Final Report Summary - EURISLAM (Finding a Place for Islam in Europe: Cultural Interactions between Muslim immigrants and Receiving Societies)

Executive Summary:
The aim of this research is to provide a systematic analysis of cross-national differences and similarities in countries’ approaches to the cultural integration of immigrants in general and Muslims in particular. The countries studied in this research project are Belgium, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The core research question can be formulated as follows: ‘How have different traditions of national identity, citizenship and church-state relations affected European immigration countries’ incorporation of Islam, and what are the consequences of these approaches for patterns of cultural distance and interaction between Muslim immigrants and their descendants, and the receiving society?’ In order to answer this question, policy differences are related to cross-national variation in cultural distance and interaction between Muslims and the receiving society population. Different methodologies are combined, allowing for a triangulation of research findings and a combination of quantitative and qualitative insights.

This research evaluates how different traditions of national identity, citizenship, and church-state relations have affected the European public debate around Islam in the last ten years. Different ways in which nation-states deal with religious and cultural differences are demonstrated. Moreover, the ways in which the forms and scopes of public debates take different configurations at national and European level are outlined. Demonstrated is that educational attainment, labour market position, religious identification and bridging social capital all form steady factors in explaining the social-cultural integration of European Muslims. However, the impact of these factors is relatively small compared to the effect of belonging to a specific group or community. In the last section of this report, the main findings of the EURISLAM project are connected to some recommendations for policy implementation.

Project Context and Objectives:
During the last decade or so, real and perceived problems related to the integration of immigrants have risen to the top of the political agenda in many parts of Western Europe. Above all, the cultural and religious integration of Muslims and Islam in Europe has been the cause for heated debate, controversy, and even violent actions. In 2005, a series of cartoons published in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten, most of which depicted the Islamic prophet Muhammad, led to protests in many Islamic countries, some of which escalated into violence. In 2008, the Dutch parliamentarian Geert Wilders released a short film named Fitna, in which the Islam is portrayed as a totalitarian ideology encouraging acts of terrorism, anti-Semitism, violence against women and homosexuals, subjugation of ‘infidels’ and Islamic universalism. The film unleashed a storm of protests in the Islamic world and stirred a still continuing debate in The Netherlands with regard to the integration of Muslims. The question of cultural and religious integration of Muslims and Islam in Europe is one that has been related to different issues. Sometimes it is related to their marginal socio-economic position, arguing that their cultural and religious background are in itself a cause for inequalities in for example education, the job market, housing, etc. At other times, the question of cultural and religious integration of Muslims and Islam relates more to the role of the state and to the place of religion in society. Should the state be involved in religious matters, and if so how should it do this? Closely related is the question of national identity, a common theme in this discussion and one that opens up seemingly simple questions that have, nonetheless, proven to be rather elusive beyond their pure legal or political interpretations. What constitutes a nation or a people? Who are
the French, the Dutch, and the Swiss? Who are they not? Are such things even important, and why so?

Elusive or not, these issues have proven to be an important factor in the formulation of practical solutions to problems related to the migration and integration of people moving across administrative, linguistic, and cultural borders. Because these movements are likely to affect processes at very different levels, e.g. at the level of the nation-state, the city neighbourhood, the family, and the individual, it is important to have a broad perspective in the analysis of patterns in integration. Both the policy making at the national and European, and the identities and feelings of individuals are important, and their relationship should be a key research interest for social scientists and policy makers alike. The EURISLAM research project aims to combine these different levels by integrating macro and micro perspectives to provide a broad picture on the socio-cultural integration of Muslim minorities in Western Europe.

What is the core research question of the project?

Compactly formulated the core research question of the EURISLAM project can be summed up as follows:

‘How have different traditions of national identity, citizenship, and church-state relations affected European immigration countries’ incorporation of Islam, and what are the consequences of these approaches for patterns of cultural distance and interaction between Muslim immigrants and their descendants, and the receiving society?’

