

# **Muslim identities and the school system in France and Britain: The impact of the political and institutional configurations on Islam-related education policies<sup>1</sup>**

*Paper presented for the ECPR General Conference  
Pisa, September 2007*

## Abstract

*This paper examines how Muslim pupils have been integrated within the school system in France and in Britain, in relation to the political and institutional configuration of each of these countries. In both countries, there have been contentious debates on such a topic, including discussions about separate Muslim schools, the display of religious symbols in public schools or religious education. Britain and France are often described in the social sciences literature through the distinction between a republican universalist pattern and a multicultural one. When turning attention to a particular policy field, of great importance for both minorities' integration and the definition of a common citizenship and national identity, the picture that is drawn is somewhat more complex and ambivalent. The pre-existing institutional and political arrangements have greatly shaped the divergent ways Muslim pupils have been accommodated within the school system in France and in Britain. To some extent, they have also encouraged different Muslims' claims-making and Muslim families' views in the two countries. However, their important impact can not be considered only through the multicultural-universalist opposition and other important political and institutional factors have played a role. Some common features can also be identified, whose impact takes different forms in the two countries but which have greatly contributed to the contentiousness characterizing the debates and policies in both countries.*

## **Introduction**

Muslims' integration into society has been a high profile issue in public debates and political agenda over the last two decades in different European countries. Discussions reached an acute point following the 9/11 events and the terrorist attacks in Madrid and London. The

---

<sup>1</sup>The idea of this paper and some first data originated from the project "Multicultural Democracy and Immigrants' Social Capital in Europe: Participation, Organisational Networks, and Public Policies at the Local Level (LOCALMULTIDEM)". This project is funded by the European Commission under the 6th Framework Programme's Priority 7 "Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge-Based Society" as a STREP instrument (contract no. CIT5-CT-2005-028802). The LOCALMULTIDEM consortium is coordinated by the University of Murcia (Dr. Laura Morales), and is formed, additionally, by the University of Geneva (Dr. Marco Giugni), the University of Trento (Dr. Mario Diani), the University of Bristol (Dr. Paul Statham), the CEVIPOF-Sciences Po Paris (Dr. Manlio Cinalli), and the MTAKI (Dr. Endre Sik).

durable settlement of large Muslim communities in some European countries has reintroduced the question of the place of religion in the public sphere in societies that think themselves as deeply secular. Yet, the way European states have accommodated Muslim's identities, practices and claims is not similar from one country to another.

This paper focuses on the British and French cases and a specific policy field, namely education. The integration of Muslim pupils within the school system has brought controversial disputes in France and in Britain, causing thorny discussions on such issues as the display of Islamic religious symbols, the existence and definition of religious education and the development of separate Muslim schools. Education is the main public instrument of cultural and civic socialization and as such is a major public institution both for the inclusion of ethnic minorities into society and for the shaping of a civic and national identity. The aim is here to analyse Muslim-related education policies developed by these two countries over the last decades and to identify the keys factors that have impacted on the accommodation of Muslim pupils within the school system.

Ethnic relations and ethnic minorities' accommodation have been increasingly analysed through approaches in terms of "political opportunities", which aim at assessing how the latter are impacted by a wide range of institutional and political factors (conceptions of citizenship, laws, institutional arrangements, actors' political strategies, etc.). Comparing France and Britain seems particularly relevant in order to understand how the institutional and political configuration shapes Muslim groups' experience in the host country. Both countries are home to a large Muslim community, as the result of their colonial past and the massive immigration occurring in the 1960s and 1970s. In the social sciences literature, they are often described in terms of a contrast between a French republican and universalist pattern and a British multicultural model. When turning attention to a particular policy sector, very crucial to the construction of collective identities, the education field, the picture that is drawn is somewhat more complex and ambivalent. Keys elements other than this dual universalism-multiculturalism opposition have also an impact, a few of them being common in the two countries. In addition, policy lines, far from being stable, have varied throughout time.

Using a sector-based approach is particularly useful. There can be significant differences in the way Muslims' and more generally ethnic groups' identities are taken into account from one policy field to another (Alexander *in* Penninx & *al*, 2004) due to the impact of specific factors in each case. The focus on one policy field hence enables to introduce more complexity into the analysis of national patterns.

In a first section, we will briefly give an overview of the Muslim presence in Britain and in France. We will then focus on the Islam-related education policies and issues in both countries, before trying to identify the specific factors that shape the way Muslim pupils are accommodated within each of the school systems.

## **Muslim presence in both countries**

The colonization of Muslim countries and the immigration waves to Europe following the Second World War led to a significant Muslim presence in both France and Britain. These countries underwent massive post-war waves of immigration, first connected to their needs for rebuilding and then to the economic boom they benefited from until the mid-1970s. Immigrants, essentially men, came from countries where they had fewer economic opportunities to fulfil in both countries unskilled jobs in sectors undergoing labour shortages.

