MUSLIM MINORITIES IN EUROPE : THE SILENT REVOLUTION*

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As late as the 1960's, Western Europeans still regarded Muslims as aliens who belonged somewhere "out there", beyond the pale of familiar culture and community. This view persisted in spite of a long history of diverse contacts with Islamic countries. Despite Muslims' growing and enduring presence, they were considered migrants by definition. Western European governments differentiated them by their economic status, their race and their nationality—not by their social or cultural norms.

Islam first emerged as a social issue between Muslim communities and their host societies in Western Europe when European governments changed their immigration policies in response to the 1972-74 recession. Governments introduced family reunification—a plan permitting immediate family members to join migrant laborers in the host country—while at the same time abruptly suspending policies to admit new male workers. Family reunification increased the contact surface between Muslims and their hosts: children entered schools, women appeared in daily life, and families gained visibility. Muslim immigrants increasingly demanded recognition of their religious practices, provoking debate among European societies and, occasionally, violent clashes between immigrants and "native" Europeans. Committed to establishing *masjids* and Islamic community organizations, a new generation of Muslims refused to practice their religion covertly or with a sense of shame, as their parents had done. While the social status of their fathers or grandfathers was defined by their economic roles,

this “second generation,” born and educated in Europe, forced Western European governments and societies to confront the cultural and political consequences of migration.

Unfortunately, Western clichés too often provide the chief framework for coping with this unprecedented situation. The presence of Muslims in Europe is commonly perceived as a cultural or terrorist threat. With this reductive and biased point of departure, many reflections on Islam in Europe fail to reach any enlightening conclusion. The very question that many of these analyses seek to answer—“Do Muslims fit into European societies?”—presupposes a radical opposition between Islam and the west. This opposition formed the basis of Orientalism, which has implicitly informed many subsequent theories on Islam and politics, such as Samuel Huntington's theory of “clash of civilizations” (HUNTINGTON 1996). Orientalism is characterized by a substantialist approach to religion and a linear vision of history; the politics of the Islamic world, according to this view, are inherently theocratic and recidivistic (DUPRET 1994). A survey of the current scholarship on politics and Islam in the Arab and Muslim world often reveals a similar perspective. Rationalized language disguises a normative and value-laden approach, which tends to disparage the political legacy of the Muslim world while equating the Western political tradition with moderation, democracy and human rights. (CESARI: 1997b)

Scholarship on Muslims in Europe falls prey to the same essentialist approach that characterizes political analyses of the Arab world. This approach involves a totalization effect: it mistakenly supposes that all immigrants of Muslim origins are devoutly religious and observe all the principles of Islamic law. It thereby overlooks the variations in Muslim belief and practice resulting from the impact of migration, as well as the influence of the pluralistic environment of Western Europe. Considering Muslims as an undifferentiated whole

legitimates the view of Islam as a threat, prevalent in much European scholarship on Muslim minorities.

Centering on this recurring theme, explanations of the Muslim "threat" vary from one country to another. In France, various experts and journalists focus on the negative influence of Islam in the suburbs. These accounts have produced a kind of moral panic over the imagined rise of home-grown Muslim extremists. In the autumn of 1995, French police killed Khaled Khelkhal, the chief suspect in a terrorist bombing campaign. This incident provoked widespread public debate about the phenomenon of alienated young French Muslims joining violent Islamist groups. In Great Britain, the Runnymede Trust supported the publication of a report on Islamphobia in 1997. The report, describing "the prejudice and discrimination" Muslims encounter in everyday life, reveals the prevalence of close-minded and xenophobic attitudes towards Muslims in Britain (RUNNYMEDE TRUST 1997). In Germany, Heitmeyer's book *Verlockander Fundamentalismus*, which implicitly equated Islam with violent and subversive activities and branded Muslim youth as "at risk," generated heated public debate (HEITMEYER 1996).

This kind of vision implies three major misperceptions. First, it neglects the important transformations in Islamic identity underway among the generations born or educated in the West. These Muslim youths are involved in a quite new secularization process, which is re-positioning Islam into the private sphere. Second, this essentialist vision does not take into account the fact that different cultures and ethnic boundaries affect both the meaning and the content of Muslim identities. Sectarian, ethnic and nationalist groupings, in many cases, play a more prominent role in Muslim identity than any abstract notion of a universal brotherhood of believers, or *umma.* Finally, these analyses are often founded upon an artificial and

misguided opposition between Islam and modernity. This opposition prevents analysts from understanding that references to Islamic law, or to the vocabulary of Islam in general, do not signify archaic attitudes, but instead demonstrate the capacity of this culture reconcile its religious traditions with issues of social and political modernization (BURGAT 1995).

Islam as a Transnational Religion

In Europe and in the West more generally, claims asserting an antagonism between Islam and modernity are situated within a broader debate about the "return of religion". The modern notion of religion as a system of personal belief, disconnected from the political and social realms, sheds little light on either the social function of Islam historically or the new forms of religiosity in Europe. One should not forget that the Western notion of the separation of church and state is not only relatively new, but also under intense scrutiny and debate today. This concept has artificially compartmentalized religion, doing violence to its nature and reinforcing a static, reified conception of religious traditions, rather than revealing their dynamic inner nature. According to this post-Enlightenment perspective, any religion whose doctrines do not conform with the relegation of spirituality to the private sphere appears to be retrogressive.

