Us vs Them syndrome in Christian-Muslim conflicts

Denmark, Indonesia and Nigeria

by Lissi Rasmussen, director

The prime focus of this article is the indigene-settler and Us vs Them dichotomy which has been one of the main causes of tensions and conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, Denmark and Indonesia. It is mainly based on the findings and reflections of a study team, consisting of Christians and Muslims, one of each from Denmark, Indonesia and Nigeria who travelled together for 10-16 days in each country over a period of two years (2003-5) in order to study situations of conflict and peace building and analyze the role of religion.[1]

Three conflicts - three countries

Distinct demographics and histories have given rise to various patterns in Christian-Muslim relations in the three countries, different types of conflict and resolution of such. Nonetheless, the similarities between the conflicts -especially between Nigeria and Indonesia--with regard to their origin and course and what was required for their resolution, are striking.[2]

In all three countries, conflicts have escalated over the past twenty-five years, especially since the mid-1990s. The escalation has been partly due to various forms of political transition and the cumulative effect of many years of cultivated grievances.

Since the 1970s there have been over seventy major eruptions in Nigeria, mostly in urban centres in the North.[3] In Indonesia, the conflicts have been more localized and have not been on the same scale or had the same significance as in Nigeria. The immediate cause of the conflicts in both countries varies from place to place. Nonetheless, the remote causes are in many cases similar as is their course. Often minor incidents, fuelled by rumors, sparked off the riots. Several stages of escalation followed during which each side claimed that the atrocities were committed in retaliation or as self-defense.

In Denmark there have been no actual major outbreaks of physical two-way violence. Like in most other European societies, one-way violence and threats have taken the form of racially motivated harassment, threats via SMS or emails, violence against taxi drivers, vandalism against shops and desecration of Muslim graveyards. The conflicts took the shape of verbal abuse and aggression, sweeping generalizations, hate speeches, extremism, etc.

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[1] The team visited Denmark (October 2003): Copenhagen, Odense; Indonesia (June 2004): Medan (Sumatra), Yogyakarta, Surakarta, Jakarta; and Nigeria (March 2005): Jos, Bukuru (and Korot village), Gusau (Zamfara).Team members were mainly scholars: Dr. Amin Abdullah/Dr. Syafa'atun Almirzanah (Yogyakarta), Dr. Jamilin Sirait (Medan), Barrister Nafisatu Lawal Musa (Jos), Archbishop em. dr. David L. Windibiziri (Nigeria), imam Fatih Alev (Copenhagen), rev. Dr.theol. Lissi Rasmussen (Copenhagen), Dr. Nelly Van Doorn-Harder (LWF/Chicago), rev. Dr. Ingo Wulfhorst (LWF).
The studies are published in a book titled"Bridges instead of Walls: Christian-Muslim Interaction in Denmark, Indonesia and Nigeria" by the Lutheran University Press (Minneapolis), September 2007. The book contains six case studies and further reflections primarily made by the author of this paper. This article is based on the reflections of this author.
[2] The three countries were selected for a number of reasons. The countries in three different continents reflect certain numerical symmetries: Indonesia has an overwhelming majority of Muslims whereas the Christians constitute a maximum of 10%. Denmark constitutes the opposite situation, namely 83% members of the Lutheran church and only 3, 8% Muslims. Nigeria has approximately an equal number of Christians and Muslims. However, in Northern Nigeria, Muslims constitute the majority in most areas.
[3] On the conflicts, see for instance Fwatshak 2006: 259-280.

It has to be remembered, however, that relations between Christians and Muslims in the three countries have not only been problematic and negative, but that good relationships have been and are still a part of daily reality in all three countries.

The study takes its starting point in three conflict stories:

The Danish cartoon row
On 30 September 2005, Denmark's largest newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten,* published twelve caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad. One showed the Prophet wearing a turban in the shape of a bomb with a burning fuse, another depicted him wielding a cutlass and a third had him saying that paradise was running short of virgins for suicide bombers.The images, considered blasphemous under Islam, drew intense criticism from across the Muslim minority in Denmark and the Muslim world at large.[4] Also in Nigeria and Indonesia there were strong critique of the drawings, and in the North of Nigeria it came to violent riots and actual killings.

