

**Project Title****Critique of religion and the framing of Jews and Muslims in the Netherlands today****Summary (250 words)**

Recently, in the Netherlands and other European countries, controversies have arisen concerning Jewish and Muslim religious practices such as ritual slaughter and circumcision. These controversies are usually framed in terms of shifting relations between secular cultures and (orthodox) religion. Some criticise these practices in the name of secular and liberal values, often with reference to the Enlightenment and human or animal rights; others argue that secularist cultural hegemony exists in an uneasy relationship with religious freedom.

A question which has so far remained in the background, is how the framing of these controversies, in terms of the relationship between secular critique of religion and (orthodox) religion, is related to how Jews and Muslims have been historically, and still remain, the objects of cultural stereotyping, racialisation and discrimination. This is a crucial question at a time when anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are issues of concern in Europe.

This project therefore analyses the dynamic between critique of religion and the framing of Jews and Muslims, while also aiming to contribute to public reflection on this dynamic. One sub-project provides a conceptual-historical analysis of the dynamic between religious critique and the framing of Jews and Muslims in secular modern political theory. It subsequently examines the contributions of contemporary Dutch public intellectuals to the debate in light of that conceptual history. Another sub-project involves participants in controversies in the Netherlands concerning circumcision and ritual slaughter to evaluate the legitimacy of specific forms of religious critique. The principal applicant will write a synthesising study in Dutch.

**Principal Applicant**

Prof.dr Yolande Jansen, senior researcher (tenure track) at the Amsterdam Centre for Globalisation Studies (UvA, research school ASCA) and special Professor of 'Humanism in relation to religion and secularity' appointed by the Socrates Foundation (VU/Theology).

**Co-applicant**

Prof.dr Thijl Sunier, Professor of Islam in European Societies, VU University, Social Sciences.

**Institutional Setting**

1. UvA Faculty of Humanities (Research school ASCA: Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis).
2. VU Faculties of Theology and Social Sciences (Research school VISOR: VU Institute for the Study of Religion, Culture and Society).

**Period of funding**

1 December 2013—1 December 2018.

**Composition of the Research Team**

| Function | Name | Affiliation | PhD-supervisors | fte |
|----------|------|-------------|-----------------|-----|
|          |      |             |                 |     |

|                           |                        |   |                                       |                      |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Principal Applicant       | Prof.dr Yolande Jansen | UvA, ACGS/ Philosophy                               |                                       | 0.5 fte; 0.5 year    |
| Co-applicant              | Prof.dr Thijl Sunier   | VU, Cultural Anthropology                           |                                       | 0.5 fte; 0.5 year    |
| PhD-project 1             | PhD-candidate          | UvA (ASCA)  | Yolande Jansen and Michiel Leezenberg | 0.8 fte, four years  |
| PhD-project 2             | PhD-candidate          | VU (VISOR)  | Yolande Jansen and Thijl Sunier       | 1.0 fte; four years  |
| Co-Promotor PhD project 1 | Dr. Michiel Leezenberg | UvA, Philosophy                                     |                                       |                      |
| Societal Partner          | Prof.dr Yolande Jansen | Socrates Foundation                                 |                                       | 0.05 fte; four years |
| External advisor          | Dr. Annelien de Dijn   | UvA, Political science, history of political theory | Advisor PhD 1                         |                      |

**a. Principal applicant:** Prof.dr Yolande Jansen is special professor for the Socrates Foundation at the VU University and senior researcher (tenure track) at the ACGS (Amsterdam Center for Globalization Studies) of the UvA. She is a specialist in European secularisms in connection to multicultural questions. Her book *Secularism, Assimilation and the Crisis of Multiculturalism; French Modernist Legacies* will be published soon in the AUP/IMISCOE Research Series. She has been a postdoctoral researcher in the NWO *Future of the Religious Past Programme*, in the Research Group ‘*Genealogies of Self, State and Society in the Islamic World*’ led by prof. dr. Ruud Peters and dr Michiel Leezenberg. Her current research project for the ACGS has the working title *Provincialising philosophy: what philosophy can learn from postcolonial religious and cultural studies when talking about religion, secularity, and postsecularity*. She has ample experience of teaching and lecturing about multiculturalism, secularism and postsecularism.