Formulated as such the focus lies on the interaction between variables at the macro or the national level, e.g. citizenship and cultural policies, and variables at the micro or the individual level, e.g. feelings of acceptance and ideas of cultural distance. In the above research question, the cultural distance and interactions between Muslims and the receiving society population can therefore be seen as the main dependent variable that is partly explained by variations in the independent variable; national identity, citizenship and church-state relations. We can break our dependent variable down even further to clarify what we mean exactly by ‘cultural distance’. We are primarily interested in four main aspects that all relate to particular preconditions for peaceful and cohesive relations across cultural boundaries:

• Language competencies – as a precondition for communication across cultural boundaries. The idea here is clear. Sharing the same language promotes communication across group boundaries and enhances mutual identification.
• Mutual identification and acceptance – as a basis for solidarity across cultural and religious groups. Equally identifying as members of a country promotes the notion of common interest and therefore develops solidarity across groups.
• Shared core norms and values – as a basis for democracy in a culturally diverse society. Each democracy assumes a common core of democratic values, although it should be noted that there is some controversy over the content and interpretation of this core, which may include the equality of men and women; the separation of church and state and the freedom of speech and association.
• Bridging social capital – (social networks and trust) as a basis for social cohesion across cultural groups. As Granovetter (1973) has argued, network ties that reach outside the own social group (so-called ‘weak ties’) are also important for individuals’ access to scarce information and resources, such as job opportunities. Others, however, have emphasized the role of support networks of the own ethnic group in facilitating immigrants’ socio-economic participation.

How is the research question translated into empirical research?

In order to make the core research question operational in terms of actual data collection, we formulate three more specific questions that translate the research into separate research fields:

I: ‘What are the differences between European immigration countries in the way they deal with cultural and religious differences of immigrant groups in general, and of Muslims in particular?’

This first question has two general aspects. The first is formal, dealing specifically with legislation and jurisprudence on citizenship, anti-discrimination, and cultural accommodation. In the project this aspect will handled and studied in the first research field ‘Legislation and Jurisprudence’ (RF1) by ways of gathering a systematic set of cross-national indicators on a wide
range of legislative issues using secondary sources. The second aspect of the above question is more informal and deals with how conceptions of national identity, citizenship, church-state relations, and the position of Islam in society are discussed in public. This more informal understanding of national identity and ways of dealing with cultural differences will be addressed in a second research field ‘Identity Conceptions’ (RF2) that will analyse the debate surrounding Islam and Muslims in newspaper articles.

II: ‘To what extent do we find differences across immigration countries in cultural distance and patterns of interaction between various Muslim immigrant groups and the receiving society population?’

In addressing this second question, we will first focus on attitudes, norms, and values; particularly those relating to democratic norms; gender relations and family values; ethnic, religious and receiving society identification; and attitudes towards relations across ethnic and religious boundaries. Besides that, we will look at cultural and religious resources and practices such as; language proficiency; adherence to various religious practices, e.g. attendance of religious services or wearing of a headscarf; interethnic and interreligious partnerships and marriages; the frequency and quality of interethnic and interreligious relationships with neighbours, friends and colleagues; and memberships in social and political organisations of the own ethnic and religious group as well as of the receiving society. Where relevant, these questions will also be asked to members of the dominant ethnic group of the receiving society or the national majority. This is especially important because cultural distance and interactions are obviously determined by the perceptions, attitudes and practices at both ends of the relationship. All these variables where gathered in a third research field ‘Cultural Distance’ (RF3) by way of conducting a survey. We undertook data collection making use of a standardized questionnaire and a CATI-procedure (computer assisted telephone interviewing) among a sample of Muslims and a sample of the ethnic majority group in our six participating countries (Belgium, the UK, The Netherlands, France, Switzerland and Germany). The Muslim sample was constituted by making use of the following procedure: first, through an onomastic method (name recognition method), a sampling frame was constituted making use of digital phone book records (including both land lines as cellular phones), aimed at identifying people of Moroccan, Turkish, Pakistani and Ex-Yugoslav origin. Subsequently these people were phoned up by a polling agency and screened whether they had indeed the aforementioned national origins and were themselves Muslims or of Muslim descent.

III: ‘To what extent can cross-national differences in cultural distance and patterns of interethnic and interreligious interaction be explained by the different approaches that immigration countries have followed towards the management of cultural difference in general, and Islam in particular?’