In Britain as in France, a large part of immigrants came from former colonies, among which a significant number were predominantly Muslim countries (mainly Pakistan and Bangladesh for Britain and North-African countries for France)

In Britain, very favourable provisions facilitated the immigration of citizens from New Commonwealth countries, who were granted all the rights of British citizenship under the British Nationality Act of 1948. A particularity of Britain is that immigration control begun quite early relatively to other European countries and France in particular, in the early 1960s. The governments of the time were explicitly willing to limit the immigration of “coloured” people (Walford *in* Daun & Walford, 2004; Fetzer & Soper, 2005). Beginning with the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, different measures adopted by both Labour and Conservative governments tightened citizenship rules and considerably restricted the rights of Commonwealth citizens to enter Britain. An intense movement of family reunification followed. Recent developments of British immigration policies have also been marked by a tightening of the regulations related to the entrance and stay of non-European immigrants.

In France, the immigration of people from North-Africa (Algeria in particular) and to a lesser extent of Sub-Saharan Africa intensified from the 1960s, after a first wave dominated by the Portuguese immigration. The shift from a labour, male immigration to a family one occurred later compared to Britain, in the mid-1970s. In relation to the economic recession undergone at this time, French officials decided to put an end to economic immigration in 1974. Since this date, labour immigrants have constituted only a very slight part of immigration in the country.

Muslims represent nowadays a significant religious minority both in Britain and in France. After France and Germany, Britain is the European country with the largest Muslim community. A question about religion was introduced only very recently, in 2001, in official census. According to the 2001 census, 1.6 million Muslims lived in the UK. Most are of South Asian, primarily Pakistani (40%) and Bangladeshi origin (20%) (Meer, 2007). A particular feature of the Muslim community in Britain is its ethnic diversity: while the largest group is of Pakistani origin, other Muslims comes from diverse ethnic backgrounds, in particular Middle Eastern, East African (Kenyan, Egyptian) and East Asian (Malaysian). Hence Muslims in Britain, far from being a homogeneous group, is multiracial, multicultural and multilingual. Settlement patterns of Muslim immigration to Britain have led to a local concentration in such large cities as London, Bradford, Birmingham, Manchester, Leicester. This concentration is of relevance for the educational system that has to provide for a broadly predominant Muslim school population in some areas. This is a factor favouring the local mobilization of Muslim groups desiring to maintain their religious identities and to make them recognize within the school system (Parker-Jenkins, 1995; Walford *in* Daun and Walford, 2004). As in other European countries, the Muslim population is particularly youthful, one third being 0-15 years old and almost 20% being 16-24 years old (Scoot, Pearce, & Goldblatt, 2001). About half a million pupils are Muslim, that is 6% of the school population (Meer, 2007).

France is the European country with the largest Muslim community. As the French laws forbid questions in census about ethnicity or religion, only estimations of the number of Muslims are provided. Figures published go from 3 to 5 millions, this latter one being the one generally advanced by French officials. Based on a joint survey to the 1999 census providing data on the land of birth of parents and on the offspring of 380 000 adults aged 18 years old and over, the work of Michèle Tribalat estimated that the “potential” number of Muslims

would be 3,65 millions, among whom 1,7 million first generation, 1,7 million second generation and 300 000 third generation<sup>2</sup>. 82% of the Muslim population is of North-African origin; the population is diverse in terms of national backgrounds (43% of Algerian, 28% of Moroccan, 11% of Tunisian, 9% of Turkish or Sub-Saharan African, origin).

Muslim first-generation immigrants, as other immigrants, were initially viewed in Britain and in France as temporary workers, who would eventually come back to their country of origin. Their durable settlement in both countries deeply changed the conditions of their relationships with the host country. While in the first post-war decades only the issue of their socio-economic rights had been at stake, from the 1970s onwards, the conditions of their integration within French and British society and the political and cultural dimensions of it began to be discussed. As numbers of Muslim pupils were present in state-funded schools, education has particularly been a relevant area for debates related to Muslims' incorporation into host society.

Nevertheless, the religious aspect of this integration has emerged in public and policy debates only in the late 1980s in the two countries, in relation to two events that were intensively publicized at that time: the Rushdie controversy in Britain and the headscarf affair in France. These two events have a similar consequence in both countries: they highlighted a phenomenon broadly ignored so far in policies and public debates, namely the political relevance of the Muslim identity and the emergence in the public sphere of specifically religious claims from communities of foreign origin. Muslims living in these countries have a particular relation to their religion that permeates much more intensively their daily life practices compared to the whole population. A recent international poll conducted in 2006-2007 among Muslim populations in London, Paris and Berlin (The Gallup organization, 2007) shows that strong majorities of Muslims (68% in Paris, 85% in London) say religion is an important part of their daily lives, which starkly contrasts with the proportions found in the general population (23% of French, 36% of British). Muslims in Britain and France thus have a much stronger religious identity compared to the general population living in both countries. The fact that this religious identity has been activated politically from the 1980s onwards is linked to the gradual establishment of Muslim communities in Britain and in France, whose durable settlement in host countries went with a development of family, community and other social bounds and networks during the 1980s. As a result, Muslim groups became more self-confident and organized to express their own identity and claims.

## **Islam and education policies**

### *Two differentiated school systems*

The structure of the British and French school systems is deeply connected to the political construction of each of these countries, particularly to the church-state relations that have developed over the last two centuries.

