

# **MUSLIM INTEGRATION:**

**CHALLENGING CONVENTIONAL WISDOM IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES**

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The CSIS Transatlantic Dialogue on Terrorism (TDT) was launched in 2003 by the International Security Program and the Europe Program to promote an open and timely discourse between counterterrorism experts from across the United States and Europe. The transatlantic community's experience with global terrorism since September 11, 2001 has presented complex and novel security challenges and new requirements for international cooperation.

The Transatlantic Dialogue on Terrorism seeks to identify common counterterrorism priorities among its American and European participants and also highlight areas where consensus is lacking. The project's format involves a series of closed roundtables, alternating between the United States and Europe, involving the leading researchers, intelligence and security professionals, academics and journalists in the field.

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## PREFACE

While questions of Muslim assimilation and integration have long been a feature of scholarly debates in Europe about identity, religion, and politics, two events in 2004 catapulted such questions into policymaking circles and the mainstream media. The bombings in Madrid in March and the murder of the Dutch filmmaker, Theo van Gogh, in the Netherlands in November alerted the general public and the transatlantic community more broadly to the danger lurking in the shadows of increasingly disenfranchised and alienated Muslim populations inside Europe. Almost immediately after these two incidents occurred, high-level conferences were convened, special exposés on Europe's "parallel societies" were written, and various policy initiatives were launched, all with the goal of strengthening the public's and governments' understanding of the challenges at hand.

Since then, a number of assumptions about the size of the Muslim populations in Europe, their grievances, their sense of identity, and the degree to which elements of immigrant communities have embraced radical sentiments have begun to harden. Today, Europe's "integration challenge" is often a core component of European or transatlantic discussions on terrorism and the roots of radicalization. That theme also features prominently in political debates across the continent. In fact, it is hard to turn on the television or radio in Europe without stumbling on some form of commentary on this subject.

As part of its ongoing Transatlantic Dialogue on Terrorism, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, DC dedicated its seventh meeting in the series to Muslim integration and assimilation. In partnership with the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) in Berlin, Germany, CSIS hosted a two-day event entitled, "The Transatlantic Dialogue on Muslims in Europe: Dealing with, and Looking Beyond, the Terrorist Threat."

The purpose of this meeting was to question and examine many of the conclusions that Europeans and Americans have drawn in recent years about the Muslim communities in their own societies. Is the often-cited figure of 20 million Muslims in Europe accurate? What about predictions that Muslims will outnumber non-Muslims in France by mid-century? Is promoting interaction among religious groups the best way to integrate Muslim communities? Are our general characterizations of first and second generation Muslims true? Can Islam be reconciled with European values? Are American Muslims better integrated than their European counterparts?

In addition to hosting the two-day conference in Berlin, CSIS commissioned six papers – three by European authors and three by Americans. What follows is an edited collection of those six pieces. The findings are fascinating. Many of the papers reveal the sometimes shaky foundations upon which Europeans and Americans are crafting integration theories and policies. The papers also show that despite efforts to improve the West's collective understanding of Islam and Muslim integration in American and European societies, many countries remain ill-equipped to deal with groups that define themselves in terms of religious affiliation. As Paul Barrett, author of *American Islam: The Struggle for the Soul of a Religion* (2007) writes in his paper, "To better understand this complex reality, and to put ourselves in a position to encourage the more hopeful trends concerning Muslims, a careful sifting of what facts we have is very much in order." This collection of essays is one such attempt.



The Transatlantic Dialogue on Terrorism owes many debts. In the last year, our principal funding came from the Robert Bosch Foundation, which has supported us generously and shared our belief that the work of the Dialogue is essential for building bridges between both leading researchers and institutions on both sides of the Atlantic. Daniel Benjamin, Director of the Center on the United States and Europe at The Brookings Institution and co-creator of the Transatlantic Dialogue on Terrorism during his tenure at CSIS as a Senior Fellow deserves special thanks for his substantive contributions, insight, and guidance throughout the course of this project. This

publication and the conference in Berlin would not have come to fruition without his wealth of expertise on this particular issue. We are grateful as well to our conference partners: the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) in Germany, which hosted the Dialogue's meeting in February in Berlin. In particular, we would like to thank Roderick Parkes for his assistance in making the Berlin conference a success. The conference surpassed our expectations, both in terms of the liveliness of exchange and the fruitfulness of ideas because of the SWP's superb preparation and substantive contributions. At CSIS, we have also benefited from the strong support of our president and CEO, John Hamre. More members of the CSIS staff have contributed to the Dialogue than could possibly be mentioned, but one whose involvement has been critical is Natalia Filipiak, whose research, writing and logistical support has been heroic. Derek Mix, Elizabeth Gray Simmons, and Niccolo Pantucci from the CSIS Europe Program also provided crucial editing and formatting support. Milena Staneva served as designer-in-chief of this publication and Clay Risen brought an exceptional editor's eye to each chapter. We greatly appreciate all their assistance.



**Julianne Smith**  
*Director and Senior Fellow*  
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# MUSLIM POPULATION OF EUROPE: A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND SOCIOECONOMIC INTEGRATION, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO BRITAIN

By Ceri Peach<sup>1</sup>

Today the Muslim population of non-Russian Europe is about twenty-one million (Table 1). We do not know the precise numbers because few European countries include census questions on religion, and statistics are inferred from different bases. Some keep statistics by citizenship, some by birthplace, some by ethnicity, and some by religion. France, for example, which keeps statistics neither by ethnicity nor religion, probably has the largest but least precisely known numbers.

It is clear, however, that the European Muslim population is young and fast-growing, in a continent of aging people.<sup>2</sup> The recognition of the rapidly growing Muslim population has come as a shock. The years from 1950 to 1973 saw a rapid growth of foreign labor in Western Europe. At first it was drawn from adjacent or nearby European countries: France from Spain, Portugal, and Italy; Germany from Italy and Yugoslavia; and the United Kingdom from Ireland. It rapidly expanded to former colonial territories or further a field: to the United Kingdom from the Caribbean, India, and Pakistan; to France from Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco, and then from Sub-Saharan Africa; and to Germany from Turkey.<sup>3</sup> Electorates fretted about the growth of strangers in their midst, but their concerns were largely about race and ethnicity.

With the rise of Islamic regimes in the Middle East and North Africa following the Iranian Revolution of 1979, European countries became uneasily aware that many of their ethnic-minority workers and their dependents were also Muslim.<sup>4</sup> The discourse changed from race and ethnicity to religion and Islam. The shock has been particularly marked in Spain, Italy, and Greece, once the sources of emigrants to northern Europe and now themselves importers of Muslim workers and refugees.

The atrocities of al-Qaeda, 9/11 in the United States, the riots in Paris, and the bombings in Madrid and London all produced distrust of the Muslim populations embedded in Western European cities.<sup>5</sup> On the one hand, many of these same Muslim settlers have come to see Islam as a vehicle for restitution of the injustices they have suffered in their host societies, as well as retribution for those that the Muslim world has experienced at the hands of the West. On the other hand, the Western European media has come to represent European Muslims as a homogenized, reified, and radicalized group. However, Muslims are highly differentiated, and their corporate identities differ in each of the European countries.

## DEMOGRAPHY AND TRENDS

### Old and New Muslims

The estimated twenty-one million European Muslims can be divided into two main categories. The first are what I term the “old” Muslims. These are “rock pool” communities, left by the retreating tide of Ottoman control in the

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<sup>1</sup> Ceri Peach is a professor of social geography at Oxford University.

<sup>2</sup> Charles F. Westoff, and Tomas J. Frejka, “Fertility and Religiousness among European Muslims,” (paper presented at meeting of Population Association of America in New York, NY, Spring 2007), 8-9.

<sup>3</sup> Ceri Peach, “Post-War Migration to Europe: Reflux, Influx, Refuge,” *Social Science Quarterly* 78, no.2 (June 1997): 269-283.

<sup>4</sup> Ceri Peach and Günther Glebe, “Muslim Minorities in Western Europe,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 18, no. 1 (January 1995): 26-45.

<sup>5</sup> Humayun Ansari, *The Infidel Within* (London: Hurst &Co, 2004).

Balkans and the Russian retreat from the Baltic States. “Old” Muslims number 7.5 million. The second group is the 13.2 million “new” Muslims of the postwar labor immigration, their children, and later refugee movements into Western and later Northern Europe (see Table 1 and Figure 1).<sup>6</sup>

### “Old” Muslims: The “Rock Pool”

Although I term them “old” Muslims, the rock-pool communities have been massively stirred during the post-Soviet and post-Yugoslav breakup period.<sup>7</sup> The ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina contributed to an out-movement of 500,000 people (Table 2); the secession of Macedonia from Yugoslavia, and the persecution of the Kosovar Muslims and their secessionist movements, contributed even more Muslim emigrants. The collapse of communism in adjacent Albania contributed to an exodus of over 600,000 from the country of three million people. Further a field, Bulgaria displaced about 300,000 Turkish Bulgarians between 1984 and 1989 in an attempt to force the Bulgarising of their Turkish names. In Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, there are small numbers of Tatars and other Turkic groups, outliers from the Tsarist and earlier Mongol times (though the larger number of Muslims in Finland are now Somali refugees and asylum seekers). The composition of the “old” European Muslim population is shown in Figure 2.

### NEW MUSLIMS

The focus of this paper, however, is the “new” Muslim populations of Western, Southern, and Northern Europe. They have grown rapidly since World War II under the impact of four main forces, or waves. The first wave was single-male worker immigration responding to the huge demand for labor between 1950 and 1973. These movements ended suddenly with the oil crisis precipitated by the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The second wave, coming after the economic disruption of the oil shock, was the arrival, in large numbers, of wives and dependents following the worker-immigration bans in many countries. The third wave is the rapid growth of refugees and asylum seekers, starting in 1979 with the Iranian Revolution and escalating with the Iran-Iraq wars, the two Gulf wars, the Taliban-Russian war in Afghanistan, the NATO-Taliban war, and the civil wars in the Horn of Africa,

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<sup>6</sup> See Peach and Glebe, “Muslim Minorities in Western Europe,” 26-45. For Table 1 and Figure 1 sources, see also: for Germany: Federal Ministry of the Interior estimate, 2006; France: based on Michèle Tribalat and Jeanne-Hélène Kaltenbach, *La République et l’Islam: Entre crainte et aveuglement* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), and Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaisse, *Integrating Islam: Political and Religious Challenges in Contemporary France* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution Press, 2006); UK: Census 2001 U.K. Office for National Statistics, “Census 2001: Ethnicity and Religion: Muslim,” 2001, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/rank/ewmuslim.asp> and Census 2001 U.K. Office for National Statistics, “58,789,194: Census: Snapshot of the U.K.’s Population,” 2001, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ci/nugget.asp?id=185>; The Netherlands and Belgium: Department of Economic Affairs, *Trends in International Migration* (Paris: OECD, 2003); Switzerland: Switzerland Bundesamt für Statistik, *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Schweiz*, CD\_ROM, (Bern: Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 2002); Sweden: Muslim Population Worldwide, “European Muslim Population: General Source,” 2006, [http://www.islamicpopulation.com/europe\\_general.html](http://www.islamicpopulation.com/europe_general.html); Denmark: Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, “Background Notes: Denmark,” U.S. Department of State, June 2007, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3167.htm>; Norway: Muslim Population Worldwide, “European Muslim Population: General Source,” 2006, [http://www.islamicpopulation.com/europe\\_general.html](http://www.islamicpopulation.com/europe_general.html); Greece: Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, “Background Notes: Greece,” U.S. Department of State, June 2007, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3395.htm>; Italy: Foreign and Commonwealth Office, “Country Profile: Italy,” July 11, 2007, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/ServletFront?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountryProfile&aid=1019061811914>; Austria: Statistik Austria Die Informationsmanager, “Volkszählung 2001, Benutzerhandbuch,” 2007, [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/statistiken/index.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/index.html); Spain: Muslim Population Worldwide, “European Muslim Population: General Source,” 2006, [http://www.islamicpopulation.com/europe\\_general.html](http://www.islamicpopulation.com/europe_general.html), and Migration Policy Institute (MPI), 2007.

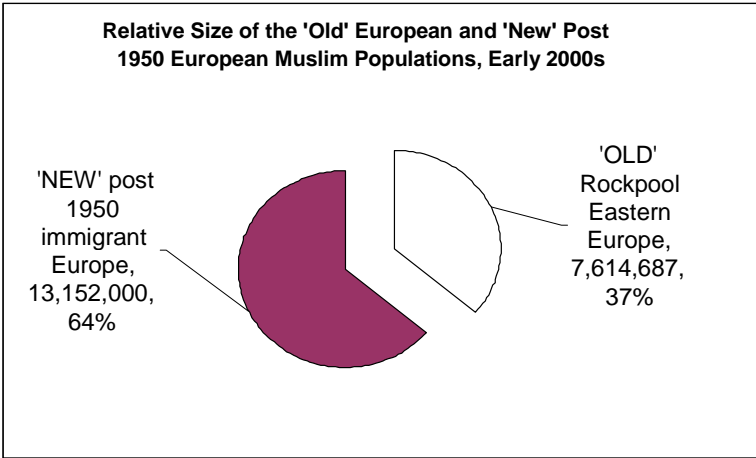
<sup>7</sup> See Peach and Glebe, “Muslim Minorities in Western Europe,” 26-45.

Sudan, and Algeria. Finally, the fourth wave has been the birth of children to the earlier immigrants. In Britain, for example, although the Muslim population is 68 percent South Asian in ethnicity, nearly half (46 percent) are UK born. The distribution of Muslims across their receiving countries is shown in Figure 3.

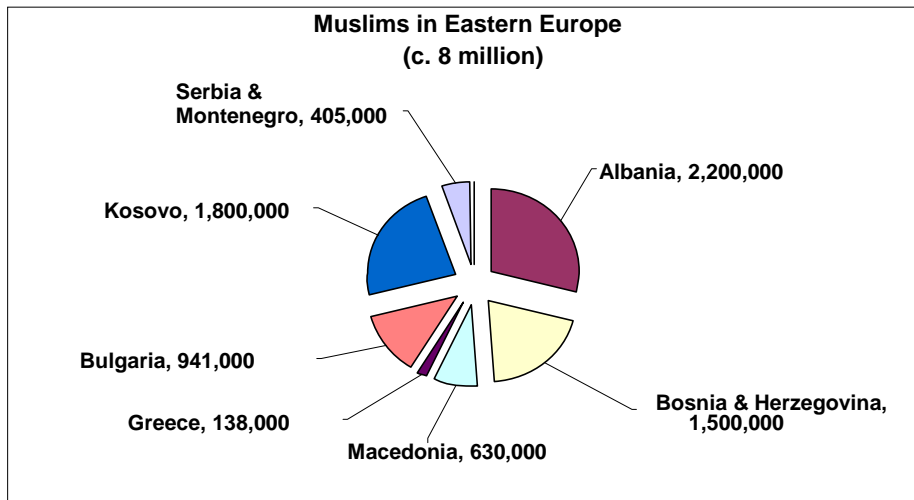
**Table 1: Estimated Muslim Populations of Selected European Countries, Early to Mid-2000s**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Estimated Muslims</b>	<b>Total Pop</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Albania</b>	2,200,000	3,100,000	71.0
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	1,500,000	3,800,000	39.5
<b>Macedonia</b>	630,000	2,100,000	30.0
<b>Bulgaria</b>	941,687	7,718,750	12.2
<b>Kosovo</b>	1,800,000	2,700,000	66.7
<b>Serbia &amp; Montenegro</b>	405,000	8,100,000	5.0
<b>Subtotal OLD Europe</b>	<b>7,476,687</b>	<b>27,518,750</b>	<b>27.2</b>
<b>France</b>	4,000,000	60,000,000	6.7
<b>Germany</b>	3,500,000	82,500,000	4.2
<b>UK</b>	1,600,000	58,800,000	2.7
<b>Netherlands</b>	945,000	16,407,491	5.8
<b>Belgium</b>	400,000	10,364,388	3.9
<b>Switzerland</b>	318,000	7,489,370	4.2
<b>Sweden</b>	206,000	9,016,596	2.3
<b>Denmark</b>	270,000	5,450,661	5.0
<b>Norway</b>	93,000	4,593,041	2.0
<b>Spain</b>	500,000	40,341,462	1.2
<b>Italy</b>	825,000	58,103,033	1.4
<b>Greece</b>	138,000	10,668,354	1.3
<b>Austria</b>	339,000	8,184,691	4.1
<b>Finland</b>	18,000	5,223,442	0.3
<b>Subtotal NEW Europe</b>	<b>13,152,000</b>	<b>377,142,529</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20,628,687</b>	<b>404,661,279</b>	<b>5.1</b>

**Figure 1: Old and New European Muslims, Early 2000s**



**Figure 2: National Composition of the “Old” European Muslim Population<sup>8</sup>**



**Figure 3: National Shares of the “New” Muslim Population by West European Countries<sup>9</sup>**

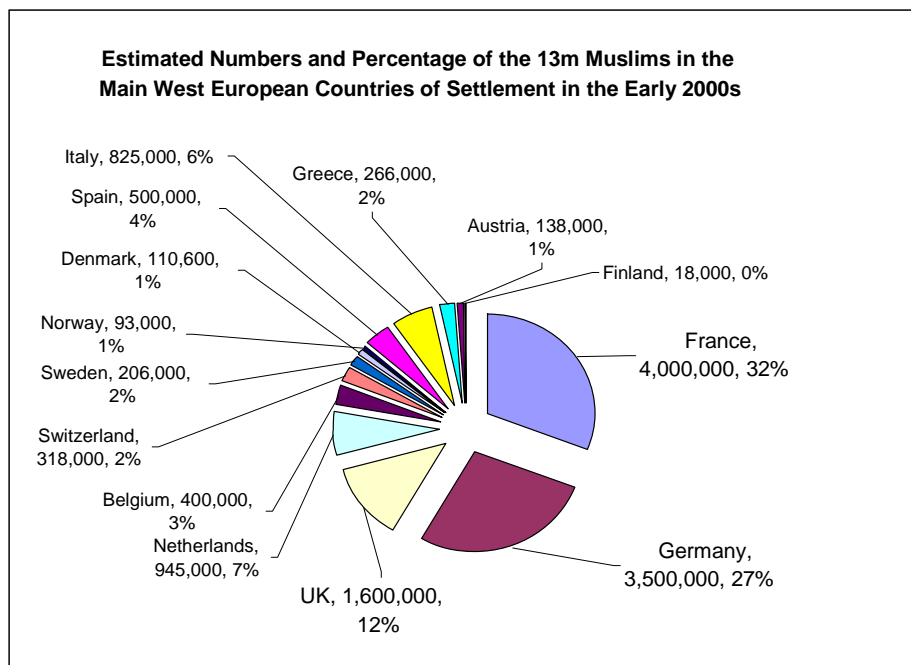


Table 2 is a matrix of sixteen sending and fourteen receiving countries. For the sake of simplification, it omits or amalgamates small sending areas and omits small receiving countries.<sup>10</sup> Although the ethnic mix of Muslims in each country is complex, the big picture is clear. The three main receiving countries—France, Germany, and the United Kingdom—differ sharply from each other. France’s Muslim population is predominantly North African, Germany’s is predominantly Turkish, and Britain’s is predominantly South Asian.

<sup>8</sup> See Table 1 for source data.

<sup>9</sup> See Table 1 for source data.

<sup>10</sup> For Table 2 data sources, see footnote 7 of this chapter.

**Table 2: Estimated “New Muslim” Numbers for Selected Countries of Origin and Settlement, Europe, Early 2000s**

	Turkey	Bosnia	Macedonia	Albania	Morocco	Algeria	Tunisia	Sub-Saharan Africa	Somalia	Iran	Iraq	Afghanistan	Pakistan	India	Bangladesh	Indonesia	Estimated Muslims
GER	1,912,200	163,800	58,250	10,449	73,027	14,480	22,429			65,187		57,933	30,892			12,295	3,500,000
FR	315,000				1,000,000	1,750,000	350,000	550,000	1,003								4,000,000
UK	30,000	30,000				40,000			43,373			26,000	750,000	130,000	280,000		1,600,000
NL	341,000	659	49	606	284,000	4,131	4,101		19,560	24,154	35,793	30,959	11,096		957	161,443	945,000
BE	42,600	1,060	2,117		81,763	7,200	3,328			1,073			2,621		851	954	400,000
SZ	78,800	46,000	59,800														318,000
SWE	33,094	52,948			4,909			14,005	8,800	50,721	41,500						206,000
DK	31,900	18,100							13,400	11,600	19,700	9,000	6,900				270,000
NOR	19,000	15,000							18,000	15,000	20,000	6,000	28,000				93,000
SP	986				282,400	20,100	51,400										500,000
IT				169,000	172,800		62,650	26,300					31,000	3,400	32,000		825,000
GRE	76,561	32,000		438,000									11,100				138,000
AU	127,226	138,700	13,696	1,648			2,400				1,266						339,000
FIN	2,100	1,700							4,500	2,400	3,400						18,000
TOTAL	3,010,467	499,967	133,912	619,703	1,898,899	1,835,911	496,308	590,305	108,636	170,135	121,659	129,892	871,609	133,400	313,808	174,692	13,152,000

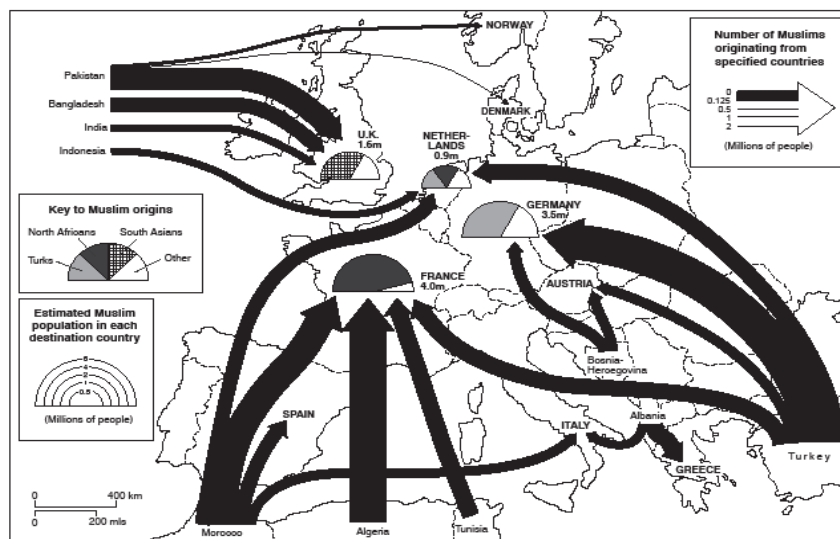
### Three Large Source Areas and Three Large Destinations

The largest individual contributor to the new Muslims of Europe is Turkey, and the largest recipient is Germany. Overall there are thought to be about three million Turks in Western Europe, and just under two million of them are in Germany (Table 2). However, Turks have been diffusing more widely since the 1970s, and significant numbers are found in France (315,000), the Netherlands (341,000), Belgium (43,000), and Switzerland (79,000).

That said, if the flows from the Maghreb countries (Tunisia, 500,000; Algeria, 1.8 million; and Morocco, 1.9 million) are combined, their total is even greater than that from Turkey, accounting for 4.2 million European Muslims (these figures take into account second- and third-generation Maghrebians born in France).<sup>11</sup> Maghrebians are concentrated in France, Southern Europe, and Northwestern Europe: 76 percent are in France, with a further 9 percent in Spain, 4 percent in Italy, and 7 percent in Belgium and the Netherlands. While the movement into Belgium and the Netherlands took place in the 1970s, the movement into Spain, Portugal, and Italy is a feature of the 1990s and the 2000s.

<sup>11</sup> Michèle Tribalat and Jeanne-Hélène Kaltenbach, *La République et l’Islam: Entre crainte et aveuglement* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002).

**Figure 4: The Three Big Receiving Countries of Muslim Immigration in to Europe**



The third-largest aggregate group is South Asian Muslims from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. Again the colonial connection explains the linkage: after 1948, newly independent former colonies (now Commonwealth countries) were given British citizenship. Indians and Pakistanis, as British citizens, had the right to migrate to Britain. South Asian Muslims in Europe number 1.3 million and are overwhelmingly (88 percent) concentrated in the United Kingdom. However, not all of these Muslims came directly from South Asia. A significant minority were among those forced out of Uganda by Idi Amin in 1972 and thereafter from Kenya and Tanzania. These included some highly successful Shia trading groups, who became the pacemakers of the successful East Indian economic community.<sup>12</sup> The characteristics of the Nizami Agha Khanis, for example, are the opposite of those of the Kashmiri Mirpuri peasants, who are generally taken to typify South Asian Muslims in Britain.

The Netherlands has had flow patterns similar to the British colonial linkage patterns, but with Indonesia, which has introduced a significant Muslim population dating back to 1953. The larger part of its Muslim population merges the French and German patterns.

The clarity and self-contained quality of the three source-and-destination flow systems has become blurred and more complex since the 1990s. The French, German, and British systems have seeped into each other at their edges, with movements of Turks from Germany into France and Pakistanis from Britain into Denmark and Norway. The Maghrebian movement has spread into Spain and Italy. Meanwhile, the North African source area has expanded to south of the Sahara, especially into Francophone Africa. Morocco has become a staging post for the Sub-Saharan channel into Europe, with France remaining the main recipient country. The Mediterranean has become Europe's Rio Grande. And completely new refugee movements have overlaid the old patterns and added new European destinations to the list. Albanians have seized the opportunity of the fall of communism to cross the Adriatic into Italy and to move over the mountains to Greece. Southern Europe, which was once the source of emigration to the north, has completed the second demographic transition of falling fertility and emigration rates and turned, much to the consternation of the Catholic Church, into a Muslim settlement region. The civil war in

<sup>12</sup> Parminder Bhachu, *Twice Migrants: East African Sikh Settlers in Britain*, (London: Tavistock Publishers, 1985).

Somalia has scattered 100,000 Somali refugees across the continent, from France to Finland, together with newer movements of Afghans, Iranians, and Iraqis.

Thus in 2007, the three primary relationships—Turkey-Germany, Maghreb-France, and South Asia-Britain—still dominate, but Muslim settlements have filtered slowly into each others’ territories, while new areas have been pioneered in the Nordic countries and in the Mediterranean. The original worker immigrants have matured into settled families, and new refugee movements have been parachuted in from the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, and the violent stirring of the Balkan rock-pool communities.

**Growth**

Given that the current and earlier Muslim numbers are based largely on estimates of varied reliability, it is not possible to give accurate estimates of the growth of the Muslim population over time. As an approximate guide, the Muslim population of Western Europe has increased from perhaps a few hundred thousand (largely in France, Britain, and the Netherlands) in the 1950s to about seven million in the early 1990s, and to 13.2 million in the estimate presented in this paper for the early 2000s.<sup>13</sup>

This suggests nearly a doubling (83 percent) over the last ten- to twelve-year period (Table 3 and Figure 5). Depending on which estimate is taken, Muslim numbers in the large countries and the older countries of settlement (France, the United Kingdom, and Germany) seem to have increased by 50 percent, 60 percent, and 74 percent, respectively, from the early 1990s estimate to the early 2000s estimate. The fastest growth has occurred in the new countries of settlement and the smaller countries (Table 3 and Figure 5). The Mediterranean and the Nordic countries, which did not even feature in the 1990s estimates, have joined the list. Austria, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Spain, and Italy, which did not figure on a 1995 list drawn up by Günther Glebe and I, now account for two million out of the estimated thirteen million “new” Muslims in Western Europe, and their addition accounts for over a third of the 5.8 million estimated increase in the Muslim population between the 1990s and 2000s. Although the growth in the three large countries has been impressive, it seems to have been below the European average. Instead, a significant part of the 82 percent increase of the Muslim population in Western Europe during the 1990s occurred in the smaller or newer countries of settlement.

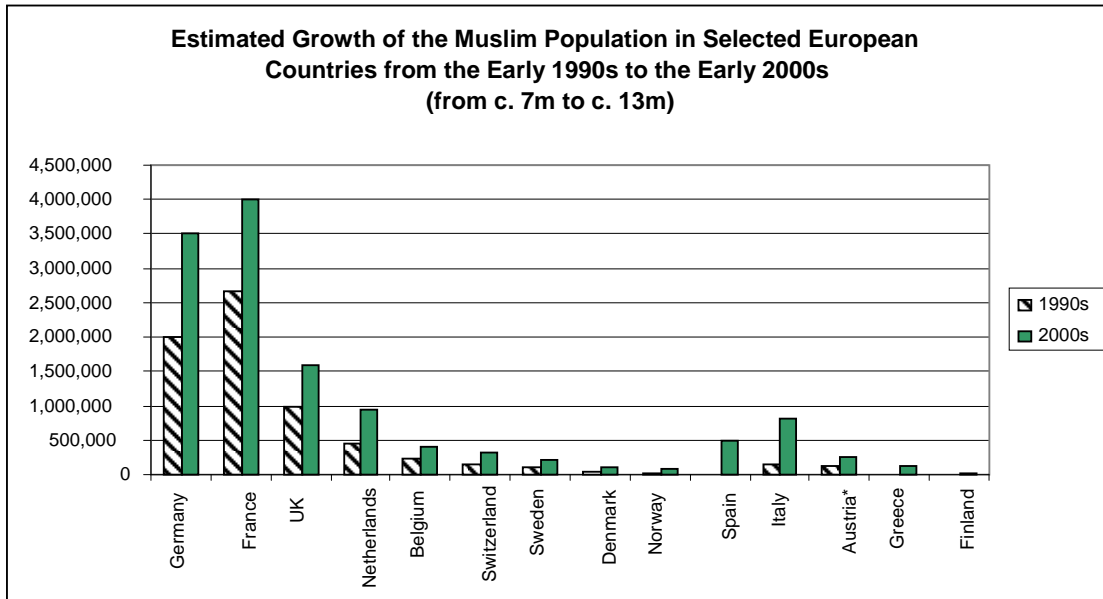
**Table 3: Estimated Increases in Muslim Population for Selected Countries for Which Data Are Available, Between the Early 1990s and Early 2000s<sup>14</sup>**

Country	1990s	2000s	Difference	Percent
France	2,668,800	4,000,000	1,331,200	50
UK	1,000,000	1,600,000	600,000	60
Belgium	244,100	400,000	155,900	64
Germany	2,012,000	3,500,000	1,488,000	74
Sweden	111,943	206,000	94,057	84
Denmark	53,300	110,600	57,300	108
Switzerland	152,217	318,000	165,783	109
Netherlands	441,800	945,000	503,200	114
Austria*	123,000	266,000	143,000	116
Norway	25,000	93,000	68,000	272
Italy	154,400	825,000	670,600	434
Spain	2,350	500,000	497,650	21,177
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,988,910</b>	<b>12,763,600</b>	<b>5,774,690</b>	<b>83</b>

<sup>13</sup> Updated from Peach and Glebe, “Muslim Minorities in Western Europe,” 26-45.

<sup>14</sup> 1990s data updated from Peach and Glebe, “Muslim Minorities in Western Europe,” 26-45; 2000s data from Table 1.

Figure 5: Estimated Western European Population Change, Early 1990s to Early 2000s<sup>15</sup>



These numbers need to be treated with great caution. For example, I have taken a lower figure for France than the five to six million provided in several estimates, as the high figures seem to be the result of repetition, rather than research. Moreover, the figures for the size and speed of increase of the Spanish Muslim population seem out of proportion to those of other countries. The hardest data seem to come from the United Kingdom. Assuming the 1995 estimate I gave with Glebe of one million for the United Kingdom in 1991 is correct, that suggests a 60 percent growth of the Muslim population between 1991 and 2001. The United Kingdom has a young Muslim population with high fertility. There has also been continued immigration and a substantial increase in asylum seekers during the 1990s, largely from Muslim countries. It seems improbable, with this rate of growth in Britain, that it would have expanded by over 20 percent less than the European average over the same period.

