

## **Islamophobia in the Media A Response from Multicultural Education<sup>1</sup>**

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This paper looks at the media in Germany and Australia in order to focus on the question of how Islam is accepted in both countries, and the extent to which Islamophobia exists. It was discovered that, for the most part, the media in both countries present a somewhat biased view of Muslims and Islam. However, there were some significant differences: (1) a higher acceptance of multiculturalism in the Australian media, which is revealed in the greater number of articles on ordinary, everyday multicultural life; (2) differences in the portrayal of migrants' roles; and (3) the terminology used to refer to migrants. The paper concludes by outlining the ways in which multicultural education could contribute to a reduction of Islamophobia.

### ***Introduction***

This paper considers Australia and Germany as two Western countries that have experienced Muslim immigration and have had a considerable Muslim population for many decades. Of course, differences between the two countries have to be taken into consideration as well. Why the comparison between Germany and Australia? There are several reasons: both countries have become multicultural states, though with very different histories as countries of immigration. Taking existing differences into account, the multicultural and anti-discrimination policy in Australia and its influence also on

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<sup>1</sup> We use the expression 'multicultural education' in the Anglo-Saxon sense, which is synonymous with the European use of 'intercultural education'.

multicultural education may stimulate new reflections in Germany and Europe. Such comparative studies have proved to be the best way not only to help explain certain phenomena that occur in various countries, but also to clarify questions relating to one country by comparing these to similar questions in other countries (cf., e.g. Bommers, Castles & Wihtol de Wenden 1999; Castles & Miller 1993). It is both enriching and rewarding also to gain an impression of the Australian view of developments in migration and the educational responses to these, since Australia was often quicker at finding answers than Europe, though in recent years there has been some retreat from the ideas of multiculturalism in Australia. We are, of course, aware that comparative studies with other countries of immigration such as the United States or Canada as well as other European countries such as Great Britain, the Netherlands or Sweden would be of high interest and would deliver further insights (cf., e.g., Nacos & Torres-Reyna 2007 for the USA; Poole 2003; Richardson 2004 for Great Britain; Poole & Richardson 2006 for Great Britain and the USA and other countries; d'Haenens, L. & Delange, M. 2001; Leiprecht 2002, 2003 for the Netherlands; Larsson 2006 for Sweden; Bonnafoous 1991 for France as well as Oktem 2007 for differences between UK und the rest of Europe, especially Germany and France; for a comparison between UK, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany and France Cesari (ed.) 2006). In this paper we will mainly concentrate on Germany and Australia in order to be able to take a broader approach.

We focus on the question of how Islam is accepted in both countries, and the extent to which Islamophobia exists. We have therefore examined the media in both countries in order to find ways in which Islam is presented, but also bearing in mind the possibility that Islamophobia exists in these societies. This leads to the question about whether the media themselves are in danger of producing Islamophobia. Data presented in this paper are mainly taken from newspapers, and we differentiate between tabloid and broadsheet.

While many articles have been collected randomly since 1993, several short-term studies in Australia and Germany were undertaken in 1998, 2000, 2003, 2004, and 2006. The findings from these are also included in our analysis and are used as the basis for our third section, where we will consider multicultural education as a concept for raising students' awareness of Islamophobia in the media – and elsewhere – in order to help them achieve multicultural (media) competence. The analysis of newspapers provides an up-to-date appraisal of the way in which the media deal with migration, multiculturalism or – the focus of our study – Islam and Islamophobia. This is especially true with regard to the situation in Australia or Germany, since TV channels more often deal with the situation in other countries, though a demand for greater representation of Muslims is part of the present discourse in the television media (cf. Hafez & Richter 2007 with regard to Islam on German television).

### ***The use of the term 'Islamophobia' in this paper***

In this paper, we use the term Islamophobia 'to refer to an irrational distrust, fear or rejection of the Muslim religion and those who are (perceived as) Muslim' (van Driel 2004, x; cf. also Runnymede Trust 1997 for a further model to explain Islamophobia). In this sense, Islamophobia is a subcategory of xenophobia and closely related to anti-Semitism as another rejection of an ethno-religious group. Orhun (2005) gives a more general definition, when he describes Islamophobia as "fear or suspicion of Islam, Muslims and matters pertaining to them." We do not mean a legitimate scepticism about Islamic doctrines or moral criticism of its practices (cf. Benn 2002).

In the report "Securitization and Religious Divides in Europe Muslims in Western Europe after 9/11" (Cesari 2006) Islamophobia is defined as "a modern and secular anti-Islamic

discourse and practice appearing in the public sphere with the integration of Muslim immigrant communities and intensifying after 9/11. The term has been used increasingly amongst political circles and the media, and even Muslim organizations, especially since the 1997 Runnymede Report (Islamophobia A Challenge for All) (Cesari 2006, 5).” Furthermore, Cesari stresses that academics are still debating the legitimacy of the term and questioning how it differs from other terms such as racism, anti-Islamism, anti-Muslimness, and anti-Semitism.

Islamophobia has also to be judged with regard to its relationship to discrimination and racism on a private, societal, political and institutional level. A recent study points to the high correlation between xenophobic and Islamophobic attitudes (cf. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2007) for racism in Europe). This suggests that xenophobic persons are also generally Islamophobic (Leibold & Kühnel 2003, 102-107). Leibold & Kühnel (2006, 137ff.) introduce a new category, when they characterise, what they call ‘de-differentiation’ as a way to identify Islam and Muslims without differentiating between countries, groups, or between Islamic terror and peaceful Muslim neighbours. It follows that differentiation is necessary - certainly a task for the media and for education. The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (2006, 60ff.) indicates that Islamophobia is mostly an element of racist violence and crime and often not to be clearly differentiated from racism. In its collection of data, the EUMC (2006, 64ff.) mainly includes verbal and violent acts, while in our study of Islamophobia in the media, a more hidden, latent form of Islamophobia is detectable. This can be as dangerous because of its manipulative power.

