



THE PEW
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ON RELIGION
& PUBLIC LIFE

AN UNCERTAIN ROAD

MUSLIMS AND THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Throughout Europe today, it is not uncommon to see women wearing headscarves and men with skull caps and beards. On many European streets, shops now sport signs in Arabic and other Near Eastern languages and sell an array of exotic looking products from the Middle East and other parts of the Islamic world. Indeed, in the space of a few decades, whole neighborhoods in cities like Birmingham, Rotterdam and Paris have been transformed. Streets that have witnessed hundreds of years of European history are now playing host to a decidedly non-Western people and culture.

This is the new Europe, one in which a rapidly growing Muslim population is making its presence felt in societies that until recently were largely homogeneous. Muslims are still very much minorities in Western and Central European countries, making up roughly 5 percent of the European Union's total population. But a number of demographic trends point to dramatic change in the years ahead.

Islam is already the fastest-growing religion in Europe. Driven by immigration and high birthrates, the number of Muslims on the continent has tripled in the last 30 years. Most demographers forecast a similar or even higher rate of growth in the coming decades.

The social impact of this growing population is magnified by a low birthrate among native Europeans. After a post-World-War-II baby boom, birthrates in Europe have dropped to an average of 1.45 children per couple, far below the 2.1 needed to keep population growth at replacement levels. The continent that gave the rest of the world tens of millions of immigrants and Thomas Malthus' dire predictions of overpopulation is now faced with a shrinking populace.

Amid these demographic shifts lie a host of social challenges. While many European Muslims have become successful in their new homes, many others do not speak their host country's language well, if at all, and are often jobless and poor. Moreover, segregation, whether by choice or necessity, is common, with large numbers of Muslims living in ghettos where the crime and poverty rates are high.

For Europeans, too, Muslim immigration poses special challenges. Unlike the United States – a land of immigrants with no dominant ethnic group – most nations in Europe are constructed around a population with a common ethnicity. In addition, these countries possess deep historical, cultural, religious and language traditions. Injecting hundreds of thousands, and in some cases millions, of people who look, speak and act differently into these settings often makes for a difficult social fit.

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Tensions also have arisen over religion. The centrality of Islam in the lives of so many European Muslims is hard for increasingly secular Scandinavians, Germans and Frenchmen to comprehend. Europeans worry that Islam will make it difficult for their Muslim neighbors to accept many of the continent's core values, like tolerance, democracy and equal rights for women.

These social pressures have been compounded by the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United

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Muslims in Europe in 2003

	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Population (in millions)</u>
France	8%	5
Netherlands	6	1
Germany	4	3.5
Belgium	4	0.4
Austria	4	0.3
United Kingdom	3	1.6
Sweden	3	0.3
Italy	2	1
Spain	2	1
Bosnia Herzegovina	40	1.5

Source: International Religious Freedom Report 2004,
U.S. Department of State

States and subsequent events – particularly the March 11, 2004, train bombings in Madrid and more recent killing of Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh. Terrorism and its link to radical Islam have made Europeans even more wary of Muslims, especially those living within their midst. These concerns have provided fuel for xenophobic, nativist parties, helping to propel a number of them into the political mainstream.

Into this volatile mix comes the continent-wide debate over whether Turkey should be admitted into the European Union (EU). Efforts by Europe's political elite to convince a skeptical populace of the benefits of including a largely Near Eastern and Muslim country of 70 million into Europe's grand experiment have, so far, mostly fallen flat. Polls show majorities in many European countries remain opposed to Turkish accession.

The argument over Turkey goes beyond the geopolitical pluses and minuses of EU membership and raises the larger issue of Europe's troubled relationship with Islam. It is an old acquaintance, one stretching back more than 1,300 years. And it is marked by countless wars and occupations, as well as a vibrant, steady cultural exchange. Over the last 40 or more years, though, the relationship has entered a new phase, one dominated by the largely peaceful migration of Muslims to Europe, usually in search of work or freedom.

European governments have grappled with this migration in various ways and with varying degrees of success. Some countries, like France and Britain, have had relatively well established policies toward immigrants for decades. And Britain, in particular, has had some success in integrating Muslim newcomers into the broader society. Other states, like Germany, Spain and Italy, have, until recently, treated their Muslim communities as temporary phenomena, groups of "guest workers" or foreigners who would eventually return to their homelands.

But the growing presence of Muslims coupled with increased social tensions and terrorism-related fears have forced governments around the continent to focus more intently on trying to bring this community into the mainstream. Efforts have ranged from new laws aimed at hastening the pace of assimilation, such as the recent French head scarf ban, to proposals to assist in creating a more homegrown, European brand of Islam.

The successful integration of European Muslims is crucial to the future of Europe. Prognosticators may disagree on the community's ultimate demographic and social impact, but all believe that Muslims will, at the very least, be a significant and sizable minority that will play an important role in shaping the continent's future.

A Matter of Demographics

Determining the size of the Muslim population in Europe today is difficult for a number of reasons. First, many European countries do not collect census data on religious groups. Furthermore, many nations aren't forthcoming with the information they do have, because the size of their Muslim population is a sensitive political issue. Finally, there is no straightforward geographic definition of Europe. Should it include Muslim Turkey, for example, or the republics of the former Soviet Union? As a result, estimates of the size of Muslim Europe can and do vary widely.

Using figures provided by the State Department and other sources, and a definition of Europe that does not include Turkey (which has a mostly Muslim population of 70 million) or the countries of the former Soviet Un-

ion, there are approximately 23 million Muslims in Europe.¹ The majority of this community – 15 to 18 million – lives in the 25 countries that now make up the EU. Most of the rest live in the Balkans, notably Bosnia, Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia, small states or quasi-states where Muslims comprise either the majority or a substantial minority of the population.

Within the EU, France has the largest Muslim population – as many as 5 million people, most from North Africa, comprising about 8 percent of the country's total population. Germany, with up to 3.5 million, is home to the second largest group of Muslims, followed by England with 1.6 million and Spain and Italy, with roughly 1 million each.

