and heritage associations and two small businesses that operate there. However, as far as my interviewees could tell me, no Jewish family lives there now.

Despite this invisibility, an increasing interest in Barcelona's Jewish past is apparent among Jews and non-Jews, tourists and local residents alike. This trend is also present in other European cities (Corsale, 2017; Corsale & Vuytsyk, 2018). In this section, I present examples of spatial practices of Jewish religious, cultural and heritage associations and small businesses that have recently taken place in and around the medieval Jewish neighbourhood, and which I group under the concept of place-recovering strategies. The Jewish organisations behind these initiatives come from very different ideological backgrounds. Some are secular organisations that engage with the neighbourhood from a cultural and heritage perspective, whereas others, in particular the local branch of Chabad-Lubavitch, do so by organising religious rituals for locals and tourists. However, they all share the reference to the Jewish past of the neighbourhood in their aspirations for the current Jewish presence in the city to be known and publicly recognised. Moreover, their engagement with the neighbourhood is not so much based on references to a particular Sephardic ancestry, which they do not claim directly, but rather to a broader pan-Jewish identification as a people.

While the neighbourhood has been an object of heritage and tourism policies already since the creation in 1993 of the countrywide project *Caminos de Sefarad: Red de Juderías de España* (Routes of Sepharad: Network of Spanish Jewish Quarters), in this article I focus exclusively on the initiatives of Jewish organisations. The latter are a form of appropriation of the space from within the Jewish milieu that differ significantly from the above-mentioned touristic project, promoted by twenty-two Spanish municipalities. From this perspective, next to an economic interest, the neighbourhood is a site where Jewish organisations claim public recognition, as both a historical and a contemporary minority. I have classified their practices in three types: (1) heritagisation practices, (2) place-naming practices and (3) place-marking practices.

The first type includes the (polemic) restoration of a former medieval synagogue, the creation of a Jewish cultural centre, and the development of an alternative touristic programme by Jewish entrepreneurs. The second type includes the recent renaming of a street after a medieval rabbi. The third type is more heterogeneous and encompasses the celebration of Jewish religious and

cultural festivals in public spaces, e.g., the construction of a *sukkah* and the lighting of the *hannukiah* in two public squares, and the celebration of the Barcelona Jewish Film Festival and the European Day of Jewish Culture. All these practices, some permanent, others temporary, contribute to re-appropriating an urban space in which Jewish organisations feel disinherited due to heritage policies and private economic practices that, for the most part, exclude them.

3.1. Place Recovering through Heritagisation

In 1996, a Jewish citizen of Barcelona acquired the ground floor of a house in the *call*, as this was the position where the major medieval synagogue of the city was supposedly located. Its website presents the space—open as a museum since 2002—as a project that aims to "rescue from oblivion a long period of the history of Catalonia through the rehabilitation of the old synagogue space" (Greater Synagogue of Barcelona, 2020). While controversy has surrounded the location, as new historical research shows that the synagogue was probably located in the adjacent building (Caballé & Gonzàlez, 2002; Casals & Jáuregui, 2015), this could be considered the first step taken by Jews in the contemporary heritagization of the Jewish *call* of Barcelona.

A more recent development is the opening of *Casa Adret* (Adret House) in 2018. This initiative became a local hub of Jewish cultural production. Run by Mozaika, a Jewish cultural association, with support from the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage (EAPJ) and other smaller public and private contributions, *Casa Adret* is located in a majestic house in the *call*. A Jewish family owned the building in the Middle Ages, as the municipal cadastral records and a *mezuzah* door hole indicate. The project partly mirrors a similar one instituted in the Catalan city of Girona in 1992—the Bonastruc ça Porta Centre, run by the Patronat Call de Girona, which includes the Museum of Jewish History and the Nahmanides Institute for Jewish Studies—to which I refer in Section 3.2. By conducting research on the city's Jewish past, and organising talks, conferences, concerts, tours and gastronomic activities that aim to recover this past, *Casa Adret* aims to produce alternative heritage discourses about the neighbourhood. Its primary public is the local population, both Jewish and non-Jewish. However, *Casa Adret* tries to distinguish itself from the most popular tourist companies by proposing a 'distinguished' cultural product that offers what its members claim to be a more accurate narrative of history.

A third example of heritagisation is the entire touristic programme that local Jewish entrepreneurs have developed as an alternative to the official offer. *Call Barcelona Wines & Books* is a Jewish-themed shop and cultural centre located in one of the houses of the old Jewish neighbourhood and run by the international movement Chabad-Lubavitch. Opened in 2009,

the shop sells a variety of Jewish products, including kosher wines, books and *kippot*, and organises cultural activities and 3D tours around the neighbourhood. It is primarily addressed to the Jewish public: its Facebook page refers to it as a means "to know your roots and renew your identity" (Call Barcelona Wines & Books, 2013). The *Urban Cultours* project is a business started by a Jewish architect in 1997, who states on her website that "our memory must be kept alive, brought back after 600 years of oblivion" (Urban Cultours, 2002). This entrepreneur organises tours that include both visits to past Jewish places and participation in current Jewish life and events, including Shabbat services. This alternative offer is mostly addressed to Jewish tourists, who have increased in numbers in recent years, impelled by new low-cost air connections between Tel Aviv and the cities of Barcelona and Lleida, and tourist and commercial agreements between the Catalan and Israeli governments.

3.2. Place Recovering through Place Naming

In 2018, one of the streets in the Jewish *call* was renamed after a medieval rabbi from the city, Salomó Ben Adret (after whom *Casa Adret* is also named). Ben Adret, who was born around 1235 and died around 1310, was one of the most important Talmudic masters and commentators, and leader of the medieval Barcelona Jewish community. As a Talmudic scholar, he gave responses to questions that individuals, families and the rabbinic tribunals posed concerning everyday practical matters of the lives of Jews and their interaction with Christians (Feliu, 2003, 2009; Hames, 2010). The re-naming of the street—resulting from claims made in a letter to the mayor in 2017 by all four local Jewish communities at that time and some associations—after previous unsuccessful attempts, had a clear reparative aim. The street was formerly called San Domènec del Call. San Domènec refers to the feast day of this saint on 5 August. This was the day when a pogrom against the Jewish population living in the Barcelona Jewish quarter in 1391 took place (Feliu, 2005; Pons i Casacuberta, 2010). As the 2017 letter to the mayor indicated, the name change was an initiative to commemorate the lives of the citizens who had been killed in that violent event, and to protect *convivencia*. In their own words: "We cannot allow the infamy of the 1391 pogrom to be perpetuated in the streets of the city and the memory of the victims—all citizens of Barcelona—to be underestimated" (letter to the Mayor from 2017, shared via private communication with some Jewish organisations). The district council approved unanimously the request to remove the derogatory name and acknowledged the need for historical reparation (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2018a). In the council session, the representative of the Jewish organisations who intervened indicated that they had proposed Salomó Ben Adret not only because he was an internationally renowned Talmudic scholar, but also because he "represents plurality and coexistence

within medieval Judaism, reconciling in our city the various opposing tendencies, between rationalists and mystics" (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2018a, p. 42). Two members of the municipal government and a few members of the Jewish organisations participated in the public uncovering of the plaque in November 2018, an event reported in several local media.

From the perspective of political semiotics, the renaming of the street must be considered a quest for justice through the cultural and political recognition of a contemporary minority and of its persecution in the past. Commemorative place-naming practices connote symbolic functions and contribute to "the cultural production of shared past" (Azaryahu, 1996, p. 311). In Barcelona, Jewish organisations and the municipal government see the change in the street name as a form of historical reparation that recognises the importance of minorities. Moreover, it makes the cultural and political representation of a contemporary minority more visible, thereby "establishing who has a right to the city in public spaces" (Mitchell, 2003, as cited in Rose-Redwood et al., 2010, p. 465).

3.3. Place Recovering through Place Marking

Next to these rather stable elements, Jewish organisations also hold more ephemeral religious and cultural practices in the public spaces of the old neighbourhood. I will present four of them: the construction of a public *sukkah* and the public lighting of the *hannukiah*, on the one hand, and the Barcelona Jewish Film Festival and the European Days of Jewish Culture 2018, on the other. These open-air practices mark and render visible the spatial presence of today's Jewish organisations in the neighbourhood.

The construction of a *sukkah* in Placeta del Pi and the celebration of Hannukah in Plaça Sant Jaume are two spatial practices that temporarily mark the space as Jewish and invest it with religious meanings. The public *sukkah* was constructed in 2018 for the first time after obtaining the permission and logistical support of the municipality. The event was promoted and organised by Chabad-Lubavitch with the aim of providing locals and tourists with the possibility to celebrate the festival of *Sukkot*. Their aspiration was to place Barcelona at the level of other global cities in terms of public Jewish life. A member of a Reform Jewish community, ideologically closer to the municipal government, initiated the first contact with city officials in a rather informal way (personal interview, 29 October 2018). This piece of temporary religious architecture changed the configuration of the square and endowed it with religious meaning. The event was celebrated widely by members of the Jewish communities involved and the municipal government as being the "first *sukkah* [constructed in Spain] since the Inquisition" (Pin, 2018). The emphasis placed by the Jewish representatives on its historic character and on the need for historical reparation was strategic

in achieving municipal support. In one of the leaflets produced to inform neighbours about the religious festivals taking place in that area, the district council explains the festival of *Sukkot* and emphasises the historic character of the celebration: "The festivity of *Sukkot* 2018 in Barcelona will install the first public *sukkah* in the whole country" (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2018b). Moreover, the then left-leaning municipal government considered this and other religious events an expression of the cultural and religious diversity of the city and a sign of the richness that this diversity brings to it (Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2018c).

Similarly, the public lighting of the *hannukiah* in the square where the City Hall and the seat of the Catalan government are located marks the space temporarily as sacred. By way of the spatial configuration of objects, including a big candelabrum, and a ritual of lighting candles, singing religious songs and dancing, the space becomes Jewish and religious. Again here, Chabad-Luvabitch, and its standardised display of Hannukah celebrations in public throughout the globe (Endelstein, 2017), is the main actor. While its linkage with the Sephardic tradition is rather weak, Chabad-Luvabitch too emphasises the connection of this public celebration with the tragic past of the city. As one of my interviewees, member of Chabad, put it:

> The fact of celebrating a festival such as the Festival of Lights with Christmas simultaneously in the same part of the city is like a reconciliation with the past, with the trouble that took place at the time of the Inquisition.

These two examples of "doing Jewish space" (Brauch, Lipphardt, & Nocke, 2016, p. 2) temporarily by inserting religious symbols and celebrations in a public square transform an iconic space of the city for participants, passers-by and regular pedestrians alike, thereby reinforcing the emplacement of the Jewish minority in this particular area of the city. However, not all Jewish organisations, including heritage associations and some religious communities, agree with Chabad's 'religionizing' approach, whereby public space is signified and marked as religious (Dressler, 2019). Therefore, participation in these events of progressive and secular Jews, as well as of members of other Jewish communities who 'compete' for the same public with Chabad, tends to be rather scarce.

The Barcelona Jewish Film Festival is a well-established event organised since 1999. It is the main activity representing the city in the *Red de Juderías de España* project. After providing a brief summary of the rich and tragic history of the Jews who lived in the *call*, the website of the festival presents its aims, i.e., "to place Jewish culture in the cultural scene of the city" and "to show the intercultural nature of the Jewish people" (Festival Cinema Jueu, 2019). Every year, this two-week event screens a wide variety of Jewish-themed films pro-

duced in Spain and abroad. While most of its activities take place in cinemas and projection rooms, between 2004 and 2015, its official opening took place yearly in one of the squares of the *call*. The selection of this spot was made to show the city population that this had been a space inhabited by Jews in the past, thereby bestowing the event with more 'Jewish texture,' that of the stones and buildings of the old Jewish neighbourhood. As the director of the festival told me, choosing to screen films in a public square, at a time when the city's Jewish past was widely unknown:

> Was a way of saying: We are screening films here because there were riots here in 1391…, there was a Jewish neighbourhood here, Jews lived here….Many important figures came out of the Barcelona Jewish community and all of a sudden, in one day, they were kicked out and that was it, 400 or 500 years without a Jewish institutional presence. (personal interview, 29 October 2018)

The European Day of Jewish Culture 2018 is a pan-European project that aims to offer "the broader public the possibility to discover several aspects of Jewish heritage and get acquainted with Jewish culture and traditions" (EAPJ, 2018). The 2018 edition in Barcelona consisted of a series of cultural events organised around the theme of 'storytelling,' a component of Jewish oral tradition used to disseminate historical heritage. Theatrical performances reviving the medieval and recent Jewish past of the city through its historical characters filled the streets of the Jewish neighbourhood with living Jewish life. Organised by *Casa Adret* with the financial support of the European Council and the Patronat Call de Girona—a publicly funded and independent municipal board in the City of Girona that aims to renovate and promote the historical Jewish neighbourhood of that Catalan city—the event aimed to disseminate Jewish culture in entertaining ways.

As should be clear by now, I am not arguing that place-recovering strategies consist of practices merely restoring 'the past' as if it were possible to bring it back. A clear example of this is the fact that one of the organisations actively referring to that past, Chabad Lubavitch, is a modern movement that claims to represent Jewish authenticity. The reconstruction and recreation of that past and its urban space is designed to "transform an abstract absence into a palpable presence" (Richards, 2005, p. 618). For Chabad, as well as for the other Jewish organisations involved, 'the Jewish past' of Barcelona serves as a discursive tool to frame their current activities. These activities transform the abstract absence into the palpable reality of the neighbourhood now.

In a sense, all these examples of the appropriation of a certain part of the city for community purposes could be considered practices of place making, whereby a religious minority makes new places in the city (Becci et al., 2017). However, they are, I argue, qualitatively dif-

ferent. Some Jewish organisations of Barcelona are not making some of their places anew anywhere in the city but are actually focusing on a particular part of the city that had been the Jewish neighbourhood in the past. Therefore, by 'inhabiting' these spaces, these Jewish organisations are doing two things, imbuing the neighbourhood with contemporary Jewish references and drawing on the Jewish history of the place to claim their historical belonging to it. More specifically, by "marking a space as a heritage site" through contemporary uses, the Jewish groups are providing "a 'second life' for that space" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998, p. 149). In turn, Jewish-signified spaces are being used to bestow content and meaning on this minority and to give historical legitimacy to its claims for recognition. As one of the main persons responsible for *Casa Adret* told me, "the fact of being in the *call* is symbolically very important….The fact of being in the old Jewish neighbourhood creates a link between the contemporary Jewish community and the history of the city" (personal interview, 31 October 2019).

The examples above show the importance of the temporal dimension involved in recalling the past in order to legitimise the present and claim recognition as an urban community, also for the future. Three temporalities converge: (1) the recovery and reconstruction of both an idealised past of flourishing Jewish life and the memory of a "history of pain" (Richards, 2005, p. 618), (2) the attempt to make Jewish life more visible in the present and (3) the aspiration of a future with full recognition. In other words, these spatial practices reflect the ideals and aspirations of a group in relation to its presence, visibility and recognition in the city that differ from both the current state of things and the memories of the past.

4. Recovering the *Call* as a Claim for Recognition

In what follows, I examine the motivations that underlie and discourses that justify the spatial strategies of the Jewish organisations that I have examined. As indicated previously, I am interested in their organisational motivations rather than in their individual reasons, although the two may coincide at times. These range from an affective relationship and emotional attachment to the place, to the appropriation of the space for economic, political and memory reasons. Although intra-communal struggles around community representativeness in front of city authorities also play a role in the undertakings of these organisations in the *call*, these are beyond the scope of this article.

The most evident motivation for Jewish organisations to install themselves in the old Jewish neighbourhood is economic. The *call* is a good site for a "selling of the past" (Ashworth, Graham, & Tunbridge, 2007, p. 31). Some Jewish organisations, such as *Call Barcelona Wines & Books* store and its 3D tours, address themselves mostly to Jewish tourists from Israel and the US. Others aim to occupy the niche of a more exclusive touristic offer for locals and people with a 'real' interest in heritage

and history. This is the case of the tours and culinary experiences offered by *Casa Adret*.

However, based on the discourses of my interviewees, I argue that, economic interests aside, their investments in these practices are also part of their struggle for recognition in the space of the city. In a highly diverse context like Barcelona, where historical Judaism was erased and contemporary Judaism is still invisible today (Martínez-Ariño, 2016), heritage production can serve to validate and legitimise the presence of this minority in the city. "The Jewish neighbourhood is part of the DNA of the city," claimed one of the Jewish entrepreneurs of the *call*. The representative of another association claimed their role as key actors within the local social fabric in protecting the neighbourhood from its mass touristic exploitation and related gentrification. In so doing, they portray the Jewish presence as inherent and essential to the very nature and continuity of the city and neighbourhood, despite their absence for a period of over 500 years.

Heritage conveys an "idea of continuity" that validates the contemporary Jewish presence. Put differently, heritage production fulfils "a need to connect the present to the past in an unbroken trajectory" (Graham, 2002, p. 1008). For some of the Jewish associations in the *call*, recovering the past is a means to show continuity with the present and make contemporary Jewish organisations visible. This function of continuity-building is particularly important in contexts where the connections of a people to a place have been cut, as is the case for the Jewish communities expelled from Spain in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Their organisers consider contemporary initiatives a way of dispelling the interruption, by five hundred years of darkness, of the alleged *convivencia* that existed before the 1391 attacks, as one of my interviewees put it (personal interview, 29 October 2018). The culinary routes and the celebration of public religious festivals attempt to recreate and recover the places from which these traditions were cut. Simultaneously, they show that those culinary traditions and religious festivals are again part of the contemporary life of the city. Moreover, marking the space as Jewish by lighting the *hannukiah* and constructing the *sukkah* is a strategy to remind not only tourists, but also the rest of the city's population, of Barcelona's Jewish past and, more importantly, of the contemporary Jewish presence. Even though Jews no longer live in the *call*, this is a way of "asserting the community's presence in city affairs in the present" (Clark, 2007, section 4.7). Jewish actors want to prevent Jews from being imagined as 'relics' or 'fossils' of the past by promoting an image of a population that is alive, as also shown by Corsale and Vuytsyk (2018) for the Ukrainian city of Lviv.

Relatedly, a sense of duty to historical memory in order to fight the "collective amnesia" (Clark, 2007, section 1.1.) around Spain's Jewish past is present in the discourses of my interviewees. Many of the activities and practices analysed attempt to memorialise an absence by making it palpable in the present (Richards, 2005). In particular, the change in the street name epitomises this struggle for recognition of the past suffering of the local Jewish communities that were devastated by the 1391 pogrom. It is an endeavour to recover and memorialise that which was tragically erased from the urban landscapes of many European cities. Closely connected to this sense of the duty of memory is the emotional attachment to a place (Kearney & Bradley, 2009), which is both a memory-holder of that absence and a way to make visible and normalise the contemporary Jewish presence. One representative of a Jewish community put it this way:

> We are now in the 21st century, and we have a connection with these [medieval] Jews. We feel an emotional connection to the space, to what they did, because they were Jews, and to the space because now we share again this space in Barcelona, this small corner with the four streets that remain there. So, it is the recuperation of memory in order to explain and normalise the Jewish life and in order for institutions to talk again about Jews and that they make changes, such as the change they made removing the old street name. (personal interview, 29 October 2018)

Finally, the practices of these Jewish organisations are also an attempt to claim a voice and space of their own in the heritage industry. In the tour addressed to Jewish tourists in which I participated, the guide and Jewish entrepreneur introduced herself saying that she decided to start those tours "because it was time for Jews, as a minority, to take the microphone and speak for ourselves." When I interviewed her after the tour, she told me that she felt the heritage industry "was speaking of Jews as if they did not exist, as if after 1492 there was a glaciation period and we disappeared from the map. But Jews remained and we are back!" (personal interview, 30 December 2019). Through their initiatives, Jewish actors in the *call* challenge the "authorised heritage discourse" (Smith, 2006, p. 11), which in the words of this touristic guide "has appropriated the historical account" (personal interview, 30 December 2019). Moreover, as the representative of another Jewish heritage association put it, the official heritage discourse "misrepresents Jews and reproduces prejudices against them" (personal interview, 30 October 2018).

Like in other European cities, where rather small Jewish minorities are suspicious of the strategies of governments and economic stakeholders (Corsale, 2017), Jewish actors in Barcelona mistrust the political and economic management of the Jewish heritage. Through the subversion of official narratives, Jewish actors challenge their marginalisation and the "dispossession and disinheritance" that heritage production inevitably creates (Ashworth et al., 2007, p. 39). As a representative of a Jewish community put it:

Other members and I feel a bit attacked with this topic because of the shameless utilisation [of the Jewish heritage by authorities] and not counting on living Jews. "We are only interested in stones, not in living Jews"....They [non-Jewish heritage actors] have to be respectful with traditions and customs. (personal interview, 29 October 2018)

Jewish actors present themselves as necessary to heritage by making claims to authenticity. They claim the value of their *emic* knowledge and 'profound experience' as something that is exclusive to them, something which governmental agencies and non-Jewish touring companies cannot provide. This argument of authenticity is twofold: on the one hand, it refers to some sort of historical continuity, whether real or imagined, with the past, and, on the other hand, it entails a normative assumption about a specific quality of the *emic* experience (Charmé, 2000). Representatives of different Jewish initiatives share this desire to show the experiential dimension as an added value. As one of them told me, Jewish actors play the role of providing the Jewish experience 'first hand' (personal interview, 31 October 2018), not like the technical and historical knowledge provided by non-Jewish specialists. By 'raising' their voice in the heritage sector, Jewish organisations claim that they be considered and recognised not only as 'objects' but also as 'subjects' of memory.

5. Conclusion

Drawing on conceptual tools from the sociology of religion, critical heritage studies and critical toponymy studies, in this article I have expanded the typology of religious groups' urban spatial strategies in contexts of religious super-diversity proposed by Becci et al. (2017). Based on an analysis of the spatial practices of some contemporary Jewish organisations of Barcelona in relation to the city's medieval Jewish neighbourhood, I have argued that, next to place-keeping, place-making and place-seeking strategies, a fourth set of strategies, which I call place-recovering strategies, should be added to the typology. This improves our understanding of the ways in which minority religions claim the recognition of their presence in contemporary urban contexts through their spatial practices. This addition is relevant because it captures a particular relationship to urban space that is neglected by the other three types, yet is of particular relevance in the contemporary European context. Research in other European cities, e.g., Bucharest and Lviv, shows similar attempts of Jewish stakeholders to be recognised and included in Jewish heritage practices (Corsale, 2017; Corsale & Vuytsyk, 2018), indicating that place-recovering strategies are not exclusive to Barcelona.

In certain cases, place-recovering practices could be a part of a broader place-making strategy of a minority group, just like place-making practices can be a part of a broader strategy of majority religions to keep their place

(Becci et al., 2017). I would argue, however, that the recovery of places is not *per se* aiming at making a new place for a group to settle. A place-recovering strategy could be aimed solely at recognising the dispossession of a group from a place without it leading to the settlement of that group there.

Place-recovering strategies materialise in at least three types of practices: (1) heritagisation practices, (2) place-naming practices and (3) place-marking practices. Majority churches also turn to heritage discourses to keep their place and immigrant religious groups use place-marking practices, e.g., urban religious festivals, to make new places (Becci et al., 2017; Saint-Blancat & Cancellieri, 2014). However, I argue that in relation to the recovering of places these practices have a particularity: They draw on the historical meaning of certain spaces and buildings and draw on mythical views of the past to legitimise claims for past and present recognition. In Barcelona, Jewish organisations claim their belonging and historical and emotional connections to the space of the *call*, thereby making their presence in the city more visible and legitimate. Thus, my analysis has shown that this neighbourhood is a site of struggle for public recognition. More research should be done on the internal community struggles and representativeness claims that also play out in the engagement of these organisations with this urban space.

The heuristic potential of the concept of place recovering can be extended beyond the specific analysis of the European Jewry. It can also serve analyses of other cases where historical or contemporary persecution or forced displacement followed later by return may influence the relationship of religious groups to the spatial regimes of cities. This would be the case with the attempts to reconstruct shrines, mosques and other sacred buildings of different religious traditions in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina (Sells, 2003), indicating that strategies for recovering a space exist beyond the specific case of Jewish populations. Moreover, although I conceived of this notion as a tool for analysing a particular type of relationship of religious groups to urban spaces, in a broader conception place-recovering strategies and practices could also be used in examining diasporic engagements with a particular place that do not necessarily involve persecution or displacement. The term could be used to examine cases of rather different qualities such as the return and recovery of places significant to slavery by populations descended from enslaved persons (Richards, 2005). In any case, place-recovering strategies are related to pasts of expulsion, dispossession, disinheritance, displacement, persecution, eviction, flight or migration of a particular religious or ethnic minority from a specific place.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

Space, Religious Diversity, and Negotiation Processes

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Abstract

After a literature review of space, urbanity, and religion, this article identifies some descriptive categories and analytical frameworks to theorize problems faced by religious minorities, especially Muslims, in obtaining space for their cemeteries and places of worship. A second section focuses on debates and an analysis related to these themes in the province of Quebec (Canada), especially in the City of Montreal, showing that while spatial dimensions rarely constitute an analytical category, this aspect is nevertheless a continual source of tension. The article illustrates how dysfunctional administrative processes have dominated the public scene in recent years. A case study shows how a few actors are exploiting provincial regulations in order to oppose public decisions that seek to accommodate the needs of Muslims, using a process for approving amendments to zoning bylaws by way of referendum. After a brief examination of the case related to a Muslim cemetery in a village near Quebec City, to shed light on the recent debates surrounding regulations, the article analyzes the decision-making process resulting in a failure to modify zoning regulations in order to welcome new places of worship in a borough of Montreal. While analyzing administrative and legal aspects, the article also exposes the complexity of the social and spatial dynamics at stake. Our conclusion is that any successful public policy on diversity must employ multi-layered strategies, particularly to support space regulations with foundational intercultural and interreligious initiatives. It also brings attention to the perverse effect of some local participatory procedures, whereby a few actors maneuver to mobilize citizens, in order to resist the religious pluralization of space.