In Britain, education of children had long been considered as a family affair. A range of religiously-based schools supported by the churches developed from the seventeenth century

---

<sup>2</sup> The use of the term "potential" is important as such figures are based on the country of origin of the respondents or their parents. The exact number might be lower than that, since, according to a recent survey among a representative sample of French adults of African and Turkish origin, about one third of such a group do not declare being Muslim (among whom 20% declare not having a religion) (Brouard & Tiberj, 2005).

for providing for the poor children. However, in the nineteenth century, as the educational deficiencies of lower classes started to be reported in a context where urbanization and industrialisation required a better educated and disciplined workforce, the state became involved in the provision of schooling. Under the 1870 Education Act, a national system was set up, but was still based on multiple providers. The state's own system of schools remained little developed and church schools continued to operate, a great part of them being supported by public grants. The 1944 Education Act solidified the co-operation between the state and churches in the provision of schooling and clarified the system by defining different categories of schools: aside totally independent private schools and state schools, various types of status for state-maintained church schools were specified, differing according to the degree of public control and the funding expected from the church. The local education authorities (LEAs) were given responsibility for implementing this system. The system was greatly socially selective until the 1970s when it was replaced by comprehensive schools, still provided by the churches together with the LEAs.

This configuration was largely maintained until today, although a reform in 1998 slightly modified the categorization of schools. The state-maintained sector gathers different types of schools. "Community schools" enrol the great majority of British pupils nowadays. They are totally funded and managed by the LEA. Among church schools, two main statuses exist: in "voluntary controlled" schools, the control and in return the financial contribution of the local authority is higher than in "voluntary aided" schools, where school governors comprise more church actors, carry responsibility for admitting pupils and hiring the staff, and share with the LEA the cost of building maintenance and improvement. Voluntary-aided schools are allowed to consider religious views in their employment and admission policies. Although both types of church-schools have to follow the national curriculum, substantial difference exists between both statuses regarding the requirements for religious education and collective worships (see below). The majority of church schools are voluntary-aided. Church schools currently educate a higher proportion of pupils compared to France, namely 29 percent of primary and 15 percent of secondary pupils (Fetzer & Soper, 2005). About 7 000 schools (out of about 25 000) are church-related in England and Wales. Most of them are Christian-related: there are about 4 800 Church of England, 2100 Roman Catholic, 55 Methodist (some in association with the Church of England) and 30 Jewish schools.

The British school system is still decentralized nowadays, although the set up of a national curriculum in 1988 have paved the way to a greater centralization. Local authorities and schools are free to adapt the curriculum as well as other education issues to local educational needs. The value given to parent educational choice, through different regulations, is another factor increasing the internal diversity of the British school system.

In France, the French Revolution was the beginning of a long political struggle between the Catholic Church and the Republicans. French revolutionaries sought to break with the ancient divisions of the *Ancien Regime*, characterized by a hierarchical social and political order (with the division in three groups: the nobility, the clergy and the "Tiers-Etat"). The Revolution aimed at creating a new political community, in which all citizens are equal individuals, detached from their distinctive groups and private interests and exclusively guided by the general will of the nation. Basically, the republican conception of the public sphere defines it as a neutral, individualistic and universalistic sphere. As the Catholic Church defended the monarchy and wished to maintain its influence in the public life, a long opposition between anti-clerical Republicans and Catholic Monarchists took place throughout all the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. Education was one of the main

battlefields of this struggle. The creation of a compulsory public, free and *laïque* (secular) primary school system in the 1880s, under the Third Republic, aimed at implanting republican principles and teaching them to children while excluding religion out of the school space. While the possibility to create private schools was recognized through successive laws in the mid- nineteenth century, the public funding of such schools was forbidden in 1886, as a result of the anticlerical policy implemented by the Third Republic.

It is only after the World War II that the situation changed, in relation to the appeasement of the relations between the state and the Catholic Church. The current arrangement essentially stems from the “Debré law” of 1959 (from the name of the Prime Minister of the period). This law created a unified education public service, gathering essentially public schools, and private schools as well. When signing a contract with the state, private schools receive public funding. There are two statuses for public-funded private schools: the “simple contract” and the “contract of association”. The former leaves more freedom for schools but is less advantageous financially. The quasi-totality of private-owned schools have a contract with the state, in most cases a contract of association. Under such a contract, public authorities pay for teachers’ salaries and schools’ operating expenses. Teachers must respect the specific ethos of their schools and are appointed by the schools, but the schools’ choices are validated by a special public commission. Unlike Britain, schools cannot base their admission policies on religious criteria. The French private school system is less developed in France than in Britain: it enrolls 17 % of the school population (13 % in primary education and 21 % at secondary level). The great majority (80%) of these schools are Catholic ones.

The education system in France is under the central authority of the Ministry of National Education, which defines the curriculum and main educational objectives. Though local authorities have been granted more autonomy from the 1980s, the system remains quite centralized.

### *Islamic religious expressions and practices*

Although no precise data exist on the issue in both countries, most Muslim pupils are educated in state schools. That is why the question of the accommodation of Muslim identities within the state school system has been a matter of concerns in both countries.

