

“Constructing a Religious Cleavage: The Comparative Effects of Political Salience and Policy Venue in Muslim Incorporation Policies in France and Great Britain”

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Before 1989, the issue of religious difference and the role of faith more generally was hardly a matter of societal concern much less a matter for public policy in the Western European state. This would change in a relatively short period of time -- in as little as a decade. Religion emerged as a salient political issue during the 1990s often as a result of domestic and international events that highlighted concerns of transnational influence, a rise of religious identity and group demands that challenged established church-state relations and conceptions of secularity, and a connection of religion with problems of social order and violence. International (and internationalized national) events such as the Iranian Revolution, the Rushdie affair in Great Britain, the Gulf War, and the Palestinian Intifada in the 1980s-1990s helped change how Muslims were viewed in Western Europe, elevating a perceived religious difference to the center of public debates (Bleich, 2005; Cesari, 2004; Cesari, and McLoughlin 2005; Roy, 2004; Kepel, 2002; Kepel, 2004; Esposito, 2003). Recently, the Madrid and London bombings, the murder of the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, and the Danish cartoon controversy appear to have accelerated this trend. Governments have responded with initiatives to channel and, at times, construct religious difference that is commensurable with the liberal, democratic Western state, labeling certain groups and activities as assimilable (namely, secular, liberal, and moderate) as opposed to unassimilable (transnational, conservative, and, in certain cases, observant).

This paper provides an examination of the policies undertaken by the British and French governments to address the issue of Muslim incorporation, through security and other restrictive measures that would “deconstruct,” that is marginalize and expel, as well as measures to “construct” assimilable religion. Three main governmental actions can be identified across the cases to construct religious difference into something that is commensurable with the Western state. First, governments sought to manage and channel difference through the **creation of institutions and institutional processes**. Second, the government **provided funding** to particular civil society organizations that it deemed supportable and **commissioned research** which reflected governmental priorities and, ultimately, how it framed the problem and solutions. And, third, governments set about legitimating certain identities over others through the

recognition of particular actors as acceptable mediators and/or leaders of a particular community, often through the above actions.

The Larger Context

This first section will situate the paper in the broader dissertation argument. In my dissertation, I provide an historically-based account of the “turn to religion” in Western European politics, demonstrating when, how, and why religion came to the fore in Muslim incorporation policies. The first part of my dissertation, thus, provides the historical pathways through which religion was politicized in the Western European state -- and why it has not been to the same degree in the United States -- focusing on how transnational events elevated a perceived religious difference to the center of public debates, introducing new policy dilemmas for Western states. It is within this new environment that policymakers increasingly viewed Islam negatively. This new definition of the problem, a perceived incompatibility of Islam within the Western state, then led to changes in incorporation policies with the goal of engaging the Muslim community on more explicitly religious terms.

I argue that international events fundamentally altered the politics of religion in the three ways, ultimately leading to the politicization of religion and Muslim incorporation issues. First, international events provided a higher profile to Muslim community to citizens that were unaware or indifferent, increasing the salience of the issue among the general public. Events surrounding the Rushdie affair and headscarf controversies put religion on the agenda of society and the media in the 1990s. Through these events, which implicated issues of social control, the presence of Muslims in Britain and France was brought sharply under the public and political gaze. The Muslim community became a visible community and the perception of the “Other” gained considerable ground. With the Rushdie Affair and headscarf controversies, the first formal recognition of domestic Muslims and the presence of Islam was a highly politicized one and became a visible focal point for politicians and society with respect to broader connections with violence and political Islam in the Muslim world. And, through these events, the threat posed to Western liberal and progressive values was highlighted.

International events increased the salience of religion and the Muslim community in the political/electoral realm as well, providing those among the Left concerned with illiberal religion and those on the Right with immigration, social order, and national identity issues with evidence of a problem -- rendering *religion* a problem. The second result, then, would concern the politics among the political right. Among the right, concerns over social control would strengthen the position of the mainstream right as well as the far right, depending on conditions specific to the domestic context. A third result would be to alter the politics among the political left. Although traditionally the party of immigration and integration rights, the change in the policy problem to religion -- and, specifically, illiberal religion -- highlighted competing liberal principles for the political left. According to scholars, the left has not been as constrained historically by ideological contradictions and other competing internal factors that prevent them from embracing immigrants. This, I argue, has changed as a result of the politicization of religion, introducing new cleavages and internal contradictions over competing principles (for example, of gender equality and supporting immigrant values).

The second half of my dissertation focuses on how this politicization affected the form of state policy response, the focus of this paper. By focusing on the processes of politicization, my study demonstrates the importance of the “politics of religion,” that is to say, how the problem was defined, debated, and resolved by the major political actors, including the traditional political parties of the right and left, as well as the chosen political venue to deal with the problem is central to this story.

To understand the characteristics of the policies, including the broadly restrictive (that which serves or tends to limit the rights and/or freedoms of individuals or groups) or inclusive (that which serves or tends to expand the rights and/or freedoms of individuals or groups) policy tendencies toward Muslim incorporation, I find that the salience level of a particular issue and the policy venue (whether it is undertaken in a bureaucratic or administrative environment as opposed to a electoral or party politics environment) is

important (Givens and Luedtke, 2005).¹ The higher the political salience as well as the more policy is developed through a political process, the more restrictive the policy. On the other hand, the less salient or mediatized and the more policy is developed by bureaucrats, the more inclusive the policy response. While the politicization of religion (i.e. increased issue salience) and policy venue may help explain the broad contours of policy, the particular characteristics of the policy are affected by policy legacies such as church-state relations and colonial legacies. Past policy affects which policy actions are considered relevant and provide a template for government elites in fashioning the specifics of the policy.

A Comparative Look at British and French Policies

There is a growing literature on Muslims in the West (Nielson, 1999; Al Sayyad and Castells, 2002; Hunter, 2002; Kepel, 2002; Ruijs and Rath, 2002; Allievi and Nielson, 2003; Esposito and Burgat, 2003; Mandaville, 2003; Marechal et al., 2003; Cesari, 2004; Grillo, 2004; Kepel, 2004; Mandaville, 2004; Roy, 2004; Cesari and McLoughlin, 2005; Fetzer and Soper, 2005; Klausen 2005a; Klausen, 2005b; Laurence, 2006; Laurence and Vaisse, 2006; Bowen, 2007; Jenkins, 2007; Esposito and Mogahed, 2008). The individual and societal level has been studied by psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists and often focused on the consequences of living as a minority in the West. While this literature has demonstrated how the Islamic religion and Muslims have adapted (or not) to the living conditions of the West, only recently have scholars turned their attention to the effect of the political sphere and how governmental policies have shaped the way Islam and Muslims have evolved in the West, a central concern of my research (Aluffi Beck-Peccoz and Zincone, 2004; Klausen, 2005a; Laurence, 2006).