While these communities are sizable, Muslims still only make up a small portion of Europe's population, no more than about 5 percent of the EU's more than 425 million people. But most demographers predict that that number will increase dramatically in the coming decades – to 10 percent as early as

2020. Indeed, if the past is any guide, that estimate may be low, since the size of the European Muslim community has tripled in the last 30 years.

This rapid growth is caused both by immigration and high Muslim birthrates. Nearly 1 million legal immigrants enter Europe each year, mostly on family reunification visas or as refugees seeking asylum. A majority of these newcomers are from North Africa, Turkey and other Islamic countries. Muslims also make up a large share of the continent's illegal immigrants – a group that is estimated to number up to half a million per year.²

At the same time, Muslims already living on the continent are having three times as many children as their white, European neighbors. This trend can be seen in the relative youth of European Muslims. In Germany, for instance, fully one-third of all Muslims are under 18, compared to less than one-fifth of the population as a

whole. And in Great Britain and Belgium, one-third of all Muslims are under age 15, compared to one-fifth of the general populations of those countries.³ The fact that this sizable young cohort is approaching its peak child-producing years should help drive Muslim numbers up. "Given the age spread of the Muslim population, their numbers would grow quite a bit even if immigration stopped tomorrow," says Furman University Professor Brent Nelsen, an expert on religion in Europe.

Meanwhile, low native birthrates throughout the continent will further increase the Muslim share of the entire population. Indeed, with a birth rate of 1.45 children per couple, the European Union is expected to shrink from 455 million today to 425 million in 2050, even if

current immigration levels remain constant.⁴ Moreover, with Europe's aging population putting an increasing strain on the continent's generous health and pension schemes, much greater immigration may be necessary to maintain a workforce large enough to pay benefits to retirees.

Europe's demand for young workers and the Islamic world's excess supply of people are likely to increase the flow of migrants from South to North, unless Europe adopts draconian immigration restrictions, a development viewed as unlikely though not impossible.

Waiting to fill this need are an estimated 300 million Muslims under the age of 20 who are living along the Mediterranean's "southern rim" – North Africa and the Middle East. Most of these young people live in developing countries such as Algeria, Morocco, Egypt and Syria whose sluggish state-dominated economies are not creating jobs nearly fast enough to employ most of them.⁵

These two powerful forces – Europe's demand for young workers and the Islamic world's excess supply of people – are likely to increase the flow of migrants from South to North, unless Europe adopts draconian immigration restrictions, a development viewed as unlikely though not impossible.

For now, the growing Muslim minority is changing parts of Europe's landscape, especially in urban areas, where

immigrants traditionally congregate. Many European cities already have sizable Muslim minorities. Currently, they make up at least 25 percent of the populations of Marseille and Rotterdam, 20 percent of Malmö's (in Sweden), 15 percent of Brussels' and Birmingham's, and 10 percent or more London's, Paris' and Copenhagen's. Over the next few decades, a number of large European cities will likely become majority Muslim.⁶

A Long, Troubled History

Islam's association with Europe is nearly as old as the religion itself. Within 80 years of the death of the Prophet Muhammad, Muslim armies had invaded Spain, quickly conquering all but the northernmost strip of the Iberian Peninsula. In 732, Charlemagne's grandfather, Frankish King Charles Martel, beat back an Islamic invasion into the heart of Western Europe, defeating a Muslim army at Tours in Southwest France.⁷

Tours likely prevented the Islamic conquest of France, but it was just one, early battle in a long struggle between Christianity and Islam for dominance of both Europe and the Middle East. In 1099, knights from Western and Central Europe set out to re-conquer the "Holy Land" and wrested much of the Levant, including Jerusalem, away from Muslim forces for over a century. The success, albeit temporary, of the Crusades was soon followed by the first significant Christian efforts to re-conquer Spain, a process that would slowly but steadily push Islam off the Iberian Peninsula, leading to an end of the Muslim presence in 1492.

Even before the re-conquest of Spain was complete, Europe was facing a new Muslim challenge, this time from Seljuk and then Ottoman Turks from Central Asia. In a matter of a few centuries the Ottomans swept away what remained of Greek Byzantium, as well as Islamic Kingdoms of the Near East and North Africa, and forged a new and powerful Muslim empire. By the 16th century they had conquered most of the Balkans and were driving into the heart of Europe. The Ottoman advance was finally halted in 1683, when an army from Poland and Austria destroyed a huge Turkish force then laying siege to Vienna.

During the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries, much of the Islamic world fell prey to European colonial ambitions. France, England and other colonial powers gobbled up Muslim territories in sub-Saharan and North Africa, the Near East and South and Southeast Asia. The final of these colonial land-grabs occurred in 1918, when the Ottoman Empire collapsed following its defeat in World War I and a host of territories, including present-day Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, were turned over to Britain.

These overseas colonies and territories brought some Muslims to Europe, especially to France, in the century before the Second World War. But large-scale immigration, Muslim or otherwise, did not begin until the years following that conflict, when efforts to rebuild Western Europe's shattered societies led to breakneck economic growth. Indeed, the 1950s and '60s are now referred to as the years of "economic miracle" in Western Europe. For example, in West Germany industrial production grew by nearly 600 percent between 1948 and 1967. During the same period, it roughly tripled in France, quintupled in Italy and more than doubled in Great Britain.⁸

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Humming factories created a tight European labor market, which in turn led some countries to look overseas for cheap labor. During the miracle years, millions of migrants came to Europe from the developing world, often from former or existing colonies. In Great Britain, for instance, the 1950s and '60s witnessed the arrival of many immigrants, a good number of whom were Muslim, from former colonies in Africa, the Caribbean and especially South Asia. As a result, the Muslim population in the U.K. ballooned, from 21,000 in 1951 to an esti-

mated 369,000 two decades later. A similar demographic picture can be painted for the Turks who migrated into Germany beginning in the late 1950s, or North Africans making their way to France around the same time.

A substantial portion of the jobs the immigrants originally came for – largely in manufacturing – are now gone.

Many of these Muslim migrants were men, who were either single or who arrived without their families. Most were seen by their host countries as guest or temporary workers who would eventually return to their homelands, a view also held by many immigrants themselves. Many worked in manufacturing or in the lower echelons of the service sector, often doing jobs that increasingly well-off Europeans would no longer take.