Increasingly, however, this approach is no longer dominant. Rather than examining how Islam can fit into a modern European context, it is more constructive to rephrase the question: What new forms of interaction between religion and politics are developing today, both in the Arab-Muslim world and in those societies where the separation of church and state originated? In a period when the basic values of Western societies, such as individualism,

science and progress, are being called into question, when modernity and Western world are no longer synonymous, Third World societies are now addressing modernization and other pressing social issues in their own cultural languages. The use of Islam in the political and social arenas in Islamic countries demonstrates this quest for cultural authenticity. In European societies, the return of religious references to social and public life serves as another example of the growing tendency to blend religious and political meanings.

To explain this greater mobility of meanings, it is necessary to articulate a new conceptual framework to overcome the separation of politics and RELIGION (HERVIEU-LEGER 1993, MICHEL 1996). In fact, the two spheres are characterized by similar social and symbolic processes, and many scholars are currently examining how beliefs circulate from one realm to the other. Despite their similarities, religion, unlike politics, requires the legitimization of tradition. The strong role of tradition in the transmission of religious beliefs produces two consequences: on the one hand, dogmatic rigidity and on the other, the control of consciousness and behavior. This control may be exerted simultaneously in two directions: it extends outward from the religious community, expanding the influence of religion in society; at the same time, it works within the community, reinforcing the barriers that separate the group's members from the rest of society. Depending upon their social and cultural contexts, religious communities exercise widely varying combinations of external and internal ideological control. The distinction between internal and external controls sheds light on the relationship between religion and politics: religious groups defining membership *extensively* link their traditions with political and social processes and translate their doctrines into a broader public mission, while groups defining membership *intensively* emphasize the bond among members and the individual's spiritual experience.

This perspective allows us to draw a critical distinction between the workings of Islamist movements in the Arab-Muslim world and those in the West. So-called fundamentalism in Muslim countries refers to an extension of Islamic references to different social, cultural, economic and political spaces which were formerly secular, at least since independence. Islamization in the Western context, on the other hand, operates on the intensive level, reinforcing the primacy of Islam in members' lives, often to the detriment of other social bonds. The minority condition of Muslims in the West is the chief factor producing these different emphases. For many Muslims in Europe, whose parents or grandparents emigrated from countries where Islam is the state religion, or at least the religion of the majority of the population, the experience of life as a minority in a context of political and cultural pluralism is a novelty. In their efforts to practice Islam in Europe, they confront problems previously unexamined by the Islamic tradition: Muslim theology has not yet provided a systematic formulation of the religious implications of minority status. As the ranks of Muslim minorities in the West swell, however, many Muslim theologians are approaching this issue today.

Since the development and institutionalization of Islam in Europe necessarily involves interaction between Muslim minority groups and governments and religious organizations in the Middle East and North Africa, any examination of this subject must be linked with an analysis of cultural globalization. The improvement of communications and transportation, as well as the striking growth in recent international migrations, have contributed to new forms of ethnic groups, often labeled "transnational networks." In this shrinking world, it seems that nobody leaves forever. Technological developments constantly provide new and more efficient means of keeping in touch. Increasingly, people identify simultaneously with different

nations and cultures, and manage activities and loyalties that cross national boundaries. The term "diaspora," whose meaning is extrapolated from its historical connection with the Jewish condition, may be useful in analyzing these new phenomena. A group must possess three main traits to comprise a diaspora: the awareness of ethnic identity; the existence of group organizations; and the persistence of relations—whether monetary, political or psychological—with the homeland[1].

"Diaspora" refers to the ongoing ties, bridging both time and space, which ethnic groups maintain with their countries of origin; therefore, a diaspora may be considered as a specific sort of transnational network. Religion is an important aspect of these transnational networks and activities, since it increases the necessity for international circulation and mobility. In the case of Islam, diverse needs and activities—from the demand in Europe for religious leaders and teachers from the Middle East and North Africa, to the funds that Muslim-majority countries donate to religious organizations in Europe—contribute to the movement of people and money across the borders of nation-states.

Thus, mobile dynamics establish the autonomy of social groups in the international relations field. These social groups do not strive to assert themselves as collective actors in a transnational space; instead, private interests push them into this unintended role. Family reunions, marriage arrangements and business activities, for example, are usually motivated by individual or family interests, but these activities often entail international mobility. Private decisions affect not only visiting rights, family groupings and monetary flows, but also religious, linguistic and cultural models, indirectly producing a collective result on the international scene.