The cycle of violence in Plateau State, Nigeria
The 7 September 2001 riots in Jos, Nigeria, the capital of Plateau State,[5] were triggered when a young Christian woman crossed a roadblock in front of a mosque downtown Jos.[6] However, the real causes were much deeper, largely related to ownership of land, and access to public office of the socalled indigenous people, the predominantly Christian Birom, Anaguta and Afizere and the Muslim Hausa-Fulani who are still seen as settlers.

By early 2002, the previously contained violent conflict spread from Jos city across the state, resulting in loss of life and material resources on a scale never before experienced in Plateau State. Fighting became very intense, especially in Yelwa-Shendam in 2002 and 2004,[7] and on 18 May 2004, President Olusegun Obasanjo declared a state of emergency in Plateau State which was lifted after six months. The conflict had become not

The market in Jos, burnt down during the 2001 riots

only a threat to the state's social fabric but also had implications for the entire nation.

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[4] On the cartoon affair see Seidenfaden & Larsen 2006.

[5] The city of Jos was founded in 1915 and has today about 800.000 (greater Jos), predominately Christian inhabitants. It is located in what can be referred to as the "Middle Belt" of Northern Nigeria.

[6] On the Jos conflict see for instance Danfulani & Fwatshak 2002 and Bagudu 2004. The government in Jos initiated a six-month program comprising different committees, including one consisting of religious leaders, to restore peace in the area. Documents from these committees were the basis for a peace conference in August 2004 which included dialogue between religious, ethnic and community leaders. The report from this conference contains detailed and valuable insight into the 2001 crisis and its causes. Plateau Resolves 2004.

[7] Yelwa is a market town located 200 kilometers southeast of Jos. Yelwa is administered by the Shendam Local Government Area headquartered in the town of Shendam, twenty kilometers away. Shendam is a predominantly Christian town, and residents in the surrounding villages are also predominantly Christian. Hundreds of Christians and Muslims lost there lives, thousands were displaced, and lots of property was destroyed.

Intercommunal fighting in Sulawesi, Indonesia

Between December 1998 and 2001 Muslims and Christians in Poso, a town in Central Sulawesi,[8] were pitted against each other in one of the most violent and persistent conflicts the nation has ever witnessed. The violence started on the eve of Christmas and Ramadan with a street brawl involving two young men, a Protestant and a Muslim.[9] The arrival in 2001 of the radical Muslim group, Laskar Jihad in the area escalated the violence.[10]

What initially was a private conflict transformed into communal violence involving hundreds of Muslims and Christians and resulting in death and the destruction of homes, villages, schools and houses of worship on both sides. The conflict in Poso calmed down after four years but recently started to erupt again. All in all, the fighting has cost more than 7,000 lives and displaced a total of 1.3 million people.[11]

Certain parallels were noticeable in these three stories; namely that it was not religion as such but economic inequalities, political ambition, feelings of neglect and exclusion, as well as ethnic, cultural or social envy that fuelled the conflicts. These became framed in religious terms and religion used as a tool in the struggle. In this way, especially in Nigeria and Indonesia religion came to widen the conflicts. Nonetheless, to think of religion as the root cause would be to oversimplify the many ways in which religion works and has worked in practice.

The socio-economic dimension of Us vs Them

In all three stories of conflict, the dichotomy between indigenes and settlers, hosts and foreigners, has played a crucial role. Whereas in Nigeria and Indonesia this relates primarily to the prevalent socioeconomic conditions, in Denmark it reflects questions of identity and recognition at the psychological and symbolic levels. The perceptions of the difference between Us and Them constitute the problem rather than the diversity itself. In all three conflicts, discussions have focused on the questions of who belongs, who fits the description of a "true" citizen and how allegiance is expressed. Moreover, both in Nigeria and Denmark, the dichotomy and the associated enemy images have been used by political leaders for populist purposes.

In Jos area, the economy has been largely dominated by commercial trading activities which are mainly in the hands of "newcomers" such as the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani. The "indigenous"were afraid of being excluded from ancestral land, offices and economic resources. Most of the indigene-settler disputes, therefore, revolved around economic issues, such as access to farmland, fishing ponds, markets and the opportunity to engage in economic activities. The indigenes insisted that the Hausa-Fulani had no claim to land in their community, while the Hausa-Fulani argued that since they were born in this community and had lived there all their lives they had equal rights.

