Mobilizing in Different Political Opportunity Structures

The Cases of French and British Muslims

IMÈNE AJALA, PHD*

Issues related to Islam in the European sphere have increasingly been at the forefront of public spaces and part of decision makers' agendas. According to the European Union (EU) Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, the EU includes at least 13 million Muslims, representing 5 percent of Europeans.[1] For Jocelyne Césari, "Muslim immigration to Europe and North America can be seen as the foundational moment for a new transcultural space—a space where individuals live and experience different cultural references and values that are now disconnected from national contexts and boundaries."[2] Such a transcultural space is characterized by the forceful emergence of a transnational religion (Islam) in a secularized public space (Europe).[3] This situation necessarily leads to tensions; that is, European Muslims experience difficult relations with their respective governments.[4] The context of the "war on terror" since the attacks of 11 September 2001 (9/11) and the security implied have drawn additional attention to Muslims and their claims-making in terms of economic, political, and religious rights in European countries. Muslims' integration is considered a challenge constructed as a confrontation between religious discourses and secular spaces. Of course, national differences have different effects in terms of the conceptualization of multiculturalism, and one can distinguish among them by different "philosophies of integration."[5]

*The author holds a BA in political science from the Grenoble Institute of Political Studies, Grenoble, France, as well as an MA and a PhD in international relations from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland. Her broad interests lie in the realms of domestic politics and international relations, foreign policy analysis, and multiculturalism, with a particular focus on Muslims in Europe.

France and Great Britain traditionally stand for two theoretically opposed models of integration—assimilation and multiculturalism, respectively. Each model shapes characteristics of the country's political opportunity structure, and those same characteristics affect and constrain the political mobilisation (i.e., collective action) of minority groups. This comparative study puts forward the official conceptions of race and ethnic group politics in each country before addressing the emergence and development of Muslims' mobilisation in each country. The analysis traces the ways in which Muslims frame their mobilisation rhetoric and narratives in conformity with these conceptions. However, this study also goes beyond the static view, presenting the models of France and Great Britain as ideal types and offering evidence of the changes affecting both countries' philosophies of integration.

First the article provides an overview of both models in terms of their official philosophies, the supported conceptions of identities, and the implied perceptions of minorities. Doing so allows consideration of the definition, measurement, perceptions, and self-perceptions of Muslim communities in both countries. The analysis then places Muslims' mobilisation in a longitudinal perspective in order to highlight the metamorphosis of mobilisation and its conceptions throughout the years.

Defining Muslims

Immigration in France and Great Britain

From the assumption of some form of influence and implication in the public sphere to the extreme idea of a Muslim lobby in France, the place of Muslims in that country has been viewed from different perspectives. France has a long relationship with Islam, notably as a result of its colonial past.[6] For at least two centuries, it has been a country of immigration.[7] After World War II, labor market considerations ruled immigration, with labor migration essentially beginning in 1945. However, the need for a labor force did not mean that all immigrants were equally welcome. In fact, North African recruits were considered less desirable than their European counterparts.[8] The larger number of immigrants first included Algerians, followed by Moroccans in the 1970s, and finally Tunisians. The year 1974 constituted

a turning point. During the oil crisis, administrative bills issued by the secretary of state for immigrant workers on 5 and 19 July suspended immigration, which dropped significantly.[9] Immigrant workers who initially intended to go back to their home countries turned into permanent settlers, bringing along their families. The reunification of families soon represented the largest component of immigration, especially during the 1980s and until 1993, when policy changes brought about a decrease in the absolute levels and proportion.[10] France automatically granted citizenship to children born there, and this population became known as *Français issus de l'immigration* (French resulting from immigration). Attempts to encourage immigrants' return—first and foremost that of the Algerians—failed. Progressive awareness that these migrants were there to stay started to emerge only in the 1980s. Even in the 1990s, "most of those who were perceived as 'immigrants' in France were no longer immigrants."[11] They had become a permanent part of the population.

Indeed, the suspension of immigration in 1974 would initiate the move towards higher selectivity and tighter restrictions. Though this trend would be accepted as a consensus by the Right and the Left, the rise of the National Front would soon make immigration a politically charged issue: "Thus, as the proportion of foreigners in the country has diminished, the salience of political conflict over foreigners has increased."[12] Talks about selective immigration started in 2006. In this respect, the Loi Hortefeux, legislation adopted in 2007 to tighten conditions for family reunification, represents a reorientation of French immigration. The pressure to expel undocumented immigrants has increased, and debates around immigration remain tense, as reflected by the controversial creation of a Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity, and United Development in 2007 and the discussion about national identity that took place between November 2009 and January 2010, stirring considerable disagreement.

Martin Schain observes that, unlike France and the United States, Britain is not a traditional country of immigration, having been a country of net emigration until well after World War II.[13] In France, immigrants came mostly from other European countries (especially from southern Europe) until the 1960s, but the majority of immigrants to Britain came from its former colonies.[14] What changed since then is that the proportion of immigrants from the "New Commonwealth" (essentially India and

Pakistan) has increased, in contrast to that from Ireland and the "Old Commonwealth" (Canada, Australia, and New Zealand).[15] Until the first Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962, which introduced the first restrictions, citizens of British colonies and of the Commonwealth could enter freely into the United Kingdom (UK). However Britain already had a policy in place for the restriction of "nonwhite" people coming from the New Commonwealth, even long before World War II. The relative open-door policy did not necessarily apply equally to all members of the Commonwealth.[16] Immigrants from India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan arrived to work in industrial cities, especially in textile towns.[17] As in France, Britain considered some immigrants less desirable than others, deeming their capacity to integrate weaker.[18] Though the heritage of the empire entailed an expansive and multicultural conception of citizenship, the accelerating flow of immigrants from the New Commonwealth (which has increased by about 50 percent since 1981) and widespread anti-immigrant sentiment forced authorities to redefine and narrow the rules for citizenship. The immigration Act of 1971, for example, reinforced restrictions. Thus, reunified families remain the largest category of immigrants.[19] Moreover, in the 1990s significant Muslim refugee flows from Bosnia, Kosovo, and countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia took place.[20]

A Large, Diverse, and Concentrated Community in Both Countries

France has the largest Muslim population in Europe. Determining the precise number of Muslims in that country is not an easy task since French law forbids ethnic statistics and political considerations can lead to overestimations. Counting Muslims does not necessarily imply counting practising Muslims; in fact, the term primarily refers to people with a Muslim background and origins, as noted by Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaïsse. They refer to Muslims as "those individuals who, by dint of their national origin or ancestry, are of Muslim culture or sociological background. The population of course includes many secular-minded citizens who would object to being primarily classified as Muslims. In that respect, [their] book's main theme is itself a concession to viewing integration problems from a religious perspective."[21] Although Laurence and Vaïsse recognize that their study "admittedly succumbs to the convenience of shorthand and so emulated the recent trend among policymakers and community activists," it is difficult to

proceed differently, as in all ethnic studies.[22] This reflects the necessity of using fixed categories for the sake of research.[23] Therefore, the number of Muslims in France will differ, depending upon the criteria used for the estimates. The usual figure is 5 million when talking about Muslims in the wider sense but 220,000 for practising Muslims, understood as those who regularly attend the mosque.[24] Distinctions made on the basis of ethnicity lead to the following results: 69 percent Arabs; 30 percent of Turkish, Berber, African, or Asian origin; and 1 percent French or European converts.[25] When it comes to national origins, Bernard Godard and Sylvie Taussig's estimates are close to Laurence and Vaïsse's: 1.5 million Algerians, 1 million Moroccans, more than 400,000 Tunisians, nearly 340,000 sub-Saharan Africans, and 313,000 Turks.[26] Counting Muslims is thus a challenge in France but not in Great Britain, where official ethnic and religious statistics are available.