This third question about the relationship between policies and cultural distance has been addressed from several different angles. First, in the fourth research field ‘Cross-National Socio-Cultural Variables’ (RF4) a multivariate analysis of the survey data has investigated to what extent cross-national differences on our various socio-cultural variables (see above under point II) persist when controlling for individual-level background characteristics, such as gender, age, level of education, labour market position, and timing of immigration. Moreover, these analyses can establish to what extent these cross-national differences are stable across Muslim groups from various countries of origin, and to what extent there are specific interaction effects between destination and source countries of immigration. The survey data will also be used to analyse the issue of the relation between cultural and socio-economic integration.

In addition to the analysis of the survey data, the relationship between policies and cultural distance is addressed in a fifth research field ‘Transnational Families’ (RF5) that favours a more detailed and qualitative analysis. In this research field members of transnational immigrant families were interviewed whose family members live in two or more of the immigration countries included in our study. This part of our research can be seen as a quasi-experiment, in which groups of people who are from a very similar background but who have ended up in different immigration contexts are qualitatively compared.

Finally, a sixth research field ‘Representatives Muslim Organisations’ (RF6) introduces another layer of qualitative data by interviewing a crucial stakeholder in the wellbeing and integration of Muslim minorities in Europe; leaders and representatives of Muslim organizations.
Project Results:
We will summarize here the results with respect to some key variables in the project. For a full analysis please refer to the Final Scientific Report.

Ethnic and Religious Identity

The way people see themselves is on the one hand determined by views they develop themselves and the views given by other members of their group. On the other hand, identity is also formed by positive and negative views of out-group members. In the migration context stigmatisation of newcomers is rather common. Cultural differences are easily considered negatively and can sometimes even be felt as threatening by the host society.

On self-identification, we can shortly summarize the following conclusions:

1. Turks tend to identify stronger with their country of origin than the three other ethnic groups in five European countries but not in France.
2. There is no clear difference between groups or countries in the identification with the country of settlement.
3. The interviewees in the survey of all four ethnic groups in all six countries do not identify very strongly as Muslims (all scores are lower than 31.6 per cent). There is no clear difference between ethnic groups or countries in this.
4. Muslim leaders tend to define their organisations most of the time as a Muslim organisation in all countries and among all ethnic groups.
5. The results of the transnational family interviews are mixed. More analysis is needed to explain the different experiences of family members in the different countries.

Our data show that the respondents of the survey of the four Muslim ethnic groups in the six European countries differ considerably and that there is only a limited tendency to identify as Muslims. On the other hand, the leaders of the organisations tend to present the organisations most of the time in religious terms and call the organisation a Muslim organisation. Leaders seem more convinced of the Muslim identity than the public. Therefore we conclude that the leaders in the interview sample cannot speak for the whole Turkish, Moroccan, Pakistani or Ex-Yugoslavian community as present in the survey sample. Leaders represent the more religious part of the community and therefore the views of the less religious Muslims are underrepresented. The way in which leaders view their position, is obviously highly related to the role that leaders themselves want to fulfil in a community.

The following conclusions concern the second element of ethnic identity that we have covered, the way others look at the Muslim communities:

6. The national majority shows least acceptance of immigrants in the UK and most in The Netherlands and France.
7. Turks, Moroccans and ex-Yugoslavs feel least accepted in the UK, but Pakistanis don’t have this problem. For the other countries the differences are not very big.
8. The debate on Muslims in general is negative in Germany and either neutral or positive in the other countries.
9. The tendency to speak about Muslims in general is stronger in The Netherlands and Switzerland, while mentioning a particular minority of Muslims is observed more often in Germany and to some extent also in Belgium.

If one single conclusion can be drawn from these points, it is probably that we cannot give one simple answer to the question about differences between countries or ethnic groups. Where the views of the majority and the feelings of acceptance among minority individuals at least show a little consistency, this is not the case when we add the two elements of the media debate. Acceptance is lowest in the UK, while the media debate in Germany is relatively hard and negative, and the tendency to generalise and turn Muslims into one category is more visible in The Netherlands and Switzerland. Every country seems to have its own special way in which opinions are shown, but in all the countries of this study there is some form of negativity present. One lesson can be learned looking at the results of this chapter: generalised conclusions on the ethnic identity of
Muslims in these six European countries cannot easily, and, perhaps, should not be drawn.