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[8] Poso is located about 220 km south of Central Sulawesi's provincial capital, Palu. The town's approximately 420,000 residents are divided more or less equally between Christians and Muslims.

[9] The International Crisis Group has published a great number of reports on the conflicts in Sulawesi and Maluku Islands. These can be found at http://www.crisisgroup.org

[10] See "Context, Causes, and Laskar Jihâd," in *Human Rights Watch*, *III*, part 1 at http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/indonesia/indonesia1102-03.htm#P119_15133.

[11] "What Happened in Poso?," in the *Jakarta Post*, 14 October 2003.

Also various conflicts in Sulawesi, the Maluku Islands and other parts of Indonesia, for instance Central Java and Sumatra, grew out of economic issues such as unemployment, poverty and economic inequality. Social and economic frustration and jealousy on the part of those who are economically disadvantaged have resulted in making a scapegoat of others and a lack of confidence in what the future might hold. This has created mutual suspicion and communal discord, sometimes falling in line with ethnic and/or religious divides.

Disputed land ownership has often been at the heart of conflict.[12] When no efficient action was taken to resolve these disputes, they escalated into violent conflicts, and sometimes the parties involved ended up identifying themselves and their opponents as Muslims and Christians. Economic conditions have not been a decisive factor in the development of tensions in Denmark. There are, however, some economic inequalities between ethnic minorities and the majority population, caused by difference in job opportunities.[13] Research has shown that people from ethnic minorities experience direct or indirect forms of discriminatory treatment on the labor market. A number of cases have been publicized of Muslim women who wear headscarves accusing their employers of discrimination.

There is no doubt, however, that economic jealousy on the side of ethnic Danes plays an important role in the development of xenophobic sentiments. For instance, a considerable number of ethnic Danes believe that the majority of those who are granted asylum are not real refugees but have come to exploit the Danish public welfare system.[14]

Indigenousness and settlership in Nigeria

The indigenous-settler dichotomy is at the root of most intercommunal conflicts and political quarrels in Nigeria, particularly in the North. It has diluted the real meaning of Nigerian citizenship. One is not really seen as a citizen in Nigeria but only as a citizen of the place to which one is indigenous. And there is no real way for non-indigenous to become indigenous, regardless of how hard and long they have struggled to integrate in and identify with the community they live in.

The clashes between indigenous and settlers developed especially violently in Plateau State, where historically the segregation between indigenes and settlers has been upheld, especially during the colonial system of indirect rule where "natives" and "immigrants" (in mining camps) were not treated as one entity. Hausa settlements were dealt with separately and maintained

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[12] In certain areas such as the Mamasa district in Sulawesi and in north Maluku, *pemekaran* (process of decentralization, has led to fears of new conflicts over land, mineral wealth and boundaries and to local politicians manipulating tensions for personal gains. The introduction of new boundaries has often resulted in disputes over the exact location and ownership of land and led to accusations of land grabbing or land "vanishing." For instance, the question of the legal status of *adat* (traditional) land and the final authority over it became uncertain. "Indonesia: Overcoming Murder and Chaos in Maluku," in International Crisis Group, *Asia Report*, no.10 (2000).

[13] According to 2003 statistics, the employment rate among citizens of non-Western origin is 47 percent, whereas the corresponding figure for long-term Danes is 77 percent. The Danish Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration, *Årbog om Udlændinge i Danmark* [Foreigners in Denmark Yearbook] (2004).

[14] This transpired when thousands of Danish citizens, predominantly of Lebanese-Palestinian background, were evacuated from Lebanon in July 2006 during the Israeli attack on the country. The Danish People's Party suggested that the social authorities took advantage of the opportunity to check these people–many of them having undergone traumatic experiences–whether they had been cheating the social service system by having traveled to Lebanon without having informed the social authorities. The party claimed that a great number of Danes had contacted them wondering how so many people were able to go on vacation to Lebanon, since many of them are unemployed.

separate identities with a different religion and culture.[15] They have been denied opportunities for educational advancement and civil service jobs. This is why the appointment of a Hausa politician to a statewide post in a federal poverty eradication program sparked such clashes as was the case in 2001.