A smaller, but not insignificant, number of Muslim newcomers also came to the continent as refugees from the turbulent parts of the Islamic world, notably Algeria, a former French colony that gained its independence in 1962 after a bloody war. The French withdrawal from the country and subsequent fear of retribution prompted nearly 100,000 Algerian Muslims who had collaborated with the colonial regime (known as Harkis) to flee their homeland and resettle in France.⁹

In the early 1970s, the importation of foreign workers into Europe was severely curtailed. The rising price of oil and other factors threw Western Europe's economies into recession, and nations that for years had grappled with labor shortages now found themselves facing rising unemployment. As a result, most European countries stopped importing foreign laborers, and some even offered monetary incentives for existing immigrants to return home.

But the new legal restrictions did not so much end immigration as change its composition. Many of the "temporary workers" who had arrived in the 1950s and '60s did not return to their home countries. Instead, in the ensuing decades, they brought their wives, children

and other family members to live with them in their new country. To this day, most Muslims enter Europe to join family members already there.

Many of those who stayed behind and settled in Europe have had a difficult time. A substantial portion of the jobs the immigrants originally came for – largely in manufacturing – are now gone, replaced by higher-end service sector positions in fields like health care, finance and high technology. But lack of education and often even language skills put these new opportunities beyond the reach of many Muslim immigrants and their children. As a result, Muslim unemployment rates tend to be very high. The Turkish community in Germany, for instance, has a jobless rate of 24 percent, almost two-and-a-half times the national average.¹⁰ In France, the unemployment rate for North Africans hovers around 30 percent, or more than three times the country's overall rate, according to the Montaigne Institute, a Paris-based think tank.

A Delicate Balance

Muslim Europeans are not monolithic in their views. For one thing, the Muslim community is ethnically and culturally diverse, coming from more than 30 different countries, some of them thousands of miles apart. A job-seeking immigrant from more secular Turkey may be quite different in outlook than an Islamist fleeing political oppression in his native Algeria.

However, Europe's Muslims are not so diverse as to entirely exclude commonalities. The most important, of course, is Islam. Recently, this sense of Islamic identity has strengthened, bolstered by a growing religiosity. A 2001 poll published by the French newspaper *Le Monde*, for instance, found that Muslims were attending Mosque and praying more frequently than they had been in 1994, when a similar survey was conducted.¹¹ And in London, a recent survey found that a stunning 80 percent of Muslims said they attend mosque regularly. Even the more secular Turks of Germany and the Benelux countries are becoming increasingly devout, with more overt displays of piety in evidence, such as women wearing headscarves and men growing beards.

This new interest in faith is especially keen among Muslims born in Europe, mostly the children and grandchildren of the immigrants who arrived in the 1960s and '70s. "In Europe 30 years ago, Muslims concealed their religious practice because, in the traditional immigrant way, they wanted to fit in," says Chris Soper, a professor of political science at Pepperdine University. "But today, especially among second and third generation Muslims, you see much greater interest in religion. They are much more willing to live with the tension that more public [religious] displays may create."

But others caution that an increase in religious activity may not necessarily signal an upsurge in genuine religious feeling. "There's certainly an increase in symbolic religion, like fasting on Ramadan and things like that," says Jonathon Laurence, a visiting fellow at the Center on the United States and Europe at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. "But whether that means that people are becoming more pious is an open question."

Moreover, Laurence does not see religious interest on the part of Muslims as a kind of challenge or a new willingness to live with tensions. "I think it's more a sign that they are looking for their identity," he contends. "It's very much like what other groups have done in similar circumstances. It's very natural." Indeed, surveys show that many Muslims in Europe, especially the young, now identify with Islam more than the country either of their heritage or birth — feeling accepted in neither place.¹²

Still, in the wake of 9/11 and the Madrid attacks, some Europeans are concerned that this growing religiosity, however natural, will give greater voice to radical Islam and, ultimately, lead to more violence. In an increasingly secular Europe, many also question whether Islam is really compatible with core Western values, such as democracy, tolerance and individual rights.

These concerns stem from several factors, including a spate of bombings, assassinations and death threats (notably the famous fatwa against British writer Salman Rushdie) linked to Islamic extremists in the three decades leading up to the 2001 attacks on the United States. In the three years since 9/11, police have uncovered al Qaeda cells in a number of European countries, including Britain, Spain and Germany. Muslims also have been implicated in the rise of violent anti-Semitic attacks that have plagued the continent — especially France. In addition, authorities have arrested or expelled hundreds of alleged Muslim extremists, many of them foreign-born imams who have called for violence or expressed

deep sympathy with Osama bin Laden or other terrorists. Moreover, polls have shown that these religious leaders are not preaching to entirely unsympathetic audiences. In a recent poll of British Muslims by *The Guardian* newspaper, for instance, 13 percent of all respondents said that further attacks by al Qaeda on the U.S. would be justified.¹³

The latest incident to stoke European fears occurred on Nov. 2, when Dutch film-

maker Theo Van Gogh was brutally murdered in Amsterdam, allegedly by a 26 year-old Moroccan and four other Muslim accomplices. Van Gogh is believed to have been targeted because he made a film critical of Islam's treatment of women. His dead body was found with a letter threatening to kill the person who had scripted the movie, who also happens to be a Dutch lawmaker.¹⁴

The murder sparked a nationwide outrage, no doubt magnified by the fact that it came just two years after the slaying of another Dutch critic of Islam, political maverick Pim Fortuyn. (*See Reaction from the Right*, p. 11.) For its part, Holland's government reacted to the assassination with harsh rhetoric and promises of tough action. In announcing a crackdown on extremism less than a

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week after the killing, the country's Deputy Prime Minister, Gerrit Zalm, declared war on radical Islam. "We will step up the fight and make sure radical Islamist movements will disappear from the Netherlands," he said.¹⁵ And indeed, since Van Gogh's death, more than a dozen Muslims suspected of links to terrorism have been rounded up by Dutch authorities. At the same time, public anger has led to more than 20 attacks against Muslim sites around the country, including a school that was bombed and two mosques that were burned to the ground.