## ***Islam in Australia and Germany***

The Muslim population in Australia has broader origins both in terms of their ethnic background and of their socio-economic status in society than the dominantly Turkish group in Germany, but is smaller in number. About 300,000 Muslims live in Australia, which is close to 1.5% of a population of 19,855,288 (2006 census, cf. [www.abs.gov.au/ausstats](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats)). About a quarter of them are of Arabic origin ([www.immi.gov.au](http://www.immi.gov.au)). It also needs to be taken into consideration that there are other people living in Australia who were born in Muslim countries but who are not Muslims. This holds especially true for Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon. Only 5% of the population in Australia are from religions other than Christianity, but this group has shown the largest proportional increase since the 1996 Census. Between 1996 and 2001, there were just over half a million new arrivals to Australia. Of these, 9% were affiliated to Islam, 9% to Buddhism, 5% to Hinduism and 1% to Judaism. The non-Christian religions have a younger age profile than Christians (<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats>). The Islam population has increased from 1.1% in 1996 to 1.5% in the 2001 census. The number may well be higher, since a declaration of religious affiliation is voluntary in the Australian census. It is striking to read in the census how many different Christian religions are listed, but no differentiation is made with regard to Islam, even between Sunni and Shiite.

Australia has been serious in acknowledging her multiculturalism and her secular status since the seventies, which has led to a higher acceptance of difference and diversity in schools and at least to some extent in the broader society, and this is reflected in the media as well. However, it has to be taken into consideration that Australia has had a conservative coalition government since 1996, which is now in its fourth period of office.

This Government is unenthusiastic about the multicultural policy of earlier years, yet has not so far rejected the bi-partisan agreement on multiculturalism. Recently, Australia has been part of the coalition that has been involved in the war on Iraq, despite strong opposition within sections of the population. Furthermore, it needs to be taken into consideration that Australia is situated at the edge of South-east Asia, where a high proportion of the population is Muslim (cf. Poynting et al. 2004 for an analysis of stereotyping Arabs).

Similarly, in Germany the majority of the population, which in 2006 was about 82,314,900, is Christian—nearly equally divided between about 26 million each of Protestants and Catholics. There is also a high percentage of Germans who do not have a religious affiliation. The Jewish population comprises about 100,000 (Statistisches Bundesamt 2007). Germany has a high Turkish Muslim population, though there are also Muslims from North Africa and other countries. The Federal Bureau of Statistics has no information about the number of Muslims, but only of the nationality of immigrants.<sup>2</sup> Until recently, German statistics only differentiated between Germans and non-Germans and revealed that the proportion of non-Germans living in Germany was about 9% – a proportion which has not changed much since 1998 (Bundesintegrationsbeauftragte 2005, Statistisches Bundesamt 2005). At the end of 2004, there were about 6,717,115 foreigners in Germany, which comprises 8.1% of the population. Since children of foreign parents who have lived in Germany for eight years are registered as Germans, due to the new citizenship law of the year 2000, the number of foreigners has officially fallen (Migrationsbericht 2005, 116ff.)

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<sup>2</sup> Email information (Statistisches Bundesamt) 28-2-05.

A microcensus in 2005 has revealed that there are about 15,300,000 persons living in Germany who have a migration background, which corresponds to 18,6% - in comparison to 9% foreigners. (Statistisches Bundesamt (Federal Statistical Office) 2007a). Statistics also reveal that most immigrants originate from Turkey. About 93% of these are Muslims, most of them Sunnis, but there is also a high number of Alevites (Zentrum für Türkeistudien 2004). In addition, there are Muslims from the former Yugoslavia, and also from Asia and Africa. According to Remid (2007), there were about 3,300,000 Muslims in Germany in 2006, of whom about one third have a German passport due to naturalization, while about 15,000 are German converts to Islam.

As Germany only acknowledged its status as a country of immigration a few years ago, there is no strong acceptance of multiculturalism and diversity. Thus, contentious issues such as the building of mosques (see Leggewie 2002 for a detailed analysis), special requirements of female Muslim students in schools, or Muslim traditions for slaughtering animals have been part of the political, everyday and media discourse for years. (See Karakasoglu & Luchtenberg 2004 for a detailed discussion of the difficult conditions under which Muslims live in Germany). Larsson (2006) stresses a fact which also holds true for Germany when he complains that the Swedish media mostly do not differentiate between cultural groups and individual identities among Muslims, nor acknowledge that many Muslims are not religious. This is also true for media perception of a common 'Muslim identity' in Spain, the UK, the Netherlands, Germany and Italy (Cesari 2006). September 11 has sharpened the question of cohesion in a diverse society in both Australia and Germany, but events in the Netherlands such as the murder of Theo van Gogh in 2004 have had a particular influence on the discourse in Germany. The ability of the Muslim population to integrate is now sometimes fundamentally questioned, and the 'failure' of multicultural society is again a point of discussion, though no event similar to what has happened in the Netherlands has occurred in Germany (Fekate 2006). Muslim Turks have

confirmed that they have felt themselves to be victims of Islamophobia more often since 2001. This has led to religion having a stronger attraction for many (Zentrum für Türkeistudien 2004). We find a different situation with regard to Muslims in the United States even in spite of September 11, which may well derive from their mostly privileged socio-economic status compared to the median in the country (cf. Pew Research Center 2007, also Cesari 2006, 18).

