Religion, Gender and Citizenship

Women of Faith, Gender Equality and Feminism

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Citizenship, Gender and Diversity

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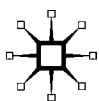
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For my parents, Elin and Leif Nyhagen,
who have taught me the most valuable things in life
LN

For my parents, Lilan and Cato Halsaa,
for providing me the gift of curiosity
BH

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Contents

Tables

Preface

This book is a result of research conducted within '*FEMCIT: Gendered Citizenship in Multicultural Europe: The Impact of Women's Movements*' (www.femcit.org), funded by the European Commission's 6th Framework Programme (2007–2011). The FEMCIT project was led by Scientific Director and Professor Beatrice Halsaa. The FEMCIT research theme '*Multicultural Citizenship: Intersections between Feminism, Ethnic Identity and Religion*' was led by Dr Line Nyhagen (Predelli).

Acknowledgements

1

Christian and Muslim Women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom Talk about Faith, Citizenship, Gender and Feminism

What do women of religious faith think about citizenship, and how do they practise citizenship in their everyday life? What is the importance of faith in their lives, and how is religion bound up with other identities such as gender and nationality? How do religious women conceptualize 'gender equality', and what do they think about women's movements and feminism? We address these questions through an examination of religious women's lived citizenship, their lived religion and gender relations. For feminist scholarship, it seems a puzzle that women are drawn to religious traditions and institutions that practise female subordination (Mahmood 2005: 6). How can we understand this from the point of view of religious women themselves? Do religious women comply with, resist or subvert gender inequalities within their own communities? Through their participation in churches and mosques in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, the Christian and Muslim women in our study have chosen to identify with and belong to local religious communities.[1] Some of them would like to see greater gender equality and more opportunities for women within their faiths, while others accept, or even support, existing inequalities. Mainstream women's and feminist movements, as well as feminist theory, have tended to marginalize religion, despite the crucial historical role played by religious women in bettering women's position in the home and in society (Braude 2004), as well as their internal struggle for gender equality within their own religious contexts. It is now time to critically discuss the contributions of contemporary religious women to struggles against increasing global social inequalities and persisting gender inequalities. Moreover, the voices of religious women themselves must be recognized as legitimate in the public sphere. As Dubravka Žarkov (2015: 6) argues, 'the role of faith in women's everyday life [is] often ignored, even more often seen as symbol

of traditionalism and backwardness, an obstacle to emancipation, and seldom recognized as an inspiration in women's struggle for social justice and women's rights'. Our book is a contribution towards a feminist acknowledgement of the role that faith plays in contemporary women's lives. Rather than looking at how religious institutions view women's rights and gender equality, we examine what religious women themselves say about citizenship, gender equality, women's movements and feminism. Through this study of religious women's views, we are also able to indicate, in our final chapter, whether there is room for dialogue and even collaboration and alliance between women across religious and secular divides.

As *citizens of faith*, Christian and Muslim women in Europe have in common a religious outlook on life, but they differ in relation to the content of their faith, their attitudes towards and interpretations of their faith, their status as privileged or marginalized citizens within broader contexts of state religions, their national and ethnic belonging, their gendered lives, and their views on gender equality, women's movements and feminism. As *faithful citizens*, they share their faith in and commitment to the communities in which they live, while at times also disagreeing with them on gender grounds. Any attempts at generalizations about how Christian and Muslim women throughout the world experience and view gender relations based on our qualitative interviews would be foolhardy. These women's 'heterogeneous realities' (Ahmed-Ghosh 2008) are characterized by complexity and depend on global, national and local political and socio-economic transfigurations, as well as on theological prescriptions, sectarian beliefs and traditions. This diversity has inspired us to undertake an in-depth case study of religious women that pays careful attention to multiple contextual factors and levels. In this book, we privilege religious women's own voices and viewpoints, rather than the texts and practices that may be considered as 'authoritative' or 'legitimate' representations of their religious traditions, be they Christian (Pentecostal, Lutheran, Anglican or Catholic) or Muslim (Sunni or Shia). This does not mean that differences pertaining to theology, rites and rituals are unimportant; they are simply not the focus of our study. Existing sociological scholarship tends to talk about 'Muslim women' as one category, while a few studies acknowledge Sunni–Shia differences and similarities. In this regard, Ahmed (1992: 233) states that 'differences between the two branches of establishment Islam in many matters affecting women […] are minimal' (see also Al-Ali 2010 and Ahmed-Gosh 2008). Badran (1998) notes that sectarian differences between Sunni and Shia Islam did not play an important role in Kuwaiti women's resistance to Iraq's invasion and occupation in 1990–1991. In her study of Muslim women in Bahrain, Seikaly (1998) explicitly addresses differences between Sunni and Shia women and reports that the Shia women she interviewed had more 'radical feminist' views while the Sunni women had more conservative views (see also Abusharaf 2006 and Sechzer 2004). In our own study, similarities rather than differences

emerged between the interviewed Sunni and Shia women and their views on citizenship, gender equality, women's movements and feminism. Their shared sense of religious (and also often ethnic) minority status, and of experiences of discrimination and stereotyping, might have contributed to the lack of references to 'sectarian' differences. Similarities among the Lutheran, Anglican, Catholic and Pentecostal women were also much more pronounced than their differences, but specific issues of difference stood out (e.g., the lack of women's ordination in the Catholic Church and non-recognition of Pentecostals) and these are addressed in relation to the contexts in which they arose.

The main question guiding the book is whether and how religion is a resource and a barrier to European women's citizenship, from the perspective of religious women themselves and also from our point of view as academic feminists in Europe. This raises issues about religious women's agency and submission and about feminist concerns with respect to gender equality and women's rights (Chapter 2); such issues are addressed throughout the book when we examine religious women's identities and how they live their faith in everyday life (Chapter 3), how they think about and practise citizenship (Chapter 4), and how they view and relate to gender equality (Chapter 5) as well as to women's movements and feminism (Chapter 6). After a brief introduction to the book's main topics, our main concern in this first chapter is to situate our research within the historical, socio-political and religious contexts of Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, as well as to provide information about our case-study research methods. In Chapter 2, we position our research within the growing literature on religion, gender and citizenship.

Gendering lived religion and lived citizenship

Feminist scholarship has moved beyond rights-based approaches to citizenship by including not only rights and status but also identities, belonging and participation as important aspects of lived citizenship (e.g., Yuval-Davis 1999; Siim 2000; Lister 2003; Lister et al. 2007). This move has been paralleled in the sociology of religion, which has moved beyond institutional approaches to religious belief and practice to emphasizing religion as it is lived and practised in everyday life (see Chapters 2 and 4).

Our book brings together these advancements in feminist scholarship on citizenship and sociological scholarship on religion by adopting a bottom-up approach to lived citizenship, lived religion and gender relations and examining how women live, practise and negotiate religion, citizenship and gender relations in everyday life.

Our aim is not only to bridge feminist and sociological scholarship on citizenship, religion and gender but also to contribute to theoretical debates in the field. One such contribution is via a critique of rights-based definitions

of religious citizenship, which also demonstrates the shortcomings of rights-based approaches to citizenship more broadly. Both gender inequalities and different religious majority and minority positions challenge rights-based approaches to citizenship (Chapter 4). We show that religious women's understanding of citizenship mirrors that of feminist perspectives, in that they foreground identity, participation and belonging. In addition, we suggest that an ethic of care, rooted in religious conviction, but transcending religious difference, is crucial to religious women's lived citizenship practice. An ethic of care, tolerance, respect and love stand out as a similar finding across women from the two religions and the three countries. Such moral stands demonstrate how politics is lived in everyday lives, and they also have political implications pointing to commonalities as well as differences between religious and secular women.

In our analysis of how religious women talk about intersecting identities (e.g., religion, national belonging, marriage, motherhood and family), we distinguish between those who forefront religion as an all-encompassing feature of their lives and those who regard religion more as a cultural practice or habit. For many women, religion provides a foothold and foundation that guides all aspects of their lives (Chapter 3). Issues of autonomy and freedom, versus relationships and interdependence, arise from the discussion of religious identities and religion as 'meaning-maker'. The notion that agency can be located in piety, and in the right to choose submission, challenges feminist liberal conceptions of what agency is and how it relates to structural factors. Moreover, when religious women submit to the notion of God and religion forms part of their 'root identity' (Neitz 1987), gender may be less important and even not important at all.

This book also contributes to a growing scholarly questioning of the secular–religious binary, focusing on citizenship, gender equality and feminism. Despite growing secular tendencies in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, religion remains a core dimension of many individuals' lives, as well as of civil society organizations, religious institutions and governments. The hard-core secularist notion that religion should only be a private matter and thus abolished from public life would produce social and political exclusion, non-recognition and a serious democratic deficit. Religion is relevant to political debates about social justice, gender equality, the environment and other issues, and religious people have a legitimate voice in such debates. Often, however, religious institutions as 'corporate bodies' (Phillips 2009: 37) are given a voice (e.g., the Catholic Church), while alternative religious organizations (e.g., Catholics for Choice), and in particular grass-roots religious women's organizations, are sidelined or ignored by the state and also by staunchly secularist feminist organizations. By demonstrating how the interviewed religious women interweave religious and secular understandings of citizenship (Chapter 4), and how they perceive gender equality (Chapter 5), women's movements and feminism (Chapter 6), our research

suggests cautious optimism within definite limits for some common ground between religious women of various faiths and between religious and secular women (Chapter 7). We recognize religious women's contributions to feminism and equal rights for women but question the extent to which it allows for alliances among religious and secular women. Our analysis problematizes the unspoken or taken-for-granted assumptions about gender equality forwarded by equal rights feminists, while also demonstrating the limitations of 'equal value' perspectives on gender relations. We need to ask what price either perspective has – for secular women and for religious women. From our study, scope for issue-based dialogue and cooperation emerges on topics such as persisting gender pay gaps, flexible working, contraception, childcare, parental leave, and also domestic abuse and other violence against women issues. In addition, we think that religious and secular women may also find common ground in a critical resistance towards neo-liberal politics, neo-capitalism, globalization, climate change and environmental degradation. In the context of increasing socio-economic inequalities perpetuated by post-colonial global economic forces as well as political and cultural displacement and marginalization, the growth of religious fundamentalist movements, often detrimental to gender equality and women's rights, is also of concern to religious and secular women alike (Hawley 1994; Tohidi and Bayes 2001; Antoun 2008). However, our study also reveals much less scope for dialogue and collaboration across religious and secular divides on issues concerning women's control over their own bodies (abortion), divorce and LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex) rights.

Our study is unique in that it applies a double comparative lens by studying Christian and Muslim women in three country contexts and contributing in-depth empirical evidence about their lived religion, lived citizenship and lived gender relations. Our qualitative approach enables us to examine rich interview data that allow careful comparisons between 60 women who adhere to different faiths and live in different countries. The analysis reveals interesting differences relating to Christian and Muslim women's lived religion, citizenship and gender in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, particularly with regard to women's positioning in relation to the dominant and privileged religion (Christianity) and the 'minoritized' and marginalized religion (Islam), but also in relation to issues of gender equality and feminism. Our study also reveals important similarities between Christian and Muslim women in the three countries in terms of what religion means to their identities and their everyday lives and how they think about and practise citizenship. Moreover, our research finds that, across religious and country divides, the interviewed women are positive to gender equality in the equal worth tradition; they embrace women's movements as having been important (in the past) and as having had some (positive) impact on their religion, but they reject feminism as too 'extreme' and as contrary to their ethic of care. The remainder of this chapter describes

relevant contextual aspects about Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom regarding religion, gender and citizenship, and our research methods.[2]

Country contexts: Religion in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom

The principle of religious freedom is enshrined in government legislation in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, but the three countries display different 'faith regimes' when it comes to the relationship between the church and the state and the characteristics of their religious plurality. All three countries have a historically dominant and privileged Christian church, with other religions having been present but marginalized and not always tolerated. It is only after the Second World War in Norway and the United Kingdom and after the collapse of the Franco regime in Spain in 1975, with the influx of migrants and the development of new state policies regarding religion and belief, that the three countries have become established as both more religiously plural and tolerant. Immigration has led to unprecedented religious diversity, and in all three countries religious minorities are operating under 'low restrictions' (Fox 2008), meaning they are, in principle, free to operate as they wish. There is, however, great variation in how different religions are treated by the Norwegian, Spanish and British national governments as well as by local authorities. For example, the United Kingdom has increased its surveillance of religious minorities (mainly Muslims), and Spain has increased its restrictions on the building of religious places of worship (Fox 2013: 153–154). Access to state political power and to government financial support also varies across different religions in the three countries (see the following).

Madeley (2010: 31) describes Norway and Spain as part of three 'historic mono-confessional culture blocs' that include 'the Lutheran North' (Scandinavia), the 'Catholic South' (Italy, Spain and other European countries) and the 'Orthodox East' (Greece and Eastern European countries like Romania and Bulgaria). Dominant churches such as the Lutheran Church in Norway and the Catholic Church in Spain have propagated an 'all-inclusive' principle, seeking to embrace all citizens and marking boundaries towards other Christian denominations as well as other religious faiths (ibid.: 36). Madeley places the United Kingdom within the 'historic multi-confessional culture belt' which also includes countries like the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany and Hungary (ibid.: 33). The historical multi-confessional character of the United Kingdom is built upon a mix of Anglican, Catholic and Protestant faiths that have dominated the religious landscape, with Islam emerging as a more recent part of the mix. Fox (2008) describes Norway as having an active state religion via the Evangelical Lutheran Church, which remained Norway's official religion until 2012. Constitutional changes from 2012 have meant that Norway no longer has an official

Table 1.1 Population statistics and religious beliefs. A snapshot of Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom

	Norway	**Spain**	**United Kingdom**
Total population (2014)	5,166,000	46,440,000	64,600,000
Percentage of Christians	89.7%	88.3%	72.6%
Percentage of Muslims	2.88%	2.33%	3.36%

Sources: Population statistics for Norway (https://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/statistikker/folkemengde); population statistics for Spain (http://www.ine.es/en/prensa/np917_en.pdf); population statistics for the United Kingdom (http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nscl= Population); percentage of Christians and Muslims in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom: the Association of Religion Data Archives (http://www.thearda.com/internationalData/index.asp); all accessed 8 September 2015.

religion. The Evangelical Lutheran Church has been renamed the 'people's church' (*folkekirke*) and remains central to Norway's national identity and culture. Fox (2008) depicts the United Kingdom as having a historical or cultural state religion in the form of the Anglican Church of England and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Spain, on the other hand, demonstrates 'preferred treatment for some religions or support for a particular tradition' in the form of the Roman Catholic Church (Fox 2008: 121).

It is difficult to identify comparable and up-to-date statistics on religious affiliation. The prominent picture in all three countries is that of an overwhelming dominance of Christianity as the majority religion, with Islam as a small minority religion. A snapshot of main contextual data is provided in Table 1.1, while more detailed as well as competing figures are presented in the chapter text.

Table 1.1 lists the most recent data available from the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) for the proportion of Christians and Muslims in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom.[3] Further figures reported by the ARDA reveal that while a majority of the population in the three countries belong to a religion, less than half actually identify as a religious person. Only a small segment of the population in each country (ranging from 11% in Norway to 20% in Spain and 24% in the United Kingdom) attend religious services at least once a month. On the other hand, belief in God remains relatively high, with about three-fourths stating such belief (www.thearda.com).[4] Secular beliefs are also gaining ground, with the ARDA reporting agnostics at roughly 6% in Norway, 8% in Spain and 20% in the United Kingdom. All of the ARDA figures are, however, indicative at best as they compete with other survey results showing significantly lower figures for Christian belief and higher figures for non-believers and atheists. For example, for Spain, de Velasco (2010: 251) refers to figures for the year 2009, reporting Catholics at 76%, other religions at 2%, non-believers at 13% and atheists at 7%. The latest UK Census reported changes in belief from 2001 to

2011 where those who 'identify as Christian' in England and Wales fell from 72% to 59% and those reporting 'no religion' went up from 15% to 25% (ONS 2012). In Norway, those reporting non-membership of any religion or belief groups went up from 8% in 1994 to 14% in 2012 (Taule 2014). In all three countries, there are simultaneous tendencies towards increased secularization (measured as declining belief in God and church attendance) in the majority population, combined with increased sacralization and religious diversity stemming from belief among the growing immigrant population (Pérez-Agote 2010; Woodhead and Catto 2012; Taule 2014). The next three sections present more detailed information about the contemporary religious landscape, citizenship and women's movements in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Norway

In Norway, the constitution of 1814 established the Lutheran Church (formally the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway) as the state religion. This arrangement has functioned alongside the constitutional right to freedom of religion or belief (see Lindholm 2009: 3–4). In 2012, the privileged position of the Lutheran Church in Norwegian society diminished, as it was abolished as the official religion of the country. As mentioned earlier, the Lutheran Church remains 'Norway's people-church' (*folkekirke*) and as such retains a symbolically privileged role. However, the state provides equal financial support to *all* religion and belief associations depending on their actual membership. Religious organizations are free to decide whether they want to register or not, but in order to receive state funds they must be registered by county officials. This has led to a rapid increase in the number of registered religious organizations. Although religious freedom is guaranteed by the Norwegian state, there are tensions and disputes related to religious minorities, especially in regard to Muslim women's veiling and the building of places of worship by Muslim communities. There are no general restrictions on the wearing of religious symbols in Norway, but there have been individual cases of employers prohibiting the Muslim headscarf in the workplace. Some cases have been presented to the Gender Equality Ombud as cases of gender discrimination under the Gender Equality Act and, more recently, under the Act against Ethnic and Religious Discrimination from 2005. The Ombud has found that a ban on the Muslim headscarf is a violation on both prohibition grounds (Siim and Skjeie 2008: 332; Hellum 2011), thus providing Muslim women with a strong legal protection.

In 1970, nearly the entire population of Norway (94%) were members of the then Lutheran State Church, but membership has progressively declined.[5] By 2014, the figure was down to about 74% of the population (in absolute numbers, about 3.8 million were members of the Lutheran Church that year).[6] Regular attendance at religious services is very low (less

than one in ten attend church services more than once a month), but the state church is still important for its members during national and religious holidays and for rituals, including weddings and baptisms (Plesner 2008: 91–92). Until 2012, preferential treatment of the Lutheran faith was evident in that the King of Norway and government ministers confessing to the Lutheran faith handled church issues such as the appointment of bishops. The Lutheran Church itself now makes these appointments. It has also had a privileged position in public institutions such as hospitals, the military, prisons, the police and nursing homes (Furseth 2009; Furseth 2015).

Christian women in Norway have a strong tradition of organizing, starting with women's missionary associations that grew impressively in numbers throughout the 19th century and in effect became the first women's movement in Norway (Tjelle 1990; Nyhagen Predelli 2003). Parts of the women's missionary movement of the early 20th century also established direct links with the feminist movement (Nyhagen Predelli 2001). The 20th century also saw the foundation of the Norwegian female theologians' association (Norsk kvinnelig teologforening) in 1958 and the establishment of Christian Women's Feminist Forum (Kristent Kvinnesaksforum, KKF) in 1974. KKF went in alliance with the broader women's movement in Norway on issues such as pornography and prostitution and female genital mutilation (Klingberg 2007).

The rights of religious minorities in Norway have gradually improved. In 1814, when the Constitution was adopted, no religious minorities, not even Christian ones, were allowed to assemble without permission from the State Church (Plesner 2008: 92). The Dissenters Act of 1845 allowed Christian denominations of Norwegian citizens the right to establish their own faith communities. In 1851, a ban on Jews was abolished; in 1891, non-Christian communities were permitted; and in 1897, a ban on monastic orders was set aside, but Jesuits were not admitted to Norway until 1956 (Kultur- og kirkedepartementet 2006). Only in 1969, when the Faith Communities Act replaced the Dissenters Act, did all faith communities in Norway obtain the same basic rights (see Plesner 2008: 93). The more recent Anti-Discrimination Act of 2006 further improved the right to religious freedom, as it includes protection against discrimination on the basis of religion and belief (ibid.).

However, the anti-discrimination legislation pertaining to gender provides general exemption rights to communities of faith (Skjeie 2007; Siim and Skjeie 2008: 328–329; Solhøy 2015). Proposals to abolish the exemption of religious communities from the Gender Equality Act have been made but so far without success (Barne- og Likestillingsdepartementet 2008; Økland and Halsaa 2008; Solhøy et al. 2010; NOU 2013: 1). Women have, however, demanded access and have gradually been admitted to formal positions within the Lutheran Church (Solhøy 2015). The legal ban on women priests was abolished in 1938, and the first woman priest was ordained in 1961.

Gender equality has gained ground in the Church over time in line with public gender equality policies. In 1961, six of the Church's nine bishops argued that female priests were against the word of God, but today all the bishops support the appointment of women bishops and the first woman bishop was appointed in 1993 (more than 20 years earlier than the first woman bishop of the Church of England). The relative liberal practices of the State Church, comparatively speaking, are also demonstrated in the, albeit contested, appointment of gay and lesbian priests.

About 555,000 individuals in Norway are members of religious or belief communities outside of the State Church (Taule 2014). The majority of these are Christian, including members of other Protestant traditions and Catholicism. In 2011, nearly 40,000 people were members of Pentecostal congregations, while those of the Roman Catholic Church numbered about 83,000.[7]

The Pentecostal movement was brought to Norway in 1907 by the Norwegian Pastor Thomas Ball Barratt, who led a religious revival in his *Filadelfia* Church in Oslo – a revival which, according to Anderson (2004: 84), attracted pilgrims from all over Europe. Barratt was influential in establishing and advancing Pentecostalism in Europe from the early 20th century and onwards, including in the United Kingdom. As in other countries in Europe, the Pentecostal movement in Norway consists of a number of different and independent free-church congregations, including the Assemblies of God, the Church of God, the Full Gospel Church and Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance. There are about 300 local Pentecostal churches in Norway.[8] Each congregation is an independent faith community led by its own council of elders, but the movement as such is led by an advisory 'Leader Council' (*lederråd*) (Thorbjørnsrud 2005: 285). In 2015, the Leader Council had six members, consisting of five men and one woman.[9] While preaching used to be the sole preserve of men in the Pentecostal movement, today several (but not all) congregations in Norway have women pastors and elders, and the debate about this issue was lively during the time of our interviews with Pentecostal women.[10] It is up to each independent congregation to allow women taking on such roles.

The number of registered members of the Muslim faith in Norway has increased rapidly since 1980, when the figure was only 1,000. As of 1st January 2014, registered Muslims (those who are formal members of a religious association) numbered 132,135.[11] In addition to those born into Islam, there are between 900 and 1,000 converts to Islam in Norway, and most of them are women (Jacobsen 2009: 19). A recent unofficial count found that the number of mosques (registered and unregistered) was nearly 130, with more than 30 located in Oslo.[12] The mosques are differentiated along religious, ethnic, national and linguistic lines. Politics (often related to international issues) is a further element of differentiation. Strandhagen (2008: 40) notes that it is quite common for Muslims to make use of various mosques,

although it is customary to be a 'member' of just one due to funding regulations. Mosques in Norway vary in terms of whether women are admitted and/or allocated space (and how much space; see Nyhagen Predelli 2008). Pakistani immigrants founded the first Sunni mosque in Oslo in 1974 (the Islamic Cultural Centre) and the first Shia mosque in 1975. As in Spain and the United Kingdom, most Muslims in Norway adhere to the Sunni tradition (80%) while a minority adhere to the Shia tradition (20%). Among the Sunni followers, there is a strong presence of the Pakistani Barelwi movement, an expression of traditional folk-religiosity with a strong basis in the Pakistani countryside. Recent migration from Iraq and Afghanistan has led to growth and changes in the Shia milieu. In the 1990s, a number of new organizations were established. They included the Islamic Women's Group of Norway (*Islamsk Kvinnegruppe Norge*) in 1991 (Nyhagen Predelli 2003b) and the Islamic Council of Norway (*Islamsk Råd*) in 1993 after a dialogue initiative by the then Lutheran State Church (Jacobsen 2009: 21).[13] Interreligious dialogue, including Christian–Muslim dialogue, developed significantly in Norway during the 1990s (Leirvik 2014). The Islamic Council is an umbrella organization for roughly 40 member organizations (mosques) all over the country, with a total of more than 60,000 members. It seeks to unify Norwegian Muslims and to create a common normative Islamic practice on certain issues (Jacobsen 2009: 22). The Islamic Council has gained some legitimacy as a representative of Muslims and increasingly acts as a liaison with public authorities. A Norwegian woman and convert to Islam, Lena Larsen, led the Council in the period 2000–2003. The appointment of a woman to such a prominent public role was a bold and unprecedented step in the context of Islam in Norway. In 2002, the World Islamic Mission mosque in Oslo appointed Amber Khan, another Muslim woman, as its media spokesperson (see Nyhagen Predelli 2008). There are no organized feminist Muslim groups in Norway, but Islamic feminism is advocated both within informal milieus and by individual Muslim women with high media and political profiles, including Hadia Tajik, who is a member of the Norwegian Parliament and Deputy Leader of the Labour Party. In general, religiously based organizing has increased over time in Norway, due to immigration patterns and available state funding. According to Siim and Skjeie (2008: 328), religion is the single most important basis for immigrant organizing in Norway.

Spain

The Spanish constitution protects religious freedom and states that 'no religion shall have a state character' (Fox 2008: 127). It also protects against discrimination on the basis of religion. However, the state must consider the religious beliefs of Spanish society and maintain relations of cooperation with the Catholic Church and other denominations. Historically, the

Catholic Church has had a privileged position in Spain. Relations between the Catholic Church and the state during the fascist dictatorship of Franco (1939–1975) have been described as 'National Catholicism' (Pérez-Agote 2010: 226). The state had high control over the church while also depending on the church for political legitimacy (ibid.: 228). During the Franco regime, 'religious minorities were defined as a threat to the "national identity", they were strongly persecuted, forced to act clandestinely and publicly stigmatized' (Griera 2013: 231). This meant that Protestant churches, including Pentecostal ones, as well as other religious minorities, could not operate in public; they were only allowed to worship in private (Astor 2014: 1719). Towards the end of Franco's reign, a limited tolerance of religious diversity was implemented via the 1967 Law on Religious Freedom that 'permitted the creation of non-Catholic religious associations' (ibid.). Moreover, the Catholic Church increasingly sought to distance itself from the authoritarian regime – a move which 'made a contribution to the political transition to democracy' (Pérez-Agote 2010: 288). The 1978 constitution confirmed Spain as a democratic state, removed Catholicism's status as the country's official religion and supported religious pluralism (Guia 2014). The 1980 Law on Religious Freedom protects the right to religious freedom and gives religious groups the right to register with the Ministry of Justice to obtain legal status (ibid.: 76).

The Catholic Church has, however, retained a privileged status in Spain. An agreement between the state and the Vatican from 1979 effectively 'safeguards the favourable treatment of the Catholic Church' in matters relating to children's education and church finance (de Velasco 2010: 247). Government tax forms include the option of donating taxes to the Catholic Church (Fox 2008). Furthermore, the government funds Catholic chaplains for the military, hospitals and prisons,[14] supports private Catholic schools and gives the Catholic Church tax benefits that are not given to other religions. In 1992, the government signed separate agreements with Judaism, Islam and Evangelical Christianity, as these were considered 'deeply rooted' religions in Spain (Guia 2014: 81). The agreements give official recognition to marriages within these religions and tax-exempt status and the right to religious education in public schools. However, the public funding given to Judaism, Islam and Evangelical Christianity does not match that afforded to the Catholic Church (Fox 2008; Guia 2014: 83–84; see also de Velasco 2010). For Islam, the agreement was signed with the Islamic Commission of Spain, a joint organization representing the Federation of Islamic Religious Entities of Spain (FEERI) and the Union of Islamic Communities in Spain (UCIDE) (see Guia 2014: 82; Astor 2014). The agreement with Evangelical Christianity was signed with the Federation of Evangelical Religious Entities in Spain (FEREDE);[15] it includes Protestants, Baptists, Pentecostals and others (de Velasco 2010: 247). Religions that have secured agreements with the Spanish state receive financial support from the government via

the Foundation for Pluralism and Coexistence,[16] established in 2004 and supported by the Ministry of Justice (see de Velasco 2010; Griera, Martínez-Ariño and García-Romeral 2014). The Foundation's main aims are to support religious freedom and provide funding, including support for educational and cultural projects (Griera, Martínez-Ariño and García-Romeral 2014; see also Astor 2014). A third level of recognition has been assigned to Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and Buddhism as 'well known faiths or those that have clearly taken root', while a fourth level includes 'minority confessions' that are simply registered and not afforded recognition (de Velasco 2010: 248). This fourth level includes the Church of Scientology. Religions that are not registered are considered 'cultural associations' and compose a further level (ibid.).[17] In 2011, the Observatory of Religious Pluralism in Spain[18] was founded with the aim to support local councils in dealing with religious diversity (Griera, Martínez-Ariño and García-Romeral 2014). The five different levels of recognition (and non-recognition) give clear evidence to Spain's privileging of the Catholic Church and of its differential treatment of specific religions. Moreover, Fox (2008: 128) reports that 'minority religions, including those with agreements with the government', have experienced problems with obtaining permission for the construction of places of worship. The wearing of headscarves by women and girls has also become a contentious issue in Spain (see Burchardt, Griera and García-Romeral 2015), and abortion continues to be hotly debated and contested. The Spanish Constitution gives religious organizations in Spain the right to organize their own internal life as they wish. They are not explicitly exempt from gender equality legislation, but in practice they do not have to comply with it either.[19]

As noted above, Spain does not have a state church, but the Catholic Church is nonetheless privileged by the state. The Catholic Church in Spain is part of the global Roman Catholic Church governed by the Pope and the Vatican and does not permit women to be ordained as priests. It is also a staunch opponent of any abortion rights for women. The historically strong position of the Catholic Church and its emphasis on a submissive and family-centred role for women were constraining factors for the development of a contemporary women's movement in Spain (Threlfall 2005: 16–17; see also Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa 2012: 41). Even during the Franco regime, however, there were feminists working to improve the status and position of women within the Catholic Church, including Women's Catholic Action,[20] a mass organization of women (Valiente 2014). The World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations currently has two member organizations from Spain: the *Acción Católica General de Adultos de España* and the *Adoración Nocturna Feminina de España*.[21] A strong women's movement campaigning for democracy and women's rights and against sex discrimination in Spain developed rapidly from the mid-1970s. Despite strong opposition from the Catholic Church, a divorce law was passed in 1981

and a restrictive law permitting abortion in exceptional cases was introduced in 1983 (Threlfall 1996). Abortion continues to be a highly contested issue in Spain, with recent street protests taking place in 2014 and the Catholic Church vehemently opposed to women's universal access to abortion. The Spanish women's movement remains vibrant and campaigns strongly for women's rights and against gender-based violence (see Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa 2012). Contemporary Catholic feminists in Spain include Teresa Forcades, 'Spain's most famous living nun' and a leader in the Occupy Movement, who supports women's right to abortion and the Church allowing women to become priests.[22] The Catholic Church has a tradition of mobilization and advocacy in support of the rights of immigrants in Spain (see Guia 2014).

Swedish missionaries brought Pentecostalism to Spain in 1923 (Anderson 2004: 97), and subsequent missionaries have arrived from other parts of the world. Today, the number of Pentecostals (also called Evangelicals in Spain)[23] is estimated at 1.5 million, including 600,000 Roma who have converted to Evangelism (Pérez-Agote 2010: 229; see also Delgado 2010 on Gypsy Pentecostalism in Spain), and the Pentecostal movement is growing with new churches being established all over the country (Griera, Martínez-Ariño and García-Romeral 2014: 12). Similar to Norway and the United Kingdom, Spain has several Pentecostal denominations, some of which have been established by missionaries from Puerto Rico and Brazil (Anderson 2004: 97) and others by missionaries from North America (Griera 2013). The Filadelfia Evangelical Church, established by a Frenchman in the 1950s, is both the 'largest Pentecostal denomination and the largest Roma Church in the world' (ibid.). Other Pentecostal churches include the Elim Pentecostal Federation, the Assembly of God and Apostolic churches.

Contrary to Norway and the United Kingdom, Islam has a rich historical legacy in Spain, including the medieval Muslim kingdom in Al-Andalus, but from 1492 the country has been largely Christian (de Velasco 2010: 327; Guia 2014). In 2010, the number of Muslims in Spain was estimated at 2.3% of the population, or just above 1 million individuals,[24] including about 20,000 converts (Guia 2014: 79). More recent estimates, however, put the total figure at 1.5 million or more (Guia 2014: 3; see also Astor 2014: 1717). As mentioned earlier, the Spanish government has afforded recognition to the Islamic Commission of Spain (CIE) as the legitimate representative of Muslims in the country. The first Muslim organization in Spain was established in Melilla (a Spanish enclave on the North African shore) in 1968. ATIME,[25] an influential Muslim advocacy group formed by Moroccan immigrants in Spain, was established in 1989 (see Guia 2014: 44 and 56). As in Norway and the United Kingdom, the number of official Muslim groups has increased greatly over time. Guia (2014: 82) reports an increase from 51 in 1994 to 616 in 2011, while de Velasco (2010: 237) states that '[m]osques are sprouting all over Spain and now number more than 500', including

purpose-built places of worship and those using existing buildings. An even higher figure of 1,300 Muslim places of worship is suggested by Griera, Martínez-Ariño and García-Romeral (2014: 12). The first Muslim women's organization in Spain was 'The Committee of Muslim Women' in Melilla, which held its first public protest in January 1986 (Guia 2014: 18). The first national mobilization of Muslim women took place in Barcelona in 1999 and in Valencia in 2000, focusing on issues such as women's participation in Muslim organizations, the headscarf, mothering, religious education and others (Guia 2014: 90). Guia states that Muslim women have since first and foremost mobilized at a regional level, and regional activism has resulted in the election of the first Muslim woman (a Spanish convert) to 'the prominent, mixed-gender Islamic Cultural Centre of Valencia' (ibid.: 92). Muslim feminist groups in Spain have included *An-Nisa*[26] and *Inshallah* (Guia 2014: 88), as well as the Union of Muslim Women of Spain (UMME).[27] In 2010, UMME, then led by a Spanish convert, co-organized the fourth International Congress on Islamic Feminism in Spain, which gathered more than 500 participants (both women and men). By arguing for religious recognition and full citizenship status, Muslim immigrants and converts in Spain have, according to Guia (2014: 9), contributed to Spain's democratic development.

United Kingdom

While the United Kingdom has no written constitution, the right to religious freedom is enshrined in law, and its official religions are the Anglican Church of England and the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Christianity is the dominant religion throughout the United Kingdom, but each of its four nations (England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales) has distinct religious forms and practices (Weller 2008). In Northern Ireland there is no state religion, but Catholics constitute the largest denomination, with Presbyterians coming second. Wales, however, has no single predominant Christian denomination that serves as a national focus (ibid.). As mentioned earlier, Fox (2008) characterizes the United Kingdom as having a historical or cultural state religion, which he describes as

> official state religions, but other than this official designation their governments take few or no steps to support the religion more than they support any other religion. Other than funding for religious education and perhaps some other minor funding of religion, their involvement in religion tends to be symbolic, ceremonial, and generally a result of historical momentum rather than any active support for religion.
>
> (ibid.: 119)

Whether this is an accurate description of the United Kingdom is a matter of debate, as some would argue that Christianity in general and the Church

of England in particular enjoy great privilege and access to political power. Indeed, 26 Anglican bishops (known as 'the Lords Spiritual') have a seat in the House of Lords (the Upper House of the UK Parliament) and thus enjoy a political privilege that is hitherto unprecedented for representatives of other Christian denominations and other religious faiths in the country. Moreover, as Monarch and Head of State, the Queen is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England.[28]

Unlike Spain, the United Kingdom 'has no formal list of religions officially recognized by the state' (Weller 2008: 180), and unlike both Spain and Norway it does not have national or regional public registers of 'registered religions' or religious associations. The only lists are of the religions that are recognized within the Prison Service and of those that obtain charitable status via the Charity Commission for England and Wales (ibid.). Charitable status provides a range of 'public benefit' organizations with tax exemptions, and thousands of organizations with religious affiliation in England and Wales have therefore registered with the Charity Commission.[29]

Similar to Norway and Spain, the United Kingdom has a history of discrimination and marginalization of religious beliefs outside the dominant church (the Church of England), but restrictions were abolished earlier in the United Kingdom than in Norway and Spain. For example, the Toleration Act, granting freedom of worship to registered Protestant dissenters, was passed in 1689, while the Protestant Dissenters Relief Act was passed in 1779.[30] Legal protection against discrimination on the basis of religion and belief has been instituted in the 1998 Human Rights Act, which guarantees freedom of religion. It has also been affirmed in the 2006 Equality Act, the 2006 Racial and Religious Hatred Act and the 2010 Equality Act.

The UK government does not provide funding for state churches, with the exception of funds for the repair of historical buildings (Fox 2008: 120). The government does, however, fund several thousands faith schools, most of which are Anglican or Catholic. A small minority of the publicly funded faith schools are Jewish, Methodist, Sikh, Muslim, Greek Orthodox and Seventh Day Adventist. Furthermore, the UK government does not fund purely religious activities, but through local authorities the government engages faith-based organizations or groups to provide public services. The public funding of faith-based organizations has risen since the 1980s due to their increased role in community regeneration, welfare and service delivery (Dinham 2009; Dinham and Jackson 2012). Faith-based organizations have also been allocated public funding to promote social cohesion and integration through programmes such as the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund and the Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund (Thomas 2009). Moreover, faith-based organizations are eligible to apply for 'non-faith-specific' central government funding to support their training, services (e.g., homeless shelters and pregnancy advice) and political advocacy. However, such funds are not to be used to promote solely religious

activities but for wider faith-based work for the common good and services that promise to deliver key government policies and strategies. All religious organizations providing public services are subject to the government's equality legislation that makes it unlawful to discriminate against faith-based organizations in tendering processes. On the other hand, faith-based organizations are subject to general discrimination laws that make it illegal for them to discriminate against clients based on their gender, ethnicity, faith and so on. However, faith-based organizations are exempt from equality legislation pertaining to gender and sexual orientation. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has been mandated by the UK Parliament to 'challenge discrimination, and to protect and promote human rights'.[31] It includes gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, age, religion and belief in its remit and deals with cases where the freedom of religion and belief may contradict freedom from discrimination related to gender and sexuality (see Donald 2012).

As noted, the 2011 UK Census revealed significant changes in the religious landscape since the previous 2001 Census (ONS 2012). While in 2001, 72% of the population in England and Wales identified as Christian, the figure was reduced to 59% in 2011 (down from 41 million individuals in 2001 to 33 million in 2011). Moreover, while in 2001, 3% (1.6 million people) identified as Muslim, this had risen to nearly 5% (2.7 million people) in 2011. Other main religions include Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Buddhism. As stated before, the 2011 Census also reported that a quarter of the population had no religion. The figure was even higher in a recent representative survey by NatCen, which found that 49% of the respondents had 'No Religion', while 17% identified as Anglican, 8% as Roman Catholic, 17% as 'Other Christian' and 8% as 'Non-Christian' (NatCen 2015).

Membership of the Anglican Church has been in decline over a long period of time, and in 2013 it was down to 1,362,855 individuals (Brierley 2014). By comparison, membership in the Catholic Church, which is also declining, was slightly higher at 1,399,942 in 2013 (ibid.). Church attendance is also in decline (Bruce 2002). After much debate, the Church of England opened for the ordination of women priests for the first time in 1994. It took another 20 years of contentious debate before the Church permitted the ordination of its first woman bishop in December 2014. About 20% of Anglican ministers are women.[32] The feminist organization Women and the Church (WATCH), established in the 1990s, is linked to the Church of England and has been a staunch advocate of women bishops. In June 2015, it called for God to be referred to as 'she' within the Church.[33] The Christian Feminist Network UK, established in 2012, is another group seeking to promote Christian feminism.

While other Christian churches in the United Kingdom have experienced decline, Pentecostal churches have been growing.[34] Brierley (2014) found that in 2013 there were 432,687 Pentecostals in the country, but others

have reported just under 1 million adherents.[35] The largest Pentecostal churches are the Redeemed Christian Church of God, African and West Indian churches, Elim Pentecostal churches and Assemblies of God. Brierley has predicted a 25% growth in membership of Pentecostal churches by 2020 (ibid.). Pentecostalism came to Britain in 1907 via Norway, as Anglican vicar Alexander A. Boddy had visited T. B. Barratt's Oslo church (Anderson 2004: 91). Purpose-built churches and various Pentecostal denominations were subsequently established, including the Apostolic Faith Church, the Elim Pentecostal Alliance and the Assemblies of God in Great Britain and Ireland (Anderson 2004). The growth in African Caribbean and West African Pentecostal churches began with post-war immigration of people from the West Indies and from Nigeria (Anderson 2004: 95). Figures from the English Church Census showed that in 2005, there were 2,227 Pentecostal churches in England alone, and the number has probably increased since.[36] Pentecostal churches vary in whether they allow women as leaders and/or preachers. For example, in 2015, the Elim Pentecostal Alliance and the Assemblies of God Great Britain were led entirely by men, but both engage women chaplains.[37]

As in Norway and Spain, Islam is the second-largest religion in the United Kingdom in terms of its number of adherents. A majority of Muslims in the United Kingdom belong to the Sunni tradition, and about three-fourth of them are of Asian origins, including Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Indians (Gilliat-Ray 2010: 120). Shia Muslims have been estimated at 320,000 and the two largest ethnic groups among them are Pakistani and Iraqi (ibid.: 61). The number of converts to Islam is probably around 20,000 (ibid.: 118). The Muslim presence has increased significantly from the 1960s and onwards, tied primarily to immigration from South Asia (Pakistan, India and Bangladesh), but also to immigration by East African Asians who came to the United Kingdom from Uganda when Idi Amin expelled all Asians from that country. Muslims have also immigrated from Turkey, Iran and the Middle East. From the 1980s, Muslim asylum seekers from Bosnia, Somalia and elsewhere settled in Britain (see Gilliat-Ray 2010).

Estimates of the number of mosques in the United Kingdom vary from 850 to 1,500 (ibid.: 181). Women have traditionally been excluded from or marginalized within mosques due to either a lack of space or the allocation of an inferior space compared to that of men, but purpose-built mosques have increasingly included a room for women (ibid.: 201–202; see also Bhimji 2012). Such rooms allow women to transform male-dominated spaces to more gender-inclusive ones (Bhimji 2009). Despite campaigns to increase the participation of women in UK mosques by the UK government as part of its strategy to prevent terrorism (see Gilliat-Ray 2010 and Brown 2008), gender segregation and male dominance remain the organizing principles for mosques in the United Kingdom (Gilliat-Ray 2010). In May 2015, the Muslim Women's Council in Bradford announced the start of a consultation

on the establishment of Britain's first women-led mosque for women.[38] Women have representation on national, gender-mixed Muslim umbrella organizations in the United Kingdom, including the Muslim Council of Britain and the British Muslim Forum.[39] In 2013, Sugra Ahmed was elected the first-ever woman president of the Islamic Society for Britain.[40] Muslim women in the United Kingdom also have a long history of mobilization and organization to support local communities (see Gilliat-Ray 2010; Jones et al. 2014; Wadia 2015). Similar to Spain and Norway, advocates of Muslim women's rights and Islamic feminism have become increasingly vocal and visible, including both individual women and organized groups like The Muslim Women's Network UK (established in 2003)[41] and *Maslaha*, which runs the website islamandfeminism.org.[42]

Country contexts: Gender, race and ethnicity, citizenship and women's movements in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom

This section provides a brief overview of contextual factors relating to gender, race and ethnicity, citizenship and women's movements in the three countries (for more detailed descriptions, see Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa 2012; Nyhagen Predelli, Halsaa and Thun 2012).

Norway has a strong international position in advancing women-friendly policies and a well-established gender equality machinery that provides a high level of policy access for women's and feminist groups. The internationally pioneering Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (*Likestillings-og diskrimineringsombudet*)[43] is tasked with combating multiple forms of discrimination based on gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, disability and age. The radical women's movement that emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s mobilized around a wide range of issues, including abortion, childcare, equal pay, gender equality legislation, political representation, domestic abuse and EU membership. Indigenous Sami women were politicized as women in the mid-1970s and created their own organizations in the late 1980s (Eikjok 2000; Halsaa 2013). The first interest organization established by ethnic minority women emerged in Oslo in 1979, as the Foreign Women's Group. It was later subsumed by the MiRa Centre, which has a prominent position in the struggle for migrant and refugee women's rights (Nyhagen Predelli 2003 and 2011). Many organizations by and for immigrant women have since been established around the country, but most of them are at the local rather than national level and are cultural or ethnic associations rather than political organizations (Nyhagen Predelli 2006).

Unlike Spain and the United Kingdom, Norway does not have a colonial history, yet it cannot deny 'colonial complicity' (Vuorela 2009: 19) as well as a history of discrimination against people of foreign descent. Immigration increased from the mid-1960s (Vassenden 1997), with labour migrants

arriving mainly from Europe and North America but also from Asia and Africa (including India, Pakistan and Morocco). An immigration stop was implemented in 1975, which curtailed labour immigration, and a period of family immigration began before a third phase of refugee immigration brought groups from countries like Chile, Vietnam, Iran, Yugoslavia and Somalia. A fourth wave of immigration has come from EU states, including Poland and the Baltic States. The indigenous Sami people amount to about 40,000 people.[44]

The anti-racist movement emerged in the 1980s (Nydal 2007), but it took time for the Norwegian state and society to seriously acknowledge the existence of racism. A comprehensive law against racism and discrimination was instituted in the 2005 Anti-Discrimination Act. The Norwegian Nationality Act has a strict principle of one nationality for its citizens, language training for all and the possibility of swearing allegiance (since 2006) to the state. A liberal aspect of the law gives all individuals who meet the requirements of naturalization the right to obtain formal citizenship. The universal right of immigrants to vote in local and regional elections applies to all migrants who have lived in Norway for three years or more (it does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of his or her country of origin). In comparison, both Spain and the United Kingdom practise a system where only 'preferred nationalities' have voting rights.

The long period of Franco's dictatorship in Spain (1939–1975) had a major impact on the late (in comparison with Norway and the United Kingdom) introduction of gender equality legislation in Spain (Valiente 2003a), as well as on the emergence of the radical women's movement (Threlfall 2005). The first state institution aiming to promote women's rights and equality was founded in 1983 (The Institute of Women, or *Instituto de la Mujer*) (Valiente 1995). Initially weak, and providing only limited access to women's organizations, the Institute of Women has since played an important role in Spanish gender equality policies. New legislative measures were introduced with the Gender Violence Act in 2004, the (Gender) Equality Act in 2007 and other national and regional acts promoting gender equality. A Ministry of Equality was established in 2008, later absorbed by the Ministry of Health (see Bustelo 2009). Lombardo (2009: 4) describes this development as one where Spain has moved from being a 'dictatorship and a latecomer in gender equality policies, to being one of the European pioneers'.

The development of the radical women's movement in Spain took off towards the end of 1975 and mobilized around reproductive issues, including abortion and reproduction, divorce and labour market discrimination. Feminist demands were also raised about education, parental rights and childcare, as well as domestic violence. The first organizations formed by ethnic minority women include the first organized group of Muslim women in Melilla in 1968, as well as women's organizations established by women from Latin America, the Maghreb and the Philippines, during the 1980s

and 1990s. Roma women in Spain have also established important femi-
nist organizations. Today, there is a plethora of ethnic minority women's
organizations in Spain, ranging from political to cultural and religious
groups.

Both Spain and the United Kingdom have been significantly influenced
by their respective and different colonial histories. Moreover, Spain has only
recently become a country of net immigration. The increased immigration to
Spain has largely come from African and Latin American countries, includ-
ing Morocco, Ecuador, Peru and Colombia, and also from China, Pakistan,
India and the Philippines (Ayres and Barber 2006). EU migrants, especially
from Romania and the United Kingdom, also form large contingents. Legal
and institutional mechanisms for the regulation and governance of racial
and ethnic relations were also introduced comparatively late with national
policy plans emerging in the 1990s and government bodies established in
the new millennium (e.g., the Council for the Promotion of Equal Treat-
ment of All Persons without Discrimination on the Grounds of Racial and
Ethnic Origin). Immigrant organizations in Spain have mobilized to improve
the rights of migrants in the labour market as well as their citizenship rights,
and the Catholic Church has also provided support for migrants' causes.
A new and more restrictive immigration law was introduced in 2000, which
'stripped immigrant workers of the rights of association, protest and strike'
(Zapata-Barrero 2010: 179). A new Law on the Rights and Freedoms of For-
eigners and their Social Integration was implemented in 2009 (ECRI 2011).
In Spain, Muslims have not always enjoyed the same citizen rights as oth-
ers (see Guia 2014). The right of non-EU citizens to vote in Spain remains
controversial, as reciprocal agreements with some countries, in particular
Latin American countries, only give some immigrants the right to vote in
local elections (on the condition they have resided in Spain for five years).
Individuals from countries without reciprocal agreements are left without
the right to vote, and 'at the bottom [are] immigrants from largely Muslim
countries' who suffer political exclusion (Guia 2014: 72).

The United Kingdom has instituted legislation that prohibits discrimina-
tion based on gender, ethnicity, religion, age, disability and sexuality, but its
substantive measures to reduce inequalities for women do not match those
of Norway (e.g., childcare and parental leave policies). The Equal Oppor-
tunities Commission, the Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act
were early features of the initial gender equality machinery. The election
of a Labour government in 1997 increased the access of women's groups to
policy channels. The gender machinery itself was considered weak in terms
of its political influence, despite innovations like the Government Equali-
ties Office (now subsumed under the Home Office) (Benn 2000; Coote 2000;
Lovenduski 2005). In 2007, the new Equality and Human Rights Commis-
sion was established with a remit that includes gender, sexuality, disability,
age, race and faith/belief. A new Equality Act came into place in 2010,

consolidating previous anti-discrimination laws into a single act (see Squires 2009 and 2007).

The women's liberation movement in the United Kingdom, emerging in the late 1960s and early 1970s, forwarded political demands that were agreed to at national feminist conferences. Its demands centred on labour market rights (equal pay and opportunities), abortion and contraception, childcare, legal and financial independence for women, lesbian women's rights and domestic abuse (Caine 1997). Ethnic minority women's organizations included the Brixton Black Women's Group (1973), the Organisation of Women of Asian and African Descent (1978) and Southall Black Sisters (1979). On their agenda were issues related to education, police brutality, immigration abuses and racism (Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe 1985). Today, gender-based violence, in all its forms, remains a central agenda issue for both white and ethnic minority women's organizations.

Unlike Norway and Spain, the United Kingdom has had a strong anti-racist movement since the 1960s, and the state introduced anti-discrimination laws and policies from that time, starting with the first race relations legislation passed in 1965, further Race Relations Acts in 1968 and 1976, and the Equality Act in 2010. Modern immigration to the United Kingdom (post-Second World War) has a longer history than Norway and Spain, relating in large part to the colonies of the British Empire. A large section of the immigrant population has voting rights due to their origin in a Commonwealth Country (totalling 55 countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan). Immigrants of non-EU and non-Commonwealth backgrounds do not have the same voting rights, but the issue is not highly politicized. Immigrants with legal residence status can apply for citizenship after five years of residence, but they must also pass a citizenship test and demonstrate English-language proficiency. The Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act (2009) introduced different routes to citizenship for immigrants and various stages they must go through before obtaining citizenship. Roma and Traveller communities in the United Kingdom are 'among the most disadvantaged ethnic minority groups' (ECRI 2010: 8). Other groups that experience prejudice and discrimination are Black and ethnic minority groups and members of Jewish and Muslim communities.

Research methods

The main question guiding our research has been whether religion is a resource or a barrier to women's citizenship. We have approached this question both from the point of view of the interviewed religious women and from our academic point of view as feminist scholars. We have also asked the following empirical sub-questions: (1) How do religious women live their faith in everyday life? (2) How do religious women think about and

practise citizenship? (3) How do religious women relate to gender equality, women's movements and feminism? We have sought to answer these questions through qualitative interviews with Christian and Muslim women in Europe.

Selection and recruitment of research participants

Our book is based on in-depth interviews with a total of 61 Christian and Muslim women living in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom. We first considered recruiting participants from national organizations formed by and representing religious women. Only the United Kingdom, however, has a variety of national-level religious women's organizations that reflect a wide range of faith traditions. Norway and Spain have national organizations for Christian women, but few if any national women's organizations that represent other faith traditions. In order to achieve comparable case studies, we chose a more bottom-up strategy that involved recruiting women who attend churches or mosques in or around three major cities – Oslo, Madrid and Leicester. In Norway and Spain, the respective capitals were the primary locations for our study, as these cities are the most ethnically diverse. In the United Kingdom, our research was conducted in the city of Leicester in the East Midlands region of England. Next to London, Leicester is the most religiously diverse city in the United Kingdom[45] (for further details about the specific locations for our study, see Halsaa, Thun and Nyhagen Predelli 2010; Nyhagen Predelli and Manful 2010; Quintero and Nyhagen Predelli 2010).

To reach women who are positioned differently in terms of the majority religion (Christianity) and the minority religion (Islam) in all three countries, we opted for a four-dimensional strategy that included congregations affiliated with the dominant state-supported church (Lutheran, Catholic and Anglican, respectively) or with a Christian 'free church' (Pentecostal – Assembly of God) and mosques affiliated with the dominant Muslim faith in the three countries (Sunni Islam) or with a smaller Muslim community (Shia Islam) (see Table 1.2). Large churches representing the dominant Christian tradition (the state church or official church) were easily identifiable and chosen in each country context. There were several Christian free churches to choose from (e.g., Methodists; Baptists), but Pentecostal churches were selected because the Pentecostal movement is considered the 'fastest growing group of churches within Christianity today' (Anderson 2004: 1). After examining the various Pentecostal faith traditions in all three countries, we chose to recruit from churches identifying as Assembly of God churches.[46]

In terms of the main Muslim faith in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom (Sunni Islam), our strategy was to focus on the largest immigrant Muslim group in each country (Pakistanis in Norway and the United Kingdom, and Moroccans in Spain). We thus identified Sunni mosques in Oslo, Leicester and Madrid that were frequented by these ethnic groups. All Muslims are discursively positioned as belonging to the same *Ummah* or

Table 1.2   Final recruitment strategy

Christianity	Islam
Majority religion (state or official church) Norway: Lutheran (State) Church* Spain: Roman Catholic Church UK: Church of England (Anglican)	**Minority religion (largest faith)** Norway: Pakistani mosque (Sunni) Spain: Moroccan mosque (Sunni) UK: Pakistani mosque (Sunni)
Majority religion (free church) Norway: Assembly of God (Pentecostal) Spain: Assembly of God (Pentecostal) UK: Assembly of God (Pentecostal)	**Minority religion (smaller faith)** Norway: Shia mosque Spain: Shia women UK: Shia women

Note: *At the time of the interviews, the Lutheran Church in Norway was a state church. From 2012, Norway no longer has an official religion.

community of religious believers, but historical processes of differentiation have led to a great variety of law schools and sects. Sunni-Islam represents the most widespread belief tradition and includes four major religious law schools, accounting for about 80% of all Muslim believers (Esposito 1998). Shia-Islam, the second-largest faith tradition within Islam, has its own religious law schools and represents about 20% of Muslim believers (ibid.). While it was quite straightforward to recruit participants from a Shia mosque in Oslo that is frequented by women, it was more difficult to recruit Shia women from within organized religious contexts in Madrid and Leicester.[47] The Shia women interviewed in Leicester actually attended a Sunni mosque due to its designated space for women. The Shia community in Madrid is rather small, and we could not find a Shia mosque. The interviewer was told that the devout Shia (men) in Madrid who attend mosques either frequent Sunni mosques or get together in private homes. The Shia participants recruited in Spain could thus not be identified with a single place of worship.

The snowball method was used to identify individuals who were asked to participate in the research. The recruitment process was slower than expected and very time-consuming in all three countries. We used e-mails and made numerous phone calls and sent letters to recruit women. In some cases it was difficult to make contact with women, and even if they had agreed to participate, it could be difficult to arrange interview appointments due to busy schedules.

Most of the research participants were born into or grew up in the religion they adhered to at the time of the interview, but a few had converted from one religion to another (see also Chapter 3). Those who had converted include an ethnic minority Pentecostal woman in the United Kingdom who had grown up in a Sikh household, a white Shia woman in the United Kingdom who was born into Christianity, a white Sunni woman in Spain who

had grown up as a Catholic and two white Pentecostal women in Spain who had 'converted' from Catholicism (see Chapter 3). Many of the interviewees, both Muslim and Christian, talked about experiences of chosen, deeper commitments to their faiths as adults. Most of the participants were deeply religious and practised their belief both at the church or mosque and in everyday life outside organized religion, while a few were less devout (see Chapter 3).

Of the 20 interviewed women who lived in Oslo, Norway, the ten Christian women (Lutheran and Pentecostal) were of ethnic majority and Norwegian origins, and the ten Muslim women had ethnic minority backgrounds with origins in Pakistan (the Sunni participants) and in Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan (the Shia participants). The ages of the participants in Norway ranged from 20 to 73 years. Most of those aged between 30 and 60 years of age were working, either full-time or part-time, in highly skilled occupations. Those who were not in full employment were either retired or studying at university or college. Some of the research participants in Norway had been stay-at-home mothers when their children were younger, but others had worked full-time also with small children. About half of the participants in Norway were, or had been, married and had children (some were divorced). They all spoke Norwegian fluently.

Of the 20 women from Madrid who participated, ten were of ethnic majority Spanish origins and ten had ethnic minority backgrounds with origins in Morocco (all Sunnis), Lebanon, Iran and Senegal. Of the ten white women, five were Catholic, four were Pentecostal (Evangelical) and one was a Sunni Muslim. Of the ten ethnic minority women, one was a Pentecostal, five were Sunni Muslims and four were Shia Muslims. Their ages ranged from 18 to 75. Most of them were (or had been) married and had children. The Spanish sample included women who were in employment or in education, homemakers and pensioners. Most of the interviewees spoke Spanish fluently, although two were less proficient.

Of the 21 women living in the East Midlands who took part in the study, nine were white of British origin and twelve were from ethnic minority backgrounds. Among the white women were five Anglicans, three Pentecostals and one Shia Muslim. Among the ethnic minority women were three Pentecostals with origins in India, Nigeria and Jamaica, five Sunni Muslims with origins in Pakistan and India, and four Shia Muslims with origins in Iran and Pakistan. The ages of UK participants ranged from 29 to 65 years, with more than half of the participants in their forties. At the time of the interview, about half were in full-time employment, working in highly skilled occupations. Those who were not in full employment were either retired, stay-at-home mothers, or worked part-time to juggle childcare demands. All of them spoke English fluently.

Among the interviewed Muslim participants, there were women who veiled by wearing a headscarf (*hijab*) and women who did not veil. In many

European contexts, various forms of veiling (*hijab*, *niqab* and *burka*) are controversial due to their symbolization of female submission, but veiling is also interpreted as a form of female resistance to post-colonialism, Western cultural dominance and Islamophobia. Recent research on veiling includes comparative studies of the framing and regulation of the Muslim headscarf in various European countries (Kilic 2008; Kilic, Saharso and Sauer 2008; Rosenberger and Sauer 2012), as well as studies of the multiple meanings of the veil among Muslim women themselves (e.g., El Guindi 1999; Ghazal Read and Bartkowski 2000; Bilge 2010; see also Scott 2007 and Joppke 2009). The focus of our own study is broader (Christian and Muslim women's faith, citizenship, gender equality, women's movements and feminism), but we refer to the headscarf if and when participants brought it up, especially in relation to Islamophobia and discrimination.

All of the interviewed women were asked about their views on gender equality, feminism and women's movements (see Chapters 5 and 6). None of them were self-identified feminists or had been active in women's movements in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom. Some of the women were, however, members of women's organizations that had expressed solidarity with women abroad or with women in their own societies who wear the *hijab*.

Interviews were conducted in Norway during March–June 2009, in Spain during the periods March–August 2009 and February–April 2010, and in the United Kingdom during March–July 2009, in settings such as the office or workplace of the interviewee, in their homes, at our own workplace, at the site of the religious organizations in which the participants are active, or at cafes or other public spaces. The interviews were completed with the aid of a topic guide with open-ended questions (see Halsaa, Thun and Nyhagen Predelli 2010; Nyhagen Predelli and Manful 2010; Quintero and Nyhagen Predelli 2010). This approach offered the opportunity to focus on a limited number of cases while exploring topics and meaning in depth, resulting in the production of 'thick description' data (Geertz 1973). Following Rubin and Rubin (2005: 30), we define our approach to interviewing within the tradition of interpretive constructionist thinking, in which 'responsive interviewing' (ibid.) entails the understanding that both the researcher and the interviewee come to the research situation with their own feelings, personality, interests and experience. Moreover, a dynamic relationship is created in the interview situation which might challenge both the researcher and the interviewee in terms of his or her understanding, and the interview setting thus provides an arena for dialogue and conversation which aims at 'depth of understanding, rather than breadth' (ibid.). A strategy of engagement in the research interview, rather than disengagement and distance, is a valued aspect of feminist methodology and research, and emphasizes connections between knowledge, theory and language, and experience (Ramazanoğlu 2002; see also Kitzinger 2007).

All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim by professional transcription agencies or by research assistants in the three countries. The Spanish interviews were professionally translated to English. The interviews were analysed via identified and emerging concepts and themes. We focused on how issues of gender equality, women's movements, feminism, religion, identity and citizenship were talked about by Christian and Muslim women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom. For example, we examined how the meaning of religion was represented in the interviews, how participants practised religion and what role religion played in the participants' identity constructions. We analysed how interviewees talked about citizenship, whether religious belief and practice were linked to citizenship, and whether religion was presented as a resource or barrier (or both) to lived citizenship. We also studied how the participants talked about gender equality and women's rights, as well as about feminism and women's movements. A small number of quotes have been used more than once in order to illustrate different analytical points.

Our qualitative approach produced comparable data (across the three country cases), but the findings are limited in scope due to the relatively small number of participants from specific organizational, social and cultural contexts. Many of our findings are, however, likely to be indicative of a wider set of Christian and Muslim organizations in Europe in which religious women are active and of a broader set of religious women's concerns and perspectives on gender, religion and citizenship.