### France

The clearest example of the difficulties of measuring growth lies in France. Estimates for the French Muslim population in 1999, the year of the most recent census, range from 3.7 million<sup>16</sup> to over six million, but are, of course, for dates seven or eight years apart.<sup>17</sup> Work by Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaisse in 2006 provides an excellent summary of the estimates of the French Muslim numbers published between 1989 and 2004.<sup>18</sup> The highest estimates are by two right-wing French ministers: Charles Pasqua, with an estimate of five million in 1996, and Nicholas Sarkozy (now president), with an estimate of five to six million in 2003. In 2004, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website stated five million. Laurence and Vaisse's comment on all three statements is that their sources are "unknown."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See Tables 2 and 3 for source data; Early 1990s figures updated from Peach and Glebe, "Muslim Minorities in Western Europe," 26-45.

<sup>16</sup> Michèle Tribalat, "Une estimation des populations d'origine étrangère en France en 1999," *Population* 59, no. 1 (January-February 2004): 51-82.

<sup>17</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, *CIA World Factbook: France*, 2007, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/fr.html>. This assumes the CIA's estimation that up to 10 percent of the French population being Muslim is taken literally.

<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaisse, *Integrating Islam: Political and Religious Challenges in Contemporary France*, (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), 19-20.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

Until 1962, Algeria was a department of metropolitan France, and the population of that department was largely Muslim. There was also considerable interaction between metropolitan France and the colonies of Tunisia and Morocco. Moreover, since independence, a significant immigration has taken place from former colonies, such as Senegal and Mali in Muslim Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>20</sup> The Haut Conseil à l'Intégration reported in 2002 that there were 200,000 Algerians in metropolitan France in 1939, and that by the time of Algerian independence in 1962, there were 330,000.<sup>21</sup> It goes on to state a later date, however, for the first permanent Muslim community in continental France, which was formed by the 80,000 *harkis* (Algerians who supported the French during the war of independence and who were given sanctuary in France after the French withdrew in 1962). Thus a significant, but unquantified, Muslim population in France predates the post-World War II surge into the rest of Western Europe. In 1995 Glebe and I concluded that many of the estimates in the late 1980s were unreliable, since they either gave no indication of the sources of their figures or arbitrarily updated any earlier firm figures that were available. The estimates with the greatest degree of quantification and specification of sources suggested that by the 1990s the Muslim population of France was probably about 2.7 million. Estimates for the 2000s range from the CIA's World Factbook's six million (10 percent of the national population) to the 3.7 million estimated by Michèle Tribalat's Institut National d'Études Démographiques, based on a large sample survey from the 1999 French census, but of course for seven or eight years earlier.

The apparently authoritative Haut Conseil à l'Intégration report, *Islam in the Republic*, wrings its hands over the problem of statistics and quotes, without any attempt at evaluation, several conflicting estimates.<sup>22</sup> However, it seems to place the greatest reliance on a figure of 4.1 million, since it quotes in detail the ethno-national breakdown of these figures. The Haut Conseil quotes a 1992 Mobilité Géographique et Insertion Sociale ("Geographical Mobility and Social Integration," or MGIS) survey report, based on the 1990 census, that the number of people of Muslim cultural background in France was less than one million.<sup>23</sup> The report cites two estimates: five million by Paul Fregosi (but no date or details given) and 4.16 million by Alain Boyer (again no details, but the estimate is from 1998). Boyer's figures suggest 2.9 million Maghrebians (1.55 million Algerians, one million Moroccans, and 350,000 Tunisians), 100,000 Middle Eastern Arabs, 315,000 Turks, 250,000 Black Africans, 40,000 converts, 350,000 asylum seekers and illegals, 100,000 Asians (unspecified), and 100,000 "others" (again unspecified). The Haut Conseil gives no date or place of publication for these authors (though Laurence and Vaisse show Boyer's work to be published 1998, predating the 1999 census). Boyer's work contains a suspiciously large number of unspecified "Asians," "Middle Easterners," and "others" (100,000 each).

However, work in 2002 by Tribalat at INED, using a very large sample (380,000 people) drawn from the census of 1999, concluded, from parental and grandparental birthplace data, that the Muslim population of France was about 3.7 million, of whom three million were of Maghrebian origin and 700,000 from the Sub-Saharan region. The population of Maghreb origin was made up of 43 percent immigrants, 48 percent children of immigrants, and 9 percent grandchildren of immigrants. This suggests that 90 percent of the population of Maghreb origin is still first or second generation, and that the bulk of the Muslim settlement dates back only to the 1960s. The percentage is even higher for populations from black Africa and Turkey, whose immigration is more recent.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Peach and Glebe, "Muslim Minorities in Western Europe," 26-45.

<sup>21</sup> Haut Conseil à l'Intégration, *Islam dans la République*, la Documentation française, 2000, 18-19, [http://209.85.165.104/search?q=cache:tjG\\_ViRNQIgJ:lesrapports.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/BRP/014000017/0000.pdf+1%27Islam+dans+la+R%C3%A9publique&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us](http://209.85.165.104/search?q=cache:tjG_ViRNQIgJ:lesrapports.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/BRP/014000017/0000.pdf+1%27Islam+dans+la+R%C3%A9publique&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us).

[http://209.85.165.104/search?q=cache:tjG\\_ViRNQIgJ:lesrapports.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/BRP/014000017/0000.pdf+1%27Islam+dans+la+R%C3%A9publique&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us](http://209.85.165.104/search?q=cache:tjG_ViRNQIgJ:lesrapports.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/BRP/014000017/0000.pdf+1%27Islam+dans+la+R%C3%A9publique&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>24</sup> Pierre-Yves Cusset, "'Ethnic' Statistics in France: What's the Position to Date?" *La Note de Veille*, no. 22 (2006), [http://www.strategie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/Newswatch\\_22\\_Ethnic\\_Statistics\\_in\\_France.pdf](http://www.strategie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/Newswatch_22_Ethnic_Statistics_in_France.pdf).

The point about the French statistics is that the Haut Conseil, the key organ of state that deals with the integration of Muslims in France, seems not to know what the numbers are and apparently does not care to investigate. It simply shrugs its shoulders at the large disparities in estimates. Building on this basis to predict that “Muslims could outnumber non-Muslims in France and perhaps in all of Western Europe by mid-century,” as Timothy Savage did in 2004, seems a precarious proposition.<sup>25</sup>

The conclusion to be drawn from this unsatisfactory and contradictory set of data is that the most credible figures are those for which an account of the calculations is made. There is a history of exaggerated numbers.<sup>26</sup> This suggests that Tribalat’s account may be the most robust, and that her figure of 3.7 million in 1999 is the most likely to be reliable. Even so, I have increased this figure to four million in Table 2. The CIA *World Factbook 2007*’s 5 to 10 percent of the French population (i.e., three million to six million) illustrates the statistical problem.

### **Germany**

Muslim growth in Germany can be traced back to the early 1960s, when there were 6,700 Turks in the country. By 1970 there were 429,000; by 1976 over one million; by 1981 1.5 million; by 1990 1.7 million; and by 2006 just under two million. Turks are thought to have accounted for about 80 percent of the Muslim population in 1986, but probably for a much reduced percentage of the 2006 estimated Muslim population of 3.5 million, as Germany’s ethnic composition has broadened. Muslims form 4.2 percent of the German population. One hard figure we do have for the growth of Germany’s Muslim population comes from the Federal Statistical Office. Of the 706,000 children born in Germany in 2004, 64,000 (9 percent) were to parents belonging to an Islamic denomination.<sup>27</sup> Regrettably, we do not have any other data points with which to compare this figure—but given that the 2006 estimate put the Muslim percentage of the German population at 4.2 percent, it suggests that other things being equal, the Muslim population could more than double over a lifetime period.

### **Summary**

The Muslim population of Western Europe numbers about 13.2 million, of whom a third are living in France, a quarter in Germany, and 10 percent in the United Kingdom. Turks form the largest group (about 38 percent), North Africans about 28 percent, and South Asians about 17 percent. Over time, although their absolute numbers have grown, the relative dominance of these groups has diminished as flows of refugees from former Yugoslavia, Albania, Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Sub-Saharan Africa have increased. Thus, although Turks dominate the German Muslim population, North Africans the French Muslim population, and South Asians the British Muslim population, there is increasing diversity of Muslim origins in all of the European countries.

### **European Demographic Trends and Projections**

Europe finds itself with an aging, secularized, and agnostic white population and a young, growing, radicalized Muslim population. Natural increase has fallen below the replacement level for the white population. Prophets of doom have pointed to demographic forces accomplishing what Charles Martel prevented in 732 AD at the Battle of Poitiers: the Muslim conquest of Christian Europe.

If current and past numbers of Muslims in Europe are unreliable, the prospect of projecting those figures forward is even more problematic. There are, however, some troubling predictions in the literature, such as one by Savage in 2004 in the *Washington Quarterly*:

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<sup>25</sup> Timothy Savage, “Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing,” *Washington Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (Summer 2004), 28.

<sup>26</sup> See Peach and Glebe, “Muslim Minorities in Western Europe” for details of how the figures for the *harkis* ballooned; and Ceri Peach, “The Muslim population of Great Britain,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 13, no. 3 (July 1990): 414-419, for disputes over the size of the British Muslim population before the results of the 2001 census.

<sup>27</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland, <http://www.destatis.de/presse/englisch/pm2005/p3310023.htm>.

Muslim communities in Europe are significantly younger than the non-Muslim population, and Europe's "Generation X" and "Millennium Generation" include considerably more Muslims than does the continent's population as a whole. One third of France's five million Muslims are under the age of 20 (compared to 21 percent of the French population as a whole); one-third of Germany's four million Muslims are under 18 (compared to 18 percent of the German population as a whole); one-third of the United Kingdom's 1.6 million Muslims are under 15 (compared to 20 percent of the British population as a whole); and one-third of Belgium's 364,000 Muslims are under 15 (compared to 18 percent of the country's population as a whole).

By 2015, Europe's Muslim population is expected to double, whereas Europe's non-Muslim population is projected to fall by at least 3.5 percent. Looking further ahead, conservative projections estimate that, compared to today's 5 percent, Muslims will comprise at least 20 percent of Europe's population by 2050. Some even predict that one-fourth of France's population could be Muslim by 2025 and that, if trends continue, Muslims could outnumber non-Muslims in France and perhaps in all of Western Europe by mid-century.<sup>28</sup>

### **Britain: Future Projection of the British Muslim Population**

Savage advances a very slippery argument: such a firm end date without a specified beginning, such a glissando from percentage of Muslims of a particular age to the percentage that Muslims might form of the whole French population, such a leap from the quicksilver pool of French Muslim estimates to the entire European population. To make such a prediction involves not the percentage that an age group forms of the Muslim population, but the percentage than Muslims of that age group form of the national cohort of that age.

To exemplify, I take the British example, using the 2001 census data for England and Wales which account for 98 percent of the British Muslim population. Savage places his emphasis on the different proportions of the Muslim and non-Muslim populations in the younger age cohorts. If instead of examining what proportion of Muslim are young, we examine what percentage young Muslims form of the total population in the younger cohorts, a clearer perspective is gained. In Britain, as Savage states, the proportion of Muslims 15 and under in age is 34 percent, compared with 20 percent of the population as a whole. However, the Muslim percentage of the population of the total 15-and-under age cohort is only 5 percent. This percentage has been stable from the 16-to-24-year-old cohort to the 15-and-under cohort. Although it represents an increase from the 3 percent of the 25-to-49-year-old cohort and the 1 to 2 percent mark of the older cohorts, the British Muslim population appears to be stabilizing at the 5 percent level. In fact, an unexpected consequence of the expansion of the European Union to Eastern Europe has been the surge in immigration to Britain of some 500,000 Catholic Poles in 2006.

The most recent systematic demographic investigation of European Muslims was performed in March 2007 by Charles Westoff and Tomas Frejka of the Population Association of America in New York. Despite data difficulties, they show that Muslim women have consistently higher total fertility rates (TFR) than non-Muslims (TFR is the average number of children that would be born to a woman over her lifetime if she were to experience the current age-specific fertility rates through her lifetime). However, the effect of Muslim fertility on the national rates tends to be small, since they are a small minority of the population. Where trend data are available (Austria, Belgium, England and Wales, Germany, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and Switzerland), the picture is for substantial declines in Muslim fertility, bringing their fertility closer to the native population. For example, the TFR for Muslims in Austria decreased from 3.1 in 1981 to 2.3 in 2001, while that for Catholics decreased over the same period, from 1.7 to 1.3. In Belgium, Moroccan TFR decreased from 5.7 in 1981 to 3.9 in 1994; for the same period Turkish TFR decreased from 4.9 to 2.4 and the Belgian overall TFR from 1.6 to 1.5. In Germany, Turkish TFR decreased from 4.4 in 1970 to 2.4 in 1996, while for Germans overall it went from 2.0 to 1.4. In the Netherlands, Moroccan TFR decreased from 4.9 in 1990 to 2.9 in 2005; for Turks over the same period TFR decreased from 3.1 to 1.9, while for the overall Dutch it increased from 1.5 to 1.7. For England and Wales,

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<sup>28</sup> Timothy Savage, "Europe and Islam," 28.

Pakistani and Bangladeshi TFR decreased from 9.3 in 1973 to 4.9 in 1996, while for the population as a whole it decreased from 2.3 to 1.7.

### **British Muslim Projections to 2051**

I use here a calculation made by David Coleman, professor of demography at Oxford University, and his colleague Martin Smith. All projections come with a healthy warning about the assumptions which they contain. As in all population projections, there are three main variables: births, deaths, and migration (I am ignoring conversion). All have instabilities, but the most unpredictable is immigration. Furthermore, the longer the period of projection, the greater the likelihood of error will be. Projections out to 2051 are likely to be very unstable.

The Coleman and Smith projections were made before the 2001 census was taken and are based on the estimated South Asian (Pakistani, Indian, and Bangladeshi) ethnic populations, assuming all Pakistanis and Bangladeshis and 13 percent of Indians were Muslim. South Asians were assumed to form 73 percent of the British Muslim population.

Coleman and Smith give both a high and low projection (Figure 6). The high projection assumes positive immigration for Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis at their 1991-2000 annual average rates, with fertility held constant at their respective 2001 rates. The second projection assumes zero immigration for Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis and fertility converging/declining at projected rates based on 1980-2001 trends. Coleman explains the results:

If you take the average of the two projections for each population for 2050, assume that all Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are Muslim and that 13% of Indians are (Peach, 2005 paper) then you get 2.5 million. If you gross that up by the 2001 percent of all Muslims that are IPB (73%) then you get 3.4 million. That is about 5% of the projected UK (not GB) population of about 70 million. However the projections here used rather low immigration estimates and the African Muslim immigration is likely to be very high unless there is a policy change. But even if these understate by 100% - quite possible, indeed very likely - that still only makes about 10% by 2050, not by 2015.<sup>29</sup>

The Coleman and Smith figures could be refined to reflect later knowledge provided by the 2001 census figures. Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis - one million, 747,000, and 280,000, respectively - were higher than the 910,000, 722,200, and 260,100 estimate at the time of the calculation. On the other hand, not all the Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are Muslim: 92 percent and 92.4 percent, respectively, are Muslim, while among Indians only 12.6 percent, rather than 13 percent, are Muslim.

Thus the lower percentage that Muslims formed of the South Asian population would have in fact been lower than those used by Coleman and Smith. However, South Asian Muslims accounted for 68 percent, rather than the 73 percent that I calculated from my analysis of vernacular languages used in mosques, before the 2001 census. Even so, Coleman's projection would still be closer to 10 percent by 2051, not 2015, and far away from Savage's suggestion that "Muslims could outnumber non-Muslims in France and perhaps in all of Western Europe by mid-century." The Coleman and Smith predictions are based on both natural increase and migration; the Savage projection seems to relate only to natural increase.

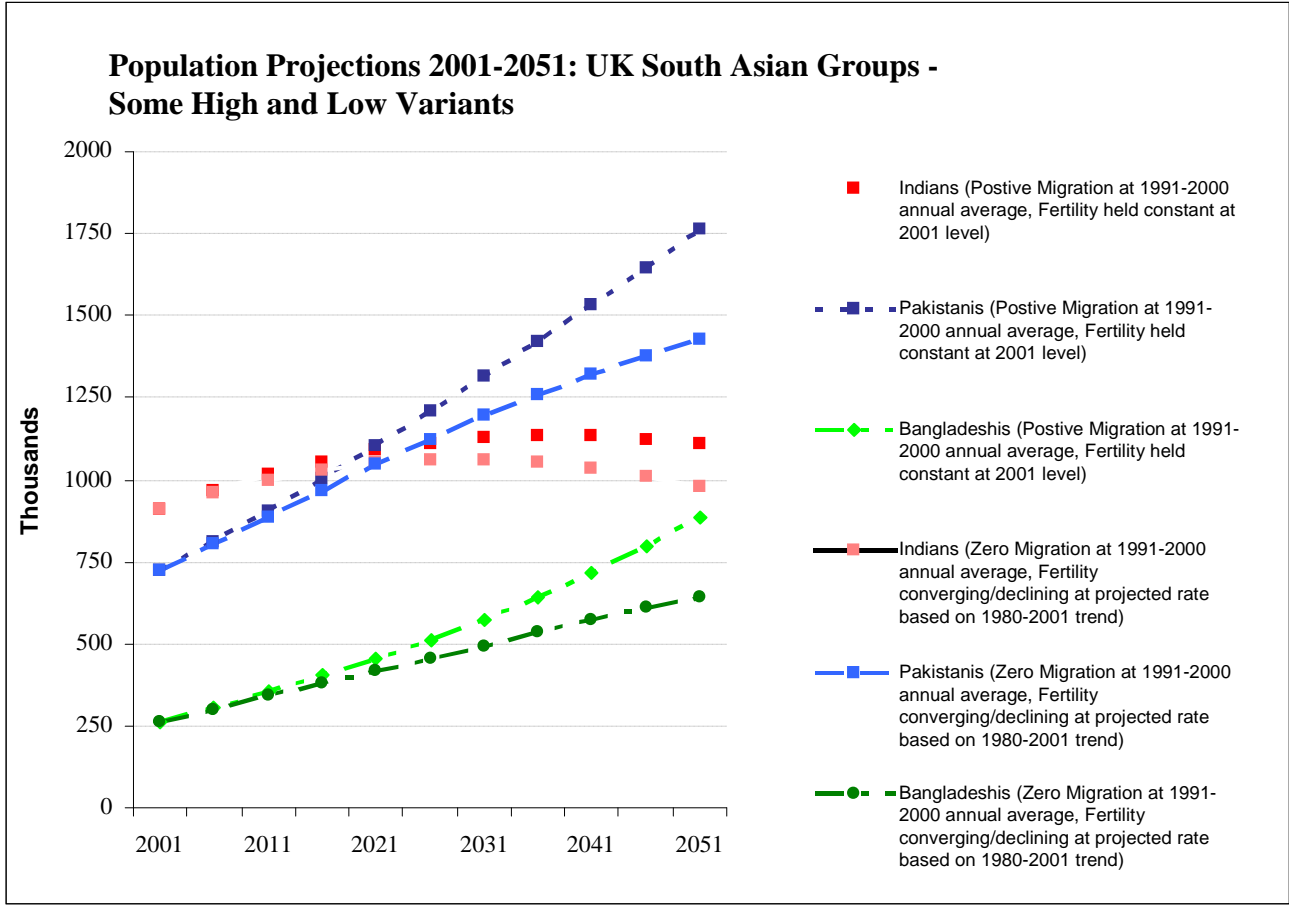
In 2003, Richard Gale and I adapted the availability of cross tabulations for ethnicity and religion figures in the 2001 census to back-project the probable Muslim population of Britain from 21,000 in 1951 to the known data point of 1.6 million in 2001.<sup>30</sup> These figures are fused with slightly modified Coleman/Smith figures to project British Muslim figures forward to 3.75 million in 2051 (Figure 7).

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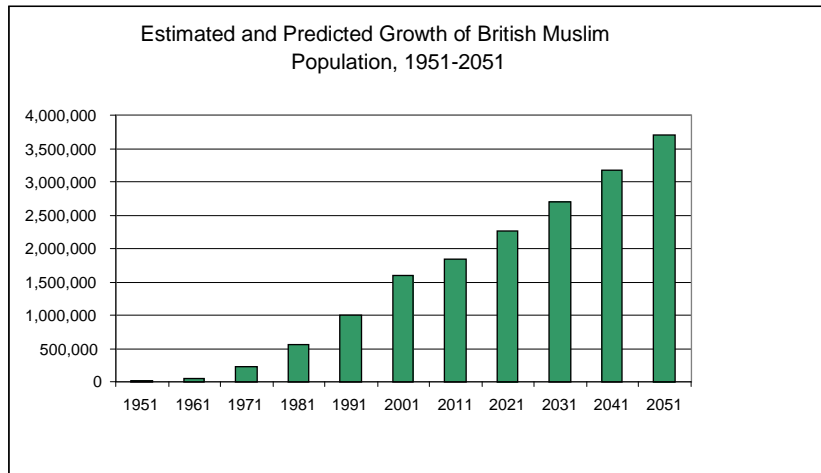
<sup>29</sup> David Coleman, email message to author, February 2007.

<sup>30</sup> Ceri Peach and Richard Gale, "Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs in the New Religious Geography of England," *Geographical Review* 93, vol. 4 (October 2003): 469-490.

**Figure 6: 2001-2051 Population Projections for South Asian Groups in the United Kingdom**



**Figure 7: Estimated and Predicted Growth of the British Muslim Population, 1951-2051<sup>31</sup>**



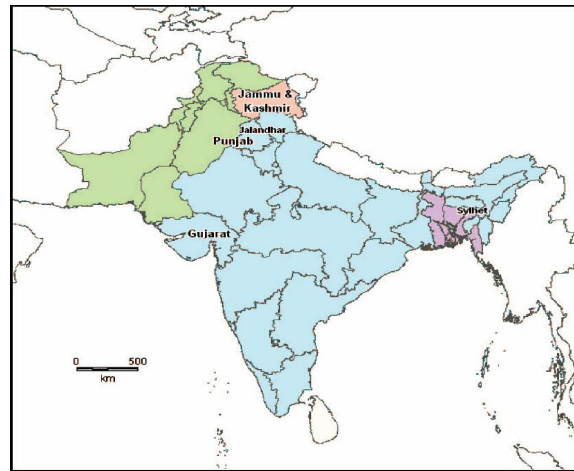
<sup>31</sup> For source data from 1951-1991 see Peach and Gale, “Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs”; the 2011-2051 data is the slightly modified (see text) Coleman projection.

## INTEGRATION OF MUSLIMS MINORITIES: THE BRITISH EXAMPLE

### Ethno-National Origins of the British Muslim Population

Although there has been a Muslim presence in Britain from at least the eighteenth century, the current population is overwhelmingly post-1950 in its settlement. There were only thirteen registered mosques in Britain in 1963.<sup>32</sup> The 2001 population numbered 1.6 million and was over two-thirds South Asian in origin. The largest group are the Pakistanis, who form 46 percent of the population, followed by Bangladeshis, who form 18 percent, and Indians, who form 9 percent. The Pakistanis came largely from the Mirpur District of Azad Kashmir (Figure 8), a poor agricultural area and the site of major territorial disputes between Pakistan and India. The Bangladeshis, who came in the 1980s (twenty years later than the Pakistanis), came from the isolated peasant district of Sylhet.

**Figure 8: Locations of Sources in the Indian Subcontinent of Main South Asian Communities in Britain<sup>33</sup>**



In contrast to other minority groups, Muslims show a stronger Northern and Midland industrial geographical distribution (Figure 9). This reflects the fact that in the 1950s and 1960s they were particularly drawn to the old textile mill towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire and the metal industries of the Birmingham region, where, not speaking English, they were often employed as *biraderi* (extended family) gangs on the night shifts. These areas bore the brunt of the loss of British manufacturing industries in the 1980s and 1990s, leaving the populations, and the Muslim minorities in particular, stranded with high rates of unemployment. Economically active Muslims aged twenty-five and up had an unemployment rate of 14 percent in 2001, compared with 4 percent for the population as a whole, 5 percent for Hindus, and 6 percent for Sikhs.

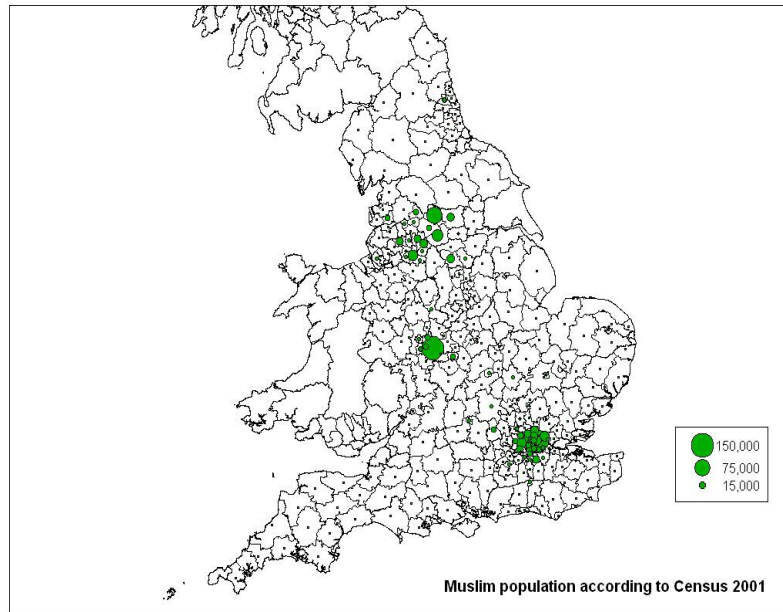
Although South Asians dominate the British Muslim population (68 percent), there are another third who are ethnically different. White Muslims (including Turkish Cypriots, Bosnians, and Iranians) accounted for 12 percent, while black Muslims (largely of African origin) contributed another 7 percent. “Other Asian” Muslims (including Afghans and Malaysians) formed 4 percent, and the white/black and white/Asian “mixed” population formed another 4 percent. Even the Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi Muslims are often very different from one another, not only in terms of living in different parts of Britain, but in being rather segregated from one another in cities. Bangladeshi and Pakistani Muslims are the most segregated ethnic groups in the country.<sup>34</sup> Figures 9, 10, 11, and 12, depicting the residential distribution of the ethnic Muslim groups in London in 2001, indicate a high degree of intra-Muslim separation.

<sup>32</sup> Peach and Gale, “Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs.”

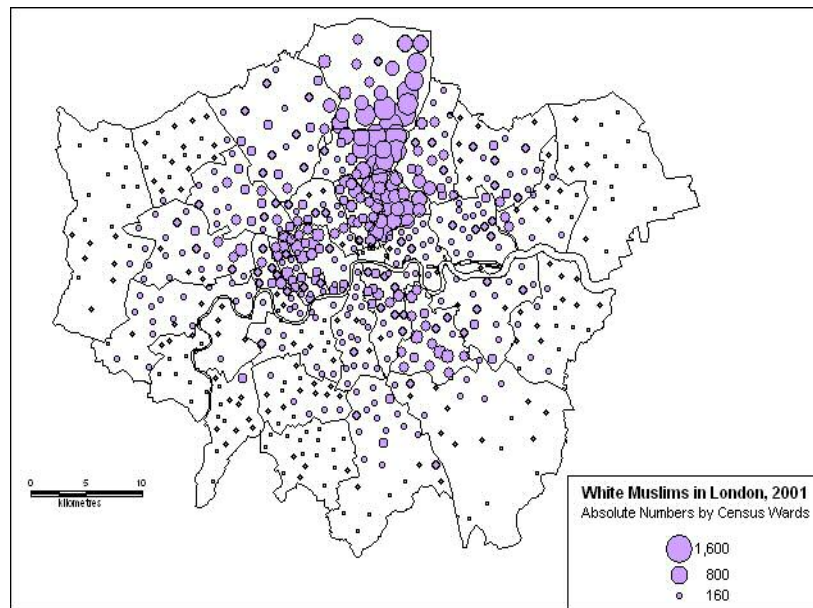
<sup>33</sup> For source data see Ceri Peach, “South Asian migration and settlement in Great Britain 1951-2001,” *Contemporary South Asia* 15, no. 2 (June 2006): 133-146.

<sup>34</sup> Ceri Peach, “Does Britain Have Ghettos?” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 22, no. 1 (1996): 216 - 235.

**Figure 9: Muslim Distribution in England and Wales, 2001<sup>35</sup>**



**Figure 10: White Muslim Distribution in London, 2001<sup>36</sup>**



<sup>35</sup> Based on data from Census of England and Wales 2001, Table S104: Ethnic Group by Religion. Census output is Crown copyright and is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO.

<sup>36</sup> For source data see Ceri Peach, "Islam, Ethnicity and South Asian Religions in the London 2001 Census," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 31, no. 3 (September 2006): 353-370. Based on data from Census of England and Wales 2001, Table S104. Crown copyright reserved.

Figure 11: Pakistani Muslims in London, 2001<sup>37</sup>

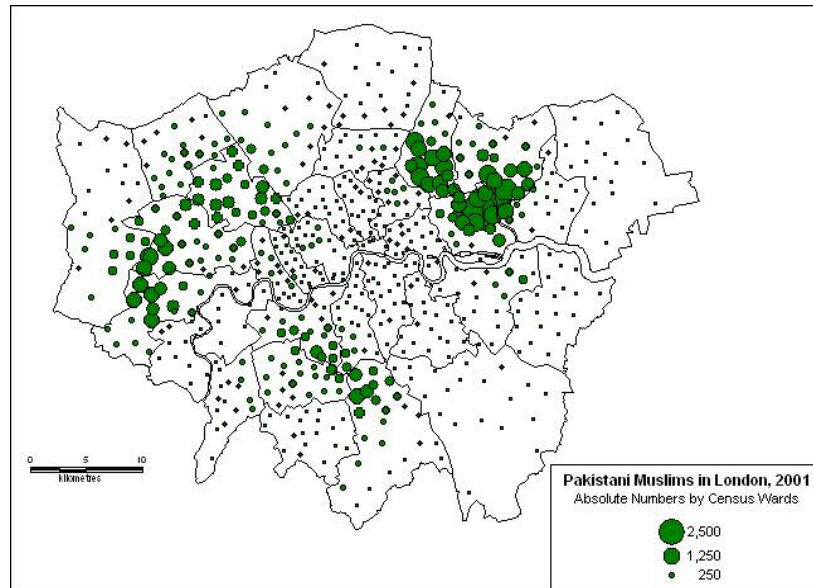
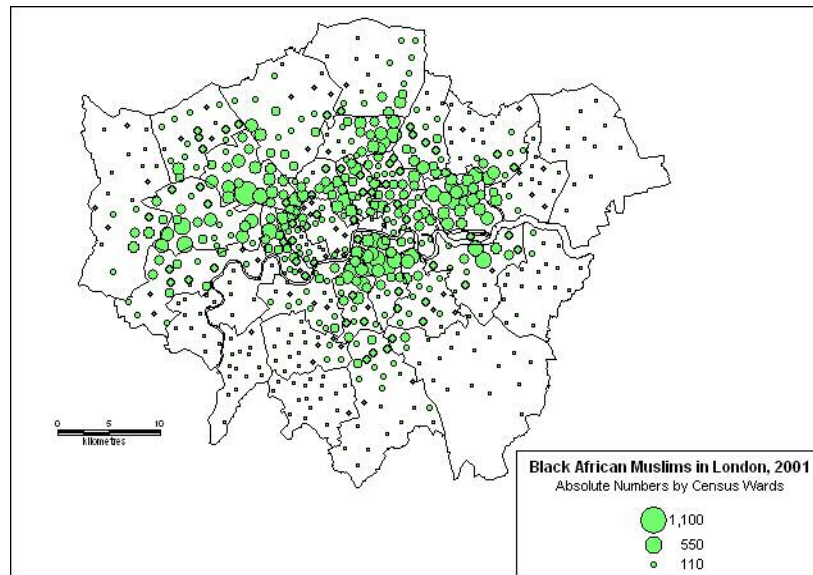


Figure 12: Black African Muslims in London, 2001<sup>38</sup>



### The Honor Society

The key features of British Muslims are the numerical dominance of its numbers by South Asians and the traditions of *purdah* (“honor society”) and the *biraderi* that are embedded in their culture. Because the Sikh and Hindu populations are largely contemporaneous with the Muslim minorities in their time of settlement in Britain, and because they are drawn from broadly the same ethnic (but religiously differentiated) population (from

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

proximate regions of the subcontinent), it is possible to pinpoint the socioeconomic characteristics of Muslims that can be specifically attributed to religion.<sup>39</sup>

Roger Ballard argued in 1990 that significant economic differences between Indian Sikhs and Pakistani Muslims derive from marriage practices. Sikhism regards men and women as equals and encourages a more outward going attitude to women. Men and women eat together in the *gurdwara* (temple), while Muslim mosques tend to be men-only. Sikh girls tended to marry outside their own villages and not to their own kin. They therefore move away from their families and villages and to their in-laws upon marriage (as do all South Asian brides). Pakistani Muslim girls tended to marry within their villages and frequently to close kin. It is a much less uprooting and dynamic experience than that built into the Sikh practices.