In all three cases, governments adopted a general two-fold policy converging around 1) restrictive measures to marginalize unassimilable religion and counter radicalization in religious spaces and 2) inclusive

¹ Terri Givens and Adam Luedtke (2005) argue that the the different venue of policy development and implementation will affect whether policy is restrictive or liberal. It matters whether policy is developed by a narrow group of policymakers such as bureaucrats or whether policy is developed within the domain of electoral politics by politicians. What is more, Givens and Luedtke present evidence which demonstrates how the salience of the issue among both the general public and among political actors affects the content of policy. As the salience of an issue rises, policy tends to become more restrictive. However, if the issue salience is rather low and not politicized by political actors then policy may reflect a “problem-solving” process rather than a reactionary one. Thus, Givens and Luedtke claim that the restrictive nature of immigration policy is a result of high issue salience, driven by the politics of the far right, and that political actors are “highly responsive to public opinion vis-a-vis immigration” (2005, 17).

measures to promote moderates and the integration of the domestic Muslim population. While the restrictive response would implicate religion and the Muslim community as a source of the problem, the inclusive measures would mark an important policy shift within government: one that viewed a particular type of Islam (and, consequently, particular Muslim organizations and leaders) as partners in the solution.

As religion became a matter of public policy concern -- -- as media coverage increased, as public consciousness and interests increased, and as the issue rose to the top of the political agenda through the involvement of political party and electoral politics -- both the British and French governments acted to assert state control through restrictive policies that were designed to marginalize and expel that which was considered “bad” and dangerous. These restrictive measures largely took place through a highly politicized and mediatized policy process in the areas of security and immigration. The restrictive measures were intended to rid the state of terrorism and other transnational threats; at the same time, through the connection to security concerns, these measures targeted those strands of Islam that the state deemed unassimilable (for example, Salafism), resulting in a widening of the state’s ability to interfere in religion.

Many of the British and French government actions to construct a secular, liberal Islam would take place in the domain of bureaucrats rather than politicians, particularly in the case of British faith policy. The processes through which inclusive measures were initiated and enacted proceeded in a markedly different manner than the restrictive measures: inclusive measures would be ushered in through an administrative process rather than the political process with policy developed by a narrow group of policy-makers who tended to be “problem-solvers” rather than politicians constrained by political and electoral considerations. Policy would be developed in the presence of low-level government officials and outside high-profile government venues. The fact that these processes were initiated and conducted outside the levers of party politics and largely under the radar of the domestic media and society is not unimportant. These efforts reflect a desire to keep religious issues off the public agenda, a depoliticization of religion.

My argument is that one needs to understand the restrictive and inclusive measures as interdependent. Although scholars have focused on the constraining aspects of the far right politics and policy legacies, the successful politicization of religion has also provided policy opportunities. As the salience of the issue rose, by successfully linking the state’s “Muslim problem” with security concerns, the

politicization of religion provided the necessary political argument and political opportunity space for the state's more inclusive measures. The security imperative justified and demanded measures to bring Muslims to "opt in" to Western political and societal structures. I am suggesting that we might profitably view politicization as circumscribing certain policy avenues but also opening up what were previously unavailable avenues. Moreover, there would be a reinforcing quality to the restrictive and inclusive measures.² The restrictive measures would be negatively group targeting while inclusive measures would be group producing, both actions further entrenching the "Muslim" identity. In this process, the Western state would put forth an identity that was hegemonically "liberal": portraying itself as a bastion of liberal values of freedom of thought, speech, conscience, and gender equality.

Deconstructing Islam: British and French Restrictive Security and Immigration Measures

Scholars and the popular media have focused almost exclusively on the security and counterterrorism responses of Western states to the terrorist attacks. In particular, 9/11 has been hailed as an important turning point in the state policy response toward Muslim immigrants and domestic communities (EUMAP, 2002; Cesari, 2004; Cesari and McLoughlin, 2005; Crotty, 2004). An important component of state policy toward the Muslim communities are measures that are negatively group targeting, those that seek to monitor and deport illiberal and dangerous elements. These measures are housed in two primary sources: counterterrorism and general security policy and immigration and integration policy. There has been less sustained attention to the inclusive measures and, what is equally important, most accounts have not attempted to integrate the two responses. This section will present a brief description of the restrictive responses, highlighting cross-national trends.

Across cases, governments devoted more resources and underwent substantial organizational change. However, as Schain (2008b) demonstrates, 9/11 was not necessarily the significant departure point; many of the counterterrorism responses in Great Britain and France were developed before 9/11 and then reinforced by the events. The British government would seek greater counter-terrorism powers in measures after the

² I have taken this insight from Joppke's work on civic integration and anti-discrimination measures in Western European states.

2005 bombings in London. First, the Labour government allocated more resources. For example, the British government allocated £85 million to the security services in December 2005, to complement £100 million dispersed after 9/11, to aid in detecting, investigating, and countering the international terrorist threat (Intelligence and Security Services, 2006, 34). In January 2006, the Home Secretary announced the Home Office was allocating an additional £446 million to the police forces over a two-year period for “countering the international terrorist threat and domestic extremism” (Intelligence and Security Services, 2006, 37). The French government also increased its security funding. In addition to the increased funding, the governments also sought a general overhaul of the security organizational apparatus, prompting greater coordination between different security branches as well as local police (Intelligence and Security Services, 2006 HRW, 2007). The French regime -- after 9/11, the model for other European states (Haddad and Balz, 2008) -- is characterized by a centralized counter-terrorism system, including a separate court system (Cour d’Assise; Trial Court of Paris) with specialized corps of investigating magistrates and prosecutors, non-jury trials, and preventive measures, notably preventive detention and administrative deportations (HRW, 2007). What is more, Western governments sought a pursuit of wider powers.³ This has included powers to shut down objectionable mosques, ban radical parties, deport “preachers of hate,” (re)institute secret terrorism trials, and establish new security units to monitor Muslims suspected of extremist sympathies.

Western states have used two policy tools: 1) control orders and deportations and 2) civic integration. Deportations, in tandem with more liberal control orders, have served as a useful policy tool for Western governments to “police” radical imams and other individuals and, thereby, affect the type of Islam preached within the state. High-profile detentions and deportations have generated intense media scrutiny. Governments, to varying degrees, have used this media attention and increased political salience to portray a hard-line security response. Indeed, public expulsions have been used even in cases where their legality and

³ In the British case, these powers have been pursued and expanded through the following: Terrorism Act of 2000; Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001; Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005; Terrorism Act 2006; and Counter-Terrorism Act 2008). In France, these powers have been expanded primarily through the 1986 reform to the Code of Criminal Conduct and the 1996 change to the Criminal Code. In addition, police powers have been expanded in 1991, 1995, 1996, 2001, and 2006.

even long-term policy effectiveness have been questioned.⁴ Deportations have become a desirable policy tool as they have allowed the current government to visibly show its actions against terrorism; it is immediate, quantifiable, visible, and easily understood by the general public. Unlike other policy measures, the government can broadcast the image of the radical cleric boarding a plane and being sent back to his home country. What is more, the government is able to gain significant political points, and perhaps electoral support, as the policy is generally supported by the public. In a poll conducted for *The Guardian* a month after the London bombings, 71 per cent of the British public agreed that “foreign Muslims who incite hatred should be excluded or deported from the UK” (Ford, 2005).

