

Religious Institutions, Church-State History, and Muslim Mobilization in Britain, France, and Germany

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ABSTRACT

State accommodation of Muslim religious practices is an increasingly important political issue across Western Europe. With somewhere between ten and fifteen million adherents, Islam is the largest religious minority in Western Europe. The number of Muslims in Europe has tripled in the last thirty years, Islam is the third largest religion overall in Europe, and in most West European countries it is growing much faster than the historically dominant Catholic and Protestant churches (Hollifield 1992; Masci 2004). Political controversy has developed throughout the region on such issues as mosque building, the teaching of religion in state-run schools, the ritual slaughter of animals, and various family law issues. The deadly attacks by Muslim extremists in Madrid, London, and the Netherlands over the past several years, along with the ethnic riots in France in the fall of 2005, brought even greater public scrutiny to a host of political issues associated with how European states have accommodated the religious needs of their Muslim populations. Chief among those issues is how states can simultaneously recognize Muslim religious rights and practices while insuring their successful incorporation into the values of a liberal democracy.

While the policy challenge is identical, the political response of European states has differed. This article explores how three countries, Britain, France, and Germany, have reacted to the religious needs of Muslims. We will demonstrate that the differences among them are largely a result of a set of inherited church-state practices that have significantly influenced how the three states have accommodated Muslim religious practices (Fetzer and Soper 2005). While those structures have not preordained political outcomes in Britain, France, and Germany they have shaped the contours of the deliberation in meaningful ways. Until quite recently, social scientists devoted very little attention to the religious aspects of Muslim policy demands (Nielsen 1995; Bader 2003; Cesari 2004; Klausen 2005). One reason for this relative silence on religious questions has been a perception among social scientists, oftentimes assumed rather than stated, that Western Europe is essentially secular and that issues of church and state are no longer relevant to public policy. According to this view, religious disputes were historically important in Europe, but those issues were largely settled, or at least minimized, in recent decades as the state became more secular and began to treat religious groups more or less equally. Religion, which was at the center of political conflict in Europe a century ago, became less important politically in the middle decades of the twentieth century. However, the migration and settlement of large numbers of Muslims into Western Europe has challenged that assumption, resurrected somewhat dormant religious disputes, and exposed the extent to which state policies are not secular but typically give privileges to Christian churches. Paradoxically, the presence of Muslims in Western Europe exposed the lingering significance of church-state practices throughout the region.

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The countries in this study are particularly useful for comparative purposes as they represent three different types of church-state models found in Europe: a state-sponsored church (Britain), strict separation between church and state (France), and state support for more than one church (Germany). By analyzing some key issues of state accommodation of religion in each country, we will explore how those different institutional models have affected each state's response to Muslim religious needs.

Finally, in our conclusion we will set out three scenarios for how Muslim-state relations may evolve in the future.

The Established Church of England and Muslim Accommodation

State accommodation of Muslim religious practices in Britain is shaped by an established religion, the Church of England, which is closely linked to the state in various ways. Twenty-four of the Church of England bishops and its two archbishops sit by right in the House of Lords, the nation's blasphemy laws protect Christian doctrines, and the monarchy and the Church remain linked in some important respects (Beckford and Gilliat 1998). Even more significant is that religious education is a part of the national curriculum in state-run schools, the government finances religious schools, and significant resources flow to religious social service agencies (Monsma and Soper 1997). On its surface, the establishment of a particular religion might have posed a barrier to Muslims as they negotiated with the state over contested religious practices. Because Islam was not the officially recognized religion, Muslims might have been left out of the policy mix of state benefits accorded to the Church of England. Contrary to these expectations, however, Britain's church-state model has served as an important institutional and ideological resource for Muslim activists.

What is most significant is that the British state has pragmatically accommodated religious minorities in the past (Weller, Feldman, and Purdam 2001). A religious establishment that initially included significant disabilities for Protestant nonconformists, Roman Catholics, and Jews gradually gave way to a system that provided virtually identical benefits to all religious groups. On the key issue of state funding for religious schools, as an example, since the middle of the twentieth century, the

state has financed Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, and Jewish religious schools (O'Keefe 1986).