The safety and family honor invested in Muslim women's virtue is a key element in South Asian Muslim concern about interaction with British society. White British society is regarded as sexually promiscuous, alcohol-abusing, non-religious, and non-respectful of parents and elders. Virginity of the bride at marriage is essential to the Muslim *biraderi*. Sending girls to co-educational schools is deeply concerning for parents. Arranged marriage in the South Asian Muslim population is a universal expectation.

However, the key, extra element among South Asian Muslims is that first cousins are the preferred partners in such arrangements. For Pakistanis, consanguineous marriage is exceptionally strong.<sup>40</sup> It is estimated that 55 percent of Pakistani couples in Britain are first cousins.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, Alison Shaw has shown that 59 percent of her sample of 70 Pakistani couples in Oxford were married to first cousins and a further 17 percent to other relatives. There is a higher rate of congenital disability in the Pakistani population than for the population as a whole.<sup>42</sup> Since *pardah* emphasizes the avoidance of non-related men, it was not particularly restrictive in Pakistani villages where women were surrounded by their own *biraderi*. In Britain, however, it became a much more serious constriction on action.

The result is that girls generally are married at an early age to avoid the contamination of British youth culture. A further advantage of arranged marriages is that they allow overseas grooms, generally family members, to gain entry to Britain, and they allow family reunification, which is otherwise difficult. Early marriage and early childbirth go together, and families are larger than the British average. Because it is difficult to accommodate children-in-law and their families within the parental home to the same extent as in Pakistani villages, there is a strong preference to locate them in houses nearby, preferably on the same street, where behavior can be monitored and social contact maintained.<sup>43</sup>

In the terraced Victorian houses of the Yorkshire and Lancashire mill towns and the inner city of Birmingham, such arrangements are relatively easy to arrange. The areas are avoided by the white population. The need to be close to the members of the *biraderi* keeps these settlements in place even though employment opportunities have contracted. The overlapping nature of the *biraderi* projects outward into Pakistani and Bangladeshi

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<sup>39</sup> Roger Ballard, "Migration and Kinship: The Differential Effect of Marriage Rules on the Processes of Punjabi Migration to Britain," in Colin Clarke, Ceri Peach, and Steven Vertovec (eds), *South Asians Overseas: Migration and Ethnicity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>40</sup> See Ballard, "Migration and Kinship"; Alison Shaw, "The Pakistani Community in Oxford," in Roger Ballard (ed.), *Desh Pardesh: The South Asian Presence in Britain*, (London: Hurst, 1994), 35-57; Alison Shaw, *Kinship and Continuity: Pakistani Families in Britain*, (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic, 2000); and Alison Shaw, "Kinship, Cultural Preference and Immigration: Consanguineous Marriage among British Pakistanis," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 7, no. 2 (June 2001): 315-334.

<sup>41</sup> Shaw, "Kinship, Cultural Preference and Immigration," 315-334.

<sup>42</sup> Census of England and Wales 2001, Table S152: Sex, Age and Limiting Long Term Illness and General Health by Religion. Crown copyright reserved.

<sup>43</sup> Shaw, *Kinship and Continuity*; and Deborah Phillips, "Parallel lives? Challenging Discourses of British Muslim Self-Segregation," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 24, no. 1 (2004): 25-40.

concentrations. Family values become manifested in apparent segregation. The *biraderis* offer the milieus for the intense small networks discussed by Marc Sageman in his 2004 book *Understanding Terror Networks*.<sup>44</sup>

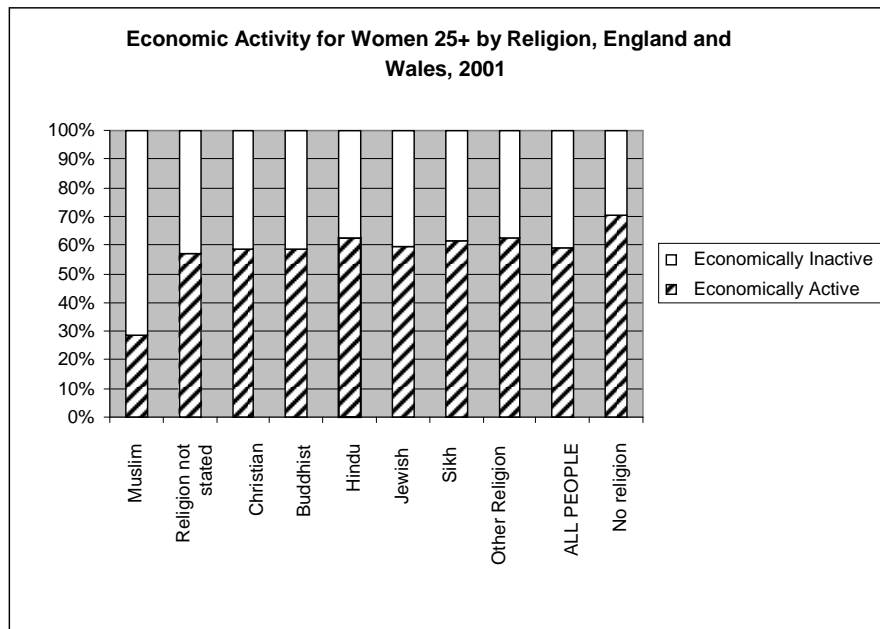
Early marriage, early childbirth, larger families, younger average age, crowded housing, low household incomes, high segregation, and poor housing: in all of these criteria the Muslim statistics are more extreme than is the case for Sikhs or Hindus.

**Female Absence from the Labor Force**

Concern for contact with unrelated men, above all, restricts women’s entry into the formal labor market. The protected status of Muslim women has meant less than half the participation rate in the formal economy of any other religious or ethnic group. Only 29 percent of Muslim women age twenty-five and over were economically active, half the percentage of every other faith group (Figure 13). Only 25 percent of Pakistani women and 18 percent of Bangladeshi women age twenty-five and over were economically active, compared with an average of 59 percent for all women, 60 percent for Indian women, and 66 percent for Caribbean women.

Nor was the lack of participation in the formal labor market due simply to the characteristics of the dominant South Asian Muslims; it was true of Muslim women generally, even when the Pakistani and Bangladeshi components were extracted from the data (Figure 14).

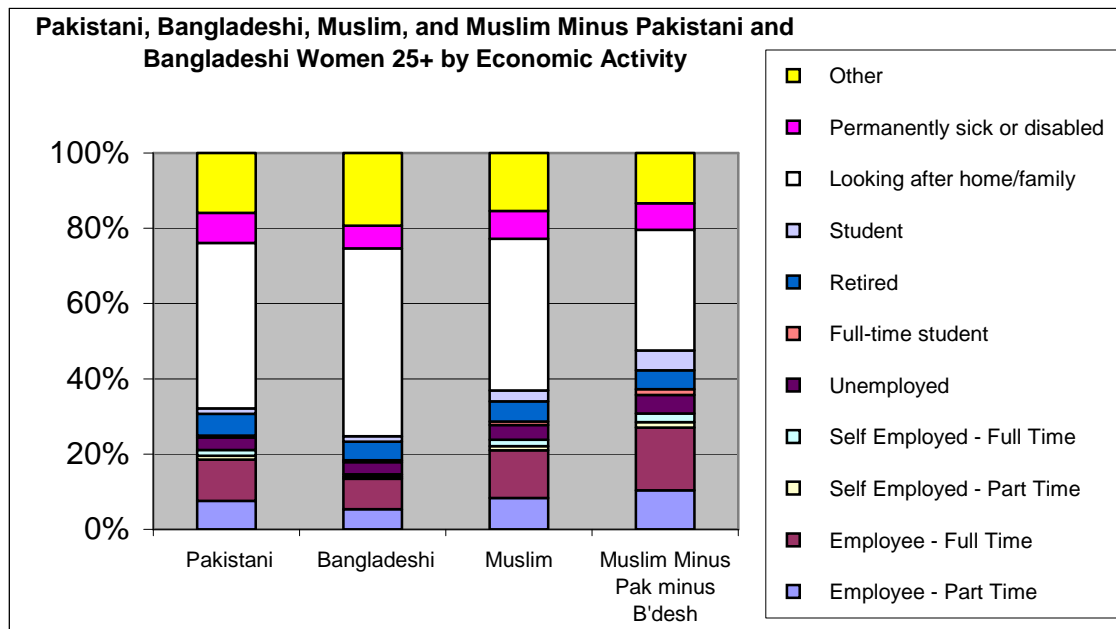
**Figure 13: Economic Activity for Women 25+ by Religion, England and Wales, 2001<sup>45</sup>**



<sup>44</sup> Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terrorist Networks*, (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

<sup>45</sup> Based on data from Census of England and Wales 2001, Table S153: Sex and Age and Economic Activity by Religion. Crown copyright reserved.

**Figure 14: Pakistani, Bangladeshi Muslims and British Muslims Minus Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, Women 25+ by Economic Activity<sup>46</sup>**



### Absence of Muslim Women from the European Labor Force

The phenomenon of Muslim women’s absence from the formal labor force is also true more generally of Muslim women in Europe. Rainer Thomas Münz, et al. reported in 2007 that

Some immigrant women (in particular Muslim women) are reluctant to enter the labor market for cultural or religious reasons. For example in 2005, immigrant women with the citizenship of Turkey or countries of the Middle East and North Africa ... had the lowest employment rates in the EU-25. Their employment rates only reached levels of 30.3% and 22.4% respectively. These rates represent only about half the level of national female employment and only one third of the comparable male employment levels.<sup>47</sup>

In the British case, the result or the cause of the absence of Muslim women in the labor force is the very high proportion of women, relative to other faith communities (40 percent of those over 25 versus 13 percent on average), looking after the home and family (see the blank section of the Muslim column in Figure 15).

British Muslims have the lowest educational qualifications of all faith groups in the country (Figure 16). Nearly 40 percent have no qualifications. Although high, the educational profile of British Muslims is not dramatically different from that of Sikhs. In terms of the relative socioeconomic success of the Sikhs, however, the difference is striking.

<sup>46</sup> For source data see Ceri Peach, “Muslims in the 2001 Census of England and Wales: Gender and Economic Disadvantage,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29, no. 4 (2006): 629-655; based on data from Census of England and Wales 2001, Table S153, and Table S108: Sex and Age and Economic Activity by Ethnic Group. Crown copyright reserved.

<sup>47</sup> Rainer Münz et al., “What Are the Migrants’ Contributions to Employment and Growth? A European Approach,” Research Paper 3 (Hamburg: Hamburg Institute of International Economics, March 2007), [http://www.hwwi.org/uploads/tx\\_wilpubdb/HWWI\\_Policy\\_Paper\\_3-3.pdf](http://www.hwwi.org/uploads/tx_wilpubdb/HWWI_Policy_Paper_3-3.pdf).

Figure 15: Occupations of Women 25+ by Religion, England and Wales, 2001<sup>48</sup>

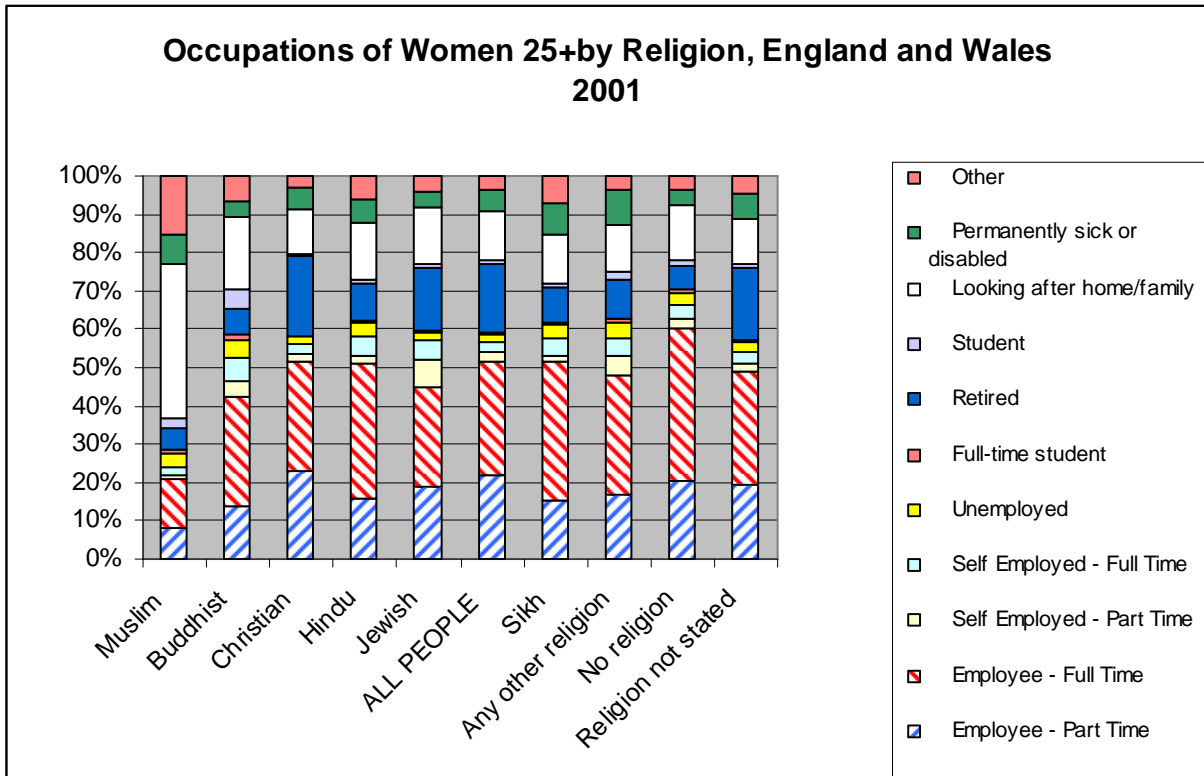
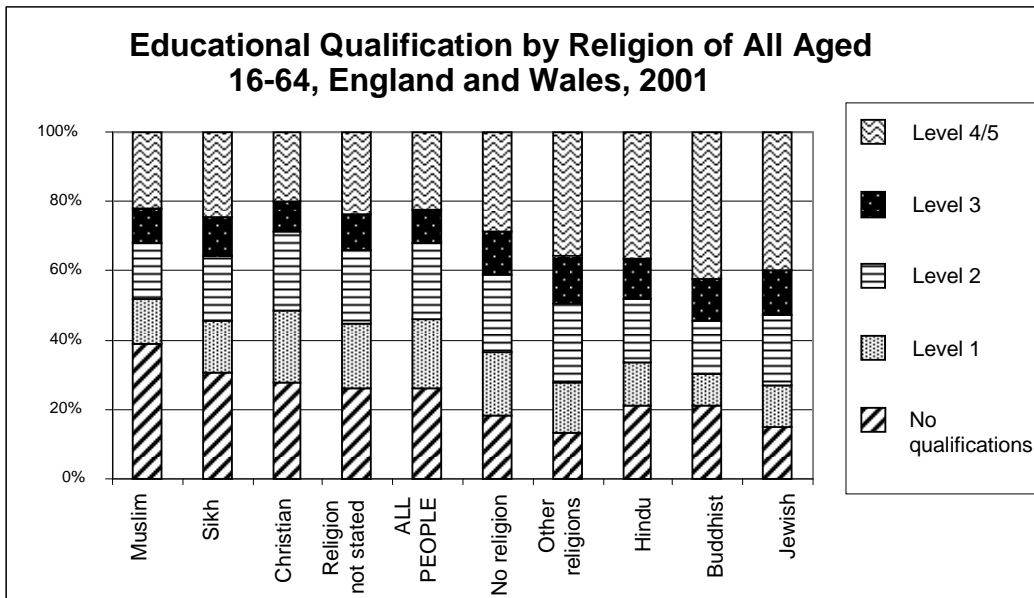


Figure 16: Educational Qualifications by Religion, England and Wales, 2001<sup>49</sup>

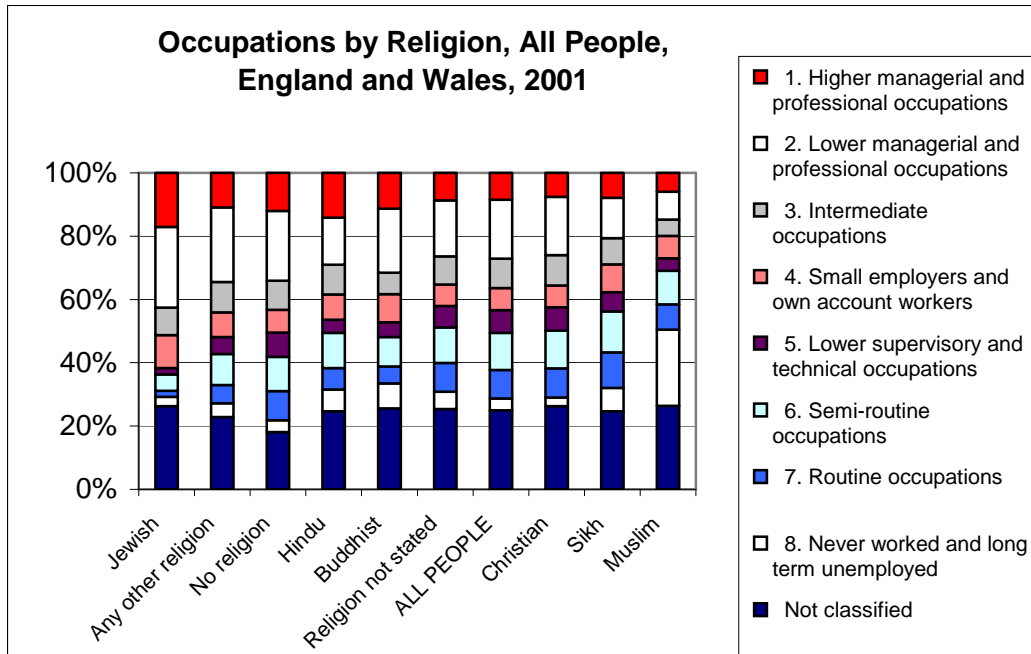


<sup>48</sup> Peach, "Muslims in the 2001 Census," 629-655. Based on data from Census of England and Wales 2001, Table S154: Sex and Occupation by Religion. Crown copyright reserved.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

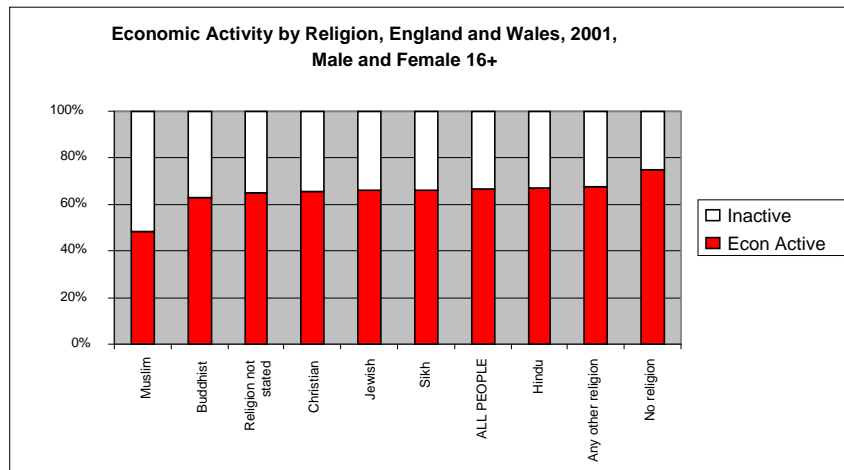
Figure 17 shows that Muslims have the most disadvantaged occupational structure, with smaller percentages in the upper white-collar classes than other groups and correspondingly more in the lower occupations. However, the most striking fact is that 24 percent of Muslims of working age had either never worked or were long-term unemployed, compared with the Sikh and Hindu figure of 7 percent and the national average of 4 percent.

**Figure 17: Occupations by Religion, England and Wales, 2001<sup>50</sup>**



The depressed Muslim occupational profile is further lowered by the level of economic activity (Figure 18). Less than half (48 percent) of the working-age Muslim population is economically active, compared to an average of two-thirds for the population as a whole and for Sikhs and Hindus.

**Figure 18: Economic Activity by Religion, England and Wales, 2001<sup>51</sup>**

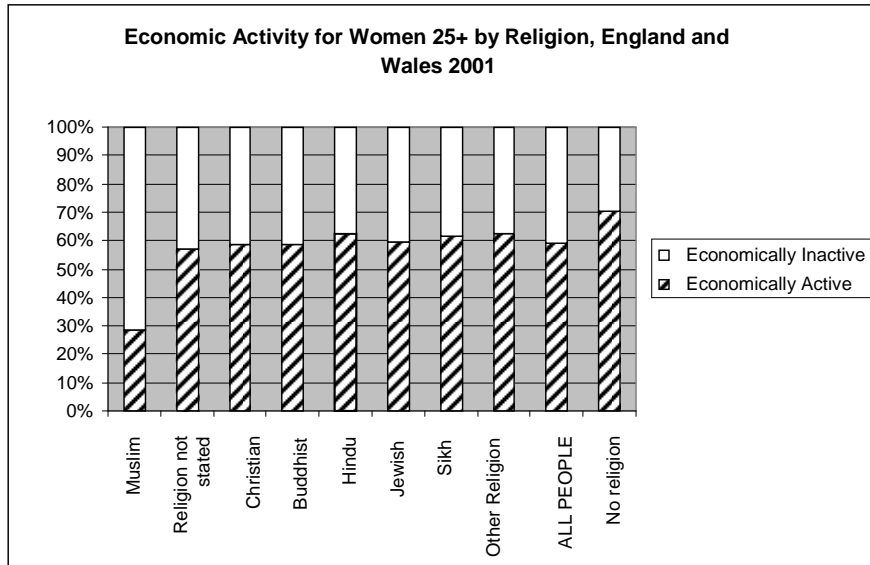


<sup>50</sup> Based on data from Census of England and Wales 2001, Table S154. Crown copyright reserved.

<sup>51</sup> Based on data from Census of England and Wales 2001, Table S153. Crown copyright reserved.

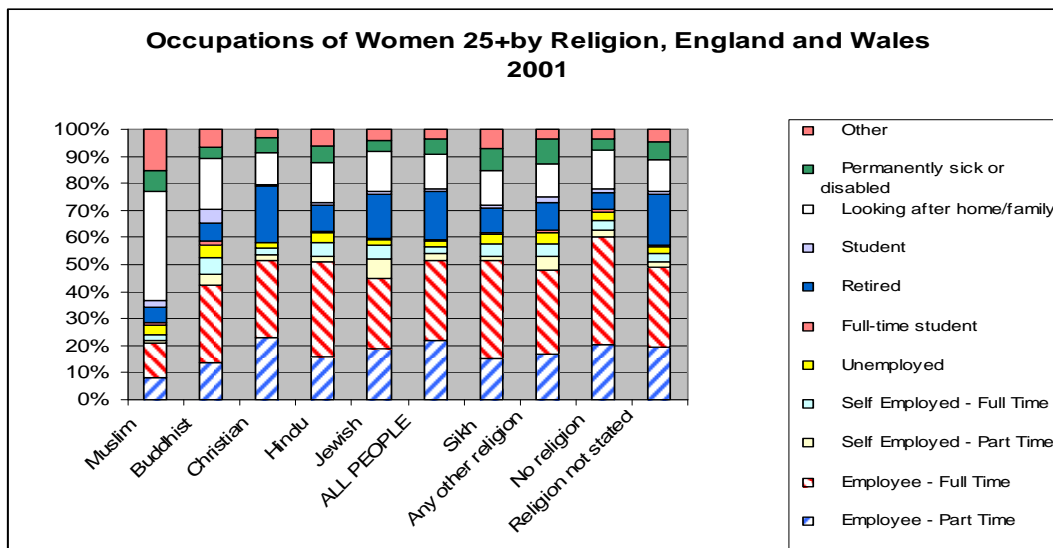
If the data in Figure 18 are disaggregated to show the position of women alone for the twenty-five-and-over group (Figure 19), the very low participation rate of women in the formal economy appears even more sharply. Only 29 percent of Muslim women are economically active (see the blank section of the Muslim column), compared with double the percentages for women as a whole (59 percent) and for Hindu and Sikh women (both 62 percent).

**Figure 19: Economic Activity of Women 25+ by Religion<sup>52</sup>**



Correspondingly, Figure 19 shows that over 40 percent of Muslim women are “looking after home/family,” compared with 13 percent for women as a whole, 15 percent for Hindus, and 13 percent for Sikhs.

**Figure 20: Occupations of Women 25+ by Religion, England and Wales, 2001<sup>53</sup>**

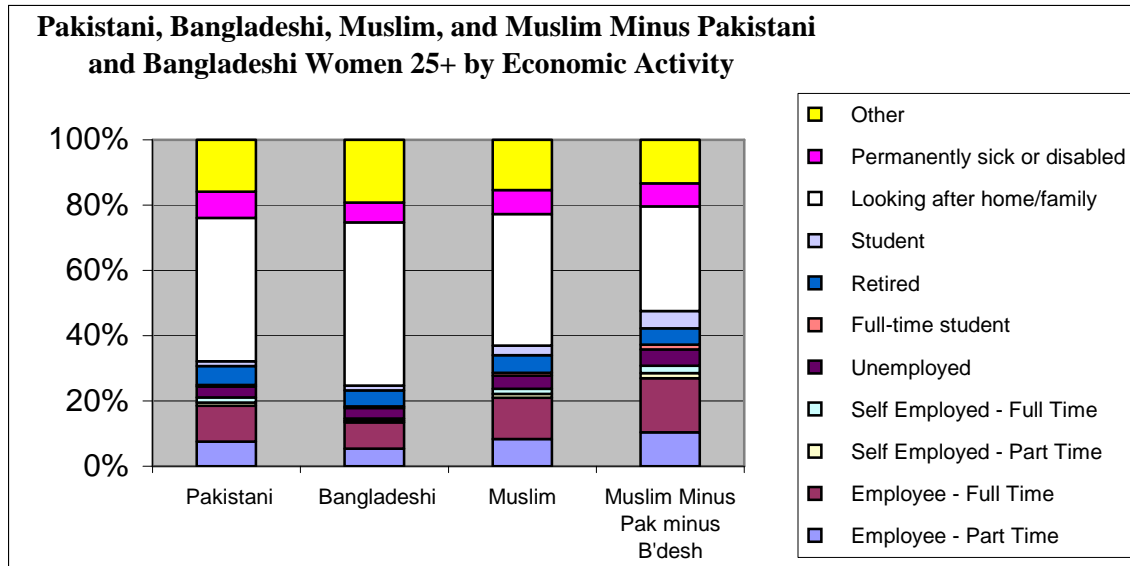


<sup>52</sup> Based on data from Census of England and Wales 2001, Table S153. Crown copyright reserved.

<sup>53</sup> Based on data from Census of England and Wales 2001, Table S154. Crown copyright reserved.

This is not simply an artifact of the dominance of Pakistani and Bangladeshi in the Muslim population. If we subtract their numbers from the Muslim cohort, the same pattern remains for non-Pakistani or Bangladeshi women, albeit in a slightly attenuated form (Figure 20).

**Figure 21: Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Muslim and Muslim Women, Minus Pakistani and Bangladeshi, 25+ by Economic Activity<sup>54</sup>**



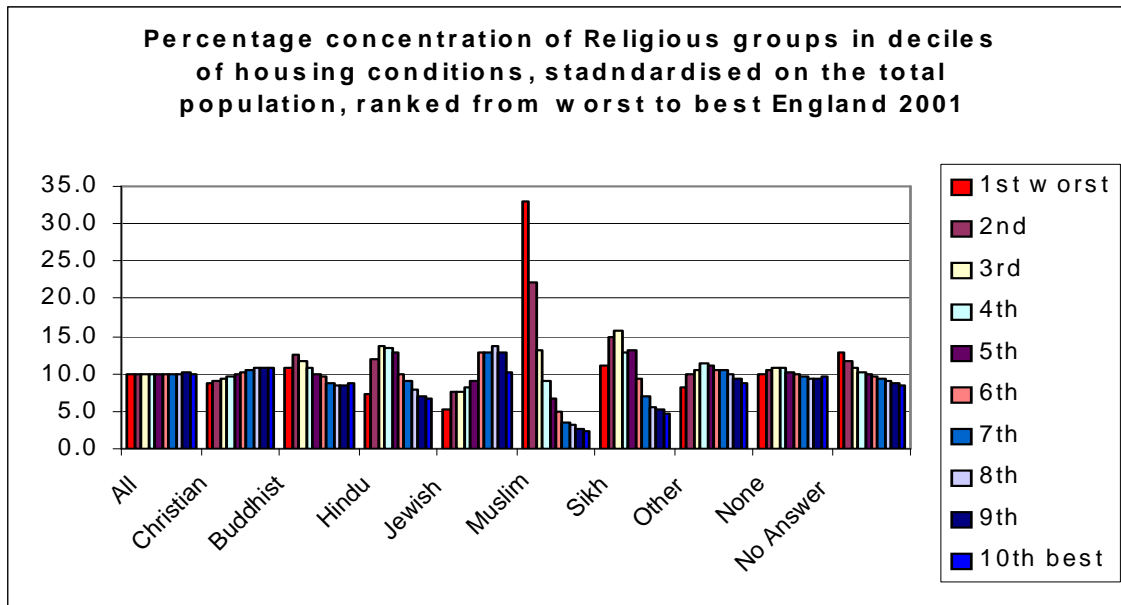
The conclusion to be drawn from these data is that Muslims are the most economically marginalized of the British faith groups, with poor educational qualifications, low participation in the labor force, poor jobs, high rates of unemployment, higher than average health disabilities, large families, and high segregation. The young age structure ensures the rapid growth of Muslims as a whole. Low educational qualifications and occupational concentrations in restaurant- and taxi-driving-type occupations, with limited opportunities for progress, suggest that it will be difficult for them to escape from their current economic position. The very low participation rate of Muslim women in the formal labor market means that there are fewer wage earners than in comparable Sikh and Hindu households. Low female economic activity is exacerbated by low male economic activity (compared to other groups) and by high male unemployment rates. The young age of marriage for Muslim women contributes to fewer years of education and lower educational qualifications. It also contributes to large average family and household size.

All of these factors unite to explain the extraordinarily high concentration of the Muslim population in areas with high indices of poor housing. Figure 22 uses Census Super Output Areas, which are tract-sized units standardized on the total population. The total population and each religious faith group is divided into bundles of ten categories (deciles), ranging from worst - the left-hand column of each bundle - to best. The standardization works by dividing the total population into ten groups, each containing 10 percent of the total Super Output Areas, ranging from worst to best. The percentage of each religion found in the equivalent deciles is given in the succeeding columns. Figures above or below 10 percent in each column, therefore, represent over or under-representation of the religion in each situation.

<sup>54</sup> Based on data from Census of England and Wales 2001, Table S153, and Table S108. Crown copyright reserved.

The extraordinary degree of Muslim concentration in areas of multiple deprivation stands out in Figure 22. One-third of the Muslim population of England and Wales lives in the worst areas of multiple deprivation, which account for only 10 percent of all households. A further 22 percent live in the next-worst decile. Altogether, 55 percent of Muslims live in the worst two deciles, which contain only 20 percent of the population of England. Sikhs are only slightly over-represented in the worst decile and Hindus are under-represented.