Today Plateau State government and other state governments all over Nigeria issue "certificates of indigenousness" which serve as documentary proof that the bearer is a "native" of the area concerned. Those who are not granted a certificate are treated as non-indigenous in their formal interaction with all levels of government. They experience discrimination in terms of higher school fees, lack of access to positions in the federal civil service, military or police force, less employment opportunities and limited access to resources such as land. As a result of these ever more stringent discriminatory policies, levels of poverty and unemployment have increased.[16]

Locals and settlers in Indonesia

In Indonesia the Us vs Them rhetoric between different groups has not been as explicit at a national level. There is a stronger awareness of being a nation than in Nigeria, and there are not the same kind of cultural and religious blocks. While Indonesian culture has been able to absorb various imported cultures, there is nonetheless an imbalance of resources, and an indigene-settler dichotomy has developed in certain areas such as Sumatra, Sulawesi and Central Java.[17] Tensions between locals and settlers sometimes even lead to fighting, because the locals envy the economically more successful migrants, who often have fared better than the local farmers and were better informed about new types of crops and methods of cultivation.[18]

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[15] The settler economy among the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani was dominated largely by commercial/tracking activities whereas indigenes were preoccupied with farming on outskirts of the city in Birom, Afizere, Basa and Anaguta.

[16] All this is happening despite the fact that the 1999 Constitution states that "No citizen of Nigeria shall be subjected to any disability or deprivation merely by reason of the circumstances of his birth." Fundamental Rights Section of the Nigerian Constitution (1999). Section 42: Right to freedom from discrimination. In the 1979 Constitution (which forms basis for the 1999 Constitution currently in force) the principle of "federal character" was introduced as a type of quota system to ensure that all ethnic or other groups have equal access to education and public sector employment opportunities and to resources at the federal, state and local levels. While the aim was to create a national unity, in practice the principle created a polarization between "indigenes" and other residents of a state. One of the reasons was that through the "indigenousness clause" the federal character principle was explicitly linked to indigeneity, determined by ancestry as a legitimate basis on which to make political claims and assert entitlement to certain benefits.

In this way, the concepts "indigenous" and "non-indigenous" were constitutionally legitimized and discrimination justified against those whose ancestors may have migrated from other states. This has been exploited by various groups in order to further their own interests. Various human rights organizations have therefore suggested that all references to indigenousness should be removed from the Constitution and replaced by residency as the criterion for appointment. For example, "Nigeria's Faltering Federal Experiment," in International Crisis Group, *Africa Report*, no. 119 (15 Oct. 2006).

[17] Tensions have developed between local Javanese and the Chinese élite. The Chinese middle-class entrepreneurs have been made scapegoats for the economic and political troubles in the area. They are mostly Christians in this area, more advantaged and members of relatively affluent churches. It must be added that there has always been a power struggle between Java and the outer islands. Over all, there is a feeling that Java dominates and receives most of the resources.

[18] This was for instance the case in Luwu, South Sulawesi in the 1970s and 1980s. There was, however, also fighting between individual villages.

The study team in a semina, arranged by a Protestant and an Islamic Universityr about conflict and violence in Solo

The main reason for the indigene-settler conflicts in Indonesia has been a transformation in the demographic composition in certain provinces due to the government's huge transmigration program. Between 1969 and 1995 eight million people were resettled, for which the World Bank paid over half a billion dollars. In these areas, the local communities were often predominantly Christian. During the 1990s this was the case in Ambon, Sampit, Poso and Mamasa, where with the arrival of immigrants, the composition changed and the confessional balance was tipped in favor of the Muslims. This shift was accompanied by a rise in the political and economic fortunes of individual Muslims. Power and bureaucratic weight shifted from Christians to Muslims, as did money and opportunity.[19]

In some of these situations, the decentralization process added to the tensions or created new ones between indigenes and migrants. This happened partly because of a new influx of migrants and partly because of new opportunities for some communities to gain access to political power provided under the program. Furthermore, extremist groups connected to Saudi Arabia who came from outside and had no interest in local areas contributed to the maintenance of this dichotomy between Us vs Them.

Us vs Them in Denmark

In Denmark, a rhetoric of a protective and positively defined "We" versus a threatening and negatively defined "Them" has become more and more common among ethnic minorities as well as long-term Danes. This became manifest during the cartoon affair. Since 2001, leading politicians have emphasized that Danes have to lead a culture war against those who still "adhere to medieval values." They argue as follows: "We" (Danes) have to defend our values, our freedom of speech and our civilization's achievements against "Them," (Muslims) who do not understand us. We have to stand firm in this struggle and not surrender.

