

COMENIUS UNIVERSITY BRATISLAVA
European Master's Degree in Human Rights and Democratisation
A.Y. 2015/2016

FROM 'THE OTHER' TO 'PART OF US'

A legal, historical, political and sociological analysis of the
relationship between Austria and the Islam.

Author: Corinna Franzinelli
Supervisor: JUDr. Tomáš Gábriš, PhD

Abstract:

The general purpose of this thesis is to analyse the attitude towards and the relationship with Islam in Austria, a country actually among the most liberal and active ones in Europe. Due to demographic changes, the Muslim population of Austria increased substantially during the last decades. Anti-Muslim attitudes, direct and indirect discrimination and the rise of right-wing parties and nationalism are opposed to this demographic development. Muslim and Islam are still perceived as something not belonging to 'us' and both the media and political parties are misusing corresponding images.

This thesis will try to throw light on the real situation through an in-depth analysis of the legal, historical, political and sociological aspects that influence the relationship between the Austrian state and Islam. Starting with an analysis of the 2015 Islam Act, it will continue by explaining the Austrian approach to secularism (through recognising religious groups) and examine the creation of Austrian national identity, showing that religion has played a minor role in this process. In order to understand the othering discourse regarding Muslims, theories of cultural and collective memory will be used.

Finally, the thesis shows how – on a historical and sociological level- Islam has in fact been/become part of Austria. Nevertheless, the situation remains tense due to national and international developments. For this reason, it is crucial to promote integration, collaboration and participation of Muslims in the Austrian society.

Table of Contents

1. List of abbreviations	1
2. Foreword	2-3
3. Introduction	4-6
4. Status of research	7-10
4.1. Definitions.....	10-12
4.2. Anti-Muslim prejudice	13-15
4.3. Othering.....	16-18
5. The legal framework	19
5.1. The relationship between Austria and religion.....	20-21
5.2. Tradition of legal protection of Islam in Austria.....	22-23
5.3. The 2015 Islam Act	24-32
5.4. Summary : legal approach.....	33
6. A historical approach	34
6.1. Europe and Islam – a changing history	35
6.1.1. Representations of Muslims in art	35-38
6.1.2. Representations of Muslims in literature	39-42
6.2. The Habsburg monarchy – a multi-ethnic state	43-44
6.3. The situation in Austria during the 20th century	45-46
6.4. Summary : historical approach	47
7. A political approach	48
7.1. Political theories.....	49-50
7.2. The political use of symbols and myths	51
7.3. Creating an Austrian national identity.....	52-57

7.4. Current political issues: internal and external developments	58
7.4.1. International terrorism and counter-terrorism	58-60
7.4.2. Refugee crisis	60
7.4.3. Changes in Austria's political landscape	61-62
7.4.4. Sagas from Vienna	62-66
7.5. Euro-Islam and Austro-Islam	67-70
7.6. Summary : political approach.....	71
8. A sociological approach: What does it mean to be Muslim in Austria?.....	72
8.1. The Muslim Community in Austria – More than 500.000 people	73
8.1.1. Different levels of religiosity	74
8.1.2. Muslim organisations	75-77
8.2. Education.....	78-79
8.2.1. Kindergarten.....	79-81
8.2.2. School system.....	81-83
8.3. Current debates.....	84
8.3.1. Halal debates	85
8.3.2. Mosques/Minarets debates	86-87
8.3.3. Inclusion of Muslims in Austrian armed forces	88-89
8.3.4. Women's rights	90-93
8.4. Facing discrimination and hate crime	94
8.4.1. Indirect discrimination	95-96
8.4.2. Direct discrimination and hate crime	96-98
8.5. Summary : sociological approach	99
9. Conclusions : Can there be an Austrian Islam?	100-106
10. Bibliography.....	107-129
11. Annex	130-131