1. Introduction

When driving or walking through the city of Montreal in the province of Quebec in Canada, you will notice many places of worship established in former shops, next to bars, on the main floor of commercial buildings, in bungalows, or even in garages. Their signs are often discreet, such as an Arab inscription in the window, a sign indicating religious service times, or curved roofs. After observing them in one place for a few months, you begin to wonder when they will move elsewhere. The trend of non-permanent places of worship and those functioning without permits stands in stark contrast to the history of established places of worship, when entire communities would proudly invest all their resources into build-

ing a cathedral or large church in a prime location in the village or borough (Conseil interculturel de Montréal, 2015). Like several large cities in the world, Montreal is home to many imposing Catholic and Protestant places of worship, which were often constructed in the richest areas of the city, even though the landscape has changed considerably. For instance, the Marie-Reine du Monde cathedral, an ambitious 19th century replica of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, is now enclaved by a chaotic collection of skyscrapers (Kemble, 1989). The major challenge for present-day Christian churches is to maintain, sell or convert these buildings.

In sharp contrast, and as was often the case throughout history, dynamic religious minorities often face much resistance when they desire to settle into a place of

worship, notably some Muslims and ethnic Evangelical groups we have studied during the last few years. From information they have shared with us and from what we have witnessed, the main problems they are facing are the following. First, urban space has become scarce, expensive, and very sought-after, making access to spaces for worship difficult. Second, any new place of worship risks entering into conflict with existing spaces and their specific character: residential tranquility, commercial activities, and historical religions. Third, minority religions such as Christian Evangelicals often prefer small places of worship, where they can enjoy close and warm fellowship, or they need different settings than the ones offered by existing large church buildings. This makes the purchase of an existing monumental or Christian place of worship in Montreal challenging, and increases the need for different styles of places of worship. Lastly, when it comes to the establishment of newcomers' religions, lack of funds and the complexity of the negotiations leading to zoning permits and tax exemptions play a large role. Paradoxically, there is great mistrust concerning the relationship between money and religion, which taints the continuing efforts of religious organizations to raise funds for their activities, places of worship and ministers. This multifaceted problem is quite common around the world.

One cluster of existing research related to the topic of this article concerns urbanity and religion. The literature on that subject is extensive, but its most common theme is the breakdown of human relationships in urban settings, which is addressed through a historically pessimistic view of the impact of urbanization on religion. This view has been criticized by scholars such as Becci and Burchardt (2013), Brown (1988), Dejean (2016), and Gauvreau (2009), originating particularly from the 19th century Tönnies (1957/1988) work on the Gesellschaft and the Gemeinschaft. It links, for example, the secularization theory understood as the decline of religion to urbanization of the population and the weakening of popular religiosity. It also connects religious pluralism and urban life to the dissolution of social supports and bonds that link individuals with those sharing their religious identity (Olson & Hadaway, 1999). Some religions themselves have a long history of 'hatred' of cities, as has been well researched by several scholars (Baubérot & Bourillon, 2009; Bérubé, 2014; Salomon & Marchand, 2010). During the last few decades, the cessation of binary relations between rural and urban areas, greater mobility, and the appeal of large urban centres for immigrants have profoundly changed relationships between urbanity and religions. Many research studies have examined the city as a location where religions frequently flourish or change.

The first section of this article considers a few theoretical efforts to reflect on space, urbanity, and religion, notably in relation to Henri Lefebvre's work on the production of space. It will help identify useful descriptive categories and analytical frameworks to theorize the problems faced by religious minorities, especially Muslims in the case of this article, in obtaining space for their cemeteries and places of worship. A second section will focus on debates and analysis surrounding these themes in the province of Quebec (Canada), showing that while spatial dimensions rarely constitute an analytical category, this aspect is nevertheless a continual source of tension. This section and the following one illustrate how dysfunctional administrative processes have dominated the public scene in recent years. A case study shows how a few actors are exploiting provincial regulations in order to oppose public decisions that seek to accommodate the needs of Muslims. But first, we need to look at the controversies surrounding a Muslim cemetery in a village near Quebec City, a necessary detour to understand the current provincial legal debates, before looking more carefully at the decision-making process resulting in a failure to modify zoning regulations in order to welcome new places of worship in a borough of Montreal. One specific and major provincial legal aspect is very contentious. The *Act Respecting Land Use Planning and Development* (Government of Quebec, 2020) includes a process for approving some amendments to zoning bylaws by way of referendum. While analyzing administrative and legal aspects, through media and document analysis and participant observations of public events, this article also exposes the complexity of the social and spatial dynamics at stake. Our conclusion is that any successful public policy on diversity must employ multilayered strategies, which include foundational intercultural and interreligious initiatives. Space regulations are not enough to assure harmonious 'living well together.' It also brings attention to the perverse effect of some local participatory procedures, whereby a few actors maneuver to mobilize citizens, in order to exercise control over local space and to resist the religious pluralization of space.

2. Space and Religion

Since the beginning of the 21st century, debates on religion in public 'space' in many countries have been very intense, in relation to religious pluralization, fear of Muslim religious extremism, and secularism controversies. Paradoxically, despite the large number of reflections on the subject, space seems to often be used as a self-evident concept, while authors develop related dimensions such as public and private (Ferrari & Pastorelli, 2012), human relationships that are more or less significant, social classes, etc. The well-known Henri Lefebvre's criticism of the use of the concept of space as a recipient which exists "prior to whatever ends up filling it," still seems relevant in this regard (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 15). He was quite influential, particularly in urban, geographical, and historical studies (Arnade, Howell, & Simons, 2002; Kipfer, 2008).

The concept is obviously more systematized in the various subdisciplines of geography and architecture

(e.g., Soja, 1989; Stump, 2008). Carroll (2012) presents a good systematic overview of research studies that have taken space and religion seriously, from Mircea Eliade's cosmic approach to more contemporary ones. Founding reflections on religion explained space as a fundamental social category (Durkheim, 1912/1990). Urban ecology offers rich studies of religious diversity (Stringer, 2016). Space opens the way for several correlated descriptive and analytical categories. In fact, in the literature, the word 'space' usually refers to a great number of descriptive categories such as physical spaces, sacred buildings, streets, architecture, neighbourhood, and public areas. Furthermore, on the horizon of a fundamental reflection on the visibility and power of religions (Morelli, 2008), there are also sacred space markers, including sounds or noise, religious symbols, processions, and toponymy. Human geography offers an astute analysis of human contact in specific material settings, inspired particularly by Chombart de Lauwe (1952). One body of literature makes a distinction between place and space, as Jenks points out, also using Nora's concept of site of memory (Jenks, 2008). Like many others do, she draws on Henri Lefebvre's theories, for whom social relations are produced through space (Jenks, 2008, p. 242; Lefebvre, 1974/1991). A similar distinction can be found between physical territory and a 'sense of place' more related to culture and history (Agnew, 1987; Soja, 1989).

Urban studies have offered a variety of theoretical reflections on space. From human ecology to the social construction of space, sociologists and geographers have been studying the ways cities of various sizes are developing, in different areas and because of multiple factors such as social class, ethnicity (Guay, 1978), or intergroup contact (Wessel, 2009). There have been a few systematic efforts regarding space, urbanity, and religion. Dejean and Endelstein (2013) are worthy of mention: They offer a synthesis of the interdisciplinary challenges of such analysis, and the way it could be deployed beyond geography of religion and cultural geography, as does Stringer (2016).

In relation to social space, several research works examine the dynamics of the re-urbanization of religion (Bielo, 2011), the adaptive strategies of religious groups through the process of gentrification (Cimino, 2011), and the changing environment (Corrigan, 2017; Form & Dubrow, 2005). They study complex intercultural interactions, opposition to the building of new places of worship, and management of diversity and religious heritage (see, e.g., Boucher, 2016; Dehanas & Pieri, 2011; Fornerod, 2015; Gagnon & Germain, 2002; Germain & Dejean, 2013; Lefebvre, 2015). They examine how people attach meaning to secular buildings used by diverse religious communities (Day, 2008). Historians study the way religion transforms districts (Endelstein, 2008). In line with lived space theories, ethnographic studies reveal how immigrants utilize their neighbourhood (Hinze, 2013) and how locals relate to religious heritage (Grigore & Beaman, 2017). Several research works analyze the

city as a place of religious performance and public rituals (David, 2012; Garbin, 2012).

What kind of conceptual framework based on space could structure our analysis of the ongoing struggle to obtain places of worship in Montreal, after looking briefly at the debates surrounding Muslim cemeteries? In addition to the elements already discussed, Henri Lefebvre's famous book (1974/1991) on the production of space had a major impact on many research studies of urban space, generating a critical 'spatial turn.' His interdisciplinary and encyclopedic theory, although eclectic, raised important questions about the social nature of space, structured by architecture, human densities, locational relationships, and capitalist driving forces. Several of his ideas are key to any reflection on the way various ordinary and powerful people share and create space, and his writings have served as a multifaceted toolbox for reflection. He offers a fruitful distinction between abstract and absolute spaces. The first concept treats space as a product used for domination, in the service of some abstract purpose and exchange value. The second one means "crafted work," used by ordinary people, "organically emerging out of the felt needs and urges of daily life" (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 156; Molotch, 1993, p. 889). Another useful and well-known distinction is between the three interconnected and dialectical ways of producing space, through the triad of spatial practice, representations of space, and spaces of representation. They respectively refer to perceived, conceived, and lived spaces.

Scholars have offered interesting reflections related to Lefebvre's thinking and religion, which are useful for this article. Garmany, a geographer, studies the way Evangelicals are gaining space in Fortaleza, Brazil, ending the domination of Roman Catholicism in social space and its capacity to unite everyone in common practices and identities, as a cohesive "space of representation" (Garmany, 2013, p. 51). Lively Evangelical churches, even though they have introduced fragmented, heterogeneous, and often oppositional identities, thereby multiplying new social spaces, have installed a new kind of social and spiritual order in some areas of the city. This third term of Lefebvre's triad, "spaces of representation," is often used to conceptualize the way majority religions have invested in the construction of prestigious buildings (Wenell, 2007, p. 264). A final example related to the second term of the triad, 'representations of space' concerns the evolution of the construction of mosques in Birmingham, Britain, by considering Lefebvre's concept of representation of space, which is more or less shared by the city council and Muslim communities through the negotiations surrounding the building of mosques (Gale, 2009). DiGregorio makes an important point when he mentions that Lefebvre conceived his diverse categories to form a united theory and did not intend to generate distinct conceptions of space (DiGregorio, 2007, p. 445). The focus is then redirected toward "the intermediate resolutions of conflict in the production of space"

(DiGregorio, 2007, p. 445). He also draws attention to the lack of complexity of Lefebvre's categories, showing that ordinary people can be part of any level of the production of spaces, and not just passive subjects of state or expert representations of space (the second term in the triad).

Why is this relevant to our study of the legal context in Quebec and the case study of new places of worship in the borough of Saint-Laurent? There are several reasons. First, the triad helps distinguish the multilayered debates and struggles surrounding places of worship. Religious groups engage in very creative spatial practices when the time comes to provide their members with a place of religious activity, as this dimension of their community life is vital. The experts' representation of space is negotiated through different channels, mostly legal and pragmatic (space available, safety, etc.), with the religious groups themselves, whose spatial practices interact with their expertise. The last term of the triad, spaces of representation (lived), includes several levels of experience, the most crucial one being related to historic temples that are the centre of a cohesive space. This cohesive space is questioned by newcomers. In diverse contemporary cities, the triad changes considerably, all terms being transformed almost constantly. Facing the creation of new social spaces by groups, regulatory and political leaders are always running behind and have no choice but to tolerate non-legal occupation. Facing the multiplication of places of worship, the expert is confronted with limitations when it comes to architecture and design of new places of worship, as these spaces are mostly old buildings being adapted or transformed. Lastly, the space of representation is in tension between heritage and new diversity. Lefebvre writes that any ideology, and particularly religious ideology, needs space to assure its continuity (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 55), as it competes with other ideologies. In light of a few of these conceptual elements, we will turn to the Quebec context and the two case studies.

3. Contentious Issues in Quebec

Like several countries, Canada has been the scene of controversies and legal debates concerning spatial dimensions of religion. Among the main contentious issues that have arisen in the province of Quebec since the beginning of the 21st century, one concerns the requests of religious groups to modify zoning to allow a new place of worship or to establish a cemetery. Before the new millennium, municipalities in charge of zoning were not really aware of the challenges involved, but as public controversies as well as many new informal places of worship or those without permits multiplied, this forced municipalities to begin to manage religious diversity. A majority decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in 2004 related to the efforts of Jehovah's Witnesses to be granted an amendment to the zoning bylaw for their place of worship in Saint-Jerome,

north of Montreal, shows how contentious this topic is (*Jéhovah de St-Jérôme-Lafontaine v. Lafontaine (Village)*, 2004). The Jewish community has been at the forefront of many disputes related to space, in relation to synagogues or other space markers. This was especially the case in Outremont, a borough of Montreal where the dispute centres around Hassidic Jews and *eruvim*, sukkots on balconies, the establishment of new synagogues, and frosted windows in a gym for women in response to complaints from Orthodox Jews (the *eruv*— plural noun, *eruvim*—is a discrete boundary creating a space for observant Jews, where they can carry certain essential things on Shabbat, despite religious prohibitions; Gagnon, 2002; Stoker, 2003; Weiner, 2014). Many heated debates about the legal concept of reasonable accommodation occurred in relation to other types of sacred space markers, such as Muslim prayers in public, the wearing of religious symbols, and gender separation in secular locations (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008). Despite this context, only a small number of studies related to spatial dynamics exists.

Dejean interprets the recent developments regarding new places of worship in Montreal along the lines of three socio-spatial dynamics. First, there is tension between the traditional Catholic model of the local parish and the Protestant congregational model that is not linked to territorial belonging. Most new religious groups opt for the congregational model, being open to a large metropolitan network of members. Secondly, their buildings are multifunctional, and thirdly, they often use non-religious buildings (Dejean, 2016). As one of the few authors that have reflected on religion and space in Quebec, Stoker contends that underlying certain arguments made by opponents to the establishment of new synagogues or the installation of *eruvim* by Hassidic Jews in Outremont (Montreal), there is a specific perception of space that is characteristic of the dominant cultural French-Canadian community. The latter perceives Outremont as a homogenous and specific territory (Stoker, 2003, p. 24). From a very different perspective, Gagnon and Germain (2002, p. 157; Gagnon, 2002) observe that tensions relating to cohabitation between Hasidic communities and other neighbourhood residents revolve less around religious or ethnic differences than around opposition between different lifestyles, and between religious and secular values (of secular Jews for instance). In light of our case studies, we would endorse this latter complex reading of the situation. In order to avoid the generalization of any social conflict around religious public issues, and therefore dividing a population into them and us, any study should look more carefully at the different actors involved in the processes leading to a public decision. That is what we intend to do through the following two case studies.

In regard to Muslim cemeteries (autonomous) and squares (integrated into a larger cemetery), many disputes have occurred (Dabby & Beaman, 2019; Dimé & Fall, 2011; Rachédi, Idir, & Sarenac, 2018). The first ceme-

tery located in Laval City in 1990, with the remains of over 2,000 people, was the subject of tension within Muslim communities, some of them thinking it was neglected and poorly maintained by the Islamic Center of Quebec. The Quebec Muslim Burial Association was dissatisfied, and in 2015, acquired space in an interfaith cemetery maintained by a private firm, which granted space to several religious squares. The association did not want the cemetery to be managed by a mosque: "It's human to want to be buried with our traditions. But what was important was that we did not want to be separate [sic]. We wanted to be where other people [of other faiths] are also buried," the association's president declared (Birkbeck, 2015). Before being granted the square, it had tried in several towns in the metropolitan area of Montreal, without success. In one case, for example, a majority of the city council's members had opposed the mayor's intention to sell a piece of land to the Muslim association.

Another high-profile case, which is quite important for our case study in Montreal, occurred in the village of Saint-Apollinaire, near Quebec City. It is a pivotal case in regard to certain regulations related to places of worship. The mayor and council were favourable to a Muslim cemetery project. In July 2017, they organized a referendum, in accordance with the *Act Respecting Land Use Planning and Development*, which includes a process for approving amendments to zoning bylaws by way of a referendum requested by a sufficient number of individuals living in a zone concerned by the changes (Government of Quebec, 2020, Art. 131.136). 49 people in the area around the cemetery were allowed to vote, and the cemetery was defeated by a vote of 19 to 16 (Montreal Gazette, 2017). In brief, there was an acrimonious debate, in part due to the concerns of a handful of citizens, who lived close to the future cemetery, that their property would lose its value. Even though the municipal council, most of the population and the leaders in the larger area were in agreement with the cemetery project, a few actors, mostly for ethno-nationalist reasons, fueled public debate to influence the referendum. In particular, the extremist group called The Pack (*La Meute*), identified as a far-right group, was at the heart of the movement that forced the village to hold a referendum by collecting signatures (Camus, 2017). They also came to municipal council meetings to intimidate, and campaigned against the project, notably on social media. The mayor estimated that the larger population of the village would have voted in favour of the cemetery. Furthermore, a few months before the referendum, on January 29, a man had killed six Muslim men at a Quebec City mosque, not far from Saint-Apollinaire, and five of the six victims have been buried overseas. Despite the fact that Muslims had lived in Quebec City for generations, there was no Islamic-owned cemetery in the area, so the community was forced to bury its dead in Montreal or send bodies back to their birth countries.

In this and the subsequent case study, one specific and major legal aspect is very contentious. The *Act Respecting Land Use Planning and Development* (Government of Quebec, 2020) includes the process for approving amendments to zoning bylaws by way of referendum. Bills were recently introduced by the government of Quebec to deal with several problems, including that one in particular. Just before the Saint-Apollinaire referendum, in June 2017, Bill 122 increasing autonomy and the powers of municipalities was passed, but some of its provisions did not make it possible to avoid the referendum (Government of Quebec, 2017). Months later, in April 2018, Bill 155 was passed to amend various legislative provisions concerning municipal affairs (Government of Quebec, 2018). The law then became very explicit: "As regards urban planning, the Act provides that bylaw amendments aimed at allowing a cemetery to be established do not require approval by way of referendum" (Government of Quebec, 2018, explanatory notes). In December 2019, the mayor of Quebec City, Regis Labeaume, explained that he had found land to establish a Muslim cemetery near his city, quickly enough to avoid an unhealthy debate, and encouraged his citizens to love each other (The Canadian Press, 2019).

We have presented this last debate in detail, because it reveals how problematic a controversy on local diversity can become under the influence of just a few actors, who make strategic maneuvers and take advantage of certain laws, especially the process for approving amendments to zoning bylaws by way of referendum. The literature often contrasts a general population resisting requests for accommodation by minorities, but this does not seem to always reflect reality. Despite the vicious and misleading campaign around the Saint-Apollinaire case, the vote was very divided. In addition to cemeteries, should places of worship have been included in the recent amendments of Bill 155? Surprisingly, no public debate was held about the Bill, probably to avoid stirring up the recent controversy in Saint-Apollinaire. In our opinion, this was a missed opportunity, as the following more detailed case study seems to demonstrate.

4. The Negotiation Process for a New Zoning Project in Montreal

In many countries, Muslims either have to undertake intense negotiations or engage in bureaucratic procedures in order to procure places of worship. The analyses of various negotiation processes "can generate insights into the relation between state and religion and the position of Muslims in different countries" (Sunier, 2009, p. 168; see also Kuppinger, 2011; Wessel, 2009). This section presents results from a research study conducted about that type of process. It involves not only Muslims, but also other churches that are flourishing (such as Pentecostals) in Montreal, which is composed of 19 boroughs and is labelled a super-diverse city by Germain and Dejean (2013; see also Vertovec, 2007). According

to Statistics Canada (2016), in 2016, over 250 ethnic origins were reported in the Canadian population (as opposed to 200 in 2006). This fact is largely due to the number and the diversity of immigrants who have steadily increased in the province of Quebec, from 706,965 in 2001 (9.9%) to 851,560 in 2006 (11.5%), to 975,000 in 2011 (12.65%). In 2019, 72.2% of Quebec immigrants were living in the Montreal metropolitan area (Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration, 2019). In five years, the number of residents in the City of Montreal increased by 3.3%, from 1,649,519 in 2011 to 1,704,694 in 2016. Statistics on religious affiliation, based on the decennial 2011 census, reported that among the total population of the City of Montreal in 2011, 65.8% identified themselves as Christians (52.8% Catholics), 9.6% as Muslims, and 2.2% as Jews. There were several small groups of other religious minorities, and 18.4% of the population declared they had no religion (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Our research concerns the borough of Saint-Laurent, which tried to reform its urban planning in 2017 in order to welcome new places of worship. Each borough can manage zoning for places of worship differently, in accordance with the Montreal urban plan. Close to the international airport of Montreal, this large and economically dynamic borough seems to offer a vibrant multicultural lifestyle. On the streets, members of visible minorities rub shoulders with Caucasians, several mother tongues are spoken, and ethnic restaurants and grocery stores are abundant. According to the 2011 census, 81% of its 93,165 residents had either been born overseas or had at least one parent who had been born outside Canada. More than 50% are members of a visible minority (City of Montreal, 2014). Over 40 different origins were reported in the census. In a province where the official language is French, and the English language receives some protection, 59% of the individuals in this borough are bilingual (French and English), 20% speak only French, 16% speak only English, and 5% speak neither French nor English.

In 2017, Saint-Laurent reported having more than 103,000 residents (City of Montreal, 2017a), with over half being immigrants (52.4%, as compared to 33.4% in the City of Montreal). The main countries of origin were Lebanon (11.4%), Morocco (8.3%) and China (7.5%). From two decennial Canadian censuses (2001 and 2011), statistics reveal that the following religious groups had decreased: Catholics went from 40.3% to 33.8%, Jews from 10.6% to 7.4%, and Buddhists from 4.8% to 4.3%. On the contrary, the number of Muslims and Greek Orthodox increased, respectively going from 10.2% to 17%, and 5% to 10.1%. Compared with the City of Montreal, Saint-Laurent is home to a greater proportion of Jews (14.2% vs. 2.2%), Muslims (23.3% vs. 9.6%), and orthodox Christians (10.6% vs. 5.7%).

In 2017, the borough proposed a new zoning regulation, which would allow it to add about 30 new places of worship within its territory, some of which had been requested during the preceding few years; most

of them being already operating without permits (City of Montreal, 2017b). At that time, there were 32 authorized places of worship or religious centres in the borough (Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Jewish, Christian Orthodox, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, etc.). A carefully planned reflection had begun in 2015, when some problems had occurred in relation to an Islamic Center. Among other religious groups who were seeking an authorized place of worship were the Saint-Laurent United Pentecostals who were occupying a building with a seating capacity of 600 but had a potential community of 1,200 members from 60 different countries. Since 2012, the two-story unauthorized Islamic Center Al-Andalous had been located on a main commercial boulevard close to a major metro station, with a bar next door. On the first floor, one could find the Imam's office and a prayer room reserved for men; on the second floor were a prayer room for women and a few rooms for teaching. Nearly 600 women and men could attend the centre during the week, both locals and other people. In March 2014, Saint-Laurent asked the centre to move to an authorized area. The community refused, saying that there was no authorized location that could accommodate its needs. Therefore, Saint-Laurent planned to reform its zoning bylaws concerning places of worship, as there were other similar cases that could not be properly accommodated.

Mayor DeSousa presented the project to the press as the borough being "the first to take a global approach to these issues, in a spirit of social acceptability and urban planning," hoping he could avoid the acrimonious debates that had taken place in several other boroughs (Leduc, 2017). Among the principles guiding the reform, a new multifunctional definition of a place of worship was proposed. During the preceding few years, cases in other areas had shown that under the label of a community centre, prayer or religious teaching activities could legally be conducted. Until then, in Saint-Laurent's zoning bylaws, a place of worship was meant to offer a religious education or to practise a religion. In addition to this basic definition, the new bylaws would include other authorized activities: "Dedicated space for the assembly of a religious group, for the purpose of worship and where community, humanitarian and leisure activities and activities for teaching religion can be exercised" (City of Montreal, 2017c). This would allow the borough to exclude religious teaching and worship from the strict community or humanitarian uses of buildings (vs. place of worship). Secondly, the borough wanted to exclude places of worship from 10 zones where schools were located, to avoid schools being sold to religious groups. Thirdly, the city wanted to preserve commercial and industrial areas, the latter often being proposed by citizens for places of worship in an attempt to avoid having one near their neighbourhood. To facilitate social acceptability, the borough of Montreal-North had modified its zoning in this way, forcing new groups to establish their worship places in remote industrial zones (Dejean,

2016). Fourth, the borough wanted new places of worship to accommodate both neighbourhood residents and public transportation needs of members living farther away. Fifth and lastly, to avoid mega places of worship (regional or metropolitan size), the borough intended to limit the size of the new places of worship (City of Montreal, 2017b).