**b. Co-applicant:** Prof. dr Thijl Sunier holds the chair of ‘Islam in European Societies’ at the VU University Amsterdam and is head of the anthropology department at the same university. He has conducted research on inter-ethnic relations, Turkish youth and Turkish Islamic organisations in the Netherlands, comparative research among Turkish youth in France, Germany, Great Britain and the Netherlands, and international comparative research on nation building and multiculturalism in France and the Netherlands. He conducts research in the field of transnational Islamic movements, religious leadership, and nation-building and Islam in Europe. Sunier is preparing a study on Turkish transnational Islam. He is chairman of the

board of the Inter-academic School for Islam Studies in the Netherlands (NISIS), chairman of the board of the Dutch Anthropological Association (ABV), and editor of the Journal of Muslims in Europe (JOME).

**Project 1:** Phd Candidate UvA, ASCA (Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis): This will be a candidate with a Research MA in philosophy, and experience of conceptual historical methodologies. Supervisors: Prof. dr Yolande Jansen and dr. Michiel Leezenberg. Dr. Annelien de Dijn (UvA Political Science -- intellectual history of politics) will serve as an external advisor of this project. The candidate will be selected through an open procedure.

**Project 2:** PhD Candidate VU, VISOR (VU Institute for the Study of Religion, Culture and Society). This will preferably be a candidate with a Research MA in religious studies and/or anthropology, with experience in doing participatory research and rhetorical framing analysis of focus group data. Supervisors: Prof. dr Yolande Jansen and Prof. dr Thijl Sunier. The candidate will be selected through an open procedure.

## **12. Description of the proposed research (3889 words).**

### **Project title:**

**Critique of religion and the framing of Jews and Muslims in the Netherlands today**

### **A. Scientific Quality**

#### ***Research Question***

For an understanding of how religion can be divisive and could become increasingly so in European societies, and in the Netherlands in particular, it seems relevant to focus on the increasingly **interconnected position of Jews and Muslims as objects of religious critique**. Recently, within public debates in the Netherlands, the religious practices of Jews and Muslims, particularly ritual slaughter and circumcision, have frequently been the object of controversy, often in relation to interpretations of Islam and Judaism as specifically problematic versions of monotheism and/or orthodoxy. Contributors to the discussion tend to frame the issues at stake in terms of shifting boundaries between secular and/or liberal values and more orthodox religious ones. Some argue that the critique of religion, and the adaptation of religious traditions to secular values and rights is a worthy Enlightenment legacy (Israel 2001; 2011; Cliteur, 2010a and b; Hirsi Ali 2010; Pels 2008). Others argue that religious tolerance and religious freedom are at risk because of an increasing cultural hegemony of secularist discourses (Verkaaik 2009; Valenta 2012).

Critique of religion (or religious critique) plays an important role in these debates. Religious critique is a public discursive practice which, so it is argued, stems from the Enlightenment, and which is aimed at emancipating citizens from unquestioned religious authority (Israel 2001, 2006, 2011; Cliteur 2010a; Weinrich 2011). In a Dutch context, Geert Wilders appealed to the legitimacy of religious critique in his defense against charges of discrimination and incitement to hatred, a line of defense which has been accepted by legal scholars and judges (Rechtbank Amsterdam 2011).

Religious critique, as one of the pillars of *cultural* secularism beyond the institutional separation of Church and State (Casanova 1994; Jansen 2006; Bader 2007) has been criticised for its exclusionary effects for religious persons, especially those of non-European background (Taylor 2007; Habermas 2008; Asad et al. 2009).