More than any other country, France has pursued an active policy of forced deportations, both of those accused of terrorist-related offenses and imams that are deemed by the security officials as preaching ideas that advocate terrorism or radicalize (HRW, 2007, 6). From 2001-2006, a 2007 Human Rights Watch report cites 71 “Islamic fundamentalists,” 15 of which were imams, deported by the French government. The majority of the deportations are administrative expulsions (*arrete ministeriel d’expulsion*), ordered by the Interior Ministry. A recent British Home Office report cites the following figures: between July 2005 and the end of 2008, 153 people have been excluded from UK on national security grounds (2009, 64); three people have been deprived of citizenship on grounds that it is conducive to the public good for national security concerns (2009, 64); and 40 people have been subjected to control orders under the Terrorism Act of 2005 (2009, 66), of which 6 have been deported (2009, 171).

Even though the numbers may be low, governments have benefited from several high-profile cases. Immediately after the July 2005 bombings, the British government deported several imams for supporting or inciting terrorism in sermons. One of the most publicized examples is the case of Abu Hamza, an autodidact imam of the Finsbury Mosque in north London during the 1990s. For years, British authorities had Abu Hamza under surveillance in connection to terrorist activities abroad. In August 2004, shortly after he was ejected as the imam of the Finsbury mosque and started preaching on the street, British security arrested Abu Hamza under the Terrorism Act of 2000 which made a crime the commission, preparation or

⁴ In some cases, deportations have actually pitted electoral and political aspirations against the desires of security officials to continue monitoring for increased intelligence.

instigation of acts of terrorism and stripped him of his British citizenship. In France, the government deports foreign imams that advocate violence but also those that advocate values deemed incommensurable with Republican liberal principles. The most publicized case concerned Abdelkader Bouziane, an Algerian imam who was expelled twice from France in 2004 for questioning the equality of the sexes and condoning the beating and stoning of wives (HRW, 2007, 56-60).

Citizenship tests, along with other measures that promote language and liberal value acquisition, form a second component in the Western state's deconstruction of Islam. Many of these measures are housed in recent immigration and integration legislation. Joppke's research has demonstrated a converging trend toward a reorientation of immigrant integration policy, a move toward civic integration, which according to Joppke, has shifted the burden of integration to the individual in the enforcement of liberal values (Joppke, 2007a; Joppke, 2007b). These policies, pioneered in the Netherlands before 9/11, often require the immigrant to have a basic (and, in some cases, more advanced) knowledge of the host country's language, history, institutions, and values. These measures effectively provide the Western state with a mechanism to weed out undesirable and unequipped (i.e. unskilled) immigrants. Thus, the British and French governments subject foreign imams, the majority of imams in Western Europe, to various civic integration requirements, with the goal of ensuring that those imams who enter the country will not contribute to the radicalization of Muslim youth. To the extent that some of these requirements have been shifted to the country of origin (through provisions that the requirements are completed before one can apply for a residency permit), Western states have managed to prevent undesirable immigrants from entering the state. What is more, these actions are highly popular with domestic audiences, allowing governments to control without jeopardizing political support.

Deportations and civic integration requirements are a part of government actions to rid the state of undesirable and threatening elements. As Interior Minister, Nicolas Sarkozy defended French initiatives on grounds of defending French values: "We will not keep people on our territory who issue calls to hatred, to violence and to disrespect of our democratic values. They will leave the territory, and they will leave quickly" (qtd in HRW, 2007, 49). There is an important performative function of the restrictive government actions. Government initiatives can be viewed, in part, as symbolic actions geared toward maintaining an

atmosphere of state power over social order concerns. The character of government action, particularly the highly visible nature, lends support to the argument that they were considered performances, particularly if one looks to the high number of high-profile temporary detentions or arrests and the low number of subsequent prosecutions and convictions, suggesting the actions were meant to produce a powerful image for the media in the short-term but not directed to a long-term strategy. In tandem to these measures, governments acted to manage and shape the actions of those who stayed. This will be a focus of the next section.

Constructing Islam: British and French Buffering Strategies

The restrictive measures pursued by the Blair government were only one pillar of its overall post-7/7 security response. While the first pillar would implicate religion and the Muslim community as sources of the problem, there would be an important policy shift within government: one that saw Muslim organizations and leaders as partners in the solution. The cornerstone of the government's second pillar would turn to religion and the Muslim community as explicit partners in the government's new strategy to create and support a British Islam. As the new threat required a new approach, the response aimed to support a particular type of faith in the public sphere, a civic religion that supported British values and citizenship. And, just as the French Republic was seeking to distance itself from "bad" or "illiberal" religion, the second pillar in its response would seek to create closer ties with "good" religion. The government would support "moderate" and "liberal" Muslim associations, illustrated in its continual propping up of the Paris Mosque and insistence on appointing special representatives in the French Council on Muslim Religion (CFCM) as well as its creation of an imam training program at the Catholic Institute of Paris that sought to train imams in Republican values. The contours of this "inclusive" pillar would be circumscribed due to the legal restrictions involving state intervention in internal religious affairs.⁵ Nevertheless, the French elites (in

⁵ The French principle of *laïcité* is governed by the law of 1905, marking the separation of the Catholic Church from the French government, and later was enshrined in 1958 in the Fifth Republic's Constitution. The law of 1905 contains two separate clauses governing the French state's relationship with religion. The first article provides for freedom of conscience for individuals, guaranteeing "freedom of conscience and the free exercise of organized religions." The second article is the disestablishment clause which states that the government shall do nothing to privilege or promote a particular religion, proclaiming the state "neither recognizes, nor pays the salaries of, nor subsidizes any religion." Thus, the French government is prohibited from subsidizing the building of places of worship or supporting religious officials (Bauberot, 2004b; Bauberot, 2004c).

particular, Interior Ministers) would push the limits of French *laïcité* in the creation of a national Muslim interlocutor, a foundation for mosque construction and imam training, and an imam training program. It is in the connection with international events, particularly the security threat of terrorism, that the French state found its justification to take an activist hand in religion.

This section will take a closer look at the different government initiatives to manage and channel a particular type of Islam within the Western state, focusing on how the British and French governments created new institutions and emphasized funding and research strands to legitimize certain actors and institutions. I offer a comparative analysis of the policy instruments and strategies adopted by Western state; to date, not enough attention has been paid to the actual administrative mechanisms and domestic political processes. What one sees is a transfer away from the political realm -- from legislators, courts, political parties -- to the administrative and bureaucratic realm.

I argue that we should conceive of this response as a buffering or diffusing strategy. Similar to trends found by scholars in the area of immigration policy, there has been a degree of delegation and/or devolution -- a transfer of functions away from the central government -- as a diffusing strategy (Lahav, 2000; Guiradon, 2001).⁶ Thus, the British and French governments created institutions in order to shift the costs and liabilities of policy-making away from the central government. While the restrictive measures had the effect of raising the salience of religion in the political realm, the measures to be described below aimed to depoliticize religion. A second broad goal of these measures was to develop a more effective and adaptable state policy response. The state increasingly delegated policy elaboration and implementation to religious buffer institutions as a way to increase policy effectiveness. The degree of delegation and the relative emphasis on the two goals, though, varied cross-nationally. In particular, there have been varying degrees of incorporation and/or co-optation of new policy actors as well as the value placed on religion for the solution.

⁶ Lahav (2000), in an argument that highlights how the modern state has not lost a significant degree of sovereignty, identifies two developments in the area of immigration policy of Western liberal-democratic states: 1) the *delegation* of state functions to third-party agents and nonstate actors and 2) the *devolution* of decision making, policy elaboration, and regulations away from the central state. The state, she argues, has delegated upward to international actors, downward to local actors, and outward to private actors.

