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May 1, 2009
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From Blowback to Incorporation: Muslim Council Consolidation in Europe

In the past two decades, tensions between immigrant Muslim communities and majority populations in Western Europe have risen, with fearful images of Islam worsening both perceptions of ongoing integration problems and relations themselves. In several countries, European Muslim councils have been established that have potential to channel constructive interaction and cooperation on issues relevant to Muslims and their sustained integration into mainstream societies. With only very limited literature yet existing on the topic, this paper challenges assumptions about the formation of these councils and the role of inter-community tension. Examining cases in Sweden, the United Kingdom, Denmark and France, it argues that, first, European state support for religious minority groups and government willingness to engage them can incentivize grass-roots Muslim representative consolidation. Second, where consolidation has not already happened, major episodes of contention--especially when they contain transnational Muslim appeals and responses that are linked to the domestic Muslim community by media coverage--trigger a process of national-level Muslim consolidation for unified, credible and more moderate representative bodies. Third, Muslim councils are fulfilling a vital role, even if they are not fully representative; this is shown in their capacity to channel dialogue and media coverage that can dampen contention. And finally, where councils are consolidated, European Muslim representative politics corresponds decreasingly to a spoiler framework such as that assumed in much security-focused literature, and more to frameworks of coalition formation and two-level games.

Heightened fears and perceptions of threat from global Islamist movements over the past twenty years has often worsened tense relations between Muslim immigrant minorities and majority publics in Western Europe. Very contentious episodes--including the 1989 'Rushdie Affair' (centered in Britain) and the 2005-6 Danish Mohammed cartoons episode--have exacerbated those relations further; many have argued that they have made mainstream European actors more timid in risking offense to Islam and Islamic practice while strengthening transnational ties between European Muslims and global or homeland Muslim organizations. Further, domestic attacks and tensions involving fundamentalist Muslims are seen by many to ratchet up tensions and lead to continual patterns of conflict in somewhat newly multicultural societies.

Yet the number of highly contentious episodes arising out of such a tense political environment is quite limited, and actually seem not to be repeating themselves much, if at all: when a European society has experienced one major episode where its Muslim and majority communities are in uproar over a given event or issue, the level of hostility seems to reach a single peak and then moderate over time. If a society then experiences another potentially explosive event, domestic responses are more muted.

This paper explains this development by tracing the development of bodies through which these tensions are increasingly being channeled: Muslim representative councils. It contends both with the tendency in political science to over-securitize the study of Islam and politics and with incomplete conclusions in a new and very limited literature on Muslim councils. Examining four national cases, it shows that, where grass-roots consolidation into national representative bodies was not incentivized early with state support (as in Sweden), contention eventually arose and became transnational, producing negative political pressure on Muslim leaders to move to form moderate bodies to speak with a united Muslim voice in the public sphere, as in the United Kingdom and Denmark. In other countries like France, however, contention did not take on a transnational frame until after government initiatives for a united Muslim council were well in motion; there, the council consolidation process was government-led.

While expanding on existing literature on the councils, then, this paper also makes a new contribution to understanding the political effects of contentious 'Muslim vs. majority' episodes much reported on and little understood in journalistic or scholarly reports: by intensifying the negative politicization of Islam already in motion, they have induced Muslim and government actors to start or intensify processes of moderate coalition formation that seeks to co-opt extremist Muslim voices in European political spheres.

The paper first outlines Muslim immigration and settlement in Europe. Second, it examines the expectations about European Muslim political engagement inferred by much social science analysis of Islam and politics more broadly, and by the emergent literature on European Muslim councils in particular. Third, it examines four national cases to draw out patterns of Muslim political appeals or protest and of Muslim representative organization consolidation, and (where applicable) of incorporation into mainstream political processes. Fourth, it uses these cases to propose a model of minority Muslim representative consolidation in Europe.

1. Landscape for contention: immigration, issues, networks

Though Western European Muslims are differently concentrated and organized in each state, several consistent patterns emerge that are relevant to the study. Chief among these are immigrant and settlement patterns, and issues of contention that arise between Muslim and majority populations.

Though some European colonial powers (Britain and France especially) experienced some colonial migration beginning in the 19th century and heightened post-colonial immigration after World War II, arrival of Muslims to Western Europe began in force in the late 1950s - early 1960s, when Europe needed workers. Many of these labor migrants did not intend to stay, but as jobs dried up with world economic slowdown around the 1973 oil crisis and most European states tightened immigration flows, many did remain. Even the unemployed could hope for a good life in the increasingly stable welfare economies of Western Europe. They brought their families in the years that followed, usually settling in ethnically concentrated areas of cities and suburbs. Through the 1970s and 80s, they formed community centers, Islamic associations and mosques around these ethnic enclaves. These organizations tended politically and financially to be more oriented to Muslims' states of origin than to any networks in their states of residence. Different state policies on the relationship between state and religion mediated the possible role to participate in national institutional life *as* Muslim groups, and varying possibilities for naturalization determined different possibilities for individual participation in national political processes and institutions. As Muslim populations remain quite small in European states (France has the largest proportion at an estimated 8-10% of its population), and many remain resident aliens, Muslims are not a very politically salient force in traditional political processes; their representation through national councils is thus an important development that is key to their institutional inclusion.

By the 1980s and 90s, several issues of possible contention has arisen over Muslim life and practice within European societies. Questions revolved around state subsidies for private Muslim schools to equal that enjoyed by some other communities, and around the right of female students to wear the *hijab*, or headscarf. Aspects of many Muslim family structures--such as women's isolation within family circles or arranged and early marriages--seemed an affront to European feminist movements that were enjoying relatively newly won rights and status for women. Many towns objected to the establishment of mosques, fearing they would change the fabric of communities. And disproportionately high crime rates emerged, among second-generation Muslim youth, focusing increasingly negative attention on their communities. New waves of Muslim refugees in the 1980s and 90s from conflict areas in the Muslim world reinforced these conflicts and provided new rivalries between different ethnic communities of Muslim background. These changes were eventually accompanied by the rising global profile of Islamist

militant extremism, which added another negative association to perceptions of Muslims among European publics.

2. Theory and predictions: impacts of global Islamism and challenges of consolidation

2.1. Global threats, domestic cleavages: impacts of militant Islam on analysis of national settings

Clearly, the rise and impact of militant Islamism on global security and power structures over the past two decades has made it the dominant frame for popular, journalistic and scholarly discussions of Islam and Muslim communities. In examining Muslim representative organizations, it is necessary to question flawed analysis of this influence on Muslim European communities and European politics itself, and to examine where the excessive focus on hard security in academic literature may give us faulty assumptions.

The main fault of much academic literature on European Muslims--especially within political science--lies in the excess of work focusing on extremist groups, and the lack of systematic analysis of the broad range of Muslim communities that in reality make up the vast majority of Muslims in Europe. Tracing the roots of political and academic discourse on "Islamic terrorism" back to PLO operations in the early 1970s, Richard Jackson (2007) outlines the hegemony of this concept. Western media, writes Jackson, have consistently portrayed Muslims using "frameworks centred on violence, threat, extremism, fanaticism and terrorism, although there is also a visual orientalist tradition in which they are portrayed as exotic and mysterious" (400). Post-9/11 discourse on Islamic terrorism, he continues, is nearly always "embedded within a wider set of political-cultural narratives surrounding the war on terrorism, including, among others: the 'good war' narrative surrounding the struggle against fascism during the Second World War; mythologies of the Cold War, including the notion of 'the long war', the deeply embedded civilization-versus-barbarism narrative, the cult of innocence, the language and assumptions of the enemy within, the labels and narratives of 'rogue states', and the discourse surrounding the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction" (400-01). The accumulation of this discourse, according to Jackson, has often resulted in an implicit assumption that terrorism is somehow inherent to Islam or at least inherently tied to it. Indeed, many portrayals of Muslims in public life--especially where they participate in political contention--carry the idea that the contention under consideration is part of a larger civilizational conflict, and with it the expectation of political dynamics consistent with larger, more militarized confrontations.

Further, the over-securitization of research on Islam and Muslim communities has only brought more such study, since attention (and funding) is often turned to the direct security implications. While militant Islamism is present in European Muslim communities and radicalization among marginalized youth does pose a threat to state and human security, lack of scholarship on longer-term processes of integration has left analysts and policy-makers with incorrect assumptions of the dynamics involved. Though studies of Muslim minority politics usually rarely analyze their subject systematically, many actually follow the dominant trend in the literature on Islam by assuming a dynamic that imitates spoiler dynamics in civil war mediation.

Presumption of spoiler dynamics in Muslim minority political processes vis-à-vis European governments and publics is both helpful and limited for the present study. On one hand, it is helpful to conceptualize extremist Muslims on the fringes of these communities as ranging between those who would act as ‘limited spoilers’ and ‘total spoilers,’ as in Stephen John Stedman’s (1997) framework developed for problems of civil war settlement. Limited spoilers might create their own factions, mobilize a demonstration when the primary organization refrains or make public statements that threaten to alienate public sentiment. Militant Islamists, in European societies, are total spoilers: unable to achieve an Islamic state or capture any electoral advantage through violent acts, these are typically anti-systemic actors. Any violent act will detract Muslim /majority relations.

Yet the analogy also has its flaws. First, Muslim / majority relations are no conflict scenario in the traditional sense. There is never any possibility for Muslims to accomplish anything they wish--(i.e., a full ‘victory’); rather, any long-term situation will ultimately have to be negotiated with the European state or society. Extremists often have totally different goals from the majority of Muslims--while militant extremists want to destabilize the system or only care about some goal of symbolic Islamic value, nearly all Muslims want a livable existence within their society of residence. They are usually not associated with localized Muslim organizations, but are engaged with globally oriented Islamist groups through online and social networks. Finally, the spoiler analogy is also harmful in that it limits the scope and accuracy of analysis. By keeping Muslim / majority relations within a conflict frame, analysts would miss dynamics that more closely resemble more ‘everyday’ politics of coalition formation and credibility. This study will analyze the process of contention and representative consolidation in several cases to discern where these patterns apply, and how they possibly transition from one dynamic to another.

2.2. European Muslims confronting collective action problems

A limited but growing body of work does study European Muslim organizations and representation in view of domestic and European regional politics and provides a helpful baseline for this paper. While a moderate number of works--many within sociology and religious studies, and most within single case studies--have highlighted consolidation processes in some way,[1] but only a few examine Muslim representative formation through political decision frameworks.