What has remained relatively out of focus, however, is how the *secular-religious framework* for understanding the controversies is itself related to the *historical* position of

Jews and Muslims as two distinct minorities with highly complex, interconnected and variable *religious, political, cultural and ethnic* dimensions, which themselves tend to become the objects of social and cultural exclusion and discrimination (Bunzl 2007).

The project's **first aim** is therefore to innovatively theorise the intersections between (1) today's critiques of Jewish and Muslim religious practices and their understanding from *within* a secular-religious framework, and (2) the position of these minorities as the historical and present day interrelated objects of highly complex and sometimes utterly negative framings. The project's **second aim** is to raise the awareness of the wider public in the Netherlands of these intersections.

The **first research question** is: what is the relation between religious critique, as understood from within a secular-religious framework, and the dynamics of cultural stereotyping, culturalisation, religionisation, orientalisation and racialisation, in sum, of 'framing Muslims' (Morey and Yaqin 2011) and, analogously, 'framing Jews'? The **second question** is: what are, in view of our rethinking of the relation between religious critique and the framing of Jews and Muslims, the legitimate boundaries for religious critique, both in cultural and in legal terms? The **third question** is related to the valorization and experimental methodology of the project: can we extend reflection on this issue beyond the limited academic research field, thus 'expertising' the public while also publicising scholarship?

### ***Theoretical framework***

***Two theoretical problem fields have to be distinguished to tackle the research questions:***

#### ***(1) Islam and Judaism as religions and the framing of Jews and Muslims***

The relatively clear-cut distinction between critique of religion and the stereotypical framing of populations is based on the idea that we can neatly distinguish between the *content* of certain beliefs and practices, and the members of specific religious groups. This assumption is systematically related to the idea that critiquing or hating beliefs is not directed towards people for who they are, but for what they think and do.

This distinction has been problematised from various perspectives. Firstly, it is problematic to distinguish between 'religious doctrine per se' and 'followers of that doctrine', because the doctrine itself cannot exist without followers (Klug 2012). Further, Van der Valk notes that 'it is still not easy to mark the boundary between religious criticism and Islamophobic ideology, not least because it is possible that the latter hides behind or controls the former' (2012: 18). Moreover, in the Euro-Atlantic context, Islam itself has been thoroughly culturalised, and presented as a 'backward culture' beyond religion by some of its fiercest critics, such as Pim Fortuyn in 1995 (Mepschen et al. 2010).

However, the deepest problematisation of the notion of religious critique can be expected from the ways in which the concept of religion itself has been deconstructed in anthropology and religious studies, and has been criticised as a specifically modernist, mentalist, Kantian legacy, strongly connected to a privileging of Protestantism (Asad 1993, Dubuisson 2003). This deconstruction has by now expanded into a fuller questioning of what has been called the 'religio-secular' paradigm in the humanities, where critics question the concepts of 'religion' and 'secularity', and the demarcations between them, analysing the historical, social and political dimensions of 'religion-making' and 'secularity-making' (Dressler and Mandair 2011; for Judaism specifically: Batnitzky 2011; for Judaism in connection to Islam: Anidjar 2008).

Such a deconstruction of the concept of religion and of the religio-secular paradigm is related in complex ways to the culturalisation of citizenship (and of religion), which has been analysed in the context of the Netherlands by Mepschen et al 2010. It *does* imply a cultural, practical and contextualised reading of religion. However, the deconstruction of religion and

of the secular-religious framework implies that we assume the intricacy of the representative and performative dimensions of both religion and secularity. This thoroughly problematises the abstract distinction between, on the one hand, *choosing* or *having* religion, or culture, and, on the other hand, being determined by *a* religion or *a* culture. This abstract distinction is the basis for culturalisation (Brown 2006; Asad et al 2009; Butler 2010), and for the clear-cut distinction between critique of religion and negative framing of populations as well.

The challenge of the project, then, will be to rethink the legitimacy of diverse forms and aspects of the critique of religion, taking the deconstruction of the religio-secular paradigm fully into account.