### ***Media discourse on migration in Australia and Germany***

The media play an important role in modern societies (cf. Fairclough 1995). There would be no idea of a "global village" without the media. They inform us and raise our awareness of events everywhere in the world, but they also contribute towards constructing our knowledge of the world by selecting information and emphasizing events in various ways. Thus the media can also amplify existing attitudes and opinions with regard to events, beliefs about rights and wrongs, and political leaders or groups. This holds true with regard to foreign countries as well as with regard to one's own country, since it is also the media that inform us about immigration statistics, the cultural history of recent immigrant groups or processes of integration (cf. Zentrum für Türkeistudien 1995, 4). Information, disinformation and influence are closely connected and may, in combination, lead to a construction of one's world and consequently to a formation of one's attitudes. Therefore media are sometimes regarded as a "fourth estate" in democratic states (cf. Jäger & Link 1995; Schultz 1998. Cf. also Harcup 2006 with regard to the responsibility of journalists in our democracies). Yet media are not independent of the society in which they exist, and thus their power of exercising influence is to some extent limited by mainstream opinion, though the media discourse is by no means closely connected to power (cf. Macdonald

2003). Oktem (2007) confirms that the European media have no “unified view” on Islam and Muslims (cf. also Cesari 2006, 33).

Migration discourse is here regarded as a discourse on migration in its meaning and importance for society. Migration discourse - by which we here mean in the media - may be understood as a continuum in which a range of reactions towards migration can be found, and this places multiculturalism on one side and racism on the other or, put another way, acceptance versus rejection of migration and its consequences for cultural and linguistic diversity

#### DISCOURSE CONTINUUM Migration and Multiculturalism

Discourse of rejection	Discourse of acceptance
Hostility towards foreigners	Discourse of integration
Racism	Diversity /pluralism

A connection between and mutual influence on media and mainstream society can be demonstrated by comparing the discourse of migration in Australian and German media (cf. Luchtenberg & McLelland 1998). In both countries, the media confirm the general political attitudes towards migration and multiculturalism, which are thus supported and amplified by their influence. Australia has an official policy of immigration and multiculturalism, though it is currently under attack, while Germany has only slowly developed into a multilingual and multicultural society, although this has not been acknowledged yet officially by all politicians. These differences are apparent in the media of both countries through the ways in which migration and multiculturalism are dealt with. It can be stated that significant differences between the Australian and German media discourse on migration have been found in three areas

- 1) a higher acceptance of multiculturalism in the Australian media, which is revealed in the greater number of articles on ordinary, everyday multicultural life;
- 2) differences in the portrayal of migrants' roles;
- 3) the terminology used to refer to migrants.

In contrast to the inclusive discourse in the serious Australian media, where diversity resulting from migration is often referred to as normal, most articles in German newspapers that deal with migration and its consequences are negative (cf. Ruhrmann & Demren 2000). Few articles deal with ordinary daily life in a multicultural society. This is important, since it deprives German consumers of media of the chance to learn about the normal life of their Muslim neighbours. TV was – and still is – often thought to fill this gap, especially in regularly broadcast programmes that go to air in the afternoon or early evening. There are occasional examples, but rarely as a permanent feature of the programme. This approach to multiculturalism in the media is closely related to the roles that the migrants themselves have in the media. The portrayal of migrants in the German media is mainly one in which their roles are those of victim or perpetrator, and far less often one of their relationship to German society or the state. In Germany the media have great difficulty in finding adequate words to refer to both the people who have migrated into the country and to their descendants. The term *Migranten* (migrants) is used only very reluctantly, instead migrants are called *Ausländer* (foreigners) or *Fremde* (strangers). This results in 'foreigner migrants and their German born descendents' being indistinguishable from true foreigners, such as tourists or short-time business visitors (cf. Luchtenberg & McLelland 1998). The use of the word foreigner instead of migrant not only confuses, because it does not allow a differentiation between long-term migrants and short term visiting foreigners, but it also stigmatises migrants as 'foreign', i.e. people who do not

really belong to Germany. Thus, the gap between 'us' and 'them' is maintained in the media discourse (cf. Van Dijk, 1997, 16ff.).

Analysis of the media on migration and multiculturalism in Australia and Germany indicates that it is difficult to differentiate between articles on migration and those on Islam, since both are often interconnected. This holds especially true for Germany, where the dominant group of immigrants is that of the Muslim Turks.

## ***Islam and Islamophobia in the Australian and German Media***

### **The Australian media**

The last ten years has seen a significant rise in the numbers of Muslim migrants to Australia, though there is disagreement on how high these figures are. Since 2001, there has been increasing hostility to these migrants in Australia, perhaps traceable to the rise of Pauline Hanson and her racist party One Nation in the 90s, when an attack on multiculturalism increased, and it again became acceptable to criticise minorities for not assimilating (Abbott 1998; Jakubowicz, 2004).

There are three important non-tabloid newspapers in Australia The Sydney Morning Herald (SMH) in Sydney, The Age in Melbourne and The Australian. All three can be characterized as sensitive with regard to questions of migration, multiculturalism and diversity, which does not hold true for the tabloids. The three selected papers are centrist or mildly to the right in their editorial policy, and generally liberal. The SMH and the Age are from the same liberal Fairfax stable, whilst the more liberal-conservative Australian is owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation. The media in Australia, as in many other countries, are owned by a handful of entrepreneurs, of whom Rupert Murdoch and the Packer family are the most powerful. The major cities have their own tabloids, which tend to be socially conservative.

Islam has, of course, been a prominent topic in recent years. Historically, the prevailing image of Islam in the press between 1950 and 2000 moved from being presented as quaint, though uncivilised in the 1950s and early 60s, to nationalist with associated terrorist violence in the 1960s and 1970s, to fundamentalist revolution as represented by Ayatollah Khomeini in the 1980s, to one of the Veil – with women as simultaneously submissive wives and fearsome warriors in the 1990s (Brasted, `2001). In the 80s, in Australia as in other Western countries, the portrayal of Islam moved from one of historical stereotyping to one of an increasing threat, arising from events in Iran, and in Australia's case, also the 'threat from the north', i.e. Indonesia, with the Aceh conflict, the Christian-Islam confrontation in Ambon, the Moro National Liberation Front in the Philippines, and Islamist unrest in Indonesia and Malaysia, and attacks on Christian churches in Jakarta: the dominoes were beginning to fall.