Since the *Act Respecting Land Use Planning and Development* (Government of Quebec, 2020) included a process for approving amendments to zoning bylaws by way of referendum, the borough had to present the new plan publicly, in order to offer citizens the opportunity to gather signatures in favour of a referendum. There were 20 individuals who attended the public hearings, expressing their opposition. They feared noise and traffic flow, but also the difficulty of controlling the number of people entering the places of worship, as well as opening hours ("In certain religions, there are many prayers per day, and the back and forth will be incessant"), and apprehension regarding the broad definition of worship ("Can a meeting place for marijuana users be considered as a place of worship?"). One opponent said: "Why regularize nonconforming situations? You are unable to enforce the policy and prevent non-compliant situations. You are doing things backwards." In his or her defense, noise and traffic problems had arisen in the neighbourhood, around the Muslim school near which a place of worship was proposed.

Because of the influence of a few actors, more than 300 signatures were collected in the main zones in question, contesting the new regulation. A good number were from local or religious leaders, who were quite engaged in the preservation of their space and, in some cases, their power. Behind the opposition were fears of certain ethno-religious groups (Muslims, Black churches), secularist attitudes, and rivalry between religious groups. False perceptions were also noticeable. For instance, I had conversations with a few religious leaders and key players, notably Christians, who perceived that some areas of Saint-Laurent were becoming "Muslim enclaves," houses being supposedly purchased mostly by Muslims. However, after checking with some members of their communities, these perceptions did not seem to conform to reality. Some explained that Christians from diverse ethnic origins were also purchasing houses. Other individuals, Christians or Jews from the Middle East, as well as non-religious individuals, expressed their fear of Muslims. It seems that the most positive relationships, such as friendships and neighbourhood acquaintances, which were quite frequent in Saint-Laurent, were ignored, hidden, or forgotten. The borough's project was refined, with some sensitive zones excluded, and a second consultation took place, again without the necessary social support. The attempt to reform the zoning has failed, with the exception of new provisions regarding the protection of schools and the definition of a place of worship, as well as other aspects not subject to an approval process (City of Montreal, 2017c).

5. Reshaping the Sense of Space

Bitter debates about places of worship and cemeteries can be found in many countries in the world, with Montreal being no exception. The disastrous possibility of a few influential citizens controlling the agenda through the referendum process seems to be counterproductive. While Saint-Laurent is remarkable because of the diversity of its population and its political leaders, the obligation to submit new places of worship to popular approval considerably limits the borough's power. At the end of the 1990s, Qadeer was already noticing some perverse effects of participatory procedures in Toronto, the largest city in Canada, noting that these procedures "turned into the tools of ethno-racism" used by some local groups "to resist the accommodation of others' divergent needs and tastes" (Qadeer, 1997, p. 491, as cited in Fourot, 2009, p. 648). In this case, the motives were complex, ranging from the fear of losing tranquility to fear of specific ethno-religious groups.

Returning to Lefebvre's model, here is what our case study tends to reveal. Management of diversity presents different power dynamics than the ones based on social classes that inspired Lefebvre. Instead of capitalist forces, the categories us and them, used by some influential actors, seem to produce a sense of space: our local space, as opposed to new groups trying to occupy space with a highly symbolic place of religious gathering. What about Lefebvre's distinction between absolute and abstract space? The process in Saint-Laurent revealed how many places of worship were seeking authorization. Immigrants are creating illegal places of worship (without permits) as the dedicated spaces they crave (absolute space), in order to respond to their religious, social, and cultural needs. According to this definition, abstract space becomes the way space is pre-structured in various neighbourhoods, with their existing religious and commercial buildings, as well as residences. A new place of worship seems to threaten the pre-established symbolic order, especially in the eyes of local leaders. "Certain elements obviously privilege certain kinds of activities and inhibit others, support the projects of one type of actor and deter the goals of another," writes Molotch (1993, p. 888) about Lefebvre's understanding of the production of space.

Finally, let us use this other distinction between spatial practices (perceived by people), representation of space (conceived by experts) and spaces of representation (lived). In the case study, the power of a few citizens to block plans for new places of worship was fueled by many false perceptions and indifference to the socio-religious needs of minorities. The opponents categorically refused any modification to their spatial practices, and exercised power over local space. Experts and municipal authorities, in collaboration with religious groups, tried to propose a new 'representation of space,' paving the way for an inhabited urban space more open to religious diversity and intergroup contact (instead of iso-

lating them in industrial areas). In relation to the third part of Lefebvre's triad, the Saint-Laurent sacred space of representation is composed of diverse symbolic landmarks as 'sites of memory,' which could still generate a historical and cultural 'sense of place,' especially among the families and individuals that have been established in Saint-Laurent for several generations. Despite the current diversity, markers of the Catholic tradition are numerous, with several historic churches located there, the largest being the Saint-Laurent Catholic Church at the heart of the old Saint-Laurent district, between the large buildings of the city college. Ironically, after the city's failed attempt to reform its zoning bylaw, the Islamic Center Al-Andalous moved from the commercial area into a building in front of the Saint-Laurent Catholic Church and the college, still without a permit. A complementary space marker is undeniably the borough's toponymy, since founding French-Canadian families gave their names to the main arteries (e.g., Decarie, Laurin). The borough's name itself was given to the parish, village, and parish municipality in 1845, and Saint-Laurent became a city in 1893 (City of Montreal, 2020).

After visiting a few historical Catholic churches, I observed how diverse the practising Catholic population had become, most of the few children enrolled in the Christian initiation process being Haitian, Asian or Lebanese. How can this internal diversity be turned into a new sense of interreligious space? How can the many non-practising Catholics, called cultural Catholics, and the non-religious, reshape their vision of Saint-Laurent? Saint-Laurent is home to several religious worship buildings, more or less well established, creating already a diverse representation of space. But how far does the 'lived' factor go? Diversity is there, but often not thought out. I contend that reshaping the sense of space becomes necessary when a few actors make an explicit choice against or in favour of the establishment of a new religious location, in various zones. At least in Saint-Laurent, there is no way for citizens to adequately prepare themselves to make that kind of choice, and diverse campaigns can steer the final decision in many possible directions.

To conclude, studies of urban space offer another interesting idea around the lack of substantial intergroup contact that is frequent in large cities. Wessel is hoping for a "richer imagination of urban space," through the contact tradition which presupposes "that people are co-present in time and space, but…rarely considers the contributory impact of particular settings upon contact, tolerance, or integration" and lived diversity (Wessel, 2009, pp. 14–15). Urban studies of space particularly show that ethnic diversity in the same space can either increase or decrease contact between different subgroups. For places of worship, this is of great importance. Public policies in Canada are very reluctant to favour interfaith networks or official mechanisms of negotiation and representation including religious groups, especially because there is no formal process for the

recognition of religions as there are in Europe, for instance. Monnot's (2020) article in this thematic issue reflects on two Swiss cities with different characteristics in this regard. Multicultural as well as intercultural policies do not expressly include the religious factor (City of Montreal, 2017a). In my conversations with the city's experts, I suggested that such mechanisms could have been useful during the negotiation process. Municipalities could think about imagining such mechanisms; this could help reshape the imaginary of sacred space and allay fears, especially those of the key leaders who are very protective of their interests. As an example of an explicit interreligious policy, one borough decided to consolidate places of worship in a shopping centre, close to each other: Muslims, Christians, and Jews, living well together, decided to name the commercial space Unity Square (Radio-Canada, 2016).

However, Saint-Laurent is also now home to one of the larger mosques in Quebec, established before Montreal became subject to the Act, which included the problematic process for approving changes to zoning bylaws. The mosque, serving mostly Anglophone Muslims, proudly displays its minaret and its large green dome. Smaller places of worship can be seen here and there, both illegal and authorized. The plan presented by Saint-Laurent would have formalized the existing diversity and the "new social and spiritual order" (Garmany, 2013, p. 51), after the transformation of Saint-Laurent's original and historically Catholic space during the last few decades. In other words, Saint-Laurent's space of representation is already diverse, without proper official recognition, forcing several religious groups to practise their faith and gather their members without permits, or even invisibly. While the borough may regret the missed opportunity to withdraw places of worship from the process for approving change, and hope it will be done in the near future, it may also need to inspire intercultural and interreligious relationships that will help reshape spatial practices and the sense of space. This would reduce the likelihood of organized opposition to meaningful lived representation of space.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Article

The City as a Continuous Laboratory for Diversity: The Case of Geneva

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Abstract
After a long period of interest of religious plurality in the nation-state, the sociology of religion, with the impulse of the sociology of migration, has turned its attention to the city. This local level allows us to understand the issues of diversity governance. This article takes advantage of the literature on the governance of migration to apply it to the governance of religious diversity. Using data from the National Congregations Study and available data on Geneva, this article will first show how past responses to the emergence of diversity determine the path for future decisions. To this top-down regulation of religion responds one or more bottom-up strategies of religious communities to find legitimacy in a constraining environment. Based on the unit of the religious community, this study on Geneva provides a historical case of the evolution of diversity. This historical perspective provides the consistency of the current governance of religious diversity, illuminating the struggle for recognition of the minority groups.

Issue
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1. Introduction

The context of the 21st century secular society brings new challenges to the city. Secularization relegated a portion of religiosity to the background of urban issues in the latter half of the 20th century. The establishment of variegated populations with multiple origins then brought about a disturbing resurgence of religious issues due to their sheer plurality. For instance, a group of *Hare Krishna* or veiled women draw a sharp contrast with a historic church building in the background. Cities have become a privileged scene of diversity in Europe. A varied population—consisting of a wide range of cultural and religious minorities with diverse demands—lives with dignity in urban areas. Diversity thus becomes "super-diversity" (Vertovec, 2007), with a multiplicity of factors that affect the place and way of life of the city's inhabitants (Burchardt & Becci, 2016).

The city continues to be a "laboratory of the social" (Park, Burgess, & Mackenzie, 1925, p. 79) in which di-

versity is now plural, signifying a diversity within the diversity, particularly with the multiplication of religious groups of traditions with very different histories, roots, and rituals. This complex diversity is described by super-diversity, a concept to be understood as the description of a multiplication of variables that affect the place and the way of life of the city's residents. As Vertovec (2007) points out, super-diversity implies a rearrangement of legal frameworks and overlapping of expectations and values within a limited space. In this context, it is hardly surprising that debates are emerging that seek to transform, adapt, or repeal laws on the recognition of various religious communities.

Verovec's (2007) impulse was followed by extensive research on migration and diversity in cities. Migration has an impact on the dimensions of policymaking and integration policies (Caponio, Scholten, & Zapata-Barrero, 2019; Glick Schiller & Caglar, 2010). This article will focus on the implementation of religious diversity in the city and especially the settlement of religious commu-

nities. The aim of this article is to show, through the case of the establishment of religious groups in Geneva, how the demands for recognition of religious minorities lead to changes in the legislative framework and how religious groups adapt for their establishment to a constraining institutional and social environment. The case of Geneva is interesting because from an entirely Calvinist city, its Protestantism diversified during the 19th century. Moreover, the addition of Catholic communes to its territory when Geneva joined Switzerland in 1815 posed many problems in the governance of this new diversity. Then, in the last quarter of the 20th century, its position as an international city gave it a cosmopolitan population with the settlement of very diverse religious groups.

The article is organized as follows. Section 2 is devoted to the literature. The city and the local context present new interests for sociologists of migration but also of religion to apprehend the governance of diversity. The installation of religious groups is also a new perspective to better understand local policies and participation. In Sections 3 and 4, the case of Geneva will be presented through the lenses of the installation of the different groups using the available data from the National Congregations Survey in Switzerland (2007–2010), updated by a second census in Geneva (2014). In Section 5, the top-down management of religious diversity—that is, the different legal responses by the authorities to diversity—will be discussed. These legal responses trace an institutional path for current decisions. Section 6 will present the bottom-up management of diversity: the strategies that religious groups follow in Geneva to obtain legitimacy in a secular society. To conclude, we will underline how these two ways (top-down and bottom-up) of managing diversity are closely linked and respond to each other.

2. City and Religious Diversity

In the way opened by Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002) calling for migration and diversity to be studied not only at the national level, but also at the local level, several studies have shown fruitfully the impact of local governance on migration (Duemmler & Nagel, 2013; Glick Schiller & Caglar, 2010). Caponio et al. (2019) identified different factors that influence local governance of migration and diversity. If the local policy on migration has been widely discussed (Caponio & Borkert, 2010; Glick Schiller & Caglar, 2010), and the local politics and participation as well (Joppke & Seidle, 2012; Morales Diez de Ulzurrun & Giugni, 2011), the history of local policy on migration and diversity is a promising direction to investigate further the local governance of migration (Hackett, 2017).

Religion in the city has already been considerably discussed. Let us quote the edited book by Berking, Steets, and Schwenk (2018) discussing the new challenge of religious plurality in the city, often considered as a secular place. The book shows how religion and the city are intertwined. Several have investigated how the set-

tlement of religious groups follow different strategies or are constraints by different city governance. Becci, Burchardt, and Giorda (2016) and Burchardt, Becci, and Giorda (2018) have pointed out historically recognized or state-supported churches in cities follow a strategy of "place-keeping" in the urban environment, while non-recognized communities follow a strategy of "place-making" and those from the holistic milieu follow a strategy of "place-seeking." Historical churches keep their place in the public space, by notably offering their imposing and recognizable religious buildings for cultural events, such as concerts or exhibitions. Vásquez and Knott (2014) noted that for migrant communities, several dimensions exist in the way religious groups manage to make a place, including spatially managing differences. The groups that are 'seeking place' are collectives from the holistic milieu or new spiritualities (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005). For their small gatherings, they make use of coffee rooms, neighborhood centers, or public parks. These collectives are outside the usual religious register in the city, while access to a religious building is one of the key factors in their long-term establishment in the city.

Martínez-Ariño (2018b) show the increase of diversity in the (historically Catholic) city of Barcelona. First a few Protestant communities were established at the end of the 19th century, then a net increase in the last quarter of the 20th century with the settlement of Pentecostal, Muslim, Buddhist, etc. communities. Becci and Hafner (2016, pp. 107-108) conducted a mapping of all the religious groups in the city of Potsdam and observed that the settlement of religious groups is related "to the urban space ranges from territoriality to deterritorialization….Religious and spiritual newcomers negotiate their presence with the religious-secular hybridity of the spatial regimes and thereby produce social innovations." Moreover, religious plurality settlement depends on local normative definitions of what is accepted or legitimate in the public sphere or not. A legal norm and a social norm co-exist and lead the governance of diversity in the city (Martínez-Ariño, 2018a). The present article intends to interrogate the increase of diversity through the settlement of religious groups. It will also question the path the city of Geneva has pursued for the governance of plurality. Following Duemmler and Nagel (2013) studying the diversity governance in Germany and Switzerland, we will look not only at the top-down approach (regulation) but also at the bottom-up approach (struggle for recognition). Only one approach is generally analyzed in the different studies on religious plurality. However, we will see that they are closely linked, that one responds to the other, they are historical co-constructions that regulate the religious diversity.

3. A National Congregations Study

In order to address the establishment of religious diversity, Switzerland is one of the few countries where

a census of all religious groups is available. Whether they are parishes of historic churches, free congregations, gatherings in mosques and synagogues, or regular spiritual and religious celebrations in different places of worship (Monnot & Stolz, 2018, pp. 15–32), these units were included in the census conducted in 2007–2008. It was the first step of a representative study of collective religion in Switzerland—the National Congregations Study (NCS)—conducted until 2010 (Stolz, Chaves, Monnot, & Amiotte-Suchet, 2011).

Our data allows us to grasp exact information on the number and percentages of local religious groups in Switzerland and its organizational diversity. 5,734 local religious groups active in the Swiss territory were identified (Monnot, 2013a). In 2008, Switzerland counted 30.5% of Catholic communities, 19.1% of Reformed parishes, 24.8% of free Evangelical congregations, and 17% of non-Christian tradition communities (among them 5.5% are linked to Islam). Buddhists represent 2.5% of the groups, and Hindus 3.3%. Other traditions were included like Sikhs (0.8%), Bahá'ís (0.7%), esoteric groups (1.1%), Spiritualism (0,8%), Scientology (0.5%), and many more besides (Monnot & Stolz, 2020, pp. 140–141). According to the updated census conducted by Knobel, Gonzales, and Montandon (2014), there are 400 religious communities in Geneva and 270 places of worship in the city.

An important result of this census shows that the diversity is located mainly in the city and urban area (Monnot & Stolz, 2018). As Stringer (2013) points out, no matter what our theory for conceptualizing the city, it is the place of super-diversity and religion plays an important role in this context. It is therefore not surprising to observe that Swiss cities are the space of

religious diversity. Figure 1 thus shows in a simplified manner this difference in the distribution of four religious categories between cities, urban area, and rural area. Cities have the most non-Christian and non-established religious communities as well as the highest rate of non-believers. 31% of the groups are non-Christian gatherings: Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, and New Religious Movements. 11% of the groups are Other Christians (e.g., Lutherans, Anglicans, messianic congregations: Jehovah's Witnesses, Latter-Day Saints, New-Apostolics, etc.) and 32% are Evangelicals—leaving only 26% to the established Christian parishes.

This figure is similar to what we can observe in Geneva, where 84% of the communities are located in urban areas. In the rural communes of the canton, there are almost only Catholic and Protestant churches. A "rural-urban gap" is visible with a concentration of religious diversity in urban areas (Monnot & Stolz, 2020, p. 141).

4. Establishment of Diversity in Geneva

The city of Geneva is of particular interest. First, the census carried out for NCS has been updated by Knobel et al. (2014). Secondly, Geneva has two historical particularities in terms of religious plurality. Following the Congress of Vienna, the city of Geneva became a Swiss canton in 1815 with the addition of a rural territory that is essentially Catholic. Having had an entirely Protestant population in the 17th century, the town was gradually confronted with religious plurality at different stages of its history. The second turning point was the installation of the European headquarters of the United Nations, followed by the establishment of numerous interna-
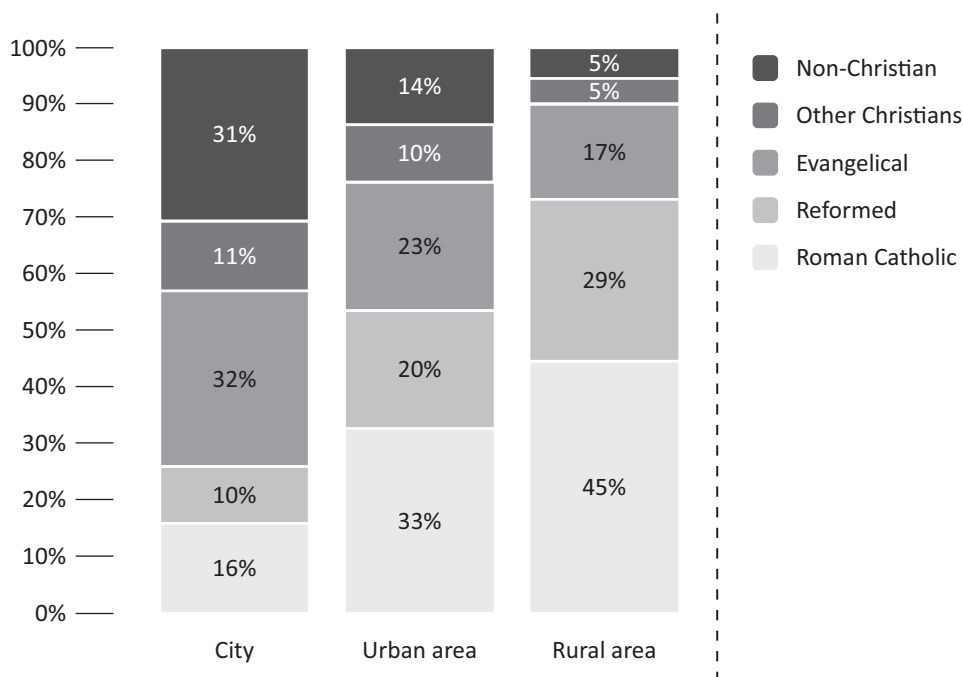

Figure 1. Division of religious traditions in Switzerland in urban and rural areas. Source: Stolz et al. (2010).

tional organizations. Geneva has thus become a very cosmopolitan city with a population of more than 40% foreigners despite its size of a little less than 500,000 inhabitants. The process of establishing religious diversity is particularly evident in Geneva: A city that was one of the key centers for the dissemination of the Reformation is now the place for the whole range of the great religious traditions.

Geneva quickly adopted Protestantism, as did other major Swiss cities such as Zurich, Basel, Bern, and Lausanne. The process of the diversification of Protestantism began in 1766, as Table 1 shows. It was at this time that the Lutheran Church established the first non-Calvinist place of worship in the old town. The German-speaking community settled in a mansion near the cathedral in the center of the city, without adding a single religious symbol. 50 years later, the 'Revival of Geneva' (from ca. 1810 onwards; Bastian, 2016) profoundly affected the Protestant city by subdividing Protestantism into two major trends—the National Church and the Free Church. However, the few chapels initiated by the Evangelical Society, which later became the Free Church of Geneva, did not transform the architectural space in any way. The Pélisserie chapel, which was built in 1839, and the Oratoire chapel, which

was inaugurated in 1836, are recognizable as religious buildings only from an interior courtyard. Thus, at this point there had only been an internal diversification of Protestantism. It was only in the middle of the 19th century that Protestant plurality came from outside Geneva with new evangelical movements. First, with a Darbyst group in 1842, and second, with the Methodist Church in 1867, which settled about a hundred meters from the Lutheran Church. Despite the establishment of Protestant diversity (cf. Table 1), Geneva and its urban organization stayed the same, as buildings of the new congregations remained totally invisible. Indeed, in the history of Geneva, despite the schisms, the new Protestant groups did not seek to and were unable to overshadow the great temples of the historic and 'national' Protestant Church. In the mid-19th century, the ringing of the cathedral bell served as a call to worship for all Protestants, despite their division into different communities since the early 19th century pietist 'revival.'

During the second stage of diversification, religious diversity became more visible, with new claims for recognition through the settlement of diverse groups within the urban periphery. When Geneva became part of the Swiss Confederation in 1815, the Protestant citadel began to destroy its walls, opening up the city. The first

Table 1. Years of the establishment of diversity in the city of Geneva.

First Religious Group	Year of Foundation
First non-Calvinist Church	
Lutheran Church	1766
First "Evangelical Movement"	
'Revival of Geneva'	1815–1850
Chapel of Oratoire	1836
Chapel of Pelisserie	1839
First Darbyst group	1842
First Anglican Church	1853
First non-Protestant Church	
Catholic 'Cathedral'	1857
First Jewish group	
First Jewish Synagogue	1859
Russian Orthodox Cathedral	1866
First Methodist Church	1867
First Christ Catholic Church (National Catholic)	1873
First non-Christian (except Jewish)	
First Bahá'ís group	1948
First Muslim group	1961
First Buddhist group	1962
First Hindu group	1962
First Ahamdiyya group	1970
Great Mosque of Geneva	1978
First Shia group	1992
First Taoist group	2006
First Sikh group	2008

Sources: Knobel et al. (2014) and Monnot (2013a).

belt around the city offered opportunities to build new settlements. This allowed several non-Protestant places of worship to be built—namely the Catholic 'Cathedral,' the Russian Orthodox Cathedral, and the Synagogue. Although Geneva's neighboring communes had their own Catholic Church, the city remained overwhelmingly Protestant. However, it was not until the destruction of the ramparts that a Catholic Church could be built. In 1857, the Catholic Church inaugurated a building remarkable for its size and architectural willingness to appear equal to a cathedral, with which it ostensibly posed an architectural challenge to the Protestant cathedral (Amsler & Scholl, 2013; Grandjean & Scholl, 2010). A few years later, the Russian Orthodox Church was erected in 1866. At the end of its construction, it stood alone on the margins of Calvin's town. Then, little by little, important buildings surrounded it until it integrated perfectly into the city—so much so that any inhabitant of the actual city will situate it in the 'old town.' With its golden dome, the building makes a visible architectural difference in the cityscape.

A new step of diversification started when, at the end of the Second World War, Geneva took on an international dimension. Non-Christian groups began to settle in Geneva, with one of the most striking examples being the inauguration of the Grand Mosque of Geneva in 1978, located near the international organizations quarter (European Headquarters of the United Nations, World Health Organization, and World Trade Organization main buildings). It was inaugurated in the presence of the Federal Council and the Prince of Saudi Arabia. As in the 19th century, groups with distinctive buildings are being pushed out of the town center. The only opportunity to build a religious edifice is within the city's confines. In Geneva, an emblematic example is the Armenian Apostolic Church "Surp Hagop," founded in 1969. Its recognizable building is located outside the city, surrounded by trees and opulent villas, 6 km away from the center. Another example is the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist temple, built in 2006, also on the outskirts of the city, 1 km from Geneva airport. However, an important diversity has settled within the city, but invisibly. More than 60% of the communities identified in Geneva in 2013 by Knobel et al. (2014) and in 2008 by Stolz et al. (2011) are religious minorities. Those that have been able to settle in the center of the city have hidden spaces and Geneva currently has more than 120 spaces that have been reconverted for religious activities. These are former cinemas, craftsmen's workshops, commercial or administrative premises, post offices, restaurants, museums, or garages. Occasionally, residential areas such as apartments or individual houses were converted.

This brief historical overview of Geneva suggests the emergence of a 'new' religious diversity in the city under the influence of people who have recently settled there. The first stage, which occurred at the turn of the 19th century, witnessed the diversification of Protestantism. First, by internal movements under the influence of Pietism, then by external movements—mainly British (Anglicans, Methodists). The second stage took place around 1850, when Christianity diversified. Except for the synagogue, it was almost a century later, at the end of the Second World War, that non-Christian groups began to settle.

