
MUSLIM INTEGRATION IN TRANSATLANTIC PERSPECTIVE

Brandon Boylan

University of Pittsburgh

This paper examines the extent to which Muslims are integrated in the United States and Europe. It utilizes and assesses country-level data, such as public opinion polls, figures on discrimination and data on participation in society in order to draw comparisons between these two regions. First, integration debates and approaches are reviewed in order to provide a framework for comparison. Second, public opinion surveys are interpreted to see how factors affecting the Muslim community differ between the United States and Europe. Third, the United States and United Kingdom - countries that both espouse multiculturalism - are used as case studies to determine how Muslim integration compares over time and in relation to the general public. Findings suggest that the inclusion of Muslims in American society has been more successful on the whole, while European countries struggle with eliminating large differences between the Muslim community and the general public. Moreover, Muslims in the United States seem to face less discrimination than other minorities, and their experience appears to be improving over time. In contrast, discrimination against Muslims in the United Kingdom is more severe than other religious groups, and seems to be remaining constant.

Introduction

The degree to which Muslims living in Western countries are integrated into their societies has become increasingly important to policymakers and researchers since 9/11. The idea that the exclusion of Muslim communities from mainstream society threatens national security has gained particular currency in Europe as a result of attacks in Amsterdam, Madrid and London as well as riots in Paris. That most of those involved in these incidents were European citizens of Asian or African descent brought many to question integration and immigration policies, and the extent to which these policies can foil a future homegrown at-

tack.

Jihadist terrorism in the United States and Europe has spurred several research agendas that examine Muslim integration in the West, but few base their analyses on direct transatlantic comparison.¹ Some studies specifically focus on Muslim integration in Europe, while others have looked at the experience in the United States.² Why is transatlantic comparison important? Similarities in political institutions, cultural values, diverse populations and threat perceptions between Europe and the United States make a direct comparison especially useful for gauging the level at which states integrate their Muslim communities. How could one say that Muslim integration in a particular country has been a success or failure without a point of reference? Comparison between the United States and United Kingdom is especially appropriate since integration approaches have been so similar.

In this study, I aim to contribute to research on Muslim integration by employing a comparative case study analysis to observe how integration differs between the United States and Europe. I operationalize integration by considering the opinions of Muslims and the general public, figures on discrimination and data on participation in society, such as education and employment. Much of this analysis focuses on providing interpretation of open-source data that allows for two types of comparison. First, I directly compare the United States and Europe using transatlantic public opinion survey data primarily from the Pew Research Center. Second, I analyze Muslim integration within the United States and United Kingdom over time and in relation to the general public or another minority group and then compare findings. Some academic research

1 For a study of Muslim integration in the West, see Abdulkader H. Sinno (ed), *Muslims in Western Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009). Chebel d'Appollonia and Reich include discussion of both Europe and the United States but do not compare the regions directly. Ariane Chebel d'Appollonia and Simon Reich (eds), *Immigration, Integration, and Security: America and Europe in Comparative Perspective* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008). Cesari carries out a transatlantic comparison, although her analysis underscores the transformation and reconciliation of Islam in the West rather than the extent to which Muslims are included into Western societies. Jocelyne Cesari, *When Islam and Democracy Meet: Muslims in Europe and in the United States* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004).

2 For studies on Muslim integration in Europe, see Jamal Malik (ed), *Muslims in Europe: From the Margin to the Centre* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2004); Jorgen Nielson, *Muslims in Western Europe* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004); Joel S. Fetzer and J. Christopher Soper, *Muslims and the State in Britain, France, and Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Arno Tausch et al., *Against Islamophobia: Muslim Communities, Social-Exclusion and the Lisbon Process in Europe* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2007). For studies on Muslim integration in the United States, see Linda Cateura (ed), *Voices of American Muslims* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 2005); Allen Verbrugge (ed), *Muslims in America* (Detroit, MI: Greenhaven Press, 2005); Geneive Abdo, Mecca and Main Street: *Muslim life in America after 9/11* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); and Aminah Beverly McCloud, *Transnational Muslims in American Society* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2006).

and governmental reports, such as the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia's "Perceptions of Discrimination and Islamophobia," provide detail on discrimination against Muslims, but do not put this discrimination in context by establishing a benchmark. It is true that Muslims in the West face discrimination, but to what extent? How does Muslim integration in Europe and the United States differ?