These steps were taken at similar moments as the restrictive measures outside of the political process and, I argue, are interrelated. The highly politicized and, at times, performative responses to policy problems by the governments can be viewed as the immediate and less costly policy avenue, particularly with regard to electoral considerations as the actions were highly popular among the general public. Even as the governments were undertaking these measures, though, it was acknowledged within the same political circles that an exclusive security response was inadequate. Governments undertook experiments to diminish costs, enlisting actors outside of the political process, particularly moderate Muslims, in a principal-agent type relationship.⁷ Through this process, governments sought to enhance the political capacity of the state, to make the state more flexible and adaptable, to shift the focus of responsibility away from the state and deflect criticism from political opponents as well as the general public, and to generate more effective state legitimacy.

i) New Institutions: British Religious Buffers and the French CFCM

Similar to the racial buffers created in the 1970s, the Blair government created formal bureaucratic institutions to deal with faith and the Muslim community, or “religious buffers.”⁸ Faith-related issues became the responsibility of bureaucrats rather than politicians in an effort to take religion out of politics, allowing the government to manage faith while also maintaining, at least ostensibly, that the government was not interfering with the internal workings of Islam. The most important of these religious buffers are the Faith

⁷ To a certain extent, this can usefully be described as a principal-agent relationship in which the state, the principal, delegates part of policy elaboration and implementation to an agent, a religious buffer institution or more directly to different Muslim partners. The state faces a situation in which the agent has access to more information or particular qualities that it lacks, such as infrastructure, personnel, access, and trust. As in any other principal-agent relationship, the state as the principal also faces costs associated with incomplete and asymmetric information as well as deviating preferences among the agent(s).

⁸ The strategies adopted by the Conservative and Labour parties in the 1960s-1970s to depoliticize race -- that would ultimately serve, according to Anthony Messina (1989), to politicize race in the public sphere -- would be pursued generally during the 1990s and 2000s with respect to religion. Messina describes several strategies adopted by the parties to depoliticize race which met with fair success during the 1964-1975 period. First, the major parties remained silent of the issues of race and immigration during campaign years and in other public arenas, effectively denying that race was a politically salient issue. Second, the major parties maintained a dual strategy of passing restrictive immigration measures along with race legislation and integration measures more generally, and this was done to send contradictory signals to the electorate. And, thirdly, racial buffers, quasi-governmental bureaucratic bodies, were established to address and investigate race-related problems in order to deflect the responsibility away from those in government and the parties and inhibiting non-white political participation (Messina, 1989, 44).

and Cohesion Unit and the Preventing Extremism Unit of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). These institutions were created to take charge of the Labour government's policy commitment to faith communities (Faith and Cohesion Unit) and the Muslim community (Preventing Extremism Unit).

The creation of these institutions served two primary purposes. The first was a pragmatic policy consideration: as the Blair government's faith policy shifted to working with more faith organizations, through the wider community cohesion framework and in its preventing extremism agenda, the government would need to create institutions that could effectively manage the new partnerships.⁹ These structures institutionalized government-faith partnerships as a permanent aspect of policy interaction rather than the preceding ad hoc initiatives. There were several advantages to institutionalizing government-faith partnerships, including pragmatic considerations of utilizing faith organizations for their space, people, and access for public service delivery. Previous government-faith partnerships, in addition to being ad hoc and for limited purposes, largely consisted of one faith organization (or an interfaith forum that acted as a single faith structure). In seeking to partner with a greater number of organizations as well as those below the national level -- in effect, by moving beyond the "usual suspects" -- the government needed a permanent body that had the capacity to supervise the various partners with differing levels of need.

The second, and most important, purpose was to depoliticize or diffuse the Labour government's faith policy. This was particularly important with regard to the policies directed toward the Muslim community and the problems within Islam. By creating a bureaucratic institution, the government was able to maneuver more widely as many of the decisions and outcomes were out of the scrutiny of the public eye, an insulation for both the government and the Muslim organizations receiving support from the government.

⁹ In the British case, the shift in liabilities of certain activities to private actors -- to non-profits, interfaith forums and councils, to women's organizations, etc -- was a part of a broader trend occurring in other policy areas. As a part of its "third way" politics, the New Labour government was concerned with greater inclusiveness and increased community participation (Furbey and Macey, 2003; Gilliat-Ray, 2004; Smith, 2004). As Sophie Gilliat-Ray demonstrates in her research on faith in the New Labour government, social inclusion was an important commitment of Blair's third way, with speeches repeatedly emphasizing values such as "fairness," "participation," and "inclusion" (2004). This change in government philosophy, emphasizing principles of equal worth, community, partnership, and social inclusion, would lead to the government to reach out to the community to address public policy concerns. Faith communities would be included within government, as Furbey and Macey describe it, through a wider casting of the net (2003). As a part of this third way politics, one sees a shift to the local level as well.

Through the religious buffers, the Labour government delegated the management of certain events to Muslim organizations in an effort to provide greater legitimacy as well as deflect criticism. For example, the government outsourced the management of the Scholars' Roadshows, a program targeting Muslim youth through a series of national forums of Islamic scholars, through the provision of funding and logistical support to the Radical Middle Way, an independent organization formed after the July 2005 bombings. This degree of separation is important, particularly as the government was viewed suspiciously among Muslim youth and the event's goal was to develop an Islamic-based counternarrative to the extremist message, a highly controversial subject within the Muslim community without the implications of government involvement. In effect, delegation allowed for government objectives to be pursued through the backdoor, particularly as the government's stamp is not found on event publications. This was the government's goal; in practice, the insulation was far from perfect.

It is in the religious buffer institutions that the bulk of the policy work has been introduced and implemented. Let us take a closer look at the Preventing Extremism Unit to reflect upon the British government's policy development toward its British Muslim communities. The Preventing Extremism Unit -- housed within the Department of Communities and Local Government (formerly of the Home Office) as a separate institutional unit alongside the Race, Cohesion and Faith Directorate -- was set up in December 2006 to implement the British government's prevent strand of the counter-terrorism strategy within the domestic context. The unit is comprised of professional government bureaucrats pulled from other established departments (such as the Home Office, ODPM, Cabinet Office) as well as individuals that were involved in the temporary Preventing Extremism Together working groups set up directly after the 7/7 bombings. Moreover, several Muslim advisors, one full-time Senior Faiths Advisor and two external advisors, were hired specifically for the purpose of provided better knowledge of the theological and political positions of various groups and to facilitate broader connections within the Muslim community.

This Unit is the lead organization of the government's new strategy, "Winning Hearts and Minds," an explicit policy shift in 2007 to engaging with "moderate" and "mainstream" leaders and organizations. With the "Winning hearts and minds" initiative, the government shifted from a policy of engaging with a wide range of Muslim and faith partners, viewing the faith community as an undifferentiated and unerring force

for good in the civic sector, to a policy which separates and distinguishes faith organizations and leaders according to a set of conditions. What is more, the focus on shared values would move from vague rhetorical references to tolerance, fair play, and democracy, to more particular values, particularly implicating illiberal elements within Islam. It is in the support and funding of platforms for “moderates” that points to a degree of government intervention outside of traditional government roles.