Research ethics

Ethical approval was obtained from Loughborough University's Research Ethics Committee (for research in Spain and the United Kingdom) and from the Norwegian Social Science Data Service (for research in Norway). Participants were given a letter of information about the research and asked to sign a written consent form. To protect the anonymity of the participants we have not named the churches and mosques from where they were recruited. Throughout the book, interviewees are mainly referred to in relation to their religious affiliation, either as Lutheran, Catholic, Anglican, Pentecostal (or Evangelical), Sunni or Shia, in combination with their country of residence (e.g., 'Spanish Pentecostal'). Pseudonyms have been used whenever first names are invoked.

Insider–outsider problematic

Members of our original research team were involved in designing the project, interviewing participants and writing reports to the European Commission.[48] This book is, however, the result of a new analysis of all the interviews and a new writing up of all the findings. The research process, from start to finish, has been influenced by the positioning of researchers in relation to gender, religion, nationality, age, sexuality and immigrant status.

All the researchers in our team had grown up in Christian-dominated contexts and were more familiar with Christian teachings and practices than with Islam. The research team included a black, migrant researcher who identified as Christian (Pentecostal) and five white, non-migrant researchers who did not identify with any religion as adults but had grown up within the context of the Lutheran State Church in Norway and the Catholic Church in Spain, respectively. The Christian interviewer's faith made her an insider to Christian communities, while the fact of being a religious believer also made her share an important identity aspect with all of the interviewed women. Moreover, her ethnic minority status probably supported access to and recruitment of ethnic minority participants (both Christian and Muslim) in one of the country case studies.

Two members of the research team were actively involved in women's rights and feminist activism outside the academia, while the other three were not. The researcher's connections (or lack thereof) to the women's movement were not discussed in the interview situation.

During the interviews, the Christian women did not behave or talk as if they had a lot to explain or to defend, and they were probably not invited to do so to the same extent as with the Muslim interviewees. The Muslim women often took the opportunity of the interview to outline and explain their practices, prescriptions and doctrines and to correct any potential misunderstandings of Islam. The interviewers were taken to be representatives of the unknowing, possibly critical, majority population; they were outsiders to the Muslim faith and often without a similar national or ethnic belonging and lacking skills in the languages of migrant women. Both the researchers and the interviewees were situated in a context of negative public attention towards Islam. This may be one reason why Muslim interviewees felt the need to defend or to emphasize positive aspects of their religion. Another reason for this might be the minority status of Islam and Muslims in Europe (see also Chapter 6).

Nevertheless, both women in the mosques and in the churches generally welcomed the researchers warmly and expressed interest in our research project. The Christian women, especially those from state or official churches, treated the interviewers more like insiders. Many of them took the interviewers' knowledge of certain names and practices for granted due to shared socialization and education within the dominant Christian tradition. The feeling of being an 'insider' to Christianity in the interview situation may be because of a sense of belonging to the shared community of 'we Norwegians', implying a shared history, values and reference points based on a Christian heritage. These things are usually unsaid, but may still be present in the interview situation, and provide a certain context for the interview. This differed slightly for some of the Pentecostal women who belonged to a free-church tradition which has a less privileged position within Christianity in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom. However,

none of the Pentecostal women displayed any sign of wanting to defend their faith or practices, but they willingly explained when asked.

The next chapter sets the theoretical and analytical context for our study, drawing on scholarship from the sociology of religion, women's and feminist studies and citizenship studies. It provides a critique of rights-based perspectives on citizenship and argues for a bottom-up approach to lived religion, lived citizenship and lived gender. It provides a framework for our analysis of religious women's agency, their identities, their citizenship practice and their views on gender equality, women's movements and feminism.

2

Towards Lived Religion and Lived Citizenship: Binaries and Complexities in the Study of Religion, Gender, Feminism and Citizenship

> The notion that religion is bound to disappear has become increasingly untenable. There are far too many spiritually serious, well-educated, economically sophisticated, civically engaged religious people in the world.
>
> (Ammerman 2014: 5)

Introduction

With overall trends towards increasing secular beliefs and more gender-equal relations and practices in contemporary Europe, how can it be that so many European women continue to adhere to religious faiths and doctrines that support the equal value of women and men yet also support gender inequality? This issue is complex, not the least because neither 'religious' nor 'secular' and neither 'equal' nor 'equality' are straightforward terms. Instead, they are being read, understood and practised in many different ways. Moreover, women have ambivalent and contradictory relations to religious institutions and authorities. They may choose to accept and submit to some religious prescriptions and practices, while contesting or rejecting others. As Casanova (2009: 17) has argued, 'the religious politics of gender has become one of the most important issues facing humanity worldwide', and it is therefore urgent to address how religious women themselves live and practise religion, gender relations and citizenship. This chapter situates our empirical study of Christian and Muslim women in Europe in relation to relevant theoretical perspectives, concepts and empirical works in the sociology of religion, women's and feminist studies, and citizenship studies. It forges links between contemporary scholarly debates on religion and secularization, gender and secularization, institutional and everyday forms

of religion, the role of agency and structure in the analysis of gender and religion, different feminist approaches to religion, feminist theory's contributions to citizenship theory, and, finally, the conceptualization of religious citizenship.

Feminist women's movements of the 1960s and 1970s have mainly been understood as secular (Braude 2004; Bracke 2008; Jeffreys 2012). At the top of their agendas were issues such as abortion, contraception, women's bodies and reproductive rights, which challenged ideals of motherhood rooted in notions of female piety and domesticity (Cott 1977). In the section entitled 'Questioning the "post-secular": The intertwining and contextualization of the religious and the secular', we offer a critique of the term 'post-secular', of the distinction between the secular and the religious, and of the secularization thesis. Processes of both secularization and sacralization can be observed in contemporary European societies. Moreover, what is perceived as religious and as secular is subject to change and contestation and therefore requires attention to specific contexts.

In the next section, 'Lived religion: A holistic approach to religion as belief and practice', we outline the shift that is taking place within the sociology of religion from an institutional focus on organized religion to a focus on religion as lived and situate our own research within the 'lived religion' approach emerging from scholars such as Robert Orsi and Meredith McGuire. Later in the chapter, we forge links between the lived religion approach and the 'lived citizenship' perspective of feminist scholars such as Ruth Lister, Birte Siim and others. Before that, however, we suggest that the 'lived religion' approach poses challenges to the secularization thesis whether it is applied to the religious beliefs and practices of women or of men (see the section on 'Gender and secularization'), and we also question the notion of a 'post-secular turn' in feminism (in the section 'The "turn" that never was? The limits of dichotomous thinking').

Notions of autonomy, empowerment and agency were vital to the feminist women's movements originating in the late 1960s and 1970s. These notions have also become central to feminist analyses of religion and to debates about what constitutes agency within religious contexts. In the section 'Analysing women's religious agency', we demonstrate shifts and developments in feminist debate about religious women's agency and situate ourselves within the debate. Studies have often looked for religious women's agency in the ways in which they have circumvented, resisted or challenged patriarchal structures. Recently, however, scholars such as Saba Mahmood, Phyllis Mack and others have proposed that agency can also be located in behaviour that reproduces patriarchal social norms. Conceptualizations of agency as residing in religious piety have a strong affinity with the 'lived religion' approach, and with Robert Orsi we argue that attention must be paid to the structures and conditions in which any form of agency is performed.

Feminist perspectives on religion vary from deeming religion to be a private matter for individuals to viewing religion as either *irredeemably* patriarchal or *not necessarily* patriarchal. In the section titled 'Religion and patriarchy: A inevitable collusion?' we examine different feminist approaches to religion. We also use Linda Woodhead's theorization of the relationship between religion and gender to structure a discussion of ways in which religion can relate to gender equality. Moreover, we show how different approaches to 'feminism' and 'gender equality' can inform studies of gender and religion.

Our approach to 'citizenship' is inspired by feminist scholarship, including work by Ruth Lister and Birte Siim. In the section on 'Religion, citizenship, gender and multiculturalism' we outline feminist contributions that broaden up the term 'citizenship' from including only status and rights to also encompassing social identities, participation and belonging. Based on our empirical research on religious citizenship, social identities and gender equality, we also suggest that love, care, tolerance and respect (conceptualized as an ethic of care) are important aspects of citizenship as lived practice. This section also highlights a central theme in our book – that of connections between 'lived religion' and 'lived citizenship'. In the final section of this chapter ('Towards lived religion and lived citizenship'), we show that recent scholarship has focused on rights-based approaches to religious citizenship and argue that 'lived religion' and 'lived citizenship' expose the limitations of such rights-based approaches. Rights-based approaches ignore aspects of citizenship that religious women deem important, including identities, participation, belonging and an ethic of care.

Questioning the 'post-secular': The intertwining and contextualization of the religious and the secular

Recent scholarship on the role of religion in modern society invokes the term 'post-secular' to describe a *return* of religion to the public sphere. Although we are critical of the term, it usefully reminds us that the secular and the religious vary across historical, geographical, cultural and socio-political contexts and that they are intertwined in complex and shifting ways. According to Dillon (2010: 142), the term 'post-secular' 'recognizes the relevance of religion and of religious ideas in informing civic discourse', while Habermas (2008, 2011) suggests that religious citizens have a legitimate right to voice their views in the public sphere on a par with those who do not adhere to a religion. He also concedes that policy solutions rooted in religious convictions can be valuable to government. The 'return of religion' to the public sphere in European contexts also pertains to an increasing reliance of governments on the delivery of public welfare services by faith-based organizations (Bäckström and Davie 2010; Dinham and Jackson 2012; Reynolds 2014), as well as to public debate about the role of religion in the lives of

ordinary (often immigrant) citizens (Modood et al. 2006; Ahmad and Sardar 2012), and to the role of religion in the perpetuation of extreme forms of violence, including terrorist attacks by individuals or groups claiming to either represent or resent a particular faith (Pantazis and Pemberton 2009; Berntzen and Sandberg 2014). As Beckford argues, however, 'it is a high modernist intellectual and ethnocentric conceit to believe that moral, spiritual and religious questions have only recently forced themselves back on to the public or private agenda' (Beckford 2003: 200). Rather, such questions have invariably been part of modern national and global political agendas that continue to address education and welfare provision as well as health and well-being policies, including services that are targeted towards women in relation to pregnancy, childbirth, contraceptives, abortion and sexual violence.

Usage of the term 'post-secular' tends to reify the assumption that, with Western European modernity and its growing differentiation of social institutions and separation between public and private spheres (McLennan 2011), religiously informed values and practices became increasingly absent from the public sphere. It suggests that religion came to belong to the private lives of citizens and that 'religious values' can be fully disentangled from 'secular values'. This type of narrative or genealogy denies the continuous importance of religion in political debate and policy implementation (including the role of state churches in some European contexts), and it gives the impression that 'the secular' and 'the religious' are two fundamentally distinct phenomena with no overlap or shared characteristics. Although the 'post-secular' term signals a possible 'benign' role of religion in public debate, it nonetheless depends on a perspective that emphasizes differences between the religious and the secular, rather than their similarities and complex relationship. As such, it perpetuates traditional sociological thinking (e.g., Durkheim 1915; Weber 2001 [1930]; Bruce 2002) that has envisaged a progressive development from a state of backwardness and conservative tradition (i.e., religion) to that of enlightenment and modern liberation (i.e., secularism).

The 'difference-narrative' of the religious and the secular, also visible within political science (e.g., Inglehart and Norris 2003; Norris and Inglehart 2004), describes supposedly universal, linear historical processes towards secularization via the use of binary categories, including the religious and the secular, the traditional and the modern, the private and the public, the emotional and the rational. Feminist scholars in particular have critiqued such binaries for their close association with constructions of subordinate femininity and superior masculinity as well as their perpetuation of gendered hierarchies and inequalities (Pateman 1988; Lister 2003; Hagemann et al. 2008; Michel and Budde 2008). The gendered values that infuse dichotomous categories are discussed further in the section entitled 'Analysing women's religious agency' and also in Chapter 5.

The term 'post-secular' also contributes to a continued normalization and valorization of 'the secular' over and against 'the religious', which is marked as the inferior 'other' (Sands 2008: 309). In other words, 'the secular' is infused with universal values, while the religious is infused with particular values (see Fessenden 2008). An alternative narrative of the role of religion in the public sphere would not only interrogate more precisely when, where and how religion played a (legitimate or disputed) role in democratic deliberation, policy formation and implementation but also acknowledge and examine 'the interaction of religious and Enlightenment values' (Mack 2003: 161; see also Casanova 2009: 9; Razavi and Jenichen 2010: 835; Habermas 2011). To disentangle what stems from and/or is related to religion or to secularism, as if the two were wholly separable, is a challenging task, not least because what counts as religious or as secular is shifting in different contexts (Beckford 2003). The religious women in our own research talk about citizenship in terms of an ethic of tolerance, respect, love and care towards others – an ethic which for them is rooted in religious conviction but which transcends religious difference and also a religious–secular divide.

Despite its simplistic message of a 'return to religion', the term 'post-secular' breaks with the narrative of unstoppable development towards secularization in modern societies. It acknowledges that religion continues to play an important role in the lives of individual citizens, as well as in civil society and politics in contemporary Europe. As such, it implies a theoretical and empirical critique of the secularization thesis, which postulated that modernization would inevitably lead to secularization, a 'process whereby religious institutions, actions, and consciousness lose their social significance' (Wilson 1966: xiv). This process includes a separation of the church and the state, a declining influence of ideas about the sacred (Weber 1992) and a rejection of religious explanations in favour of scientific explanations (Bruce 2002). The secularization thesis proposed that religion would become increasingly privatized and individualized as its significance in the public sphere would continue to decline; religion as a collective, sacred canopy would gradually disappear (Berger 1967); its importance would become confined to everyday family life (Berger 1967; Luckmann 1967); and faith would become a question of personal choice and preference (Luckmann 1967).

While some prominent sociologists of religion continue to insist that increasing secularization is inevitable in modern societies (Wilson 1998; Bruce 2002, 2011; Voas and Crockett 2005; Crockett and Voas 2006), more nuanced and complex theories and evidence are being offered by equally prominent scholars who take into account changes in institutional forms of religion and individual religious beliefs and practices, as well as changes in the very meaning attributed to 'religion' (see, e.g., Martin 1978; Berger 1999; Dobbelaere 1981; Beckford 2003; Demerath 2007). Peter Berger, for example, has famously declared that the secularization thesis (of which he was previously a principal proponent) is 'mistaken' and that the world is 'as furiously

religious as it ever was' (Berger 1999: 2). He suggests that the worldwide 'resurgence' of religion he has observed pertains to 'conservative or orthodox or traditional movements', of which he identifies the 'Islamic and Evangelical upsurge' as 'the most dynamic' (ibid.: 6–7). Berger indicates two principal causes of the global resurgence in religion: that religion appeals to people in modern societies because it offers security in a context of uncertainty and risk and that the secular views of reality propagated by an educated, affluent elite 'are resented by large numbers of people' who are not themselves part of that elite (ibid.: 11). In line with Max Weber, Berger also suggests that humans have a 'religious impulse' in their eternal quest for meaning (Weber 1922; Berger 1999: 13).

With regard to Islam, Gellner (1994: x) has stated that 'the secularization thesis does not apply' because the number of adherents of Islam are not in decline and Islam is thriving in both 'socially radical' and 'traditionalist' countries (ibid.). While religious fervour among Muslims may be evidenced in what Berger (1999) terms 'the Islamic upsurge', other scholars offer more nuanced analyses of concomitant processes of secularization and sacralization both within Muslim-dominated countries and in the West, where Islam is a minority religion (see, e.g., Marranci 2010). Martin (2010) has also made the point that secularism is not only a result of 18th-century Enlightenment modernity, as a debate on secularization and sacralization also took place within pre-modern Muslim societies. In Europe, the context of our own research, Cesari (2004: 5) has argued for the importance of studying 'the instances and places of reciprocal influence between the cultural constructs of the European and Muslim worlds' – a 'transcultural space' which requires increased scholarly attention. Moreover, although Muslim belief in Europe is viewed as evidence for the continued importance of religion (e.g., Davie 2007, 2013), Cesari focuses attention on secularization processes among Muslims in Europe and the United States. These include the 'increasing secularization of individual Islamic practice', resulting in 'more personal forms of Islam' characteristic of 'an individualized and secular Islam' (ibid.: 45–46). Other signs of the secularization of Islam in the West include the adaptation of Islamic legal principles to European state laws and the cooperation between Muslim civil society organizations and European governments (ibid.; see also Marranci 2010; Levey and Modood 2009). Processes of secularization within minority religions (including Islam) in European contexts are in need of more research, as existing studies tend to focus on the dominant religion of Christianity.

Sociologist of religion Grace Davie also offers a more nuanced view of the role of religion in modern society than those who argue that progressive secularization is an inherent feature of modern society (e.g., Bruce 2003, 2011). While Davie acknowledges the decline in institutional forms of religion, she argues that modern societies are only partly secularized due to religious beliefs still being relatively strong and widely held (Davie 1994, 2007, 2015).

Davie's 'believing without belonging' thesis, which applies to 'unchurched' Christians in the United Kingdom, thus proposes that individuals continue to display high levels of religious faith while their religious institutional affiliation is in decline. In other words, Christian people continue to believe in God, but they no longer attend church services. The opposite, however, has been the case in Scandinavian countries, where people have continued to attend church ceremonies without believing in God (Davie 2002, 2007; Storm 2009). Belonging without believing is thus more characteristic of Scandinavia's churchgoers, while believing without belonging is more typical of British Christians. Spain, on the other hand, seems characterized by a concurrent decline in both believing and belonging to the Catholic Church (see Pérez-Agote 2010; Griera, Martínez-Ariño and García-Romeral 2014).

Davie also suggests that a religiously active minority 'perform' religious belief and practice on behalf of a larger majority who appear uninterested in religion in times of 'normality' but are drawn to religion in times of individual or collective crisis (Davie 2007). Her 'believing without belonging' and 'vicarious religion' theses have both been vigorously critiqued by scholars who insist on the validity of the secularization narrative. For example, Voas and Crockett (2005) argue that 'neither believing nor belonging' offers a realistic picture of contemporary religious belief and practice in the United Kingdom. They claim that generational change is key to religious decline and observe that only half of parental religiosity is successfully transmitted to children, thus producing a subsequent generation that is both less religiously active and less believing in religion. These authors conclude that even if religion is still present in society, the fact remains that religion in modern Europe is in decline (see also Bruce and Voas 2010 for a critique of the concept of vicarious religion).

In response to claims about secularization in Europe, and the notion that Europe indicates the pathway to secularization that other societies will join as they increasingly modernize, scholars propose to look beyond Europe for signs of religious vitality and resurgence. In this regard, Davie (2002) as well as Berger (1999) and Berger, Davie and Fokas (2008) argue that, seen from a global perspective, Europe constitutes the exception by being more secular and less religious than other geographical contexts. World regions like Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Middle East continue to display high levels of religious belief and practice (Davie 2002) notwithstanding their increasing modernization. Davie points to 'global Catholicism, popular Pentecostalism and the possibly overlapping category of fundamentalism (encompassing a variety of world faiths)' as movements that display religious vitality and growth at a global level (ibid.: 22). A religiously plural country like the United States, which tends to be regarded as the modern society *par excellence*, also displays high levels of religious belief, in contrast to predictions inherent in the secularization thesis. Examining Europe more closely,

it is clear that there are also significant differences in the levels of religious belief and practice among different countries, suggesting divides related to the North–South and East–West axes. The most religious countries in Europe include Ireland and Poland, while the least religious include the Czech Republic and Sweden (see, e.g., Casanova 1994, 2004; Davie 2002; Halman and Draulans 2006; Berger, Davie and Fokas 2008; Kaufmann, Goujon and Skirbekk 2011).

The notion that modernization inevitably leads to secularization has thus been contested and challenged by sociologists of religion who emphasize belief and practice beyond institutional forms of religion or who examine religion in new, renewed or alternative forms. This trend is exemplified by Davie's concept of 'vicarious religion', Abby Day's notion of belief as the experience of belonging in a social context (Day 2011), the renewed role of churches and other religious institutions in public policy debate and in the delivery of welfare services (Bäckström and Davie 2010; Dinham and Jackson 2012; Reynolds 2014), religious growth and vitality due to immigration (Davie 2000; Ebaugh and Saltzman Chafetz 2000), the global growth in Pentecostalism (Anderson 2004) and an increase in alternative forms of 'spirituality' (Sutcliffe 2003; Heelas and Woodhead 2005; Flanagan and Jupp 2007; Lynch 2007). These developments speak of both a return to and a renewal of the sacred in Western societies and at a global level.

The twinned processes of secularization and sacralization[1] in modern society have also been emphasized by other sociologists of religion. Jay Demerath (2007), for example, argues that the death of religion thesis must be replaced by a postulate of 'fluctuations' and shifting processes of secularization and sacralization (ibid.: 77). Such shifting processes take place at the level of individuals, organizations and broader societies and are, in the words of Demerath, 'critical to understanding the historical dynamics of all culture' (ibid.). This approach opens up for the possibility that, in a given context, there can be simultaneous processes of secularization and a loss of sacred meaning as well as (re-)sacralization and religious renewal. In this regard, when examining religion and change in modern Britain, Woodhead (2012: 3) observes that the available empirical evidence is ambiguous and concludes that 'post-war Britain emerges as religious *and* secular' (see also Woodhead and Heelas 2000). A similar co-existence of processes of secularization and sacralization can be found in both Spain (Pérez-Agote 2010; Griera, Martínez-Ariño and García-Romeral 2014) and Norway (Botvar and Schmidt 2010; Furseth 2015). Moreover, in an analysis that invokes parallels to Weber's (1992) thesis about the Protestant ethic, Martin (2005: 134) argues that Protestant evangelicalism itself embodies both secularizing and sanctifying aspects, as it is based on individual choice, an intense individual relationship with faith and a rejection of majority society as 'un-Christian'.

Adding further complexity to the argument, James Beckford (2003) emphasizes that what counts as religious and as secular is shifting in different contexts. Moreover, these are 'highly contestable social construction[s]' (ibid.: 33; see also Lynch 2012). For example, some definitions of religion would require a belief in a divine or supernatural power, while others would not. Beckford (2003) contends that a certain way of doing things can be considered deeply religious in one context but as a secular way of doing things in another. The same type of behaviour or action can thus be motivated by religious beliefs or by secular beliefs. An example could be individuals who decide to stay in bad marriages rather than opt for divorce. On the one hand, such a choice can be seen as an expression of traditional religious views of marriage as sacrosanct and unsolvable, but it can also represent secular ideas about commitment and responsibility towards a spouse and offspring.

Similarly, the value of caring for others can be argued as central to both religious and humanist secular standpoints. Today, most sociologists of religion would agree that there is no *necessary* link between modernization and secularization. The key insights of recent scholarship convey that both secularization and sacralization take place in modern societies (Davie 2007; Demerath 2007), that what counts as religious and as secular is subject to change and contestation (Asad 1993; Beckford 2003) and that studies of the secular and the religious must be attentive to particular historical, political and socio-economic contexts (Martin 1978; Beckford 2003; Demerath 2007; Woodhead 2012). Our case studies of Christian and Muslim women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom seek to contribute to existing scholarship by examining both similarities and differences across their faiths and countries. Moreover, we point to possible overlaps as well as divergences between their discourses on citizenship, identity, gender equality and feminism and how these issues are addressed in secular feminist scholarship.

Lived religion: A holistic approach to religion as belief and practice

Another significant development in the sociology of religion is the shift in focus from institutional forms of religion (institutional belief, membership and attendance) to everyday forms of religion that are, most of the time, lived and practised outside organized religious groups. Conceptualized as the 'lived religion' approach, scholars such as David Hall (1997), Robert Orsi (1997, 2003), Meredith McGuire (2008), Nancy Ammerman (1987, 2007) and Mary Jo Neitz (2011) emphasize that individuals are not simply or only living their religion as it has been formally prescribed and transmitted by religious institutions. This necessitates a 'focus on religion as practiced and experienced by ordinary people in the contexts of their everyday lives' (McGuire 2008: 96). McGuire (2008: 96) also underlines the importance of studying how religious and spiritual beliefs and practices

are embodied in various social practices related to food preparation, health and well-being, leisure, sexualities and so on.[2] She emphasizes that religion and spirituality involve material bodies as well as the mind and/or spirit. In this regard, norms and practices related to gender and sexuality, including social constructions of femininity and masculinity, are highly salient for religion as lived. McGuire (ibid.: 160) notes that '[t]he religious meanings attached to gendered bodies' are socially constructed, disputed and changeable and that such meanings influence how religion is lived. Obvious examples include religious meanings attached to gendered rites of passage, fertility and childbirth.

Importantly, religious and spiritual beliefs and practices, and the meanings people attach to them, are not static but change over time (ibid.: 5). Attention to context, including space and time, is thus required. In addition to situating religion in specific contexts, religion is multifaceted, dynamic and relational:

> When we focus on religion-as-lived, we discover that religion – rather than being a single entity – is made up of diverse, complex and ever-changing mixtures of beliefs and practices, as well as relationships, experiences, and commitments.
>
> (ibid.: 185)

Although McGuire advocates a focus on individuals' lived religion rather than on institutional forms of religion, she acknowledges that the two are intertwined. If we only pay attention to institutional forms of religion, we miss out on how individuals actually experience and practice their beliefs and the meanings they attach to them. A focus on lived religion, however, does not preclude the inclusion of individuals' engagement with institutional religion. Individuals may be active participants in organized religious settings, and their lived religious practice may be 'closely linked with the teachings and practices of an official religion' (ibid.: 98). Studying lived religion therefore does not hinder us in taking into account institutional religion when it is relevant. Instead, people's engagement with, reliance on or departure from the teachings and practices of religious institutions become part of our investigation into lived forms of religion, in particular historical, geographical, political and socio-economic contexts. Furthermore, lived religion is not the same as privatized or individualized religion. Rather, privatized or individualized religion can be part of lived religion. Again, this is a matter of empirical investigation. The religious women who participated in our own study were all participating in organized religious contexts (churches and mosques). McGuire (2008), as well as Neitz (2011), Ammerman (2010) and Orsi (2003), points to lived religion as potentially encompassing both private and public realms. In the words of Neitz (2011: 54), 'lived religion is not necessarily private or internal. It is often practiced in public or in collective acts and understandings.' As such, lived

religion has the potential to cross and bridge boundaries between what we perceive as 'private' and 'public', or even to dissolve them, as Orsi argues (Orsi 2003: 173). As an example, Orsi refers to religious prayer being misunderstood as private, when 'people at prayer are intimately engaged and implicated in their social world' (ibid.). Furthermore, in her examination of individual religion among adherents of different (and sometimes mixed) religious traditions in the United States, McGuire points to evidence that highlights relations with others, and therefore outward engagement, as central to the lived religion of women engaged in 'holistic healing practices': they indicated 'a high level of genuine involvement with others, of caring and commitment, of empathy and emotional investment in the well-being of others' (McGuire 2008: 154). Likewise, Ammerman (1997), in her study of members of Protestant and Catholic congregations in the United States, found that, among those she labelled 'Golden Rule Christians', relationships with others and caring towards others were at the heart of their religious experience and practice. Their relationships of care were centred on family, friends, neighbourhood and church (ibid.; see also Ammerman 2014).

As will become clear in subsequent chapters, the religious women who participated in our own study also highlighted relational aspects of their religious belief and practice, including an ethic of care, love, tolerance and respect that was centred on their own families, neighbourhoods and religious communities. These findings resonate with and support Linda Woodhead's observation of a 'relational turn' in modern religion, where 'relational religion' signifies that emotions and 'relationships based on love, trust, and care' are at the centre of contemporary religious belief and practice (Woodhead 2003: 78).

As Orsi (2003: 172) states, all religion can be approached as lived religion. Lived religion focuses on the religious beliefs, practices and experiences of individuals as they are embedded in social relationships that include and span families, neighbourhoods, places of work and leisure, religious spaces, local communities, nation states and global networks. Instead of relying on statistical evidence, the lived religion approach investigates religious belief and practice at the micro-level of everyday life (Lynch 2012: 81). However, lived religion encompasses private and individual aspects, as well as public and collective dimensions of everyday religion, and ultimately challenges the constructed binary between public and private spheres, as well as the gendering of this distinction.

Gender and secularization

Are women more religious than men, and if so, why? Is it because women do most of the care work, or because women are torn between their domestic responsibilities and labour market participation? If secularism offers better protection for women's rights and gender equality than religion, then how

can we understand women's continued religiosity? Scholars who write about the secularization thesis have generally been blind to gender differences (e.g., Berger 1967; Luckmann 1967; Bruce 2002; Martin 2005). Recently, however, contributions that deal explicitly with gender have started to examine the relationship between secularization and gender (e.g., Göle 1996; Hoodfar 1999; Brown 2009 [2001], 2006, 2012; Aune, Sharma and Vincett 2008; Woodhead 2008; Trzebiatowska and Bruce 2012). Focusing on the West, this section examines some of these scholars' work and suggests that the lived religion approach challenges both the secularization thesis and its current gendering.

Academic scholarship has repeatedly asserted that women are more religious than men, whether assessed in terms of as religious belief, attendance or membership (see, e.g., Walter and Davie 1998; Miller and Stark 2002; Crockett and Voas 2006; Collett and Lizardo 2009; Trzebiatowska and Bruce 2012). Scholars have also sought to identify factors that can explain the gender variation in religiosity, and explanations vary from structural location theory (related to family and work) (e.g., Becker and Hofmeister 2001), gender orientation (views on femininity, masculinity and gender roles), gender socialization (e.g., Miller and Stark 2002), personality differences (psychology) and risk aversion theory (e.g., Collett and Lizardo 2009).

Studies that find gender differences in religiosity are, however, often confined to Christianity (and also to particular strands of Christianity) in Western contexts, while ignoring other religions in the West (see, however, Cesari 2004 on the secularization of Islam in Europe and the United States) as well as religions in non-Western contexts. Globally, both Judaism and Islam offer counterexamples where 'the observed religiousness is higher among men' (Sullins 2006: 873) when religion is measured as 'active religiousness' (participation in synagogues and mosques). When religion is measured as 'affective religiousness' (personal piety), women appear to be more religious than men, but Sullins (ibid.: 858) argues that such alleged differences are due to bias in how women and men respond to survey questions about their religiosity. In a study that includes Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim male and female participants in the context of the United Kingdom, Loewenthal, MacLeod and Cinnirella (2002: 133) argue that 'the general conclusion that women are more religious than men is culture-specific, and contingent on the measurement method used'. Based on a sample of 530 individuals residing in England, differentiated by religion and gender, Loewenthal and colleagues found that Christian women were somewhat more religiously active than men, while Hindu, Jewish and Muslim women were less religiously active than men (ibid.: 136). Religious activity was measured via three variables: frequency of attendance at a place of worship, frequency of prayer and frequency of the study of religious texts (ibid.: 135). Loewenthal et al.'s study thus gives a more nuanced picture of the relationship between gender and religious activity, as it offers a comparative

focus on men's and women's religious activity levels within different religions in a specific West-European country. Some scholars also engage with the secularization thesis in geographical contexts beyond the West, but they largely present a non-gendered analysis. Examples are Peter Berger's edited volume *The Desecularization of the World* (1999) and Grace Davie's *Europe: The Exceptional Case. Parameters of Faith in the Modern World* (2002).

One of the main contributions to discussions of the gendering of secularization processes in the West is Callum Brown's *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800–2000* (2001, 2009). Brown argues that both the sexual revolution and the feminist movement of the 1960s had a major impact on Christian religiosity, and in particular on women's Christian religiosity. In his view, sexual liberalism and feminism provided women with alternative models of how to be a woman and how to be feminine. In the context of the 1960s, where gender politics and sexual politics mobilized both women and men to claim new rights and new spheres of participation, new identities were forged which did not rely so much on inherited traditions and institutional prescriptions as on individual choice. Inspired by more progressive ideas about womanhood, young women began to reject the norms of pious femininity. In turn, the 1960s sexual and feminist revolutions incited a growing disaffection among women from the established churches, with women increasingly defecting from them (Brown 2009). Indeed, Brown claims that women in Britain are leaving the churches at a faster rate than men (Brown 2006: 278), thus suggesting that women are catching up with men's disaffection with the church. Brown concludes that 'the keys to understanding secularisation in Britain are the simultaneous de-pietisation of femininity and the de-feminisation of piety from the 1960s' (Brown 2009: 192). While Brown's analysis deals with the issue of women's strategy of exit from religion, which may be connected with abortion, contraception, divorce, homosexuality and general changes in motherhood (or what Walby (2011: 4) calls 'the emancipation of women from the domestic sphere'), he is less concerned with religious women's advocacy of internal religious reform, evidenced in Christian, Muslim and Jewish women's reinterpretations of sacred texts and practices.

Brown's arguments are principally related to Christianity in Britain, and his claims about de-Christianization are mainly backed up with reference to evidence regarding the decline in church adherence and churchgoing. From the theoretical perspective of 'lived religion', such empirical evidence is useful in that it indicates disaffection with institutional forms of religion (in particular Trinitarian, established and traditional churches), but it is less helpful in assessing whether and what meaning religion has in people's everyday lives. In this regard, McGuire (2008: 5) argues that it is 'doubtful that even mountains of quantitative sociological data […] can tell us much of any value about individuals' religions'. In other words, quantitative measures used in survey research, employing terms like 'religion' as if it

was unitary and static, that ask people to provide answers to pre-conceived ideas about what religion is, only have limited value when we apply a more dynamic and holistic perspective on what religion means and what it means to be religious. Moreover, quantitative measures that ask about religious attendance are skewed towards Christianity, as religions differ in whether or not they prescribe communal worship, and whether or not such prescriptions include women and men.

As we have seen, Brown focused on the sexual revolution and feminism and their impact on women's identities, values and experiences in order to explain changes in women's religiosity. An alternative analysis is offered by Linda Woodhead (2008), who is more concerned with changes related to women's paid and unpaid labour than with the sexual revolution of the 1960s. In her view, changing patterns of women's participation in paid and unpaid work explain both women's disaffiliation from institutional religion *and* their continued affiliation with it. In her article on *Gendering Secularization Theory,* Woodhead observes that women in general are more religious than men, that women are 'leaving the churches at a faster rate than men' and that far more women than men are attracted to alternative forms of spirituality such as New Age, holistic therapies and neo-paganism (Woodhead 2008: 88; see also Heelas and Woodhead 2005). According to Woodhead, the factors that can best explain continuities and changes in women's religious beliefs and activities are their participation in the labour market and the care work they provide within families. Woodhead essentially postulates that there are three types of women (much similar to the types offered by Catherine Hakim in her preference theory regarding gender and work; see Hakim 2000): women who are career-oriented, women who are family-oriented and women who are oriented towards a mix of both career and family.

Woodhead suggests that paid work is associated with traditionally 'masculine' attributes such as 'confidence, assertion, individuality, competitiveness and ambition' and that unpaid domestic and care work are associated with traditionally 'feminine' attributes such as 'care, compassion and thinking of others before self' (ibid.: 189). Women who choose to focus most on their paid work are, Woodhead claims, 'highly likely to turn their backs on religion' (Woodhead 2008: 190–191). Women who, on the other hand, choose to concentrate on providing household and care work for family members are likely to 'shelter under the sacred canopy of religion', supported by conservative forms of Judaism, Christianity and Islam which prescribe such traditional, domestic roles for women (ibid.: 190). The third type of women, those who combine paid work with unpaid domestic and care work in the home, is said to constitute the largest group and that which displays mixed relationships with religion. Suggesting that these women have 'ambiguous identities', Woodhead hypothesizes that some will embrace religion while others will reject it or simply not have any time for it (ibid.: 191). Women

in this group who embrace religion are said to be doing so mainly because religion offers a 'brief escape from [domestic] labour and a space in which to "be me" ' (ibid.). In this regard, Aune, Sharma and Vincett (2008: 9) postulate that, for the women who are attracted to religion in late modernity, religion 'reinforces or helps them cope with their negotiation of daily life'. These are allegedly women who combine paid work outside the home with unpaid care work at home – women who ' "juggle" the public and private' (ibid.: 10). In the view of Aune, Sharma and Vincett (2008), religion can offer a 'thirdspace' for such women, which overcomes the duality of the private and public spheres in which they move. This implicitly suggests that women find it harder to cope than men and that women are somehow less capable of coping without religion.

There are several problems with Woodhead's gendered secularization theory. Just as Hakim's (2000) original preference theory, Woodhead's (2008) gendered secularization theory too lacks empirical evidence. It remains largely untested and reproduces an essentialist, gendered binary between the public and the private sphere based on normative assumptions about women's and men's experiences and interests. Certainly, many of the women interviewed in our study participate in the labour market, are highly religious and view their religiosity as a core part of their identity rather than a route to self-oriented leisure. The alleged largest category in Woodhead's framework includes women with opposite outcomes in terms of religiosity and secularity, and it is likely that a variety of intervening variables (beyond labour market participation and unpaid care work) are needed to understand and explain these different outcomes. Even when the relationship between gender, religion and work has been investigated in more detail, results do not uniformly concur with Woodhead's thesis. For example, in a survey study comprising 1,000 adults in upstate New York, Becker and Hofmeister examined the effects of family formation, full-time employment and values related to gender roles and the roles of religious institutions in family life on religious involvement. They found that '[w]omen's own church attendance and their participation in other religious organizations is mostly determined by their own attitudes, beliefs, and religious subculture and not by family formation and full-time paid employment' (Becker and Hofmeister 2001: 719). A smaller, qualitative study of evangelical Christian women in England by Aune (2008), however, shows that evangelical religiosity is stronger among women who mainly lead domestic lives than among those who also participate in the public sphere.

Woodhead's theory is also problematic because it does not take into account the gendered patterns of women's participation in the labour market. A majority of women are employed in 'care-work sectors', including education, health and other services. Whether women employed in these sectors abandon or embrace religion, and on what basis they do so, is not known. We also lack comparative studies of the relationship between

women's religiosity and the different sectors of employment they inhabit. For example, are women engineers less attached to religion than women hospital workers? Moreover, men are increasingly (albeit slowly) taking on household tasks and caring duties (Sullivan 2000; Kan, Sullivan and Gershuny 2011). What impact do such changes have on men's religiosity, and on women's? Such questions will have to be asked by scholars wishing to understand the relationship between gender, work and religiosity.

In an analysis that bears resemblance to both Brown's (2009) and Woodhead's (2008), Trzebiatowska and Bruce (2012: 178) suggest that the noted difference in religiosity between women and men in modern societies is principally due to a time lag caused by men having been exposed to participation in the public sphere over a longer time than women. As men increased their participation in paid employment, they also started losing interest in religion and leaving churches (ibid.: 172). Women, on the other hand, were much slower in entering the paid labour force and remained for a longer time in the private sphere, providing care for their families and engaging in limited social circles. As caring and socialization have close affinity with religion, the time lag between men's and women's entry into paid employment explains women's greater religiosity than men's, according to Trzebiatowska and Bruce (ibid.). In their view, further changes towards greater gender equality, including in the public sphere of work, will lead to women catching up with men, thus increasingly losing interest in religion and leaving churches. Rates of people leaving churches are, however, not sufficient to indicate a loss of religious belief and practice. A lived religion approach is able to capture people's religiosity (or lack thereof) in a more holistic manner.

It is notable how the analyses of gender and secularization processes offered by Brown, Woodhead, Trzebiatowska and Bruce remain focused on Christianity, and (mainly) on institutional forms of religion, rather than applying a broader conceptualization such as 'lived religion'. In studies of secularization (and gender) in the West, there is still a lack of attention to Islam (the second-largest religion in Norway, Spain, the United Kingdom and elsewhere in Europe), as well as to other established religions, and especially to religions mostly associated with immigrants (e.g., Hinduism). An exception in this regard is the edited volume *Women and Religion in the West. Challenging Secularization*, edited by Aune, Sharma and Vincett (2008), which includes several chapters on Muslim women in the West (other exceptions that focus on Islam include Roald 2001; Cesari 2004). In a chapter that problematizes the issue of counting women with faith, Hussain (2008) discusses difficulties in counting practising Muslims in general, and in counting Muslim women in particular. For example, whether one follows the 'five pillars' of Islam could be used as a factor to categorize individuals as Muslim, but the practices of prayer, charity and religious pilgrimage vary considerably among Muslims. Attendance at mosques is also a problematic measure,

in so far as Islam requires only men to attend Friday prayer at the mosque and does not at all require women to pray at the mosque (ibid.: 170). Muslim women are more likely to observe and practise their religion at home rather than at the mosque. Another point to be made is that the principle of strict gender segregation, together with the fact that many mosques in Britain, Spain, Norway and elsewhere in Europe offer women no space at all or only a limited space, in effect denies women entrance to the mosque. In terms of secularization, Hussain argues that Muslims in Britain do not become less religious over time. Instead, offspring of first-generation Muslim immigrants and their children are keen to display their religious identity (ibid.: 177; see also studies of Muslims in other European contexts by Roald 2001; Jacobsen 2011; Jouili 2015). Moreover, contrary to postulations by Woodhead (2008) and others, Hussain claims that 'there is growing evidence to suggest that greater exposure and participation of Muslim women within the public sphere does not influence levels of religiosity nor encourage greater secularization' (Hussain 2008: 178). Attention to religious difference as well as other contextual factors (historical, political and socio-economic) is thus crucial in attempts to establish linkages between gender, labour market participation and religiosity.

As Aune and colleagues note, secularization theory 'fits white men, and especially white, Protestant men in Europe' (Aune, Sharma and Vincett 2008: 2). Rejecting secularization theories all together is unwise, but a revised version must take into account specific geographical, religious, political and socio-economic contexts; the oscillation between secularization and sacralization; changes in meanings attributed to the religious and the secular; the intersection of religion with gender, race and ethnicity, class and sexuality; and the holistic perspective on religion offered by the 'lived religion' approach to religious belief and practice. 'Lived religion' challenges the secularization thesis by counselling a shift from institutional forms of religion (adherence, membership and attendance) to how religion is expressed and experienced in everyday life of women and men. The approach to religion as lived means that we have to investigate empirically, via research methods that go beyond quantification, the role of religion in the lives of women and men both inside and outside the walls of religious institutions. Our study of religion in the lives of Christian and Muslim women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom is a contribution to that effort.

The 'turn' that never was? The limits of dichotomous thinking

Similar to writings on the post-secular 'turn' in the sociology of religion, feminist theorist Rosi Braidotti writes about a 'post-secular turn in feminism' (Braidotti 2008; see also Bracke 2008; Aune 2011). Positing that most European feminists have been and are secular, she talks about 'the mainstream secularist line' in feminism, while the alleged marginal line,

consisting of 'various schools of feminist spirituality and alternative spiritual practices', is labelled 'the non-secularists' (ibid.: 7). Braidotti identifies as 'non-secularists' those feminists who are interested in spirituality, theology, black and post-colonial theory and critical theory (ibid.), giving examples of published women scholars and poets.[3] There is no mention of women who are religious and feminist in movement or activist contexts, or even in ordinary life contexts. Braidotti thus overlooks important historical activism by European and other Christian, Muslim and Jewish religious feminists in national and international contexts (see, e.g., Badran 1995, 2009; Hammar 1999; McFadden 1999; Nyhagen Predelli 2003; Braude 2004), as well as contemporary feminist activism by Christian and Muslim women in European societies (see Chapters 1 and 6). The term 'non-secular' is seemingly used by Braidotti to encompass something more than 'religion', but the effect is a framing of secular feminists as the hegemonic norm and religious or spiritual feminists as the exception. Braidotti is thus complicit in a reproduction of the dichotomy between the secular and the sacred. An account of the relationship between academic feminism and religion that speaks of a 'post-secular turn in feminism' is also misleading. Feminist scholars, whether identifying as secular, religious or spiritual, have been preoccupied with religion over a long period of time, investigating the relationship between 'ordinary' women and religion in historical and contemporary contexts, and in both social practice and textual discourse (e.g., Davidman 1991; Römer Christensen 1995, 2004; Brasher 1998; Manning 1999; Salomonsen 2002; Nyhagen Predelli 2003; Cochran 2005; Grung 2011; Valiente 2014). Nevertheless, Braidotti reminds us that religious women pose a challenge for feminist theorists who may have been unable or unwilling to concede that 'agency, or political subjectivity, can actually be conveyed through and supported by religious piety' (Braidotti 2008: 2).

Feminist theory has been deeply critical of a series of binaries or dichotomies that are all gendered, including the separation between the (masculine) public and the (feminine) private; the secular and the religious; agency (liberation) and complicity (subordination) (Yadgar 2006; Avishai 2008; Reilly 2011). The religious–secular dichotomy associates irrationality, emotion, bias and false consciousness with religion (and with women and femininity), while rationality, reason, impartiality and a liberated mind are associated with the secular (and with men and masculinity) (see Beattie 2004). This dichotomy sustains the notions that religion is backward, conservative or traditional and that religious women are subordinated, submissive and non-feminist. The secular, on the other hand, is associated with notions of progression, liberation and modernity, and secular women are perceived as liberated, self-realized and with the potential to be feminist (Yadgar 2006; see also Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2008; Cady and Fessenden 2013; Reilly and Scriver 2013). Dichotomies like these are often based on the 'othering' of individuals and groups along gendered, racialized, classed or religious lines

and include distinctions between the allegedly subordinated (e.g., black women, religious women and non-feminist women) and the allegedly liberated (e.g., white women, secular women and feminist women). Feminist scholars of religion are rightly critical of such binaries as both false and oppressive. Moreover, Niamh Reilly and Joan Scott suggest that the binary between the religious and the secular is currently implicated in new forms of state violence against minorities, where Muslims in Western contexts are targeted and subjected to interrogation, surveillance and other forms of state violence and control (Scott 2007; Reilly 2011: 14, 18). In this regard, Muslim women in France, Belgium, Spain and elsewhere are being denied the right to wear the headscarf or the face veil and are in effect criminalized (see Scott 2007; Rosenberger and Sauer 2012; Loenen 2013; Gürsel 2013; Burchardt, Griera and García-Romeral 2015).

Analysing women's religious agency

The notion of agency is much debated among scholars of religion, gender and feminism. In the hegemonic gender order (Connell 1987), men are imbued with more agency than women, and secular individuals and groups are imbued with more agency than those who are religious. Mack (2003: 153), for example, notes a general assumption that religious people have no or limited agency, while secular people are capable of free, autonomous behaviour. When different discursive representations of agency intersect, religious women are constructed as those who lack agency the most. However, the attempt to produce and sustain clear distinctions between the religious and the secular is made difficult, not only by the shifting meanings that are attributed to these two terms (Beckford 2003), but also by the historical processes of interaction between religious and Enlightenment values (Mack 2003: 153). In Western European contexts, public spheres and individuals' life-worlds are infused with moral ethics and value sets that are often rooted in explicitly religious sources (e.g., the Bible; the Catholic and Protestant churches; nation-state constitutions). The French Revolution, for example, saw a revolt against the Catholic Church as a powerful political institution but did not abandon the moral guidance that religious faith could provide individuals. As Göle and Billaud (2012: 119) remind us, 'the world is not only guided by liberal ethics but by moral values inspired by religion'. Our own research discusses how Christian and Muslim women in Europe emphasize an ethic of tolerance, respect, love and care towards others which is rooted in religious conviction but transcends religious boundaries (see Chapter 4).

Today, women and men (be they feminist or non-feminist) in Western European countries may identify as religious or secular (or both), but they have all undeniably been influenced in some ways by the intertwining of religious and Enlightenment values at the levels of discourse, norms and

practice (see Yadgar 2006). In this regard, Dillon (2010: 148) argues against a strict demarcation between 'religious' and 'secular' citizens and communities: '[m]any non-religious individuals are mobilized by religious-cultural ideals, and many religiously involved individuals pursue civic goals that may have little or no bearing on their religious beliefs'. As European, white and feminist women, we have grown up in the context of a nation state (Norway) and local communities that were infused with Lutheran Protestant values and practices, as well as with more philosophical ideas about natural law, state governance and individual rights. There is considerable overlap between a Protestant focus on the individual and personal faith and that of Enlightenment ideas about the inalienable rights of the individual. As adults, we subscribe to secular humanist values, but it is difficult to disentangle the ways in which our sense of self and personhood has been shaped by the intertwining of religious and secular values.

Returning to the notion of women's agency, a much-debated contemporary practice is that of Muslim women in the West wearing the headscarf or *hijab*. While studies have shown that many Muslim women choose to wear the headscarf due to motivations of religious identity and observance, political protest or fashion etiquette (e.g., Göle 1996; El Guindi 1999; Roald 2001; Scott 2007; Joppke 2009; Tarlo 2010; Rosenberger and Sauer 2012), the headscarf has for others become a symbol of the oppression of women by men (see, e.g., Kilic 2008; Rosenberger and Sauer 2012). Some secular feminists find it a disturbing and even unacceptable proposition that Muslim women can freely choose to wear clothing that to them symbolizes discrimination and subjugation. Political scientist Sheila Jeffreys, for example, forwards a view where women's veiling is singularly analysed as an expression of male power and domination over women (Jeffreys 2012: 119–120). In this type of narrative, women's agency can only be expressed in the form of oppositional practices that challenge men's power and domination. In other words, agency is tied up with resistance (Abu-Lughod 1990; Göle 1996; Mahmood 2001, 2005; Bracke 2008). Choosing anything but resistance would thus amount to compliance with patriarchal control.

Other feminist scholars are less pessimistic regarding women's agency within patriarchal structures, including religious traditions and institutions. A growing number of feminist scholars of religion are engaged in a more nuanced critical discussion of agency in relation to religious piety (Göle 1996; Mahmood 2001, 2005; Mack 2003; Avishai 2008; Bracke 2008; Winchester 2008; Burke 2012; Rinaldo 2014; Zion-Waldoks 2015). In her study of women in the Egyptian mosque movement, Mahmood (2005: 5) argues that the expression of agency is not limited to behaviour that questions social norms; agency can also reside in behaviour that reproduces such norms. She suggests that 'it is crucial to detach the notion of agency from the goals of progressive politics' (ibid.: 14; see also Mahmood 2001). Moreover, Mahmood proposes the 'uncoupling [of] the notion of self-realization from

that of the autonomous will' (2005: 14). In other words, agency can also be located in submission to and complicity with conservative tradition and habit, and self-realization can be achieved via adherence to group norms. This is something we also find in our study.

In this regard, Mack (2003) suggests that acts of individual autonomy may be less important than acts of self-transcendence involving obedience to God. In her study of 18th-century women Quakers, Mack (ibid.: 157) found that 'submission to God and the religious community enhanced personal integrity and public credibility'. Agency thus resided in self-negation and self-transcendence. Mack argues that it is possible to have agency without individual autonomy related to self-interest. Instead, Mack talks about 'freedom to do what is right' (ibid.: 156). 'What is right' can be perceived or interpreted as what is right according to God, which can be constructed as obedience to God and as implying a form of self-negation. In Mack's view, what is needed in studies of devout religious adherents is 'a conception of agency in which autonomy is less important than self-transcendence and in which the energy to act in the world is generated and sustained by a prior act of personal surrender' (ibid.: 156). Similarly, in a study of American Catholic women, Orsi has suggested that 'self-abnegation and surrender' are forms of religious action that involve agency (Orsi 1996: 197–207, cited in Mack 2003: 157), while Avishai (2008) talks about Orthodox Jewish Israeli women's agency as located in religious observance or religious conduct (the 'doing' of religion). Agency can thus be expressed in relationships that involve some kind of submission of self to others (e.g., to God, or to another human being, to a group or community).

Religious agency can be expressed in multiple ways, including suffering and survival, which, Mahmood (2005: 167) suggests, do not follow a 'logic of resistance and subversion'. Mahmood theorizes that a desire for individual freedom is neither universal nor innate, but it is 'mediated by other capacities and desires' in specific historical and social contexts (ibid.: 211). For 'the pious subject', social change may be of lesser importance than 'self-fashioning and ethical conduct' (ibid.: 223), and what appears to outsiders as 'passivity and docility' may actually express agency (ibid.: 212). A relevant example would be when religious piety, expressed in ethical conduct and compliance with community norms, is perceived as more important than social change towards greater equality between women and men. Mahmood also talks about 'the *work* that discursive practices perform in making possible particular kinds of subjects' (Mahmood 2005: 188). As we read Mahmood, this does not mean that agency is simply a product of discursive traditions devoid of human actors.[4] Instead, she locates agency in the interplay between discursive practices and 'practical engagements and forms of life' in particular contexts (Mahmood 2005: 188). Her project is 'to grasp the different modalities of agency involved in enacting, transgressing, or inhabiting ethical norms and moral principles' (ibid.).

We thus read Mahmood as recommending a focus on religion as it is lived in everyday life.

But if agency can be found everywhere, then the concept of agency also loses its meaning. We must be careful in not idealizing agency to the extent that we lose sight of structural forms of discrimination and subordination that are often tied to patriarchal gender regimes and gender relations within religious institutions and traditions. From a sociological point of view it is important to theorize and analyse religious agency in relation to structural factors that can enable and/or constrain social action (see, e.g., Bracke 2003; Othman 2006; Burke 2012). For example, when women are prohibited from taking on positions of religious authority, there are limitations on the scope of their agency within organized religious contexts. A 'lived religion' perspective pays attention to both agency and structure in everyday life:

> The interpretive challenge of the study of lived religion is to develop the practice of disciplined attention to people's signs and practices as they describe, understand, and use them, in the circumstances of their experiences, and to the structures and conditions within which these signs and practices emerge.
>
> (Orsi 2003: 172)

In a useful categorization of different scholarly perspectives on agency labelled as the resistance, empowerment, instrumental and compliant approaches (where the latter is used by, e.g., Mack 2003; Mahmood 2005; Avishai 2008), Burke suggests we need a conception of what constitutes 'non-agency' (2012: 130). Is there anything women can't do simply because they are women? If so, their agency is likely to be constrained in some way. However, a lack of opportunities, or not having a choice between different alternatives, and even a lack of exit rights, does not necessarily signal a complete void of agency (see Phillips 2007: 150). Again, it is useful to be reminded that agency is not necessarily tied up with resistance but can also be expressed in conformity, compliance and docility. However, while we may accept thinking about the religious or pious subject in these terms, it is also worth contemplating that the 'secular, liberal subject' expresses conformity by discursively positioning itself as embodying and representing the social norms of individual autonomy and free choice. Moreover, agency in the form of religious piety and submission can thus go hand in hand with agency as resistance to and subversion of religious doctrine (Jacobsen 2011: 78). Based on extensive research with young Muslim women in Norway, Jackobsen argues that these women draw simultaneously on Islamic discourse of piety and on a liberal ethic of personal authenticity and autonomy. Similarly, Jouili (2015: 95) discusses how religiously pious, European-born, young Muslim women forward notions of dignity and empowerment that are 'partially impacted by', but also different from and competing with, 'the

language of individual rights and autonomy'. In the same vein, Rinaldo (2014), in her study of Indonesian Muslim women activists, suggests that religious women draw upon both secular and religious sources in their attempts to improve women's rights. She launches the term 'critical pious agency' to denote 'the capacity to engage critically and publicly with religious texts' (ibid.: 829). She argues that when Muslim women in Indonesia employ critical discourse about Islam to further women's interests, they demonstrate that pious and feminist subjectivities can intersect and overlap. A further study that demonstrates resistance coupled with piety is that of Zion-Waldoks (2015), who applies the term 'devoted resistance' (originating with Hartman and Buckholtz 2014) to describe Modern-Orthodox Agunah activist women in Israel who are religiously devout and also mobilize to improve women's rights. Together, these examples illustrate multiple, complex and intertwined forms of agency and complicity that challenge a more oppositional understanding of liberation and subordination.

As noted earlier, Mahmood (2005: 188) talks about how 'discursive practices perform [work] in making possible particular kinds of subjects'. For our purpose, this is a useful reminder that both Muslim and Christian subjects are talking from and positioning themselves in relation to discourses that legitimate certain types of identifications, behaviour and practices. For example, Taj (2013) has shown that Muslim women in Norway seek advice from multiple imams until they receive the advice they actually wanted in the first place. In Yadgar's terminology, these women are using 'discursive tactics' to construct their 'self-and collective identity' (Yadgar 2006: 360). In our own work, we discuss how the interviewed Muslim and Christian women talk about themselves as autonomous agents, while at the same time expressing *relational* modes of identity and belonging. What emerges is that religiously informed notions of care, love, tolerance and respect are central to the interviewed women's subjectivities. The religious women in our study display relational understandings of their own selves and place in the world, while also foregrounding their own choice and decision-making. Such findings resonate with interventions by Jacobsen (2011), Rinaldo (2014) and Zion-Waldoks (2015), who argue that religious women's subjectivities are formed in the interplay between discourses, acts of religious piety and resistance to practices that support gender-based discrimination. They also resemble the kind of mixed messages that Joan Scott has detected in Muslim women's mobilization in support of the right to wear (or not to wear) the headscarf – a mobilization that is rooted in religious observance and builds upon notions of individual freedom and choice. Scott thus argues that 'discourses of religious devotion and ethical deportment combine with assertions of modernist notions of individual rights and pluralist democracy' (Scott 2009: 11; see also Scott 2007).

Individuals are embedded in multi-layered social contexts, where everyday social relations create opportunities and constraints for agency. As such,

agency can be enabled or constrained by nation states, organizations and institutions, offices, rules and regulations, communities, groups, families and others. But agency is never purely individual; it is always produced in relation to others (Mackenzie and Stoljar 2000; see also Westlund 2009; Pagis 2013; Zion-Waldoks 2015). Relational agency can reside in discursive, social and political acts of community belonging, identity and participation as much as in resistance to different forms of subordination (e.g., gender, ethnic or religious discrimination). As Yuval-Davis (1999) reminds us, women are members of larger collectivities, including families and religious communities, whose importance may be variable and shifting. In our study, both Christian and Muslim women talk about themselves as subjects that can choose, while also emphasizing connectedness, belonging and care towards others. Agency is embedded in everyday relationships and social structures, or in what we do and how we relate to others.

Religion and patriarchy: An inevitable collusion?

Religious women and religious feminists have been part of historical and contemporary women's movements all over the world. Alongside non-religious women, they have fought for women's rights and gender equality, while also identifying with their personal religious faith. For some feminists, women's religious belief and practice have been a contested issue, while other feminists have accepted, embraced or been indifferent to religion. Debates about women and religion have taken place among feminists since the first mobilization of women's movements in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Morgan 2002; Nyhagen Predelli 2003) and have continued throughout women's movements activism from the 1960s and 1970s (Saghal and Yuval-Davis 1992) and onwards until today (Bayes and Tohidi 2001; Aune 2011, 2014). In European contexts, the three major world religions have been scrutinized by both religious and non-religious feminist women, and the question of whether religious belief can co-exist with feminist values has been vigorously debated (see, e.g., Midden 2012; Brandt 2014; van Es 2015). In the United Kingdom, for example, the organization Women Against Fundamentalism (WAF) devoted a special issue of its journal to this topic, where questions such as 'Why can't I be a Jewish feminist?' and 'Is there a space for feminism in Islam?' were posed by activists (WAF 1996).[5] WAF, which was formed in London in 1989, was dedicated to campaigning against any type of religious fundamentalism, or any 'mobilization of religious affiliation for political ends' (Connolly 1991: 69). A particular event, the religious *fatwa* against the novelist Salman Rushdie, spurred the establishment of WAF. Although WAF insisted it was neither anti-religious nor interested only in Islamic forms of fundamentalism, it quickly achieved an anti-Islamic image (ibid.: 74). The organization viewed religious observance as a matter of personal choice and acknowledged that 'religion can play a

progressive, political role' (WAF 1996: 1). It mobilized both black and white feminist women, some of whom were religious. However, WAF highlighted the features of religion that were oppressive to women and argued that feminist politics should be informed by secularism and not by religion (see Siddiqui 1991; Dhaliwal and Yuval-Davis 2014). Pearson (2014: 110) writes that, although WAF was welcoming of 'women of many religions as well as of none', some women dissociated themselves from WAF because they were 'angered by the lack of understanding or support for minority women active in churches in London and elsewhere' (see also Balchin 2014). WAF is thus illustrative of tensions that can arise between feminists with different views on religion.

Some feminists who identify as non-religious reject religion outright, claiming that all world religions are inherently patriarchal (e.g., Siddiqui 1991, 2008; Okin 1999; Børresen 2004; Jeffreys 2012). In her book on religion and women's rights, Sheila Jeffreys (2012: 4; our emphasis) argues against a distinction between religion and fundamentalism and claims that '*all religions* are dangerous to women's rights'. In a one-sided account of the relationship between women and religion, Jeffreys has selected examples that demonstrate the 'harm' that social practices carried out in the name of religion can cause to women. The practices mentioned by Jeffreys range from veiling and polygamy to forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Failing to acknowledge any positive aspects of religion, and indeed to grant religious individuals any respect and dignity (see Nussbaum 2012), Jeffreys also offers a one-sided account of the relationship between feminism and religion, claiming that 'all major feminist theories' have rejected religion (Jeffreys 2012: 15–16). Speaking from a white and secular feminist perspective, Jeffreys thus ignores and silences the many religious and secular women who have represented more positive or even ambivalent views on religion. Such alternative voices include white, Black and post-colonial religious and non-religious women who may identify as feminist or womanist (Gross 1996).[6]

A more well-known attack on religion is offered by feminist philosopher Susan Moller Okin, who in the 1990s became a reference point for scholarly discussions of gender and multiculturalism. She argued that the protection of minority cultures through group rights or privileges could have anti-feminist consequences in instances where specific cultures or religions endorse male control of women (Okin 1999). Okin referred to the founding myths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam as 'attempts to justify the control and subordination of women' (ibid.: 14). Acknowledging that progressive versions of these religions have 'softened' the drive to control women, Okin was nonetheless concerned about 'their more orthodox or fundamentalist versions', which continue to propagate women's subordination (ibid.). Okin's reading of (minority) culture and religion has been heavily critiqued, as it leads to forms of analysis where minority women in particular

are portrayed as devoid of agency and 'victims of culture'. Among the critics is feminist political theorist Ann Phillips, who suggests that Okin's strong demarcation between egalitarian and patriarchal cultures is not very useful for a liberal practice that endorses both equality and difference (Phillips 2007; see also Chapter 5, where we discuss the equality–difference nexus). Religious feminist and scholar Martha Nussbaum is critical of Okin's fundamentally Marxist analysis of religion, where religion 'is little more than a bag of superstitions' ultimately aiming to control women (Nussbaum 1999: 105). Highlighting instead those aspects of religion that provide people with meaning, purpose and a sense of community (thus echoing Max Weber), Nussbaum argues that internal religious debates within various faith traditions have been 'highly pertinent to religion's role in the search for women's equality' (ibid.: 107). An example used by Nussbaum is that of Reform Jews in Germany, who introduced gender equality measures earlier than the German state (ibid.). In line with Weber's notion that religion has the potential to produce social change, Nussbaum suggests that religion can 'contribute to the struggle for justice', including the struggle for gender equality, and that religious feminists are potential allies of secular feminists (ibid.; see also Karam 2013). Our own study discusses different notions of gender equality that emerged in our interviews with Christian and Muslim women and demonstrates the possibility of common ground between religious women, and also potentially, and on specific issues, between religious and secular women (see Chapters 5 and 7).