The Office for National Statistics' 2001 census was the first to include questions about religion, establishing a Muslim population of 1.6 million (2.7 percent of the UK's population), compared to 71.6 percent Christians and 15.5 percent with no religion.[27] Muslims constitute the second largest religious group after Christians in the UK.[28] The Muslim population is mainly concentrated in England and Wales (hence the focus of this article on Muslims in Great Britain).[29] The Muslim population has experienced rapid growth, from 21,000 in 1951 to 600,000 in 1981 and 1.6 million in 2001.[30] According to the Office for National Statistics, 2.4 million Muslims live in Britain as of January 2009, and the population is growing faster than any other.[31] Sixty-eight percent of that population is of South Asian origin.[32] People with a Pakistani background constitute the majority (750,000 or 43 percent), followed by Bangladeshi (200,0000 or 17 percent), and Indians (150,000 or 8 percent).[33] Eight hundred thousand Muslims are British citizens.[34] In addition to South Asians, there are also Turkish, Kurdish, Arab, and African communities.[35] The number of converts is estimated at 10,000.[36] According to Ceri Peach, "the characteristics of the British Muslim population strongly reflect those of the Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Indian Muslim population living in Britain, but with a significant White, Mixed, African, Cypriot, North African, and Middle Eastern minority."[37]

The Muslim population is younger than the French general population: people 15 to 34 years old represent 32 percent of the French general

population and 63 percent of French Muslims.[38] Those 50 to 65 years of age and above represent 42 percent of the French general population and 13 percent of French Muslims.[39] Similarly, British Muslims are younger than all other religious groups in England and Wales.[40] Ninety percent of Muslims are less than 50 years old, and the national average age is 28, compared to the general national average of 41.[41] Thirty-four percent of Muslims are 15 years of age or younger, compared to a national average of 20 percent.[42]

Immigrant populations are concentrated mostly in big cities such as Paris, Marseille, Lyon, and their outlying suburbs. Sixty percent of all immigrants in France live in Paris and its surroundings (Ile-de-France region). Thirty-five to 40 percent of all French Muslims live in the Ile-de-France region, 15 to 20 percent around Marseille and Nice (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region), 15 percent in Lyon and Grenoble, and 5 to 10 percent around Lille.[43] Immigration flows have determined settlement patterns in industrial and urban areas.[44] These include, for example, the south of Alsace; the northern departments; areas such as Val-d'Oise, Seine-Saint-Denis, and Val-de-Marne; and areas around Paris such as Somme, Seine-Maritime, and Eure-et-Loire.[45] One also finds many Muslims on the Mediterranean shores, especially self-declared Muslims in Hérault, Gard, and Bouches-du-Rhône.[46] Geographically, Islam in France highlights a line going through Le Havre-Valence-Perpignan—the exact line situating strongholds of the National Front vote.[47]

Again, as in France, early phases of settlement strongly determined geographical distribution of immigrants in Britain; seeking jobs, they settled primarily in industrial and urban areas.[48] Eighty percent of Muslims live in the five major conurbations of Great Britain: Greater London, West Midlands, West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, and East Midlands.[49] They represent 8.5 percent of London's population, and a quarter of London Muslims live in Tower Hamlets and Newham.[50] Muslims are also present in industrial areas: the industrial Midlands, the northern mill towns, and the west coast of Scotland.[51] Though Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims show high rates of segregation, this does not mean that Muslims live in religiously exclusive wards.[52]

In sum, Muslim communities share common patterns with regard to demographics and settlement patterns in both countries. Such similarities

have roots in the colonial past of France and Britain, but, as we shall see, the environments in which these communities evolve are antagonistic.

Antagonistic Political Opportunity Structures

The Question of Identification and Self-Definition or the Articulation of Citizenship and Religion

French citizenship is conceived of as a universal identity.[53] It is "a philosophical concept expressed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen in 1789, mainly inspired by universalistic ideals of freedom, legal equality and property, while nationality has a legal definition in the Civil Code."[54] Politicization of citizenship started in the 1980s. The tradition of *jus soli* has existed in France since the 1789 revolution, but a movement emerged in the 1980s to consider citizenship more of an active choice than something automatically granted to anyone who chooses to live in France. Legislation introduced in 1993 (Loi Méhaignerie) specified that people between 16 and 21 years of age should request citizenship. After the Loi Guigou in 1998, one could still claim citizenship when he or she reached 16; if not, it became automatic at age 18. About 3 million Muslims in France are French citizens.[55]

Britain likely has the most liberal citizenship regime in Europe.[56] Citizens of the Commonwealth, the dependent territories, and the Irish Republic can vote and run for office.[57] Most British Muslims are citizens, and 46 percent are British-born.[58] For a long time, British citizenship has been shaped by the status of the British empire and the resulting expansive definition of the concept until after World War II.[59] In 1948 the British Nationality Act gave citizens of Commonwealth countries the right to freely enter, work, and settle with their families in the UK as permanent residents.[60] Since then, different, more restrictive legislative acts have redefined citizenship.[61] The British Nationality Act of 1981 directly addressed the matter. Only citizens of the UK have the right to enter, and automatic citizenship is restricted to children born in the UK of a British mother or father or of non-British parents in the UK.[62] The act represented "the culmination of a process of withdrawal of citizenship rights, which progressively restricted citizenship to those born in UK and their direct descen-

dants."[63] The meaning of citizenship has also changed: older generations are more "denizens" in the sense that citizenship is narrowly linked to their residence in Britain, whereas for new generations, citizenship means access to British identity.[64] The unity of modern Britain has never been "one and indivisible," as in France.[65] The devolutions of some powers to regional assemblies of Wales and Scotland in 1997 have reinforced decentralization; a high degree of cultural pluralism and therefore a lack of a "common public culture" exist.[66] Schain notes that "most self-identify as English, Scottish, Welch or Irish, rather than British" and that Britishness or Englishness — understood by Yasmin Hussain and Paul Bagguley as the sharing of "some substantive beliefs" and the requirement of "a common public culture"—is not subject to consensus.[67] Consequently, the multicultural character of British society brought by immigration is seen as an extension of diversity within the UK.[68]

