ISLAMIST EXTREMISM IN BRITAIN AND FRANCE: 
MUSLIM COMMUNITIES COMPARED

A thesis 
submitted to the Faculty of the 
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences 
of Georgetown University 
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the 
degree of 
Master of Arts 
in Security Studies

By

Michael Gee, B.A.

Washington, DC 
April 16, 2010
Islamist Extremism in Britain and France: Muslim Communities Compared

Michael Gee, B.A.

Thesis Advisor: C. Christine Fair, Ph.D.

Abstract

This paper compares the integration of the British and French Muslim communities in order to determine if there are differences that can explain why Britain has experienced a greater level of Islamist extremism than France in recent years. Home to two of Europe’s largest Muslim communities, the issue of Muslim integration in Britain and France has become inherent to the threat of “homegrown” terrorism. While integration in relation to radicalization has often been dismissed, this paper examines British and French integration policies beyond the narrow definition of socioeconomics to include discussion of national integration models, living situations, identity, and politicization. Analysis through these topics reveals important divergences between the integration of Muslims in Britain and France that offer an explanation for differing recent experiences with extremism in the two countries.
For Mom and Dad,
the family’s original Europhiles,
who made it all possible
# Table of Contents

I. Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1

II. Scope Note and Data Caveats ...................................................................................... 2

III. Islamist Radicalism in Britain and France ................................................................. 4

   Explanations for Radicalization among European Muslims ....................................... 5
   Islamist Presence in Britain and France .................................................................... 9

IV. Background on British and French Muslim Communities ........................................ 13

   Demographic and Socioeconomic Data .................................................................... 14
   History and Formation of Muslim Communities ....................................................... 16

V. National Integration Models ......................................................................................... 19

   Britain ......................................................................................................................... 19
   France ......................................................................................................................... 21

VI. Comparing Integration of the Muslim Communities ................................................... 23

   Housing and Living Environments .......................................................................... 23
   Identity ....................................................................................................................... 28
   Majority Attitudes .................................................................................................... 31
   Political Involvement and Representation ................................................................ 33

VII. Counterterrorism Strategy ......................................................................................... 36

VIII. Analysis and Implications ........................................................................................ 38

IX. Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 41

Appendix 1: Map of France ............................................................................................ 43

Appendix 2: Map of Britain ............................................................................................. 44

Appendix 3: Map of London with Geographic Distribution of Selected Populations ....... 45

Bibliography ..................................................................................................................... 46
I. INTRODUCTION

The Muslim population in Europe has grown exponentially since the middle of the 20th century. The issue of Muslim integration has continually occupied European governments and acquired an urgent security context more recently with the rise of Islamist extremism and terrorism. Great Britain and France are home to two of Europe’s largest Muslim communities. Yet, in recent years, it is Britain that has experienced Islamist terrorism plots committed or attempted by its own citizens. In contrast, France’s most recent major experience with “homegrown” violence, the suburban riots in the fall of 2005, was not motivated by religion and nor exclusively committed by Muslims.

This paper seeks to answer the question of whether there are differences between the integration of Muslims in Great Britain and France that can explain why Britain has experienced a more visibly active Islamist extremist presence than France. Using a number of measurable and immeasurable variables to compare the British and French Muslim communities, the goal is to draw descriptive inference between integration and radicalization. These variables will be analyzed using a variety of theories about the radicalization of European Muslims in order to determine if any of them offer compelling explanations for Britain and France’s dissimilar experiences with radical Islamism.

This paper begins with a section on background information on Britain and France’s respective Muslim communities. At least empirically, it will first be shown that the extent of Islamist extremism is greater in Britain than France. Explanations for radicalization among British and French Muslims are then presented.
Following this, the British and French Muslim communities are presented from historical and contemporary perspectives. The communities are first presented in terms of demographics and socioeconomics. Study then moves on to tracing the primary contemporary immigration patterns of Muslims to Britain and France and the generational evolution of the Muslim diasporas into the communities that exist today.

The next sections deal directly with Britain and France’s integration policies. National approaches to integration, Britain’s multiculturalism and France’s universalism, are explained along with related debates in relation to Muslim integration. From there, Muslim integration is examined through four key issues: housing and living environments, identity, majority attitudes toward Muslims, and political involvement and representation. The final policy section is devoted to counterterrorism strategy in Britain and France, included not only as a means to highlight differences in Muslim integration but also as a possible alternative explanation to the research questions.

Lastly, using the radicalization explanations presented in the first section as a baseline, the cogent differences in integration found in the previous sections will be analyzed regarding their ability to explain why France has experienced less Islamist terrorism than Britain. Here, the possibility of counterterrorism policy as an alternative explanation will also be weighed.

II. SCOPE NOTE AND DATA CAVEATS

The type of terrorism under consideration in this paper is so-called “homegrown” terror; that is, British and French citizens involved in terrorist attacks against their own
countries. While Islamist activity among a small percentage of Muslims in Britain and France also includes violence conducted in foreign countries, terrorism which necessitates the willingness to commit treason and attack one’s own country is most appropriate for a study of integration. Additionally, the four variables chosen as points of comparison between the British and French Muslim communities are intended neither as definitive nor comprehensive and were chosen based on review of relevant literature on Muslim integration.

The issue under the analytical scope of this paper is comparing the differences in the integration of British and French Muslims rather than the relative degree to which they are integrated. This paper is concerned with how Muslims are integrated, not if they are more or less integrated in one country. Additionally, the goal is to determine differences in integration that have or have not contributed to radicalization among certain Muslims and not simply disaffection—which I expect to find high levels of among both British and French Muslims but is not a sufficient explanation alone for the use of violence.

It may be argued that examination of integration in relation to Islamist terrorism in Europe is irrelevant. Some terrorists involved in attacks in Britain were economically well off, such physician Bilal Abdullah, who took part in the 2007 Glasgow Airport bombing, or July 7 bomber Shehzad Tanweer, who drove a Mercedes and came from a
relatively wealthy family.¹ This paper, however, operates under an expanded the notion of “integration” beyond the sole measurement of economic well-being.

A caveat must also be made in acknowledgement of the selection bias of this paper’s methodology. Ultimately, this paper encounters an observation problem regarding extremism in Britain and France. While an empirical attempt is made to demonstrate that Britain has a more visible extremist presence, it may be that France has a similarly widespread violent Islamist presence that is less observable due to, for example, terrorist operations being disrupted in their early stages. Demonstrating that France has a lower level of extremism also encounters the problem of trying to prove a negative and judging whether absence of evidence is, in fact, evidence of absence.

Finally, this paper does not in any form intend to equate Islam or Muslims with terrorism or Islamist extremism, nor does it mean to suggest that the whole of the British or French Muslim community is economically disadvantaged. Obviously, only a tiny percentage of Muslims in Britain and France, much less globally, are involved in terrorist violence.

III. ISLAMIST RADICALISM IN BRITAIN AND FRANCE

This section presents explanations for Islamist extremism in Britain and France as well as an examination of the levels of extremism in the two countries. In discussing theories of radicalization for use in the final analysis, the key focus is on explanations

which help explain not only Islamist radicalization but how radicalization can lead to the use of terrorist violence.