**Figure 22: Comparison of Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and the Muslim Population of England and Wales, Minus Those Two Groups by Economic Activity<sup>55</sup>**



There is a paradox about Muslims in Britain. Taken as a group, they have a depressed socioeconomic position, but socially they are strong. Their social organization is conservative and family-centered. Unions are formed through formal, often arranged marriage rather than cohabitation. Married couples with children are the norm. Children are born in wedlock. Extended multi-generational families are common. In London, where the largest number of British Muslims is found, they are residentially well mixed. However, the two largest Muslim groups, the Pakistanis and particularly the Bangladeshis, are rather isolated and encapsulated. Cattle (2001) reporting on the 2001 riots in Bradford, Oldham, and Burnley, referred to Asians (largely Muslim) and whites as leading parallel lives. This is, perhaps, an overly pessimistic representation of the situation. Deborah Phillips' survey of urban ethnicity in Bradford and Leeds found that high levels of South Asian segregation are evident at ward level in both cities, but a much clearer pattern of settlement emerged from a small-scale analysis at the level of the enumeration district or postcode sector. This revealed intense segregation in very localized areas, but also, contrary to the popular image, a considerable degree of racial mixing across the core ethnic areas.<sup>56</sup>

At the same time, not all Muslim groups suffer from these difficulties. Nizari Ismailis Muslims, for example, are clearly able to compete with the most professionalized ethnic groups. Comparisons with other South Asian religions, though often unfavorable to Muslims, generally reflect pre-migration conditions in the sending areas

<sup>55</sup> For data see Peach, "Muslims in the 2001 Census," 629-655. Based on data from Census of England and Wales 2001, special tabulation, Table M321. Crown copyright reserved.

<sup>56</sup> Malcolm Harrison and Deborah Phillips, *Housing and Black and Minority Ethnic Communities. Review of the Evidence Base* (London: Office of the Prime Minister, May 2003), <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1155610>.

rather than unequal performance since arrival.<sup>57</sup> However, British Muslims, taken as a whole, experience a vulnerable economic situation. That said, the known degree of ethnic difference within the Muslim population, and the degree to which we do not yet have information on the characteristics of some of the Muslim groups, means that by presenting aggregate data we are capturing the characteristics of a heterogeneous group, defined by religion, but that the precise role played by religion is not clear. What is clear is that for South Asian Muslims specifically, religion is the variable that most distinguishes their vulnerable situation from the more successful positions of their Hindu and Sikh South Asian co-ethnics.

## CONCLUSION

- The Muslim population of Western Europe has grown from probably less than 300,000 in 1950 to about 13.2 million in 2006, but data are imprecise.
- France, Germany, and the United Kingdom have the largest Muslims populations, but there has been an increase in the smaller European Nordic countries and, more recently, strong growth in the Mediterranean countries.
- Muslim TFRs are higher than those for native groups, but they show strong decreases over time and convergence with the native populations of the countries in which they have settled.
- The ethnic mix of Muslims in European countries has increased, particularly with refugee movements, and one cannot speak of a homogeneous Muslim population.
- The Muslim population is younger than the majority populations and is growing faster, but in countries with good data, the speed of growth is lower than many estimates suggest.
- While the Muslim population contains many educated, professional, and wealthy individuals, the bulk of the population occupies the lower end of the socioeconomic scale as measured by educational level, occupation, and economic activity.
- High levels of residential concentration, poor housing conditions, large families, small houses, and very different cultural mores with regard to women, coupled with poor language skills in the older age groups, have fostered social exclusion, both desired and undesired.
- The South Asian and North African Muslim populations maintain strong clan and family contacts, with a strong sense of family honor. This manifests itself in a low (30 percent) participation rate of Muslim women in the formal economy, less than half of that of most other groups.

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<sup>57</sup> Ballard, "Migration and Kinship."



# ISLAMISM AND EUROPE'S MUSLIMS: RECENT TRENDS

By Tim Winter<sup>1</sup>

## RACE RELATIONS: DEATH OF A PARADIGM?

Over the past ten years European governments have struggled to find a coherent response to the spectacular comeback of religion, a factor that for a century had been essentially absent from the way governments considered issues of diversity. In the United Kingdom, where the debate has been particularly sharp, we remain dimly aware that the constitutional underpinnings of our society contain a range of fossil laws and concessions that recall earlier political fears about Catholic and sometimes nonconformist loyalties; the establishment of the Church of England being perhaps the most obvious of such relics.<sup>2</sup> Yet for most of the twentieth century, and certainly in the critical years of the 1950s and 1960s, during which time government and social administrators crafted their response to a new diversity led by large-scale primary immigration, such survivals seemed irrelevant. Officialdom in the United Kingdom largely ignored religious criteria and, through agencies such as the Commission for Racial Equality, favored racial or “ethnic” categories.<sup>3</sup> In countries such as France, with a strong centralizing tradition, policymakers pressed for a steady assimilation into a generic French identity and were generally reluctant to permit the creation of stable minority modules within the larger society. Other European countries mapped out their own positions somewhere along this spectrum.<sup>4</sup>

With the rise of global Islamism, and with it an apparently increasing desire among these new minorities for a religious rather than a less precise “ethnic” self-understanding, Muslim groups in several European countries are pressing for the right to communal recognition. One of the most interesting consequences of the current demand among some European Muslims to be defined as a religious community - rather than as a collection of ethnicities, or as members of an equal but atomized citizenry - is that a very old definer of identity is being resurrected. Well-known dangers lurk here. Perhaps the biggest danger today is that these communities can become more vulnerable when defined in this way. As an unintended consequence of recent European hate-speech legislation, negative stereotyping by far-right movements is easier when directed against groups that define themselves confessionally, given the currently drastic legal consequences of racism, and the fact that residual blasphemy laws typically only protect Christian sensibilities. The British National Party, the Vlaams Belang (Belgium), the Republikaner (Germany), the Swiss People's Party, and their analogues in other European countries (including many in the newly-acceded Slavic member states) may be said to have substantially redefined themselves as anti-Muslim parties, with the BNP, for example, now seeking to recruit Sikh, Hindu, and even Jewish members.<sup>5</sup> Ultra-nationalist and neo-fascist formations seem to be particularly prone to this shift in target. When Christian Worch,

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<sup>2</sup> The process of Catholic Relief, as it was called, began following the Vatican's recognition in 1766 of the House of Hanover as legitimate heirs to the throne of England, Ireland, and Scotland. The process reached an effectively final settlement with the Catholic Relief Act of 1829, many of whose provisions directly or indirectly shape the constitutional position of religion in the UK to the present day. See Wendy Hinde, *Catholic Emancipation: A Shake to Men's Minds* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1992). For the background to religion and citizenship issues in the UK, see Ian Bradley, *Believing in Britain: The Spiritual Identity of Britishness* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> The Commission for Racial Equality was set up under the 1976 Race Relations Act to promote racial equality. Supported by the government, it has no executive powers, but it may investigate abuses and offer legal advice.

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Collett, “One Size Fits All? Tailored Integration Policies for Migrants in the European Union,” Working Paper no. 24 (Brussels: European Policy Centre, April 2006), [http://www.epc.eu/TEWN/pdf/602431467\\_EPC%20Working%20Paper%2024.pdf](http://www.epc.eu/TEWN/pdf/602431467_EPC%20Working%20Paper%2024.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Nick Lowles, “Sleeping with the Enemy: Griffin Ponders Black Membership,” *Searchlight*, February 2002; Ian Cobain, “Racism, Recruitment, and How the BNP Believes It Is Just ‘One Crisis Away from Power,’” *Guardian*, December 22, 2006.

the German “neo-Nazi” leader, was asked, “Is Islam a greater threat than international Judaism – especially after 11 September?” he replied, “The enemy is changing.”<sup>6</sup>

This development needs careful scrutiny, and on occasion it may keep national legislatures busy. But overall, despite the anxiety of the race-relations industry, it is not clear that the shift from racial to religious categories should not be cautiously welcomed. For many, it increasingly seems more defensible to categorize and affirm citizens on the basis of their worldview than on the basis of the color of their skin or their increasingly dim memory of ancestral homelands. Many hold that there was always something uncomfortable in the insistence that while race, as race, means nothing very much, we need to take it with deadly seriousness because bigots think that it is important. Religion is increasingly accepted as a more substantive and profound, not to say stubborn, cause of diversity and human self-identification.

In fact, the old race-relations paradigm that guided municipalities and employment tribunals, and which still shapes the European Union’s legislation through bodies such as the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, is in some quarters regarded as an exacerbating factor in the current unsatisfactory relations between communities in Europe’s inner cities. Social administrators across the continent, trained by left-leaning faculties of sociology to regard race, class, and economic achievement as the most significant variables in community relations, are not always showing themselves well-equipped to deal with communities which define themselves primarily in terms of religious affiliation. The result is often an additional alienation from public discourse and policy. The official imposition of solutions of a secular or left-wing inspiration may tend to impress upon communities that the political establishment does not take seriously their own self-definition and understanding of their community’s situation. Such perceptions and complaints are by no means always well-founded. However, it is undeniable that the old nostrums have not worked as their authors hoped. Across Europe, race-based strategies for integration appear to be in crisis. In the eyes of some, they are in terminal decline.

### **THE RELIGIONIZING OF ALIENATION**

The case of Birmingham, the United Kingdom’s second-largest conurbation, is instructive.<sup>7</sup> The city’s so-called inner ring, effectively a post-industrial rust belt, is home to most of the city’s minorities. The Sparkbrook neighborhood is largely Muslim, while Soho is mainly Hindu and Sikh. The Christian population of Sparkbrook, according to the 2001 census, has fallen to less than twenty percent of the total, and Small Heath is home to only slightly more. Natural increase, marriage, migration, and “white flight” seem set to maintain this polarization for the foreseeable future. All the signs are that religious identities are thriving, while ethnic/racial ones are increasingly problematized, not least by the fact that 9 percent of schoolchildren are now of ethnically mixed parentage.

Educational achievement, which in part determines social mobility, closely mirrors the educational standard of parents. Hindus, whose UK diaspora is drawn from relatively educated classes, outperform almost all other communities; Muslims and Caribbean Christians lie consistently at the lower end of the range, reflecting the often elementary educational standard of their parents. In Britain as a whole, a disturbing 36 percent of Muslim children currently leave school with no qualifications at all.

Recent surveys suggest that this picture is slowly improving. However, education does not correlate exactly with opportunity. Increasing levels of public hostility towards Muslims, eliding in complex ways with older, racially based prejudices, impose substantial barriers to economic progress and integration. In 2005, the number of pupils

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<sup>6</sup> Cited in Nick Ryan, *Homeland: Into a World of Hate* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2003), 294.

<sup>7</sup> Information mainly drawn from Tahir Abbas, “Muslims in Birmingham, UK,” Background Paper (Oxford: Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford), <http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/publications/papers/Birmingham%20Background%20Paper%200206.pdf>.

suspended from British schools for racist abuse jumped by 29 percent.<sup>8</sup> A BBC investigation in 2004 found that job applicants with Muslim names are at a substantial disadvantage: identical resumes submitted to employers resulted in 24 percent of people with Christian names being interviewed, compared to 9 percent of Muslims. “The unemployment rates for ethnic minorities in the top four social classes are on average more than twice that of Christian groups for the population as a whole.”<sup>9</sup> In France, no Muslim was elected to parliament in the 2007 elections, reflecting a culture in which “people are not ashamed of their prejudices”<sup>10</sup> and where Muslims in particular face high levels of employment discrimination.<sup>11</sup>

It is clear that racial prejudice continues to be a factor in Muslim alienation, as well as in a consequent receptivity to radical Islamism. As Muslims in Europe are overwhelmingly non-white, ongoing racial disharmony naturally impedes integration. However, current security preoccupations seem to have exacerbated this problem, adding the allegedly spiralling problem of “islamophobia” to the factors obstructing Muslim integration. On occasion, the borderline between religious and racial dislike may be vague, as in the widely condemned “noise and smell” speech made in 1991 by then-Paris mayor Jacques Chirac:

It is clear that having Spanish, Polish, or Portuguese people [...] fewer problems than having Muslims or blacks. How do you think a French worker feels when he sees on the landing a family with a man who has maybe three or four wives, about 20 kids, who receives around 50,000 francs in social services, of course without working [...] and if you add the noise and smell [...] no wonder the French worker across the landing goes mad.<sup>12</sup>

Despite a steep decline in church attendance, the views of an intransigent minority of church leaders also play a role in “religionizing” the alienation of young Muslims. In Greece, the government has been forced to override vehement opposition by church leaders to the construction of the first mosque for Athens’ 150,000-strong Muslim community.<sup>13</sup> In Italy, the Archbishop of Bologna has called for the closure of the country’s mosques and an end to immigration by Muslims, who are, he believes, “outside our humanity.”<sup>14</sup> In the Russian region of Kamchatka, at the furthest end of European settlement, the Orthodox bishop has backed opposition to the construction of a mosque for the region’s large Muslim community. The mosque would be “a direct insult to the religious and civil feelings of the Slavic population,” according to its local opponents, and it would encourage further Muslim immigration, with the result that “given their mindset, they won’t let us live normally here.”<sup>15</sup> Such examples could be multiplied. Although most church leaders have been sympathetic to the needs of disadvantaged Muslim communities, a minority of more conservative bishops has added to the anti-Muslim rhetoric, which reduces the communities’ sense of belonging and promotes a belief that it is being discriminated against and rejected on specifically religious grounds.

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<sup>8</sup> Jack Doyle, “Racism and Assaults Soar in English Schools,” *Independent*, April 14, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, “Muslims in the European Union: Discrimination and Islamophobia,” 2006, 44, [http://eumc.europa.eu/eumc/material/pub/muslim/Manifestations\\_EN.pdf](http://eumc.europa.eu/eumc/material/pub/muslim/Manifestations_EN.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Stanley Hoffmann, cited in Alex Chase-Levenson and Roumania Ivanova, “The French Disconnection: What the Riots Portend for the Future of French Politics,” *Harvard Political Review Online* (March 2006), <http://hprsite.squarespace.com/the-french-disconnection>.

<sup>11</sup> BBC News, “French Muslims Face Job Discrimination,” November 2, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4399748.stm>. President Nicolas Sarkozy has, however, appointed a Muslim woman, Rachida Dati, as justice minister; and in a reshuffle on June 18, 2007, junior portfolios were given to two others: Rama Yade (human rights) and Fadela Amara (city planning); see Katrin Bennhold, “After French Election Stumble, Sarkozy Alters His Team,” *International Herald Tribune*, June 19, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted by Naima Bouteldja, “The Reality of l’affaire du Foulard,” *Guardian*, February 25, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Harry de Quetteville, “Disputed Athens Mosque Given Go Ahead,” *Telegraph*, April 15, 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Rory Carroll, “No Offence Meant, Pope Tells ‘Defective’ Religions,” *Guardian*, October 2, 2000.

<sup>15</sup> Russell Working and Nonna Chernyakova, “Muslims Under Fire in Russian Far East,” *Japan Times*, August 7, 2000.

In the United Kingdom, the still poorly defined attitude of “Islamophobia” has recently resulted in a seemingly endless series of news stories, including the much-discussed announcement by a British Muslim policeman that he was taking legal action against the Metropolitan Police for unfair removal from a sensitive diplomatic protection unit.<sup>16</sup> Such cases are increasingly referred to the courts, which are exploring strategies of response. However, there are also signs that religious discrimination is increasingly spilling over into extrajudicial violence. A 2005 report by the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights indicated a steady increase in attacks against European Muslims and their places of worship, and it claimed that 33 percent of Muslims say that “they or their family members have experienced hostility and abuse because of their religion.”<sup>17</sup> Moreover, some experts have claimed that attacks are substantially under-reported, in part because of publicity surrounding a number of recent incidents in which police called in to investigate violence against a Muslim have allegedly treated the victim as a terrorist suspect. Slips by government ministers have not helped: in late 2003, the press reported that Denis MacShane, minister for European affairs, had called on Muslims to choose between the “British way” and the “terrorist way.”<sup>18</sup> A similar message has seemed implicit in many other official pronouncements directed at the Muslim community.

One vignette from the Helsinki Federation report indicates the nature of what is recognized, across the political spectrum, as an intensifying problem:

In April 2004, dramatically worded newspaper articles reported that police had thwarted a terrorist attack on the stadium of the soccer club Manchester United by arresting ten people suspected of planning a collective suicide bombing. All of those arrested were Muslims. The story was never directly challenged by police, and rumors about a possible terrorist attack were further fuelled as police took measures to tighten security at subsequent Manchester United home games. Police claimed that the arrests were made “after a great deal of deliberation” and because of “credible intelligence,” but the only evidence that was presented to support the arrests consisted of Manchester United t-shirts, posters, old ticket stubs and a match fixture list, which were found in the possession of those arrested. After being held for ten days, all ten arrested were released without charge. When interviewed a few months after being released, two of those arrested summarized the impact that the event had had on their lives by saying: “We have lost our jobs, our girlfriends, [and] our friends. Nobody believes us that we are not terrorists.”<sup>19</sup>

Media panic, police overreaction, and an inquisitorial public culture are driving Muslim communities in the direction of introspection. The Muslim Council of Britain reports that its efforts to encourage Muslims to cooperate with police are often thwarted by negative experiences, particularly by the invasive dawn raids launched with startling frequency against Muslims accused by neighbors of suspicious behavior.<sup>20</sup> It is clear that current policies and practice are strengthening isolationist tendencies within the community which before the present security crisis were fast receding.<sup>21</sup> It is in this context that one must interpret the sudden flourishing of internal community media, including, in the United Kingdom, five Muslim television channels and several radio stations. Unable to recognize themselves in the elite media, let alone the tabloid press, there are signs that European Muslims are increasingly choosing to create their own media networks.

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<sup>16</sup> *Independent*, “Muslim Policeman Removed from Duty Sues Met Police,” November 7, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, “Intolerance and Discrimination Against Muslims in the EU: Developments Since September 11,” March 7, 2005.

<sup>18</sup> Gethin Chamberlain, “Bush: Nowhere Safe from Terror,” *Scotsman*, November 22, 2003.

<sup>19</sup> International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, “Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims.”

<sup>20</sup> Muslim Council of Britain, “British Muslims Welcome Release of Two Brothers Arrested in Forest Gate Raid,” June 10, 2006, [http://www.mcb.org.uk/media/presstext.php?ann\\_id=205](http://www.mcb.org.uk/media/presstext.php?ann_id=205).

Cf. Muslim Council of Britain press release dated June 10, 2006.

<sup>21</sup> It nonetheless remains the case that among Muslims “strong majorities [...] would prefer to live in neighborhoods that are ethnically and religiously diverse.” See Zsolt Nyiri, “Muslims in Europe: Basis for Greater Understanding Already Exists,” *The Gallup Organization*, 2007, <http://media.gallup.com/WorldPoll/PDF/WPSRMuslimsinEurope1050707.pdf>.

## PARALLEL LIVES: MERITS AND DEMERITS

Social administrators, particularly those of a highly secularist or Marxist commitment, instinctively lament this mood of introspection. The reality, however, may be more complex. Two factors in particular should give us pause. First, we must resist the idea that a liberal democracy can only flourish where it expects or imposes community cohesion defined as the routine deep interaction of religious and ethnic modules within society. Communities, no less than individuals, should have the right to privacy if they wish it. Some highly traditional Jewish communities have existed in that way in Britain, to no noticeable social detriment, for centuries. There are also Christian communities, such as the Plymouth Brethren, which adopt a strongly isolationist stance. And there are researchers who believe that de facto school segregation may in fact bolster the self-esteem of ethnic minority members, leading to improved academic performance and hence to enhanced longer-term social mobility.<sup>22</sup> Short-term ethnic concentration may facilitate long-term integration, and state interference (bussing, affirmative action, municipal “diversity promotion” plans, and the like) may turn out to impede this natural process, which was part of the evolution of other minority communities in the past. The Huguenots and the Sephardic Jews are significant precedents here.

Second, the idea that integrated communities are less likely to produce criminal, cult-like or terroristic behavior remains problematic. Cults and new religious movements of Christian or post-Christian inspiration typically recruit their membership from the educated and successful middle classes, as did the British Communist Party in its heyday; and there is no automatic reason to suppose that integration and social mobility will provide an inoculation against recruitment by Islamist radicals.<sup>23</sup> Conversely, very traditionally educated Muslims tend to be immune to radicalization and lawlessness; in fact, it was presumably significant that not one of the individuals convicted in the aftermath of the July 2001 Bradford riots had attended an Islamic school.<sup>24</sup> The same may be said for the 2005 Paris riots,<sup>25</sup> while in London, the 7/7 bombers were all, in conventional terms, well-adjusted and well-integrated products of the state school system. Perhaps the best-known British Muslim convicted of terrorism, Omar Shaikh, went nowhere near Islamic schools, but attended Forest, a prestigious private school favored by the British establishment. His tutor there told the BBC: “I’m horrified. The chap we knew was a good all round, solid and very supportive pupil.”<sup>26</sup>

This fits with the larger global picture: the senior al-Qaeda leadership is conspicuously short of graduates of *madrasa* or Islamic universities. Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri themselves are from highly Westernized backgrounds, and the same could be said of all nineteen of the 9/11 terrorists. Abd Samad Moussaoui, brother of the alleged twentieth hijacker, Zacarias Moussaoui, has written a biography of his brother in which he describes an almost entirely modern and secular upbringing; in fact, far from inhabiting a religious ghetto, Zacarias Moussaoui had French girlfriends and never entered a mosque until, as an adult, he came to Britain and visited Finsbury Park.<sup>27</sup> Although his alleged mentor, Abu Hamza al-Masri, is routinely described by

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<sup>22</sup> Simon Burgess and Deborah Wilson, “Ethnic Segregation in England’s Schools,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 30, no. 1 (March 2005), 20-35.

<sup>23</sup> Of the members of the Solar Temple suicide cult, which ended dramatically in 1994, “most were middle-aged, upper-middle-class, solid Swiss and Canadian citizens.” See Massimo Introvigne and Jean-François Mayer, “Occult Masters and the Temple of Doom: The Fiery End of the Solar Temple,” in David G. Brombley and J. Gordon Melton (eds.), *Cults, Religion and Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 170-188. See also the profile of Unification Church recruits, which belies “the suggestion that those who might be thought to be most vulnerable - the young, socially isolated, deprived, or those not succeeding in their lives - were particularly attracted.” See Stephen J. Hunt, *Religion in Western Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 163.

<sup>24</sup> Matthew Taylor, “Two Thirds Oppose State-Aided Faith Schools,” *Guardian*, August 23, 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Hadi Yahmid, “French Imams Distance Islam from Paris Riots,” *IslamOnline*, November 5, 2005, <http://www.islamonline.net/English/News/2005-11/05/article04.shtml>; Stéphanie Giry, “France and Its Muslims,” *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 5 (September-October 2006): 87-104.

<sup>26</sup> BBC News, “Profile: Omar Saeed Shaikh,” July 16, 2002, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/1804710.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/1804710.stm).

<sup>27</sup> Abd Samad Moussaoui, *Zacarias Moussaou: the Making of a Terrorist* (London: Serpent’s Tail, 2003).

the British media as an “Islamic cleric,” Abu Hamza is not the graduate of any traditional seminary or *madrasa* institution, in contrast to the previous, more mainstream mosque leadership which he forcibly displaced. Like many cult members in a Christian context, individuals attracted to the Finsbury Park mosque were reacting against established orthodox religion.<sup>28</sup>

A certain kind of traditional social science may find this hard to accept. Yet as a matter of fact, it is usually the more successfully integrated who turn to terrorism. For many, this offers support for the theory that al-Qaeda-type terrorism is a product of modernity as much as a reaction against it. In John Gray’s words:

No cliché is more stupefying than that which describes al-Qaeda as a throwback to medieval times. It is a by-product of globalization. Its most distinctive feature - projecting a privatized form of organized violence worldwide - was impossible in the past. Equally, the belief that a new world can be hastened by spectacular acts of destruction is nowhere found in medieval times. Al-Qaeda’s closest precursors are the revolutionary anarchists of late nineteenth-century Europe.<sup>29</sup>

Gray represents an apparently growing trend among commentators who regard radical Islamism as primarily a rejection of Islamic orthodoxy and tradition, and only secondarily as an anti-West ideology, a view commended recently by a group of Western Muslims in a book entitled *Islam, Fundamentalism and the Betrayal of Tradition*.<sup>30</sup> In this view, radical Islamism’s campaign against traditional Islamic orthodoxy is not primarily a civil war within Islam, but is rather another mode of Western modernity’s onslaught on the remains of the traditional Muslim world. This case is sometimes overstated. However, the patterns of radicalization visible among young European Muslims undeniably confirm the traditionalist Muslim perception that Islamism is in the first instance a rejection of classical Islam, and only secondarily of Western cultural and political encroachment. The 2007 book *The Islamist*, by the former radical activist Ed Husain, although flawed and exaggerated, credibly portrays a pattern of Islamist recruitment which flourished mainly among the least Islamically educated young people on the British streets.<sup>31</sup> During Husain’s years as an activist for Hizb ut-Tahrir and other radical groups, it appears that he had no success in recruiting traditionally educated Muslims. This perception is strengthened by a recent study which showed that traditionally educated imams working as prison chaplains are consistently a force for deradicalization, with the countervailing forces being energized by non-expert activists present in the prison population.<sup>32</sup>

Terrorism in Muslim communities, it appears, has little to do with social exclusion or with Islam as a religion. In fact, despite their frequent economic difficulties, Muslim communities stand above the national and European norm in terms of the usual indices of loyalty and respect for the state and its instruments. In April 2007, a Gallup poll showed that Muslims in the United Kingdom have nearly twice as much confidence in the government as does the public at large, and they place more trust in the police and the judicial system. They are substantially more likely to be loyal to the United Kingdom and to respect other religions (for the latter index, 82 percent, compared to 54 percent of the general population).<sup>33</sup> In a 2006 poll by the same organization, which surveyed

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<sup>28</sup> According to Bryan Wilson, “cults and NRMs [New Religious Movements] are the result of secularization and distance from institutionalized religion.” See Thomas Robbins, *Cults, Converts and Charisma: The Sociology of New Religious Movements* (London: Sage Publications, 1988), 55-56.

<sup>29</sup> John Gray, *Al-Qaeda and What It Means to Be Modern* (London: PRESSTK, 2003), 1-2. Other analysts who take this view include Gilles Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds: Islam and the West* (London: Belknap Press, 2004) and Abdal Hakim Murad, “Bombing without Moonlight: The Origins of Suicidal Terrorism,” *Encounters: Journal of Inter-Cultural Perspectives* 10, no. i-ii (March-September 2004), 85-118.

<sup>30</sup> Joseph E.B. Lumbard (ed.), *Islam, Fundamentalism and the Betrayal of Tradition* (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2004).

<sup>31</sup> Ed Husain, *The Islamist: Why I Joined Radical Islam in Britain, What I Saw Inside, and Why I Left* (London: Penguin Books, 2007).

<sup>32</sup> University of Aberdeen, “Living Islam in Prison: faith, ideology and fear,” April 12, 2007, <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/mediareleases/release.php?id=889>.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Binyon, “Poll Reveals Muslims as Model Citizens,” *Times*, April 17, 2007.

Muslim opinion in London, Paris, and Berlin, similar findings were obtained, despite rates of religiosity two or three times higher than the national populations:

the idea that their higher religiosity implies a weaker sense of national identity is simply false. In London and Paris, when Muslims were not forced to choose between religious and national identity, they tended to associate themselves with both. In fact, in none of the three countries were Muslim residents less likely than the populations at large to say they identify strongly with their country (in the United Kingdom, they were actually somewhat more likely to do so).<sup>34</sup>

Social exclusion and affiliation to mainstream Islam, then, seem not to be significant factors in the rise of radical Islamism. The Gallup poll, however, indicated that British Muslims differ substantially from the larger population on foreign policy issues. Notably, they are significantly more likely to be hostile to the invasion of Iraq (in April 2007, 14 percent defended the invasion, compared to 23 percent of non-Muslims). The evidence suggests that resentment at foreign policy is the most significant factor in opening Muslim hearts and minds to radical Islamist currents arriving from abroad. Governments have not been comfortable with this conclusion, and instead they respond by piling rhetorical and legal pressure on communities that already feel under considerable pressure to change and conform.

The many encouraging signs of Muslim willingness to participate fully in the European reality nonetheless coexist with an undercurrent of radical sympathy among some. Although governments look to mainstream Muslim organizations for a response, the established leaders have clearly been at a loss to deal with these elements. Frequently this is because the radicals refuse to engage in conventional Muslim scholarship or debate. Whereas even mainstream Islamists such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the *Jamaat-i Islami* recognize the usefulness of modified and streamlined versions of classical Muslim scholarship, the radicals reject the entire medieval superstructure of Islamic law and theology as *bid'a* (heretical innovation) and seek to read the scriptures directly on the basis of very limited knowledge. To the consternation of the traditional elders, the radicals simply will not accept the ground rules of Muslim debate.

This rejection is a symptom of a massive and global redefinition of Islam, which in some respects is analogous to the Reformation in Europe. By rejecting a medieval consensus on how the scriptures were to be interpreted, the Reformation unleashed a tidal wave of religious violence, civil war, scriptural literalism, Cromwellian iconoclasm, and anti-Semitism, and the new Islamic *takfiri* Salafism appears similar. The rapid change forced on Muslim societies, and the arrival of new technologies allowing believers to bypass traditional authorities - the Internet being only the most recent and potent - is unsurprisingly throwing up a wave of scripturalist puritanism. Hence a frequent pattern of Islamist radicalization across Europe shows young Muslims alienated from the culture of their parents, and rejected on racial, religious, or economic grounds by the "host society," seeking an alternative identity and basis of self-esteem as part of an idealized global Islamic vanguard. The evidence suggests that this is not made available to them from mosque pulpits, but from the Internet. Teenagers in search of an identity learn about Islam at random through search engines and very soon conclude that Westerners, and Christians in particular, hold them in contempt. Internet polemics against Islam, which often take the form of extreme and vituperative attacks against the religion's theology and its founder, inevitably generate a resentment that finds a mirror image in radical Islamist websites which demonize the West and Christians. The discourtesy and anonymity, which many have remarked on as a particular feature of Internet religious debate, propel young Muslims with little knowledge into the arms of radical advocates. Cyberspace appears to impede empathy, reduce inhibitions, and enables "info-wars" which for many are hardly less engaging than computer games.<sup>35</sup> As an

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<sup>34</sup> Zsolt Nyiri, "Muslims in Europe: Basis for Greater Understanding Already Exists," (Princeton, New Jersey: Gallup World Poll, 2007), <http://www.gallupworldpoll.com/content/?ci=27409>.

<sup>35</sup> Gwilym Beckerlegge, "Computer-Mediated Religion: Religion on the Internet at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century," in G. Beckerlegge (ed), *Religion Today: Tradition, Modernity and Change: from Sacred Text to Internet* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 219-266.

unregulated transnational space, it allows both the exchange of extreme prejudice and recruitment by individuals whose technical skills may allow them to escape detection or capture indefinitely.

It is this environment, unsupervised and even unknown to the traditional mosque leadership, which now appears to provide the leading context for radicalization. The situation on campuses described by Husain has changed enormously for the better since his own radical Islamist days in the mid-1990s.<sup>36</sup> The collapse through infighting of radical factions (the Hizb ut-Tahrir cadres in the United Kingdom have fragmented into several smaller groups), the fear of official scrutiny in the new post 9/11 environment, and the increasing influence of orthodox, anti-radical voices have all contributed to calming the atmosphere in the mosques and the campuses. However, the formation of “para-mosque” communities by small, alienated groups that may have met initially in the “blogosphere,” and cautiously gather in non-mosque contexts to explore a radical ideology, is a process which continues, and whose full extent is unknown. The London 7/7 bombers and those of Madrid appear to have met under such circumstances, far from the guidance of qualified Islamic scholars. With its decentralized system of authority, lacking a church hierarchy or anything resembling a principle of excommunication, Islam in Europe possesses few resources for combating such fringe communities. On occasion, mainstream leaders may even deny its existence.

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

Recognizing, somewhat belatedly, that mainstream mosque leaders, and the instruments, institutions, and texts of Muslim orthodoxy generally, have not yet responded successfully to the growth of such external communities, governments across Europe have begun to move beyond the strategy of creating or sustaining “moderate” networks and agencies in favor of promoting, publicly or discreetly, Muslim voices outside the established organizations, whose charisma and sincerity may reach the para-mosque communities.