The issue of state funding for Muslim schools caused considerable controversy throughout the 1990s, and for many years education officials refused to approve applications by independent Islamic schools for state aid. Over time, however, it became increasingly difficult to deny aid to Muslim schools when the state was providing money to Christian and Jewish ones. With money flowing to Anglican, Catholic, and Jewish schools, the government's decision in 1998 to approve two independent Islamic schools seemed inevitable. By 2004, the government was funding a total of four such schools (Cesari 2004:73). At a minimum, equal treatment demanded this funding of Islamic schools. As Muslim leader Ibrahim El-Esawwy (2001) pointed out, "the fact that there were no government-funded [Islamic] schools was a ridiculous anomaly that had to go. The Anglicans had their schools, Roman Catholics had their schools, Jews had their schools. It was only right that we got our schools." There continue to be isolated cases where government officials reject the applications of Islamic schools for independent status (Cesari 2004:73), but it is impossible to imagine the state going back on its decision to finance some Islamic schools. In fact, a 2005 government White Paper calls for even more government-aided religious schools, and in that same year the Department for Education and Skills gave the Association of Muslim Schools more than \$100,000 to help Islamic schools make the transition to the state sector (Department for Education and Skills 2005; Taylor 2005).

A similar kind of accommodation has marked other issues related to the religious needs of Muslims in the schools. As early as the 1970s educational officials adopted multiculturalism as the appropriate model in state-supported schools (Spencer 1997). The required religious courses in the schools include an extensive treatment of not only Christianity, but also Judaism, Islam, and Sikhism (Keene and Keene 1997). When confronted with the issue of girls wearing the *hijab* in state-run

schools, British educational authorities quickly reached a compromise that allowed girls to wear the headcovering so long as it conformed with the color requirements of the school uniform (Liederman 2000). All of these decisions were possible, in our view, because British church-state policy makes significant allowances a public, political role for religion.

Just as importantly, Muslims benefitted from the political support of religious leaders inside of the system who had well-developed ties with political elites and policymakers. For the most part, church leaders supported Muslim efforts to secure state aid for their own schools. Since they are key players in educational policy, this support has proved essential for Muslims. While religious leaders could theoretically have used their advantaged position to reject Muslim claims for state accommodation of their religious practices, Anglican, Catholic, and Jewish leaders seemed to recognize that denying benefits to Muslims called into question the very system that provided them with considerable state aid.

In making their case for public funding for their own schools and social service agencies, Muslim activists fully recognize the benefits of the established church model. As British Muslim leader Ataullah Siddiqui (2001) noted, “One benefit of the religious establishment is that it allows a back door to other religions to have access to the government.” The religious establishment, in short, created space for the political mobilization of Muslims as they pressed the state to accommodate their religious needs. Perhaps most importantly, the presence of an established church and its close link with politics and public policy in Britain encouraged Muslim groups to look to the state for a public recognition of their religious rights and public policy needs.

This does not mean, of course, that the state has automatically accorded Muslim organizations the same benefits it grants to the Church of England. The state has, for example, consistently refused to extend the blasphemy law to apply to all religious communities, and the government’s Racial and

Religious Hatred Bill, which would have protected Muslims from religious discrimination, suffered a major legislative defeat in the Commons in 2006 (Times Online 2006). Even Prime Minister Blair, who has been a keen supporter of state funding for Islamic schools, has simultaneously advanced antiterrorist laws that have the effect of targeting Muslims.

What the established church has done for Muslims, however, is to provide an institutional construct through which they have gained a quasi-official status before the government. By using the church-state policy legacy to their benefit, Muslim leaders in Britain have successfully negotiated with the state and gradually gained public recognition for their religious practices. Dr. Fatma Amer, director of education and interfaith relations at the London Central Mosque, noted to us: The religious establishment makes possible recognition of a person's right to put into action what he most sincerely believes in. It is recognition of a person's most fundamental right B the right to practice their religion@ (Amer 2001). As do virtually all British Muslim religious leaders, Amer opposes the disestablishment of the Church of England because she fears that it would lead inevitably to a secular public policy that would disadvantage all religious persons, Muslims included. A state church that seemed in some respects a mere vestige of a long-forgotten historical past has, in fact, provided the means through which British Muslims have gained public recognition for their religious practices.