Dividing issues

In this section we focus on language skills, values, and attitudes towards society and democracy. We will thereby look at what issues could separate and divide the different Muslim groups, and the Muslim groups from the non-Muslim majority. We present language competencies and some cultural and religious attitudes towards society and democracy. Shared norms and values form a basis for democracy in a culturally diverse society. Each democracy assumes a common core of democratic values, although there is usually some controversy over the content and interpretation of this core. In this section we will primarily use survey data on language competencies, shared core values, and attitudes to democracy, and complement this with data from the interviews and the media content analysis.

Language

Overall, Turks seem to experience the most difficulty as a group, while Moroccans seem to experience less difficulty in general. It is striking that the Muslim respondents in Germany seemed to have significantly more problems with the national language than in any other country. As can be expected, Pakistani hardly reported problems speaking the national language in the UK. The same can be said for Moroccans in Belgium and Switzerland, but it is interesting to see that Moroccans in France report more difficulty speaking French than do Moroccans in The Netherlands report problems speaking Dutch. Obviously the fact that French is a national language of Morocco does not automatically mean that all are equally proficient with it. The high percentage reported for some groups in some countries do perhaps warrant the installation of stricter language requirements. However, there are also some substantial differences between countries and between groups regarding the overall proficiencies with the national language(s).

Perceived Cultural Distance

In this section we will focus on the cultural distance that is perceived between the resident Muslim minorities and the non-Muslim majority in each country. What stands is that in every country the non-Muslim majority group perceives the most cultural distance between Muslims and non-Muslims. Turkish minorities follow the non-Muslim majority in most countries, except for the United Kingdom and The Netherlands where Pakistanis perceive more cultural distance between Muslims and the non-Muslim majority. Overall Muslims from former Yugoslavia see much less cultural distance and quite frequently stress the similarity between them and the non-Muslim majority. It is also interesting that some issues are systematically seen as more divisive. The role of religion in society is in most cases seen as a very divisive issue, i.e. it is usually perceived to be valued differently between Muslims and non-Muslims. This is less the case for values relating to freedom of speech in society, on which more Muslim groups think that the non-Muslim majority holds similar points of view. This perception is however not shared by the non-Muslim majority, who overall seems to perceive that Muslims think differently on freedom of speech in society. Another interesting point is that the most divisive issue for the non-Muslim majority seems to be the division of roles between men and women in the household, whereas among the Muslim groups this issue is either seen as non-divisive or comes second to the role of religion in society. This indicates that the perceived separation between the non-Muslim majority and resident Muslim minorities in all countries except the United Kingdom are related to the position of women and only to a lesser extent purely on religion.

Views of leaders and representatives of Muslim organizations

In the interviews with leaders and representatives of the Muslim organisations we asked the respondents to indicate what in their views were the major issues separating their communities from the non-Muslim majority in their country. Perhaps one of the most interesting things about the answers given by the leaders and representatives of these organizations is that a large share (26%) indicated there is really nothing that significantly distinguishes their community from the non-Muslim community.
On the question what separated his community from the non-Muslim majority, one respondent stated that there is; ‘Nothing actually, we did not get any hindrance and we stick to European laws, so there is nothing that is difficult or keeps us apart. Islam says that one has to adjust to the country where you live, and live in peace with the people there. Of course there are sometimes issues that can disturb people, like momentarily the law proposal that Islamic slaughter (without anaesthetic) is not allowed which passed the parliament, but if I read the text of the suggested law carefully, there can be all kinds of exceptions, so maybe it can be solved’ (Pakistani organisation, The Netherlands).

Debates on Muslims and Islam in the national media

Religious issues are central to the debate in the national newspapers. Structural issues such as minority social rights or citizenship rights are discuss less frequently, but issues of racism and Islam phobia are in most countries discussed quite regularly. Overall there does not seem to be tremendous differences between the countries. Only when we look a bit closer at claims on minority social problems do we see for example that Germany reports more on Islamic extremism and less on political extremism or the position of women in Islam. In general, the issues talked about by the leaders and representatives of the Muslim organisations seem to correspond roughly to the issues debated in the national news media, with both showing a tendency to focus more on religious issues. Compared to the public debate in the national newspapers, however, leaders and representatives of Muslim organisations do seem to mention political and socio-economic issues more frequently.