## *(2) The historical dynamics of framing Jews and Muslims.*

What brings Jews and Muslims together in the debates mentioned above, relates to Judaism and Islam being constructed as the monotheistic others of secularized Christianity or Judeo-Christianity. Characteristic of their interconnectedness is the fact that Jewish and Muslim *religious practices* are easily misunderstood from within a secularly-informed framework of interpretation (Asad 1993; in political theory, Brahm Levey (2009), Jansen (2011), Norton (2013).

But the interconnectedness of Judaism and Islam requires qualification. From a historical perspective, contemporary Islamophobia differs from anti-Semitism because, at its height, European anti-Semitism went together with nation-state formation, while Islamophobia today is more related to the idea of Europe as a civilizational realm characterised by ‘secular liberal democracy’ (Bunzl 2007). In connection to this, it has been argued that since the Holocaust, Jews and Judaism have to a large extent been culturally included within this European realm, especially when thought of in terms of ‘Judeo-Christian’ civilization (Kalmar 2008, Døving 2010, Meer 2012). However, these authors argue, this inclusion is a recent articulation of a history shared by Jews and Muslims (often closely connected to Arabs). In the course of the nineteenth century both groups were constructed as *Semites*. The genealogy of the *Semite* shows that Jews, in the course of modernity, have often been racialized, while Muslim-Arabs were ‘theologised’ and deracialized (Olender 1989, Anidjar 2003, 2008, Kalmar 2008, Jansen 2008, Døving 2010; Heschel 2012). This literature demonstrates how notions of Judaism and Islam are highly variegated and interrelated cultural constructions, which cannot be separated from the genealogies of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

These genealogies ought to be taken into account if we want to denaturalise today’s framings of Jews, Muslims, Islam and Judaism as primarily *religious* categories which can be understood within a *secular-religious framework*, and if we want to understand the **triangular dynamics of self- and other definitions among Jews, Muslims and other Europeans** – defined as secular (Enlightened), Christian or Judeo-Christian.

From this genealogical perspective, we use the notion of ‘**framing**’ as a broad concept which can encompass **racialisation, orientalisation, culturalisation, and stereotyping in different constellations**. We thus undo the vectorisation of thinking about cultural exclusion, which traces a line from the religious bigotry of the Middle Ages to biological racism in the more recent history and to cultural racism or ‘culturalisation’ in postmodernity; a line which is often assumed in the literature (Meer 2012). Our assumption of the messiness and context-specificity of framing is in line with recent trends in research (Anidjar 2003 and 2008, Butler 2010, and specifically for the relation between religion and race, Meer 2012; and will be innovative in comparison to readings which tend to focus specifically on ‘culturalisation’ (Mepschen et al 2010).

## ***Research Design/Method***

The project will be carried out in two PhD-projects and a third synthesizing study in Dutch aimed at a wider public. Several academic articles will be co-authored by the PhD-candidates and applicants. The first PhD-project traces the genealogy to ‘Muslims and Jews’ in the modern political philosophical tradition of religious critique, and then studies the articulation of this tradition in present day Dutch intellectual debates. The second project analyses debates about religious critique, Islam and Judaism in the Netherlands between 2004-2012, aiming to have an ‘expertising’ effect on this debate by deploying a combined focus group and interview methodology.

The project as a whole is informed by three methodological thrusts:

### *1. The pragmatic turn in philosophy*

We conceive of meaning as a social practice, and as being constituted by the *use* of specific words and concepts, rather than by what these words or concepts refer to (Bernstein 2010). This approach necessitates a rigorously contextual approach, also in the case of seemingly transhistorical concepts such as ‘secularity’, ‘religion’, ‘Islam’, ‘Enlightenment’ etc. Philosophical pragmatism is in line with the project’s deconstruction of the secular-religious framework, which is an expansion of the genealogies of religion that were themselves based on the interpretation of meaning as social practice (Asad 1993).