French *laïcité* and the Rejection of Muslim Demands

In contrast to Britain, French policy on state accommodation of religious practices is governed above all else by *laïcité*, or a certain version of separationism between religion and state. Today, a century after its enactment into French law, *laïcité* continues to structure public debate over the proper place of religion in French politics and society. Not only secularists, but even most practicing Christians, Jews, and Muslims still justify their respective positions by appealing to some version of this

particularly French concept (Cesari 2000). Arising out of the many battles between Catholics and anticlericals since the French Revolution, *laïcité* led eventually to the state stripping the churches of their role in public education, the banning of religious teaching in public schools, and the abolition of state funding of clergy salaries (Baubérot 2000). More important than those policy decisions, *laïcité* became an ideological screen through which church-state conflict were contested.

Today, one might divide the various interpretations of *laïcité* into two broad categories: “soft” (also called “pluralist” or “open”) and “strict” (a.k.a. “militant” or “closed”). According to the “soft” version of *laïcité*, the state must protect the expression of religious beliefs and be neutral among all religions. Far from wanting to confine religion to the private sphere, advocates of “open” *laïcité* wish to encourage interreligious understanding and public dialogue among different religious groups, even in the public schools. A 1989 ruling of the *Conseil d’État* on the wearing of the *hijab* seemed to preference this open version of *laïcité*. The court ruled that the wearing of the *hijab* “is not in itself incompatible with the principle of *laïcité* since [this display] constitutes one’s exercise of the liberty of expression and the right to indicate one’s religious beliefs” (Jézéquel 1999).

Despite this ruling, it is the strict version of *laïcité* that has governed most public policy decisions on religion. Under this formulation French citizens may, in their private life, believe what they will about religion. In public, however, religious individuals face more restrictions. If they are employed by the state or find themselves in a public-services setting (e.g., in a public school), believers are not to engage in any “exterior manifestation” of their particular religion. Praying in public, refusing to eat certain kinds of food in a school cafeteria, and wearing religiously distinctive clothing or jewelry outside the home, for example, all violate the first type of *laïcité* (Jézéquel 1999:38-39; Pena-Ruiz 2001:22). The 2004 law that banned the wearing of the *hijab* in public schools was a symbolic victory for the advocates of the strict version of *laïcité*.

The French church-state model, particularly in its strict form, has restricted the ability of Muslim groups to take their case for public recognition of their religious rights directly to the state. France=s secular republican creed, which shuns notions of special lobbies or communities, has made it particularly hard for Muslims to advocate for state accommodation for their religious practices. French teachers’ union leader Francis Berguin (2001) explains that in the public space the individual must “leave his or her religious concepts behind.” This secular mindset, which is widely shared among policy makers, implies that any public accommodation or acknowledgment of religion is illegitimate. Naturally, Many Muslims are on the defensive when they enter the policy realm as Muslims. The director of the Grande Mosquée de Lyon, Kamel Kabtane (2001) thus complains of “extreme secularists who want to impose *laïcité* as a new religion. . . as in [Soviet] Russia.”

As both a form of public policy and an ideological tradition, *laïcité* has structured the political arguments of Muslim groups and political leaders in France. Muslims have not, for example, been able to put on the policy agenda such things as support for separate Islamic schools despite state funding for Catholic schools or state aid for Muslim social service organizations, both of which are viewed as simply unacceptable given the state’s commitment to church-state separation. Many Muslims, however, experience this kind of separationism as anything but ideologically neutral. Muslim public school teacher Youcef Mammeri (2001) believes that militant *laïcards* are “trying to impose *laïcité* as a religion, which is rather paradoxical.” France’s intransigence on any public manifestation of religion has left French Muslims contesting rearguard actions on highly symbolic, though still very significant, issues such as the right of girls to wear the *hijab* in state-run schools. Even before the French legislature completely banned the *hijab* from state schools in 2004 (Sage 2005), some local school authorities had already been dismissing girls for wearing the headscarf. French Muslim leaders estimate that between 1989 and the early 2000s, “hundreds” of Muslim young women had been

expelled from public schools for refusing to remove the *hijab* (Kabane 2001; Merroun 2001). These young women were then forced to study by correspondence, rely on volunteer Muslim tutors, or abandon their education altogether (Kada 2001).

Although the controversy over the *hijab* dwarfs that surrounding other issues, Muslims face other problems in the French public schools. French educational policy rejected multiculturalism as an appropriate educational model in the state schools, which further alienated many Muslims who experienced the state-run schools as hostile to their cultural and religious background. Aside from such short lessons on the “Muslim world” as those in the *cinquième* History and Geography class (Marseille 1997:24-39), the French secondary-school curriculum teaches very little about Islam.