The issue of creating a transparent Gallic Islam motivated then-Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy to assert in 2002 that the French state should encourage a more public form of Islam, stating “What we should be afraid of is Islam gone astray...‘garage Islam’...‘basement Islam’...‘underground Islam.’ It is not the Islam of the mosques, open to the light of day.” (qtd in US State Department, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90175.htm>). As Interior Minister, Sarkozy called for the need to modify the 1905 law separating church and state. In 2005, the year France celebrated the centennial anniversary of the 1905 law separating church and state and a year after the National Assembly passed the law to ban the headscarf in school, Sarkozy charged Jean-Pierre Machelon with looking into the issue of revising the church-state institution. The Machelon commission issued a report that called for a revision of the 1905 law to allow local communities to finance the construction of places of worship and create a less rigid set of criteria in defining an association of worship (*association cultuelle*) which is governed under the 1905 law.¹⁰

Years before the Machelon report called for the French state to aid Islam, the French Interior Ministry would be doing just that in the creation of religious buffer institutions. While the British government utilized its religious buffer institutions to provide a more flexible and effective policy response

¹⁰ Like those calling for a *laïcité* that is more modern and multicultural *laïcité* during this time period, the Machelon report considers the reinterpretation of *laïcité* as not only essential but within the French Republican tradition. In arguing that the French state should revise the 1905 law, the report contended that *laïcité* should be viewed as a principle that can change and adapt; one could change the law of 1905 and not change the foundation of the Republic itself. In fact, the Machelon report provided an historical account of the principle of *laïcité* that stresses how it has changed and been reinterpreted in French history and after the law of 1905. For example, the report suggested that the restoration of the religious peace from 1905 to 1944 was actually the result of the reinterpretation of the concept of *laïcité* that did not conceive of the principle as an activist separation and did not exclude any form of financial support. The report then goes on to reinforce this argument with recent Constitutional Court decisions that have ruled the state can finance certain aspects of religion. A recent case was the 15 March 2005 decision in *Ministre de l’Outre Mer* in which the court argued that the constitutional principle of secularism does not by itself interdict the provision of grants in the general interest to certain worship activities and facilities (“le principe constitutionnel de *laïcité* qui...implique la neutralité de l’Etat et des collectivités territoriales de la République et le traitement égal des différentes cultes, n’interdit pas par lui-même, l’octroi dans l’intérêt général et dans les conditions définies par la loi certaines subventions à des activités ou des équipements dépendant des cultes”) (qtd in Machelon, 2005, 23).

while deflecting criticism of intervention, the French government created its own institution to buffer (or deflect) the fallout in utilizing religion in its policy response. To a certain degree, the political stakes were higher in France due to its unique church-state history. The degree of delegation was circumscribed by legal constraints concerning state action in the religious sphere as well as a less sanguine assessment of the benefits of the partnership. Rather than an abdication of state sovereignty, the French state's response was a way to bring Islam in lines with what is thought proper to religion but also in lines with French values as well, a strong-handed way "to take Islam under state control and to assimilate it" (Kuru, 2008, 11).

Since the 1990s, successive governments on both the Left and Right tried to create a "representative body" for the Muslim religion, seeking a single interlocutor to not only effectively manage the religious issues arising from Islam in France (and, the subject of considerable controversy among politicians as well as scholars, as a political interlocutor). The French government, in a more nationalized, top-down policy, has attempted to make Islam more "French" through the government's institutionalization of Islam in the creation, first of the Council of Reflection on Islam in France in 1990 (*Conseil de Reflexion sur l'Islam de France*, CORIF), and, in 2003, the French Council for Muslim Religion (*Conseil Francais du Culte Musulman*, CFCM).

The French Council of the Muslim Faith (CFCM), established May 4, 2003 under the auspices of Nicolas Sarkozy as Interior Minister, was intended to bring Islamic practices into the open, thereby affording more input from the French government and less dependence on foreign influence. Throughout the almost 15 years to establish a representative Muslim body, the French state insisted on how it was a representative body for the Muslim religion rather than for the Muslim community.¹¹

The structure of the CFCM, to a certain extent, supports this conclusion. The CFCM is composed of an executive board of a president, two vice-presidents, and a secretary and a general assembly of 150 delegates. In the final structure, the major Muslim organizations are represented on the executive council; the executive board's positions are filled by a representative of the major French Muslim associations (Paris Mosque, *Union de Organisations Islamique de France*, *Federation National de Musulmans Français*). Delegates to the

¹¹ In a 2005 special edition of *French Politics and Society* dedicated to the CFCM, scholar Jonathan Laurence underscored this very point: "Though the Interior Ministry has taken pains to ensure the CFCM's broadly representative character, the Council is technically limited to representing the Muslim religion -- not Muslims themselves -- in state institutions. The CFCM was never intended to speak for the Muslim population, but rather to give voice to -- and oversee -- the religious associations frequented by observant Muslims" (Laurence, 2005, 2).

general assembly are elected through a complex electoral process. Over 1500 mosques and associations elect or appoint delegates to regional councils, which then elect 150 representatives to a general assembly; seven eligible federations and five grand mosques elect another 24 organizational representatives; and, finally, ten unaffiliated “personalities” are appointed to the assembly (Billon, 2005; Klausen, 2005; Laurence and Vaisse, 2006; Bowen, 2007). Moreover, the negotiated electoral formula privileges large prayer spaces with 210 large prayer spaces elected around 75% of the delegates (Laurence and Vaisse, 2006). This formula was necessary for the participation of the Paris Mosque who, with one of the largest mosques on French soil, has been afraid of losing its influential status within the government. The CFCM has seven working groups to facilitate the practice of Islam in France. These working groups cover areas related to prayers spaces, training of imams, the appointment of Muslim chaplains, the organization of the Aid slaughter, halal certification, and facilitation of the hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca, one of the five pillars of Islam) (Billon, 2005; Laurence and Vaisse, 2006, 153).

Beyond concerns of equality and integration, however, French state action should be interpreted as ensuring Islam conforms to the French notion of religion. That is, government officials have defined, regulated, and observed through the CFCM in order to ensure that Islam, like other religions in France, is

“organized, bounded, orderly, contained in its buildings and defined by worship practices in those buildings. If it strays into the street, selling tracts or proselytizing, it is out of bounds, and even when it is tolerated it is no longer protected by the French constitution and can easily be quashed in the name of protecting order” (Bowen, 2007, 18).

The institutionalization of Islam in France, thus, is an effort to organize and regulate Islam within the French Republic. The main driving force in the process has been the secular state: the process has been initiated and directed by the French government, specifically by the Ministers of Interior, who have initiated the first meetings, participated in how to define the procedures of election to the Council, drew up criteria for participation (and, to a certain extent, to ensure broad representation of all Muslim perspectives), and provided the organizational support for the elections (Laurence and Vaisse, 2006; Laurence, 2006; Bowen, 2007).