Early experiments with supporting hyper-liberal figures unacceptable to most Muslims have been largely abandoned, as the counterproductive and highly resented project for floating the lead balloon of “progressive Islam” has brought no palpable benefits to governments or to communities, and it may even have raised suspicions about official intentions. Instead, the newer policy seems to have been to recognize that only religiously credible figures will have an impact. In France, the government is increasingly supportive of the theologians Tariq Ramadan and Zuhair Mahmood as credible voices of post-Islamist yet politically engaged Muslim integration, and has been more zealous than many other European governments in calling for imam-training programs where classical rather than Islamist or Salafist teachings will prevail.<sup>37</sup> In 2006, the German Central Council of Muslims elected a former centrist politician, Ayyub Axel Köhler, as its new president in place of an individual of allegedly more Islamist loyalties, and this move was welcomed in government circles.<sup>38</sup> In Britain, officialdom has belatedly recognized that the most effective voice in championing mainstream Islam and weaning young Muslims away from radical Islamism has been the U.S. cleric Hamza Yusuf. A veteran of the Islamic preaching circuit in the United Kingdom, Yusuf was the centerpiece of the “Radical Middle Way Project,” set up in 2005 with Home Office support on the recommendation of consultants within the Muslim community who had been asked for their advice on combating radicalism in the wake of the July 7 bombings in London. The media soon disclosed that the roadshow, which involved lectures in major mosques and campuses around the United Kingdom, was officially sponsored, to the disgust of more isolationist elements who clearly regarded the

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<sup>36</sup> I make this statement on the basis of my own frequent engagement with UK students’ Islamic societies; this is confirmed by Yahya Birt’s review of Ed Husain’s book, *The Islamist: Why I Joined Radical Islam in Britain, What I Saw Inside, and Why I Left* (“Dangerous Minds,” *New Statesman*, May 14, 2007).

<sup>37</sup> Jonathan Laurence and Justine Vaisse, *Integrating Islam: Political and Religious Challenges in Contemporary France* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 2006), 121-124.

<sup>38</sup> Mark Landler, “The Saturday Profile: German Muslim Leader Speaks Peace to Provocation,” *New York Times*, February 8, 2006.

initiative as an example of heavy-handed interference by Whitehall in the internal affairs of the community. However the popularity of the project, and its undoubted effectiveness, seemed hardly dented by the disclosures.<sup>39</sup>

At a major conference in Istanbul in 2006 funded by the British Foreign Office, which platformed non-Islamist traditional scholars but which also encouraged Islamist participation, the leadership of Europe's major Muslim organizations, including most mainstream Islamists on the continent, showed themselves willing to sign the so-called "Topkapi Declaration." They agreed to "reject the cancer of terrorism" and the "killing of civilians," to be willing to serve in their countries' military, and to affirm their status as "contributors to Europe's past and as stakeholders in its future."<sup>40</sup> The document has since been widely referred to as a quasi-constitutional statement for the continent's Muslim community.

European governments, despite centuries-old traditions of church-state separation, are increasingly intervening in the domestic debates of their Muslim minorities. In many cases, governments are seeking to influence the process of Muslim community institutionalization by supporting or creating "moderate" organizations to compete with bodies whose ideology is shaped by international Islamist movements, or hardline Salafism/Wahhabism.<sup>41</sup> In only a few cases do the communities themselves regard these new state-supported organizations as truly representative, the most notable exception being in Belgium, where elections to the Muslim National Executive (*Éxecutif des Musulmans de Belgique*) are organized by the state and are widely respected among Muslims, especially among the ethnic Turkish minority. In general, however, such interventions are regarded as an unsatisfactory state of affairs by both governments and by the Muslim communities.

It is clear that mainline communities are as opposed to extremism as their non-Muslim compatriots, yet these new religious minorities clearly cannot marshal resources commensurate with their size and importance. Internal wrangling within Muslim organizations, usually between hardline and moderate Islamists, can paralyze their outreach to the disaffected youth. This has been particularly evident in Italy, where the government has been puzzled by the diversity of the Muslim leadership. The main mosque in Rome is controlled by Muslim ambassadors to the Vatican, and for financial reasons it is culturally heavily indebted to Saudi Arabia. But its impact on the wider Muslim community is small. The obvious alternative is the Union of Islamic Communities in Italy (UCOII), which has strong ties with (although little power over) more than half of the country's active mosques. Substantially influenced by the moderate wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, this organization nonetheless includes more isolationist figures who resist the Italian state's overtures and who believe that Islam, while respecting local laws, should develop independently in Italy. In consequence, the government has often dealt instead with much smaller organizations which do not accept donations from Middle Eastern states and which are, in general, supportive of an integrative, multicultural agenda. Alternatively, officialdom may work with individuals who attempt to maintain close relations with all the major factions and their leaders, the most significant example being Yahya Pallavicini, imam of a mosque in Milan, who plays a leading role in the Interior Ministry's Council on Islam and is also active in inter-faith forums such as the Congress of Rabbis and Imams. Pallavicini has been strongly supportive of the Interior Ministry's scheme for monitoring Middle Eastern donations to Muslim groups in Italy and of the government's "Charter of Values," a non-statutory document

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<sup>39</sup> Rosemary Bennett, "Muslim Task Force 'Snubbed,'" *Times*, June 20, 2006; for information on the project itself, see <http://www.radicalmiddleway.co.uk/>.

<sup>40</sup> "The Topkapi Declaration," Muslims of Europe Conference Final Declaration, July 22 2006. It is to be noted that participants included Yusuf al-Qardawi, the Qatar-based Egyptian scholar, who despite this declaration has consistently supported suicide bombing in Israel/Palestine. It is not clear how he reconciles this teaching with the text of the document.

<sup>41</sup> Sara Silvestri, "The Situation of Muslim Immigrants in Europe in the 21st Century: The Creation of National Muslim Councils," in Holger Henke (ed.), *Crossing Over: Comparing Recent Migration in the United States and Europe* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), 101-129.

issued in 2007 which seeks to define the relationship between the Muslim community and mainstream Italian society.<sup>42</sup>

### NEGOTIATING WAHHABISM

Yusuf, Köhler, Pallavicini, and others are walking a tightrope. On one hand, they recognize the need to articulate the mainstream Muslim willingness to engage positively and peaceably with the society around them. But on the other hand, they need to avoid being labeled as disloyal by radical Islamists. Since Muslim funding from overseas is mainly directed towards institutions and activism of a Salafi/Wahhabi orientation, they also need to avoid speaking directly against Saudi Arabia and, to a much lesser extent, other Gulf states which have a record of supporting hardline religion. This dilemma seems to have become more acute in the post-9/11 context, as more mainstream Muslims have abandoned donating to religious causes out of an often excessive fear of being unjustly identified as sponsors of terrorism, while hardliners, and the Saudi agencies in particular, continue to operate. While Saudi Arabia's agencies, such as the Muslim World League and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, together with more informal sources of funding within embassies and Saudi-controlled Islamic Centers, are intensely alert to the need to avoid funding radical Islamist politics (Bin Laden being as much a threat to the Saudi kingdom as to the West), they continue to spread the Salafi/Wahhabi strain of Islam, which is finding it difficult to define itself as conciliatory and pluralistic. In the bookshop of the Saudi-controlled Central Mosque in London, for instance, there is no indication of the texts which made classical Islam an often diverse, creative, and hospitable world. Instead, every book conforms to the official Saudi perspective. One such book, *The Religion of Truth*, is supplied gratis by the Saudi embassy. On page 44 this text tells Muslims that obedience to non-Islamic rulers is apostasy, and that "a Muslim is permitted to fight them until idolatry is uprooted and the religion of Allah gains victory."<sup>43</sup>

Saudi lobbying, direct or indirect, allows such intransigent messages to go unchallenged. Those who speak out against the Saudis may be offered money to remain silent: in his memoirs, the British writer Ziauddin Sardar records that the Saudis offered him \$5 million if he would desist from criticizing them.<sup>44</sup> Over the last ten years, Saudi literature has proliferated across Europe to an extraordinary degree. With the community disoriented by news from Jerusalem, Baghdad, and elsewhere, a theological absolutism has put down deep roots in the inner cities.

Informally, British Muslims like to identify two strains of Wahhabism. First, there is "Royal Saudi Wahhabism," which is the intransigent doctrine officially spread by the Saudi state, which seeks to promote hostility to the Shia, traditional Sunnis, and non-Muslims, while denying that this could have political repercussions. Second, there are the "Wahhabis of Mass Destruction," who accept the official Saudi theology but insist that it must be implemented politically. Migrations between the two tendencies are frequent, as are defections from Wahhabism to mainstream Sunnism.<sup>45</sup> The latter tendency is thwarted by the financial constraints under which non-Wahhabi groups operate, but the growing cultural and economic competence of local Muslim communities is now fostering the emergence of publishing houses and other agencies which are seeking to counteract the Saudi missionary infrastructure.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *Italy*, "Government Unveils Charter of Values," April 27, 2007, <http://www.italymag.co.uk/2007/news-from-italy/current-affairs/govt-unveil-charter-of-values/>.

<sup>43</sup> Abdul Rahman Ben Hammad Al-Omar, *The Religion of Truth* (Riyad: Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Da'wah and Guidance, 1995); for many other examples see "Saudi Publications on Hate Ideology Fill American Mosques" (Washington DC: Freedom House, 2005). It should be noted that the case mentioned in this latter document is overstated.

<sup>44</sup> Zia Sardar, *Desperately Seeking Paradise: Journeys of a Skeptical Muslim* (London:Granta Books, 2004), 313-316.

<sup>45</sup> Since 9/11, several activists who had formerly been extensively funded by Saudi Arabia discreetly reoriented themselves and their organizations as non-Salafi, a tendency visible in the United Kingdom, France, and Denmark in particular.

<sup>46</sup> In the United Kingdom, publishers such as Amal Press and Aqsa Publications lead this campaign; in France, Al-Bouraq Editions is playing a somewhat similar role. The 2004 film *Al-Ghazali: Alchemist of Happiness*, made in London, is also said to have been effective in countering radical Islamism.

The challenge for European Muslims in this fast-moving situation is to recognize that, of all the available interpretations of the Muslim heritage, Salafism/Wahhabism is among the least suitable to communities living amicably with non-Muslim neighbors in a religiously plural state. This recognition is not always easy to make publicly, due to the fact that funding from the Muslim world for the still-impoorished Muslim communities of Europe is generally withheld from advocates of more conciliatory voices rooted in traditional orthodox Sunnism and that mainstream communities, probably wisely, are reluctant to accept funding from Muslim or from Western governments. The emerging reality in post-9/11 Europe is one of polarization, with the ongoing and perhaps increasing appeal of terroristic religion challenged by an increasingly confident movement of majoritarian Sunni scholars. It has nothing to do with an immutable Islamic essence forever at odds with European modernity.



# MUSLIMS, INTEGRATION, AND SECURITY IN EUROPE

By Steffen Angenendt<sup>1</sup>

Most European countries, especially those with large Muslim populations, have been having a long-standing debate on immigrant integration. Currently, however, the debate on Muslim integration has taken on a new focus: in addition to the “traditional” questions of social marginalization and discrimination, of assimilation and integration, aspects of internal and external security are increasingly discussed.

This paper highlights some of these aspects. It starts with a short overview of the current European debate on immigration and security. In the second part, it will ask why we know so little about the Muslims living with us, arguing that this has much to do with the main integration models applied in European countries. All these traditional models are now under fire due to their poor outcomes. In the third part, the paper will present some key data on Muslim integration. Finally, it will address some of the options European countries will have in the future to integrate their growing Muslim populations.

## THE CURRENT DEBATE ON MUSLIMS, INTEGRATION, AND SECURITY IN EUROPE

There are at least three different, although interconnected, debates on immigration, integration, and security.

The first debate is over the link between migration and terrorism. Against the background of 9/11 and the fact that - seen from a U.S. perspective - these attacks were carried out by immigrants, there are fears in many European countries that terrorism has already immigrated to Europe and could do so further. One political reaction has been the enhancement of border controls and the reduction of cross-border movements from certain countries. But there has also been - and still is - a general suspicion of Muslims who have already immigrated and an increase of internal controls, especially of Muslim immigrants.

The second debate is also about security, but in the much broader sense of an extended notion of the concept, including aspects of cultural security. Here the background is demographic change in Europe, with its low fertility and low mortality, which will result first in a dramatic aging and then a shrinking of the population. Europe’s demographic decline is offset to a degree by immigration and the relatively high birth rates of immigrants, especially of Muslim immigrants. However, this leads to increasing fears, at least in countries with a larger Muslim population, that a fast-growing Muslim minority could change the ethnic composition of the country, lead to more ethnic heterogeneity, and thus endanger national identity.

Finally, the third debate is a combination of the first two. Its focus is on real or perceived integration deficits of Muslim immigrants - their feeling of being marginalized or not having a fair chance in Europe. The fear of the non-Muslim majority is that this feeling of rejection and not belonging could lead to a further isolation of these immigrants, to ethnic enclaves or so-called *Parallelgesellschaften* (“parallel societies”), to more political radicalization, to a spread of militant Islamism, and finally to a new “home-grown” terrorism. This argument has also been promoted by some U.S. security experts, including Robert Leiken from the Nixon Foundation. They argue that Europeans should become far more active in integrating their Muslim immigrants because they will otherwise indirectly foster international terrorism.

Clearly, it is important to map Europe’s Muslim populations more exactly in order to get a more precise idea of their demographic trends, as well as their social and cultural integration. But, unfortunately - and this is the main

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message of this paper - we still have serious deficits in what we know about our Muslim populations, particularly with regard to at least two aspects.

First, there is a crucial lack of comparative migration data. Most data, including the size of the Muslim population, is based only on estimates. In some European countries, migration statistics do not refer to religion, and data collections and data sources vary from country to country. In addition, some official statistics are based on local registration, others on inflows and outflows at the borders. Furthermore, naturalized immigrants often disappear totally from official statistics, and some countries grant citizenship on the basis of *ius soli*, or birth right, so newborn children of immigrants are not statistically identified.

Second, knowledge of the living conditions of Muslims in Europe is rather sketchy. There are - at least in some European countries - numerous empirical studies on isolated aspects of integration, but there are no repeated surveys that could provide a reliable picture of how integration is working (for example, integration in the labor market).

The main reason for these knowledge deficits is that the need for an integration policy, and for an empirical and statistical foundation of such a policy, has not yet become clear to decisionmakers and the broader public. Although data and research have slowly improved, Europe is still far away from having a broad political consensus on the importance of integration policy, nor is there consensus on the finality of integration: what does integration mean? What is successful integration? And what kind of society do we want to have in 50 years, with what degree of ethnic and cultural diversity?

## MODELS OF INTEGRATION

These questions are critical for countries with fast-growing ethnic and cultural diversity. But we are now further away from a solution than we were two decades ago, because the main models we have used to frame integration policies during the last 20 years are under pressure. In general, three main models have been used in European countries: the guest-worker model, the minority model, and the assimilation model.

These “traditional” integration models have lost the public’s confidence. In all major receiving countries - be it Germany, the Netherlands, France or the United Kingdom - integration of immigrants is now considered a failure, and an intensive search for new concepts and models has begun.

The guest-worker model was born in the 1950s and 1960s, when the post-World War II European economies boomed and labor was scarce. The model was based on the idea that migrants would come to fill labor market shortages, and that they would return to their home countries after a certain time - two or three years - having saved part of their income. A classic example is the guest-worker recruitment program in West Germany from 1955 until 1973. German employers recruited - with active support from the German labor authorities - skilled and unskilled workers, first from Italy, and then from Turkey and other southern and South Eastern European countries.

A core aspect of this policy was the conviction that integration was unnecessary because immigrants would only stay for a short time. Consequently, Germany did not design an integration policy, neither to pave the immigrants’ way into society nor to help the receiving society cope with growing diversity. A typical statement was (and still is) the German saying “we are not a country of immigration.” This attitude is still held widely by the German public, despite recent profound changes in German nationality law that have made access to citizenship much easier - and which indicate that at least a majority in the German Bundestag has accepted that the country has a large and growing migrant minority.

Today many believe that the guest-worker model has completely failed, primarily for the simple fact that all countries that introduced it have seen these temporary migrants become permanent immigrants - without having

an integration policy. The unintended results can now be seen in Germany, which has a growing “underclass” of children and grandchildren of these “temporary migrants.”

In contrast, the second model, the minority model, was based on the assumption that immigration would be permanent and that immigrants should be treated as citizens with specific religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Thus immigrants were perceived as group members, and their local settlement and the emergence of ethnic communities was seen as an intermediary, although necessary, step towards integration. They were to keep their cultural identity, and integration was considered as a long and more or less self-organizing process. The state would, in turn, guarantee certain minority rights to these immigrant groups.

This “multicultural” model was used, for example, in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. But, over time, this model has also lost its legitimacy, as it turned out that the outcomes with regard to socio-economic integration were as bad as the results of the guest-worker model: violent protests, ethnic clashes, militant political action, and ultimately terrorism.

The third model was the assimilation model. Immigrants were regarded as individuals, and these individuals and the state would sign a kind of contract. Immigrants were welcome as long as they behaved like natives, respecting the laws, norms, and institutions of their new home country and accepting the dominant culture. France is a good example, and indeed, so-called *contrats d'accueil et d'intégration* were offered to immigrants.

But this model has also come under fire, especially since the violent and repeated clashes between second- and third-generation immigrant youths, mainly of Muslim origin, and the French police, in the fall of 2005. It has become clear that most of these youths no longer trust in more or less theoretical promises of citizenship, given that they face de facto day-to-day marginalization and discrimination. The discrepancy between promises of upward mobility and the reality of having practically no chances to participate fully in France’s economic and political life is too large.

None of the classic European models of immigrant integration are regarded as a guideline for current or future integration policy. Indeed, there is a growing public anxiety over how to deal with rising numbers of immigrants, especially those from different cultural backgrounds, such as those Muslims are perceived to have. In general, the political interest in integration policy and in the security aspects of non-integration has increased in all European countries. Many member states, as well as the EU Commission, are developing new integration tools and concepts.

## **SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF MUSLIMS**

This crisis of integration being the case, it is important to turn next to some data on the social integration of Muslims in Europe.

### **General Demographic Data**

First, Islam is the largest minority religion in Europe, but it is also the continent’s fastest-growing religion.<sup>2</sup> Some estimates show that the number of Muslims in Europe has tripled over the last 30 years. The number of Muslims in the EU 15 countries is estimated to be 13 to 15 million, while within the EU 25 countries it is 25 million - about 5 percent of total population.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Jytte Klausen, “Europas neue muslimische Elite,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 20 (2005), 17.

<sup>3</sup> Frank F. Buijs and Jan Rath, *Muslims in Europe. The State of Research* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation), 2002; Klausen, “Europas neue muslimische Elite”; International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, “Intolerance and Discrimination Against Muslims in the EU: Developments Since September 11,” March 7, 2005, 12; European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, “Muslims in the European Union: Discrimination and Islamophobia,” 2006, [http://eumc.europa.eu/eumc/material/pub/muslim/Manifestations\\_EN.pdf](http://eumc.europa.eu/eumc/material/pub/muslim/Manifestations_EN.pdf).

The main drivers of Muslim immigration to Europe are labor migration, family unification, and post-colonial immigration. In addition, there has been substantial irregular immigration from Muslim countries in the last decade, an immigration which was mainly based on ethnic networks stemming from former legal migration. It is estimated that approximately one million Muslims migrate to the EU 25 per year, mostly as family members and - although in rapidly decreasing numbers - as asylum seekers.<sup>4</sup>

The primary countries of origin are the former guest-worker-recruitment countries: Turkey, the former Yugoslavia, and the former colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean.<sup>5</sup> The majority of Muslims have immigrated since the 1950s. Three-quarters of them now live in Western Europe, with the majority being first- or second-generation immigrants.

In three countries with large Muslim populations, most of the immigrants came from one particular country or region: in France, for example, from North Africa; in the United Kingdom from South Asia; and in Germany from South Eastern Europe, especially Turkey.<sup>6</sup>

The majority of these Muslims are going to stay in Europe, even if their residence status is often only temporary. It can also be expected that their numbers are going to increase, in large part because of the comparatively higher birth rate among Muslims, which is about three times that of native Europeans. Predictions of future fertility rates and of migrant inflows are theoretically and methodologically difficult, and scenarios of the future size of Europe's Muslim population should therefore be treated with a degree of scepticism. Nevertheless, there are estimates that the number of Muslims in Europe will double by 2015 (assuming constant net migration and birth rates), while the non-Muslim population will decrease by 3.5 percent.<sup>7</sup> These migration patterns and birth rates portend a relatively youthful Muslim population in Europe. In Germany, about one-third of Muslims is under 18 years of age, compared to 20 percent of the non-Muslim population.

### **Socio-Economic Status**

Most European Muslims have a low socio-economic status compared to that of non-Muslims; they also have significantly fewer educational and professional qualifications. In addition, their unemployment rates are far above average: in France, the unemployment rate of North African Muslims is about 33 percent, versus a national average of 10.2 percent. In the United Kingdom, the unemployment rate of 16-to-24-year-old Muslims is about twice as high as that of the same age group of non-Muslims.<sup>8</sup>

For many European Muslims, self-employment seems to be the preferred way out of their limited labor market chances. In Germany, a steadily rising number of self-employed Muslims can be found, mostly in restaurants, the retail trade, and, increasingly, in the service sector. Turkish first- and second-generation immigrants are very active in this regard, as are Muslim immigrants from North Africa and the former Yugoslavia. In 2005, an

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<sup>4</sup> David Masci, *An Uncertain Road: Muslims and the Future of Europe* (Washington, DC: Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Buijs & Rath, *Muslims in Europe*.

<sup>6</sup> Shireen Hunter (ed.), *Islam, Europe's Second Religion: The New Social, Cultural, and Political Landscape* (Westport, Connecticut and London: PRESSTK, 2002); Shireen Hunter with Huma Malik, *Islam in Europe and the United States: A Comparative Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> Timothy Savage, "Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing," *Washington Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (Summer 2004), 25-50.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Bergen, "Islamic Extremism in Europe," testimony before the Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats of the Committee on International Relations (Washington, DC: United States House of Representatives, April 27, 2005), 4, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/congress/ber042705.pdf>; Muhammad Anwar Qadir Bakhsh, "State Policies Towards Muslims in Britain," Research Report (Warwick: Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick, January 2002), 21, [http://www.emz-berlin.de/projekte/pdf/Muslims\\_in\\_Britain.pdf](http://www.emz-berlin.de/projekte/pdf/Muslims_in_Britain.pdf).

estimated 66,000 Turkish enterprises invested about 7.5 billion euros in the Germany economy, generating a total business volume of about 30 billion euros.<sup>9</sup>

### **Education**

In the United Kingdom, according to Home Office data, one third of working-age Muslims have no vocational training, a significantly higher percentage than for other ethnic or religious groups, and their school qualifications are of a lower standard than those of all other groups. Similarly low qualifications can be found in Germany, where Turkish immigrants constitute the largest part of the Muslim population. For example, in North Rhine-Westphalia in 2002, 26 percent of Turks failed to earn a secondary diploma, compared to only 2 percent of Germans who failed to do so in the same region.<sup>10</sup>

### **Political Participation**

In many European countries, the share of Muslim immigrants with voting rights is small—in Germany it is estimated to be about 12 percent. Only the United Kingdom and the Netherlands report higher political participation; in the former, half of the South Asian immigrants have voting rights, while in the latter, half of the Turkish and Moroccan immigrants have voting rights.

The low share of Muslim voters is also reflected in the member state's parliaments. To quote Jytte Klausen: "There are more Muslims than Catholics in the Protestant north, and more Muslims than Protestants in the predominantly Roman Catholic countries. There are about 15 million Muslims in Western Europe, but only about 25 have been elected to European parliaments."<sup>11</sup>

### **Discrimination**

A recently published report of the Helsinki Committee concludes that discrimination against Muslims is common in all European countries, especially in the labor market, education, and public services.<sup>12</sup> In 2004, more than 80 percent of Muslims interviewed for an EU-wide comparative study said that they had been targets of religious discrimination (the share was 35 percent in 1999 and 45 percent in 2000). In Sweden, France, and the United Kingdom, empirical studies have shown that Muslim applicants have significantly lower chances to secure a job interview than similarly qualified non-Muslim applicants. This rejection corresponds with attitudes of the general public. In Germany, for example, one empirical study found that:

- 62 percent of those interviewed accepted the sentence "Islam is a backward orientated religion"
- 71 percent supported the sentence "Islam is intolerant"
- 58 percent expected conflicts with the Muslim population in Germany<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Kemal Şahin (president of the Turkish-German Chamber of Commerce), speech (Berlin, May 26, 2006), [http://www.td-ihk-kongress.de/index.php?article\\_id=32&clang=0](http://www.td-ihk-kongress.de/index.php?article_id=32&clang=0).

<sup>10</sup> Veysel Özcan, "Turks in Germany: Aspects of their socio-economic and socio-cultural integration," (paper presented at conference on "Integration of Immigrants from Turkey in Austria, Germany and Holland," at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey, February 27-28, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> Klausen, Jytte, "Counterterrorism and the Integration of Islam in Europe," *Watch on the West. A Newsletter of FPRI's Center for the Study of America and the West* 7, vol. 7 (July, 2006).

<http://www.fpri.org/www/0701.200607.klausen.integrationislameurope.html>; for information on the German case, see the International Crisis Group, "Islam and Identity in Germany," *Europe Report*, no 181 (March 14, 2007), <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4693>.

<sup>12</sup> International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, "Intolerance and Discrimination Against Muslims."

<sup>13</sup> Elisabeth Noelle and Thomas Petersen, "Eine fremde, bedrohliche Welt," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, <http://www.faz.net/s/Rub594835B672714A1DB1A121534F010EE1/Doc~E2D1CB6E9AA1045B291A1FC21272D467D~A.Tpl~Ecommon~Scontent.html>.

## Religiosity

Although the majority are Sunnis, Europe's Muslims are also highly diverse with regard to their beliefs and religiosity.<sup>14</sup> As far as religiosity is concerned, we have only poor comparative data. But at least we have a measure of insight into the religious life of Muslims in some EU countries.

In Germany, according to a recent survey by the Centre for Turkish Studies, about 41 percent of Turkish Muslims frequently visit mosques<sup>15</sup>. About 55 percent consider themselves "religious," 28 percent "very religious," and only 17 percent "not religious." Interestingly, religious affiliation correlates positively with age and with the length of time in the country.

In a British survey on the religiosity of South Asian immigrants, more than 90 percent stated that religion is "important," and 66 percent of interviewed Pakistanis and Bangladeshis answered that religion played a "very important" role in daily life."<sup>16</sup>

In France, according to a survey of the National Institute for Demography, 36 percent of Muslim immigrants consider themselves practicing Muslims, while 42 percent consider themselves non-practicing (IFOP-Survey).<sup>17</sup>

There are some indicators that religiosity has also increased in other European countries, including the Netherlands and Belgium.<sup>18</sup>

But what does religiosity mean? A Dutch study found that the majority of 18-to-30-year-old Muslims saw themselves as religious (87 percent among Turks and 94 percent among Moroccans). But when it came to the day-to-day practice of religion, only half of the immigrants from both groups actively practiced.

## CONCLUSION: GENERAL POLICY OPTIONS

It has become clear (albeit on the basis of insufficient empirical data) that Muslims in Europe generally have more severe integration deficits than many other groups. While other immigrant communities certainly have experienced such deficits, current demographic trends make it obvious that the deficits of European Muslims should be taken as a major political challenge.

A crucial question is whether integration deficits can be solved by public policy. Clearly most European governments are convinced that policy matters, and indeed most countries try hard to develop adequate integration policies. In many member states a renewed public debate on integration is going on, and a large number of new programs and substantial financial resources have been dedicated to reducing integration deficits. In addition, the desire for a common European integration policy is increasing: the EU Commission has taken the initiative and introduced a system of "National Contact Points" and a "European Migration Network" to better share experiences and support member states in developing new approaches.

It is high time to further develop a common European framework for integration policies, based around the question of how member states should cope with increasing diversity, how to generate equal opportunities, and how to foster participation, especially in core integration areas such as the labor market, education, and political participation.

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<sup>14</sup> Hunter, *Islam, Europe's Second Religion*.

<sup>15</sup> Şen Faruk and Martina Sauer, "Islam in Deutschland: Einstellungen der türkischstämmigen Muslime - Religiöse Praxis und organisatorische Vertretung türkischstämmiger Muslime in Deutschland," *ZfT-aktuell*, no. 115 (2006), [http://www.zft-online.de/UserFiles/File/ZfT%20aktuell%20115%20Islam%202005\\_neu.pdf](http://www.zft-online.de/UserFiles/File/ZfT%20aktuell%20115%20Islam%202005_neu.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Tariq Modood, et al., *Ethnic Minorities in Britain: Diversity and Disadvantage*, (London: PRESSTK, 1997).

<sup>17</sup> Sondage Ifop - Le Monde/Le Point/Europe 1, "L'Islam en France et les réactions aux attentats du 11 septembre 2001," October 5, 2001, <http://www.ifop.com/europe/sondages/opinionf/islam.asp>.

<sup>18</sup> Masci, *An Uncertain Road*.

There are four options to approach this challenge, and member states will have to decide which way they prefer:

1. The first option would have the state be neutral, considering culture and religion as a private affair. The state would merely set the framework to guarantee legal equality. But this option is more or less theoretical, given the fact that a legal order can never actually be neutral in a strict sense because it always reflects a certain cultural background - a state which considers itself neutral in such affairs still cannot help but exert a certain amount of pressure on immigrants to assimilate culturally.
2. Second, in an attempt to recognize the cultural specificity of various minority groups, the government could grant minority communities special rights such as the right to receive an education in their mother tongues. This approach would avoid putting migrants in a situation where they are forced to choose between their native identity and that of their host country. They would simply maintain parts of both, which might ease a number of integration challenges. Some development experts studying the benefits of return migration see additional advantages in this strategy. They argue that migrants who are allowed to maintain their language and societal and cultural traditions may find it easier to return to their host countries than those that do not. Of course, it is not entirely clear whether or not the migrant communities in Europe have a genuine interest in returning to their host countries.
3. A third option - relatively extreme and unknown in Europe because it would be in conflict with some foundations of our democratic order - would be legal pluralism. The result would be different legal norms for different groups, including in criminal and family law.
4. Finally, a fourth option would be group-based autonomy for national or regional minorities. This model has, to a certain extent, been introduced in some European countries, but until now never for immigrant groups.

Obviously, some options do not really fit in our legal order, and they would simply increase social disintegration. But it is clear that, facing growing diversity, we must discuss these questions and develop strategies and concepts in response. Otherwise, we risk paving the way for an erosion of social integration - and then the non-integration of Muslims would be only one aspect of a far larger problem.



# ISLAM AND CITIZENSHIP IN GERMANY

By Jonathan Laurence<sup>1</sup>

Germany is home to the second-largest Muslim population in Western Europe (after France), and its experience indicates that a significant Muslim population at the heart of Europe need not produce either violent Islamist groups or destabilizing social unrest. Successive federal, provincial, and local governments have either been fairly lucky or impressively far-sighted with their practice of urban-planning techniques that avoided creating inner-city ghettos. Turkish migrants and their German-born offspring have not been associated with any significant unrest or terrorism, and the 1999 citizenship-law reform removed the principal obstacle to integration by automatically granting German nationality to most children born to legally resident foreigners. Politicians now acknowledge that Germany is an “immigration country,” with a large and permanent Turkish and Muslim component at peace with its environment.