Religious feminists acknowledge that religion may be used to legitimate gender inequality and the discrimination of women. However, they reject the idea that religion is *by necessity* patriarchal. Religious feminists working within Christianity (e.g., Daly 1968; Ruether 1983; Schüssler Fiorenza 1983; Hauge 1999; Grung 2007), Judaism (e.g., Plaskow 1990; Cantor 1995; Adler 1998), Islam (e.g., Hassan 1991; Mernissi 1991; Wadud 1999, 2006; Roald 2005; Larsen 2011b) and alternative forms of spirituality (e.g., Starhawk 1979; see also Salomonsen 2002; Heelas and Woodhead 2005) have engaged theologically with their own religious traditions in an attempt to change patriarchal practices from within (see Gross 1996; Manning 1999). Concerns about women's rights and gender equality have been at the centre of their efforts.

Religious feminists have sought to change gendered practices within their own faith traditions by arguing, for example, that women should be allowed to perform functions and inhabit roles that have traditionally been the preserve of men. In some of the Christian and Jewish traditions, notably mainline Protestant Christian churches and Reform, Reconstructionist and Conservative Judaism, women have successfully challenged the practice that positions of religious authority should be exclusively reserved for men (Gross 1996). Although women rabbis are a familiar sight in many synagogues, and women's ordination to the priesthood has become a well-established practice

in many churches, the question of male and female headship remains controversial in some contexts. Institutional Roman Catholicism and Orthodox Judaism remain opposed to women taking on religious leadership roles. Catholic feminists in the United States who argue for greater gender equality within the church have founded *WomenChurch* (now called *Women-Church Convergence*), a movement of Catholic feminists, in response to their lack of impact on the Catholic Church itself (Manning 1999: 53; see also www.women-churchconvergence.org [accessed 18 March 2015]). Within Orthodox Judaism there are also women's groups that argue for change (see Manning 1999: 55). Muslim women in diverse geographical locations are debating notions of gender equality, women's rights and feminism in relation to Islam (e.g., Mir-Hosseini 1999; Wadud 2006; Barlas 2008; Contractor 2012; Seedat 2013; Taj 2013). Moreover, Muslim women are taking on new roles related to religious leadership, including as spokespersons for Muslim organizations and mosques, leaders of women's groups and religious teachers (Nyhagen Predelli 2008). The notion that the functions of the religious leader of the mosque (the imam) are a strictly male preserve has recently been challenged through high-profile women-led, gender-mixed prayers in the United Kingdom and the United States (Roald 2001; Haddad et al. 2006; Wadud 2006; Nyhagen Predelli 2008; Hammer 2012).

Linda Woodhead (2007) distinguishes between different ways in which religion can be *situated* and *mobilized* in relation to gender norms and practices in the overall society. She theorizes religion to be empirically situated as either mainstream, marginal, confirmatory or challenging in relation to the hegemonic gender order and religion as opting for strategies that are either consolidating, tactical, questing or countercultural in relation to the existing gender order (Woodhead 2007: 569–570). Religious institutions and leaders, as well as individual believers, can make use of such different strategies in relation to gender. A religion can firstly be used to *consolidate* traditional and existing gender differences and inequalities. An example is Orthodox Judaism, a form of religion which 'sacralise[s] gender difference and inequality' (Woodhead 2007: 572) but which, nonetheless, manages to attract women precisely because of the traditional gender roles it endorses (Davidman 1991). In a study of two Protestant megachurches in the United States, Brenda Brasher (1998) also found that women were attracted to strongly gender-differentiated, conservative congregations because they were allowed to engage in small women-only groups that had considerable autonomy and empowered women by focusing on personal and family issues. Similarly, in her study of the evangelical-Charismatic 'Women's Aglow' movement in the United States, R. M. Griffith (1997) found that women accepted the ideals of female domesticity and male headship while also making use of their own female religious organization to deal with the negative aspects of their subordination. The women she studied offered each other mutual support as wives and mothers over issues such

as child-rearing, spousal infidelity and domestic violence. Although they were in an overall context of male domination and control, the women experienced empowering relationships within an all-female context.

Secondly, a religion can be used in *tactical* ways that seek to undermine the existing gender order from within (Woodhead 2007: 569). Such a tactical pushing of the boundaries of the dominant gender order has, for example, been observed within the 19th-century evangelical missionary movement. By allowing women to proselytize among potential Christian converts, and thus giving them an independent role in the mission field, the missionary movement was (albeit unintentionally) subverting the dominant gender order it otherwise upheld (Nyhagen Predelli 2003). Missionary women were thus effectively 'bargaining with patriarchy' (Kandiyoti 1988) by gaining an independent role and entering the male domain of preaching, while not radically undermining the patriarchal gender regime of the mission.

Thirdly, a religion might aim to improve but not drastically change the dominant gender order, a strategy that Woodhead labels as 'questing' (Woodhead 2007: 569). A religion can be used to 'improve one's position – and well-being' in the existing gender order through focusing mainly on inner life and self-spirituality (ibid.: 575). According to Woodhead, the New Age movement and self-spirituality are the forms of religion that most clearly represent a type which 'tacitly accept[s] the dominant gender order, whilst seeking to shift the balance of power within it' (ibid.; see also Heelas and Woodhead 2005; Fedele and Knibbe 2013).

Fourthly, a religion may actively 'try to contest, disrupt and redistribute' the existing gendered distribution of power (Woodhead 2007: 569). Such a *counter-cultural strategy* is exemplified by the Goddess feminist movement, including witches and Wicca (ibid.: 576; see also Salomonsen 2002). A focus on 'the divine feminine in their own lives and in society', coupled with female empowerment strategies and a deep commitment to gender equality, is the main characteristic of this type of strategic mobilization of religion (Woodhead 2007: 576).

Analyses of the relationship between religion and gender face challenges, however, due to the highly contested issues of feminism and gender equality. What constitutes feminist principles, advocacy and action is much debated among feminist scholars and women's movement activists with different backgrounds, experiences and interests (see Goertz and Mazur 2008; Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa 2012). Women's movements are plural, diverse and disunited, as they include women who adhere to different feminist ideologies, including liberal, radical-libertarian, radical-cultural and Marxist-Socialist ideologies, to name a few (see Tong 2014). Debates between white and Black feminists, and between feminists who speak from different Western and post-colonial perspectives, also contribute to the disunity within women's movements (see Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa 2012). Importantly, views on what constitutes 'gender equality' also differ among

feminists. Some favour a principle of gender equality based on difference between women and men, while others favour a principle based on 'sameness'. Yet others have tried to conceptualize gender equality as embracing both difference and sameness (see Chapter 5). A 'difference approach' to gender equality emphasizes that women and men are different (either through nature, nurture or both) and have different experiences and interests. It argues that gender equality should acknowledge and build upon these differences rather than attempt to ignore or erase them (Phillips 1987; Evans 1995). Broadly speaking, on the one hand, the difference approach is associated with Karen Offen's 'relational feminist tradition', which 'proposed a gender-based but egalitarian vision' of society (Offen 1988: 135). Within this approach, women and men are equal in the sense that they are valued as having the same worth as human beings, but they can be treated differently according to their sex (male/female) and gender (masculine/feminine). The 'sameness approach' to gender equality is, on the other hand, based on the notion that women and men are the same in that they are equal as human beings and should be treated in an equal manner. As such, they should have exactly the same rights and opportunities in society. In Offen's terminology, the sameness approach is rooted in an individualist feminist tradition based on gender equality irrespective of sex and social gender roles (ibid.: 136). A transformative approach that seeks to move beyond dualities emphasizes diversity and views equality (sameness) and difference as context-dependent (e.g., Scott 1997; Fraser 1997). In our own research, we ask whether and to what extent the interviewed Christian and Muslim women view women and men as 'same' or as 'different', and we identify and discuss some widely differing types of discourses about gender equality that emerged from the interviews. Moreover, we ask what they think about feminism and about women's movements (Chapter 6).

Many feminist perspectives have in common that they foreground the importance of gender to women's lives. Alternative scholarship, however, originating mainly from Black and post-colonial feminist perspectives, has underscored that gender must be analysed in relation to other intersecting forms of identities and inequality, including, class, race, ethnicity, nationality and sexuality. Intersectional approaches to inequality challenge the notion that gender is always of primary importance to women's lives and introduces the notion that women experience different forms of inequality depending on their positioning in relation to multiple identities and inequalities (see, e.g., Carby 1982; Hill Collins 1991; Crenshaw 1997; Yuval-Davis 2006b). As Appelros (2005) has argued, religion is also an important dimension of women's lives that intersects with other forms of identities and inequalities, and in our study we examine how important religion is to the lived citizenship of the Christian and Muslim women we interviewed. Our book is a contribution to the so far limited feminist scholarship on religion and intersectionality (Weber 2015).

As discussed earlier in this section, women may experience both empowerment and subordination within religious contexts. Religion can therefore be analysed as both a resource and a barrier for women's rights, as well as their participation and belonging within and outside religious communities. At times, religion can be used to support gender equality, such as during the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988–1998; see Chapter 5), while at other times it is used to maintain and reproduce gender inequality. As Joan Scott (2009) reminds us, however, secular society is no guarantee either for political, social or economic equality between women and men (see also Cady and Fessenden 2013; Reilly and Scriver 2013). Women's rights and equality must therefore be studied in particular contexts that consider their opportunities and participation in a broad perspective, including that of lived religion.

Religion, citizenship, gender and multiculturalism

Debates about the relationship and linkages between religion, democracy and human rights are flourishing (Rosenblum 2000; Spinner-Halev 2000; Weithman 2002; Motilla 2004; Habermas 2006; Skjeie 2006, 2008; Loenen and Goldschmidt 2007; Hellum 2011; Rosenberger and Sauer 2012; Hellum and Aasen 2013). Scholars who examine political and social aspects of religion are increasingly invoking the term 'citizenship' in debates about religious rights, religious freedom and political claims-making rooted in religious convictions (e.g., Rosenblum 2000; Spinner-Halev 2000). The idea that religion and citizenship are connected is not new; indeed, many states offer preferential treatment to specific religions. For example, the United Kingdom has an official state religion, and Church of England bishops hold unelected seats in the UK parliament. Spain does not have a state religion but gives preferential treatment to the Catholic Church. Norway no longer has an official religion, but in the revised constitution from 2012 the Lutheran Church is still defined as the church of the people of Norway (*Norges folkekirke*). Moreover, full citizenship rights are sometimes exclusively conferred upon members of particular religions. An obvious example is Saudi Arabia, where the public practice of minority religions is outlawed. However, restrictions on the construction of places of worship for minority religions are common in many Western democratic states (including Norway and Spain). Such restrictions, which often limit the building of mosques, can be seen as a limitation of citizenship rights (see Fox 2008, 2013).

The term 'religious citizenship' (which is discussed further below) is, however, of more recent coinage; its usage gaining momentum alongside the development in citizenship theory towards differentiation between various dimensions, for example, political, social, economic, multicultural, gendered, sexual, intimate, bodily, ecological and technological dimensions of citizenship (see Isin and Wood 1999; Lister et al. 2007; Halsaa,

Roseneil and Sümer 2012). Foregrounding an analysis of citizenship as gendered, feminist scholars have demonstrated women's exclusion from citizenship status and rights in political, socio-economic and other contexts, as well as how gender inequalities limit women's ability to use or practise their citizenship rights in political, economic, social, cultural, religious, bodily, domestic or intimate spheres (Yuval-Davis 1997, 1999; Siim 2000; Stolz 2000; Benhabib 2002; Lister 2003; Friedman 2005; Kabeer 2005; Lister et al. 2007; Fraser 2008; Siim and Squires 2008; Halsaa, Roseneil and Sümer 2012; Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa 2012; Santos 2012; Roseneil 2013; Outshoorn 2015). The development of increasingly multicultural societies in Western European countries, including Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, combined with more complex understandings of the interaction between different forms of inequality, has contributed to the development of more complex feminist analyses of citizenship based on intersectional approaches to inequality (Antihas and Yuval-Davis 1983; Crenshaw 1989; Hill Collins 1991; Hancock 2007; Squires 2008; Ferree 2009; Kantola and Nouisiainen 2009; Lombardo and Verloo 2009; Borchorst and Teigen 2010). Intersectional analyses take into account gender and class, and also race, ethnicity, sexuality, age, disability, religion and belief. Furthermore, a clear need for more comparative analyses of how multiple inequalities intersect and how they affect citizenship practices has been identified in the literature (Siim and Squires 2007, 2008). In our research, we are particularly concerned with intersections between gender, religion and ethnicity in a double-comparative perspective involving Christian and Muslim women in three country contexts (Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom).

Importantly, feminist scholars have also advanced the idea that citizenship is not limited to status, rights and duties and propose a broader understanding of citizenship as *practice.* Lived citizenship, or citizenship as practice, is intimately linked with individuals' identities, their actual participation (or non-participation) in different contexts and their sense of belonging to (or exclusion from) the smaller and larger communities in which they live (Lister 1997; Isin and Wood 1999). An emphasis on citizenship as lived practice is based on the idea that citizenship is not so much a fixed attribute of a particular group but rather involves contested, fluid and dynamic processes of negotiation and struggle. In this broader view of citizenship, civil society, including its array of voluntary organizations ranging from community groups, advocacy groups, charities, sports associations, religious organizations and social movements, is one of the major spheres in which citizenship is lived and negotiated. Our focus in this regard is on religious women's lived citizenship, which encompasses rights and duties, participation, identities and belonging (see Lister et al. 2007: 168).

Citizenship as *belonging* expresses the notion of 'feeling at home' within a community (Yuval-Davis 2006a: 197). As such, citizenship involves emotional and psychological aspects and 'a set of social and political

relationships, practices and identities that together can be described as a sense of belonging' (Lister et al. 2007: 9). Yuval-Davis makes a useful distinction between three different levels at which belonging can be analysed: in the construction of social locations, in the construction of individual and group identities and attachments, and in the construction of ethical and political values (Yuval-Davis 2006a; see also Chapter 3 in this book). The 'politics of belonging', in turn, are about the construction of insiders and outsiders, or 'us' and 'them' (ibid.: 204). The construction of Muslims as 'others' in Europe (Jacobsen 2011; Cesari 2013; Guia 2014; Jouili 2015) is a contemporary example of a politics of belonging that creates symbolic boundaries between those who allegedly belong and those who allegedly don't. In this regard, Cesari (2013) writes about how Muslims in the West are constructed as both 'internal' and 'external' enemies that threaten social integration and national security.

Religion has historically been used as a traditional boundary marker between people, leading to 'social glue' or community cohesion in a Durkheimian sense (Durkheim 1915), as well as to conflict and war (e.g., Nazi Germany; the 1990s conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina). Religion has also been used in various ways to instil terror in people's everyday lives, ranging from raids on abortion clinics in the name of Christianity to terrorist attacks in the name of Islam. Today, in Western European contexts, religion is deeply involved in the politics of belonging linked to the economy, migration, multiculturalism and social integration. Fear of Muslims, expressed in Islamophobia and outright discrimination, is a salient aspect of the politics of belonging. Other aspects include conflicts about the broader role of religion in the public sphere, including politics, education and the workplace. Boundaries are also being created between 'the secular' and 'the religious', where the common ground between secular and religious values are being ignored, silenced or denied rather than acknowledged (see Sands 2008; Fessenden 2008). The politics of belonging is also linked to citizenship – to who belongs to a nation state (status, rights and duties) and who participates in 'full and legitimate' ways in local communities (ibid.: 205–206). The role of religion in the politics of belonging and citizenship is under-researched (see Chapter 4). In our study, we asked Christian and Muslim women how they would describe their identities, and we explored what religion meant to their identities.

In terms of *identities and belonging*, citizenship is also 'multi-layered' (Yuval-Davis 1999), as people's experiences of citizenship are mediated by their multiple identities and loyalties to families, groups and wider communities. Individuals *participate* as citizens in a number of different contexts, including families and intimate relationships, neighbourhoods, work, politics, civil society (including religious organizations), and nature or the environment. From a normative point of view, citizens should have equal opportunities for participation in all of these contexts, but feminist scholarship

has pointed to the exclusionary mechanisms that prevent women as well as ethnic minority groups and other marginalized groups from participating on a par with white men. In Nancy Fraser's terminology, the ideal of 'participatory parity' means that all individuals must be accorded the status of full partners in social interaction and be enabled to participate 'on a par with the rest' (Fraser 2000: 113; Fraser 2003: 29). For the ideal of participatory parity to be realized, Fraser (2007: 27) postulates that material conditions must be present which enable participants' autonomy and 'voice', and that 'institutionalized patterns of cultural value [must] express equal respect for all participants and ensure equal opportunity for achieving social esteem' (ibid.). Both reciprocal recognition and status equality are needed to support participatory parity. On the other hand, misrecognition and status subordination are seen as detrimental to participatory parity. Fraser's conceptual apparatus of participatory parity, reciprocal recognition and status equality are relevant in analyses of relationships between religions that are accorded majority and minority status in society (e.g., Christianity and Islam) and relationships between different religious groups (e.g., Christians and Muslims) in a particular context.

Beliefs and assertions about *social identities* are related to *citizenship*, in that 'both are group markers' and group identities can be used in 'claims for recognition of citizenship rights' (Isin and Wood 1999: 20). Identities, including religious identities, are neither unitary nor fixed. Rather, identities are 'multi-layered' (Yuval-Davis 1999), 'plural' (Østberg 2003), contested and changeable (Hall 1996), but also relatively durable (Isin and Wood 1999). Identity is a continuous *project* (Calhoun 1994) that we constantly *work on*, reshape and change through the interplay between our own life-course, our agency and the social world in which we are located. Mette Anderson describes identity work as '[…] the dialogue between collective identities ascribed to us from others and our own identifications with various manifest and imagined communities of belonging' (Anderson 2000: 291; see also Thun 2012). Identity work is thus, in line with Calhoun (1994), a continuous project which refers to both reflexivity and constant attention to the question of 'who am I' and to how our 'situatedness' in particular social contexts can constrain as well as provide opportunities for different forms of identities and practice to emerge, change or be reproduced. We approach identity construction as a type of 'narrative work' continuously performed by experiencing and interpreting subjects who are situated within concrete historical and social processes. In our research (see Chapter 3), we are concerned with the narrative identity work accomplished by religiously devout Muslim and Christian women: how do they construct their identities in relation to religion, gender, ethnicity, nation and citizenship? In short, what identity work do they do?

The modern self is a 'reflexive project' where the continuous creation and construction of the self can be viewed as an ongoing do-it-yourself (DIY)

project (Beck 2000: 75; Kelly 2001: 26; see also Giddens 1991), but the DIY project is not accomplished in isolation. Rather, individuals construct their identities in social interaction with others (identity is thus relational) and through engaging with available discourses and traditions, or what Somers calls 'public narratives' (Somers 1994, as cited in Ammerman 2003: 213) and Mahmood (2005: 32) calls 'authoritative discursive traditions'. In contemporary society, religion is an optional resource and a 'reflexive choice' in 'the on-going project of constructing personal identity' (McGuire 1997: 53). The meaning and importance of religion to an individual's biography can fluctuate over the life-course (ibid.). In this regard, Kelly Besecke uses the term 'reflexive spirituality' to describe how individuals create personal meaning and to denote 'a cultural language, a way that people talk with each other about transcendent meaning' (Besecke 2007: 171). As such, reflexive spirituality is part of both individual and collective work on identity and belonging.

Conceptualized as encompassing status, rights, identities, participation and belonging, the term 'citizenship' remains an exclusive term that creates and maintains divisions and differences. It confers 'insider' status and a set of rights and obligations and legitimates identities, forms of participation and belonging for a group of people within a bounded political community (Benhabib 2004). But even in its broadened meaning, citizenship sets the insiders apart from those defined as 'other', as strangers, aliens and outsiders (Isin 2005: 377). Arguably, all people within a bounded political community should have *equal* status and rights, and equal opportunities for participation. In practice, however, citizenship rights and opportunities are often differentiated between different groups of people (i.e., women and men; heterosexual and homosexual people; an ethnic majority and ethnic minorities; a dominant religion and minority religions), and different citizenship rights can compete against each other (e.g., women's rights and gender equality versus the right to religious freedom). Moreover, the ability of citizens to participate is influenced by structures of gender, class, ethnicity and race, nationality, religion, disability and sexual orientation. The claim that citizenship is 'internally inclusive' and 'externally exclusive' (Brubaker 1992) is therefore too simplistic, as it exaggerates and fixes a distinction between 'included citizens' and 'excluded aliens', rather than seeing the relationship between inclusion and exclusion as fluid and contested (Benhabib 2004: 19). Feminist scholarship and political activism has a solid tradition of addressing the internally excluding notions and practices of citizenship, or the production of hierarchies and inequalities within the privileged 'citizen group', as well as between the privileged citizen group and marginalized citizen groups (Hernes 1988; Pateman 1989; Siim 1991; Lister 2003). Building on these broader feminist approaches to citizenship, and examining how religious women understand and experience citizenship in their everyday life, we argue (in Chapter 4) that rights-based approaches to

religious citizenship do not capture the full complexity of women's religious citizenship.

The feminist move towards conceptualizing citizenship in terms of lived practice is paralleled by developments in the sociology of religion described earlier, which emphasize religion as lived or practised in everyday life. North American scholars Orsi (1997), McGuire (2008) and Ammerman (2007) suggest that religion in contemporary society cannot be fully understood through perspectives that centre on formal religious organizations and 'institutionally defined beliefs and practices' (McGuire 2008: 12). Instead, the concept of lived religion shifts the focus onto 'the actual experience of religious persons' as individuals and as participants in wider social contexts (ibid.). Top-down approaches to citizenship and to religion that centre on formal aspects of rights, statuse, institutions and doctrines are thus being complemented by bottom-up approaches that focus on how people understand, practise and negotiate citizenship in everyday life (Lister et al. 2007) and that are 'grounded in the everyday ways modern persons relate to the things they experience as religious or spiritual' (Ammerman 2007: 5).

In multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies like Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, the politics of difference versus equality are central to government policies that address relations between different groups of people. The term 'multicultural citizenship' describes both the de facto ethnic, cultural and religious pluralism of Western democracies and the citizenship claims for recognition and justice that have emerged from diverse groups, including indigenous peoples and immigrant groups (Kymlicka 2010: 36–37). Multicultural citizenship is linked to demands for justice and the anti-racist and anti-discrimination laws and policies that have emerged at different points in time in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom. Such policies address issues of racism and discrimination, protection of national minorities and indigenous people's rights, and freedom from religious hatred. Multicultural citizenship is thus concerned with the status, rights and duties, identity, participation and belonging of ethnic majority and minority groups, national minorities, migrant communities and indigenous peoples. Empirical studies of multicultural citizenship must include privileged dominant groups as well as disadvantaged and marginalized groups and take into account relations between them. In our research we pay particular attention to the ways in which women talk about Christianity as a privileged majority religion and Islam as a minority religion.

Theorists of multiculturalism, gender and feminism (e.g., Okin 1999; Eisenberg and Spinner-Halev 2005; Phillips 2010) highlight discrepancies between the rhetoric of inclusion and actual practices of exclusion along intersecting inequalities such as gender, ethnicity and religion. Specific practices among national, cultural and religious minorities have variously been emphasized as needing protection (to preserve traditions) and political recognition (assigning particular rights to such minorities; see Kymlicka

1995), or as needing to be challenged, contested or even abolished (e.g., Okin 1999). However, the recognition of group rights for specific ethnic and/or national and indigenous minority groups might effectively condone illiberal within-group practices that undermine women's rights to equality. Minority, migrant and indigenous women, who often find themselves to be a 'minority within a minority' (Eisenberg and Spinner-Halev 2005), may suffer from a lack of equal status both within majority society (as a minority) and within the minority community (as women).

Organized religious practices pose a dilemma for a broadened notion of citizenship when patriarchal religious laws, norms and practices are at variance with state-implemented laws on gender equality and international human rights conventions such as the Convention for the Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). For example, in the context of Roman Catholicism, women are excluded from ordination to the priesthood, and official religious teachings prohibit access to and use of contraception and abortion (see Bayes and Tohidi 2001). In the context of Islam, traditional Sharia law legitimates and also 'requires legal discrimination of women' (Mayer 1991: 99). In effect, such discrimination undermines the protection women have under international conventions such as CEDAW (ibid.: 137; see also Moghadam 2002). In Norway, the state law on gender equality prohibits discrimination against women, but religious associations are exempt from gender equality legislation and can legally discriminate 'on the basis of gender or sexual orientation when such discrimination is based on religious doctrine' (Skjeie 2004: 6; see also Skjeie 2006). In relation to religion, the issue of gender equality is thus deemed a private matter by the state, and religious associations are exempt from laws that would otherwise demand gender equality in leadership and participation. Likewise, in Spain and the United Kingdom, religious communities are free to implement gender-discriminatory practices that contravene gender equality laws that apply to other social spheres such as education and the labour market. Moreover, in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, religious organizations can draw on public financial resources to support gender discriminatory practices. Principles of religious freedom and non-interference by the state with issues of gender quality are thus privileged through public financial practices, while principles of gender equality must, as Skjeie (2006) has argued, effectively 'yield' (see also Solhøy, Strand and Økland 2010). Some scholars have thus called for gender equality to be assigned a higher or equal priority to the principle of religious freedom (Sunstein 1999; Skjeie 2006; see also Loenen and Goldschmidt 2007). The question of state intervention in what is usually regarded as 'internal religious matters' has thus been raised: should gender equality be imposed on religious organizations, or is it better if it emerges from within?

Answers to this question rely, at least in part, on whether or not religious organizations are viewed as private or as public entities. It can be argued,

however, that in combining private religious beliefs, civil society activism, and public deliberation and intervention, religious organizations represent a contested borderland where the practice and negotiation of citizenship status, rights, identities, participation and belonging may become especially acute. In relation to gendered (and sexual) aspects of citizenship, the religious field, in its different formations across various beliefs and practices, presents a test case for the inclusion or exclusion of women (and of sexual minorities) in the broader understanding of citizenship promoted by feminist scholars.

Religious citizenship and the limits of rights-based approaches

Despite an increasing use of the term 'religious citizenship' by academics (e.g., Yip 2003; Levitt 2004; Ryder 2008; Permoser and Rosenberger 2009; Beaman 2013), there are few attempts at offering precise definitions of what it means.[7] A recent instance is that of Beaman (2013), who discusses 'obligatory religious citizenship'. While Beaman suggests that a 'responsibilized citizen' is increasingly being framed as a religious citizen (ibid.: 145), she does not offer a definition of the term. Another case is Levitt (2008), who uses the concepts 'religious citizenship' and 'religious global citizenship' to draw attention to transnational migrants' civic engagement via religious organizations. Apart from arguing that religious belonging, identification and participation enhance community engagement among transnational migrants, Levitt does not give a more precise understanding of what she means by the term 'religious citizenship'. In contrast to these two examples, where 'religious citizenship' is used quite loosely, Permoser and Rosenberger (2009) provide an attempt at delineating what 'religious citizenship' consists of by suggesting that it includes individual rights, group rights and 'corporate rights'. Discussing the governance of religious diversity in Austria, with a focus on Muslim immigrants, Permoser and Rosenberger (ibid.: 151) argue that 'the increasing number of rights derived from religious membership amount to a form of "religious citizenship" that transcends nationality and therefore increases the rights of Muslim immigrants'. These two authors foreground three types of rights: the universal right to freedom of religion; group-differentiated rights (related to Islam as a minority religion; e.g., rights to wear religious clothing, praying at work and religious holidays); and what they call 'corporate rights' allocated to a specific organization (the Islamic Faith Community Organisation in Austria) which the state recognizes and cooperates with as the assumed representative of all Muslims in Austria (ibid.).

Hudson (2003) also forwards a predominantly rights-based approach to religious citizenship. Nevertheless, Hudson suggests that religious citizenship can be defined in multiple ways, including a nation-state definition, where 'religious citizenship is the citizenship that your nation state allows

you to exercise in religious matters' (ibid.: 426), and a civil society definition, where 'religious citizenship is the citizenship which citizens exercise as religious persons in the civic sphere' (ibid.). Hudson also talks about religious citizenship in terms of the rights of persons, and he says that religious citizenship can be approached via existing legal documents, including national and international law on religion and belief. Finally, Hudson suggests that individuals may obtain religious citizenship through 'adopting specific discursive positions' linked to particular religions, such as by calling themselves 'Christians or Buddhist or secularists' (ibid.: 427).

Important challenges can be directed towards the rights-based approaches to religious citizenship offered by these authors: what is the importance of gender, and of majority/minority religious status, for the practising of religious citizenship? Gender inequalities remain a serious obstacle to equal religious citizenship, and religion-based discrimination of women continues to perpetuate patriarchal gender relations within families, communities, states and globally (Bayes and Tohidi 2001). In its liberal version, a rights-based approach to defining religious citizenship neglects the issue of gender discrimination and the ways in which women are differently situated within their religious communities. Moreover, a rights-based approach is too narrow because it ignores dimensions that religious women themselves deem important. In their lived practice of religious citizenship, women may prioritize belonging and participation related to religious identities, groups and communities, rather than gender equality in the form of equal rights for women and men. As such, gendered forms of religious citizenship practice may support the feminist move to include identities, belonging and participation as important dimensions of lived citizenship, but they may also challenge feminist ideals of citizenship as gender equal. As discussed earlier, scholars such as Mack (2003), Mahmood (2001, 2005), Göle and Billaud (2012) highlight that women's agency can emerge from religious forms of piety that accept, rather than reject, gender inequalities. Women's religious identities, beliefs and practices may therefore pose challenges to both rights-based and feminist conceptualizations of citizenship. Rather than assuming religious women's subordination or agency, we need to investigate whether and how religious women experience their lived citizenship within particular contexts as empowering or restricting in relation to their gender.

The state can confer religious status and rights upon both individuals and collectives, and these may be assigned equally or unequally across different individuals and religious groups. Moreover, religious institutions themselves may assign equal or unequal status and rights to their members, and they often design hierarchies in which different groups of people (lay people versus religious leaders; men versus women; heterosexual versus homosexual individuals) are assigned different status and rights. In turn, the status and rights conferred by nation states and by religious institutions have implications for the *participation of and sense of belonging experienced by* citizens

acting within nation states, religious institutions and local communities. There is not a deterministic relationship, however, between status and rights, on the one hand, and participation and belonging, on the other. Despite in many instances being denied equal status and rights with men, religious women (and also sexual minorities) have been able to circumvent and challenge discriminatory rules and conventions and to carve out independent roles and dignified practices for themselves. In doing so, they have often drawn on their own sense of identity and belonging as a resource for empowerment and action. Religious identity and belonging can thus be a (re)source for citizenship practice. At other times, women have accepted a subordinate status in relation to men as part of religious frameworks that assign meaningful roles to women as wives, mothers and carers (Davidman 1991). Religious beliefs and practices may, however, also provide barriers to citizenship, depending on what frameworks of religious meaning individuals draw upon and how such frameworks are used and interpreted. Religion is thus a malleable resource that may have empowering and disempowering effects in relation to citizenship as lived or practised. Whether religious identities, participation and belonging provide barriers or resources for women's citizenship practices must therefore be investigated in specific, historical and socio-political contexts.

Reflection is also required on the relationship between a religious majority and religious minorities, as well as between religious and non-religious (or secular) beliefs. In European countries, Christianity is privileged either because of historical, political, cultural or social reasons (Fox 2008) – a privilege that has 'so far mainly gone unrecognized' by 'those who have been born and raised in Europe in a traditional European style' (Van den Brink 2007: 214). In turn, religious majority or minority status may intersect with other forms of inequality, including those pertaining to religion and gender.

Towards lived religion and lived citizenship

Drawing on scholarship that examines the relationship between religion and agency, we see that agency can be conceptualized as residing in acts of resistance and progressive politics but also in religious forms of piety that may more silently reproduce, contest or subvert patriarchal norms. Agency can thus be located in subordination to God and also in adherence to group norms that support or circumvent women's submission. A lived religion perspective acknowledges that religions are not *necessarily* patriarchal and that the relationship between gender, feminism and religion must be studied in particular contexts. The lived religion approach enables us to examine forms of religious agency as well as how such agency is embedded within, and may be constrained by, social structures. Moreover, the lived religion approach challenges both the public–private distinction and the religious–secular dichotomy. Lived religion analyses religion as it relates to institutions

and the public sphere as well as to people's everyday life. The meaning of what is 'religious' and 'secular' changes for individuals as well as for larger communities over time.

We are living not in a 'post-secular' society but in a society where secular and religious influences are dynamic and fluctuate. What is constructed as secular and as religious varies in different contexts, and the boundaries between them are blurred due to their intertwining. For example, what is considered 'secular' moral or ethical values are often rooted in religiously informed conceptions of moral and ethical behaviour. A lived religion approach offers a holistic perspective on religion as it is believed, embodied, experienced and practised by people in their everyday lives. As such, it challenges the secularization thesis as well as the gendering of the secularization thesis to go beyond statistical measures of religiosity to study religious meaning and experience at the micro-level via ethnographic methods.

This chapter has brought together feminist scholarship on religion and on lived citizenship and sociological scholarship on lived religion. By broadening up the term 'citizenship' to include not only formal status, rights and duties but also forms of identities, participation and belonging in different life spheres (Chapter 3), the lived citizenship approach challenges the public–private distinction as well as a narrow focus on rights-based approaches to citizenship. From our own research, an ethic of care, love, respect and tolerance emerges as further, important aspects of citizenship as lived practice (Chapter 4). Moreover, majority–minority relations between different religions and ethnic groups in multicultural societies like Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom pose challenges to citizenship's inclusive potential. The privileging of Christianity and the marginalization and even stigmatization of Islam have an impact on how citizenship and religion are lived in everyday life. The issue of gender equality is a further dimension of both citizenship and religion as lived, and our research reveals that many of the women we interviewed view women and men as basically different, with different capabilities and concomitant responsibilities (Chapter 5). They are also largely sceptical of feminists and view them as 'too extreme', unwomanly, selfish and power-seeking. At the same time, they acknowledge the past achievements of women's movements on issues such as voting rights, educational opportunities, paid work and equal pay, but they tend to talk about women's movements as a phenomenon of the past with little contemporary relevance. Moreover, they are sceptical and even hostile towards women's movement claims on abortion, divorce, lesbian rights and 'unrestrained' equality (Chapter 6). These findings have implications for the possibility of initiating dialogue and identifying common ground between women across religious and secular divides (Chapter 7).

3
Religious Identities and Meaning-making

> Identities are narratives, stories people tell themselves and others about who they are (and who they are not).
>
> (Yuval-Davis 2006a: 202)

Identities, the personal and inter-subjective experiences of who we 'are', result from a complex interplay of multilevel processes. Identities are influenced but not determined by social location and power dynamics; they are shaped and reshaped by subjects who are subjected to social norms and structures and who are also able to reason, to desire and to act. The social construction of individual and group identities is always a 'work in progress', a continuous project of affirmation and reaffirmation, as well as contestation and change. In this chapter, we outline the notion of identity and examine how the interviewed Christian and Muslim women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom talk about their own identities in relation to marriage, motherhood and family, work and education, nationality, citizenship and, of course, religion.

The chapter is divided into five sections. The first one, 'Religious identity, intersecting identities and social location', introduces the conceptual framework with which we approach the issue of religious identities and meaning-making. The second section, ' "Who am I?" Complex identities', examines the key and overlapping themes that were addressed by the interviewees when they described their identities, including national belonging, marriage, motherhood and family, and employment and education. It demonstrates that identities were talked about as complex or 'multilayered' (Yuval-Davis 1999) and also shows that some participants valued independence from identity labels. The third section, 'Ways to faith', discusses the different routes to faith taken by the research participants, such as being born into their religion ('getting it from the mother's milk') or becoming religious over time. This section also introduces a route to religious engagement and identity that we, inspired by Lützen (1988), call 'magic moments' of religious insight and devotion. The fourth section, 'Religion

as lived', examines how interviewees practise religion in their everyday lives, either as a way of life (religion as an all-encompassing feature) or as a cultural practice and habit. We also look at intersecting forms of prejudice experienced by some of our research participants. The fifth section, 'Religion as meaning-maker', demonstrates that for many women in our study, religion is a foothold and foundation, or a 'root reality' (Neitz 1987) in their lives, while for others religion seems to be a taken-for-granted and compartmentalized aspect of their identities. The overarching issue is how participants construct their religious identities and other intersecting identities in relation to self and community. This section also looks briefly at more relational aspects of religious identities linked to the notion of faith as belonging (see also Chapter 4), before the concluding section that summarizes the findings of this chapter. The discussion shows that participants talk reflexively about their identities as plural or multi-dimensional, as both shifting and durable, and in terms of a 'salience hierarchy' (Stryker 1980). For many of the research participants, their religious subjectivity takes a foundational or constitutive status as 'root identity' based on religion being their 'root reality' (Neitz 1987). Their religious 'root identity' is complemented by other intersecting identities, including gender (e.g., motherhood) and nationality (e.g., migrant background). In other words, their subjectivities are largely constituted not only by religion but also by gender, nationality and other identity aspects. Other participants talk about their religious identities as one among multiple identity aspects and as such do not single out religion as being of greater importance in the hierarchy of identity categories. Interviewees also talk about their identities in relation to morality and values (Taylor 1989; Calhoun 1991; see also Winchester 2008), as well as in relation to belonging (Yuval-Davis 2006a).

Religious identity, intersecting identities and social location

In this section, we briefly discuss some theoretical aspects of identity: how identities are socially and contextually constructed; the principal changes in women's lives, from obedience to relative independence; identity politics as a response to non-recognition; and lastly the collective aspect of religious identity.

Individuals construct their identities in social interaction with others and through engaging with available discourses and narratives. They can be about national identity (e.g., 'being British means to love democracy'), gendered identity (e.g., 'mothers have a duty to take care of their children'), religious identity (e.g., 'all Muslims belong to the global community of Muslim believers, the *Ummah*') and other identity aspects. 'Public narratives' (Somers 1994, as cited in Ammerman 2003: 213) 'provide recognized "accounts" one can give of one's behavior, accounts that identify where one belongs, what one is doing and why' (Ammerman 2003: 214). They are

actively used by individuals in the creation of their 'autobiographical narratives' about their own identities (e.g., 'I am a British Muslim') and are also used by groups, cultures and institutions to produce and maintain collective identities (ibid.). In the analysis of interviews with Christian and Muslim women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, we foreground the autobiographical construction of identities, but we also try to make links with larger public narratives about identities.

The narrative construction of identities is deeply intertwined with notions of belonging and social location. Yuval-Davis points out that some social dimensions may be more important than others in specific historical situations, but some social locations, including gender, age, ethnicity and class, 'tend to shape most people's lives in most social locations' (Yuval-Davis 2006a: 201). We suggest that, in our time, religion is increasingly becoming a more salient social location. This is partly because religion is becoming increasingly politicized (see Chapter 2) and as such is implicated in what Yuval-Davis terms 'the politics of belonging'. The politics of belonging is about creating and maintaining boundaries between people, between 'us' and 'them'.

The cultural change in industrial societies towards increased individualization and reflexivity has entailed fundamental transformations in the lives of women. Nielsen describes 'the emergence of new subject positions for Scandinavian girls over the last three generations' (Nielsen 2004: 10) that have arisen due to educational and employment opportunities as well as changes related to gendered expectations regarding domestic work and childcare. New social roles for women are being shaped, and the communal moral imperative of 'being of use' is challenged by the more individualistic proposition of 'finding oneself' (Nielsen 2004: 13), especially among middle-class women. In the same vein, Gullestad (2006: 71) claims that the traditional value of obedience is discarded, while the modern value of independence is adopted. In periods of rapid change, new forms of 'taken-for-grantedness' emerge, and 'there is more reflection about the formerly self-evident' (ibid.: 71). Gullestad describes moral reasoning and living as 'the ability to live with tensions and paradoxes and to find solutions not in terms of either one or the other poles of an opposition, but in terms of their integration' (ibid.: 71). The move from emphasis on 'obedience' to 'being oneself', she suggests, implies new ways of living with old tensions. As a sub-theme in this chapter, we also attempt to explore whether and how the tendency towards individualization in modern society leaves traces of less conforming gender roles and new ways of living with tensions among the interviewed religious women in Oslo, Madrid and Leicester (for a more in-depth discussion of gender equality, see Chapter 5). Linda Alcoff suggests that 'women's subjective experiences of being women are constituted by women's position' (Alcoff 2006: 148). She denies that gender identity is 'exhaustively determined by biology' (ibid.: 148). Rather than perceiving an essential identity that all

women share, she emphasizes gender as 'positionality'; '(…) the position women find themselves in can be actively utilized (…) as a location for the construction of meanings' (ibid.: 147) and for political activities (see also Chapter 5).

Yuval-Davis (2006a: 203), like Alcoff (1988, 2006), and Nielsen (2004) point out that the connection between social location and a particular social identity category is conditional on 'specific social practices'. A working-class woman may not identify with and share middle-class women's interests. When an identity construction is forced on people, it becomes an important dimension of their social location. Minorities that are persecuted for political and religious reasons, for example, may be forced to live with negative public narratives about their identities that also create socio-economic forms of marginalization (Young 1990; Yuval-Davis 2006a). Individuals may also constantly be asked to give information about their identities by people who feel a need to place them in specific identity categories such as 'immigrant', 'Christian', 'Muslim' and/or 'feminist'. In such situations, 'the relationships between [social] locations and identities can become empirically more closely intertwined' (Yuval-Davis 2006: 203). We expect this intertwining to be reflected among the interviewed ethnic and religious minority women in our study, especially among the Muslim women (Jacobsen 2006; Es 2015).

The recognition of identity is vital for any person to feel accepted, and yet, because recognition is 'relative to a constantly shifting context' (Alcoff 2006: 148), it is always vulnerable.[1] When one's identity, for instance the identity as a Pentecostal Christian or as a Sunni Muslim, is challenged, discriminated or stigmatized, identity politics may be an active response and the targeted groups may employ various coping strategies. One strategy is to keep one's (religious) identity secret or only for private use; other strategies are to change or modify (religious) identity, to reject (religious) identity altogether, to consolidate religious belonging, victimization and lastly to mobilize and engage in religio-political struggle (see Engebrigtsen 1992; Es 2015).[2]

Religious identity has a significant social dimension, such as religious worship, which is activated, negotiated and (re)produced in collective action. Consequently, communal spaces and rituals for religious observance, such as churches and mosques, marriage and birth rituals, are good examples. Historically, religious movements have been crucial in social and political processes, such as the civil rights movements in the United States and the Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle East, and we will explore the collective aspect of religious identity in the lives of contemporary religious women in Europe. We draw on Rupp and Taylor's (1999) study of the international feminist movement, where they discuss the emergence of a collective feminist identity. The social constructions of 'the circle of we', the development of group consciousness and the politicization of everyday life are important. The collective identity, which is embedded in symbols and practices that

unite the members of the feminist collective and connect their everyday experiences with broader forms of social injustice, is likely to be relevant to the construction of religious identities as well. We have applied a distinction between three layers of collective identity (Gamson 1991; in Rupp and Taylor 1999: 366): the organizational layer (collective identities constructed around networks or groups), such as a women's group in a church or mosque; the movement layer (which subordinates the networks and groups to the larger cause), such as the Pentecostal movement; and finally, the broader social groups that the movement claims to represent (related to, e.g., nationality). The three layers of collective identities are derived from people's social locations and are not necessarily closely integrated (ibid.: 366). We will return to these levels in the following, when we examine whether and how the interviewed women identify with their local church congregations and mosques and with the broader religious traditions in which their religious practices are embedded.

'Who am I?' Complex identities

When women in our study were asked to describe who they are, or their identity, some referred to their social locations, including their gender, ethnicity and work (see also Chapter 1 for the participants' background characteristics). Others responded quite differently, by reflecting on their personalities, likes and dislikes. We are using their immediate responses, including the sequence of social locations, as an indication of identity, and not as a basis for in-depth identity analysis. All the women referred to more than one identity category in their narrative, and several participants explicitly contextualized various aspects of their identity. Five overlapping themes were prominent in the participants' descriptions: national belonging, marriage and motherhood, work and education, independence and, last but not least, religion. Our primary goal is to enhance our understanding of religious identities and religious belonging; hence, this theme is discussed more in depth than the other themes.

National belonging

The following citations illustrate the ways in which several research participants immediately referred to the intertwining of their religious and national identities, often along with age or other aspects of their social location:

> I am Arab, Muslim, Moroccan.
>
> (Spanish Pentecostal)

> Who am I? I am a Caribbean heritage woman, a Black British woman who is a Christian, working and living my life in Britain.
>
> (UK Pentecostal)

I am Indian, because I was born in India and you know I have a British citizenship and I grew up here. I was born in India, So I would say I am, I go regularly back and forth to India because I minister there, but I would say I was very much British to be honest, been here too long.

(UK Pentecostal)

Yes, I am 24 years, and I have, originally I am from X [North African country]. But I have been at different places, I was born in Y [country in Western Europe] and then I have lived a year in Z [North African country], and I have lived in A [a city in Norway], and then I moved to B [city in Norway] some seven years ago. All in all I have been in Norway maybe 10 or 11 years, soon, I believe (…). I did not use to be very religious (…) It started perhaps really when I was 19 years of age.

(Norwegian Shia)

These statements display the urgency of national belonging in the lives of many women; it was often immediately addressed and also soaked with implicit meaning. The three words, 'Arab, Muslim, Moroccan', uttered by the woman living in Spain contain layers of belonging, demarcations and enclosures, the larger meaning of which we can only begin to grasp. Likewise, the reference to 'Caribbean heritage Black British Christian', and to two Middle Eastern countries, two countries in Western Europe and two cities in Norway, indicates radical changes and probably significant amounts of pain and loss, but hopefully also gains, in the lives of these women. The brief references to social locations (i.e., age, gender, nationality) implicitly display the complex work involved in identity work and (re-)construction. The attentive reader is left baffled by the glimpses of belonging involved, including the ways in which nationality, ethnicity and religion are intertwined. Certainly, processes of migration loom large here and remind us that national belonging is primarily a heightened identity issue for migrant women.

A complex mixture of social locations is involved in the research participants' narratives about who they are. Often, but not always, national belonging is mentioned simultaneously with age, education and employment, as in the words of this interviewee: 'I am a girl, 22 years of age, and I go to college, [to become a] general teacher, and I live in Norway, and that's that. And I am from Afghanistan, actually' (Norwegian Shia).

National, ethnic and religious identity sometimes appeared as flexible and adapted to the women's actual (and at times shifting) social contexts, as illustrated by this citation:

I was born in Argentina. I have been in Spain for a long time now. When I am in Spain and someone asks, I say I am from Argentina, but because of my accent a lot of the times, [people can tell] there is something else and in the end I have to say I am Lebanese. […] when I am not in Spain

> I always say I am Spanish, always; I don't know why but I have discussed
> this with other people who've also been here a long while and became
> [Spanish] citizens...when one is abroad someone's always going to ask
> where are you from and if I start saying I was born in Argentina but
> I am half Lebanese...I say 'I am Spanish'. So I feel a bit from everywhere,
> although less and less from Argentina.
>
> (Spanish Shia)

The quote illustrates that belonging, nationality and citizenship are situa-
tional and dynamic identity markers. The use of different identity markers
(i.e., Spanish, Lebanese, Argentinian) illustrates the shifting and context-
dependent nature of this individual's narrative identity work. When choos-
ing her identity marker, this participant considers her context and picks the
descriptive strategy that she finds more appropriate, in line with Alcoff's
(1988, 2006: 148) point that the position women find themselves in can be
actively utilized as a location for the construction of meaning. This descrip-
tion of situational identity emerged from interviews with women who had
a migration history, whether they were migrants themselves, children of
migrants or married to migrants. Most of those with migrant backgrounds in
our study were Muslim. This finding is in line with Yuval-Davis's claim that
while 'there is no necessary connection between social location and a partic-
ular social identity', the relationship 'can become empirically more closely
intertwined' in cases where identity constructions are 'forced on people'
(Yuval-Davis 2006a: 203), such as when they are asked by others to clarify
or confirm their identities. In contemporary Europe, Muslim women have
to cope with processes of being 'othered', non-recognized and discriminated
against by the majority society. Adapting to the actual situation by silenc-
ing, modifying or consolidating their identity is one way of coping with this
problem (Engebrigtsen 1992).

While some participants expressed a plural identity in a straightforward
way, we also noticed different responses. Some interviewees seemed to lack a
language or words to adequately express the burden of work involved in (re-)
creating a plural identity. The interview quotes highlight that religion and
national heritage are intertwined, but they barely hint at the identity work
that needs to be carried out in order to negotiate the various norms and
practices that are embedded in the sketched identities. The mixture of faith,
nationality and migration is likely to involve not only painful challenges in
lived life but also potential resources. One example is a Sunni woman who
defined her religious identity as intertwined with both her Pakistani heritage
and the nation (Britain) and nationality (British) she feels she belongs to.
The following quote indicates some of the contestations involved in identity
work:

> [I am] a British Muslim. Although my parents are from Pakistan, my father
> was actually born here, my mother is from Pakistan, and I relate myself

more to Britain and being a Muslim than being from Pakistan. Some of my friends from a similar age say British Pakistani Muslim or Pakistani Muslim, but I myself would class myself as British.

(UK Sunni)

The final part of her statement may be interpreted as a strategy of silencing her religious identity; she prefers to define herself as 'British', unlike her friends who apply hyphenated identities. However, at the start she also uses the term 'British Muslim' to distance herself from the identity label of a 'Pakistani Muslim' yet retain a plural identity as both British and Muslim. Here, 'British' seems to refer not only to nationality but also to culture. She identifies with British culture, as well as with her religion, Islam; she embraces a multi-layered and plural identity; she is a British Muslim. A Shia woman in Spain also indicates the plurality of social locations involved in her identity:

Well, as you know, I am a Lebanese, from Beirut . . . and I come, well, from a multicultural context, in my family there are many religions, my family is a bit mixed, my father is Russian, my mother is Muslim and I am half Muslim, but here I consider myself Muslim, although there are things that I don't practice.

(Spanish Shia)

This woman feels more of a Muslim in Spain than in Lebanon, which resonates with other migrants' experiences of becoming more religious post-migration. Her reflection displays that identity is not set once and for all and also that for her religion is a form of connection to her home country, to her kind and to her background. Her identity is multi-layered and plural. It is also relatively durable (Isin and Wood 1999), but also contested and changeable (Hall 1996) across time and space. She considers herself Muslim even though she is born 'half Muslim' due to the mixed ethnic and religious background of her parents. The religious background of her father (a Druze) is silenced in the interview.

Some of the research participants found it difficult to describe their identity, particularly if they had mixed national backgrounds. A Shia woman in the United Kingdom remarked that she would describe herself as an 'Iranian English woman' living in England, but added that she found it difficult to answer the question about identity. Similarly, a Shia woman in Norway who talked about her rich experiences as a child born in Germany and raised in two countries in the Middle East and Norway reflected on how difficult it was to talk about her identity:

So, it is difficult, actually, to tell my identity. I feel that I have a bit of this and that, I am both Norwegian, and, I almost said, Arab. I won't say X [country in the Middle East] so much, because I have not, well, I lived

there until I was [a teenager], but I was raised in [another country in the Middle East], so it's like I got everything from Arab cultures.

(Norwegian Shia)

Her identity is clearly *hybrid*; it is a mix of different nationalities and cultures (Hylland Eriksen 2007a, 2007b). Notably, all the Muslim participants included national belonging when describing their identity, which for most of them was linked to their own or to their family's migration history and experience. A further example is a Sunni woman in Norway who described herself in this way: 'My name is Leila and I am initially from Pakistan, but now I am a Norwegian citizen. And I am a Muslim'. In the case of a Spanish convert to Islam, national belonging was talked about in relation to Muslims in general being stereotyped and associated with immigrants and her own feeling of being 'othered' as a Muslim despite being of 'native' Spanish origin.

   In contrast with the Muslim women and a few exceptional Christian women (such as two with a missionary background and a few (Pentecostals) with migrant backgrounds), it is interesting to note that the Christian women hardly mentioned nationality or ethnicity when they described their identity. Most of the Christian women responded to our question about identity by referring to aspects of their personal character, their interests and work, while national and ethnic identities and belonging were silent issues. Here are three examples of statements by white Christian women who comment on either their personality characteristics or work:

I am a woman in my best age, I am, as a type, I am both, I am more introvert than extrovert.

(Norwegian Lutheran)

I am a person who is engaged in other people, and who enjoys to interact with other people. I am calm also.

(Norwegian Lutheran)

How could I describe, well, I don't know. I am just somebody in a very lucky position to be able to contribute this way and have the time [for church activities], and effectively, the financial backing, to be able to do it.

(UK Anglican)

These statements can be read as an illustration of the silencing of these white women's national and ethnic identities, as such identities were never forced on them, never interrogated or questioned, and never in need of being defended (see Yuval-Davis 2006a). Identities and belonging in the sense of cultural heritage, race, ethnicity and nationality were silent issues, unquestioned and taken for granted among most of the interviewed women with

dominant ethnic (white) backgrounds. Their position of privilege, stemming from their identification with and belonging to the nation and religion in which they were born and raised, as well as to the dominant ethnic category in their country, remains 'unmarked, unnamed' (Frankenberg 1993: 6).

We found that descriptions of belonging are related to different migration histories and colonial pasts, as discussed in Chapter 1. The general picture is that the interviewed Lutheran, Catholic and Anglican women belong to the national, racial and ethnic majority of their respective countries (Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom). So do most of the interviewed Pentecostal women, but they were more mixed with respect to national belonging, as some of them have migrant backgrounds. Most of the interviewed Muslim women, irrespective of the Islamic tradition they belong to and the country they live in, are migrants or children of migrants. They are 'minoritized' twice since they belong to both national and religious minorities, and thrice if we include gender (see Eisenberg and Spinner-Halev 2005 for the concept of a 'minority within a minority'). Here, it is worth noting that the interviewees' national, ethnic and racial backgrounds must be seen in light of the selection of churches and mosques that were included in our study, as they tend to be established and organized along ethnic and national boundaries (see Chapter 1).

Some of the interviewed Christian ethnic majority women in the three countries also identified with their cultural heritage, but they did so less often and with less emphasis compared to the women of ethnic minority backgrounds. The Norwegian Pentecostal woman with a missionary background,[3] however, emphasized her mixed cultural background, not unlike the women with migrant origins:

> I grew up in the Pentecostal movement. I am a missionary child, from the outset. Grew up in Africa, and was there until I was [a teenager], and well, started to walk barefoot in the village, in the bush. I have kind of a bi-cultural background, you may say, because I almost felt like an African when I came to Norway, at [years of age]. And now, I have lived a Norwegian life. I have also been to boarding schools, as a child, yes. So I have kind of a bi-cultural background.
>
> (Norwegian Pentecostal)

The fact that their nationality and cultural background were hardly mentioned by women from the dominant Christian groups (Lutherans in Norway, Anglicans in the United Kingdom and Catholics in Spain) indicates that these aspects of their identities are 'naturalized' or taken for granted and are not something that need to be addressed or explained (see also Chapter 4). These findings are in line with theories of minoritization (Gunaratnam 2003) and 'othering': to remain silent is the privilege of the unnamed and unmarked group (Alcoff 1988, 2006; Frankenberg 1993;

Ahmed 2007; Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa 2012). As part of the dominant Christian traditions in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, these white women seem disassociated from the 'politics of belonging' (Yuval-Davis 1999) that is so central to the lives of religious women with migrant backgrounds. Left unspoken, their privileged positioning within 'a location of structural advantage' (Frankenberg 1993: 1) remains non-politicized and de-coupled from the counterpart position of disadvantage that is inhabited by migrant women and by Muslim women in particular.

Marriage, motherhood and family relations

Motherhood, marriage and other family relationships were instantly mentioned by many of our participants when they talked about their identities. References to motherhood were expected, partly because nearly half the interviewees were married and/or mothers. Social location does not necessarily define identity (Alcoff 2006; Yuval-Davis 2006a), but motherhood, marriage and family relationships have been constitutive aspects of femininity for centuries. Giving birth is a major life experience in women's lives, and the task of raising children has traditionally been women's responsibility. Moreover, (heterosexual) marriage has been, and still is, the normative institutional context within which 'proper' or legitimate religious motherhood should be carried out. 'Religious motherhood' entails that children are raised within a context of religious norms and practices, with children taking these up and maintaining them into adulthood. Children thus learn to feel a sense of religious belonging that becomes embodied over time.

As noted, many interviewees responded immediately to the question of their identity by referring to marriage, motherhood and family relations. An Anglican woman, for example, referred to her status as Tom's wife, but she also indicated that there is a plurality of 'key components' in her identity. She had a reflexive view and questioned which aspects of her identity are more salient than others. Our first impression is that, in her salience hierarchy (Stryker 1980), her relational identity as wife comes first:

> I would say I am Eve, I am, oh, what would kind of come first for me? That is a very good question, how do I identify, yes, what are the key components in my identity, what do I go to first. I think it would, although I question whether it is right, I think it would be by my role. I am married to Tom, so I could say I am Eve, I am married to Tom.
>
> (UK Anglican)

Similarly, a UK Pentecostal also foregrounded her relational identity as wife and mother: 'Who am I? I am a wife and a mum. I have three daughters. None of them are permanently at home. I am also a daughter, my mum lives relatively near. I see her fairly often' (UK Pentecostal). While these participants commenced by pointing to their families as the primary source

of their current identities, they did not end their response there, thus confirming the plural and multi-layered aspects of their identities. In line with other women who referred to marriage, motherhood and/or family when describing their identities, the two Anglican and Pentecostal women quoted above also added further aspects, indicating that their salient hierarchies were not so straightforward. The first quote, from Eve's interview, continues this way: '(...) so I could say I am Eve, married to Tom, you know, daughter and sister, but I think a lot of it would be – and I am a vicar in this place. So I think a lot of my identification, and again I question whether that is a good and healthy thing, but that is how I would identify myself.' In addition to being Tom's wife, Eve is a daughter and a sister, and she is also an ordained priest within the Anglican Church. She signals that work is also a main aspect of her identity. The Pentecostal participant quoted above continued this way:

> I teach languages at a local sixth-form college. My role in church, I am Paul's wife, an elder's wife, and also we have responsibility over [named city] for an inter-church, a group of people who are interested in re-discovering the Jewish roots of our faith, celebrate festivals and things like that.
>
> (UK Pentecostal)

Similar to Eve, this interviewee also moved on to her own employment role as a teacher and to her role in the church. A Spanish Pentecostal, who also referred to marriage and motherhood, started by telling her age and ended by mentioning her relation to work:

> My identity? Well, I'm a person...fifty years old, married with children. I have a job that is sporadic, sometimes. I try to live out my life according to what you would call the...values of the church, family, marriage and work. And within that, I feel satisfied, with my own clear, distinct identity.
>
> (Spanish Pentecostal)

These interviewees indicate that although marriage and motherhood are important in many women's lives, they do not necessarily stand out as the most prominent or salient aspects of the participants' identities. In our study, nearly half the interviewed women were or had been married, while a somewhat lower portion were mothers. Among those who were married and/or had children, only about half referred to marriage and motherhood. For example, among the half of UK participants who were married, only a third mentioned marriage when they described their identity. Furthermore, among the roughly half of UK participants who were mothers, only half mentioned motherhood when describing their identity. We interpret

these findings to echo those of Nielsen's, which demonstrated an increase in available subject positions for women over the life-course of the last three generations (Nielsen 2004). Women's lives, including those of Christian and Muslim women, are not restricted to family, home or charity work, as illustrated by this quote:

> I have been married for 28 years, seven kids, full-time housewife, mother and I have a degree. I have a teaching qualification […] I don't do paid work. […] I have been involved in some programmes of going into schools and teaching if the teachers have needed help with explaining Islamic customs and traditions to the children. That is basically it for me, mum.
>
> (UK Shia)

The citation displays how women's traditional roles as full-time mothers and wives have been modified and changed through education and paid and unpaid work outside the home. It also indicates that women have a greater choice in terms of the roles that are available to them, and that some women may still value motherhood over paid employment. Despite 'a degree and some teaching qualifications', the woman quoted above chose to describe herself as a 'full-time housewife' and a 'mum'. Seven children may explain why motherhood has triumphed paid employment in this case.

Some of the research participants prioritized the roles of housewife and mother while their children were young, indicating that the relationship between social location and identities is dynamic and contextual, as this woman describes:

> I stayed at home with the children the first eight years, I think. Then I began to work a little, but I did not work fulltime until the youngest was thirteen I think. So, but, well there was this practical…I had a husband who worked shifts, you see, so this was practical also. But it was also more common then, and we lived in a small place, and then it was, you see, customary that you stayed at home and everyone was at home with the kids and that's how it was.
>
> (Norwegian Pentecostal)

A few women in our study mentioned that they were single, three that they were divorced (one Sunni in the United Kingdom, one Pentecostal in Spain and one Lutheran in Norway) and two that they were cohabiting. The social locations of being single or divorced were just briefly touched upon and not discussed at any length. One of the divorced women talked about herself in this way:

(I will describe myself) as a conscious grownup Christian woman. Marked by a life that has been rather tough . . . and I am engraved by this on the inside, but it is not very apparent on the outside. (. . .) And I am a woman with hope and faith that there is a meaning [to it all].

She was not asked to elaborate on her divorce experience, but her story suggests that divorce does not mean absolute stigma or exclusion from religious institutions. This supports the notion that religious women can inhabit more subject positions than before and perhaps that the hegemony of marriage is less strong than it used to be. But whether religious women are less likely to break a promise of everlasting love and loyalty to their partners than the population at large and whether they are more likely to enter a partnership through marriage than cohabitation than they were before are issues for further research.

One of the women in our study reflected on her social location as single and indicated that it is not without challenges. She said:

Throughout the years I have in a way, I am not dependent on any man for my life to function, although I am brought up to it. [. . .] In my life I feel very free and very respected, as a single woman. But at the same time I experience that some things are against, for example amongst typical family folks, that they look at me in a funny way, particularly in Christian circles.