The CFCM was intended to provide the French state with a degree of legitimacy. To the extent that it did not or could not provide this legitimacy, the French government worked outside and undermined the institution. The issue of using religion to support government policy is seen in the actions of Nicolas

Sarkozy during the headscarf affairs. Because the CFCM did not provide the government with a unified response in 2003 to the issue of whether the headscarf was a religious prescription or not -- with the UOIF arguing that the headscarf was a religious obligation and Dalil Boubakeur of the Paris Mosque taking the contrary position -- Sarkozy went to Al Azhar in Egypt to obtain a religious decree that argued the headscarf was not a religious requirement for French Muslim girls.

ii) Funding and Research

After the issue of security dominated the agenda, the British government's funding priorities would shift. First, the government allocated more funding toward faith initiatives. Second, the additional funding overwhelmingly benefited Muslim organizations and interfaith forums. Third, the funding priorities, in addition to benefiting a particular constituency, also targeted particular policy goals. Most importantly, faith organizations were required to demonstrate how their programs reduced the risk of extremism. One of the primary funding streams is the Preventing Extremism Pathfinder Funds, launched by the DCLG in October 2006. The funds supports local authorities in developing programs of activity to tackle violent extremism at local level. These funds were solely used to support activities directed toward the Muslim community or to support Muslim community organizations themselves, replacing the government's cohesion agenda of promoting broader shared values with a particularistic one. Specific priorities include a focus on "empowering mainstream voices", promoting "dialogue," supporting theological teaching, and capacity building to "recognize and challenge violent extremism" (DCLG, 2007b). For the 2007-2008 funding cycle, the DCLG allocated £6 million to support over 200 grass-root projects. Moreover, the government has pledged greater funding in the future, with the expectation of funding £18 million in projects by 2010. This is complemented by £650,000 by the Preventing Violent Extremism Leadership Fund, rolled out in June 2007 by the DCLG, with a more targeted mandate of supporting capacity-building within the Muslim community.

The religious buffer institutions would be the primary channel through which the British government would fund faith organizations and activities. Through these institutions, the government would interact with particular faith groups and particular representatives, shaping what is "acceptable" and what is "unacceptable" religion in the public sphere. The different funding schemes set up by the Blair government

would seek to develop such an orientation through funding objectives (for example, funding those faith organization which delivered services to individuals outside of their faith) and stipulations, particularly those that supported the community activities of a faith organization or required interfaith interaction in order to receive funding.

This focus on faith would also be reflected in the research commissioned by the British government starting in the 1990s. With the increasing recognition that faith was a major component in British citizens' lives, particularly for minority communities, the British government sought to understand the role of religion in relation to its major policy objectives. This resulted in a significant research agenda that both sought to assess and understand the relevance and salience of religion for individuals and communities as well as how faith could be utilized in the political and public domains. Since 1997, the Department for Communities and Government (DCLG) (and its predecessors) produced upwards of 20 publications focusing on faith issues. This does not include reports in other government departments which look at faith/religion in connection to specific policy focus, such as the role of faith schools and faith education addressed by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

This research provides evidence of how the government viewed religion at this time, suggesting what was considered significant and how it saw different policy issues connecting to religion. First, these reports highlighted the salience of religion for minority faiths, particularly for Muslims, in contrast to the wider British population. What this suggests is the government viewed religion in a particular manner: as one connected to its minority communities and, thus, implicating the larger concerns of the ethnic minorities. A common thread among research findings is the relative deprivation of the Muslim community across indicators.¹² These reports also emphasized how faith raised "distinct" issues for various policy domains, providing support for the government's move to create new structures to deal with faith. As the extremism

¹² Several studies confirm the prevalence of the perception of religious discrimination among minority faith communities, particularly among the Muslim community. A Home Office report, commissioned in April 1999 reported consistently higher level of unfair treatment reported by Muslim organizations than other religious groups. The study documents that Muslims experienced unfair treatment in every aspect of education, employment, housing, law, and local government services. Several years later, these findings were confirmed in the 2005 Home Office Citizenship Survey focusing on the issues of race and faith. This report also indicated that religious discrimination was perhaps on the rise as 52% of respondents said there was more religious prejudice than 5 years ago with Muslims mentioned as group experiencing more religious prejudice today.

agenda has risen in priority, the research that has been commissioned by the Preventing Extremism Unit demonstrates an exclusive focus on the Muslim community, including studying the issue of religious identity and its role in radicalization and the denominational and ethnic breakdown of Muslim communities.

The official narrative found in French schools and government reports universally frames the law of 1905 as the foundation for the principle of *laïcité* and, crucially, a principle that has been agreed upon from the start. Indeed, the law of 1905 is the starting-, and end-, point for the official public narrative. In both government and private reports on issues concerning the Muslim headscarf, Islam in the Republic, and even those reports focused on immigration and integration have begun with a section on the principle of *laïcité*. All of these reports would conclude that *laïcité* was under threat and reach a consensus that the French state must intervene to strengthen *laïcité*.

Moreover, a look at the issues the Stasi Commission, the commission set up by President Jacques Chirac in July 2003 to look into the issue of the headscarf, will demonstrate how the French state sought to channel the issue of Islam.¹³ The Commission's public proceedings and final report -- in highlighting issues of social order problems connected to a lack of *laïcité* in French schools -- placed the maintenance of "public order" as the prominent issue and relegated the issue of individual freedom of expression and belief as secondary to a desire to maintain a "conflict-free" school environment, defined ultimately by the Commission as a headscarf-free environment. Thus, there was a shift from privileging of individual religious freedom upheld in the 1989 Conseil d'Etat decision to the issue of public order as the paramount concern. Citing the French Constitution, the Commission claimed that the manifestations of freedom of conscience

¹³ The Commission, in typical French fashion, was dominated by distinguished intellectuals, with six professors, three members of the national Education board as well as administrators and politicians and, notably, only one Muslim (Mohammed Arkoun) (Bauberot, 2004a; Bowen, 2007, 113-114). All of the members had academic or professional experience with *laïcité*, Islam or immigration (Choudhury, 2007). The composition of the Commission in terms of initial orientations concerning *laïcité* is the subject of some debate, although it is clear that both the president, Bernard Stasi, and the general rapporteur would steer the proceedings toward a strict interpretation of *laïcité*. For example, Kuru (2008) would argue that the majority of 20 commissioners were partisans to a strict version of *laïcité*, including Régis Debre and Henri Pena-Ruiz, and only one was a positive secularist, Jean Bauberot. However, according to Jean Bauberot, a quarter were partisans of strict *laïcité*, a quarter were favorable to a more open *laïcité*, and half did not have a pronounced opinion (Bauberot, 2004a, 135).

can be restricted in the case of threats to public order. It then concluded "after having listened to both sides... today it is not a question of freedom of conscience but of public order."¹⁴

The threat to public order was not just domestic. Indeed, the Stasi Commission would justify its concern with public order in connection to a changing context, and this change in context was largely the result of international factors, with the Commission noting in the report that "the context [in 1989] was clearly different from what it is today.... [I]t is relevant to note that the charge of the Council of State [Conseil d'Etat] did not mention the question of discrimination between men and women. The evolution of the terms of the debate in fifteen years provides a measure of the mounting force of the problem" (Stasi, 2003, 29).