In 2001, members of parliament such as the former Minister of Integration (currently Minister of Education and Ecclesiastic Affairs), Bertel Haarder (Liberal Party), and Søren Krarup (Danish People's Party), have gone as far as to say that Denmark must be defended against those who come from outside. They draw a parallel between the Danish resistance movement against the German soldiers during World War II and today's fight against Muslims.[20]

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[19] "Indonesia: Overcoming Murder and Chaos in Maluku," in *Asia Report*, *op. cit.* no. 10, (2000). The 2001 conflicts between the local Dayak community (mainly Christians) and the newcomers, the Madurese (mainly Muslims) in Sampit in Central Kalimantan (Borneo) are an example of this development. After a massacre of about 500 Madurese, almost the entire Madurese community fled. The main reason for this was the dislocation of the Dayak community. Due to immigration from other provinces many Dayaks were forced to leave land that they had previously used. Consequently they felt marginalized in the province, looked down upon by other communities as backward and uncivilized. See "Communal Violence in Indonesia: Lessons from Kalimantan," in *Asia Report, op. cit.* no. 18 (27 June 2001), pp. 4ff. .

[20] *Jyllands-Posten,* 27 May 2001.

According to the government, Western tolerance and liberalism must draw the line when they come under threat. Thus the Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen claimed in his 2003 New Year's address that for too long Danes had been foolishly kind and that they had not dared to say that some values are better and more valuable than others. This must happen now, and Danes must speak out against "fundamentalist imams" and prevent medieval

A view of a multi-cultural atmosphere in Nørrebro, Copenhagen

forces and political fanaticism from taking root in Denmark. One quarter of his speech was devoted to this issue. Many Muslims were offended, feeling that as their Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen did not speak to them but about them.

It is striking that this speech resembled a speech given by another political leader, the Governor of Plateau State, Joshua Chibi Dariye, himself a Christian, in an interview with *The Daily Champion* in March 2004:

> From the onset, let me say it again, as I have before that Jos, capital of Plateau State, is owned by the natives […] . Simple. Every Hausa-man in Jos is a settler whether he likes it or not. In the past, we might not have told them the home truth, but now we have […] .They are here with us, we are in one state but that does not change the landlord/settler equation, no matter how much we cherish peace […] .Our problem here today is that the tenant is becoming very unruly. But the natural law here is simple: if your tenant is unruly, you serve him a quit notice! [...] This unruly group must know that we are no longer willing to tolerate the rubbish they give us. The days of "over tolerance" are gone forever. All of us must accept this home truth.[21]

These comments were made at a moment when indigene-settler tensions had erupted around Yelwa and were widely condemned by people within and from outside the state as being irresponsible and inflammatory. It underlines how important it is that political leaders, especially in tense situation, act as leaders for the whole the population and not protect their own ethnic group to the detriment of others.

In Denmark, public and parliamentary debate repeatedly revolves around such issues as forced marriage, parallel societies, repression of women, punishment laws and "failed integration." In these discussions, the Us vs Them rhetoric has been dominating, and the the "guests" often are pressurized to tone down their visible cultural and religious differences and to become like their "hosts." According to many Danes, integration is incompatible with Islamic values. Therefore the minorities have to choose sides, to be Muslim with or without Islam.

Enemy images and mutual fear

In all three countries the Us vs Them syndrome has been associated with mutual enemy images and fear. Even in the majority populations, such as in the predominantly Christian Denmark,

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[21] *The Saturday Champion*, 20 March 2004, p. 9. Cited in "They Do Not Own This Place. Government Discrimination Against 'Non-Indigenes'," in *Human Rights Watch*, vol.18, no. 3 (25 April 2006), p.45.

Muslim Indonesia and Muslim Northern Nigeria, a substantial percentage of the majority feel discriminated against by those they see as a threatening enemy.

Thus in certain areas of Indonesia, Christians have increasingly been associated with the imperialist West in recent years, and a fear of "creeping Christianization" has developed among many Muslims. In Poso and Maluku, members of *jihadist* organizations such as *Jemaah Islamiyah* (JI), descendants of *Darul Islam* and *Mujahidin Kompak,* regard Christians as infidels and "enemies of Islam," who pose a threat to the local Muslim community.