As for the emergence and awareness of a community identity—more precisely, a specifically Muslim identity—evidence points in several specific directions. On the basis of polls and previous studies, Laurence and Vaïsse point to the emergence of a strong Muslim identity.[69] In fact, Muslim identity even trumps French identity.[70] Religious identity as such, however, is not necessarily more pronounced; rather, it refers to cultural and religious traditions.[71] Religious self-identification and a sense of religious collective identity fed by integration issues have grown, as has the visibility of Islam on the international scene. Sixty-six percent of the French with North African origins declare themselves Muslims, 8 percent are Catholic, and 20 percent have no religion.[72] However, only 36 percent of people with Muslim background (*personnes de culture musulmane*) declare themselves as practising, and only 15 percent go regularly to the mosque. Religious practise also declines with time spent in France.[73] The five daily prayers and attendance at the mosque are the usual criteria that distinguish practising from non-practising believers.[74] As for cultural behaviour, fasting (*ramadhan*) and the nonconsumption of alcohol are the most shared characteristics.[75] The wearing of the veil, despite its disproportionate coverage in the media, pertains to a minority of practising believers.[76] Integration cannot be separated from the issue of Islam, independently of whether the minorities in question define themselves first and foremost as Muslims and independently of their practise.[77] In this context, it seems difficult to dissociate the religious

variable from the ethnic Arab variable as revealed by the commonly used expression *arabo-musulman*, even if one can question the legitimacy of assimilating all the French of African origin with Muslims. Deprivation partially explains this re-Islamization process, which can be understood as "the process whereby French youth of African, Turkish, or Middle Eastern origin turn to Islam in their search for identity—and often, but not always, to a form of abstract and globalised Islam rather than the 'family Islam' of their parents."[78] However, even if French Muslims, like their European counterparts, tend to identify more strongly with their faith than does the general population, this does not mean that they do not also identify strongly with their host country—particularly true in France where 42 percent of French Muslims see themselves as French citizens first.[79] Forty-six percent of French Muslims consider themselves Muslims first, whereas this proportion reaches 81 percent for British Muslims.[80]

Religion is also very significant to British Muslims, for whom Muslim identity is more important than British identity.[81] During the campaign for inclusion of the religious question in the 2001 census, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) repeatedly emphasized that "British Muslims identify themselves on the basis of faith not ethnicity."[82] A range of surveys confirms this tendency.[83] In 2006 Islamic identity was the strongest among British Muslims in Europe, 81 percent of them identifying themselves as Muslims first rather than British. The figure for French Muslims is 46 percent, 69 percent for Spanish Muslims, and 66 percent for German Muslims.[84]

Contrary to French politics, which regards religion as a private matter, public affairs in Britain consider it a participating force. Former prime minister Tony Blair remarked that "religious faith has much to contribute to the public sphere; is still a thriving part of what makes a cohesive community; is a crucial motivator of millions of citizens around the world; and is an essential if non-governmental way of helping to make society work. To lose that contribution would not just be a pity; it would be a huge backward step."[85] The question of identification is crucial regarding both divided loyalties and the articulation of religion and citizenship as complementary or, on the contrary, competing concepts.[86] Transnational and local processes redefine identity, especially in younger generations.[87] Indeed, divisions among British Muslims do not occur only along ethnic, national, or ideological divisions; generational gaps also strongly characterize the British Muslim

community. The re-Islamization of youth has no link to the parents' home-land but is defined by adherence to transnational Islam and the emergence of radical Islamic activism—a matter of great concern to British Muslims.[88] Conceptions of a purified Islam in the Wahhabist tradition, brought in by Middle Eastern religious teachers in the 1990s, filled a void created when young British Muslims could not identify with their parents' (primo-migrants) "cultural Islam."[89] This phenomenon does not necessarily suggest a rejection of British identity because there is an accommodation of the "universalism of citizenship claims with particularism of their ethnic iden-tities"; in other words, no conflict exists between transnational Muslim identity and British citizenship.[90] Identity is complex, plural, and composed of different layers—a fact especially well perceived in younger generations who not only consider themselves British citizens but also "members of religious, racial, ethnic and linguistic groups."[91] The diversity of Muslim organisations also entails the plurality of Muslim identity conceptions since "representations (that is, characterizations) of community identity are in-variably bound up with claims to represent (speak for) a community."[92] The political aspects of these organizations shape their definition of identity.[93]

Two Antagonistic Philosophies: Assimilation versus Multiculturalism

France is the strongest representative of the assimilation model, usually perceived as very rigid and known to reject any recognition of groups on ethnic, cultural, or religious bases.[94] Policies designed for economic and political integration, for example, will target geographical areas but never directly address ethnic communities. More importantly, this rejection im-plies a form of renunciation, in the French imagined community, of the republican myth of integration to the nation and to the general interest.

This Jacobin obsession for national unity and "national cohesion" hinders any consideration of ethnicity in the social sciences.[95] Such a pat-tern is all the more striking in the French perception of the United States, for example, where the recognition of immigrants is tied to ethnic politics and the consequent public collective identities. This also results in ethnic lobbying, whereas in France republican individualism entails the assimilation of individuals and the private, not public, expression of collective identi-ties.[96] As summed up by Pierre Birnbaum, according to the French perspec-tive, the ethnicity concept refers to ghettos and to "a fragmented nation

without unifying identity."[97] The French have a word for this, *communau-tarisme*, which means a parallel identity defined by the belonging of a group at the infra- or supranational level in opposition to national identity and which can bring about a fragmentation of the public space.[98] Any recognition of the de facto multiculturalism of French society can also lead to accusations of fomenting fragmentation of the nation.[99] These paradigms have concrete effects in that the collection of ethnic statistics, defined as "data of a personal nature showing, directly or indirectly, racial or ethnic origins," is forbidden by French law, mentioned above.[100]

Despite the official discourse, a process of ethnicization of some debates in relation to "the second generation" has occurred.[101] France is a de facto multicultural country, and public authorities have become increasingly aware of this characteristic of French society.[102] In fact, according to Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, "multiculturalism has acquired some legitimacy under the pressure of immigration, of Europe and of globalisation, but also from the desire to assert the weight of local cultures in the patrimony of national culture."[103] The EU has already contested some of the principles of republican individualism through the institution of European citizenship and antidiscriminatory directives.[104] It played an important role in change, especially via directives in 2001 and 2002 that banned discrimination in employment and housing.[105]

The debate over ethnic statistics and the ensuing official codification of identities in ethnic categories by the state reflects different approaches to social realities in France. In 2006 the Centre of Analytical Strategies (a public institution) organised a colloquium on ethnic statistics, and Minister of the Interior Nicolas Sarkozy opened the debate by stating his favourable position regarding affirmative action (*discrimination positive*) and his support for ethnic statistics, contrary to the position of President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin. It is interesting to note that positions on this issue are not divided along partisan lines. The community of statisticians is strongly divided with regard to the introduction of ethnic statistics as well.[106] The main problem concerns finding a way to treat ethnicity objectively.[107] The issue touches not only upon measuring issues but also upon the final use of the data.[108]

Thus, we do not necessarily dispose of estimates, but the absence of official, state-sponsored statistics does say a a great deal about the institu-

tional context in terms of political opportunity and the expression of private interests. The first general data including parents' place of birth became available in 1999, with the release of the survey "Etude de l'Histoire Familiale" (Studies on family history).