(Norwegian Lutheran)

The citation indicates that contemporary religious women probably have a greater sense of freedom than earlier generations of religious women: although the interviewee was brought up to be married, she now feels 'very respected' as a single woman. And yet, she alludes to her being single as 'problematic' for other people through the dissonance between her initial claim to feel 'very' free and 'very' respected as a single woman and the subsequent statement about things being 'against' and being looked at 'in a funny way'. She asserts that such attitudes were expressed 'particularly in Christian circles', which serves as a reminder of the historical expectations for women in general to be married. Being single deviates from established family-oriented couple-norms (Roseneil et al. 2012), and probably more so within religious communities than outside of them.

In contrast to the participants' focus on their own roles as wives and mothers, the potential and actual role of men as fathers, involved in parenting and housework, is much less prominent in the interviews. Reflecting on how her children were raised, a Spanish Catholic woman suggested that men's roles are still more traditional within religious communities than outside: 'How I take care of raising them? I fully devoted myself! (. . .) I've

always liked to . . . make sure they went on the right path. It's true, I've been very . . . My husband seeing that I was so . . . he was glad to have that weight off his shoulders, yes' (Spanish Catholic). A few women briefly mentioned that their husbands participate to some extent in domestic duties, but it was clear that such duties were primarily women's domain.

Employment and education

Professional life and education are important aspects of the identity of many of the interviewed women, despite considerable variation in their work and educational location (see Chapter 1 for further details about the research participants). Some work or study full-time, others part-time; some were in highly skilled professions, others in less skilled jobs, and a few were self-employed. Those who did mention their work or education usually did so after having described their nationality, religion and/or marriage and motherhood, as the following citations illustrate:

> My name is Fatima, I am Muslim, I have come from [a country in south-east Africa] and we settled here, it has been 33 years now since I have been in England and I am married, I have got four children, got our own business, I help out with business. Sometimes I need to go to the shop and I help out a lot in the business. And I also work for our community, I also do a little bit of work for the mosque as well, voluntary work and that is about it, that is how I would put my life.
>
> (UK Sunni)

> My name is Farhat, and I am 39 years old, basically I am from Pakistan, been living in the UK for more than 16 years now. I spent most of my time in Europe, but I did complete my basic qualifications in my country. I am a self-made person, and I have my career [with] step-by-step promotions so I can say that I have done a lot through my life. I also spent a family life together with my family in Pakistan, because we had a combined family system in Pakistan. Here in England I have got relatives, when I first came I lived with them, and now I am living with my husband. So what else?
>
> (UK Shia)

> My name is Dina . . . and I am originally from Pakistan. But now I am a Norwegian citizen. And I am Muslim [. . .]. I am a woman, mother, and then member of various organizations working in relation to religious issues and women's issues. I have been an advisor [for a local government service] for fourteen years, and before that I was a teacher. I did a Masters' degree at university.
>
> (Norwegian Sunni)

The quotes above show the plural and multi-layered identities of the research participants. The issue of work features together with narratives about their

country of origin, their marital status, education and age. The social locations are diverse, and although work and education are often mentioned last, it is not possible for us to claim that these identity aspects are necessarily less salient than others.

We also noticed some exceptions from the inclination to refer to other issues before work and education when the interviewed women were asked about their identities. For example, one participant immediately referred to her education: 'I am a full-time PhD student at [name of university]. I am thirty two years old and a mum of two. I have two children and I am studying [university subject]' (UK Shia). It is likely that she talked straightaway about her educational status because she is a mature student at a prestigious institution and also a mother of two, which sets her apart from the majority of university students. Another participant mentioned work as the second issue after age, but before nationality and faith:

> I am a young lady [dame]! And I work as a teacher. And I am from Pakistan. And I am a Muslim woman [...]. And I can say that I feel very comfortable in this country. And because I have not only integrated [myself], I also very much want to practice this religion, Islam, which encompasses a lot. We have to be good role models for others. And I have worked as a teacher for fifteen years now.
>
> (Norwegian Sunni)

Professional life is clearly important, but her identity is multi-layered, and she indicates that faith and religious belonging are also of strong significance in her life. She wants to be a good Muslim role model both at the school where she teaches and in the religious community of her mosque. She also insists that she is happy in Norway. This is a clever way to insist on the right to combine Islam and a life in Norway, without being victimized. Her narrative offers an example of religious engagement (Engebrigtsen 1992) as a strategy to cope with the minoritized (Gunaratnam 2003) positions of being a migrant, a Muslim and a woman.

We want to emphasize that religious women have never been confined to family life. They have engaged in care work that extended their traditional domestic work, including charity work, missionary work and philanthropy. However, like modern 'secular' women, the modern religious woman has entered the labour market via multiple routes, some skilled and some unskilled, some professional and some non-professional. The religious women in our research, across the faith traditions and the three countries, have considerable work experience. They are or have been employed as accountant, acupuncturist, barkeeper, businesswoman, civil service researcher, computer programmer, deaconess, doctor (specialist physician), housemaid, magistrate, marketing officer, musician, psychologist, self-employed, teacher, therapist, translator, shop-assistant, switchboard

operator, vicar, waitress and so on. The analysis demonstrates that deep and extensive religious commitment is not a barrier to education and employment and confirms that multiple subject positions are available to religious women. The findings also indicate that marriage and motherhood continue to be basic for many religious women's identity in addition to work.

Independence and not being labelled

Some of the interviewees mentioned personal characteristics and achievements when describing their identities. A Norwegian woman, an employed, married mother, described herself as permeated by faith. She said:

> I am a person who is preoccupied with wondering, and understanding. And therefore I am quite open and curious, I think. In relation to this field. And I am a person who has been lucky to participate a lot in organizational life, and had the chance of being a leader quite a lot, and have seen that it is possible to influence. So, in a way, I have been lucky, having been able to contribute to my own and other people's situation too.
>
> (Norwegian Lutheran)

This interviewee did not emphasize marriage and motherhood, nor education and employment, but rather her traits as a curious, wondering and open person, and an influential leader. In narrating her identity, she foregrounds her own individuality rather than her relational roles as wife and mother. As such, she provides another example of women's changed roles in modern society: women, including religious women, are not confined to family life; they do not have to identify as wives and mothers. They can see themselves as independent persons, as this participant also clearly expressed:

> I suppose I am a mature woman, I don't need anybody else to define me, I am me. I know a lot of women define themselves as being somebody's wife or somebody's mother. I don't do that. I am a Christian and I am English and a musician.
>
> (UK Anglican)

This woman proudly asserts herself as an independent person who does not belong to anybody else ('being somebody's wife'), as distinct from the majority of women in our study who foreground a relational identification rather than focusing on their own self and individuality (see also Chapter 5). She wants to be identified on the basis of her own status and merit. In addition to being 'mature' or of a certain age, her identity is composed of faith, ethnicity and profession. Similar to other interviewees, she demonstrates the plural and multi-layered nature of women's identities.

Some of the participants in our research were also reluctant to describe their identities or to 'label' themselves. For example, one woman said:

> OK, well l don't tend to think of myself particularly with labels, I suppose that Christianity is important to me, so I would probably describe myself as a Christian. I am not sure if I would particularly describe myself as single, although I am, because to me that is not important. I would probably describe myself as a quantitative researcher, [...]. I also might describe myself in terms of being creative or artistic, and liking artistic hobbies. I am kind of practical, [...] I suppose that is how I see myself I guess.
>
> (UK Anglican)

This somewhat unwilling description contains several references: to faith, civil status, employment and personal characteristics. The reluctance illustrates the trouble, and also hard work, that several research participants experienced in describing their identity. The dislike of labelling one's identity was partly attributed to a wish to avoid being 'the other' and partly to the impossibility of fitting into one overall identity category.

Ways to faith

Religious faith and belonging are not self-evident aspects of identity in contemporary Western societies. Secularism – as the increasing separation of religion from issues of the state as in the French notion of *laicité*, or of increasing differentiation of society into discrete spheres of which religion is but one (Mahmood 2005: 47) – is arguably a characterizing feature of modern, liberal and capitalist societies (see also Chapter 2). This means that, somehow, religious belonging and practices are being marked as distinct from secular belonging and practices and as in need of explanation and legitimation. In this section, we examine how the research participants talked about 'coming to faith': through being born into or brought up in a faith community or religious family; converting from one faith community to another; and the sudden experience of or call from a divine figure.

'Born this way' and 'getting it in with the mother's milk'

Childhood and being brought up in a religious family were often mentioned when the interviewees talked about their religious identity. Many of the women were born to religious parents and grew up in a religious environment. Religion was a natural part of their upbringing, and not something they questioned as children. If their parents were Christian, they were baptized as children and included in the faith community of their parents through institutions such as Sunday school, Catholic Mass or Eucharist service, confirmation and the Holy Communion. For example, an Anglican participant emphasized her childhood

practice and how it made her develop a strong bond for life to her church:

> I have always been to church. My parents sent me from the age of three to Sunday school, and I have never stopped going. I just felt a bond there and I have never stopped. I am 65 now so you know, it is just part of my life for such a long while.
>
> (UK Anglican)

Similarly, a Catholic interviewee pointed to her religious faith as rooted in childhood experience and family bonds, and how she and her family 'live religion': 'To me it [Catholic religion] is everything. I identify with it since I was a child. It is my religion . . . all my family's religion . . . and we live it' (Spanish Catholic). If the parents were Muslim, they were taken to the mosque and to the Qur'an school and experienced religious practices such as fasting during Ramadan, purification and pilgrimage. Many interviewees, across the three countries and two faiths, referred back to their childhood and family upbringing as central to their adult religiosity, as illustrated in these four examples: 'I started as a child, yes' (UK Anglican); 'I've been a Catholic from the outset, that is to say, from birth, obviously, because I was born into a Catholic family and, following the custom, I was baptized, then I had my First Holy Communion and so on' (Spanish Catholic); 'I consider myself a Muslim. I was brought up as a Muslim' (Spanish Shia); 'I feel identified with it since I was a little girl. My religious faith comes . . . since I was a little girl, I've had it all my life, like all my family and . . . All my brothers and sisters and all my family are religious . . . ' (Spanish Catholic). In the interviews there is thus a strong sense of religion as being nurtured and practised within familial and community relationships (Rupp and Taylor 1999). The faith community was often an unquestioned, taken-for-granted part of growing up that required ongoing commitment and participation for religious transmission to succeed. It was also an important site for making friendship, and a place of happiness, as this Muslim interviewee explained at length:

> I was born in [city in the UK] and we are a very tight-knit community, religious community. I used to go to mosque when I was little, which you will find all the youngsters attend mosque to learn the Qur'an. I did that myself and I used to enjoy going to the mosque. Some children don't like going to the mosque, but I did. (. . .) After school in the evening we would have to go to the mosque. Some children enjoy it, some don't, I can't speak for others but I know all my friends that we all used to go there because we loved going to the mosque and learning the prayers and everything, obviously because we were all meeting each other as well. I think it is more, not of a learning thing, but more like, I am going to see my friend today.
>
> (UK Shia)

These examples illustrate how social location influences belonging. Many of us have grown up being socialized to inhabit the faith of our parents (by being subjected to their faith) and at the same time we have become subjects of a certain faith. Research has found that 'parental influences dominate religious beliefs and attachments throughout the life course' (Sherkat 2003: 155). Religious socialization, as 'the process through which people come to hold religious preferences' (Sherkat 2003: 152), is especially powerful when two parents transmit a common faith to their offspring (Crockett and Voas 2006).

The influence of social location on a person's faith was acknowledged in a slightly different way by one of our Muslim participants. In her view, we are all *born* with a religion (she rejects secularism), and the religion we are born with is Islam. Nevertheless, we may end up belonging to a different religion because of the way we are brought up. Although privileging Islam as a 'natural' religion we are allegedly all born with, she accepts that different social conditions may produce different religions or pathways to faith. She said:

> Generally nobody is born without a religion, everybody is born with a religion and according to Islam everybody is born [in the] Islam religion, basically. But the circumstances change that person because every child is born as a Muslim but the circumstances change that child into other religions. So if a child is born with Christian parents, the child is basically born as a Muslim but when the child grows it becomes a Christian. Similarly, if a child is born in Hinduism, the child is born as a Muslim then when he or she grows up she becomes a Hindu.

> (UK Shia)

The emphasis on being 'born' religious and growing up with a 'naturalized' attitude towards one's religious upbringing does not mean that the child's relationship to faith remains taken for granted or unquestioned throughout life. Questioning and challenging one's (parents') religious belonging is part of the puberty of many youngsters as they scrutinize established norms and challenge the authority of parents, teachers and the like. Moreover, friends and peers, as well as future spouses and offspring, influence the religious trajectories of individuals (see Sherkat 2003). Furthermore, urgent existential questions about life and death, love and hate, meaning and emptiness may prompt (young) people to strive for a deeper understanding of the various religious teachings and practices of the community. Growing up in religiously plural societies also diminishes the 'sacred canopy' (Berger 1967) of inherited religious tradition and fosters active religious choosing on the part of the individual. Today, religion is more of an optional resource and a reflexive choice for individuals seeking to create personal and collective meaning (McGuire 1997; Besecke 2007; see also Beck 2010). Several interviewees

explained how they had consciously affirmed and thereby actively chosen their inherited religious identity as they grew up, and also how they had spent time and energy to develop a deeper understanding of the meaning of their faith. In various ways, these women transformed their 'natural-ized' faith into a chosen personal belief, as this Spanish Catholic woman described:

> Yes. I've been a Catholic from the outset, that is to say, from birth, obviously, because I was born into a Catholic family and, following the custom, I was baptized, then I had my First Holy Communion and so on. But then, later, since I was old enough to know what I was doing, I've been a Catholic according to my own convictions.
>
> (Spanish Catholic)

A Sunni woman in Norway also offered a very explicit statement about the 'born-becoming' dynamic, emphasizing the role that migration plays in shaping religious faith as a 'self-reflexive choice' (McGuire 1997: 53). Her words illustrate the development of a 'reflexive spirituality' in the form of 'an intentional, deliberate, self-directed approach to the cultivation of religious meaning' (Roof 1999, as cited in Besecke 2007: 171):

> Being born a Muslim means getting it in with the mother's milk, it becomes a habit and you don't really know why you do it. And when you are asked, you don't really know. I have noticed this in particular when I meet someone who has converted to Islam. I guess it is like that with all religions, but then I feel that maybe they [converts] know more about why one does or does not do things that I do personally. So, in a way, there is a process, like the new and the old generation [of migrant Muslims]. This is very interesting, right, because one does things by force of habit. Then you get a question, and you don't quite know why you do this. And then you begin to search, why does one really do this? So, well, this is really interesting. But then there is this thing about knowing, maybe, to really be serious or sincere concerning one's faith.
>
> (Norwegian Sunni)

Some of the women in our project were not actually 'born' into their religion but came to their faith during their teens. For example, a Spanish Pentecostal woman explained how her religious identity and belonging started forming when she was 12 years old. She said:

> [...] my mother started going to this church, when I was hardly 12 years old. And, well, I started going with her, and I liked it. Why did I like it? Because I saw a different lifestyle, a different lifestyle in the sense that ... people there were more sincere ... that was where one could find

real friends. In fact, ever since, those are the friends I have, the ones I met there.

(Spanish Pentecostal)

Although she was not born into a religion, her upbringing, and especially her mother, was crucial in forming a religious identity that continues into adulthood. In general, mothers have been found to have more of an impact on adolescent children's religiosity than fathers (Regnerus, Smith and Fritsch 2003: 8).

The citations from interviewees express personal, reflexive religious identities, in line with the understanding of identity as constructed rather than a continuation of unambiguous tradition (Bredal 2004; see also Calhoun 1994; Anderson 2000). The claim by one Sunni in Norway that 'there is no standard Muslim' resonates with research that stresses the ongoing interpretation and negotiation work among Muslims in diaspora (Leirvik 2002; Jacobsen 2006, 2009; Grung 2011; Larsen 2011a, 2011b). It also mirrors the identity work that takes place among religious adherents more broadly (see, e.g., McGuire 1997; Ammerman 2003).

Religious converts

Some of the participants in our study had travelled a more complex route to arrive at their adult religious identity and belonging. Rather than having simply been brought up within a religion and having reaffirmed a relationship with that religion as an adult, some had gone through a process of conversion from one faith to another (see Chapter 1 for further information about participants who experienced a religious conversion). The less dramatic forms of conversion are those that take place within a major religion such as Christianity or Islam, either in the form of a 'born again' experience or religiously experienced affirmation of faith, or in moving from one 'branch' to another (e.g., from Catholicism to Pentecostalism). Such conversions can be intensely felt but are probably of more significance to the individual than to the wider social context in which an individual is embedded. The more momentous type of conversion is that from a major religion to another, such as from Christianity to Islam or Islam to Christianity. Such a conversion has broader implications for the individual and his or her family, friends and others (see Neitz 1987; McGuire 1997: 72; Hunt 2002: 84).

One of the Spanish interviewees outlined her 'conversion' from Catholicism[4] to Pentecostalism (evangelicalism) as a grown-up. She had 'always' been a practising Catholic, she said, but had abstained from practising confession since her late teens, and she had never worshiped the saints. When she moved with her husband to a different city, however, she suffered from some trying experiences during Easter, which was for her the most important religious time of the year. She claimed that the Easter celebration

in her new church had 'boiled down to folklore' and to 'absolute fanaticism' and was despairing. Her Catholic husband had, however, been invited to attend a Pentecostal congregation, and the two of them started attending. Soon, they both converted and became evangelicals. Based on what the interviewee said, this change of religious identity and belonging did not seem to have been very difficult. Another Spanish Pentecostal imparted a similar experience:

> Well, yes, Christian or Catholic religion is to me . . . I mean I belong to it for 21 years. I was a Catholic and still am because we are all Catholic . . . But now I read the Bible, I go to listen to the word of God with the Bible, and so it is a different way of looking for God. It has been so rewarding and fulfilling that I feel better now than when I belong to the Catholic Church.
>
> (Spanish Pentecostal)

These examples from Spanish Catholics having converted to an evangelical form of Christianity indicate that religious conversion may happen without much drama. It is illustrative of situations where there is much common ground or overlap between the religious traditions that are involved in a conversion, such as these conversions taking place within the overall Christian faith tradition.

A woman in Spain who converted to Sunni Islam told a very different story. For her, the religious conversion was hard work and difficult. Conversion to Islam required that she got to know 'the essence of that source of knowledge that drove' her to become a Muslim. She described how she had become immersed in a long and complicated process in her search for deeper knowledge. This involved asking existential questions such as 'Who are we now? Where are we? What's going on?' (Spanish Sunni). She talked about 'reconstructing' herself in order to embrace Islam, thus signalling a painstaking process of reflexive identity work. Not because of the practice of praying five times a day, but

> because what you want is to live in a certain way every day of your life, right? And within that, it means that you are going to pray five times a day, besides many other things, right? So this entails, evidently, a change in perspective . . . in the interpretation of one's own life, right?

In addition, she said, it was hard for Spaniards to accept that a woman should change her religious identity and affiliation to Islam, 'given all the prejudices that have arisen around that religion, you know' (Spanish Sunni). In this case, the conversion was one of 'radical transformation' (McGuire 1997: 72). It had a high cost, as it involved her being marked as 'deviant' from the Spanish Catholic-secular norm. Moving from secularism

to religion, or shifting allegiance from one world religion to another, is a sig-
nificant step. Going from the dominant, privileged and normative religion
(Christianity) to a minority, disadvantaged and 'deviant' religion (Islam) is
even more difficult. This is all the more because of the role Islam has been
given as the symbol of 'otherness', branded as alien to democracy, liberty,
gender equality and other 'Western' ideals.

Magic moments

The third route to faith described by the participants in our study is what
we have labelled 'magic moments',[5] or moments of a sudden divine expe-
rience. From history, we know of many individuals who set out to perform
extraordinary deeds because of God's calling. Among them is Joan of Arc
(1412–1431), who testified that she experienced her first vision at the age
of 13, when she was in her father's garden, and was instructed by God to
drive out the English from France. Another example is that of Hans Nielsen
Hauge (1771–1824), a Norwegian lay preacher and social reformer. Hauge
had a mystical experience while working on his father's farm in April 1796,
which he described this way:

> One day while I was working below the open sky, I sang by heart the
> hymn, 'Jesus, I Long for Thy Blessed Communion'. . . . At this point my
> mind became so exalted that I was not myself aware of, nor can I express,
> what took place in my soul. For I was besides myself. As soon as I came to
> my senses, I was filled with regret that I had not served this blessed and
> transcendental God. Now it seemed to me I could no longer be in awe of
> anything in this world. And my soul possessed something supernatural,
> divine, and blessed; it was a glory that no tongue can speak of – I do
> remember it until this very day, as clearly as if it had happened only a
> few days ago. It is now twenty years since the love of God visited me so
> abundantly.
>
> (Stibbe 2007; our translation)

Among our research participants we do not have stories that can match Joan
of Arch or Hans Nielsen Hauge. But we do have women who, like them,
experienced a sudden call, which changed the direction of their lives. They
describe their coming to faith as a revelation or a 'born-again' experience.

One interviewee, Leila, a Sunni in Spain, told us how something came to
her; something happened while she was simply sitting on a bus looking out
of the window. Suddenly she went from not believing in anything to think-
ing 'there's something out there'. She described the experience as a shock, as
if something had just hit her, and she felt like an angel had touched her.

Leila's experience illustrates an exceptional way to religion, a lived experi-
ence of an encounter with a divine power. This is her story: A young woman

is sitting on a bus with her boyfriend after having celebrated Christmas holiday with his family. She starts thinking about the future, of having babies. His family is Apostolic Christian, her parents are Muslim, but her brothers are atheists. Raising children with her boyfriend has not been an issue previously. He believes in God, but he had never planned to give his children a religious upbringing. She used to think of herself as agnostic, she neither believed nor dis-believed. She has not really minded. But then, sitting beside him on the bus, she suddenly starts to think differently: If they were to have children, she realizes that she would like to bring them up to some sort of religion. Religion, she admits to herself, has important values. It may be helpful. She looks at her boyfriend and asks him: 'But if we have children, can't we bring them up in the Islamic faith?' He just stares at her, with a look on his face that seems to say, 'what on earth are you saying, have you gone crazy?' At that moment she becomes afraid it will be too difficult for them to continue their relationship, he as a Christian, she a Muslim. All of a sudden she feels bewildered and desperate. Her boyfriend is angry. He refuses to discuss the matter and accuses her of being hysterical, of having gone insane. Leila continues her story:

> I stayed silent, thinking. Just before I started asking him, something had come to me...I don't know. Something happened. I was just sitting on the bus, looking out the window, and it was like, suddenly I went from not believing in anything to thinking there is something out there. I was a bit stunned, and I even started crying and everything. But, what's the matter with me? I was surprised myself and I said to myself...I started thinking and I would say to myself: 'But what's wrong with you!' 'Nothing, nothing'. In other words, I was trying to take stock of what was going on inside me, because it was also a shock to me: From being something I wasn't even interested in – okay, it's there, so what – it had suddenly become, I don't know, it just hit me. I was suddenly like...I don't know, I felt like an angel or something had touched me.

Leila keeps quiet for the rest of the trip on the bus, trying to cope with the shock. A week after the incident, she returns to the issue of faith and asks her boyfriend what to do. He feels pressured and surprised, because faith has never been a difficult issue between the two. After two months, she finds out that he has started going to the mosque. He is trying to find out about Islam. She had never explained anything to him about Islam, because she herself did not know the meaning of Islam.

Leila describes her boyfriend as being 'shell-shocked' when he started reading about Islam: He had an image of crazy terrorists and oppressed women – 'a disgusting religion'. This is, she suggested, to a certain extent the way everybody, including her, sees Islam. Because she too had the same perception: 'that people have here in Europe, in other words, the Western

perception. About stoning, terrorism, oppressed women having to wear the veil.' As a result of her boyfriend's reading, they both start attending the mosque to find out what Islam is about. He would read a lot more than her, because at the time he was out of a job and she was working. He spent hours in the library, and hours at the mosque; he spent virtually all day long studying and learning. Then at night, when she returned from work, he would explain it all to her.

This 'magic moment' of revelation changed the life of this interviewee and also of the couple. Leila's boyfriend became a convert, and together they studied and practised Islam. We do not know if the two got married, but 'religious intermarriage is one of the strongest predictors of changes of religious affiliation' (Sherkat 2003: 157). Moreover, the typical direction of switching is 'that the more religious spouse has more influence over the direction of change' (ibid.). Leila's story is illustrative of the non-recognition of Islam in Europe, and some of the dilemmas and challenges of belonging to a religious minority. It reveals that stereotyping, marginalization and 'othering' have deep effects on personal relationships and on the ways in which both Muslims and non-Muslims perceive the social world. In this case, because her boyfriend was adaptable, Leila was able to start practising Islam with his support. It is easy to imagine another outcome if he had decided differently.

Religion as lived

What role does faith play in the daily lives of people who belong to a religion? In what ways and to what extent do they comply with religious instructions? What do religious practices mean, and how do embodied practices relate to the making of morally good Christian and Muslim individuals? This section explores themes that emerged when we asked women about the meaning of religion in their lives. One theme was that of religion as a way of life and a moral guide (see also Chapters 4 and 5), which included engagement in voluntary activities centring on providing care and welfare to others, as well as the practising of established religious rituals such as reading the holy texts, going to church or mosque, praying and fasting (Mahmood 2005; Winchester 2008; Rinaldo 2014). Within the theme of religion as a way of life, participants also talked about having a personal relationship with God. Both Christian and Muslim women talked about religion or God as a 'social' God or 'welfare God' that inspires and directs their voluntary work, and as a personal and intimate God they are guided by in their everyday lives (Chapman, Naguib and Woodhead 2012). A second theme that arose from some interviews is that religion was talked about as a cultural practice and habit, rather than as a deeply rooted personal and reflexive belief. A third theme that emerged, especially in interviews with Muslim women, is that of prejudice and discrimination, which we briefly address here (see Chapter 4 for a more in-depth discussion).

Religion as a way of life: Practices and experiences

When the research participants were asked to describe what religion meant to them, the issue of how their religious identity plays a part in structuring daily lives was addressed. The women we interviewed were engaged in – or had been involved in, depending on their age – a variety of voluntary practices. They mentioned activities such as raising money for a church or a mosque, contributing to a 'third world' project, visiting the sick, organizing sports and other activities for children, youth and women in the congregation, sharing hobbies with disabled people, participating in organizations promoting women's well-being (e.g., the Mothers Union), counselling people with special needs, cooking or serving food, reading for children, doing laundry (altar cloths, the chalice, veils, etc.) and sewing for jumble sales events. These activities were talked about as embodied religious practices (Orsi 1997; McGuire 2008), as parts of their individual selves that are deeply rooted in and integrated with their faith. Moreover, the activities involve everyday relationships with others, thus foregrounding the relational aspects of religion that put emotions and 'relationships based on love, trust and care' at the centre of religious belief and practice (Woodhead 2003: 78). For example, a Spanish Pentecostal said:

> Why do I do it? I do it out of love for the ... that I am called upon to carry out. So it's something that just comes naturally. I mean, it's not something I do mechanically, or just to follow someone, or because I see someone else doing it. It's something that comes from within me. And that is one of the things that give me the most strength to believe in God, because I think if He didn't exist, this feeling wouldn't flow from within me. In other words, I personally am incapable of seeing someone who needs my help and, if I can offer it, not doing so. So ... it helps me grow as a person.
>
> (Spanish Pentecostal)

Her religion is 'something that comes from within' her; it is embodied in her very being (McGuire 2008). God speaks directly to her and gives her instructions and direction in life; in Pentecostalism, God 'is an intimate friend who loves and cares for the individual, and supports their personal journey through life and the finding of their unique purpose' (Chapman, Naguib and Woodhead 2012: 179). The interviewee asks for and receives moral guidance from this personal God on when and how to act towards people in need. God is thus also a 'social' God or a 'welfare God' who 'inspire[s] humanitarian action and the creation of a perfect society on earth' (ibid.: 179). The practical efforts are rewarding as they make her feel a better and stronger person. The voluntary activities mentioned by our participants were closely related to traditional women's roles and activities – charity work, helping the

young, sick, disabled and elderly (unlike the previous examples of expanding social roles for women in employment and education). A Spanish Catholic woman talks about her voluntary care work among people in need and how it is deeply connected to her faith, emphasizing positive emotional and spiritual aspects of her activities. She is living her religion in everyday life; her 'Catholic happiness' is an embodied part of who she is:

> Given my Christian culture or, rather than Christian, owing to the fact that I am a Catholic, I do engage, or have tried to engage in other forms of social action. So, my voluntary work, for example, has always involved looking after the sick. I have been looking after sick people for a long time. I think it is a source of personal fulfillment, of Catholic fulfillment, being able to bring happiness to other people and devoting my free time to people who suffer, people with disabilities, people who, above all, are suffering. So, within my possibilities, well yes, I do feel identified with this kind of acts and I try to help as much as I can within family spheres, within the more private spheres, within the spheres of neighbourhood associations, bringing with me the Catholic happiness wherever I can, sharing the joy of being a Christian and the joy of giving my life a purpose, and ensuring that those people receive the joy I derive from being a Catholic, from being a Christian, and helping them as much as I can, to make their day-to-day lives easier.
>
> (Spanish Catholic)

Religion as a moral call to be socially engaged in the well-being and welfare of other people is prominent among the women in our study, across countries and faith groups (see also Chapter 4).

The women also spent a lot of time and effort on their inner or personal relationship with God. For example, a Lutheran woman reflected on how religion made her different from secular friends who are just as socially engaged as herself. It was not, she underlined, that she was better than them in any way. Rather, it was the way she prioritized her time. Each morning, she remarked, she spent time trying to 'put my life in the hands of God', trying to 'bring God in, to give me strength to cope with the day' (Norwegian Lutheran). If she worried about someone, she would pray for him or her. If she doubted how best to handle a problem, she would 'sit together with God' and see if she could find a way out. God is thus a companion or friend she can rely on for guidance and support. She had the habit of asking herself what God or Jesus would have done or said in a situation. 'And I try to complete every day with a brief summary of what has been God's finger during this day, in a way. That's how I try to frame it' (Norwegian Lutheran).

Christian and Muslim women across countries and faith traditions strongly emphasized religion as a personal and relational phenomenon central to their everyday lives. Some interviewees talked specifically about

their understanding and experience of God, as a personal and relational phenomenon, as in this testimony from another Lutheran:

> I have a personal God-relation, I approach God as a relation in my life, an important relation […] And then it is also about the role of God [Gudsrollen] being so real and important, so we take it as a completely realistic thing this, me and God, this is what it is about, then, to work on this relation. And I felt that I needed it, because I felt there was a distance between myself and God. That I talk to a fellow human, you for instance, in a completely different way than I talk to God.
>
> (Norwegian Lutheran)

The God-relation in this citation is recounted as a foundation in the participant's life; God is real, someone she talks to in a special way, and she is 'working' on her personal relationship with God. This kind of 'God talk' was especially noticeable among the Lutheran women in Norway, which is not surprising considering the specific character and aim of their women's group and its relations to the retreat movement.[6] The Norwegian Lutheran women were not alone in this personal approach to religion and to God, however. Pentecostal women in Spain expressed similar thoughts and experiences of the personal dimension of religion as central to their lives:

> Religion is very important to me […] what have I learned from it? That God really exists. Why? Because I have met him in a personal way. It's not something that I have been told or heard about, rather it is something that I have experienced and felt. It goes beyond reading things in a book [….]. To me, God is someone that is always there, everywhere I am […].
>
> (Spanish Pentecostal)

For this interviewee, her faith is thus an embodied aspect of her everyday life, and God has the role of a personal friend she can rely on at all times. Similarly, another Spanish Pentecostal woman talked about her personal relationship with God: 'Well, to me, religion is not the key, God is. God is something personal. He's always been the central point of my life'. Yet another Spanish Pentecostal woman emphasized how the process of 'getting to know God' is gradual and slow, and as such it may also be more lasting, deeper, and ultimately fulfilling: 'When it comes to spiritual growth, maturity, and slowly getting to know God. That is something that I have learned in the Evangelical Church, thank God'.

In these narratives, God is thus portrayed as a 'present friend' rather than a 'distant ideal' (Chapman, Naguib and Sharuk 2012: 179), which resonates with broader evangelical perceptions of God as 'an intimate friend who loves

and cares for the individual' (ibid.). A UK Shia participant described how Islam is part of 'who she is':

> Oh very, oh yes, because it is something that doesn't leave you from when you wake up to when you go to sleep. I mean, it is part of who you are and how you behave and how you go about your daily actions and what you want to achieve in your day you know. It is a constant […]. So yes I would say very important and very natural. […] I like my life, it is very ordered, you wake up you know what time your prayers you know, I don't know I just find prayer time, it organizes your day […].
>
> (UK Shia)

Faith is an integral part of who she is; religion never leaves her; it is embodied in her everyday life practices (McGuire 2008).

Pious religious women like these are deeply concerned about their inner life. They spend considerable time in stillness, in prayer, and in reading and reflecting on holy texts. Interviewees also described religious practice as a way of living. For example, a Spanish Pentecostal said: 'Religion is a lifestyle. It is not about coming here [to church] on Sundays and recharging … not really, it is a part of your daily life … it is everything' (Spanish Pentecostal). Similarly, a Spanish Catholic said: 'To me it [Catholicism] is everything. I identify with it since I was a child. It is my religion … all my family's religion … and we live it' (Spanish Catholic). Likewise, an Anglican woman expressed that adhering to Christian principles on a daily basis was integral to her identity: 'I suppose it is fairly quite important, because it is something that I do. […] I start the day by doing Bible readings and what have you. It is part of my life, certainly, it has always been part of my life' (UK Anglican).

Personal faith structures the daily chores for the interviewed religious women, across countries and faith traditions, but Christianity and Islam differ when it comes to religious prescriptions and the differences are reflected in the women's embodied practices. For example, Islam requires prayers at regular intervals every day, while Christianity has a less structured approach to prayer; Muslim women who attend the mosque do so in a separate women's room, while Christian women share the main church space with men. Despite such differences, however, the moral and ethical codes of Islam and Christianity have much in common (see also Chapter 4). A Norwegian Sunni woman describes some of the religious prescriptions and moral codes of Islam:

> So we have to mind what we do each day. Eh, that number one, this is what I say, to believe in God, to pray five times a day, and then – not lie, not lie nor hurt nor harm; respect people, and not distinguish between people – they have equal value. Give to the poor as much as I can. And

> I am grateful, I am very [grateful]. And then, I fast thirty days a year, in Ramadan. What else? That I am honest and precise, and try as much as I can […].
>
> (Norwegian Sunni)

This participant, like many of the Muslim women in our research, referred to Islam's five pillars or duties: reciting the declaration of faith (*Shahadah*); performing the daily ritual prayer (*Salah;* five times per day for Sunnis; three times a day for Shias); fasting during the month of Ramadan (*Sawm*); giving to charity (*Zakat*); and pilgrimage to Mecca (*Hajj*). The prescriptions of the five pillars are central to Islam and the interviewed Muslim women often referred to them. Generally, the Muslim women were more inclined than the Christian women to talk about religious rules and prescriptions when outlining the meaning of religion in their lives. One woman remarked that to be a Muslim means to be faithful and to believe in God and Muhammad and all the Prophets. She added that she has to believe in the 'books coming from God. I have to be, I have to follow what's in the Qur'an, right? […]'. Her expression is illustrative of phrases used by other Muslim women as well, which were hardly ever uttered by Christian interviewees, such as references to God-given 'prescriptions', 'recipes given by God' and 'the Creator knows best'. References to obligatory traditional practices seem to belong to a uniquely Muslim discourse, judging from our interviews. This finding relates to 'the idea of faith in Islam as embodied in an act, that is, the act of submission to God' and to 'the ethico-legal relationship with God which emphasizes responsibility and duty' (Chapman, Naguib and Woodhead 2012: 185). Moreover, such expressions remind us of the marginalization and 'othering' of Islam in Western European contexts, and the practical barriers to complying with Islam in countries where Christianity is the dominant, normative religion. Public life, food and drinking traditions, dressing and other social practices in European societies are often at odds with Islam, and Muslim women in our study have to find strategies to cope with their lives as a religious minority in social contexts where Islamophobia is on the rise (Allen 2010; Esposito and Kalin 2011; Cesari 2013).

Importantly, Muslim women's greater focus on rules and prescriptions does not exclude them from having personal relations to God, similar to what the Christian women have. This is not a matter of either–or, but it is a combination of different traditions which inspire contemporary women's ways of living religion. While responsibility and a duty are central characteristics of Islam, the 'mystical path of Sufism which seeks communion with a beloved God' is also shaping a more personal relationship with God (Chapman, Naguib and Woodhead 2012: 185). Furthermore, although many of the interviewed Muslim women talked about dress codes and the

obligation to dress decently, the obligation of wives to satisfy their husband in marriage and a duty to convert others, such accounts were not totally absent from interviews with Christian women. For example, similarities emerged with comments by some of the Pentecostal women who also described various restrictions in their congregations, including prohibition against dancing, drinking and playing cards, and against sex before marriage, as well as the expectation to marry within the congregation (see also Chapter 4). Unlike the Muslim women's stories, however, the Pentecostal women recounted such restrictions as characteristic of bygone times.

Religion as a cultural practice and habit

Not all of the interviewed women were similarly pious or devout. Some had stronger or deeper faith than others, and some had stronger ties to their religious communities than others. For the less pious or devout, religious expressions and belonging may sometimes primarily be like a cultural habit. For them, religion is a shifting and flexible part of their identity and does not represent a 'root reality' (Neitz 1987) in the way it does for the more devout participants (see the section below on 'religion as foothold and foundation'). Describing her complex, multicultural and religiously plural background, one woman who considers herself a Muslim stated that she does not strictly follow Islamic rules and prescriptions. She said:

> Well, as you know, I am Lebanese, from Beirut . . . and I come, well, from a multicultural context. In my family there are many religions, my family is a bit mixed, my father is Russian, my mother is Muslim and I am half Muslim, but here I consider myself Muslim, although there are things that I don't practice.
>
> (Spanish Shia)

Despite the emphasis on her diverse religious and migrant background, she notes that 'here', in Spain, she considers herself a Muslim. Her religious identity is thus flexible and situational, and maybe also instrumental. It is plausible that when she is away from her country of origin and from her wider family, religion provides a form of connection to her home country, family and background and she therefore invokes Islam as part of her identity in Spain.

The distinction between religion as more or less cultural and to believing and practising as two different aspects is present in several interviews. Some of the research participants – across national and religious boundaries – made a distinction between religion and culture when they described the meaning of religion in their lives. They sometimes blamed Christian or Muslim 'culture', and not religion, for being narrow-minded and old-fashioned. Religion, they emphasized, is tolerant and insists on respect and recognition of other people. Some cultural traditions, however, are perceived as

old-fashioned by some, such as gender segregation, and encourage prejudice. Some Muslim women also mentioned harmful and illegal practices, such as forced marriages and female genital mutilation. The intended effect of such claims was to distance 'religion' from negative cultural stereotypes and practices. To attribute bad practices to 'culture' is, one might say, an example of using religion as a resource to increase respect and recognition for, in this case, Islam.

Also related to the distinction between religion and culture was the argument that believing and practising are two different issues. For instance, a Muslim woman in Spain defines her religious identity in a more cultural way. She said: 'I consider myself a Muslim, I was raised as a Muslim, I don't lead a particularly religious life, I don't practice religious principles except in…very few things like I don't eat pork. I am a great believer, but do not practice' (Spanish Shia). This interviewee confirms her religious identity, but this does not mean that she practises religious prescriptions. Another Muslim participant explicitly stated that religion was important to her, but more in a 'cultural' than a 'religious' way. To her, religion provided an affirmation of her identity and belonging to a culture and a community, to the history and memory of the collective, she said. Similarly, a Shia in Norway remarked that she did not go to the mosque regularly, but only sometimes during Ramadan. She followed the Islamic prescriptions more according to her personal needs and did not really feel very 'religious'.

When the 'cultural' aspects of faith are emphasized, religion provides a resource for staying connected to cultural, national and ethnic roots and backgrounds. For religious minority women like the three Shia Muslim women cited above (in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, Shia women are a minority within the minority of Islam), living in diaspora, social belonging and collective memory are precarious and vulnerable in ways that are hard to perceive by women belonging to the national majority populations.

A Pentecostal woman from Spain also made a distinction between culture and religion in order to separate Catholic and Pentecostal practices. According to her, religion is not limited to going to church on Sundays, a practice which she associates with Catholics. Instead, religion encompasses everyday life; it is a lifestyle (Spanish Pentecostal). 'Religion is a lifestyle' (see also Chapter 4) summarizes how some of the interviewed women perceived of and lived religion, irrespective of having a Christian or a Muslim identity.

Intersecting forms of prejudice

Prejudice within and across religious traditions emerged as a theme during the interviews. Biased conceptions are, in part, a product of historical struggles between and within various religious, and of contemporary hostilities in Western countries towards Islam in particular (Cesari 2013).

There were references in all the faith groups to 'being different' due to the participants' own religiosity. This experience of being 'different' was sometimes described in positive terms, such as being a person worthy of trust. However, there was a notable difference between participants belonging to privileged churches (Lutheran, Catholic and Anglican) and participants belonging to less advantaged churches (Pentecostal) and to Islam (Sunni and Shia). Negative aspects of being 'different', such as non-recognition, were issues for some of the Pentecostal women and also for almost all the Muslim women. Muslim women stated that their religion marked or positioned them as different and described how much they had to explain and defend their faith to non-Muslims. This was especially pertinent for Muslims after 9/11 (see also Chapter 4). This finding resonates with those of Es (2015) in her comparative study of Muslim women in Norway and the Netherlands.

Some interviewees expressed negative attitudes towards Muslims originating from specific countries or traditions within Islam. For example, some Shia participants were reluctant, even hostile, to attend prayers in mosques associated with Muslims from North African countries that are perceived as less progressive than a country such as Lebanon. One of the Shia interviewees described religious issues as 'delicate matters' because, in her view, even though a lot of people preach, they do not necessarily preach what is 'correct':

> So, one has to be very careful with who one relies on to be taught, who you choose to teach you, right? That is why here [in Madrid] I haven't been anywhere, have not participated in any forum, have not been to the mosque, because these branches are, in general, they lean toward, not Taliban but Wahabi.[7] For example, the [name of mosque] is Wahabi, which is a branch of Islam that Taliban belongs to. They are very extremist and have other sets of beliefs within Islam that I don't share, so I leave that [participation in religious circles] for when I go [home].
>
> (Spanish Shia)

The participant expresses a clear concern and distress about being influenced by unknown or allegedly extremist branches of Islam. This apparently is why some interviewees of migrant backgrounds end up not forming or relying on an organized religious community (Engebrigtsen 1992). They keep leaving that aspect of their identity untouched while they are in Europe, but they try to reconnect (e.g., in the form of taking lessons) when they return periodically to their countries of origin. For example, another interviewee said that she went to the mosque when she visits other countries, but not in Spain where she lives, because she does not like the mosques and the people that gather there – they have a different national background from her own:

> I don't like it at mosques here, the same people get together, the same Moroccan people . . . for example, people from Algeria who are very

different from us [Lebanese] and I don't feel very close to them, it is a set-
ting that feels far away from me ... a mosque is a dirty and cold place
and I don't like it. I do like to go to beautiful mosques but in other
countries.

(Spanish Shia)

The mosques she knows in Spain are probably not purpose-built and occupy
existing buildings that were not originally intended for religious wor-
ship. She finds these places to be cold and dirty, unlike the purpose-built
mosques she knows and visits abroad.

When Shias – a minority within the Muslim minority in Norway, Spain
and the United Kingdom – were asked about the meaning of religion in
their everyday life, some immediately made an association to other people
being prejudiced against Shias. To cope with their experience of such prej-
udice, some described how they started to dress and behave in (religious)
neutral ways. Their strategy was a mix of victimization and making their
religious identity and belonging a more private matter (Engebrigtsen 1992).
None of the Shia interviewees in Spain wore the headscarf, so this exter-
nal and very visible aspect would not put them in the Muslim category in
the eyes of fellow Spaniards. One woman remarked that people could not
identify her straightaway, not even by her accent. She did not feel that reli-
gion affected her in her daily life, and her complexion helped her in the
sense that people did not directly associate her with Islam. She seems to be
unmarked by her religious identity: 'In fact, my life is not that of a prac-
ticing person, but rather the opposite, you know (Spanish Shia).' She added
that she receives comments when stating that she does not eat pork and
things like that, but the comments do not really affect her. When she is
not in the mood to answer questions, she simply refrains from respond-
ing. She does not really care because she has become so accustomed to
being questioned. She has also developed a way of negotiating and jus-
tifying wearing clothes that she 'knows she should not be wearing' as a
Muslim:

As a believer I know I should not dress like I do, at least in the summer,
because to cover yourself is an obligation, let's say, a religious obligation,
you ought to do it, I believe in it but don't practice it […] My father tried
to teach me religion and insisted a lot on many things although never
forced me to cover myself […] When I came to Spain things changed and
I chose my path in life and I dress the way I like. When I go to Lebanon
I wear normal clothes, of course for me to dress normal is to avoid short
or very short clothes […] or wear sleeveless tops although I do wear short
sleeve tops and things like that.

(Spanish Shia)

The interviewee has developed a way of coping with religious prejudice. Time has helped her ('I've been here a long time'), and she knows how to change her outfit according to context. Although she does not dress according to what she perceives as 'religious obligation', there are clear boundaries in terms of how she will *not* dress: she will not wear 'short or very short clothes' nor sleeveless tops. She has a notion of how she 'ought to' behave according to religious instructions (including those from her father), but she has a flexible view of religious practise. The minoritized women in our research are seeking to balance religious prescriptions and non-recognition. In doing so, they apply various strategies from keeping religion fairly private, to consolidating religious identities, and to religio-political struggles such as fundraising to build a mosque or putting on the headscarf.

Religion as meaning-maker

In this part, we examine further the interviewees' elaborations of what place or importance religion has in their lives. For all of our interviewees, religion provides a feeling of identity and belonging, but for some it is a more prominent aspect of everyday life than for others. In other words, in these women's salience hierarchy, religion has the status of foothold or foundation, and as such it permeates all aspects of life. For the most religiously devout Christian and Muslim women in our study, religion is intimately bound up with their 'root reality' (Neitz 1987) or who they 'really' are (Greil and Davidman 2007: 549). Faith gives them direction at difficult crossroads and in all aspects of life, to paraphrase several participants. It offers an 'ethical standard', something to 'aspire' to, and provides coherence to otherwise 'compartmentalized lives'. Many of the interviewees gave vivid descriptions of how religion was a fundamental part of their identity, irrespective of their faith traditions and ethnic backgrounds. This was especially prominent, on the one hand, in interviews with Pentecostal and Muslim women, as well as among the Norwegian Lutherans (who belonged to the Retreat movement) and the UK Anglicans (many of whom inhabited formal positions in the church). The interviewed Catholic women, on the other hand, who were neither evangelical in their approach nor in positions of religious leadership, seemed to take their religious faith and identity more for granted and appeared to not having reflected as much on the meaning of being religious. Due to the qualitative nature of our research, we are reluctant to draw conclusions about the degree of 'devoutness' of each of the faith groups. It is likely that our observations of differences in this regard are indicative of broader variations that can be found within any faith group, between the more devout and the less devout. As Ammerman (2014: 290) points out, '[w]ithin every tradition, there are people who are more and less active in pursuing everyday spirituality and more and les inventive in that pursuit'. Nevertheless, an interesting question for further research would be to

examine whether women who adhere to dominant and privileged faith traditions are less inclined to view their faith as an all-encompassing feature of their lives than women who adhere to minority religions and/or to religions that centre on a personal relationship to God. Both migration and religious 'otherness' (as well as religious leadership status) may contribute to a more reflexive stance on national and ethnic identities as well as religious identities.

Religion as foothold and foundation, or taken for granted?

The descriptions of the meaning of religion were generally profound and presented at ease when the interviewees shared their reflections. That 'religion is everything' or 'a way of life' was invoked by many participants who imparted a deep sense of reflective, personal religiosity. Some interviewees, however, were inclined to talk about their religion in ways that signalled a less reflexive stance, where religion seemed to be more or less taken for granted. This section examines what the Christian and Muslim women in our study said about the meaning of religion in their lives. We start off with examples from participants who positioned religion as the 'root reality' (Neitz 1987) in their everyday lived religion:

> 'The faith is the foundation [bærebjelke] in my life, a foothold or foundation in a life where wind and weather and road conditions change. It is the essence, that holds me firmly, that is there, in a way. […] It is the most basic, actually, that I am created and willed by God.' The interviewee continued: 'It invites me to be creative in the bright and dark moments of life … we all live, in different ways and on different arenas, in relation to what is our personality, then. And so this gives me a foundation, also in death and pain. That is not the last there is, because there is something, there is hope – in the middle of darkness there is hope. Out of ashes flowers grow.'
>
> (Norwegian Lutheran)

> Religion is something you live, that you have in yourself all the time. It is not something you bring out at certain times. It is, I say, there all the time. It is something one has inside which is always there. Something, it is not something you put away and stuff. No.
>
> (Norwegian Pentecostal)

> God lies within us, not just around us, he lies within us. And it is by God being within us that gives us our strength. And I believe that because I have had that strength.
>
> (UK Anglican)

My faith in Jesus Christ defines exactly everything about who I am. He gives me my value system, so that if anyone says anything negative to me,

I might not like it very much but it doesn't change who I am, it doesn't define who I am. God alone gives me my value. So everything that I do comes out of the love that God has put into me, and the security and wholeness that I have, all that I do comes out from that, it is a natural out working of that.

(UK Pentecostal)

[I am] very proud of being a Muslim, I believe it is important for me to live according to [Islam], it guides me and encourages me, in society, at home in relation to individual persons, how to bring up my children, help others, care, and show understanding for those who are different from me … My whole life is governed by religion.

(Norwegian Sunni)

My religion is my life. What it means, I can't be more … Let's say, If I am not a Muslim, I am nothing. I mean, I am nothing [...]. My religion is the refuge, it's what I look for, it is peace, it is tranquillity, because when I forget or become immersed in material life, I feel lost. So when I return and I turn there, so to me it is not a hiding place, but rather the refuge that protects me [...]. I live as a Muslim, in everything. In my way of speaking, the way I behave, the way I … my contacts with people, my promises, even the way I behave with my husband. Well, I am a Muslim woman, I am the Sunna.

(Spanish Sunni)

Oh very, oh yes, because it is something that doesn't leave you from when you wake up to when you go to sleep. I mean, it is part of who you are and how you behave and how you go about your daily actions and what you want to achieve in your day you know. It is a constant.

(UK Shia)

These text fragments reveal how religion encompasses all aspects of life for many of the participants in our study. While religion is lived within institutional contexts like churches and mosques (usually at weekends), these women live religion in the everyday (Orsi 1997; McGuire 2008). Religion is a foundation for who they are; it represents a 'root reality' (Neitz 1987) through which everything else is thought of and experienced. It also provides a value system or a moral code (see also Chapter 4). It is an all-encompassing, constant and enduring feature of their lives. Religion offers guidance; it 'shows me the way'; it offers comfort, hope and strength. It is embodied in their selves (McGuire 2008; Winchester 2008); it is a 'mode of being' (Avishai 2008). This is very well illustrated in the interview with the Spanish Sunni woman quoted above, who stated 'I am the Sunna': she literally embodies 'the teachings and example (Sunna) of Muhammad' (Esposito 1988: 113). Religion is a foothold and a foundation – something

that you always actively *live.* It is fundamental to these devout women's lives.

For many of the interviewed women, God is intertwined in their everyday life as one who cares about them in a very literal sense, and who makes them see themselves as important. God is not a withdrawn figure; God is actually present in the here and now. God is a figure with whom one can be in contact, for instance when praying (see also Reynolds 2014). In line with this, faith was sometimes described as a source of peace, tranquillity and quietness across all four religious groups. A Muslim woman in Norway emphasized how her religious experience offers a symbolic room of peace, quietness and confidence:

> The five pillars, frames around spiritual life, are what should be read, the prayers. Five times a day. I do it because it gives me strength, and it cleanses the heart and controls the passions and the temptations . . . When I come from this [prayer] room, if something has happened and I am on fire, then I just forget and I calm down a little and I have peace and quiet. Many people say; you are so calm. And this is why I fast, it has taught me to practice love.
>
> (Norwegian Sunni)

The quote illustrates that being loyal to Islamic prescriptions ('the five pillars') is comparable to the deeply personal religious experiences described by Christian women. The internal and external aspects of faith seem to melt together, according to this Sunni woman in Norway.

As we have seen, many of the interviewed women describe their religious experience in a very personal manner. For them, religion cannot be separated from the self. This was particularly prominent among the Pentecostal and Lutheran interviewees. The evangelical and personal dimensions of Pentecostal belief were presented as permeating the self in a profound way. Among the Pentecostal women, religion was talked about more in terms of a personal relationship with God than with religious institutions. For some interviewees, the term 'religion' signified institutionalized religion, while faith or belief described their own experience. For example, a Spanish Pentecostal said that to her 'religion is not the key. God is. God is something personal. He has always been the central point of my life.' Similarly, an Anglican woman in the United Kingdom made a distinction between religion and faith, stating that religion is not important to her identity, while faith is: 'There is a difference. The religion is the concept of the overall thing that there is a God thing. The faith is how you live that in that religion, in that journey.' In Spain, some of the Pentecostal participants also discussed their religious identity in contrast to the dominant Catholic religion. They had grown up in a Catholic environment, and also been brought up as Catholic, but had converted to evangelical Christianity as adults. For

example, one woman emphasized how the Pentecostal church offers 'a different way of looking for God. It has been so rewarding and fulfilling that I feel better now than when I belonged to the Catholic Church.' She also noted how her personal relationship with God has grown and matured in the Pentecostal church. Some of the interviewed Catholic women in Spain, however, seemed to take their religion for granted and presented a less reflexive view. Our sense is that, for them, their religious experience is *connected* to the self, as a sort of companion attribute, more than as an experience that deeply penetrates and shapes the self. Religion is, it seems, more of a habit or a taken-for-granted aspect of their lives. This contrasts with the more deeply devout Christian and Muslim women in our study, for whom religion is a foundation or 'root reality' that they are constantly reflecting on and actively drawing personal resources from.

Faith as belonging

When asked to reflect about the meaning of religion in their lives, many of the interviewed women also talked about faith as a provider of 'community', 'company' and 'belonging' (Rupp and Taylor 1999). In short, they centred their personal belief in a wider context of belonging. In this section we offer some comments on the theme of belonging, which is elaborated further in Chapter 4. The interviewees' references to community, participation and belonging extend the concept of citizenship beyond rights and duties and imply a broader approach to citizenship as well as a potentially more prominent role for religion (see also Chapters 2 and 4). Their descriptions of belonging and community confirm that religion is an important source of social glue and that religious groups represent significant sites for inclusion and participation.

When the interviewees speak about community and belonging, they talk mostly about their local and national communities, but also about transnational communities. Many of them (in particular the Muslim women) have a migrant background and imparted a sense of belonging to both their country of origin and their country and community of settlement. Some of the Christian women had a missionary background, and they as well as other Christian women talked about Christian churches abroad as welcoming. For example, a Norwegian Lutheran referred to people in her congregation as 'a family of brothers and sisters', while also emphasizing commonality with Christianity in contexts further afield: 'wherever you travel in the world, you can go into a church and be a part of a community. Without having to go around in a town, or a country, there is always a connection/context [sammenheng] for you.' In referring to such transnational belongings, participants indicate how religious communities rupture national borders as the frame of identity. Participants thus imparted that their sense of belonging is multi-layered and spans local, national and global contexts. Feeling at home is basic, but 'home' is also a complex

concept. Home means belonging and roots, but it may also imply social control and loyalties that inhibit autonomy. Whether 'home' and belonging are felt as positive or negative for the individual depends on situational characteristics, including whether you are positioned as belonging to a dominant and privileged or marginalized and disadvantaged faith community (Leirvik 2002; Roald 2005).

Many participants emphasized relational aspects of their religious faith and belonging. Religion provides social relationships with others, and safety, care and hope. For example, a Catholic woman in Spain expressed the sense of companionship she gets from attending church, even when she doesn't personally know her fellow worshippers:

> Wherever I go I look for a church because I feel like more linked to my own beliefs as a Catholic woman, I find companionship . . . even if you really are completely isolated from the others, who you don't know . . . [. . .] But at least you no longer feel alone.
>
> (Spanish Catholic)

In this way, religion is a resource for participating in society and something that facilitates or leads to companionship. It is a mechanism for integration in the broader community, and as such it is also connected to citizenship.

Several participants expressed a conviction that we are born in order to cooperate and to help one another. We should all strive to display empathy and care for each other, the interviewees underlined, irrespective of religious belonging. For example, a Muslim participant said: 'Let's say I have a Norwegian neighbour, and if I see that they have problems I'll go and help them. It doesn't matter to me, I see him and her as a human being; I don't see him or her as a Muslim or Christian.'

The participants' religiosity is very much connected to citizenship, to being a good person towards others and treating them with respect. Behaving as a good citizen is part of being a good Christian or a good Muslim (see Chapter 4).

Many participants also stated that religion was a main source of motivation for their participation in religious communities and in society more generally. For example, a UK Pentecostal woman made a link between participating in her religious community and sharing her faith with others:

> I feel the way to help impart that or get the message of Christ across is to be involved with the people who are in church. I may not see them, many of them I don't see outside of Church, but in my interactions with them, I hope they have opportunities to share how my life as a Christian impacts not just when I am in church, but when I am at work and with my family.
>
> (UK Pentecostal)

For Muslim women, religion is a relational experience within their own religious communities, but also markedly so in relation to the broader society in which they often find themselves to be in a double minority position – as migrants and ethnically different to the majority, and as Muslim and therefore different from the religious majority. The Muslim women in our study talked about experiences of discrimination and marginalization due to their migrant backgrounds and religious identities. In contrast, Christian women belong to the religious majority and as such their religious belief and identities are not questioned or marked in the same way. Only very few of the Christian women reflected in any way on the fact that they are part of a dominant and often privileged religion. Moreover, they did not impart a sense of threat from secular society, which may indicate an increased toleration and accommodation of religion in the public sphere, coupled with the emergence of a more individualistic approach to matters of faith and belief.

Faith as a way of life

When the interviewed Christian and Muslim women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom told stories about who they are (and who they are not), a few prominent, often overlapping, themes emerged: Religion is clearly a way of life, embodied in everyday practices and a matter of profound moral concern for many women. It is a 'root identity' that permeates all aspects of life for most of the interviewed women, across countries and faiths. Faith is 'something that doesn't leave you', 'that you have in yourself all the time', as two of the women said. Faith is a matter of inner life, but it also permeates and guides daily practical tasks at home in their religious communities and in society more broadly. It is a moral call to care for the well-being of other people, for love, respect and tolerance. In this sense, religion is a tremendous resource for the individual as well as for the community. Religion gives a feeling of identity and belonging and is intimately bound up with the feeling of who they 'really' are (Greil and Davidman 2007: 549). Faith did not appear as having been forced upon the interviewed women, who rather displayed an agentic and existential relationship to faith and religion. Faith was a belonging they chose voluntarily every day; it was not necessarily an easy choice but something to struggle with, negotiate and come to terms with in difficult situations.

  Religion played different roles in the interviewed women's lives, and for some, religion was more like a cultural habit, and just one among several aspects of their identities. For them, religion was not all-encompassing and not an issue they thought a lot about. Lived religion had a distinct aspect of power when their religious identities were challenged: Muslim women told stories of discrimination, stigmatization, prejudice and 'othering' that were not paralleled by Christian women, with the exception of a few, mainly Pentecostal interviewees. They shared their efforts to cope with

non-recognition (Engebrigtsen 1992), such as the strategy of not marking or modifying their religious belonging in public by adapting to the dominant habits among the majority population of eating, drinking and dressing. Several Muslim women consolidated their belonging to Islam by more frequent reading and practising of Islamic traditions, and a few women were engaged in religio-political activities such as demonstrating in the streets for women's rights to wear the hijab.

We have also analysed how Christian and Muslim women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom talked about their 'coming to faith'. Moments of sudden, divine experience is one route, but being brought up in a religious family, 'born this way', was the most commonly mentioned. Parents are obviously important in shaping a religious identity, but religious identity work continues throughout life, according to many interviewees. They were 'born' with a religion, then performed religious practices 'by force of habit', before actively affirming their religious belonging as adults. 'Naturalized faith' was transformed into personal belief, a process which was often fortified by migration in the case of interviewed Muslim women. Our study also includes a few women who converted and discusses processes and implications of conversion.

This research confirms that identities are multi-layered and complex, and the interviewed Muslim and Christian women referred to more than religion when they described who they are. Motherhood and marriage appeared as a common theme strongly related to identity, as in the statement 'Who am I? I am a wife and a mum.' The interviews also showed, however, that women's traditional roles as full-time mothers and wives have changed, and women have greater choice in terms of the roles that are available to them (Nielsen 2004). Professional life and education were important aspects of many of the women's identities. Modern religious women have, like 'secular' women, entered the labour market, and the interviewed women were no exception. They have considerable work experience, despite the emphasis on motherhood and family relations. The brief accounts of identities, varying from basically being attached to motherhood, or to education and employment, or to both, demonstrate that women do not share one identity as women but indicate the importance of positionality or 'social location' in the construction of meaning.

National belonging also turned out to be an urgent issue in the stories of who the Christian and Muslim women are, often intertwined with religion or other aspects of their location; 'I am Arab, Muslim, Moroccan', as one woman stated. Notably, all the Muslim participants included national belonging when describing their identity, in contrast with most of the Christian women who hardly mentioned nationality or ethnicity. Nationality, cultural heritage, race and ethnicity were silent issues among women from the dominant Christian groups (Lutherans in Norway, Catholics in Spain and Anglicans in the United Kingdom) – a finding that corresponds to

theories of minoritization (Gunaratnam 2003) and privilege (Frankenberg's 1993): the unmarked group has the privilege to remain silent. Marked groups, such as Muslims, have to explain themselves. Left unspoken, however, the privileged position of Christianity in Europe remains non-politicized and de-coupled from the disadvantaged position of Muslim women.