One of the main questions has been the wearing of specific Islamic dresses. There are debates among Muslims about what is considered as an acceptable dress, particularly for pubescent girls and women. As a result, the practice is a matter of family and individual interpretation, also depending on the specific Islamic affiliation and national background. Among acceptable female dresses, there are notably the headscarf (*hidjab*), the affixed or face veil (*niqab*, that also covers the face), trousers or long dress. The issue of the headscarf is often used as an illustrative example of the differentiated French and British approach to Muslim religious needs.

In Britain, the issue has been dealt with locally as there is no specific national regulation in this field. A few individual cases have led to court judgments. Many schools have adapted their regulations since the 1970s to take into account specific religious demands. Apart from minor, occasional and localized conflicts, the wearing of the headscarf is usually accepted in most British public-funded schools (Parker-Jenkins, 1996; Molokotos Liederman, 2000; Fetzer & Soper, 2005). Solutions often implemented have consisted of putting the

headscarves in line with the colours of school uniforms, as it was the case in a Manchester's school, for example, where the initial incident, caused by the refusal to admit in the classroom girls wearing the Islamic headscarf, were highly publicized in the media in 1990 and finally resolved in that way. Girls have also been allowed, in many schools, to wear trousers instead of the skirt that is part of the school uniform. The respect for Islamic dresses is then widespread in British state-maintained schools. Nonetheless, there remain some occasional and localized conflicts especially involving girls wearing ankle-length dresses (as in Luton in 2004) or face veils (as in Buckinghamshire near London in 2007). Such demands have often been rejected by school officials, arguing that they have done considerable effort so far to adapt their uniform requirements to Muslim religious practices. Some of these cases were ruled by high court (as it was for the Luton and Buckinghamshire cases) in favour of the schools, which has contributed to clarify how far the accommodation of Muslim practices goes in this area.

By contrast, the wearing of the Islamic headscarf has been one of the most controversial issues of French public debates on education and on Islam for the last two decades. Analysing the French and British press coverage of the headscarf issue at school during the period 1989-1998, L. Molokotos Liederman (2000) founds 1261 French articles on the topic, compared to only 23 British articles. The defence of the wearing of the headscarf in public schools has been the main demand of French Muslim actors for twenty years and concentrated their struggles and effort for a better recognition of their religious and cultural identity. Based on an analysis of migrants' claims-making through the national press in different European countries, the work of P. Staham, R. Koopmans and al. (2005) concludes that fourteen out of 25 Muslim group demands in France between 1992 and 1998 directly referred to wearing headscarves in public institutions.

The controversy started in 1989 with the first "headscarf affair" known as the "Creil affair", when three Muslim girls wearing headscarves were refused to entry the classroom in a school of Creil (a suburb of the north of Paris) and after a temporary solution, were eventually expelled from the school. This localized conflict gives birth to a national controversy that has been recurrent over the last years. The Conseil d'Etat (*Council of the state*, the highest administrative court in France) was called to decide the matter, after the Socialist Education Minister Lionel Jospin's incitement to dialogue had brought out protests from teachers' unions, right-wing political actors and leaders of his own camp. The *Conseil d'Etat*'s position was rather liberal, recognizing the right to pupils to demonstrate their religious beliefs so long this did not disturb the order and normal functioning of the schools. However, following other "headscarf cases", the new Education Minister, François Bayrou, issued in 1994 a circular going further in the rejection of the headscarf for it considered certain symbols as "ostentatious" by nature and invited schools to modify their regulations in order to ban them. In practice, the issue was dealt with locally and on a case-by-case basis, leading to a great variety of practices regarding the toleration for the headscarf in public schools.

The debate was launched again in the early 2000s, with the media high coverage of a new case. Yet, the situation proved to be somewhat appeased since according to the mediator specifically in charge of dealing with conflictive cases, only 150 difficult cases were recorded each year (compared to 450 five years before). Most of them were resolved by dialogue, expulsions not being over 10 per year (Hafiz and Devers, 2005: 202). But the political and state actors appeared firmly committed to put an end to the controversy and to reassert a strict conception of the French principle of *laïcité*. A special committee was created in 2003 to work on the application of this principle nowadays. The committee's report suggested to

ban the wearing of religious dresses in public schools, among other measures such as the granting of a holiday for pupils for Yom Kippur and the Eid al-Adha and a one-day holiday credit for salaried workers allowing them not to work during the main religious festivals of their religion. Eventually, only the proposal related to the ban of religious dresses from public schools was adopted through a law in March 2004. The following circular of May, 2004, remained quite ambiguous on the issue: it mentioned all signs that are clearly revealing a religious identity and explicitly referred to the “Islamic headscarf, however it is called, the skullcap and a cross whose size is obviously excessive”. In this way, the circular does not resolve the problems of interpretation: headteachers eventually still have to assess whether the dress has an obvious religious dimension or not, for example the bandanna. This law was justified by state actors and supporters by the singularity of the school space, where children and teenagers’ freedom of conscience has to be protected from the potential intrusion of other pupils with different beliefs and from family and community pressure, thus demonstrating a rather paternalist state’s approach to the issue (Maurer, 2005).