### *2. Expertising democracy, democratising science*

Taking meaning as a social practice justifies the setup of the project as not just a theoretical exercise, but as one with the definite goal of having a transformative, ‘expertising’ effect on a part of the active public (admittedly inevitably a limited one). The valorisation of the project is thus written into the research design itself. The project’s intention is to ‘expertise democracy’ and ‘democratise science’ (Bader 2013).

### *3. Anthropology of public reasoning*

The project is also inspired by John Bowen’s successful ‘anthropology of public reasoning’, which allowed him to ‘see connections among political philosophy, public policy and common sense, by studying how people deliberate about an important social issue’ (2007: 3). This approach was especially successful in France, where academic debate and ‘more widely distributed ways of thinking’ are intimately connected (3). Yet it also promises to be successful in the Netherlands, where there is a salient connection between academic debate and the wider public, especially in the corpus we want to study in Project 1, part II.

Additional methodological tools are more specific to the aim and research questions of the two PhD-projects, as we explain below.

## **PhD project 1. Islam and Judaism, Muslims and Jews in the contemporary Dutch ‘Enlightenment’, in light of their genealogies in modern political philosophy**

This project first traces the genealogy of the notions of Jews and Muslims, Islam and Judaism, in modern political thought, especially within the liberal and secular tradition of critique of religion (Weinrich 2011). Secondly, it reads contemporary Dutch critique of religion by public intellectuals as context-specific articulations of these earlier traditions of modern political thought.

Critique of religion is intimately connected to the emergence of Enlightenment philosophy in the line of Spinoza-Voltaire-Kant-Mendelssohn-F Feuerbach-Bauer-Marx-Nietzsche-Freud. This tradition has strong echoes in today’s liberal and secular public intellectual traditions, for

example Derrida (2002), Chebel (2004), Dalferth und Groshans (2006), Taylor (2007), Habermas (2008). We can trace this tradition in Dutch public intellectual debates in contributions by Herman Philipse, Paul Cliteur, Afshin Ellian, Paul Scheffer, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Jonathan Israel, Dick Pels.

The way in which authors within the modern political philosophical tradition have tended to work with problematic, often orientalisating, de-modernising and ‘illiberalising’ concepts of religion, and of non-Protestant and/or non-Latin-Christian monotheisms in particular, has been quite extensively examined (Olender 2008 [1989], Yovel 1998; Kal 2000; Frishman 2008, Anidjar 2003 and 2008, Cavanaugh 2009, Kalmar 2008, Almond 2010, Toscano 2010, Døving 2010, Batnitzky 2011, Jansen 2010 and 2011, Norton 2011 and 2013). Yet although there is now a relatively burgeoning strand in intellectual history and sociology studying the interrelated construction of Jews and Muslims over the last two centuries, extending the trend of such comparative work to political theoretical traditions is in its very early stages (but see Heschel 2012, Norton 2013). Moreover, there is, as yet, no study of how today’s articulations of religious critique should be read in the context of post 9/11 concerns about the return of religion in the public sphere, and in light of the Israel-Palestine conflict – although Bunzl, Anidjar, Kalmar and Døving have started this discussion.

In part I of this sub-project, the available literature on how the tradition of religious critique is related to modern concepts of religion, and Islam and Judaism in particular, is systematically examined, with one critical focus point: the project asks whether *religious critique itself, as a modern, Enlightenment tradition, depended upon distorted or at least problematic concepts and images of religion, and of Judaism and Islam, and Jews and Muslims, in particular*. A second critical focus will be where in canonical modern political theory we can trace a comparison between Judaism and Islam, and how they are connected to or differentiated from each other.