Since then, surveys have included more questions related to parents' place of birth. Only the collecting of data on the actual nationality and place of birth of an individual and of his or her parents was authorised. As a result, evidently no "transfer" of this Anglo-Saxon concept could occur, especially if it entailed using a narrow conception of ethnicity as dictated by the republican myth of equality (i.e., reduced to the claims making of a specific identity in the public space).[109] In fact, a more appropriate definition of ethnicity would address all groups that are a "minority in respect to the national context."[110] Such a definition would serve as a reminder that ethnicity is a wide concept that can apply to all countries.

Republican blindness to the recognition of ethnic minorities weighs heavily on state policies connected to religious and ethnic communities and explains the growing debate regarding the possibility of ethnic statistics. The emphasis on discrimination and employment issues is thus symptomatic of a move towards a focus on ethnic integration typical of multiculturalism, but a multiculturalism that seeks to avoid dispersion.[111] The consensus about the need for equal institutional religious representation and for frameworks dealing with racism and discrimination issues has slowly emerged. The picture, as it "evolves," is then more nuanced than the typical "color-blind" republic image.[112] Still, Wihtol de Wenden concludes that "the difficulty that collective identities have in defining themselves in the face of republican values shows that French political space is poorly integrated and scarcely permits the emergence of communitarian groups. Multiculturalism has a long way to go in order to be more explicit and acquire full legitimacy."[113] Britain has chosen multiculturalism—a choice more and more contested these last years, especially since the riots in several cities in 2001 and the terrorist attacks in London during 2005.[114] Multiculturalism emerged at a time when "Britishness" itself had to be redefined after the end of the empire.[115] British authorities favoured a race relations approach to the problem of integration that emerged in the 1960s, and as a consequence, the concept of race has been used since then to talk about the New Commonwealth immigrants.[116] The Commission for Racial Equality was created in

1965, and the first Race Relations Act of the same year constituted a first basis for the institutionalization of integration policies and of a policy framework supporting pluralism.[117] The mandate of the Commission on Racial Equality, for example, is limited to racial, not religious, discrimination.[118] The 1991 census was the first to include questions about ethnic groups' membership; therefore, Muslims are seen through the prism of ethnicity.[119] Because the race relations legislation provides protection for Sikhs and Jews (religious groups), Muslim organizations have exerted pressure to frame issues in terms of religion, especially those concerning discrimination. Those organizations specifically demand that religion be taken into account as a category.[120] The 2001 census provided data on the basis of religion for the first time. In the 2000s, one might argue that religion has replaced race and ethnicity as the cutting-edge interest in minority populations.[121] Muslim identity politics have shaped and have been shaped by the creation of a race-relations and then of a faith-relations industry.[122]

Multiculturalism has come under question more frequently, and the emphasis now resides on civic integration, shared values, and collective identity.[123] The Cantle report, which followed riots in Bradford, Oldham, and Burnley in the summer of 2001, reflects this new orientation. After observing the segregation characterizing the places where riots had taken place, it recommended a greater sense of citizenship.[124] A white paper published by the Home Office in 2002, *Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain*, also reinforced this idea by tying integration to increased civic integration.[125]

Social unrest emerged with riots in the Notting Hill area of London and in Nottingham in 1958.[126] Public authorities have changed the way they framed these riots. In the 1980s, they were considered a structural condition linked to discrimination, but in the 1990s, tensions with the police force, socioeconomic indicators, cultural misunderstandings, and religious differences constituted the dominant framework for understanding these events.[127]

The violent Bradford riots of 2001, provoked by the announcement of a march of the British National Party, had polarized the debate over Muslims' integration in Britain.[128] Those riots became a symbol of the limits of multiculturalism, and those local events were wrongly apprehended through national and global perspectives, systematically assigning to rioters the

status of spokespersons for their community.[129] Official reports about the Bradford riots tended to avoid attempts to explain the events, emphasizing instead the broader issues of segregation, social cohesion, and proposals to instil a liberal conception of citizenship into the minds of South Asians.[130] The reassertion of national belonging over and above ethnic identity has remained a central theme in these reports.

Academic accounts regarding the riots highlight several factors. Some of them place most weight on deprivation, segregation, and the demands of "new generation" South Asians, yet others concentrate on long-standing grievances against the police and local manifestations of racism.[131]

The intensifying political focus on Islam may also be responsible for the change in political discourse in Britain from multiculturalism to social cohesion.[132] In this regard, one can identify a growing public discussion regarding multiculturalism.[133] The 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and, above all, the attacks on London in July 2005 constituted a pivotal moment, amplifying concerns and leading to questions about multi-culturalism and the integration of Muslims perceived to be on the margins of the national community.[134] Antiterrorism legislation has added a climate of fear and suspicion to issues of deprivation.[135] Muslim organizations regard the portrayal of Muslims in the media as a continuing source of concern, especially the coverage related to international crises, which, to Muslim organizations, emphasizes extremist views that depict Muslims as a threat from within or as a fifth column.[136] The MCB points out that "most British Muslims have actually been born in the UK. They are indigenous British citizens. There is no question of them being 'hosted' in any way."[137] In fact the MCB has judged integration relatively successful.[138] Trevor Phillips, chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, has described multiculturalism as "outdated" and encouraging "separateness"—criticisms widely reported as a "bombshell."[139] Allegedly, he said, "What we should be talking about is how we reach an integrated society, one in which people are equal under the law, where there are some common values."[140]

Therefore, if both models strongly stand as ideal types, they both experience pressure from the antagonistic model. The rigid French framework of assimilation has come under question, especially in the context of the EU, whereas the British multiculturalist model has come under attack, especially since 9/11 and even more so after the London bombings.

Mobilisation and Institutionalisation

Political Participation

Because of data constraints, this section uses ethnically diverse candidates and immigrants as a proxy for French Muslims. Schain notes in his studies on immigrants that France consistently shows the "worst record of political representation."[141] People with an immigrant background are poorly represented politically. Schain specifically observes that "between 1995 and 2000: on average, [there were] just over 3 percent of municipal counsellors from ethnic communities in towns of 50,000 or more."[142] It is difficult for minority candidates to be appointed to political parties, in part because of the pressure exerted by the National Front, but also because of more structural causes related to the reproduction of the political elite.[143] The main parties remain closed to the admission of diverse candidates, as proven by the results of the legislative elections in 2007.