When positioning about the headscarf, Muslim organizations used an argumentation based on the *laïcité* principle (Fetzer and Soper, 2005; Molokotos Liederman, 2000). They claimed for a more open and softer conception of *laïcité*, giving a space in the public sphere for religious diversity and religious expressions. However, they did not receive a strong support from non-Muslim organizations and political actors; the voices in favour of the wearing of the headscarf at school were quite secondary in the debate, especially in the early 2000s, and were opposed by a great majority among public opinion. Muslims’ demands in this field came to be rather defensive and reactive, confronted to the state asserting its strict vision of separation between religion and the public sphere (Staham, Koopmans and al., 2005).

The intensity of the debate on the headscarf is not the only feature distinguishing the French and British cases. The way the issue was formulated also highlights the contrast between the two countries. In France, the discussion has focused about the meaning of the *laïcité* principle, eventually leading to the assertion of a narrower version of it, strictly excluding religious beliefs and expressions from the school space. The headscarf was often depicted in the press (Molokotos Liederman, 2000) in a negative way, as a symbol of women inequality, cultural backwardness and family and community pressure; the fundamentalist nature and the religiously authentic origin of such a practice were also intensively discussed. By contrast, the wearing of the headscarf was often presented in the British debate as an act of individual choice; the arguments of Muslim groups and many officials referred to a broader context of multicultural policies respectful for the diverse cultural identities present in Britain.

As far as the wearing of the headscarf in public schools is concerned, the British state thus demonstrates a stronger commitment to accommodating Muslim specific religious needs. Turning attention to other issues, however, one can be noted some similar features in the school experience of Muslim pupils in Britain and in France. In both countries, arrangements based on local pragmatic negotiations and decisions have been set up in two fields: the exemption from school attendance for certain religious holidays and specific food provision at school. In France, the *Conseil d’Etat* states in the mid-1990s that time-off can be granted to pupils provided that they do not disturb the academic duties of pupils and the public order of the schools. In practice, time-offs are granted locally, on a case-by-case and individual basis. In Britain, the 1944 Education Act allowed possible time-off for religious holidays. As in France, the management of such demands is made locally. Although there are no precise data on the issue in both countries, evidence from research indicates that time-offs are usually accepted for the main Islamic religious holidays in Britain as in France (Fetzer & Soper,



2005). Hence, in both countries, there is no imperative and official national rule and the issue is dealt with locally, paving the way to a potential local variation. In none of these countries, religious holidays specific to the main religions present in the territory were integrated in the official calendar. The same situation can also be found regarding the provision of substitute non-pork meals for Muslims and Jews. In both countries, there are no specific national regulations on the issue, apart from some national recommendations. Nonetheless, the provision of meals without pork is a quite usual practice in both countries. However, the provision of *halal* meat is inexistent in France so far. Some Muslim parents have recently claimed for it in some local areas, for example in Lyon, where the local authority decided to examine the issue. The provision of *halal* meat in British schools is more frequent.

### *Religion education and knowledge about Islam*

Britain is quite unusual amongst liberal democracies in that the Anglican church has an “established” position in the structure of the state (Modood, 1997; McLoughlin, 2005; Fetzer & Soper, 2005). Although many privileges of the established church have been abolished over the two last centuries, there are still some vestiges of such a status. In the education area, this went long with a Christian religious instruction and daily Christian collective worships in state-funded schools, although the law of 1870 and the Education Act of 1944, in accordance with the so-called “Cowper-Temple clause”, forbade any reference to a specific denomination. The 1870 legislation also recognized the freedom of conscience and allowed parents to withdraw from this Bible-based religious instruction and religious acts at school. Religious instruction was first optional for local schools. The Education Act of 1944, following an informal agreement between the main churches (essentially Christian at that time), made it compulsory. Detailed religious education curricula were decided locally by the LEAs after the consultation of a committee made up with representatives of Christian denominations.

The multicultural policies that have been implemented from the 1970s onwards in the British school system have significant consequences on religious education. Many LEAs started to give a liberal interpretation of the law by accepting the presence of representatives of non-Christian faiths among the local committee in charge of religious instruction syllabus. In the 1970s and 1980, through local school arrangements and curricula, many children were hence also given information about the main other religions present in the country (Islam, Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhism).

The Education Reform Act of 1988, which widely rules the current situation, partly reversed this trend towards multi-faith teaching, at least in principle. Very discussed at that time in the Parliament and in the media, the reform of religious education in state-funded schools was the result of a compromise between those wishing to see its multicultural orientation confirmed and other claiming for a focus on Christian traditions. Some right-wing actors denounced the “multicultural mish-mash” prevailing before 1988, others even advocating a denominational Christian religious education as a way to preserve the British culture and regenerate moral values. The act hence adopted a balanced formula, stating that religious education should “reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking into account the principles and practices of the other principle religions represented in Great Britain”. The law also specified that daily collective worships were to be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”. Pupils who wish to can be excused from religious education and collective worships. The detailed provisions for religious education and collective worships are still defined locally by the LEAs, assisted by local Standing Advisory

Committees on Religious Education (SACREs), which have been made compulsory since 1988. According to the 1998 act, schools can also apply to the local SACRE for exemption from the “broadly Christian” requirement related to collective worships for some or all of their pupils. This is called a “determination”, and alternative worship must be provided for these pupils.