Then, in part II of the dissertation, the project homes in on a select number of contributions to the debates which are salient in the Netherlands today, especially on Paul Cliteur (2010 a and b), Jonathan Israel (2001, 2006 and 2011), Dick Pels (2008), and Ayaan Hirsi Ali (2010). We will analyse in detail the construction of Jews and Muslims in a few Enlightenment authors especially relevant for Dutch religious critique today, namely Baruch Spinoza (especially for Jonathan Israel), the Baron d’Holbach and Immanuel Kant (especially for Paul Cliteur). This part of the project asks whether we can trace those forms of framing, of both secular and religious Jews and Muslims, that are familiar from modern political philosophy in contemporary Dutch contributions. If so, we will ask whether these new contributions have been able to revise the tradition’s earlier participation in negative framings of Jews and Muslims, and how they have done so.

### ***PhD-project 2: Critique of Jewish and Muslim religious practices in the Netherlands between 2004-2015: Exploring the grey zone between the critique of religion and discrimination by means of a participatory approach***

This PhD project asks – within contemporary public debates about Islam, and ritual slaughter and circumcision in particular – if and how distinctions between religious critique and discrimination are being made by the participants themselves. How are contributors to these debates reflecting on the legitimacy of their own or their co-contributors’ standpoints, and can the project play a role in processes of learning from each other through debate?

The research will take into account three types of material:

(1) A selection of documents forming part of Dutch parliamentary debates, discussions with representatives of the groups concerned (in the case of ritual slaughter and circumcision), juridical documents (Geert Wilders trial), the position document by the KNMG (Royal Dutch Medical Association) about circumcision (2010).

(2) The material produced by the focus group debates. The setup of the focus groups will be prepared by studying Breen (2006) and specifically Duyvendak and Scholten (2011), who used focus group methodology in research about citizenship in the Netherlands (2011). The focus groups will be formed by persons who are active in the debates about Muslim and Jewish religious practices, either in social media, in newspapers or in actual debates – some of them are also members of the user group. The interaction between members of the focus groups will be a central goal of our approach (Kitzinger 1994).

(3) Interviews with a few key players in the debates: Jonathan Israel, Paul Cliteur, Dick Pels, the judges who acquitted Wilders of discrimination, the president and ethics commission of the KNMG – if they consent to be interviewed.

The material will be analysed along the lines of framing analysis (Rein and Schön 1994). It is important to note, however, that *the participatory design of the project aims at stimulating collective reflection on the legitimacy of specific forms of religious critique and/or religious practices in the focus groups and interviewees themselves* as part of the research design. This implies that not *analysis* from the outside, but *participation* and interpretation of that participation will necessitate the adaptation of framing analysis to our participatory research goal. Framing analysis, especially when refined along the lines of D'Angelo and Kuypers 2010 and Scholten 2011, can help to develop a pragmatic, language-sensitive perspective not only on policy, but on public debate as well. It can help to analyse how frames construct, consciously or unconsciously, particular objects in particular ways. Analysing shifts and repetitions in specific frames can help to clarify how they define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies (Kuypers and D'Angelo 2010). In our project, such framing will itself be discussed with the participants in the focus groups, and the way in which assumptions about the legitimacy of specific forms of religious critique hang together with specific frames for defining the 'problem' of Jewish and Islamic religious practices today will be discussed.

To refine our understanding of the specificity of the Dutch debate, one chapter of the dissertation will be dedicated to a preliminary comparison with similar recent controversies in Germany, Britain and Norway, in cooperation with our international partners doing similar research in those countries (see under 13).

### ***Innovative elements***

We will bring several burgeoning trends in the literature about the interrelated framing of Muslims and Jews in Europe together. Initial work on this has been done by Olender 1989, Anidjar 2003 and 2008; Brahm Levey and Modood 2009, Klug 2012, Jansen 2009 and 2013 and Norton 2011 and 2013; Meer 2012, Heschel 2012. However, the focus on the secular-religious framework itself is original, as are our links to humanities, sociological and political theoretical literatures, which usually remain firmly within their disciplinary boundaries. Moreover, we focus, innovatively, on the interrelated construction of Judaism, Islam and 'Judeo-Christian-secularity' in modern political philosophy (bringing together and innovating earlier findings of Yovel 1998, Toscano 2010, De Dijn 2012, Heschel 2012, Norton 2013).