Given this background, it is somewhat ironic that French political leaders have worked hard to create a representative Muslim body that could effectively negotiate with the state. In 2002, the new Minister of the Interior, Nicolas Sarkozy, brought together various French Muslim leaders to form the French Council on Islam (CFCM). In the aftermath of the 2005 race riots, Sarkozy even called for “special measures” to take account of people’s race, ethnicity, and religion (Henley 2005), something that is anathema to advocates of strict *laïcité* and French Republicanism. If adopted, those measures might eventually provide an opportunity for a public recognition of Muslim religious practices, but until that time what prevails is the assumption that *laïcité* requires the strictest separation of church or mosque and state. This idea restricts Muslim efforts successfully to negotiate with the state on substantive religious issues of concern to their religious community.

Germany’s Multiple Establishment and Partial Accommodation of Islam

The German church-state system strikes a middle ground between Britain’s established church and France’s *laïcité*. The German Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) establishes a formal separation between

church and state, but at the same time the constitution secures cooperation between the two institutions in such areas as education and social welfare provision (Robbers 1996; Davie 2000:5-23). For example, the Constitution requires public schools to provide formal religious instruction (*Religionsunterricht*) as part of the core curriculum that is “in accordance with the doctrine of the religious community concerned.” Moreover, churches that are recognized by the state as public corporations are eligible to the proceeds of a church tax (*Kirchensteuer*) that is collected by the government, and the state runs a significant portion of its social welfare services through agencies of these publicly recognized churches. The cooperation between church and state is particularly strong for the historically dominant and state-supported Roman Catholic and *Evangelische* churches, which together represent over ninety percent of Germany’s religious population.

The *Grundgesetz* also protects a person’s right to put her religious views into practice. Article 4 guarantees “the undisturbed practice of religion,” while article 140 forbids the state from restricting one’s civil liberties based on the exercise of religious freedom.” The Basic Law even goes so far as to protect the right not to work on Sundays and publicly recognized religious holidays (art. 140) and the right to decline military service based on personal conscience (Deutscher Bundestag 1998:13, 88 & 91-92). In various cases, the German Constitutional Court has likewise recognized this positive notion of religious freedom (Monsma and Soper 1997:164-171). German school authorities have almost universally accommodated Muslim girls who wish to wear the *hijab* on the ground that the denial of this practice would violate their religious liberty rights (Lemmen 2001:148-52; Rohe 2001:145).

The issue for Muslims in Germany is not whether the state should recognize and accommodate religion in public institutions; it already does. The question, instead, is whether the state will expand its informal religious establishment to include Islam. As in Britain, pre-existing church-state practices

have strongly influenced the politics of state accommodation for Muslims, as Muslim leaders shape their political demands in light of existing circumstances. On the issue of religious instruction in state schools, for example, Hamburg Muslim leader Halima Krausen (2001) pointed out, “in the past, religious instruction was provided by the Protestant and Catholic Churches. Then Muslims came in and said, ‘Hey, if they can have it, why can’t we have it as well?’ That the state was already providing such religion instruction for other religionists made it easier for Muslims to demand that the state allow similar courses on Islam as well. It also has helped Muslims that bureaucratic ties between religious and educational authorities already existed in all of the German states. Muslims did not have to reinvent the curricular wheel, as it was, but simply needed to make the necessary inroads with the educational powerbrokers.

German federalism complicates issues of state accommodation of Muslim religious practices, particularly on educational matters where *Land* governments have the autonomy to determine how religious instruction is provided in the schools. Not surprisingly, this has led to tremendous diversity in how or whether public schools provide instruction on Islam. In Berlin, education authorities allowed a Muslim group to write the curriculum on Islam for the required religion courses in public schools. In North-Rhine Westphalia, public officials went so far as to write the required textbook for the Islamic courses; the clear intent of this action was to insure that the version of Islam that was taught was fully compatible with liberal democracy (Gebauer 1986; Pfaff 2001). Berlin and Munich have even financed separate Islamic schools (Doomernik 1995; Hasanein 2001). Not all *Länder* have been so accommodating to Muslim demands. Some German states have banned the wearing of the headscarf for teachers and other states have required the placement of crucifixes in public schools.