While it is in itself an accomplishment to have avoided a worst-case scenario, however, German officials know they lost valuable time debating for decades the place of immigrants within the Federal Republic while the foreign-origin population grew into the millions. But the emergence of well-organized Muslim religious communities in Germany’s major cities - and the integration difficulties experienced by some young people of Muslim background - have renewed some of the same counterproductive debates over naturalization and citizenship for Turkish residents that took place in the 1980s and 1990s, although this time the debates focus more explicitly on Islam. The controversy, then as now, revolved around whether law-abiding citizens who espouse views contrary to the fundamental norms and values of contemporary German society should be excluded from the polity - either by denying them citizenship or by excluding them from any formal dialogue with the government. Contemporary German debates focus on how to designate appropriate interlocutors in state-Islam relations and how to inculcate Muslim leaders and religious associations with *Leitkultur* (“German values”). German politicians tend to think that a set of “shared values” (beyond simply abiding by the constitution) should be required as the precondition for formal discussions rather than viewed as a desired goal of dialogue. Such tensions have long characterized German policy debates: becoming German, for example, has always been tied to giving up Turkish citizenship.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, granting full rights and equal administrative recognition to Muslim organizations in state-religion relations - e.g., for teaching Islam in public schools or generally being consulted by the state’s local and national religion offices - is conditioned upon religious leaders’ public repudiation of Muslims’ putative socio-cultural characteristics, such as inequitable gender relations. This theme resurfaced last year with the proposal in several German *Länder* (“provinces”) to ask every naturalization candidate whose origin is in a Muslim-majority country how he or she feels about homosexuals, blacks, and a woman’s choice of careers; that proposal presumes that anyone with a Muslim background is likely to subscribe to culturally based prejudices. The problem with formulating such demands as the price for entry into the German polity, however, is that it appears to presuppose an inherent incompatibility between Islam and the German republic which, in turn, has provoked a general defensiveness and cries of double standards from Turkish and Muslim organizations. How this debate develops will define the kind of environment

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<sup>2</sup> And most - but not all - other nationalities, too. Dual nationality is regarded as an exception, but it is tolerated in many cases, especially where “countries of origin do not provide for renunciation of citizenship or impose prohibitive costs on their citizens when they renounce citizenship.” See Albert Kraler, “The Legal Status of Immigrants,” in Rainer Bauböck (ed.), *Migration and Citizenship*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006) 59. In 2002, for example, around 41 percent of newly naturalized German citizens were allowed to keep their original citizenship, down from 48.3 percent in 2001; exceptions have also been granted for some EU citizens who take on German citizenship, e.g., UK nationals. See *Migration und Bevölkerung*, no. 06/03, (July/August 2003); Federal Ministry of the Interior spokeswoman Ingrid Stumm, quoted in *FAZ am Sonntag*, June 20, 2003.

- either mutually suspicious or integration-minded - in which the first generation of native-born Turkish Germans grows up.

**A RELATIVE SUCCESS STORY**

The German Muslim population’s relative quiescence contrasts with the image of rioters in France and the United Kingdom’s “home-grown” terrorists. For many in Germany, those cases offered evidence that mastering the local language and even acquiring citizenship were “necessary but not sufficient” conditions for actual integration.<sup>3</sup> Germany’s defenders have often argued that next-door France produced generations of “*français de papier*” (“officially French”) without creating “*français de coeur*” (“wholeheartedly French”).<sup>4</sup> German *Länder* have long practiced a stringent naturalization regime that emphasizes an individual’s identification with Germany above less-subjective indicators, such as length of residence or place of birth. Additionally, for decades German cities have practiced urban-planning techniques that now appear far-sighted. Local governments made an effort in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s to avoid creating urban ghettos: ceilings on quotas were instituted in subsidized housing, municipalities hired professional mediators to resolve cultural disputes in densely populated areas, and cities classified as having “special renewal needs” received extra money. Despite fears of spillover from the French riots in fall 2005, no German cities saw anything similar; only two cars were set alight in Berlin in October and November of that year. Fears of contagion and confrontation were similarly misplaced during the 2006 Mohammed caricatures affair: more journalists than demonstrators responded to a call for protest in a Berlin mosque.

**Table 1: Population of Turkish Origin in Germany<sup>5</sup>**

1961	6,800
1965	132,000
1970	469,000
1973	910,000
1981	1,546,000
1991	1,779,000
2001	2,371,000
2005	2,500,000-2,600,000

As shown by recent French experiences with a large immigrant-origin minority, however, political and socio-economic inequality and discrimination are a volatile mix. The dividends of good fortune and prescience are not endless, and German politicians’ long refusal to acknowledge a diverse society has had its costs. The equity of the system is in jeopardy, as educational and employment statistics make abundantly clear. There exist the makings of a parallel society or an underclass, and the streaming of immigrant-origin children into secondary schools should be reoriented and bolstered with programs that address real integration needs - from further political outreach to developing effective anti-discrimination measures. A series of problems must still be addressed more effectively if the genuine integration that will ensure social peace and stability is to be created. Practical issues, especially education and jobs, matter most to the disadvantaged individuals among the more than two million people of Turkish origin and the hundreds of thousands of others of Muslim background.

<sup>3</sup> Wolfgang Schäuble, “Integration in die Gesellschaft – Funktioniert ein multikulturelles Deutschland?” (Federal Ministry of the Interior speech to business leaders, June 27, 2006), [www.bmi.bund.de](http://www.bmi.bund.de).

<sup>4</sup> Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde, “Wer ist das Volk? Rogers Brubakers Vergleich französischer und deutscher Staatsangehörigkeit,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 11, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> As of December 31, 2005, there were 1,764,041 Turkish citizens and 673,024 naturalized Germans of Turkish origin. See “Stand der rechtlichen Gleichstellung des Islam in Deutschland,” *Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Große Anfrage – BT-Drucksache*, no.16/2085 (June 29, 2006).

The relationship between Germany's Muslim population and the German national community was until recently conditioned by the political class's refusal to acknowledge that Germany is a country of immigration and that the Muslim population is there to stay. Conceiving of Muslim residents - largely of Turkish origin - as "guest workers" rather than immigrants, the state long refused to grant them citizenship. Turks' own uncertainty over whether they would eventually return "home" and a tendency toward linguistic and social segregation were reinforced for two generations by German administrative practices. Now accounting for just under 3 percent of the general population, Turks constitute the largest immigrant group - 27 percent of the Germany's 7.3 million foreigners - and amount to roughly three-quarters of its 3.2 to 3.4 million Muslims. However, use of the designation "Muslim" belies a population with many crosscutting identities and values - both among Turks and the nearly one million other Muslims *not* of Turkish origin. According to Theodore Karasik and Cheryl Benard, Turks in Germany are themselves divided into "subgroups [that] have little in common with each other,"<sup>6</sup> along lines of ethnicity, political affiliation, class, urban-rural origin, and degree of modernity and religiosity: Kurds and Turks, Sufis and non-Sufis, Kemalists and anti-Kemalists, secularists and pious Muslims, and German citizens and non-citizens. Because the old citizenship law did not provide for the automatic acquisition of German nationality upon birth in the territory, second- and third-generation Turks were not automatically granted citizenship. Even as the total foreign population grew to 9 percent in the 1990s, successive Christian Democrat Union (CDU)-led governments affirmed that the federal republic was "not a country of immigration." Many of the 9 percent would have naturalized if they lived in a country with *ius soli* (the right to acquire citizenship through residence), such as the United States or France, especially the more than one million "native-born foreigners."<sup>7</sup> Since 2000, however, German outlook and policy have changed; the reality of immigration and permanent settlement is now recognized and a new willingness, in principle, to extend citizenship has developed.

However, the view that integration should precede naturalization - the requirement that Turks and other Muslims should first integrate and demonstrate their "German-ness" before they may acquire that citizenship - remains a formidable brake on the process. Because the Muslim population and its religious leadership are still overwhelmingly foreign, the German authorities can use naturalization and foreigners' law (*Ausländergesetz*) to filter out what (and whom) they deem inadmissible by refusing to grant citizenship or to renew the residence permits of individuals whose views they do not share. Even those politicians who appear actively to support integration are in fact setting a very high bar. Some demand language courses and loyalty tests that require would-be naturalized Muslims not only to be more familiar than most Germans with things German, but also to sign up with currently fashionable ideological positions (on gender relations and sexual mores, for example) as proof of Germanness - as well as their modernist/democratic credentials.<sup>8</sup> The liberalization of citizenship laws since 2000 has been accompanied by increasingly demanding conditions for full participation, from ideologically driven civic-loyalty tests to intensified surveillance of Muslim associations. This apparent contradiction - paying lip service to integration while making practical aspects difficult to achieve - reflects the fundamental tension between an ethno-cultural vision of Germany that predominated until recently and a genuine new desire to address the realities of a diverse society. The emphasis on ideological correctness, illustrated by the proposed use of demanding naturalization questionnaires requiring applicants to agree with current German public opinion on certain questions, leads the authorities to stigmatize as inherently "un-German" immigrant opinion that subscribes even to entirely non-violent varieties of Islamist thinking. There are grounds for thinking that this very demanding conception of integration actually means something more like "assimilation," and thus expresses an unstated (but conscious) opposition to integration in fact.

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<sup>6</sup> Theodore Karasik and Cheryl Benard, "Muslim Diasporas and Networks," in Angel Rabasa et al. (eds.), *The Muslim World After 9/11*, (Washington: PRESSTK, 2004), p.441.

<sup>7</sup> Even after the citizenship-law reform, Germany will still produce foreigners: half of the 100,000 children born annually to foreigners will still not be eligible for German nationality. See *Bundesregierung Beauftragte für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration, 2004*.

<sup>8</sup> Jesko Bender, "Konsens ist Nonsens," *Jungle World*, September 27, 2006; Sigrid Aversch, "Muslime kritisieren hessischen Einbürgerungstest," *Berliner Zeitung*, March 17, 2006; Joachim Peter, "Einheitliche Einbürgerungstests," *Berliner Morgenpost*, March 13, 2006.

## POLICING EXTREMISM

This complication arises from reunified Germany's careful balancing of free speech and democratic order. The dual experiences of dictatorship - under National Socialism from 1933 to 1945 and "real existing socialism" (i.e., communism) in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) from 1949 to 1990 - continues to shape political culture and the authorities' willingness to engage Muslim community organizations. Protecting democratic institutions is a central tenet of the constitution, and some surveillance of those on the borderline between "condoning violence" and "committing violence" is necessary. The government's power to place right- or left-wing extremists - and sympathizers or sponsors of terrorist groups - under surveillance or even ban them outright has helped define postwar values and the appropriate limits of free speech. But given their small numbers, it is arguable that Islamists as such are not the primary challenge to Muslim integration in Germany. At the very least, local and national *Verfassungsschutz* ("protection of the constitution") surveillance is an overly blunt instrument that leads to stigmatization - the lumping together of the (many) non-violent with the (few) "potentially violent." The safeguards against extremism - a combined policy of aggressive mosque raids and the administrative exclusion of "undesirable" (although law-abiding) interlocutors - inhibit an open dialogue and give fodder to extremists who thrive on an antagonistic relationship with the *Länder* and national *Verfassungsschutz* offices, which monitor potentially anti-democratic or un-constitutional activities of both registered and underground civil society groups, and are not well adapted to dealing with Islamist organizations (such as the Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görüş [the Islamic Community of the National Vision, or IGMG]). To be labeled an "Islamist" and placed on the constitutional observation list can, for example, lead to refusal of citizenship, public housing, and even residence permits. It also entails intensive surveillance of certain organizations and their members, even if those organizations are law-abiding. Local and federal authorities have concentrated on the role of Islamism as the potential locus of anti-democratic behavior, including terrorism. In the definition of one local constitutional protection office, Islamists are those who "want God, not the people, as the highest authority, with Sharia as the basis for this state."<sup>9</sup>

In all, twenty-eight Muslim organizations (up from twenty-four in 2004) - a mix of Arab, Pakistani, Turkish, and Turkish-German associations - are classified as "Islamist" in the 2005 federal report on extremists (*Länder*-level offices also release biannual reports on these and other organizations).<sup>10</sup> In order to arrive at the number of "Islamists," authorities count those belonging (or paying dues) to these organizations - a methodology that has been surprisingly uncontroversial. The federal *Verfassungsschutz* estimates that roughly 1 percent (or 32,100) of the Muslim population in Germany is Islamist.<sup>11</sup> Of this group, the two largest nationalities are Turkish (27,250) and Arab (various nationalities: 3,350).<sup>12</sup> The figure of 27,250 Turks, however, consists almost entirely of the 26,500 members of the IGMG. Also included are around 1,300 Muslim Brotherhood members (half of whom are affiliated with the Islamische Gemeinschaft-Deutschland in Munich),<sup>13</sup> and roughly five hundred members of Tablighi Jama'a (although its annual meeting draws around one thousand participants).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Inneres, Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz, "Türken und Deutsche in Hamburg: Gemeinsam für die Demokratie!" (January 31, 2005).

<sup>10</sup> Just two of these membership organizations have been formally banned: Hizb-ut-Tahrir and Kalifaatstaat. However, German authorities have also banned several Hamas-related charities (Al Aqsa and Yatim Kinderhilfe), as well as a Turkish newspaper, *Yeni Akit*. See Federal Ministry of the Interior, Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, *Verfassungsschutzbericht 2005*, May 22, 2006, [http://www.bmi.bund.de/Internet/Content/Common/Anlagen/Broschueren/2006/Verfassungsschutzbericht\\_\\_2005\\_\\_de,templateId=raw.property=publicationFile.pdf/Verfassungsschutzbericht\\_2005\\_de.pdf](http://www.bmi.bund.de/Internet/Content/Common/Anlagen/Broschueren/2006/Verfassungsschutzbericht__2005__de,templateId=raw.property=publicationFile.pdf/Verfassungsschutzbericht_2005_de.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. Members of the 24 organizations amounted to 31,800 in 2004.

<sup>12</sup> Iranians accounted for 150, and "other nationalities" for 1,350. By comparison, foreign leftist extremists in Bavaria came to 17,290; foreign extreme nationalists at 8,430. See Bayern Ministerium des Innern, *Verfassungsschutzbericht 2004*, 160.

<sup>13</sup> On the arrival of the Muslim Brothers in Germany, see Ian Johnson, "Ex-Nazis Spark Radical Islam," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 12, 2005; see also Lorenzo Vidino, "The Muslim Brotherhood's Conquest of Europe," *Middle East Quarterly*, 12 (Winter 2005).

<sup>14</sup> Bayern Ministerium des Innern, *Verfassungsschutzbericht, Half-year report 2005*, 16.

This policing of thought is experienced by Turks and other Muslims as discriminatory, hostile in spirit, and frequently provocative in practice. At the same time, it complicates the business of organizing effective consultation between the authorities and Muslim religious leaders with respect to the management of Muslim religious life and practice in Germany by inhibiting the equitable representation of the various points of view within the Muslim population. Given their small numbers, it is arguable that Islamists are not the primary challenge to Muslim integration in Germany. At the very least, *Verfassungsschutz* surveillance is an overly blunt instrument that leads to stigmatization and the lumping together of the many non-violent with the few potentially violent.

### THE LONG ARM OF THE TURKISH STATE

A further complication arises from the Turkish government's effort to monopolize the representation of Muslims in Germany through the Diyanet İşleri Türk-Islam Birliği (the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs, or DİTİB), an instrument of its attempt to guard against the possible growth of opposition among the Turkish diaspora. The survival of the secularist Turkish order, Ankara believes, depends in part on keeping Islamist and other minority elements in check at home and abroad. For the few first decades of the Turkish settlement in Germany, the authorities relied on the DİTİB for most practical matters relating to Islam, such as visas for imams, permits for mosque construction, and teachers for religious education in public schools. The German state's handling of this set of issues is complicated by the fact that the majority of Muslims in Germany are still Turkish nationals and that they were denied easy access to German citizenship for nearly forty years (1961-1999). As a result, the state has in effect outsourced management of Islam, relying on what is essentially an extension of the Turkish state, the DİTİB, to tend to the Turkish population's religious needs. This arrangement was consistent with treating the Turks as resident aliens, and it helped provide services such as prayer space, imams, religious education in public schools, and the like while avoiding direct engagement with Turkish Islamists who had also settled in German cities. But it has not easily accommodated the Alevi element of the Turkish population, let alone the non-Turkish element of the Muslim population. It also has led some Sunni Turks to gravitate toward the IGMG, a Cologne-based dissident organization that is rooted in long-term political opposition to the secular Turkish state and that promotes a more visible, central role for religion in daily life.<sup>15</sup>

Germany is home to 75 percent of all Turkish citizens abroad,<sup>16</sup> and since 1978 DİTİB has sent over preachers trained in state seminaries. Its first German branch was established in Berlin in 1982, and within two years 250 organizations were gathered under its umbrella. Under a 1984 bilateral treaty, it has arranged for three-to-four-year German residence permits (and a Turkish-paid salary) for roughly 700 imams.<sup>17</sup> It controls over 300 associations and 800 to 900 prayer spaces;<sup>18</sup> in 2004 it financed two chairs in Islamic theology at Frankfurt's Goethe University (the first in Germany).<sup>19</sup> According to TK, imams are sent "to spread healthy religious information and encourage peaceful coexistence. This is a benefit to the country, since we cannot wait for Germany to get around to training imams."<sup>20</sup> A program with the Goethe Institute in Ankara led, in 2006, to a contingent of fifty imams receiving language training before going to Germany; one hundred more were planned

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<sup>15</sup> Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham, "Challenging the Liberal Nation-State? Postnationalism, Multiculturalism, and the Collective Claims Making of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities in Britain and Germany," *American Journal of Sociology* 105, no.3 (1999): 652-96. Milli Görüş, headquartered near Cologne, has a distinctly domestic German agenda; indeed, its leaders argue that they are the only truly German federation without a diplomatic stake or significant foreign funding.

<sup>16</sup>Zentrum für Türkeistudien, 1/2004.

<sup>17</sup> Martin Spiewak, "Vorbeter aus der Fremde", *Die Zeit*, September 21, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> Annual costs in Baden-Württemberg are estimated to be as high as €3.6 million. See Valerie Amiraux, *Acteurs de l'islam entre Allemagne et Turquie* (Paris: PRESSTK, 2001); Thomas Lemmen, *Islamische Organisationen in Deutschland* (Bonn: PRESSTK 2000); Brigitte Maréchal, "Mosquées, organisations et leadership", in Felice Dassetto et al. (eds.), *Convergences Musulmanes: aspects contemporains de l'islam dans l'Europe élargie*, (Louvain-la-Nueve : PRESSTK 2001), 32.

<sup>19</sup> Vedat Acikgöz, "College Launches Disputed Islamic Program," *Qantara.de*, March 29, 2005, [http://qantara.de/webcom/show\\_article.php/\\_c-478/\\_nr-258/i.html](http://qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/_c-478/_nr-258/i.html).

<sup>20</sup> Mehmet Yildirim, (general secretary, DİTİB), interviewed by the author, Cologne, January 4, 2006.

in 2007.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, DİTİB pays salaries for Turkish-trained teachers in Bavaria, Lower Saxony, and Baden-Württemberg, where it handles Islamic education in public schools. The Turkish government offers its own version of Islam for its émigrés: a religious practice within the secular Turkish framework, complete with clergy who stick to sermons centrally approved and posted on an Ankara website each Friday.<sup>22</sup>

The privileged relationship between DİTİB and German governments has come into conflict with the plural nature of the German Muslim population, notably the presence of Arab Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds, as well as supporters of alternative currents of Turkish Islamism. The dilemma for the German authorities is that they need Ankara's cooperation in certain practical matters but cannot afford to yield to DİTİB's monopolist pretensions without prejudice to the integration of all legitimate (constitutional) currents of religious and political opinion within the immigrant population.

## REPRESENTING MUSLIMS

Elaborate provisions exist for state recognition and accommodation of religious communities - from the "church tax" to the more obscure "public corporation status" that allows publicly funded religious education and chaplains in public institutions<sup>23</sup> - but Muslim organizations were largely excluded from this web of institutional relations for the first three generations of the contemporary Turkish settlement. German governments need Muslim interlocutors to consult on a variety of policies and practices that make up state-church relations under Article 140 of the constitution. That article, carried over from the Weimar Republic, places such relations under *Länder* jurisdiction, and a variety of Muslim associations have been involved in informal local consultations for several years.<sup>24</sup> However, these consultations have suffered due to the tension between official Turkish Islam and Islamist activists. Either IGMG is excluded or DİTİB does not participate. Moreover, these councils have been ad hoc and non-binding, resembling single-issue coalitions for specific tasks such as mosque construction. Their existence is subject to the whim of local officials. An inclusive political process that affirms Muslims' institutional equality in state-religion relations and draws on all major organizations has been missing.

Dissension among religious leaders, which local administrators fuel by favoring DİTİB, has led to continued de facto inequalities in the exercise of religion. Muslim students' rights to religion courses have been subordinated to bickering among federations, and local conflicts over mosque construction are still common. Competing Muslim associations hoping to provide Islamic education in more public schools have no incentive to cooperate, since they too often receive their mandates by court order or administrative decree. Many mundane issues of policy and practice have been unattended to for years, such as standards for halal slaughter, appointment of Muslim representatives to public television and radio advisory councils, and regulation of the amplified call to prayer. Given the visibility and sensitivity of Islam in the public realm - and the long-established Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic national representative councils for state-church relations - there has been a growing desire among both German administrators and leaders of Muslim religious associations for Islam to speak in a single voice on practical religious matters at the federal level.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Katrin Teschner, "Imam sind wichtige Vermittler," *Newsclick.de*, October 30, 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Martin Spiewak, "Vorbeter aus der Fremde," *Die Zeit*, September 21, 2006.

<sup>23</sup> The greatest privileges are restricted to organizations recognized as a religious community or Corporation of Public Law, a distinction awarded by *Länder*-level governments since the Weimar constitution. Additionally, Article 7 section 3 allows for religious education in public schools as a regular course (although some *Länder* have modified this to include philosophy and ethics). See Grundgesetz (GG) für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, May 23, 1949, <http://www.datenschutz-berlin.de/recht/de/gg/index.htm#inhalt>.

<sup>24</sup> In Hamburg, Hessen, Lower Saxony, Berlin, Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg.

<sup>25</sup> On the first anniversary of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, then-Interior Minister Otto Schily announced an inter-ministerial working group on Islam to meet periodically and resolve issues regarding Muslim religious practices. This involved three of the four major federations (IGMG excluded) and representatives from all ministries having anything to do with Islam, including Agriculture (animal slaughter), Construction (prayer space), Interior, and the chancellor's office. It aimed to deepen coordination among the individual *Länder* and eventually lead to a common federal policy toward Islam.

Criteria for participation in a formal dialogue remain controversial, dominated by fear of including Islamists, which reflects the extent to which even the most banal discussions of practical religious accommodation have been influenced by *Verfassungsschutz* reports. The same sort of litmus test that characterizes naturalization policies influences federal officials responsible for contacts with religious leaders. Ex-Chancellor Gerhard Schröder’s counterterrorism adviser has argued that the time is not ripe to speak to the main contending Muslim federations: “The state must ensure that all participants are loyal to the constitution, but mainstream federations still include some representatives who are under observation by the *Verfassungsschutz*.”<sup>26</sup>

Similar concerns animated recent French and Italian “state-religion” consultations with Muslim religious leaders, which similarly came up against the reality of low membership within the federations that claimed to be representative of an entire community: only 10 to 20 percent of Muslims actually affiliate with these organizations. Unlike the French Council for the Muslim Religion, which represents only prayer spaces, at stake in German consultations are also public education funds to pay for the teachers and curriculum that will influence hundreds of thousands of young Muslims’ first formal encounter with Islam.

**Table 2: Muslim Federations and Affiliates (2006)<sup>27</sup>**

	member organizations (and members)	cultural centers/ Prayer spaces
DİTİB (Cologne,1984)	300 (110,000 – 150,000 members)	780-880
ZMD: Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland (Eschweiler, 1994)	18 (12,000-20,000 members)	400
VIKZ: Verband islamische Kulturzentren (Cologne, 1980)	300 (21,000-100,000 members)	200-300
IR: Islamrat für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Bonn, 1986)	32 (140,000 members)	700
IGMG: Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görüş (Kerpen, 1974)	16 (26,500 members)	400-600
[member organization of IR]		
IGD: Islamische Gemeinschaft-Deutschland (Munich, 1958)	(600 members)	30-40
AABF: Föderation der Aleviten Gemeinden in Europa (Cologne, 1993)	90 (25,000 members)	n/a
<b>Total affiliates</b>	350,000-600,000 members, 10-15 percent of all Muslims	c. 2,500-2,800

<sup>26</sup> Guido Steinberg (former adviser on international terrorism to the federal chancellor), interviewed by the author, Berlin, December 22, 2005.

<sup>27</sup> The membership figures in Table 2 do not always allow for direct comparisons of size and influence; IG-Deutschland’s 600 members are those listed in the organization registry, for example, whereas IGMG’s more than 26,000 members are based on estimates by German security officials. Ulrich Dehn, “Neue Daten zum Islam in Deutschland,” *Evangelische Zentralstelle für Weltanschauungsfragen*, October 2003; Faruk Sen, “Türkische Minderheit in Deutschland”, *Information zur politischen Bildung*, no. 277.

With the government's German Islam Conference (Deutsche Islam Konferenz, or DIK), which first met in Berlin's Charlottenburg Castle on September 27, 2006, there is at long last a national initiative to formally recognize interlocutors for Islam. The makeup of the DIK belies the Interior Ministry's dual agenda of recognition *and* religious reform. The membership of the conference consists of fifteen state representatives (from the federal, *Länder*, and municipal levels) and fifteen representatives of Islam in Germany.<sup>28</sup> On the Muslim side, the five main federations invited to the consultation are the Islamrat, ZMD, DITIB, VIKZ, and the Alevis, which together are estimated to represent as many as 15 to 20 percent of the general Muslim population. Alongside these membership organizations are ten ministerial appointees including, in CDU Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble's words, "representatives of a modern secular Islam from business, society, science, and culture."

**Table 3: German Islam Conference (Deutsche Islam Konferenz)<sup>29</sup>  
Official Working Groups and Themes, Fall 2006 – Fall 2008**

<p><b>Working Group 1: The German social order and values consensus-</b> e.g., equality of man and woman; political decision-making processes; families, raising children, and youth self-determination; acceptance of the diversity of democratic cultures; secularization (criteria, tendencies, international comparison)</p>
<p><b>Working Group 2: Religious questions in the German constitutional context-</b> e.g., the basic principle of state-church separation; interaction with religious symbols; mosque construction; religious education in the <i>Länder</i>; language courses, including pre-school; equality of boys and girls and co-education (e.g. sport and swimming classes, class trips, sex education; behavior of Muslim boys towards non-Muslim female peers); Imam training and the education of Muslim religion teachers</p>
<p><b>Working Group 3: Building bridges in the economy and the media-</b> e.g., youth in the job market (qualifications, etc.); hiring policies in the economy and public sector and self-employment; information policy to undo prejudices in Turkish and German media; religious and cultural identity of selected personalities and role models; forms of secular Islam</p>
<p><b>Discussion Group 4: Security and Islamism-</b> e.g., questions of internal security, Islamist efforts against the free democratic basic order, and preventing and exposing Islamist acts of violence</p>

The government has been praised for encouraging development of a single body to represent Muslims for religious purposes - especially in its quest to arrive at national standards for allowing religious education for Muslims in public schools. It is an open question, however, whether the DIK will become the forum for the "emancipatory march through institutions" earlier envisioned by the German-Turkish author Zafer Senocak.<sup>30</sup> The main accomplishment of the DIK thus far is to have expanded the group of official interlocutors beyond (although still including) DITIB. Follow-up meetings have been held in May 2007 and a major effort at self-organization of leading Muslim federations - the Coordinating Council of Muslims - took place in April 2007. The ultimate goal of such dialogues is to render the practice of "new" religions like Islam routine while also helping disprove the oft-quoted notion that the West is hostile towards religion (and notably Islam). By doing so, and thus accommodating the needs of an emergent religious community, governments can force competing tendencies - including the oft-excluded groups like IGMG and the Alevis - to engage in conversation with one another, DITIB, and the German

<sup>28</sup> *Welt am Sonntag*, May 28, 2006.

<sup>29</sup> "Deutsche Islam Konferenz," Bundesministerium des Innern, September 2006, [www.bmi.bund.de/cln\\_012/nn\\_122688/Internet/Content/Nachrichten/Pressemitteilungen/2006/Einzeleiten/Islamkonferenz\\_Kurzinfo.html](http://www.bmi.bund.de/cln_012/nn_122688/Internet/Content/Nachrichten/Pressemitteilungen/2006/Einzeleiten/Islamkonferenz_Kurzinfo.html).

<sup>30</sup> Zafer Senocak, *Atlas of a Tropical Germany: Essays on Politics and Culture, 1990-1998*, trans. and ed. by Leslie A. Adelson (Lincoln and London: PRESSTK, 2000).

state. The authorities need to ensure at both federal and *Länder* levels that whatever institutional arrangements are made for consulting religious leaders, respect the plurality of outlooks and organizations.

There is also an important distinction to be made between representation for religious purposes and for social and political purposes. The bilateral dialogues between the state and Muslim religious organizations in the DIK rightfully address matters of religious practice - for instance, mosque-building, halal butchers, cemeteries, and other such matters - but they should not become substitutes for other forms of political participation. The highly political character of the agendas of Working Groups 1 and 2 and Discussion Group 4 underscore this danger (see Table 3 above). There is a vital distinction between representation for religious purposes and representation for social and political purposes, yet it appears that the government has sought to ensure that the DIK combines both of these radically different representation functions, despite the fact that its Muslim participants will have no mandate whatsoever from the Muslim populations to represent them on non-religious issues.

The DIK must avoid usurping tasks properly performed by Germany's political parties and thus inhibiting them from fulfilling their necessary role in the integration process. The greatest defense against religious extremism and imported fundamentalism is intensive interaction to enhance the mutual acquaintance of Muslim religious associations and the state. The solution to alienation, however, is not to encourage formation of a cohesive "faith community" in the DIK or elsewhere and so risk ethicizing socio-economic problems.

## INTEGRATION FAILURES

It is primarily for the political parties - not a government-sponsored religious forum - to provide political representation for Turkish Germans on social, economic, and political issues, and they need to raise their game. They should not just represent them as Turks or Muslims but as members of German society with a variety of interests. There are clear signs that the parties are slowly adapting to the changing environment. Nearly all now have a Turkish or Muslim section that seeks to recruit immigrant-origin citizens, and there are a handful of elected officials in the Bundestag and local governments. But it is premature to judge political participation among Turkish youth, since the first enfranchised generation has yet to come of age.

The most significant challenge will be to achieve a degree of equal opportunity in schooling, job training, and employment. This will be especially important for the 800,000 children of Muslim background, roughly three-quarters of whom are of school age, who will be entering the job market in the coming decades.<sup>31</sup> In seven of the sixteen *Länder*, between one quarter and one third of all fifteen-year-old students are from an "immigrant background," and in the biggest cities half of the under-forty population will be of immigrant origin by 2010; fully 11 percent of all students in the 2006-2007 school year in North Rhine-Westphalia (home to the metropolitan regions of Cologne and Bonn) are of Muslim background.<sup>32</sup> Difficulties with language and low socio-economic status are key factors in Turkish children's below-average educational performance and limited opportunities to attend the best schools. The last Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) study of 45,000 German fifteen-year-olds found a stronger correlation of parental socio-economic status and educational success in Germany than in any other OECD country.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> "Stand der rechtlichen Gleichstellung des Islam in Deutschland," *Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Große Anfrage – BT-Drucksache*, no.16/2085 (June 29, 2006).

<sup>32</sup> Johannes Kandel, "Islamischer Religionsunterricht in Berlin: kontroversen um religiöse Bildung und Islamismus," *Fazetten der Islamismus*, (Berlin: PRESSTK, August 2002); Landesamt für Datenverarbeitung und Statistik, North Rhine-Westphalia, "Schüler in NRW im Schuljahr 2006/2007 nach Religionszugehörigkeit," January 2007. See also Maria Böhmer, "Bundesregierung setzt Schwerpunkt bei Integration," (speech on immigrant integration, April 5, 2006), [www.cducsu.de](http://www.cducsu.de).

<sup>33</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "Where Immigrant Students Succeed – A Comparative Review of Performance and Engagement in PISA 2003," Programme for International Student Assessment, May 15, 2006, [http://www.pisa.oecd.org/document/44/0,2340,en\\_32252351\\_32236173\\_36599916\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.pisa.oecd.org/document/44/0,2340,en_32252351_32236173_36599916_1_1_1_1,00.html).