All these requirements must be met by community schools and voluntary controlled schools, which must follow the local official syllabus. However, voluntary aided schools with a religious character, which represent the majority of religious schools, are the only state-funded schools allowed to implement a denominational religious education.

Despite the language used in the 1988 act, the later developments (Education Act 1996, School Standards and Framework Act 1998) have generally confirmed the multi-faith character of religious education in British schools, even though Christianity is still granted the greatest place. Instructions from the Department of Education have recommended to local school officials to take into account the pupils’ backgrounds when designing acts of worships and religious education, in order to limit the number of withdrawals. In addition, representatives of the Muslim faith are part of the council in charge of defining the local syllabus and are also consulted by many SACREs. In 2004, a non-statutory framework for religious education was established after a wide consultation, including Muslim largest organizations. Its content largely confirms the multi-faith orientations of religious education as it also comprises the study of the main religions present in Britain in addition to the Christian one. Non-religious philosophies, as humanism, can also be added to the curriculum. The framework repeatedly invites pupils to recognize the “similarities and differences” between religions, “their own values and those of others”.

In practice, a large variety does exist regarding the schools’ practices of religious education and daily collective worships. In some schools, the Christian component can widely predominate, whereas in others the place granted to other religions can be much greater. Many SACREs do not have a policy on determination and hence many schools must implement a mainly Christian worship. However, some SACREs have developed specific approaches on the issue. A few schools, as in Bradford, which receive a great majority of non-Christian pupils, hold separate faith worships, including Islamic ones, as a result of a determination process. In other multi-ethnic areas, as in Brent, some schools has used the determination to provide a multi-faith worship with no special place granted to Christian traditions. In addition, whether their provisions respect the Christian requirements for collective worships or not, a number of British schools offer prayer spaces to Muslim pupils.

Regarding church schools, the majority of which being allowed to implement a denominational religious education, consideration to other faiths has also been given very recently. In February 2006, national representatives of the six main religions in Britain (Anglican Church, Catholic Church, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism) committed themselves through a common declaration to teach the basic principles of other faiths, in addition to their own religion, in their schools.

All these developments regarding religious education are totally alien to French approach to the issue. As a result of the anticlerical policy developed by the Third Republic, religious education was banned from the school curricula in the 1880s and replaced by a civic and moral education essentially aimed at teaching the republican principles to pupils and in which the references to in which the references to Catholicism and other religions were almost

absent. There was only a mention of “the duties towards God” in the part of the curriculum dedicated to the moral duties of the child, but this was officially suppressed in 1923.

This republican tradition of a completely secular public education has been maintained afterwards. Religions are only present today in the school curriculum through a historical teaching approach, in history lessons, with no place granted to spirituality, discussions about pupils’ religious beliefs or any kinds of worships. All forms of religious education, even multi-faith, remain outside the public school space.

Over the last two decades, in the framework of discussions about the meaning of the principle of *laïcité*, the place granted to religions in the school curricula has been discussed. Some educational organizations (such as the *Ligue de l’Enseignement*) and some intellectuals have pointed the lack of religious understanding among pupils and claimed for a greater cultural approach to religions in public schools; it has also been argued that this would be an opportunity to introduce pupils to the religious plurality of current France, in particular to the Islamic culture. These discussions were based on a renewed approach of *laïcité*, often called “open *laïcité*”, more tolerant for religions and their cultural contribution to past and present French culture. In line with the secular tradition of the French school system, the introduction of any form of religious education has not been proposed and the debate has only focused on cultural approaches to religions. However, such proposals have brought strong criticism, especially from French teachers’ unions, denouncing this religion-focused approach and its risks for the neutrality of the school system. Following these debates, the place granted to a cultural learning about religions in the curricula was slightly extended, notably the sections related to Islam in the History curriculum. However, the presentation of France’s religious diversity remains limited in the current school curricula. It is mainly the history of religions that is studied and not their current forms and expressions within the French society: as other religions, Islam essentially figures as a specific study theme in the History curriculum at certain historical periods (at its birth and in the Middle-Ages).

### *Muslim schools*

Unlike the issue of the wearing of the headscarf at school, the question of the public funding of Muslim schools has brought out a national controversy in Britain from the 1980s onwards. The problem has arisen only very recently and has remained quite secondary in French public debates.

In Britain, as the various ethnic minorities were better financially and organizationally established from the 1980s, they started to create their own private faith-based schools. The number of Muslim independent schools has gradually increased over the last two decades: there were 60 Muslim schools by 1998 and over 100 nowadays. They educate about 2-3% of British Muslim pupils nowadays and are very diverse. They range for very large schools (the largest has 2000 pupils) to one-room schools for a few pupils. Single-sex schooling is important for some Muslim parents, especially for teenagers. That is why there are more secondary schools than primary and co-educational secondary schools are very rare. Some of these schools are particularly designed to provide formal training for imams and teachers in Islamic institutions. Muslim schools are diverse regarding the more or less traditional education they give, the place granted to Islamic religious education and Arabic courses relatively to mainstream national curriculum subjects and their specific Islamic affiliation.