What is perhaps most surprising about the Van Gogh case is the rhetorical response of the political class in a country that traditionally prides itself on tolerance. Many commentators and officials have called on Muslims to accept Holland's liberal values – either voluntarily or by government coercion. And this view is supported by a substantial majority, with one recent survey showing that 80 percent of the population favors harsher measures to force integration.¹⁶

Even in countries that have not had a shocking episode similar to the Van Gogh killing, the rhetoric against what is perceived to be an Islamic threat has been intensifying, with mainstream political leaders questioning whether Islam is ultimately compatible with European

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values. Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi has openly declared that Islamic civilization is inferior to that of the West. More recently, Belgian Interior Minister Patrick Dewael condemned cultures "where women are put in a position of inferiority because they have to cover up their bodies" – a direct reference to Islamic practice.¹⁷

Assimilation, Integration or Segregation?

Western European countries have taken very different approaches to the way they treat their Muslim minorities – ranging from aggressive efforts at assimilation to policies that border on benign neglect and that often have resulted in the marginalization of this community.

Atop the list of the most activist states in this regard is France, which has pursued a vigorous policy of assimilation through its educational and other institutions. The goal, in essence, is to create Frenchmen from the country's largely North African immigrants and their offspring. This policy has its roots in the French Revolution of the late 18th century, which was driven by a belief that a set of universal values ("liberty, equality, fraternity") could be applied to everyone. These "enlightened" principles, along with the country's highly regarded traditional culture, make assimilation irresistible to newcomers, or so many native Frenchmen believe.

The United Kingdom, on the other hand, has adopted a more multicultural model, one that aims not to change immigrants into Englishmen, but to get them to accept Britain's core institutions and to learn English. Some scholars say that this approach has worked well. "They've had a debate there like we've had here over multiculturalism vs. assimilation," Soper says. "But I think they've found a good balance because they're doing much better than most other countries in Europe. Muslims in Britain are making more progress in business and politics than they are most elsewhere."

By far the majority of European countries, including Germany, Italy and Spain, have, at least until recently, taken a third, more *laissez faire* approach, one that has treated Muslim minorities as a temporary phenomenon that will eventually go away and, hence can safely be ignored.

For instance, until 2000 Germany based its citizenship laws on *jus sanguinis*, or blood, rather than *jus solis*, or place, as is the case in the United States. This made it difficult for Turks and other immigrants who were not

ethnically German, as well as their children and grandchildren born in Germany, to acquire citizenship.

“You see, politicians said that Germany was not an immigrant country and so did not have immigrant issues,” says Andrea Witt, program officer for the Immigration and Integration Program at the German Marshall Fund’s office in Berlin. “It didn’t matter how long they had been here, they were still guest workers and ‘guest’ implies temporary.”

However, in 2000 the country overhauled its naturalization laws, making those born in the country, regardless of ethnicity, eligible for citizenship, and easing citizenship requirements for other longtime residents. In spite of this new law, however, Germans have yet to come to grips with the presence of a permanent non-German minority, Witt says. “While the politicians have accepted that we are an immigrant country, the people still have not,” she says.

In the wake of 9/11, all of Europe’s governments, as well as their people, have taken much greater notice of the Islamic communities in their midst. (*See A Delicate Balance, p. 5.*) Indeed, the fear of terrorism, reinforced by the recent Madrid bombings and the attacks in the Netherlands, has prompted some of these states to pursue a more assimilationist model of integration. In Denmark, for instance, the government recently banned arranged marriages, still popular among many Muslims. Even in multicultural Britain, civics classes and a loyalty oath were recently added as requirements for citizenship.¹⁸

The most significant and widely publicized post-9/11 change has been the banning, earlier this year, of headscarves and veils in French schools. Even though the new law applies to all overt displays of religiosity, includ-

ing the wearing of Christian crosses and Jewish yarmulkes, it is widely assumed to be directed primarily at Muslim girls. Although there was scattered resistance to the ban, predictions of mass protest and civil disobedience proved unfounded. Some observers, like the Brookings Institution’s Laurence, see this development as a sign that Muslims are accommodating themselves to European values.

But others view the lack of large-scale resistance to the ban differently. “I really think that this has to do with 9/11, which has severely marginalized Muslims in Europe,” says Abdulaziz Sachedina, a professor of religious studies at the

University of Virginia. “Since [the 9/11 attacks] Muslims have been afraid to fight back or to stand up for their rights because they think they will be singled out.” (For further discussion on this issue, see the transcript of an April 19, 2004, Pew Forum event entitled “The Veil Controversy:

International Perspectives on Religion in Public Life” at <http://pewforum.org/events/index.php?EventID=55>.)

Some countries have used 9/11 to try to build bridges to their Muslim minorities. In Spain, for instance, the government recently established a foundation that aims to help integrate the nation’s Muslims into the broader society.¹⁹ Other countries, like Britain and Italy, have taken similar steps.

These organizations complement a network of thousands of privately funded groups established in the last few decades that aim to provide Muslims with everything from social services to political leadership. Some are linked to foreign governments, like Turkey or Morocco, and serve communities specifically from these countries. Many more are tied to and receive support from wealthy benefactors as well as different political or

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religious movements in the Islamic world. In France, for instance, the Union of Islamic Organizations of France (UOIF), a large nationwide umbrella group, has close ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, a widespread fundamentalist movement with a history of violence that is now seen as largely peaceful.

But these groups, whether sponsored by European governments or overseas entities, often suffer from credibility problems. “You can’t impose leaders on the community,” Sachedina says. “A lot of these groups are tainted, either because they are imposed from other countries or because they are associated with the [host] government.”