These minorities originate mainly from demand for manpower for companies based in Geneva, multinational companies, and international organizations, but also from religious minorities oppressed in their countries, such as the Ahmadiyya of Pakistan, the Bahá'ís of Iran, and the Alevis of Turkey (Monnot, 2013b). Furthermore, groups such as the Buddhists of Tibet, the Tamils from Sri Lanka, and the Muslims from Bosnia-Herzegovina have also settled in Geneva due to conflict in their home countries.

5. Diversity in Geneva: The Top-Down Management

The history of Geneva is not only that of the diversification of religion. It is also a history of political debates on the legal framework of religion. As stated by Martinez-Ariño: "Cities are not only sites where religious diversity becomes more visible (Becci, Burchardt, & Casanova, 2013; Knott, Krech, & Meyer, 2016), but also sociospatial configurations where controversies over issues related to public expressions of religiosity take shape and are negotiated" (Martínez-Ariño, 2019, p. 364). At the turn of the 19th century, Geneva was the scene of spectacular religious changes which heckled the political life of the century until the promulgation of a law in 1907 which, in fact, separated the State from the Church.

From the 16th century with a Protestant church-city, the controversies of the 19th century pushed Geneva to become the single Swiss canton without any "national church" and to no longer support religious groups either directly or indirectly (through taxes or subsidies; Grandjean & Scholl, 2010). In 1803, under Napoleon's occupation, the first mass was celebrated in the city of Geneva (Grandjean & Scholl, 2010, p. 9). It prefigured the addition of Catholic territories in 1815. The new Swiss canton of Geneva known as the cradle of Calvinist Protestantism has to deal, since 1815, with a large Catholic minority. In 1822, the canton population was 38.7% Catholic (Altermatt, 1994, p. 188). The management of this increasing minority was the source of many controversies.

To add to the difficulty of managing this new Catholic minority, Protestantism—which was still in the majority—was shaken by the 'Revival of Geneva,' which began around 1810 and divided the city's Protestants into two factions (Bastian, 2016), a situation that led Geneva to have four large churches as early as 1873. For Protestantism, a (majority) National Protestant Church and a (minority) free Church, fruit of the various waves of the 'Revival of Geneva' started at the beginning of the century. For Catholicism, a National Catholic Church made up of liberal Catholics led by democratic and local

authorities recognized as state church in 1873 and a 'free' Roman Catholic Church, composed of the great majority of the members and clergy who remained faithful to the Roman Catholic hierarchy (Scholl, 2013).

The tensions that arose, mainly from the majority of Catholics not recognized by the Canton, were also supported by Protestants (free Church) who did not want the State to interfere in the affairs of the Church and other Protestants (National Church) who promoted free thinking. Several laws were debated, voted, and often rejected. It was finally in 1907 that the law requiring the canton to withdraw support for the churches from the budget was adopted, thus ending the crisis. De facto, Geneva would no longer support churches and there would no longer be any national churches (Scholl, 2013). It is therefore noticeable that, in Geneva, religious plurality provoked many debates between a state that wanted to control the churches and also churches reclaiming recognition due to the fact that their members represent a large minority of the population (Scholl, 2010). This "learning of religious pluralism" as Amsler and Scholl (2013) called this period ended with an egalitarian solution, since in the end no church would be included in the state budget. We note here that the State's contempt of a large part of the population by recognizing a schismatic and small local Catholic Church has provoked major controversies in Geneva. Peace has been restored by not recognizing any church. One interesting anecdotal fact to mention is that it is not so much on the grounds of equality that Protestants voted for the law withdrawing state support to the Church; it was much more because of the belief that by this removal the church would experiment spiritual renewal as Stolz (2018) and Stolz and Chaves (2017) have noted. These authors underlined that this belief was later disproved. The separation of church and state in Geneva led to a decline of churches, a decrease in membership, and an impoverishment of staff and resources.

In Geneva, the emergence of diversity led to a political crisis that divided the life of the city for almost a century. It was a top-down crisis in the management of pluralism, with, first of all, a desire to contain Catholicism, and then a desire from the State to control the bodies of the Churches. The law of separation of Church and State was enacted and approved by the majority of the population. It did not allow the Catholic minority to be recognized but neither did it allow the state to control the Church's bodies. One can therefore observe that the history of Geneva, with a Church strongly rooted in the life of the city, has led the politicians on a path of exclusion of the new diversity from public life. This exclusion will eventually lead to the exclusion of all churches from state support.

Interestingly enough, on the occasion of the adoption of a new Constitution in 2013, Geneva went one step further. Non-Christian diversity increased significantly in the last quarter of the 20th century. In response, the Canton stated in the constitution that it was a *laïc* (secular) republic, identical to France. The presence of significant religious diversity as well as of many people who do not belong to any church or religious group has prompted the state to strongly affirm separation between state and church. The course taken at the beginning of the 20th century was then further accentuated 100 years later by the emergence of new diversity. All the religious groups in Geneva are therefore currently associations under private law similar to any sports club, cultural organizations, or other associations, except that they cannot receive subsidies from the state or the city.

This top-down way of regulating religion has already been widely discussed in sociology of religion at the national level. Very recently, it is also beginning to be discussed at the city level, as a special issue of *Religion, State and Society* demonstrates (Martínez-Ariño, 2019). Though, little emphasis is placed on how the city's history and institutional path will direct choices in the management of religion as it diversifies and new issues arise. However, this idea has already been exploited in the sociology of migration to show how history and institutions will determine a city's attitude towards its migrants (Hackett, 2017; Schiller, 2012). We have seen from the history of Geneva that the path opened by the first settlements of religious diversity will determine the policies that will follow. Geneva, which was an entirely Protestant city-state, failed to recognize its new Catholic minority. This led to the separation of church and state, which only became more evident with the arrival of a new diversity at the end of the 20th century.

6. Diversity in Geneva: The Bottom-Up Responses

Faced with religious plurality, public authorities regulate the religious expressions in a top-down process. Another way of understanding the issues of recognition of religious groups in the city is to follow a bottom-up process. We will then show two bottom-up processes. The first is the interreligious initiatives, which are not insensitive to the city, since it allows the authority to regulate, softly, the diversity through the historical churches. The second one is a response to the constraints of normative background by the groups to obtain some legitimacy. In other words, how the groups adapt their activities to conform to the implicit expectation of the society.

Interreligious dialogue and initiatives are among the tools available for the city to 'domesticate' religious diversity:

The emergence and growth of interreligious initiatives can be understood through two complementary different theoretical perspectives, observes Griera: (a) as a consequence of a more general trend of religious de-privatization in contemporary societies; and (b) as a result of the increasing relevance of the governance of religious diversity and the implementation of 'technique of liberal governmentally' (Brown, 2006) aimed at regulating and domesticating religious groups. (Griera, 2020, p. 91)

In Switzerland, one of the main NCS results was the dynamic of the interreligious initiative, an intermediate path between rejection and recognition of the religious groups (Stolz & Monnot, 2017). The established Churches with legal or social recognition may co-opt newcomers and offer them at least a kind of social recognition. Newcomers are invited to participate in the interreligious dialogue or worship that the established churches lead. In Switzerland, NCS showed that 83.3% of established Christian parishes have engaged in a joint ritual with another congregation. In roughly 70% of the cases, this other congregation was of a different religious tradition from theirs. In most cases, this common ritual was with another Christian congregation, in roughly 1/3 of the cases with another non-established congregation.

In cities, this dialogue takes on social importance (Giordan & Pace, 2014; Körs, 2018; Körs, Weisse, & Willaime, 2020). The mayor and politicians generally participate in these interreligious gatherings, aiming to facilitate dialogue and a good understanding between religious groups. Interreligious dialogue allows communities to enter the "gray zone" (Becci & Knobel, 2014) of the urban fabric, to be designated as reputable, while those who do not participate or are not invited to the interreligious dialogue are not. Those who are not invited remain invisible and are considered poorly integrated into urban society (Lamine, 2004).

The NCS has shown that the vast majority of local Christian communities participate at least once a year in ecumenical or interreligious worship (Monnot, 2013a, pp. 219–225; Stolz & Monnot, 2017, pp. 82–84). However, this rate drops to less than one community in five among Christian minority communities, such as conservative Evangelicals (Darbysts or Bretheren). The rate is even lower among Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons (Last-Day Saints). When the analysis is extended to non-Christian groups, the study reveals that 1/3 of these local communities participate at least once a year in an interreligious celebration. This relatively high rate of co-optation in Switzerland from the established Churches to other 'acceptable' groups should not hide the fact that the invited groups belong to one of the major religious traditions (Islam, Buddhism, Hindu, Judaism, etc.), particularly their liberal wing (Stolz & Monnot, 2017). This situation becomes even more significant when one observes that none of the groups of the holistic milieu in Switzerland participated in interreligious worship during the year of the survey.

In Geneva, on the initiative of pastors of the Protestant Church, a group for interreligious dialogue was set up in 1992. A few years later it formed an association under the name "Interreligious Platform of Geneva" (www.interreligieux.ch). One of the initiators, the Protestant pastor Basset, published a panorama with presentation sheets in alphabetical order of each religious community. Each card contains headings such as "Precepts of conduct," "Attitude of the community to-

wards the State and society," a school card where one speaks, among other things, of the role and status of women and men in civil society as seen by the community in question, and finally a practical card with headings such as "Publications and Internet sites" (Basset, 2001). This platform organizes the 'week of religion' in November which is an opportunity for many groups to introduce themselves, take action, and invite other groups to pray with them. On this occasion, the platform distributes a booklet that presents itself in this way:

> The Interreligious Platform of Geneva has been working for twenty-five years to promote recognition and dialogue between members of various religious traditions. Together, we are committed ourselves to ensuring that all people can live and practice their beliefs freely within the framework of the Swiss legal system. (Plateforme interreligieuse, 2017, p. 1)

This platform also published each year a rather successful interreligious calendar which on the calendar side indicates religious holidays and on the photo side presents images around a theme that changes every year. Obviously, this platform wants to present the religious diversity as valuable components of society. Differences, rites, and celebrations are ways of discovering other traditions and ways of making society. It also insists on the compatibility of religion with the legal system in force. It is a facade that presents religion as compatible with laicity, a necessary component of society for it to live in peace. As we can read in its booklet, it does not hide the fact that it is a means to obtain recognition (Plateforme interreligieuse, 2017).

However, this platform also plays a role in soft regulation of religion. As Gonzalez (2019) documents in a recent article, the city authorities asked the platform about a new Kosovar mosque that was being built in a neighborhood. All that was at stake was whether this mosque defended radical Islam or not. Gonzalez (2019) shows that this mosque has stirred up controversy in some religious positions, but that it has also been able to play the right score by being strongly committed to the interreligious platform, thus ensuring coverage to obtain the various establishment permits. The interreligious dialogue promoted by the established churches in Europe is not neutral (Beyer, 2020; Nagel, 2020). It is governed by implicit social norms that make a selection from within the diversity.

This involvement in interreligious meetings works, according to Lamine (2005, p. 83), as a "staging of interreligious understanding," where local religious groups appear together in the local public space to demonstrate their peaceful coexistence within the city alongside different religious communities and faiths. Our approach makes it possible to show how the established churches are (implicitly) invested with the role of 'regulation.' However, one can imagine other institutions in other fields operating in the same way.

Not all religious communities can take part in interreligious dialogue. While Gonzalez's (2019) account of the history of the mosque sheds light on the role of legitimizing the activities of a local religious group in the eyes of society, many religious groups do not have access to this platform. This leads us to a second way of responding to the context of constraint by the communities in a bottom-up process.

In her study "Snowboarding on Swiss Islam," Banfi (2013) conducted a survey of Muslim associations and organizations in Geneva and Zurich. She was interested in presenting the associative life and tried to understand the contribution of these different Muslim associations to civil society. She identified 30 areas in which these associations contributed, ranging from sport, to language learning, well-being, provision of typical products, and contact with other surrounding institutions. The important point to stress here is that these activities differ, of course, from one Muslim association to another. But if one compares the different activities of the associations in Geneva, there are no significant differences with Zurich. The few points of difference are mainly due to the profile of the Muslim populations. For example, Geneva has a higher proportion of people from the Maghreb speaking French, so learning the main language of the new city is not a priority compared to Zurich, where the population comes mainly from the former Yugoslavia and Turkey, areas where German is usually not spoken.

The point raised by Banfi (2013) was to show that these Muslim associations are therefore not only focused on prayer and the organization of religious services: They participate and are active in all kinds of activities in their neighborhoods and beyond. There was, however, a notable difference between the two cities with regard to the group's goals as set out in the association's statutes. In Zurich, the first goal mentioned is the prayer or the religious gathering, while in Geneva, this goal is never expressed to the detriment of others such as good integration, help for women, cultural center of a country of origin, etc. This difference sheds light on an important point about struggles for the recognition of religious actors. It is a question of adapting the strategy to integrate the association into the social fabric; two strategies for two different city contexts! In Zurich, the legal framework is favorable to religion. The church still has broad support for local policies. By declaring itself as a prayer room for a Muslim association, one is simply registering in an activity that is recognized in the city of Zurich, whereas in Geneva, as we have seen, the Church has lost its prerogatives and religion has no place in the public sphere. It is therefore in the interest of Muslim associations to profile themselves in some of the other activities offered by the group. By putting forward socio-cultural activities, they fulfill the expectations of a society which wants to see groups offering something other than religious practice. These associations therefore make their aim compatible with the constraints of a *laïc* republic. This adaptation in response to the constraints of social

norms is another bottom-up way of struggling for recognition in an urban environment.

7. Conclusion

Following Hackett (2017), who suggested inserting the "local turn" of the study of migration in historical perspective in order to understand the different local governance between cities, we were able to identify the particular path of Geneva. The Protestant monopoly, even internally cracked with the fragmentation of Protestantism, did not bend politically in response to the claim for recognition by the large Catholic minority in the 19th century. The exclusion of the Catholic Church from the affairs of the city finally led to the adoption of a law of separation of Church and State. It can therefore be observed that Geneva has taken the path of separation. In the context of growing diversity, Geneva has continued on the path of separation and even accentuated this direction by declaring itself a *laïc* republic. This top-down process of governance reflects only part of the issues at stake in the recognition of religious communities in Geneva.

As suggested by Duemmler and Nagel (2013), it is also necessary to observe bottom-up processes in order to fully comprehend the strategies and claims of recognition from minority groups. Two processes have been described in Geneva. One is the interreligious, which plays an ambiguous role in selecting among the groups those that can be reputable and legitimizing those that participate. The case of the inauguration of a mosque in Geneva underlines the fact that the public authorities consult interreligious bodies before granting permission to open a new worship place. The second process is the profiling of the association according to the demands valued by the norms of the surrounding society. We have seen that in Geneva, Muslim associations are determined in their status like other secular associations by their social activities, whereas in Zurich, associations, which nevertheless propose very similar activities, can declare themselves as a mosque or prayer room in their status by the fact that the city of Zurich recognizes religious activity as an integral part of the social life of the city. In Geneva, the secular presentation of the activities of religious associations stems from the strict separation between Church and State, resulting from its religious history. For Zurich, its religious history is different and the governance of diversity has taken another path.

These two ways (top-down and bottom-up) of managing diversity are closely linked and respond to each other. Turning to the history of the city makes apparent the particular path that has been followed by the city's policies. It is by observing this path that one can perceive the different reasons for the struggle for recognition of religious groups. This path also provides a framework in which these communities will work to obtain the necessary legitimacy to ensure their success or simply their survival. Geneva's case highlights the fact that the city has become a laboratory where new ways of living to-

gether in diversity have been shaped. However, in the context of super-diversity, with societal norms, laws, and levels of regulation, the question raised by the Geneva case is this: How will the path followed by the city produce innovations needed to deal with the increasingly fragmented diversity within the state regulation of religion framework?

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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Article

Muslim and Buddhist Youths in Switzerland: Individualising Religion and Striving for Recognition?

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Abstract
Since the second half of the 20th century, immigrants and refugees from numerous countries have arrived in Switzerland. With their long-term settlement, the immigrant minorities have established cultural and religious associations to maintain their cultural and religious traditions and to teach their children the faith and religious practices from the country of origin. In contrast to the first immigrant generation, the second generation has had concurrent social influences from the Swiss ordinary school system and the cultural-religious traditions of their parents. This article asks to what extent the young generations have continued the religious traditions brought by their parents and what changes have occurred in adapting religious practices, ideas and collective forms to the new socio-cultural environment. In addition, we study whether and how the second generations have striven to move away from the often-marginalised social position of their parents and engage with social recognition in Swiss society. To provide answers to these pertinent questions, the article will draw on the examples of first and second-generation Muslims and Buddhists in Switzerland and refer to the theoretical model designed by the American scholars Fred Kniss and Paul Numrich. The article argues that not only outward changes of religiosity are observable among second-generation youths, but also that despite an intensified degree of individualisation, some of their newly founded youth associations strive for civic participation and social recognition in the public arena of Swiss civil society.

Issue
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1. Introduction: Second-Generation Immigrant Youths in European Diversity

In the second half of the 20th century, European countries faced large-scale arrivals of immigrant workers, spouses, and refugees. Over time, they established places of assembly and founded associations to maintain their religious and cultural traditions and to teach their children the faith and religious practices from the country of origin. The immigrants' children were socialised both in the European countries and in the cultural-religious traditions of their parents' country of origin. The basic question both of the parent generations and of many academic studies has been to what extent the young generations continue the religious traditions brought by the parents and what changes have occurred in adapting religious practices and ideas to the new socio-cultural environment. Numerous studies argue that there has been a shift towards the individualisation of religiosity and an emphasis on religious concepts

over practices among Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh youth (Herding, 2013; Limacher, Mattes, & Novak, 2019; Sedgwick, 2015).

This article aims to provide a theory-led comparative analysis of changes of religiosity from the first to the second generation in two exemplary religious minorities, i.e., Muslims and Buddhists in Switzerland. Additionally, we will examine to what extent these generally individualised young people and the religious youth associations that are sometimes established strive for civic engagement and social recognition in public arenas of Swiss society. We define the second generation as the descendants of immigrants who have been socialised in Switzerland, whilst the first generation immigrated to Switzerland as adults.

In theory, we apply the analytical approach by Kniss and Numrich (2007) differentiating religious associations concerning preferences of religious authority and engagement with civic participation. Civic engagement activities, we will argue, can also encompass actions to make one's voice heard with the aim of claiming respect and social recognition for the minority and faith. The topic of recognition admittedly covers an enormous field of discussion and reflection (van den Brink & Owen, 2007). It covers analytical approaches, such as those carried out by Honneth (1995), accentuating the ideal of the autonomy of moral subjects, Taylor (1994), examining politics of recognition in multicultural societies, and Fraser (2003, 2018), calling for a 'politics' of recognition with a politics of redistribution.

The article will first introduce the theoretical perspective, followed by the two case studies of Muslims, the majority with Kosovo-Albanian and Bosnian background, and Vietnamese Buddhists in Switzerland. We employ the theoretical perspective to map generational dynamics and the civic engagement of individuals and religious associations. We selected these two minorities as Muslims and Islam constitute the most publicly discussed and stigmatised religious minority in Switzerland (Ettinger, 2018) while Buddhism is positively referenced in public discourse (Kollmar-Paulenz & Funk, 2010). Moreover, while Albanian-speaking and Bosnian Muslims are considered as badly integrated, Vietnamese enjoy good social recognition due to a positive stereotyping, as well as being integrated and successful (Beglinger, 2017). Following this, we discuss the appropriateness of employing the moral-order map, assess reasons for the degree of striving for social recognition and provide explanations for the patterns of change. A brief conclusion will highlight the main findings.

The main thesis of the article states that the generational transmission of religious practices and ideas in Switzerland leads to decisive shifts of individually interpreted religiosity, dependent on specific contextual factors. Young Muslims position themselves socially to correct the bad image of Islam. Hence, independent Muslim youth groups strive for social recognition in public arenas of civil society. In contrast, young Buddhists growing up

with a positive image of their religion engage in civil society more individually and informally.

2. Analytical Perspective: Moral Order Map

Studying civic engagement and one of its sub-forms, the claim for respect and recognition, poses the difficulty of a lack of a widely accepted definition and an agreement on core items. For example, Keeter, Zukin, Andolina, and Jenkins (2002) chose 19 core activities which ranged from "voting, to volunteering, to signing petitions" (Keeter et al., 2002, p. 1). Alternatively, Wray-Lake, Metzger, and Syvertsen (2016) listed "behaviours, values, knowledge, and skills that comprise political and prosocial contributions to community and society" as characteristics of civic engagement (Wray-Lake et al., 2016, p. 4). The authors recognised the highly multifaceted nature of civic engagement, which includes actions such as voting, volunteering, activism, and environmental conservation. In contrast to the abundance of quantitative studies, qualitative studies on religion and civic engagement are comparatively rare. The study by Todd and Rufa (2013) represents one of the few exceptions as they conducted 15 in-depth interviews to examine the extent to which Christian congregations in the US-Midwest promote social justice. Also, Kniss and Numrich (2007) proposed a heuristic 'moral order map' to locate the degrees of civic engagement of immigrant religious communities in the greater Chicago area. The map ranges from no civic engagement to various forms of engagement in the arenas of civil society, the government, and the economy. The authors defined civic engagement as "the public action of individuals and groups as they interact with and participate in the organisations, associations, and institutions of society" (Kniss & Numrich, 2007, p. 10). We have identified this qualitative approach as being particularly suitable for the analytical aims of the article as it enables the comparative study of religious individuals and groups and takes into consideration religious rationales for civic engagement and different authority structures of groups. The approach rests on three dimensions of differentiation, i.e., on the degree of sectarianism, on the locus and emphasis of the moral authority of the religious group, and on the most central moral project of the group (Kniss & Numrich, 2007, p. 9).

The 'degree of sectarianism' of a religious community is decisive insofar as sects commonly emphasise specific religious interpretations and practices and break with long-established interpretations. In protest against established tradition, the sectarian view claims to offer the authentic interpretation of the founder's message, relaying it into the correct words and a true way of life (Kniss & Numrich, 2007, pp. 21–34). This dimension often strongly affects the other two dimensions.

Secondly, the authors position a religious community's 'locus of moral authority' on a spectrum between the poles of an individual and a collective moral authority (Kniss & Numrich, 2007, pp. 38–40). The individual as the

prime place of moral authority bases his/her decisions and values on personal reasons and experiences. In contrast, the collective locus of moral authority is based on an understanding that "the authority to define ultimate values is grounded in the collective religious tradition" (Kniss & Numrich, 2007, p. 40). Believers are expected to follow the instructions of the ecclesiastical and/or scriptural authority.

Thirdly, the dimension of a religious community's 'moral project' also ranges between the poles of groups with a tendency towards collectivist moral projects and those with a tendency towards individualist moral projects (Kniss & Numrich, 2007, p. 55–65). The content and communal form of a moral project at the individualist end of the continuum "[seek] the maximisation of individual utility" (Kniss & Numrich, 2007, p. 56) and the moral improvement and/or moral self-perfection of the individual. The opposite side of the continuum, the collectivity as a moral project, favours the collective good and aims at "establishing a just and righteous social order rather than reforming individuals" (Kniss & Numrich, 2007, p. 56). Collectivist moral projects may result in joint civic actions with public criticism of unjust social structures and the aim of amending social problems. In the US, Kniss and Numrich point to Roman Catholic and Muslim immigrant communities as prime examples of this expression with their civic engagement for poor and marginalised people (Kniss & Numrich, 2007, pp. 60–63).

Our case studies illustrate these different types of civic engagement. Using the approach by Kniss and Numrich (see Figure 1), we indicate the shift between the first and second generation. While the Muslim and Buddhist first generations tend towards the collectivity as a locus of authority, the authority locus of the second generations shifts towards the individual with a trend towards a societal moral project.

3. Analysing Immigrant Religious Minorities and Generational Dynamics

We will use the model to analyse the range of the first and second generation. While Kniss and Numrich focused solely on immigrant religious communities, we have also included the people of the first and second generation to examine generational changes based on the model.