Candidates from minorities often present themselves as independent. The legislature included 123 ethnically diverse candidates out of a total of 8,424, but only one for the Union for a Popular Movement, the right-wing party; two for the Union for French Democracy; and three for the Socialist Party. So although many ethnic minorities run for office, we rarely see them representing the major parties in France. The first three members of Parliament of North African origin were elected in the senatorial elections in September 2004.[144] The three deputies from minorities in the National Assembly and four for the Senate produce a total of seven deputies or 0.81 percent of metropolitan deputies with North African origins.[145]

The question of diversity also seems to represent a minor concern raised exclusively during elections. The Union for a Popular Movement, for example, eliminated the position of the national secretary of diversity after the presidential election of 2007.[146] Though the Socialist Party does possess a national secretary of diversity, an office held by Faouzi Lamdaoui, the party has often alienated candidates from minorities, especially under Lionel Jospin's government (1997–2002).[147] Besides, the internal dynamics of the party at the grassroots level do not help the emergence of these candidates. No local section of the Socialist Party presented a minority candidate in the legislative elections in 2007. Then, the party had to freeze 20 constituencies for "diversity candidates" but usually in constituencies diffi-

cult to win. A telling example is that of Malek Boutih, sent to the fourth constituency of la Charente, whereas the local candidate, Martine Pinville, kept on running for the election.[148] Additionally, Abel Djerrari, a former member of "France Plus," an association for the promotion of political representation, was a candidate for the regional elections, receiving only 0.4 percent of the vote.[149] We can only note the relative success of Mouloud Aounit, former president of "SOS Racisme," who ran for the Communist Party, obtaining 14.3 percent of the support during regional elections of 2004 in Seine Saint-Denis, a place with a high concentration of populations with foreign origins. Indeed, he obtained "up to one third of the vote in heavily Muslim neighbourhoods."[150]

In sum, French political parties seem hardly interested in the question of diversity.[151] From the minorities' perspective, especially those who have recently immigrated to France, economic success is much more important than diversity, and elites do not necessarily invest the political field.[152] Minority candidates cover a heterogeneous population, but the situation can differ from one group to the other. Eric Keslassy, for example, indicates that political socialisation and integration are higher for the French of North African origin than for the French from sub-Saharan Africa because the North Africans have inherited political capital from the mobilisations of the 1980s.[153] Besides, investment creates strong competition among minority candidates, which makes them fight each other for offices instead of fighting together for more offices; in other words, there is a lack of collective mobilisation.[154]

Are political parties simply reflecting the French population's preferences? Barack Obama's election in the United States has prompted this question, asking whether the same thing could have happened in France. Diversity may represent added value during an election, especially, of course, concerning minority voters.[155] In a 2008 poll, when asked, "Could you personally vote one day for a black candidate running for president?" 80 percent of the French said yes; the percentages are 72 for a candidate of Asian origin and 58 for one of Maghrebi origin.[156] The stakes, of course, are higher in a real election, and some form of "reluctance" may occur.[157] Furthermore, during 2006, polls showed that voters draw a distinction between different elections. That is, the proportion of French people ready to vote for a minority candidate in local elections can be significant, but the proportion for legis-

lative elections, though increasing, is weaker.[158] Two traits define Muslims' political involvment: their relative lack of participation and their preference for parties on the Left.[159] Both phenomena, especially the skew to the Left, are first and foremost driven by social and economic exclusion. When asked about their current lives and expectations, "French Muslims are half as likely as the general public to be considered thriving."[160] For Wihtol de Wenden, the question "How can one be French and Muslim?" remains relevant in political debates "although neither an Arab or ethnic vote nor a penetration of external allegiances can be perceived among the majority of Muslims in France."[161] In other words, the heterogeneity of the population also prevents it from acting as a voting bloc.[162] A strong consensus exists regarding the absence of a specifically Muslim vote.[163] One can conclude that formal political institutions do not constitute the main instrument of mobilisation for Muslims. Furthermore, the constraints of the assimilation philosophy seem to be interiorized by Muslim political actors who do not think and conceive of their mobilisation as one that favours particular ethnic rights; on the contrary, they try to embed their rhetoric in conformity with the universalistic claims of the assimilation paradigm. Therefore, the philosophy characterizing the political opportunity structure substantially constrains and shapes the features of Muslim mobilisation. The same phenomenon happens in Great Britain but in opposite forms as the multiculturalist model not only admits but also calls for a religious space.

Integration into political life has proven more successful than in the French case.[164] One can even trace participation in politics back to the pre–World War II period.[165] Immigrant minorities represent 6.6 percent of the electorate.[166] Political awareness has especially increased after the older generations' "myth of return" lost all significance and as ethnic organisations created political awareness and emphasized the necessity to engage in homeland politics.[167]

However, as in France, nonregistration is higher among ethnic minority voters.[168] Like their European counterparts, British Muslims vote massively for the Left—for the Labour Party.[169] Having said that, the trend may be changing in favour of the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats, especially since the war in Iraq. One can see some success at the local level in that 10.6 percent of local councillors in 2001 were from ethnic minorities in London's boroughs.[170] In the House of Commons in 2005, 15 out of 630

members represented ethnic minorities.[171] One can attribute this local success to the system of designation of candidates by the Labour Party, which uses a ward-based system, taking advantage of the concentration of ethnic votes in a district and finally ensuring some level of influence over national representation.[172]

If we go back to the two strategies concerning the use of immigrants as a political resource or as a challenge to national identity, given their share in the electorate and the institutional recognition of diversity, some move towards the first strategy has taken place.[173] This strategy of reaching out to ethnic voters was exemplified by the establishment of the Labour Party Race and Action Group in 1975 as well as the setting up of a Black and Asian Advisory Committee.[174] Jack Straw's message to Muslims to beware of "fair-weather friends" (Liberal Democrats) before the June 2004 elections has been interpreted as evidence of the Labour Party's viewing the Muslim vote as crucial.[175] These initiatives were not restricted to that party—witness the fact that the Conservative Party also established an Ethnic Minority Unit that helped the emergence of an Anglo-Asian Conservative Society. Moreover, the Anglo-West Indian Conservative Society later on was replaced by the One Nation Forum to recruit respective minorities in the Party.[176] The Liberal Democrats also set up the Asian Liberal Democrats in 1991 as well as a forum called Ethnic Minority.[177]

However, two factors have limited this strategy. First, the concentration of ethnic votes is limited. Second, it often takes place in constituencies safe to Labour.[178] The second factor concerns the relatively weak politicization of Muslim communities in terms of civic values.[179] Schain notes an interesting contradiction whereby French Muslims, despite their attachment to civic values, are not or are rarely used as a political resource. In Great Britain, however, where Muslims show a deeper attachment to religious rather than to national identity, they still constitute a political resource and have better access to political life.[180]

Organisation and Institutionalisation

In light of the fact that *laïcité* (secularism) is one of the founding principles of the Republic, the visible expression of Islam has presented a new challenge in recent years.[181] According to the Ministry of Interior, the number of mosques increased from 100 in 1970 to 1,600 in 2004.[182] France now has

about 1,700 mosques, just behind Germany, which has the most in Europe with 2,300.[183] In Ile-de-France, there are more than 50 mosques in eight *départements*.[184] Godard and Taussig put the number at more than 1,800 on the basis of different data from the Ministry of Interior, regional committees of the French Council for the Muslim Cult (CFCM), and regional studies.[185] With regard to financing the mosques in France, most of the foreign funds for their construction and maintenance come from the Middle East, not from countries of origin except for the Algerian subsidy for the Great Mosque of Paris and salaries of imams.[186] However, mosques receive most of their financing from the population's contributions.[187]