True leadership within the community often rests with the imam at the local mosque, also a recent target of government interest. As already noted, imams in many European countries have been accused of inciting violence and, in some cases, arrested or expelled. The solution, many Muslims and non-Muslims say, is to create an educational infrastructure to train imams on the continent. Such an infrastructure is already taking shape in Europe, albeit slowly. Privately funded schools to train Muslim clerics have recently been established in places like Burgundy, Wales, Paris and Rotterdam.²⁰

Meanwhile, European governments have started to show an interest in regulating the licensing of Muslim clergy. Countries like Britain, Spain and Holland have been toying with establishing some sort of minimal requirements for imams. The Netherlands has been financing pilot programs to educate its imams in “Dutch values.”²¹

Right now, few if any standards in most countries govern who can preach at a mosque, a situation that has produced wildly varying levels of competency. “In Italy, even a butcher can call himself an Imam,” said Omar Danilo Speranza, president of the Association of Italian Muslims.²²

Mosques, too, are often ad hoc affairs, with many located in warehouses, old factories and other structures not originally designed for worship. Still, as Europe’s Muslim population grows, so do the total number of mosques. In England, the number has jumped from 613 in 1997 to about 1,000 today. And in Germany, there are about 2,400 mosques.²³

As with the training of imams, European governments have largely left the building of mosques to private entities. But here too, political leaders are beginning to propose a greater state role.

Recently, France’s former Finance Minister, and likely future presidential candidate, Nicolas Sarkozy, argued in favor of government financing of mosque construction.²⁴ Sarkozy’s remarks set off a firestorm of controversy, because his plan would require amending the country’s 1905 law establishing strict church-state separation. France has a hallowed secularist tradition (*laïcité*) and politicians tamper with it at their peril. Still, taxpayers already support the upkeep of thousands of Catholic churches (deemed historical monuments, and hence exempt, by the state) and some people applauded Sarkozy’s proposal, arguing that it would help bring the country’s Muslims closer to mainstream French society.

A Mixed Success

So, are Europe’s Muslims successfully integrating? It depends who you ask. According to Soheib Bencheikh, the mufti of Marseille, “the great majority of French Muslims are melting into the social mainstream.”²⁵ A recent survey seems to point to the same conclusion in Britain. In a poll taken for the *Eastern Eye*, the country’s largest Asian newspaper, 87 percent of the country’s Muslims said they were loyal to the U.K.²⁶

On the other hand, Bat Ye’or, an Egyptian-born Jewish writer who currently lives in Switzerland, argues that the continent’s growing Muslim population will not ultimately assimilate, or even integrate, and instead is turning the continent into what she calls “Eurabia.” (*See The Way Ahead*, p. 14.)

More sanguine but still pessimistic is Shireen Hunter, director of the Islam Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. Hunter, herself a Muslim, says that “a significant majority of Muslims hasn’t integrated” and that this is a “festering problem” caused by a combination of factors, including government inaction, prejudice, legitimate cultural differences and the desire for self segregation among Muslims themselves.

“There is no question that few of the governments in Europe are really trying to address the socioeconomic problems that plague these immigrants, like joblessness and lack of adequate education,” Hunter says. “But there are other issues at work here as well. For instance, the governments want to ghettoize them and they want to self-segregate, which makes integration very difficult.”

Muslim enclaves, like the Kreuzberg district of Berlin, dot much of Western Europe. Some of these areas are vibrant, growing ethnic neighborhoods, but many are breeding grounds for social alienation or worse, with high levels of unemployment, crime, poverty and hopelessness. Some also are “no go” areas for white Europeans and even the police, who fear the hostility of the local community.

Many of these enclaves serve to segregate Muslims from the majority population, creating a sense of estrangement on both sides. The problem is especially acute in France, where

many Muslims live in government-built tower blocks reminiscent of the worst American public housing schemes of the 1960s.

In addition to physical segregation, there are deep cultural differences that can create real barriers to mutual understanding between majority and minority communities. Some of these differences are obvious, such as the suggestive clothing worn by some European women, which offend more pious Muslims. Other examples are not as readily apparent. For instance, Hunter says, “most Muslims don’t drink and this is not trivial because the drinking culture in Europe is very big.”

But in spite of these very real challenges, some experts are optimistic about the prospects for integration. They point to admittedly infrequent surveys of European Muslims, which show anything but a sense of alienation. For example, in one 2001 poll of ethnic Turks in Berlin,

conducted by the Christian Democratic Union (Germany’s main opposition party), 80 percent of respondents said that German society was fair and offered equal opportunity.

Optimists have special hopes for the 50 percent of Muslims who were born in Europe. “In France, for example, you now have third and fourth generation young people who are invested in what you might call ‘the French Dream,’ ” Laurence says. “They’re committed to making it.” Others point out that Muslim areas in many European cities, such as Madrid, Rotterdam and Brussels, are not pits of despair, but thriving communities with a growing number of small businesses. Far from being “no go” areas, these neighborhoods attract many white visitors, often looking for a taste of Middle Eastern culture.

Laurence and others contend that recent government efforts, like those outlined earlier, are helping to create some of this optimism. “I think [officials] have finally come to the

realization that if the government doesn’t support foundations and mosques and community groups there will be a void and the void will be filled with unsavory types,” he says, referring to Islamic extremists.

Even in “no go” neighborhoods, there is a real and increasing effort by the authorities to make a difference, Laurence and others say. Probably one of the most significant of these endeavors has come from France, where the government in September announced a more than \$10 billion program aimed at tackling social ills in Muslim ghetto areas.²⁷

“It’s an exaggeration to say that these neighborhoods have been lost to the forces of despair,” Laurence says. “They are in play in the sense that different people are vying for their attention, including bearded fundamentalist preachers but also an increasingly active and interested government.”

Muslim enclaves, like the Kreuzberg district of Berlin, dot much of Western Europe. Some of these areas are vibrant, growing ethnic neighborhoods, but many are breeding grounds for social alienation or worse, with high levels of unemployment, crime, poverty and hopelessness.

Reaction from the Right

Whatever the reality, there is a widely held view among Europeans that Muslims are not integrating into the mainstream. In many countries, this perception has tended to benefit fringe, often right-wing, parties. France, Austria, Italy, Denmark, Great Britain and the Netherlands, for instance, have all seen these fringe movements edge closer to, and in some cases even into, the political mainstream.