Overall, we suggest that the civic participation of immigrant communities leaning towards the poles of the societal moral project will also encompass activities claiming respect and social recognition in society. In conceptual terms, Fraser suggested "to treat recognition as a question of *social status*," (Fraser, 2018, p. 89, emphasis in original) terming it status model. She contrasts her status model with the so-called standard identity model which, following Taylor and Honneth, claims respect and recognition for specific groups and their cultural identity (Fraser, 2018, p. 88–89). Fraser held this identity model as "deeply problematic" as the model would reify culture and "impose a single, drastically simplified group identity, which denies the complexity of people's lives" (Fraser, 2018, p. 89). The status model, however, would analyse the social status of group members in the per-
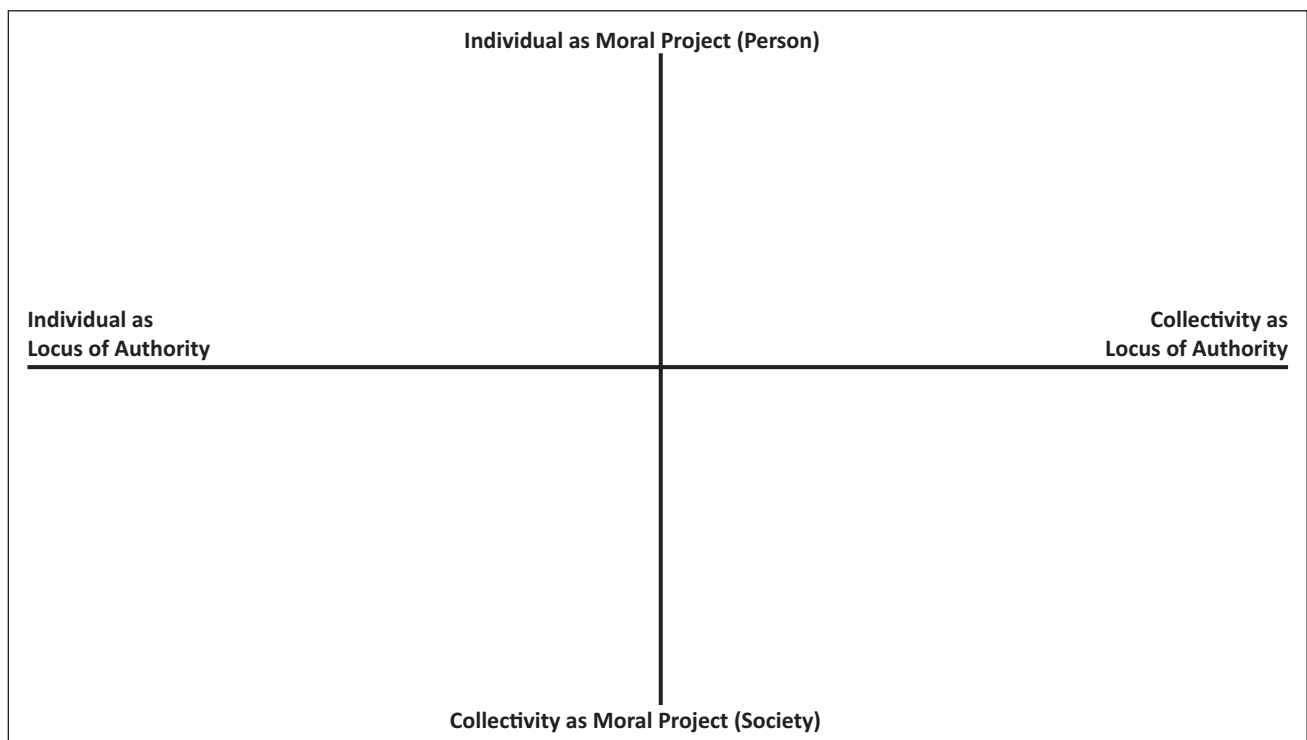

Figure 1. Model by Kniss and Numrich (2007).

spective of justice as "some individuals and groups are denied the status of full partners in social interaction simply as a consequence of institutionalised patterns of [less or minor] cultural value" ascribed to them (Fraser, 2018, p. 91). In this regard, Fraser opted for a conception of justice and norm of "parity of participation" (Fraser, 2018, p. 94) which criticises forms of misrecognition as "it denies some individuals and groups the possibility of participating on a par with others in social interaction" (Fraser, 2018, p. 92).

While scholars in practical philosophy and sociology have paid little attention to religion and religious groups in discussing claims for recognition, Fraser explicitly included issues of minority religious practices and controversies (Fraser, 2018, pp. 99–101). She demonstrated that her proposed status model relying on the norms of participatory parity and justice provide a standard for evaluating "the effects of institutionalised patterns of cultural value on the relative standing of minorities *vis-à-vis* majorities" (Fraser, 2018, p. 100, emphasis in original). In this regard, claimants demanding cultural or religious recognition were to show "that the institutionalisation of majority cultural norms denies them participatory parity" as well as to show "that the practices whose recognition they seek do not themselves deny participatory parity" neither to various group members nor to non-members (Fraser, 2018, p. 100). While applying Fraser's status model, we need to analyse whether members or groups of the discussed religious minorities are denied any parity of participation.

3.1. Muslims in Switzerland

In Switzerland, the first Muslims arrived due to recruiting schemes from Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s, followed by considerable numbers of Muslims fleeing the disintegrating state of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. In 2019, the heterogenic Muslim minority of some 458,000 people were composed of 37% from the Balkans, 11.5% from Turkey, Muslims from various African and Asian countries, and 35% Swiss Muslims. The latter comprises large parts of naturalised former Kosovo-Albanians, Bosnians and Turks. Nine out of ten Muslims adhere to Sunni traditions (Monnot, 2013; Tunger-Zanetti & Schneuwly-Purdie, 2019).

In Switzerland, according to the 2014 survey completed by the Federal Office of Statistics (2016), only a small percentage of first-generation Muslims practise their religion by visiting the mosque and praying daily. The percentage of Muslims who visit the mosque weekly was stated as 12% and those praying more or less daily as almost 30% (Federal Office of Statistics, 2016, pp. 9, 12). Overall, Gianni, Giugni, and Michel (2015) put the percentage of religiously observant Muslims at 10 to 15% (Gianni et al., 2015, pp. 86–90). In contrast, the vast majority of less to non-religious Muslims rarely perform the five prayers a day and only occasionally visit the mosque.

Political scientist Matteo Gianni emphasised the variety of individual ways in which the Islamic faith and prescriptions were lived among the silent majority of Muslims in the early 2000s (Gianni, 2005, pp. 6–7). Meanwhile, these varieties have grown since then. Translating Gianni's findings to the moral order map, the individual as the locus of authority is characteristic of many Muslims in Switzerland. Observant religious Muslims tend more towards the collectivity as represented by the mosque and a knowledgeable imam (Gianni, 2005, p. 24–25). The content of the moral project seems to be more individualised among the less and non-religious Muslims, while it tends more towards collectivity with the religious Muslims. This is expressed in activities such as volunteer work and giving donations. The graphical representation on the map reproduces the wide range of understandings and attitudes of first-generation Muslims as a strung-out ellipse. The various mosques, as places with numerous social, cultural and religious services, tend towards civic engagement on the community level, and those with an employed imam lean towards the collectivity as the locus of authority (Gianni et al., 2015, pp. 63–79; Martens, 2013).

The generation of young Muslims aged 15 to 30 constitutes approximately 120,000 people in Switzerland. The survey by Käppler and Morgenthaler (2013) on religiosity among young Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Jews aged 13 to 17 showed, despite its limitation to Swiss-German conurbation areas, that a minority percentage of the surveyed young Muslims are either non-religious (16.4%) or highly religious (11.5%). A strong majority of 72% can be labelled as somewhat or selectively religious (Zehnder Grob, 2013, p. 64).

Furthermore, the large-scale qualitative study by Baumann, Endres, Martens, and Tunger-Zanetti (2017) on young Muslims aged 15 to 30 provided in-depth views of religious attitudes and practices of young Muslims. The researchers employed varied approaches to contact young male and female Muslims, visiting youth centres, contacting key persons at mosques, directly addressing young Muslims, and establishing contacts via the Facebook site 'Imra Cy' and the project's university website. The sample strove for a large spectrum of young Muslims concerning gender, age, education, religious profile and country of origin of the parents.

Overall, the researchers conducted 61 narrative individual interviews, 28 with young Muslim women and 33 with young Muslim men (Baumann et al., 2017, pp. 7–9). The analysis of the multifarious data which comprised more than 5,000 minutes audio recording evidenced a cognisant and reflexive approach towards Islamic ideas and a decrease of religious practices among the interviewed young Muslims (Baumann et al., 2017, pp. 11, 15, 29). In contrast to their parents, young Muslims, a large proportion of them Albanian-speaking and Bosnian Muslims, attempt to understand Islamic ideas and norms in their terms, suitable for their situation in Switzerland. They distance themselves from the religious-cultural

practices of their parents (Baumann et al., 2017, p. 13) and take a comparative and scrutinising stance towards the Islamic norms and guidelines of the various Islamic authorities (Tunger-Zanetti, Martens, & Endres, 2019, p. 195). For example, as Yalçuk (male, 26 years) explains concerning the observation of Islamic commandments: "I simply need a good explanation. It must make sense to me" (Baumann et al., 2017, p. 28, translation by the authors). Statements such as this indicate that the varied spectrum of understanding and practising Islam is tending towards the pole of the individual as the locus of authority on the map.

In addition, due to the decisive critical discourse about Islam and Muslims in Switzerland, almost all young Muslims report negative experiences of discrimination, exclusion and rejection (Baumann et al., 2017, p. 31). Young female and male Muslims developed different strategies to handle the pejorative Islam discourse. While some retreat to the private domain with their religious practices and others adapt these selectively at work, a third group emphasises their Muslim belonging and claims the right to practice in public. This group openly criticises the negative image of Islam and demands rights and claims social recognition by public actions. In the words of Fraser, this group of young Muslims speaking out criticises "being denied the status of a full partner in social interaction and prevented from participating as a peer in social life as a consequence of institutionalised patterns of cultural value that constitute one as comparatively unworthy of respect or esteem" (Fraser, 2018, p. 92). The negative image of Islam and Muslims repro-

duced by the media and conservative politicians constitutes a "status subordination" which denies the "norm of participatory parity" (Fraser, 2018, p. 92). In contrast to their parents who tend to remain in a marginalised societal position, often in the private realm and some in the mosque, determined young Albanian-speaking and Bosnian Muslims engage and participate in the public arena of Swiss civil society and call for respect and recognition. Hence, applied to the graphical representation on the map, young Muslims lean more than their parents towards the pole of the individual as the locus of authority and more towards the pole of the collectivity as a moral project (see Figure 2).

Turning to Muslim youth organisations, the explorative study by Endres, Tunger-Zanetti, Behloul, and Baumann (2013) employed qualitative methods of visiting internal and public religious and leisure events organised by these organisations, conducting participant observations and semi-structured interviews and observed web-based activities of Muslim youth groups on their websites and social media platforms (Endres et al., 2013, pp. 26–27; Tunger-Zanetti & Endres, 2019, p. 127). The study provided evidence that only a minority of young Muslims had been affiliated to a youth group in 2012. Among the approximately 100 youth groups, the majority were closely connected to a mosque, usually headed by an imam and continuing the same patterns of national-linguistic bonding (Tunger-Zanetti & Endres, 2019, p. 134). However, the close organisational linkage brought forth critical voices like that of 25-year-old Gezim:
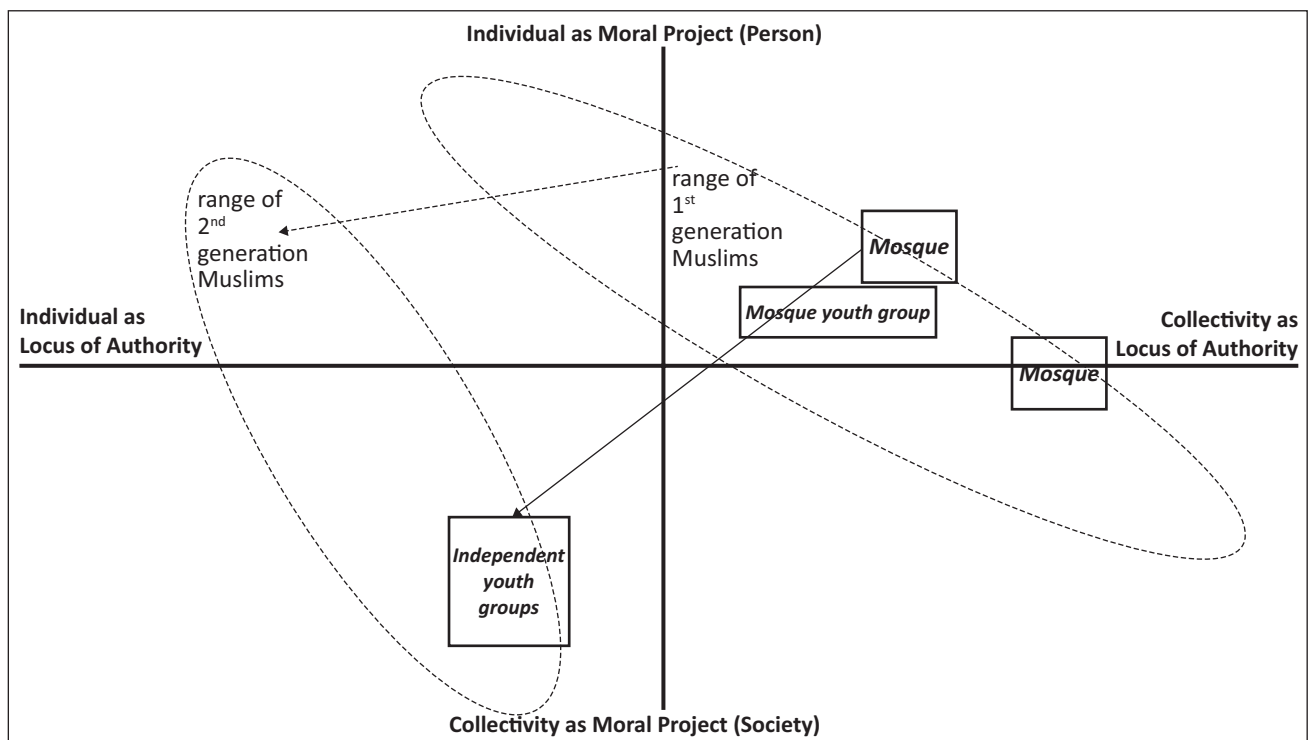

Figure 2. Locating first and second-generation Muslims on the moral order map.

There is no common language between Swiss Muslim youngsters and the imams. On the one hand, there is a generation gap, on the other, the imams commonly do not speak and teach in Swiss German, but in Turkish, Albanian, etc….The imams do not match the language of the youths and often do not know the situation in which the youths live in Switzerland. (Endres et al., 2013, p. 66, translation by the authors)

This frustration and the will to engage beyond their ethnic group has led young Muslims to set up independent youth groups, traversing established infrastructures of mosque associations and linguistic, national, and cultural boundaries. In these groups, apart from organising various leisure and sports activities in an Islamic setting, young Muslims are eager to teach themselves an observant Muslim life with an understanding of Islamic scripts, ideas and values. Importantly, young Muslim men and women stress a conscious self-understanding of being 'Swiss Muslims' rather than merely tolerated "Muslims in Switzerland" (Tunger-Zanetti & Endres, 2019, p. 135). As 18-year-old Bosnian Ismeta explains:

I would love to see something that serves the whole Swiss community. So people would notice that Muslims belong to Switzerland and are not only THERE. That they not only exist but that we are a part of society. I would also wish that they get more politically active. (personal interview 179, research material 2015, translation by the authors)

Such volunteer activities seek, among other things, to help gradually change and develop the public image of Muslims and Islam. In addition, groups such as the Association of Islamic Youth Switzerland challenge the pejorative public discourse and occasionally organise public activities such as information booths, participate in Christian-Muslim dialogue and at times gather for demonstrations to disseminate their ideas about Islam and the Muslim way of life (Tunger-Zanetti & Endres, 2019, p. 136). With all due caution in turning these findings into a graphical representation on the map, independent Muslim youth groups strongly lean towards the pole of the collectivity as a moral project and collective actions in the political realm. Figure 2 translates the findings to the map.

The heuristic figure displays the strong shift of second-generation youths towards the individual as the locus of authority. Due to the pejorative societal discourse about Islam and Muslims, more young Muslims appear to be socially engaged and aim to change the stigmatising picture. The range of attitudes remains wide, however.

3.2. Buddhists in Switzerland

We analysed shifts between the first and second generation of Vietnamese Buddhists by using data from a qualitative research project carried out from 2016 to 2020. In the study, the authors studied the religiosity of young Vietnamese Buddhists in Switzerland and Germany. We conducted narrative interviews with 22 young Vietnamese Buddhist adults between 17 and 30 years of age at the time of the study. The sample included persons who were involved in the pagodas and people with little to no relation to the pagodas. We gained the interview partners by using recommendations, key persons from pagodas and Buddhist youth organisations as well as social media and youth-specific events in Switzerland and Germany. Method-wise, the authors proceeded ethnographically and used participating observations in the pagodas. In this article, we draw upon data from Switzerland.

In 2018, about 15,000 Vietnamese lived in Switzerland. The majority came between 1975 and 1995 because of the Vietnam War (Weigelt, 2013, p. 107). The German-speaking part of Switzerland, in particular, provided Vietnamese contingent refugees with a new home away from home during this period.

Vietnamese immigrants are an ethnically and religiously heterogeneous community in Switzerland. Informed estimates assume some 50% of the Vietnamese people are part of Mahayana Buddhism. In 2020, three pagodas existed in Switzerland, with two pagodas near Berne and Lucerne in the Swiss-German region and the third pagoda near Lausanne in the French-speaking region. In the pagodas, Vietnamese Buddhists practice a mixture of Chan and Pure Land Buddhism. The monks and nuns emphasise the recitation of sutras and the acquisition of religious merit. About 80–90% of the practising Buddhists in pagodas are female and older than 40 years (Baumann, Eulberg, & Weigelt, 2011, p. 17). Young adults, however, are strongly underrepresented. Fieldwork impressions gained by the authors suggest that the average age is shifting even higher. Affiliated associations of lay Buddhists (Buddhist youth association) support two of the pagodas. In these Vietnamese Buddhist youth groups, the lay Buddhists practice Buddhism and continue elements of Vietnamese culture and tradition.

The majority of Vietnamese Buddhists are likely to belong to the spectrum within the category of the selectively religiously oriented. Likewise, a minority of first-generation Vietnamese Buddhists do not attend a pagoda at all and practice only in the private domestic sphere, representing the category of religiously distanced.

Therefore, on the moral order map, we can show a wide range of religious understanding among the first generation, tending towards the pole of the individual as a moral project. In addition, as most Vietnamese of the immigrant generation highly respect the Buddhist monks and nuns as guides for individual and collective religiousness (cf. Baumann, 2000, pp. 61–67), a majority tends towards the collectivity as the locus of authority. Collective social and civic engagement beyond their community only rarely occurs. We noticed small differ-

ences between the alignments of the three pagodas. The two pagodas near Lucerne and Lausanne, for example, present themselves as open to the Swiss majority society. The pagoda in Berne, on the other hand, is primarily aimed at its community.

The spectrum of second-generation religiosity ranges from non-religious to a small minority of religious people. The majority of respondents can be categorised as selectively religious. They only visit the pagodas during festivals but not for regular chanting and services at the weekend. Transferred to the moral order map, the positioning of religious authority strongly shifts towards the pole of the individual as the locus of authority.

The minority of young Buddhists involved in the Buddhist youth associations is rather irregular and self-determined. On the moral order map, the second generation is shown as tending towards both the pole of the individual as a moral project and the pole of the collectivity as a moral project.

Since young Vietnamese Buddhists are less represented in pagodas, they practice Buddhism more as a way of life. They are involved in associations of the majority society, in the neighbourhood or the inter-religious area. This form of religiosity is directed at the individual and civic engagement in the informal sphere. What is striking is that they distance themselves strongly from the parent generation. They often refer to the religiosity of their parents' generation and demand a stronger separation between Vietnamese culture and Buddhism. As 25-year-old Nathalie emphasises:

> Tradition and religion go hand in hand and that sometimes bothers me because I already have the Swiss in me, or I am already quite Swiss. And this has always bothered me, the conservative elements, which is why I decided to get to the bottom of it for myself by searching for literature myself. (personal interview, translation by the authors)

Second-generation Buddhists choose religious authorities by themselves but do not accord them authority by dint of their position. In this regard, the majority of young Buddhists tackle religion independently and based on their own choices. Quite a few align with the Western image of Buddhism and the Buddhism represented by the Vietnamese Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh. The 22-year-old female Buddhist Kim describes this examination of her religiosity:

> A line [of Buddhist interpretation] that I like is just that of Thich Nhat Hanh….I like it more because it is more related to everyday life and to mindfulness. I also feel that it brings me something in everyday life. I also notice how it is practical, everyday life and what is said. This is only my personal opinion, but when I joined Mahayana Buddhism, it simply didn't make sense for me. (personal interview, translation by the authors)

The quote highlights the attitude of young Buddhist adults towards their religion and questions the religious practice of their parents' generation. It also indicates a turn towards a Western understanding of Buddhism as expressed by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh.

Unlike Muslims, young Vietnamese have experienced less discrimination due to their religious affiliation. Discrimination, or the attribution of foreignness, occurs more because of their ethnic roots and appearance. Young Vietnamese react with different strategies. As a rule, over-adaptation to the Swiss majority society is evident. In addition, success in education is of great importance (cf. Baumann et al., 2011, p. 14). They do not seek social recognition through official groups in the same way that Muslims do, but through informal engagement and adaptation. Their civil society involvement is manifested in the informal sphere and as part of Buddhism which is seen as a way of life. 21-year-old Mai Linh emphasises:

> If you practice meditation or pray, or always go to temples, sure it's good, it certainly helps you, but I find that all of this…you find it in the smallest action, e.g., you bring in your neighbour's newspaper every day….I think it starts at the very beginning and if you can't be a good person in everyday life or treat other people in a way that you would treat people in the temple, then you can't be a good Buddhist. (personal interview, translation by the authors)

Like the female Buddhist Mai Linh, the majority of respondents understand civic engagement as part of their 'Buddhist being.' Here, however, a shift towards the pole of the individual as the locus of authority is striking as the Vietnamese youth only irregularly attend collective religious services and gatherings (see Figure 3). Compared to the parent generation, the members of the second generation are stronger volunteers in Swiss civil society and less within the Vietnamese Buddhist pagodas. Unlike Muslims, however, they are not involved in the political or formal sphere. They are involved in informal activities.

In conclusion, it seems justified to say that young Buddhists seek social recognition through established structures. Referring to Fraser's status model, we observed that Buddhists in our case study achieve participatory parity based on upward mobility. Religious organisations support this mobility in strengthening the social recognition of the individual and less the collective (Bankston & Zhou, 1995; Le, 2020). The interviewees of our study are not much involved in religious organisations, as they perceive a lack of peers. Nevertheless, we assume that the pagodas and youth organisations influence the young adults' search for recognition. A clear majority has adapted structurally to Swiss majority society and is engaged in the informal sector of community activities to demonstrate their belonging. Figure 3 translates the findings to the map.
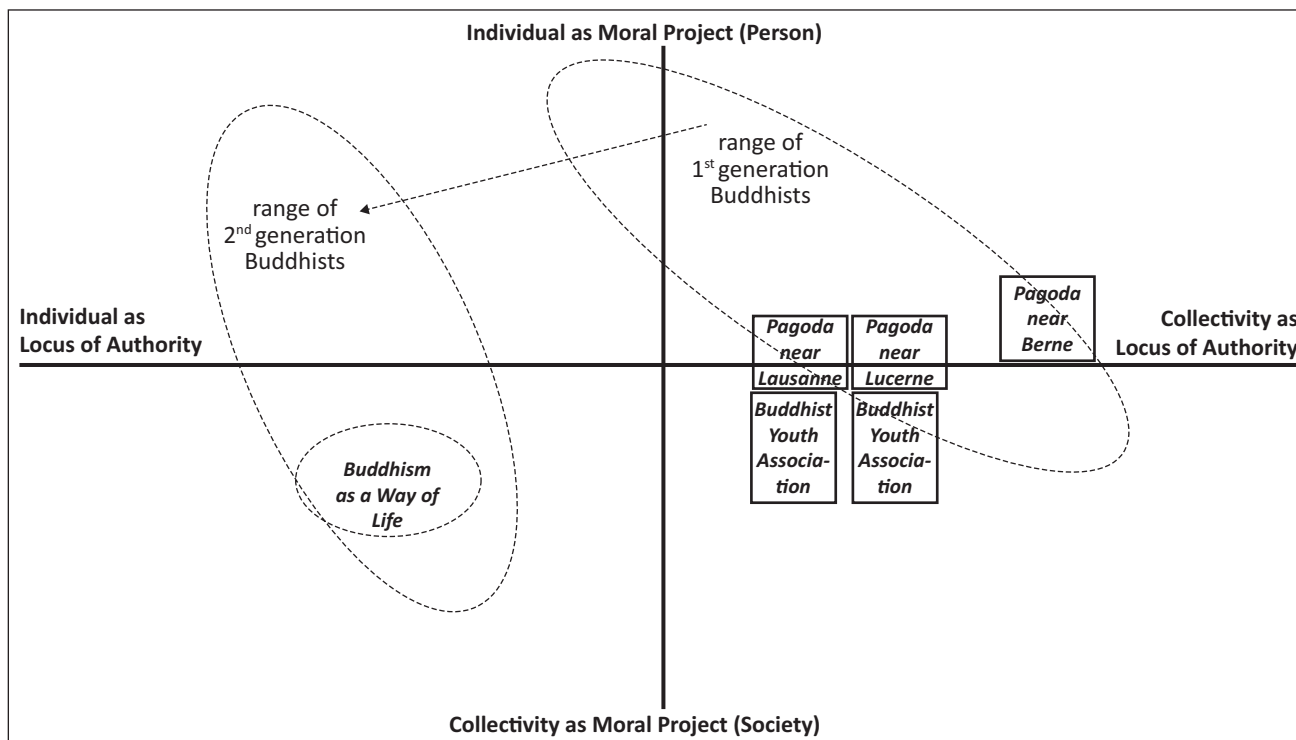
Figure 3. Locating first and second-generation Buddhists on the moral order map.

4. Discussion and Explanation

In this article, we use the moral order map and the approximate graphical location of first and second generations and their religious organisations to highlight generational dynamics. An advantage of this approach is that it demonstrates the wide range of religious self-understanding of both Muslim and Buddhist generations in Switzerland.

The used model is not without shortcomings, however. The actual location of a mosque, pagoda and youth group on the map can only be approximately set, and this is even more the case as regards locating the range of the first and second generations of the Muslim and Buddhist minorities. To some extent, the spectra can be only suggestive, as representative data on the different characteristics of the content of the moral project and the locus of authority are not widely available.