This chapter has demonstrated that the meaning of religion for our research participants is subjected partly to broader social structures and power dynamics and partly to the outcome of ongoing identity work on the personal level. The analysis shows that identities are relational and dynamic. Participants from dominant and marginalized faiths point to complex processes of reinterpretation within both Islam and Christianity. Thus, they confirmed that identity is not determined by social location; rather, identity is constantly worked and reworked in reflexive ways. Religion 'offers identities that matter to people' (Modood 2007: 79), thus a lack of recognition from broader society is far from trivial.

4

Religion and Citizenship as Lived Practice: Intersections of Faith, Gender, Participation and Belonging

Introduction

Religious faith is in many ways related to citizenship: it is a way into citizenship practice in that religious believers participate in organized faith communities and in the broader societies in which they live, and faith also provides guidance about what constitutes a good citizen.[1] When religious faith prevents participation in and belonging to organized religious groups, or prevents participation and belonging in the wider society, it can also be a barrier to citizenship. Religious faith can be used to *deny* someone citizenship, as when Muslim women who wear face veils in public risk arrest in European countries like France and Belgium, or when lesbian women priests are denied employment in the Lutheran Church. Faith can also be used to *enhance* someone's citizenship, as when state laws assign more rights and privileges to some religions than to others. In Europe, the privileging and accommodation of Christianity is especially visible to those of minority religious beliefs or none. As faithful citizens, the religious women in our study believe in and practise their own faith, and they believe in citizenship as an expression of, and practising of, a religiously informed ethic of care, love, tolerance and respect. In this chapter we demonstrate how lived religion and lived citizenship are deeply intertwined for the women in our study (see also Chapters 2 and 7).

How do the interviewed Christian and Muslim women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom think about and practise citizenship and religion in their everyday lives? Do they talk about religion and citizenship mainly in terms of rights and status, or do they also foreground other aspects of citizenship? Do they position religion as a resource or a barrier to their everyday citizenship practices? Do Christian and Muslim women talk about gender inequalities within their own religious communities as obstacles to their own citizenship practice, or do they simply accept such inequalities? Do they talk about religious privilege and disadvantage, or

about stereotyping and discrimination? In this chapter we develop a critical perspective on the term 'religious citizenship' by linking it to the concept of 'lived religion' (McGuire 2008), to gender inequality, to differences between privileged and disadvantaged religious groups, and to identity, belonging, participation and care as aspects of lived citizenship. Inspired by theoretical perspectives that foreground both citizenship and religion as 'lived practice' (see Chapter 2), our research applies a bottom-up perspective grounded in the interview data. Based on our findings, we argue that, in its liberal version, a rights-based approach to 'religious citizenship', suggested by scholars such as Hudson (2003) and Permoser and Rosenberger (2009), is too narrow (see also Chapter 2). A rights-based approach silences inequalities based on gender and ignores the different statuses accorded by states and societies to different religions. It also overlooks dimensions that religious women themselves deem important in their lived citizenship practice, including identity, belonging and participation, and an ethic of care, love, tolerance and respect. The chapter demonstrates that 'religious citizenship' has multiple meanings among the interviewed religious women, thus making it difficult to offer an alternative, precise definition of the term. Instead, a multi-perspectival approach is required which acknowledges that rights, status, identities, belonging, participation and an ethic of care, love, tolerance and respect are important dimensions of religious citizenship as lived practice. Rather than focusing on tensions between secular and religious citizenship (see Levey and Modood 2009; Cady and Fessenden 2013), we highlight citizenship inequalities between adherents of majority and minority religions.

In their lived practice of religious citizenship, some women attempt to challenge what they perceive as gender inequalities within their religious communities and seek change from within, often supported by broader societal moves towards greater gender inequality. While being deeply committed to their own personal faith and religious community, they also view their own religious tradition as compatible with demands for gender-equal opportunities (see also Chapter 5). Other women focus their energy more exclusively on their personal relationship with God (see also Chapter 3) and on their belonging to and participation in religious faith traditions and communities. They are less (or even not at all) concerned with gender equality in the form of equal rights for women and men. Most of the women in our study, both Christian and Muslim, tend to perceive women and men as different but equal (in the sense of having equal value), although their formal rights and/or social roles may be differentiated. Some of them believe that even if women and men are different by nature, their social roles are, at least to some extent, interchangeable. Others believe that biological differences between women and men justify their different social roles in the home and in the labour market, and for some these differences also justify women's submission to men's authority (see Chapters 5 and 6). These types of view

pose a direct challenge to liberal feminists who argue that citizenship must be based on gender-equal rights and responsibilities, both within and outside the home. The 'relational feminist tradition' (Offen 1988), on the other hand, accommodates the view that women and men have equal worth as human beings but have different natures and can therefore inhabit different roles and also be treated differently. Although the liberal and relational feminist traditions acknowledge class and sexuality as important dimensions of women's lives, they tend to foreground gender. Other intersectional approaches suggest that inequalities related to race and ethnicity are more acute and important to Black and other ethnic minority women (Carby 1982; Hill Collins 1991; Crenshaw 1997; Yuval-Davis 2006b) and that religion also should be included in intersectional analyses of women's lives (Appelros 2005; Weber 2015).

Whether religious beliefs and practices provide barriers or resources for women's citizenship practices must therefore be investigated through an intersectional lens, which takes into account women's multi-layered identities, participation and belonging to families, groups and wider communities (Yuval-Davis 1999). In this chapter, we examine the types of barriers and resources that were talked about and experienced by the interviewed women in their respective historical, geographical and socio-political contexts in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom. We pay particular attention to whether and how privilege, as well as disadvantage and marginalization, was talked about or even silenced. In this regard we reflect on relations between a religious majority and religious minorities, as well as between religious and non-religious (or 'secular') beliefs. Moreover, religious majority or minority status intersects with other forms of inequality, especially those related to gender, ethnicity, nationality and immigration status.

The chapter is divided into five sections. We first outline some linguistic and contextual considerations relating to how citizenship is talked about and understood within the three different countries. The subsequent sections present and discuss our findings related to how the interviewed religious women talk about and practise citizenship and religion in their everyday lives. Throughout the chapter, commonalities across the sample are identified, as well as differences pertaining to religious adherence and national contexts. We start by exploring the participants' understanding of citizenship more generally and of a 'good citizen' in particular. The analysis demonstrates broad support among the interviewees for an approach to citizenship which foregrounds identities, participation and belonging. Next, we analyse the research participants' understanding of 'religious citizenship'. This section shows that 'lived religion' is deeply intertwined with 'lived citizenship' for the participants and that religious citizenship invokes an ethic of care towards others that is embedded in the women's religious identities. Moreover, the discussion reveals that some interviewees view religious citizenship as inclusive of all religious believers as well as of non-believers, while

others view religion as being a matter 'over and beyond' citizenship. We then move on to examine religion as a resource or barrier to lived citizenship practice. It shows how intersecting forms of inequality related to gender, to religious majority/minority status and to migrant backgrounds pose a challenge to rights-based approaches to citizenship. It also highlights how religious women's lived citizenship practices may challenge feminist notions of gender equality and thus further question a rights-based approach to religious citizenship.

The concept of 'citizenship' in different country contexts

The wider country-specific contexts of Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom (outlined in Chapter 1) provide the background for how citizenship was talked about among the interviewed religious women. Colonial and post-colonial legacies, transitions from authoritarian to democratic regimes, experiences of civil and other wars, changing Church–state relationships and the emergence of religiously pluralist societies are important in this regard. Moreover, changing patterns of migration, the institutionalization of human rights, the establishment of state agencies dealing with issues of gender and with migration and integration, as well as with racism and discrimination, and the development and enlargement of the European Community have deeply but differently affected contemporary European countries (see Chapter 1). For the purpose of this chapter, the continued formal and/or symbolic privileging (albeit in different forms) of Christianity in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom is particularly important. The Lutheran Church in Norway, the Catholic Church in Spain and the Anglican Church in England, all have a dominant position in their respective countries, and they are also given some kind of privileged status by their respective state governments (see Chapter 1). Other Christian denominations and traditions (e.g., Pentecostals, Methodists, Baptists) are part of the overall Christian hegemony but generally have a less privileged status. Other officially recognized religions, such as Islam, are included in government consultations (in all three countries) and may receive public funding (Norway and Spain) but do not enjoy the political and social privileges granted to the main Christian churches and to Christianity as such. Another important contextual factor is the growth in 'non-Christian' religions, and especially Islam, in all three countries, due to immigration. Islam is now the second largest religion in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom. Moreover, in all three countries Muslims experience discrimination and 'othering' due to stereotyping of and prejudice towards immigrants in general and Muslims in particular. Islamophobia has increased after the 9/11 terror attacks in the United States in 2001, the Madrid terror attack in March 2004 and the terror attacks in London in July 2005. The terrorist killings in Oslo and at Utøya in Norway on 22 July 2011 were also a result of Islamophobia (see

Chapter 1 for further details on religion in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom).

In all three countries, participants would be unfamiliar with the scholarly term 'religious citizenship'. Indeed, the broader term 'citizenship' has different connotations in each country.[2] In the United Kingdom, government and schools promote a broad understanding of 'citizenship' as including status, rights, duties, loyalty, belonging and active participation (see Kiwan 2007). Furthermore, the term 'active citizenship' has been used in British politics to mobilize voluntary work and community participation (Lister 1997; Yuval-Davis 1997). In Norway, the term *statsborgerskap* (state citizenship) covers legal aspects of citizenship, while *samfunnsborgerskap* (community citizenship) and *medborgerskap* (fellow citizenship) cover social aspects such as identity, loyalty, belonging, trust and participation (Brochmann 2002: 56–60). The Norwegian government uses the term *medborgerskap* to promote the active participation of citizens in society. In Spain, citizenship (*ciudadanía*) appears generally to be understood in a more limited and specific way and is mainly associated with nationality and long-term residency within the territory of the Spanish state (Medrano 2005). Guia (2014: 23–24) argues that native Spaniards have a narrow or what she calls 'passive' understanding of citizenship, as limited to 'electoral politics, established political parties, and associations such as trade unions, all of which [are] controlled by European descendants'. Medrano's and Guia's research suggests that Spain has lagged behind Norway and the United Kingdom in terms of actively promoting a broader understanding of citizenship that forefronts not only status and rights but also identity, belonging, trust and participation. Furthermore, in the new Spanish democracy post-Franco, Muslim women and men in Spain have fought for recognition as full citizens, and Guia shows how Muslims in Ceuta and Melilla, two autonomous Spanish communities in North Africa, were successful in gaining citizenship rights. Muslim immigrants to Spain remain, however, disadvantaged in comparison with other immigrant groups (especially those from Latin America), as their access to citizenship is more difficult and they have yet to obtain political rights (ibid.: 162; see also Hellgren 2008; Zapata-Barrero 2010; Nyhagen Predelli, Halsaa and Thun 2012).

As stated earlier, there is little research on what citizens (as opposed to governments and scholars) understand by 'citizenship' and its related terms (Lister et al. 2007: 168). In a previous study, however, we examined how women's movements activists of ethnic majority and ethnic minority backgrounds in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom understand the term 'citizenship'. We found that activists in the three countries differed substantially in their understanding (Nyhagen Predelli, Halsaa and Thun 2012). On the one hand, the interviewed movement activists in Norway foregrounded participatory aspects beyond that of political voting (i.e., volunteering and caring for others) and did not talk much about individual

rights or the state. Activists in Spain, on the other hand, focused predominantly on the rights of the individual, including political, economic and social rights. They were also concerned with access to citizenship and to voting rights. Women's movement activists in the United Kingdom, however, talked mainly about issues of national identity, participation and belonging and also about racism and discrimination perpetrated by the state as well as by society more generally.

In our study of religious women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, interviewees were first asked what they associate with the word 'citizenship' as a general term. In the United Kingdom and in Spain, interviewees were then asked if it would make sense for them to talk about 'citizenship' as linked with religion. In Norway, research participants were first introduced to the notion that *medborgerskap* can include participation on political, social or economic arenas, before being asked what they thought of the notion of 'religious citizenship' (*religiøst medborgerskap*). Most of the religious women we interviewed in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom understand citizenship in the wider sense promoted by feminist scholarship (see Chapter 2). They emphasize identity, belonging, participation and care, while also talking about status, rights and duties. Among the interviewed Muslim women in Spain, however, those who were of immigrant backgrounds tended to focus somewhat more on status, rights and duties, as well as identity and belonging, rather than on societal participation, volunteering and care towards others. This finding is probably related to the difficult access to citizenship experienced by Muslim immigrants in Spain, as well as to experiences and feelings of exclusion. It is also likely to reflect the narrower understanding of citizenship that seems to pervade Spanish society (see Medrano 2005; Guia 2014). Such a country-specific difference between Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom was also mentioned by one of our research participants in Spain, who suggested that public discourse on citizenship in Spain has only recently framed citizenship as a horizontal relationship between citizens, rather than only as a vertical relationship between citizens and the state:

> The sense of citizenship is something that was already prevalent in the Norwegian society, in north European societies, or in the English society, whereas in the Spanish society the sense of citizenship as such did not exist. Granted that the term citizenship is a coined term, a term that was introduced fairly recently, but that sense of civic-mindedness did not use to exist in Spain. That is to say, we were good people. Spaniards were nice people, right? And that was it. But the concept of a civic spirit was non-existent, that spirit of saying 'together we can do it'. Now is the first time we are seeing, as a result of the [economic] crisis, an advertising campaign in which [...] they say, 'if we all chip in, we can do it'. So that kind of slogan, or that kind of calls to our sense of belonging, of forming part of

a whole […] that never used to happen before, that integrating vision, don't you think? Saying we are all part of this.

(Spanish convert to Sunni Islam)

This interviewee, who is of Spanish (non-immigrant) origin, supports the notion that a public discourse about citizenship in its broadest sense has been delayed in Spain due to the long duration of Franco's authoritarian regime and the transition to democracy that happened in the second half of the 1970s. In comparison, Norway and the United Kingdom are more established democracies that have dealt with civil society activism, migration and multiculturalism over a longer period of time. Historical conditions in these two countries have thus facilitated a public discourse about citizenship in its broader sense (as identities, participation and belonging in addition to rights, status and duties).

Understandings of citizenship

We started by asking the research participants to reflect on the question 'what does citizenship mean to you?' Christian and Muslim women from Oslo, Madrid and Leicester forwarded very similar understandings of citizenship. Themes identified in the responses included legal and political aspects of citizenship, rights and duties, the importance of being part of a collective, a feeling of belonging and participation. Follow-up questions were then asked about the participants' understanding of what constitutes a 'good' citizen.

The classic understanding of citizenship as an individual's status was advanced by very few participants who associated citizenship with having a passport, with the right to live in a country and with the freedom to move across borders. Some participants also mentioned rights and duties as part of citizenship, including the right to vote and the duty to respect the law. Most of the interviewees moved beyond a rights-based approach in their answers by advancing a multi-dimensional understanding, emphasizing collective and participatory aspects of citizenship. Citizenship was conceptualized as playing a positive or active role in your own community, which in turn would benefit society as a whole: '[it] is about participating in society, playing an active role, and perhaps being a volunteer of some sort, respecting the law' (UK Pentecostal). Active participation included taking part in political processes, engaging in community groups and being friendly and caring towards one's neighbours:

I think about being together with my neighbours and those who live around me. That is to be a citizen [medborger]. And to have a good relationship with one's neighbours, to be able to chat and to have a cup of

coffee together. Go on a walk together. That is what I think being a citizen is all about.

(Norwegian Pentecostal)

Interviewees forwarded collective dimensions and a relational view of citizenship, where citizenship forges connections between people and citizens are relating to each other in helpful ways:

[…] When you live in an apartment building, you are not only by yourself, you have neighbours. So, to be a citizen [medborger] [is] to be together, […] to know about each other, take responsibility for each other, be a citizen. Do things together […]; know about each other. Take responsibility for each other.

(Norwegian Sunni Muslim)

Being a citizen is committing yourself to sharing everything you are experiencing with those around you […] you are a good citizen according to how you behave towards others. So obviously, to me, being a citizen means just that: living together with others. Living, being able to live, to give of yourself, being there for others, helping people.

(Spanish Catholic)

Many participants mentioned a sense of belonging as part of citizenship, thus mirroring feminist conceptualizations of citizenship as multidimensional and inclusive of participation and belonging (Lister 2003; Yuval-Davis 2006a):

Citizenship, the very fact that I belong to this community, I belong to this country, more particularly I look on it that I belong to this community, am a member of this community, and therefore the responsibilities, the privileges but also the responsibilities that kind of come with that, as a member of this community. So I think that is what it means, citizenship, belonging to this place.

(UK Anglican)

In terms of belonging to a place, most participants (including those with immigrant backgrounds) talked about citizenship in relation to their own local community or to the country in which they live. Interviewees talked about a sense of belonging and feeling at home in a community, which indicates that citizenship has strong emotional aspects (Yuval-Davis 2006a). The 'community' often had a local dimension, in the form of belonging to a neighbourhood or to a particular mosque or congregation. Some participants had multiple national identities and a feeling of belonging to several

countries, but very few talked specifically about citizenship as being part of a wider, global community or described themselves as being a 'citizen of the world'. Among those who associated their national identity with belonging and citizenship, some described a feeling of belonging to two or even three countries – the one they were born in, the one they live in and at times a third one they had lived in temporarily. For example, a Norwegian Sunni Muslim stated, 'When I look at my children, they, their hearts only beat for Norway. My heart beats for both Norway and Pakistan.' A Shia Muslim in Spain who identifies with a country in South America (her birth country), a country in the Middle East (where she grew up) and Spain (where she now lives) uses her three national identities interchangeably, depending on context:

> When I'm in Spain and people ask me, I say I'm [from the South American country], but they can often tell by my accent that there is something else, so I always end up having to say I am [from the Middle Eastern country] [...]. And whenever I go abroad I always say I am Spanish, always. [...] So at this stage I feel I belong a little to all these places; I feel I belong to all three places.

When abroad, she refers to herself as Spanish to avoid having to tell her complex story of belonging to three countries. This practice illustrates how mixed national and migrant identities can be drawn on in a selective but positive manner, depending on the context in which you are located and the experiences that have shaped you. However, when another Shia woman from Spain, who has dual nationality, was asked what the word 'citizenship' means to her, she simply stated: 'I don't think about it. I don't feel either a Spanish citizen or an Iranian citizen [...]. I don't even stop to think about it. Because, why deceive myself I don't belong to either of those places.' Having moved from Iran to Spain nearly 20 years ago, and having experienced social exclusion and discrimination as an immigrant and as a Muslim in Spain, she does not feel at home in any of the two countries. Similarly, a Spanish Sunni interviewee, born in Spain of Moroccan parents, described herself as not belonging anywhere – neither in Spain nor Morocco: 'You don't belong anywhere. That affects you quite a lot, because it's you against the world.' These reflections illustrate that complex national and migrant identities can also be associated with negative experiences and feelings of exclusion (the theme of exclusion is addressed in more detail in the following).

The Spanish Shia woman quoted above, who identifies with three countries, also has a mixed religious background. Her grandmother was Jewish but her mother, who was born Jewish, was baptized as a Catholic: 'She was baptised a Catholic because when my grandparents emigrated because my grandmother was Jewish and they arrived in [South American country], my grandmother said: "What are they here, Catholic? Well, Catholic

it is, then."' Being part of a religious minority can indeed be very costly, as was the case with Jews during the Nazi regime in Europe. Moving on to a safe country, having both an immigrant status and a religious minority status, the Jewish grandmother decided it would be best for her offspring to not stand out in terms of religion. Moreover, the participant's father was Muslim and brought up his daughter as Muslim. Her mixed religious heritage, however, did not result in a mixed religious identity: she fully identifies as Muslim and feels she cannot claim any other religious identity: 'You can't say you are part Jewish, you can't say that, can you?' This statement suggests that, while it might be acceptable for someone to claim national belonging to several countries (e.g., a South American, a Middle Eastern and a European country), it would most likely be considered as strange if someone said they were 'Jewish, Catholic and Muslim' and thus claimed simultaneous belonging to three world religions. That individuals can hold multiple national citizenship is a right recognized by many governments, and those who are privileged in this way possess considerable political, social and cultural capital. A notion of multiple religious identities on an individual level, however, challenges social norms and expectations as well as practices that uphold demarcations between Christianity, Judaism and Islam (as well as other religions). The notion of multiple religious citizenships (or multi-religious faith, identity, belonging and participation) seems strange. Nevertheless, the possibility of viewing citizens as holding multiple religious identities could have far-reaching consequences in terms of the status and rights, as well as financial support, granted by governments to particular religions.

The initial question about what citizenship means was an open one, and interviewees were therefore encouraged to talk about what they immediately associated with the term. Across the total sample of interviewees from Oslo, Madrid and Leicester, only a few mentioned aspects of their religion or faith as related to citizenship without being prompted. Among those who did, both Christian and Muslim participants noted that all humans are equal before God, regardless of their nationality, race, gender or religious faith. Some Muslim participants also said that, as Muslims, they experience challenges related to how they are perceived by overall society and how much they 'belong'. For example, a British Sunni Muslim linked citizenship to her British nationality and to her faith – both of which she is very proud. She suggested a tension, however, between what the overall society associates with being British and her own identity as a British Muslim: ' . . . to me, citizenship means being proud of where I am from, being proud of my country, being proud of the Queen, some people look at me really strangely when I say that, but being proud of being British and a British Muslim' (UK Sunni Muslim). As only a few participants linked citizenship with religion without being prompted, we return to this topic in the next section of this chapter. Issues of inclusion and exclusion are also discussed later.

When the interviewees were asked what they view as 'a good citizen', the answers largely mirrored their earlier responses to the broader question about what citizenship means to them. Again, most answers were complex and included more than one aspect. Contributing to society through volunteering was a dominant theme, along with 'being there for your neighbours' and more general notions of tolerance, respect, love and care towards others. Being a law-abiding citizen, respecting the society's rules and the rights of others were oft-mentioned aspects of being a good citizen. One interviewee also included giving children a good education as part of being a good citizen:

> I think it starts with the basic things: not throwing litter in the streets, abiding by the law, turning on you headlights, that kind of thing. So, starting with the basic things, that's what I call being a good citizen. Being a good citizen, if you are a father or a mother, is being able . . . to give your children a good education [. . .] To me, when I think about it, it would involve the basic duties of respecting the surroundings where you live, the environment.
>
> (Spanish Shia Muslim)

Participants also reiterated that participation in and a feeling of belonging to their local community is related to being a good or active citizen:

> An active citizen is concerned about his neighbour, is concerned about his neighbourhood, about his town council, the neighbourhood associations . . . [he] is active within his immediate environment. In other words, I can't hope to be a citizen at the Spanish government level because I can't reach that far, it is beyond me. However, I can involve myself . . . I can participate in my neighbourhood association, my local church. Or go to church every Saturday, and there we sing and there we say the word of God, and we try to take it to all those around us [. . .]. So my efforts are directed to what I can cover, the small community around me.
>
> (Spanish Pentecostal)

What emerged from the interviews was a keen sense of citizenship as being part of a bigger whole, of relating in positive, loving, tolerant and respectful ways to people in the community, of contributing to the creation of a good society through compassion and volunteering, and leading a life conforming to societal rules and regulations. To care for the environment was also mentioned by a few interviewees, while one participant mentioned the right to protest as an important part of good citizenship. The interviewed women thus understood and experienced citizenship as 'multi-layered' lived practices (Yuval-Davis 1999) that include participation and belonging and also ethical notions about how people should behave towards each other.

Rights-based approaches fail to capture this complexity of religious women's lived citizenship.

A few interviewees also made explicit references to religion in relation to how they perceived a good citizen. For example, a UK Christian woman (Pentecostal) suggested that loving and obeying God, together with obeying the laws of the country, makes you a better citizen. Similarly, two UK Muslim participants (a Shia and a Sunni) made a direct link between obeying governmental laws and the laws of religion, as both laws instruct you to not hurt other people, while a Sunni Muslim from Spain stated that Islam instructs her to 'coexist with others and live in peace' as well as abide by the rules of the country she lives in. Furthermore, several interviewees invoked a broad fellowship or commonality between all human beings and emphasized the importance of respect and tolerance. A Norwegian Sunni Muslim specifically mentioned respect and tolerance for each other's religious beliefs as well as the beliefs of 'those without a religion'. In other words, citizens should give each other space and freedom to hold different beliefs, including non-belief. The explicit reference to and inclusion of non-religious citizens as good citizens were forwarded by several participants, including a Norwegian Pentecostal who saw a good citizen as someone who is kind, good and fair. She stated, 'There are many good people, even if they are not Christian. So, a good human being is a good human being.' Similar statements were made by other interviewees who thought that the ability to be a good citizen does not depend on religious faith but on the personal characteristics and qualities of particular individuals. The discussion so far suggests that, for most of our research participants, citizenship is linked to their religious beliefs, but religious beliefs are not perceived as *necessary* for individuals to act as good citizens. Citizenship, in its broader meaning, is being linked not only with individuals' religious beliefs but also to their social behaviour. Although seen as linked with religious faith, a general ethical imperative of 'good behaviour', including obeying the law of the society you live in, participating in the local community and caring for family, friends and neighbours, is not framed as exclusive to religious believers. For the interviewees, 'good citizenship' seems to encompass a plurality of religious belief and non-belief. A challenging issue is therefore how to negotiate and accommodate religious pluralism in relation to equal citizenship for individuals and groups belonging to different faiths and none, and in relation to gender equality for women and men (see below and also Chapters 5 and 6, as well as Loenen and Goldschmidt 2007). The next section examines in more depth whether and how interviewees perceived links between religion and citizenship.

Religious citizenship

The interviewees were asked specifically whether it made sense for them to talk about citizenship in relation to religion. The majority of them, across the different faiths and the three countries, affirmed a linkage

between citizenship and religion by stating that their faith provides guidance on how to be a good citizen. For example, several Anglican participants emphasized that there is an expectation within Christianity that followers of the faith should be actively involved in their local communities and work towards the common good. To be 'a good citizen' and 'a good Christian' and 'a good Muslim' was regarded as one and the same thing by the interviewees; they are viewed as deeply intertwined and inseparable. Being a good follower of the Christian and Muslim faiths included showing love and care, respect and tolerance for each other. An ethic of care (see Tronto 1993, 2005), rooted in religious conviction yet transcending religious difference, thus emerged from the interviews as a significant dimension of lived religious citizenship (see Jouili 2015 for similar findings relating to young European-born, pious Muslim women). Both Christian and Muslim interviewees saw their own religion as providing instructions and guidance on how to act as a good citizen. A UK Christian participant, for example, stated that the Bible instructs Christians to be responsible citizens:

> [. . .] it is part of being a Christian that as well as obviously believing in God you should be equally responsible citizens. The second commandment is to love thy neighbour as thyself, and part of doing that is obviously being a responsible citizen and looking out for your neighbour and doing the right thing so yes, I think being a Christian does mean you have to be a responsible citizen.
>
> (UK Anglican)

Similarly, another Anglican participant made a direct link between her faith and being a good citizen: 'How I behave as a citizen is affected by my faith, and most of the Christian rules would lead towards a god citizen, I think.' A Spanish Catholic stated that she engages in voluntary social work because of her Catholic faith. Her work is led by her religious conviction that helping others is good: 'I think it is a source of personal fulfilment, of Catholic fulfilment, being able to bring happiness to other people and devoting my free time to people who suffer, people with disabilities, people who, above all, are suffering.' Good citizenship was thus linked specifically to religious faith.

A Spanish Sunni participant said that many things in Islam can be applied in practice to a context of citizenship, including respect for 'everything that is common, that is public', and respect for others, including your neighbours. A Norwegian Sunni suggested that sufficient knowledge about Islam does not only cover the five pillars of Islam (proclaiming one's faith, prayer, fasting, almsgiving and pilgrimage to Mecca) but also covers how people, Muslims and non-Muslims, should live together, with equal rights. She

stated that the Qur'an gives instructions on how to live with your neighbours – the society where you live and the people around you, be they Muslim or non-Muslim. A UK Shia participant also noted that Islam provides its followers with guidelines that cover working, studying, bringing up children and other areas of 'private life'. A Spanish Sunni participant saw a clear relationship between her religion and being a good citizen. She thought that, as a believer, you have to be a good citizen to fulfil your religious duties. For her, being a good citizen does not mean that it is enough to blindly follow religious rules. In her view, praying and fasting done by people who are not good do not serve any purpose. In other words, someone who purports to be religious is not necessarily also a good citizen. According to the interviewee, you also have to be a good person in order to be a good citizen, and in her view, within Islam it is compulsory for adherents to be a good citizen.

> Because at the end of the day you have to be good internally, right? Your heart has to be good in order that you do such things [prayer, fasting]…Because if you love God, he doesn't want you to act wrongly to others, because we are all equal. So within yourself, from the beginning, before praying, before doing Ramadan, before doing all the things you have to do you must first have a clean heart.

Similarly, a Spanish Pentecostal interviewee suggested that citizens should be led by Christian values (first and foremost being a follower of Christ), as well as a set of moral values such as integrity and honesty. These moral values are not seen as specific to Christianity, and people can thus be good in a moral sense regardless of their religious faith. Being 'saved', however, is dependent on religion in that only those who have God in their hearts will be saved. Nevertheless, having God in your heart is not only for Christians: '[…] God loves us all alike, he created us all and loves us all alike [Jews, Gentiles, Samaritans, Muslims]. To God there is no distinction and he makes no exception of persons.'

So far, the discussion has shown that participants made direct links between their religious faith and prescriptions for how to be a good citizen, while also acknowledging that being a good citizen is not *dependent on* religion. Not all participants, however, saw an immediate link between citizenship and religious prescriptions regarding behaviour. A Shia interviewee from Spain quoted earlier, who associated citizenship mainly with 'the basic duties of respecting the surroundings where you live', stated that Islam talks about

> how to be a good person […], the notion of cleanliness, of hygiene, of family, of non-violence, of treating your neighbour well, which is something common to most religions, but you don't have citizenship…Or maybe you do, in the intellectual discourse of modern or contemporary

intellectuals maybe they do make a reference to how to be a good citizen. But it is a different subject, I think.

Although this interviewee identified what she saw as behavioural prescriptions that are shared by most religions, she did not see the relevance of these to her (narrow) understanding of citizenship as obeying laws and respecting the environment in which you live. Instead, she saw tolerance, respect and care towards others as part of religious instructions and lived religion, rather than aspects of citizenship. Similarly, a Sunni participant from Spain saw citizenship as linked to respect, for what she calls 'the political and social laws of the country you live in', and not as tied to religion: 'I think anyone can be a good citizen, right? But that doesn't have much to do with religion. To a certain extent, if you are a good person at home, with your family, with your friends, [at work], you are also going to be a good citizen.' Again, we see how interviewees link citizenship to individuals' social behaviour rather than to particular religious beliefs. The possibility of being a good citizen is thus open to all, independent of religion (see below for a further discussion of this theme).

Some of the Christian participants linked citizenship to being part of a larger Christian community, encompassing various traditions and denominations. They thus forwarded an ecumenical approach centring on the unity of Christians and also underscored their experience of citizenship as multi-layered through membership of local, national and global collectives (Yuval-Davis 1999). For example, a Norwegian Pentecostal noted that she feels part of the Christian community wherever she is; it is like being part of a larger family. When travelling, she feels welcomed in churches abroad: 'There is one God, there is one church.' A Norwegian Lutheran also used the term 'Christian citizenship' to denote unity and equality between followers of the Christian faith. She saw their faith in Jesus as what unites Christians.

Furthermore, some Christian interviewees, and notably (but not exclusively) Pentecostals, also talked about 'citizenship in heaven' or citizenship in relation to the notion of 'God's Kingdom'. The notion of 'Kingdom' is central to Pentecostal thought about the Second Coming of Jesus. Believers are future citizens of God's Kingdom, and as such they are expected to behave in ways that have a positive impact upon society. When asked if it makes sense to talk about citizenship in relation to religion, a Pentecostal participant said: 'Yes, we are citizens of the Kingdom. We have a Kingdom identity, and there is a lot in there about being good citizens of God's Kingdom and there are rules and regulations of his Kingdom. So, yes' (UK Pentecostal). Similarly, a Norwegian Lutheran used the notion 'citizenship in heaven', and another Pentecostal interviewee referred to God's Kingdom as heaven: 'The Bible talks about citizenship, it calls us citizens of heaven. Citizens of heaven even though we are living on the earth.' Religious citizenship can

thus be understood both in the this-worldly context of the here and now and also in the other-worldly context of 'heaven' where followers of Jesus unite.

Some interviewees, both Christian and Muslim, from the three countries, forwarded a wider understanding of *all religions* or the three world religions (Christianity, Judaism and Islam) as relevant to citizenship. For example, a Norwegian Lutheran suggested that religious citizenship is an inclusive concept: 'When I hear that concept [religious citizenship], it encompasses all religions', whereas a Norwegian Pentecostal underlined care as a commonality between religions: 'most religions are about taking care of people around you'. Treating each other well, independent of one's religious belief, was seen as important by Muslim and Christian participants in all three countries, who also linked equality between humans to their equality before God. For example, a UK Sunni participant said that '[…] when it comes to citizenship, we are all servants of God', thus proposing that a common faith in God, across different religions, produces a fundamental equality between humans. Another Muslim interviewee (UK Shia) stated that 'God created this world and did not make any boundaries, it is us humans who made the boundaries', thus indicating that boundaries created by humans are arbitrary and produce differences and inequalities between people, while a common faith in God, across different religions, produces a fundamental equality between humans. These views were echoed by other participants, including a Spanish Sunni who made connections between followers of Islam, Christianity and Judaism:

> I can't treat you badly, because to me it makes no difference what religion you are. To us Christianity is a belief that we respect very much. My religion is Islam, and part of my religion is your religion, And Judaism too. Which means I must respect them the way they are … And try to live together peacefully, like, coexist peacefully because human life, to God, mine is the same as yours, it makes no difference. What awaits us there … but here we are the same.

In this quote there is also a reference to the afterlife, which we have seen was also invoked by Christian participants. While humans are equal in this world, God's judgement will decide who is worthy or not of a place in the afterlife.

Similarly, a UK Christian participant forwarded the notion that citizenship means equality between all humans: ' … it [citizenship] is all about linking to my life and just treating everybody the same. Jesus Christ said that; treating everybody the same. Jesus Christ said it is about treating everybody equally, regardless of gender, race' (UK Pentecostal). A Norwegian Lutheran suggested that people of different faiths feel affinity with each other simply because of their faith in God. The interviewees thus indicate that an ethic

of tolerance, respect and care towards others is a significant dimension of religious citizenship.

These findings lend support to the claim that rights-based approaches to religious citizenship are too narrow, as they focus only on the status and rights of individuals and groups and do not consider belonging, participation and care as significant dimensions of lived citizenship. However, one participant noted that there are limitations to the joint fellowship of those who share a faith in God. Acknowledging that religion can bind people together, the Norwegian Lutheran cited above also reflected that extreme forms of religion can alienate people, as in the example of a Satanist who will call himself religious but who has 'opposite values' to hers. As noted, some participants specifically mentioned believers of Christianity, Judaism and Islam as worthy of tolerance and respect, thus invoking similarities between the three major world religions. Most interviewees used the general term 'religion' as inclusive of people of different faiths.

A few interviewees included not only all religious people but also *secular* people in their overall notion of citizenship and equality. For example, a Norwegian Shia who thought that all religions have 'the same ethics and morals' talked about all people being equal regardless of their religion. She specifically included atheists or non-believers in her view of a good society where people live in peace and tolerance: 'So I think that in a society we are all of us living together; that is a religious citizenship. Even if you are not religious, right?' Similarly, a Norwegian Sunni mentioned respect and tolerance for each other's religious beliefs as well as the beliefs of 'those without a religion'. These views were echoed by other participants who also said that good citizens can be of different religions or of no religion. For example, a Spanish Catholic thought that someone who is not religious can also be a good citizen. When asked if being a good citizen has to do with being a good Catholic, another Spanish Catholic said that 'to be a good person you don't have to be a Christian, because you have some very good people who are not Christian'. A third Spanish Catholic stated that 'a good citizen is a good person. A good person can be a wonderful citizen who carries out all her duties, and is perfectly law-abiding, and behaves properly towards the people she has contact with. Another matter is whether this good citizen should be a Catholic.' She goes on to say that God commands Catholics to behave like good citizens, but non-Catholics as well as atheists can be good citizens; they can be of whatever faith. Being a good citizen is thus not necessarily related to religion.

Some interviewees thus acknowledged the accommodation of people of different religious faiths, as well as of non-religious or secular people, as important dimensions of 'religious citizenship'. They suggested that the term 'religious citizenship' is inclusive of a plurality of religious belief and non-belief, as it invoked a general ethical imperative of 'good behaviour' whose

validity transcends, yet may be rooted in, particular religious beliefs. The discussion so far demonstrates how the religious and the secular are intertwined rather than separate (see Chapter 2). Moral values and an ethic of care are thought of as blending and overlapping religious and secular notions of good behaviour, and our research participants recognize that both religious and secular people are capable of following prescriptions about what constitutes good citizenship practice. In Western contexts, as noted in Chapter 2, public spheres and individuals' life-worlds are infused with moral values and ethics that are often rooted in religious sources. A meshwork of liberal secular values and ethics and religiously prescribed values and ethics informs the laws and practices of European governments and citizens (see Yadgar 2006; Jacobsen and Pellegrini 2008; Casanova 2009; Dillon 2010; Razavi and Jenichen 2010; Göle and Billaud 2012).

An example that illustrates this blending of the secular and religious is a Norwegian Shia Muslim who talks about how all people are equal, regardless of their religion, and how she, as a Muslim, should behave well and give people a good impression of Islam. She does not see herself as having a duty to convert others to Islam, and she values religious freedom, '[…] so if you want to be a Christian or an atheist or what you want to be that is up to you'. She notes that not everyone has to be religious, and that even those who are religious do not necessarily agree with each other. What is most important to her is that people of different beliefs live together in peace, which is made possible by the moral values shared by all religions and by extension all humans: 'Because really it is the same ethics and moral in all religions.' A similar view was forwarded by another Norwegian Shia, who thought that multicultural society should actively promote religious tolerance (as the acceptance and recognition of religious difference). Echoing the views of Habermas (2008) and Casanova (2009) that religion should be acknowledged as legitimate in the public sphere and not be ignored, the interviewee also emphasized commonalities between all humans: 'No matter what kind of human being you are, you do really have one or another type of faith. You can be an atheist, or you can be a Buddhist, or you can . . . , right?'

Another way of emphasizing commonality between all people, regardless of whether they are religious or not, was suggested by a Norwegian Sunni Muslim. She thought that the concept of religious citizenship implies an unhelpful distinction between religion and no religion, while to her everyone has a religion. She did not think of religion in the sense of adhering to a formal faith (mentioning Islam, Christianity and Buddhism) but as of following ideas about how to live:

> It does not have to be that you believe in a God or in religion. It doesn't have to be a religion. That is, at least I feel, that a religion can in a way be everything. One who does not believe in God also has a religion,

> I feel. Because you do something. And you do have a purpose with what
> you do.

These viewpoints further demonstrate how some interviewees refer to a general ethical imperative about being a good citizen that applies to religious believers as well as to non-believers. You can be a good citizen regardless of your religious faith. Good citizenship is thus a universal capability and a generic type of social behaviour that depends on ethical attitudes and moral values, rather than on religious faith. That said, participants point to connections between good citizenship and religious faith in that religions such as Christianity and Islam instruct you to be a good citizen. Therefore, in order to be a good Christian or good Muslim, you also have to be a good citizen.

While most research participants perceived connections between their own faith and religious practice (lived religion) and their own citizenship practice (lived citizenship), some conceived of citizenship as first and foremost a secular term. They considered religion to be a matter above and beyond the issue of citizenship. For example, a UK Anglican saw citizenship as linked to secular society and to being a member or citizen of a country. A UK Pentecostal made a distinction between secular and religious forms of citizenship, in that formal citizenship of the United Kingdom has 'to be earned' by immigrants coming to the country, 'whereas with Christianity I believe you don't have to earn it, you just have to ask forgiveness and believe in God'. This interviewee underscored that everyone is equal before God and that religious citizenship only requires a personal conviction or faith. 'Religious citizenship' is thus open to all who want it, while formal, legal citizenship status of a particular nation state is conditional upon birthright or other non-inclusive criteria. Although a minority of both Christian and Muslim participants perceived citizenship as first and foremost related to secular aspects such as being a citizen of a country, this sentiment was more pronounced among some of the Muslim interviewees. Several Muslim participants conceived of citizenship as secular and in contrast to religion. This is probably linked to the fact that Islam is a minority religion in all three countries, as well as to the commonality between all Muslim believers ('the Ummah') regardless of their nationality, and to the immigrant origins of most of the Muslim interviewees. Secular notions of citizenship forwarded by Muslim participants included the right to live in a country, a feeling of belonging to a country, and to actively participate in society. One UK Sunni stated that she is equally committed to her religion and to her (national) citizenship, but she viewed them as separate and hoped she would not be made to choose between loyalty to her religion and to her country. Such views were echoed by a UK Shia who distinguished between citizenship as the right to live in a country and her religion, Islam, which instructs her to live by the rules

of whatever country she is living in. Participants from Norway and Spain made similar statements. These interviewees thus suggested that religion is a matter over and beyond the issue of citizenship. Another UK Sunni, who also associated citizenship with a person's formal, legal status and not with religion, thought it would be a mistake to relate citizenship to religious belief. In her view, citizenship involves legal status differentiation and therefore inequality, while religious faith transcends status differentiation and invokes a form of equality among believers. She observed that people adhere to different religions, that the intensity of people's religious convictions differs and that faiths have religious leaders as well as followers. This interviewee thought that if citizenship has to do with status differentiation, then it cannot be transferred to the complex phenomenon of religious belief:

> [...] in religion I don't think you can make the citizenship, because you have got so many different believers and the different faiths and the different levels [...]. So again those are three different levels, and what citizenship are you going to give them, low class, middle class, higher class. So in religion I don't think citizenship makes any difference, you know.
>
> (UK Sunni)

In other words, when applied to the religious sphere, a limited notion of citizenship as status is problematic, as it implies that different religions will be accorded different types of status by the state. Unequal citizenship status based on religious faith was perceived as unfair, and this view offers an indirect critique of current government practices in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom that privilege one religion over the rest. Moreover, Muslim interviewees in particular mentioned freedom of religion and respecting different religions as central citizenship values, including the freedom to practise religious rituals like prayers and to build mosques where people can come together for religious observance. Such comments were forwarded by Muslims only, thus highlighting current inequalities between Christianity as a religion privileged by the state and Islam as disadvantaged. Moreover, the building of churches is far less controversial in society than the building of mosques (see Cesari 2013: 18–19).

   Only one interviewee, a Lutheran woman in Norway, made an explicit connection between religious citizenship and women's rights or gender equality. In her view, Christianity offers stronger support for gender equality than other religions, and she mentioned female genital mutilation as an example of a practice that is allegedly not tolerated by Christianity but tolerated by other religions (by implication, Islam). The overall silencing of gender equality in response to direct questions about religious citizenship suggests that gender is of lesser importance than other dimensions

of citizenship, including participation, belonging, tolerance, respect and care towards others (see Chapter 5 for an in-depth discussion of how the participants talked about gender equality).

In conclusion, most interviewees thought that it makes sense to talk about 'religious citizenship'. They made connections between being 'a good Christian' or 'a good Muslim' and being 'a good citizen', which involved respect, tolerance, love and care for others. Being a good citizen included obeying laws, participating actively in the local community, voting in political elections, getting to know and caring for your neighbours. As one interviewee put it, 'most religions are about taking care of people around you'. However, participants emphasized that it is not necessary to be a follower of Christianity or Islam to be a good citizen. The values, attitudes and behaviour associated with good citizenship are viewed as common to good religious and good secular people. For the interviewed religious women, these values are intertwined with and also rooted in their religious convictions, but the values also transcend religious faiths in that they can be shared and adopted by followers of other religions and by non-religious people. Interviewees talk about a universal ethical imperative to be a good citizen and a general standard of how to be a good citizen. Anyone, regardless of faith, can be a good citizen. The views forwarded by the interviewees suggest that rights-based approaches to citizenship must be complemented with perspectives that emphasize identities, participation, belonging, and an ethic of tolerance, care and responsibility to others as central to lived citizenship.

Religion as resource and barrier to lived citizenship

In terms of their understanding of what citizenship means, what constitutes a good citizen and the relationship between religion and citizenship, there were no major differences in terms of which faith tradition the interviewed women belonged to or which country they inhabited. The only palpable difference was that Spanish Muslim women focused somewhat more on status, rights and duties than on societal participation and care towards others (see above). When the interviewees were asked about their experiences of barriers, discrimination or privilege in relation to their faith, however, there were some pronounced differences across religious traditions and countries. Generally, both Christian and Muslim interviewees identified barriers to their lived citizenship in terms of discrimination they have experienced either within their own religious communities or within society at large. These barriers were perceived as linked to religion, gender or migrant backgrounds. Importantly, some, but not all, gender inequalities within their own religious communities were talked about as producing hindrances to women's participation. For example, while it was perceived as problematic by most Christian interviewees when women are not allowed to take on certain positions of religious authority (e.g., bishops in the Church of England;[3] pastors

and elders in the Pentecostal church; priests in the Catholic Church), none of the Muslim interviewees perceived it as a problem that women cannot take on the role of imam within mosques. Although the issue of homosexual and lesbian priests is hotly debated within the Norwegian Lutheran Church, it was not mentioned by any of the Lutheran interviewees. Other participants only mentioned homosexuality in terms of it being a controversial issue in more general terms. Furthermore, Pentecostals in Spain and the United Kingdom talked in accepting terms about male headship of the family as a religiously rooted prescription, while Pentecostals in Norway, as well as Lutherans, Anglicans and Catholics, did not invoke the term 'male headship'. Also, Muslim women (both Sunni and Shia) in all three countries accepted Islamic family law, which assigns gendered duties to women and men. Pentecostals (in Spain and the United Kingdom) and Muslims (in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom) expressed similar views on what they perceive as biological or God-given differences between women and men and how these differences inform gendered social roles (see also Chapter 5).

More generally and across the faiths and countries, religious communities were talked about as a resource in terms of belonging and participation. Notably, very few Christian participants reflected on privilege related to their own faith, and those who spoke about discrimination by the state or by society more broadly were mostly Muslim. An exception to this was Spanish Pentecostals who mentioned historical prejudice against Pentecostalism due to the persecution of Protestantism during the Franco regime. However, the Spanish Pentecostals did not talk about contemporary forms of discrimination by the state. Some Norwegian Pentecostals also mentioned societal prejudice against their religion, but this was related to the past.

In this section we first examine views on religion as a resource and barrier to citizenship among Christian (Lutheran, Anglican, Catholic and Pentecostal) women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, before turning to views imparted by Muslim (Sunni and Shia) women in the three countries.

Pentecostal interviewees from Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom imparted that women speaking and preaching in the congregation is a contentious issue in the Pentecostal movement. However, while participants from Norway and the United Kingdom were for women pastors, all but one of the participants from Spain was against women pastors. Interviewees from the United Kingdom and Norway talked about limitations to women's roles as an issue, in that women cannot (in the UK congregation) or have only recently formally been allowed to (in the Norwegian congregation) take on the role of 'elders' within the church. Some Pentecostal interviewees suggested that churches are male-led and male-dominated because of tradition, and that men have been using religion 'to control women and trying to use the Bible to justify that' (UK Pentecostal). Literal reading of

the Bible was mentioned as having caused male domination in positions of religious authority. For example, a Norwegian Pentecostal referred to the apostle Paul as privileging men, and said that such passages should be read as relating to a specific historical context and not to contemporary society. She noted that her own pastor had recently changed his view on women elders from a negative to a positive one and that he had asked the congregation's women for forgiveness for his former views. The interviewed Pentecostals from Norway and the United Kingdom were generally positive about women increasingly coming into leadership positions in the church, but most of the Spanish Pentecostals were specifically opposed to women becoming pastors. Several participants observed that significant changes have taken place within Pentecostalism, as women were required to wear hats, were not allowed as preachers or as elders and were expected to submit to men's decisions in the church. Despite positive changes, however, interviewees (mostly from Norway and the United Kingdom) noted that the Pentecostal movement was still dominated by men, and that many of these men still hold traditional gender views. Changes in formal rights and opportunities for women had thus still not been embraced entirely by the church, and the interviewed women from Norway and the United Kingdom experienced barriers to gender-equal citizenship within the Pentecostal movement.

A Spanish Pentecostal, on the other hand, stated that while there are people in her religious community who would like women to be pastors, she does not agree with it 'because women have enough scope for working in the Church without having to climb the pulpit'. For her, it is fine if women are in charge of a study group or of a committee visiting elderly people. 'But I don't think women pastors are a good idea', she said. Similarly, another Spanish Pentecostal stated that although others believe that the Evangelical church is male chauvinist, it is not true:

> We're not male chauvinist, we know that both men and women have their role. Why do they consider us . . . Or consider the men to be a little male chauvinist? Because women, for instance, in other churches women stand in the pulpit, they stand in front of everybody and deliver a message; in my church women don't deliver a message. But there are other, much more important things to do.

She goes on to mention social work and a weekly food and clothing bank run by women in her church: 'all this work is run by women. And it is work that is just as important as giving a sermon might be for a man.' Despite these gender differences, she sees women and men as equal: 'Both man and woman are equal, we don't believe men to be above women.' The notion that gender roles are different but complementary and of equal value shone through the interviews with Spanish Pentecostals (see also Chapter 5).

All the interviewed Pentecostals indicated that traditional gender roles within the church are contested, but they were divided across countries in that Norwegian and UK Pentecostals largely welcomed women pastors while the Spanish Pentecostals were largely dismissive of them. Moreover, while Spanish and UK Pentecostals referred to and accepted the notion of male headship within the family, this was not mentioned at all by Norwegian Pentecostals. It is possible that Norwegian Pentecostals did not mention male headship because they would feel uneasy about it in the context of the research interview (see Chapter 1). On the other hand, it could also be that male headship is simply not accepted by them because they have embraced more general norms about gender equality in Norwegian society.

Traditional expectations regarding gender roles in the home and in the workplace were however raised as an issue by UK and Spanish Pentecostals. Such expectations require women to do the caring and cooking, as husbands perceive their wives' main place to be in the home. A UK Pentecostal participant stated that wife and husband should 'submit to each other in ministry', indicating that women and men are equal in the religious arena. At the same time, she did not see it as a problem that she is expected to submit to her husband in the home. Other Pentecostal interviewees from both Spain and the United Kingdom supported the notion of male headship in the home based on Biblical injunction. For example, a UK Pentecostal participant who herself has a pastoral role in the church said she is comfortable with women leaders but prefers that women should not come to dominate. She noted that the issue of male headship is 'tricky' within the church, and that while men and women are equal before God, in debated matters she 'will just have to trust God and go with what my husband says'. She does not want to 'rebel' against her husband's wishes. Similarly, a Spanish Pentecostal stated that, according to the Holy Scripture (the Bible), the man is over and above the woman. She should not be 'subjugated or downtrodden' by the man, but 'almost 80 percent of my life should be governed by him, because that's what the Scriptures say'. Although the man is her superior, they have to be on an equal footing, 'but always with a certain respect and a feeling that he is [. . .] the leader of the pack'. Another Spanish Pentecostal referred to the Bible and stated that ' . . . [God] gave a little more responsibility to men in the running of the church, and likewise in the running of the household'. Women should thus be helpmates to their husbands and provide care for the family. The interviewee emphasized her relational role within the family rather than her own individual needs and wants. According to several Spanish Pentecostals, women and men have different natures, and while this justifies their different social roles, men and women have equally valued roles (see also Chapter 5). Only one Spanish Pentecostal expressed support for the notion of women pastors, referring also to women in the Bible to justify the view that women can have a role in 'Jesus Christ's ministry'. An immigrant to Spain from South America, she is used to watching Pentecostal services

on television that include women pastors. Despite her support for women in ministry, however, she is unequivocal about her support for male headship in the family. In her view, a woman cannot be head of the family 'because the [male] head of the family is instituted by God'.

Interviewed Pentecostals in the United Kingdom and Spain thus expressed limitations to gender equality within the family, in that 'the final say' lies with men. However, they also indicated that such limitations were accepted due to religious prescription and thus privileged their religious faith and identities over concerns related to gender inequality. In other words, their lived religious citizenship accommodated certain gender inequalities. In contrast to UK Pentecostals, Norwegian Pentecostals did not problematize gender roles in the family, which, as suggested earlier, could be linked to Norway overall being a more gender-equal society than the United Kingdom (see Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa 2012), or to the interviewees silencing male headship due to its deviation from the strong norm of gender equality in Norway.

In contrast to the Pentecostal women in Spain and the United Kingdom, the interviewed Lutheran and Pentecostal women in Norway, the Anglican women in the United Kingdom and the Catholic women in Spain did not talk much about husband–wife relations or women's participation in the labour market as being debated within their religious community. Instead, they focused more on formal gender inequalities within their own churches. The Norwegian Lutheran women approvingly noted developments in their church towards the ordination of women vicars (since 1961) and appointment of women bishops (since 1993). For them, there are no formal barriers to gender equality within the church. As one Lutheran participant noted, 'I have never experienced that someone could not get a position due to their gender.' Her experience and the rules of gender-equal access to formal positions of religious authority within the Lutheran church, however, do not mean that there is full agreement among all sections of the church. According to some Lutheran interviewees, there are still people in the church who hold the view that only men should be ordained as priests. However, such views were not portrayed as producing any barriers to their own lived citizenship within the church, and the Lutheran participants seemed to take for granted that equal gender rights trump dissonant views. The Lutheran interviewees were speaking from a position where formal gender equality is an established norm and practice (despite the presence of dissonant views), both within the church and within the broader Norwegian society. As such, they know that their views are not only supported but also constitute the hegemonic position within which they are embedded and speak from.

The Anglican women's focus was on the much-debated and contested issue of leadership within the church. One Anglican participant noted, 'when I first started, women couldn't even be ordained priests, so we have come on a long way from there'. Interviewees remembered the issue of

women priests as very controversial in some sections of the Church of England, with some people moving to the Roman Catholic Church. The question of women's leadership within the Church of England has also been debated in relation to the appointment of women bishops, which was only formally approved by the Church towards the end of 2014. One Anglican participant, herself a lay reader, stated that '...if a woman can be a priest, I don't see why she can't be a bishop'. She also noted, however, that women readers are not accepted everywhere in the Church, and referred to one of her friends who was prevented from becoming a reader by her local male vicar: 'That is quite extreme but there are still some churches where they will not let women sort of have any leadership role at all. It is quite unusual in the Church of England but it still does happen.' Similar to some of the Lutheran and Pentecostal interviewees, an Anglican participant suggested that some men within her church still find it difficult to accept women in positions of religious authority. She observed that '[women] have a lot to give no matter how the men interpret the Bible, they [men] try to find these little loopholes saying that women aren't allowed to...'. She talked about how some men misquote the Bible to support their traditional views. She thought that the Apostle Paul 'was a bit of a male chauvinist pig really', and that while certain verses in the Bible may say that women should sit still and not say anything, that may have been relevant to society at that time, but not any longer. In the view of this participant, although women can now take on any role they choose, 'the priest has the final say obviously because it is his or her parish and some of them I think feel a bit threatened...'. These reflections demonstrate that the interviewed Anglican women continue to face barriers to gender equality within church contexts and that they experience these barriers as problematic for their lived citizenship.

Some of the interviewed Spanish Catholic women also raised the issue of women's leadership within the Church. For example, one participant expressed concern about the male hegemony in the Church and suggested that women and men should have equal access to all roles:

> That is my major objection to the Catholic world, the fact that the leaders of the Church and the priests continue to be exclusively male, you know. There is no reason for it, except for historical reasons. That is to say, there are neither mental reasons, nor reasons of ability or resources; nothing at all [...]. So there is no need for priests, bishops or archbishops to be male, or the Pope himself.

She also referred to the Catholic Church's views on women's roles as outdated: 'So, being a housewife, submission, all those things that are quite often transmitted by certain sectors of the Catholic world, well, I think they are totally out of date.' Her views were echoed by another Spanish Catholic who argued that many more women than men are working in the Church

and that perhaps they are even working more than a priest. She also noted that while priests tend to appreciate the work women do in the church, men's work is generally appreciated more. Moreover, she does not understand why women cannot have a more representative and acknowledged role within the Church. She believes that changes are needed but is not very optimistic in this regard:

> Well, in the hierarchy, because there are no women priests, there are no women bishops, and so on and so forth. So a Pope is elected by men . . . who have reached all the way up the ladder [. . .] But of course, women never make it that far up. We never get that far up, nor will we for a long time to come. If we ever do, that is.

The interviewed Catholic women also raised other issues as controversial within the church, including abortion, contraception, divorce and homosexuality, which are all related to women's health and equality (see also Chapter 5). The Catholic interviewees positioned themselves in favour of contraception, thus disagreeing with the Church teaching that married couples should have 'as many children as God commands'. However, all of the Catholic women found abortion a very difficult issue, as did the Spanish Pentecostals, with some of them referring to abortion as a sin, a crime or 'murder'. In this regard, it is interesting to note that some of the Pentecostal interviewees had been raised Catholic and converted to Pentecostalism as adults. Abortion is a highly contested issue in Spain, with street protests taking place in 2014 and 2015. The Catholic Church has not accepted government legislation which in 2010 made it legal for women to access abortion during the first 14 weeks of pregnancy. Of all the other interviewees, both Christian and Muslim, from all countries, abortion was only mentioned by a Norwegian Pentecostal who declared herself against legal access to abortion. Divorce and homosexuality were also specifically mentioned by Spanish Catholics and Pentecostals as controversial in their religious communities, but these issues were hardly mentioned by any other interviewees.

Overall, Christian women did not talk much about experiences of inclusion or exclusion in relation to the wider society. Among the few who did, some talked about the relationship between different faiths and between religious and secular people. For example, an Anglican interviewee suggested that her faith solicits different reactions from secular and religious people, and therefore she does not always reveal her faith to others:

> If someone introduces me, this is Karen, she is a Christian, people are wary, oh she is going to start preaching to me you know. So you don't tell people straight away [. . .]. Nobody wants to talk about it. [It is] a bit like

politics I suppose, you avoid politics and your religion. But for a person that has a faith, it is such a relief to find someone that you can share with.

Some of the Spanish Pentecostals reflected on how being a Protestant and an Evangelical in Spain today is unproblematic, with one participant even suggesting it has 'almost [become] fashionable to be Evangelical'. However, she looked back on the period of the Franco regime (1939–1975) as a time when being Protestant was risky. Protestant pastors were jailed, churches were targeted and adherents were subject to discrimination by the state, by employers, and by friends and neighbours. Back then, as a Protestant you were faced with 'threats, losing your job, getting dirty looks, being spat at, you know. For being a Protestant'. Although Norwegian Pentecostals have not experienced persecution, they, as well as Norwegian Lutherans, also mentioned experiences from childhood that marked them as different to others. Not being part of a youth culture with dancing and drinking alcohol branded one to some extent as an outsider. An older Norwegian Pentecostal had also experienced direct discrimination as she was prevented from teaching Christianity in public schools due to the then law on 'non-conformist' Protestant denominations ('dissenting' from the Lutheran State Church). The term 'dissenter' was only eliminated from Norwegian jurisprudence in 1969 when she was about 30 years old. Similar to the Spanish Pentecostals, however, the Norwegian Pentecostals and Lutherans expressed that they feel accepted and included in today's society. Parallels can nonetheless be drawn between the historical religious discrimination experienced by Pentecostals in both Norway and Spain and more contemporary forms of religious hatred, including Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, experienced by Jews and Muslims throughout Europe (see following paragraphs).

Only a few Christian interviewees reflected in some way on privileges attached to Christianity as the dominant and privileged religion in their country. A Lutheran school teacher noted that she has good access to Muslim students and their parents due to their shared (general) religious faith, while another Lutheran said she has been invited by the Norwegian government to participate in the writing of a parliamentary report due to her background as a Christian. Similarly, a Catholic observed that she has experienced advantages in belonging to a religious community that is there for you when you need something. She did, however, feel that 'right now … we Catholics are persecuted' and referred to some people in the Spanish government as being 'against the Catholic religion'. Her view contrasts with that of another Catholic who stated that she feels that people of different religions coexist peacefully in Spain and that Catholicism is as important as any other religion. An Anglican participant, herself a vicar, simply noted that her church affiliation gives her easy access to schools and nursing homes. While all of these Christian women reflected on how they are treated by others, they

did not talk about how they treat others or how their own religion is dominant and privileged in their respective societies. Only two interviewees, both Anglican, reflected more broadly that Christians feel included in society simply because 'we [the United Kingdom] are supposed to be a Christian country' and because 'our society is actually set up in a way for Christianity, you don't think about it, you know'. One of the Anglicans mentioned how society is organized around Christian holidays, and that it might be a problem if you are a Muslim and would like to attend Friday prayer. Reflecting on the privilege of belonging to the majority religion, she noted that it is easier to follow the Christian religion in the United Kingdom than any minority religions, 'because everything is set up for you, people don't question it'. These views demonstrate, albeit sometimes in an indirect way, that religious citizenship is not equal for people of all religions in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom. Religious freedom is not a guarantee for equality, and when governments grant privileges to or foregrounds certain religions, other religions are disadvantaged.