This paper proceeds as follows. First, I consider debates and approaches relating to integration in order to provide a framework for studying the Muslim experience. Second, I analyze the results of a series of Pew surveys in order to make general comments on the extent to which Muslims are included in American and European societies. Third, I specifically examine the cases of Muslim integration in the United States and the United Kingdom by examining opinion surveys, incidents of discrimination and levels of access to society. This approach standardizes the way in which these two countries can be compared. Finally, I conclude by offering three key observations on integration in the United States and Europe.

Integration Debates and Approaches

Steffen Angenendt identifies three debates that underscore the relationship between immigration, integration and security as they relate to Islamic issues in Europe.³ They are particularly useful in contextualizing the transatlantic comparison of Muslim integration.

The first debate links immigration to terrorism.⁴ This is an association that Ariane Chebel d'Appollonia and Simon Reich refer to as the securitization of immigration.⁵ The 9/11 attacks highlighted vulnerabilities in the US border control apparatus and demonstrated that terrorists could circumvent the immigration system. Thus, the United States made immigration a key component of its post-9/11 counterterrorism policy. The connection between immigration and security became clear when the responsibilities of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) were transferred to the newly established Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Some Europeans have followed the US lead, resulting in what many refer to as Fortress Europe. For example, as the gateway between North Africa and Europe, Spain has implemented more restrictive im-

3 Steffen Angenendt, "Muslims, Integration, and Security in Europe," in *Muslim Integration: Challenging Conventional Wisdom in Europe and the United States*, ed. Steffen Angenendt et al. (Center for Strategic and International Studies, Transatlantic Dialogue on Terrorism, 2007).

4 Ibid.

5 Chebel d'Appollonia and Reich (ed), *Immigration, Integration, and Security*.

migration policies to control the flow of immigrants, especially since the 2004 Madrid bombings. Those that subscribe to this argument claim that tough immigration policies can mitigate the risk of terrorism.

The second debate centers on how Islam is changing Europe's cultural security.⁶ Some argue that the increasing presence of Muslims in Europe is eroding the conventional European ethos, pointing to Denmark and Turkey as illustrations. In Denmark, the incendiary depictions of Mohammed in 2005 and politician Geert Wilders' anti-Islamic diatribes exemplify tensions between the Muslim community and Danish society. Though these views may be the exception rather than the rule, Denmark also struggles with aspects of Islamic culture, including arranged marriages and the wearing of the hijab. Turkey's accession to the European Union is another point of contention. Some do not want to see Turkey become European, insisting that Europe is a "Christian club." Austria's opposition to Turkey's accession is widely believed to be rooted, at least in part, in Islamophobia. For some Europeans, "the possibility of 70 million Turkish, mainly Muslim, people becoming part of the EU poses a cultural threat."⁷

The third debate cuts between the first two arguments and highlights the marginalization that some Muslims experience while living in Europe.⁸ The logic follows that disenfranchisement leads to anger, which induces acts of aggression and violence. The London bombings in 2005 and the assassination of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh in 2004 - both homegrown terrorist incidents - lead some to believe that exclusion from mainstream society breeds Islamist militancy. Robert Leiken, for example, endorses this belief in his contentious Foreign Affairs article "Europe's Angry Muslims."⁹ He claims, "As a consequence of demography, history, ideology, and policy, western Europe now plays host to often disconsolate Muslim offspring, who are its citizens in name but not culturally or socially."¹⁰ Similarly, Zachary Shore contends that Europe is "breeding bin Ladens."¹¹ Proponents argue that the way to prevent terrorism is constructing effective social integration policy and promoting participation in public life to assuage political and religious grievances.