**Explanations for Radicalization among European Muslims**

One of the issues identified as critical to radicalization is identity. Specifically, the radicalization process requires the loss of identity and sense of belonging that anchors oneself to the majority or minority community. Olivier Roy writes that young Muslims who join al-Qaida or similar jihadist movement suffer some sort of “rupture” with their family, daily living environment, country of origin, or country of residence before becoming a “born again” Muslim and adopting an extremist interpretation of salafism that justifies jihadist violence against the West.\(^2\) The issue of identity loss among British and French Muslim youth is addressed in greater detail later in a later section. H.A. Hellyer, among others, agrees that identity is the key to integration, saying that socioeconomic improvement is ineffective without also addressing the sense of societal belonging.\(^3\)

Studying the al-Muhajiroun movement in Britain, Quintan Wiktorowicz writes that some type of grievance, or change in exogenous circumstances, is necessary for an individual to abandon mainstream society and join an extremist group. In addition to the most common types of grievance of “deteriorating economic conditions, political repression, and cultural alienation”, he includes personal and “idiosyncratic experiences.”

---


\(^3\) H.A. Hellyer, *Engagement with the Muslim Community and Counter-Terrorism: British Lessons for the West*, Analysis Paper No. 11, Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings, December 2007, 3.
As Muslims grow distant from their community due to grievances, they become develop “cognitive openings,” or willingness to accept new identities, communities, and ideologies that can be exploited by groups with extremist views.\(^4\) Hellyer’s analysis backs up that of Wiktorowicz, using the term “provocation” rather than grievance. This provocation could be real and personally experienced—or perceived in a communal sense, such as outrage over treatment of Muslims in Palestine and Chechnya.\(^5\)

Multiple authors agree that Islamist radicalization from extremist viewpoints to the use of violence requires the combination of both religious and political factors. Within this politico-religious typology, Samir Amghar identifies three different types of jihadist movements in France but only one with endogenous characteristics that falls under the scope of this study. The brand of politico-religious radicalism that leads to domestic jihad is associated with an ideology espoused by al-Qaida. To mobilize followers, it draws upon anti-Western, anti-imperialist rhetoric which portrays action as part of an international struggle to defend the greater Islamic community.\(^6\) Political radicalization is in the form of viewing U.S. and Western foreign policies as oppressing Muslims worldwide. Amel Boubekeur writes that when religious and political radicalization of European Muslims combine, Islamist violence may follow. Like

---


\(^5\) Hellyer 11.

Amghar, Boubekeur writes that violent Islamists attempt use jihad as a political tool to influence policy.\textsuperscript{7}

This stands in contrast to the “Islamo-nationalist radicalism” that France faced in the 1990s that sought to establish Islamic states in immigrants’ countries of origin and targeted France specifically as a formerly colonial power. This sort of movement has external origins and is typified by attacks by the Algerian organization Groupe Islamique Armée (GIA) that targeted France because of its support of the secular Algerian state.\textsuperscript{8}

Olivier Roy lends support to the theory of the politico-religious typology, explaining that the attractiveness of al-Qaida and violent jihad to European Muslims is in the form of a powerful narrative with religious and political connotations. This narrative is composed of four key ideas: the collective suffering of the ummah, the ability of the individual to avenge worldwide crimes against Muslims, jihad as a compulsory duty, and the importance of attacking the West. Roy specifically avoids the word ideology, noting that the al-Qaida narrative provides an easily understood and identifiable means for young Muslims to interpret world events.\textsuperscript{9}

There is, however, disagreement over the idea of ideology. Maha Azzam writes that “what drives the radicalized minority is ideology”—essentially the opposite of what Roy posits. Azzam presents jihad as a unifying and mobilizing ideology, a sort of

---


\textsuperscript{8} Amghar 39.

alternative worldview that provides meaning to the violent Islamist cause and increases its appeal.¹⁰

Before political radicalization can occur, some authors argue that loss of a political voice must first occur. Anouar Boukhars argues that loss of faith in mainstream Islamic political leaders and political underrepresentation must first occur. Likewise, Akil Awan says that a feeling political “impotence” in the conventional political arena is a precondition of radicalization.

A study by Brendan O’Duffy has tested radicalization theories against a sample of British jihadists since 2001 who had been killed or captured. An important question raised by his study is whether radicalization is primarily a top-down (with a network of terrorist leaders actively recruiting among Muslim communities) or bottom-up (involving aggrieved Muslims forming cells on their own) process.¹¹ Peter Nesser offers one possible answer, saying that organization and recruitment is primarily bottom-up. Disenfranchised young Muslims tend to seek out information on jihad on their own, reaching out to radical mosques and militants who fought or trained in Afghanistan.¹² Olivier Roy’s analysis of the radicalization process notes a similar path, writing that it is

---

“an individual quest” and never because of community, family, or neighborhood pressure.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{Islamist Presence in Britain and France}

The string of Islamist terrorist attacks in Britain in recent years is certainly the most visible sign of an active extremist presence. The cells involved in the July 7, 2005, London transport bombings and July 21, 2005, attempted attack in London drew concerted attention to the issue of homegrown terrorism. Numerous other terrorist plots by British citizens have been attempted or disrupted in the following years, notably what would have been the most spectacular attack, the 2006 plot to blow up transatlantic flights between London and the United States. According to the 2009 report outlining CONTEST, Britain’s comprehensive counterterrorism strategy, British authorities have disrupted over a dozen major terrorist plots since 2001.\textsuperscript{14}

Evidence suggests that the Islamist presence in Britain is growing. In 2006, then MI5 head Eliza Manningham-Buller stated that there were over 1,600 known Islamist extremists on British soil actively involved in planning or facilitating terrorist attacks.\textsuperscript{15}


The following year, that number had grown to 2,000, according to Manningham-Buller’s successor and cited in official government reports.\textsuperscript{16}

If radicalism found in mosques is any indication, the French extremist base has yet to reach a level found in Britain. As of 2008 50 of France’s 1,685 Islamic houses of worship (not all of which are officially mosques) are administered by “radical” elements; however, none have attracted attention for extremist activity like, as a prominent example, London’s Finsbury Park Mosque.\textsuperscript{17} Taken over by radical Egyptian cleric Abu Hamza in the mid-1990s, the once mainstream mosque became “the undisputed headquarters of jihadist activities in Europe.”\textsuperscript{18} Before it was raided by police in 2003 and later placed under control of the independent Muslim Association of Britain, the mosque had provided sanctuary for extremists such as Richard Reid and Zacarias Moussaoui and housed questionable materials such as military manuals, forged documents, and hazardous materials protection suits.\textsuperscript{19}

Even prior to the 2005 London bombings and the spate of attempted attacks in the following years, British leaders worried about the threat of extremism and terrorism arising internally from among their country’s Muslim community. An April 2004 letter from Cabinet Secretary Andrew Turnbull to Home Secretary John Gieve bluntly noted “the problem” of disaffection among young British Muslims and how “Al Qaida and its off-shoots provide a dramatic pole of attraction for the most disaffected.”