The other significant church-state liability for Muslims is that no German *Land* has granted public corporation status to a Muslim group, which is necessary to receive public funding for

religiously based social services and other activities. On its surface, the denial of this status seems to violate the state's commitment to equal treatment and to neutrality among religious groups, an argument that was suggested to us by a leader of a major Muslim umbrella organization: "in contrast with the other religious groups . . . we receive next to no [governmental] support for our institutions. . . They receive 100 percent funding from the state for all of these social programs. But for us, even though we pay our taxes, our tax money goes elsewhere" (Totakyhyl 2001). Besides the financial benefits from official recognition, achieving public corporation status would also represent a symbolic affirmation by the state that Islam has become part of the everyday religious landscape in Germany. We believe opposition to this formal recognition has much more to do with a lack of acceptance for German Muslims than it does with legal or institutional barriers. But precisely because there is a constitutional mechanism by which a religious group can gain this recognition, byzantine though it may be, we feel that the more than 3 million German Muslims will not be shut out of this system for much longer.

State accommodation of Muslim religious practices in Britain, France, and Germany have been shaped by the constitutional and legal patterns of church-state relations in each country as well the history of country-specific arrangements that have been worked out over time between religious groups and the state. The result has been policy divergence, as states have responded to Muslim demands in light of the countries' unique legal, historical, and constitutional structures. This is not to suggest that these patterns have preordained the outcome of these disputes; the persistent political controversy in Britain, France, and Germany around the public incorporation of Islam suggests that no one policy about religious recognition is inevitable. Nonetheless, pre-existing church-state practices have shaped the contours of the debate in unique ways in each of the three states.

This divergence is particularly remarkable given the strong countervailing tendencies toward policy convergence in the region (König 2005). Each of these states is an important member of the European Union and they each face increased pressure to recognize religious rights in national anti-discrimination legislation. Finally, the recent terrorist attacks by Muslim extremists in Madrid, Amsterdam, and London have created a perception at both the elite and popular levels that some synchronization of policy is necessary in order to respond effectively to what are shared social and political problems. What, then, might the future hold on issues of state accommodation of Muslim religious practices in Britain, France, and Germany?

Conclusion: The Future of Islam in Western Europe.

We see three possible futures for the political role that Islam could play in Western Europe as a whole, or in any of the three countries. These scenarios are public policy secularism, pan religious mobilization, and political backlash against Muslims.

Scenario #1: Public Policy Secularism

An important factor that we have not discussed at length but that promises to shape how states respond to Muslims in the years ahead is European secularism. The chief social characteristics of this secularization are declining church membership and the retrenchment of religious belief into the private sphere. Only 10 percent of French respondents claimed weekly church attendance in a 1990 survey (Davie 2000), a mere 8 percent of western Germans did so in 1995 (Fetzer and Soper 2005:110), and perhaps only 6.6 percent of the English now do (Brierley 2001).

As fewer people attend church, and as the secular tide moves religion and the state further apart, it is possible that the state will remove itself from the business of recognizing churches and granting to them any statutory advantages (Iverson 2004). Why should the state protect the political

privileges granted to Christian churches when so few citizens are actively religious? It is plausible that political elites, borrowing a page from the French church-state model, will argue that secularism warrants the state's withdrawal from the business of recognizing any churches and moving away from a system that has historically granted religious institutions important power in such policy areas as education and social welfare provision.

The immigration of Muslims into Western Europe might well hasten this secular trend. Political elites may conclude that the increased political disputes around religion are simply not worth the cost of maintaining the inherited church-state links. That Muslims in each of these countries tend to be more religious and attach a greater importance to their religious identity accentuates those places where the state does not adequately accommodate them and induces political conflict around religion.

Rather than extending state benefits to include Muslims and other religious newcomers, in short, the governments will disestablish where necessary and cease to fund any religious organizations. Like the Peace of Westphalia before it, such a policy might have the advantage of depoliticizing religious conflict.

This secular policy option might also appeal to those who believe that Islamic values are incompatible with those of the West. According to this view, state aid to religious schools in Britain or religious instruction in German schools could be defended when the religious groups in question (Jewish and Christian) accept the liberal, pluralistic values of the West. Since some people believe Muslims do not support liberal democracy, education must be fully secularized and funding for separate schools eliminated in order to ensure that Muslim schoolchildren learn liberal values. The Chair of the Commons education select committee, Labour M.P. Barry Sheerman, suggested this line of reasoning when he attacked his own government's effort to create more faith schools: "if we are not going to have divided, ghettoised communities, we have to be very careful of this enthusiasm that

some of the Department of Education have for faith schools” (Hinsliff 2005). A public opinion poll taken shortly after the terror attacks in London in 2005 also indicated that there is a growing public opposition to religious schools (Taylor 2005).