Attitudes towards democracy

Since the six countries of the EURISLAM project are all democratic societies it would seem at least comforting that there seems to be a strong support for democracy across the board. The only negative value observable is among Muslims from former Yugoslavia in the United Kingdom who more often than not believe that democracies are not good at maintaining order. Obviously the breakup of Yugoslavia and the onslaught of the Yugoslav war in the 1990’s will play a role in lowering the overall believe that democratic societies are good at maintaining order among some Muslim immigrants from former Yugoslavian territories. However, it becomes clear that even with such a terrible history, Muslims from former Yugoslavia have not lost their faith in democracy all together since many of them still believe it is the best form of governance and in France they actually show more support than any other group. Concerning the other groups there appears to be no clear pattern, only that the national majority usually claims a stronger support for democracy and democratic societies than the Muslim groups with France as the only exception.

Muslims and the media debate

The percentage of claims on Muslims and Islam made by Muslims themselves, ranges from 15,9 per cent in Germany to 32,3 per cent in the United Kingdom. Overall, more is said about Muslims by non-Muslims than by Muslims themselves. Secondly, we have looked at the tone of the debate and calculated a mean score on the tone in the articles. Though it is sometimes stated that there is a lot of negative news on Muslims, our research shows another story. The mean score given to the tone of the debate is only negative in Germany. One reason for this might be that the negative articles remain in people’s memory because they arouse strong emotions; a well know psychological phenomena called ‘priming’. In addition it can be, as Vanparys et al. state, that ‘a lot of scholarly work has been overemphasizing the deplorable stigmatization and demonization of Islam and Muslims in Europe, failing to see that there was also a counter discursive movement which kept topics as accommodation to Islam on the political agenda’.

The exposure to the national media debate might be lowest for Turkish immigrants, since they read considerably more Turkish newspapers and watch more Turkish TV stations, while the other Muslim groups mainly read newspapers and watch TV stations in the national language(s) of the countries of settlement.

Muslim leaders tend to notice mainly the negative aspects of the debate and not the positive ones. The largest segment of Muslim leaders feels that they need to defend Islam and the position of Muslims, followed closely by those who wish to interact and get into a discussion with non-Muslims. Some community leaders view their role only internally as chairman of the
organisation and therefore they remain passive, while others see an external role for themselves and therefore become more active in the debate. In the case where leaders think they do have an external role, they want to be active in the debate, especially in a context where negative elements attract the most attention and the number of Muslim actors is limited. In those cases there seems to be a need for more of their input.

It is reassuring to conclude that the debate is not only negative and that there are forces that defend the rights and accommodation of Islam. It would be interesting to see what would happen when the number of Muslim actors partaking in the public debate would increase. Though a direct causal relationship is not proven, the UK case suggests, that the tendency to give positive input into the papers seems to diminish when the number of Muslim actors increases. Of course we cannot be sure that the same would happen in Germany, where the fact that state actors provide negative input might interfere.

Contacts and networks

A first result is that in all six countries the national majority population is at the bottom of the bridging social capital ladder. This may not come as a surprise since most Muslim groups live in concentrated areas in the countries (that is, big cities) and most majority population respondents will thus not have the chance to meet a Muslim countryman. However, the ‘imbalance’ between the Muslim groups and the majority population remains striking. Except for family members, Muslim groups do have majority population close friends, association acquaintances and neighbourhood acquaintances while the other way around this is not the case. This is even more noticeable since there is variation in the degree of social capital in the majority population: neighbourhood acquaintances are relatively more common than the other forms of bridging social capital. While in the United Kingdom and The Netherlands the majority population does have close Muslim friends and in The Netherlands they do have neighbourhood acquaintances.

In Belgium, France and Germany Ex-Yugoslavs have the most contacts, while In The Netherlands and Switzerland Moroccans are at the top. In all countries except the United Kingdom, Ex-Yugoslavs and Moroccans have more contacts than Pakistani and Turks. In three countries (Belgium, Germany and Switzerland) Turkish Muslims are at the bottom, indicating a relatively closed ethnic community. The United Kingdom is the exception here: Pakistanis have the most bridging social capital while Ex-Yugoslavs have the less. However, given the lower language barrier of Pakistani in the United Kingdom this is hardly a surprise.