\textsuperscript{17} R. John Matthies, “‘Kicking the Anthill’: The Destabilization of the Extremist Base in France,” \textit{Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs} 28, no.1 (2008): 143.


\textsuperscript{19} Vidino 65-66
Gieve’s response included a Foreign Office and Home Office report titled “Young Muslims and Extremism,” which subsequently leaked after being presented at a May Cabinet meeting. The report identified the link among a small number of Muslims between disaffection and extremism possibly leading to violence as well as the need to understand the typical “terrorist career path.” While the report noted that the number of British Muslims involved in terrorist activity was less than one percent of the total community, it outlined policy steps to “isolate extremists,” “provide support to the moderates,” and “help prevent young Muslims from becoming ensnared […] in terrorist or extremist activity.”

The same level of urgent concern about an internal Islamist threat does not seem to occupy the French government. A 2006 *livre blanc*, or official report, on “Domestic Security against Terrorism” mentions the threat of homegrown terror only in passing and rather emphasizes France as a target for international groups. The report primarily identifies the threat from abroad as emanating from the Maghreb as fighters who traveled to Iraq return home, combined with the “transnationalisation” of terror groups in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya operating together to attack France.

Terror plots by French Islamists have not been completely absent. In 1998, authorities in Belgium dismantled a terror cell led by Farid Melouk, a French citizen of Algerian origin. Three years later, French security services disrupted a plot to attack the

---

21 *La France Face au Terrorisme*, La Documentation Française, June 2006, 35-36.
22 *La France Face au Terrorisme* 133.
U.S. Embassy in Paris by a cell comprised of six French citizens and residents.\textsuperscript{23} Since then, however, homegrown plots against French targets, particularly those on the scale of certain disrupted or successful attacks in Britain, are absent from observation. A listing of the “Principal Threats against France since 1998” in the 2006 \textit{livre blanc} mentions no attempted attacks by French Muslims other than the above two.\textsuperscript{24}

Instead, the primary Islamist threat to France continues to come from abroad, namely from the Algerian terrorist group Groupe Salafiste pour le Prédication et le Combat (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, GSPC). According to France’s chief counterterrorism magistrate, Jean-Louis Bruguière, the 2006 alliance between the GSPC and al-Qaida that saw the Algerian group rebrand itself as Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) made France even more of a target for the Algerian-based terror network.\textsuperscript{25} France is a primary target of AQIM, and its precursory organizations have a long history of conducting attacks in France, including a series of deadly bombings in the Paris Metro in 1995 by the GIA.

France’s most recent experience with supposedly Islamist violence, the fall 2005 suburban riots, was, in fact, not religious in nature. The civil unrest was motivated by social justice, not religiously-based hatred. Rioters did not contest the French state and French integration policy; rather, they were angry over its unequal application.\textsuperscript{26} Although the violence itself was directed primarily at the police and public buildings, the


\textsuperscript{24} \textit{La France Face au Terrorisme} 133-134.


\textsuperscript{26} Boubekeur 92.
deeper meaning of the riots should be seen as an expression of frustration over
discrimination and social and economic inequality. Tellingly, appeals by radical as well
as moderate religious leaders and organizations to stop the unrest had no widespread
effect on the rioters.27

IV. BACKGROUND ON BRITISH AND FRENCH MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

According to the 2001 U.K. census, which included for the first time ever in
Britain a question asking the respondent’s religion, the British Muslim community
numbers 1.6 million, or around 2.8 percent of the total population.28 In France, precise
counting of the Muslim population is problematic because French law prohibits the
collection of data on ethnic and religious affiliation. The last national census to do so was
conducted in 1872. Nonetheless, it is estimated that France’s Muslim population is
somewhere between 3.5 and 5 million—up to 7.9 percent of France’s total population of
64.6 million.29 British and French Muslim communities have had a significant impact on
their respective countries’ population growth. Nearly half of France’s population growth
of 10 million from 1960 to 2000 is accounted for by its Muslim population, which grew
from 500,000 to 5 million over the same period.30

27 Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaisse, “Understanding Urban Riots in France,” Brookings Institution,
28 Felice Dassetto, Silvio Ferrari, and Brigitte Maréchal, Islam in the European Union: What’s at Stake in
29 European Union Monitoring and Advocacy Program, Muslims in the EU - Cities Report: France, 2007,
6. Most related literature cites the 5 million figure.
30 Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaisse, Integrating Islam: Political and Religious Challenges in
Demographic and Socioeconomic Data

Of the 1.6 million British Muslims, over half are British-born and, by default, British citizens. Ethnically, two-thirds of all British Muslims are of South Asian origin. The predominant ethnicity, accounting for half of all British Muslims, is Pakistani—with evidence suggesting that a great majority, two-thirds by one estimate, of Pakistani-British are from the Pakistani-administered region of Kashmir. 31

In France, somewhere between one-third to one-half of the Muslim population are French citizens. 32 The overwhelming majority, about 75 percent, are of North African origin, with Algerians forming the largest contingent, followed by Moroccans and Tunisians. There is also a significant Turkish Muslim community in France, numbering approximately 500,000. It should be noted that only about half of France’s Muslims are Arab, with the other half a diverse mix of Berbers from North Africa, Turks, and Muslims from sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. 33

As for socioeconomic data, there are not significant differences in the situations of the British and French Muslim communities as a whole. However, it is included because they help to confirm the notion that economic deprivation alone is an indicator of radicalization.

Across the board, data present Muslim communities that are economically depressed with little signs of near-term improvement. As of 2004, the level of unemployment among British Muslim men was a staggering 40 percent and has likely not

33 Laurence and Vaisse, Integrating Islam, 21.
significantly improved since then, given a global economic crisis. Economic inactivity impacts more than just the worker: Muslim children at especially at risk of poverty, with over one-third living in a household with no employed adults.\textsuperscript{34} British Muslims are also significantly less likely to be found in higher-paying managerial and professional occupations.\textsuperscript{35}

French Muslims are similarly disadvantaged. Among French citizens with Algerian and Moroccan origins, the unemployment rate is 30 percent, compared to a national rate which typically ranges from eight to ten percent.\textsuperscript{36} French youths with North African fathers face the extreme difficulties entering the labor market: five years out of schooling, half have not found stable employment, compared to a third of for French young people with a father born in France.\textsuperscript{37} Like in Britain, French Muslims are also underrepresented in executive positions—and 40 percent of working Muslims are employed as factory workers, double the rate for the overall workforce.\textsuperscript{38}

Dire employment figures have an effect on educational achievement, where doubts about job prospects and equal access to them contribute to underachievement in school.\textsuperscript{39} Just four percent of children of immigrants go to university, compared to 25


\textsuperscript{38} European Union Monitoring and Advocacy Program (EUMAP), \textit{France}, 39.