Australia's involvement in the first Gulf War further fuelled images of Islam: moving from an emphasis on violence to one that included cultural, social and religious difference, and the basic tenets and beliefs of Islam (e.g. the role of women, human rights, *Sharia* law - especially punishments, female circumcision, honour killings), with Islam portrayed as 'failing the tests of civilised society' (218). The Taliban treatment of women in Afghanistan received particular coverage, with the Veil becoming the symbol for all of this. Since 9/11, Muslims have become one of the hottest topics in the press, with the Veil continuing as a powerful symbol both of threat and oppression. The tone has become one emphasising risk, with accompanying suppression of Muslim' own voices and images, and an even greater demonizing of Islam (Macdonald, 2003). The multiculturalism (embracing migrants) and national reconciliation (acknowledging Aboriginal suffering and loss) that had been official policy for about two decades came under increasing attack, to be replaced by a politics whereby future possibilities determine decision making, and

perceived risks determine action (Humphrey, 2005). Muslims have moved from being perceived as socially problematic and marginalised, to being the object of a more overt racism and fear.

Despite a minority of newspaper articles and books attempting to balance this view (e.g. Manning, 2006), what came to predominate in the press was a view of Islam as ‘offering a world...of prevailing disorder’ (Brasted, 2001: 221), rather than one of ‘the normal, stable, social existences experienced by the vast majority of Muslims’ (222). As Akbarzadeh (2005) points out, however, that whilst there is a continuum between conflict and harmony represented by Muslims around the world, ‘a significant number of Muslim actors, especially ruling regimes, congregate in the middle of the conflict-harmony continuum’ (2), where coexistence and divergence are prevalent.

Within this new prevailing atmosphere, Robert Manne, in the Sydney Morning Herald (September 16, 2002) talks of the “new ideological virus” of Islamophobia, from which Australia “has, unfortunately, proved far from immune”. The print media has a patchy record on this. For example, in the Melbourne ‘Herald Sun’, columnist Andrew Bolt wrote, towards the end of 2001, “Unlike Mohammed, Christ did not slaughter unbelievers, execute women who sang rude songs about him, cut off the limbs of apostates, sleep with a woman whose family he had just killed, have sex with a nine-year-old, urge the murder of Jews, authorise the beating of wives ... and promise heaven above all to those who made war on infidels.” Janet Albrechtsen, writing in the broadsheet ‘The Australian’ at around the same time, tried to argue that rape by Muslim men was considered pardonable amongst the local Muslim leadership, and that they had absolved the young men of their moral responsibility. This was a serious distortion of the facts.

From the perspective of a young Islamic woman who grew up in Australia, Sarwet Kaddour, writing in 2002, says, “for many years now, a trend has emerged in the media –

the demonisation of Islam and Muslims ... the news provides us with an insight into the world around us. A world where Mujahideen are called 'terrorists', where the Straight Path is called 'Islamic fundamentalism'". Specifically on the portrayal of Muslim women, she says, "with no insight into Islam, journalists and writers condemn the religion's attitude towards women. In all forms of media, we are constantly portrayed as being weak and submissive to a religion, which seeks to oppress and dominate. Muslim women who choose to cover themselves are pitied, and depicted as victims of a patriarchal system. This is not the case. In Islam we have a place of respect and equality" (Kaddour, 2002).

Other sections of the media are more moderate. From February to April 2003, some in the media in Australia dealt carefully with the impending war on Iraq and its relevance for Iraqis living in Australia. Reports about Australian Iraqis were largely positive. The SMH (The Sydney Morning Herald) is amongst those papers in which delicate questions were dealt with empathetically "A world away, Iraqis are torn over their tortured land" (SMH 18.02.2003). This is even more striking if we take into consideration that the number of Australian Iraqis and Iraqis living in Australia was very small.<sup>3</sup> In a series of articles, the newspaper presented a great deal of information about the Iraqi community in Sydney. This article, as well as another one on Arabic newspapers in Australia, seems to have been directed at decreasing possible negative reactions amongst Australians. This might have been found necessary since, during the first Gulf war as well as after 9/11 and the Bali bombings, some excessive reactions to the Muslim population have occurred, so one motivation of these articles could be to conciliate the Australian population, given the small number of the Iraqis, and by providing more information about them.

During this time of cautiously positive reports on Iraqis and Muslim Australians, the equal treatment of the main religions was questioned by the new Dean of the Anglican Church

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<sup>3</sup> However, Iraqi migrants had the third largest increase of all groups migrating to Australia between 1996 and 2005 at 10%, rising to over 37,000 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2005)

in Sydney, who declared in his inaugural sermon that only one of the world's religions can be right. The media – especially the Sydney Morning Herald – have interpreted this message as a challenge to a multi-religious Australia. Interestingly most reactions by the editorial staff, but also most letters to the editors, were in support of a multicultural Australia. Having said in his sermon, “If one view is right the others must be wrong. We must stop the stupidity of stretching social tolerance into religious or philosophical relativism” (SMH 10.03.03), the Dean later clarified his words by saying that Christianity and Islam could not both be right, which was not meant as an attack against Islam but as the truth. (SMH 10.03.03). Even comments that supported Dean's ideas criticized the timing of this declaration and the lack of respect for other religions “Mr Jensen must recognise that he was hardly showing respect for the rights of such minorities when he declared some of their beliefs to be ‘the monstrous lies and deceits of Satan, devised to destroy the life of the believers’. Sydney already has its religious tensions. They stand to be made worse by a Gulf war. Its citizens may forgive a new dean, at his commencement service, offering a plain declaration of where he stands. But henceforward they are entitled to expect more temperate language, a greater sense of tolerance and more sensitive timing”. (SMH 15./16.03.03).