The interviewed Sunni Muslim women in all three countries, and also the Shia Muslim women in Norway, were appreciative of their mosques, which offer women-only spaces via a separate entrance to the mosque (as explained in Chapter 1, the interviewed UK and Spanish Shia women did not belong to a specific mosque). Mosques operate with strict separation between women and men, and the gender segregation is rooted in women's child-bearing role and a perceived need to control (male) sexuality (Mernissi 1975; Ahmed 1992; Riphenburg 1998 (in Haddad and Esposito 1998); see also Hammer 2012). Gendered entrances to the mosque enable women to take part in religious services shared by women and men, where men are seated in the main prayer room and women in a separate and often much smaller room. In the mosque, men can ask questions directly to the speaker, but women are required to write down their questions and have them sent to the main prayer room. The interviewees imparted that women feel comfortable coming to the mosque because they have their own space, where they can talk about their own personal lives as well as partake in religious prayers. Participants noted that some mosques do not have spaces for women, or only a small space for women's prayer, which were seen to produce barriers to women's participation. Strict gender segregation, in the form of separate rooms and entrances, is common practice in mosques both in Europe and beyond (Nyhagen Predelli 2008; Hammer 2012). However, this practice was not perceived as a barrier to participation by the Muslim interviewees. Rather, gender segregation was seen as providing *opportunities* for women to participate in institutional religious life (see also Nyhagen Predelli 2008). By inhabiting their own gendered space in the mosque, Muslim women are 'altering the historically male-centered character of mosques' (Mahmood 2005: 2) while at the same time accepting the gendered practices dictated by religious tradition. Thus, the more notable is the practice observed by a

Shia Muslim in Norway, who stated that the women's room in her mosque is so full of chatter that women who want to partake in the religious service have moved in to the main prayer room where men are seated: 'So in our mosque they have introduced a system where you go [and] sit on the men's side. That is, women go and sit down in the men's section so that they can follow what is being said.' When women enter the room, they ask men to move forward, and women take seats in the back of the room. According to her, about 20 women regularly enter and take seats in the men's section. While this practice can be read as an indication of how mainstream gender equality has become in Norway, accommodating women's participation in the mosque in this way is highly unusual within mosques in Norway, as well as in Spain, the United Kingdom and Europe more broadly. It further challenges the ordinary male-centredness of mosques, as does the introduction of women's committees that have decision-making power in relation to women's activities and fundraising. That women have voting rights in the mosque (albeit limited to women's own affairs) was seen as a very positive step forward for women's participation and influence. For example, an interviewee from the UK Sunni mosque noted that 'ten years ago nobody would have thought of having a sub-committee of women who would have equal voting rights and look what we have achieved today'. She saw the goal of the women's committee to be that of 'empower[ing women] to participate in mainstream society, using their religious knowledge'. In this regard, religion can be viewed as a resource to increase Muslim women's participation and influence.

Muslim interviewees in all three countries also talked about the role of the imam in the mosque, and they all imparted an acceptance of the existing norm that only men can inhabit the role of imam. Without being prompted, several interviewees suggested that it would not be practical for women to be imams, because during the menstruating period 'we are not pure, we are not allowed to pray', and hence women cannot lead prayers. The possibility of post-menopausal women leading prayer was not mentioned. While the interviewed women did not see any problems with women being prevented from taking on the role of leading gender-mixed prayers, one UK interviewee noted that she has heard of an event where a woman led such a prayer,[4] thus signalling that the gender of the imam is becoming problematized at least in some contexts. However, neither she nor her mosque approves of it: 'What God and the Prophet's rules were, that the man should be performing and the men and women came behind to pray . . . God does not allow it, the priest does not allow it, so we won't debate about it.' Allowing only men to be imams was not perceived as a hindrance to Muslim women's participation within the religious arena. Indeed, the status quo was accepted as the only legitimate practice. The interviewed Muslim women's acceptance of gender segregation and women's unequal access to leadership roles within their religious organizations pose a challenge to rights-based approaches to

citizenship for which equal rights is a fundamental notion. The fact that religious women may choose to accommodate such gender inequalities as part of their religious identities also challenges liberal feminist conceptions of gender equality as an ideal for citizenship practice, as well as feminist traditions that uphold gender as the most important political identity for women. From an intersectional perspective, however, it is clear that religious identities, belonging and participation are more important to these interviewed women than are demands for formal gender equality. Indeed, such demands are often not on their agenda.

The interviewed Muslim women (Shia and Sunni) also talked about women's roles in the home and in the labour market. They agreed that a woman's *primary role and duty* is to take care of the home and children and support her husband, while a man's primary role and duty is to provide for his wife and his children (see also Chapter 5). These roles are seen as complementary and of equal worth:

> If you look at Islam, what Islam says about the women, it says the woman is in charge of the house, the home, looks after the children, gives them a very good education. The right [way] of bringing a child up. And the man's responsibility is to go out and work hard and bring money for the family. Basically this is what Islam teaching is about.
>
> (UK Shia)

This was echoed by another participant who stated that complementary roles are equal, with 'one person doing the house duty and one person doing the outside duty' (UK Sunni). These views accord with Islamic family law, which allocates to the husband the responsibility for 'maintaining' his wife and to the wife the duties of housework, child-rearing and obedience to her husband (Esposito 1982; see also Nyhagen Predelli 2004; Taj 2013). Muslim participants saw women and men's different and complementary roles as of equal worth and as 'natural', stemming from men's physical strength and women's capacity for caring:

> Physically men are built differently and are stronger, which is true, we can't say no. If you look at the physical [aspects] of a woman and a man, it is two different ways that God created us. God created woman to give enjoyment to man. And man is stronger. He can go out and work hard and they [men] are more strong people physically, women are more light. Otherwise their rights are equal.
>
> (UK Shia)

Several interviewees recognized, however, that modern life might require families to be supported by two wages, and that Muslim women therefore may have to work outside the home. Women can choose to work if

they want to, or because of family needs, provided they have their husband's approval. A UK Shia participant who endorsed the view that men and women have different natures and as such can never be equal nevertheless observed that modern life requires families to be supported by two wages and that 'some Islamic rules, traditional Islamic rules, need updating' because of this.

Some interviewees also suggested that women are better looked after in Islam than men, because they do not *have to* go out to work, like men do (see also Chapter 5). A woman's father and/or husband are responsible for providing for her. Women are thus perceived as privileged, as they do not have any formal, financial obligations towards family. If a married woman has money of her own, she does not have to contribute to the family's upkeep: 'My money is my own to keep; my husband has no right over it' (UK Sunni). She, on the other hand, has a right to her husband's money and can demand that her husband looks after her. The interviewee emphasized that even though women and men have different rights, they are still equal.

When Muslim interviewees talked about women and men having different rights, they framed it as a logical extension of their different natures and needs. For example, some participants noted that the court testimony from two women equals that of one man. This rule was seen as logical due to women being governed more by emotions, while men were governed more by reason. The allocation of unequal inheritance rights to women and men within Islam was also explained and justified within the same framework: men need more resources than women, as they are obliged to provide for others. Although women inherit one-third and men two-thirds, this was apparently not perceived as a problem, because of the duty men have to provide for women. Moreover, the fact that women can keep their inheritance (albeit smaller than men's), rather than share it with their family as men have to, meant to some interviewees that women have 'more rights' than men in Islam: 'You can keep yours, nobody could force you to spend it on your family, but men can't keep it, they have to spend it on their family and their wife' (UK Shia). A Sunni Muslim interviewee gave a statement that seems representative also of the other Muslim participants: 'religion [Islam] has provided a framework where women have all the rights that they need'.

More radically, the UK Shia participant cited above also suggested that a wife is permitted to charge her husband for breastfeeding, childcare, housework and sexual favours: 'You could charge. Nowhere in the world, in no religions do you find all these points giving to the lady. You could charge your husband for anything you do. Even bedtime' (see Mir-Hosseini 2000: 61–72, for a discussion of this view). Such transactional aspects of marriage may give women financial resources, particularly if they are not permitted to work outside the home. Nevertheless, the interviewed Muslim women's acceptance of women and men being accorded different formal rights within Islam poses particular challenges to rights-based approaches to citizenship,

including those forwarded by liberal feminist scholars and women's and feminist movement activists.

A few interviewees also talked about Islam as formally allowing men to have four wives. One interviewee saw this as a 'logical' practice, as a woman needs to be certain about who is the father of her children (he is then responsible for hers and their upkeep). A man, however, is allowed four wives because in times of war women can be in surplus and need the support of men. The interviewee mentioned that in English society a number of men have mistresses, while in Islam you don't have mistresses, but you have another wife who has her own rights. 'So if anybody says that makes women unequal, I don't see it [...] I think it raises their equality because it provides them with stability, a role, a purpose and respect' (UK Shia). A Spanish participant, on the other hand, was uncomfortable with polygamous practices and emphasized that although men are formally allowed to have four wives, she is personally not aware of any that have more than one.

Overall, Muslim participants talked about gender-unequal norms and practices within their own religious community as unproblematic, and indeed as justified, thus indicating a difference between the views of Christian and Muslim interviewees. However, some of the Christian interviewees, most notably Pentecostals in Spain and the United Kingdom, also expressed the view that women and men have different, God-given natures and should therefore have different social roles. They also endorsed the notion of male headship within the family. For these interviewees, gender-equal rights and roles are of lesser importance than their religious faith, identity and belonging which support their conviction that gender equality means equal value rather than sameness (see also Chapter 5). Indeed, a Spanish Sunni convert asserted that gender equality is not of utmost priority and that 'the most important thing is enhancing and encouraging the natural abilities' that women and men have. She sees 'nothing wrong' with a woman being emotional and a man being tough, as these are their natural roles. 'Why seek equality, thereby frustrating the distinctive nature of each one? We cannot fight against that. The only thing we can do is to understand, accept and value that nature. Educate ourselves and understand; that is what gender equality is about.' Similarly, a Spanish Catholic emphasized the importance of women's relational roles rather than their individual status. She stated that 'women have to give precedence to the demands of their true nature, over and above their expectations as individuals. You can have a more fulfilling life as an individual without giving up your Catholic identity.' Obligations towards God, towards family and your religious community are thus of major concern. Formal gender equality is not a priority, and it is also not on the agenda. There is therefore a fundamental difference between the concerns of religious women such as these, and those of liberal feminists insisting on gender-equal rights. The priorities are simply very different.

More unique to the Muslim participants from all three countries was that they referred to stereotypes in society at large as producing barriers to their lived citizenship. Due to negative media portrayals of Islam, and isolated terrorist incidents perpetrated by people claiming to be Muslim, some women felt a need to demonstrate that they are 'a good Muslim', and that 'good Muslims can be good citizens', so as to counter stereotypes. For example, a Shia participant stated that Muslims '[…] have to be good role models, we have to be good responsible members of society because that is going to reflect on our religion […] you have to portray your religion in the best possible light, because you can damage the image' (UK Shia). She also suggested that because Muslim women are 'so visible and identifiable' due to their dress, they have a particular responsibility to act as good citizens.

Participating in and contributing to society were seen as positive values and practices that should be promoted by Muslims in order to increase society's acceptance of Islam and of Muslims. The UK Shia participant cited above also suggested that when Muslims contribute to society and demonstrate that they can play a positive role, this in turn will create a more welcoming environment for future Muslims who arrive as immigrants to the country: 'You contribute because in a way you are only benefiting the future Muslims to come, you know. If they see us as a positive in the society [and] not as a negative, then we will be welcome for the future.'

Several Muslim interviewees talked about uncomfortable experiences of harassment and discrimination in the workplace, in educational settings or in public spaces like city streets and public transport. Such experiences were in some instances directly associated with the wearing of a headscarf or hijab, while in other cases it was related to the participants' immigrant status and/or skin colour. Some interviewees related heightened incidents of harassment and discrimination in the wake of terrorist attacks in New York, Madrid and London. A Sunni woman born in Spain of Moroccan parents was met with reactions such as 'Oh, so you are from Al Qaeda' and 'look out, she's going to plant a bomb on us' when she talked about her own background to fellow students at secondary school. Another Sunni woman who had immigrated to Spain from Morocco recounted experiences of harassment in the street and on the underground simply for wearing the headscarf. She describes such experiences as 'people intruding into my life, just like that', and she recounts an episode where a man walked up to her and said 'I can't understand a beautiful young woman like you wearing a headscarf.' On another occasion, she was rummaging in her pocket for something, and as a couple nearby looked at her they started moving away from her, 'as if I was going to blow up … or something like that'. Sometimes she takes off her headscarf 'to avoid strange looks, so as not to stand out. I too feel scared'. A Spanish convert to Sunni Islam talked about how she objects to immigration being tied to Islam in Spanish public discourse: ' … not all immigrants are Muslim. You also have immigrants who are Hindus,

or Orthodox Christians, or Catholics, Evangelicals, Mormons, right?' She describes getting 'funny looks' and being stigmatized and devalued because she wears the headscarf: 'When you go to any workplace, or in any situation like that, well, all your abilities, all your skills, or your knowledge, are totally marginalized, because you are wearing a headscarf, you see?' She feels it is unjust that her religious beliefs are always questioned and that she has to justify herself. She wishes that all religions are equally respected: 'no one should tell others how they should live'.

A Shia interviewee who migrated from Iran to Spain, and has lived in Spain for the past 18 years, has never felt a Spanish citizen. As soon as she arrived, she found that 'being a Muslim woman in Spain is a considerably greater disadvantage than being a woman in Iran'. Using words such as 'rejected' and 'disabled' to describe her feelings, she found herself labelled as a Muslim woman and 'undervalued' in Spain. After 9/11 she found also that people were suspicious and considered her a potential threat simply because she carried a backpack to university:

> So they saw a threat in me, and often, with my sister, with my parents, we would laugh about that: Have you seen that? People abroad believe we are a threat to the world [...]. And we would laugh our heads off, because we simply could not understand it, because we are simply not a threat to the world. Is it simply because they perceive us as being different?

Similarly, a UK Shia interviewee stated that she is not as comfortable in public spaces as she was before, but at the same time she has observed that an increasing number of Muslim women are wearing the hijab and the practice is therefore becoming increasingly normalized. Because of negative media portrayals she feels it is important for other people to see that 'we are normal' (UK Shia). She and other Muslim interviewees suggested that Muslim women are under more pressure than Muslim men to demonstrate good citizenship, as women are more visibly Muslim due to their dress (i.e., wearing the headscarf): 'I just feel for Muslim women at the moment it is really important for us to be part of the society. Because otherwise they are going to take the media hype and isolate us.' The problem is not so acute for Muslim men in her opinion, as they are not as visible as Muslim women are due to their dress. A Muslim interviewee from Spain also suggested that Muslim men with a beard may feel similarly marginalized. Social forms of exclusion were also experienced in relation to immigrant backgrounds, where some participants of foreign origin felt they were not always accepted as 'Norwegian', 'Spanish' or 'British'. For example, a Sunni Muslim originating from Pakistan related how she feels a Norwegian citizen at work, in the mosque or at home, where she lives. However, other people may insist that she is 'a Pakistani woman', rather than 'a Norwegian-Pakistani woman'.

In relation to social exclusion, most Muslim participants thus talked about having experienced discrimination related to their religious faith and/or their immigrant backgrounds. Being Muslim puts you in a position of disadvantage and marginalization in relation to majority society that is both Christian and secular. One Muslim participant also made a more explicit reference to state discrimination, in that she wishes to live within what she calls a 'non-confessional state' that 'protects and safeguards the rights of a multicultural citizenry [...]. What it means is that the State refrains from any participation whatsoever in any kind of group or community, whether it be religious or atheist [...]. It treats all in the same manner' (Spanish Sunni convert).

Gender, religion and citizenship: Moving beyond rights

The interviewed Christian and Muslim women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom forwarded a multi-dimensional understanding of citizenship, which echoes feminist approaches linking citizenship not only with status, rights and duties but also with participation, identity and belonging (Yuval-Davis 1999; Lister 2003). Citizenship, they suggested, is linked to their sense of identity and belonging, as well as to their participation and engagement, in religious organizations, local neighbourhoods and wider communities. Moreover, the research participants linked citizenship to an ethic of tolerance, respect, love and care towards others – an ethical outlook which is rooted in religious conviction but transcends religious difference. These views and experiences pose a direct challenge to scholars who foreground religious rights as central to religious citizenship (e.g., Hudson 2003; Permoser and Rosenberger 2009). Rights-based approaches to religious citizenship tend to silence or neglect the importance of identities, participation, belonging and ethical imperatives about love and care – aspects that religious women themselves highlight as important to them. When religious citizenship is viewed only in relation to rights, experiences of discrimination and exclusion linked to identities, participation and belonging, both within religious organizations and within society more broadly, remain hidden. Moreover, rights-based approaches to religious citizenship overlook inequalities related to gender and to the majority/minority status of particular religions in specific social contexts.

Interviewees across both the Christian and Muslim faiths and the three countries identified strong connections between their own faith and citizenship, in that they saw their own religion as providing them with guidance on how to be a good citizen. Participants thought that in order to be a good Christian and a good Muslim you also have to be a good citizen. It can therefore be argued that 'lived religion' (McGuire 2008) has a strong affinity with 'lived citizenship'. However, interviewees also insisted that it is not necessary

to be a Christian or Muslim, or indeed religious at all, in order to be a good citizen. The noted ethic of tolerance, respect, love and care towards others is thus viewed as universally accessible to all, regardless of faith. For the interviewees, this ethic is rooted in religious conviction, but they acknowledge that the same ethic can be rooted in secular conviction. This finding supports the notion that the religious and the secular are intertwined in the lives of contemporary citizens in a multicultural, religiously plural Europe (Casanova 2009; Göle and Billaud 2012; Razavi and Jenichen 2010). It also raises important questions about current discursive public representations of the secular and the religious that tend to highlight differences rather than commonalities.

Some participants emphasized a commonality between all religious believers, and in particular Christians, Muslims and Jews, in that all are equal before God. Several participants also referred explicitly to non-believers or atheists and included them in their vision of good citizenship. A few interviewees, however (most notably, but not exclusively, Muslims), viewed citizenship as mostly a secular matter concerning legal status, which creates artificial boundaries between people. As such, they did not see citizenship as relevant to religion, as religion is accessible to all, and therefore is a matter above and beyond that of citizenship as status.

An acute problem with rights-based approaches to religious citizenship is when collective and group or individual rights collide. This can be illustrated via conflicts between the privileged rights of individual and collective adherents of a state's official or dominant religion and the lesser rights of individual and collective members of minority religions. An example is the privileging of places of worship or churches for Christians, and the difficulties experienced by Muslim communities wanting to construct Islamic spaces of worship (mosques) (see Cesari 2013). Notably, only one of all the interviewees, a Spanish convert to Islam, thought about 'religious citizenship' in terms of the state allocating equal status and rights to different faiths. Using the term 'non-confessional state', she wished for a state that treats all groups and communities in the same way. On the one hand, other Muslim interviewees, however, also talked about their experiences of discrimination, stigmatization and marginalization as Muslims (and also as immigrants). On the other hand, the Christian participants largely left silenced the fact that Christianity is privileged by the state, while Islam and other religions as disadvantaged. Only two Christian women (Anglicans) reflected on how it is taken for granted that Britain privileges Christianity. Christian women in Norway and Spain did not raise the issue of privilege when asked if they experience any advantages or opportunities related to their own faith. These findings reveal that privilege is often invisible and even taken for granted by those who inhabit positions of privilege and support van den Brink's assertion that the privileges accorded to Christianity in European societies 'have so far mainly

gone unrecognised' (van den Brink 2007: 214; see also Frankenberg 1993 and Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa 2012 on majority privilege). Likewise, the discrimination and harm experienced by disadvantaged groups and individuals seem invisible, silenced or ignored by those in positions of privilege.

The interviewed religious women experience opportunities and barriers to their lived citizenship, but these vary across their religious faiths and countries in which they live. Most of the Christian women (Anglican, Lutheran, Catholic and Pentecostal) were keen for formal and informal barriers to gender equality within their respective churches to be eradicated. Some Pentecostal women, however, as well as the Muslim women (Sunni and Shia), were much more accepting of established gender inequalities within their congregations. At the same time, however, they were highly appreciative of opportunities for participation that do not directly challenge male religious authority and leadership. As Mahmood (2005) argues, even the sheer presence of women in traditionally male spaces can challenge male authority in indirect ways.

When we study women and religion via an intersectional lens that does not automatically associate gender inequality with oppression, it becomes clear that some religious women may not prioritize or even be interested in gender equality. For them, their faith and belonging to a religious community take priority over and above the issue of gender equality. Indeed, their religious faith may be aligned with the acceptance of formal inequalities and different rights and social roles for women and men rooted in perceived natural or biological differences between them. At the same time, such women will insist that women and men are of equal value and that the gendered arrangements they endorse are both God-given and just. They tend to emphasize their relational role (in relation to family and community) rather than individual concerns about rights and equality (see also Chapter 5). As such, they illustrate that women's sense of identity and belonging are often multi-layered (Yuval-Davis 1999), as expressed in relation to family, neighbourhood, religious congregations and religious communities. Moreover, they demonstrate that collective identities and belonging together with religious piety may be prioritized over individual rights (Mahmood 2001, 2005; Mack 2003).

These views and practices challenge feminist views of gender as women's primary identification. Moreover, discrimination of Islam as a minority religion may intersect with discrimination of women, yet religious discrimination may be experienced (see following).

The Norwegian Lutheran and Pentecostal interviewees, as well as the Anglicans in the United Kingdom, and the Pentecostals and Catholics in Spain, did not talk about barriers to citizenship related to their family life or labour market participation. The UK Pentecostals, on the other hand, identified gendered expectations concerning women's household work and

care work as restricting. Moreover, both the Spanish and UK Pentecostals explicitly submitted to male headship within family. These observed country differences are probably linked to overall gender inequalities being more pronounced in Spain and the United Kingdom than in Norway (see Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa 2012). Muslim interviewees accepted that women's primary duty is to take care of the home, while also emphasizing that they might take on work outside the home to fulfil their own aspirations or to increase the overall family income. The gendered expectations towards women's and men's work were generally not questioned by Muslim women, but several interviewees suggested that men should help with domestic work. Due to Islam's status as a minority religion, as well as widespread Islamophobia and discrimination against immigrants, Muslim interviewees identified barriers to citizenship that were not echoed by Christian interviewees. Negative stereotyping in the media, discrimination in the workplace and on city streets and public transport, affected Muslim women's citizenship in negative ways. Their religious identities were questioned, their religious dress was ridiculed and their sense of belonging to the overall society was undermined.

Conflicts between collective rights and group or individual rights may also arise in relation to gender discrimination, when patriarchal organizational rules override women's right to equality (Skjeie 2006). As this research shows, however, religious women do not always contest formal gender inequalities that are prescribed by religious traditions or imposed by religious leaders and may also accept such inequalities as an inherent part of their own religious identities. As such, some religious women's willing acceptance of formal gender inequalities pose a challenge to the idea that equal (religious) citizenship must be based on equal rights, while also supporting the move by feminist scholars to focus on identity, participation and belonging (and, we add, an ethic of care) as important dimensions of citizenship as lived practice. Despite the noted connections between feminist scholars' conceptualizations and religious women's understandings of citizenship as identity, participation and belonging, however, a fundamental incompatibility exists between these religious women's willingness to accept subordination and inferior rights in relation to men and feminist notions of gender equality that forefront equal status and rights for women and men.

5
Religious Women and Gender Equality

> The majority of Europeans disagree with traditional perceptions of gender roles at home and in work. However, most think that family life suffers when a mother has a full-time job and around half believe that men are less competent than women at performing household tasks.
>
> (Special Eurobarometer 428 Gender Equality: 13)[1]

Introduction

This chapter explores how the interviewed Christian and Muslim women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom talk about gender equality. In the first section, we discuss theoretical approaches to gender equality and outline our conceptual framework, focusing on the contested notion of 'gender equality' in culture, feminist theory and activism, and in political and legal institutions. In the next section, we describe and analyse the main representation of gender equality that emerged in our interviews. We found that 'equal worth' rather than 'gender equality' was the preferred notion among the participants. Within the overall dominant discourse of 'gender equality as equal worth', however, we identified four different perceptions of gender equality that are discussed in subsequent sections: the perception that gender equality is impossible because of God-given prescriptions; the notion of gender equality as differentiation without hierarchy; the conception of gender differentiation in the family and equal opportunities in the public sphere; and the perception of gender equality as embracing difference. We found that gender differences are emphasized as normative as well as descriptive, but gender equality is not necessarily seen as a prioritized issue, while notions of respect and understanding play a prominent role when the interviewees talk about gender equality. Some of the women were critical of their religious tradition with respect to women and gender equality, however, and this is addressed before the concluding section 'Complex notions of gender equality as equal worth'.

Theoretical approaches to gender equality

'Gender equality' is a contested notion, whether we speak in cultural, political, legal or religious terms. It is context-sensitive, and people associate it with different things at different points in time and space. 'Gender equality' may refer to norms about womanhood and manhood or to empirical claims about women and men. Culturally, the notion has been entangled with symbolic perceptions of gender as dualist (women and men as fundamentally different) and dichotomous[2] (gender relations as structured hierarchically) (Holter 1970; Hirdman 1988; Solheim 1998). In political philosophy, 'gender equality' has been justified on the basis of both a conception of difference in kind and conceptions of sameness. In her analysis of nine male philosophers, Maud Eduards (1983) summarized their ideas about women's social condition and gender relations as equal or unequal in table-form and suggested that their ideas were related to their perceptions of gender as basically different or same:

Table 5.1   Perceptions in political theory of the nature of women and men and their social conditions

Nature	Social Conditions	
	Unequal (*ojämlikhet*)	Equal (*jämlikhet*)
Different (*olikhet*)	1	3
Same (*likhet*)	2	4

Source: From Maud Eduards (1983: 147); our translation from Swedish.
Note: The names of the philosophers have been removed in our account. The philosophers mentioned in square 1 in Eduard's table were Aristotle, Aquinas and Rousseau; in square 2, it was Plato (*The Laws*), Hobbes and Locke; square 3 was empty without any philosophers; and the names in square 4 were Plato (*The Republic*), J. S. Mills and Engels.

Eduards found different combinations represented in the philosophical texts. The most obvious was the combination of different nature–unequal status, and same nature–equal status. She also found arguments for the combination of same nature–unequal status, but she found no example for the combination of different nature–equal status. Eduards (1983: 150) described the 'empty box' as a patriarchal paradox and questioned as follows: Is it impossible to obtain equality among basically different people (men and women)? Is the combination of 'equality' and 'difference' perceived as impossible or even preposterous because it means that women's

'naturally' different demands and hopes are as legitimate as men's and thus challenge men's superiority? In her momentous book *Sex Roles and Social Structures*, Harriet Holter argued:

> It should be noted, however, that complementarity of roles is not a sufficient condition for equality. The differentiation between men and women, like other types of specialization, contains the germs of status differentiation as well *as equality*. One cannot, on the grounds of complementarity, dismiss the idea that sex differences in relative prestige and power are fundamental to the interactions between men and women. *(. . .) specialization may produce distance and hostility as well as cooperation and solidarity*.
>
> (Holter 1970: 49; our emphasis)

'Different', 'equal' or 'diverse'?

A somewhat different take on the analysis of gender equality flourished within Western feminist theory during the 1980s and 1990s. Gender relations were discussed as symbolic, structural, relational and psychological (Harding 1986; Hirdman 1988). The widespread and common-sense presumptions of gender relations as either different or equal were problematized and intensely discussed in feminist journals and books, and more complex and nuanced understandings emerged (Harding 1986; Pateman 1992; Fraser 1997; Scott 1997; Phillips 1999). The crux of the debate was precisely named by Carole Pateman (1992: 20) as 'the Wollstonecraft dilemma'. Pateman claimed that to argue in favour of gender equality and at the same time argue for the recognition of (women's) difference represents a dilemma:

> 'Within the existing patriarchal conception of citizenship', Pateman said, 'the choice always has to be made between equality and difference, or between equality and womanhood. On the one hand, to demand "equality" is to strive for equality with men (to call for the "rights of men and citizens" to be extended to women), which means that women must become (like) men. On the other hand, to insist, like some contemporary feminists, that women's distinctive attributes, capacities and activities be revalued and treated as a contribution to citizenship is to demand the impossible; such "difference" is precisely what patriarchal citizenship excludes'.
>
> (ibid.: 20)

Thus, the Wollstonecraft dilemma arises because within the existing patriarchal conception of citizenship, equality and difference are dichotomously[3] constructed, so the choice always has to be made between equality and difference, or between equality and womanhood. Moving beyond the

entrenched dichotomous construction is difficult, argues Pateman: The pertinent question is assumed to be whether sexual difference is politically relevant, or how 'difference' could be relevant. Thus, the vital question of how to subvert and change the manner in which women have already been incorporated, and so to transform the relation between 'equality' and 'difference', is overlooked (ibid.: 27). Joan W. Scott discussed the dilemma further, drawing on poststructuralist theory: 'When equality and difference are paired dichotomously, they structure an impossible choice. If one opts for equality, one is forced to accept the notion that difference is antithetical to it. If one opts for difference, one admits that equality is unattainable' (Scott 1997: 765). Scott introduced 'diversity' as a heterogeneous notion in an effort to deconstruct the dichotomy and to 'unmask the power relationship constructed by positing equality as the antithesis of difference' (Squires 1999:125). With Scott, Fraser and other feminist scholars, the 'Wollstonecraft dilemma' was deconstructed and transformed. New ways of reasoning about gender relations were established that sought to move beyond dualities and embrace diversity. In the words of Scott, '[i]t is not sameness or identity between women and men that we want to claim but a more complicated historically variable diversity than is permitted by the opposition male/female, a diversity that is also differently expressed for different purposes in different contexts' (Scott 1997: 766).

Argumentative traditions in feminism

The meaning of 'gender' and 'women' was not only a theoretical issue discussed among scholars. It was just as much a highly political issue, because words have effects. Different conceptualizations had different practical consequences, as in the case of strategies of women's movements. Women's movements have based their struggles for women's rights on various shifting and interlaced combinations of women as 'different' and 'equal' in relation to men. Two poles or main argumentative traditions have been established in Western feminist theory: on the one hand, a tradition variably called 'relational feminism' (Offen 2000), 'maternal feminism' (Ruddick 1989), 'social feminism' (Elshtain 1981), 'gynocentric feminism' (Young 1985) or 'difference feminism'; on the other hand, a tradition variably referred to as 'individual feminism' (Offen 2000), 'liberal feminism', 'humanistic feminism' (Young 1985) or 'equality feminism'. The first pole has been based on an egalitarian vision and argued for women's rights as women, with their womanly capacities as mothers and care-givers. Here, the family or male–female couple has been the core unit of society (Offen 2000: 21). This tradition values "the feminine" or "womanliness", however these terms are culturally configured' (ibid.: 22). By contrast, the other pole emphasizes more abstract concepts of individual human rights and celebrates the quest for personal independence (or autonomy) in all aspects of life. The vision is to transcend sexual identification, to 'eliminate a separate women's sphere

and giving women the opportunity to do what men have done. This implies that men will have to do more of the work traditionally assigned to women' (Young 1985: 174). Within and between women's movements, there have been ongoing debates about these different visions as well as about strategies for the struggle for women (Jaggar 1983).

Gender equality and faith

While the feminist theorists discussed above did not pay attention to religion or faith as a core dimension in their arguments about gender equality during the 1980s and 1990s, faith was soon to become established as a very important dimension. Immigration from Muslim societies formidably increased the number of women and men of Muslim cultures and faith in Europe; Christian revivalist movements spread in the Western world; radical feminist movements were mobilized alongside international conventions to promote women's reproductive, political, economic and civil rights; these were all elements that contributed to religion being put on the agenda from the 1990s. Feminist ideas have emerged among, and influenced, secular as well as religious women, and religious practice and traditions were also topics of hot debate outside of as well as within various religious traditions and congregations (Sahgal and Yuval-Davis 1992; Bayes and Tohidi 2001; Dhaliwal and Yuval-Davis 2014; see also Chapters 2 and 6). Notions such as Christian feminism or feminists (Ruether 1998; Tohidi and Bayes 2001; Vincett 2007), Muslim feminists and Islamic feminism (Moghadam 2002; Mir-Hosseini 2006; Ahmed 2011) and Jewish feminism (Plaskow 1991) denote the effort of women (and men) to enhance women's voices and demands within various religious traditions. Women priests, women rabbis and imams, women-friendly interpretations of holy texts and feminist liturgies are some examples of women's rights issues that were discussed. As we will see, disputes over various notions of gender equality also emerged, such as the combination of gender equality and gender complementarity (Siim 2007; Hellum 2011: 74; Hellum, Ali and Griffiths 2011; Charrad and Zarrugh, forthcoming).

Equality in gender equality legislation

Political parties have disagreed on the means and scope of state responsibility to interfere in gender relations in order to promote gender equality and women's rights. This is clearly seen in processes of adopting gender equality legislation since the 1970s: Should the new legislation have a narrow scope limited to education and/or the labour market, or should it be comprehensive and also include political institutions and the private sphere? Should the aim of gender equality legislation be gender neutral or forefront the situation of women (address gender discrimination or the oppression of women)?

Legally speaking, gender equality is a compound concept that balances seemingly contradictory claims. The purpose of the Norwegian, Spanish and UK gender equality legislation is not only to promote 'equality irrespective of gender' but also to improve the position of women.[4] They prohibit direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of gender and establish the principle of equal treatment – 'the absence of all direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of sex, in particular as regards maternity, the assumption of family obligations or marital status' (Article 3 of the 2007 Spanish gender equality law).[5] However, in order to achieve substantive gender equality, the general principle of equal treatment, or non-discrimination on the basis of gender, has to be balanced against the right to differential treatment (Hellum 2011: 71). Differential treatment is allowed on the conditions that it has an objective and legitimate purpose and is necessary in order to achieve the purpose, and that there is a 'reasonable relationship of proportionality' between the negative impact on those whose position will worsen and the aims sought (De Schutter 2005: 5).

The status of the private family has been a core issue of Western feminism, and feminist strategies in relation to the family are still contested. Sylvia Walby (2011: 4) formulates the two opposite options, claiming that the promotion of women's interests may mean ' (…) the emancipation of women from the domestic sphere, so that they can enter the public sphere and gain better access to education, employment and political representation (…)'; or the contrary; ' (…) the protection and enhancement of their position in the domestic sphere, especially in domestic care work' (ibid.: 4). Protection could be seen as feminist because the promotion of domestic care work is part of a maternalist feminist strategy (Koven and Michel 1990 in Walby 2011: 5). Citing Fraser (1997) and Rees (1998), Walby also states that it could be '(…) a stepping stone along a route designed to improve the conditions of women's lives, that is likely to lead eventually towards gender equality – that is, to see it as the beginning of a strategy of "transformation" ' (Walby 2011: 5). Initiatives to improve women's rights must be seen in their actual context or 'gender regime': 'Defence of women's space in the home is more likely to be progressive for women under a domestic regime than under a public gender regime when most women do not derive their livelihood from unpaid domestic labour' (ibid.: 5).

Last but not least, the notion 'equality' in gender equality legislation refers to both 'equal status' and 'equal opportunities' (as in the English translation of the Norwegian law) and 'human dignity, equal in rights and duties' (as in the English terminology of the Spanish law). The compound notion of substantive gender equality that has been established in various national legislation echoes the composite aims of human rights conventions (such as the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights; see Hellum and Aasen 2013). The CEDAW convention,[6] for example, aims to protect equality, freedom

and dignity (ibid.). Formal equality is not sufficient to comply with women's human rights, and substantive gender equality requires that 'biologically, socially and culturally constructed gender differences between women and men must be taken into account' (ibid.: 626). Context sensitivity is crucial when the CEDAW committee negotiates to define the limits of legitimate equal and different treatments respectively (Hellum 2011). On the one hand, equal cases should be handled in the same way; on the other hand, different treatment may be required in contexts of complementary gender roles and relevant gender differences. Likewise, national gender equality legislation tries to balance the ban on unequal treatment with the need to have positive discrimination – quota schemes for example – in order to promote gender equality. This is the 'Wollstonecraft dilemma' addressed in contemporary political and legal institutions. The contestations of the 'equality and difference' issues continue within a legal framework of sophisticated notions of gender equality.

Notions of gender equality and difference

In addition to the discussed cultural, political and legal aspects of the meaning of gender equality, there is also the linguistic issue. Language and concepts are dynamic constructions. They adapt, accommodate and relate to other notions. Terms such as sex, gender and (gender) equality are no exception (Magnusson, Rönnblom and Silius 2008; Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009). For instance, as Anette Borchorst (1999: 163) suggested in an analysis of Nordic gender equality institutions, class differences are understood to be socially determined while gender differences are both socially and biologically determined. Thus, class differences may in principle be eradicated, contrary to gender differences. Different notions may also be hard to translate properly from one language to another. The Norwegian language does not discriminate between 'sex' and 'gender' as the English language does. 'Kjønn' refers to 'sex' as well as to 'gender'. Unfortunately, we do not know Spanish well enough to address potential problems related to the translation of Spanish to English.

Recently, the Norwegian term *likestilling*, which used to denote 'gender equality', has taken a new turn. In line with the international trend to also include sexual, ethnic and other dimensions of inequality, *'likestilling'* no longer refers only to gender equality but may include more categories. Major attention is now directed to 'intersectionality' (Crenshaw 1989), 'multiple' and 'compound inequalities' (Zarrehparvar and Osander 2007), or 'complex equality' (Walby 2009: 60) in anti-discrimination legislation in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, in other European countries and more globally (Phoenix 2006; Zarrehparvar and Osander 2007; Forest and Platero 2008; Lombardo and Agustin 2011; Bygnes 2013; Siim and Agustin 2013). This is partly a response to claims from black, lesbian and postcolonial feminists about the need to de-centre white (middle-class and heterosexual) women

as the normative subject of feminism (Crenshaw 1989, 1997; Boxer 1998; Mohanty 2003; Brah and Phoenix 2004; Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa 2012; Cho and Squier 2013; Seedat 2013).

Feminist activists and scholars have discussed notions and policies of gender equality intensively and revealed a gap between the everyday assumption that 'we all know what gender equality means' and the numerous usages of the term in policymaking (Magnusson et al. 2008; Holter et al. 2009; Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009). The discussions are related to quarrels within and between strands of women's movements, such as black, lesbian and postcolonial critiques of the tendency of Western women's movements to embrace a narrow notion of women as white, middle-class and heterosexual (Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa 2012). The recognition of different kinds of women – women of colour, lesbian women, women from 'the South' and so on – was debated, and the relationship between recognition and redistribution mobilized a number of feminist scholars and activists. A core issue was how to represent, prioritize and deal with differences between women, between women and men, and between gender and other categories. Nancy Fraser (1997: 203), who has argued for the simultaneous focus on recognition and redistribution, and the interplay between them, recommended a closer look at 'difference'. She distinguished between various kinds of difference and suggested four attitudes towards it: (1) difference as an artefact of oppression, as in the stunting of skills and capacities; these should be abolished; (2) difference as a mark of the oppressed group's cultural superiority over their oppressors, like feminine nurturance; these should be re-evaluated and universalized; (3) differences as cultural variation, which should be enjoyed; and (4) there are different kinds of differences (this is Fraser's position), which means that we need a differentiated politics of difference (Fraser 1997: 203–204). Such a differentiation is still relevant, for example in relation to contemporary initiatives to merge antidiscrimination legislation and antidiscrimination bodies into one. What kinds of difference and inequalities are related to gender, in comparison with other social categories? What happens to gender equality when other differences and inequalities are addressed in public policies and legislation? What about religious men and women's notions about God-given gender differences? What happens when religious freedom collides with other human rights (Loenen and Goldschmidt 2007)? In a study of gender equality policies in Europe, Lombardo, Meyer and Verloo (2009: 3–6) identified four understandings of gender equality: a rigidly 'fixed' or 'frozen' notion where gender equality is enshrined in law; a 'shrunk' notion that limits gender equality to particular policy issues; a 'stretched' notion that broadens gender equality to include further dimensions of inequality; and a 'bent' notion that favour other goals over gender equality. These authors argue that gender inequality is pervasive 'in all domains of reality' and that

it intersects with other forms of inequality. They pay attention to structural hindrances to gender equality and also address 'the need to transform power relations between women and men and the empowerment of women' (ibid.: 8).

Gender equality is a burning issue in religious contexts, including Muslim and Christian traditions (Gross 1996; Nussbaum 1999, 2012; Okin 1999, 2005; Bayes and Tohidi 2001; Scott 2007; Casanova 2009; Rosenberger and Sauer 2012; Cady and Fessenden 2013; Reilly and Scriver 2013; Aune and Nyhagen 2016; see also Chapter 2). A core issue is the relationship between religious freedom and gender equality as two distinct human rights. To what extent should religious communities be granted exemption from the general ban on gender discrimination? The Norwegian law on gender equality exempts the 'inner life' of religious communities. In 2007, Skjeie concluded that religious communities are allowed to practise their religion 'regardless of any inherently gender-specific consequences such practice may have' (Skjeie 2007: 479). The exemption was made less encompassing in the last revision of the gender equality law, but it is still valid. When norms of gender equality meet norms of religious freedom, religious freedom tends to be prioritized (Solhøy 2015). Consequently, feminism is sometimes perceived as inherently contradictory to religious institutions (Børresen 2004), but what about religious women – what do they think of gender equality? And how do we explore this issue?

The translation of 'gender equality' from one language to another is difficult, and the selection of appropriate terminology/translation has been a challenge in this comparative project: firstly, when we carried out interviews with women from different language groups and, secondly, when the interviews were translated to English. In everyday speech, notions such as gender equality, equality, equity, equal rights, equal status, equal opportunity and 'on equal terms' are sometimes applied as equivalent, sometimes as distinct and sometimes as contradictory. When people talk about gender equality, they may refer to ideas and norms, structures and institutions, or to social realities, or personal relations and experiences (Magnusson, Rönnblom and Silius 2008).

According to the joint topic guide used in our research in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom (see Appendix), we put forward the following proposition: ' "Gender equality" can mean different things to different people. Some people may say that gender equality means that women and men have the same status and rights and can do exactly the same things, while others may say that women and men have equal value but should concentrate on doing different things and complement each other. How do such understandings of gender equality relate to your own understanding of the relationship between women and men?' In the following sections, we discuss how the interviewed Christian and Muslim women reflected on the notion of 'gender equality'.

A discourse about gender equality as equal worth

'There are different interpretations of equality. It is a mixture of lots of odd things', one of our research participants, a Norwegian Sunni, commented. She was one of several women who found the notion difficult, like this Spanish Shia who said: 'But gender equality, you see, I don't know what it is...It doesn't make sense to me.' Her comment is not unreasonable, because 'gender equality' really is a compound and contested notion. 'That is very complex, isn't it?' was the brief comment given by a woman from the Church of England. Her statement is illustrative of the multifaceted perceptions of gender equality among our participants.

Most of the women we interviewed preferred the notion of 'equal worth' to the notion of 'gender equality', but they nevertheless applied both notions. Sometimes they were used interchangeably, and sometimes they were complementary conceptualizations, as this Norwegian Lutheran explained:

> I think in a way that both equality and equal worth are important. In that way, if you want a complete picture, a fuller picture, both must be included. Maybe I tend to lean towards a more value-based thinking – not equality at any price – but more who you are as a person.

Her words express some distinct aspects in the reasoning of our research participants: They emphasize that values are very important in their lives, which is 'natural' given the centrality of faith in their lives. They think that gender equality needs to be seen in its social context and that it should not necessarily always be prioritized in relation to other values. Sometimes, depending on the actual situation, other issues are more important than gender equality. This point is quite relevant with respect to the fact that national and international gender equality legislation continuously negotiates how to strike the balance between equal and different treatment.

Corresponding to the finding that the 'equal worth' language is preferred among the research participants, is another striking conclusion: The religious women in our study – irrespective of their faith and national belonging – represent a 'women and men are different' discourse. An Anglican woman from the United Kingdom spontaneously reflected this way about 'gender equality': 'I have never been asked to define that before. What does it mean to me, to verbalise what it means to me? Gender equality, having the same opportunities, but men can't give birth to babies, do you know what I mean.' Her instant association to 'same opportunities' was immediately negated or limited by reference to the factual biological difference that men cannot give birth. In other words, it is impossible to address gender equality without reference to gender differences. Another woman, a Norwegian Lutheran, also immediately expressed thoughts about difference:

> Well, I think that women and men are created differently. But of equal
> worth. We just have a bit different perspectives, and I think we should –
> I think there is a God-willed difference between us. But that we should
> enrich each other, that is how it was thought – supply and enrich.

Here, gender differences are described as God's will and as such carry legiti-
macy and a certain eternal feature. They are clearly positively loaded; gender
differences improve our lives by making them richer.

This Sunni woman from the United Kingdom talked in a similar way about
how she understands gender equality: 'They [women and men] are different.
They must respect the difference. I think that is equality for me.' She under-
stands gender equality to mean respect for one another. We interpret the
comment to be an advice against pushing gender equality too far. There is
a limit to equality; differences should be respected. A Shia woman in Spain
bluntly claimed that gender equality was incomprehensible. To her, it made
no sense to compare 'things that are inherently different'. Her statement
implies that men and women are not different simply because of historical
and social conditions but by nature. She could not imagine women and men
being the same and equal.

These statements are, nevertheless, far from similar, as they represent dif-
ferent kinds of differences (Fraser 1997). Some of them are described as
God-given differences, some are seen as natural or biological and some dif-
ferences are viewed as socially and historically produced. In the responses,
the differences are often but not always represented in some kind of combi-
nation. The interviewees' conceptions are generally that gender relations are
complementary and horizontal, of equal value but different in kind. There
are some representations of gender as complementary and hierarchical, and
they are often related to religious prescriptions. Broadly speaking, the state-
ments are often a mix of ideas about 'the nature of human beings' and claims
about historical or contemporary 'social conditions', as in Eduards' (1993)
conceptualization cited earlier. Sometimes, however, God-given differences
are historicized. They are described and discussed with reference to chang-
ing interpretations of Holy Scriptures and to various ways of practising these
interpretations in real life. Christian as well as Muslim women do this apolo-
getically, in order to blame culture and not their faith for the bad treatment
of women.

These representations of gender are connected to perceptions of gender
equality as achievable or not and to a specific take on 'gender equality'.
A widespread vision among the research participants is, in line with the
difference discourse, that of the couple. Men and women are as a couple:
a married, heterosexual couple as a team and as companions who are able to
enrich and complement each other. This normative description is a vision
of how things were meant to be by the Creator or God. This is compatible
with maternal or relational feminism but hardly with 'liberal' or 'equality'

feminism, as described previously. Also, the religious women in our study, across other differences, generally emphasize love and respect rather than conflict or competition between men and women. 'Respect' is a mantra, a notion that is mentioned by most interviewees. We interpret this to be a deep concern and obligation to do the utmost to cope with gender differences in a decent way, according to God's will. God created us differently, and God loves us all.

In line with this, the interviewed women also talked about the need to understand each other. There is a clear tendency to discuss gender relations as direct, concrete and individual rather than indirect, symbolic and structural. Gender relations are also more often considered in terms of the wife–husband couple than in terms of abstract, institutional or symbolic gender systems and in terms of gender complementarity rather than gender inequality. The emphasis on respect and love of all human beings, including men, seems difficult to combine with feminist perceptions of conflictive gender relations and struggle against oppressive social structures. The few references to terms such as patriarchy or oppression of women are either about past times or distant places/country of origin. There is little or no resemblance with more explicit radical feminist language of struggle, power, exploitation and abuse.

Despite a few comments on the difficulty of knowing how to understand the notion of 'gender equality' itself, most of the research participants shared rich reflections with us. Within the overall dominant discourse of gender equality as equal worth, we can make analytical distinctions between four different perceptions about or representations of gender equality:

(1) Gender equality is impossible because of God-given prescriptions
(2) Gender equality as differentiation without hierarchy
(3) Gender differentiation in the family, equal opportunities in the public sphere
(4) Gender equality embracing difference

Each type will be outlined and discussed separately below. In addition to the four identified perceptions of gender equality, it is interesting to note that a few interviewees talked about contemporary society as having almost 'too much gender equality' or warned against exaggeration of gender equality initiatives. For example, a UK Pentecostal woman said:

> I actually think it is pretty equal now. A part of me worries that it will go to the other extreme where men will be totally minimalized and women would be the powerhouses, and I actually think scripturally that is wrong. And I think if that happens there would be issues. I think it is wrong when you see churches where it is almost an all female leadership and their husbands are sort of pathetic little creatures that follow behind them. That actually makes me really cross; I feel like rousing the husbands and

going, come on rise up. You have got a role, you have got gifting you know.

This participant does not explicitly say that there is too much equality, but she is afraid of a situation where women have too much of a say and men's power or authority is reduced. She also seems to worry about passivity among men, which was also mentioned by one of the Norwegian Lutheran women.

Unlike the woman quoted above, a UK Shia woman explicitly stated that 'women have more rights than men in Islam'; this was something she endorsed. She referred to inheritance; the man receives it to provide for his family, but 'if you get it as a lady it is yours'. She also added that as a breastfeeding mother, she could charge her husband for her services (see Mir Hosseini 2000: 61–72; see also Chapter 4). 'Nowhere in the world, in no religion, do you find all these points given to a lady'*,* she said, thus justifying the view that Islam is woman-friendly and places a high value on women. Several Muslim participants commented on men's obligation to provide income, and women's right to *not* undertake paid work, but none commented on the advantages of being economically independent. Only a few Muslim interviewees proposed that Islam affords women more rights than men, and none of the Christian interviewees suggested that Christianity gives women more rights than men.

It is also noteworthy that several participants gave mixed statements that fit into more than one of the four perceptions identified above. For instance, one woman, a Pentecostal in the United Kingdom, who claimed that men should have the ultimate authority, also maintained: 'I guess it is both genders having the same rights and same amount of respect and same amount of opportunities, would be my understanding.' Our interpretation is that gender equality is a compound, complex and contested notion, and that the discourse of gender equality as equal opportunities in society at large also colours the interviewees' responses.

Gender equality is impossible because of God-given prescriptions

Within this perception, equal worth is established and then defied. Within linguistic thinking, which is analogue and concrete, this is illogical. Interviewees here are, however, applying a symbolic way of thinking. They use a metaphoric and mythical language, within which it makes perfect sense to them to argue that gender equality is impossible because of God-given prescriptions and at the same time insist on the equal value of women and men. The point here is that, under certain conditions, men are superior to women, and there is no goal of gender equality, despite equal worth.

The perception was articulated by a small group of interviewees (about eight or so), who applied somewhat varying arguments. The women who represented a 'gender equality is impossible' perception are mainly Pentecostals, and most of them reside in Spain. One is a Spanish Catholic

woman. A couple of them reside in the United Kingdom (an Anglican woman and a Pentecostal woman). None of them reside in Norway.

The Spanish Catholic woman who represented this perception refers to marriage as a sacrament and implies that her husband must to some extent be her 'spiritual guide'. This claim is in no way straightforwardly indicating gender inequality, however. The same woman also argues that women are 'still not given their due worth in many strata of society', and therefore a woman's task

> is to put herself on a level with men. And in that respect the Catholic religion, or my Church, is not against that, that is to say, it is in favour of that. The two have to be shoulder to shoulder, within the partnership of marriage, within political society, we have to be equal; we have to have the same rights, the same ability to decide about our children, about our lives. We have to seek equality between the two.

Our interpretation is that the role of husbands as their wives' spiritual guide is not considered to be consequential for the social status of women, and that it has only a limited reach outside of spiritual affairs.

A Spanish Pentecostal woman who represented this type of perception states that men have 'a slightly greater responsibility. Not because it's a male chauvinist church, but because we try to govern ourselves according to the Bible.' She refers to the Old Testament and the 'intelligent God'. In contrast with the Catholic woman mentioned above, she bluntly claims that it is not worthwhile to try to achieve gender equality: 'To me, in my view, there's no point in it at all, because, like I said before. He [God] gave each one their role. So I believe it's all a waste of time, fighting for equality.' This is a different way of delineating the scope of men's 'greater responsibility'; the scope has been broadened from spirituality to also encompass the household. According to this interviewee, God gave men 'a little more responsibility in the running of the church and likewise in the running of the household'.

Another Spanish Pentecostal woman argues that '(…) my husband is over and above what the law might say at any…because that's explained very clearly in the Bible'. In this representation, the Bible is explicitly prioritized above legal obligations. She imparts a more submissive attitude than the previous two interviewees quoted before. In her view, her husband is above what the law might say, and she adds: 'Well almost 80% of my life should be governed by him, because that's what the Scriptures say. That is to say, the figure of the husband, both in the Song of Songs, and especially in the…New Testament'. She confirms the gender hierarchy twice and also describes the husband's rights in percentages. The value given to the husband, the partner, is explicit, precise and above the law. She added: 'So I don't care what the government might say.'

A Spanish Sunni argues that we are all equal in 'the circle of God's commandments'. She differentiates between the realm of the religious and other spheres and claims that outside of God 'there is no equality, none at all that'. It is impossible to achieve equality beyond God's commandments according to this woman, because people don't care about laws and rules. Consequently, gender equality is 'totally out of the question'. This statement is similar to that forwarded by a UK Anglican woman, who also claims that you cannot achieve gender equality outside of the church. Her argument is different, however: outside of the church women and men cannot understand each other fully, she says, because they don't recognize the 'complementary nature with which God created us'. For 'complementariness to reach its full measure', she reasons, 'we have to give each other time and understanding and space'. But the world does not recognize this, she states somewhat pessimistically, because people are not prepared to do what it takes for it to come to full fruition. 'I don't think people are prepared to be patient with each other, be generous with each other. And I don't think that people trust God enough to help them be what they need to be and help them,' she said. According to her there is, however, 'a huge potential in the church to realise gender equality'. This will take 'a lot of learning and a lot of faith in God's ability, but the church does not demonstrate it very well'. This interviewee does not totally preclude gender equality but relates it to people's reluctance to follow the law and their lack of patience and generosity. She does not have much confidence that people will change, but she has complete trust in people's equality before God: gender differentiation without hierarchy.

Gender equality as differentiation without hierarchy

This perception is based on an understanding of women and men as fundamentally different, yet having an equal status in society. Gender differences are acknowledged, and gender roles are seen as complementary, but they are not hierarchical in the eyes of God, and women's maternal capacities should be encouraged in society at large. This position resembles box 3 in Maud Eduards' (1983) figure, which she labelled the 'empty box' because none of the philosophers she explored fitted within it. Within this type of discourse, men and women basically differ by nature, and they hold different social positions based on their different capacities and interests. Society is differentiated along gender lines, and women's responsibility 'as women' is applicable to society at large and is not restricted to the family. Women should be 'societal mothers' and bring their maternal, caring capacities to bear in the public sphere as well as in the family. There is segregation or differentiation between women and men, but the gender hierarchy has vanished because women may hold high positions – equivalent to men's – within their sphere, at all levels. (The empirical realism of differentiation/stratification without hierarchy is an interesting question (Holter 1970; Eduards 1983), but it is outside the scope of this book.)

Very few (about four or so) of our participants expressed perceptions of gender equality that resemble this particular combination of 'difference' and 'equality'. The participants who talked about gender equality in terms of the perception of 'differentiation without hierarchy' included women from different faith groups (Lutheran, Pentecostal and Sunni) residing in the three countries. A Sunni woman in Spain describes gender equality as 'enhancing the distinctive traits of either gender – both male and female. That is to say, gender equality does not mean that a man should be the same as a woman and be able to do the same things as a woman.' Men and women are viewed as different; they have different traits and should never try to be similar. The Sunni woman repeats the 'difference' issue several times throughout the interview and also makes clear how exactly these differences make men and women 'mutually compatible'. She believes that

> man and woman have different natures. Both belong to the same species, but we have different natures. And we must preserve that difference because it is precisely such a difference that makes compatibility possible, that mutual attraction. That longing for the other. And that ability to succeed, on the part of the community, or the group, or the family.

Although this interviewee does not explicitly outline a society with different roles for men and women, all the way from the family to the public sphere, from lower to higher ranks, the position 'gender segregation without gender hierarchy' nevertheless fits well with her statements.

A UK Pentecostal woman also seems to fit into this perception of differentiation in society at large without hierarchy. She says that gender equality is 'knowing and understanding the genders and how they differ and what they need. (...) Women are not men and men are not women.' She also claims that a woman can never be as good at being a man as a man can be. We interpret this to mean that women should not try to do what a man is supposed to do, and the other way round.

Another take on the perception of 'different' but 'equal status' is represented by a Norwegian Pentecostal. She refers to research about the cerebral hemisphere that has confirmed gender differences. According to her, this has been consequential in several ways. She cannot expect her husband to think like her because of 'innate differences'. He 'is created differently, simply', she states. The innate differences are 'primarily positive', however on the condition that they are followed or adhered to. If not, they will frustrate us, according to the interviewee. The couple-courses run by her congregation are inspired by the brain research, and scientific knowledge reassures her that acceptance of gender differences makes life better:

> But if you have the confirmation from the outset that there are differences, it is much easier to relate. (...) Because you cannot do anything

about it. It is really about having to accept things as they are. What I can-
not change. I have to accept in order to be all right. And if we are born
different, well ok, then that is how it is. And I think it is positive to know.

We interpret this to be a statement of 'reinforcing circles'; gender differences
at the outset are understood and confirmed in order to reach the full poten-
tial of both genders, to the happiness of all. In line with this, she also states
something that was claimed time and again during several other interviews
as well – that men are more rational than women, and that women are more
people-focused than are men. This interviewee tells us that she doesn't like
to put people into boxes and states that she is referring to 'average' men
and women. She also thinks that gender differences are the reason why her
Pentecostal congregation will be better off when women are included in
the Eldership. This argument resembles the 'empty box' in Eduards' (1983)
table: women should be represented in all public positions, like men, and
be included in top congregational positions. Their different capacities will
enrich everyone and be to the best for all.

A Norwegian Lutheran woman forwarded another representation of the
'different, but of equal value' perception. She insists on men and women
being created differently through God's will, with the purpose of supple-
menting and enriching each other. She is crystal clear that men and women
should be different but have equal worth, and she insists that we should all
be allowed to 'emerge naturally' in order to 'bloom'. Her statement about
her fellow sisters in the Lutheran congregation also seems to illustrate well
the third square in Eduards' (1983) figure: women and men are fundamen-
tally different, but they have equal social status. Women carry out a lot of
the work and activities in the congregation, and they are described as good
administrators who also take care of the 'somewhat scatterbrained men'.
In fact, she says, '(…) we have maybe taken charge of, or transferred, our
motherliness and our caring – from the family to the congregation, quite
simply'. This 'transfer' of maternal caring from the private family to the
public sphere (in this case, the congregation) and also having equal status
to men is what Eduards' third square is about. The Lutheran woman cited
here is obviously quite proud of her fellow sisters, whom she describes as
'splendid, well educated, public-minded, compassionate, concerned about
fulfilling themselves, free-standing' and, at the same time, motherly. Her
statement is based on empirical observations but could easily be interpreted
as being normative as well.

Gender differentiation in the family and equal opportunities in the public sphere

This perception of gender equality is ambivalent or contradictory because
gender (woman and man) is seen as both same and different, or as dual
and dichotomous (see the first two footnotes in this chapter). It resembles

the 'trapped in differences' discourse in feminist theory from the 1980s and 1990s. Here, gender equality is stuck in the 'Wollstonecraft dilemma': the impasse of constituting gender difference and gender equality within a patriarchal discourse where equality and difference are seen as dichotomous. The perception here, however, differs from the 'trapped in' discourse, because of the distinction between the private and the public sphere and because of the God-given or religious justifications for women's maternal role. An interesting question is if differentiation in the private sphere is compatible with equal status in the public sphere, but this is also outside of the limits of this book.

The main characteristics of this representation are the emphasis on women's maternal role in relation to the family and household and the distinction between the private and the public spheres. Women and men are perceived as different, and women's main responsibility is to take care of their husbands and children. Outside the family, in society at large, however, women and men have equal rights insofar as both women and men have paid work. Women's maternal role and men's role as the main provider are seen as God-willed gender duties. 'Gender equality' is implicitly understood as men and women being and doing precisely the 'same', and this is dismissed as impossible and as unhealthy and undesirable.

Gender relations are viewed as both different and equal, and the discursive representations of this view are moving within the impossible space of 'Wollstonecraft's dilemma' (Pateman 1989: 196–197). These notions of equality and difference seem stuck in the quagmire of an 'either–or' logic. The representations address all the dilemmas and paradoxes that have haunted feminism in relation to policymaking and legislation, and they fall short of making any deconstructive or transformative moves. The interviewees who talk in this way are trying to combine their personal, direct and real experiences of gender differences, which are also strongly supported by cultural and symbolic representations of women as mothers/carers and men as main breadwinners, with the prevailing norms and policies of gender equality, equal rights and equal opportunities. It seems that these research participants do not possess the analytical tools to deconstruct or transform the dilemma, and their representations are bouncing back and forth between differences and equality in ways that mirror the previously discussed impasse in feminism (Pateman 1992; Fraser 1997; Scott 1997; Phillips 1999; Squires 1999).

About one-third of the responses to our interview question about gender equality align with this type of representation. It is mainly found among Muslim participants residing in the United Kingdom, but it is also visible among Muslim interviewees in Norway and Spain. They tend to outline how Islam, in their interpretation, is both consistent with gender equality and

also a producer of equality. Sometimes, women are also described as being privileged compared to men (see also Chapter 4).

A few Pentecostal women also voiced understandings that fit with this type of perception. It is noteworthy, however, that none of the majority Christian (Lutheran, Catholic and Anglican) women from Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom uttered opinions like these. We interpret this difference to reflect the migrant background of many of the interviewed Muslim women. Some of them were brought up in, or have a family history from, countries where Islam has been (and is) used to justify gender differentiation and gender hierarchy and where complementary gender roles are still hegemonic. This is unlike most of the Lutheran, Catholic or Anglican Christian women who have lived in more gender-equal societies where the patriarchal aspects of religion have been problematized from within and from outside of the church. Quite different social, political and religious contexts, with female priests as almost a non-issue among Norwegian Lutherans, the admission of women in the Eldership among Pentecostals, and so on (see also Chapters 2 and 4), account for at least some of the observed discursive differences across faiths.

This gender equality as 'differentiation in the family' perception resembles the intense 'equality-difference' debate in feminist theory during the 1980s and 1990s, described earlier in this chapter. The discursive representations seem partly stuck in 'Wollstonecraft's dilemma' (Pateman 1992; see also Scott 1997; Squires 1999), but it differs because of the emphasis on women's maternal role in the family and also the (implicit) assumption that it is possible to have differentiation in the private sphere without hierarchy in the private or the public spheres.

'Gender equality' in this discourse includes statements about men and women as different, and there is the insistence that differences should be understood and respected. 'Men should be men and women should be women. God created man and woman. If they should all be the same, it would be dull. So, also because of this, I don't think they should just switch roles. It is not wise, not healthy, not good', like one Muslim woman in Norway said.

The starting point is generally on gender relations within the family or household, with the additional argument that women have the right to choose whether to have paid work or not.

The notion that gender roles are complementary is clearly established in this type of perception about gender equality. One Spanish Pentecostal woman said:

> I believe that women have their role, and men have theirs, which complement each other. Women will never be able to take the place of men, nor will men be able to take the place of women. (...) So I believe that by wanting to be the same as a man, we've lost.

A Sunni woman in the United Kingdom described her notion of gender equality and difference this way:

> It is, you know, people think that all rights have got to be the same, I don't think that, I think it is OK for us to have different rights but still be equal. Because you know, fundamentally, men and women are different and by their very nature you know, the fact that women bear children and are more nurturing, they will have different roles to play, but that doesn't make them any less equal than men. I don't think a woman has to act like a man to be regarded as an equal you know.