A glimpse into the complex interaction of local, national and international groupings characterizing Islam in Europe reveals some of the shortfalls of current scholarship on the subject. Because of the importance of transnational networks for the European Muslim community, any analysis that stresses Muslims' obligations to the host society, to the exclusion of international influences, fails to provide a balanced view. The adaptation of Islam to the democratic context is a two-dimensional activity, involving both the status of Islam in the countries of origin and the status of ethnicity in the different host countries. Developments in the status of Muslim minorities hinge equally on the political and cultural climate of the *dar al-Islam*—the Muslim world as traditionally defined—and that of the European countries.

The Emergence of a Post-Migration Religious Minority

The core dynamics of Islam in Europe are characterized by conflict, negotiation and compromise—between the ethnic and religious ties, between the host country and the country of origin, and among Muslim minorities of different ethnic and national backgrounds. These processes, producing controversy and challenging the status quo in both Europe and the Middle East /North Africa region, disprove stereotypical views of Islam as anti-democratic and resistant to political and cultural change. (CESARI:1994, 1997a)

One dynamic driving minority Islam in Europe might be described as a conflict between the specific bonds of ethnic and national groupings, and the universal bond of Islam. Islamic organizations and social movements in Europe are often anchored in ethnic and national ties derived from the country of origin, rather than the transnational *umma.* These ethnic ties often endure over generations, qualifying European Muslims' ties with the

"homeland" as a diaspora, even though individual Muslims frequently deny the strength of their communal bond with the country of origin. North African immigrants are mostly likely to evince this discrepancy between real and perceived ethnic and nationalist ties. Families of Algerian descent, even if they do not describe themselves as devoted to Algeria, brave political violence and unrest to visit their families frequently. Attachment to the homeland often takes the form of family ties, rather than an overt nationalist bond: families of immigrant descent send home remittances, trade goods through the black market in the country of origin, and search for potential spouses for their children through family networks in North Africa. Other forms of attachment are more explicit and less intertwined with family relationships, such as the growing number of satellite dishes in North African communities in France, allowing households to receive Arab television channels.

The challenge of establishing an institutional framework for Islam, as well as the strength of family and cultural ties, contributes to the tendency toward ethnic and national factionalism among Muslims in Europe. When first-generation migrants in France launched the first public calls for Islamic worship spaces, they made their demands independently, with no assistance from organizations and governments in the countries of origin. It soon became clear, however, that the difficult task of creating of a network of Islamic institutions in France would require scholars, teachers and funding from the Middle East and North Africa. Imams recruited to manage mosques in Europe usually accept the offer, because these positions allow for more economic security and political stability than they could hope to attain at home. Also, their position as religious authorities living in Europe often allows them a safe space in which to oppose political regimes in the Middle East and North Africa. Immigrant circles in Europe frequently serve as sounding boards for political dissent that would normally be

prohibited in the countries of origin. The Berber rights movement, initially suppressed in both Algeria and Morocco, first gained a foothold in France; Germany, similarly, has provided fertile ground for the Turkish Islamist movement. Both the political agendas of religious leaders in Europe and the influence of funding, often donated from one "home country" to its nationals abroad, accentuate ethnic and national divisions among Muslims.

Today, however, many young Muslims are attempting to combat this tendency toward factionalism. While previous generations accepted the primacy of ethnic and national ties in the practice of their religion, Muslims in Europe today often feel that these networks conflict with the universal bond of Islam. European Muslims of North African descent are among the most likely to experience this sense of conflict. Since their countries of origin do not offer widespread access to Islamic education, North African Muslims in Europe often seek intensive training in the Islamic tradition in Saudi Arabia or Egypt, rather than in their parents' homeland. Islamic ties, for these young Muslims, refer exclusively to the concept of *umma*, or community of believers. They express their transnational Islamic identity not just through their espousal of an orthodox Islam, free from the "taint" of national or ethnic traditions, but also through their sense of solidarity with their "brothers" abroad. The outcry of Muslims all over Europe during the controversy in Britain surrounding Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* attests to this solidarity, as did their concern for the plight of Muslims affected by the Gulf war and ethnic conflict in Yugoslavia.

In the face of these developments, the question of whether the religious group should reinforce or transcend ethnic bonds has become the most contentious issue surrounding organized Islam in the West. This debate has given rise to fierce competition among religious leaders seeking to impose their own conception of the community in different European

countries. Some of them intend to maintain a relationship with the homelands and a sort of ethnic partition of the religious community, while others defend a global view of Islam (CESARI 1997a). It is illusory to think that European Islam can cut itself off from the influence of different Muslim groups' countries of origin. Therefore, the main issue on the agenda should be to find conditions under which European Muslims may both assert their specificity as a minority, and form a legitimate part of the *umma.*

As well as a tension between ethnic and broader religious loyalties, a complex triangular interaction among Muslim minority groups, their receiving countries in Europe, and their countries of origin also develops. Homeland governments frequently try to manipulate the presence of their nationals in Europe to their advantage, in an attempt to improve relations both with individual host countries and with the European Union. At the Barcelona Conference of November 1995, for example, North African governments used the migration issue as a bargaining chip, demanding more benefits from the Euro-Mediterranean policy. A similar relationship of bargaining and compromise has taken shape between Germany and Turkey. The Turkish state made no attempts to intervene in the affairs of its nationals in Germany during the first wave of migration, in the 1970s. After the military coup of September 1980, however, it established a European annex of the Directorate for Religious Affairs in Ankara, the Dyanet Isleri Turk Islam Birigli (AMIRAUX 1998).