A number of candidates and parties who have made a crackdown on immigrants and immigration a pillar of their political platforms have performed surprisingly well in recent elections. For instance, in 1999, Jörg Haider's anti-immigrant and xenophobic Freedom Movement placed second in Austria's national elections and, for a time, was part of that country's coalition government.²⁸ Similarly in Italy, where two parties with xenophobic tendencies – the separatist Northern League and post-fascist Nationalist Alliance – performed well in 2001 elections and remain important parts of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's center-right governing coalition. And in 2002, France's anti-immigrant champion, Jean Marie Le Pen, shocked the world when he beat President Jacques Chirac's main opponent, then-Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, in the first round of presidential voting to face the incumbent in a runoff. Although Le Pen was soundly beaten in a second round of voting, his candidacy was seen by many as a sign that his ideas could no longer entirely be consigned to the political wilderness.

Perhaps the most significant beneficiary of anxiety over immigrants, particularly Muslim immigrants, was Pim Fortuyn, a sociologist from the Dutch city of Rotterdam, where 40 percent of the population is made up of foreigners, many of them Muslim. Unlike Le Pen, Haider and others, Fortuyn attacked the growing Muslim presence in his country from the Left, rather than the Right. Fortuyn, who was gay and socially liberal, argued that immigration should be halted because much of Islam is “backward” or incompatible with modern, Western values, like tolerance. Holland's core values would be radically altered if it allowed the Muslim population to continue to grow unchecked, he warned.

Fortuyn's blunt warnings struck a cord with many Dutch voters. In March 2002, the party he headed, Livable Rotterdam, won that city's local elections and took control of the municipal government. Less than two months later, and on the eve of a national election that showed his party, now called Pim Fortuyn List, winning second or even first place, he was assassinated. In spite of, or maybe because of, this tragedy, the Pim Fortuyn List went on to a second place finish and an invitation to join the center-right coalition government that formed in the weeks after voting. But the fractious party performed poorly in elections the following year, and has since faded from the national scene.²⁹

Regardless of how long these parties remain in the mainstream, the fact that they have risen to prominence at all speaks poorly of the state and quality of the immigration debate in Europe, many scholars say. Indeed, thinkers on both sides of the Atlantic have argued that European elites have yet to fully grapple with the broader issues of race and identity surrounding Muslims and other groups for fear of being seen as politically incorrect.

Well-known American political thinkers, like Francis Fukuyama and Samuel Huntington, have argued that European elites should not be ashamed of defending their cultural traditions, like humanism and Christianity, in the face of Islam's growing presence. “There is a European culture,” Fukuyama said in a recent interview. “It's subscribing to a broader culture of tolerance. It's not unreasonable for European culture to say, ‘You have to accept this.’ The Europeans have to end their political correctness and take seriously what's going on.”³⁰

The Turkish Question

Modern Turkey has always been an anomaly. A state with an overwhelming Muslim majority, it has gone against the Islamic grain and embraced a rigorous form of state secularism. A country with firm geographic, political and cultural connections to the Middle East and Central Asia, Turkey is also very much a part of Europe, with a chunk of its territory (about 10 percent) sitting across the Bosphorus on the edge of the continent, where 15 million, or roughly one-fifth, of its citizens live.

In the past two decades, the country has sought to use its territorial link to Europe to push for entry into the European Union. This is very much in keeping with the spirit of modern Turkey's founder, Kamal Ataturk, who in the 1920s and '30s sought to build a new state from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire by turning the country's orientation westward.

Much of Ataturk's vision has been realized. Today, Turkey is a working democracy and a valued member of the West's premier military alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO.) It also has a moderately developed economy with a per capita GDP of about \$7,000, putting it somewhere in between the newest (and poorest) members of the EU, like Hungary and Poland, and Arab states like Jordan and Egypt.

Over the last few decades, most of Turkey's politicians and people have come to believe that the country's geopolitical and economic gains as well as its geographic position entitle it to EU membership. In 1963, Turkey took its first step toward that goal by becoming an

EU associate member, a status that is open to countries that are part of NATO but not ready for full Union membership. Since that time, Turkish efforts to secure full membership have come to naught. The EU, which has absorbed 12 new member states in the last decade, has yet to even begin formal membership negotiations with Turkey.

That is probably about to change. On Oct. 6, Turkey edged closer to the negotiating table when the EU's governing body, the European Commission, approved formal talks. On Dec. 16-17, the 25 member states of the Union will meet to decide whether to ratify this decision and set a date to begin formal talks. While approval must be unanimous, many observers believe that the members will vote to formally authorize negotiations, probably sometime in late 2005.

But formal talks do not assure a successful outcome. The process could fall prey to internal squabbling among EU member states, or be held hostage by one country or faction within the Union trying to use the issue to advance another, unrelated agenda.

"I am somewhat skeptical [about negotiations] because the Europeans are a complicated bunch with a lot of differences," says Suat Kiniklioglu, director of the Ankara Center for Turkish Policy Studies and a visiting fellow at the German Marshall Fund in Washington, D.C. "There is also Turkey, which might get impatient or frustrated and pull out."

In addition, Kiniklioglu and other experts agree that even if the negotiations go well, Turkey probably won't join the EU for at least 10 years. All sides agree that a decade is needed to give the Turks time to further bring their political and economic development closer to European levels. It would also allow the EU some additional time to properly ab-

sorb the 10 new members that joined earlier this year, as well as the two applicants (Romania and Bulgaria) that are likely to be accepted for membership within the next year or two.

Still, those who favor Turkish membership are optimistic in part because the bulk of the continent's political leaders – including Germany's Gerhard Schroeder and France's Jacques Chirac – have gone on record in support of the idea.

Europeans and Turks who favor accession often say that bringing Turkey within the EU could create both a symbolic and an actual bulwark against the darker forces within Islam that are fueling the terrorist assault on the West. More to the point: to have one of the world's most important Muslim states anchored in Europe as a wealthy, tolerant democracy, and bordering countries

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like Iraq, Syria and Iran, would send a powerful and hopeful message to the rest of the Islamic world.