The United States and Europe agree that integrating Muslims is neces-

6 Angenendt, "Muslims, Integration, and Security in Europe."

7 Antonia Ruiz Jimenez, *Tackling Turkey's Image Problem in the European Union* (The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2008).

8 Angenendt, "Muslims, Integration, and Security in Europe."

9 Robert S. Leiken, "Europe's Angry Muslims," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2005.

10 Ibid.

11 Zachary Shore, *Breeding Bin Ladens: America, Islam, and the Future of Europe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

sary in its own right to increase satisfaction and social capital among Muslim populations, regardless of whether social exclusion breeds terrorism. But approaches to integration have varied considerably. The more common policies include assimilation, multiculturalism and guest worker programs, and each approach espouses different goals and produces varied results.

For example, France espouses assimilation. This is marked by *laïcité* and republicanism, which establish a strong separation between church and state and guarantee citizens the right to express their faith, but exclude religion from public policy.¹² Martin Schain argues that France extends neither privilege nor protection to ethnic and religious groups.¹³ As such, France does not adhere to quota systems or affirmative action, believing that equal rights foster equal opportunity.¹⁴ For example, the government prohibits Muslim girls from wearing the hijab in schools (with few exceptions) and maintains no state-funded Islamic schools.¹⁵ Though religious diversity is accepted outside of the public sphere, all are expected to learn French and adopt French values.

Contrary to the French model, Britain has advocated multiculturalism, which promotes “tolerance and integration while allowing immigrants and ethnic groups to maintain cultural identities and customs.”¹⁶ This approach fosters recognition of British norms and values but encourages the preservation of personal culture and advocates anti-discrimination. Individualism, diversity and group membership are equally stressed in both private and public life. The United States has also promoted multiculturalism. Martin Schain observes that multiculturalism in the United States developed out of the civil rights movement and race relations in the 1960s, which shaped integration of immigrant communities by “providing a strong, pro-active national anti-discrimination structure.”¹⁷ In the United States, diversity is not always appreciated but is common while tolerance is not always granted but is expected.

Guest worker programs became widespread across Europe after World War II when reconstruction was necessary and economies were strong but labor was scarce. Immigrants traveled to Europe to fill labor shortages, but were required to return home after a few years. Guest worker programs did not have a

12 Gallis et al., *Muslims in Europe: Integration Policies in Selected Countries*, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for Congress, 2005.

13 Martin A. Schain, “Managing Difference: The Success and Failure of Integration Policy in France, Britain, and the United States” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, New York, NY, 2009), 5-6.

14 Gallis et al., *Muslims in Europe*.

15 Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*.

16 Gallis et al., *Muslims in Europe*, 12.

17 Schain, *Success and Failure of Integration*, 32.

strong integration component because immigrants were never meant to live in European societies permanently. The Turkish population in Germany is illustrative. Jonathan Laurence notes:

German leaders would be well advised to concentrate on the practical concerns that undermine social cohesion: political alienation, overzealous policing, and socioeconomic inequality. Germans' caution at embracing Turks as a minority community and insistence on rupture with the home country were often perceived as indifference; politicians' repeated criticism of 'parallel societies' did nothing to eliminate their existence. The fundamental problems of Turkish Germans and other Muslims are rooted in disenfranchisement, social discrimination, and the lack of economic and political integration, not religion.¹⁸

For years, Germany did not engage its Turkish minority, refusing to address problems that arose from these co-existing societies. Though recent attempts have aimed to alleviate this effect, problems from this dual society persist.

Michael Minkenberg discusses the relationship between countries' immigration and integration policies.¹⁹ France's immigration policies, he argues, continue to be less open in comparison to the United States, and its level of cultural integration, in terms of religious and cultural group rights, remains low in contrast to Britain and the United States.²⁰ This is not surprising since its strategy has encouraged assimilation and prohibited special rights for religious groups.