In its main argument that the headscarf threatened the *laïcité*, the Commission argued that it cannot be divorced from the goal of political Islam. Thus, secular France, by allowing Muslim girls to wear headscarves in its public schools, is aiding Islamists in their project to transform secular democracies into the *ummah*. Headscarf-wearing Muslim girls were foot soldiers for Islamists, even if they themselves did not subscribe to an Islamist ideology or attach a political meaning to the act of wearing the headscarf. Patrick Weil, in discussing the work of the Stasi Commission, wrote in 2004 :

"Our near-unanimous sentiment (with the exception of one member) was that we had to face a reality that was perceived at the local level, but not at the national nor obviously at the international one: wearing the scarf or imposing it upon others has become an issue not of individual freedom but of a national strategy of fundamentalist groups using public schools as their battleground."

The research and analysis, in connecting Islam to larger problems within the French Republic, and security concerns, would provide the government with the necessary argument to circumvent its legal injunction to fund religious organizations. In creating the fund, Interior Minister de Villepin took a political position against his predecessor, Sarkozy, rejecting his suggestion to change the law of 1905 to allow the Muslim communities to use public funds to build mosques and train imams. What de Villepin created was an officially recognized public interest organization -- with an initial budget of 800,000 Euros intended to subsidize imam training and the CFCM -- technically independent from the French state. The action would allow the French government to avoid direct intervention in religion. The Prime Minister's office would

¹⁴ "La commission, après avoir entendu les positions des uns et des autres, estime qu'aujourd'hui la question n'est plus la liberté de conscience, mais l'ordre public."

describe the organization's function as follows: "The Foundation aims to meet the financial constraints of the Islam of France by bringing together, in perfect transparency, the means necessary for its operation. Its action is primarily for the construction and development or renovation of places of worship" (<http://www.interieur.gouv.fr>). This organization, set up as a parallel structure to the CFCM with a similar leadership structure, would also be plagued by rivalries among the main Muslim organizations that have blocked action from going forward.¹⁵

In another action that would avoid direct government intervention while at the same time playing an instrumental role in religion, the French government, through a third party, instituted an imam training course. In 2008, the *Institut de Catholique de Paris* (Catholic Institute of Paris; ICP) began its inaugural year in administering the course, entitled "Religions, Secularism, and Interculturality." It is a two-semester course on French politics, law and secularism, given by the social and economic sciences faculty of the ICP. Students are required to take a variety of courses in four subject areas -- general history and culture of France, legislative matters, religion, and intercultural exchange -- constituting over 200 hours of course work over a six-month period followed by a six-month period for thesis writing. The classes are geared to both practical issues in "Economy and Management of Worship," with a course description noting "the aim of this course is to learn to manage and administer in the context of republican equality" to the more philosophical, including the course "Religion and philosophy."

Although officially administered through the Catholic Institute of Paris, three government departments -- the Central Bureau of Cults of the Interior Ministry, the newly-created Ministry of Immigration, Integration and of National Identity and Co-Development, and the Office of Population and Migration -- are listed as official partners in the program. The French government has repeatedly stated that it does not interfere with the internal organization of religion and that its actions in creating the CFCM, the Foundation, and the ICP program are initiatives of the Muslim community itself. However, the strong hand wielded by the Republic, particularly by the Interior Ministry, provides evidence of a greater degree of managing and shaping religion than is officially acknowledged. In the face of criticism that it is

¹⁵ Thus, even though Dalil Boubakeur of the Paris Mosque would lose the Presidency of the CFCM by 2008, he would still be in charge of the Foundation.

circumventing *laïcité*, the government justified its actions by referring to the security situation, arguing that "There was an urgent need for providing imams, who speak French and are familiar with French laws. That is why the course was organized in tandem with the Grand Mosque's (theology) institute and the Catholic institute" (Yahmid, 2009).

iii) Legitimizing Certain actors

After 7/7, the Blair government initiated the “winning hearts and minds” strategy, the cornerstone of which was an engagement of the Muslim community toward promoting shared values (DCLG, 2007a). In this new strategy, the government sought a “rebalancing” of its partnership with the Muslim community. The new government strategy laid out in “Preventing Violent Extremism -- winning hearts and minds” and a series of case studies (DCLG, 2007b) includes what the government calls a fundamental “rebalancing” of its engagement with the Muslim community to support those who are providing “proactive leadership,” and, to support those groups who have been marginalized (DCLG, 2007a, 9). What is more, the new government policy explicitly sought to support “moderate” and “mainstream” Muslim organizations. This would have important implications for the evolution of Islam within Britain. The effect was that the Blair government privileged those actors with a liberal Islamic viewpoint. Particularly, in “rebalancing,” the Labour government shifted away from national “representative” bodies and shifted to the support of three types of activities and/or organizations: 1) interfaith; 2) women and youth, and 3) civic religious leadership.

Given the Blair government’s previous commitment to interfaith work,¹⁶ it is perhaps not surprising that interfaith activities form an important component of the government’s promotion of moderates. This preference for interfaith structures stems from both practical and policy considerations. Foremost, the structure of interfaith fora, as one organization that has several different faith participants, enabled the government to work with faith communities through a single structure and not as disparate and heterogeneous groups. Moreover, from a practical standpoint, the government had already established a

¹⁶ From the ICRC through the Lambeth group and the campaign to include a religious question on the 2001 census, the role of interfaith collaboration and structures in the government-faith partnerships has been important. As is demonstrated in the history of government-faith partnerships, the government preferred to work with interfaith structures.

working relationship with interfaith organizations, particularly the Interfaith Network of the United Kingdom. In effect, the government is working with a known quantity. Moreover, the promotion of interfaith structures reinforced the government's own view of all faiths sharing common values. Interfaith conferences and frameworks are frequented by those individuals and organizations who have, if not moderate views on religious matters, views that are founded on an openness to finding common ground. Moreover, the issue of being able to dialogue and develop common ground is regarded as a positive outcome by those involved. The mere process of finding and articulating shared values leads to common denominator, moderate positions. Taken together, interfaith organizations are natural allies in the government's agenda to promote wider engagement by the Muslim community as well as emphasizing shared values.

While the British government focused on youth as a vulnerable population, it identified Muslim women as key repositories of peace and moderation within the Muslim community. Women were particularly viewed, both in Parliament and in the religious buffer institutions, as forces for moderation and liberal reform within Islam. The government described its support as unlocking the potential of Muslim women, an untapped resource, viewing Muslim women as being “uniquely” placed to challenge extremist and radicalization within the community and as positive, peaceful forces (DCLG, 2008). In order to harness the positive influence of Muslim women, the government has undertaken two general policy initiatives. First, through various Preventing Extremism program funding schemes, the government has prioritized Muslim women's organizations and those organizations with programs that serve Muslim women.¹⁷ In rebalancing of its engagement with the Muslim community, the Labour government has increased its partnerships with women's organizations. What is more, beyond a specific priority laid out after the PET working groups, the shift to smaller, local bodies has benefited women's organizations and issues.

The Labour government has also challenged the status of women within Islam itself through a more direct route. In the second case, the government has provided outside legitimization for those individuals and

¹⁷ The government has sought to provide support to Muslim women through the Preventing Extremism Unit's Pathfinder Funds as well as the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund (FCCBF), the fund supporting the Improving Opportunity and Strengthening Society initiative with a central priority, in addition to a support of interfaith activities, of bolstering faith organization capacity-building. Through these two funds, women's organizations have access to more than £6.5 million in resources with an individual grant of the FCCB Fund reaching £30,000 for the 2007-2008 funding year.

organizations challenging the status quo. In particular, the government has sought to create a direct channel from Muslim women representatives to the government, an acknowledgment that the government's former reliance on national bodies, composed of male Muslim representatives, resulted in the stifling of women's voices and concerns. First proposed during the Preventing Extremism working groups, the Faith and Cohesion Unit was given the mandate to create a national Muslim women's advisory forum, unrealized to date. This forum would seek to give voice to those "voices that often go unheard" (DCLG, 2008, 2).