The absence of any Islamic clergy explains in part the religion's lack of organisation and the obstacles to building a strong representative entity.[188] Awareness by French authorities of a need for recognition of the Muslim cult came after several international events, especially the Iranian revolution.[189] A driving incentive for involvement of the French state in the emergence of a specifically French Islam has to do with decreasing foreign influences and financial dependence on foreign sources.[190]

Several factors explain the strong involvement of foreign regimes, especially homeland countries, in matters related to Islam in France. Historically, French secularism and the myth of return encouraged French authorities to delegate all issues related to Islam to foreign regimes—done through consulates and embassies.[191] Other geopolitical factors, such as an increasing dependency on Saudi oil, also have played a role. Thus, the Muslim World League opened a branch in France in 1976.[192] Two factors contributed to French authorities' change of mind: integration issues and the emergence of Islamic radicalism and security threats.[193]

The first significant step towards building representation for Islam in France was the creation of a Council for Deliberation under Minister of the Interior Pierre Joxe. Under Charles Pasqua, the Great Mosque of Paris became the predominant interlocutor, and a charter of the Muslims' faith was signed. Although the charter sought to regulate the different currents, it failed to federate the different associations.[194] Significant progress occurred under Jean-Pierre Chevènement in 1999. A series of consultations began, resulting in both the establishment of a framework of agreement whereby French Islam reaffirmed loyalty to the Republic, and the rendering of decisions regarding voting procedures and status of the CFCM.[195] On 9

December 2002, the three big federations—the Great Mosque of Paris, the Union of Islamic Organisations in France (UOIF), and the National Federation of Muslims in France—signed an agreement on the composition of the CFCM.[196] The first CFCM was elected in April 2003 with 80 percent of the prayer spaces participating.[197] The latest elections, won by the Gathering of Muslims in France, took place in June 2011.

The CFCM, which comprises regional councils, is supposed to be exclusively dedicated to religious issues such as the certification of halal meat or organisation of the hajj.[198] The creation of a French Islam also entails a sort of transnational mediating political role although this is not always explicit.[199] However, the CFCM introduced substantial change—specifically, the representation of Islam as a cult on equal footing with other religions and its legal institutional status, comparable to that of the Catholic clergy, the Protestant Federation and the Consistory, and the representative body for French Jews.[200]

The CFCM is in fact, however, a weak body—one that has not successfully fulfilled its mission.[201] The results are disappointing in that it has been dominated by well-organised and conservative Muslim groups.[202] Laurence and Vaïsse depict the institution's paradox, noting that it constitutes "the only game in town for leaders of Muslim background," which can lead to even more confusion in terms of the constituency represented.[203] Indeed, the council gives a highly visible community role to practising Muslims but leaves aside younger generations, as well as secular Muslims. Another reproach often addressed to the CFCM is the involvement of foreign regimes. Even in the consultation process leading to creation of the CFCM, foreign governments had their say.[204] At the same time, the Ministry of Interior has been heavily involved in the composition of the governing board.

Thus institutionalisation remains based on the lowest common denominator, and rivalries between federations are strong and complicated by foreign pressures.[205] Godard and Taussig indicate that this institutionalisation led to what was supposed to be avoided: a new empowerment of foreign governments.[206] On the contrary, for Riva Kastoryano, such institutionalisation and domestication in the national framework could precisely help contain transnational networks, which emphasize the transnational and deterritorialized reimagined *umma* (community of all Muslims). Moreover, they seek to shape European Muslims' identification and type of belonging,

over which the state would then have no control.[207] Finally, the CFCM is divided, the search for consensus is difficult, and when reached, it is fragile. The council cannot pretend to be a community spokesperson, a fact that can only limit "its actual influence over Islam-related policies in France."[208] Then, in terms of influence, most forms of political organisations, including those based on Islam, have failed.[209] Most of these groups were born in the 1980s and tried to expand in the 1990s, but overall, an obvious crisis of political organisation dynamics remains. Former leaders evolved towards a less religious discourse in order to seek alliance with other secular movements, but another tendency seeks to replace the religious discourse at its core.[210] While leaders began to consider the secular political space, intermediary leaders demobilised, leaving the basis of these movements (geographically represented by the *banlieues* [deprived urban areas]) without representation. There are, of course, exceptions such as the UOIF, which still mobilises although its influence is restricted to "communitarian" events. Though dedicated to making Islam visible in society, the UOIF is also affected by a crisis of militancy that can be explained by a social division. That is, tensions exist between institutionalisation and militants' aspirations, as proven by the UOIF leadership's refusal to publicly oppose the 2004 law banning head scarves in school. These failed mobilisations have left a void characterised by two pathological forms of political mobilisation: jihadism and riots (*révoltes de banlieue*).[211] The Salafist movement emerged in reaction to the failure of previous movements.

The riots of 2005 proved again that the communitarian structuring of Muslims in France is a myth.[212] Therefore, one can hardly equate the problem of the *banlieues* with Islam since even major organisations (first and foremost, UOIF) that had tried mediation failed. Sarkozy asked the imams to intervene in the riots, but they did not.[213] This episode is quite telling in terms of the perceptions of the political elite, if not of the French population. In fact, no community intervention has sought to regulate the crisis, and the dominant picture is that of an atomized/individualized population having strong and unsatisfied demands towards the state, which occasionally leads to violent forms of mobilisation.[214] In short, the French political opportunity characterised by the assimilation philosophy and the weight of Jacobinism is not favourable to the mobilisation of specific interests—even less to ethnic mobilisation. As to the resources of the group itself, French

Muslims do not constitute a homogeneous group because divisions along national origins trump religiosity, especially as reflected in the CFCM dysfunctions. Given the focus on foreign policy in this article, the UOIF stands out as the most active organisation regarding this type of issue and constitutes a useful source to investigate interactions with the government concerning international affairs.

A British Muslim civil society has emerged relatively recently.[215] For Peach, British Muslims' "social organization is conservative and family centred."[216] Around 1,000 prayer spaces exist as well as informal Islamic law courts.[217] Compared to other European Muslims, British Muslims have a specific relationship not only with religion but also with religious law—sharia law—as shown by the existence of informal courts.