Nonetheless, France has recently begun to debate positive discrimination approaches and has reached out to the Muslim community by spearheading the Conseil Français du Culte Musulman (French Council of the Muslim Faith). Furthermore, the US's stance on immigration has toughened since 9/11 and most immigration services have been folded into the Department of Homeland Security, lending support to the idea that immigration has been securitized. Britain has continued to be active in adding civic integration dimensions to its multiculturalism approach since the 7/7 London bombings, and the Muslim

18 Jonathan Laurence, "Islam and Citizenship in Germany," in *Muslim Integration: Challenging Conventional Wisdom in Europe and the United States*, ed. Steffen Angenendt et al. (Center for Strategic and International Studies, Transatlantic Dialogue on Terrorism, 2007), 62.

19 Michael Minkenberg, "Religious Legacies and the Politics of Multiculturalism: A Comparative Analysis of Integration Policies in Western Democracies," in *Immigration, Integration, and Security: America and Europe in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Ariane Chebel d'Appollonia and Simon Reich (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008).

20 *Ibid.*, 19.

Council of Britain in particular has become essential in establishing communication between the Muslim community and government in recent years.

The Muslim Experience in Transatlantic Perspective

Understanding Muslim integration in the context of a specific country has been the primary focus of those interested in the subject. However, a transatlantic comparison of the Muslim experience is equally important since it offers a frame of reference for evaluating integration. The Pew Research Center has provided public survey data that offer insight into Muslim integration in the United States, Great Britain, France, Spain and Germany. Surveys ask for perspectives from Muslim communities and the general public, and information on social inclusion factors such as income. The data suggest that Muslims are better integrated in the United States than in Europe.

The Muslim community is much smaller in the United States than in Europe. The difference between the United States and France is especially large (under one percent compared to nearly ten percent).²¹ Population differences between the United States and Europe can be explained by the massive immigration movement that took place during the post-war European reconstruction effort where nationals of mostly Muslim former European colonies traveled to Europe to provide labor. Immigrants included Turks moving to Germany, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis to Britain, Algerians to France and Moroccans to France and Spain. Many immigrants stayed permanently and had children who developed a Muslim-European identity.

More Americans than Europeans believe that Muslims want to adopt national customs. Less than half of the American public believes that Muslims want to be distinct from society.²² In contrast, approximately two thirds of Britons and Spaniards and three fourths of Germans believe that Muslims want to be separate from society.²³ This could be because the European public, more so than the American public, thinks that Muslim subculture is separate from “society” rather than a component of it, or because Muslim and national customs are seen to be more compatible in the United States. Moreover, Europeans view Muslims more negatively than Americans. In 2008, less than one quarter of Americans held unfavorable views of Muslims; the rate is more than dou-

21 Pew Research Center, *Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream* (Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2007b), 10; *Muslims in Europe: Country guide* (BBC News, 2005).

22 Pew Research Center, *Muslims in Europe: Economic Worries Top Concerns About Religious and Cultural Identity* (Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2006b).

23 Ibid.

ble in Germany and Spain.²⁴ What is also striking is that since 2004, attitudes in the United States have improved toward Muslims, while those in all four European countries have deteriorated.²⁵ This is likely because Muslim populations are larger and therefore more noticeable in Europe and because Europe has experienced more high-profile domestic Islamist incidents than the United States has, which has over time exacerbated tensions between non-Muslim and Muslim communities. Finally, more Europeans than Americans view growing Islamic identity as “bad,” especially Spain (82 percent), Germany (83 percent) and France (87 percent).²⁶ Many in Europe seem to believe that Islam presents a cultural threat to European identity.

The way in which Muslims perceive their own identity varies between the United States and Europe as well as between European states. Spanish, German, and British Muslims think of themselves as Muslims “first” and then as members of their respective countries. Opinions are the reverse in the United States and France.²⁷ In the United States, differences across religions as well as race are common, which may explain why Muslims relate primarily to the country of residence. To the contrary, France’s policy of assimilation mitigates differences by refusing to recognize religious factors in public life, which may actually produce a similar outcome experienced in the United States. Moreover, Muslims in the United States and Britain are more likely to be concerned about Islamic extremism, which is not surprising since policies against extremism have been prominent in these countries.²⁸