\textsuperscript{39} Laurence and Vaisse, \textit{Integrating Islam}, 38.
percent for students with longer familial ties to France.\textsuperscript{40} In Britain, there is also a gap between Muslim and non-Muslim students. For post-secondary education, university acceptance rates for Muslims students are 40 percent, compared to 54 percent for whites, as of 2005.\textsuperscript{41}

Muslim schools in France have not been able to provide a solution to poor education prospects for French Muslims nor provide an alternative to substandard public schools. As of 2008, there are just three Muslims schools operating in mainland France with over 100 students between them, and none are under contract with the state which would make them eligible for public subsidies.\textsuperscript{42} This is not an indication of a stringent application of secularism in education policy: in comparison, there were over 30,000 students enrolled in 256 private Jewish schools as of 2006.\textsuperscript{43} Britain has 60 private, independent Islamic schools, four of which receive state funding.\textsuperscript{44}

\section*{History and Formation of Muslim Communities}

For both Britain and France, the establishment of contemporary Muslim communities was primarily a result of post-World War II economic recovery and development. As Western European countries enjoyed great economic growth, particularly during the 1960s, governments opened their borders to immigrants from

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{40} Dominique Maillard, “The Muslims in France and the French Model of Integration,” \textit{Mediterranean Quarterly} 16, no. 1 (2005): 73.
\item \textsuperscript{42} Dasetto \textit{et al} 112.
\item \textsuperscript{44} Dasetto \textit{et al} 174.
\end{itemize}
North Africa and South Asia to fill the demand for laborers, overwhelmingly in low-paying, industrial positions.\textsuperscript{45}

In Britain, this involved the migration and settlement of Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and Indians to industrial cities in the Southeast, Midlands, and North regions of the country, notably Bradford and Birmingham. For the most part, these immigrants were unskilled workers with little to no education.\textsuperscript{46} Most had rural backgrounds and likely would have felt out of place in any major city.\textsuperscript{47} Ironically, it was a British policy intended to aid white immigrants that helped allow Pakistanis and Bangladeshis to arrive in such great numbers. The 1948 British Nationality Act, which extended the rights and privileges associated with British citizenship to people born in Commonwealth countries, was designed with white Commonwealth colonial subjects in mind.\textsuperscript{48}

The 1970s saw demographic and geographic shifts in British Muslim immigration patterns when many Arabs, relatively wealthier overall than the previous wave, began to form communities in the London area. Since that time, the British Muslim community has seen much greater diversity, with immigrants from the Balkans and Africa.\textsuperscript{49}

Concerning the French patterns of Muslim immigration, Algerians formed the bulk of the first wave of labor immigrants in the 1950s, particularly as families fled fighting and oppression related to the Algerian War. During the subsequent decade,

\textsuperscript{45} Dasetto \textit{et al}. 1.
\textsuperscript{46} Rehman 844.
\textsuperscript{47} Hellyer 1.
\textsuperscript{48} Joel S. Fetzer and J. Christopher Soper, \textit{Muslims and the State in Britain, France, and Germany} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 27.
\textsuperscript{49} Abbas 288.
Moroccan and Tunisian laborers also joined the surge of immigrants to France. When France suspended labor immigration in 1974, over 900,000 Algerians had come into the country, along with 260,000 Moroccans and 140,000 Tunisians—included among all three nationalities were students and skilled workers as well as blue-collar laborers.\textsuperscript{50}

Resettlement of family members and marriage among the immigrant Muslim communities resulted in the growth and evolution of Britain and France’s Muslim populations even as economic downturn in the 1970s caused European countries to end their liberal worker immigration policies. As migrant workers realized that returning to their home countries was not possible and permanently settled in Britain and France, they brought over family members from abroad. The result has been that strictly immigrant diasporas, once assumed to be temporary in nature, have evolved into the multigenerational communities found today. Generational expansion accounts for much of the continued growth in the Muslim communities even after Britain and France ended the free flow of immigrants. In France, an estimated 30 percent of the Muslim community as of 1999 was second generation—this percentage is undoubtedly higher today and continuing to increase.\textsuperscript{51}

Yet, the fact that Britain and France’s Muslim communities are permanent components of society has sometimes been in spite of concerted efforts to stem their establishment and growth. In 1978, the French Immigration Minister attempted to arrange the deportation thousands of foreign-born Muslim workers along with their families—an


\textsuperscript{51} Freedman 8.
initiative which failed due to lack of legislative support. More recently, France in 1993 ended the right of *jus soli* citizenship, though this was reversed in 1998 under a more liberal Socialist government. In Britain, restrictions in the 1970s intended to stop primary immigration by non-whites actually caused an increase in family resettlement by migrant workers already in the country, who feared immigration policy would soon become even stricter.

V. NATIONAL INTEGRATION MODELS

Both Britain and France’s integration models are discussed in the following section. Britain has adopted a multicultural approach that recognizes minority differences and culture. France, in contrast, has long embraced a universal approach to integration which holds that minority cultures should adapt to French society and not the other way around. These approaches are, of course, ideals. In practice, both have their share of associated debates and controversies.

Britain

Multiculturalism, loosely defined, is the official recognition and acceptance of minority communities, whether based on culture, ethnicity, race, or religion. In 1966, in the early stages of its recognition as Britain’s approach to integration, Home Secretary Roy Jenkins defined multiculturalism “not as a flattening process of assimilation but as

---

52 Fetzer and Soper 65.
53 Fetzer and Soper 29.
equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual
tolerance.”

It has been argued that Britain’s Muslim minority is uniquely challenging to the
country’s multicultural model. Despite the multicultural model, the underlying
assumption of British integration policy is that immigrant groups will inevitably
assimilate, which has not happened among Muslims at the extent or pace originally
envisaged by policymakers. Instead, British Muslims have tended to “retreat into their
communities,” relying on community strength to face racial hostility and economic and
societal obstacles.

In Britain, tension over the position of the Muslim community is derived from the
question of how much the country’s multicultural policy should accommodate cultural
differences that may be highly visible or at odds with British values. It has even been
 argued that the atmosphere of Britain’s integration approach actually helps create
increasing conflict between Muslim and British culture. As Muslims become
disappointed by what they perceive as an inadequate level of recognition of Muslim
culture in a British society that prides itself on being so culturally liberal, they find it
necessary to challenge the limits of toleration.

One example cited in support of this idea occurred in 2007 when a female Muslim
Metropolitan Police Service cadet refused to shake hands with the Commissioner at her

graduation ceremony on grounds that shaking the hand of a man who was not a close

54 Qtd. in Shane Brighton, “British Muslims, Multiculturalism and UK Foreign Policy: ‘Integration’ and
‘Cohesion’ In and Beyond the State,” *International Affairs* 83, no. 1 (2007): 5.
55 Abbas 289-290.
56 Christian Joppke, “Limits of Integration Policy: Britain and Her Muslims.” *Journal of Ethnic and
relative was not allowed by her faith. But, of course, controversy flows both ways. In 2006, Member of Parliament and former Member of Parliament Jack Straw wrote that the veil was a “visible statement of separation and of difference” and that “wearing the full veil was bound to make better, positive relations between the [Muslim and non-Muslim] communities more difficult.” Straw’s comments drew both support and condemnation—and demonstrate that, in practice, there may be limits to multiculturalism in Britain.