Carolyn Warner and Manfred Wenner (2006) conclude that little real consolidation has been accomplished to credibly represent Muslims in European societies, arguing to collective action problems inherent in the diverse structure of Islamic institutions has hindered it. They examine and discount several alternative hypotheses on why consolidation has, in their view, largely failed. First, they write, *de jure* exclusion of many Muslims as non-citizens from mainstream political processes (Klausen 2005) is not an important factor, since legal residents may vote in local elections in most Western European states and many are in fact citizens or are involved in community groups. Second, low religiosity among many European residents of Muslim background and alternative organization on the basis of class, ethnic or national identities (Castles and Kosack 1974) is not the reason for poor Muslim consolidation, such other cross-cutting attempts have been somewhat limited and many non-religious residents do still self-identify as Muslims. Third, they argue that state structures and resources (bearing different traditions of relating to minorities through labor, ethnic or religious identities) have not primarily shaped Muslim consolidation processes (as in Ireland 1994, Fetzer and Soper 2005, Ferrari 2005), since Muslim workers' links to organized labor are usually weak, and the apparent difficulties in Muslim coordination across a range of European religion-state structures show that some more general difficulty persists. Warner and Wenner, examining the French and German cases, argue that the decentralized nature of Islam (especially Sunni Islam), "with multiple and often competing schools of law and social requirements," is the primary obstacle to Muslim coordination in Europe (461). Though European states have recently sought unified Muslim representative bodies with which to interact, "the characteristics of the immigrants--the fact that they are immigrants from different countries practicing a decentralized religion with very different

[1] Ferrari 2005, De Galembert and Belbah 2005, McLoughlin 2005, Caeiro 2005, Sunier 2005, Roald 2002, Simonsen 2002. Haddad and Golson 2007, Godard 2007 and Silvestri 2007 all provide reasonable comparative overviews of council formation processes, but do not analyze them in a significantly theoretical framework.

traditions--works against the creation of a unified Islamic movement in any Western European country" (472).

Focusing only on the German case (which is characterized by high difficulties of coordination), Steven Pfaff and Anthony Gill (2006) largely concur with Warner and Wenner, but pay more attention to Muslim differences within the German setting and to blocks to engagement in German institutions.[2] They study mosque-state relations in the German federal state of Berlin, finding that "the decentralized structure of European Islam provides opportunities for factions ("spoilers") to undermine broad-based collective action if they perceive centralizing interest organizations as compromising doctrinal and organizational autonomy" (822). Availability of foreign and transnational support gives many Muslim leaders the opportunity of using factional splits to preserve group autonomy and authority in the face of disagreements, blocking efforts at forming unified organizations for Muslim representation within the public sphere.

Overall, Warner and Wenner's treatment of Muslim consolidation is somewhat superficial. Their rush to gloss over alternative explanations that do in fact contribute to difficulties of consolidation somewhat undercuts their conclusion. More significantly, their article is so focused on establishing an argument as to why coordination is difficult that it brushes past the fact that representative bodies have in fact consolidated in several countries and are playing significant consultative roles. While Warner and Wenner discount some of the bodies that have emerged by pointing to ongoing disagreements over their credibility and effectiveness, they insist on presenting a general argument that denies much variance in the processes and success levels of representative coordination across different countries. Pfaff and Gill's study is more helpful, in that they consider state and societal sources of difficulty in addition to Muslim structural and ideological differences; and because they recognize the use of strategic faction-making by "spoilers" who fear threats to group values and interests from political consolidation. However, they seem to over-generalize the German case to Europe more broadly, missing insights from more successful Muslim consolidation elsewhere.

In her work on Muslim institutions in Europe, Sara Silvestri (2007) summarizes Muslim political mobilization in European public spheres as characterized until recently by three usually competing forces:

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[2] See also, Koopmans and Staham 1999 and 2001.

"the 'Islam of the states', Islamist and diaspora networks, and more informal and local groupings" (171). Similarly, Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaisse (2006) mention foreign-supported 'embassy Islam' and the nongovernmental fundamentalist networked 'Islam of the streets'. Over time, Muslim-majority states have lost their influence in European Muslim networks, and most Muslim groupings across the ideological and theological spectra (with the most extreme as the exceptions) have transitioned and merged to take more active service and advocacy roles in their local and national settings, forming what Silvestri herself calls 'civil society Islam' (172). She does not go so far as to suggest that civil society forms of Muslim participation in societies have replaced earlier forms, but this seems increasingly to be the case.

Jonathan Laurence (2005a, 2005b, 2006, and with Vaisse 2006) has written perhaps the most helpful analyses of the formation of European Muslim representative councils, focusing especially on the French case. Laurence (2006) explains the recent rise of representative councils in some countries through government initiatives to engage Muslims. He contends they have done so for two reasons. First, they seek an alternative means of engagement in the face of poor integration through traditional civic institutions. Since "party systems have largely failed to transmit social diversity into parliaments, public schools are in budgetary crisis and mandatory conscription is a thing of the (recent) past … governments there have fallen back on religion policy – via national state-church institutions – as a central tool of immigrant integration" (255). Second, they want to weaken existing ties between foreign governments and religious groups with Muslim immigrant communities. Wary of the foreign control and funding of a majority of prayer centers and mosques on European soil, many governments began major pushes for local and national engagement from the 1990s onward. Representative councils, Laurence writes, "are the culmination of a fifteen-year push by Muslims and public authorities alike for the legal recognition of Islam and the protection of freedom of worship on par with other major religions" (256). But, he emphasizes that government initiatives for engagement with unified bodies are premised on overall precedence of state authority; governments attempt to engage Muslims through national institutions "in the hope of enhancing the authority of the nation-state over competing demands on citizens' socio-political loyalties" (257). Laurence's review is quite persuasive, but seems to over-generalize the dynamics of the French case--where government initiative has been key--to European Muslim councils in general. This study argues that such a nearly exclusive emphasis on government initiatives to explain council formation is not persuasive across European cases.

2.3. Contributions of this paper

Using the case studies to follow, this paper challenges the existing literature by arguing that:

1. *European state support for religious minority groups and government willingness to engage them can incentivize grass-roots Muslim representative consolidation.*

2. *Muslim councils are fulfilling a vital role, even if they are not fully representative; t*his is shown in their capacity to channel dialogue and media coverage that can dampen contention.

3. Where consolidation has not already happened, *major episodes of contention--especially when they contain transnational Muslim appeals and responses that are linked to the domestic Muslim community by media coverage--trigger a process of national-level Muslim consolidation for unified, credible and more moderate representative bodies.*

4. Where councils are consolidated, *European Muslim representative politics corresponds decreasingly to a spoiler framework such as that assumed in much security-focused literature, and more to frameworks of coalition formation and two-level games.*

3. Case studies: Sweden, Britain, Denmark and France

The four cases examined here have been chosen because they give great variety in terms of variables that are here considered independent, to allow us to see how different starting situations in terms of immigration and policy influence the timeline and process of Muslim organization consolidation, with intervening processes of domestic and transnational contention. They constitute, to some extent, two matched pairs: the roots of much immigration to both France and the UK lie in their colonial periods, and both have historically had more inclusive civic models extended to post-colonial migrants--yet their approaches to minority groups, especially in terms of religion in the public sphere, have differed extensively, leading to different patterns of contention, consolidation and incorporation. Further, Sweden and Denmark are broadly similar demographically, religiously, politically and economically, and experienced similar immigration patterns. However, integration policies in the two countries have led to very different minority /majority contention and Muslim consolidation patterns.

Given these similarities and differences in the two pairs, the selection gives good grounds for comparison of the relationship between policies, transnational/domestic contention and consolidation and incorporation, given that the UK and Denmark have each experienced significant transnationally linked

episodes, while France has seen limited domestic contention and Sweden has seen little to none.[3] The following case descriptions starts with Sweden's early consolidation model, advances through the contention-to-consolidation patterns in the UK and Denmark, and then examines France's state-driven pattern.

3.1. Sweden

After limited numbers of Muslim Tartars came from Finland and Estonia after World War II, Muslim immigration to Sweden occurred in earnest through labor migration during the 1960s. The first wave of foreign workers came early in the decade from Turkey, Yugoslavia, Albanian and Pakistan. In 1967, however, economic slowdown brought immigration restrictions. As in many other Western European countries, many workers decided to remain in and bring their families to the country, where a growing welfare system enabled a reasonable existence even to the unemployed. The 1980s brought refugees from the world's hotspots, including significant groups of Muslims from Iran, Iraq (including some Kurds) and Lebanon; more came in the 1990s from Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq. There are around 330,000 first-generation immigrants from Muslim-majority countries in Sweden (Statistics Sweden, 2006); while no reliable count of all those of Muslim background exists, they are estimated to make up about 5% of the Sweden population. Today, the biggest groups of immigrants in Sweden are (beginning with the largest groups) Iranians; Bosnians; Turks; Arabic speakers from Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria; Albanians, Somalis and southeast Asians. Muslims in Sweden live largely in suburbs to the three largest cities, somewhat isolated from mainstream Swedish social life and--in a departure from the situation in many other Western European countries--from most city centers (Roald 2002). Historically, Muslims have voted for the Social Democrats, but there are few Muslims in national politics. There is one practicing Muslim in the current parliament--Mehmet Kaplan of the Green Party.

Sweden's contemporary political culture has been heavily shaped by its intellectual elite and Social Democratic Party, which has dominated the establishment since World War II. Sweden, as Denmark and most of Western Europe, experienced a wave of labor migration in the 1960s and 1970s which was stopped after the 1973 oil crisis for all but family and refugee migration. Social Democratic governments

[3] There are, of course, several other relevant national cases, the most notable being Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and perhaps Norway. In the interest of space, these will need to be included in a larger study, but their processes are taken into account to some extent in the modeling process, and their basic elements can be viewed in the appendix.

since the 1970s have followed a firm multicultural policy that is maintained by the current center-right government. In Sweden as in much of Western Europe, Muslim immigrants have become known and politicized over the last two decades less as national groups, and more as 'Muslims.' There are inter-community tensions and a certain level of hostility towards immigrants and Muslims in the country, but the public discourse is deeply multiculturalist. In 2001, Sweden implemented a new dual-citizenship law allowing immigrants to keep their existing citizenships while becoming naturalized Swedish citizens. Swedish citizenship is available after five years' legal residence, with no language requirement.

3.1.1. Gradual Muslim representative consolidation

In contrast to the other cases to be outlined here, Swedish Muslim organizations consolidated early and have since seen their engagement with public institutions progressively increase. The consolidation was largely bottom-up, but was encouraged by state multicultural policy and directly incentivized by the availability of state support for minority religious institutions.

After the initial establishment of Muslim prayer rooms and cultural centers in newly settled Muslim communities in Sweden, national representative Muslim groups formed in accordance with historical arrangements for 'free churches,' with the 1974 Law for Religious Denominations bringing them into potential legal equity with both free churches and the soon to be disestablished Church of Sweden.[4] Many Muslim organizations exist in the country on the local, regional and national levels, but the largest receive some state support from the Commission for State Grants to Religious Communities (SST), with the first qualifying for aid in 1983: the Union of Islamic Congregations in Sweden (formed in 1974, *Förenade Islamiska Församlingar i Sverige*) and the Swedish Muslim Union (1982, *Sveriges Muslimska Förbund*), which together make up the Swedish Muslim Council (1990, *Sveriges Muslimska Råd*); and the Union of Islamic Culture Centres in Sweden (1984, *Islamiska Kulturcenterunionen i Sverige*), which consists mostly of Turkish Muslims and is linked to the turkish *Süleymanci* movement. Together they represent an estimated more than 106,000 practicing Muslims (SST 2007). They receive their support

[4] Religious pluralism came late to Sweden: at the end of the 19th century, in remained legally possible to expel residents of "dissident" faith, and religious freedom first became formally established in 1951. The process of establishing state support for minority religions began in 1964 with negotiations for reducing the monopoly of the state Lutheran church, a long-term process that has been identified as one root of the broader multiculturalist policies (Roald 2002: 108, Sander and Larsson 2002). Legal provision was established for support of independent Christian denominations in 1971, and 'immigrant religions' were deemed to qualify in 1974. This Law for Religious Denominations was key to minority religious institutionalization, bringing legal frameworks into line with organizational and funding practices that had been in place for over 20 years.

today through the Islamic Council for Cooperation (1988, *Islamiska Samarbetsrådet*), which acts as a gatekeeping body for state support to Muslims.