Methodologically innovative is our attempt to integrate the valorization of the research in its design, rather than only in its dissemination. Moreover, we aim to include the relevantly affected stakeholders and knowledge holders not so much *in policy processes* (as Bader 2013



advocates), but in *public reflection on representation processes and their histories*. Thus, we aim to contribute not just to research *on* religion in society, but also to forming an ‘expertising and democratising’ intervention *transforming* the position of religion in society.

## **B. Cohesion of the research**

Conducting this project requires interdisciplinary capacities that will facilitate intensive cooperation between the applicants of the research, but also between the applicants and the PhD-candidates. The cohesion of the *team* will be guaranteed by the co-authoring of several of our deliverables (see under 15); here we will follow the trend in several recent NWO-projects where cooperation among authors has been productive and succesful (NWO project ‘Culturalization of citizenship’, NWO project ‘Diasporic writing: A Comparative Literature of the Moroccan Literatures in French, Spanish and Dutch’). Moreover, *the project as a whole* forms a contribution to Dutch and international debates at the intersection of public debate and academic work, so the aim will be a shared one. Although the methodologies of both PhD-projects will be quite different, our project will make them communicate through their shared aim and research questions. The synthesizing study of the applicant will bring the findings from both settings, the conceptual-historical and the participatory one, together, by taking its cue from the ‘anthropology of public reasoning’ that we described under question 12A.

## **C. Societal Relevance**

The position of Jews and Muslims in Dutch society (and in Europe) has recently become a topic of renewed concern in the light of public debates about circumcision and ritual slaughter, about Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, and more generally about the position of religious minorities in largely secular societies. The applicants for this project are convinced that it is crucial, in the Dutch and European context, to rethink the position of Jews and Muslims as minorities which have been subject to complex trajectories of racialisation, culturalisation and orientalisation, and which are at risk of severe forms of discrimination, while being increasingly visible as *religious* minorities. It seems reasonable to expect that increasing poverty and the rise of populism may cause the rearticulation of forms of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, the basis for which has been developed in the post 9/11 context (and before). The context, moreover, is one where some are convinced of the legitimacy of their religion-critical views, while such views touch on either anti-Semitism or Islamophobia in the experience of at least some of the minority members concerned. It is significant that both the Anne Frank Stichting and FORUM, and, moreover, de *Linkerwang* (GroenLinks) and the *Banning Werkgemeenschap* of the PvdA want to form part of the user group. These organisations are all important for translating concerns about the position of religious and cultural minorities to a wider public, while also being influential in shaping and transforming this position.

### *Literature*

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## **International orientation and/or international cooperation**

### ***Comparison of Dutch processes to international ones***

Debates about ritual slaughter and circumcision are happening all over Europe today (and actually worldwide). They are occurring alongside the debates about religious dress that were already in progress (with institutional effects). In these more recent debates, Jews have been implied more clearly than before as well as Muslims, although it must be remembered that the first conflicts in France about the headscarf in the late 1980s arose after analogies had been drawn between Jewish and Islamic religious practices when some Jewish children did not want to attend school on Saturdays (Pierre Birnbaum 1998).

Specificity in the Netherlands' resides in a few circumstances: partly as a reaction to the murders of Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh, and because of death threats to Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Geert Wilders and Paul Cliteur, contributors to Dutch public debates have understandably become hesitant in connecting religious critique on the one hand, and processes of stereotyping and discrimination on the other. The painfulness of this context may have resulted in the fact that, in the Netherlands, there are relatively few public intellectuals who regularly cast a critical light over the 'politics of Enlightenment' (De Dijn 2012), particularly in the context of the framing of Jews and Muslims, while there are a number of good authors and debaters defending the politics of Enlightenment, such as Jonathan Israel, Paul Cliteur and Dick Pels. Critical voices such as those of Tariq Modood, Bhiku Parekh and Nasar Meer in Britain, or Esther Benbassa, Pierre Birnbaum, Vincent Geisser and Nilüfer Göle in France, are relatively scarce (but see for example Leezenberg 2007). This may have the long term

effect of ‘normalising’ views as hegemonic which need to be matched by other voices to guarantee the enduring inclusion of both Jews and Muslims in the Dutch public sphere. This is why the Netherlands, in particular, needs more academically trained public voices to balance the dynamics of religious critique and discrimination.

