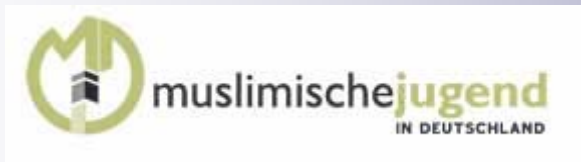Spaces of Belongingness in an Othering Society:
A Comparative Analysis from Germany

Representing the Other

Synnøve Bendixsen and Urmila Goel

14th Nordic Migration Researchers' Conference
Bergen, 14th – 16th November 2007

theinder.net
Indian Online Community
Indienportal für Deutschland

- infotainment:
  - information about India and India in Germany
  - for others like themselves and ‚white' Germans
- draw a 'positive' image of India
  - modern and young
  - countering images of backwardness
  - in order to positively identify with
  - implicit and non-normative
- considered authentic representation
  - by many users and 'white' observers
  - 'authentic voice'

- Knowledge in MJD:

    - being both Muslim and German is possible

    - a 'correct' Islam, detached from culture and tradition

    - how to best answer or react in the public sphere

- Representing what is a 'good' Muslim:

    – 'Identity politics': to change the negative stereotypes

    – A religious duty: to do du'wa

Conclusion

- Representation in both spaces
  - focuses on content of difference
  - (re)produces image of participants as Muslims/ Indians
  - thus stabilises Othering discourses
  - while at the same time challenging the norm
- within the system of ‚divide and rule'
  - attempt to (re)present a 'better' Other
- Consequence:
  - keeps hegemonial position invisible
  - thus stabilises and reproduces it

Thank you for your attention

Contact:

synnove.bendixsen@metropolitanstudies.de

www.urmila.de