The Union of Islamic Congregations and the United Muslim Communities of Sweden (the country's first and largest organization and its once split-off group [5] of mostly Sunni Arabs) joined forces to form the Swedish Muslim Council (SMR) in 1990 (Haddad and Golson 2007). By far the country's largest Muslim umbrella organization, the SMR was created to "concentrate and centralise power and to demonstrate a more united front with respect to the various authorities as well as to Swedish society in general… to create information materials… and to take an active part in representing and lobbying for the Muslim interest in various debates in the society" (Sander and Larsson 2002: 109). It represents a majority of Sweden's Muslims through its constituent organizations, and is the government's main counterpart on issues of Muslim concern. It is primarily a political organization, advocating for Muslim concerns and demands through the mainstream media and consultation with government and society-wide institutions like national insurance firms. Its voice has, however, was kept somewhat diluted by the establishment of several smaller umbrella groups during the 1990s, representing many Shiite and Bosnian congregations in Sweden, among others.

3.1.2. Engagement in mainstream political sphere

The SMR's effectiveness in engaging on Muslims' behalf with societal institutions may be hindered by the conditions of state funding and the nature of leadership of the SMR and other Swedish Muslim organizations. It has been argued, for instance, that the bureaucracy necessary for obtaining these grants is not natural to their organizational forms, and that the grants, though not sizable, make them more passive than they should be (Sander and Larsson 2002, Sander 1997). Further, the leaderships of various organizations overlap, often leaving the same first-generation male men who tend to operate more within their (often ethnically concentrated) communities than with wider society, and who seem to maintain a restrictive power structure that may not be seen to fully represent Swedish Muslim communities (Roald 2002). The SMR's leadership has changed somewhat, however, with the assumption of its chair position

[5] A number of splits, mostly ethnic in nature, plagued the organizations in the 1980s -- a group of mostly Sunni Arabs split from the Union of Islamic Congregations (FIFS) in 1982 and formed the United Muslim Communities of Sweden (SMUF), and Suleymanci and Somali communities split from the FIFS 1990 to form the Union of Islamic Culture Centres (IKUS). IKUS later formed, together with some smaller organizations, the Islamic Council in Sweden (IRIS). That organization has a more traditionalist orientation, being openly linked with the the pietist Turkish Süleymanci. Its advocacy work is not often explicitly political, but has focused on establishing Koranic schools throughout Sweden.

by Helena Benauoda, a young female Swedish convert to Islam. The Council's effectiveness may also be limited by its leaders' perceived ability to influence Muslim communities, which has been questioned on the grounds that many Swedish Muslims are said still to seek religious authority and council through religious programs broadcast from the Muslim world more than to their local Imams, who often lack a full understanding of Swedish society anyway (Roald 2002).

Yet with all these caveats, SMR's role has grown gradually since its formation as societal recognition as the government's main consultative partner has increased. When media reports raised concerns about girls quitting high school to marry, the ministers of integration and education established a committee, including the SMR and the (largely Turkish) Islamic Council in Sweden along with other religious and ethnic minorities to work on the issues (Roald 2002: 108-9). The organization's spokespersons are frequently cited in mainstream media on issues relating to Muslims.

Having established early and gained a mainstream consultative role over time, the SMR and other main organizations have been instrumental in channeling dialogue to contain potentially contentious issues in the years since the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington. During the uproar over the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*'s published cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed in February 2006, members of the Swedish parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee visited the Stockholm Central Mosque to discuss the drawings and reactions to them with Swedish Muslims. At the time, SMR spokesman Mehmet Kaplan (the same individual who is now a member of parliament) told a reporter from the country's main news daily, "We have mutual understanding and dialogue with politicians here that is missing in Denmark. Freedom of speech is strengthened by this dialogue and it would be dangerous to backpedal on questions of freedom of speech," referring to the terms in which the conflict had been framed as a point of conflict in Denmark and some other European countries (Anander 2006).

When Sweden experienced its own 'Mohammed cartoon' episode in August 2007, established channels of dialogue contained it to a national issue. Concerned that art galleries were refusing to publish

cartoonist Lars Vilks' work in fearful self-censorship, on August 19, 2007 regional daily *Nerikes Allehanda* published a cartoon of the Prophet Mohammed as a dog.[6]

Swedish Muslims launched protests against the newspaper for its publication of the drawing, in the region and around the country. These were peaceful, and demonstrators cooperated with the police; they said their objective was to open dialogue with the government over the surrounding cultural issues. Muslim organizations weighed legal action. Within ten days, the Iranian and Pakistani governments and the OIC sharply condemned the publication of the drawings (Hamrud 2007, Svensson 2007, OIC 2007). Egypt, Jordan and Afghanistan followed in early September. Muslim-country ambassadors to Sweden requested meetings with the Prime Minister.

Institutional responses to the cartoon's publication were of a conciliatory nature towards Muslims, and were largely channeled through leading Muslim organizations. From the first day, the Swedish Post refused to deliver the paper in which it was printed. On September 4, Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt (Conservative Party) visited the largest mosque in Stockholm to meet with a large group of Swedish Muslim organizations about the incident, thanking them for their efforts in dampening tensions to prevent the situation from escalating. "In the same breath," said Reinfeldt, "we must defend our freedom of expression and our democracy, and do it in dialogue and close cooperation between this group of Muslims and the government" (Carlborn 2007a). His plans for national dialogue were affirmed by spokespeople for the Swedish Muslim Association and the Swedish Muslim Council, who also offered to assist his efforts.[7] In all, discussion of the Swedish incident lasted several weeks, but faded from the front page quickly. A few demonstrations were put on by more extreme groups in the Muslim world, but no major transnational reaction ensued.

Though certainly driven by a less flammable national political context than the Danish episode, Swedish Muslim and government actors hindered the event's escalation through proactive steps and direct

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[6] The newspaper's editor wrote that refusals of various galleries to exhibit cartoonist Lars Vilks' work were "unacceptable self-censorship. A liberal society must be able to do two things at the same time. On the one hand, it must be able to defend Muslims' right to freedom of religion and their right to build mosques. However, on the other hand, it is also permissible to ridicule Islam's most foremost symbols – just like all other religions' symbols" (Ströman 2007). The galleries' decisions, he wrote, were based on the experience of the Danish cartoons crisis that had escalated in large part because of the xenophobic political environment in Denmark (in contrast to the less hostile environment toward Muslims in Sweden), but that his work should still be given a fair hearing.

[7] The Swedish government refused to directly apologize for the drawing's publication, but promptly pursued dialogue with Muslim-country diplomats. On September 7, he responded to diplomatic concerns by meeting with 20 Muslim-majority country ambassadors. During the meeting, previous demands that, among other things, Sweden make insulting the Prophet Mohammed illegal seemed to have largely been put aside (Carlborn 2007b).

dialogue. The containment of the issue to the national (rather than transnational or international) level was enabled in part by the early establishment and progressive strengthening of Muslim representative organizations with willingness and credibility to speak and conduct dialogue on behalf of the larger Muslim community.

3.2. The United Kingdom

The 2001 UK census measured the state's Muslim population at 1.6 million (and some estimates have said 2 million), meaning they constitute 3-4% of the general population; it is estimated that about 800,000 of these are citizens (Laurence and Vaisse 2006). More than half of these are from South Asia; Pakistanis, then Indians and Bangladeshis are the largest national origin groups. Muslim immigration to the UK began in earnest after World War II with migration from the former colonies, giving way to waves of labor migration during the 1960s and 70s. From the 1970s onwards, many Middle Eastern immigrants have also come, especially many educated professionals to London and its surrounding areas. Along with most other Western European states, the UK received several waves of refugees beginning in the 1980s from Muslim-majority countries, most significantly from Somalia, Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq. Having arrived through chain migration and settled through kinship and friendship networks, British Muslims are concentrated especially in the greater London area, with smaller numbers in other (mostly urban) areas of southeast England, the Midlands, West Yorkshire and South Lancashire. Pakistanis are more evenly dispersed throughout the UK, while Bangladeshis are especially concentrated in several areas. The Muslim population is young, with 34% under 15 years old (Pedziwiatr 2007b). Large numbers live in areas that are ethnically and religiously very concentrated, and many Muslim children attend schools with high proportions of Muslim students. On average, they are economically disadvantaged; the Spring 2000 Labour Force Survey found that Bangladeshis and Pakistanis were 2 ½ times more likely than whites to be unemployed, and three times more likely to be in low-paid jobs (cited in Pedziwiatr 2007b).

3.2.1. Early Muslim organizations.

With settlement of family groups in late 1960s and 70s, many Muslim organizations emerged in Britain. South Asian groups, especially, focused first on working with local authorities to find places of worship, and focused on meeting the needs of specific linguistic and even extended family based groups in local

settings (Vertovec 2002: 22).[8] The Union of Muslim Organisations of the UK and Ireland (UMO) was formed in 1970 by representatives of 38 groups as the first umbrella organization, to realize Muslim unity, coordinate Muslim activities, and represent Muslim communities in lobbying the national government on issues of concern to Muslims. Yet it encountered difficulty in attaining the support of some of the most influential mosques and organizations and ultimately failed in becoming a widely recognized representative for the country's Muslims. It has been described as premature in conducting national-level advocacy at a time when most issues of Muslim practice and life in their communities were being addressed at local levels (Nielsen 1992, Pedziwiatr 2007a), and its governing structure seems also to have been quite rigid (with its founding leader remaining in leadership indefinitely). The UMO laid groundwork, however, for future Muslim advocacy work on key issues, such as workplace allowance of Islamic practice, educational guidelines; and it engaged in early inter-faith cooperation (Pedziwiatr 2007a).

For several decades, effective Muslim cooperation with the British state was limited not only by organizational problems, but also because the British legal system structured protection of minorities through racial and ethnic divisions rather than religious ones. While Jews and Sikhs were included in the system of protection based on the 1976 Race Relations Act and many related initiatives as ethnic groups, Britain's ethnically diverse population of Muslims were for many years not related to as they are--a group with a unifying set of concerns that has increasingly been perceived in the wider public sphere not in terms of ethnicities, but as 'Muslims' (Ferrari 2005).