These controversies have caused debate in academic and political circles with fundamental disagreement about the suitability of multiculturalism for British society in relation to Islam. A report by the UK-based Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity, for example, criticized the multicultural model as a set of “rose-tinted lenses” that stresses political correctness over addressing issues of race and identity among Muslims. As an opposing viewpoint, academics Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood argue that multiculturalism is not in danger of failing but rather being “rebalanced” to reflect the changing political and societal roles of the Muslim community.

France

Republican principles form the basis for France’s integration model, universalism. Ideally, universalism holds that all citizens shall receive equal treatment and protection

57 Joppke 469.
5410472.stm.
59 Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity, Islam in Britain: The British Muslim Community in
60 Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood, “The Multicultural State We’re In: Muslims, ‘Multiculture’ and the
‘Civic Re-balancing’ of British Multiculturalism,” Political Studies 57 (2009).
under law uniquely as French citizens, with no accommodations made based on ethnic or religious background. Because universalism is based on the idea that citizenship is founded on cultural cohesion, assimilation is therefore a requirement of societal integration. Unlike multiculturalism, universalism can be used as a policy to combat communitarianism and sectarianism among immigrant communities.  

Universalism has, at times, publicly and controversially clashed with Islam. While universalism is based on egalitarian ideals, for the French nation this translates into requiring a high degree of cultural uniformity. France’s adhesion to its ideals can be rigid: as a recent example, controversy arose after the fast food hamburger chain Quick began exclusively serving halal meat in eight restaurants located in predominantly Muslim areas in November 2009. Among both French leadership and the general public, there is the strong belief that French culture should not make accommodations for differences in immigrant cultures. Muslims are certainly no exception to this attitude; then Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy stated in 2004, “Whether I like it or not, Islam is the second religion of France. So you’ve got to integrate it by making it more French.”

Like multiculturalism, the growth of the Muslim community has also uniquely challenged the limits of French universalism, especially because one of the principles on which the French Republic and national identity is firmly rooted is secularism, or laïcité. France’s nature as a secular republic helps explain why, for example, the issue of wearing a headscarf at school could spark the type of heated debate at the national level that

---

61 Freedman 20.
62 Franz 100.
occurred in 1989 and 2004. Wearing of the Muslim headscarf or face veil in Britain could be seen as a sign of the country’s multiculturalist toleration. Under France’s integration model, however, it is viewed more as unwillingness on the part of the wearer to fully accept French values—and, equally importantly, as a challenge to the country’s secularism. Though perhaps overly applied against Islamic traditions, the French adhesion to laïcité is so strong that it is said, only half-jokingly, to have become a religion unto itself.

VI. COMPARING INTEGRATION OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

In this section, the integration of British and French Muslim communities is compared through four variables: housing and living environments, identity, majority attitudes toward Muslims, and political involvement and representation.

Housing and Living Environments

While Muslims live across all of Britain, they are heavily concentrated in just four major urban areas. According to census data, 52 percent of all British Muslims live in the Greater London area. Another 15 percent are found in West Midlands, 11 percent in West Yorkshire, and 10 percent in Greater Manchester. Correspondingly, the Muslim communities in these areas account for large percentages of the overall population in
certain neighborhoods. The London borough of Tower Hamlets, has the highest percentage of Muslims out of the total neighborhood population, at 36 percent.  

Muslim areas in Britain are ethnically homogenous, even within the Muslim community. The ethnic breakdown of the Greater London Muslim population offers an illustrative example of the ethnic enclaves that have formed. In Inner London, home to a quarter of all British Muslims, Bangladeshis are the predominant Muslim ethnic group. Notably, 40 percent of British Muslims with Bangladeshi origins live in a single London borough, the aforementioned Tower Hamlets.

This contrasts with Outer London, where Pakistanis are the primary ethnic group—and Bangladeshis account for just eight percent of the Muslim community. The majority of London’s 140,000 strong Pakistani Muslim community is concentrated in three boroughs: Newham, Redbridge, and Waldham Forest. Beyond London, Pakistani Muslims dominate the ethnic breakdown of the three other predominantly Muslim areas of West Yorkshire (75 percent), West Midlands (70 percent) and Greater Manchester (60 percent). The issue of enclaves has not escaped the notice of Britain’s leaders: in 2005, Trevor Phillips, then head of the Commission for Racial Equality, controversially remarked that the country was “sleepwalking towards segregation.”

France’s Muslims are concentrated in the suburbs of the country’s major urban areas that have large industrial bases and an abundance of cheap housing. According to a

---

65 EUMAP, United Kingdom, 15.
66 Rehman 846.
67 EUMAP, United Kingdom, 15-16.
Ministry of the Interior report, in the Ile-de-France region comprising the Paris metropolitan area, Muslims make up 35 percent of the total population. This is followed by 20 percent in Provence-Alpes-Côte-d’Azur region, where Muslims are primarily concentrated around the city of Marseille. Elsewhere, Muslims make up 15 percent of the Rhône-Alpes region, which includes the cities of Lyon and Saint-Etienne—and 10 percent in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region, centered around the Lille urban area.69

Predominantly Muslim neighborhoods are typically on the outskirts, or banlieue, of these cities, often with poor public transportation access to the city center. These areas also frequently defined by high percentages of low-rent public housing, or habitations à loyer modéré (HLM): large apartment blocks with potentially hundreds of dwellings in low-income suburban neighborhoods. While some of these apartment complexes, a collection of which is known as a cité, were constructed specifically to house immigrant workers,70 others were designed as cheap housing for French baby boomers who moved on and were replaced by immigrants.71 While at the time of their construction in the 1960s and 1970s, HLMs were actually considered the height of modern architectural achievement in France, they have since become known for economic and social hardship.

Unlike in Britain, Muslims in France tend not to be self-segregated in ethnic enclaves. Certainly, there are neighborhoods with high concentrations of Muslims. But the creation of housing projects has actually helped counter the enclave phenomenon, as residents who apply to live in an HLM building are placed by a housing office. In the

69 EUMAP, France, 14.
70 Laurence and Vaisse 35-36
71 Giry 94-95.
HLMs that make up the suburban *cités*, there is a mix of blacks, North Africans, non-French Europeans, and white French citizens living in the same structure—although in social circles, ethnic lines may be observed.\(^72\) Half of all immigrants from North Africa live in public housing projects, alongside 37 percent of all other African immigrants and 36 percent of Turkish immigrants.\(^73\) Additionally, nearly one-fifth of French citizens, Muslim or not, live in an HLM.