Many Indonesian Christians feel unsafe, and some see Islam as a coercive, terrifying and unfriendly religion. This was the case, for instance, in the Medan area in Sumatra. During a meeting with church leaders in Medan[22] Rev. Wilson Siahaan from the HKBP in Medan said:

> In daily life we have good relations with those who are of other religions. But after a *fatwa* (a legal opinion or decree handed down by an Islamic religious leader) that Muslims cannot wish Christians Merry Christmas things changed. For example, suddenly Christians who wanted to visit a Muslim friend were no longer welcome […] . Last night I heard about a *becak* (rickshaw) driver who refused to take a Christian to the church. This does not occur often but it happens. Religion has also become a means to get promoted; especially in the field of education. This has happened in Medan, but also in other places. [23]

Some church members regard the willingness of provincial heads and governors to implement parts of Sharî'a as attempts to strengthen their political standing. In their eyes, this could divide the nation and lead to a loss of its local cultural roots and traditions due to Islamic-Arab cultural imperialism.[24]

The study team met with church leaders in Medan

Some Christians in Nigeria share this fear of Muslim dominance while some Muslims see Christianity as part and parcel of Western imperialism and aggression. They fear being excluded from national power and control and therefore, many in the North have seen Sharî'a as a solution guaranteeing that this will not happen. In general, ethnic self-assertion has become a threat to national coherence and created mistrust and fear among people. When one part gains more influence, the other worries about losing

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[22] 5 June 2004. Gereja Kristen Protestan Angkola (GKPA) is the Christian Protestant Angkola Church.

[23] Medan, 5 June 2004. Huria Kristen Batak Protestant (HKBP) is one of the main Lutheran churches in Indonesia.

[24] Rev. Andreas Yewangoe in "Sharî'a Complaints," interviewed by Patung, 26 October 2006, at http://www.indonesiamatters.com/772/Sharî'a-complaints/

In Manokwari, a Christian-majority district in West Irian Jaya and the West Papuan capital, politicians have been working toward the introduction of a kind of "Christian Sharî'a," an ordinance based on the Bible. This has been interpreted by some Indonesians as an attempt to counteract the introduction of Muslim Sharî'a based bylaws in for instance Aceh and West Sumatra ("Right on cue, Bible-based ordinances appear", *Jakarta Post* 2 June 2007). The act, however, must be seen in relation to West-Papua's struggle to strengthen its autonomy vis-à-vis Jakarta. Jakarta's massive exploitation of their precious natural resources gives them a sense of being colonized.

control. In some areas of Nigeria it has resulted in confrontation over access to local power and economic resources, whereas in Denmark the consequences have often been polarization, verbal abuse, negative self-image and despair.

In Denmark, some political leaders and other opinion makers have expressed the fear that Muslims will grow in numbers and take over the country, introducing an Islamic state. This rings tr e for many Danes who look at the future with great anxiety. Also on the side of the minorities, enemy images of the West, Danish society and its decadence have developed and some feel that all Danes are against them.

The consequence has been that many immigrants or descendants of immigrants have found it difficult to be recognized as Danes and feel that they "belong". This was highlighted by the cartoon incident.

A vicious cycle of Us vs Them

The Us vs Them syndrome in Denmark must be seen against the background of a vicious cycle that has developed and consolidated itself over the last decade between the media, political leaders, majority population and the Muslim minorities.The fact that almost on a daily basis the media portray one-sided, negative stories about immigrants in general and Muslims in particular (reproduced by the public opinion and politicians), affects the Muslim minorities who feel unwanted, insecure and unconfident. This has for many Muslims resulted in an ingrained mistrust of the media and political processes and taken away the energy to reflect critically and contextually on Islam.

Subsequently these reactions are exploited by populist politicians and other opinion makers through harsh rhetoric and restrictive laws. All of this contributes to an atmosphere of fear and mistrust among the majority population who are then attracted to negative stories in the media in order to have their prejudices confirmed. The cycle is complete and starts all over again.

The situation is rather more complex in Nigeria and Indonesia. In Nigeria, the national and local levels are very much interconnected. Although media and society affect each other, the media have not had an impact on Christian-Muslim relations worth mentioning. The dichotomy between Us vs Them has been exacerbated locally as well as nationally, leading to the demand for Sharî'a to be introduced in order to improve the economic situation. Moreover, in order to garner votes, ambitious politicians have promised to introduce and implement parts of Sharî'a if they are elected.