More recently, Cardinal George Pell, Australia's most senior Catholic, in an interview with the National Catholic Reporter (2006), said that “Islam is a much more war-like culture than Christianity”, and that he had had it asserted to him “that in the relationship between the Islamic and non-Islamic world, the normal thing is a situation of tension if not war, or outright hostility”, and further, that “it's difficult to find periods of tolerance in Islam”. The response in the press was varied, but some were strongly critical of the Cardinal, and Muslims were given some voice. For example, the Islamic Council of New South Wales spokesman Ali Roude was quoted in Sydney's tabloid, The Daily Telegraph, as saying, “it was Western European Christians who launched the Crusades, who

conquered most of the world (including the Muslim majority regions) during the Age of Discovery, who grew strong and wealthy through the exploitation of Muslim peoples under centuries of colonialism, and who still today refuse to engage seriously on the issues of debt relief, disarmament and trade reform.”

On the one hand, the trend in Australian print media has seen a rise in reporting of fears of Islam, in particular as fanatical, intolerant, militant, fundamentalist and misogynist (Dunn, 1990). On the other hand, Muslims are still given a voice, so that a speech in February 2006 by Federal Treasurer Peter Costello condemning “mushy multiculturalism”, and another in September 2006 by Prime Minister John Howard calling for Muslims to accept Australian values, learn English, fully integrate and treat women as equals were challenged by Muslims in the media, though a disturbing development was that the Prime Minister’s own Muslim Reference Group was stopped by the Government from publishing a letter to the press responding to Costello’s speech, as well as remarks by a number of other Government ministers.

As far as our examples from the SMH and The Australian are concerned, the discourse is mainly on racism, but not racist in any way whatsoever in itself (cf. Gabriel 1998 who describes similar patterns in British and US media which are looked at under the notion of “whiteness”). Racism is an important topic in the migration discourse of the Australian media that could be linked to the human rights and equal opportunity movements and the anti-discrimination policies (cf. Martin 1996). Though most articles related to racism deal with Aborigines, racism itself is also regarded as a problem to be taken into consideration - even before the emergence of the right—wing populist politician, Pauline Hanson, who founded the right—wing party One Nation - appeared on the stage. Der Satz stimmt nicht mehr: entweder ‘emergence’ ODER ‘appeared on the stage!! Wobei mir ‘appeared on the stage’ besser gefällt! While Aborigines are still often discriminated against, racism against

Muslim migrants and/or migrants from the Middle East has grown in recent years, and this is reflected in the media (cf. Anti-Discrimination Board NSW 2003, 64ff.).

### **The German media**

In Germany, there are many more regional non-tabloid newspapers, which can be found in nearly every town, even small ones. In our studies, we have focused our analysis on two liberal newspapers, which are distributed and read nationwide, despite their having a regional background. These are the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) from Munich and the *Frankfurter Rundschau* (FR) from Frankfurt. We have focussed on these in particular because they can be compared to the Australian ‘The Sydney Morning Herald’ and ‘The Australian’. Some of our focus has been on other regional newspapers, such as the ‘Leipziger Volkszeitung’, but we have considered no examples from these newspapers in this paper. Instead, we give a few examples from the most well-known German tabloid, the ‘Bild-Zeitung’.

Jäger & Link (1995, 12) assume that the media not only has an enormous influence on the migration and Islam discourse (and therefore on the opinions and behaviour of inhabitants of a country), but it also shares a responsibility for the escalation in crime against immigrants and refugees.

In a study of German newspapers (April-August, 2003), there were many articles that dealt with religion, more precisely with Islam or Muslims, and only two that dealt with other religions. Four out of ten articles referred to women’s headscarves, arising out of the action taken by a Muslim teacher at the Federal Supreme Court demanding to be allowed to wear her headscarf at school. Three articles dealt with the ‘Caliph of Cologne’, the leader of a group of fundamental Muslims who was released from jail after serving a four year sentence. In this case, Islam was presented in the media as both fundamentalist

and as linked to crime. This was also the case in a further article on a Muslim group, Milli Görüs, that claimed to have transformed itself from a fundamentalist group to a more democratic one, though the German home security organization contradicted this opinion. The journalist did not conceal his negative position, and the headline states “Fundis auf Samtpfoten” (‘Fundamentalists on velvet paws’ or ‘Fundamentalists tread softly’), a metaphor with a meaning similar to the ‘wolf in sheep’s clothing’, which clearly indicated the journalist’s scepticism (FR 22.4.03).

There can be no doubt that the headscarf debate has been prominent in the media for a long time – and will probably continue to do so in the future, since the decision about whether or not teachers should be allowed to wear a headscarf or – further down the track – whether headscarves should be allowed in any state institution, has not been resolved in most German states. The discussion of this issue often borders on Islamophobia. In an article in the Frankfurter Rundschau (FR) a statement against the wearing of headscarves by then Chancellor Schröder is cited. He is quoted as having said that someone who wants to live in Germany has to be respectful of German laws and to learn the German language (FR 23-11-04). The journalist does not question this statement, though the relationship between language competence, lawfulness and the headscarf is not at all an obvious one. The Minister of Education in Baden-Württemberg<sup>4</sup>, the first state to pass a bill against teachers wearing headscarves, insists that headscarves are to be forbidden because it is not (only) a religious symbol, but even more of a political symbol of fundamentalism and is not compatible with the German constitution (FR 18-10-04). The political symbolism of the headscarf has become the main issue. A year earlier the president of the central Council of Muslims in Germany said in an interview that it would be a hindrance to integration if the headscarf were forbidden (FR 24-09-03). There is a striking similarity in the argument of conservative German groups, who also regard the headscarf as a

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<sup>4</sup> Germany consists of 16 states (Länder) who are responsible for education in their state.

