Colonial and Post-Colonial Governance of Islam. Continuities and Ruptures. By Marcel Maussen, Veit Bader and Annelies Moors (eds.) Imiscoe Research Series. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011. Pp. xi + 250. ISBN 978 90 8964 3568. € 42.50

How to explain the large differences that exist between European states in the way they have responded to the presence of Islam? The dominant approach in the political and sociological literature is to discuss Islam as a new religion imported into European societies by immigrants. This literature seeks to explain national differences in the regulation of Islam out of national differences in policies to incorporate immigrants. Multicultural integration policy in the Netherlands would explain the Dutch accommodative policy towards Islam. The other approach is to explain national differences in the regulation of Islam out of national traditions in state-church relations. The Dutch accommodative policy towards Islam is then explained as a consequence of the Dutch history of pillarization.

The volume on colonial and postcolonial governance of Islam, edited by Marcel Maussen, Veit Bader and Annelies Moors, takes a different perspective. Many European countries such as France, the United Kingdom, Portugal or the Netherlands are former imperial powers with long-lasting experiences in ruling Muslim populations. The suggestion is that the present day governance of Islam may be thoroughly influenced by colonial modes of governing Islam. This idea that colonialism continues to shape responses to Islam is what the editors wanted to explore. Yet, they were interested not only in Europe but also in the former colonized countries. How was Islam governed in colonial times and what are the legacies of colonial forms of governance in post-colonial societies? Moreover, it was both continuities and discontinuities they were after.

The volume comes out of a workshop under the same name organized in 2008 at the former International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM). It is divided into a part on historical perspectives (with contributions on Mozambique, Sudan, Tunisia, Iraq and British India) and a part on post-colonial situations (with contributions on Pakistan, Malaysia, Britain, Portugal and a paper on Islamic dress in Europe). The book includes a wide range of countries, historical circumstances, topics, academic fields and disciplines. In fact, the diversity is rather overwhelming.

In a solid introductory chapter Maussen and Bader make a brave attempt at developing an analytical framework to get a grip on that diversity. The term 'colonial governance' suggests that there are certain resemblances in the way the colonial powers governed Islam in their overseas territories. One such similarity is that the imperial powers all wanted to maintain colonial hegemony. As we are speaking of huge territories and equally huge populations, keeping control by military means only was not an option. Therefore, a major challenge was to find ways to manage Islam-based indigenous authorities, e.g. by forging strategic alliances or co-opting indigenous religious leadership. Other characteristics typical of colonial governance Maussen and Bader mention include transnationalism, the dispersed nature of government, as usually a stable and effective institutional centre was lacking and nationalism, as in the nineteenth century nationalist ideologies and resistance to colonial rule became related to Islamic religious identity.

Colonial rule was transnationally organized, but the term transnationalism also refers to the fact that there was sometimes a way of policy-learning between empires. Liazzat Bonate

describes how the Portuguese ‘borrowed’ from the French colonial policies to rule ‘black Islam’ in colonial Mozambique. They believed, like the French, that the colonial subjects should be civilized through assimilation into European culture. It was however only at the very end of the colonial period, in the years between 1900 and 1974, that Portugal attempted to control the Muslims of Mozambique. This was not a matter of religious governance but was a reaction to the upcoming independence movements. Another striking example of ‘travelling colonial modes of governance’ is provided by Julia Clancy-Smith. According to her, Tunisia, which was the first protectorate, served as a model (and later as a counter-model of what not to do) for colonial rule of other Muslim states like Morocco and Syria. Clancy-Smith shows that the protectorate that was superimposed on the Husaynid dynasty was a continuous process of adjustments, contradictions and manoeuvres, preserving some of the dynasty’s ways of governance while changing other parts. There is no clear divide between a colonial and a pre-colonial era, between European colonizers and colonized Muslims, between tradition and modernity. She thus problematizes the concept of rupture.

Not all authors contributing to the volume address the central questions posed by the editors. A contribution that succeeds well in addressing these questions and in moving between colonial and post-colonial times is the one by Annelies Moors on Islamic dress, gender and the public presence of Islam. Moors outlines how both in Turkey and Iran state-imposed dress regulations for men were part of a program to create a modern nation-state. When in Turkey the fez came to replace the turban this was to create uniform citizenship. Under Atatürk the fez was banned as a symbol of Islamic allegiance but also as the emblem of ignorance and fanaticism. Likewise Reza Shah believed that a European costume would create uniform citizenship, unite the different communities in one nation and show Europe that Iranians were just as modern as Europeans. Women’s dress regulations in the emerging nation-states of Turkey and Iran were similarly part of a program to de-Islamize the public sphere, but also part of a modernization program that aimed to transform gender and family relations, e.g. through education for women.

In colonial settings, the colonial administrators were less interested in regulating women’s dress but veiling became politicized in the course of contestations between the colonizers and the colonized. The French establishment in Algeria, who wanted to keep Algeria French, turned to Algerian women with promises to liberate them from Islamic oppression. Unveiled women thus became a symbol of support of the French and in reaction retaining the veil became a symbol of Algerian nationalist pride.

Moors points out important similarities and differences with contemporary debates. A continuity is the association of veiling with women’s submission and with undesirable political forms of Islam. Remarkable is her finding that contemporary European governance of Islamic women’s attire resonates more with the governance of the rulers of the emerging nation-states of Turkey and Iran, for whom it was part of the nation-building process, than with colonial governance. An important difference Moors notices is that in the past Muslim women’s emancipation was defined in terms of education and changing family relations, while in present-day Europe Islamic women’s emancipation is defined in terms of sexual freedom and sexuality visibility.

The volume is very diverse. Many contributions are interesting to read in themselves. Yet, it is because of the valuable analytical insights provided by Bader and Maussen in their

introduction and conclusion and the by the contributions of Moors and others who kept to the editors' guiding questions that this volume convinced me of the added value of a historical approach that searches for continuities and changes in colonial and post-colonial modes of governance of Islam. It is an innovative and illuminating perspective. The book deserves to be read by all who are interested in understanding modes of religious governance and of Islam in particular.

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