The dynamics of conflict and compromise visible among European Muslim groups today have dovetailed with social change in the Middle East and North Africa to combat traditional perceptions of Islam as an inherently anti-democratic and static worldview. Commonplace views among Western scholars hold that Islam condones unequal relationships between believers and unbelievers and between men and women, and that it is intolerant of

diversity and political dissent. In cases in which Islamist groups are actually prominent players in electoral politics, such as in Egypt, Jordan and Algeria, skeptics often speak of these groups as "hijacking democracy." As more Muslim countries begin to experiment with democratization, however, they are disproving stereotypes about Islamic society. Muslim scholars and political thinkers have condoned many techniques of modern democratic political organization—such as elections, representation, parliamentary rule, and the separation of powers—as compatible with Islam as they understand it. They have also embraced key values such as freedom, equality, individual responsibility and accountability, despite the fact that general principles are confined to the framework of *shari'a* (MOUSSALI 1997). Viewing these developments, some commentators have argued that the prevalence of autocratic governments and the lack of opportunities for democratic input in many Muslim-majority states may be attributed more to political impediments than to any inherent tendency of Islamic society (HADDAD 1995).

The settlement of Muslims in democratic societies plays a key role in changing the terms of this debate. The "transplantation" of Muslims into Europe, necessitating interaction with a largely non-Muslim environment, is crystallizing the social and cultural questions surrounding the role of Islam in modernity. Historically, the influx of Muslim populations to the West represents a unique challenge: Islamic law, elaborated chiefly between the eighth and ninth centuries, did not examine the possibility of Muslim minority communities resulting from voluntary migration, since Islamic society dominated the cultural, political and economic realms during this period. Muslim minority groups are contesting traditional views of Islam as a social system by re-positioning the relationship between religion and the public sphere. This process involves the individualization and privatization of Islam.

The Emergence of a Muslim Individual

Their status as members of a post-migration religious minority affects the ways in which contemporary Muslim youth identify with religion. “First-generation Islam,” hampered by an uprooted sense of national identity and a weak organizational structure, is increasingly giving way to new forms of religiosity, characterized by individualism, secularism and privatization. This emergence of a Muslim individual is partially the consequence of the migration process. Exile implies changes in the ways religious beliefs and practices are transmitted from one generation to the next. Among North African immigrants, the gap between the values of the first generation and the values of their children is more pronounced than among other immigrant groups (MALEWSKA-PEYRE 1982). As part of working-class French society, the parents have struggled to maintain the cultural system of their birth country, while their children have been socialized more by French institutions, such as schools and social workers. In general, as well, the first generation failed to pass along Arabic language skills to their children, and abandoned many North African cultural habits. The growth of a "vernacular" Islam in Europe is the most interesting sign of this change: increasingly, public discussions, sermons and literature are conveyed in the local European language. As the cultural legacy associated with the country of origin diminishes, non-first-generation Muslims begin to conceive of their religion less in terms of family and tradition, and more in terms of individual belief.

This social adaptation process of Muslim minority groups has placed Islam within the three interrelated paradigms of secularization, individualization and privatization, which have

until recently been distinctive characteristics of Western societies. Secularization refers to the decreasing functionality of religion in the structural differentiation of society. Individualization means a sharpening of self-consciousness, privileging personal choice over the constraints of religious tradition. Individualization is often associated with privatization: religion is increasingly confined to the private sphere, and religious values and rules are not placed at the center of one's personal orientation to life, but are conceived as a kind of annex or compartment. Like French Christians, many Muslims now identify most strongly with their religion during large festivals and at birth, marriage and death. A related pattern, often referred to as consumerism, affects European Islam as it does other religions, especially among young people. Like buyers, people are increasingly choosing which tenets and rules of their religion they will recognize and which they will ignore. The inculcation of Western values through the educational systems certainly has an influence and can explain the emphasis on critical debate and reflexive questioning. (ROGERS ALISTAIR AND STEVEN VERTOVEC, 1998).

But individualization, as well as reflexive questioning, can also be associated with collective and social identification with religion. In other words, strict observance and fundamentalism are also the outcome of individual choice. This tendency toward individualization explains why one generation evinces two seemingly opposite trends: a wholesale abandonment of Muslim attachments, and the attraction to Islam as a global symbol of resistance to Western political and cultural imperialism. (CESARI:1998)

Privatization of Islam

For these young people to define themselves as Arab or Muslim represents a symbolic assertion that is not always connected with their everyday lives. Usually, they have adopted

the most important values of French society, such as liberty and equality. As they absorb the mores of the host country, they often grow more critical of the situation in their family's country of origin, and suspect that their relatives consider them too westernized. Due to these tensions, the decision of young people to define themselves in France as Arab or Muslim indicates less a feeling of nostalgia for their country of origin than a response to their situation in France. Often, it is a reaction to discrimination. The relationship between these youths and French society is unequal, because their families' countries of origin are considered poor. In the case of North African immigrants, this inequality is also a consequence of colonial history. The more the relations between the groups are unequal, the more migrants are evaluated through pejorative ethnic categories. Even if these second-generation Muslims automatically obtain French nationality (according to the *jus soli*), they are still defined and considered as Arab or Muslim.