As well as HLM housing policies, the ethnic makeup of France’s Muslim population also means it does not have the same level of internal cleavages along ethnic lines as Britain. While North African Muslim immigrants to France include a variety of races in addition to Arabs, including Berbers and Kabyles, they have commonalities of using Arabic in religious life, North African traditions, and a shared school of Sunni Islam.\(^74\) French Muslims with Maghreb origins also have high levels of interracial “mixing”: in certain predominantly North African neighborhoods, the rates of mixed marriages and divorces are both over 30 percent.\(^75\)

In both Britain and France, however, areas with large Muslim populations are home some of the worst economic and living conditions, with Muslims disproportionately represented in poor neighborhoods. The overall poor socioeconomic status of the Muslim community as a whole is a general indicator of their living conditions. Muslim neighborhoods have also tended to be economically isolated from the larger, surrounding urban areas that of which they are a part. Even as cities overall have

---

\(^{72}\) Bowen 20.  
\(^{73}\) Laurence and Vaisse 36.  
\(^{74}\) Bowen 17.  
\(^{75}\) International Crisis Group 22.
experienced economic growth, prosperity has not extended to Muslim areas, which remain disadvantaged or in decline.\textsuperscript{76} Muslims in Britain also face residential “stagnation”, or the inability to move out of economically depressed areas.\textsuperscript{77}

While the \textit{banlieue} of Paris, Marseille, Lyon, and Lille is not defined by ethnic enclaves, Muslims there are a world apart in terms of living conditions. Life in the \textit{cités}, generally lacking in facilities like sports and youth centers, is marked by profound boredom. Unemployment can reach as high as 30 percent among the youth segment of certain suburban quarters, approximately three times the national rate. For those who do find work, income levels in France’s worst neighborhoods are 75 percent under the national average.\textsuperscript{78}

Various statistics in Britain paint a similarly dire picture of Muslim neighborhoods. One-third of the British Muslim population lives in the bottom ten percent of neighborhoods in terms of deprivation.\textsuperscript{79} Many face uncomfortable living conditions. Half of all Muslim children live in accommodations considered overcrowded.\textsuperscript{80} Additionally, nearly 60 percent of Pakistani and Bangladeshi households lack central heating, compared with 37 percent for white households.\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{76} Abbas 289.  
\textsuperscript{77} Abbas 289.  
\textsuperscript{78} Franz 102.  
\textsuperscript{80} Rehman 847.  
Identity

The notions of disaffection and alienation among certain members of the British and French Muslim communities encompasses not only socioeconomic disadvantage but also the equally importantly though less definable concept of identity. In relation to integration, identity is not necessarily a question of social cohesion but of psychological distance from a given community.82 Young second- and third-generation Muslims may encounter the issue of double alienation from both the non-Muslim majority community and the Muslim and ethnic community. While many Muslim youth are able to transcend the two communities and establish a dual identity, for others, the inability to “fit in” to either community means that some Muslim youth lack a sense of both national and minority identity.

Alienation from the non-Muslim community stems from a distancing in both social and political life. Even though second generation Muslims and beyond are British and French citizens by law, the socioeconomic data clearly show that members of the Muslim community generally do not benefit from the same opportunities and level of prosperity as the majority population. The French model of universalism does create a highly positive French identity to which immigrants are supposed to aspire. The issue for many of France’s Muslims, however, is that they feel this identity is unattainable.

Muslims may face active discrimination regarding, for example, employment. In France, Muslim job seekers may be unlikely to be even considered, much less hired, based on their ethnicity: in a 2004 study that handed out identical resumes with differing

82 Hellyer 3.
names to a variety of employers, “companies responded to resumes with Arabic-sounding names five times less often than resumes without such names.”

Simultaneously, second generation Muslims may lack a strong connection with their parents’ ethnic and religious heritage, which may be viewed as old world and restrictively traditionalist. Outside the home, Muslim youth often find a lack of positive role models in their community and feel little connection with religious from their parents’ home countries. Of the 1,200 clerics in France, three-quarters are not from France—and one-third cannot speak French.

Driven by this sense of being lost between two identities, some young Muslims turn to radical interpretations of Islam in search of an alternative identity. Turning to Islam is can be seen as a sort of “cultural entrenchment”, constructing an identity outside of both the unattainable (and now rejected) Western identity and the undesired ethnic identity. While some alienated young Muslims will treat their Muslim background as a “protest” identity, carving out a “youth culture” that mixes Western consumerism with elements of their ethnic heritage, others will undergo “Re-Islamisation.”

Though this phenomenon of double alienation is found in both the British and French Muslim communities, there are important differences between the two regarding the question of identity. Survey data suggest wide divergence between British and French Muslims over the way they see themselves in a national versus religious sense. Just seven

---

84 Hellyer 2.
85 Greif.
87 Roy, Globalized Islam, 144-145.
percent of British Muslims polled in the 2006 Pew Global Attitudes Survey thought of themselves first as British, compared with 81 percent as Muslim. In contrast, 42 percent of French Muslims chose French as their first identity, only four percent fewer than those who responded they thought of themselves first as Muslim. Indeed, this was by far the highest by nearly 30 percentage points among the four European Muslim populations queried.88

An important distinction must also be made about the nature of counterculture Islam in France. French Muslim youths who embrace Islam as a sort of third identity do so in a cultural, rather than religious, sense. Beliefs do not necessarily become extreme or fundamentalist, nor are observances of customs strict.89 Religious practices have meaning as part of an identity of resistance to majority culture rather than as a demonstration of devotion. Studies by the French National Institute for Demographic Studies on attitudes toward religion have found that the level of disaffection towards religion among French youth is similar for those with foreign-born Algerian parents as with native French parents.90 A young former imam from Marseille summarized this idea by stating that “youths are not looking for an Islam to provide authority, an Islam to provide spirituality, but a normative Islam to reorganize their disorganized lives.”91

In contrast, the Islamic identity turned to by alienated British Muslims is in the form of extremist movements, such as the al-Muhajiroun movement. While these movements do not necessarily espouse violence, they are based on anti-establishment

89 Franz 100.
90 Freedman 8-9.
91 International Crisis Group 12.
views that are attractive to Muslim youth who have encountered social and psychological barriers to integration.  

**Majority Attitudes**

Even though Muslim communities in Britain and France have existed for decades, their growth has made many among the non-Muslim majorities uneasy. Fears of an assertive Muslim population and its possible, if unlikely, effect on British or French values and society manifests itself, for example, in movements to ban Islamic face veils in public places. Quantifiable evidence of this unease, so-called “Islamophobia,” can be seen in surveys of the British and French publics. Asked in a Pew Global Attitudes survey about a growing sense of Islamic identity, 59 percent of British respondents and 87 percent of French respondents believed it was a “bad thing.” Similarly, 77 percent of British and 76 percent of French polled said they were either “very concerned” or “somewhat concerned” about the “rise of Islamic extremism” in their country.  