The British government has also sought to develop the infrastructure to cultivate and train homegrown imams. The government is concerned with ensuring that imams would have the proper understanding, skills, and capacities to engage with young people and present a version of Islam compatible with democratic and British values, a concern with providing a "legitimate" counter-narrative. Several government initiatives have sought to tackle the "imam and mosque problem," including restrictive immigration measures as well as the creation of a national advisory body to develop a standardized code of conduct for imams and mosques in Britain. Originating from the PET working groups, the Mosque and Imams National Advisory Body (MINAB) was formally constituted in June 2006, composed of four representatives from four major Muslim organizations.¹⁸ While a Muslim community-led initiative, the government has provided funding as well as consultation to the body.

In identifying the problem as "inside" the mosque, the proposed solution has been to create a mosque that is externally -- that is, civic -- oriented, one that is transparent, democratic, and liberal. MINAB standards seek to orient the mosque to civic engagement and liberal values evident in such standards as requiring "[m]embers ensure there are programmes that promote civic responsibility of Muslims in wider society," which entailed "actively" combating violent extremism, as well as holding events which promote a multicultural citizenship (in these events, individuals would "discuss, explore and promote the importance of living in peace with others in a culturally diverse society") as well as stressing the responsibilities and rights of citizenship. This deliberate mixing of the religious role and civic role for the mosque demonstrates the push

¹⁸ The four organizations are the Muslim Council of Britain, the Muslim Association of Britain, the British Muslim Forum, and Al-Khoei Foundation.

for creating a “British Islam,” one that is not only “moderate” but supporting the goals of the secular state as well.

The resulting composition of the CFCM demonstrates the active hand of the French Republic to influence the composition of the institution and steer debates within it.¹⁹ This activist hand belies the government assertion that it is not interfering with the internal affairs of religion. Indeed, throughout the process, there has been a concern that radicals -- while having to be included for the sake of establishing a “representative” institution -- do not dominate; this would be done primarily through the propping up of moderates.

The French government has sought to legitimize moderate and liberal partners over a concern for “representativeness” during the institutionalization process. A rather conspicuous example of the activist French hand concerns how Sarkozy negotiated the terms through which “moderate” Muslim figures would be assured leadership positions. Fearing the influence of the UOIF (*Union de Organisations Islamique de France*) and the FNMF (*Federation National de Musulmans Français*), then newly-appointed Minister of the Interior, Nicolas Sarkozy, negotiated a political compromise that guaranteed the post of president-spokesman of the CFCM to Dalil Boubakeur, the director of the Paris Mosque, and the other two executive positions to representatives of the UOIF and FNMF. Insisting on Boubakeur as the first president illustrates how the government sought to privilege “moderate” Islam as the interlocutor and maintain the unofficial policy of working with the Algerian government to regulate Muslim affairs in France (Laurence and Vaisse, 2006; Bowen, 2007). The manager of the Paris Mosque, Dalil Boubakeur, was well-known among Parisien elites and well-liked, particularly as he has advocated a version of Islam that adopts Western values (Laurence and

¹⁹ The December 2002 agreement provided that the top three positions would be allocated to the Paris Mosque, the UOIF, and FNMF. As more than 50% of Muslims were not members of major national Muslim organizations, six independent mosques were chosen to be represented as well. These mosques were: Evry Mosque, Mantes la Joli mosque, Grand Mosque of Lyon, Ad Dawa of Paris Mosque, Grand mosque of Saint Denis de la Reunion, Islah mosque (neo-Islamiste).

Vaisse, 2006, 102). His liberal, moderate credentials were further instantiated when he supported the headscarf ban in 2004.²⁰

The French state would further legitimize the Paris Mosque as its “moderate” and preferred partner in 2008 with the creation of the imam training program. The Paris Mosque was chosen to provide the necessary theological training to complement the secular education provided by the Catholic Institute of Paris. Thus, once again the French state would provide the Paris Mosque with a privileged position.

In placing the French state’s institutional weight behind the Paris Mosque and Boubakeur, French leaders sought to decrease the influence of other strands of Islam within France, given form in the two large Muslim associations in France, the UOIF and FNMP. The UOIF has gained prominence over the last two decades, starting with its role in the headscarf controversy in 1989. The French state has been particularly concerned with the UOIF’s rising star, evident in the second CFCM elections in 2005, because of its ties to political Islam (and the Muslim Brotherhood in particular). The FNMP, a Moroccan-dominated organization, has also increased its grassroots support but, noticeably, not within the French state’s elite.

Conclusion

As religion -- inextricably connected to issues of illiberalism and transnationalism through international and internationalized domestic events -- rose to the forefront of societal and governmental concern, the British and French governments were prompted to pursue initiatives to address problems in the Muslim community. Legislative and policy initiatives in the 1990s and 2000s were a reaction to -- rather than anticipation of -- policy concerns, largely coming after events implicating concerns of social conflict. When the security situation resulted in a focus on problems within the Muslim community, particularly those problems associated with an illiberal version of Islam, religion was addressed as a variable to be managed by the government, to be channelled away from negative aspects, particularly in its connection with radicalization and transnational loyalties, and to be formed into what would variously be termed liberal, moderate,

²⁰ In fact, Dalil Boubakeur warned to the members of the Stasi Commission during his testimony that emphasizing religious identity in public would “open the door to demands for a separate religious status, and to communalism, something the Republic rejects because it integrates individuals and does not recognize communities” (Bowen, 2007, 159-160).

mainstream, and/or European Islam. The rhetoric of moderation divided religion into that which was “good,” requiring and, therefore, justifying, government support, and that which was “bad,” consequently, needing to be targeted, controlled, and, ultimately, eradicated. Across cases, Western governments differentiated among Muslim organizations and activities, seeking to legitimize those considered supportive of liberalism and democracy. In conjunction, the illiberal elements of Islam, particularly with reference to the role of women in Islam and other marginalized populations (i.e. homosexuals), were targeted for removal.

Across time and across cases, the European governments sought to channel what they framed as different into acceptable avenues, particularly activities and development of identities that were turned toward the liberal democratic state, that is, civic-minded and oriented to “opting in” to prevailing societal values. Although France has been the most insistent, particularly as its response has more clearly defined the values it is fighting for, all these initiatives have in common the aim to promote a particular type of Islam within the Western state. This type of Islam, often labeled Euro-Islam, entails a strong commitment to civil society, secular democracy, and individual human rights. Euro-Islam, introduced by scholar Bassam Tibi and increasingly used in Tariq Ramadan’s writings on Islam in Europe, connotes a liberal and progressive strand of Islam in Europe that is in harmony with European values. The quest for a new Muslim establishment that not only can reside in the West but can contribute to Western society -- and at this particular moment, provide security guarantees against homegrown extremism and radicalization -- is common to all government initiatives.

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