Such a public policy secularism is limited, however, in several respects. First, there is scant public support for the elimination of the existing ties between religion and public policy in either Britain or Germany. Europeans may not go to church with much regularity, but they have little interest in abandoning those ties, and they apparently perceive benefits from the existing church-state arrangements. Secularism at the popular level may, in short, coexist in an unusual way with continued institutional links between church and state.

Second, church leaders in both countries have key policy positions, and they are well positioned politically to fend off efforts to alter the existing links between church and state. The architect of the curriculum for religious instruction in public schools in North-Rhine Westphalia, Klaus Gebauer (2001), counters criticism of such programs by claiming that they promote Muslim integration: “it is far better to bring [Muslim] students into the [public] schools” to learn about Islam than for such pupils to get their “Islamic education” elsewhere, from “dreadful organizations.” Despite the growing public opposition to faith schools in Britain, the leaders of both of the major British political parties have publicly supported an extension of state funding for those schools. In short, any effort toward French-style separationism in Britain or Germany is limited by the political power of the well-established churches that benefit from the current arrangement and by the support of political elites on issues of church-state accommodation.

Finally, the growing Islamic presence in Europe might even have the paradoxical consequence of helping to reverse the century-long secularization trend in the region. Muslims have introduced a degree of religious pluralism in Europe that has been absent since the Peace of Westphalia affirmed

the principle of *cuis regio, eius religio* (“the religion of the rules is the religion of the state”). While this idea helped to stem the religious wars that raged throughout Europe, it did so by imposing religious conformity on the newly developing nation states. The result was that the dominant churches could rest comfortably on their advantaged position vis-a-vis the state while gradually fewer and fewer people actually attended religious services. Religious pluralism could change all of that; church attendance patterns might come to mirror those in the United States, where religious competition has historically been a tremendous boon for churches, mosques, and synagogues (see Finke and Stark 1992).

Scenario #2: Pan Religious Mobilization

A second possible future for the politics of religious accommodation is that European Christians, Muslims, and Jews will form a political coalition to protect the very idea that the state should accommodate or aid religion. Presumably, secularism poses a generalized challenge to all religionists.

In considering Turkey’s bid for entry into the European Union, former French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin (quoted in Anderson 2004) rhetorically asked “do we want the river of Islam to enter the riverbed of [European] secularism?” If this quotation is indicative of the views of European political leaders and policy makers, Christians would probably do well to conclude that secularism is a threat that Christians and Muslims share. After all, if the riverbed of Europe is secularism, as Raffarin suggested, it presumably leaves little room for a Muslim or Christian foundation.

Given the historical animosities between Islam and Christianity, this political outcome might seem dubious at best, and some religious leaders reject this ecumenical vision for a return to Europe’s specifically Christian roots. Cardinal Ratzinger, who later became Pope Benedict XVI, said in August of 2004 that the Muslim faith was in “permanent contrast with Europe’s Christian legacy.” The

Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, has spoken of the inherent risks of Islam in France “becoming a state religion” by the backdoor (Economist 2005).

However, there are many examples of Christian and Muslim leaders recognizing their shared interests. Tariq Modood (1994:72), a British Muslim, notes that “the real division of opinion is not between a conservative element in the Church of England versus the rest of the country, but between those who think religion has a place in secular public culture and those who think not.” Leslie Newbigin (1998:22), a British Christian, asserts “in our present situation in Britain where Christians and Muslims share a common position as minority faiths in a society dominated by a naturalistic ideology, we share a common duty to challenge this ideology.”

This shared worldview has led to political unity between Muslims and Christians on a number of church-state issues. An ironic effect of the opposition to faith schools in Britain, as an example, has been to cement the political alliance of Anglican, Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim religious leaders, all of whom wish to retain the existing nexus between church and state. Rowan Williams (Archbishop of Canterbury), Rabbi Herschel Gluck (Chair of the Muslim Jewish Forum), and all of the major Islamic organizations blasted Sheerman’s comment about the negative effect of faith schools and publicly defended the existing system (Smith 2006). On the issue of religious instruction in public schools, German priest Martin Wetzel (2001) perceptively notes,

There are movements to do away with government-run religion classes or to take religious instruction out of the [public] schools altogether. I can see how lobbying for Islamic religious instruction would, in the end, help Christians ensure the long-term survival of their own religious instruction. If religious instruction is denied to one group, then religious instruction for all groups is up for grabs.