3.2.2. The Rushdie Affair

The 1988 publication of Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* triggered responses from Muslims worldwide upset by its juxtaposition of profane and sexual imagery with an account of the Prophet Mohammed and his immediate circle, especially as they assumed Rushdie--seen as a lapsed Muslim--must have known and in all likelihood intended the offense his work would give (Werbner 2002: 115-16). Initially, British Muslims responded to the novel as part of a global Islamic response, yet they seemed to feel a sense of responsibility toward the global Muslim community for Rushdie's actions as a fellow British Muslim (Werbner 121).

[8] Muslim community leaders were usually laymen, whose authority overlapped somewhat with, but remained distinct to, that of religious scholars. They distinguished themselves from many other first-generation immigrants, according to Seán McLoughlin (2005), by being part of a well-established kinship group, having a reputation as a connected and effective political operator, some education and English competency and experience of engaging with wider British society through a service occupation or small business (58-59). Such men used their cultural capital to build up mosques and Islamic community centers all over Britain.

British Muslims initially made appeals for the book's offenses to be addressed through institutional channels. On learning of the content of Rushdie's novel from a contact in Madras, India in early October, Faiyazuddin Ahmad of the Islamic Foundation in Leicester sent excerpts to a number of Muslim organizations in Britain and flew to Saudi Arabia to appeal for intervention from the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) (How the Row... 1989). In the following weeks, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Somalia, Sudan, Malaysia, Qatar, Indonesia and South Africa banned either the novel or entry by Salman Rushdie.

In the same time period, a group of reformist Islamist and traditionalist Muslim leaders formed the United Kingdom Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA) to lobby the government with their concerns (McLoughlin 2005: 59, Vertovec 2002). Appeals were also made through the Union of Muslim Organisations, whose secretary wrote in October to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher requesting Rushdie's prosecution. Three weeks later, Thatcher responded that no prosecution was warranted. In late December, the ambassadors to the UK from Pakistan, Qatar and Somalia protested to the Home Office together with the director of London's Regent Park Mosque.

When the campaign of letter-writing, petitions, telephone calls and meetings failed to bring a significant response from the government, the more traditional, ethnically oriented leadership associated with the Bradford Council of Mosques (BCM) co-opted the campaign and bypassed UKACIA's preferred civic channels (McLoughlin 2005). The BCM, which had mobilized Muslims for protests on earlier campaigns for Islamic practice rights in British communities, mobilized a protest that would become the enduring image of the 'Rushdie Affair.' Though it was planned to call media attention to Muslim concerns over the book, the 'Bradford book burning' on January 14, 1989 unintentionally connected Muslim protests to Nazi Germany's policies in the minds of a shocked British public.

Events quickly escalated in Muslim-majority countries as well. On February 12 and 13, 1989, riots in Pakistan and Kashmir over Rushdie's book killed six and injured 160. on February 14, Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini issued a *fatwa*, or execution order, for Rushdie, for the offense of apostasy. The following day, 5,000 Iranians demonstrated and threw stones at the British Embassy in Tehran, and a price was put on Rushdie's head. On February 16, the OIC threatened a boycott of all Penguin (Rushdie's publisher) publications by its 45 member countries if unless the book was withdrawn (How the Row… 1989).

The ‘Rushdie Affair,’ as the contentious series of events in response to the novel became known, heavily impacted majority British and Muslim perspectives on the identity and role of Muslims within British society. It led, writes Pnina Werbner, to British Muslims’ “discovery of the real limitations of their power as British subjects. This realisation was gradual and highly traumatic” (2002:121). The entire episode changed majority views of British Muslims, but coverage of the Bradford book burning was especially influential, as it was portrayed by British media sources as providing evidence of an “uncivilized” and “intolerant” Muslim nature (Vertovec 2002: 23). The issuance of a *fatwa* by Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini to call for Rushdie’s death reinforced this perception, being “portrayed as a worldwide Muslim threat that had infested the body Britain” (Vertovec 2002: 23). This was reinforced by coverage featuring inflammatory statements by some British Muslim spokespeople and a lack of focus on reactions of the broader Muslim population to the novel and ensuing events. Overall, writes Steven Vertovec, it “created or bolstered an image of a Muslim population that was homogeneous in its antimodern values and dangerous in its passions, posing a challenge both to nationalist ideologies of ‘Britishness’ and to liberal notions about freedom and human rights” (2002: 23, referring to Asad 1990, Modood 1990).

The effects of the Rushdie Affair on media and popular perspectives of British Muslims were broad and long-term. Two years later, Muslim mobilizations for protest against the Gulf War were similarly “portrayed generally as somehow linked to a worldwide antiwestern, Islamic fundamentalist movement,” and their loyalty to Britain and the allied cause was questioned (Vertovec 2002: 23). As Zaki Badawi, then-director of the Muslim College in London and a member of the newly formed Muslim Forum told *the Independent* in 1991, "As Muslims, we are perceived as having dual loyalties in this war. We are in a delicate position, and we must reassure our compatriots that we are loyal British citizens; otherwise, hostility could break out" (quoted in Hinds 1991).

3.2.3. Muslim representative consolidation

The Rushdie Affair caused Muslim leaders, in their own words, to see “the need to coordinate efforts on wider issues of Muslim concern” (Research and Development Committee, MCB 2003). Kalim Siddiqui, one of the more radical leaders involved in mobilizations during the Affair and known for voicing his support for the Iranian *fatwa* ruling, made an abortive attempt at establishing a body to respond to British

Muslim needs and concerns. In 1992 he established the 'Muslim Parliament,' proposing a somewhat parallel society for Muslims in Britain and discouraging Muslims from participating in mainstream politics. At its startup *the Independent* declared that the credible Muslim representatives desired by government and media "have not been forthcoming...Dr Siddiqui and his 'parliament' are exploiting a vacuum that the moderate majority of Muslims should fill as rapidly as possible" ("Editorial…" 1992). Notorious for extreme positions, the Muslim Parliament was never supported by the most influential mosques or groups, and eventually declined over leadership disputes (Pędziwiatr 2007b).

During the same period, more moderate groups like UKACIA that had initially mobilized during the Rushdie Affair and some new movements like the Muslim Forum were examining possibilities for a more representative body to assume the mantle of moderate representation of Muslim concerns through mainstream media and political channels. But the cacophony of voices left the organizations without real credibility to engage broadly on behalf of British Muslims.

In March 1994, Conservative Home Secretary Michael Howard told Muslims they needed to speak with one voice if they wanted to exert more influence over government policy (*Q-News* 1994, referred to in McLoughlin 2005). Partly in response, a number of Muslim organizations and institutions held a meeting in April 1994, forming an interim committee and working group to study the needs of Muslim communities for representation and strategy for forming such a body (Research and Documentation Committee, MCB 2003). Moderate Muslims, according to a 1995 report, were not satisfied with the focus of media attention on radical Muslims in the absence of a dominant Muslim voice (Evans 1995). The working group's own survey findings were typified by responses expressing the desire for a an organization "seen to be positively engaged in dialogue with all sectors of British society. Muslims must come out of their enclaves and begin serious and positive but cogent moves to increase their influence in the areas of life which are significant to shaping their future" (Muslim leader in Bradford, cited in Research and Documentation Committee, MCB 2003).

After a three-year process in which over 1200 organizations and activists were consulted, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) was inaugurated on November 23, 1997.[9] A central working committee and officers were elected for two-year terms at the first general meeting in March 1998 (McLoughlin

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[9] The working group had decided to imitate the structure and constitution of the Board of Deputies of British Jews (established 1760), as many other British minority umbrella organizations have done

2005). Its constitution declared objectives of promoting "cooperation, consensus and unity on Muslim affairs;" strengthening efforts made "for the benefit of the Muslim community" on the basis of fairness and rights; promoting "a more enlightened appreciation of Islam and Muslims in the wider society;" fostering "better community relations" and working "for the good of society as a whole" (Research and Documentation Committee, MCB 2003). Currently, the MCB represents an ethnically mixed range of about 350 regional and national Muslim institutions, including mosques, educational institutions, charities, women's and youth organizations and professional bodies.

3.2.4. Engagement in mainstream political sphere

Tony Blair's Labour government, which came to power that same year, engaged the MCB eagerly from its inception. Though no official recognition process has occurred, the MCB has been the government's only consistent counterpart representing British Muslims. Though its longer-term trajectory of formation rules out the possibility that the MCB was the project of New Labour, as some have said, the rise of that government was certainly fortunate for the new Council. The government was generally committed to integrating faith-based organizations in its civic renewal initiatives, and the MCB received quick responses to its initial proposal for contact with invitations to regular meetings and receptions; it even represented the Commonwealth Office in delegations to Muslim-majority countries (McLoughlin 2005). After 9/11, its public face and interaction with government leaders initially intensified (Allen 2007).

The MCB's key consultative role has raised the prestige of its leaders; former MCB Secretary-General Iqbal Sacranie was estimated by *The Observer* in 1999 as one of the 300 most powerful people in Britain (even the Archbishop of Canterbury was not included), and was knighted by the Queen in 2005 for his social activity in Britain (Pędziwiatr 2007). The MCB leadership has, in turn, used its public authority to influence British Muslim discourse, initiating significant interfaith engagement to mobilize Muslims and people of other faiths to get a question on religion included in the national census (Pędziwiatr 2007), as well as affecting a significant number of public debates.

However, with its central representative role, the MCB has had to negotiate a difficult balance between Muslim constituent and majority concerns. The government's common references to it as the primary Muslim body of Britain sometimes damages its reputation among some Muslims, who portray it as a puppet council that is too pro-government (Hellyer 2007). The MCB must negotiate between being

moderate enough to work effectively through media coverage and in government consultations within mainstream political processes, and remaining close enough to the positions of its own constituent and other Muslim organizations to remain a credible representative on their behalf. This was vividly played out in October 2001, when Tony Blair invited MCB leaders to visit with him just before the expected invasion of Afghanistan. As journalist Jeevan Vasagar (2002) wrote, “His guests knew they were in a no-win situation: accept the invitation and risk being labelled a sell-out for supporting the war; turn it down and lose any influence they might wield with the government.”

The London bombings of July 7, 2005 revealed both the accomplishments and limits to the Muslim representative role that had developed since the Rushdie Affair. In the days immediately following the attacks, the MCB and a few lower-profile groups were on hand as dialogue partners for the government and somewhat trusted representatives, presenting a more moderate Islam within British society that could disassociate the broader Muslim community with what had occurred. But the attacks also revealed a possible weakness in the MCB, shaking up its role. Though its status was very sure as the leading Muslim voice in public affairs leading up to the attacks, the MCB was accused immediately afterwards of being too soft on Islamic extremism in Muslim communities (Pędziwiatr 2007). The government established seven working groups throughout the country, and launched the “Preventing Extremism Together” program with the MCB and three other leading councils--including the increasingly influential Muslim Association of Britain and the British Muslim Forum. As sociologist Tahir Abbas was quoted as saying in early 2006, the government’s “monologue with the MCB” seemed to be over (quoted in “Britain: Who Speaks for Muslims? 2006). It remains unclear whether the MCB will re-emerge as the dominant Muslim voice in the future, or whether a more diverse range of representatives will consistently be consulted.