If we focus on the various forms of bridging social capital, we can observe that ‘family contacts’ are the most difficult. Almost every group in every country scores negative on this indicator. Exceptions are Moroccans in Belgium and The Netherlands and Ex-Yugoslavs in Germany. Every other indicator of bridging social capital of Muslim groups scores positive, but there are differences between the three remaining types. ‘Close friends’ score relatively lower. An exception here is the Turks and Pakistanis in The Netherlands (the Dutch ‘close friends’ scores are also high compared to other countries. Followed by those in Switzerland). Overall out-group ‘association acquaintances ’ and ‘neighbourhood acquaintances’ are highest among the ethnic groups we study. However, their popularity varies between countries and between groups: in Belgium Muslims know more people from the majority population through associations than through their neighbourhood (except for Turks). In the United Kingdom the same goes as in Belgium (except for Ex-Yugoslavs). In The Netherlands and Switzerland neighbourhood contacts dominate. The picture in Germany and France is mixed. In France neighbourhood networks are stronger than associational networks for Ex-Yugoslavs and Moroccans while for the Turks and Pakistanis it is the other way around. If we compare neighbourhood networks to associational networks in Germany, we see that neighbourhood bridging social capital is higher for Turks and Pakistanis and associational networks are stronger for Ex-Yugoslavs and the two equal for Moroccans.

With respect to birthday parties, marriages and public spaces we can conclude that the attitude for all ethnic groups in all countries is positive. Generally speaking people do not avoid public spaces or social events with many Muslims/non-Muslims. Striking is, however, that the national majority populations in all countries (except the UK) have more problems with public spaces than with social events: positive scores are lower for public spaces. More worrying are the negative scores with respect to the question whether religion matters in hiring an employee. Mostly all groups in all countries demonstrate slightly negative scores and the national majority populations express the most negative scores (except in France where Moroccans are the most negative). The fact that national majority populations and, to a lesser extent, Muslim communities tend to prefer
the in-group in a situation where job applicants have exactly the same qualifications, is disturbing and certainly needs (European) policy attention.

Explaining the Social-Cultural Integration of Muslims in Europe

Our multivariate analysis focused on language competencies, religious identification, bridging social capital, mutual identification and acceptance, and shared core norms and values. Regarding the attributes of language competencies, religious identification, and bridging social capital, the results of the regression analysis show that men have fewer problems with the national language than women. The higher educated have less problems with the national language than the lower educated. People in employment have fewer problems with the national language than those who are unemployed. The first generation and - to a lesser extent - the one and half generation (which arrived in the country before the age of 18) have more problems with the national language than the second generation. Migrants having more bridging social capital (more contact with members of the national majority) experience less problems with the national language. Controlling for all these variables, Moroccans have more difficulty with the national language in Belgium, Germany and The Netherlands than they have in France. In Switzerland and the United Kingdom, Moroccans have a better mastery of the national language than in France. In France, ex-Yugoslavs, Turks and Pakistanis have more trouble with French than Moroccans. For religious identity, the regression analysis shows that men have a weaker religious identity compared to women, while older persons have a stronger religious identity than their younger counterparts. Those with a higher education identify less with religion, as do those who are in employment. In the United Kingdom and The Netherlands people have less strongly pronounced religious identities, and, compared to the national majority all Muslim groups have much stronger religious identities. For bridging social capital, the result of the regression analysis shows that there is more bridging social capital in Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, and Switzerland, and less bridging social capital in the United Kingdom. The higher educated and people in employment have more bridging capital. Men have more bridging social capital than women, and, unsurprisingly, all Muslim groups have more bridging capital than the ethnic majority group. Those with a stronger religious identity and those who perceive a greater distance vis-à-vis de out-group have less bridging social capital. Those who have experienced hostilities involving the out-group have more bridging social capital.

Regarding attitudes measured in mutual identification and acceptance, and regarding the shared core norms and values, the results of the regression analysis show that men identify more strongly to the country of residence than women. The higher educated also identify more to the country of residence than the lower educated, just as those who are in employment have a higher level of identification than those who are not. Older persons identify less with the country of residence, and persons with a stronger religious identity also identify less with the country of residence. Men from the four Muslim groups feel less accepted as fellow citizens than women. People, who are in employment, and those who have a higher level of education, feel more accepted as fellow citizens. Older people feel slightly less excepted than younger people. Feelings of acceptance are lower in the United Kingdom, The Netherlands, and Germany compared to France. Moreover, ex-Yugoslavian and Pakistani groups feel more excepted compared to Moroccans and Turks. Persons who have a stronger religious identity feel less accepted as fellow citizens, and persons who have experienced hostilities involving the national majority also feel less accepted. Those with more bridging social capital feel more accepted as fellow citizens. For the acceptance of migrants as fellow citizens by the national majority we have observed that there is no statistically significant difference in the attitudes of men and women. Those who are in employment, and those who have a higher education, have a larger inclination to accept Muslims.