Yet, on the whole, French citizens appear to be more at ease with its Muslim community than the British. On the issue of national identity among Muslims, in one survey 80 percent of French respondents believed it was “possible to be both a Muslim and a Frenchman,” compared to just under 60 percent for the corresponding question posed to British respondents. The same survey also asked the question of whether “the presence of Muslims in your country pose a threat to national security.” Twenty percent

---

92 Hellyer 3
93 Pew Research Center 24.
of French citizens polled responded yes, approximately half the number of Britons who responded similarly.\textsuperscript{94}

However, movements in France against Muslim traditions have generally gained more traction than in Britain. A 2004 law bans the wearing of religious symbols in public schools. Though it does not specifically single out Muslim headscarves, the law was a thinly veiled move against their presence in the classroom, given that the debate surrounding the legislation almost exclusively focused on the Muslim custom. More recently, France has taken steps to ban women from wearing a full face veil—to include the niqab and burqa—in public spaces, such as hospitals, universities, and public transport. Following recommendation by a parliamentary commission, the French Parliament is currently considering a resolution authorizing a partial ban on veiling one’s face, which would not make the practice strictly illegal in public spaces but give officials the legal right to ask women to remove their veil.

While controversy in Britain over the Muslim headcoverings does arise, the country generally has liberal policies on the subject, especially in relation to France. The headscarf is widely accepted by both public and private employers. Women police and parking officers, for example, may request to be issued uniforms integrating the headscarf.\textsuperscript{95} And since 2000, Muslim women have had the right to wear a headscarf in official passport photographs.\textsuperscript{96}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{96} Dasetto \textit{et al} 175.
\end{flushright}
Political Involvement and Representation

There are around 1.2 million Muslim voters in France. Religious preference does not seem to have much of an impact on voting patterns, with French Muslims behaving similar to fellow French voters along socioeconomic lines. Their four political issues of top priority—unemployment, social inequality, education, and cost of living—are the same as among the general French public. According to Olivier Roy, there is simply no concept of a “Muslim vote” in reality because French Muslims are too diverse and too “Gallic” to be treated as a voting bloc.97

In fact, Islam has become largely depoliticized for France’s Muslims. The struggle against discrimination and inequality is seen as a secular process, and what political organization that does occur happens outside the religious sphere.98 The idea of a Muslim political party or lobbying organization is largely opposed even among Muslim elites.99 But while Islam is separated from politics, this should not be taken to mean that French Muslims are likewise depoliticized. Rather, it means that political action by Muslims regarding social equality, whether riotous or peaceful, does not have a religious motivation.100

However, Muslims are extremely underrepresented in the French political arena. On the national level, official representation is scant: there are just two members of Muslim faith in the Senate. Additionally, French Muslims lack an independent and national community authority. In theory, the highest Muslim authority in France is the

97 Giry 96-97.
98 International Crisis Group 11-12.
99 Giry 97.
100 Boubekeur 93.
Conseil Français du Culte Musulman (French Council of the Muslim Faith, CFCM), which consists of 25 regional councils and a national council made up of delegates from various Muslim organizations and mosques.\(^{101}\) But the CFCM, born out of a 2002 government initiative led by Nicolas Sarkozy, is marked by internal divisions among the constituent organizations and a lack of coordination among the regional councils.\(^{102}\)

The problem of competing organizational voices is in part exacerbated by the French government, which makes a point of not dealing exclusively with any single group over Muslim issues in order to maintain neutrality.\(^{103}\) Principal Islamic authorities that interact in an official capacity with French political leaders include the Union des Organisations Islamiques de France (Union of the Islamic Organisations of France, UOIF), the Fédération Nationale des Musulmans de France (the National Federation of the Muslims of France, FNMF), and the Grand Mosque of Paris. The UOIF, which has close ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, receives much of its funding from the Gulf States—though its membership is ethnically diverse, including a significant sub-Saharan African Muslim population. The FNMF is dominated by Muslims of Moroccan heritage and considered more moderate than the UOIF. Meanwhile, the Grand Mosque of Paris, established in 1926, is funded by the Algerian government. In addition to its symbolic function as the center of Islam in France, the mosque runs an imam training school, oversees its own network of Algerian-linked mosques, and is the government-sanctioned issuer of halal certificates.\(^{104}\)

---

\(^{101}\) Klausen, *The Islamic Challenge*, 36.

\(^{102}\) EUMAP, *France*, 78.

\(^{103}\) EUMAP, *France*, 65.

Muslims in Britain have some, though greatly disproportionate, national representation. There are seven Members of Parliament in the House of Lords and four in the House of Commons. In recent years, however, Muslim political cohesion has been seen more through grassroots, community-level organization rather than at the ballot box. British Muslims have also been a politically active and leading segment of certain issue-specific movements that have mobilized the British population at large, such as opposition to the U.S. invasion of Iraq.\textsuperscript{105}

The British Muslim community has also established three main organizations with a national presence. The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) is the most successful and—unlike any Muslim organization in France—regarded as the national representative body for Muslims by the media and political leaders, with professional public relations and lobbying offices. In terms of community and charity work, the Islamic Society of Britain, affiliated with the MCB, organizes social activities nationwide such as youth summer camps, study groups, and financial collection for relief projects. Another MCB affiliate, the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), which took over the Finsbury Park Mosque at the request of the British government, is a similarly a political action group but is dominated by Arab members. While the MAB lobbies British politicians, its central rallying issue is not domestic but rather the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{105} EUMAP, \textit{United Kingdom}, 44.
\textsuperscript{106} Klausen, \textit{The Islamic Challenge}, 34-35.
VII. COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY

Though not a variable of integration, comparing the counterterrorism strategies of Britain and France can highlight further differences between the two countries’ Muslim communities. Both Britain and France have long histories of confronting terrorism on the domestic front—Britain against the Irish Republican Army and France against a variety of leftist and national separatist organizations in the 1970s and 80s and, more recently, Islamist groups like the GIA and GSPC.

France is universally regarded as being one of the most effective countries at fighting terrorism, but it has adopted a number of measures considered more intrusive and infringing upon civil liberties that would likely be unwelcome in Britain. The French practice of expulsion of foreign national with links to terrorism and extremism, for example, has been strongly criticized by Human Rights Watch.\footnote{Jytte Klausen, “British Counter-Terrorism After 7/7: Adapting Community Policing to the Fight Against Domestic Terrorism,” \textit{Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies} 35 (2009): 407.} French security services also conduct high levels of domestic surveillance activity, including surveillance of mosques.\footnote{Jeremy Shapiro, interview by Alison Stewart, \textit{Bryant Park Project}, National Public Radio, March 25, 2008, \url{http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89025341}&ft=1&f=1001.}

French anti-terrorism law is notable for having established a concept not found in any other European country, that of “criminal association in relation to a terrorist venture,” or, in other words, “the belief that anything that happens before a terrorist act is already terrorism.”\footnote{Alexis Debat, “Terror and the Fifth Republic,” \textit{National Interest} no. 82 (2005/2006): 60.} By legally stating that the conspiracy to commit terrorism is itself terrorism, thereby allowing investigations to be launched before a terrorist act, the law...
effectively linked suppression with prevention. In contrast, non-terrorism French law typically requires an infraction to have occurred prior to opening a judicial inquiry.\footnote{Jeremy Shapiro and Bénédicte Suzan, “The French Experience of Counter-terrorism,” \textit{Survival} 45, no. 1 (2003): 84.}