hindrance. Integration has been the key word in the migration and multiculturalism debate in Germany for a long time, and can be linked to new events such as the headscarf debate. The case of Fereshta Ludin, a young woman of Afghan origin who was trained as a teacher in Baden-Württemberg, set the ball rolling when she demanded she be allowed to wear a headscarf. She brought her case through several lower courts up to the Federal Constitutional Court. In a final decision in September 2003, this court stressed the necessity of treating all religions in Germany equally. The decision was immediately criticised as unhelpful, but this did not hinder the emergence of 'anti-headscarf-laws'. The decision of the Federal Constitutional Court was followed by a continuing, highly emotional discussion among politicians, journalists and the wider public about the reasons why some young Muslim professionals and academics continue to wear headscarves, the extent to which they are ruled by extremist organizations, and how far teachers at state schools should appear 'neutral' in their outward appearance. The Ludin case demonstrates that German state authorities, much like a considerable proportion of the population, still tend to regard the headscarf in general as evidence of an undemocratic, theocratic and thus dogmatic worldview. Teachers with headscarves are suspected of imposing a backward worldview on their students, and are considered a potential threat to a democratic and tolerant education (cf. Karakaşoğlu & Luchtenberg. 2004 for a detailed discussion). The headscarf discourse is slowly moving away from the question about WHETHER the headscarf should be forbidden, to WHERE, if at all, it should still be allowed. Is this a case of Islamophobia? It could be interpreted as such, since dialogue is rejected, but at the same time there is a message being sent to the population at large that there could be some danger in all of this; and specifically the danger of disintegration is mentioned.

The headscarf is not the only issue for which Muslim girls and women are the focus of interest in the media. The oppression of Muslim females, in particular forced marriages,

has attracted the attention of politicians as well as of the media in recent months. Here again there is a lack of balanced reporting and debate. While there is no reason not to condemn forced marriages and the oppression of women, the media often tend to confuse forced and arranged marriages, and furthermore they give the impression that a very high number of Muslim marriages are forced marriages, though reliable data on this issue are not available. A second example is that of two school girls in Bonn who, at the end of April 2006, attracted the attention of the media because they returned to school after their Easter holidays wearing 'burkas'. They were expelled, to the applause of the media, who also confirmed the approval of the German Central Consistory of Muslims (Die Welt 28.04.06). The point is that the case of these two girls, one of whom did not wear even a headscarf prior to this event, was presented as an example of the failure of Muslims to integrate, rather than as two adolescent girls perhaps being provocative or seeking attention.

Events concerning Muslim females are sometimes related to crime, for example 'honour crime/killing'. A case in Berlin – the murder of Hatun Sürücü by her younger brother because of her 'Western' life style - led to a wide discussion on such killings. This was extended when the court did not press the prosecution of the elder brothers, who had been accused of planning the murder, for lack of evidence. While the murder certainly must be condemned, the discussion in the media – as well as in the political discourse - took the line of discussing whether persons who are not willing to accept Western values should be forced to leave Germany. If this discussion becomes more generalized, this could easily lead to an increase in Islamophobia.

There is also a rather strange example of how an issue can be turned completely on its head, in an article under the heading 'Mosque as target of a fire attack', classified under the topic 'Muslims'. The writer spent most of the article discussing a warning from the Minister of Internal Affairs that there was a threat of 'parallel societies' emerging, rather

than reporting on the attack itself. The development of a Muslim minority that had won the right to have street signs in its own language would not be tolerated (FR 19-11-04). Here we find a new buzzword, ‘parallel society’, which is strongly associated with the notion of integration. The date of the occurrence of this story helps explain the new hysteria in the public discourse on Muslim immigrants. It happened around the time of the murder of Theo van Gogh in the Netherlands, which led to a new and sharp rejection of all forms of behaviour which were regarded as non-integrative. In addition, old demands were resurrected or new ones articulated, for example in favour of a German ‘Leitkultur’ (cf. Manz 2004) (‘leading culture’, which is to be not only democratic, but also Christian), or a constitutional oath within the German naturalization ceremony, or also repeatedly demands for competence in the German language. One headline reads, ‘Stoiber<sup>5</sup> demands a battle for German values’ (FR 8-12-04). In the same issue of this newspaper we find an article on ‘Holy warriors in Germany’. If a reader takes note of these two articles, and also the many negative articles on Islam – especially concerning the oppression of women – then the persistence of negative attitudes can be expected.

The response to the assassination in the Netherlands was surprisingly extensive and harsh, as if the murder had occurred in Germany. One might have gained the impression that politicians had recognised an opportunity to deepen and popularize their ideas about integration, since opposition would be very difficult following the events in the Netherlands. Reports on what happened in the Netherlands sometimes added to the negative reception when, for example, an article on a possible clash of civilisations was headlined, ‘Jihad at the North Sea’ (SZ 09-11-04). At least in the liberal media there were some articles presenting opposing views, such as ‘Islam does not accept terrorism’, in which a Muslim demonstration against terrorism was reported and an interview with a Muslim leader was documented (FR 19-11-04). There was also a satirical contribution,

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<sup>5</sup> The prime minister of Bavaria at the time.

with quotations from the bible referring to the oppression of women and the denial of sexual liberation (FR 01-12-04).