In theory, public state funding was available for all faith-based schools. Although the 1944 Education Act was aimed at reinforcing the links between the state and the various Christian denominations in the provision of schooling, it did not formally prevent any other religious group to benefit from public funding for schools. The system was gradually opened to other religious minorities, such as Jews. Muslim organizations began to claim for state-funding in the 1980s, stressing that this was a matter of equality as other religious groups could already use this possibility. Among Muslim parents, the attitudes towards Muslim schools are diverse. Half of Muslims support the public funding of Muslim schools, but only half of these supporters would personally send their children to such schools if they have the choice (Modood, 1997). A great part of Muslim parents hence prefer their children be educated in state schools gathering children from diverse cultural backgrounds. To their eyes, the public funding of Muslim schools is essentially a question of principle and equality. For those Muslim parents preferring Muslim schools, various motivations do exist. One of them is the disaffection towards the state system, where Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils, most of whom being Muslims, perform less than do other children. Some Muslim parents and the leadership of Muslim community also argue that Muslim schools are a better means of educating children to an Islamic way of life in a broadly secular environment. Separate education for boys and girls is another important motivation.

As it came to concern the religious minorities resulting from post-war immigration, especially Muslims, the issue of state funding for faith schools has brought out national controversial debates, even dividing political camps. While some have rejected Muslim schools on the basis of traditional assimilationist arguments, others, long committed to racial equality and multiculturalist principles, have denounced separate schools as a source of divisiveness, creating mutually uninterested segregated communities. The Swann report that had promoted multicultural education in 1985 and later the Commission for Racial equality in the early 1990s rejected separate religious schools for ethnic minorities as not serving their integration into the mainstream British culture.

The public funding of Muslim schools has been a long and difficult process. During the 1980s and 1990s, several existing Muslim private schools applied to their LEAs to enter the state sector, but all demands were turned down by public authorities, stressing the surplus of schools in the local areas. One example was intensively publicized, that of the Islamia Primary School in Brent, especially because of the personality of its founder, Yussuf Islam (formerly known as Cat Stevens, who converted to Islam). Its application for state funding was denied twice, first by the LEA in 1990, and then, after the latter's eventual and reluctant support, by the Department for Education in 1993. The situation eventually changed with the coming into power of the Labour. Despite the internal oppositions existing in its own camp – some Labour members firmly advocating the suppression of the state funding to faith schools –, Labour leaders finally converted to a defence of state-funded faith schools, and claimed for an increasing of their diversity. The new Labour government accepted in 1997 that the Islamia school entered the state-maintained sector. Since that date, however, the development of a Muslim state-funded schooling has been limited for only seven public-funded Muslim schools for the whole Britain do exist nowadays. While there have been significant developments in this field over the last years, the move towards a catching up of Muslim communities relatively to other religious groups has been slowed down by thorny and continuing debates. A recent example of this controversy was the speech of David Bell about independent Muslim schools in 2005, Chief Inspector of Schools and Heads of the Office for Standards in Education, and the reactions it provoked among Muslim communities and organizations. David Bell warned that Muslim schools were not passing on a British “common heritage” and

did not prepare pupils for their lives in modern Britain. Muslim education figures, such the chairman of the Association of Muslim Schools, have firmly reacted, putting forwards the good academic results of these schools and their positive role in helping pupils to enter fully into British life. Though this controversy only concerned independent schools, it fuelled the opposition to public funding for Muslim schools in Britain as the distinction between the two types of schools has been considerably blurred in the debate.

In France, the system initially built up in 1959 as a compromise for taking into account the interests of Catholic schools can also benefit to other denominational schools since there is no distinction in the legislation according to religious lines. However, there is no Muslim public-funded school so far in the metropolitan France. The only one is a high school which is located in a French overseas territory, in the Réunion island (near the Eastern coast of Africa). Founded in 1947, it signed a “simple contract” with the state in 1970 and then a “contract of association” in 1990. A few Muslim private schools have been created in the metropolitan France but their development is much more recent and still very restricted compared to Britain. It has been argued that their development was partly encouraged by the difficulties encountered in the public system by girls wearing the headscarf, before and after the 2004 law. These schools are all of quite small size for the moment. No one have applied for public funding so far, one of the main reason for this being that these schools are recent and the rule is that schools have to operate for 5 years to be allowed to apply. The first Muslim private school opened in 2001 at Aubervilliers (a city of the Paris suburbs). This lower secondary school enrolled 80 pupils and might sign soon a contract of association with the State. A Muslim high school also opened in 2003 in Lille (about one hundred pupils nowadays) and a secondary school in Décines (Lyon urban area) in 2007. The creation of such schools is sometimes made difficult locally, as it was the case in Décines, where the local school officials proved to be hostile to the project. As a result, two demonstrations gathering Muslim associations and families were organized in October 2006. The “*Conseil Supérieur de l’Education*” (ie the National Council of Education) finally gave a favourable opinion about the project and the school opened its doors in early March 2007. Only about 20 pupils go to this school so far because it opened during the school year. The school can receive about 150 pupils, which would make it the largest Muslim school in France.