The controversy over Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* constituted a shifting point in the emergence of a single Muslim community, its mobilisation, and its political assertion.[218] The campaign was particularly led by the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA), whose head, Iqbal Sacranie (who later became the first head of the MCB), recognized the influence of the Jamaat-e-Islami party on his actions.[219] The UKACIA took the *Satanic Verses* case to the House of Lords.[220]

However, the peaceful lobbying and search for recognition by the UKACIA did not function and was shadowed by the "old grassroots" leadership of the Bradford Council of Mosques, which resorted to violent protest and publicly burned Rushdie's book.[221] For Toby Archer, however, this event reflects more of an importation of Pakistani subcontinental politics.[222] The episode was also significant in revealing the lack of unity and organization of British Muslims.[223] Creation of the MCB and the orientation of its strategy towards political participation are perceived as a reaction to the failure of this confrontational Islam.[224]

However, the most significant breakthrough came in 1997 with the establishment of the MCB, an umbrella organization.[225] Like its French counterpart the CFCM, the MCB emerged because of the need expressed by the British government for a single interlocutor representing British Muslims.[226]

Presented as the "first democratic British Muslim organisation," the MCB counts more than 500 affiliated organisations and claims to challenge extremist groups.[227] Its 2007–8 annual report presents the MCB as "a

non-partisan body," declaring that "the Muslim interest lies in working with all the main political parties."[228] The MCB was designed to be an "integrated framework for Muslim self-expression and participation in the life of the country." Towards that end, the council "will plan and conduct effective public campaigns on Muslim issues, encourage fuller participation of Muslims in public affairs and provide an informed, competent and authentic representation of Muslim interests at all levels."[229] Another Muslim organisation, Al-Mujahiroun, however, opposes efforts of the MCB to encourage voting and political involvement. Followers of Omar Bakri Mohammed (leader of Al-Mujahiroun) disrupted an election meeting organized by the MCB in 2005, thus shedding light on "issues of unprecedented importance in this election: the influence of the Muslim vote in marginal constituencies; and the battle within the Muslim community between the moderate mainstream and extremists trying to hijack the agenda to impose their own intolerant views on fellow British Muslims."[230]

The MCB is presented in a favorable light as "a group of some 350 affiliates formed to give Muslim views greater coherence and prominence in Britain"—one that "advocates 'constructive engagement' with the Government and has urged its members to use their vote as citizens to make their voices and concerns heard. In doing so, the council has taken an important step to counter the marginalisation and alienation of many British Muslims and to inculcate the notion that democracy is compatible with Islam."[231]

The MCB has indeed worked with the Electoral Commission and mosques to encourage registration.[232] In 2005, a document titled "Electing to Deliver" and a voter card listing 10 key issues were also prepared for the general election.[233] MCB advertisements encouraged people to vote, and fringe meetings took place with the three important British parties.[234] The MCB has systematically asked imams in mosques and leaders of organisations to reach out on the grassroots level in the context of local, national, and European elections.[235] Prevention of the far Right's electoral success also justifies the MCB strategy.[236] The council issued a press release to voice its concern about the winning of two seats by the British National Party in 2009 for the first time.[237] The idea of "serving the common good," which developed early on, lies at the core of the MCB's mission.[238] In its response to the report by the Conservative Party's Group on National and Inter-

national Security, the MCB argues that its objectives are "to collate and articulate Muslim opinions on prevailing issues of the day much like any other conceived interest group. It is not a 'single issue group,' nor are its interests confined to the members it represents. Its ethos is to work for the common good of all; in the belief that religion, if practised properly, can be a force for good in the lives of all mankind."[239] This stance also corresponds to the future stage identified by Sacranie, former secretary-general of the MCB, whereby the council would engage in issues affecting not only Muslims but also the entire British nation, thus leaving identity politics behind.[240] As a result, the MCB has been highlighting its partnerships with other organisations—for instance, with other faith communities during the campaign for the question on faith in the 2001 census.[241]

The MCB has access to the government, as proven by consultations between the two actors that have occurred on different occasions. Conceived from the beginning as an organization close to the government, "the MCB was given a role in recommending appointments from the Muslim community to government advisory committees, for instance at the Foreign Office, and suitably moderate spokespersons for BBC programming, although subsequently these privileges have been challenged."[242] The MCB consulted on various occasions with the government, especially after the 9/11 attacks, to discuss various issues such as media coverage, the protection of Muslims, and, of course, foreign policy.[243] Consultation meetings have taken place with the home office as well as Foreign and Commonwealth Office delegations, including Muslims sent to Muslim countries.[244]

The government has clearly defined the MCB as an actor in the building of antiterrorist policies.[245] In March 2004, in the wake of the Madrid bombings, Sacranie wrote to imams to encourage them to cooperate fully with the police.[246] The MCB participated in the "Prevent Extremism Together" groups set up by the Home Office, whose recommendations were presented in November 2005. The MCB also convened a meeting as a follow-up to the issue on 13 May 2006 to decide that "a steering group led by community organizations, which would include the MCB, as well as others, must work together to establish an independent and inclusive advisory board to deal with specific issues related to mosques and *imams* in the UK."[247] The Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board, presented in a

press release as "a community-led independent body . . . to achieve the objective of self regulation," was finally elected in May 2009.[248]

The MCB repeatedly presents itself as "arguably Britain's most prominent Muslim representative organisation."[249] It seems to be perceived as a legitimate actor. An article that appeared in 2002 referred to the council as "an organisation recognised by Downing Street as representative of mainstream opinion among Islamic communities."[250] Reporting the police raid on the Finsbury Park Mosque that took place on 20 January 2003, another article refers to the MCB as "the moderate umbrella group" which often noted that British Muslims had been repeatedly upset by the "publicity given to the 'outrageous' statements of Abu Hamza."[251] Yet another article, listing some of the MCB's demands (such as "a timetable for withdrawal from Iraq" or "legislation banning incitement to religious hatred"), concludes that "we would not endorse all the demands. But to set them in a democratic, constitutional framework is the legitimate right of any religious or political lobby group."[252]

An article titled "Anger over Forest Gate Fuels Culture of Denial for Muslims" describes the MCB as "the national body that purports to represent British Muslims and which is frequently consulted by Downing Street."[253] Jonathan Birt's analysis of the MCB explicitly mentions the "government creation of a unified Muslim lobby."[254] British authorities, with a "hearts and minds" approach to Muslims, have been trying to engage with the Muslim community to prevent radicalization—but with only limited success.[255] After the London bombings in 2005, Prime Minister Blair organized a conference to ask Muslim communities to support his strategy aimed at eradicating extremism, most notably the monitoring of independent Islamic schools and the regulation of imams' immigration flows.[256] International connections came into play during a hostage crisis when Norman Kember and three other people from the Christian Peacemaker Team were taken hostage in Iraq in November 2005.[257]

In terms of success or representation, Archer reckons that the strong links between South Asian politics and MCB leaders mean that the organisation never had full support from Muslims in Britain.[258] Exactly like the CFCM, international connections and credentials of the leaders also imply a distance from younger generations. A *Times* article notes the MCB's difficulty in representing a diverse population in terms of age and ideologies.