“To modernize an Islamic country based on the shared values of Europe would be almost a D-Day for Europe in the war against terror,” German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer recently told the BBC. “It would be the greatest positive challenge for these totalitarian and terrorist ideas.”

Turkey, with its sizable, well trained army, would also increase Europe’s military clout, those who favor accession say. This is an important issue, since EU countries have been unwilling to spend significantly more on their armed forces in order to bring their collective military strength into close parity with United States.

But much of European public opinion has yet to be swayed by these arguments. A recent Louis Harris poll shows that three-quarters of the French oppose Turkey’s entry into the EU.³¹ Other surveys have shown that two-thirds of Austrians and nearly six out of ten Germans are also opposed.³²

Moreover, Europe’s political elite is not entirely marching in lock-step in support of negotiations. A significant and vocal minority of the continent’s leadership opposes Turkish accession, including Germany’s main opposition leader Angela Merkel, the outgoing EU Minister for the Internal Market Frits Bolkestein, and former president and recent EU constitutional convention head, Giscard D’Estaing. Bolkestein recently made headlines across the continent when he warned that if the EU accepted Turkey as a member it risks becoming “Islamized” and “would implode.”³³

Other prominent leaders, including outgoing EU Commissioner Romano Prodi, French Prime Minister Jean-

Pierre Raffarin and EU Agriculture Minister Franz Fischler, have all, publicly or privately, also voiced strong reservations. And powerful Roman Catholic Cardinal, Joseph Ratzinger, who heads up the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has called EU negotiations with Turkey “an enormous mistake,” although the church has officially taken no position on the matter.³⁴

The existing disparity between Turkey’s still relatively poor economy and rich Europe causes many to worry that the EU would be forced to spend enormous sums just to bring the country to socio-economic parity. Agriculture Minister Fischler recently warned that Turkish membership could cost the EU nearly \$14 billion in agricultural subsidies alone.³⁵

Others are concerned that further expansion of the EU, especially following its recent growth, will dilute the organization’s cohesiveness. This fear is especially keen among the bigger European states, like France and Germany, which until recently were able to dominate the Union’s political agenda. Turkey will not only be a new member, it will, in a decade or so, likely

supplant Germany to become the continent’s most populous country and garner the largest bloc of votes (about 15 percent) in the EU.

Finally, some worry that bringing a large Muslim country formally into Europe will compromise the continent’s Christian character and heritage. As the recent decision to leave any reference to God or Christianity out of the EU Constitution shows, the continent has a strong secular bent. But the EU was founded by Christian Democrats, like Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet, and many of their heirs still see it as a

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“Christian Club.” (*See sidebar, p. 15.*) That will be much harder when the club’s biggest member is a Muslim state.

But by rejecting Turkey, Europe might pay a price with its own Muslim population, says Pepperdine’s Soper. “I think that non-acceptance would lead to a backlash in that community,” he says. “It would reinforce the idea that the West is hypocritical and that it is ultimately hostile to Islam.”

On the other hand, some European Muslims are just as wary of Turkish membership as their Christian neighbors. Some fear that letting populous and relatively poor Turkey into the EU could lead to a massive influx of low-wage laborers who would compete for many of the jobs currently held by Muslims. “They will flood into Europe,” said Akag Acikgoz, a Dutch-born man of Turkish descent living and working as a bouncer in Amsterdam. “I don’t want the Turks to join, even if they are my people.”³⁶

The Way Ahead

Recently, the eminent Arabist Bernard Lewis shocked many in Europe when he matter-of-factly stated that the continent would be major Muslim by the end of the 21st century, if not sooner.

Swiss historian Bat Ye’or takes Lewis’ prediction a step farther, arguing that the Muslim demographic tidal wave will combine with European “appeasement, accommodation, and cultural abdication” to create a completely new state that will in no significant way resemble the Europe of today. Europe, she writes, is well on its way to this new reality, having already “evolved from a Judeo-Christian civilization, with important post-Enlightenment/secular elements to... Eurabia: a secular Muslim transitional society with its traditional Judeo-Christian mores rapidly disappearing.”³⁷

But many scholars do not see these visions of massive demographic and cultural shifts as being at all realistic. “I find such a prediction implausible on its face,” says Pepperdine University’s Soper. “Throughout history, have we ever seen examples that paralleled this?” he asks. “I don’t think so. Certainly I have never seen a

case where a population went from 5 percent to 50 percent in a century, which is what we’re talking about here.”

Moreover, Soper and others maintain, if there is a huge migration into Europe, it may not come entirely, or even primarily, from the Muslim world. “There are other regions that might provide these people, like Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, which are not primarily Islamic,” Witt says.

That is not to say that Europe’s Muslims will remain a small minority, Soper and Witt contend. Instead, their most likely scenario has the Muslim community growing into a much larger European minority – but still a minority.

“I don’t see an Islamic Europe,” agrees the University of Virginia’s Sachedina. “What I do see is a large Islamic group in Europe that will be more tolerant, more pluralistic and much less traditional than non-European Islam.”

This new larger Muslim presence will not destroy existing European culture and society but reach an accommodation with it, optimists predict, much as progressive waves of immigration have changed American society. “I see a new European culture emerging in the 21st century,” says Furman University’s Nelsen. “I don’t know what this new culture will look like, but I do think there will be some sort of settlement between these two cultures – Islam and the West. And... as with other past cultural clashes, say between the Romans and the Goths, it will probably take on the best aspects of both.”

But some observers contend that the segregation, Islamicization and general lack of integration of Muslims in Europe today does not bode well for accommodation tomorrow. Mark Krikorian, director of the Center for Immigration Studies, believes that Muslim communities in Europe are coming to resemble not Goths to Europe’s Romans, but Gypsies, who often speak their host country’s language and take on some of its customs while remaining firmly outside the mainstream. “Most Muslims today are only integrating in superficial ways, and they still see themselves and are seen by Europeans as ‘the other,’ ” he says. “As long as that continues, as

(Continued on page 16)

Is the EU a Christian Club?