In comparison to the French - and controlling for gender, educational level and employment status -, the British, Belgians, Germans, Swiss and Dutch are less inclined to accept Muslims as fellow citizens. The gap is the biggest between the British and the French and the smallest between the French and the Dutch. Persons who have experienced hostilities involving migrants are less inclined to accept Muslims as fellow citizens. Those with more bridging social capital are more inclined to accept migrants as fellow citizens.

Perception of out-group distance is the highest in the United Kingdom, followed by The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland. Muslims perceive less distance than the national majority group. Ex-Yugoslavians perceive the least distance,
followed by respectively Moroccans, Pakistanis and Turks. Men perceive less distance than women, the higher educated perceive less distance than the lower educated, as do those in employment compared to those not having a job. Persons with a stronger religious identity perceive more distance, as well as those who have experienced some hostilities with the out-group. Those with more bridging social capital perceive less distance vis-à-vis the out-group. Finally regarding the level of progressiveness, women are more progressive than men, and older persons are less progressive than their younger counterparts. Those with higher education, and those holding in employment, are more progressive than those who are unemployed or have a lower education. The UK, Germany, Belgium and Switzerland are less progressive than France. People in The Netherlands are more progressive on these issues than in France. Turks, Pakistanis, Moroccans and Ex-Yugoslavians are considerably less progressive than the national majority group. Those who have a stronger religious identity are less progressive, and those with more bridging social capital are more progressive. Overall, educational attainment, labour market position, religious identification, and bridging social capital, are, when included, all steady factors. However, the impact of these factors is relatively small compared to the effect of belonging to a specific group, i.e. belonging to the Turkish or Moroccan community. Differences between countries exist but these are again usually smaller than the differences observed between the different groups.

Potential Impact:
Firstly, the issues and questions raised by the Muslims’ presence in Europe are largely framed as relating to integration, which is the dominant theme that discursively structures the public debates on Muslims and Islam. Religious rights and minority social problems are the most often tackled issues within this field. Because this framing as an integration issue, the Muslim question in Europe is very much dependent on national characteristics. National traditions concerning immigration policies play a significant role in the ways integration is debated and institutionalized. The supranational level, on the other hand, is only marginally addressed in the public debate in which supranational actors play only a minor role, corroborating the fact that the public debate on Islam and Muslims remain largely a national affair. Therefore, as in other fields on which the European Commission has taken a pro-active role (for example, the fight against discriminations), it would be worth, to avoid the emergence of particularisms, to articulate the European public debate on Muslim integration more at the supranational level than at the national, regional, or local level. Furthermore, the debate is merely characterized by a bi-directional communication between the states and Muslims organizations. Civil society actors as a relevant addressee are quite absent from it.

Therefore, we recommend the following suggestions for policy implementation:

• States might endorse a more mediating stance between civil society actors and Muslim organisations, supporting and criticizing not only the latter, but also the actors related to them. This might foster better forms of institutional negotiation of the accommodation of Muslims.

• Muslim organisations should not consider public institutions as the only significant addressee of their claims, but also open their discourse to other actors of civil society. This might entail a process through which the repertoire of actions and claims of these organisations are not only centred around their specific (religious) interest, but also around more general issues in collaboration with other civil society actors. Such a process would, on the one hand, allow them to develop a broader social and political capital and, on the other hand, to have a public visibility not only linked to religious issues.

• Professional organisations and antiracist organisations can be very relevant actors in addressing issues on which they are competent and specialized. Through their increasing public visibility and participation to networks of actors addressing specific issues (for example, conflicts between labour law and religious rights as in the case of the headscarf), these organisations can have a very fruitful pragmatic role of mediation among the state and Muslim organisations about problematic issues.

• Media discourse structures and consolidates the public perceptions there are of Muslims. In order to avoid the persistence of negative representations, they should not focus their coverage on Islam and Muslims only when dramatic events mark the
international, national, or local agenda. Instead, some space should also be provided to cover the negotiations between the state and the different actors involved in the process of finding solutions to specific issues. This should be done in a more neutral way.