Perceptions of Muslims from both the general public and Muslims themselves help to identify the extent to which Muslims are included in their communities. How Muslims compare to the general public in terms of earned income is also important because it speaks to the extent of their participation in society. On the whole, Muslims earn as much as the general public in the United States across three household income brackets: \$75,000 or greater, \$30,000-74,999 and less than \$30,000.²⁹ This is especially surprising since women in Muslim households are less likely to work than women in other households. In contrast, income levels are not equal in Europe. In Germany, the public earns on average more than twice as much as Muslims in the highest bracket and in

24 Pew Research Center, “Unfavorable Views of Jews and Muslims on the Increase in Europe” (Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2008), 2.

25 Ibid.

26 Pew Research Center, “Muslims in Europe.”

27 Pew Research Center, “Muslim Americans: Middle Class,” 3.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid., 19.

Spain, more than four times.³⁰ Although income disparity is most striking in Germany and Spain, it also exists in France and Britain. The percentage of the Muslim population that falls in the highest bracket in France is 20; the general public is 32. In Britain, 13 percent of the Muslim population is earning an income that lies in the highest bracket, compared with 23 percent of the general public. Disparities in income levels between the Muslim community and general public in European countries highlight Muslim exclusion.

United States and Muslim Integration

The Muslim population is much smaller in the United States than in Europe, making up less than one percent of the total population; in Europe, it ranges between 2.3 and 9.6 percent, depending on the country.³¹ But what does the Muslim population look like in the United States? Most are first-generation immigrants arriving primarily from Pakistan or Iran; others are US citizens but children or grandchildren of immigrants.³² Most first-generation Muslims immigrated to the United States in the 1990s and 2000s. Also, despite the fact that two thirds of Muslims in the United States come from other countries, three fourths are US citizens.³³

Notable differences between US Muslims and the general public include age and race. Over half of American Muslims are under 39 compared to only 40 percent of the public, and 13 percent are over 55 compared to 30 percent of the public.³⁴ It is evident that many American Muslims are young, especially compared to the public. Moreover, racial compositions between Muslims and the public also differ. There are over twice as many Caucasians in the general public than the Muslim community and over twice as many African Americans and four times as many Asian Americans in the Muslim population than in the general public.³⁵ These figures show that the Muslim community in the United States is much more diverse than the general public in terms of age and racial composition.

Comparison between the United States and Europe gives indication that Muslims are more integrated into American society. Here, I analyze additional data on the American Muslim experience by considering integration over time,

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., 10; BBC News (2005).

32 Pew Research Center, "Muslim Americans: Middle Class," 15.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid., 16.

35 Ibid., 17.

in relation to other minority groups, in terms of access to societal goods and as perceived by both the Muslim community and the general public. This should give more meaning to the nature of Muslim integration in the United States.

An appropriate starting point is to compare incidents of discrimination over time and across minority groups. Table 1 shows the number of incidents of discrimination that Muslims, Blacks, Jews, homosexual males and Hispanics experienced from 2001-2007.

Table 1: Incidents of Discrimination against Select Minority Groups, 2001-2007

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Anti-Islamic	481	155	149	156	128	156	115
Anti-Black	2899	2486	2548	2731	2630	2640	2658
Anti-Jewish	1043	931	927	954	848	967	969
Anti-Male Homosexual	980	825	783	738	621	747	772
Anti-Hispanic	597	480	426	475	522	576	595

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2001-2007). "Hate Crime Statistics." Annual Reports.

These figures are reported to the FBI by law enforcement agencies. As such, they are undoubtedly under-representative of all discriminatory acts. However, they should be consistently underreported across time and minority groups, which allows for an appropriate comparison. Muslims experienced fewer incidents per year among all groups, which is to be expected since they are the smallest of the five minority groups. The number of anti-Islamic incidents in 2001 compared to subsequent years is particularly noteworthy. In 2001, nearly 500 incidents were reported, compared to only 155 in 2002. However, the hostile response that the Muslim community faced directly after 9/11 helps to explain why so many incidents occurred in 2001. Although discrimination decreased for all groups over the time period, the fall was most pronounced for the Muslim community at 76 percent. Despite the fact that 2001 is considered anomalous, anti-Islamic discrimination nevertheless decreased by 26 percent from 2002-7. Over the same period, discrimination against male homosexuals decreased by only six percent, while all other forms of discrimination actually increased. This indicates that the situation for Muslims is improving, while discrimination against other groups is either decreasing or remaining constant.