Still immersed in the heated debate on the failure of multiculturalism in the Netherlands and the dangers of ‘parallel societies’ in which Muslim migrants tend to live, the widely read German tabloid ‘BILD’ presented on its front page a photomontage with the then German Government Minister Trittin (of the Green Party) with a Muslim beard and a turban. The text said, “By the beard of the Prophet - Send Trittin into the desert!”<sup>6</sup> (BILD 17.11.04) What had happened? In contrast to the conservative reactions to the murder of van Gogh, which mostly argued for integration and acceptance of a German ‘Leitkultur’, a left parliamentarian of the Greens and Minister Trittin had suggested introducing a Muslim holiday as an official holiday in order to pay Muslims respect and demonstrate the German interest in their integration. The tabloid had a clear answer. It is more “peaceful and helpful for friendship between peoples to learn the language of the host country and to celebrate together the existing holidays. .... The other way – to remain alien in an alien country – is a path to a catastrophe as the Dutch example has proved...” (BILD 17.11.04). It can be assumed that such statements may increase Islamophobia, since the two demands – competence in German and a willingness to celebrate existing, i.e. Christian, holidays – is not shared by all Muslim migrants. Thus, they are – indirectly – accused of rejecting integration! On the Minister’s homepage we find an interview with BILD in which the journalist asks “You don’t eat pork and drink little alcohol – will you convert to Islam?” A further reproach from the journalist refers to multicultural society: “Don’t you agree that the ideas of ‘multi-kulti’ ... have failed – look at Holland?” (Bundesministerium für Umwelt ... 2005a <http://www.bmu.de/namensbeitraege>). The Minister declared that he had merely proposed that Muslims should be given the opportunity to celebrate their holidays

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<sup>6</sup> German readers recognize this phrase ‘By the beard of the prophet’ as a line from fairy tales on oriental life. Therefore it has a sense of discrimination in this context. Of course, a version as “By the word of Mohammed ‘ would be likewise discriminating since the minister is no Muslim

without incurring problems at work. This is also confirmed in press release of the Minister (Bundesministerium für Umwelt ... 2005b <http://www.bmu.de/pressearchiv>). It is obvious that the tabloid used the murder in the Netherlands to condemn multiculturalism and Islam in Germany. Even the more serious newspapers showed some schadenfreude when the proposal was officially retracted.

These examples refer to the situation in Germany with its increasing Muslim population. Yet it has to be considered that the way we as readers deal with Islam is very much influenced by the way in which the media deal with Islam worldwide (cf. Schiffer 2005).

It is obvious that amongst the themes in the German media are school-related ones, which can – at least partly – be linked to an older discourse strand, namely the discussion about whether the presence of migrant students will negatively influence the academic performance of German students, because migrants are slower learners; however, there was no special focus on Muslim children in this. The point was picked up when the PISA results were discussed, since it was argued that the poor performance of migrant students had negatively influenced the German results as a whole. Meanwhile the main focus is on the fact that many migrant students do not speak German to a sufficiently high level – a point which has been linked to the existence of ‘parallel societies’ in many media reports – again following the dominant political discourse. According to this argumentation the (Muslim) migrants themselves are to be blamed for the poor school performance of their children. These discourse strands are sometimes related to the discussion on the lack of acceptance of Western lifestyles, which altogether deepens the mistrust felt with regard to Muslims.

Our examples show that the German media contribute to Islamophobia in several ways

- (1) Only rarely do they report on Muslim immigrants in a positive way;

- (2) They tend to portray Muslims as traditional Muslims (head scarf, traditional clothing), neglecting their varied and often very individual expressions of religiosity and even the refusal of an affiliation to any religion by Muslim born individuals;
- (3) They often quote political pronouncements without comment or rectification of bias.

However, they are in general careful not to discriminate against Muslims openly. In the Australian media, the trend in recent years has been towards a more negative portrayal of Islam, though Muslims are still given a voice in the media.

Such contributions to the spread of Islamophobia are not easy to detect. Educational institutions therefore have to seek ways of making students more sensitive to them.

### ***Multicultural Education: A Concept to Raise Awareness of Islamophobia?***

Multicultural education that claims to prepare all students for a life in a multicultural society could contribute to a reduction of Islamophobia in schools.

- Schools that adopt the philosophy of multicultural education require an inclusive education (cf. Gundara 2000). Thus, teachers have to accept all students as having the same rights, and this includes expressing or not expressing cultural or religious differences within the limits of human rights.
- International exchanges among researchers, as well as teachers, help towards an understanding of the German or Australian situation. It will then become clear that the French laicistic approach for example, is different from the secular approach practiced in Germany and Australia, though with important differences (see above). Yet, it should be kept in mind that Turkey has strict rules of laicism similar

to France, since the founder of the modern Turkey adopted the idea of a strict division between state and religion. On the other hand, the relatively tolerant case of Britain will perhaps contribute to a reflection on how much difference can be tolerated before major frustrations arise (cf. Casanova 2006 for an European-USA overview).

- Examples of how to obtain knowledge about different religions can be integrated into teacher education and training, and also help disseminate knowledge in schools, though it has to be kept in mind that knowledge is the first step, empathy the second.

Following from this, the study of religious and cultural diversity is an essential element in teacher training, since teachers can contribute to a mutual understanding if they themselves have learnt to deal with diversity. This holds equally true in Australia, where multiculturalism has been an accepted philosophy, even if it is a policy which has not been kept alive and vibrant at all times. Teachers and student teachers should not be forced into multiculturalism, but should gain insights by being given the chance to encounter different cultures and religions, by learning about different philosophies and discussing the impact on Australian or German society (and schools). A teacher should understand that he/she does not have to accept the principles of Islam, but has to accept the right of Muslims to follow these principles as long as they do not contradict human rights or national laws. Religious diversity is closely related to a key question in multicultural education: should we support relativism of cultures or universalism? The focus on 'culture' in multicultural education often leads to an overemphasis on the role of cultures in the sense that an individual is assumed to belong to 'a culture', rather than to multiple cultures. This is not only concerned with an intrusion into individual and group identity and a denial of the complexity of cultural membership in a modern society, but leads also to the danger of the