### ***Position in international scholarship***

The project forms part of a broad, fundamental, international rethinking of the relationship between religion, secularity, culture and race to better understand the position of religious minorities, and of Muslims and Jews in particular, in contemporary European societies. Significant for this rethinking is the recent work of Sindre Bangstad, Matti Bunzl, Nasar Meer, Geoffrey Brahm Levey and Tariq Modood, for example Meer’s recent special issue of *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, which is entirely dedicated to the shifting relations of race, racialisation, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. In the humanities, Gil Anidjar, Alexa Døving, Davidson Kalmar, Denise Buell, Anne Norton, Wendy Brown, Judith Butler and others are working on similar issues from a more conceptual-historical or genealogical perspective. Our research will profit from and contribute to both disciplinary fields.

Both applicants are involved in the international network of scholars mentioned above. Jansen is currently involved in research projects in Norway (Secularism and Tolerance of Religious minorities – in cooperation with Jonas Jakobsen and Sindre Bangstad), and in Germany (Jews and Muslims in European societies), initiated by Volker Heins (Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI Essen), together with Tariq Modood and Nasar Meer (England). The contributions to the Norwegian project will be submitted for a special issue of *Political Theory* at the end of March 2013, which has been negotiated by guest-editor Jonas Jakobsen. The German project initiated by Volker Heins involves a workshop in May 2013, with presentations by leading scholars in the field, which will be collected for an edited volume (Yolande Jansen will be contributing to this workshop). Sunier has conducted comparative international research on Islam, and as chairman of NISIS is currently involved in several international research projects.

### **Summary for laymen (249 words)**

Recentelijk zijn in Nederland en andere Europese landen controverses ontstaan over joodse en islamitische religieuze praktijken zoals rituele slacht en besnijdenis. Sommigen bekritisieren deze praktijken in de naam van seculiere of liberale waarden, vaak met referentie aan de Verlichting; anderen menen dat een overheersend liberaal secularisme op gespannen voet staat met religieuze tolerantie en religieuze vrijheid.

Wat tot nu toe meestal op de achtergrond blijft, is de vraag hoe de debatten over rituele slacht en besnijdenis in relatie staan tot beeldvorming over Joden en moslims, waarbij stereotypering, racialisering en culturalisering vaak een belangrijke rol spelen. Of en hoe zulke dergelijke beeldvorming nu ook weer een rol speelt is een urgente vraag nu anti-semitisme en islamofobie bronnen van zorg zijn in heel Europa. Dit project analyseert daarom de dynamiek tussen kritiek op religie, in het bijzonder Jodendom en Islam, en de culturele representatie van Joden en moslims.

Eén promotieonderzoek geeft een historisch-conceptuele analyse van de dynamiek tussen religieuze kritiek en de representatie van Joden en moslims in de geschiedenis van de moderne politieke theorie. Vervolgens analyseert het de bijdragen van enkele publieke intellectuelen in het Nederlandse debat (onder meer Jonathan Israel, Paul Cliteur) in het licht van die geschiedenis. Het tweede promotieonderzoek gaat met de deelnemers aan dit debat zelf op zoek naar de legitimiteit van verschillende vormen van religieuze kritiek, wanneer we die interpreteren in het licht van de dynamiek met de culturele representatie van Joden en

moslims. De aanvragers zullen Engelstalige artikelen en een synthetiserend Nederlandstalig boek schrijven.