The Pew Research Center provides additional information about how Muslim Americans compare specifically to African Americans in terms of discrimination. Survey respondents were asked to report if they felt like they were treated or viewed with suspicion, called offensive names, singled out by the police, physically attacked, threatened or mistreated by any combination of the

previous four.³⁶ In all five categories, the Muslim community fared better. Nearly ten percent of Muslims felt like they had been singled out by the police: the rate is double for the African American community.³⁷ Only one quarter of Muslims experienced suspicion compared to one third of African Americans.³⁸ On average, it seems that Muslims suffer less discrimination than African Americans, at least as suggested by this data. One explanation may be that there are simply more African Americans than Muslims in the United States and that their higher visibility attracts more attention, including racism.

How does the American public view Muslims and Muslim Americans? Most Americans hold a more favorable opinion of Muslim Americans than Muslims (53 compared to 43 percent).³⁹ This suggests that Americans view Muslim Americans as more integrated or less extreme than Muslims in general, or that Americans know more Muslim Americans than Muslims, thereby viewing them more favorably.

Aside from discrimination and public opinion, integration can be measured by the degree to which Muslims participate in society, especially in terms of education, employment and household income. By and large, education levels between the general public and Muslim community are comparable.⁴⁰ In fact, although the differences are small, more Muslims have high school degrees as well as some graduate education.⁴¹ Employment rates are also similar, although more of the general public is employed full-time.⁴² Finally, household income levels between the public and the Muslim population are even, differing only by one percent in the top four brackets and two percent in the bottom.⁴³ These figures suggest that levels of participation in society are similar between these two groups.

Muslims' perspectives on life in the United States may be the best indication of integration because they encapsulate the trade-off between pros and cons. Although the public rates its communities, personal financial situations and happiness higher than the Muslim community, these differences are small.⁴⁴ Moreover, more Muslims believe that they can get ahead with hard work than

36 Ibid., 38.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Pew Research Center, "Benedict XVI Viewed Favorably but Faulted on Religious Outreach, Public Expresses Mixed Views of Islam, Mormonism," 1.

40 Pew Research Center, "Muslim Americans: Middle Class," 18.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid., 19.

43 Ibid., 18.

44 Ibid., 2.

the general public and also feel more satisfied with their status as Americans.⁴⁵ Despite small degrees of variation, Muslims' viewpoints are relatively in-line with the public.

These data suggest that the Muslim experience in the United States seems to be improving or at least remaining constant over time and that Muslims may be better integrated than other minority groups, especially since 9/11. Undoubtedly, some Muslims feel discrimination and alienation, but as a community, their situation appears comparable to those of the general public.

United Kingdom and Muslim Integration

The United Kingdom has a large Islamic population. After Christians, Muslims make up the largest religious community in the country, composing approximately three percent of the general public in England and Wales.⁴⁶ Moreover, as in the United States, the Muslim community is relatively young. Over half of the Muslim population in England and Wales is 24 or younger, compared to 33 percent of the general public.⁴⁷ Approximately one third is between 25 and 49, as is true for the public.⁴⁸ Only eleven percent of the Muslim population is 50 or older, compared to 34 percent of the public.⁴⁹ Ethnic differences in England and Wales are also noticeable. Nearly three fourths of the Muslim population is Asian.⁵⁰ Of this group, most are Pakistani (58 percent), Bangladeshi (23 percent) or Indian (12 percent).⁵¹ This is not surprising given Britain's former rule over South Asia and that many South Asians relocated to Britain after World War II. In contrast, the number of Caucasian or black Muslims is much smaller.⁵²

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) provides data on Muslim victimization. The CPS is the federal department that is responsible for public prosecution of those charged with criminal offenses in England and Wales. In its annual reports, it provides information about the religious affiliation of crime victims. Table 2 gives figures on the number of victims of religiously aggravated incidents in England and Wales from 2004-07.