imposition of a cultural identity by others. If Islam is regarded as backward-oriented, the conclusion could easily be drawn that a Muslim girl is backward-oriented, and does not ponder her individual lifestyle, attitudes and values. Extremely controversial views are held concerning the way religion relates to modernity. In this respect the position of Islam in a basically Christian yet secularised society is one of the most crucial issues. One of the questions is to what extent Islam will be offered the opportunity to achieve a position in the community similar to that of the Christian denominations. At least in Germany we may safely expect that the churches, given their many social and economic ties with the German state, will not willingly surrender their privileges in favour of a radically laicistic separation of state and religion. Yet the Australian way of keeping religion out of the school curriculum and school life, but allowing representatives of acknowledged religions to teach children of their religion on one afternoon, might at least be considered. This model relates to a regulation in the state of Berlin, where acknowledged religious groups are given the opportunity, under their own responsibility, of offering religious education in schools. This is an approach ultimately to declaring religion a private affair, without interfering with the right of each individual to live according to his/her religion in a multi-religious society, as long as laws and human rights are acknowledged. While in Australia, religion is not only not a school subject, but is proscribed throughout school life (e.g., with regard to holidays) or as a part of other subjects (such as religious literature in English), in contrast we find not only that religion is a regular school subject in Germany, but beyond that, the churches are given a say in the curriculum as well as in teacher education and employment. In most states, students over the age of fourteen can decide to drop religious education and instead take a subject such as ethics. In very few states, religion has been completely replaced by such subjects – in the face of loud protests of the churches. The current German system obviously is not supportive of encouraging Muslim religious

education in German schools along the lines of Christian religious education, as there is no equivalent to a 'church' in Islam.

Without question, Islamism should, in so far as it represents a form of political extremism, be kept under surveillance and, in its violent forms, be banned both in Australia and in Germany, including of course in schools. Policy makers in Germany still need to develop a code of practice for religious equality that will meet the challenge of religious pluralism that *de facto* already exists (cf. Karakaşoğlu & Luchtenberg 2004).

As we have shown in this short analysis, the media in Australia as well as in Germany, play a role in presenting an image to the majority society of the way in which migrants and non-migrants cope in our multicultural societies. None of them are openly racist, but stereotypes of migrants and their cultures as well as their religions are often present and can thus fuel a latent fear, especially with regard to Islam. Meanwhile, there are many different forms of anti-racist education established in both countries (cf., e.g. 'school without racism' (SOR-SMC 2007) for Germany or 'Racism no way' (2006) for Australia). We are proposing here that the raising of awareness of the role of the media could be a next step.

### ***Multicultural Media Competence***

Media education is playing an increasingly important role in both German and Australian schools, especially as a result of the 'new media', i.e. the computer and other electronic media. There are some more traditional approaches in media education, which deal critically with media influence and manipulation. In this respect, advertising is of central interest. Media education that tackles the migration and multiculturalism discourse in the media has to examine this from several standpoints (cf. e.g., Schiffer 2005a). From a

broader perspective, we find the challenge of conveying the following skills to be part of multicultural media competence, and thus of multicultural education as well.

- An ability to understand media reporting and its background.
- The linguistic knowledge to understand the way migrants and especially Muslims are described.
- A proficiency in understanding the meaning of topicality and negativism in the migration and Islam discourse.
- An ability to interpret the roles in which migrants and Muslims are presented – in film and television, e.g. the intimidated daughter in a Turkish family.
- The know-how to understand the relationship between texts and images (e.g. photographs).
- An ability to understand the relationship between different aspects of the discourse on migration, migrants and multiculturalism, such as ethnic crime, Muslims, integration or school success.
- The competence to uncover the relationships between the media discourse on migration, migrants and multiculturalism and other discourses such as on women or citizenship.
- A capacity to interpret the meaning of the lack of multiple perspectives in the media discourse on migration and multiculturalism, as well as on Islam.

There are some more specific requirements with regard to the discourse on Islam and Islamophobia such as

- gaining independent knowledge of Islam and the Muslim communities;
- gaining knowledge about research on Muslim women;

- looking into the ways in which fundamentalism and Islam are linked in the political and media discourse;
- dealing with the demands of human rights and the demands of religion;
- being able to compare approaches from other countries, and to understand the reasons for the differences.

It would seem that two approaches need to be juxtaposed in order to achieve multicultural media competence, multicultural competence and media competence.

Multicultural media competence then adds to

- the acceptance of linguistic, cultural and religious diversity in the media (as well as in the neighbourhood);
- the ability to find racist and Islamophobic tendencies in the media, including the internet;
- dealing critically with the discourse on migration, multiculturalism and Islam in the media;
- linguistic competence in using the media in Europe and the global world;
- critical knowledge of global media interrelationships;
- critical reading and understanding of international news.

Further challenges could easily be added to these lists, but that would not answer the question of where and how these requirements can be implemented in school curricula (cf. Leiprecht 2002, 2003). There are two ways to approach this question: either media education opens up to and includes such multicultural factors, or multicultural education includes media education perspectives. Both ways could work, but from the perspective of

teacher education it would probably be easier to include media education in multicultural education, as those studying in this area are usually already sensitive towards and receptive of these facets, though it has to be considered that multicultural education is still a supplementary, non-compulsory training element within teacher training in Germany, as well as in Australia. To some extent, the above-mentioned challenges can be understood as appropriate to language education (and thus to teacher education in language). In Germany, this would mainly apply to the part of the German curriculum called 'Reflection on language', which is closely allied to language awareness (cf. Fairclough 1992). A further place to deal with these tasks is multiliteracy, a relatively new concept in the German educational landscape, but already practised in Australia.

In addition to this, it is also important to teach students to read statistics more professionally and carefully. This can be achieved by including elements from mathematics, social science or political education into academic teacher education. In general, citizenship education could be a subject to deal with the question of the role of media in a multicultural society in greater depth.

To conclude we can confirm the necessity of making students aware of the way in which the media deal with migrants, migration and multiculturalism and especially with Islam and to enable them to achieve a self-critical and differentiated use of media and discourse on media, since otherwise stereotypes, Islamophobia and racism are likely to increase.

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