3.3. Denmark

After Denmark experienced labor migration in the 1960s and early 1970s like most of Western Europe, then abruptly stopped all but family and refugee migration in 1973, tensions rose in the 1990s as greater numbers of refugees arrived and concerns rose about minority youth involvement in criminality. It is estimated to have 220,000 first- and second-generation migrants from Muslim-majority countries, or about 4 % of the populations (Statistics Denmark, 2008). Muslims in Denmark come primarily from Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, Bosnia, Iran and Somalia; the majority of second-generation Muslims are of Turkish and

Pakistani origin. Many Muslim immigrants to Denmark are not well-educated, tending to come from less developed regions of their native countries.

The Social Democratic-led governments of much of the 1990s had pursued multiculturalist policies but had not led substantive dialogue to address legitimate public concerns that came with increasing numbers of refugees, recession-heightened unemployment among immigrants and disproportionately high criminality among youth of some immigrant communities. The far-right Danish People's Party (DF, *Dansk Folkeparti)* sailed into parliament in 1998, by making the issues their own.

The party was formed in 1995 in a split from the far-right Progress Party, which had risen on anti-EU and anti-immigrant nationalist discourse in the early 1990s. DF was formed especially to advocate for the strengthening of 'Danishness' and the Danish way of life--which they define by pointing to shared values of democracy, freedom of expression, Lutheran Christian faith and its heritage, and a functioning welfare state. It is a populist and anti-immigration party, stating in its platform that "Denmark is not and has never been an immigrant-land. We will therefore not accept a multi-ethnic transformation of the country" (Dansk Folkeparti Platform). The DF has gained seats in each successive elections, through the latest in 2007 where in captured 14% of the vote.

The DF is central to any discussion of recent integration politics in Denmark, since the center-right minority government in power since 2001--dependent on its support--has implemented much of the DF's immigration and integration platform. Further, much of the political establishment, from right to left, has essentially adopted the terms set by DF on integration discourse--restrictive policies and suspicion of Islam have become dominant and electorally advantageous themes in contemporary Danish politics.

There is one member of Parliament of Muslim background--Naser Khader, of Lebanese origin--but no practicing Muslims. Naturalization rates are lower than in Sweden, and there are few links between immigrant associations and political parties, as such connections could be electoral liabilities. Labels of second- or third-generation immigrant are common, and 'bilingual' has attained a negative connotation in discussion of the children of immigrants. If minority youth are alleged to be involved in a crime, newscasters do not hesitate to describe their 'immigrant' (understood: Middle Eastern) appearance. With a strong discourse of the virtues of 'Danishness' prevailing, it is in law and in social practice very difficult for immigrants to become 'Danish.' Instead, a general hostility toward immigrants--especially those of Middle Eastern origin--has been steadily built.

3.3.1. Early Muslim organizations

As elsewhere in Western Europe, ethnically-oriented cultural centers and mosques have been established throughout the country as various waves of Muslim immigrants have come to Denmark. There have been no changes of religion-state relations in Denmark to parallel those in Sweden--the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church (commonly and constitutionally called 'the People's Church') remains the established state church--and no accompanying expansion of rights or support for Muslim groups. Further, as Per Mouritsen (2006) highlights, the dominant place of secularized Lutheranism in Danish cultural identity and even political life produces a doubly difficult situation for Danish Muslims. They are defined culturally as non-Danish by their Muslim faith, and held at a distance politically for being organized culturally in faith-based groups at all. Since religion should occupy a private and preferably dispassionate place in life and society, there is little room for religious groups in political life. Successive Danish governments, then, have been reluctant to deal with Muslims as religious communities.

The effects of these combined elements on earlier institutionalization of Islamic representative organizations is clear: there was very little. Materially, there is no fully recognized mosque in Denmark (i.e., a facility built to serve as a mosque) to serve as a centralizing site for Muslim communities and to represent the established fact of Islam as a part of Danish life to the community at large; attempts are being made to build one, but keep being held up at the local level, where site approval has been made difficult. Overall, Muslim groups developed and held a defensive posture in 1970s and 80s, with little communication across ethnic lines (mosques were ethnically organized).

Initially immigrants imagined they would return home and did not enter Danish society; even as they realized they would remain permanently, settled patterns and marginalization from engagement in Danish institutions kept many oriented socially and sometimes politically toward their countries of origin (Simonsen 2002).

In the 1980s and 90s several national associations arose--mostly ethnically defined into Pakistani, Turkish, Bosnian, Arab-speaking, Somali, etc.; many of these exhibit a spoke-and-wheel structure with national leadership committees and local centers and congregations. The single ethnically mixed organization of national stature, the Islamic Center for Knowledge and Information (*Islamisk Videns- og Informations Center*) was somewhat apolitical and fairly small. A group based at the Copenhagen and Aarhus Islamic Cultural Centers, the Islamic Congregation (*Islamisk Trossamfund*) was often the reference

point for news media seeking to gain a Muslim perspective on events, but it is chiefly made up of Arabic immigrants and is not much more broadly representative than the other ethnically defined groups. Until very recently, no group has consistently been present as a ready representative body on the national political stage.

3.3.2. The Mohammed Cartoon Crisis

On September 30, 2005, *Jyllands-Posten*, Denmark's largest-circulating daily newspaper, published 12 drawings of the Prophet Mohammed, each by a different Danish satirical cartoonist. The newspaper's editors organized the spread in response to an author (an Islam critic known for provocative statements) who claimed he could not find any illustrators who would draw Mohammed for a book he was writing and suggested that Danish media had become too self-censoring on topics related to Islam (Rose 2005). The drawings were diverse: three of them actually criticized the paper's effort; but several were seen as offensive by Muslims, most of all one depicting Mohammed with a bomb in his turban--i.e., Mohammed as a terrorist.

Danish Muslims reacted promptly to the cartoons' publication. In the days after the drawings were published, Muslim religious leaders in the country "tried to tone down reactions. But the anger among average Muslims, especially the young, would not be dampened." The leaders believed "that if they simply let the case alone, they would risk a tragedy in Denmark in proportion to the murder of Theo van Gogh in Holland" (all citations my translation, Det Europæiske Udvalg 2006b). 27 organizations formed an ad-hoc 'European Committee for Honoring the Prophet' with the purpose of pursuing the issues at stake in the drawings, which they believed related to a broader repression of Muslims in Denmark. The Committee's spokesman Ahmed Akkari later told the New York Times: "We collected 17,000 signatures and delivered them to the office of the prime minister, we saw the minister of culture, we talked to the editor of the Jyllands-Posten, we took many steps within Denmark, but could get no action" (cited in Fattah 2006). The Prime Minister's office did not respond to the petition. The Committee then appealed to Muslim country ambassadors to Denmark to speak with the Prime Minister on its behalf.

Eleven ambassadors sent a letter to Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen on October 12, requesting a personal meeting with the Prime Minister over their concern about the drawings and potential for reactions throughout the Muslim world. Their request was refused; Rasmussen confined his response

on the issue to a simple constitutional one, writing that "Freedom of expression has wide limits, and the Danish government has no means to influence the press" (Rasmussen 2006). With the Prime Minister's refusal to meet with the ambassadors, said Committee spokesman Akkari, "the case moved to a new stage. We decided then that to be heard, it must come from influential people in the Muslim world" (Fattah 2006).

In December, the Committee sent a delegation to several Middle Eastern countries, where representatives met with politicians and Muslim leaders "to get help to solve the conflict peacefully" (Det Europæiske Udvalg 2006b).[10] In response to the Islamic Congregation delegation's appeals to Middle Eastern Muslim leaders over the drawings, Danish People's Party leader Pia Kiersgaard loudly labeled them 'traitors' to Denmark (Ritzau 2006b).

In December, the Arab League issued a statement about the Danish government's handling of the situation, and the 57 Muslim-majority countries of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference officially expressed concern over the drawings at their summit (OIC 2005). According to regional experts, the OIC meeting signaled a turning point. Protests and mass boycott of Danish imports ensued in multiple Muslim countries,[11] and among some European Muslim communities. Danes watched in shock as news programs broadcast images of angry crowds setting their embassies in Syria, Iran and Lebanon ablaze, burning their prime minister in effigy and sometimes turning violent. 100 protesters died in riots and conflicts with police in Pakistan, Nigeria, Libya and Afghanistan. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, an Egyptian-Qatari mufti, President of the European Committee for Fatwa and Research and of the International Union of Muslim Scholars, and a co-founder of the huge global website Islam Online, was a driving force in mobilizing a transnational boycott of Danish goods in early 2006[12] (Skovgaard-Petersen 2007).

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[10] The delegation were later accused of misrepresenting Danish Muslims' situation and embellishing the offense with pictures unrelated to the cartoons. The delegation, it seems, took a file containing cartoons published in two Danish newspapers, along with correspondence to Danish leaders that had not been substantively responded to, and threats sent to the Islamic center in Copenhagen. Their presentation by some accounts seems to have been balanced, but some Middle Eastern outlets presented it differently, producing contentious representations of the Danish events and context (Ib 2006).

[11] Genuine concern existed about the status of Islam in Western societies and media, but some regimes also began to take advantage of the conflict for their own interests, pointing to the ridicule of Mohammed as the product of the 'free democracy' promised by European states (cited in Fattah 2006). For them, a popular backlash against those democratic societies would be normative victory, and would distract from domestic discontent.

[12] At its height, the boycott was costing top Danish dairy exporter Arla export losses of $1.5 million per day (Pfanner 2006). According to Statistics Denmark (the state's bureau), Danish export income decreased by 15.5% between February and June 2006, accounted for by a drop in 50% of exports to Middle Eastern countries during that time; the boycott is thus estimated to have cost Denmark 1.3 billion kroner (above $225 million) (Muslimsk bojkott… 2006).

While appeals over the drawings resulted in significant pressure on the Danish state from some friendly governments and Danish business leaders who criticized the government's handling of the crisis, the episode focused a great deal of negative of media attention on Danish Muslims. Perplexity Danish Muslim leaders' appeals to the Muslim world blended with confusion and anger at the sudden animosity and violence directed by people within a large world religious community toward Denmark. Islamic Foundation spokesperson Ahmed Akkari was everywhere on Danish news broadcasts and debate programs, alongside reports of the Middle East violence over the cartoons. Though public sentiment toward Muslims was already tense, especially in the post-9/11 period, the cartoon episode drove it to an intense peak of anger and contempt that joined fears of Islamist militants abroad with perceptions of Muslims living in Danish society.