In Indonesia, a cyclical pattern has manifested itself locally in situations of social inequality and economic instability. Local conflicts had economic and political roots, but the parties identified themselves and their opponents as Muslims and Christians.

The question is whether this cyclical pattern is moving toward the national level and would mean that the main threat to peaceful coexistence and unity are not scattered violent conflicts, but political vacuum and economic crisis.

The Us vs Them frustration and citizenship

The conflicts in all three countries, especially in Denmark, were stimulated by the Us vs Them frustrations on a global level, the asymmetry and lack of democracy in coexisting at a global level. The anger of Christians and Muslims was fueled by incidents and fears at a global level, made possible by the internet, radio and television. Ironically, along with the increasing

movement and mixing of people, globalization has contributed to an ideology of fear based on the unequal distribution of wealth and power. This has exacerbated the Us vs Them syndrome.[25] In most countries, the harassment of one or more minorities seems to be an inevitable reality. Many human beings feel uneasy with and perhaps are even intolerant of people who are not like themselves in terms of appearance, values, behavior, religion, etc. Victimization and scapegoatism are human phenomena. The question, therefore, is not whether there are these kinds of mechanisms, tensions or conflicts between various groups, but rather how these problems are handled. If they are not dealt with, it may turn into a growing gap, a polarization that may lead to mistrust and even hate between Us and Them, as we have seen in the conflicts mentioned.

Thus, the three stories show how important it is to include especially young people in the communities and to take their needs, wishes and contributions seriously. This is done by integrating them into the labor market as well as by taking them seriously as human beings whose contribution is valued, i.e. seeing them as active citizens.

Therefore to work for an inclusive and pluralist citizenship and equal recognition is a major challenge for Christian-Muslim cooperation nationally and internationally[26] in order to do away with or limit the categories of "indigene vs settler" and Us vs Them and to counteract socioeconomic conflicts and power struggles. [27]

The main issue in Nigeria today is the question of national unity, how to hold Nigeria together as one nation and create loyalty among people to a country marked by cultural, religious and geographical heterogeneity. There is a strong ethno-regionalism with ethnic identity, to the exclusion of others, playing a prominent role in politics, fear of domination by one ethnic/regional/religious group over the other. Therefore, constructing a pan-Nigerian identity based on equality of all citizens and common political practice is vital.[28] This must be combined with a more inclusive and participatory form of governance in order to create unity and a sense of belonging among heterogeneous groups in the state.

In Indonesia, the ideology of *Pancasila* has been one of the educating factors contributing to cooperation, unity and dialogue and has in this way promoted a sense of shared citizenship among the population. Added to this is what the study group member Dr M. Abdullah Amin has called a common "cultural capital," a strong integrative force, binding people together as Indonesians by helping them to relate to one another and creating basic standards for conduct.[29]

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[25] On the Us vs Them syndrome at the global level, see Sen 2006 and Benhabib 2002.

[26] On citizenship see Korsgaard, Sigurdsson and Skovmand 2007, especially p.123-160. Inclusive citizenship refers to the extent to which people can claim rights and whether these rights are equal for all people regardless of their background, including rights to equal participation in society. Exclusive citizenship refers to the extent to which some citizens are denied rights and benefits, possibilities for contributing to the development of society, and sense of belonging. On exclusive citizenship, see K. Faulks 2000, p.3.

27 A number of social scientists have dealt with the concept of citizenship and belonging for instance the French sociologist Dominique Schnapper, Community of Citizens, On the Modern Idea of Nationality, TransActions Publishers, USA 1998 Stephen Castles and Alastair Davidson, Citizenship and Migration: Globalization and the Politics of Belonging. London: Macmillan, 2000.

[28] The question of national unity has become even more urgent after the election of a Muslim president, Umaru Musa Yar'Ardua, on 24 April 2007. Before the election many Nigerians claimed that religion and ethnicity of the future president should not matter as long as he is competent, i.e., honest and showing the aptitude to rule. Moreover, people should vote first of all as Nigerian citizens and for democracy for the whole people.

[29] Amin Abdullah is President of the Islamic State University Sunan Kalijaga (UIN, Yogyakarta). During our visits to Denmark and Indonesia he repeatedly came back to this concept of cultural capital as a foundation of coexistence in Indonesia. This was in many ways confirmed during our stay in the country.