This negative perception produces different and opposite reactions among North Africans. The majority consider Arab and Muslim identity as positive, despite their negative connotations in the French context. In others words, they manage a semantic reversal: the more their Islamic and Arab origins are despised, the stronger their identification with them. But this identification with the Muslim or Arab world does not mean that they live as Muslims or Arabs; it is a more symbolic allegiance. At the same time, because this cultural identity is derived from values transmitted through the family, it is also a very emotional and passionate identity. This identification with the Muslim world is not limited to their parents' country, but extends to the worldwide Muslim community, especially involving solidarity with and interest in struggles such as the Palestinian cause and conflicts in Bosnia and Chechnya. This focus on the Muslim world was particularly significant during the Gulf war,

during which many European Muslims felt solidarity with the Iraqi people, while at the same time wishing not to be suspected of disloyalty toward France (CESARI 1991).[2]

Young Muslims often feel an affinity with both their families' values and the French cultural system. This coincidence of values is not hypocritical or deceitful, but an attempt to manage different loyalties. Attempts to juggle the two value systems are easier when young people's identification with France is rooted in the local communities where they were born and educated. A more abstract "French" identity, focusing on political values such as liberty and democracy, is more likely to produce ideological conflict with young people's feelings of loyalty toward their countries of origin. Identification with their local context is often more meaningful for young Muslims than is French nationalism.

Although the new generations are not always practicing believers, they do frequently respect Islamic rules and values. Most define themselves as believers and have a positive perception of Islam. This attests to their desire to remain within their parents' community. To them Islam signifies, above all, important rites and episodes of family life, such as feasts and holidays. Meaningful occasions create a rupture with the space and time of the dominant social environment. This emphasis on festive moments, rather than on the daily practice of Islam, is due in part to the fact that most second-generation Muslims in Europe have not received a real religious education, either inside or outside their families [3]. This lack of religious education within the family can be explained by their parents' attitude towards Islam during the first period of migration. During that time they neglected Islamic prescriptions, because they did not consider themselves to be permanently settled in French society. Moreover, within the traditional rural family in North Africa, religious grandfathers or uncles are more involved in children's religious education than their parents. This important role of

the extended family cannot be duplicated in France, and the migrant family is often unable to undertake the responsibility of religious education, particularly if it has been separated and then reunited by the migration process[4] .

To describe their relationship with Islam, young European Muslims often distinguish between practicing religion and believing religion. Islam forms part of their cultural legacy within the private sphere, serving as a source of ethical and moral values, but it has no direct influence on their social and public behavior. This discrepancy between the private and public functions of religion is especially acute for the upwardly mobile. Individuals thus demonstrate their autonomy from the group, and act as mediators between the content and the application of Islamic law. In this way, they express their inventiveness and liberty. This profound change in the practice of Islam is related to new forms of religiosity within modern societies. The believer no longer obeys the norms legitimated by tradition or institutions, but instead chooses among "salvation goods" according to PREFERENCE (CHAMPION AND HERVIEU-LEGER 1990). An individual logic thus moderates the collective dimension of Islamic membership. The attitudes of second-generation parents toward the religious education of their children reflect this logic of consumerism: they selectively pass on to their children the tenets of Islam they consider important, preferring a liberal education. This trend is most prevalent among well-educated parents.

But the individualization of Islam is constrained by two firm religious prescriptions: circumcision and the prohibition of intermarriage. Muslims in Europe attach great meaning to circumcision. Although this requirement is not yet one of the "five pillars of Islam," it is considered a strong shaping force of the identity of the community. In a non-Muslim society, it acts as the ultimate sign of attachment to their origins. The restriction of marriage to non-

Muslims, another important outward symbol of Muslim identity, is more complicated in its application. According to Islamic law, only women are barred from marrying non-Muslims; a man may marry any woman, as long as she is a member of the "people of the Book" (Christians, Jews, Muslims). When men choose not to marry non-Muslim women, their opposition is justified not by religious arguments, but by cultural ones: they contend that there would be a cultural incompatibility between husband and wife and a risk of domination of one by the other. Even so, the latest national statistics from France show a growing number of marriages across religious boundaries among young Muslim men (STREIFF-FENART 1989)[5] Among women, given the greater taboo, sexual relationships and cohabitation with non-Muslim men occur more frequently than does intermarriage. Women who are financially autonomous, and thus able to exert independence from their families, are the most likely to become involved with non-Muslims. These relationships rarely result in marriage, however, since this would call the woman's Muslim identity into question, and might lead her family to disown her.

Most Muslims born and educated in France try to find some coherence between their parents' values and those of French society. That explains why, even if they are not always strict in their practice of Islam, they still prize this part of their family legacy. The emphasis they place on privacy in their relationship to Islam constitutes a radical break with the status accorded to religion in their parents' countries of origin. But individuality can also be associated with so-called fundamentalism.