The council tries to represent "at the same time the standpoints of older, more conservative Muslims in Britain, the younger, better educated generation entering the professions and the angry Muslim youths on the housing estates of Oldham or Bradford."[259]

The MCB may be popular in many parts of the country, but some individuals are not as supportive of its goals or approaches. In the famous policy exchange report by Munira Mirza, a poll revealed that only 6 percent of polled Muslims felt that the MCB represented them and that 51 percent felt no organization did.[260] Ziauddin Sardar, who notes the emergence of a new generation of people who are defining themselves both as Muslim and British without difficulty, criticizes traditional Muslim organisations—including the supposedly democratic MCB—as being run by primo-migrants who use a traditional discourse that young people cannot understand.[261] However, the organization also depends on British-born newer generations representing an emerging middle class to show that it "provid[es] a non-sectarian space for the advance of a Muslim politics of recognition."[262]

Two events have made the relationship between the MCB and the government more difficult: Blair's support of the war in Iraq and the London attacks in July 2005. Security reasons have driven this search for an interlocutor, reflected by the use of the MCB transnationalist networks until the relationship became more difficult because of the council's opposition to the government's support of American policy in Iraq.[263] Moreover, the MCB has taken positions that have damaged its image, such as its failure to send representatives to the Holocaust Memorial Day.[264]

The MCB no longer seems to be considered the principal Muslim interlocutor for the government. For example, Archer notes the speech made by Ruth Kelly of the Ministry of Communities and Local Government that challenges the MCB's decision concerning the Holocaust Memorial Day and the more general search for alternative Muslim voices such as the Sufi Muslim Council, which questioned the MCB hegemony.[265] Even if Muslim organisations believe that the effort to consult Muslims showed progress, concerns exist that the government was imposing leadership on the community by favouring some groups over others and that consultation was superficial.[266] Finally, an article published in 2007 noted that "the MCB has lost its favoured-son position, but it is still not finished."[267] The council has also come under regular criticism for alleged links with extremist

organisations such as the Deobandis or the Jamaat-e-Islami and even for being a fundamentalist body.[268] Ed Husain also voices this criticism in his book *The Islamist*, which considers the MCB "a front for the Jamaat-i-Islami and the Muslim Brotherhood."[269] An article reporting the condemnation by the Muslim Association of Britain (a group affiliated with the MCB) of the London bombings described the association as "a fundamentalist organisation that has been criticised for alleged links with terrorist groups such as Hamas."[270] A Panorama documentary broadcast on the BBC in 2005 implies, on the basis of interviews with members of the MCB, that its affiliated groups adopt hard-line views and that ideology from Pakistan exerts an "undue influence."[271] In a response to a Channel 4 programme titled "Who Speaks for Muslims?," the MCB restated its democratic structure, origins, and independence from any political party, and countered accusations of anti-Semitism.[272] In another fierce response to Martin Bright's investigation in the *Observer*, the MCB also attacked usual criticisms concerning alleged links with the Jamaat-e-Islami party, its position regarding the Palestinian issue, the lack of representation, and its position on the Holocaust Memorial Day.[273]

As a result, a major part of the MCB rhetoric consists of establishing its legitimacy as an actor representing "mainstream" Muslims and differentiating itself from fringe groups. The council has also condemned excessive coverage in the press of these fringe groups, pointing out that the "Finsbury Park (mosque) received more media coverage than all the rest put together."[274] In September 2001, "in a bid to redress the imbalance in reporting, the MCB wrote to the BBC, ITN and Sky urging them to give greater coverage to mainstream Muslim voices. The MCB also met the editors and senior staff from the *Daily Mail*, the *Times*, the *Independent*, and London's *Evening Standard* to convey the same message."[275] Finally, Birt comments on the centrality of the MCB:

> In the short term as least, the MCB has remained "the only show in town" in the eyes of the government, whether for the symbolic purposes attendant on the "politics of recognition" . . . or as a means to gauge Muslim reaction to impending policy, in particular to attune foreign policy rhetoric to Muslim sensibilities both at home and abroad. . . . Having groomed and promoted a unified Muslim lobby for nearly a decade, the British government depicted it as part of the problem when it proved insufficiently compliant.[276]

Conclusion

The British structure of political opportunity characterized by multi-culturalism as well as the recognition and endorsement of identity politics favours the exertion of influence by ethnic, religious, and political groups. As for the resources of the group itself, Muslims appear to be a relatively active entity, given the electoral possibilities and mobilisation in various organisations. It is also true that British Muslims are heterogeneous. The MCB stands out as the most visible organisation, especially because of its endorsement by the government—less because of a representative character still subject to question. Although a similar top-down impulsion in France favours creation of a representative Muslim organisation, the circumstances are very different. The assimilation philosophy seems to paralyse any mobilisation framed in ethno-religious terms, which implies a relatively inefficient ethno-religious presence in the public sphere.

Both environments shape the contours of actors' potential for mobilising, and—aside from the determinant philosophies of integration coming under attack in both countries—this does not affect the movements of mobilisation, at least for now. We can expect each model's antithesis to exert pressure. In other words, we can expect France's rigid model to become more and more flexible and Britain's model to become less so. It is difficult to quantify or determine to what extent both models will change because the main structures sustaining each one are firmly anchored in each country's history. The real question concerns whether the changes that have started to affect each model will translate into effective public policies, which could mean, for instance, in France, the creation of official ethnic statistics. In any case, in order to understand ethnic minorities in any country, one should look first and foremost at the characteristics of the political opportunity structure that will determine and affect the potential, mechanisms, and forms of mobilisation.

Notes

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17. Ceri Peach, "Muslims in the 2001 Census of England and Wales: Gender and Economic Disadvantage," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29, no. 4 (2006): 632.

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20. Peach, "Muslims in the 2001 Census," 632.

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23. Marco Martiniello and Patrick Simon, "Les enjeux de la catégorisation," *Revue européenne des migrations internationales* 21, no. 2 (2005): 7–18.

24. Laurence and Vaïsse, *Integrating Islam*, 18; and Bernard Godard and Sylvie Taussig, *Les Musulmans en France: Courants, institutions, communautés; un état des lieux* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2007), 31.

25. Laurence and Vaïsse, *Integrating Islam*, 75.

26. Laurence and Vaïsse provide the following estimates: 1,750,000 Algerians; 950,000 Moroccans; 425,000 Tunisians; 407,500 Turks; 375,000 from West Africa and the Indian Ocean; 100,000 Asians; and 100,000 undefined others. Laurence and Vaïsse, *Integrating Islam*, 24. See also Godard and Taussig, *Les Musulmans en France*, 454.

27. Peach, "Muslims in the 2001 Census," 631–32.

28. Ibid., 632.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid., 637.

31. "Muslim Population 'Rising Ten Times Faster than Rest of Society,'" *Times*, 30 January 2009.

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227.   MCB, *The Conservative Party's Group on National and International Security—"Uniting the Country: Interim Report on National Cohesion": A Response from the MCB*, Annex 1, 2 May 2007, http://www.mcb.org.uk/uploads/Interim%20Report%20on%20National%20Cohesion-%20MCB%20RESPONSE.pdf. In the "Frequently Asked Questions" section of its website, the MCB presents itself as an independent "national representative Muslim umbrella body with over 500 affiliated national, regional and local organisations, mosques, charities and schools. The MCB is pledged to work for the common good of society as a whole; encouraging individual Muslims and Muslim organisations to play a full and participatory role in public life. It aims (1) to promote co-operation, consensus and unity on Muslim affairs in the UK; (2) to encourage and strengthen all existing efforts being made for the benefit of the Muslim community; (3) to work for a more enlightened appreciation of Islam and Muslims in wider society; (4) to establish a position for the Muslim community within British society that is fair and based on due rights; (5) to work for the eradication of disadvantages and forms of discrimination faced by Muslims; (6) to foster better community relations and work for the good of society as a whole; and (7) to promote inter and extra faith dialogues in the promotion of tolerance and mutual respect in a diverse society." See http://www.mcb.org.uk./faq/faq.php.

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