Nevertheless, the map provides an expedient frame to visually underscore the second generation's shift towards the pole of the individual practitioner as the locus of authority. The individualising shift of young Muslims and Buddhists socialised in Switzerland can be attributed to the overall trend of individualisation prevalent in Switzerland, Western Europe, North America and elsewhere. In recent decades, the dominant idea of religiosity as individual and private has developed, distanced from institutional religion and with almost unlimited options for the individual to select and define religious contents and practices (Stolz, Könemann, Schneuwly-Perduie, Engelberger, & Krüggeler, 2014, pp. 181–186, 200–202). Our results of a shift towards individualisa-

tion are mirrored by similar studies on young Muslims in other European countries (Herding, 2013; Jacobsen, 2009; Sedgwick, 2015; Voas & Fleischmann, 2012), young Tamil Hindus in Germany (Marla-Küsters, 2015) and young Thai and Tibetan Buddhists in Great Britain and Switzerland (Schlieter, Kind, & Lauer, 2014; Thanissaro, 2014). Also, for Canada, Ramji (2008) and Beyer and Ramji (2013), examining the religiosity of children from immigrant families, argued that young Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists considered themselves individually responsible for their religiousness. The intergenerational changes appear thus as a general trend in second-generation studies. Young adults negotiate their affiliation to religious institutions as part of their biography and their self-determined religiousness.

We assume that the reflexive and critical stance of young Muslims and Buddhists towards the religious practice of their parents' generation is strongly influenced by the Swiss school system. Children and adolescents are taught to ask for reasons and to think for themselves (Baumann et al., 2017, p. 28). Emphasis is placed by the school system on understanding and explanation. This socialisation towards reflexivity does not sit easily alongside rituals that young people often find boring and difficult to comprehend. Overall, there is a clear distancing from mosques and pagodas as places of religious authority.

Despite the overall trend of individualisation, a minority of young Muslims deliberately gather in youth groups. Notably, some young Muslims founded independent groups to transverse the national-linguistic patterns of mosque-affiliated youth groups. These indepen-

dent groups do not only enable the young Muslims to self-responsibly organise religious, leisure and sports activities in an Islamic setting. They also serve to teach themselves an enhanced understanding of Islamic values, ideas and scripts and to jointly encourage living an observant Muslim life. While each young participant individually strives to deepen his and her Islamic comprehension reflexively, this endeavour is purposefully jointly done in a collective setting. Among these young Muslims, individualisation and distancing from the mosque does not necessarily include privatisation but the setting up of autonomous community structures to consciously support a self-empowerment and a challenging of the ascribed status subordination and misrecognition (Endres et al., 2013, pp. 63–75; Tunger-Zanetti & Endres, 2019, pp. 135–141).

Furthermore, our findings demonstrate that independent Muslim youth groups and individual young Buddhists are more open to social engagement and participation in society than the established organisations founded by the first generations. In fact, engagement with social recognition among the first generations takes place within the mosque and pagoda, if at all, and is only occasionally voiced in the field of community activities. In contrast, engaged young Muslims—albeit limited in number—consciously campaign for their cause in the public arenas of politics and civil society. As distinct from these dedicated Muslims, young Buddhists commit themselves via the less outspoken informal engagement. They interpret Buddhism as a way of life, which finds ex-pression in actions such as respecting and helping neighbours and engaging in associations within Swiss society.

In particular, young Muslims increasingly collectively engage to achieve social recognition and a participatory parity. Young Muslims are confronted globally with the negative discourse of Islam (Bozorgmehr & Kasinitz, 2018). Islam as an immigrant religion is generally more socially present than Buddhism, which is less regarded as an immigrant phenomenon. This stigmatisation and status subordination of Islam and Muslims corresponds to the positioning constraint that representatives of Islam in Europe express themselves more publicly than representatives of Buddhist institutions. The engagement of young Muslims and their claim for recognition is motivated by this discourse. As we have argued, young Muslims are keen to enhance the image of their religion. They work to counter the negative image by public actions in the communal and political arenas, calling for respect and social recognition of Muslims. They demand the same rights and an end to stigmatisation and social marginalisation. "We are also a part of Switzerland," declared a homemade poster held by a young Muslim demonstrator on the Day Against Islamophobia and Racism in 2011 in Bern (Figure 4).

In contrast, the engagement of young Buddhists appears to be more informal and less visible. In 2018, a young Buddhist woman put on an exhibition presenting her family history and her perspective on her Vietnamese roots having grown up in Switzerland. She intended to show how integration into a Vietnamese fam-

Figure 4. Young Muslim demonstrator on the Day Against Islamophobia and Racism (Endres et al., 2013, p. 52.).

Figure 5. "Either saying 'I'm Swiss' or 'I'm Vietnamese' didn't feel quite right to me." Image from Hieu thao—With Love and Respect (2018), provided by Thi My Lien Nguyen.

ily and Swiss society can go hand in hand. In the private sphere, the family engages in Vietnamese culture, while in the public sphere the family has adapted to the conditions in Switzerland. While it is important for Muslims to influence the discourse, the young woman presents social participation at the micro-level with her exhibition. The young Buddhists may benefit from the fact that other Buddhist migrants like Tibetans have already established themselves in Switzerland (Schlieter et al., 2014). The positive discourse about Buddhism will certainly also be helpful to them.

Both cases demonstrate the stronger interest of both second generations to be more visible in Swiss society than the first generation. Notably, they highlight the importance of the impact made by the societal discourse of stigmatisation, in contrast to idealisation on the social engagement of young Muslims and Buddhists in different public arenas.

5. Conclusion

This article aimed to provide a theory-led comparison and analysis of the first and second generations of two immigrant minorities and how they interpret being religious. Furthermore, we intended to study the generational dynamics of how religion is perceived among second-generation youth. The model by Kniss and Numrich (2007) provided a convenient analytical framework within which to discern characteristics of the religious self-understanding of first and second generations and the religious organisations of these minorities. This comparison enabled us to highlight the range of how religion is personally interpreted and led to a graphical spectrum of understanding religion as more individualised or more collective.

The examples of Muslims and Buddhists illustrated the shifts of religious understanding among the immigrant generation towards a more individualised interpretation among the second generations. In addition, it became obvious that due to the negative discourse on Islam, young Muslims proved to be more civically and politically engaged in the public arena of civil society than the socially positively-perceived young Buddhists.

Apparently, the form and interpretation of being more or less religious among young Muslims and Buddhists are thus strongly aligned with dominant patterns of religiosity in Switzerland. These descendants of immigrants have overwhelmingly been structurally integrated into school, apprenticeships, and professions, and to a large extent assimilated into the dominant idea of religion and religiosity. Though the contents of their religious practices and ideas are different, the underlying grammar of religion as individual to a large extent has become similar.

Young Muslims draw inspiration for civic participation from Muslim intellectuals such as Mohamed Naved Johari, Islamic preachers and rap-musicians. For young Buddhists, on the other hand, the 14th Dalai Lama and the Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh serve as role models for individual engagement in their local neighbourhood.

Despite these ideals and role models, only a minority of young people engage in youth activities and groups. Although they are often few, these second-generation people have realised it is down to them to uplift what is thus far a marginal social position as an immigrant and ethnic minority in a reluctantly welcoming Swiss society. While young Muslims get involved in organisations and politically claim their affiliation to Swiss society, young Buddhists get involved in the informal sector to demonstrate their affiliation with Swiss society. Social engage-

ment such as volunteer services and participation in local initiatives such as inter-religious dialogue are useful means to make themselves visible and heard or to show that they belong to the Swiss society. Importantly, it also enables links with influential institutions in Swiss civil society, thereby strengthening their civic engagement in striving for social participation, respect and recognition.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

The Demands of Niqabi Women in the Telegram Subaltern Corner *Orgullo* Niqabi

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Abstract
The present article is about Niqabi women belonging to the private Telegram instant messaging channel *Orgullo Niqabi* (Spanish for 'Niqabi Pride'). More specifically, our main objective is to explain what they are demanding, how they articulate their demands through that channel, and why they use it for communicating and to organize their actions. Said demands are mainly linked to their recognition as autonomous and political individuals within the different contexts in which they find themselves. First, our analysis will focus on categorizing their social and political demands for being recognized, not only as Muslims, but also as autonomous, independent, and political beings. Second, we intend to explain how those demands, expressed in the virtual world, are articulated in specific actions in the different societies and social contexts in which these women live. To this end, this article analyzes, following the procedures of the Grounded Theory, the discourses obtained through 27 in-depth interviews conducted in the first half of the year 2019. The strength of this research lies in overcoming the difficult access to these women and their discourses as well as in clarifying who they are, what they are demanding from the societies in which they live, how and why they are virtually grouped and the consequences of their virtual grouping in the different societies in which each of them lives.

Keywords
digital mobilization; fundamentalism; Niqabi pride; Niqabi women; political individuals; Telegram

1. Introduction

Over the last years, we have witnessed the convergence of countless changes shaping the idiosyncrasies of people along with the essence of their bonds, due to the revolution of ICTs as well as to the liquid nature of our societies (Bauman, 2007; Castells, 2008; Žižek, 2003). In our societies we have gone from the prevalence of a completely analogical reality to that of a hybrid reality, where online and offline activities coexist in some kind of symbiosis that makes possible the emergence of new channels of communication that were inconceivable until now (Olmeda, 2014). Moreover, this has allowed people, collectives, and communities like that of

Niqabi women to find new places for association, vindication, and even fighting. This way, the discourses of a lot of these individuals that, until now, were being silenced and strategically distorted—as a result, among other matters, of what Thompson calls "mediated visibility" (Thompson, 2005)—have found their (previously unthinkable) place. Nancy Fraser talks about "subaltern counterpublics" to refer to parallel discursive spaces where members of subordinated social groups make up and circulate counter-discourses, which in turn allows them to formulate alternative interpretations of their identities, interests and needs (Fraser, 1997, p. 115). This could be the case of Niqabi women in Telegram, the latter acting as a refuge and a place for regrouping on the

one hand, and as a base for spreading, planning, and organizing activities aimed at reaching broader audiences on the other (Fraser, 1997). Telegram is an instant messaging application similar to WhatsApp but with the particularity of featuring secret chats and using encrypted data. Messages are client-client encrypted, and they cannot be sent or downloaded again. In any case, as in other contexts linked to citizen participation, by using Telegram these women have taken advantage of the change ICTs have brought to the method of social participation, which until now was influenced by the institutions. In this new environment, the philosophy of 'do it yourself' prevails. Here, the individual can become a prosumer of information contents in an autonomous way without depending on mass media, mass-communication networks or political agendas (McLuhan & Barrington, 1972; Toffler, 1980). In this respect, Howard Rheingold (2004) talks about "smart mobs" referring to those persons capable of acting together without knowing each other, similar to the concept of imagined communities categorized by Anderson (2006). Members of these groups cooperate in ways that would be inconceivable in the past without the novel information and communication systems we have today and which allow us, among many other things, to connect with other systems and even to other people's phones (Rheingold, 2004), which have become a highly efficient way of spreading and exchanging information, thanks to their portability.

Thus, our objective is the analysis of the discourses of Niqabi women, specifically in relation to the demands and vindications they express in Telegram and how they use this space to articulate them. To achieve this analytical purpose, we have used Grounded Theory, starting with general questions, not hypotheses. Some of the questions were: Who are these women? What do they demand from the societies in which they live? Why did they choose to communicate using Telegram? Do their grouping and demands have some impact on offline life? The characteristics or attributes (variables) of our study have therefore emerged from the analysis carried out. Thus, we want to stress that our discoveries and the development of the theory are not based on deductive reasoning supported by a previous theoretical framework (Charmaz, 1990), but following the aforementioned methodology.

In order for readers to fully comprehend the question we are addressing we will start talking about Telegram, the space where everything takes place. We will explain in detail every aspect of the proceeding, the methodology and the variables deduced from the analysis. This way, readers will have the whole picture of our questions and how we tried to answer them.

2. Telegram as a Subaltern Corner

Telegram may be used for a great variety of purposes (leisure, publicity, etc.). However, in the case of *Orgullo Niqabi*, it is used as a subaltern space whose main feature

is to give room to the 'non-normative,' that is to say, to all kinds of users, without discrimination, groups which are not a majority or that are non-normative, subversive, and even of criminal or terrorist nature. These spaces are useful, among other things, for 'alternative' communication, that is, for giving voice to those individuals, groups, collectives, and even social movements of all kind that are silenced in life 'offline.' This allows them to put aside the 'marginalization' of the limited spaces where their voices could be heard. More specifically, Telegram channels are groups where people can send all kinds of contents: messages, pictures, links, files, etc. Channels may be public or private, and people can only access private channels if the creator of the group adds them or sends them an invitation to join. Channels are usually built around subjects and common interests shared by all of their users. A particularity of these channels is that messages are encrypted and can be 'destroyed' after a scheduled time without leaving a trace. It is precisely this peculiarity of Telegram which made Niqabi women choose this virtual space for creating their subaltern corner. On the one hand, it gives them the opportunity to freely express their interests and opinions and, on the other, whatever they say is kept private and far from the vigilance of their countries' state control mechanisms. That way, this space possess the double functionality of subaltern spaces: It functions both as a safe place for retreating and regrouping (that is why we call it a 'corner') and as the 'headquarters' for planning and organizing their actions. Moreover, it is in these subaltern spaces where alternative, divergent and subversive ideas are often presented, even ideas contrary to the hegemonic ones, in relation to the diversity of subjects, including identity (Downey & Fenton, 2003). Thus, the goal of this article is to analyze and explain how, through one of these spaces—the subaltern corner we consider the community *Orgullo Niqabi* is in *Telegram*—women are grouped and organized, and how they articulate their political and social demands in order to go beyond the virtual world to the various realities to which they belong.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The protagonists of our article are, as we have previously mentioned, Niqabi women. We call 'Niqabi women' those who, on the one hand, define themselves as Niqabi and, on the other hand, cover their face, hands, body, and feet, leaving uncovered only their eyes. However, these women associate the niqab not only to clothing, but to a form of behaving and living in the world that has to accompany said clothing and which is linked to a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam (Ainz, 2018). We understand fundamentalism as a religious way of thinking and acting which maintains that politics should be based on religious brotherhood. Its objective is to have societies once again centered around a religious order based

on a holy book. In this regard, the holy book is considered full of sense and meaning, and it cannot be decomposed or freely interpreted by human reason. This way, divine law is declared superior to any form of society created by human beings. In the case of Islamic fundamentalism Roy (1992) identifies two trends within Islam: one representing part of the current Muslim movements, with a reformist style and not against modernity; the other (traditionalist) aiming to go back to the roots of Islam (the Quran and the Sunnah) and strictly and rigorously applying them to every sphere of society. According to Roy (1992), the former root defends an updated social and political model based on the precepts of the Islamic religion and criticizing traditionalism. The latter, which represents the women that participated in our study, rejects innovation and accepts the message from the past literally, which these women understand as ideal and still in force, accepting the validity of the founding texts and the prevalence of the Islamic law (the Sharia) over earthly, objective law. The origin of this second current lays, on the one hand, in what Roy (2010) calls "religious deculturation" and, on the other hand, in secularism. Religious deculturation takes place, essentially, by taking religion out of the public space. Secularism produces religion, says Roy (2010), who criticizes the presented solution, i.e., relegate religion to the private sphere. According to the author, the outcome of this solution is that a lot of believers respond with a will to reconquer the world they have lost.

With the aim of gathering and analyzing their identity, political and social demands, as well as understanding how Telegram is used as a space to gather said demands, we conducted 27 in-depth interviews with some of the members of the group *Orgullo Niqabi*.

Significant facts about these women, apart from those on Table 1 is that all of them say they are free and have willingly chosen the niqab, they all communicate in Spanish (some of them perfectly, others with some degree of difficulty), and they belong to various Islamic, Spanish-speaking online groups. In fact, it was in those groups that the idea of creating the Telegram channel first arose, a channel composed of Niqabi women from several Facebook and Telegram groups, and from Spanish-speaking forums. Attending to why they participate in this group, there are several parameters: (1) to intensify their practice of Islam; (2) to reassert their choice for the niqab; (3) to search the support and strength necessary to keep or start using the niqab; (4) to practice proselytism and encourage 'other sisters,' as they call it, to find that strength they search for choosing the niqab;

Table 1. Profiles of the interviewees (all names have been changed at the request of the women participating in the research).

Name	Age	Residence	Nationality	Occupation
Samia	23	Germany	Turkey	Housewife
Dunia	19	Spain	Morocco	Unemployed
Zyneb	25	Spain	Morocco	Housewife
Fatin	35	Mexico	Tunisia	Housewife
Sara	34	Mexico	Mexico	Housewife
Sonia	39	Mexico	Mexico	Housewife
Souad	27	Mexico	Mexico	Housewife
Ikram	41	United States	Colombia	Housewife
Meryem	31	United States	Colombia	Housewife
Dunia	31	United States	Spain	Housewife
Hakima	32	Romania	Romania	Housewife
Salima	28	France	Algeria	Housewife
Ahlam	25	France	Algeria	Housewife
Fatima	27	Chile	Uruguay	Housewife
Islam	28	Chile	Chile	Unemployed
Romina	27	Venezuela	Venezuela	Housewife
María	35	Venezuela	Morocco	Housewife
Hanna	35	Venezuela	Turkey	Housewife
Farida	33	Venezuela	Turkey	Housewife
Yasmin	25	Venezuela	Syria	Unemployed
Mery	34	United Kingdom	Iraq	Housewife
Ratsida	26	United Kingdom	Algeria	Housewife
Hafida	33	United Kingdom	Algeria	Housewife
Melika	29	United Kingdom	Morocco	Housewife
Nour	36	United Kingdom	Morocco	Housewife
Amina	25	United Kingdom	Spain	Housewife
Falak	19	United Kingdom	Spain	Unemployed

(5) to fight for their rights as Niqabi women. Regarding their main reason for being Niqabi, some of them have only spiritual or religious reasons, while others have also stated political reasons.

Concerning their educational level, five (5) women possess a basic level of education, 19 of them hold an intermediate level, and three (3) of them have a degree. Attending to their socialization in Islam, we find worth mentioning that there are 12 women who declare to "have turned to Islam," that is, they are converted. The rest were born and raised in Muslim families with different ways and intensities of living and practicing Islam. When asked if they were married—something of special interest when considering the converted ones—there are 14 women that are married, six (6) of them are converted. The rest is single. Attending to their jobs, some of them declare to be housewives and the rest unemployed. This is significant, since most of the housewives consider that women's work should be essentially tied to care in general and domestic care in particular. Thus, working outside home is for men. However, those who are unemployed do manifest that they would like to work, although their jobs should be *halal* (allowed) for women, mostly linked to care and to those spheres that they—and traditional patriarchal cultures—consider 'women's jobs.' We would like to stress that this study is somewhat peculiar, since these women's features are not representative of all Niqabi women around the world, which in some cases are forced to cover their bodies, and whose interpretation of the niqab, linked to subordination, is different.

3.2. Procedure

After years of continued online participation on several Spanish-speaking forums, groups, channels and social networks and their subsequent analysis (Ainz, Checa, & González, 2011), as well as having participated in several Islamic communities and associations (Ainz, 2017) paying special attention to the discrimination that Muslim women suffered (Ainz, 2011), one of the authors of the present article was given the opportunity of joining the Telegram channel *Orgullo Niqabi*. Said channel, as we have pointed out, is composed of Niqabi women or women about to become Niqabi.

In order to conduct the 27 interviews, we used the program Skype, mainly for two reasons. The first is that many of the women interviewed resided outside Spain. The second and most important one has to do with the availability of the participants, who declared that, for various reasons, they preferred the interviews to be conducted that way. Regarding their reasons, it should be noted that many of them were closely linked to lack of time, the impossibility of reaching an agreement on the time and place of meeting, and the preference of using Skype since they could do the interviews at what they called their "free time." In fact, 19 out of the 27 women stated that if they did not do the interview via Skype it would be very difficult for them to participate in the study. With this reality on the table, we decided to fully adapt ourselves to what they considered appropriate in terms of how to conduct the interviews and the schedules they set. Taking into account that many of the participants reside in countries other than Spain, such as Mexico, the United States, Venezuela, Romania, France, Germany, Chile, and the United Kingdom, some of the interviews were conducted at untimely hours. We would like to point out that the interviews were conducted over six months, but in the lead up to these interviews preparatory work was carried out over approximately one and a half years with participants. This involved establishing contacts, building trust, and participating in many Islamic groups. Finally, our opportunity to participate in the Telegram group *Orgullo Niqabi* came, as we said, after our participation in different Islamic forums and a continuous interaction with the women subject of the study. It should be noted that it was not easy to earn their trust and conduct the interviews. One of the most active and interacting women, who is also the founder of the community, was the one who acted as a 'key,' making interviews possible. After much thought and after "doing *salat istikhara*" (a prayer consulting Allah) she considered a good idea to participate, arguing that it could be a good way of becoming visible. Thus, she encouraged women to participate by publishing an announcement on the *Orgullo Niqabi* channel. From that moment on, we could see a participatory spirit and attitude among the women. Specifically, 27 of the 143 women in the channel finally participated. Previously, there had been more of them that had expressed their interest, but finally, for various reasons, they did not participate in the study. The interviews were conducted in Spanish, and the quotes used in this text are translations made by the authors.

3.3. Data Analysis Method

In order to analyze the interviews we have used the procedures offered by the Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which are related to the systematization of information and the development of analytical categorizations that show the most relevant patterns within the data. The Grounded Theory has its origin in the Chicago school of sociology and the development of symbolic interactionism at the beginning of the 20th century (Ritzer, 1993). Symbolic interactionism says that it is people who take part in society, individuals are considered social actors continuously shaping their environment (Cuff, Sharrock, & Francis, 1990).

We used the program Atlas.Ti6 as encoding manager and for the creation of different codes on which the constant comparative method—which consists in analyzing the incidents contained within the data in order to find similarities and differences (Carrero, Soriano, & Trinidad, 2012)—was applied. By doing so, we established four central categories. The first one, *subaltern corner*, refers to identity, political and/or social demands, as well as

to the space and how these women use it to articulate said demands. The second category, *the anger*, is called that way based on the expression "it angers me that…," which a lot of these women used for expressing their discontent and argue their membership in the group *Orgullo Niqabi*. This is what in Grounded Theory is known as in vivo coding, that is to say, it is codified taking into account the expressions and literal language of the participants, given its relevance to the study. We understand that this 'common anger' that gives rise to the codification has a fundamental symbolic power which we will describe throughout the analysis. The third category, *nodes*, refers to what these women have described as a non-isolated individualization, that is, they say that they perceive their cultural, family and personal particularities individually within the group but, besides, they feel united by the niqab and everything around it, especially everything related to their discrimination, which all of them perceive in the same way. Finally, the fourth category, *silent construction*, refers to the social and political actions they plan and intend to transcend the virtual plane, carrying them out in their daily contexts, reinforced by their virtual grouping on *Telegram* and based on a strong group conscience.