3.3.3. Muslim representative consolidation

Since the 'Cartoon Crisis,' as it became known in Denmark, two Muslim umbrella organizations have formed. In September 2006, several Muslim leaders and groups--some of whom were already well known to Danish media--joined to study the possible formation of a common council that could present a united Muslim voice in Danish society and politics. This Muslim Common Council (MFR, *Muslimsk Fællesråd)* hoped that by establishing a body to represent Danish Muslims as an adviser to politicians and public authorities on issues of principal concern to Muslims, it might prevent cases like the 'Mohammed Crisis' (Ritzau 2006a). First among its listed goals was that of uniting "Muslim organizations in Denmark to function as a common platform" (Muslims in Dialogue 2006). Soon after the group's founding, spokesman Zubair Butt Hussain said that not all Muslims could be gathered under a single representative body, but "I think there is a broad middle group that wishes to live as Muslims in Denmark and contribute to an inclusive society, and they are welcome here" (quoted in Haslund 2007). Asked about why previous attempts to form umbrella bodies had failed, religion scholar Karen-Lise Johansen said that while previous bodies had only been formed by several key individuals, the new group might signal a grass-roots project joining existing organizations into a larger group. According to Johansen, the new effort had more chance of being successful since Muslim organizations themselves had become more mature, more able or willing to join their efforts with others in a common organization (Haslund 2007). The MFR was able in the

following months to join a significant number of (especially Arab) smaller local and national groups together.

On March 29, 2008, more than 30 Danish Muslim organizations joined to form the Danish Muslim Union (DMU, *Dansk Muslimsk Union*) to present a more representative voice in matters important to Muslims. That initiative, which had been in process for up to three years, was spearheaded by the Coalition of Muslim Immigrant Associations (DMGT, a large Turkish Muslim organization) and included Arabic, Pakistani, Somali and Bosnian Muslim groups. DMGT leader Nuri Ünlü clarified the new Union's goals: "We would like to have an organization that encompasses all Muslims in Denmark, so there is not one group speaking on behalf of all Muslims' behalf, and so the Islamic Congregation [the center that was at the forefront of mobilizations and media coverage during the Cartoon Crisis] is not the only that is standing up in front of the the media representing all Muslims." Ünlü also criticized the Danish media for seeking out or at least giving a prominent voice to more extreme opinions, such as those from more extremist Hizb ut-Tahrir leaders that had been so much in the news. "It is the extreme," he said, "that comes to represent the entire Muslim society, and that disappoints us" (both quotations in Kott 2008).

It is the Muslim Common Council, however, that has gained the spotlight as the most known representative for Danish Muslims in the time since the Cartoon Crisis. In news reports and articles on issues up for legislation or of societal concern relating to Muslims, the MFR is consulted much more widely than the Danish Muslim Council. One reason for this is leading personalities: the leaders of the MFR, an ethnic Danish convert who is himself an imam and has been a known figure for years, and a young, second-generation Arab-Danish professional are the group's most public faces.

3.3.4. Engagement in mainstream political sphere

Since formation, the Muslim Common Council, especially, has developed and used its voice to draw a more nuanced picture of Islam through the mainstream media. Some official institutions, such as the Police Intelligence Agency, have implemented long-term strategies of engagement with even more extreme Muslim groups to prevent radicalization, and the MFR has become one key partner in this type of work.

When the Mohammed cartoons were republished by a number of Danish and other European newspapers in early 2008--most in solidarity for renewed death threats on one cartoonist, and some to

follow and review the story--responses from the mainstream Danish Muslim community were far more muted, in part showing a shift in both organizational configuration and in strategy among Danish Muslims. Researcher Lasse Lindekilde (2008) explains it by writing that key Muslim actors "seem to have been 'socialized' through the first conflict into a better understanding of the risks of backfire when playing the transnational card" (11). The more moderate councils responded to the re-publication by participating in news programs and debates, though a more extreme group, Hizb ut-Tahrir, actively protested.

Major institutionalization of official consultation with the government has yet to be realized, however. In early 2009, Welfare Minister Karen Jespersen declared that no real cooperation could be built with the MFR, since it was a group of extremists. Researchers on Muslims in the country, however, see the MFR in no way as extremist but rather as a strong developing partner that presents the best possibility for conducting dialogue. "The whole idea [behind the Council] is to join Sunni Muslims broadly," according to Kate Østergaard, who teaches at Copenhagen University; "If this council is stamped as extremists, then there are not many religious Muslim authorities one can work with," she said (quoted in Houe 2009). Jespersen's party colleague and member of Parliament's Integration Committee Eyvind Vesselbo agreed, highlighting that the Council "is an umbrella organization for all possible Muslim organizations, so Karen Jespersen is essentially putting all Muslims in the category of extremists" (Stor irritation… 2009).

Such reactions among Danish opinion-makers demonstrate that the MFR has a certain degree of recognition as a centrist organization and credibility for representing a wide swath of Muslims. Yet, though Jespersen's comments do not represent her party or government's broader position, they were defended by the Prime Minister and her views were widely debated, re-opening the issue of the organization's place in mainstream public life. Though the MFR is persistent at explaining its views and the compatibility of Islam with life in democratic Denmark, it will likely be some time before a consistent consultative role with official Denmark is established.

3.4. France

As a former colonial power in the Middle East, North and Sub-Saharan Africa that experienced more immigration from those areas during the colonial period than other great powers, France has known Islam on its territory longer and more extensively than other Western states. France's Muslim population is the largest in Western Europe, numbering an estimated five million, or 7-8 % of the population; about 3

million are citizens (2003 figures, Laurence and Vaisse 2006). Immigration began in force from former colonies after World War II, and expanded to labor migration. Algerians are the dominant immigrant group, followed by Moroccans, Tunisians and Turks. In 2006, there were an estimated 1,685 Muslim places of worship in France, still an insufficient number to accommodate all practicing Muslims (Germany has 2300 for a similar number) (Laurence and Vaisse 2006).

As in other countries, Muslim immigrants tend to be less educated, more likely to be under- or unemployed. Many recent immigrants and their children live in social housing projects built in the 1960s-70s and located around major cities, the *banlieues*. While not exclusively inhabited by immigrants, these areas are typically characterized by "poverty, welfare dependence, black markets, broken families, single mothers" and gang-type violence (Laurence and Vaisse 2006: 36). Offering neither regular interaction with nor opportunities to enter wider French society, these neighborhoods actively hinder immigrant integration.

Patterns of settlement along ethnic and sectarian lines resemble those in other European states somewhat, making large-scale coordination difficult, though it seems as though a higher rate of political activism among French Muslims than their counterparts in Europe has reconfigured many around alternative, cross-cutting associations. Naturalization rates among Muslim immigrants are higher in France than in other countries, and the civic national model extends citizenship to second-generation immigrants more readily than in many neighboring countries. Perhaps because of this model, the long-term integration outlook seems more positive than in other states, with recent surveys showing higher Muslim that Catholic or Protestant confidence in French democracy and closer Muslim feelings of closeness to other French than to other people in their own religious group (Brouard and Tiberj, cited in Laurence and Vaisse 2006).

3.4.1. 'Embassy Islam' through the 1980s

French political scientists have identified three generations of immigrant associations: 1) labor movement oriented movements in 1960s and 70s, often oriented toward homeland politics and immigrant rights; 2) anti-discrimination movements rooted in the 1980s *beur* movement, with leftist principles of solidarity with victims of unjust social structures worldwide; and 3) a less political trend of movements with more social aims, often isolated in specific communities (Laurence and Vaisse 2006: 89).

For several decades, the strict separation of religion and state from France's secularist law of 1905 combined with the ethnic community and homeland orientations of many Muslims to make early Muslim organizations naturally more well-connected to Muslim associations and governments in the Muslim-majority world than to French political processes and institutions. Jonathan Laurence (2007, and with Justin Vaisse 2006) identify this early phase of Muslim relations with official France as the 'Embassy Islam' period. From the immigration slowdown in 1973-74 until the initial Headscarf Affair in 1989, the government adopted a *laissez-faire* posture toward Muslim communities, making minimal accommodation for Muslim practice in French society. During this period, it also allowed a free hand to foreign Muslim-majority governments to support and run many Muslim institutions in France and to represent Muslim community concerns diplomatically vis-à-vis the French state. Such foreign influence slowed the emergence and limited the capacity of many newly begun local French Muslim organizations.

Until the late 1980s, a national representative role was assumed mostly by Great Mosque of Paris, but since it was closely associated with the Algerian community France and the Algerian government, it was not considered by other Muslims or the government to be well-suited to represent other Islamic communities gaining importance in France (Ferrari 2005). Many smaller groups grew up around ethnic groups on a regional and national basis, but few had potential to play a major representative role.

In 1983, groups of Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians joined to form the *Union des Organisations Islamiques en France* (UOIF) to challenge the Grand Mosque of Paris and promote Islam in the French public sphere. Though it formed through French Muslim associations, the UOIF was from the beginning closely linked to transnational Muslim movements. It is recognized to be connected with the Muslim Brotherhood, and has been described at various times in French scholarship and media as 'Islamist' 'Salafist,' 'fundamentalist' and 'radical,' yet 'republican' (Caeiro 2005, Giry 2007, Roy 2007). Today, the UOIF encompasses about 250 Muslim associations in French, and is the most powerful grass-roots Muslim organization in France. It rose to real prominence for the first time through France's 1989 Headscarf Affair, which was also the turning point of French Muslim representation.

3.4.2. 'Headscarf affairs'

Though the wearing of headscarves by Muslim women and girls has brought legal and political conflicts in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and the UK as well, conflicts over the wearing of the headscarf have

been most closely associated with France, where the issue of schoolgirls wearing them in public schools first erupted as a society-wide issue in 1989. France has historically held dear as foundation of national policy and even as part of the distinctive national mythology both its strict maintenance of *laïcité* and the capacity of its public school system for integrating diverse regions and populations into a civic French nation. It is therefore natural, as Laurence and Vaisse highlight, that the public education system should "have been at the forefront of institutional France's encounter with Islam" (2006: 78).

When two Muslim schoolgirls were expelled from a public school for wearing headscarves in 1989, Muslim protested and the issue became the focus of intense media focus--the original '*affaire du foulard.'* The French Council of State, however, ruled upon being appealed to that the 1905 law could be interpreted as allowing headscarves in school, as long as they were not used for proselytizing, propaganda or disruption of order. Tension continued over the issue during the 1990s, with the Ministry of Education estimating the adjudication of several hundred cases a year over the issue at the end of the decade (Laurence and Vaisse 2006). In 2003, the Stasi Commission--set up by President Jacques Chirac to study the issue and others related to secularist policy--weighed both sides of the issue in its report, but ultimately concluded that the school system was to provide autonomy, "openness to cultural diversity," and gender equality, and that the wearing of the headscarf detracted especially from the last purpose (quoted in Wiles 2007). The government acted quickly to have the headscarf banned in public schools by 2004. The ban brought renewed demonstrations, and some new private Muslim schools, but the majority of Muslim children in France still attend public institutions.

Islam had been a significant religion in France for over a century, France is said to have "discovered Islam" for the first time through the 1989 uproar over headscarves (Giry 2006). Though it is only one issue among many involved in immigrant Muslim integration, the importance of the headscarf issue to French and other Western media portrayals of Islam is key to the stereotyping and association of a visible minority. While the headscarf has long been a negative symbol in many European political contexts, in France it seems to have become actively associated with threats and fears of Islamists especially since 9/11, relating a legal and educational matter--previously usually dealt with at the local level--to global Islamist militancy and security concerns. According to sociologist Valérie Amiraux, since 9/11 "different frames (migration, security, terrorism, secularism) overlap in the public discussion so that Muslim women with headscarves have become new icons in the landscape of enemies of European

values...For Muslims living in non-Muslim contexts, this specific stigmatisation has increased the social cost of presenting oneself" since discrimination in many areas of society has been increasingly based on Islam (2007: 136).