Islam as a New Form of Citizenship

The Islamist trend among young European Muslims is very recent. Although they still represent a small minority, a growing number of young people have become stricter in their respect of Islamic rules. As they grow acquainted with the texts and practices of orthodox Islam, they often distance themselves from the religious habits of their parents, which they perceive as superstitious. They distinguish these customs from what they call "the real Islam." Displaying impressive initiative, they either learn on their own or seek the help of young students who come from Arab countries and are often committed to various offshoots of the Muslim Brotherhood, ranging to the MIT of Rashid Ghannushi in Tunisia or Algerian Islamist movements (Islamic Front but also Hamas). For these young religious leaders, Islam cannot be reduced to ethics or confined to privacy. Instead, it informs social behavior and can even justify collective action. Although some of them are involved in opposition groups contesting the regimes of their home countries, they do not use Islam to disseminate political propaganda among young Muslims in Europe. Instead, they intend to preserve Islam among young people and to prevent their assimilation.

For young people, Islam is a credible alternative to the prospect of unemployment, drugs, alcohol or delinquency. It allows them recover some personal dignity and to project a better image of themselves. They seek to reaffirm their identity and to live according to Islamic teachings. Contrary to one widely held opinion, this phenomenon is not exclusively an expression of opposition to the West, but is also a positive affirmation of self-confidence among young Muslims. Young people are often turning to an Islam purified from the accidents of its traditional readings. For the more educated among them, it is no more an Islam of the Moroccan, Algerian or Pakistani countryside, but instead a return to the basics of Islamic teaching through immediate contact with the sources, the *Qu'ran* and the *sunna*. Islam in the

West should have a specific and appropriate actualization, and this is the message the young are clearly conveying.

In order to achieve this “Islam of the West,” scholars are reflecting on the legacy of the *Qu’ran* and the *sunna,* in order to re-examine the relevance of the concepts of *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-harb.* These terms, literally meaning “house of Islam” and “house of war,” are used in the classic texts to distinguish between Muslim and enemy territories. The term *dar al-harb* is not appropriate to describe the condition of Muslim citizens in secularized democracies: most of them, or their ancestors, migrated voluntarily to these countries, and for the most part they live there peaceably. That is why the opinions of *ulema* in the Muslim world on the situation of Islam in Europe have evolved. The condition of large populations of Muslims permanently settled in Europe has forced scholars to reconsider their previous admonitions to distance themselves from society, not to take the nationality of a Western society, and to keep in mind that they must "go back home" as soon as possible. All of these statements, presented as *fatawa* in the past, do not correspond with social realities today. A considerable number of *ulema* have come to the conclusion that Muslims in Europe should be able to organize their futures according to the tenets of Islam in their adopted countries (CESARI 1998).

Since developments in Europe inform many of the new trends in Islamic thinking, it is necessary to analyze Islamic renewal movements in relationship to the European context. It is impossible to understand the behavior of young Muslims in Europe today without bearing in mind the strong influence that their European environment exerts on their beliefs and opinions. One prevalent trend in Europe has particularly encouraged Islamic renewal among young people: the challenging of previously accepted notions of progress and modernity. For some young Muslims, religious membership fills the gap left by weakened institutions, such as

schools, political parties and trade unions, which had traditionally strengthened social solidarity and projected an image of progress. Economic recessions further challenge the mythos of social mobility and reinforce young adults' impression of something missing in their European environments, a gap which only religion can fill. These social realities are prompting young people of other creeds, as well, to turn to religion. For young people in search of collective identity, Islamization may serve simply as a source of solidarity, rather than a belief system requiring strict practice. Following in the footsteps of past social movements, such as the civil rights and antiracist demonstrations of the 1980s in France, some young people today are using Islam as a vector for collective action and protest.

The Islamization of European Political Cultures

Immigration and citizenship laws, while crucial, are not the only factors impacting the status of minority groups in European countries; policies dictating the status of religion in the public domain play an equally important role. A cursory comparison of the immigration policies of France and Germany would seem to indicate that France accords more respect and openness to newcomers than Germany. In the 1960s, Germany implemented a *Gastarbeiter* (guest worker) policy: permitting migrant workers to enter in response to a labor shortage, the German government granted them only provisional residence permits. This precarious legal status, combined with the German policy of privileging of blood-based over territory-based citizenship criteria, makes it very difficult for the migrant workers of the 1970s and 1980s to gain citizenship today. In response to the obstacles they have met, immigrants have organized associations, often under the auspices of their country of origin, to represent their cause before

the German government. In France, on the other hand, where *jus soli* is applied, the children of migrants rapidly become nationals, and therefore citizens. (CESARI:1995)

When one examines the structures accommodating ethnic and religious diversity in Europe, however, the seeming openness of France's immigration procedures belies other social policies that inhibit the cultural integration of minorities. Political culture in France is built upon the idea of the individual as the basic social unit. Social solidarity is thus based on the equality of individuals. Ethnic and religious ties should, according to this perspective, play no role in public sphere. The nation is conceived as a framework for individual emancipation. That is why France adopted a policy of equal treatment and punishment of all discrimination, while carefully avoiding the recognition of group rights. This perception of group-based religious identity as a threat to France's secular culture may explain the nervousness with which the public reacted to Muslim demands that France permit the wearing of the headscarf in public schools.