Secondly, educational attainment, labour market position, religious identification, and bridging social capital (networks between Muslims and non-Muslims), are all steady factors in explaining the social-cultural integration of European Muslims. However, the impact of these factors is relatively small compared to the effect of belonging to a specific group, i.e. belonging to the Turkish or Moroccan community. Differences between countries exist but these are usually smaller than the differences observed between the different groups. Therefore, policies promoting the social-cultural integration of European Muslims should be directed towards individual characteristics such as education, labour market position and bridging social capital. Also, since differences between various ethnic groups are relatively big, policies have to be directed towards specific ethnic groups. Policies on the national level are not as important as one would expect.

From these findings we’d like to make the following suggestions for policy implementation:

• To stimulate good relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in European societies, it is important to maintain interreligious dialogues and stimulate bridging social capital for religious groupings. The role of civil society actors is important here.

• Policies to stimulate dialogue should not only target Muslims, but also the majority population, since they perceive far more cultural distance than the Muslim groups in our study and have lesser bridging social capital than the Muslim population.

• To promote social-cultural integration policies have to be directed towards individual characteristics such as education, labour market position and bridging social capital.

• Differences between various ethnic groups are relatively big; in addition to the individual characteristics policies have to be directed towards specific ethnic groups.

• Differences on the national level exist but are weaker than differences between ethnic groups. This is an important outcome of the EURISLAM project. Policy efforts therefore should focus on ‘lower’ levels of (ethnic) communities.

Thirdly, with respect to the Muslim organisations the religious identity remains the most important form of identification for the organisations and the leaders. Core religious practices are mentioned as being most important most frequently. On average one fifth of the organisations does not identify any substantial barriers between the Muslim population and the majority. Those that do identify some issues, tend to focus on symbolic rather than structural issues. With respect to public debate strategies: on average there appears to be an almost equal distribution of evasive, defensive, and discussion debate strategies among organisations and their leaders. The representatives of the organisations we spoke with presented stronger religious convictions than the people interviewed in the survey, but at the same time they tend to be more ‘liberal’ than the people in the survey when it comes to democratic principles and women’s rights. The organisational leaders tend to present a viewpoint of a modern integrated Muslim in the Western world. With respect to the transnational families, we found similarities across the three types of groups, Pakistanis, Moroccans and Turks, in the way that they viewed their experiences as a transnational family. The reasons behind original migration choices to move to specific countries seemed to be related mainly to a chain migration phenomenon, that is to say the availability of networks on which the migrant can rely for entering the work force or for emotional support. Belonging was often described in contextual ways, and identity was also context-dependent. Being part of the family unit was important, but individual respondents described their sense of belonging as being related mainly to their social networks and lifestyle choices they had been socialized into. Respondents tended to wish to stay where they were already based, because of a sense of belonging and family. With respect to marriage and intermarriage Pakistanis seemed less open to the idea of intermarriage with the native population than Moroccans, and marriage with someone from society of settlement would be preferable with someone from one’s own ethnic group. Indeed marrying with someone from ‘back home’ (country of origin) was seen as a possible source of psychological support and continuity for the
family unit in the face of stresses presented by migration. Turks were ambivalent. From these findings the following two recommendations can be deduced:

• Leaders and representatives of Muslim organisations tend to be (more) liberal when it comes to democratic principles and women’s rights. This makes them a good partner and vocal point for the integration of Muslim minorities in Europe.

• The need for national and perhaps even a supra-national umbrella organisation, representing Islam as a faith and Muslims as believers should be discussed.

Lastly, the project evaluates how different traditions of national identity, citizenship, and church-state relations have affected the European public debate around Islam in the last ten years by identifying principal issues and by describing the interaction between state, social, civil and Muslim actors. The results of our institutional analysis summarize different ways in which nation-states deal with religious and cultural differences. Therefore we’d like to make this methodological recommendation:

• Results suggest that immigrant citizenship rights are still to some crucial extent a national affair and there are no indications that this is fundamentally changing. Our findings prove the usefulness of a cross-national approach which takes into consideration the relevance of different ‘citizenship regimes’.

List of Websites:

www.eurislam.eu

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