Table 2: Victims of Religiously Aggravated Incidents in England and Wales

45	Ibid.
46	UK Office for National Statistics (2001) Table S103
47	Ibid.
48	Ibid.
49	Ibid.
50	Ibid.
51	Ibid.
52	Ibid.

Religion**	2004-2005			2005-2006			2006-2007		
	Number	% of All Cases	% of Where Religion Is Known	Number	% of All Cases	% of Where Religion Is Known	Number	% of All Cases	% of Where Religion Is Known
Muslim	23	68%	77%	18	42%	82%	17	63%	74%
Christian	4	12%	13%	3	7%	14%	3	11%	13%
Sikh	0	0%	0%	1	2%	5%	1	4%	4%
Hindu	2	6%	7%	0	0%	0%	0	0%	0%
Mormon	1	3%	3%	0	0%	0%	0	0%	0%
Buddhist	0	0%	0%	0	0%	0%	--	--	--
Jewish	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	7%	9%
Unknown	4	12%	N/A	21	49%	N/A	4	15%	N/A
TOTAL	34	100%	100%	43	100%	100%	27	100%	100%

*As Prosecuted by the Crown Prosecution Service.

**Religion Represents Victim's Actual or Perceived Religion.

Sources: Crown Prosecution Service (2006). "Racist and Religious Incident Monitoring." Annual Report 2005-2006. Management Information Branch; Crown Prosecution Service. (2007). "Racist and Religious Incident Monitoring." Annual Report 2006-2007. Management Information Branch.

Though the percentage of Muslim victims appears to remain stable over time, it is by far the largest of all religious victimization. For example, in 2006-07, the number of Muslim victims comprised 63 percent of all victims harassed because of their religion and 74 percent of all victims harassed because of their religion *in cases when their religion was indeed known*. This seems to suggest that harassment is directed toward Muslims far more than any other religious group.

Discrimination is only one facet of integration and cannot itself capture the Muslim experience in the United Kingdom. As in the American case, participation in society must also be considered. Access to education, employment and healthcare is an important component of social inclusion. Across all ages in England and Wales, Muslims have fewer educational qualifications than the general public.⁵³ The difference is striking. One third of Muslims between 25 and 34 have no educational qualifications, which is three times larger than the general public in the same age range.⁵⁴ 47 percent of Muslims between 35 and 49 have no qualifications, compared to only 22 percent in the general public.⁵⁵ Nearly three fourths of Muslims between 65 and 74 have no skills, compared to

53 Ibid. Table S158

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

63 percent of the general public.⁵⁶ These statistics clearly indicate that the Muslim community does not have the same opportunity to education as the general public does.

Economic activity rates also vary substantially between Muslims and the public. Only half of Muslim males between 16 and 24 are economically active in relation to 68 percent of the rest of society.⁵⁷ 70 percent of Muslim males over 25 are economically active, but this is still 5 percent lower than the public. Muslim female rates are considerably lower in both age brackets, but this should be expected in light of Islamic traditions that affect a Muslim woman's economic activity, such as obtaining permission from her male guardian to work and maintaining her commitment to the family.⁵⁸ Moreover, unemployment rates in England and Wales are much higher for Muslims. Nearly one in five Muslim males between 16 and 24 are unemployed – 8 percent higher than the rest of society.⁵⁹ The rate is lower for Muslim males over 25, but it is still approximately three times higher than the general public.⁶⁰ 16 percent of Muslim females between 16 and 24 and 14 percent of those over 25 are unemployed.⁶¹ These rates are much higher in relation to the public. It is important to note that although a low economic activity rate for Muslim females is expected given the propensity for many Muslim women to stay at home to raise their families, the unemployment rate shows that for Muslim women who do want to work, access to employment is much more difficult.