The political traditions of the Netherlands and Great Britain, unlike that of France, accord respect to particularistic identities and have historically recognized ethnic and religious communities within the public sphere. While France emphasizes the integration of individuals, Great Britain places primacy on processes of collective bargaining and collective integration. Civil society, rather than the state, develops the mechanisms of social solidarity. The political process in Britain is based not on the absolute equality of individuals, as in France, but on civil ethics, such as mutual respect and fairness. This emphasis favors pragmatic solutions accommodating the concerns of different social groups. At the same time, however, it also implies that British society is more tolerant of inequality among ethnic and religious groups on the national level. In Germany, more diversity is permitted in the public

sphere than in France, and more formal organization of religious and ethnic groups is required than in Great Britain. On the one hand, the German political system holds that any group forming part of German society should have a right to representation in public; if particularistic ties are recognized as part of society as a whole, this view contends, all members will maintain a stable identification with society. This, by the way, is one of the reasons for the hesitation of the German public to admit new groups: integration into German society takes usually one to two generations longer than in other European countries. On the other hand, the German system requires more systematic and centralized organization of minority groups, in order to avoid too much heterogeneity and therefore inequality (SCHIFFAUER 1997).

These models, reflecting the shape and dynamics of their respective civil societies, are now changing under the influence of the Muslim presence. In all of Western Europe, the appearance of Islam has introduced heated debate on religious freedom, tolerance and the acceptable limits of the public expression of faith. The different position accorded to religion in each state's conception of social membership, however, has made for very different interactions between Islam and the "secularized West" within Europe. In France, the "headscarves affair" challenged widely held assumptions that *laicite* prohibits public displays of religious affiliation. In Britain, Indian and Pakistani Muslim groups are contesting race-oriented policies that brand them as "blacks" or "Asians," rather than Muslims. Similarly, in Germany, Turkish Muslim groups seek to form representative bodies authorized by German legislation, which will advocate their interests as German Muslims rather than as alien "Turks." Thus, the "Islam question" galvanizes the most controversial social debates endemic

to each European country: the status of religion in France, the status of ethnicity in the UK, and the status of nationality in Germany.

In France, this debate concerns the content of secularity, or *laicite*: Islamic membership creates confusion over the boundaries between the public and private spheres, which have appeared to be stable since the passage of a law declaring the separation of church and state in 1905. Islam, whose doctrines emphasize the social and communal facets of religious belief, cannot be confined to homes and places of worship, as Catholicism has been. Islam has disrupted the balance among three major "pillars" of French political life: unity, respect of religious pluralism and liberty of conscience. Recent decades have witnessed a shift in the sources of social conflict: while until the 1960s, most internal strife in France stemmed from workers' demands for economic and social rights, the battleground today has shifted into the cultural realm. As religious and ethnic minorities demand the right to collective recognition in the public sphere, the French political ethos of individualism is unequipped to respond to this new dimension of social conflict.

From now on, each country in Europe must to face up to a new challenge: the institutionalization of Islam within the present framework of legislation. Different initiatives have been taken: "CORIF" in France (Council for Reflection on Islam in France), the superior council of Muslims in Belgium, and national organizations in Great-Britain and in the Netherlands charged with overseeing the building of mosques, the employment of imams, and the availability of halal meat. But these attempts to organize European Islam have until now been relatively unsuccessful, because of the national, ethnic and doctrinal cleavages dividing Muslim populations. Does this factionalism perhaps reflect the anxiety of a Western culture attempting to impose its own standards, without really taking into account either the demands

of immigrant Muslims or the process of religious transformation in transplanted Islam? Admittedly, the transition phase inaugurating a uniquely European Islam is in evidence everywhere, but the social and cultural dimension of religious belonging tends to be overrated, and European Muslims are still far from a confessional Islam, focusing chiefly on ritual and cult. The future of European Islam hinges on the way young Muslims in Europe today will live their beliefs, and how they will eventually reinterpret Islamic doctrines to accommodate their needs.

Finally, one must consider the ways in which the construction of the European Union could influence the form and the content of Islamic expression. The 1986 stage of European unification initiated visa requirements for nationals of North African countries, and through the approval of the Schengen agreements by Italy, Spain and Portugal in 1990 and 1991, reinforced the borders separating Europe from its southern and eastern neighbors. At the same time, social issues such as the controversy surrounding the Gulf War and the publication of *The Satanic Verses* in Britain brought European Muslims together in protest, provoking hostile reactions from Europeans who, for the first time, viewed Europe's immigrant Muslims as a unified whole. All these events led to both questioning of the significance of Muslims' collective presence in Europe and radicalization of European Islamic identity. Some commentators fear that this trend in Europe could feed on and contribute to the radicalization of Islam underway on the other side of the Mediterranean.