A Shia woman in the United Kingdom argued along the same lines: 'Yes, accepting and respecting, rather than fighting to be the same. Because they are different, the nature is different, the body, the physiology is different. But other things are similar; we are both human beings. But we have to have the equality within that frame, that framework as well.'

There is also a distinct emphasis on God-given prescriptions about gender relations, activities and duties. Natural or biologically produced innate differences between women and men are explicitly or implicitly articulated, in combination with claims about gender equality before God. One Sunni in Norway explained her thoughts about 'gender equality' by first referring to what the Quran says about 'what duties you have before God'. The duties 'are quite the same for men and women', she asserted and continued, 'Then I think that men and women are equal but nevertheless there is not; well, a man is not a woman. A woman is not a man. This faith, that a man may have some tasks and a woman some different tasks, but nevertheless, the value is the same.' Like all the Muslim women who represented this 'trapped in' discourse, she made clear that in Islam, the man is the breadwinner and the provider. In line with Islamic family law (Esposito 1982; Nyhagen Predelli 2004; see also Chapter 4), he is responsible for the family's finances. But this does not mean that the woman cannot work. The interviewee maintained that the Qur'an provides a kind of 'recipe' that God has given. He is the creator, and 'your creator knows best'. She also explained that in relation to the recipe, 'God has not said "Women cannot work", but He has said "Yes, the breadwinner is the male, economically". So then it is your responsibility, so you don't have to question who has the responsibility.' This very explicit emphasis on men as breadwinners, and the risk that employed women would (have to) relate to men in inappropriate ways in a non-segregated labour market, clearly distinguishes this group of participants from those who represent the second and fourth type of representation of gender equality.

'Respect', 'understanding' and 'love' are crucial notions within this perception, as in the other three: Men and women are expected to behave respectfully towards each other. A Norwegian Shia made this statement:

> I mean that equality is to understand one another. As long as there is mutual understanding, there is equality. But if there is not understanding and women look down at the man or the man down at the woman, there will be no equality, because they have no right to be the boss of the other. It is not what Islam says.

Despite the prescription of different gender roles based on innate gender differences, there is clearly a notion of equal worth.

Although the 'trapped in' discourse emphasized women's role in the household, as mother and wife, there were different ways of describing gender relations within the family. For example, a UK Shia woman was eager to impart that Islam urges companionship between men and women, as was also the vision of Mary Wollstonecraft. The Shia woman said:

> I must clarify this point very well. When a man is coming back home it is not the women's responsibility to make food for him, because a wife is not a slave. A wife is not a servant. A wife is a companion. So the companion should provide the entertainment to her husband, enjoyment . . . It is not an obligation [for women to look after the house] because our Prophet used to share the housework with his wife.

In this representation, a wife is portrayed as her husband's friend and provider of happiness and social interaction, rather than as the person responsible for all domestic duties. Moreover, according to this interviewee, the husband should take part in domestic work (see Mir-Hosseini 2000: 61; see also Chapter 4 for the view that 'a man has no right to order his wife to do housework'). Similarly, a Sunni woman in the United Kingdom emphasized Islam's harmonious couple relations:

> It is equality, what Islam brings is equality. You are both good servants, you both have to do the same thing and you both have to follow the rules, you both have to. Now the husband has to go out and provide, and the woman's duty is to look after the house and look after the children, when the husband comes in after a hard day earning, the house is clean, dinner is cooked, the children are all nicely dressed up, they are all sitting and waiting with smiling faces, when the person comes in (. . .). So it is equal you know. One person doing the house duty and one person doing the outside duty. And when it comes to the evening you are just sitting nicely having a meal together and it is like you know, you discuss the whole day, what did you do, did you have any problems, do you have anything to discuss.

This peaceful image contrasts with representations about possible abuse. A Spanish Pentecostal, for instance, added to her description about different

gender roles: 'a woman doesn't have to put up with ill treatment, or insults from a man. No, no, you shouldn't put up with that; you have to love each other, and understand and help.' Again, love, respect and understanding are seen as crucial between husband and wife, who are of equal worth.

Another view shared by most of our Muslim interviewees is that Islam is *for* gender equality; they assert that the Qur'an says so and that the way in which the Prophet Mohammad treated women supports this. Their notion of gender equality is, however, based on different and complementary gender roles rather than on a vision of 'sameness'. Complementary roles are basically related to the family but have an obvious impact far beyond the private sphere. Islamic family law prescribes the man as the main provider and the woman as the primary caretaker of children (Esposito 1982), and many of the interviewed Muslim women emphasized women's role as mother as particularly important within Islam. This is clearly stated by a Norwegian Sunni: 'A mother is highly respected. A mother has a central place. It is said that paradise is at your mother's feet, right. If you want to go to paradise you do all good things for your mother.' Being a mother means that you are respected as a woman, which means that motherhood equals the man as provider. The ambiguity in this perception reminds of Amina Wadud's notion of Muslim 'double-talk', which refers to the thought that 'woman is not to man as man is to woman' (Wadud 2006: 24) – another way of saying that women and men are equal, but men still have 'a degree over women' (ibid.: 24).

Most of the women we interviewed, across national and religious belonging, valued motherhood and caring talents. But only Muslim women insisted on a religious legitimation of a traditional family structure with a male provider and a female carer.

Some responses also problematized the very effort to compare men and women. For instance, a UK Shia woman said that you can't talk about equality between two different things. She referred to having two mobile phones of exactly the same brand and size but of different colours. These could be compared, but what if you had one mobile phone and one pen – 'how could you talk about equality between these two?' Men and women are two different creatures; they have different feelings, different talents and different powers, according to this Shia participant.

Gender equality embracing differences

The perception of gender equality as 'equal opportunities' bears resemblance to the outcome of the previously mentioned 'equality–difference' debates in feminist theory: feminist displacement and deconstruction strategies (Fraser 1997; Scott 1997; Squires 1999). Instead of perceiving gender equality and difference as dichotomous notions, this debate established gender equality not as the antithesis to difference but as embracing difference. The dichotomy is transformed and (re)constructed; women and men are perceived as different *and* equal. In the words of Joan Scott, 'Equality

is not synonymous with sameness; and difference not synonymous with dichotomous sexual difference – as if to be "equal" is to be the same as a male norm' (Scott 1997: 125–126).

About half of all the women we interviewed understood gender equality as men and women having equal opportunities in the 'private sphere' of the family as well as in the 'public sphere' of politics, work and civil society, irrespective of various kinds of gender differences that most of them also described. Among this group, there were more Christian than Muslim women, and more women from the dominant Christian churches (Lutheran, Anglican and Catholic) than from the Pentecostal tradition. In all, about two-thirds of this group was Christian, while a third was Muslim (both Sunni and Shia). In terms of countries, a majority of the Lutheran and Pentecostal women in Norway represented this type of perception, together with all the Anglicans in the United Kingdom as well as some of the Catholics in Spain, and a few of the Pentecostals in Spain and the United Kingdom. The type of perception they forwarded resonates with the notion that gender equality means equal opportunities, but, mirroring the contemporary legal understanding, it encompasses both equal and different treatment depending on the context.

The representations of gender equality within this type of perception also resemble the legal interpretations of equal opportunities and equal treatment for both men and women as they have been laid out in the formulation and implementation of gender equality legislation in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom since the 1970s and recently in anti-discrimination legislation more generally (see Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa 2012). Equal opportunities do not preclude different treatment, if this is necessary to ensure equal opportunities, on the condition that it is reasonable and proportional (Hellum 2011). Equal opportunities encompass not only education and employment but also the 'public sphere' more broadly, as well as the 'private sphere' or the family.

Gender equality '(…) means that men and women should be treated the same, paid the same for doing the same work, and given the same opportunities', an Anglican woman in the United Kingdom commented. She was addressing the labour market and is probably aware of the systematic wage differences between women and men and the frequent cases of discrimination of women (such as part-time work and 'motherhood penalties' (Bernard and Correll 2010). A Norwegian Lutheran woman gave a somewhat similar statement: 'Whether you are a man or a woman who wants the job, it would be stupid if you cannot get the job just because you are a woman.' Like her, several interviewees focused on women's rights to have the same opportunities as men in the labour market, irrespective of biological and social differences between them. A Pentecostal woman from the United Kingdom also argued that the gender of an individual should not dictate what he or she could do or achieve:

> I would describe it as if anybody has a gift to fulfil a role that their gender should not be a determining factor in them fulfilling it. Gender should not be an issue with regard to your calling, your role, finding fulfilment. It mustn't be 'You can't do that because you are a woman' or 'You can't stay at home and look after the children because you are a man'. I have a colleague and she is Head of department and her husband, when the children were little, it was him that was the house-husband. I think that is great.

She argues that whether you are a woman or a man, your gender should not be a hindrance to taking up any role that you have a capability and yearning for. Her comment also suggests that role reversals are appropriate and should be encouraged.

Several interviewees emphasized the importance of developing one's abilities irrespective of gender. One consequence is that if a woman or a man is personally suited to do a job, they should be given the opportunity to perform it. One participant, a Lutheran in Norway who is trained in the field of psychology, argued that both men and women have feminine and masculine aspects:

> (. . .) that the differences between women are just as large as the difference between women and men. So I am more concerned about personal aptness [suitability] in relation to tasks, quite irrespective of whether it is a woman or a man. There can be very good male leaders, but also very qualified female leaders. Eh, some men like what one may consider as traditional female tasks, but I am not so engaged, I am more engaged in personal suitability and qualities.

Several interviewees stressed the need to consider personal characteristics, regardless of one's biological sex. One participant emphasized the importance of playing along with one's personality and to be creative. Individual characteristics are portrayed as more important than gender characteristics in terms of performing a particular role. Equality is perceived to be ensured when every person is valued for who they are and have the opportunity to use their potential.

A Catholic woman from Spain conceptualized gender equality as embracing difference, rather than opposing difference. She said:

> (Gender equality) must be achieved not by means of . . . not by identifying the two as equal as if we were photocopies of each other . . . Men and women are necessarily different. But the underlying foundation – legislation, justice, opportunities – all these things must be equivalent for men and women alike, or they should not be dependent on gender.

Her statement echoes the ethos of current approaches to gender equality, at least in Europe – not equality *or* difference, but equality *and* difference; not formal, but substantial equality. Contemporary legal regulations presuppose that equality and difference are balanced (Hellum 2011: 71). This view is represented, understood and endorsed by some of the research participants. For example, a Norwegian Shia woman reflected on how equal opportunities sometimes presuppose different treatment:

> Gender equality means, that in a way, that your value is the same. Or, well, that you, in a way, are as good as your actions, to put it that way. That you should be judged according to what you do, rather than for things you do not control. Really, it is not necessary to be treated exactly the same way, for example as a woman you do not have to be treated exactly as a man. Because that is not quite fair either. (...) Well because, if two things are different, it will not be just to treat them in quite the same way, like if you have an eight year old and a five year old.

She described her mother's employment experience in a packing department, lifting and carrying heavy boxes, and concludes that it was unfair to demand of her mother to carry the same burden as the men 'since they have different capacities. So, one needs to consider the differences in order to be fair.' Arguments like these justify exemptions from the legal ban on discrimination on the ground of gender (and other categories in anti-discrimination legislation). It is also a useful reminder of Fraser's (1997) distinction between different differences. Some differences are relevant and some are not, depending on the context. Gender equality does not *presuppose* sameness or equal treatment.

A Catholic woman in Spain underlined women's right to be independent and to choose their own path:

> A Catholic woman today must be a woman of her time, right? She has to be an independent woman, she must ... she must seek personal fulfilment within Christian values. In other words, she doesn't have to be ... she doesn't have to do a university degree or become a nun. She ... she has to be a woman that seeks her independence in society, and has her own relationships. So, being a housewife, submission, all those things that are quite often transmitted by certain sectors of the Catholic world, well I think they are totally out of date. In other words, it is women themselves who must decide about their position in society, just like they must decide whether or not to have a sentimental partner, whether or not to have children.

She is, like numerous participants, concerned with the right to personal development based on independent choice but preferably based on religious

(in this case Christian) values. She is also very critical towards gender-conservative 'sectors' of her own faith, a sentiment shared by several other interviewees. For them, it was only fair to address what they saw as out-dated views and practices in their own religious institutions when it comes to gender relations.

In contrast to the numerous participants in our study who hold a relatively 'fixed' or 'shrunk' understanding of gender equality (Lombardo et al. 2009), there is only one clear example of a 'stretched' notion. This means that categories other than gender are considered, in a kind of intersectional approach. A UK Anglican, who talked about both gender and sexual orientation, forwarded such a 'stretched' view:

> Fair deal for all, you know, no matter whether you are a man or a woman. But these days you see we have got more than two genders haven't we. We have got people who are unsure where their sexuality is and God told us to love everyone. I remember my local doctor saying that you know, gay people, often it is not what they choose it is who they are, and if we are born in God's image and there is a variety of feelings within that person. Then we have to love them no matter what.

This statement takes notice of sexuality as a relevant aspect of individuals and expresses their right to be loved. The interviewee does not explicitly say that people outside of the 'two genders' also have the right to not be discriminated against, but the context of her statement indicates that this is a reasonable interpretation. The tendency among interviewees is to include sexual orientation if more categories than gender are mentioned, rather than disabilities, 'race' or age, for example. This seems to support a Norwegian Lutheran woman's claim that the debate about gays and lesbians 'has taken over' the hot issue position that women's concerns – such as women as priests – previously held within Christian contexts.

Several women who represented the 'gender equality as equal opportunities' perception also discussed gender equality within the family and men's responsibilities as father and husband. For example, a Shia from the United Kingdom said: 'But then I think there should be equality, even say husband and wife, they should help each other, especially these days, they both work and they both should be helping.' Likewise, this Norwegian Pentecostal woman referred to her own marriage and said: '(. . .) he is the one who screws and fixes, and maybe I do the laundering. But he irons shirts, which is quite all right with me because then I don't have to.' She then continued to talk about why gender equality is useful:

> And I think it is fine that we draw nearer each other, learn from one another. And to be capable of doing some technical things, I think that

is of great value. (…) Suddenly, you are in a situation where you have to do it. (…) Well, yes, we are of equal value as human beings. That is how I think, within God, we are on the same level. Nothing like women standing behind. And not the men either. They are on the same level. But we have talents that may make us slide into roles, and enable us to help each other. Not like 'this is yours, this is your job and this is mine'. But rather that we can meet, and stretch out and do things, together. And for each other, and teach one another things. Then I think it is equal value, which is how it is with us.

Although women and men may 'slide into [different] roles' due to their qualities and talents, they should work together and support each other. They can also learn from each another so that they can perform the same tasks. Neither is in a superior position; both are 'on the same level'. This is a vision of gender equality as encompassing both sameness and difference.

Critique of religious doctrines

Women from all religious groups referred explicitly to their faith and/or religious doctrines when they talked about gender equality. As already explored, some of them found gender equality to be incompatible with their faith. Others uttered critical remarks about their religious tradition in relation to women and gender equality (see also Chapter 4).

A Catholic woman in Spain described how she had hoped for 'a revolution in the Church; that equality was going to be achieved in a few years'. Unfortunately, this did not happen, but she claims that 'equality is slowly being achieved'. She mentions that women now hold senior positions and have major responsibilities in the Church. However, she is highly critical of the conservative male establishment in the church:

As regards the Catholic Church in particular, I think the historical burden is so tremendously great that change will take a long time to happen. That is my major objection to the Catholic world, the fact that the leaders of the church and the priests continue to be exclusively male, you know. There is no reason for it, but…except for historical reasons. That is to say, there are neither mental reasons, nor reasons of ability or resources…nothing at all. It's only 'the way it is', it is purely a question of 'the way things are' which I don't…which absolutely displeases me.

She addresses the long male-dominated tradition in the Catholic Church and argues bluntly against it.

Some of the Norwegian Lutheran women raised the issue of difference between female and male spirituality. One of them mentioned that 'the way we relate to faith, the way we express ourselves, is to some extent coloured by our gender. This is why it seems easier to be accepted and understood among women as a spiritual group. Men seem to need a different kind of spiritual supervision – which is exciting.' Her statement is implicitly a critique of 'men only' traditions in the church and also an argument for including women as priests and in other positions as spiritual leaders.

Female priests have been an issue in various Christian denominations, including the Pentecostal movement. Women are now entering the Eldership in some Pentecostal churches, and this development cannot be 'back-pedaled', according to a Norwegian Pentecostal woman. Another Pentecostal woman describes how the church has contributed to the discrimination of women, against God's will,

> (...) by letting men have all the functions, ... and clearly a lot of what's in the New Testament that Paul writes about, prioritizes men to very many tasks. And this has been interpreted, well, read as it stands and believed as it stands, but [there is] never a word about the writing as having been written to human beings at that time. And we have to interpret things in our own time. The Pentecostals are not as fundamentalist today as they were, well, it has been a very fundamentalist movement – interpreting the Bible very literally.

This woman points to parts of the sacred scripture as discriminating against women and argues against a literal reading. Rather, she asserts, we need a contextual reading and interpretation that takes our contemporary social conditions into consideration. This is also in line with a slightly different argument from an Anglican woman in the United Kingdom who said:

> You get passages of the Gospel misquoted, particularly Paul, St. Paul. He was a bit of a male chauvinist pig really. He believed that women should be, but you see in those days the men were in the main body of the church listening to the preaching and the women were outside.

Her claim is also that the scripture should be understood in its context and that words like Paul's prescriptions have a different meaning today than when they were spoken. This participant, like several others, also mentions how Jesus treated women respectfully as equals. One example is that he appeared to the women first when he rose from the dead.

It is not only Christian interviewees who engage in critiquing the ways in which religious traditions and practices have been misinterpreted or misused by men. A Shia woman from the United Kingdom upholds that men, in Arab countries, have the opinion that

(…) Wives have to do everything. I think that is just purely abusing Islam (…) I think it is abusing Islam because Islam has put a lot of equality for women, women have got, I mean, you read the Qur'an there is a lot for women. It has given women a good place in Islam; I think it should be equal. Because I think God has created them equal and I really think it should be equal. A man only brings the law and says, this is how the woman should be, and I don't think men should do that.

Her argument is that the message of the Qur'an is misused by some men for their own pleasure and advantage, in contrast to the true message of Islam. In her view, it is not right that some men take monopoly over the 'correct' interpretations of religious commands. A Norwegian Shia argues along the same lines: 'A woman can function in all kinds of positions in society, and can serve society equally. I don't think Islam can, or religion can, stop her from doing it.' Her statement implies that it is not Islam that stops women from enjoying gender equality, but the way the Qur'an and the *hadiths* are interpreted and practised by male religious leaders. Several Muslim women in our study stress that the 'true' faith image of women has been wrongly interpreted by human beings and that culture, society, men and/or religious traditions have oppressed women. They emphasize the Prophet Mohammad's respect for women, similarly to how some Christian women spoke about the role of Jesus.

Most of the Muslim women in our study, when explicitly bringing their faith to bear on the question of gender equality, articulated another type of argument, however. They located gender equality within what they saw as the prescriptive notions of the Qur'an and within the historical practices of gender relations that were exemplified by the Prophet Mohammad. For these participants, the notion of gender equality is understood in terms of eternal, religiously prescribed regulations that are beyond human interpretations. This understanding, found among the 'gender differentiation' perceptions of gender equality, was a unique feature to most of the Muslim participants, who explicitly referred to the Qur'an and to the Prophet Mohammad when they legitimated their own understandings of gender equality.

Equally worth noticing is, however, that Muslim interviewees generally also insist that this family model is consistent with working women, even with working mothers. A Norwegian Sunni explained: 'That [the man is the main provider for family] doesn't mean that a woman can't work, just that the man has the main responsibility for the family's economy. […] It is a kind of a recipe that God has given us. […]'. However, the interpretation forwarded by the Norwegian Shia woman quoted earlier in this section is that the rules of Islam are to be treated as guidelines; they are not written in stone. The woman *can* be the primary provider in a family, and the man and the woman can negotiate between them about who will do what. However, the family's economy is the man's main responsibility, and care of the children is

the woman's main responsibility. According to the Norwegian Shia woman, these responsibilities can be combined. Moreover, these rules of Islam are important when something goes wrong, when, for instance, the children don't get what they need. Then the man is to blame. The interviewee does not think this is discriminating against women; rather the opposite. The man has more limitations; he always has to prioritize his family's economic needs while the woman is not constrained in the same way.

Some of the Muslim interviewees legitimate men's and women's different roles in the family by referring to women being more emotional and men being physically stronger, just like many Christian women do. Complementary gender roles are not at odds with gender equality, Muslim women claim, because gender equality means to respect each other. 'Respect' is a positive notion also applied by Christian women when they refer to gender differences. Muslim women clearly mean that men and women should receive equal pay and equal treatment in the labour market. This is an issue that Christian and Muslim women do not question. However, they also accept the basic differences prescribed in the Qur'an (and in Islamic family law) that point to complementary gender roles in the family: a man has to protect the woman and the whole family, provide for them and make money. He has to be good and kind and should help the mother in raising the children. The woman can contribute to the family's economy, but that is not her main responsibility. One interviewee justifies this by saying that the woman should not work 'double shifts'. She can contribute if she wants to and if she has the energy. The Muslim interviewees underline that complementary gender roles and the emphasis on women's role as a mother is not discriminatory of women. The housewife ideal does not mean that men should oppress women. Islam's view of women is an expression of respect, care and love, they underline.

These statements about the importance of motherhood and the connection between complementary gender roles and gender equality (in the meaning of equal value) can be interpreted as a wish to upgrade the value of housework and childcare for small children in societies such as Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom. Such a view is in line with maternalist feminism. Here it is worth repeating Walby's argument that feminist strategies have different implications in different gender regimes. Many Muslim women in contemporary Europe have immigrant histories and were born in societies with domestic gender regimes where women are excluded from public positions. In such regimes, improving women's maternal roles makes a lot of sense compared with strategies to liberate women from the domestic sphere (Walby 2011: 106).

Many of the Muslim women we interviewed have families and also participate in the labour market. They do not necessarily perceive any contradictions between the Qur'an's prescription that women's main responsibility is to take care of home and children and their own participation

in paid work. A Norwegian Sunni woman referred to Norwegian women's tendency to participate in the labour market:

> […] The ideal for women in Norway in general is to have a career. That does not contradict the ideal for women – if you can call it that – in the Muslim religion. What matters is how you do things. For instance, you can have a career and still practice [your religion].

This quote illustrates the view of Islam as supportive of women's rights to have a career. The ideal of the housewife and the emphasis on the role as a mother is not the whole picture. The difference between this complementary view on gender relations and the 'gender equality' view in which equality is seen to embrace difference is not necessarily that big.

Complex notions of gender equality as equal worth

The pervasive discourse among the interviewed Muslim and Christian women was that of gender equality as equal worth: men and women are different, but of equal value. Their emphasis on family and motherhood – maternal or relational equality (Dubois 1991; Offen 1992, 2000) – corresponds well with the accentuation of God's prescriptions in their talk about gender equality. Care, love and respect, tolerance and understanding were core notions in the interviewed women's descriptions of their religious identities (see also Chapters 3 and 4), as well as women's role as mother and housewife. Most of them did not, however, see women's role as solely within the family. They usually insisted on women's right to paid work. Some Muslim women argued that women could work only if they needed to support themselves, but these were rare statements. Across the different faith groups, however, there were interviewees who made the right to work contingent in that it had to be compatible with women's caring duties. A small number of the interviewed women represented a form of submissive piety where they accepted an inferior status to men due to perceived religious prescriptions. A majority of the interviewed women, however, insisted on either equal worth or the support of gender equality reforms.

   Notions of gender equality are complex and ambiguous, and we identified four analytically different perceptions or representations of gender equality within the overall 'equal worth' discourse:

(1) Gender equality is impossible because of God-given prescriptions
(2) Gender equality as differentiation without hierarchy
(3) Gender equality as differentiation in the family with equal opportunities in the public sphere, and
(4) Gender equality as embracing difference.

These representations or 'sub-discourses' were found across countries and religious faiths, but two of them (numbers 3 and 4) were more prominent among our interviewees than the other two (numbers 1 and 2). About half of the statements about gender equality belonged to the 'embracing difference' perception, and about a third to the 'differentiation within the family with equal opportunities in the 'public sphere' perception. We hardly found any examples of efforts to stretch the notion of equality (intersectional approaches) but some instances of 'bent' notions and 'shrunk' notions that limit gender equality to the public sphere and exclude the family (Lombardo, Meier and Verloo 2009). We found some perceptions in line with 'differentiation without hierarchy' (Eduards 1983).

The most distinct difference was between Muslim and Christian women, rather than between countries, in the sense that it was predominantly Muslim women who perceived gender equality as differentiation within the family but not in the public sphere (the third 'sub-discourse'). This is compatible with findings from previous research, for example Nyhagen Predelli's (2004) study of Muslim immigrant women of Pakistani and Moroccan origin in Oslo, Norway. She identified four different types of views towards gender relations concerning women and men's roles in home and society, on gender equality and women's rights. She found that the variation was in part due to how the women interpret Islam, which in turn was influenced by 'their upbringing and education, their class and cultural identity, their knowledge of normative Islamic discourse, their esteem for religious leaders who interpret Islam, and the women and men they interact with in everyday life' (Nyhagen Predelli 2004: 489). Jouili (2011; see also Jouili 2015) studied women in contemporary Islamic revival movements in France and Germany and found that, for these women, 'God-consciousness had to govern all subsequent positions, including those issued in the domain of gender relations' (Jouili 2011: 98). The women she talked to emphasized women's roles 'as mothers and wives within a gendered (but flexible and even constantly evolving) division of labour' (ibid.: 60). They insisted on gender complementarity and the equal value (or equity) of women and men, rather than formal gender equality (ibid.: 51). In her study of Christian evangelical women in England, Aune (2008) found that women who took on traditional roles in the home as wives and mothers also sought roles in the church and in the labour market.

We found a combination of gender as sameness and as difference that allowed for equal rights in the public spheres of politics and work but different rights in the private sphere of the home. A few exceptional voices represented women and men as both different and unequal because of divine provisions, while the majority represented men and women as equal before God. The perceptions of gender in terms of difference ('sub-discourses' 3 and 4) were prominent and the differences were justified as given by nature or by God, but there were also some voices that emphasized historical

and social explanations. Irrespective of this, most of the women who talked about different capacities, rights and obligations insisted on non-hierarchical differences or on equal worth. To put it succinctly, the main representations of gender equality among our research participants switched between 'conditional equal opportunities' and 'unconditional equal worth'.

Whether the twists, ambiguities and contradictions in the interviewees' talk about gender equality are, in practice, compatible with or contributing to the efforts of women's and feminist movements and public institutions to enhance gender equality is a matter for further empirical research. The predominant perception seems to be in line with international efforts to balance equality and difference in order to obtain substantive equality (Hellum, Ali and Griffiths 2011; Hellum and Aasen 2013). The ambiguities may, however, indicate that 'gender equality' loses 'its potential rhetorical force' and eventually contributes to de-legitimate gender equality efforts (Magnusson, Rönnblom and Silius 2008).

The interviewed women's spontaneous response that men and women are different resembles a widespread reasoning among philosophers (Eduards 1983). They combine and mix two analytically distinct issues: perceptions of women's and men's 'nature' (= absolute differences) and perceptions of their social conditions (= equal worth). In relation to the right to be equal and the right to be different, Christian and Muslim women in our research generally concluded in favour of difference and were supportive of gender equality in the sense of 'equal worth'. While some (mostly Muslim participants) were stuck in 'the Wollstonecraft dilemma', the majority talked about gender equality in ways that transcend the dilemma. As suggested, their talk seems compatible with contemporary political and legal efforts to negotiate an appropriate balance between equal status and gender differences. The tendency was in favour of gender equality as equal worth; maternal or relational equality was found to be the overall dominant discourse among Christian and Muslim women in our study. Their emphasis on family and motherhood and on care, love and respect in the descriptions of religious identities (see also Chapters 3 and 4) reinforces this interpretation of their talk about gender equality. The combination of gender as sameness and as difference allowed for equal rights in the public spheres of politics and work for most of the interviewees, but for different rights in the private sphere of the home for some of them.

6
Religious Women, Women's Movements and Feminism

Feminism isn't a word I particularly like.

(Research participant)

What do religious women think about women's movements?[1] What does feminism mean to them? How do they see women's position within their own faith and religious tradition, and how do they perceive feminist efforts to improve women's rights? Rather than neglecting the role of faith in women's lives, as mainstream feminism has had a tendency to do, this book is a contribution to making women of faith visible. Based on our comparative empirical research, we seek to address the relationship between faith and feminism and to illuminate some of the paradoxes and ambiguities involved.

In this chapter we outline our conceptual approaches to women's movements and feminism and discuss our findings: How do Christian and Muslim women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom conceptualize women's movements and feminism? Do they view these notions as resonant with their own faith and religious belonging? Three points are worth considering from the outset:

Firstly, there is the issue of why women are drawn to a major world religion at all, given that their institutions practise female subordination (Børresen 2004; Grung 2007; Avishai 2008). As Saba Mahmood argues, 'women's active support for socio-religious movements that sustain principles of female subordination poses a dilemma for feminist analysts' (Mahmood 2005: 5). Below, we will examine whether this also causes a dilemma for our Christian and Muslim interviewees.

Secondly, how and to what extent do women comply with their subordination, or resist and subvert it? Women may deny the existence of gender hierarchies in their religion, or they may accept hierarchies as justified by their religion. Otherwise, several strategies to cope with gender inequalities in religious institutions are available. One strategy is simply to exit

from religion, to choose secularism. This is not a relevant strategy for the women in our study, however, since the interviewees were selected because of their religious belonging. Another strategy is to revise or reform religion from within, for example by means of alternative readings of sacred texts and traditions, or by more radical initiatives to reconstruct religion (Hauge 1999; Tohidi and Bayes 2001; Ahmed 2011; Feldman 2011; see also Chapter 2). We agree with Saba Mahmood (2005) that secularism, or resistance against religion, is not the only true way of expressing women's agency. In addition to reform and reconstruction, piety may also be actively chosen. Mahmood reminds us that autonomy and liberty do not 'exhaust the desires with which people live in liberal societies' (Mahmood 2005: 14; see also Nussbaum 1999). The freedom to struggle for one's individual and collective interests, liberation and autonomy – which are among the core issues of women's movements and feminism – is not the only aim of human life.

Thirdly, why have (Western) mainstream feminist movements and feminist theory tended to marginalize religion? Unlike the first wave of feminism, which was very much aware of the crucial roles played by women of various religious belongings, Ann Braude (2004: 569) argues that religion has been left out of the history of second-wave feminism. To what extent this is true for Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom needs to be explored further, but, independently of this, we believe that Dubravka Zarkov (2015: 5) is generally correct in observing that '(…) mainstream Western feminism has to a large extent adopted secularism. Not surprisingly, given the sexism of official religious doctrines and institutions'. But as discussed elsewhere in this book (in Chapters 1, 2 and 4), a feminist insistence on secularism has consequences, including the potential sidelining of religious women's interests. It also means, as Zarkov argues,

> (…) that feminist interpretations and appropriations of Christian religious texts, while having a long history in the West, have been marginalized within secular feminism. Similar happened with the role of faith in women's everyday life: often ignored, even more often seen as a symbol of traditionalism and backwardness, an obstacle to emancipation, and seldom recognized as an inspiration in women's struggle for social justice and women's rights.
>
> (ibid.: 5–6)

The chapter has five sections. In the first section, we outline our conceptual approaches to women's movements, feminism and religion and briefly describe the global context. The second section presents and discusses findings on how the Christian and Muslim women in our study talk about women's movements and feminism. Three types of discourses about women's movements emerged among the interviewees: one of 'strong

embracement' of women's movements, one of 'contingent recognition' and one of 'rejection'. Next, we analyse how the research participants talk about feminism and discuss the four types of discourses about feminism that emerged: an 'anti-feminism' discourse, a 'pro-feminism' discourse, a 'mixed feeling' discourse and a 'post-colonial discourse'. These discourses will be discussed below. In the two following sections, we discuss how Christian and Muslim women relate actions and ideas from women's movements to their own faith traditions, before moving on to the concluding section.

Conceptual approaches to women's movements and feminism

In the previous chapter, we explored how religious women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom talk about gender equality. Despite various interpretations of the term, we found the notion – mostly perceived as equal worth or relational equality – to be widely used and accepted as a legitimate aim by our research participants. We did not expect this to be the case with the terms 'feminism' and 'women's movements', which will now be in focus. We take 'gender equality' to be a broader and less contested term than 'women's movements' and 'feminism'. Gender equality is well established in mainstream politics in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, institutionalized in anti-discrimination policies and widely accepted at least formally. Contemporary anti-discrimination policies refer to the status and inclusion of more social categories than women/gender (e.g., sexuality, ethnicity), so-called intersectionality. The very notion of intersectionality is a feminist invention, but the raison d'être for women's movements and feminism are women's issues and interests. Moreover, women's movement organizations are not obvious and inescapable partners in governmental policymaking processes.

'Women's movements' and feminism

Different understandings of the concepts of *women's* and *feminist* movements have been discussed for some time in feminist scholarship (e.g., Cott 1987; Offen 1988; Dahlerup 1998; Lønnå 2004). 'Women's movements' generally refer to political mobilization aimed at improving women's lives, and it is sometimes used interchangeably with 'feminist movements' (Katzenstein and Mueller 1987; Gelb 1989, 2003; Kaplan 1992; Mazur 2002; McBride and Mazur 2010). The notions of 'feminism' and 'feminist' are, however, both loaded and contested and may intuitively be associated with negative images and stereotypes (McBride and Mazur 2008; Redfern and Aune 2010; Walby 2011). In line with many scholars who distinguish between women's and feminist movements,[2] we find a distinction to be necessary. Analytically, we prefer to see feminist movements as a sub-movement of broader women's movements, characterized by a distinct

power perspective on gender and seeking to actively advance the status of women and to contest gender hierarchies, patriarchy and women's subordination to men. The extent to which a movement is feminist is an empirical question depending on how feminism itself is defined and operationalized, which is not the aim of our study (see, however, Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa 2012, where we discuss ethnic majority–minority relations within contemporary women's movements in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom). Our current concern is to explore how Christian and Muslim women talk about women's movements and feminism; if they generally regard them as the same phenomenon or if they make distinctions; and whether they identify with feminism or not.

Although much of current gender struggles continue to take place within workplaces, families and intimate relationships, there are thousands of active women's organizations at trans-national, national, regional and local levels throughout Europe that seek to improve women's lives and prioritize women's issues (Outshoorn 2010). Like the women's movements of the 1960s and 1970s (Lovenduski 1986), they do not appear with a unified and coherent voice but are characterized by a multitude of ideologies, tactics and strategies. Women's movements' activism is displayed in a variety of forms, at different levels and in several spheres, including the family, couple relationships, work and politics. We have not asked our research participants about membership or engagement in specific organizations, campaigns or issues, however, but have posed open questions about women's movements and feminism.

Feminism

Feminism is an honorary notion to some people and a term of abuse to others. According to Karen Offen (1992: 72–73), the origin of the term is unknown, but it was not widely used before the 'early 1890s, and then principally as synonym for women's emancipation'. Hubertine Auclert was the first woman in France to declare herself a 'feminist' in 1882 in her journal *La Citoyenne* (ibid.: 72) – and the term soon travelled to both Great Britain and Spain. As noted by Offen, exclusionary definitions immediately emerged: 'By 1900 a veritable taxonomy of self-described or imputed feminisms had sprung into being, such as: "familial feminists", "integral feminists", "Christian feminists", Socialist feminists', "radical feminists" and "male feminists" among others' (ibid.: 73). In her classic book *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, Alison Jaggar (1983: 5) mentions that the term 'feminist' referred to one particular group of women's rights advocates when it travelled to the United States, 'namely that group which asserted the uniqueness of women, the mystical experience of motherhood and women's special purity'. Today, she claims (in 1983), it is 'commonly used to refer to all those who seek (…) to end women's subordination' (ibid.: 59). In contemporary religious contexts, there are terms such as 'Catholic feminism'

in Spain, 'Anglican feminism' in the United Kingdom and 'Christian feminism' in Norway. 'Muslim feminism' is also emerging in these contexts (see Chapter 1), but this has not had much to do with the 'second-wave feminism' and women's movements that rose during the 1960s and 1970s in the three countries. In the Islamic contexts, 'feminism' is also applied in various ways, such as 'Islamic feminism' (Badran 2002; Moghadam 2002), 'Muslim feminism' (Mir-Hosseini 2011) and 'pro-feminism' (Wadud 2006; see also Seedat 2013 for a critical discussion of Western feminists' appropriation of Muslim women's equality work).

The notion of 'women's rights' is, however, older than the term 'feminist'. Its origin in the Western world is often associated with the harsh gender debates that took place during the French Revolution and to publications such as the *Declaration of the Rights of Woman* by the French Olympe de Gouge (1791) and *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* by the English Mary Wollstonecraft (1792) (Lovenduski 1986; Offen 2000). According to Ellen Dubois (1991), the notion of women's rights was an aspect of utopian socialism and focused on economic rights, especially for married women between the French Revolution of 1789 and the revolutions in Europe of 1848. The idea of 'political equality' – with suffrage as a core demand – emerged around 1848. Dubois describes demands for political equality as a way to express women's wish for autonomy from men in general as well as from the family (ibid.). The Woman's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, USA, in 1948, inspired by the anti-slavery movement and by Quaker women, was yet another milestone in women's movements. Women's literary salons, such as The 'Bluestockings' in England during the 1750s (Jungschleger 1987), were forerunners, and labels such as 'suffragists' and 'suffragettes' were used during the long struggle for women's rights to vote (Dubois 1991) – all of them contested labels.

From a contemporary viewpoint, 'feminism' has negative connotations in the public at large and new terms pop up in efforts to remedy its bad reputation. Alternative words are useful whenever a person wants to signify 'feminism' without resorting to the 'F-word' (Redfern and Aune 2010: 3). Sylva Walby claims that the term 'feminism'

> is a signifier of something very particular and comes with additional meanings attached, which many seek to avoid. It has acquired connotations of separatism, extremism, men-avoiding lesbianism. This narrowing of the term is partly a product of hostile opposition, in which feminism is caricatured and ridiculed in segments of the media.
>
> (Walby 2011: 3)

Moreover, as Redfern and Aune argue, '(…) [W]omen know of, and are grateful for, the opportunities feminism brought women (…) But women cannot always translate this historical awareness into concrete support for feminism

(…)' (Redfern and Aune 2010: 8). In a Muslim context, 'feminism' is a problematic term also because of its troubled history of colonial 'civilizing' practice in the non-Christian world (Seedat 2013).

Religion and feminism

In her discussion of the general lack of attention to religion in feminist scholarship, Ann Braude notes that scholars have long 'viewed gender consciousness born of religious belief and experience as a historical precursor of the first women's rights movement' (Braude 2004: 569). Similarly, Line Nyhagen Predelli states that in Norway, the women's missionary movement was the first and largest women's movement in the 19th century, but 'missionary feminism' has been overlooked in feminist studies (Nyhagen Predelli 2003). Inspired by these and other studies that bring religion and feminism together (see Chapter 2), we asked Christian and Muslim women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom how they understand women's movements and feminism. With the 'return of religion' in the public sphere globally (Mendieta and Vanantwerpen 2011; Furseth 2015; see also Chapter 2 for a critical discussion of this idea), this is an urgent issue, not least for Muslim women who have to carry most of the burden of the stereotype of obedient, oppressed women of faith (Es 2015).

Are religion and feminism inherently incompatible, as suggested by 'hard' secular feminists like Sheila Jeffreys (2012)? This depends on one's definition of feminism, on one's approach to 'religion' (e.g., via its institutionalized forms versus religion as 'lived'; see Chapter 2), and also on the particular religious interpretations that are considered (gender conservative versus gender progressive) and the particular faith groups in question. As Hauge (1999) states, the relationship between religion and feminism is never an unproblematic one because theology and religious doctrines are distinguished by androcentric thoughts and practices. However, as we noted in Chapter 2, individuals are not simply or only living their religion as it has been formally prescribed or transmitted by religious institutions (Ammerman 1987, 2007; Hall 1997; Orsi 1997, 2003; McGuire 2008; Neitz 2011). Everyday forms of religion are largely lived and practised outside institutional contexts, and religious practices are 'neither utterly individual nor strictly defined by collective tradition' (Ammerman 2014: 290). We also agree with other scholars[3] that religion, despite its institutional attempts to control women, contains a possibility for women to carve out autonomous space as well as a distinctive gendered voice for expressing spirituality (see also Chapter 5). The expression 'The Scripture alone' (*Skriften alene*) is not tenable, because the Holy Writ is always and inherently ambiguous. This means that Muslim and Christian women may find or invent alternative interpretations and practices (Nyhagen Predelli 2004; Afshar 2008; Grung 2011; Larsen 2011a, 2011b; Taj 2013). Religious groups and movements, as part of broader social movements, are not necessarily conservative (unlike, for instance, the Catholic

Church in Spain during the Franco regime). Religious groups may also promote change (Nepstad and Williams 2007; Aune and Nyhagen 2016), as seen, for instance, in the mosque movement in Egypt (Mahmood 2005) and among liberation theologians in Latin America and elsewhere.

Neither Christian nor Muslim women are unpermeable to women's movements and feminist demands. A qualitative study on Christian and Muslim women in the United States by Saba Rasheed Ali and colleagues (Ali et al. 2008) found a complex relationship between feminism, gender roles, culture and religion. In their study, the majority of the Muslim women reported that their religion supports feminist principles and identified themselves as feminist, while the Christian women were less willing to endorse the feminist label. In our research, we examine how Christian and Muslim women in Europe relate to feminism and women's movements.

The global context

Religion, gender equality and feminism are hyper-visible issues on the contemporary global political agenda. Issues of sexuality and reproductive rights – not least women's control over their own bodies – cause profound disputes between relatively liberal and relatively conservative groups. Decisions made at the UN International Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995 (and the previous Women's Conferences in Nairobi 1985, Copenhagen 1980 and Mexico City 1975), as well as the Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993, and the Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994, prompted Pope John Paul II to initiate an alliance of conservative Catholic and Muslim groups (Bayes and Tohidi 2001). The Catholic-Islamic Commission for the purpose of fostering interfaith dialogue was established in 1995, followed by various campaigns initiatives (ibid.). The alliance of conservative religious groups is based on a religious conviction about fundamental gender difference and gender complementary: the firm belief that women's main place is in the (heterosexual) family as a mother and wife, and that women have no right to control their own bodies. Campaigns by conservative religious stakeholders to influence the UN Beijing + 5, 10 and 20 conferences have been based on a version of the 'equal worth' interpretation of gender equality and by placing human dignity before human rights. Conservative Christian and Muslim groups agree on the necessity to control women's sexuality, gender segregation and hierarchy, and a ban on women priests (Tohidi and Bayes 2001). Various factors and events account for the conservative religious initiatives. Among other issues, Bayes and Tohidi (2001) argue that increasing economic inequality and a radical capitalism without ethics, as well as the feminization of global labour, have contributed to anti-Western, anti-modern forms of religious fundamentalism (see also Hawley 1994).

A number of groups and institutions are opposing the conservative religious alliance and advocate more rights for women, adopting the slogan

'human rights are women's rights'. Liberal religious institutions are joining forces with secular human rights activists and feminist activists. The World Council of Churches, for instance, promoted the *Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women 1988–1998,* which was an important step forwards for religious women's rights. This decade challenged churches not only to examine their structures, teachings and practices as they related to women but also to make a commitment to the full participation of women.[4] Themes such as women's participation in the work and life of churches, violence against women in church and society, and global economic injustice and racism as related to the lives of women were put on the agenda.

With the so-called return of religion to the public sphere (see Chapter 2 for a critical discussion of this idea), a number of scholars have taken an interest in religion, and the relationship between religious and secular institutions is being explored with new lenses (see, e.g., Cady and Fessenden 2013; Reilly and Scriver 2013). In this regard, Mendieta and VanAntwerpen (2011: 4) argue that 'The postsecular stance looks to religious sources of meaning and motivation as both a helpful and even indispensable ally in confronting the forces of global capitalism, while underscoring the crucial difference between faith and knowledge.' Religious citizens across the globe may have a key role in fostering solidarity and equal respect, and we share Habermas' (2011: 27) point that 'secular and religious citizens stand in a complementary relation' in democratic discourse – which also implies that they need to meet in order to learn from each other.

Leila Ahmed (2011: 14) argues that the broad public interest in women, Islam, the hijab and burka 'have energized religiously committed Muslim American women, precipitating them into active engagement with the topic of Islam and women's rights. In consequence, Islamic feminism is more lively today than at any other time in my own lifetime.' She describes recent challenges to core scriptural texts by believing Muslims, the demand for equal physical space for women and men in mosques and demands for equal rights to leadership as 'specifically American' (ibid.: 306; see also Hammer 2012). Whether we see similar demands among our interviewees will be examined below.

Religious women's understanding of women's movements

We asked religious women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom about their understanding of the importance of the women's movement in general; if the movement has had any effects on their religious tradition; and if they themselves had been influenced by it.[5] We also asked what the word 'feminism' meant to them, and if feminism, in their understanding of the word, is something that they identify with at all. A few participants (some of the Muslim women with a migrant background) were too unfamiliar with women's movements and feminism to reflect on these topics. Their voices

are not included in this section, but they indicate the Western entrenchment of the term 'feminism'.

We found three different discourses on women's movements: one of strong embracement, one of contingent recognition and one of rejection. The dominant discourse used by the interviewees portrayed the women's movement in positive terms, and associated it with work towards securing women's rights and gender equality. Across country and faith groups, the strong embracement discourse and the contingent recognition discourse represented the women's movement as having been important and included specific and concrete issues such as paid work and equal pay, suffrage and education, as well as efforts to enhance equal rights and opportunities generally. References to reproductive issues such as abortion, contraception, divorce, lesbians and childcare, and sometimes housekeeping and men's roles were mentioned less frequently and with mixed feelings within the contingent recognition discourse. The general emphasis on the importance of women's movements with respect to employment and equal rights complies nicely with Joyce Outshoorn's findings regarding the 'most frequently listed priorities of women's movements' (Outshoorn 2010: 154), where 'equality at work' and 'abortion and reproduction' are listed nearly twice as often as 'political representation'. Our interviewees deviate from Outshoorn's findings, however, in their infrequent associations to reproductive rights and also in their relative silence concerning (sexual) violence against women.

Embracing women's movements

The discourse of embracement emphasized several issues, clearly demonstrated in this statement by a Spanish Catholic woman:

> Well ... feminist movements, what they did was ... set in motion ... set in motion the machinery, which I actually don't ... That is to say, revolutions have never got anywhere, but in this case they set in motion a machinery and they stirred consciences, didn't they? (...) So ... and then there are women's movements which, what they are doing is ... helping dilute that defenceless situation in which certain women found themselves by reason of their sex. Because they help, they help women who previously had nothing to hold onto, to get what the law offers them, you know. That justice and that tendency towards equality. So they have achieved an improvement in social services, in many aspects; because before, if a woman requested anything anywhere they would ignore her, and now she also gets the attention she deserves, right?

Observe the reference to the past in the quote above; feminist movements were described as a bygone phenomenon and not a contemporary one. A second aspect is the phrase 'revolution', in combination with the term 'feminist

movement'. This alludes to something extraordinary and powerful, which in this discourse is rejected as not useful ('revolutions have never got anywhere'). Interestingly, however, the movement was still credited with two achievements. Firstly, 'a machinery' – this refers to the Spanish *Instituto de la Mujer* (Women's Institute), established in 1983 (Valiente 1995). In Spain, like in Norway, the United Kingdom and in numerous countries, women's movements have been actively engaged in demanding and/or moulding a 'gender equality machinery' or government structures that were formally charged with furthering women's status and rights (McBride and Mazur 1995, 2010; Valiente 1995, 2007). In addition to crediting the women's movement for 'the machinery', the movement was said to have 'stirred conscience', which implies cultural change, often thought of as the most important aspect of social movements (Mueller 1987; Dahlerup 1998: 103; see also Halsaa 2009).

The interviewee also made an interesting distinction between the 'feminist' movement and the 'women's movement', associating the women's movement not with revolutions but with 'helping dilute that defenceless situation', and with helping women who 'previously had nothing'. The feminist movement was associated with revolution, while the women's movement was linked to charity work. The connection between the women's movement and 'help to the defenceless' suggests a further link to Christian charity, which allowed for a positive assessment of the women's movement. The reference to women who 'had nothing' marked a differentiation between women in need and women at large, and distanced the interviewee herself from those women who were the subjects of women's movements' charity work.

In the last part of the citation, there were references to the law, to justice and to equality – three core notions in contemporary gender equality policies. The women's movement, in this discourse, was represented as having achieved improved social services for women, as well as increased respect and dignity for women: 'because before, if a woman requested anything anywhere, they would ignore her, and now she also gets the attention she deserves, right?' We also note the 'they', who would have ignored women before, is likely to refer to 'men', even though the term 'men' is absent in this discourse of embracement.

This statement about the women's movement is relevant with respect to Nancy Fraser's (2003, 2008) theory of justice (see Chapter 2), as it partly includes redistribution ('improved social services') and recognition ('the attention she deserves'). Fraser's third dimension – representation or participation – was not mentioned by this particular interviewee. It was, however, included by several participants who associate women's movements positively with women's suffrage and empowerment.

The next citation also emphasized the 'past' aspect of the women's movement and associated the movement with 'struggle'. In addition, she mentioned improved political and social rights. This interviewee explicitly stated

that the movement had not influenced her. Unlike the previous Catholic woman, this Pentecostal woman from Spain applied the term 'feminist' movement, which she cautiously embraced:

> Well, it hasn't affected me personally. I know that feminism, from a historical point of view, has been a movement in which women have fought for their place in society, that is to say, for the right to vote, to achieve social improvements. So as far as those aspects are concerned I agree with them. I agree with that feminist movement.

Unlike the two women referred to above, however, several interviewees explicitly affirmed that the women's movement had been important for them personally. One Anglican woman said:

> Oh absolutely because I think had they not had those fights in the past, then I wouldn't be where I am today with the opportunities that I have. So hugely important. I haven't necessarily been a part of those fights or battles, but I appreciate what they have done for me and what they allow me now. So I guess, truly grateful for them and aware of their importance and significance. I can sit here and talk about the importance of justice and what have you, because they have won for me all those other rights and opportunities. So you know, equality of education and everything yes. So very important.

In this statement, the women's movement was described in outright beneficial terms; it had been 'hugely important', and the interviewee was 'truly grateful'. Notably, this statement also included references to struggles (fights or battles) and applied the past tense ('what they have done'; 'they have won for me'). This interviewee, however, also mentioned the present (what they allow me to do now).

The dominant discourse of embracement generally tells a story of past achievements, without participation by the interviewees. Indeed, very few interviewees described themselves as having ever been engaged in the women's movement. A Shia woman in Spain remarked: 'Well, actually I admire those groups very much, but from a distance, because I have never participated.' Likewise, this UK Anglican woman had felt empowered by the movement in the 1960s and 1970s. She applied the term 'women's liberation', which was used at that time, and praised it for influencing women's lives and affording women more autonomy ('thinking for themselves'):

> Fairly because I was quite young in the '60s, I was 13 when the '60s started, 21 when they finished, and that was the time when women's liberation was happening in this country. So yes, I think it is important and it did make a big change in women's lives, women started thinking for

themselves and didn't have to refer to anybody else to say 'Is that alright with you dear', kind of thing. So I felt quite empowered by the women's movement, yes.

Women's movements in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, in this discourse, are complimented for facilitating processes of change; for new ways of thinking and acting; and for encouraging women's participation in society further. One Norwegian Lutheran woman said:

I've actually thought a lot about that [the influence of the women's movement], and I'm forever grateful! (…) If it weren't for the battle they've fought, I wouldn't be sitting here today. Many times I think that I'm too 'sleepy'. (…) Through the years I haven't been dependent on a man in order to make my life work, even if that was what I was brought up to believe. And all the opportunities that have been laid out in front of me; education, to be able to live wherever I want, to live alone, and to move here. […] It's the women's movement which has gone in front and opened up for all of this.

This statement was very positive about the women's movement and its effect on the personal level. The movement was associated with battle and fighting, for which the interviewee was thankful. In addition to education and opportunities more generally, this participant mentioned independence or autonomy from men and the possibility to 'live alone'. This was a significant remark, and a rare one, in the sense that it pointed to alternatives to motherhood and marriage as women's destiny.

Conditional recognition

The dominant discourse of embracement was often conditional, however, and more so among Muslim participants than among the Christian ones, and more among the Spanish interviewees than among those living in Norway and the United Kingdom. Muslim interviewees nevertheless also made assertions about the positive impact of the women's movement. In addition to issues mentioned by Christian women, Muslim women sometimes described different issues, such as the right to drive. A Shia participant in Spain related the women's movement to the Spanish gender equality institution, which she praised as having been crucial in

(…) helping women entrepreneurs, helping improve the status of immigrant women, or simply improving things in general, I think that's a good thing, because in Spain women have frequently been left behind. Due to…well, history, the course of history in Spain. So that kind of thing in particular is, I think, a good thing, and they have achieved many things.

Most of the Muslim women we interviewed had a migrant background, and they face more difficulties than 'native' (white) women regarding employment (Le Feuvre et al. 2012). The remark above about 'helping improve the status of immigrant women' was an exceptional one, however, and symptomatically came from a Muslim participant. Overall, there was an interesting silence about women's movements in relation to migrant women, which is in line with findings that mainstream 'native' or white women's movements are not perceived as attentive to black and migrant women's issues by black and migrant women (Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa 2012). The reference to Spanish history in the citation above probably hints at the Franco dictatorship (1939–1975), which delayed the broader women's movement mobilization and gender equality legislation in Spain (Valiente 2003; Threlfall 2005; see also Chapter 1).

A Sunni participant in the United Kingdom mentioned suffrage and childcare as two specific examples of the women's movement's accomplishments. She also explained how the movement had inspired her. She actually linked past movement achievements to the present situation, urging Muslim women to learn from 'these women in the past' to improve their own situation or that of their children:

> I think it has empowered my knowledge to be able to go to other women and say to them 'Look, these women in the past, they didn't have the voting rights we had today, they didn't have these facilities, they didn't have childcare, look what they achieved, why aren't you achieving, why aren't you doing something. If not for yourselves, for your children'. In particular, Muslim women, when you come to them with that tactic, make them think and they think for our children and for our daughters.

The discourse of embracement contained examples of the importance of women's movements on all social levels, from the individual, the community, the state and to the global. A Shia participant in Norway boldly linked the importance of the women's movement to the entire world:

> [The women's movement] is very important. I don't think women in the whole world would have been able to get as far as they are today without the women's movement. There are many, many people in the world who try to devalue women. I don't know where they take that from, but it has been different cultures. The developing countries are the worst.

The 'devaluation' of women, or misrecognition in Nancy Fraser's terminology, is part of the positive discourse about women's movements; in the citation above, the devaluation was related to 'culture' (not religion). This was a widespread claim among Muslim interviewees, which we relate to their status as a minoritized group surrounded by stigma (Es 2015). The

reference to 'developing countries' was ambiguous, but may function to draw a line between 'us' (Muslims 'here') and 'them' (Muslims 'there'), and was a counter-representation to the stereotypes of oppressed Muslin women (ibid.).

The selected quotes from Christian and Muslim women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom illustrate a widespread understanding of the importance of the women's movement. Women have been made aware of their rights; they have been empowered; they demand mutual respect. There is a strong agentic aspect to their discourse; women's movements are seen as having enabled women to think independently, and to make conscious and autonomous decisions with respect to education and employment and about where and how to live. Moreover, women's rights to equal pay, to open a bank account, to drive a car and, more generally, to equal opportunities, are clearly associated with the impact of women's movements.

The discourse of embracement, as established before, recognizes the importance of the women's movement. In addition to the rather strong embracement, there was also a conditional recognition discourse. The latter's praise of women's movements was mostly limited to achievements of the past, and by disagreeing with what they perceived as radical movement claims. Such claims were usually related to marriage and reproduction (e.g., divorce, abortion, lesbians). There was, however, no opposition to contraceptives. Women with a migrant background hoped for future gender equality achievements in their country of origin. There were hopes that Muslim states will start to understand religion in 'the right way' and that women's rights will be acknowledged.

A discourse of rejection

In addition to the (contingent) recognition discourse, we also identified a minor discourse of rejection of the women's movement. Some interviewees were strongly reluctant or outright negative in their understanding of the women's movement. For example, a Catholic participant in Spain associated the women's movement with extremism: 'No movement which is extremist is a good thing in my view. Because there is no reason. (...) My husband is not a male chauvinist, or if a man is male chauvinist you should act against it, but without taking it to extremes, without forming groups.(...).' This participant agreed that male chauvinism should be opposed, but she was negative to 'forming groups' – to collective struggle – and she perceived the women's movement as excessive. Interestingly, she turned one of the core notions of feminism – freedom – against women's movements:

> Well, all the achievements that are made in a somewhat forced manner I don't find them to be a ... free thing. The fact that a group of feminists or ... feminist movements have achieved many things. In terms of

freedom, you are more of a feminist than any of them. But, of course, I'm not in favour of feminist groups.

She actually described herself as 'more of a feminist' than movement feminists, because movement feminists, in her view, exaggerate and overdo things, and they also act 'in groups'. This probably contrasted with her perception of 'good Catholics' as moderate and humble. 'Acting in groups' to promote for instance reproductive rights go against the papal conservative gender norm prescriptions.

A discourse of rejection was also apparent in statements on the women's movement by a Sunni participant in Spain:

> I don't know if I am correct or not, but when I talk about women's movements, if I'm referring to an institution as such … Personally, when I say women's movement – and I'm saying this because I don't want to have anything to do with feminist movements because of the strong symbolic element in the role they have played in recent history. I believe we women should aim to, while acting as women, defend the right to the masculine nature of men. Because we celebrate the great role of being the potential educators of society, starting with the family society. And that is the great role reserved for women. In Islamic society, we do defend the fact that a woman – not that she should stay at home, but the extremely important value of women within the family. If she stays at home, well all the better. But that in itself is not a value exclusive to Islamic society. Any society where families are seen as a central element, considers that the first few years, especially the first few years of a child's life, are one of the [main tasks] of the mother.

This statement clearly disavowed women's movements, and belled the cat: The women's movement was associated with what Walby (2011: 4) has called 'liberating women from the domestic sphere', namely women's 'great role' in the family. Traditionally, in Western contexts, men and women were perceived as fundamentally different, and women's role was to take care of children, in particular young children. According to this interviewee, maternal womanhood is not only an Islamic norm but rather a core norm in any society where the family, and not the individual, is seen as the basic unit. Considering what conservative Christian and Muslim voices profess about the family and women's role as mothers and carers, this statement makes sense. The notion of motherhood as central to society was shared by many interviewees, but rarely in such an outspoken way as in the quote above.

How do religious women talk about feminism?

We have seen that most of the participants were of the opinion that women's movements have been important in society at large and also at the personal

level. These findings resonate well with those related to 'gender equality'. When asked about 'feminism', however, the interviewees' discourse changed notably.

In this section, we analyse the interviews according to analytical distinctions between various types of discourse about feminism: an 'anti-feminism' discourse, a 'pro-feminism' discourse, a 'mixed feelings' discourse and a 'post-colonial' discourse about paternalism towards Muslim women. The main finding is that the anti-feminism discourse was clearly dominant among the participants in our study. There was also a distinct pattern of conditional sympathy with 'feminism', in line with the 'mixed feelings' discourse. Both the pro-feminism discourse and the post-colonial discourse were very minor. These findings resonate well with generally negative connotations of 'feminism' present in society at large, as described earlier in this chapter (Redfern and Aune 2010; Walby 2011). They also resonate with the claim that feminism and faith have been disconnected or perceived as contradictory since the emergence of the radical part of the feminist movements during the 1960s and 1970s. The negative perception of feminism is also in line with post-colonial critiques, for example, of euro-centrism; for denying gendered racism; for notions of universal sisterhood; and for paternalizing Muslim women (Arnfred 2002; Oyewumi 2002; Mohanty 2003; Keskinen et al. 2009).

A 'pro-feminism' discourse

We start at the rather exceptional 'end' of the discourses, with the 'pro-feminism' discourse, which was not prominent at all among our interviewees. We believe one reason is related to where our interviewees were recruited. They were not selected from religious women's organizations, nor from among gender studies scholars, but from mosques and churches. A different recruitment strategy may have resulted in more feminist responses. A Norwegian Lutheran participant declared that 'Yes, I absolutely believe that I would call myself a feminist now.' As a self-identifying feminist, she was an exception among the women in our study. Liberation theology and its concern with marginalized groups were her points of reference, and she established an unusual connection between feminism and faith. She then continued:

> Women have been marginalized for such a long time. So, I would label myself feminist in the sense that I want all women to have a voice, and not to be something either below, subordinated or inferior, but of equal worth and equal – and have as much space in the centre as men.

This statement represented feminism as being opposed to all kinds of marginalization, and drew a parallel between liberation theology's focus on poor people and the feminist focus on women. Both liberation theology and feminism address marginalization processes and centre-margin issues.

The 'pro-feminism' discourse represented here was moderate, however: The claim was about gender balance, for all women to be able to speak and have their fair share of the space, in line with mainstream equal rights policies. No references were made to alleged 'excessive', 'militant' and 'radical' demands or strategies.

The dominant 'anti-feminism' discourse

The dominant discourse, however, was the 'anti-feminism' discourse, characterized by representations of feminism as 'extreme'. The interviewees did not want to be associated with feminism, because they perceived feminism as 'extreme', 'excessive' or 'immoderate' in various ways. The 'feminism' label was, consequently, to be avoided, to be kept at a distance. Also, feminism in this discourse was seen as a phenomenon without any impact on the personal level.

The dominant anti-feminism discourse was found across the three countries and the various faiths, but it was more often expressed by interviewees in Spain and the United Kingdom than in Norway, and most often found among the Pentecostal women. In this discourse, feminism was characterized as extreme due to its issues, strategies, aims and agents. Among the issues labelled as 'extreme' were abortion, divorce, lesbian rights and unrestrained equality. Examples of 'extreme strategies' included bra-burning women on the barricades, 'man-hating' women, women 'against men' and child-neglect. When the interviewees distanced themselves from what they described as the extreme aim of feminism, they also claimed that feminists wanted to 'put down men', or to 'dominate' men. Feminist women themselves were also portrayed as extreme; they were characterized as 'hard', as 'power-seeking', as 'unwomanly women', as 'lesbians' and as women who had 'lost their womanliness'. Within this discourse, feminists were seen as selfish; they were women who cared more for themselves than for their children and husbands; they lacked generosity; and they pursued their own interests rather than the best for the society or 'entirety'.