Both Britain and France have a prevention-oriented counterterrorism strategy, but one divergence—and in direct relation to the Muslim community—is the area of community policing. The French attitude towards counterterrorism essentially rejects the Muslim community as a partner and instead relies upon preventive arrests and extradition of terror suspects.\footnote{Klausen, “British Counter-Terrorism After 7/7,” 407.} Community policing in France, known as \textit{police de proximité}, was abandoned in 2002 and today is nonexistent. The \textit{cité} subculture, in which respect is gained by and accorded to only those who live there, is hostile to any outsider, especially the police. The lack of a neighborhood policing policy serves to exacerbate tensions between the police and disaffected \textit{banlieue} youths, regardless of religious affiliation, whose interaction with security services involves only “the ‘repressive’ part of their job—to impose order, investigate a crime, or perform an arrest.”\footnote{Laurence and Vaisse, “Understanding Urban Riots in France.”}

Britain embraces an opposite approach with community policing forming part of its counterterrorism strategy both “as part of a larger campaign to win ‘the hearts and minds’ of British Muslims” and to actively engage the Muslim community as a partner in combating and preventing extremism. The Muslim community is approached as a “stakeholder” in the counterterrorism fight that has an especially strong interest in preventing Islamist terrorism.\footnote{Klausen, “British Counter-Terrorism after 7/7,” 407-408.}
The British government has established specialized internal and external security organizations in its attempt to better engage the Muslim community. The Metropolitan Police Service, responsible for counterterrorism matters nationwide, has created Muslim Contact Units made up of senior Muslim and non-Muslim police officers with a two-fold mission of acting as a dedicated liaison to Muslim communities on hate crimes and as an intelligence unit to collect information on extremist activity.\textsuperscript{114} Additionally, the Muslim Safety Forum, which brings together Muslim community representatives and senior law enforcement officials, was established to facilitate communication between Muslim communities and the security services.\textsuperscript{115}

\textbf{VIII. Analysis and Implications}

The fact that certain British citizens involved in terrorist plots have been wealthy or driven sports cars has been cited by commentators as integration’s irrelevance in relation to extremism. However, just as socioeconomic status and material wealth are not accurate indicators of radicalization, nor are they the sole measures of integration. Returning to the original question of whether differences in Muslim integration between Britain and France offer reasons for differences in extremism, elements from each of the variables examined can be used to form an explanation.


\textsuperscript{115} Hellyer 20.
Identity and the sense of belonging to a larger community have been identified as the key to integration. Without addressing psychological distancing involved with identity loss, socioeconomic gains are irrelevant in terms of preventing radicalization. Divergences between Britain and France in identity formation are especially important to this analysis. While both British and French Muslims face a similar double alienation phenomenon, the Islam embraced by a small number of disenfranchised in the latter community fundamentally serves a cultural, not religious, role. Based on this study of identity, it seems as though British Muslims are more likely to undergo the radicalization process of being “born again” as described by Olivier Roy.

Diversity of Muslim neighborhoods is also an important consideration. The fact that British Muslims tend to live in religiously and ethnically homogenous neighborhoods serves to compound their identity distancing. The communities dominated by France’s Muslims, even a disadvantaged cite, are not ethnic enclaves and include French citizens of other races, including whites.

As discussed previously, there is a general consensus on violent radicalization requiring both religious and political components. Islam in France, however, has become largely depoliticized. For French Muslims, religion and politics are two completely separate spheres. Grievances, even violence, over political and social justice issues are not religiously motivated. Even though French Muslims are as a whole economically disadvantaged, they still believe in universalism and expect the state to provide social equality. Rather than outright rejection of the French state and integration model, they

---

116 Hellyer 3.
call for equal application. The idea that one factor leading to violent radicalization is the loss of political voice, yet it is France which does not have an authoritative and representative Muslim political organization, may also appear paradoxical. This is countered, however, by the depoliticization of Islam: French Muslims do not expect, or want, a religious element to political debate.

Counterterrorism strategy may add to the robustness of the analysis, but on its own as a possible alternative strategy it ultimately lacks in explanatory power. If one considers the community policing stances adopted by Britain and France, it the country with less community involvement that has not suffered a recent wave of terrorist plots. One could theorize that the community element of Britain’s CT policy actually shows the magnitude of the threat it faces. A country like Britain facing a high level of extremism and a series of terrorist attacks tends to concentrate on violent radicalization, making it open to cooperation with nonviolent Islamist groups. This was the case with the government’s partnership with the MAB over the Finsbury Park Mosque. Stated otherwise, “the higher the terrorist threat, the lower the bar of partner acceptability is set.”

Another explanation relates to the ethnic makeup of Britain and France’s communities and not strictly their integration. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has stated that three-fourths of the most serious terrorist plots discovered by security services have links to al-Qaida elements in Pakistan. It is possible British Islamists are more

---

117 Vidino 65.
active because of a Pakistani connection. Familiarity with Pakistani culture and possible native language skills would aid the ability of British extremists to travel there for training. While French terrorism plots equally have frequent links to Algeria in particular, terrorist organizations in the Maghreb certainly do not enjoy the same sort of sanctuary as in Pakistan. This explanation, however, does not speak to the radicalization process and how it relates to the Muslim communities. Additionally, MI5 Director General Jonathan Evans stated in 2007 that while terrorist attacks in Britain during the previous five years mostly had links to al-Qaida in Pakistan, the international connections to threats against Britain have expanded to countries such as Iraq, Somalia, and Algeria.\footnote{Guardian, “MI5 Chief’s Warning - Full Text,” November 5, 2007, http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2007/nov/05/terrorism.world.}

**IX. CONCLUSION**

Comparison of the Muslim communities’ experiences with integration reveals important differences in the areas of identity, living situations, and politicization. The contrast between Muslim integration in Britain and France has been characterized by French political scientist and immigration expert Patrick Weil, who said, “In France we are very good at cultural integration. We are very bad at fighting discrimination, especially in high-level jobs. In the [United Kingdom] it is the opposite.”\footnote{Dombey and Kuper.}

While this paper obviously does not completely explain away an Islamist presence in France, analysis of the differences in integration of British and French Muslims offers explanations for why it is less prevalent. Equally importantly,
examination of integration should not be so hastily dismissed in relation to Islamist extremism if it is adequately considered in a broad sense to include issues like identity and not solely easily noticeable socioeconomic indicators.
APPENDIX 1: MAP OF FRANCE

Courtesy of University of Texas Libraries
APPENDIX 2: MAP OF BRITAIN

Courtesy of University of Texas Libraries
APPENDIX 3: MAP OF LONDON WITH GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF SELECTED POPULATIONS

Key

Hammersmith & Fulham

Hillingdon

Kensington & Chelsea

Westminster

Muslim

25% - 61.9%

10% - 20%

5% - 10%

2.5% - 5%

Bangladeshi

19% - 99.2%

9% - 19%

1% - 5%

0% - 1%

Pakistani

4% - 18%

2% - 4%

1% - 2%

0% - 1%

Courtesy of The Guardian, 2005
BIBLIOGRAPHY