4. Results

4.1. Orgullo Niqabi: An Online, Subaltern Space

Many silenced—or even marginalized—voices have found on the Internet, social networks, and instant messaging applications in general a space where they can be heard. In this particular case they have found it in one of the subaltern corners that *Telegram* offers. The Niqabi women under study claim to have found there what they call their community, *Orgullo Niqabi*, a space where they can express themselves freely, where they can share ideas in a horizontal communicative way, bypassing censorship and manipulation mechanisms, as stated by some of the interviewees when asked in which way did *Orgullo Niqabi* contribute to their lives:

> I decided to become Niqabi, if one can really decide that. In fact, it is a command from Allah. The thing is that I found myself very alone. Even my Hijabi friends, you know, the ones that wear a veil, told me that I was very radical, they questioned me. There was a moment when I even doubted about my mental health. Finding this community of sisters in Telegram has made me very happy, it has brought me a lot of peace. I am very grateful to Allah for putting these sisters in my way. Here we are free, we say what we please, we express ourselves freely, we encourage each other in the way of Allah, in improving our practice. Thus, "our imam," our faith is much greater. We don't have to worry about giving explanations or continuously debunking myths about the niqab. (Samia, Germany)

> Nobody understood me until I came here, I had no friends, everybody judged me in my environment, in my family….Society doesn't understand me, fine, but neither does my family and they are old-fashioned Muslims. The sisters in this community saved my life [laughs]. In Spain, people talk about freedom and democracy, but I find myself very limited. (Dunia, Spain)

When asked why they used Telegram and not other instant messaging applications, women participating in our study were very clear: they consistently referred to privacy, control, and vigilance. That is one of the main reasons why we talk about subaltern corner. Telegram is where these women feel somewhat safe to express themselves avoiding state control mechanisms. The fact that channels are private and require an invitation to join, and that messages can self-destroy, are the main factors why these women have found in Telegram their ideal place for meeting and expressing themselves:

> Look, I am going to be clear. Here in Spain, I used to use Facebook. Muslims in general talked too much. There was a time when you could be arrested for nothing. There was this feeling that anything could be linked to terrorism. I'm not talking about Niqabi women, but almost anything you would do….I don't know how to explain it, anything…religious? Anything could be misunderstood and you could end up in jail. (Dunia, Spain)

> Sometimes you were comfortably discussing on a Muslim group in Facebook, knowing some brothers and sisters, and the group was suddenly dismantled. Overnight, just like that. Then you knew from rumors that someone had been investigated, they had been reading our messages, who knows? You didn't even know who you were talking to, do you understand? You didn't know if people next to you were sisters, brothers, the police…that was a problem. It does not happen in Telegram. We know who we are inviting to the group, who is in, who is not….Telegram allows you to be more selective and feel safer. It allows you to say whatever you want, always within the parameters allowed by the Quran and the Sunnah, of course! It's not necessary even to give your phone number, when you are fed up or something you can simply say goodbye. (Amina, United Kingdom)

Finding a safe space was followed by organization: Derived from the opportunity to express themselves freely, these women were starting to draw up a manifesto called *Manifiesto Niqabi* when the interviews were conducted. There, they were gathering their impressions about the discrimination they perceive in their lives and expressing their identity, social and political demands. In this regard, two of the women declared:

The main fact we are expressing there is that we are not submissive, that being Niqabi is something voluntary. We do it not as an order from our husbands, I'm not married. Neither it is from our parents. Our parents have nothing to do either. My father passed away, and I think he would be totally against it, he was a very modern man. I was very modern as well, I have danced, I have been topless, I have had sex, I have gone to the disco, may Allah forgive me. Luckily, I saw the right path. What we currently want is to let people know that we are free, nobody is forcing us in our countries, either. A lot of us are against how some women are forced, we understand that is not Islam. Islam is not force, it is passion. The niqab has to be well explained for women to be able to open their eyes. (Zyneb, Spain)

I laugh when somebody thinks that we are poor girls, that we are dumb and forced. People talk about us without knowing anything. That's the goal of the manifest: It's for people to know that there is a brain under the cloth and that because there is a brain, there is a cloth. (Fatin, Mexico)

4.2. The Anger

Tang and Yang (2011) pointed out in one of their texts that it is somewhat of a fallacy to believe that the Internet, throughout its several social networks, browsers and phone applications distributes symbolic power among ordinary people. They point out that it would be better to say that "the internet offers ordinary people the potential of this power" (Tang & Yang, 2011, p. 677). In turn, Thompson defines symbolic power as the "capacity to intervene in the course of events, to influence the actions of others and indeed to create events, by means of the production and transmission of symbolic forms" (Thompson, 2005, p. 19). Moreover, he says that it could materialize in interpreting others' symbols, creating opinion about others, etc. This power comes from the production, transmission and interpretation of "significant symbolic forms" (Thompson, 2005, p. 19). The author also points to religious, educational or media institutions as paradigmatic institutions of this type of power (Thompson, 2005, p. 34). The women under study express through their discourses their disagreement with some misconceptions that our societies have about them. Some examples are associating Islam to Arab territories and generalizing about Islam even though there are a lot of different schools, branches, and interpretations of this religion. These ideas are clearly reflected in the following paragraphs:

The fact that people think that we are what we are not makes me feel frustrated and angry. They define you, they tag you and then to top it, they discriminate you because of what they suppose you are. I wanted to go to the beach this summer, with what the media call burkini, and there I went. Not alone, because I am

afraid of being jeered. I went with some friends. That's another story: to get your Muslim (Muslim!) friends to go to the beach with you. "Get out of here!" people said. I mean, first they tag you as submissive (you are "forced"), but then they are the ones that don't let you swim. They discriminate you. Somebody explain [this] to me, please. (Sara, Mexico)

The other day, I went to a shop to see some clothes. It was completely a show, a real show, because people look at me wherever I go. I was leaving the shop and I heard: "Go back to your country!" "But miss," I replied, "I am from here, from Guadalajara itself. I am more Mexican than a taco!" They don't realize that one doesn't need to be an Arab in order to be Muslim. One thing is the *Din*, the religion, as you call it, and other is your origin. (Sonia, Mexico)

I know that mass media are very harmful. They show Iranian women, which are not even Sunni, or women from Saudi Arabia or Afghanistan wearing a burqa and they say: "They are being forced, they are being forced." Well, you know? Some of them are forced, and I don't like that, but some are probably not forced, as is our case, and they can follow the path of Islam with all the love in the world. (Islam, Chile)

Castells (2009), in turn, introduces in this regard the emotion of 'anger' as a possible response to these circumstances, and that is why we decided to name this section so. It is well known that, with the Internet in general and with social networks and instant messaging applications in particular, everyone can share their ideas, perceptions, interests and, indeed, their frustration and anger, with a greatly broad audience. One of the issues that angers these women the most is, as we have seen, the inadequacy, the lack of correlation between what they claim to be and their perception of what the society interprets they are. Castells says in this regard that "if rage is indeed a purely individual feeling, the SMS will harmlessly drift in the ocean of digital communication. But if many people open the bottle thrown into the ocean, the genie will come out and an insurgent community will grow through the connection of different minds beyond the lonely revolt" (Castells, 2009, p. 473). All of this can be seen in the following extracts:

Here we were almost all of us online some minutes ago, talking, thinking about how to manage and what to do with these feelings that upset us so much. We are very active, you know? We have been very active in social networks, especially in Facebook, helping some sisters that wanted to start using the niqab, which had doubts or suffered just for wearing it or for wanting to do it but not being able to do so, due to their fears. But that's enough, we are many, we have to organize, make ourselves visible for who we really are and take action. (Sara, Mexico)

May Allah forgive me, I speak frankly, sometimes I feel hate, because we are not allowed to spread out, but you see, people here are starting to become aware. We, the Mexican sisters, along with the mosque, do a very important job of inviting to Islam. But we must do more, not only as sisters, not only as Muslims, but as Niqabi, because even Muslim sisters, yes, that's right, what you hear, they discriminate us for being Niqabi. I was Christian, and God said "turn the other cheek," but Islam, *subhana Allah* [praised be Allah], says nothing like that, and we are fed up with being seen as fools. (Ikram, United States)

Sometimes I end up frustrated and fed up. It angers me! People don't understand or accept us, and they don't want to. Sometimes I think that it would have been better to have been born in a Muslim country, with your whole family being Muslim, within a context more akin to my way of feeling and living my life. But I live here and I was born in this family, *alhamdulilah* [thanks Allah]. The good thing is that I can be an example to others, I can help other sisters with the same problem and I can be by their side so they don't feel alone. (Souad, Mexico)

4.3. The Nodes

The Internet in general and Telegram in particular are useful not only for certain groups to communicate, as is the case of Niqabi women, but it is also a platform to carry out actions that allow, in turn, what could be defined as 'non-isolated individualization': being alone 'in person,' but being connected to something bigger that transcends the physical world; the network, the virtual world, the community. Being a node within a network implies a peculiar perception and participation that we can see reflected in the different arguments these women give:

Orgullo Niqabi has brought us together as sisters but, moreover, it has given us our faith in the community, our *Umma*, back. It's incredible how we can feel so close being so far. It's a feeling I cannot explain. I can spend weeks without talking to my parents, but I can't spend even half an afternoon without talking to my sisters. In the beginning, when we were knowing each other, I thought "how different we are!" I couldn't believe it! But in the end that difference has enriched us all, it has made us to learn from each other. Allah is great. Who would have told me that I would find this great support on the phone? I was very critical with mobile phones! (Meryem, United States)

According to Castells (2009), two cultural patterns converge in networks: individualism and communalism. On the one hand, users browse the Internet in the solitude of their persons with all their cultural and personal particularities, in front of their computers' or their mobile phones' screens; and on the other hand, they tend

to form 'communities in practice,' that is, groups of individuals who share interests, values and beliefs. This can be clearly seen in the statements of some of the Niqabi women:

Look, no. We are a lot of sisters, in this group. All of us Niqabi, but all of us well different. We all have in common our love to Allah; we all have in common the *Salat*, the prayer, five times a day; we all have in common the Ramadan. But look little lady, some of us like blond men, others like dark-haired ones; some of us cook couscous, others cook tacos; some of us have lived in an Arab or Muslim country, others haven't seen Syria even in television. Some of us have, you know, some of us have a Muslim family and others have turned to Islam right now, some years or even months ago. What we have in common is Islam, the niqab, and now the group of sisters *Orgullo Niqabi* and our faith in carrying out a joint Project that is yet to be outlined. (Dunia, United States)

I have my own life. I grew up listening to Bob Marley because my brother likes his music a lot, he was somewhat a stoner [laughs], may Allah forgive me, may Allah guide him. Some sisters have never listened reggae, it scares them. Some sisters say that they have voted right-wing parties in the past, but I consider myself a left-wing person. The more to the left, the better. Here in Spain, left-wing politicians are the ones helping us. They are the ones that will let us enter the scene and be heard, I think. (Dunia, Spain)

4.4. Silent Construction

We could say that these women have constructed around the community *Orgullo Niqabi* a series of discourses and practices typical of what could be called 'symbolic community.' This particular community, located in cyberspace, with no apparent physical reference, presents liminal characteristics which, on the one hand, reflect the common significance that the actions these women carry out have for them and, on the other hand, transform them and create new ones. The "community *Orgullo Niqabi*," as these women call it, has not been limited or focused only in allowing them to express what they experience or how they feel with respect to their experience but, besides, the channel has been articulated as the basis for clearly planned future actions:

Meeting us on the private channel in Facebook was the beginning and creating the WhatsApp group was the second step. From there we migrated to Telegram, and here we have gained strength and confidence. We are many and we want to associate internationally, to create something big, hence the elaboration of the manifesto. We want to come to light and be heard and be able to participate in the social life that we are denied wherever we live. (Hakima, Romania)

I don't know if you know what *dawa* is, if not, I tell you, it is an invitation to Islam. Well, that's what we want, to be active with this, spreading the message. Just imagine, we are a lot of sisters here. If each of us shows the path or makes the path easier to other two sisters, just imagine that! By now, that is our little big purpose, our project: To make women turn to Islam; Christian ones, Jews, atheists, everyone! We coordinate ourselves in the group for that, too. (Salima, France)

When asked if their project is part of—or responds to—some kind of institution, organization, mosque or something similar, these women answer "no," they say they are "independent." Moreover, they point out that, although it is true that they openly consider themselves Salafists, it is also true that, according to their discourses, behind the Niqabi group there is only faith for Allah and the attempt to spread what they consider "true Islam." When asked about this matter, they tell us about a fundamentalist Islam where private life is intended not to be separated from political life, where people are intended to practice as many of the Prophet's teachings as possible, and where the Quran is interpreted and followed literally. The latter characteristics are those that authors such as Pace and Guolo (2006) attribute to fundamentalism:

> We don't follow anyone, I mean, we don't have any organization or political party behind. It is true that many of us like Muslim Brotherhood, but there are some sisters that don't even know what that is. As I've told you, we are very different people. The only thing we have in common is our imam, our faith in Allah, in our Prophet, and that we all feel Niqabi. (Ahlam, France)

> Yes, I am Salafist, but Salafism is not terrorism. People are completely wrong. Salafism is the pure essence of Islam, the true practice of Islam carried out by our ancestors, the companions of the Prophet. It is practicing Islam without worrying about anything or anyone except Allah. I don't like terrorism, Allah doesn't order that, but he does order us to be strict in our practice, and that's why I am Niqabi. Salafism is nothing but the desire to, in a way, return to the origins of Islam. I know it is very difficult, but if we can do anything, always peacefully and democratically, of course, we will. (Fatima, Chile)

> It was recently that I discovered what being Salafi means. In some Muslim chats, when you practice Islam and try to do things the best you can, I see that some people say, somewhat pejoratively, "that is salafi" or salafist, like, "that person is a radical, it's no use." Nothing is further from reality. I understand Salafism as following the *Din*, the path of Allah, as strictly as possible. (Melika, United Kingdom)

5. Conclusion

The women under study are not representative of all Niqabi women, since there are several Arab countries where women are constrained to 'opt' for the niqab. For example, in Saudi Arabia they are constrained to wear clothes similar to the niqab, something they call *abaya*. This collective declares to have freely and voluntarily chosen to be Niqabi—with all shades that may be given to that when talking about liberties. In this regard it's worth mentioning that their discourses take place in a western, modern context. They live in countries that have undergone intense secularization processes even though their political positions and regimes are very different. Moreover, we guess and propose as hypothesis for future research that there are differences between Niqabi women living in western countries and whose identity is constructed using the Internet, and those who do not have access to the Internet or whose use of the niqab is not motivated by a religious norm.

With that said, as we have seen, Niqabi women belonging to the virtual community *Orgullo Niqabi* in Telegram interpret the world in a fundamentalist way. Paradoxically, even though these women demand a return to the origins, to a considerably idealized past based on religious parameters, they use some emerging, modern tools as an identity, social and even political claim. That is, in a way, these women are modern, but not modernist. We can say that, when the interviews were conducted, these women were in the dawning of giving birth to a possible social movement grounded on a pacific reaction to modernity. Some theorists argue that these types of reaction brought together under any kind of social movement derive from economy globalization, while others consider that they derive from the crisis of the traditional family model. Some others maintain that contemporary societies are always in the frontier between social change and individual mobility, and that is the reason why we are bound to periodically doubt of the benefits of modernity and secularization and to yearn for the safety of traditional institutions and values. It is clear, however, that this group of women has found in Telegram the locus of enunciation they needed to express themselves and where they can deliberate freely, without having to be represented by an intermediary unconnected to their collective (Spivak, 1999).

Far from victimhood, this community presents itself as an agent for social change. These women reformulate a situation that they perceive discriminatory and grounded on prejudices and stereotypes, and they find their own mechanisms and a space where they can fight and articulate their demands, especially those concerning their identity. They carry out this through the elaboration of a manifesto which we do not know whether it is already finished or not but, in any case, it has not been published yet. At the same time, they plan their expansionist project away from any watchful eye which might condition their demands. All of this is carried out in the

non-space, the corner that Telegram is for them, legally coexisting in our societies but on the fringes of legality and its legitimate mechanisms of vigilance (conventional or not). That would be another subject worth discussing but, without getting into moral or ethic debate, said vigilance might come from the perception that the different security corps have: They see the potential for fundamentalism to evolve to fundamentalist terrorism, something that has already happened in the past. According to Beriain (2011), one of the problems of nihilist fundamentalism is not expressing difference, which is something inalienable in modern thinking, but to impose it with blood. This author uses an interesting concept: nihilism. It may be linked to the answer to why these women react that way to the very essence of modernity: laicism and, more precisely, secularization. This is a key subject since it poses several questions: are our societies ready to give room to these forms of living a religion? Should these new forms of living a religion adapt, in the literal sense of the term, to the secular essence of our societies? On the contrary, should social spaces be deconstructed as to give room to new scenarios? If that was to be the case, the illustrious pillars that are so rooted in the very essence of our status quo would be dynamited giving rise to a new scenario, so unlikely that it would be unthinkable today: Could we humorously talk about the democracy of fundamentalism? But if that was not to be the case, these forms of living religion would stay as they currently are, that is, relegated to the sphere of secrecy, non-recognition and non-space, always being watched with distrust, as a potential threat. Are we unconsciously fueling a situation where groups of a pacific nature become violent? When the project of forming individuals that participate of modernity is seen as something absurd in daily routine—who can imagine a Niqabi woman teaching at a school or as cashier at a supermarket nowadays?—then violence becomes, very frequently, the only way of self-affirmation.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Article

Inclusive Education for Religious Minorities: The Syriacs in Turkey

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Abstract
Expanding the scope of inclusion beyond specific groups such as individuals with disabilities has led to the investigation of school systems' inclusiveness from the perspective of all students. With this in mind, this research investigated the experiences of students and parents belonging to the ancient Syriac community in Turkey, who inhabited Mesopotamia since the inception of Christianity. Obtaining the views of 43 parents and their 46 children through semi-structured interviews, the school system was investigated at a political, cultural, and practical level in terms of the educational inclusion of Syriac individuals. Overall, student and parent views indicated that: (a) policy-making lacked an approach to reach all students and organize support for diversity; (b) school cultures needed to build a community whereby inclusive values were established; and (c) school practices lacked the organization to target and ensure the learning of all and mobilize resources to achieve this aim. Details of findings are included and discussed. Implications address the importance of building schools that consider the increasingly diverse school populations around the world, with a particular focus on cultural and religious diversity.

Issue
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1. Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right (United Nations General Assembly, 1949, Article 26). Inclusive education is defined as the process of responding to different needs of learners, increasing their participation in education, culture, and society, and reducing discrimination within the education system (UNESCO, 2009). The expansion of the scope of inclusion has provided the opportunity to talk about the inclusion of various marginalized groups in society, including minorities. Article 27 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities* (United Nations General Assembly, 1949) declares that:

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.

The minorities are therefore given an extra right in addition to other rights stated by various conventions. Turkey is a member state of the United Nations. Thus, the State needs to comply with the standards and make sure not to deny rights to members belonging to minorities. Therefore, everyone should be provided with the right to reach and benefit from quality education through inclusive approaches. However, the question of what mecha-

nisms should be possessed by school systems for the inclusion of individuals of minority groups needs to be solved.

Recent conceptualizations of inclusion look for inclusion from the perspective of all, especially those who are likely to get marginalized within the system. To ensure that students are included within the schools, theoretical frameworks propose to investigate the policy, culture, and practices of schools, and therefore analyze school systems in a holistic perspective (e.g., Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Dyson, Howes, & Roberts, 2002; Salend, 2011). The key concepts of inclusion are: (i) removing barriers to learning and participation; (ii) allocating resources to support learning and participation; and (iii) providing support for diversity. Also, this perspective provides ground for the voice of marginalized individuals and groups to get heard. In this study, students and parents of the ancient Syriac community are given a chance to comment on their educational experiences from the perspective of inclusion.

2. The Syriac Community in Turkey

Having been characterized as an intersection between Eastern and Western cultures, Turkey is a heterogeneous country with a total population of 83,154,997 (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2020). The largest ethnic group in Turkey are the Turks, which makes sense as Turkey was built as a nation-state. Still, the Jews, Greeks, and Armenians are all protected under the Turkish Constitution, despite having very small numbers. According to Içduygu, Toktas, and Soner (2008), the population of the Jews, Greeks, and Armenians in Turkey in 2005 was 27,000, 3,000, and 50,000, respectively. Since the inception of nationalism waves, which roughly correspond to the last 130 years, the ethnic group of Syriacs has been reduced significantly in the areas previously dominated by them (Bardakci, Freyberg-Inan, Giesel, & Leisse, 2017). Currently, they constitute a population between 15,000 and 25,000 according to the origin of modern sources. From this number, there are about 10,000–15,000 in Istanbul and 2,000–3,000 in the Mardin area in Southeast Turkey (Thomsen, 2008). In both cities, the Syriacs live with a predominantly Muslim population. The majority of the Syriacs have left Turkey and currently live in the diaspora. The Syriacs are an officially unacknowledged non-Muslim minority group that is deprived of minority status (Bardakci et al., 2017). Indeed, there are several officially unacknowledged minority groups such as Circassians, Georgians, and Lazs who possess an approximate population of 2,500,000, 1,000,000, and 2,250,000, respectively.

Syriacs' historical origins are considered as ancient. Their heritage dates back to early Mesopotamian civilizations. The Syriacs comprise a religious and, at the same time, an ethnic minority. The term Syriac refers to a very heterogeneous ethnic group, whose members belong to the Eastern Christian churches of the Syriac tradition, whose services tend to feature liturgical language use of

ancient Syriac, namely Middle Aramaic (Bardakci et al., 2017). For hundreds of years, Syriacs have lived as a minority group with a different cultural and religious identity under different powers in the Middle East. In terms of language, culture, and church, the Syriac community is heterogeneous. Having spread around the Middle East, the Syriacs speak different dialects of the Syriac language as well as Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish, and Persian. The minority position and cultural unity have resulted in increased solidarity within the community (Thomsen, 2008).

Although the Syriac identity is a salient one in Turkey, Syriacs—unlike other non-Muslim minorities such as Greeks, Jews, and Armenians—do not have law-abided schools. To receive a formal education, Syriac students attend public and private mainstream schools that are run by the Ministry of National Education under a centralized curriculum. Within this curriculum, Syriac children attend regular classrooms and receive the same pedagogical content. However, the extent to which Syriac individuals are satisfied with the attempts of the educational system to meet their individual, educational, and cultural needs is questionable. One of the main reasons for this is the compulsory Religious Culture and Moral Education course which targets Muslim students and is based on the religion of Islam and the Turkish culture (Yıldız, 2009). According to the current Turkish Constitution, adopted in 1982, Article 2 describes the Turkish State as a "democratic, secular and social state" while, at the same time, Article 24 gives the state control over education and instruction in religious ethics and mandates instruction in religious culture and moral education (Yıldız, 2007). Nonmuslim communities in Turkey claim that if the state controls educational activities, its democratic and social structure requires equitable provision based on the needs of everyone living in the state (Yıldız, 2002).

During the Religious Culture and Moral Education course, students from officially unrecognized minority groups such as the Syriacs have the right to withdraw from the course and obtain exemption (Yıldız, 2009). However, they are not given an alternative course based on their religion and culture. Instead, to receive education in line with their belief system and language, Syriac children attend afternoon lessons in community-owned informal Syriac schools after their state education is completed in the mornings. This informal instruction is still valid and mostly takes place in community-owned churches.

3. Turkey's Case of Inclusion

In Turkey, all educational activities at the primary, lower secondary, and secondary levels are supervised by the Ministry of National Education. The Ministry supervises all institutions through central national policy. In terms of the way they are funded, there are two types of schools in Turkey—public and private—and both are supervised by the Ministry. Both types of schools have to comply with governmental policy and provide education based on a central curriculum designed by

the Board of Education, a branch of the Ministry of National Education. From 2004 onwards, a new curriculum was implemented for primary and secondary schools in Turkey. The idea behind the current curriculum is to make it learner-centered and constructivist. The basic objectives of the curriculum in Turkey are to arrange the units thematically, to develop core competencies across the curriculum, to implement a student-centered constructivist model, to incorporate information communications technologies into instruction, to monitor student progress through formative assessment, to move away from the traditional assessment of recall, to introduce authentic assessment, and to enhance citizenship education (Board of Education, 2005).

Private schools can be established as mainstream schools as well as minority schools if they possess minority status. Unless they have separate law-abided schools concerning the minority status, all schools admit all students regardless of minority status. Law No. 5580 in Turkey defines and organizes the activities of private education institutions including those established specifically for minorities (Ministry of National Education, 2007). The law states that the minorities that are permitted by law to establish schools are the Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, meaning that the Syriacs are not allowed by law to establish private schools for their community.

In Turkey, the idea that the education system needs to be organized around multicultural and inclusive principles has been adopted by educators, scholars (e.g., Sakız, 2016; Sakız et al., 2015), and policymakers (e.g., Aktekin, 2017). The recent migration wave following the internal conflict in Syria as well as discussions concerning the flexibility of the educational system has required that the system possesses multicultural sensitivity towards the needs of students from diverse backgrounds. According to Sakız et al. (2015), the new educational ideology in Turkey, which focuses on multiculturalism and its principles such as inclusion, pluralism, and equity, is providing impetus and new opportunities to both policymakers and practitioners to establish an inclusive education system. This ideology has been adopted by policy as well; for example, in 2004 and 2008, the Regulation for Inclusive Education Practices (No. 2004/7) and the Regulation for Educational Practices through Inclusive Education (No. 2008/60) were published, respectively (Ministry of National Education, 2004, 2008). Also, the migration wave to Turkey has led policymakers (e.g., Aktekin, 2017) to consider strategies of meeting the needs of migrant students. However, in Turkey, inclusion policy has only been associated with specific groups, such as students with disabilities (Ministry of National Education, 2004, 2008) and Syrian migrants (Aktekin, 2017), without any focus on students from ethnic minorities.

Despite increased awareness among scholars and policymakers, enhancing the inclusiveness of the system to provide effective education for students with disabilities and migrants, including those from minority groups, is yet far from being adopted in Turkey. Moreover, apart from Law No. 5580, which concerns the establishment of private schools of Greek, Armenian, and Jewish minorities, the general policy does not refer to students from minority groups and the strategies to include them within the curriculum. Therefore, a multicultural perspective needs to be established within the Turkish education system and therefore major attempts are needed to include members of minority groups through school curricula. The recent efforts to design inclusive policy are observable. Nevertheless, students from minority groups may lack a sense of belonging to the school community and find it difficult to reach their potential.

In Turkey, studies on diversity and inclusion in education are mostly descriptive (e.g., Batu, 2010), focusing mostly on disability (e.g., Rakap & Kaczmarek, 2010) and recently migration (e.g., Baban, Ilcan, & Rygiel, 2017). However, no study focuses on minority groups and their experiences in schools. Although Syriacs have lived in the region for hundreds of years, little attention has been paid to their educational inclusion within the system. The current study focuses on members of this minority group and investigates their educational experiences from a multicultural perspective.

4. Methods

This study aims to investigate the educational experiences of Syriac individuals regarding inclusion within Turkish schools. To achieve this aim, a qualitative case study methodology was utilized. Using a qualitative methodology enables participants to express their experiences, thoughts, and feelings in depth, freely and the way they prefer, unlike many other methods that do not allow such freedom. This method is particularly useful with disadvantaged groups, including those with different ethnic and religious backgrounds because it hears the voice of vulnerable participants who are rarely listened to and allows them to explain their experiences (Liamputtong, 2007). Individuals from minority groups are often invisible in society and it is not easy for them to find opportunities to express their experiences.

The ethical aspect constitutes a significant side in inclusion research. To ensure maximum ethical conduct during the research, participants were provided with information about the aims, content, and procedures of the research to allow them to make a voluntary decision to join the research. Also, all participants were guaranteed that all personal information would be kept confidential; all names would be anonymized and nothing that could reveal their identities would be shared. Indeed, no names were shared in this study.

4.1. Participants and Data Collection

To investigate the experiences of Syriac individuals concerning their inclusion within Turkish schools, we conducted interviews with members of the Syriac community. 46 students (mean age = 15.4; 25 males and 21 fe-

males) attending pre-secondary (n = 18) and secondary (n = 28) level schools in Mardin district, Southeast Anatolia, and their 43 parents (mean age = 46.2; 27 mothers and 16 fathers) were interviewed. It is not easy to find participants from vulnerable groups and ensure their voluntary participation in research. Therefore, two strategies were used to recruit participants. First, a convenient sampling method was used to get in touch with whoever was acquainted with the researchers and available at the time of the research. Living in the same city with the participants was an advantage; therefore 24 parents and their 26 children were directly contacted. Second, a snowball sampling method was used to reach potential participants. This method was useful in reaching 19 parents and their 20 children whom researchers would probably not be able to reach by any other means. There was no bias in selecting participants. Whoever was available was contacted regardless of what they thought about the research topic, aims, and questions.