Sometimes, the interviewed women referred to how they perceived the representations of feminism in media and in the public at large. For example, a Shia participant in the United Kingdom made a strong comment about feminism. She said: 'The connotations are rather strident, [...], very sort of like out there and I am afraid you get a lot of connotations with lesbianism, which is something that is so abhorrent to us, we hate that so much, that would be a big thing.' This interviewee thus actively distances herself from both lesbianism, which she deplores, and feminism, which she portrays as having a too radical image. A Sunni participant from the United Kingdom had a more favourable view of feminism, but she also underlined that feminism receives negative comments in public discourse:

> I think in some ways our religion is very feminist, because it does promote women's rights and it fights for women's rights and it says, you know, you have these rights. It is very pro-women in that respect. But I don't know, feminism it has just got bad press I think, it has got a lot of negative connotations now.

The perceptions of feminism and feminists as being associated with 'abhorrent' issues such as lesbianism and having excessive and immoderate claims, aims and practices are also in line with widespread views on feminism (Walby 2011).

The anti-feminism discourse, which associates feminism with extremism, situates feminism as contrary to the faith-based norms and identities (discussed in Chapter 3) of most of the interviewed women. The religious women in our study emphasized love and prioritized tolerance and respect for gender differences rather than a struggle for women's interests. Their concern was with human relations, maternity and care for everyone rather than with individual autonomy (see also Chapter 4). The family, rather than the individual, was seen as the primary social unit. And their discourse of love and care represented motherhood as the most important task in women's lives. In contrast, the anti-feminism discourse that was dominant among our interviewees associated feminism with 'individualism' ('self-assertive', 'selfish' women), consumerism (career-oriented and 'money-seeking' women) and a lack of morality (childhood neglect, divorce, dominance).

The 'mixed feeling' discourse

'What does it really mean to be as feminist? Maybe one should question it, because, it is very diverse, the way one is feminist, right?' a Sunni participant in Norway asked. Her question illustrates that the term 'feminism' is actually contested, and that there are many different types of feminists. The variety of feminisms and feminists accounts for, at least partly, the 'mixed feeling' discourse. Here, women positioned themselves between the pro-feminism discourse and the outright dismissal of feminism (anti-feminism). The 'mixed feeling' discourse opened up for more diverse and nuanced views on feminism. It acknowledged that some women 'out there' are actually struggling for 'us' and did not limit feminism to 'selfish' activities. Rather than simply dismissing the 'excessive' measures associated with feminism, this discourse included the inclination to agree that 'immoderate' or 'extreme' demands and strategies were at times necessary in order to change society. Some of the interviewees referred to 'other women' being more feminist than they were, thus indicating a continuum of more or less feminism. One woman, a Shia participant in Norway, refrained from self-labelling as a feminist because she has not 'spoken out and demanded', and she could not compare herself to women who were actively demanding women's rights.

She laughingly labelled herself a 'feminist light'. We interpret this to indicate a feminist who prefers moderate means in order to implement modest reforms and aims. A Norwegian Lutheran participant responded somewhat similarly when she explained why she was not self-labelling as a feminist: 'I associate "feminist" with someone who fights for women's rights in all areas, and I don't feel that I fight for women's rights in all areas.' Similarly, an Anglican interviewee in the United Kingdom stated:

> Because, I am kind of saying, you know, I am not burning my bra, I am not what have you. And yet, on the other foot in so many ways, actually I am, because I rejoice in what I am able to do and allowed to do and what I am, and what my other women do. And by the nature of the fact I am a woman, I guess I do identify with it. It is tough, I hope this is useful [...].

These quotes indicate that 'real' feminists are women who actively speak out and fight hard for all sorts of issues in order to achieve justice. Compared to such activist women, the 'mixed feeling' discourse was spoken by women who would not call themselves 'feminists' because they identified as being too passive or too moderate – but they still sympathized with feminist demands. They often articulated mixed feelings and views on feminism. For example, a Norwegian Sunni participant said:

> I am in support of women's rights, but I feel that I am a feminist within my own frames. I never want to think that anyone should step on women, and then men should abuse them, but I work within certain limits. But there are some feminists who don't see any limits, but they go beyond them and just scream out that we want to do this and that. I feel that it is extreme. There are negative associations with that word, but I would like to fight for women's rights, put it like this. Feminism has negative associations, I don't like that.

This participant, like many more in our study, supported women's rights and was in favour of women's struggle against injustice – but did not identify with feminism or with feminists. What most interviewees wanted was for women to be recognized as equally worthy – but they did not see this aim as feminist. Generally, in their talk, they associated feminism with both relational and individual feminism (Offen 1992; as described in the first part of this chapter), but their emphasis on motherhood, family and gender difference makes us conclude analytically that their perceptions belong to relational feminism and that they relate mainly to one of the historical strands of feminism (relational feminism versus individual feminism) and thus have shrunk the notion of feminism. They equalled feminism to the individual-oriented equal rights version of feminism that has been most concerned with liberating women from the kitchen and the family. Their

mixed feelings were related to the fact that they had not (fully) appropriated the alternative, relational or maternalist version of feminism, which prioritizes the conditions of women as mother and aims to protect and enhance women's position in the domestic sphere (Walby 2011: 4).

A post-colonial discourse about the paternalism towards and 'othering' of Muslim women within white, Western middle-class feminism (Oyewumi 2002; Mohanty 2003; Mulinari et al. 2009) was barely spoken by the interviewees. A Sunni participant in Norway, however, made this statement when asked if she identified with feminism:

> (. . .) Without generalizing, I guess I feel that some call themselves feminists without knowing exactly what they are doing. (. . .) That maybe they pity other women too much! But STOP! That's how I feel then. It's kind of: 'Listen up, things have happened and we're here to fix this mess'. I think that's kind of weird. (. . .) For instance feminists who want to 'save'. . .there has been a tendency that they want to 'save' women wearing a hijab. I think that's completely wrong! But like I said, one defines feminism in regard to where you are. If you don't understand that a woman wearing a hijab can be a feminist, for that matter, then you have misunderstood things. That's how I feel.

The interviewee addresses the relationship between women, and, like in some of the previous representations cited earlier, feminists were perceived as women who aim to 'help' other women. The difference is that this Sunni Muslim woman did not find the feminist 'pitying' of other women as appealing. She saw this wish to 'fix the mess', not as a matter of morally acceptable economic charity, but as a cultural insensitivity and even injustice, and she represented (some) feminists as degrading Muslim women. She resisted their perception of the hijab as a sign of submission and argued that women who wear hijab can be feminists, in line with Ahmed (2011) and others.

Women's movements and Christian communities

We have established that most of the interviewed women, both Christian and Muslim, had mixed or negative attitudes towards feminism. However, they described the women's movement as important, and several participants also recognized the positive impact of the movement on their personal lives. In this section, we present findings that highlight how Christian women relate actions and ideas from women's movements to the ways in which gender relations have developed within their own religious communities, while the next section discusses how Muslim women view women's movements in relation to their own faith tradition and religious community (see also Chapter 4).

Although only a few of the interviewees associated the women's movement with their own religious community, some of them underlined that religious communities are not isolated from the rest of society. As one Norwegian Lutheran interviewee put it, '[…] the religious tradition is not "a closed room" in a society'. One example was that women can perform the same tasks as men in the Lutheran Church, and this was seen as a result of the women's movement's effort and consciousness-raising. Women from the Lutheran Church of Norway exemplified this claim by referring to women's rights to become priests since 1961,[6] and since 2006 also bishops. The Church was described as a potential counter-culture in relation to the mainstream culture. Another Lutheran interviewee pointed out that there are strong women inside the Church, and admitted that what happens outside the Church has helped improve women's position in the Church. She thus recognized the impact of the women's movement: '[…] I think the women's movement has made society as a whole and also Christian women ask: "why do we make coffee, serve cake and smile and look cute, while the men are deciding everything for us?" I think it made women asking questions'.

Some Christian participants from the United Kingdom also argued that the women's movement has facilitated recognition of the competencies and capacities of women of faith, resulting in the removal of barriers that have prevented them from holding some positions in the Church. The Church of England was used as an example where women have been given additional roles. Some of the Anglican participants also highlighted the role of women priests as an example of the impact the women's movement has had in supporting women obtaining more prominent roles in the Anglican Church. One Anglican said:

> I suppose it has in some way, certainly in the Anglican Church, women have started to play a bigger role and taken more positions of power, so to speak. In other faiths obviously that has always happened. If you are looking specifically at the Church of England then yes, I would say it would have made a difference.

Another Anglican participant gave a different example of the impact of the women's movement on the church, mentioning the ordination of women:

> The women's movement, well in a way yes, with the ordination of women yes. But then again you had a very extreme group that put a lot of the clergy off, they went a bit too far. But, you know, you do get the fanatics that do spoil any proper issues. But I think that the genuine ones, they have sort of chipped away and they have got their voice heard. And now we are getting more and more women Ordinates which is good, which is good.

This participant made a distinction between a 'very extreme group' and 'the genuine ones', crediting the latter with achievements and dismissing the first, in line with the 'mixed feminism' discourse.

Some interviewees found it difficult to recognize that women's movements had any impact on their religion. A Spanish Catholic participant acknowledged that 'the value of individuals' had been enhanced – also within the Catholic Church:

> Well, feminist movements have done a lot across society, not so much the Catholic society or religious societies. In other words, in lay society many things have been achieved, including women's right to vote, their right to open a bank account without their husband coming into it. That has been the work, if you like, of feminist movements. I believe that enhances the value of individuals today, the value of individuals within my religion as well as any other. There are other things that I'm not in favour of, such as, for instance, one thing that I believe feminists proudly proclaim or are the standard bearers of, which is abortion, or separations between couples. There are things I am against, or drastically against, but others I do consider positive.

The comment that she was 'drastically against' abortion and divorce speaks directly to a fundamental contrast between the Catholic Church as an institution and the feminist movement. The Catholic Church bans abortion and divorce, whereas the feminist movement demands civil, bodily and reproductive rights for women. Like many Muslim women and some of the Pentecostal women in our study, this Catholic woman agreed with conservative religious norms. But she did not necessarily support the idea that a woman has a duty to remain in a violent marriage, or that motherhood is her only important role, or that women should be excluded from ordination.

Pentecostal churches have different and varying practices concerning women's formal inclusion in leadership positions. An interviewee from Norway explained that her congregation had been through a process where they had accepted men and women as equals, and she thought that the women's movement had an impact on the congregation. She did not personally relate to women's movements, but she nevertheless acknowledged that it had been important:

> But I see that it [the women's movement] has influenced society, and probably churches and congregations as well. Concerning female priests and everything. It is obvious that the women's movement has stood as a wall behind, I think, and so the changes in society have been introduced, and there have been front-fighters in the background, for sure.

A Pentecostal interviewee from the United Kingdom stated that things have changed in her congregation. Women's participation has become more visible and acceptable, and women are no longer only preaching to other women but also to gender-mixed audiences. Activities in which women were previously engaged behind the scenes in the Church are now more centrally placed. She explained that women have always taught the Bible, but to other women and children, and not to the entire, gender-mixed congregation:

> There would have been women [previously] who understood the scriptures as well, but they just would have used their gifting in a more low key way. Whereas today, women are getting a chance to actually use their teaching gifts in a more mixed setting or in a more high profile.

Women's movements and Muslim women

Like the Christian interviewees, the Sunni and Shia Muslim women in our study also underlined the important role of the women's movement in advancing women's rights. But in contrast to the Christian interviewees, they often applied a 'religion is innocent' discourse, which represents religion – in this case Islam – as not guilty of doing harm to women's rights. If there are infringements, they never result from religion itself. This discourse was dominant among Muslim women across the three countries. For example, a Sunni participant in Norway argued: 'My religion has originally given women many rights. It says so in the Qur'an. But it's a male-dominated society, right?' Several interviewees elaborated how women's rights were expressed and respected in the sacred texts of Islam, but for various reasons they had been somewhat lost over the years because men, and/or the culture, did not follow the Qur'an the way they were meant to do. Within this discourse, the women's movement was represented as having contributed to rediscovering women's rights. Another Sunni woman in Norway explained:

> It [the women's movement] has been important. [...] Women work more now than they used to. In general, women have advanced in society. Maybe it wasn't like that earlier. And that's important! [...] But I also find it interesting to look at Islamic history, in comparison, to look at the women's movement and women's right to vote and so on. But then I think that all those rights are actually there originally [in Islam]. There hasn't been a women's movement in Islam, you might say. One hasn't demanded those rights. But in my opinion they *are* there. Women do have the right to vote and so on. [...] Maybe these rights have disappeared, maybe they have been misused, but in a way they *are* there. For instance when you talk about women and education, Muslim women and education, some might question that. But then I think about the Prophet's wife who was a business woman. [...] Nobody questioned her right to have

an education. [...] So I feel that those rights have been gone and then suddenly they are coming back. Maybe in connection with the women's movement? That maybe those rights in the religion haven't been made visible or people don't know about them or . . . well, I don't know.

Women's rights 'are actually there originally', according to this interviewee. In the 'Islam is innocent' discourse, innocence was established by reference to historic women figures, such as Aisha, a wife of the Prophet who according to the tradition was a learned woman who compiled *hadiths*, and Fatima, a daughter of the Prophet who claimed land and challenged male religious leaders. In the quote above, Khadijah, the first wife of the Prophet and a businesswoman, was mentioned as proof of Muslim women's original rights to education and paid work.

We interpret this discourse of innocence in the light of Muslim women's minoritized position in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom. The minority position implies that the majority population, including the researchers in our study, are taken to lack elementary knowledge about Islam, and some of the interviewees were eager to explain their religious norms and doctrines to us, the non-Muslim researchers. It is also not surprising that Muslim women mention negative connotations and the 'bad press' argument. There are negative stereotypes of Islam throughout the mainstream press in Western, non-Muslim countries (Bangstad 2015; Es 2015; Furseth 2015), and alleged misogynist gender practices associated with 'Muslims' are often discussed in public media. This was likely to encourage Muslim interviewees to explain, protect and defend their religion from any assumed or real attack and accusation. In their representations, Islam already supports (and always has supported) gender equality and women's rights. We never had any similar comments about the origin of Christianity from the Christian interviewees. They were more likely to accuse male dominance explicitly and to describe strategies for change – such as reinterpreting texts and revising traditions.

Some of the Muslim interviewees also argued that the women's movement has had a positive influence on their mosques (see also Chapter 4). Sunni interviewees in Norway described their mosque as 'not conservative' and as a site where they had organized seminars about women's rights and about womanhood. They also talked about a new generation of Muslims in Norway, where girls and boys respected each other and shared responsibilities equally. If women are beaten by men in their family, some interviewees explained, the women know where to turn to for help. Also, the women's organization in the mosque participated in demonstrations for women's rights and campaigned for women's right to wear the hijab.

Some of the interviewed Shia women suggested that the women's movement has had an indirect effect on their lives. For example, one participant had been influenced by the women's movement due to her growing up in

the Western society: 'My daily life would probably have been different if it wasn't for the women's movement.' She also pointed to the situation in her country of origin, where the leaders recently had reinterpreted parts of the Qur'an in a more women friendly way and had given women more rights. This interviewee did not know if that was because of the women's movement, but in her opinion the movement had affected society, which in turn had influenced the religious leaders.

Several Muslim women forwarded the view that any changes in gender relations, such as women participating in the labour market or the quest for gender equality, must not be interpreted as changes in the religion per se. For example, in response to the question of whether the women's movement has had any effects on her faith, a Shia woman from the United Kingdom stated:

> Affected Islam, not in, not in, I don't think so. Not unless of course those who sort of just look in one direction and say, women have to sit at home and don't do anything. I guess for those it could, but what about the right of the woman and again it is the men who would say that. The woman should be just as free as men, just as equal. Because again I believe, I mean that really comes to me that we are all, each individual is God's creation so God has something there.

At first glance, this statement indicates the opinion held by several interviewees that Islam is a constant and that nothing can or ought to change Islamic laws. But the interviewee then suggested that the women's movement may have had an impact on Muslim women's right to work. She presented this as a minor issue, applicable only to 'those who sort of look in one direction' and would deny women the right to work. Employment was in fact a recurrent theme when the women's movement was discussed, across countries and faith groups. Despite the marked emphasis on the family and women's roles as mother and wife, most of the Muslim and Christian women in our study were in favour of women's right to paid work – usually on the condition that they could also dutifully perform their obligations in the home.

Women of faith, women's movements and feminism

The interviewees talked about women's movements in a number of ways, and we differentiated between a discourse of embracement, a discourse of contingent acknowledgement and a discourse of rejection. Most of the interviewees stated that the women's movement had been important in changing society, and they mentioned issues such as education, paid work, equal pay and political rights. The significant contributions attributed to the movement were, however, often related to events of the past or events that had happened in distant places. There was also recognition among Anglican,

Lutheran and Pentecostal women that women's movements had improved reform efforts within religious communities and provided them with 'strong women'. Women's movements were also judged as conducive to the cause of allowing women to inhabit roles that were previously the preserve of men. Among the issues mentioned were ordination of women and the empowerment of women within the faith community. Muslim women did not relate the question of female imams to women's movements (see, however, Chapter 4). There were hesitant remarks about the need for a women's movement in contemporary societies, because gender equality was seen as more or less accomplished. The interviewees also described impacts of the women's movement on their personal lives, mentioning issues from the very practical and concrete, such as fair treatment of siblings during childhood, right to education, and economic independence – but they also referred to more abstract issues such as the freedom to think and express themselves, to be recognized and to be respected. Nancy Fraser's (2003, 2008) vocabulary of justice was implicitly applied, in particular the 'recognition' aspect. The interviewed women sometimes applied the terms women's movement and feminism interchangeably, but irrespective of the preferred terminology, they were generally positive to moderate claims and aims but outspokenly against any demands going beyond careful reforms.

The religious women in our study had generally not been involved in women's movement activities, and they did not identify as part of the women's movement. Some of the interviewed women looked upon movement activists as deeply engaged and involved in a broad range of issues, unlike themselves who had not been actively involved and therefore did not self-identify as part of the women's movement. Other interviewees disapproved of some or most of the aims, issues and strategies they associated with the women's movement. Clearly, they did not self-identify as feminists. The 'anti-feminism' discourse was dominant, with frequent remarks about the 'extremism' of feminism. The 'anti-feminism' discourse constructed feminists as women wanting to 'put down the men' or to 'be like men' – which can be seen in contrast to the interviewed women's religious norms of tolerance, respect, care and love, and with their conception of women and men as different. We found a minor 'pro-feminism' discourse, and also a minor 'post-colonial' discourse of critique of feminist paternalism, whereas the 'mixed feelings' discourse was more prominent but less so than the anti-feminism discourse.

Despite outright negative or ambivalent feelings, feminism and the women's movement were often said to have influenced religious communities in a positive way. Several interviewees also described how they themselves had been able to cope with negative practices in their religious communities because of the women's movement. Christian women across the three countries were less concerned with external accusations of gender hierarchies and inequalities within their religious tradition than were

Muslim women. Muslim women were more accustomed to hearing stereotypes about, and defending themselves against, the alleged submission of women to men within Islam. Unlike Muslim participants, who insisted on the innocence of Islam and accused 'culture' or men for causing any gender equality deficit, Christian participants generally did not make a distinction between 'original' or essential Christianity and contemporary practices. The exception was when Christian women supported a historically sensitive reading of passages in the Bible which they considered outdated in terms of how women were treated. This difference is likely to be related to their different status as majority and minoritized religious groups, and also to women's struggle within Lutheran, Anglican and Pentecostal congregations and their visible achievements.

The faithful women in our study generally did not consider themselves as part of the women's movement, but they appreciated movement efforts to improve rights, respect and recognition of women. Despite being supporters of gender equality, and of the women's movement's previous activities, the interviewed women were far from labelling themselves as feminists. The strong 'we' of religious women, that often encompasses all faiths, has a limit, and feminists are clearly outside of their 'circle of we' (Rupp and Taylor 1999; see also Chapter 3). Pushed to extremes, we suggest that the respect, tolerance, understanding and love so often invoked by the interviewees comprise men but exclude feminists. Religion is a resource for belonging, for moral guidance and for charity and solidarity – but feminism and feminists are perceived as adversaries of morality. In this sense, religion can be perceived as a barrier in relation to feminism.

7
Faithful Women: Lived Religion and Citizenship, Gender Equality and Feminism

We started this book by asking whether and how religion is a resource and a barrier to women's citizenship, perceived by religious women themselves and also by us as academic feminists. In our view, the feminist concern that women are drawn to religious traditions and institutions that practise gender inequality must be addressed via careful and contextual studies that involve the voices of religious women themselves. Do religious women comply with, resist or subvert gender inequalities within their own communities? How, and why? The raising of such questions suggests a focus on religious women's agency and submission and on gender equality and women's rights. In this book we have discussed whether and how religion is a resource and a barrier to women's citizenship through an exploration of how Christian and Muslim women in Europe live their faith in everyday life (Chapter 3), how they perceive and practise citizenship (Chapter 4) and how they view and relate to gender equality (Chapter 5) and to women's movements and feminism (Chapter 6). The questions we posed were: What do women of religious faith think about citizenship, and how they practise citizenship in their everyday life? What is the importance of faith in their lives, and how is religion bound up with other identities such as gender and nationality? How do religious women conceptualize 'gender equality', and what do they think about women's movements and about feminism? We addressed these questions through the lenses of religious women's lived citizenship, their lived religion and gender. Our book is first and foremost a contribution towards a feminist acknowledgement of the role that religious faith plays in many contemporary women's lives. But in this final chapter we also raise a further issue for feminist concern: Can religious and secular women find common ground in resisting neo-liberal policies that endanger women's welfare and well-being and undermine gender equality and women's rights?

Religion: A resource and a barrier

The answers we found are complex: for the Christian and Muslim women in Europe who participated in our study, religion is both a resource and a barrier to their citizenship; their identities are multi-layered, and for some religion represents a 'root reality' (Neitz 1987) while for others religion is more of a compartmentalized aspect of their identities; they think of citizenship as multi-dimensional and their conception of citizenship goes beyond status, rights and duties to include participation, belonging, love, care, tolerance and respect; Christian privilege is invisible and silenced while Muslim disadvantage is both visible and articulated; some want gender-equal opportunities within their religious communities while others accept lesser roles and spaces for women; they tend to emphasize 'natural' differences between women and men to justify different social gender roles and equal gender value rather than equal rights and opportunities; they view women's movements as having contributed positively to improving women's status in politics, work and education but are critical of women's movement claims related to abortion, divorce, lesbian rights and 'unrestrained' equality; and they are deeply sceptical of and also opposed to what they view as feminism's selfish, unwomanly, anti-men and power-seeking stance. How do we unpack and make sense of these findings, and what implications do they have for the relationship between religion, gender and feminism?

Religion is clearly a positive resource for the interviewed Christian and Muslim women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom. Religion is a 'meaning-maker'; it provides each of them with a sense of meaning in the world. For many, religion is a foothold and foundation in life which is constantly used to interpret and understand the world, while for others religion is a more taken-for-granted aspect that can be compartmentalized and drawn upon in times of need. Religion is, however, not only a meaning-maker and comfort to the individual; religion also has a strongly communal aspect and as such provides individuals with social identities, a strong sense of belonging to a community and opportunities for participation and citizenship practice. Through relations with others, religious selves and religious identities are formed, negotiated and changed at the individual and collective levels. The 'community' in question ranges from families, local churches and mosques, neighbourhoods and cities to nation states and global communities of shared faith. Religious women's identities are also multi-layered: they are shaped and negotiated not only via religion but also through national belonging, migration, marriage, motherhood, family, education and employment.

An ethic of love, care, tolerance and respect

The multi-layered identities of religious women are linked to their understandings of citizenship and how they live citizenship in everyday life.

The women in our study foreground identity, participation and belonging as important dimensions of lived citizenship, thus echoing feminist scholarship that goes beyond rights-based approaches to citizenship (e.g., Lister 2003; Siim 2007; Halsaa, Roseneil and Sümer 2012; Nyhagen Predelli, Halsaa and Thun 2012; Nyhagen 2015). Moreover, they conceptualize citizenship via an ethic of love and care, tolerance and respect that is rooted in their religious conviction but transcends religious difference. Christian and Muslim women in our study have in common a multi-dimensional understanding of citizenship that centres not so much on individual status and rights as on relational aspects of citizenship that invoke notions of caring for others and treating others with tolerance and respect. Their ethic of love and care, tolerance and respect is grounded in notions of what it means to be a good citizen, and being a good citizen is viewed as being a good Christian and a good Muslim. Lived religion and lived citizenship are thus deeply intertwined. Importantly, good citizenship is in principle available to all people of faith; it is not exclusive to good Christians or good Muslims; all good people of faith can be good citizens. In other words, the ethic of love, care, tolerance and respect provides commonality between people of different faiths. Some of the women in our study emphasize that this ethic can be rooted in either religious or secular conviction; whether you are a Christian, a Muslim, a Buddhist, a Jew, a Hindu, an atheist or an agnostic, you can live and practise good citizenship. In the conceptualization of good citizenship as universal, across faiths and none lies a realization that religious and secular ethics and values share much common ground. Religious and secular outlooks are not polar opposites; they are different but overlap. In agreement with Habermas (2011), we believe that secular and religious citizens should meet: 'For a democratic process the contributions of one side are no less important than those of the other side' (ibid.: 26), because 'secular and religious citizens stand in a complementary relation' (ibid.: 27) in democratic deliberation.

Citizenship: Moving beyond rights

Religious citizenship is, however, a notion fraught with tensions between the religious and the secular, between belief and non-belief, and between religious freedom and gender equality. When religious citizenship is simply conceived of in terms of religious rights (e.g., Hudson 2003; Permoser and Rosenberger 2009), or as an absolute, non-negotiable principle, other aspects of lived citizenship, including identities, participation, belonging, care and love, tolerance and respect, are being ignored. Our argument is therefore that rights-based approaches to citizenship are too narrow and that a broader approach must take a multi-dimensional view of lived citizenship (see also Nyhagen 2015). Moreover, the issue of religious privilege and disadvantage must be taken into account, as European states and citizens often and in many ways privilege Christianity while other religions, including Islam, are

disadvantaged, deliberately or not. Our study also suggests that religious privilege is largely invisible or taken for granted by adherents of the majority religion. The disadvantaged position of minority religions is also largely invisible to, or ignored by, adherents of the majority religion, while those who adhere to minority faiths are acutely aware of their faith's disadvantage as well as of the stereotyping and discrimination they and their fellow believers have to endure in European societies. The Muslim women in our study have experienced Islamophobia, discrimination, stereotyping and stigmatization in educational institutions, in the workplace, in city streets, on public transport, in public media and elsewhere due to their religion, migration status and gender. Their religious identities have been questioned and their religious dress has been ridiculed. Through such encounters in everyday life, Muslim women's sense of belonging is undermined, and their citizen rights are eroded. It is urgent that European states and civil societies address any constitutional, legal, financial and political privileging of Christian religion. Such a move would at least serve as a symbolic legitimation of equality between different forms of religion and belief, even though stereotyping and discrimination based on uninformed perceptions and prejudice may persist. To combat more entrenched forms of religious discrimination and disadvantage would require not only political change but also social and cultural transformations embedded in the values of recognition, participatory parity and socio-economic justice (Fraser 2008).

An interesting finding from our comparative research on Christian and Muslim women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom is that the three different country contexts and their respective religious regimes seem to have less significance for women's lived religious citizenship than the women's religious belonging to either the dominant religion of Christianity or the minority religion of Islam. The most obvious difference between the interviewed women, regardless of country, is that those who are Christian feel that their religious identities and practices are largely accepted by the overall society, while many of the Muslim women feel that their religious identities and practices are constantly questioned, stereotyped and stigmatized. While a few of the Christian women suggested that secular society may be critical of their religious identities, and a few (Pentecostals) have experienced marginalization in the past, the overall finding is that Christian women are mostly comfortable with living their faith and practising citizenship in everyday life contexts in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom. Muslim women in the three countries, however, share a sense of marginalization due to living in societies that (continue to) privilege Christianity in various ways and that afford inferior status and rights to minority religions, including Islam. Moreover, Muslim women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom share experiences of discrimination, stereotyping and stigmatization that have a detrimental impact on their lived religion and lived citizenship. Although the different national contexts provided

certain 'publicly available grammars' (Jouili 2015: 11), which meant that such experiences were often talked about in relation to being or not being perceived as sufficiently 'Norwegian', 'Spanish' or 'British', the difference in labels reflected the same experience of marginalization across the three countries. As noted above, there are, however, also similarities between the Christian and Muslim women in our study, pertaining to their views on and practising of citizenship. The identified ethic of care, love, tolerance, and respect was common to Christian and Muslim women in all three countries. Moreover, and as we will address further below, a majority of both Christian and Muslim women in our study talked about gender equality in the sense of equal status or value, coupled with the conviction that differences between women and men stem from nature and/or are God-given. Also, most of the Christian and Muslim women in our study are very appreciative of and actively engaged in their own religious communities. It is possible that our research design, including the relatively small size of our case studies, sampling decisions, recruitment and interview questions have had an impact on the finding that country contexts and religious regimes seem to mean less for women's lived religion and citizenship than their adherence to a dominant or a minority religion. Further, more detailed and larger qualitative studies are needed to explore these issues further.

Women's participation in religious communities

This book rose from a broad research project on the impact of women's movements in contemporary Europe (see Halsaa, Roseneil and Sümer 2012), in which we also studied how women of religious faith think about gender equality, women's movements and feminism. Religious freedom and citizenship within religious communities are fraught with tensions regarding women's status and gender equality, and religious women have a long history of battle over the place and authority of women within their own traditions. Much has been won, including the rights of Lutheran and Anglican women to be ordained as priests and bishops, but other challenges persist and various battles are ongoing in different contexts. The Catholic Church remains opposed to women's ordination. Pentecostal churches vary in whether they allow women elders and pastors. Mosques are highly gender-segregated spaces and tend to afford men more and better spaces than women. Muslim women are generally barred from preaching to gender-mixed audiences. Other religious communities also have barriers in place to prevent gender-equal status and treatment. A finding in our study, however, was that many women of faith, including Pentecostals and Muslims, are highly appreciative of opportunities for participation that do not directly challenge male religious authority and leadership.

There are clear barriers to religious women's citizenship both within and outside their own religious communities. Internally, such barriers include

women's lack of equal access to formal positions of religious authority in some contexts (e.g., as Muslim imams, as Catholic priests, or Pentecostal priests and elders) or continued contestations of such access by men (e.g., men who do not accept the leadership of women bishops in Anglican or Lutheran churches). Other internal barriers to citizenship for women include the absence of religiously consecrated spaces for women to gather, or small size and poor quality of such spaces (e.g., in some mosques), and gender-segregated worship. Moreover, religious justifications for women's primary role in the home and men's main role as provider are at times being used to deny women the right to gender-equal opportunities in the public sphere. Many religious women also experience barriers to equal citizenship from the overall society in which they live. Some feel that their religious identities are questioned by secular others and therefore avoid revealing their own faith. Others, and in particular Muslim women, suffer from prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination related to their faith, gender and immigrant backgrounds.

Sometimes, and in specific contexts, some religious women choose to mobilize against unequal gender arrangements within their own communities. As already noted, Lutheran women in Norway and Anglican women in the United Kingdom have successfully mobilized against their exclusion from positions of religious authority and have gained the right to become priests and bishops. Muslim women in various contexts have also argued for and achieved greater space in mosques, access to positions of leadership and greater acknowledgement of their role in religious socialization and community cohesion. For example, Muslim women in Norway and Spain have gained prominent leadership positions in gender-mixed organizations. But not all religious women demand gender equality within their own religious communities.

Gender equality: Difference and equal worth

The interviewed Christian and Muslim women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom took gender differences as their starting point when talking about gender equality. Gender differences were emphasized as normative as well as descriptive, and equal worth rather than gender equality emerged as the preferred notion among the participants. Within an overall discourse of gender equality as equal worth, four different perceptions of gender equality emerged: the perception that gender equality is impossible because of God-given prescriptions; gender equality as differentiation without hierarchy; gender differentiation in the family and equal opportunities in the public sphere; and gender equality as embracing difference. The dominant view on gender equality was more in line with the maternalist 'equal value' notion than with the liberal 'equality' notion of gender equality. Gender differences were conceptualized in various ways, however, as biological,

God-given and/or social, resulting in further nuances in their perceptions of gender equality. Some religious women (both Christian and Muslim) were comfortable with the notion that men have more authority than women and thus possess more decision-making powers. In their view, this does not mean that men are worth more than women; they are of equal value, but because they are viewed as created differently by God or by nature, they also have different capabilities which make them fit to inhabit different social roles within the family, in the workplace, in politics and in religious organizations and communities. A small minority of the women in our study view a gender hierarchy, where men in the last resort are in control, and women are submissive, as prescribed by God, and on this basis they dismissed the notion of gender equality. Another few women we interviewed view gender equality as already achieved, based on a notion of differentiation between women and men that celebrates gender difference without status hierarchy. In their view, women's maternal and caring capabilities come to good use in the public spheres of politics, religion, education and work. Other women endeavoured to reconcile women and men's differences with the notion of gender equality, but these women were 'stuck' in a discourse that posits equality and difference as fundamentally incompatible.

What emerges as a clear finding from our study is that many religious women think of gender equality first and foremost as the equal value or equal worth of women and men based on notions of gender differences, and not as equal status and equal opportunities based on notions that embrace equality and difference. Moreover, they perceive gender relations as based on God-given or biologically produced differences between women and men. Some women prefer gender relations to remain hierarchical (in a patriarchal sense), but most of our Christian and Muslim interviewees endorse gender equality without hierarchy. A majority of the women in our study supported gender equality as equal status while also embracing difference. They believed that women and men can and should take on whatever roles and activities they want to and have the skills for, in both the family and in the wider spheres of employment, voluntary work, politics and religion, and they also argued that gender differences should be acknowledged. Their view is compatible with contemporary political and legal efforts by CEDAW and national equality machineries to negotiate an appropriate balance between the right to be equal and the right to be different in order to achieve substantive gender equality (Hellum 2011; Hellum and Aasen 2013).

The different views we identified on gender equality afford different degrees of resonance with feminist activism and claims-making. In this regard, our analysis interrogates the unspoken or taken-for-granted assumptions about gender equality forwarded by equal rights feminists, while also highlighting the limitations of 'equal value' perspectives on gender relations. We need to ask what price either perspective has – for secular women and for religious women.

Women's movements and feminism

Although there are feminisms of various kinds within all religions, they were hardly visible among the women we interviewed. None of them declared that they were part of the women's movement or active in women's movements, and only very few self-identified as feminist. Overall, we identified three types of discourses about women's movements among the interviewees: one of a 'strong embracement' of women's movements, one of 'contingent acknowledgement' and one of 'rejection'. Most of the participants represented the 'contingent acknowledgement' discourse. We also identified four types of discourses about feminism: an 'anti-feminism' discourse, a 'pro-feminism' discourse, a 'mixed feeling' discourse and a 'postcolonial discourse'. The 'anti-feminism' and 'mixed feeling' discourses were the most prominent (see below, and also Chapter 6).

The ways in which our research participants talked about gender equality indicate some overlap between their discourses and feminist scholarship and activism. For instance, the religious women who celebrate gender differentiation and women's maternal roles both within and outside the home have much in common with maternal feminism. Those who embrace difference but also support gender-equal opportunities within and outside the home share common ground with both maternal feminism and liberal feminism. But issues such as abortion, divorce and sexual rights are likely to pose challenges to mutual respect and attempts at cooperation across strands of feminism and across religious–secular boundaries. More research is also needed on existing secular–religious alliances that seek to advance women's rights and gender equality (see, e.g., Bernstein and Jakobsen 2010; Snarr 2011; Rinaldo 2014). The Achilles' heel of broad women's rights coalitions, and feminist coalitions in particular, is related to three issues: reproductive rights, the emphasis on women as individual beings and not primarily as mothers and wives, and the conception of feminists as immoral and selfish. It is difficult to imagine a common platform between feminists who struggle for reproductive rights and women who condemn such struggles due to their faith. Maybe one should not even try. Moreover, some religious women simply do not prioritize gender equality, or do not have an interest in gender equality issues. Instead, their faith and belonging to a religious community take priority. For example, most of the Muslim women in our study are accepting of gender-segregated spaces in the mosque and of being prevented from preaching to women and men (see, however, Hammer (2012) on alternative Muslim voices). For the women we interviewed, it is important to actually have a space in the mosque where they can gather as women. They also choose to accept and submit to religious prescriptions that instruct only men to be imams. Some of them are critical towards what they see as men's patriarchal interpretations of the Qur'an and the hadiths and emphasize that Islamic religious texts support women's rights and women taking on

roles outside the home. Such women-friendly readings of the holy texts and traditions were shared by many of the interviewed Christian women. The Muslim participants also support Islamic family law, which states that men have a duty to provide for their families, while women have a duty to take care of the home. This does not mean, however, that they limit their activities to the home. Many of them are in full-time education and employment. We also want to issue a caution, as our interviews should be interpreted carefully and with consideration for relations between the researchers and the participants. As non-Muslim researchers, we are likely to have elicited more explanatory and also defensive descriptions of Islam than of Christianity, including comments about Islamic law.

Religion in context

Religion is not going away; contemporary European societies are characterized by both secularization and sacralization. In this book, we have taken a bottom-up view, centring on religion as it is lived and practised in everyday life. Rather than looking at religious institutions and their views on women's rights and gender equality, we have examined what religious women themselves say about citizenship, gender equality and feminism. We believe it is unhelpful to talk in general ways about whether or not religions are patriarchal. Religious institutions, leaders (who are most often men) and teachings may be patriarchal, but religious beliefs and practices must be studied in context in order to determine whether and how they are gendered. Many religious women and men support patriarchal teachings and interpretations of their religions, but many also believe in, actively support and practise gender-equal arrangements in their everyday lives. Gender inequalities remain a serious obstacle to women's welfare and well-being in both religious and secular contexts, and at local, national and global levels. Feminist scholarship needs to recognize and pay more attention to the contributions of contemporary religious women to struggles against increasing global social inequalities and persisting gender inequalities. It is possible for religious and secular women to find common ground in a critical resistance towards neo-liberal politics, neo-capitalism, globalization, climate change and environmental degradation. For example, feminist and religiously based social justice organizations in the United States work in coalition within the living wage movement (Snarr 2011). Another concern is the growth of religious fundamentalist movements that reject gender equality altogether and disregard women's rights. In democratic deliberation, we must also stop giving recognition and voice only to those who claim religious leadership the loudest and who condone gender injustices. As argued by Anne Phillips (2009: 37), 'religions most threaten gender equality when they are conceived of – and conceive themselves as – corporate bodies, capable of speaking with a unified voice'. Alternative voices that support gender equality from within

religious communities must also be recognized and afforded participatory parity. Moreover, secular women cannot speak on behalf of religious women, just as religious women cannot speak on behalf of secular women.

Limits to secular–religious dialogue and alliance?

As suggested earlier, it is possible that dialogue can foster understanding, collaboration and alliance across religious and secular divides. As we have shown, most of the religious women in our study recognize the impact of women's movements on women's status in education, work, politics, religion and the home. However, they tend to talk about women's movements as a phenomenon of the past, as something that has lost its relevance in contemporary society. The interviewed women acknowledge the achievements of women's movements on issues such as voting rights, educational opportunities, paid work and equal pay, but they are sceptical and even hostile towards women's movements claims concerning abortion, divorce, lesbian rights and 'unrestrained' equality. While there is scope for dialogue and for collaboration and alliance on issues such as persisting gender pay gaps, flexible working, contraception, childcare, parental leave and perhaps also domestic abuse and other violence against women issues, there seems to be less scope for dialogue and collaboration on issues concerning women's control over their own bodies (abortion), divorce and LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex) rights.

  A strong secularism among some feminist women and a strong antifeminism among some religious women continue to produce barriers to dialogue and to finding common ground for dialogue. An anti-feminist discourse was the most common among the religious women who took part in our study, while others imparted more mixed feelings about feminism. Only a small minority of the interviewed women took a pro-feminist stand. The anti-feminist discourse was found among Christian and Muslim interviewees across the three countries, but it was more often expressed by interviewees in Spain and the United Kingdom than in Norway, and most often by Pentecostal women. Feminism was viewed as extreme in its strategies, aims, issues and agents. Perceptions of feminists as extreme, as unwomanly and as selfish and power-seeking were widespread among the women we talked to. Such perceptions may be read in the light of existing stereotypes about feminist women, but most feminist women would not recognize themselves in such stereotypes. Moreover, the strong 'we' of the religious women we interviewed includes religious men, but it excludes feminists. In this sense, religion is a barrier to feminism. At the same time, strongly secularist feminist women portray religious women as submissive and as victims of patriarchal control (e.g., Jeffreys 2012), a stereotype that most religious women are unlikely to recognize. As Anne Phillips (2009: 55) counsels, religious and non-religious women are entitled to the same level of

respect: 'Those women who are not religious should not assume false consciousness or attribute victim status to those who chose to live their lives by religious precepts. Those women who are religious should not assume that the others lack ethical conviction or are slaves to a material culture.' For dialogue to be meaningful, secular feminists need to refrain from attacking 'religion' as such, including 'Islam' and 'Christianity', while religious women must abstain from stereotyping feminists as selfish, power-seeking man-haters.

From religious women's point of view, barriers to their citizenship are produced not only within religious communities themselves but also within an overall context of the society and the state in which they live. The privileging of majority religions and concomitant marginalization and disadvantaging of minority religions produce barriers to women's belonging and participation in society. Moreover, a strong secularism that disallows recognition and participatory parity for religious people in democratic deliberation supports further stigmatization, stereotyping and discrimination of religious women. In particular, many Muslim women in European societies suffer from prejudice and discrimination and are being triply marginalized due to their faith, migrant backgrounds and gender. Dialogue between religious and secular women could be based on religious women's emphasis on an ethic of care, love, respect and tolerance, and on feminist notions of intersectionality. For such dialogic encounters to be useful, feminists need to be able to communicate the moral and ethical dimensions of the feminist agenda and to convince religious women that secular women are not selfish and man-hating. Religious women need to communicate to feminists that their religious faith is freely chosen and that it has an important potential for solidarity. Moreover, while the interviewed religious women profess tolerance beyond their own religious faiths and thus include people of different religious faiths, and at times also people of no religious faith, in their conceptualization of good citizenship, they also articulate a limit to their tolerance. This limit is made explicit in claims that portray feminists as 'selfish', 'unwomanly', 'anti-men' and 'power-seeking'.

Acknowledging common and conflicting values

As noted before, there are serious challenges and also possible limits to dialogue and cooperation between secular and religious women. One such challenge is related to the potential clash between different sets of human rights that intersect and contradict: that of religious freedom and that of gender equality and women's rights. From our point of view as feminists, it is necessary to discuss barriers to religious women's citizenship that arise when women and men in religious communities do not have the same rights and opportunities, recognition, participatory parity and economic independence (Fraser 2008). Importantly, some religious women, but not all, agree

that such barriers produce limitations to their lived citizenship. That some religious women choose to accept subordination and inferior rights to men is their right. But such a stance is fundamentally incompatible with a feminist insistence on the equal value of women and men (which is central to all feminist ideologies and convictions) and also with a liberal feminist position that cannot retreat from the claim that women and men must have equal rights. With Ann Phillips (2009), however, we recommend that problems in the interpretation and implementation of rights, including challenges arising from potentially contradicting human rights, must be discussed politically and within their relevant contexts 'among individuals considered as moral and political equals' (Benhabib 2002: 105). Conflicts need to be aired in democratic deliberation rather than being silenced. In this regard, an intersectional lens on rights would require that attention is focused on multiple dimensions of people's identities and experienced inequalities relating to religion and gender as well as to 'race', ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, disability and age.

Religion does not only produce barriers to citizenship but is also an immensely positive force in the lives of many women in Europe. It provides women (and men) with 'enthusiasm, passion, indignation, outrage, and love' (Calhoun 2011: 132). These are resources and opportunities for active participation in community contexts that also give women a strong sense of identity and belonging. In short, religion is a substantial meaning-maker in women's everyday lives. Religious and secular women are equally entitled to respect, tolerance, recognition and participatory parity. There is much common ground between religious and secular women in terms of an ethic of love and care, respect and solidarity work. In dialogue, we can build on such common values while also agreeing to disagree on certain issues.

Appendix

Interview topic guide for research participants

(English version. Norwegian and Spanish versions were also used)

1. Preparation

Introduce yourself and the project; share information letter and FEMCIT leaflet; go through consent form (ask for signature) and permission to record.

2. Citizenship in the religious arena – Religious identity

I'd like to start by asking some general questions about your religious activities:

What motivated you to start attending your church/mosque? (Any particular issue or experience?)

Do you have any specific roles in your congregation/mosque?

Can you tell me about the types of activities you are involved in/participate in within your religious community? (Are any of these activities for women only, or are they gender-mixed?)

Do you attend any women's meetings?

What does women's fellowship/meetings within and outside your congregation/mosque mean to you in your everyday life – how important are they to you?

How would you describe who you are – what is your identity?

How important is religion to your identity? And in your everyday life?

Are there any women in your religious tradition that you admire (historical or contemporary figures)? If so, why do you admire them?

Are there any men in your religious tradition that you admire (historical or contemporary figures)? If so, why do you admire them?

Are there any discussions within your religious community about the roles and positions that women and men can take on – both within the religious community itself and outside it (in public life)?

At this point in time, do you feel that gender relations within your religious community are under pressure or changing, or are they more or less stable?

3. Gendered citizenship – Gender and religion

You belong to a women's group within your church/mosque. Are there any special issues that are important to you as a woman within the context of your own faith or religion?

In your view, is there an ideal role for a woman within Christianity/Islam today?

In your view, is there an ideal role for a man within Christianity/Islam today?

How do you view the relationship between the ideal role for women prescribed by your own religious tradition and the roles that women have in today's society? Is there any conflict between the two?

'Gender equality' can mean different things to different people. Some people may say that gender equality means that women and men have the same status and rights and can do exactly the same things, while others may say that women and men have equal value but should concentrate on doing different things and complement each other.

How does the term 'gender equality' relate to your own understanding of the relationship between women and men?

The women's movement has for a long time supported the development of women's rights in different spheres of society.

What is your understanding of the importance of the women's movement in general?

Has the women's movement had any effects on your religious tradition, as you see it?

What about your own personal life and beliefs – have you been influenced by the women's movement?

What does the word 'feminism' mean to you? Is feminism, in your understanding of the word, something that you identify yourself with at all, and if so, how?

4. Towards full citizenship – Perception of citizenship

When I say the word 'citizenship', what do you think about?

What does citizenship mean to you?

How would you describe your own nationality (British, English, Spanish, Norwegian, etc.)? Do you feel (e.g., British)? Do you feel accepted and included as a citizen in Britain/Spain/Norway?

What do you think makes a good citizen (and, conversely, a bad citizen)? (Alternatively, use the notions of 'active' and 'passive' citizen to solicit answer.)

Have you or anyone close to you experienced any *barriers or limitations* in terms of participation in society due to your religious faith?

Have you experienced any *advantages* in terms of participation due to your religious faith? (Further explanation: In this country, your own religious tradition can be considered *the majority religion/a minority religion*. In other words, you are a member of a *majority* religion/*minority* religion in this country. Have you, in these respects, experienced any barriers/limitations or advantages?)

To what extent do you feel included or excluded in society, considering your own religious faith and belief?

Or, as a member of a particular faith in this country, to what extent do you think you can exercise full citizenship in this country?

Are there other aspects of your identity that affect the way you feel about inclusion or exclusion (e.g., ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, age)?

What does multiculturalism mean to you, or the fact that people from different cultural backgrounds are living together in society?

Is multiculturalism important to you in your religiously based work?

In our research project, FEMCIT, we are trying to develop a multi-dimensional understanding of citizenship. We are thinking that a notion of full citizenship would imply that both women and men can participate in many different arenas – be it on the political arena, the social and economic arenas, private arenas such as the family and in the religious arena.

Do you think it makes sense to talk about citizenship in the religious arena? Why/why not?

5. Additional aspects of citizenship related to civil society and to work

Do you do any voluntary work outside the church/mosque (how often, how long, what is your motivation)?

Do you participate in any other community groups? Campaigns, protests, petitions (how often, how long, what is your motivation)?

Do you actively use trans-national or international contacts? To what extent are such ties important to your identity?

Did you vote in the last political election? Do you intend to vote in the next election?

You participate in all the activities you have described to me during the interview. Would you say it matters to you whether or not these activities can contribute to bringing about change in society?

Do you have a job in addition to your participation in the religious activities? What kind of job, and is it part-time or full-time? How do you like your job situation? If not working, how do you like your situation?

Do you care for children? How do you organize childcare?

6. Ending

If not already discussed, obtain details related to age, marital status, children, education, occupational status, ethnicity and nationality, period of stay in this country (if not from birth).

Thank you for your time. Reiterate anonymity. Obtain contact information for future correspondence (thank you letter/note and project findings).

Ask if they would recommend anyone they know to be interviewed by you. Ask if they are willing to give you contact details of such persons.

Notes

1   Christian and Muslim Women in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom Talk about Faith, Citizenship, Gender and Feminism

1. This book is based on research carried out within *FEMCIT: Gendered Citizenship in Multicultural Europe: The Impact of Women's Movements* (www.femcit.org), funded by the European Commission's 6th Framework Programme (2007–2011). The three countries we studied in Work Package 4 of FEMCIT (Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom) were initially selected because they offered contrasting case studies of women's movements in Europe (see Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa 2012).
2. For a more in-depth description of women's movements, gender regimes and migration in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom, see Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa (2012).
3. See http://www.thearda.com/internationalData/index.asp (accessed 1 June 2015).
4. The figures for these variables from the three countries are not directly comparable, as the latest figures for each country vary by year. The most recent figures available are those from Spain, which are from 2011. The latest figures reported from Norway and Spain are from 1996, 1999 or 2005 (www.thearda.com (accessed 1 June 2015)).
5. See http://www.nrk.no/norge/statskirken-taper-terreng-1.11637444 (accessed 29 May 2015).
6. See http://www.ssb.no/kirke_kostra (accessed 29 May 2015).
7. See http://www.ssb.no/kultur-og-fritid/artikler-og-publikasjoner/hva-forteller-stat istikkene-om-religion-tro-og-livssyn-i-norge (accessed 29 May 2015).
8. See http://www.pinsebevegelsen.no/pinsebevegelsen/om-pinsebevegelsen.html (accessed 29 May 2015).
9. See http://www.pinsebevegelsen.no/rad-og-utvalg/lederradet.html (accessed 30 May 2015).
10. See http://www.pinsebevegelsen.no/pinsebevegelsen/sporsmal-og-svar.html (accessed 30 May 2015).
11. See https://www.ssb.no/kultur-og-fritid/statistikker/trosamf/aar/2014-11-18 (accessed 29 May 2015).
12. See http://www.fag.hiof.no/~ mr/IslamiNorgeRamstad.htm (accessed 29 May 2015).
13. *The Islamic Women's Group of Norway* was abolished in 2005.
14. For developments regarding religion in hospitals and prisons in Spain, see Griera and Martínez-Ariño (2014).
15. *Federación de Entidades Evangélicas de España* (FEREDE).
16. *Fundación Pluralismo y Convivencia*.
17. The Registry of Minority Confessions is held by the Ministry of Justice, as is the Directorate General for Relations with Confessions, which 'is responsible for regulating relations between the different religions, including Catholicism' (de Velasco 2010: 248).
18. *Observatorio del Pluralismo Religioso en España*.

19. Thank you to Mar Griera for providing this information.

20. *Mujeres de Acción Católica* (established 1919).

21. See   http://www.wucwo.org/about_us/member_organisations/europe   (accessed 1 June 2015).

22. See http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2014/09/24/347660274/the-outspoken -spanish-nun-whos-made-herself-a-political-force (see also http://america.aljazeera. com/articles/2014/2/19/spanish-nun-straddlesmanyworlds.html; both accessed 1 June 2015).

23. When we write about interviewed Pentecostal women in Spain, we mostly use the term 'Pentecostal', but we also use the term 'Evangelical' when this was used by the participants.

24. See http://www.pewforum.org/2010/09/15/number-of-muslims-in-western-europe-html/ (accessed 1 June 2015).

25. *Asociación de Trabajadores Immigrantes Marroquíes en España*.

26. *An-Nisa Asociación de Mujeres Musulmanas*.

27. *Unión de Mujeres Musulmanas de España*. The first congress on Islamic Feminism in Spain was held in Catalonia in 2005; the second in Barcelona in 2006; the third in Barcelona in 2008; and the fourth in Madrid in 2010.

28. See   https://www.churchofengland.org/our-views/the-church-in-parliament/bis hops-in-the-house-of-lords.aspx (accessed 2 June 2015).

29. See https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission (accessed 2 June 2015).

30. See http://www.english.qmul.ac.uk/drwilliams/academies/timeline.html (accessed 2 June 2015).

31. See   http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/about-commission/our-vis ion-and-mission (accessed 2 June 2015).

32. See http://www.eauk.org/church/research-and-statistics/women-in-ministry.cfm (accessed 2 June 2015).

33. See http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/01/church-of-england-womens -group-bishops. See also https://womenandthechurch.org (both accessed 4 June 2015).

34. See http://www.brin.ac.uk/news/2011/uk-church-statistics-2005-15/ (accessed 2 June 2015).

35. See http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/subdivisions/pentecostal_ 1.shtml (accessed 2 June 2015).

36. See http://www.eauk.org/church/research-and-statistics/english-church-census.cfm (accessed 2 June 2015).

37. See http://www.elim.org.uk/Articles/417850/Our_Leaders.aspx and http://www. aog.org.uk/about-us/meet-the-team (accessed 2 June 2015). Of all ministers in Pentecostal churches in the United Kingdom, 16.75% are women; see http://www. eauk.org/church/research-and-statistics/women-in-ministry.cfm (accessed 2 June 2015).

38. See http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/12/muslim-womens-council-mosque-plans-teaching-uk (accessed 4 June 2015).

39. According to Gilliat-Ray (2010: 218), Unaiza Malik was a former treasurer of the *Muslim Council of Britain* and Zareen Roohi Ahmed was the former Chief Executive of the *British Muslim Forum*. Tehmina Kazi is the director of *British Muslims for Secular Democracy*.

40. See http://www.isb.org.uk/president2013/ (accessed 4 June 2015).

41. See http://www.mwnuk.co.uk/Principles__177_c.php (accessed 4 June 2015).

42. See http://www.islamandfeminism.org. For Maslaha, see http://maslaha.org/about (both sites accessed 4 June 2015).
43. In 2006, the Gender Equality Ombud, established in 1978, and the *Centre Against Ethnic Discrimination (SMED – Senter mot etnisk diskriminering)*, established in 1998, merged to form the new Gender Equality and Discrimination Ombud.
44. See http://www.ssb.no/befolkning/statistikker/samisk/hvert-2-aar (accessed 5 June 2015).
45. The UK case differs somewhat from the Norwegian and Spanish cases, as Muslims constitute the second-largest religious group in Oslo and Madrid (after Christians) but the third-largest in Leicester (after Christians and Hindus). Also, within the Muslim community in Leicester, the dominant ethnic group is Indians, and not Pakistanis. Sunni Muslim participants from Leicester were, however, recruited from a mosque established by Muslims who identify with the Pakistani community in Leicester and Pakistani Muslims form the largest community of Muslims in the United Kingdom.
46. According to Anderson (2004: 94), the *Assembly of God* movement within Pentecostalism (at least in the United Kingdom) has been critical of centralized forms of organizational control in other Pentecostal movements such as the *Elim* movement and has represented strong theological positions on the issues of 'initial evidence' and pre-millianism.
47. Due to the difficulties related to recruitment of participants in Madrid, interviews were conducted with four Shia women and six Sunni women in that location.
48. See Nyhagen Predelli et al. (2010); Halsaa, Thun and Nyhagen Predelli (2010); Quintero and Nyhagen Predelli (2010); Nyhagen Predelli and Manful (2010).

2   Towards Lived Religion and Lived Citizenship: Binaries and Complexities in the Study of Religion, Gender, Feminism and Citizenship

1. Berger (1999: 7) describes this duality as the 'interplay of secularizing and counter-secularizing forces', thus forwarding a secular master narrative where religion is the marked 'other'.
2. McGuire uses the terms 'religion' and 'spirituality' interchangeably (McGuire 2008: 6).
3. Some of the examples given by Braidotti are Audre Lorde, Alice Walker and Adrienne Rich (as representing 'feminist spirituality'), Catherine Keller, Amina Wadud, Rachel Adler and Starhawk (as representing 'feminist theology'), bell hooks and Patricia Hill Collins (as representing Black and post-colonial theory that engages with the 'non-secular'), and Edward Said as a theorist critical of secular humanism (Braidotti 2008: 7–8).
4. See Winchester (2008) for a critical interpretation of Mahmood's conception of agency. Winchester argues that Mahmood locates agency within discourse, rather than in the 'complex interplay between culture, social contexts and social actors' (ibid.: 1757). Winchester also suggests that embodied religious practices like prayer, fasting and covering form the moral dispositions associated with becoming a good Muslim.

5. For the story of *Women Against Fundamentalism*, see Dhaliwal and Yuval-Davis (2014).
6. The term 'Womanist' was coined by Alice Walker in 1983 and subsequently picked up by women theologians identifying as 'Womanist theologians' (see Gross 1996: 54).
7. A similar version of this section has previously been published in the journal *Citizenship Studies* (see Nyhagen 2015).

3 Religious Identities and Meaning-making

1. Recognition is also important for groups; see Fraser (1997, 2000); Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa (2012: 76–77); Young (1990).
2. These strategies are based on Engebrigtsen's (1992) study of Norwegian gypsies.
3. Norway has a rich history of engagement with evangelical missionary movements, and women have been central to mission activities both at home and abroad (see, e.g., Nyhagen Predelli 2003).
4. This woman has probably not left the Catholic Church in a formal way but has rather shifted allegiance from one church to another. In order to leave the Catholic Church you must file a copy of the *Defectio ab Ecclesia catholica actu formali* ('Defection from the Catholic Church by a Formal Act'), with the Office of the Bishop; see http://www.catholicdoors.com/faq/qu286.htm (accessed 25 March 2015).
5. The title of this section is inspired by 'magic moments' as explanations of why some women suddenly come out as lesbians (see Lützen 1988).
6. The aim of the *Retreat* movement, which has several branches, is to seek a deeper spiritual knowledge of and union with Jesus, focusing on prayers, tranquillity and quietude.
7. The *Wahabi* movement has had 'a formative influence on Saudi Arabia' and on 'modern revivalism' within Islam (Esposito 1988: 118). It promotes 'a return to community life based strictly on the Quran and the example of Muhammad and the Medinan community' (ibid.).

4 Religion and Citizenship as Lived Practice: Intersections of Faith, Gender, Participation and Belonging

1. This chapter is derived, in part, from an article published in *Citizenship Studies* on 31 July 2015, available online*:* http://wwww.tandfonline.com/DOI: 10.1080/13621025.2015.1049979 (see Nyhagen 2015). The analysis herein is more comprehensive and includes religious women from Spain, Norway and the United Kingdom.
2. See also Nyhagen Predelli, Halsaa and Thun (2012) for information about linguistic and other contextual as well as empirical issues related to the term 'citizenship' in Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom.
3. The Church of England changed its rules in 2014, and the first woman bishop was appointed in December that year.
4. In 2008, American Professor Amina Wadud led a Muslim congregation in Oxford (see also Hammer 2012).

5   Religious Women and Gender Equality

1. See   http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/eurobarometer_report_2015_en.pdf (accessed 9 September 2015).
2. A dualistic relation is different from a dichotomous relation, although they are often used interchangeably in everyday speech. A dualistic relation has the form A≠ B (a difference of kind/species, meaning men and women are different kinds). A dichotomous relation refers to A –A (a hierarchical structure between two entities, meaning that men and women are the same kind, but one is above the other). The combination is illogical within rational thinking. It is very much alive, however, within symbolic thinking which is metaphorical (about the distinction between rational and symbolic thinking, see Solheim 1998).
3. Dichotomous thinking refers to opposition between two identities, and a hierarchical ordering (Prokhovnik 1999, in Squires 1999: 126). 'Hierarchy entails two polarized terms such that one becomes the privileged term, and the other its subordinate counterpart' (ibid.: 127). The terms are also mutually exhaustive, the one is defined by not being the other, and they are held to constitute a whole.
4. For the Norwegian Gender Equality Act, see https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/the-act-relating-to-gender-equality-the-/id454568/ (accessed 2 June 2015). For the Spanish Gender Equality Act, see https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id= BOE-A-2007-6115 (accessed 16 June 2015). For the UK Equality Act, which includes gender, see http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents (accessed 16 June 2015).
5. Art. 3 of the Constitutional Act 3/2007 of 22 March for effective equality between women and men http://www.isotita.gr/var/uploads/NOMOTHESIA/INTERNATIONAL/SPANISH%20constitutional%20act3_2007_en.pdf (accessed 2 June 2015).
6. CEDAW: The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted in 1979.

6   Religious Women, Women's Movements and Feminism

1. There have been and there are many women's movements throughout the world, at local, national and global levels. In this book, we use the singular and plural terms interchangeably while acknowledging the diversity and multiplicity of women's movements,
2. See, for instance, Beckwith (2000, 2005); Ferree (2006); Ferree and Tripp (2006); Ferree and Mueller (2007); Outshoorn and Kantola (2007); Outshoorn (2010); McBride and Mazur (2010); Nyhagen Predelli and Halsaa (2012); Halsaa, Roseneil and Sümer (2012); Nyhagen Predelli (2012).
3. See, for example, Swatos (1994); Griffith (1997); Brasher (1998); Manning (1999); Christiano et al. (2008); Cochran (2005). (See also Nyhagen Predelli and Miller 1999; Nyhagen Predelli 2003, 2008.)
4. See https://ecumenicalwomen.files.wordpress.com/2009/02/ecumenical-woman_report.pdf (accessed 24 June 2015).
5. See the interview guide, Appendix.
6. Ingrid Bjerkås was ordained as the first female priest in Norway 1961, but legally speaking, women were admitted to the priesthood in 1938.

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Index