3.4.3. Muslim representative consolidation and engagement

The combined effects of the 1989 Headscarf Affair, the Rushdie *fatwa*, the threat of Algerian Islamist militancy extending onto French soil and later of Muslim protests over the first Gulf War drove the French government to take action in seeing a French Muslim representative voice established (Laurence 2005). From 1989 onward, attempts at and the eventual creation of a French Council of Islamic Faith (*Conseil Français du Culte Musulman*, or CFCM) also pursued the limitation of foreign influence on state-Muslim relations: "Rather than simply tolerate the existence of Islam *in* France, the government has made it a policy goal to create an Islam *of* France" (Laurence and Vaisse 2006: 138).

The process was begun chiefly by Interior Minister Pierre Joxe, who believed that Muslims should be consulted more in the course of government affairs. Joxe recognized that the many grass-roots Muslim associations formed during the 1980s were the likely basis for Muslim voices within national political discourse, and in 1990 formed a *Conseil de Réfléxion sur l'Islam en France* to advise government officials (Laurence 2005). Joxe did not really aim for a representative organization, but the council did achieve some consensus on *halal* practices, official starting dates for Ramadan and Muslim-appropriate services in hospitals, prisons and cemeteries (Laurence 2005). Joxe's successors in the early 1990s did not institutionalize the council, and it became less effective over the course of the decade as Muslim groups used it to play out inter-ethnic rivalries. Its competition with the powerful Grand Mosque of Paris (GMP) was especially damaging. When Interior Minister Charles Pasqua (1993-95) endorsed developments through the GMP, it brought together a National Coordination of Muslims/Islam in France by joining five major umbrella organizations under its leadership. A further resulting Consultative Council of Muslims in France, (later renamed the Representative Council) was formed, but the entire effort lost steam after withdrawal by a major federation with Moroccan government connections stopped Saudi and Algerian funding of the project (Laurence 2005).

Little further progress was made until Jean-Pierre Chevenement entered the Ministry of the Interior in 1995, attempting to integrate many Muslim voices into a central body. In January 2000, Chevenement

drew up and oversaw the signing of the *Principes et fondements juridiques regissant les rapports entre les pourvoirs public et le culte musulman en Franc*e. The document outlined fundamental principles of the system of relations, giving Muslim groups a consultative role while affirming the separation between religion and state and fundamental principles of the Republic, including freedom of thought and freedom of religion. Yet, as Silvio Ferrari (2005) notes, a similar affirmation of *laïcite* and the 1905 law was not required of other religious groups. Chevenement justified this difference by referring to the exceptional nature of the situation and a historical linkage between religion and politics in Islamic society.

In 2000, working groups were established to consult on Muslim-related issues; interestingly, these still included representatives from Muslim-country embassies. The September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States provided, in then-Interior Minister Daniel Vaillant's words, "a further reason for the Consultation to come to fruition in the shortest possible amount of time" (Ternisien 2001, translation from Laurence 2005). The looming Iraq War in late 2002 and early 2003 also provided a push to establish a council. Nicolas Sarkozy, after assuming the Interior Ministry in 2002, told Muslim leaders that winter that they needed to create national and regional councils quickly "in order to respond to any violence that might destabilize French society and discredit the Muslim community by throwing it and the Jewish community into opposition" (Coroller 2003, translation from Laurence and Vaisse 2006).

Islam's vulnerable position in French public opinion made an ongoing public role contentious, but--as Sarkozy's speech indicated--also necessitated it. Islam was shown in a 2004 study to be perceived negatively by more French respondents and positively by less than other religions were, though religions were in general not held in high regard (CNCDH 2004 report, cited in Laurence and Vaisse 2006: 64). The same organization wrote in its 2003 report that some of the French public sustained an "irrational fear and total rejection of Islam as a religion, lifestyle, community-building project, or culture" (CNCDH 2003 report, cited in Laurence and Vaisse 2006: 65).

With Nicolas Sarkozy's assumption of the Interior Ministry in 2002, the issue was made a top priority. Sarkozy personally negotiated the make-up of the coming representative council, including the Moroccan and Alterian embassy's and the Saudi-financed World Muslim League in the process along with major French Muslim associations. Sarkozy actively courted the involvement of the UOIF (which had significantly changed the ending of its name from *'en France'* to *'de France'*), visiting its headquarters and also addressing its annual conference in 2003. GMP leader Dalil Boubakeur was negotiated to be the

coming council's first president and spokesman. Two-thirds of the representatives would be elected through an electoral college of 4000 (chosen by constituent mosques) and one-third by appointment on agreement of the participation federations. Elections were held for the first time in 2003 to elect the *Conseil Français du Culte Musulman* (CFCM).

Since its establishment, the CFCM has undoubtedly played a central consultative role, though its capacity to truly represent Muslim communities in France has at times been called into question. However, the CFCM has a rather narrow institutional role--to consult on matters pertaining to the Muslim *religion* rather than explicitly on behalf of Muslims themselves--and is not organized as an umbrella association of grass-roots organizations. It is thus less able to credibly lobby on behalf of the broader Muslim population than the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions of France (1943), is able to do for Jews. Its role is more limited to a central point of state contact, like the Catholic, Jewish and Protestant bodies set up for that purpose. Its effectiveness as interlocutor for the state purposes is therefore also somewhat questionable, though it undoubtedly provides routine contact and consultation with Muslim leaders that do have some connection to the country's major Muslim bodies.

Opinions on the council's effectiveness also seem to revolve around the degree to which the UOIF has truly been 'softened' by participation. Haddad and Golson (2007) present a pessimistic view, citing UOIF defiance of the Council in mobilizing demonstrations against the 2004 headscarf ban, but they also consider moves it has made to moderate both its rhetoric and some of its leadership. Jonathan Laurence (2005, and with Vaisse in 2006) emphasizes broad moderating moves by the Union; it has, for example, distanced itself somewhat from its transnational ties[13] and increasingly referred to French Muslim religious authorities (Caeiro 2005). In 2005 UOIF secretary general Fouad Aloui resigned from the Council in May 2005, citing its "incapacity to be effectively representative of the Muslim religion" after his proposed candidate for a Muslim liaison for prisons was not appointed ("Fouad Aloui…" 2005). Yet the Union it actively took part again in the latest CFCM elections in 2008, where the UOIF and GMP each won 10 of 43 seats (Gabizon 2008).

[13] It declined, for instance, to translate and publish a newer volume of Yusuf al-Qaradawi's sermons and legal opinions as it had earlier done with the first--Qaradawi, the same cleric who initiated the boycott on Danish goods in 2006, is the president of the European Committee for Fatwa and Research, which UOIF helped organize.

4. Muslim political consolidation: the study's findings

4.1. Early incentives, grass-roots consolidation

Based on the foregoing cases, this paper makes several key contributions to current understandings of European Muslim council formation and ongoing political representation. First, the Swedish case demonstrates that

> *European state support for religious minority groups and government willingness to engage them can incentivize grass-roots Muslim representative consolidation.*

Consistent with work by Silvio Ferrari (2005) and others who point to religion-state structures as influential in shaping Muslim political organization in European societies, the early formation of national Muslim bodies in Sweden was clearly spurred by policies in keeping with the 1974 law giving more equality and state support to minority religions. Part of a longer-term process of disestablishment of the majority Swedish Lutheran Church, this development in Swedish policy was supported by consistently multiculturalist government policies toward immigrant minorities. As successive governments showed themselves willing to engage increasingly with established Muslim organizations, the Swedish Muslim Council especially survived a series of splits to unify a large number of Muslim groups and assume a major consultative role in the Swedish public sphere. Though not typical in Western Europe, the gradual consolidation and engagement pattern of Swedish Muslim organizations demonstrates that state support and willingness to engage can enable Muslim groups to overcome structural and communitarian diversity to engage in grass-roots consolidation. Though incentivized by state policies, the grass-roots nature of the formation of Muslim organizations--through mergers of existing community groups into politically oriented councils--challenges Jonathan Laurence's focus on government initiatives as the key driver of council consolidation in Europe.

4.2. From contention to consolidation

In a key contribution, this study demonstrates further that

> Where consolidation has not already happened, *major episodes of contention--especially when they contain transnational Muslim appeals and responses that are linked to the domestic Muslim community by media coverage--trigger a process of national-level Muslim consolidation for unified, credible and more moderate representative bodies.*

The British and Danish patterns of consolidation--while occurring 10-15 years apart--are strikingly similar. After publications of material deemed offensive to Islam, leaders in both countries appealed first to public officials, then to foreign Muslim-majority state representatives, then to the OIC and finally to the broader

Muslim world (though this last was accomplished in large part simply through the dispersion of accounts of the original publications by media). In both cases, contentious and even violent responses ensued from Islamist groups in Muslim countries; the Rushdie book was boycotted and banned, and Danish goods in general were boycotted throughout much of the Muslim world.

These events correspond closely to the first part of the 'boomerang' dynamic described in international relations literature on appeals to transnational advocacy networks, who then pressure offending states for policy (and eventually norm) changes.[14] But the outcomes of these Muslim episodes are different. While some have argued that protests, death threats and boycotts resulting from the Muslim transnational episodes have caused Western states and media outlets to be more wary of offending Muslims (norm change), it is unlike the norm change envisioned in the boomerang model in that respect for Islam as a whole does not seem to be heightened by the incidents. Rather, the intense media focus the episodes bring on the Muslim communities with which they are associated seems to weaken, rather than strengthen, their position in society. Lasse Lindekilde (2008) has identified the outcome of the Danish cartoon affair as a 'negative, reversed boomerang effect,' pointing out the backlash of negative attention on Danish Muslims as a result. Thus, while some parts of the contentious transnational Muslim appeals echo the boomerang model, the results for each domestic Muslim community were ultimately negative.