To collect data, an interview schedule including 32 questions was prepared (see Supplementary File). In constructing the interview questions, the Index for Inclusion by Booth and Ainscow (2002) as well as the conceptual and empirical scholarship proposed by Sakız et al. (2015), Sakız and Woods (2015), Sakız (2016), Dyson et al. (2002), and Salend (2011) guided the process. Interviews are a useful method to collect participants' experiences and opinions in a detailed and rich manner. The interview schedule included 'yes–no questions' such as 'Do you think the staff at school hold the necessary expertise in their subject areas?' or 'Are you made to feel welcome at school?'. Also, the questions were the same for both parents and children. However, the semi-structured nature of the schedule allowed researchers to add 'why and how questions' such as 'Can you elaborate on this issue please?' or 'How satisfied are you with the policy and regulations?' to focus more on a particular issue and make changes based on the role of participants, whether they were children or parents. The questions were presented to parents so they could provide their opinions regarding their children's education while students were encouraged to speculate on their own experiences. However, some parents reflected on their own educational experiences too. On average, the interviews lasted 45 minutes with children and 52 minutes with parents. Throughout the interviews, an audio recorder was used for 76 interviews while 13 participants consented only for taking notes. All interviews were conducted in Mardin, a city with around 2,000–3,000 Syriac people. Out of 89 interviews, 71 were held at participants' flats and 18 at the workplaces of parents. As all participants and researchers could speak Turkish, all interviews were carried out in Turkish.

4.2. Data Analysis

To analyze the data collected via interviews, the researchers used a constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) involving a process of three cycles. The NVivo 10 software facilitated the organization of the data and its thematization. This process involved a hybrid approach, which incorporated a data-driven inductive approach (Boyatzis, 1998) and the deductive a priori template of codes approach (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). This approach helped complement the research questions by allowing the process of deductive thematic analysis to include the tenets of inclusive education while allowing themes to emerge directly from the data using inductive coding. After careful reading of data, transcripts were selectively coded concerning the research question and the prevalence of each pattern. Transcriptions were conducted by the researchers. The next phase of the analysis included coding of the text to make meaning out of the data. Later, the initial codes were organized together to find any theoretical relationships between them. In addition to the initial inductive phases, a deductive approach was used at the final phase to reorganize the codes and categories influenced by the theoretical and methodological framework of the study. For the interview dataset, researchers sought participants' descriptions about their experiences and views of inclusion within the school system, leading to three over-arching themes associated with the culture, practice, and policy of the school system, and 13 sub-themes constituting the structure of the main themes (Figure 1).

5. Findings

This study mainly draws from the interviews conducted with Syriac students and their parents concerning students' inclusion within Turkish schools. The themes and sub-themes that were created from the analysis process are presented in the following sections.

5.1. School Cultures

On the majority of occasions, inadequate attention is given to the power of school cultures to support or undermine developments in teaching and learning. Yet, they are at the center of learning and development in a school. Besides, the development of common inclusive beliefs, values, and practices may lead to developments in other dimensions. In the interviews conducted with students and parents, elements of school culture were analyzed in terms of inclusion. Five sub-themes were identified out of the analysis.

5.1.1. Syriac Community Inclusion within the School System

One of the basic premises of inclusive education is to set collaboration between the school and the community. Therefore, inclusive school culture is characterized by the cooperation of all stakeholders within the entire educational process, especially in decision-making. In this study, participants' views referred to the way schools
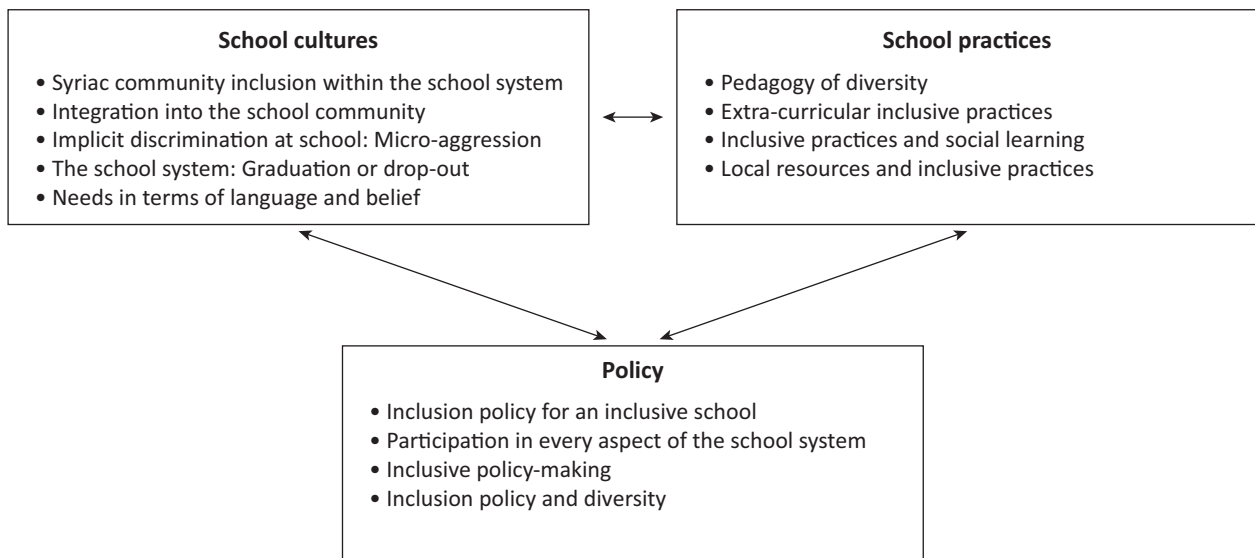
School cultures	School practices
• Syriac community inclusion within the school system • Integration into the school community • Implicit discrimination at school: Micro-aggression • The school system: Graduation or drop-out • Needs in terms of language and belief	• Pedagogy of diversity • Extra-curricular inclusive practices • Inclusive practices and social learning • Local resources and inclusive practices

Policy

• Inclusion policy for an inclusive school
• Participation in every aspect of the school system
• Inclusive policy-making
• Inclusion policy and diversity

Figure 1. Map illustrating themes and sub-themes created out of the analysis of interview data.

attempted to include the Syriac community, specifically children and their families, within the school system. The majority of the parents stated that they did not feel like part of the school community (n = 34), that they believed being different in ethnicity and belief contributed to the detachment between the school and their community (n = 33), and that there was not an emphasis on family–school involvement (n = 27). However, some parents (n = 24) reported that they were available to assist with the concerns raised by schools regarding the education of their children. A parent illustrated this case by saying: "I never felt that my children and I are part of the school community. The boundaries are mostly invisible; however, I feel that there are barriers to our integration. Sometimes we may have to conceal that we are Syriac."

The inclusion of the local communities within the school in ways that partnerships are constructed to support education in the school is a requirement for the construction of inclusive school cultures.

5.1.2. Integration into the School Community

Despite the long-lasting history of living amongst a majority that is different culturally and ethnically, members of the Syriac community have succeeded to maintain their cultural inheritance throughout the centuries. This has been possible by preserving the main characteristics of their culture. Not surprisingly, this might have caused caution to the attempts by the majority to include them because, at the first instance, it may not be obvious whether the aim is to integrate or assimilate. As a result, some members of the Syriac community remained reserved and resistant to approach the mainstream community, often to preserve their identity and culture against perceived subordinating attempts. There were parents (n = 13) and students (n = 11) who reactively maintained the caution and preferred to stay outside the school community. For example, a parent said:

"I know we cannot benefit from the school too much. It is enough if our children receive a diploma because they [schools] are not in line with our culture."

Based on the aforementioned remarks, parents and students stated that there was a need for mutual collaboration and scaffolding to motivate both the majority and minority to achieve this. However, it is not easy to realize full collaboration to achieve inclusion in schools. Some hidden elements embedded within the school cultures, such as micro-aggressive behavior, can make inclusion difficult to achieve.

5.1.3. Implicit Discrimination at School: Micro-Aggression

Some verbal, written, or performative behaviors, which may seem positive at first glance, convey subtle messages that involve racial, ethnic, gender, and other stereotypes that can play out painfully in an increasingly diverse culture. These subtle messages are called 'micro-aggression' (Sue et al., 2007). The majority of the parents (n = 33) and children (n = 25) stated that they had positive verbal communication with school staff, other students, and their parents. During the face to face communication, at first sight, they were mostly exposed to positive remarks. However, the hidden messages embedded in communication involved elements that conveyed negative and discriminatory meanings. One student illustrated this case by saying: "My teacher always advises my friends to treat me well even when I am present at that moment.''

Such hidden messages given to Syriac individuals existed within the data and were selected to represent micro-aggressive behavior. Some of these behaviors included statements such as "How can you speak Turkish quite well?," "Do you have any plans to leave here and start living with your relatives live in Europe?," "Don't worry! The race is not important, we all come from one

God!," and "I have many Syriac friends and I get on well with all of them." Such brief and commonplace daily verbal expressions, whether intentional or unintentional, may communicate negative prejudicial slights toward any group, particularly culturally marginalized people.

5.1.4. The School System: Graduation or Drop-Out

A critical decision in the lives of many individuals from minority groups is to study in the schools of the majority or leave the system either to follow a vocational career or migrate to another country for alternative educational opportunities. Similarly, some participants in this study stated that they were indecisive about whether they should continue education because the schools lacked the quality to include them in ways that equip them with skills and knowledge necessary for after school life. Remarks of students (n = 23) and parents (n = 27) pointed to the shortcomings of schools to include Syriac individuals and, therefore, the need for schools to work harder to keep students within the education system. For those dropping out of school, alternative pathways were to join the workforce involving vocations such as jewelry or trade, which are characterized by the Syriac community or to leave the city and, most often, the country. A parent illustrated how the school could not offer an embracing environment whereby students could progress throughout levels by saying:

> The school did not promise me enough to stay in the system. Thus I maintained my family job. Otherwise, I could not achieve what I wanted through schools. Furthermore, I could not gain the vocational skills needed to do the job I wanted.

Overall, participants in the study implied that school cultures need to contain an embracing environment whereby Syriac individuals feel a sense of belonging and foresee a fruitful future. Undeniably, the quality of education in a school concerns everyone. However, students from minority groups are more likely to feel the impact of low-quality education due to various disadvantages created by minority status. Achieving this aim requires improvement in the inclusiveness of school cultures to make schools appropriate places for all.

5.1.5. Needs in Terms of Language and Belief

Culture, religion, and language are often linked to each other. Inclusive education proposes that the variety of languages spoken and beliefs held by students should be an integral part of the curriculum and used as a resource for teaching and learning. This proposal is valid for the Syriac culture in Turkey, where some traditions and customs are directly related to Christianity. However, findings in this study showed that it is not sufficient to discuss the Syriacs solely in terms of religion: Language is equally important for them. However, parents and students re-

sented that their needs in terms of their language and beliefs still needed to be met. One parent said: "We are citizens and we pay tax as other citizens do but they can receive education on their languages and religions whereas we cannot. Our children do not attend classes of other religions and stay outside the classroom." Participants often stated that there was a need to include objectives in the curriculum regarding the needs of individuals of the Syriac community. When students do not feel included within the curricular content, problems in socialization among students are likely to emerge.

6. Policy

Building an inclusive school culture is associated with the need that inclusion permeates all school plans. It is thanks to inclusive policies that students and staff get motivated to participate in the school, all local students are reached out, and exclusionary pressures are minimized. The interviews in this study yielded four subthemes related to policy.

6.1. Inclusion Policy to Build a School for Everyone

An inclusive school involves mechanisms that benefit all students in terms of learning and development. Developing the school for all, therefore, requires that policy targets development of all school staff to meet the diverse needs of students, the school seeks to overcome barriers to participation for the variety of ethnic groups in the locality, and therefore, achieves an increase in the diversity of students from the locality included in the school. In this study, parents (n = 19) and children (n = 20) reported that they were not satisfied with the school policy to offer students effective education, to carry out adequate staff development activities, to help all new staff and students to settle into the school, and to arrange teaching groups so that all students are valued. Due to the lack of inclusive policy to achieve these aims, according to most parents (n = 35), the number of Syriac students in schools has gradually decreased. To illustrate, one parent said: "The school does not have satisfactory rules to produce good outcomes for our children." Similarly, a student said: "Teachers mostly take care of the highest achieving students because the rule is not to teach everyone equally." All in all, participants stated that necessary political and legislative actions had to be taken to provide quality education to all students including those from the Syriac minority.

6.2. Participation in Every Aspect of the School System

Inclusion policy in education facilitates that all children, regardless of their background, are admitted and participate in every aspect of the school system without any barriers. The multicultural nature of the city of Mardin has created awareness among educational stakeholders to welcome students from different backgrounds.

Relatedly, the majority of the parents (n = 26) stated that they did not have observable obstacles during the first admission to schools. However, participants stated that although the initial registration phase did not involve observable barriers, children hardly received adequate support to get admitted to and participate in other aspects of the school system such as classrooms, playgrounds, and curricula. To illustrate, a student reported: "I often feel that our culture is not integrated into the classes. For example, our habits, our traditions…they are not in books." Similarly, a parent reflected on the importance of active engagement with learning and having a say in how education is experienced, saying: "I think teachers should do more to provide our children more opportunities to learn alongside others and collaborate with them in shared activities and experiences." Overall, participants often stated that admission is not only about registration; it also means active participation in every aspect of the school. This requires an inclusive way of policy-making.

6.3. Inclusive Policy-Making

An inclusive way of policy-making requires that whoever has a say in the education system is heard and included within the planning and implementation of the policy. Therefore, policy-making should not be a one-sided activity. In this study, a few parents (n = 3) and students (n = 6) stated that they were individually consulted while giving decisions about them. For example, they were asked about what could be done for their children to learn better. However, the majority of the parents (n = 24) stated that there was hesitation among school managers to approach them, especially because their needs, which involved learning their native culture, language, and belief, were difficult to meet within a central curriculum which focuses predominantly on Turkish culture and the religion of Islam. One parent illustrated this case by saying: "Our needs include courses for our culture, spiritual counseling, and more opportunities. No-one aims to meet them." Similarly, students felt that they were not approached adequately by teachers for their educational needs. One student said: "Not all diverse student needs are taken into account. I feel the school is made for whoever is the majority." Overall, participants stated that the extent to which the school attempted to meet the needs of Syriac students was questionable.

6.4. Inclusion Policy to Support Diversity

An important premise of inclusive education is that diversity is seen as an opportunity to enhance the variety of teaching and learning opportunities. Therefore, creating a school that provides learning and development opportunities for children of minority groups requires that support be organized for diversity and that all support policies be coordinated in a strategy for increasing the capacity of the school to respond to diversity. In this study, the

students and parents held mixed opinions as to whether support is coordinated well in their schools. For example, a student said: "We are like others because we speak Turkish and we are the same. They [staff] are lucky otherwise they would not do anything to help us in education." Generally, participants stated that schools needed better regulations to counter anti-social behavior, to change beliefs favoring bullying and racism, and to address feelings of devaluation when they arise among Syriac students.

7. School Practices

Schools that are inclusive of students with different ethnic and religious minorities orchestrate learning and mobilize resources in ways that students' individual and educational needs are met, that they achieve their learning potential and that they do not feel discriminated against in comparison to citizens who belong to the official identity. In this study, Syriac parents and students were interviewed about whether the school practices helped to achieve their inclusion. The findings are presented below.

7.1. Pedagogy of Diversity

Inclusive schools are characterized by the pedagogy of diversity where students from different ethnic backgrounds feel belonging to the class, access the curriculum, and improve their knowledge and skills. The issue stated by parents (n = 19) was the lack of support given to teaching staff to improve teaching and learning and raise the feelings of self-worth among children of the minority. For example, a student stated that: "In primary school, paired and group activities in class always included the same people and I was not very popular to include." Both student and parent comments implied that support was needed in classes that address barriers to learning in all aspects of teaching, curricula, and school organization.

7.2. Extra-Curricular Inclusive Practices

In addition to the inclusiveness of classes, participants were asked about whether everyone with different ethnic backgrounds took part in activities outside the classroom. Mostly, parents (n = 18) felt that they volunteered to be part of the school community for their children's benefits. However, a considerable number of parents (n = 24) felt that the opportunities to take part in activities outside the classroom did not address their children adequately, and therefore, children could not socialize with each other sufficiently. Participants mentioned a lack of practices such as culture clubs, sports, community services, arts, and skill-based games that would support the development of students. A parent said that "Our school system is mostly based on teaching and rote learning in the classroom. When there are activities, these do not support or benefit local communities," while a stu-

dent said that "In primary school, teachers used to convince others to do activities with me outside the classroom because they were not eager." Participants stated that schools needed to facilitate collaboration and inclusion within heterogeneous groups among students outside the classroom.

7.3. Inclusive Practices for Social Learning

The idea of inclusion is closely associated with the principles of social learning such as peer relations, modeling, and cooperation. However, participants in this study stated that implicit and explicit ways of categorizing students based on ethnicity and religion prevented opportunities for cooperation, collaboration, and social support. There were, of course, cases where students made good friendships and socialized together. However, the majority of parents (n = 33) and students (n = 27) reported that the social relations among students of different cultures were not satisfactory. For example, a parent said: "People do not teach their children how to live together. Religion is very important to them. Because of that, children separate in schools instead of learning from each other." Also, a student reported that: "We are mostly alone during classes." A lack of constructive human relations among parents was also reported. For example, a parent said: "There are competition and separation between families, rather than socialization and cooperation." Overall, participants indicated that more cooperation, collaboration, and socialization were required in classes to achieve a positive classroom atmosphere respecting diversity.

7.4. Local Resources to Develop Inclusive Practices

In inclusive schools, community resources are known, drawn upon, and used to support teaching and learning. Where there are minority groups, schools are expected to communicate with local stakeholders that represent these groups and consider their ideas and needs. In Mardin, the most important stakeholders when it comes to the education of Syriac students are the families, the church, and cultural NGOs, who can provide awareness and religious and linguistic education for Syriac people. Indeed, given the recent popularity of the city of Mardin in terms of its cosmopolitan structure, there is a tendency to investigate the different cultures within the city. However, participants of this study reported that although stakeholders representing the Syriac community were eager to collaborate with the school and contribute to the curriculum, there was still a one-way flow of interest, information, and contribution. Schools rarely attempted to benefit from the experiences of the local Syriac community to improve education in ways that Syriac children receive good quality education. For example, a parent said: "Books are full of elements of major cultures, religions, and languages. The Syriac culture is absent from the entire curriculum and coursebooks."

Overall, participants pointed to the need for stronger bonds between schools and the local community.

8. Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the experiences of Syriac students and their parents regarding their inclusion within Turkish schools. Scholarship in the related literature such as the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2002) as well as other sources (e.g., Dyson et al., 2002; Salend, 2011) provided the conceptual and methodological framework and helped to thematize the findings under three overarching themes: school culture, policy, and school practices.

The main aim of inclusive education is to offer equitable education of good quality to all learners (UNESCO, 2015). Achieving this aim entails that school practices ensure physical and social participation, facilitate learning, and equip students with skills for transition to adult life (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007). However, the findings of this research showed that students and parents were not satisfied with the attempts of schools to provide quality education to Syriac students. Learning and development in several areas (e.g., academic, psychosocial) were usually perceived by students and parents as insufficient.

Inclusive education is seen as a collective effort to grant the right to belong to the school community (Falvey & Givner, 2005) following the approach of 'education for all.' The current study focused on the relationships between inclusive education and psychological, social, and educational development. Problems or deficiencies in psychosocial processes lead to problems in educational development because psychosocial development affects the extent to which students are supported in classrooms (Knefelkamp, Widick, & Parker, 1978). At this point, the school culture has a crucial place in the education system because the way people grow and develop throughout their lifespan affects their psychosocial development during school life.

Some participants believed that being in the same school was positive in terms of developing a culture of living together. However, reports of the majority of students and parents showed that one should not accept that academic and social-emotional skills develop automatically when students are brought together physically. Furthermore, enhancement of social-emotional skills may not necessarily indicate inclusion within all aspects of the school and community. Syriac students reported that they often lacked the feeling of being included within the school atmosphere, classes, and activities outside the classroom. However, when implemented properly, inclusive education improves social-emotional well-being among students (Black-Hawkins, Florian, & Rouse, 2007) because inclusive education can be founded on the principles and arguments of social learning and developmental theories. These arguments support that peers can learn and develop socially and

cognitively through observation, modeling, and scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978).

Exclusionary practices that hinder the development of inclusive values in a school culture may be both explicit and implicit. In this study, students and parents reported implicit micro-aggressions, which are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that convey negative and hostile racial messages to the target person or group (Sue et al., 2007). Micro-aggressive behaviors as reported by the participants were not limited to human encounters alone but were also environmental, as when Syriac students were exposed to a school or classroom environment that unintentionally assailed their identity. For example, one's cultural identity can be minimized or made insignificant through the sheer exclusion of elements or literature that represents various cultural groups.

Human development contains interacting factors such as a sense of self (religious, ethnic, cultural identity, etc.), emotions, competency, and integrity. Therefore, if the school curriculum is not inclusive, student development could face barriers, leading to a decrease in achievement. One of the basic principles of inclusive education is the attempt to make the curriculum accessible to all students and empower students to maximize their learning within the curriculum content (Williams & Reisberg, 2003). In this study, reports showed that some Syriac individuals either leave the education system for another region/country or drop out completely to join the workforce, often due to an unpredictable future after graduation. The failure of schools to promise a good future is a problem for everyone. However, students of minority groups may be less optimistic about their future due to minority status. This requires schools to consider the characteristics and needs of minority students while planning education and instruction. Also, participants reported that the central curriculum did not possess cultural flexibility to enable Syriac students to participate in classroom activities which required input from students' cultures. Participants suggested that the general curricula needed to get designed flexibly to reflect cultural elements such as language, customs, and religion and, therefore, allow all students to participate within the curriculum content. The fact that some Syriac children are not able to receive education in line with their culture may have a direct consequence on the almost extinct Syriac culture. In such a scenario, the failures of minority group members in the schooling process may not be the failure of the students themselves (Maekawa, McEwen, Liang, & Lee, 2002) but rather the inadequacy of the school curriculum which is affecting their social and emotional adaptations, school achievement, integrity, and competency.

Opinions of the families about the education of their children are important to the extent they participate in this process. In this study, a considerable number of Syriac parents reported that their children wanted to be valued and respected in the school as main members of the school community. They usually thought that their students were tolerated in the school, and this created the feeling of exclusion from the school community because of the difference between their children. However, the quality of communication and collaboration between schools and families matters and is expected to create positive results in terms of learning. It was revealed in this study that there was communication between parents and the school. However, this was far from producing effective outcomes. Most parents stated that they were interested in their children's education; however, only a small percentage of them thought that the school took their concerns seriously.

The case illustrated in the findings of this study points to the significance and need to employ effective approaches to design and implement inclusive practices to ensure that students from different ethnic backgrounds learn and participate in classrooms. Participants reported that one reason for the limited success in terms of the effectiveness of the school practices in terms of Syriac students was the inadequacy to locate and remove barriers to learning by providing support and designing structures to ensure participation and progress. For example, these practices could involve effective teaching, pastoral care, counseling, and extracurricular activities. However, this needs to be done in a school culture where students are not separated by educators as mainstream students and others (Slee, 2006). Achieving this requires competent and knowledgeable educators.

The inclusion of students with different backgrounds within the education system is not a matter only for families and schools (Beveridge, 2005). This study has shown that inclusion is associated with local and national policies. The limited success located at the policy level was related to the lack of inclusion policy that requires everybody, regardless of background and status, to be treated as main members of society, and any individual needs to be met within the framework of the social, educational, health, and other services available to all members of society. Another reason was that actors from various layers of society were not interconnected to contribute to the process of establishing inclusive policies (Wendt, 1999). However, these actors may contribute to the creation and application of flexible education systems that match the increasingly diverse characteristics of individuals and communities.

9. Limitations, Recommendations, and Conclusion

Despite the many strengths of the current study, there were some limitations. First, the findings of this study are limited to the views and experiences of parents and students, making it difficult to draw general conclusions about the school system. Therefore, data from other sources could reveal different aspects of the system in Turkish schools. Second, the sample was located in a single city where there are around 2,000–3,000 Syriac in-

dividuals. However, in future studies, participants from other cities where the Syriac community predominantly lives (e.g., Istanbul) can also be employed and represent the dynamics of schools in other regions.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the inclusion of students with different backgrounds entails that the members of such a group shall not be denied the right to enjoy and practice their own culture, while their needs are met within the education system. Therefore, these individuals who hold different needs and characteristics are given extra support in addition to individual rights. From a pluralist point of view, it is believed that genuine inclusion and equality can be accomplished by recognizing the different needs of different people and meeting these needs in particular ways that address their background. The recognition of the needs and characteristics of Syriacs is thus a requirement to treat them equally and make them the main members of the school system. Recently, Turkey has made serious advancements to make the system inclusive to students with different needs and backgrounds. Although these advancements are promising, there is still a long way to go. Despite advancements, the Syriacs of Turkey need to be remembered and considered more within the education system. The recent steps taken at the political, conceptual, and practical levels should be maintained to open paths to the establishment of truly inclusive schools that achieve the task of maximizing the learning and development of everyone.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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