"Cultural capital" is here understood as a cultural surplus of shared values and ideas. It is seen as cultural frameworks and ways of constructively dealing with very heterogeneous and sometime tense situations nationally as well as locally.[30]

Cultural capital, the sense of shared citizenship, of belonging and being loyal to the nation, however, has been challenged by regional problems and struggles for political autonomy. Furthermore, a certain Islamic radicalism connected to power relationships outside the country, and the socioeconomic inequality among people make emphasis on inclusive citizenship crucial.[31] The debates on citizenship in Indonesia, therefore, have less frequently focused on whether citizen rights should be differentiated by ethnicity (like in Nigeria) but rather whether they should be differentiated by religion.[32]

Although there is formally democracy in Denmark, and ethnic minorities have in many ways equal juridical rights with the rest of the population exclusive citizenship, lack of social and solidaric recognition of minorities are among the main problems.

For instance, political leaders are still not regarding and addressing all citizens as equal actors in society--as citizens first of all. As a result, certain symptoms (like the cartoon affair) show us that minorities do not possess the civic awareness of doing and having value as human beings. In many ways Denmark is marked by a national self-sufficiency which does not recognize the value of diversity and multiple citizenship and the necessity of international accountability and ethical conduct.

Citizenship and religion

The Us vs Them syndrome on the national, regional and international level is today so closely interrelated. As we saw during the cartoon crisis and also from Muslim reactions to the controversial speech given by the Pope on September 15 2006,[33] remote problems become local problems and are used as an excuse to protest against those who have caused the problem. There is no doubt that the disproportion in control, influence and human welfare on all levels is the root

Christian-Muslim conferenceon the Shari'a issue in Gusau, Zamfara State, March 2005

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[30] The term "cultural capital" was first articulated by the French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu as one of three types of capital: the economic, social and cultural capital. Capital acts, according to Bourdieu, as a "social relation within a system of exchange." It comprises three subtypes: embodied, objectified and institutionalized cultural capital. In the context of our studies in Indonesia, cultural capital is used in the sense of embodied cultural capital – knowledge and attitudes, a way of thinking, speaking, relating that which is inherited and acquired by the individual Indonesian. Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron, "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction," in Richard K.Brown (ed.), *Knowledge, Education and Cultural Change* (London: Tavistock, 1973). Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in J. G. Richardson, *Handbook for Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. (New York: Greenwood 1986), pp.241-258. Pierre Bourdieu, *The State Nobility. Elite Schools in the Field of Power* (Chicago: Stanford University Press 1996). Reference can also be made to Robert W. Hefner's use of the term "cultural quality" and "social capital." Hefner 2001:10.
31 On citizenship in Indonesia, see Hefner 2001.
[32] Hefner 2001:34.
[33] Pope Benedict XVI's Regensburg lecture on "Faith, Reason and the University. Memories and Reflection" in which the Pope quoted a 14th Century Christian emperor who said the Prophet Muhammad had brought the world only "evil and inhuman" things.

cause of many of the problems we are facing in the world today, including the problem of terrorism. Therefore a new and more inclusive concept of citizenship is needed on all levels. In the last few decades Muslims have increasingly discussed the compatibility of Islam with universal concepts such as democracy, human rights and citizenship. The discussions have not only been related to Muslims living as minorities in non-Muslim surroundings but have also taken place in countries with Muslim majority. For instance in Egypt, many Islamists argue that not only is citizenship and Islam compatible but citizenship is also part of the Islamic discourse, an expression of the very essence of Islam.[34]

Also a number of modern Muslim thinkers such as Abdolkarim Soroush (Iran), Ahmad Mousalli (Lebanon); Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im (Sudan-USA), Tariq Ramadan (Europe) have made attempts to articulate the concept of citizenship, most of them on the basis of Islamic principles. For them citizenship means equal political and social participation in a pluralist democracy. They emphasize the contextuality of citizenship which they see as a process.[35]

These Muslims would agree with most Christians that exercising one's citizenship should not be dictated by religion but could be inspired by religious convictions. However, if religion were to be discredited or disqualified, pushed out of society and also out of ethical debates, political life would be impoverished.

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[34] Scott 2007 p.5. See also March 2005.
[35] Tariq Ramadan even speaks about Sharî'a as an "ethics of citizenship". Ramadan 2004, p.165-71.

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