Pluralism as an issue

How to adopt a European nationality while retaining one's sense of ethnic origins and faith is not a new issue in the Netherlands or Great Britain. It is new, however, in France and Germany. Indeed, the problem of national identity and multiculturalism remains a contested issue. This debate concerns not only countries with a tradition of assimilation, but also countries where multiculturalism is politically recognized.

In the past, culture has been defined as a kind of luggage packed with goods from home, which one may either decide to keep or alternatively replace with new goods offered by the host country. Superficial features of the country of origin, such as clothing, foods and rituals and more importantly, language, are usually tolerated rather than encouraged in Europe's host countries. As a consequence, the proclaimed multicultural society, which was intended to grow out of the freedom of cultural choice, has remained an undefined entity. The politically proclaimed freedom of cultural choice has led to a paradoxical situation. European societies emphasize, at the same time, tolerance of cultural diversity and implicit normative assumptions of the superiority of mainstream cultural norms, valises and models. "We," as representatives of the dominant collective community, create the "others" (KNOCKE 1997). At the political level, the space reserved for the development of multiculturalism has been managed and defined by mainstream power holders. Religious communities, as important as these may be, are segregated into ethnic niches. Public funding, as well as administrative rules and regulations, have served as instruments for controlling religious minority groups from above. In the Netherlands, for example, the superior status of the dominant culture is taken for granted, while other cultures are viewed as problematic (ESSED 1991).

Moreover, the situation of Muslims in the West is quite different from the status of other religious minorities (migrants or indigenous converts) who, however ethnically diverse,

possess a shared Judeo-Christian culture. Muslims find themselves in a Western cultural context where they are often regarded as completely “other,” just as Jews did in the past. Ignorant attitudes among Europeans, who often equate Islam with extremism and terrorism, contribute to this stigmatization; so, too, does Europeans’ failure to appreciate the extent to which Islam is part of a Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition. Despite its monotheism and prophetic tradition, Islam has been grouped with "foreign religions" in Western scholarship, university curricula, libraries and bookstores. While there are significant differences among these three faiths, there is also a common theological outlook and shared ethical monotheism, which can serve as a source of mutual respect and confirmation, rather than confrontation. Many Europeans interpreted the demonstrations, violence and threats that accompanied the Salman Rushdie affair to indicate the presence of radical Islamic networks with international connections; this view reinforced stereotypes about militant Islam and raised questions about national security and immigration policies. That is why the traditional debate over the “assimilation” of Muslim populations is often perceived as a question of whether such assimilation will entail a sacrifice of national interest (ESPOSITO 1996).

All of the controversies surrounding Islam in Europe center on moral pluralism: what is the moral basis for a shared public culture? Is agreement on common social and cultural values possible? (LECA 1996). Europe’s rapidly growing Muslim population is defying the capacity of public policy to draw the limits of tolerance, and hence, challenging the operative public values of European societies. (PAREKH : 1995)

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[1] Sheffer provides a more extensive definition of diasporas:

Diasporas are distinct trans-state social and political entities, they result from voluntary or imposed migration to one or more host countries, the members of these entities permanently reside in the host country, they constitute minorities in their respective host country, they evince an explicit ethnic identity, they create and maintain relatively well-developed communal organizations, they demonstrate solidarity with other members of the community and consequently cultural and social coherence, they launch cultural, social, political and economic activities through their communal organizations, they maintain discernible cultural, social, political and economic exchanges with their homeland whether this is a State or a community in a territory within the state which they regard as their homeland, as this as well as for other purposes (such as establishing and maintaining connections with communities in other host countries), they create trans-state networks that enable exchanges of significant resources, and they have a potential capacity for either conflict or cooperation with both the homeland and the host country, possibilities that in turn are connected to highly complex patterns of divided or dual authority and loyalty within the diasporas (SHEFFER 1996).

[2] During the Gulf War, this mistrust clearly appeared in the attention paid to them by the French political class and within public opinion because their loyalty to French institutions was questioned.

[3] For people who are now aged between 25 and 35 years old, there were no Koranic schools when they were children. The situation is now different because the development of Islamic associations in France since the early 1980s was accompanied with the foundation of numerous Koranic courses. The majority of mosques established during this period provided religious education for children.

[4]These two stages refer to two periods. In the first the North African migrant came to France alone: he married in his home country and often went back to meet his wife and his first children. In the second period when he let his family come to France and when new children were born there.

[5] Two social circles seem to favor intermarriages : university and associations (STREIFF-FENART, 1989).

It should be noted that it is impossible to get precise informations about intermarriages in France because official statistics only provide information about weddings between foreigners and nationals. There is no measure of exogamy on the French-born generations because it is illegal to officially differentiate people according to religious or ethnic origin. It is possible to state that between 1974 and 1985, the number of marriages between North Africans and French people doubled, rising from 2703 from 5189 outstripping the marriages between Italian and French or between Portuguese and French. (MUNOZ-PEREZ and TRIBALAT, 1984).