Each case became a media event implicitly linking Muslim concerns within each country to hostile acts elsewhere, sparking fear and contempt in the British and Danish publics. In the Rushdie Affair, Ayatollah Khomeini's *fatwa* joined with images of the Bradford Book Burning to increase negative and fearful perceptions of British Muslims--raising widespread doubts about their loyalty to Britain and their willingness to accept the liberal democratic premises of British society. The Danish Cartoon Crisis, occurring in a post-9/11 environment, related media and public perceptions of Danish Muslims--already negative after Muslim integration was first politicized in the 1990s--more immediately than before to extremist violence occurring in the Muslim world and transnationally. In other words, the events directly

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[14] According to Keck and Sikkink (1998), who originally presented the framework, transational advocacy networks act to "put norm-violating states on the international agenda in terms of moral consciousness-raising. In doing so, they also remind liberal states of their own identity as promoters of human rights" (5). Essentially, when opportunities to obtain a political response is blocked at the domestic level, actors appeal transnationally to actors with the capacity to pressure for policy or behavioral change. They may appeal for action based on human rights standards (as in the original framework, and see Risse and Sikkink 1999), or on more particularistic Islamic norms. Koopmans and Statham (2001) have investigated Muslim transnational claims-making, and seem to identify the likelihood for Muslims to appeal transnationally when national political channels are blocked. They argue that the nature of migrant engagement in transnational claims-making is determined by (1)political opportunities and constraints in the country of residence, defined largely through citizenship regimes and integration models, (2) influences of homeland governments, organizations and conditions, and (3) the collective identities of migrant groups (which may be shaped in part by the other two factors).

related existing perceptual biases about Iranian and transnational Islamist extremism to the domestic national Muslim communities. In a process explained to us by social identity theory, British and Danish publics engaged in heightened intergroup comparison--stereotyping the other as a largely homogeneous group with less desirable characteristics than their own (Tajfel 1982).[15] Within political science, Donald Horowitz (1985) refers to this dynamic of intergroup comparison, in which social groups' perceptions of the 'out-group' are directly related to group fears about survival.[16]

This led to an unacceptable political status quo for British and Danish Muslim leaders. Moderates saw that needs and desires of Muslim communities for policies that accommodate their worship and family practices within society would only be addressed if they could present a different face of Islam in the public sphere, since a continuation of the status quo left them with no political capital. In response, they engaged in coalition making; by forming broad centrist-oriented coalitions, they built consensus to draw some marginally extreme fundamentalist to join them as well. In effect, they attempted to politically rehabilitate, empower and 'spoiler-proof' the Muslim community. In both the British and Danish cases, leaders involved in the formation of central councils identified the need for more moderate, broad-based bodies to hinder the monopolization of media focus by more extreme spokespersons in the Muslim community, and to present a unified voice to make more powerful appeals on Muslims' behalf. Forming coalitions to dominate presentation of Muslim perspectives in the public sphere effectively disassociates extremists (who are not interested in engagement with governments and are most likely to veto cooperation) from the perceived main Muslim community, winning the possibility of ongoing role and making possible future extremist actions less costly to the Muslim community at large.

Thus, in forming centrist coalitions, Muslim leaders:

- *incorporate many Muslim actors into the process, raising their credibility;*
- *act to exploit the negative pressure on marginally extreme fundamentalists to move toward the center, consolidating them into a centrist-oriented coalition; and*
- *make extremists into outside spoilers.*

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[15] And see Huddy 2001, Ford and Tonander 1998.

[16] This shows a distinct aspect of identity-based contention. When an issue-based movement experiences a 'boomerang' failure with negative repercussions, activists may often withdraw from public sphere interaction on the issue until a more opportune time. But identity affiliations are more persistent, especially where the boundaries of the identity are fairly visible or known: those involved cannot withdraw from public criticism aimed toward the groups, since they are readily associated with them. Further, where the basis for identity is already politicized in public discourse as one alternative or challenging to the majority, public discourse will tend to homogenize all who might be associated with those thought to be challenging the accepted public order.

The consensus and merger-based consolidation of national representative Muslim groups in Britain and Denmark in the face of increased negative pressure join the Swedish case in challenging Laurence's insistence that government initiative has driven Muslim representation across Europe. While the British case alone allows the possibility that government eagerness for a central Muslim interlocutor was instrumental, the addition of the Danish case (where government eagerness was certainly not a factor) shows that these two remarkably similar processes were driven largely by a change in strategic situation for Muslim leaders that emerged out of conflict episodes.

Further, the timing of the French case (where government efforts to organize a unified Muslim council were conducted first in 1989, then in earnest from 1997 to successful formation in 2003) gives us insights on the different motivations pushing governments and Muslims, respectively, to engage in ongoing centralized consultation. While the French government from the time of the first 'headscarf affair' realized the need to have a unified Muslim consultation partner, French Muslims did not overcome the collective action problems presented by ethnic and sectarian diversity to become involved until the process re-started in earnest with the entry of Nicholas Sarkozy into the Interior Ministry in 2002 with a greater determination than his predecessors to see a council formed. At that time, the urgency felt by the government to pursue consultation in the face of raised threats from transnational Islamist extremism coincided with increasing pressure on Muslim communities. It can be argued, on the basis of the pressure that pushed Muslims to coordinate in Britain and Denmark, that French Muslims, after 9/11, acted in part because of increased pressure to (1) present themselves as reasonably engaged in the public sphere in order to disassociate themselves from hostile images of global Islamist extremism increasingly present in French media; and to (2) enter a consultative role to exercise possible influence in public policies affecting Muslims at a time when public hostility toward Muslims was heightened as a political issue (the National Front's Jean-Marie Le Pen advanced to the final round of the presidential election in the same year).

4.3. Councils playing positive, important roles in European societies

While the sustainability of effective representation by a single national Muslim council over time is debatable--all four cases included in this paper indicate that the councils do have a positive effect on Muslim/majority relations. The Swedish case especially, along with the British, Danish and French cases to lesser extents, also show that, even if they are not fully representative,

Muslim councils are fulfilling a key positive role.

By engaging in ongoing consultation with governments, public institutions and other mainstream organizations, the councils provide channels for official dialogue and public debate through which future points of conflict can be addressed and dampened. By establishing channels of consultation with government leaders and the media, for instance, the Swedish Muslim Council has enabled Muslim and government leaders to dampen tensions as potential conflicts arise. The French Council of Islamic Faith has not only provided a ready Muslim dialogue partner for public institutions and media, but its inclusion of the most important large groups has apparently moderated the stands of more fundamentalist groups among its participants, such as the UOIF.

By co-opting more extreme voices and presenting fairly moderate Muslim views in national media, they improve majority public opinion of Islam and Muslims, and are able to some extent to disassociate public perceptions of extremists from their ideas about the Muslims population in general. By acting as recognized, moderate Muslim representatives to voice Muslim perspectives in the media and in public processes, the British Muslim Council moderates media coverage of Muslim communities and related issues, and provides a public face in times of intercommunity tension, such as in the immediate aftermath of the 7/7 bombings. The Danish Muslim Common Council and Danish Muslim Council have also become important moderate go-to sources for media coverage of issues relating to Danish Muslims and Islam more broadly (such as when tensions rose with re-publication of the cartoons in February 2008), though a broader consultative role with public institutions is largely still yet to be established.

For Muslims, councils are able to influence policy changes that more fully accommodate Muslim practice within European societies. Councils have achieved the recognition of Ramadan in official calendars (France), the inclusion of religion in census-taking (UK), compromises on policy toward headscarves in public institutions (Sweden), special insurance offerings in accordance with Islamic law (Sweden), and much more. Criticisms of their true representativeness notwithstanding, they also visibly embody for Muslims an (at least somewhat) representative function on the national institutional and media stage, perhaps perhaps lessening perceptions of political marginalization. This latter function may increase political integration through other channels as well, since the perception of engagement by key Muslim actors may draw the broader Muslim populations to believe they can influence political life through their own participation; further, perception of the mainstream political sphere as being more inclusive toward

Muslim actors may convince some to reject alternative political identities and turn toward institutionalized political processes.

4.4. Ongoing credibility and effectiveness

Though this paper chiefly examines Muslim council consolidation processes, it is important to consider what we can expect from these councils in the future. Specifically, how stable will they be as organizations with diverse membership bases, and how effective will they be as media and consultative actors purporting to represent Muslims more broadly? Evidence so far from existing councils suggests that, once councils are consolidated,

> *European Muslim representative politics corresponds decreasingly to a spoiler framework such as that assumed in much security-focused literature, and more to frameworks of political coalition formation and two-level games.*

As Pfaff and Gill (2006) highlight, consolidation processes themselves are vulnerable to spoiler processes, since Muslim actors who perceive their autonomy or authority threatened may split off and detract from a central council's credibility. This is an ongoing difficulty for councils, but the threat of splits may be thought to lessen over time, to the extent that a council gains a credible and dominant voice with government and media.

Over time, councils must retain credibility with Muslim groups, so must--in a similar logic to standard coalition-formation in parliamentary politics

> *choose their leaderships and plan their policy preferences in such a way as to convince the broadest possible coalition of Muslim communities and leaders to support them*

Yazbeck Haddad and Tyler Golson (2007) are pessimistic on the ability of national councils, which are perceived by some Muslims as government 'puppet' organizations, to be both effective and truly representative: "Despite the limited engagement of certain prominent Muslim elites with these new hands-on policies--often deliberately over-hyped by governments to project an image of earnest cooperation with Muslims--the vast majority of practicing and non-practicing Muslims remain unrepresented and un-consulted by their representative councils" (512-513). The cases studied here suggest that councils can build and retain credibility among broader Muslim groups, especially after a time of contention, but it is uncertain whether they can do it in the long term.

At the same time, the cases studied here highlight that, in order to cultivate an influential role with government institutions and media, councils must

- *maintain broad credibility among Muslims (as above), to be perceived as representative of the broader Muslim community*
- *build a moderate political profile*
- *maintain ties to fundamentalist organizations with potential knowledge of and access to potential radicalizers*

Obviously, upholding these goals concurrently is extremely difficult. In order to be worthwhile consultative partners for governments, councils must be seen to represent a sufficiently broad range of Muslims in society (though 'sufficiently broad' may vary widely, depending on the goals and constituencies of the government in question). At the same time, they must be somewhat moderate; otherwise, governments may find close engagement with them to be politically risky, and media coverage may be more negative. And finally, as the UK government's broadening of its cooperation partners after the 2005 London bombings highlights, Muslim representative bodies are also valued for their ability to assist in warning about and deterring radicalization and extremist violence; and for this, they must keep ties to Islamic leaders, mosques and centers with knowledge and potential influence on radicalization processes. As yet, it is uncertain whether it is possible for central councils to do all of these in the long term.

5. Conclusion

This paper contributes to a limited existing literature by demonstrating that, where Muslim representative councils are not consolidated early through support incentives and consistent government engagement, contentious processes can spur their formation. Highly contentious episodes pressure Muslims to overcome collective action problems by worsening the status quo through hostile perceptions of them among European publics. With a lower opportunity cost and the need for unified representation, moderate leaders join broad ranges of Muslim groups through consensus-building processes, forming more centrist to represent Muslim-community concerns to governments and media, and disassociating the general Muslim community from extremists in public perception. Once established, Muslim councils in turn provide a vehicle to routine dialogue with majority institutions that can mitigate conflicts arising in immigrant-receiving societies. Given the limited evidence available so far, their ability to maintain credibility as accountable representatives with Muslims, and as moderate, representative and effective partners with government in the long term is still uncertain.

Further research on this topic should take the form of a broader study incorporating the entire universe of Western European cases, and would benefit from a closer linking of the study of council negotiations of credibility with both Muslim and government stake-holders with studies of similar dynamics in other areas of political study. The development of a more precise model of these interactions may lend new insights to our expectations of how they may be expected to develop over time. Further case studies could be enriched with consideration of ethnic, sectarian and national political affiliations of organizational leaders and constituents.

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