Public schools have left foreign students - especially those of Turkish origin - in an increasingly precarious position. Everyday exclusion from the best educational institutions stems from German-language difficulties that lead to de facto differential access to kindergarten, as well as from the way in which students in the German system are streamlined for secondary education at an early age. The right to pre-school education for a nominal fee was enshrined by law in 1996, but it is not mandatory, and even these low costs can be prohibitive for families of modest means (there are also often insufficient openings).<sup>34</sup> Whereas other industrialized nations provide six to nine years of common public education with all students mixed together before specialization or individualized streaming into separate schools, German schools can provide as little as four.<sup>35</sup> When a ten-to-twelve-year-old finishes primary school, he or she is recommended for one of three high school tracks, only one of which (*Gymnasium*) grants the diploma necessary (*Abitur*) to enter university (although *Hauptschule* and *Realschule* graduates can gain entry to university by way of continuing education programs).<sup>36</sup>

Turkish students are twice as likely as Germans to be classified as “special education” cases, often due to language disadvantage, and to be directed to a *Hauptschule*, the lowest of the secondary school tracks. Just over 10 percent of students of Turkish origin attend a *Gymnasium*, compared to one third of German students; very few Turks go on to higher education - fewer than 25,000 of 235,989 Turkish eighteen-to-twenty-five-year-olds living in Germany were enrolled in German universities in 2004-2005, where they were outnumbered even by Chinese students (27,000). The links between language skills, educational performance, early tracking, and professional segregation, as well as socio-economic integration, are clear. Turkish students are more than twice as likely as Germans to leave school without a diploma. This is reflected in the training positions and apprenticeships - important for access to the high-skilled economy - available to immigrant youth. Just 25 percent of migrant youths participate in apprenticeship programs, compared to 59 percent of young Germans. The overall Turkish unemployment rate (25.2 percent) is more than twice the national average.

#### DISCUSSION OF THE WAY FORWARD

As it becomes clear from a detailed look at these policy debates, Germany has accepted its status as a country of immigration and is now struggling to define what kind. German leaders would be well advised to concentrate on the practical concerns that undermine social cohesion: political alienation, overzealous policing, and socio-economic inequality. Germans’ caution at embracing Turks as a minority community and insistence on rupture with the home country were often perceived as indifference; politicians’ repeated criticism of “parallel societies” did nothing to eliminate their existence. The fundamental problems of Turkish Germans and other Muslims are rooted in disenfranchisement, social discrimination, and the lack of economic and political integration, not religion.

It is also conceivable that some individuals of immigrant and/or Muslim background truly do not wish to integrate. Famously, 21 percent of Muslims in one poll said that the Quran is not compatible with the German constitution and 47 percent of Turks said they cannot imagine becoming German.<sup>37</sup> Without giving too much credence to the results of that single poll, it is a distinct possibility that respondents took to heart the decades of being told Germany is not a country of immigration, as well as the constant badgering of moderate Islamists. After all, a majority of Germans still agree with the statement that “the life of a Muslim believer is not compatible with modern, Western society”; with such “partners” for the challenges ahead, it is reasonable to ask about the integration-readiness of Germans themselves.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Janina Söhn & Veysel Özcan, “The Educational Attainment Of Turkish Migrants In Germany,” *Turkish Studies*, 7 (March 2006): 101-124.

<sup>35</sup> Georg Auernheimer, “unser Bildungssystem -- für die Einwanderungsgesellschaft disfunktional,” *Allgemeine Pädagogik*, October 2004, <http://www.uni-koeln.de/ew-fak/paedagogik/interkulturelle/publikationen/bildungssystem.html>.

<sup>36</sup> Söhn and Özcan, “The Educational Attainment of Turkish Migrants,” 101-124.

<sup>37</sup> Zentralinstitut Islam-Archiv, cited in Daniel Sturm, “Wir haben keinen Kampf der Kulturen,” *Die Welt*, March 1, 2006.

<sup>38</sup> Christian Bangel, “Integration: Mach Mit!” *Die Zeit*, July 6, 2006.

While German administrations are not lacking in sticks, however, there have been signs that some are getting comfortable enough with the minority population to offer some carrots. The best evidence are the two “summits” held in summer and fall 2006, one dedicated to integration and run out of the chancellor’s office; the latter to Islam and organized by the Interior Ministry. The federal government has made steps in the right direction, but it must take care not to appear beholden to the veto points of conservative local politicians. Moreover, these high-profile meetings are necessary, but probably not a panacea. Many *Länder*-level officials dispute the federal government’s jurisdiction: education, language courses, and naturalization fall under the competence of the *Länder*. However, good cooperation at the federal level - especially with IGMG - could set an example for the more reticent *Länder*.

As the government knows, a high-profile conference or two cannot make a dent in the need for lengthy processes of mutual understanding and relationship-building. The parties and other political institutions are the proper vehicles through which to launch the assault on them, which will not only contribute to keeping society internally safe and stable, but also, over the next decade, to equipping Germany with greater self-confidence in approaching vital issues of foreign policy, such as the European Union’s ultimate relationship with Turkey and the Middle East peace process.



# EUROPEAN APPROACHES TO THE CHALLENGE OF RADICAL ISLAM

By Julianne Smith<sup>1</sup>

It is estimated that Europe is home to approximately 20 million Muslims.<sup>2</sup> The reluctance of some of these immigrants to embrace the societies in which they live, combined with the negligence of some European governments to effectively integrate their immigrant communities, means that many Muslims in Europe live in parallel societies or concentrated ghettos of mixed ethnic groups. Over time, a small percentage of these communities have become radicalized due to an array of local and global grievances, often stemming from ongoing alienation and marginalization to the U.S.-led war in Iraq. While only a small number of individuals have turned to violence or terrorist activity as a way to express those grievances, the spread of radical Islam across the continent has become a key domestic and foreign policy challenge for European policymakers.

Radical Islam in Europe has also attracted the attention of American policymakers who fear that radical extremists with European passports could one day enter the United States unnoticed and carry out an attack. As a result, U.S. policymakers often urge their European counterparts to both monitor extremist groups and do what they can to assimilate and integrate their Muslim minorities. Such calls sometimes create friction in the transatlantic relationship, particularly when the Americans accuse Europe of doing too little.

In truth, there is no single European response to radical Islam. Because the roots and threat of radical Islam inside Europe vary from one country to another (and in some cases from city to city), each country in Europe facing this serious challenge has developed its own unique toolbox of strategies and tactics. Those toolboxes vary considerably depending on historical experience, threat perceptions, resources, politics, and national legislative structures. European initiatives aimed at combating the challenge of radical Islamism on European soil tend to fall into one of the three following areas: integrating Muslim minorities, slowing the recruitment of potential extremists, and seizing and arresting terrorist operatives. While a handful of European countries have failed to recognize the seriousness of the challenge, most have launched innovative initiatives in all three areas. To be sure, some of those efforts are insufficient, ill-conceived, or under resourced, but American assumptions that Europe is dragging its heels on the question of radical Islam are unsupported.

## INTEGRATION AND ASSIMILATION STRATEGIES

A number of European countries, having failed to adequately integrate their Muslim minorities when many of them arrived 40 or 50 years ago, now recognize the value of creating integration and assimilation policies to prevent young alienated Muslims from walking down the path of radicalization. But turning well-intentioned rhetoric into a concrete and viable integration strategy is daunting, especially as the forms of discrimination and bias against the Muslim community are so numerous. Barriers exist at all levels, be they cultural, societal, or bureaucratic, leaving some national capitals at a loss on where and how to begin.

Complicating matters is the fact that European public opinion of Muslims is worsening just when greater integration is so desperately needed. Right-wing extremists and anti-immigrant political parties that play on xenophobia have gained ground in recent years, and Islamic communities have become targets of increased hostility.<sup>3</sup> A 2006 Pew Survey on Muslims in Europe indicated that hostile events towards Muslims had been experienced by 19 percent of Muslims in Germany, 28 percent of Muslims in Great Britain, 37 percent of

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<sup>2</sup> A precise number is unavailable because religious questions are not included in European census forms.

<sup>3</sup> Mirjam Dittrich, "Muslims in Europe: addressing the challenges of radicalisation," Working Paper no. 23 (Brussels: European Policy Centre, March 2006), 26.

[http://www.epc.eu/TEWN/pdf/602431467\\_EPC%20Working%20Paper%2023%20Muslims%20in%20Europe.pdf](http://www.epc.eu/TEWN/pdf/602431467_EPC%20Working%20Paper%2023%20Muslims%20in%20Europe.pdf).

Muslims in France, and 25 percent of Muslims in Spain.<sup>4</sup> Even though the majority of the population of Spain, France, and Britain views immigration from the Middle East and North Africa as positive, worries about Islamic extremism in-country have risen in Germany and the UK.<sup>5</sup> Talk of Islamophobia abounds. This environment, where European citizens are increasingly worried about rising unemployment, shrinking demographics, national identity, and crime - which is often associated with Muslims - has made it challenging for political leaders to promote multiculturalism, costly integration policies, and interfaith dialogues.

Despite sizeable hurdles, though, several European governments have managed to launch a variety of integration initiatives in recent years. One that is currently being tried in several countries (albeit in different variations) is the creation of a dialogue with Muslim Councils, aimed to give Muslims a voice in state institutions and work towards the eradication of discrimination against Muslims. Memberships in the various Councils differ, however, which has had a notable impact on their image and credibility. The Muslim Council of Britain, often heralded as one of the most successful models (although by no means perfect), has over 475 member organizations from all parts of Britain, which include both religious and non-religious organizations.<sup>6</sup> Its inclusiveness and diversity has allowed it to establish a voice and a position for the Muslim community within British society. The Council regularly fields media requests on behalf of British Muslims, encourages Muslims to be politically active, and publicly denounced the London bombings in July of 2005.

The French Council for the Muslim Faith (Conseil français du culte musulman or CFCM), which was established in 2003, and only includes religious associations and is therefore intended to speak for the Muslim *religion* and not French Muslims, has had less success. With only five percent of French Muslims attending mosque every week, attempts by the CFCM to speak or act for Muslims more broadly (as it did in 2004 when two French journalists were kidnapped in Iraq) have triggered heated debates about its right to represent.<sup>7</sup> Critics of CFCM also charge it with supporting extremists. When it was first created, a third of its seats were grabbed by foreign-backed old-guard fundamentalists. Its election in June 2005, however, reinforced moderate groups; as a result, the Council was plagued with infighting. French Muslims have therefore created a new representative group with the aim to "complement" the existing state-sponsored CFCM umbrella; the "Rally of Muslims in France" (RMF) held an initial gathering in Paris in June 2006 with 200 heads of mosques and associations. In a statement, the RMF said it wanted to "contribute to the emergence of moderate Islam" that would respect French laws while lobbying on behalf of the country's estimated five million Muslims.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, over half of the members of Germany's Central Council of Muslims (Zentralrat der Muslime) are under observation by German intelligence for known Islamist activities. Further complicating Muslim representation in Germany is the fact that two large associations are competing for legal as well as legitimate representation. Both the Zentralrat der Muslime and the Islamrat für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland (whose membership has been criticized for being largely composed of members of the allegedly Islamist Milli Görüş) claim to represent the

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<sup>4</sup> The Pew Global Attitudes Project, "Muslims in Europe: Economic Worries Top Concerns About Religious and Cultural Diversity," July 6, 2006, <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=254>. Similarly, a study of Dutch Muslims by Amsterdam University suggests that the feelings of "indignation and humiliation" experienced by Muslims are increasing, especially among second-generation Muslims who feel rejected by their host societies. See *Economist*, "Look out, Europe, they say: Why so many Muslims find it easier to be American than to feel European," June 22, 2006. In contrast, a study commissioned by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) showed that attacks on members of the Muslim community after the Madrid and London plots were sporadic and isolated, thanks to a swift response by government, politicians, and opinion-formers. See Dittrich, "Muslims in Europe," 26.

<sup>5</sup> The Pew Global Attitudes Project, "Muslims in Europe." In a similar survey, the percentages of the population who thought that relations between Muslims and Westerners were "generally bad" were: Germany-70%, France-66%, Spain-61%, Great Britain-61%. See The Pew Global Attitudes Project, "The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other," June 22, 2006, <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=253>.

<sup>6</sup> The Muslim Council of Britain, <http://www.mcb.org.uk/aboutmcb.php#>.

<sup>7</sup> Carla Power, "New Imams," *Newsweek*, January 17, 2006, <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/6804109/site/newsweek/>.

<sup>8</sup> *Agence France Presse*, "French Muslims set up new representative body," June 18, 2006.

Muslim community in Germany. Other European countries share similar problems. Belgium's decision to use its security services to vet members of its Muslim Council has created considerable controversy. In the Netherlands, the government also faces two Muslim groups that both want to speak on behalf of the Muslim community.

The Council model, therefore, has drawn mixed reviews. The future success of these Councils ultimately rests with three core questions. First, can they find ways to broaden youth participation? A *Guardian*/ICM poll of young British Muslims in late 2004 found that only 36 percent felt that either the Muslim Council of Britain or Islamic leaders more broadly reflected their views. Second, can the councils deliver tangible results even on a small scale such as labeling halal food or organizing pilgrimages? Third, can they find a way to maintain a diverse membership without bolstering extremists?

Much more controversial than the creation of Muslim Councils, was the French decision in early 2004 to ban headscarves and other "conspicuous" religious symbols (such as Jewish yarmulkes, Christian crosses, and Sikh turbans) in primary and secondary public schools. Rooted in French secularism, the ban aims to instill a sense of equality among students by eliminating or reducing the salience of religious traits. First and foremost, all students are to be identified as French citizens, which supporters of the ban believe will help integrate Muslim students into the "republic." Then-president Jacques Chirac also wanted to reduce the influence of imams or other outsiders (i.e., Saudis) who were pressuring Muslims to adhere to strict standards. Similarly, Germany has banned teachers from wearing headscarves in public schools in 7 of its 16 federal states.<sup>9</sup> However, the rationale behind the German ban differs significantly from that in France and is not intended to serve as an integration instrument.

In contrast to France and Germany, the UK - as well as Italy and Finland - openly promote the tolerance of religious symbols in schools (and other public spaces such as High Court) as part of a broader multicultural policy. Supporters of multiculturalism argue that individuals have the right to pursue their own mode of living as hyphenated (British-Muslim) and participatory citizens. As such, efforts should be made to accommodate, support, and even encourage cultural differences instead of repressing them. Critics, however, argue that multiculturalism frequently leads to isolation, not assimilation, and can create severe economic disparities.<sup>10</sup>

Which of the two approaches (secularism versus multiculturalism) is yielding greater results in easing tensions between Muslim and non-Muslim communities inside Europe? Little concrete evidence exists among the student population, but at least among adults, the UK multicultural approach appears to be fostering more social mobility with greater numbers of ethnic minorities in public office or positions of influence (nightly newscasters for example). Both models, however, remain susceptible to extremism and religious fanaticism.

Perhaps signaling that France's commitment to secularism is starting to fray, French president Nicolas Sarkozy, when he was still the French interior minister, proposed that France adopt a policy of "positive discrimination" - a concept that President Chirac immediately declared "unacceptable"<sup>11</sup> and derailed when legislation towards this aim was drafted in March 2006.<sup>12</sup> But if secularism has failed to produce social mobility for minorities in France, asked Sarkozy at the time, shouldn't employers discriminate in favor of certain groups to balance the scales? Unsurprisingly, most of the French public thinks they should not, arguing that positive discrimination threatens one of the three pillars of the republic - equality.

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<sup>9</sup> Madeline Chambers, "Headscarves banned for Muslim teachers," *Reuters*, August 15, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Some German states have claimed that headscarves worn by teachers could be viewed as a state-supported symbol and were subsequently banned along with other religious symbols. Other states only banned headscarves, arguing that they represent the repression of women.

<sup>11</sup> *Economist*, "The War of the Headscarves," February 5, 2004, [http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=2404691](http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=2404691).

<sup>12</sup> John Vinocur, "A shadow obscuring France's Cup grandeur," *International Herald Tribune*, July 11, 2006.

Assuming that positive discrimination will not gain broad political support, some countries in Europe such as the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, have worked to strengthen their anti-discrimination laws. Instead of a proactive policy to move minorities up the social and economic ladder, this more passive approach at least prevents employers from halting their climb. France moved in this direction with the appointment of the country's first Minister Delegate for the Promotion of Equal Opportunity, and a High Authority for the Fight against Discrimination and for Equal Opportunity.<sup>13</sup> What many French citizens don't know is that positive discrimination is currently being tried at the university level as well. Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po) is allowing certain students from disadvantaged backgrounds (most notably Muslims) to skip the competitive entrance exam. If heavily publicized, the program would certainly trigger cries of foul play among anti-immigrant groups, but at present very few people know about it.

One education initiative that has led to fervent debate across the continent is the teaching of Islamic subjects in primary and secondary schools levels - an initiative that Spain, Germany, and the Netherlands are currently trying. Spain's program, launched in January 2005, allows a small number of schools in neighborhoods with a strong Muslim presence to include lessons on the Islamic pillars. The Netherlands, where parents have a right to demand confessional religious instruction in public schools, has provided Islamic instruction in Rotterdam for over 15 years and opened the first Islamic high school in Europe in 2000.<sup>14</sup> The primary challenge in all cases has been finding qualified teachers. Spain managed to negotiate an agreement with the Moroccan Education Ministry for both a steady supply of teachers and assistance in preparing curricula.<sup>15</sup> But for Germany, the teacher shortage led to an uneasy partnership with the ultraorthodox Islamic Federation because it was the only organization that stepped forward when Berlin put out the call for assistance. Assuming that Islam classes of any kind are better than none, the Federation runs classes for 4,300 children at over 35 Berlin schools. Observers worry, however, that these types of educational programs could actually breed more extremist sentiment than they prevent and lead to greater, not decreased, radicalization.

Dozens of additional, bolder ideas such as head start programs for Muslim preschoolers, greater language and literacy training for Muslims, watchdog groups to monitor integration and religious freedom, and limited dual citizenship are being considered or implemented across the European continent. One of the biggest trends over the last year has been actually mandating integration. This is often done through integration contracts or citizenship tests, which at a minimum require immigrants to learn the language of their adopted country and accept the relevant social norms. Such contracts are enforced in a variety of ways, ranging from fines (Austria and the Netherlands) to the suspension of social benefits (Belgium and Denmark) to the removal of residency rights (Germany).<sup>16</sup>

Here, the onus is placed on the Muslim communities themselves to show tolerance for and a general understanding of the cultures in which they reside as well as a genuine interest in integrating. Some Muslims have welcomed recent integration reforms (including Merkel's commitment to spend 750 million euros per year on measures to better integrate immigrants). But many Muslims feel that the new language and culture tests send an unwelcoming message. Furthermore, the tightening of national counterterrorism measures, which has put Muslim communities under even greater scrutiny in recent years by law enforcement officials, has tempered European

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<sup>13</sup> For example, the UK created several committees, with a mixture of government and Muslim members, to improve dialogue and explore concrete measures. Similarly, the Dutch government launched a comprehensive program for empowerment and integration. See Daniel Fried, "Overview of Islamist Extremism in Europe," testimony before the Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, April 5, 2006, <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/64192.htm>.

<sup>14</sup> Nico Landman, "Islamic Instructions in Dutch Schools," *Muslims in Europa – ein Ländervergleich*, February 9-10, 2001.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Amin Andalusi, "Finally, Spanish Schools teach Islam," *IslamOnline*, January 12, 2006, <http://www.islamonline.net/English/News/2005-01/12/article05.shtml>.

<sup>16</sup> Hill, "Assimilation policies carry risks," May 17, 2006, <http://thehill.com/op-eds/assimilation-policies-carry-risks-2006-05-17.html>.

Muslims' interest in engaging with their fellow citizens as well.<sup>17</sup> But any hope of successfully moving the integration agenda forward and slowing radicalization on the continent in the years ahead will require sometimes counterintuitive concessions from both parties, particularly in the area of identity.

### **SLOWING AND HALTING RECRUITMENT**

Because even the best designed integration strategies will fail to prevent some of Europe's Muslims from feeling alienated and marginalized, European countries are intent on shrinking the pool of potential extremists by slowing or halting recruitment to terrorist cells. Unfortunately, law enforcement officials and social scientists are only beginning to discover how one turns from misfit into mujahideen. Meanwhile, radical extremists both at home and abroad are showing increasing sophistication and innovation in their ability to attract and train new recruits. Young, affluent Muslims are targeted in coffee houses and given flashy DVDs. Underprivileged Muslims are offered "scholarships" to study in the Middle East. Many find inspiration and support through close to 4,000 terrorist websites that have been identified. Some, like two of the principle conspirators responsible for the March 11 attacks in Madrid, become indoctrinated in prison. Still others, such as the plotters of the London bombings in July 2005 and the failed bombing of German trains in July 2006, gradually self-recruit often in a group of likeminded individuals who have had no previous contacts to terrorist cells.

Many European countries have known for years that they have radical spiritual leaders preaching hatred on their own soil. Only in the last two to three years, however, have European governments begun to take action to prevent radical imams from capturing the minds of alienated youth in search of solidarity and meaning. In general, prohibitions on hate speech are stronger in Europe than in the United States, but the potency of the legislation varies by country. France, with some of the strongest anti-hate speech legislation, has already banned or expelled several dozen radical imams on such charges.<sup>18</sup> French officials also de-licensed the Lebanese al Manar television network in France, which preaches violence and hate. Germany recently made use of immigration laws to deport radicals, following the passage of legislation permitting the government to expel non-German nationals who pose a threat to national security. The law has been enforced since March 2005 when a Turkish imam was deported for threatening public safety.<sup>19</sup> Other countries, however, lack the legislation they need to deport radical imams who continue to espouse violence.

Europe is also trying to train and/or license a cadre of imams schooled in Western values and languages, as most mullahs still come from abroad (largely Saudi Arabia, Egypt, North Africa, and Pakistan). In Germany, for example, more than 90 percent of the country's 2,250 imams are "imported." That is not to say that all foreign imams are importing violence and hatred. But there is some question as to whether Ankara or Riyadh should be shaping European Islam. Efforts to balance the scales vary from government-sponsored programs in the Netherlands to private imam-training courses in the UK. In the Flemish Region of Belgium, mosques now need to meet certain conditions in order to receive public funding, such as the use of the Dutch language except for

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<sup>17</sup> Even though the aforementioned Pew Survey on Muslims in Europe indicated that among Muslims, economic concerns are greater than those about religious issues; alarming numbers on identity are found in other research: in one survey of German Turks, 83% said they were "rather" or "strictly" religious. In France, about a third of schoolchildren of Muslim origin see their faith rather than a passport or skin color as the main thing that defines them. Young British Muslims are also inclined to see Islam "as their true home." See *Economist*, "Look out, Europe," June 22, 2006. General discontent could, of course, also be witnessed in the French riots in the fall of 2005.

<sup>18</sup> One such case is that of Dhaou Meskine, the secretary general of the Council of French Imams, and his son Malek, who appeared before a Paris judge in the summer of 2006 on suspicion of financing terrorism. The Tunisian-born imam is the founder of the first private Muslim school in France and was one of the Muslim leaders consulted by then Interior Minister Sarkozy about setting up France's Muslim Council in 2003. See *Irish Times*, "Imam in France accused of financing terrorism," June 24, 2006.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Jacobson, *The West at War: US and European Counter-terrorism Efforts, Post-September 11* (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2006), 10.

liturgies, tolerance for women and homosexuals, and no preaching of extremist ideas.<sup>20</sup> Some countries will soon also require clerics seeking visas to pass language tests in order to obtain permission to preach in public. Many governments are also talking about establishing European seminaries to populate mosques with European-trained moderate imams. The challenge with all of these initiatives is determining who regulates and funds them.

Attempts to monitor or license imams, however, have had the adverse effect of driving some of the more radical ones underground. As such, some sermons are now delivered not in mosques, but in back rooms and basements. Mr. Sarkozy thinks one of the best ways to halt this trend as well as reduce the influence of foreign countries such as Saudi Arabia, is to build national mosques, an idea that has circulated in other cities across Europe. But questions about the constitutionality of doing so and concerns about the policing of religion have to date prevented countries from moving forward with such proposals.<sup>21</sup>

Even more challenging to monitor are prisons, which, teaming with new recruits, are commonly viewed as incubators for creating hardened terrorists. In Europe, Muslims make up large and ill-proportionate percentages of those incarcerated. In *L'Islam dans les Prisons*, Iranian-French researcher Farhad Khosrokhavar estimates that Muslims make up 70 percent of a total of 60,775 prisoners in France. Often picked up for pretty crime and drug offenses, many Muslim (and non-Muslim) prisoners get their first exposure to extremist dogma from fellow inmates who skillfully recruit them into terrorist groups.<sup>22</sup> Two of the principal conspirators in the March 11 attacks in Madrid, Hamid Ahmidan and José Emilio Suárez Trashorras, are a case in point. Neither of them was religious when first jailed, but both came to embrace Islamic fundamentalism and were eventually recruited into a Moroccan terrorist group, Takfir wa'l Hijra.<sup>23</sup> Another prison-based cell that emerged out of the 7,000 Muslim prisoners in Spain was indicted in the spring of 2005, as it had prepared plans to bomb Spain's National Court.<sup>24</sup> Very little has been done to prevent this pattern from repeating itself. While the United States now separates out and isolates suspected radicals, European prisons often put Muslims together as part of rehabilitation efforts. In cases where European prison officials recognize the need to monitor prison activity, their lack of linguistic skills and cultural understanding often prevent them from doing so. For example, in France, only seven percent of prison chaplains are Muslim, despite the large numbers of Muslim prisoners. As a means to resolve this problem, the French Council for the Muslim Faith (CFCM) named a Moroccan-born moderate the first national Muslim chaplain for prisons in September 2005; nominations for other Muslim chaplains are planned.<sup>25</sup> Another attempt to contain radicalization in prisons is screening prison clerics to make sure they are not disseminating Salafist philosophy to inmates. But European prisons should also consider isolating known radicals and tracking those who leave.

Regardless how many ways Europe tries to turn off the faucet of radical Islamism, it will never stop the steady stream of violence and hatred freely flowing through the Internet. The presence of terrorists on the Internet is growing rapidly and now serves as one of the biggest and easiest forms of training recruits (especially as mosque surveillance increases). It is important to mention, though, that no evidence exists that any European Muslim has

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<sup>20</sup> However, Belgian imams, unlike officials from other religious institutions in Belgium, rarely receive state grants. See Dittrich, "Muslims in Europe," 17.

<sup>21</sup> An interesting concept that circumvents such legal questions has been implemented in Amsterdam, where one borough of the city has entered into legal contracts with its three local mosques, spelling out the obligation of the mosque to the community, and vice versa. Per the contract, the mosques receive city funding for some of their social service projects. In return, mosque leaders identify and monitor youth they feel might be drifting toward radicalism. The borough also enlists the mosques' support to enroll young immigrant mothers in civic education and parenting classes. See Fried, "Islamist Extremism in Europe."

<sup>22</sup> According to another study published by the French Interior Ministry, radical Muslims are actively trying to convert other prisoners in approximately one out of three French prisons. See *Associated Press*, "Report: Islamic radicals in France recruiting faster, targeting youth", June 3, 2006.

<sup>23</sup> Ian M. Cuthbertson, "Prisons and the Education of Terrorists," *World Policy Journal* 21, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 15.

<sup>24</sup> Fried, "Islamist Extremism in Europe."

<sup>25</sup> *Associated Press*, "Islamic radicals in France."

ever gone straight from interacting on the Internet to waging terror. As Michael Tarnby and others have pointed out, "personal acquaintances are still required."<sup>26</sup> Still, the advantages of the using the Internet as a way to spread jihadist ideology are numerous - it provides easy access, has no oversight or control, maintains a huge reach, allows the user to remain anonymous, and is both interactive and cheap to establish. Of course, all of that appeal is also why it is so hard to halt its influence as a recruiting and training tool. The one advantage it does provide is that it allows outside observers with the proper language skills and know-how to monitor sites in order to find clues on future methods of attack and targets. It also provides insight into various cultures and grievances.

### SEIZING AND ARRESTING TERRORIST OPERATIVES

In tandem with all of the preventive measures that target would-be terrorists, Europe is also aggressively working to penetrate existing terrorist organizations in order to identify targets, foil planned operations, and arrest terrorist operatives. This is the area that has yielded the greatest amount of European cooperation. National governments continue to pursue strategies tailored to combat their individual challenges, but the European Union, in close cooperation with the United States, has launched several measures aimed at defeating terrorist activity both on the European continent and beyond.

At the national level, most European governments came to realize in the aftermath of September 11 that they faced a number of legal and cultural barriers when it came to prosecuting and tracking terrorist operatives. Using tools such as court-approved communications intercepts and wiretapping has long been prohibited in various domestic intelligence operations across Europe. There are some signs, though, that this is changing. In Italy, a Justice Ministry report stated that the number of authorized wiretaps more than tripled from 32,000 in 2001 to 106,000 last year (although it is important to note that such wiretaps were not always related to counterterrorism investigations).<sup>27</sup> There are also indications that cross-country cooperation is improving. In 2006, after extensive wiretapping and joint scrutiny of Internet traffic, SAEPO (the Swedish Security Police) and the British police joined forces to take action against a number of individuals in Sweden suspected of having financed or promoted international terrorism.<sup>28</sup>

While thorny debates on how to enhance surveillance while maintaining civil liberties continue, several countries in Europe have made significant progress in creating a stronger legal counterterrorism framework that avoids putting intelligence and law enforcement at odds.<sup>29</sup> The Netherlands, for example, has worked to increase the powers of arrest and admitting evidence from the intelligence agencies and anonymous sources.<sup>30</sup> Under the new laws, Dutch prosecutors have won a number of high-profile convictions, most notably the conviction in March 2006 of nine Muslim men for membership in the so-called "Hofstad" terrorist network. In the UK, anti-terrorism laws introduced after the July 2005 bombings have given the government unprecedented powers for dealing with

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<sup>26</sup> Michael Tarnby, "Recruitment of Islamist Terrorists in Europe. Trends and Perspectives," (Danish Ministry of Justice, January 14, 2005), 50, [http://www.justitsministeriet.dk/fileadmin/downloads/Forskning\\_og\\_dokumentation/Rekruttering\\_af\\_islamistiske\\_terrorister\\_i\\_Europa.pdf](http://www.justitsministeriet.dk/fileadmin/downloads/Forskning_og_dokumentation/Rekruttering_af_islamistiske_terrorister_i_Europa.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> *Associated Press*, "Some Europeans say stepped-up surveillance understandable," May 16, 2006.

<sup>28</sup> *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, "Swedish Daily on terror suspects detained at UK's request", July 4, 2006.

<sup>29</sup> The one exception seems to be Germany where intelligence and law enforcement must remain separated. Improvements in data surveillance have been made, however, with the agreement on an anti-terror databank that has been found after years of debate. See Migration und Bevoelkerung Newsletter, "Deutschland: Erneute Sicherheitsdebatte," September 2006, [http://www.migration-info.de/migration\\_und\\_bevoelkerung/artikel/060707.htm](http://www.migration-info.de/migration_und_bevoelkerung/artikel/060707.htm)

<sup>30</sup> Prosecutors will be able to approve surveillance, infiltration, or wiretapping suspects even when they cannot show a judge reasonable suspicion a suspect may have committed a criminal act. Earlier measures have included banning membership of a terrorist group, increased penalties for terrorism-related crimes, and spot searches of people at police discretion. The new law will expand such spot searches, allowing police to carry out searches in "airports, industrial complexes, sports stadiums and government buildings." See *Associated Press*, "Dutch parliament approves new anti-terrorism measures," May 23, 2006.

terrorism.<sup>31</sup> France, which already has one of the most advanced counterterrorism systems in Europe, adopted a new bill in December 2005 that expands police surveillance methods, including video and communications, and raises prison sentences for convicted members of a terrorist plot.<sup>32</sup>

European governments have had less success, however, in training or hiring sufficient numbers of law enforcement officials with the necessary linguistic skills or multicultural awareness to penetrate close-knit Muslim communities and cells. The UK, which is boosting the workforce in the MI5 by 50 percent with a heavy emphasis on hiring Arabic, Farsi, and Urdu linguists, and to a certain extent France, are the exceptions, but countries like Spain and Germany are increasingly aware that they have virtually no resources in this regard.<sup>33</sup> France does have a pool of specialized judges and investigators, often of Muslim descent.<sup>34</sup> At the local level, France has launched a handful of additional innovative measures, including a cadet police-training program that targets youths from underprivileged (and often Muslim) neighborhoods.<sup>35</sup>

At the EU level, bureaucrats in Brussels point to a long list of initiatives that have come into existence since September 11 as part of the fight against terrorism. The EU introduced a Europe-wide arrest warrant, strengthened legislation that cracks down on terrorist financing and the storage of telecommunications data, appointed an EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, and launched an EU Action Plan to Fight Terrorism, which will be reviewed every six months by the European Council. EU member states have also strengthened Europol, although its budget and staff are still woefully inadequate.<sup>36</sup> Concerns about national sovereignty, however, continue to prevent some of these initiatives or additional proposals from taking root. A number of EU member states, for example, have yet to implement the commitments they have made on paper. Furthermore, the EU still lacks a unified police system, shared border police, and a unified court system - all challenges that have only grown in complexity with the addition of ten new members. Initiatives such as Frontex, which was founded in 2005 as a new EU External Borders Agency, and which coordinates between members states for the training of border guards and carrying out risk assessments, have as of yet to show their operational strength.<sup>37</sup> And the EU's first Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Gijs de Vries, stepped down in March of 2007 and has yet to be replaced. Given de Vries's frustration with the lack of authority and resources he felt he needed to be effective, the future of this posting is unclear.