This logic thus led Wetzel to support Mannheim Muslims’ bid for the building of a mosque directly across from his Roman Catholic Church.

Historically, the Christian churches have, at least in Britain and Germany where the state provides significant aid to the churches, been an institutional ally for Muslims as they have sought recognition from the government. Some of that support was principled; Christian leaders have recognized the legitimacy of the claims made by Muslims and for the most part have sprung to their defense. Some of the aid from Christian leaders has been strategic; they have implicitly recognized that to deny public benefits to Muslims is to open the question of state aid to any church and to further the aims of secularists, particularly in light of the challenges that expanding the existing arrangements to include Muslims have posed. That fewer people are attending religious services adds additional fuel to the argument that public policy should be thoroughly secularized. For Christian leaders to advance the claims of Muslims in such a context can strengthen the political rationale for the maintenance of the existing church-state system. It would be supremely ironic if, after centuries of dispute, it was secularism, rather than religion, that drew Christians and Muslims together in a joint effort to retain a public role for religion.

Another possible manifestation of such a pan-religious mobilization would be its impact on party politics. European Muslims are more socially conservative than the general European population.

Euthanasia, abortion, gay rights, the decriminalization of narcotics, and the further sexualization of public spaces are issues where Muslims find common ground with other religious lobbies, which make the growing Muslim population a potential source of many votes for conservative parties throughout the region. European Conservative parties are limited by their historical identification with Christian churches and by their sometimes strident opposition to immigration, but there is no reason why they could not expand their reach by speaking more generally about the positive role of religion in society. The British Conservative Party, for example, appealed to Muslim voters by promising the creation of more Muslim faith schools (Klausen 2005:26). On the other side of the political spectrum, British

Muslims were very active in the Stop the War Coalition, joining forces with religious and nonreligious groups to oppose British involvement in the War in Iraq (Geaves 2005). In either case, it is a very healthy sign for the integrative power of a political democracy when parties and social movements build political coalitions that include Muslims (see Wihtol de Wenden and Leveau 2001). It is much more likely that Muslims will involve themselves positively in their respective communities and recognize the values of a liberal democracy when political leaders perceive them as a constituency whose interests need to be heard and represented.

Scenario #3: Political Backlash Against Muslims

At least for the short term, there will likely be a political backlash against Muslims. The large Lyon mosque has been attacked at least three times, once with bullets, once with a Molotov cocktail, and once with paint in the French national colors (Cornevin 2002). Such attacks are hardly rare in Western Europe. The current wave of anti-Muslim hostility probably has not yet peaked in Western Europe (Islamic Human Rights Commission 2002), and the “war on terrorism” continues.

The electoral success of nativist political parties in France, the Netherlands, Austria, and even Britain suggests the existence of a political market that marginalizes and scapegoats Muslims. The terrorist attacks by Muslim extremists over the past several years have clearly tested the region’s faith in multiculturalism. Even if nativist parties fail to gain political power, mainstream parties throughout Western Europe will almost certainly be under some electoral pressure to adopt policies that limit state efforts to recognize Muslim religious rights. In the aftermath of the London train bombings in the summer of 2005, British Prime Minister Tony Blair warned, “let no one be in doubt the rules of the game are changing. Coming to Britain is not a right. And even when people come here, staying here carries with it a duty.”

In the long term, however, this strategy is doomed to demographic failure. The Muslim population in each of the three countries is growing and more and more Muslims are gaining citizenship and voting in elections. This fact limits the long-term market for anti-Muslim parties and movements. It is also difficult to imagine a political backlash against Muslims taking the form of the British or German state becoming less amenable to Muslims' demand for state accommodation to their religious practices. Despite Blair's warning quoted above, inherited church-state practices in Britain, and to a lesser extent in Germany, encourage points of contact and cooperation between church and state that will not soon disappear.

The three scenarios we have outlined are not necessarily mutually exclusive, either for the politics across the region or within a particular country. What is beyond dispute, however, is that church-state traditions in each of these countries will continue to shape the context through which these scenarios will play themselves out. How, and under what conditions, states accommodate Muslim religious needs will depend in large measure on decades, sometimes centuries, of pre-existing constitutional arrangements.

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