Finally, how Muslims rank in comparison with the general public on “limiting long-term illness” provides indication on the extent to which they enjoy adequate health. The United Kingdom's Office of National Statistics defines illness as “a self-assessment of whether or not a person has a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits their daily activities or the work they can do, including problems that are due to old age.” Across all age brackets, more Muslims have limiting long-term illnesses than the general public.⁶² The difference is most stark in the 50-64 and 65+ brackets.⁶³ However, this needs to be considered in context. Many older Muslims in the United Kingdom were born in other countries, such as Pakistan and Bangladesh; therefore,

56 Ibid.
 57 Ibid. Table S153
 58 Ibid.
 59 Ibid.
 60 Ibid.
 61 Ibid.
 62 Ibid. Table S152
 63 Ibid.

their illnesses are most likely a result of health deficiencies faced in their birth countries rather than the United Kingdom. That the number of Muslims under 49 with limiting long-term illnesses is comparable to that of the general public suggests that younger Muslims face no more threats to their health than the society at large.

In short, the Muslim experience in the United Kingdom is poor in comparison to the general population. Muslims face prejudice more than other religious groups and confront serious barriers to integration, such as obstacles to education and employment opportunities. Moreover, there is little evidence to suggest that the situation is improving over time.

Findings and Conclusion

Transatlantic perspective provides a useful measure of Muslim integration. First, in general, the United States seems to fare better with integrating Muslims in comparison to Europe. Fewer Americans view Muslims negatively than Europeans and more Americans view the growth of Islamic identity positively. The image of Muslims in the United States has improved over the past few years. As Paul Barrett comments, “Overall, the immigrant Muslims of Western Europe have remained poorer, less educated, and more socially marginalized.”⁶⁴ This may be a result of the capability of American Muslims to reconcile their religious beliefs with American culture. The Council of American-Islamic Relations observes:

New Muslim thinkers are provoking debate and counter arguments, often leading to renewed understanding of Islam’s congruence with modernity. More and more Muslims in America are thus being better able [to] balance between the demands of their faith and the challenges of modernity.⁶⁵

American Muslims are achieving success in striking a balance between their religious identities and national expectations.

Second, despite different approaches to integration, the United States and France are similar in some ways. American and French publics both believe that relations between Muslims and Westerners are “good.”⁶⁶ Moreover, roughly the same percentages of Muslims in the United States and France view

64 Barrett, “Question of Assimilation,” 77.

65 Council of American-Islamic Relations (2006), 4.

66 Pew Research Center (2006a).

themselves as Muslim first and then as a part of American or French society.⁶⁷ This is most likely a result of multiculturalism in the United States and the minimization of religious differences in the French public arena. In the United States, differences are common and believed must be celebrated. In France, they are underestimated and often disregarded. This approach contrasts to the British case in which differences between Muslims and the wider society are highly visible.

Third, Muslim integration seems to have been more successful in the United States than the United Kingdom. Muslims face less discrimination than other minorities and there is evidence that the situation is actually improving over time. In general, Muslims have similar levels of access to societal needs, such as education and employment, as the rest of the American public. In contrast, discrimination against Muslims in Britain is high and remains constant. There is a large difference between Muslims and the public in terms of educational qualifications and employment, although health (at least measured as limiting long-term illness) is similar between younger Muslims and Britons.

The impact of post-colonial immigration on Europe helps to explain why the United States and Europe differ in their experiences with Muslim integration. In ways, Europe has much more to address as it finds its way in effectively embracing its large Muslim communities. This is not to say that the United States should carry on with the status quo. The government should not forego the need to construct a coherent integration policy because it believes that the traditions of diversity and expected tolerance preclude it. In contrast, Europe must continue to amend its concepts of identity. This is necessary because when Muslims become an integral constituent of European culture, they will be more represented in national policy. Current trends suggest immigration to Europe in the future will unlikely decrease, and second and third-generation Muslims will continue to face challenges reconciling traditional European values with the customs of the countries from which their parents and grandparents came. As such, policy at both the EU and national levels must persist in meeting the needs of Muslim communities.

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