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<sup>31</sup> A 12-point security plan outlined by Tony Blair in August 2005 was followed by the 2006 Terrorism Act, the fourth piece of anti-terrorism legislation introduced since Labour took office in 1997. The Terrorism Act included measures such as raising the encouragement of terrorism to a criminal offence and extending the time by which terrorist suspects could be detained without charge. Some measures, such as extending the government's powers to strip dual nationals of their British citizenship, have been legalized but are scarcely used. Proposals to create powers to order closure of any place of worship used as a "centre for fomenting extremism" have been, on the other hand, dropped as those recommendations are considered too controversial. However, calls have been made by politicians to allow intercept evidence in court. See Michael Peel, "A Year on: New terrorism laws a 'dog's dinner,'" *Financial Times*, July 1, 2006. In addition to these legal measures, there has also been a fundamental shift in police and MI5 tactics. Intervention in suspected terrorist conspiracies now happens at a much earlier stage. See Jacobson, *West at War*, 48.

<sup>32</sup> Marc Perelman "How the French Fight Terror," *Foreign Policy*, (January 2006).

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, the opinion expressed by the president of the German Federal Police. See *Wiesbadener Tagblatt*, "Der BKA-Chef fordert Zivilcourage," September 13, 2006.

[http://www.main-rheiner.de/region/objekt.php3?artikel\\_id=2522084](http://www.main-rheiner.de/region/objekt.php3?artikel_id=2522084)

<sup>34</sup> Perelman "How the French Fight Terror."

<sup>35</sup> Jamey Keaten, "We want YOU! French police reach out to youths from riot-torn areas," *Associated Press*, April 18, 2006.

<sup>36</sup> The widening of Europol status to a European investigative authority is currently being debated. National ministers at this stage agree that further discussion is needed in this regard, and that at present, work should proceed only on extending the work of joint investigative groups, i.e., the collaboration of national investigation units across borders, strengthening co-operation between Europol, Eurojust, and Frontex, and the task force of European police chiefs.

<sup>37</sup> John Leicester, "Some Europeans say stepped-up surveillance understandable," *Associated Press*, May 16, 2006.

Most challenging for Europe has been the issue of intelligence sharing, which most countries prefer to conduct bilaterally. New measures, such as common rules on storing telecom and internet data, an “evidence warrant,” and a stronger legal basis for information sharing, have been pushed by various EU presidencies. But industry, civil libertarians, and national police forces are all expressing skepticism and caution on these measures, which makes a bolder proposal to create a European intelligence agency even more unlikely to gain European support.

Unfortunately, in cases where counterterrorism efforts have been tightened and strengthened either at the national level or inside European institutions, they have sometimes led to heightened tensions with Muslim communities. As Muslims are increasingly singled out as being the problem, the risk is that radicalization will increase. The British have tried to counter this trend by distributing pamphlets that outline citizen rights, but it is questionable how much a pamphlet can quell Muslim concerns about discrimination and abuse against them (which is often extensively highlighted in Muslim media outlets).<sup>38</sup> Former prime minister Tony Blair, who was criticized both in Parliament and by a Muslim task force for not sufficiently engaging the UK’s Muslim community after the July 2005 attacks, expressed similar concerns and questioned the effectiveness of traditional public diplomacy efforts in battling Islamic extremism.<sup>39</sup> To be sure, EU efforts to brand 2008 as the ‘Year of Intercultural Dialogue,’ as well as German and other governments’ initiatives, such as the attendance of politicians at immigrant community meetings, ‘Open Mosque Days,’ public discussions, anti-racism rallies, and seminars for teachers and school classes on Islam, will not undo years of failed integration and deep frustration with the treatment of Muslims worldwide. Given the lack of alternatives, however, any effort to quell the spread of isolation and subsequent radicalization among Muslim immigrant communities should be viewed as a step in the right direction.

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<sup>38</sup> Dittrich, “Muslims in Europe.”

<sup>39</sup> Nicholas Kralev “Blair says Muslims must purge extremism; Denies lack of effort to heal community rift,” *Washington Times*, July 5, 2006.



## AMERICAN MUSLIMS AND THE QUESTION OF ASSIMILATION

By Paul M. Barrett<sup>1</sup>

Are Muslims successfully integrating into American society? Or are they retreating to the margins - alienated, angry, and possibly susceptible to the call of radicalism?

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, two diametrically opposed answers have been offered to this critical question. Some observers contend that, despite popular prejudice and sometimes-heavy handed government law enforcement, since 9/11 Muslim Americans have remained on a promising path toward assimilation.<sup>2</sup> Others argue that this is a Pollyannaish delusion. According to this view, Muslims are pulling back into mosques and Islamic centers, focusing on their religious identity at the expense of patriotic attachments.

The answer matters for several important reasons. The American civic creed - the broad set of beliefs on which the political left and right agree - holds that our country offers a generous opportunity to legal immigrants and religious minorities to thrive and become part of the mainstream. Muslims deserve this opportunity, as Catholics, Jews, and others did before them. As a practical matter, Muslims who arrive from abroad (and native-born Americans who embrace the faith as converts) have much to offer American society; the impressive entrepreneurial energy and technical skill of Muslim immigrants from South Asia and the Middle East are but two of the most obvious examples. Finally, in an age shadowed by terrorism inflicted in the name of Islam, American Muslims can offer what Daniel Benjamin, senior fellow for foreign policy studies at The Brookings Institution, calls “the first line of defense against jihadist attack.” Assuming American Muslims are not moving en masse toward extremism, Benjamin persuasively writes, they are in the best position to corral the few among them tempted by radical, violent ambitions. If they are unable to contain such threats themselves, Muslims who feel connected to the mainstream are in the best position to alert the authorities.

In choosing between the two contradictory accounts of where American Muslims are headed, we will not be aided very much by scholarly sociological insight, as scholars have yet to produce thorough studies of the American Muslim population. Moreover, the two best polls of Muslim socio-economic circumstances, and religions and political opinions offer somewhat differing results, leaving our state of knowledge about Muslims in America vague and disputed on key points. Because the Census Bureau does not count by religion, we do not even know how many Muslims reside in the United States. Estimates by Muslim organizations run to six million and higher, but non-Muslim surveys produce much lower numbers. Still, enough evidence now exists to choose one version of the American Muslim story as more credible than the other.

Based primarily on my own journalistic work over the past four years - which has included interviews with more than two hundred American Muslims - I argue that, as a group, Muslims are not deeply alienated from American society or values. To a degree that would surprise many non-Muslims, the vast majority of Muslim Americans are already integrated into the mainstream, or at least they or their children are pointed in that direction. The latest and most thorough polling data, gathered in a May 2007 report from the Pew Research Center entitled, “Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream,” supports this conclusion.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul M. Barrett is the author, most recently, of *American Islam: The Struggle for the Soul of a Religion* (2007), published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

<sup>2</sup> Some American Muslims interpret the term “assimilation” negatively to mean the abandonment of religious and ethnic affiliation and embrace of a shallow materialism. I mean nothing of the sort. I use “assimilation” as a synonym for integration into the civic mainstream. Key aspects of assimilation would include respect for democracy, the Constitution, and other laws; tolerance of other faiths and of secularism; and some basic interaction with the larger society, even if only through informal relationships with neighbors. I return to this semantic issue later in the paper.

This is not to say that there are no reasons for worry; the Pew poll itself contains caveats. While the country's history of successfully absorbing immigrants, among other factors, has helped speed the integration of Muslims, less admirable aspects of American culture threaten to estrange them. Moreover, the importation of violent strains of Islam from abroad - via fresh immigrants and the Internet - presents another potentially dangerous source of radicalization. Alarming, a small minority of Muslim Americans told the Pew pollsters that suicide bombing in the defense of Islam can be at least sometimes justified. This is meaningful, because terrorism requires only small numbers to succeed.

To better understand this complex reality, and to put ourselves in a position to encourage the more hopeful trends concerning Muslims, a careful sifting of what facts we have is very much in order.

### **WHO ARE AMERICAN MUSLIMS?**

Let us begin with some basics: who are American Muslims? Surveys consistently find that about two-thirds are foreign born. According to estimates in the Pew poll, 37 percent are from the Arab region, while 27 percent are from South Asia, including Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. All told, Muslim immigrants come from no fewer than sixty-eight nations, with Iran and Pakistan topping the list at 12 percent each. Twenty percent of American Muslims are native-born African-Americans, many of them converts.

A poll by Zogby International inquired about "ethnicity," regardless of immigrant or native-born status. This October 2004 survey, described in a report released by Georgetown University's Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding entitled, "Muslims in the American Public Square: Shifting Political Winds & Fallout from 9/11, Afghanistan, and Iraq," estimated that 34 percent of American Muslims are of South Asian ethnicity, while 26 percent are of Arab ethnicity. Zogby concluded, consistently with Pew, that 20 percent of American Muslims are native-born blacks.

Muslims have no equivalent to the Catholic pope and his cardinals. The faith is decentralized in the extreme, and some beliefs and practices vary depending on geography and sect. In America, Muslims do not think and act alike any more than Christians do. All observant Muslims do, however, acknowledge Islam's "five pillars": faith in one god, prayer, charity, fasting during Ramadan, and pilgrimage to Mecca.

The two major subgroups of Muslims - Sunni and Shia - are found in the United States in roughly their global proportions: 85 percent Sunni, 15 percent Shia. Ancient history still animates the rivalry, which began in the struggle for Muslim leadership after the Prophet Muhammad's death in 632 A.D. But in the United States, Sunni-Shia tension rarely erupts into violence. Sufism, Islam's spiritual branch, akin to Jewish Kabbalah and Christian Gnosticism, is also present in the United States.

Muslim organizations, such as the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), have published surveys estimating the Muslim population at six million or higher. Perhaps not coincidentally the American Jewish population is estimated to be slightly below six million. Surveys conducted by non-Muslims have produced much lower estimates; the 2007 Pew survey offers an approximate figure of 2.35 million. In any case, rapid growth of the Muslim population is expected to continue, fueled mainly by immigration, high birthrates, and, to a lesser extent, by conversion, overwhelmingly by African-Americans.

American Muslims, like Americans generally, live mostly in cities and suburbs. Large concentrations are found in New York, Detroit, Chicago, and Los Angeles. In New York, Muslims are typecast as cab drivers; in Detroit, as owners of grocery stores and gas stations. The overall economic reality is very different. The Zogby survey found that the majority of American Muslims are employed in technical, white collar, and professional fields, including technology, corporate management, medicine, and education. Zogby also concludes that an astounding 59 percent of Muslim adults in the United States have a college degree, compared with only 28 percent of all American

adults. The more-recent Pew poll, however, came to a starkly different conclusion: that only 24 percent of Muslim Americans have a college degree. While it is not clear how to reconcile the discrepancy with the much higher Zogby estimate, even if we take the lower Pew figure as correct, Muslim educational attainment, measured by college graduation, can be described as at least roughly comparable to that of the U.S. general public. Family income among Muslim Americans is likewise similar to that of the population as a whole, Pew concluded: among all adults nationwide, 44 percent report annual household incomes of \$50,000 or more; the comparable figure for Muslim adults is 41 percent. At the high end, 16 percent of Muslims report household incomes of \$100,000 or more, compared to 17 percent of the general public. Most Muslims own stock or mutual funds, either directly or through retirement plans, according to Zogby.

## INTEGRATION OF AMERICAN MUSLIMS

Relative prosperity and high levels of education are indications of a minority population successfully integrating into the larger society. Muslims are also participating in the American political process, although again, the two polls yield different estimates. Pew concludes that 63 percent of Muslims who are eligible are registered to vote, compared to 76 percent for the overall population. Zogby estimates that 82 percent of eligible Muslims have registered. Once again, it is difficult to reconcile the discrepancy.

But the pollsters' differences do not diminish our ability to make a useful comparison between the predominantly immigrant Muslim population of the United States and those of countries like England, France, Holland, Germany, and Spain. Overall, the immigrant Muslims of Western Europe have remained poorer, less educated, and more socially marginalized. European majorities, which beginning in the years after World War II encouraged Muslim immigration as a source of menial labor, have shown overt hostility toward the outsiders and little inclination to afford them promising economic opportunities. Partly as a result, Islamic extremism has found fertile ground in the insular Muslim communities of Western Europe. Deadly bombings in England in 2005 and Spain the year before are the bitter harvest of these attitudes and policies.

The amount and degree of extremism evident among American Muslims are far lower than in Europe. The *9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States* made the important observation that the hijackers had little contact with American Muslims and apparently received no support from them. The Justice Department's hundreds of investigations in the years since 9/11 have so far not detected a U.S.-based terrorist menace. After reviewing these cases, the Center on Law and Security at the New York University School of Law concluded, "The overall record...suggests the presence of few, if any, prevalent terrorist threats currently within the U.S." Certainly, future attacks on the United States are possible, but they are more likely to come, again, from abroad. Many of the prosecutions of homegrown American conspiracies, such as the one involving an alleged plot to attack Fort Dix in New Jersey, have turned on the encouragement of a government informant, without whom it is unlikely the defendants would have coalesced. Other plots, including one to bomb John F. Kennedy International Airport, seem exceedingly unlikely to have ever come to fruition.

Skepticism about the immediacy or plausibility of such threats does not mean that plotters necessarily should go unpunished. Bumbling criminals occasionally succeed, and prosecution presumably deters others from wandering down the same dark path. Moreover, the recent Pew poll reveals that while very few Muslims endorse terrorism in the name of their religion, there is a distinct minority willing to tell pollsters that suicide bombing of civilian targets can be legitimate.

Eighty-three percent of American Muslims say that suicide bombing of civilians is never or rarely justified, even if intended "to defend Islam." But 8 percent say this form of terrorism at least sometimes can be justified in religious terms. The Pew Research Center takes an optimistic view of these figures, noting that "in Western Europe, higher percentages of Muslims in Great Britain, France, and Spain said that suicide bombings in the defense of Islam are often or sometimes justified." But again, terrible destruction does not require large ranks of conspirators. And among younger Muslims, extremism is more prevalent. Pew observes that "more than twice as

many Muslim Americans under age 30 as older Muslims believe that suicide bombings can be often or sometimes justified in the defense of Islam (15 percent versus 6 percent),” and younger Muslims are also more likely to think of themselves as “Muslim first” as opposed to “American first” (60 percent versus 41 percent).

It is worth noting that the American Muslim population is still smaller in percentage terms than those of Western Europe, making it highly unlikely that American cities will see the sort of densely packed Muslim enclaves that have cropped up on the outskirts of Paris. In France, the Muslim population is approaching 10 percent of the total; in the United Kingdom, 3 percent. In the more populous United States, the figure is 1 percent to 2 percent, depending on which estimate one assumes. Moreover, Western European-style welfare benefits allow Muslims and other immigrants to live indefinitely on the margins of society, without steady employment or social interaction with the majority. In contrast, America’s stingier social safety net, paired with greater opportunity, tends to attract ambitious immigrants willing to adjust to the customs of their new home and eager to acquire education that leads to better jobs.

### **THE AFTERMATH OF SEPTEMBER 11**

Since 9/11, some observers have asserted that whatever success Muslims may have had assimilating into the mainstream has been seriously eroded by the fallout from the terrorist attacks. *USA Today*, the nation’s largest-circulation daily newspaper, has repeatedly offered readers this downbeat perspective in prominently played articles with headlines such as this one, from August 10, 2006: “USA’s Muslims Under a Cloud: Harassment, Discrimination Rise After 9/11, Leaving Many Feeling Ostracized.” On the other hand, *The New York Times*, the country’s most prestigious paper, has generally taken the opposite view in major articles such as one published on its front page on August 21, 2006, headlined, “Pakistanis Find U.S. an Easier Fit than Britain: Assimilation Is Rule - Siege Mentality Is Largely Absent.”

Respected experts are similarly divided. Daniel Benjamin, the coauthor of two highly regarded books about terrorism, wrote in January 2007, “Among scholars of terrorism these days, the accepted wisdom is that a major reason no second catastrophic attack on the United States has occurred is that the foot soldiers of jihad are not here - at least not in great numbers. Many Muslims in this country may be angry about U.S. foreign policy, but they are not alienated from American society or values.” In contrast, Geneive Abdo, an accomplished journalist who has worked as a consultant for the United Nations and now serves as a senior analyst at the Gallup Organization’s Center for Muslim Studies, contends that “the real story of American Muslims is one of accelerating alienation from the mainstream of U.S. life, with Muslims in this country choosing their Islamic identity over their American one.”

Abdo, the most prolific proponent of the gloomier view, is the author of the 2006 book *Mecca and Main Street: Muslim Life in America After 9/11*. She attributes Muslim alienation to two main factors: first, the reaction in the United States to the worldwide Islamic revival and surge of Muslim fundamentalism, and second, the feeling of persecution and isolation American Muslims have felt in response to government investigations and religious bigotry sparked by 9/11. She notes that more women are wearing head scarves, more young Muslims are going to Islamic schools, Muslim Student Association (MSA) chapters are proliferating on college campuses, and worshipers are turning to mosques as social centers, not just places of prayer.

Abdo quotes many individuals to support her opinion that “American Muslims are becoming a people apart.” At a mosque in Dearborn, Michigan, she reports meeting college-educated, hijab-wearing young women such as Ismahan, who told Abdo, “I don’t think Muslims have to assimilate. We are not treated like Americans.” Fatma, another young woman, said, “Some Muslims do anything to fit in. They drink. They date. My biggest fear is that I might assimilate to the American lifestyle so much that my modesty goes out the window.” Abdo concedes that American Muslims have succeeded economically. “Yet, outside the workplace,” she concludes, “Muslims retreat into the comfort zone of their mosques and Islamic schools.”

Abdo's reporting has great value, even if one disagrees with her conclusion. The sources of Muslim alienation she identifies are all real and worthy of attention. The downcast Muslims she interviews no doubt express genuine fears and frustrations which, if they were to become dominant, could help fertilize dangerous dreams. But on closer inspection, some of Abdo's conclusions seem problematic. As a preliminary matter, there is the important question of what Muslims, and observers of Muslims, mean by the word "assimilate." Abdo and the Muslims she interviews appear to regard the word in a negative light, connoting the replacement of Islamic faith with secularism and a full embrace of American popular culture, including such activities as consumption of alcohol and sex outside of marriage. If assimilation were defined that way, many Muslims - certainly all observant Muslims - would reject it as contrary to their faith. But if assimilation is instead understood as a synonym for integration into the civic mainstream, most American Muslims would embrace it. Key aspects of assimilation, as I defined it earlier, include respect for democracy, the Constitution, and other laws; tolerance of other faiths and of secularism; and some basic interaction with the larger society.

While Muslims are not as upbeat about their circumstances as Americans generally, the differences are not large: 78 percent of American Muslims say they are "very happy" or "pretty happy" with their lives, according to Pew, which compares with 87 percent of Americans generally. More than seven out of ten Muslims rate their community as "excellent" or "good," only slightly less than the comparable overall figure. Most Muslims (54 percent) register dissatisfaction with the overall direction of the country at large, but an even larger proportion of the general public (61 percent) shares that view.

To add some life to these numbers, consider the Saied family of Hialeah, Florida, whom I discuss in my 2007 book *American Islam: The Struggle for the Soul of a Religion*. A visitor to the home of Mustafa and Sadaf Saied is promptly recruited by their daughters - Zaineb, seven, Sameeha, six, and Mariam, four, - to read and discuss a colorful Disney book about the Little Mermaid. The children, who attend public school, wear jazzy American clothes. Asked for a favorite television program, they extol "Blue's Clues," an educational show starring a puzzle-solving puppy. Sadaf, the girls' mother, wears the Islamic hijab, or female head covering, and a concealing ankle-length turquoise wrap. Her husband, Mustafa, relaxes in the living room in denim jeans and a University of Tennessee football jersey. He explains cheerfully how his knowledge of college and professional sports helps break the ice with potential customers of the family company, All State Engineering & Testing. Mustafa's parents, visiting from India, keep an eye on Layla, the youngest Saied, born only a few months earlier.

Mustafa and Sadaf, who are in their early thirties, seem at ease as Americans, without having cut themselves off from their Muslim faith. He came to the United States from India in 1990 to attend college and then decided to stay. She is the American-born child of prosperous Pakistani immigrants who settled in south Florida decades ago. The couple has decorated their living room wall with a large, framed rendition of Quranic verse in ornate Arabic calligraphy. Sadaf prays five times a day; her husband, less often. He takes the children trick-or-treating on Halloween, and they join school friends in celebrating Christmas. On Sundays, the girls attend Islamic religious classes, but Mustafa has declared that the minute he hears anything about "infidels," he will keep them home. "I will stop it, cold turkey," he says. "I just want them to have a normal American life."

Based on my extensive reporting, I can say that this is not an unusual Muslim American domestic scene. Traditional dress, such as the female head scarf, does not necessarily suggest alienation. Sending children to an Islamic school does not necessarily entail cutting them off from American culture. Sadaf and Mustafa Saied are debating whether their girls ought to don the hijab when they get older, and the parents are not entirely sure how they will handle the question of dating. But they have no doubt that they are sending all of their children to secular colleges or universities, and the ambitious Saieds expect all of their girls to hold mainstream jobs, as well marry and have children.

Some misunderstanding about Muslim attitudes may stem from where journalists and other analysts seek out the Muslims they interview. Abdo, with admirable candor, makes clear that she has spoken only to "mosque-goers."

Most newspapers, magazines, and television news organizations similarly head to the local mosque or Islamic center or school when they want to collect Muslim opinion.

The problem with this technique is that most Muslims rarely if ever attend mosque. The recent Pew poll found that 40 percent of Muslims say they attend religious services at least weekly, which compares to 45 percent for Christians. CAIR has found that only one in three Muslims even “associates” with a mosque, a term that does not mean they attend very often or at all. At a recent roundtable discussion in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security, Al-Husein N. Madhany, the executive editor of the English-language magazine *Islamica* and a Ph.D. candidate in Islamic Studies at the University of Chicago, said that the actual proportion of Muslims who attend mosque is probably far smaller than even CAIR contends.

Mosque-goers obviously are more likely to be religiously conservative, and discussions at mosques tend, not surprisingly, to yield more vigorous protestations about the dangers of faith being eroded by exposure to secular influences. One gains a more certain feel for the diversity of opinions within American Islam by dealing with a broad spectrum of Muslims, from the resolutely orthodox to the non-observant. There are plenty of the latter, and their views count, too.

The life and career of Osama Siblani, another subject from my book, illustrates the importance of looking outside the mosque as well as within. The Lebanese-immigrant publisher of a bilingual English-Arabic newspaper, Siblani belongs to the heavily assimilated elite in Dearborn, Michigan, the unofficial capital of Arab America. He lives in a comfortable home and drives a large black Mercedes. A courtly registered Republican, he helped organize Arab-American support for George W. Bush in 2000, though his passionate opposition to the invasion of Iraq pushed him toward the Democrats in 2004. He has not committed to a party, let alone a candidate, for 2008, but he remains a significant political power broker in Michigan, wooed by hopefuls for local, state, and national office. He has become alienated to some degree by American foreign policy and by the domestic “war on terrorism,” which he contends singles out Muslims unfairly. But he remains deeply immersed in American civic life and firmly endorses the country’s secular democracy, especially its separation of religion from state. A Shiite by birth, he rarely attends mosque.

### **RADICALIZATION OF AMERICAN MUSLIMS**

The well-documented Islamic revival that has swept the Middle East and other heavily Muslim areas has had an effect on Muslims in the United States. Some immigrants from places like Pakistan, Lebanon, and Egypt who went out of their way to blend into their adopted society have watched with dismay as their college-age children don traditional garb and devote hours to memorizing Quran verses in the original Arabic. Some MSA chapters do have an insular flavor and flaunt an unbending religiosity that includes vituperative sermons condemning American foreign policy and the state of Israel. At the extreme, some chapters harbor sub-groups attached to truly distressing ideology.

During his time at the University of Tennessee, Mustafa Saied gravitated to a secret circle affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and led by immigrant Arab graduate students. He attended conferences and fundraisers that honored suicide bombers. Some participants at these gatherings screamed for the slaughter of Jews and the destruction of Israel. But Saied renounced this extremism after what amounted to a prolonged deprogramming session with fellow young American Muslims. They persuaded him that the foundations of American values “are very Islamic - freedom of religion, freedom of speech, toleration,” he said.

Saied’s story captures several critical elements of American Muslim experience. There are extremist strains of thought coursing through the Islamic community, especially among young men. The successful prosecutions of groups in Lackawanna, New York, and northern Virginia, some of whose members traveled to Pakistan and Afghanistan after 9/11 for military training and jihad, are further evidence of this extremism (these defendants were not accused of plotting violence within the United States.)

But a far more common mindset is that of the Muslims who talked Saied out of his radical pose. Given a chance to explain why they have come here, immigrant Muslims usually stress economic and educational opportunity. They also emphasize the constitutional protection of free speech and religion. Reza Aslan, a researcher at the University of Southern California and author of *No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam*, has written that American respect for religion has helped catalyze Muslim assimilation:

As a Muslim who lives in the United States and who has spent a great deal of time among Muslims in Europe, I can tell you that, more than anything else, it is the core American belief that faith has a role to play in the public realm that has allowed American Muslims to so seamlessly reconcile their faiths, cultures, and traditions with the realities of American life. Say what you will, this is not, nor has it ever been a “secular” country. It is, in fact, the most religiously diverse and religiously tolerant nation in the world. In no other country - and certainly no Islamic country - can Muslims pursue their faith and practice in whatever way they see fit than in the United States. It is, in short, America itself that has made American Muslims so much more resistant to the pull of jihadism than their European counterparts.

### **ANTI-MUSLIM HOSTILITY**

While integration has remained a predominant theme of Muslim life in America, even since 9/11, it is true that Muslim Americans face religious and ethnic hostility from a substantial minority of non-Muslims. This bias could undermine progress toward assimilation.

Thirty-nine percent of Americans say they “have at least some prejudice” against Muslims, according to a Gallup poll released in August 2006, and 22 percent say they would prefer not to have Muslim neighbors. About a third of Americans believe Muslims are sympathetic to al-Qaeda and that Muslims ought to be required to carry special identification papers. But a secondary finding of this kind of polling that rarely gets attention is that anti-Muslim bias decreases markedly when respondents say they personally know a Muslim. For example, only 10 percent of Americans who know a Muslim say they would not want one as a neighbor, compared to 31 percent of those not acquainted with a Muslim. Moreover, anti-Muslim feelings are far stronger among older respondents; younger Americans are maturing with a far lower level of anxiety about their Muslim neighbors.

Hate crime levels, another measure of hostility, have risen since 9/11, according to Muslim organizations. For 2005, CAIR recorded 153 reports of hate crimes, nearly four times as many as in 2002, though up only 9 percent from 2004. Each and every alleged threat, verbal assault, and physical attack, deserves investigation, and if confirmed, condemnation and punishment. But it is worth noting that some of the increase in the widely cited CAIR figures might be attributable to the organization’s growing vigilance and sophistication. It is also worth comparing the CAIR numbers to those provided by the government. From September 11, 2001 through mid-2005, the Justice Department said it had investigated more than 630 “backlash” incidents of threats and violence against Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians. The department said it had brought federal charges against 27 defendants, resulting in the conviction of 22. State and local authorities had brought another 150 criminal prosecutions over the roughly four years after 9/11.

CAIR and other Muslim advocacy groups regularly tell their Muslim constituents that circumstances are getting much worse. “It is clear that there remains a growing atmosphere of fear and hostility toward American Muslims, Arab Americans, and South Asians,” CAIR declares on its Web site. The veracity of that assertion is debatable, and its vehemence may bear some connection to CAIR’s fundraising efforts. Unfortunately, however, CAIR’s grim assessment receives reinforcement from certain politicians, conservative radio hosts, and Christian evangelists.

In one notorious incident, Virgil Goode, a Republican from Virginia, drew attention earlier this year by condemning Keith Ellison, the first Muslim elected to the U.S. Congress, for swearing an oath of office with his hand on the Quran, rather than the Bible. “I fear that in the next century we will have many more Muslims in the

United States if we do not adopt the strict immigration policies that I believe are necessary to preserve the values and beliefs traditional to the United States of America and to prevent our resources from being swamped,” Goode wrote in a xenophobic diatribe delivered to his constituents. Right-leaning radio personalities have made similar pronouncements. In the summer of 2005, CAIR and other Muslim activists pressured WMAL, a radio station in Washington, D.C., to fire conservative talk-show host Michael Graham for repeatedly declaring on the air that “Islam is a terrorist organization.”

Some on the religious right, meanwhile, have capitalized on 9/11 to rile their faithful with vile attacks on Islam. Pat Robertson has called the Prophet Muhammad “an absolute wild-eyed fanatic,” and the Rev. Jerry Vines, past president of the Southern Baptist Convention, has called Islam’s founder a “demon-possessed pedophile.” Preacher Franklin Graham has branded Islam “a very evil and wicked religion.” Muslims are keenly aware of such statements and routinely extrapolate from them to conclude that Christians generally share these views.

Muslims, predictably, are discouraged by this kind of hostility. They are also put off by the way the Bush administration has exaggerated the results of anti-terrorism investigations. Since 9/11, these probes by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Justice Department have resulted in the conviction of several dozen Muslim men, including John Walker Lindh, the American who fought with the Taliban; Zacarias Moussaoui, described by prosecutors as a would-be 9/11 hijacker; and Richard Reid, the failed airplane “shoe bomber.” But overall, the federal dragnet has yielded few, if any, significant domestic terrorism threats since 9/11. Watchfulness by law enforcement is to be applauded. But the crude methods used by U.S. authorities, beginning with the arrest and detention of some 1,200 Muslim and Arab men in late 2001 and the subsequent interrogation of eight thousand more have contributed to making many Muslims feel insecure and unwelcome. Another terrorist attack on the American homeland would almost certainly be followed by a crackdown of similar or more dire proportions, and that would likely heighten Muslims’ sense of alienation.

Still, there simply is no persuasive evidence today that a Muslim American population deeply committed to education and material attainment has retreated into isolation and resentment. Even the occupation of Iraq and unwavering American support for Israel in its confrontations with Hamas and Hezbollah have not led to the sort of Muslim vituperation that is common in the United Kingdom. Most American Muslims have deep misgivings about these aspects of American foreign policy, but their response, at least so far, has been to object in the healthy tradition of American political dissent - not to turn to militant plotting.

Muslim Americans are more likely than members of the general public to say that Americans can get ahead with hard work (71 percent versus 64 percent), according to Pew. A higher percentage of Muslims than Americans overall say they are “satisfied” with the state of American society (38 percent versus 32 percent). Pew summarizes its survey by saying that Muslims are “largely assimilated, happy with their lives, and moderate with respect to many of the issues that have divided Muslims and Westerners around the world....[T]hey are decidedly American in their outlook, values, and attitudes.”

We live in a volatile world, and it would be foolish to declare that there is no danger of the Muslim population of the United States turning away from the path of integration. Polling and anecdotal reports show that a tiny minority of American Muslims endorse the use of terrorism, at least in theory, if such acts are thought to be in defense of their religion. Another major terrorist attack within the United States could have devastating effects, provoking government crackdowns, anti-Muslim hate crimes, and intensified Muslim estrangement. But for the moment, all Americans should look with pride at the promising early progress of Muslim assimilation, while working diligently to encourage further development along the same lines.