The debate in the European Union over whether to admit Muslim Turkey as a permanent member has given rise to a parallel discussion concerning the EU's fundamental identity. Is the 53-year-old institution a "Christian Club"? The term is a favorite of Turkish prime ministers seeking to shame the EU into opening up to its southern neighbor. It also is used by European traditionalists, looking to give a more prominent role to the continent's Christian legacy. But is the label accurate?

To many European policymakers the idea is absurd. European levels of religious belief and practice are low and declining. How could a continent dotted with empty churches be considered "Christian"? To these officials, the EU is a tool for adjusting to a changing world. In theory, the EU is open to any state wishing to join – Christian or not.

But not all Europeans see the Union open to all comers. The "Turkish Question" has brought to the surface strong emotions among Europeans who normally take pride in the continent's commitment to secularism and social tolerance, but who now find themselves – embarrassingly – drawing an imaginary line around a Europe that excludes Turkey. Turks often feel foreign to them.

Some Europeans try to rationalize this feeling by arguing that Turkey is too big, or poor, or undemocratic to be a member of the EU. Others freely admit that the divide between the EU and Turkey is in fact a cultural gap – one large enough for former French President Valerie Giscard d'Estaing to state that "Turkey is not a European country," EU Commissioner Frits Bolkestein to warn of the coming Islamization of Europe and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi to assert "the superiority of [European] civilization" over that of "Islamic countries." For these and other European leaders, culture matters and Turkey is simply forcing Europe to realize it.

Many would agree that the European Union is in fact a Christian club – if by "Christian" we mean a culture profoundly shaped by Christian, and particularly Roman Catholic, ideas and practices. Much is often made of the fact that Catholic political leaders such as France's Robert Schuman, Germany's Konrad Adenauer and Italy's Alcide de Gasperi dominated postwar Europe and used their positions to found the European Community. But what made their Catholicism important to integration?

The answer is twofold. First, Catholicism provided ideological support for European unity. Pre-Vatican II Catholicism emphasized the visible unity of Christendom. The division of western Christendom into nation states undermined this vision and drove Catholic leaders to do what they could to restore the medieval ideal.

Second, transnational Catholicism, represented first by a universal church but also by numerous international social and political organizations, fostered a community spirit – a "we-feeling" – among Catholic elites that overcame parochial divisions. Postwar Catholic political elites felt comfortable with each other and

with the idea of political union. The church itself, led by Pope Pius XII, became an immediate and staunch supporter of European integration, which encouraged Catholic politicians and made the process seem even more "Catholic."

The sense that European integration was a Catholic project was reinforced by the fact that Protestant countries steered clear of the Community. This was mainly because they cared little for the ambitious political project accompanying economic integration. But some in Britain and Scandinavia also opposed consideration of membership because of its "papist" character. After Britain and two Nordic countries applied for membership in the 1960s, French President Charles De Gaulle vetoed their applications, implying that Britain was not "European."

De Gaulle was right in the sense that Protestant states, when they did enter the Community in the 1970s and 1990s, proved largely uninterested in fostering the deep political community favored by the Continent's Catholic countries. The "we-feeling" was weaker between the original members and the Protestant newcomers to the European club.

Public opinion also reflected the cultural divide. From the early 1970s to the 1990s, practicing Catholics were the strongest supporters of integration, while practicing Protestants showed much less enthusiasm. Recently, however, this dynamic has begun to shift. Devout Catholics remain the staunchest supporters of the EU, but their numbers are slipping. At the same time, Europe's growing "seculars" have overtaken Protestants as the most intense "Euroskeptics." And although the Catholic hierarchy, including Pope John Paul II, has consistently supported integration – despite the refusal of European leaders to reference Christianity in the EU constitution – small groups of conservative Catholics have begun to voice their opposition to a secular Union they believe actively undermines traditional Christian morality. These voices are destined to grow louder after Rocco Buttiglione, a Catholic who is very close to the pope, was forced to withdraw his name from nomination to the EU Commission after running afoul of the European Parliament for his more traditional moral views. Ironically, the EU could be a Christian club in danger of losing the support of its strongest Christian backers.

Political scientist Karl Deutsch, in his 1957 book Political Community in the North Atlantic Area, argued that successful integration requires a sense of community among political elites based on a common culture. The current EU brings enthusiastic Catholics together with less enthusiastic Protestants and modern secularists – and the Union survives. But does it lack the transnational emotional bonds and popular support that might be required to successfully integrate the full range of European cultures? For all of its strategic advantages, Turkish accession may accelerate the disappearance of the common culture that drove the early European project. If the last vestiges of the Christian club disappear, might the hope of an "ever closer union" fade as well?

long as Muslims don't really think of themselves as Germans or Swedes or Frenchmen, they will be 'the other,' just like Gypsies."

Others say that lack of integration will lead to something far worse than just continued separateness. "There is a general feeling that a social collision is becoming inevitable," said Jan Rath, co-director of the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies at the University of Amsterdam. "People think it's been building for years and now finally coming to the surface. My impression is the European voices that say, 'Everyone is equal, but we are more equal than Muslims,' are growing."³⁸

But some observers maintain that predictions of pending collision are based on a false premise: that Muslims are ultimately not capable of accepting core Western values.

But democracy, tolerance and other values held dear in Europe are not unknown in the Islamic world, they argue. "In the Koran you have accountability to public action, in the sense that public bodies are accountable to the people, giving us something we can tease out into democratic principles," says Sachedina. And while Koranic concepts of accountability may not be quite in the same league as the Federalist Papers, Sachedina reminds Christians that their Bible offers no direct endorsement of modern democracy either. "But Christians are able to function in democracies," he says. "So, too, will Muslims."

"There is no reason to assume that Islam is undemocratic," agrees Soper. "And I'm confident that Muslims in the West will be able to interpret Islam to support democracy."

Indeed, these optimists say, integration will proceed apace so long as Europeans do not let their legitimate concerns over a small minority of extremists prevent them from making the rest of the continent's Muslim community, which is the vast majority, feel welcome. "When an imam fulminates and calls for violence, the answer should be simple," says Hafid Bouazza, a Moroccan writer now living in Holland. "If you think the Netherlands is such a bad place, pick up your bags and go."

This report was written by David Masci, a senior research fellow at the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.

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