A reason for this limited development of Muslim schools in France is maybe than overall, like the general population, French Muslims are strongly attached to the existing public secular system, as a recent survey indicates (Brouard & Tiberj, 2005): 67% of French Muslims are satisfied with the current public school system as they prefer to send their children in a public school without religious education. 18% of them give their preference to a public school where a religious education can be provided and only 5% to a Muslim school. Even if the questions are not similarly formulated and the samples differ, these results contrast with those previously mentioned for British Muslims, a higher proportion of whom preferring a Muslim schooling.

## **Explaining the way Muslim pupils are accommodated in Britain and France**

The different way by which the French and the British state have dealt with Muslims’ practices and identities within the school system has been presented as essentially connected to the inherited church-state relations by Fetzer and Soper (2005). According to these authors, far from being an obstacle for Muslims, the historical links between the British state and churches have created a favourable context for the accommodation of Muslim religious

demands in education. Throughout the twentieth century, the Anglican Church has not been aggressively committed to keeping its privileges and compromises were set up to include religious minorities such as Catholics, Baptists and Methodists in school arrangements, especially by making the public funding available for the schools of these faiths and designing a Christian (not denominational) religious education. This pattern has created expectations that new religious minorities could also benefit from the system. As for France, the Muslim-related policy was tied to the historical pattern of conflictive relation between Catholicism and the Republican state. The separationist conception underpinning the French principle of *laïcité* make it very difficult to accept the presence of a religious dimension within the French school system, leading to the controversies over the wearing of the headscarf in schools and the impossibility to make provisions for religious education or religious practices at school.

However, Fetzer and Soper's analysis appears to overlook some aspects of the British and French church-state relations. Regarding Britain, the institutional configuration has had ambivalent effects for Muslim groups. While it certainly make more legitimate the presence of religious identities in the public sphere and in the school space in particular, it also gives a clear advantage to Christian denominations. The British state has not gone towards a complete abolition of these privileges for example by giving up the special place granted to Christianity within state-funded schools. It neither imposed an official national rule related to specific religious education classes and worships for Muslim pupils and other minority pupils, as other European states did. As for France, it must be stressed that the church-state relations pattern was built through different forms of compromises, what Baubérot calls "pactes laïques" ("secular pacts"). Such compromises have made the distinction between the private and the public spheres less rigid in some sectors. In the area of education, the Debré law of 1959, which allowed public funding for private schools, is a good example of such an accommodation. Designed in a context where the relations between the Republican state and the Catholic Church were largely appeased, this arrangement first aimed to Catholic schools was also made available for other religious groups. Jewish groups, for example, have used this possibility to create a separate network of schools. Though it is difficult to know now, given the very recent development of Muslim private schools, it is possible that Muslims will benefit from the system in the future. On other issues such as time-off for religious holidays and food provision at school, the French state also demonstrates an ability to accommodate religious identities within the school space, even though, overall, these accommodations remain very limited compared to those implemented in Britain.

Other crucial factors for explaining French and British Muslim-related policies in the area of education must also be taken into account, some of them making the situations of both countries somewhat closer to each other. First, the irruption of a religious identity in politics in societies that think themselves as secularized has represented a considerable challenge in both countries and elsewhere in the West. The reactions this has triggered share common features in France and Britain. In France but also, most surprisingly, in Britain, the emergence and development of Muslim political claims have brought out a firm opposition from a secularist, liberal current, hostile to the presence of religious identities in the public sphere. As suggested by Modood (2000, 2006), in reaction to Muslim assertiveness, sections of British elites, especially among left-wing circles, yet long committed to multiculturalism and racial equality principles, have militated in favour of the abolishment of the institutional links between the state and the churches. Due to their secular credentials, they have revived a public-private distinction they had long tried to destroy when claiming that policies took into account ethnic minorities' identities. Muslim schools have been at the core of this debate.

Eminent centre-left intellectuals and political and state actors have argued against faith schools and claimed for an entirely secular public state system.

Actually, British multiculturalism has had ambivalent effects on Muslim-related policies. Inspired by the American experience related to anti-Black racism, British multicultural policies, developed from the 1970s onwards, were based on the idea that the major issue was “coloured” racism (Modood, 2000; Staham & al, 2005). This accent on racial equality and ethnic minorities has made it especially difficult to recognize religious identities and discriminations based on religious grounds. However, at the same time, the success of the idea underpinning multiculturalism – the recognition of group differences within the public sphere – has created a favouring background for the later expression of Muslims’ religious demands. While reacting to the ethnic bias of multicultural policies, Muslim actors have also used the multicultural rhetoric and adapted it to their own claims (Modood, 2000).

This specific British context can be considered as one of the reasons why Muslim communities in Britain have given a greater support to separate Muslim schools and have significantly claimed for their public funding compared to France. Both the important place of public-funded religious schools within the school system and the multicultural idea that differences and specific identities are legitimate in the public sphere have encouraged British Muslims to claim for their own schools. In France, the predominance of the public school system and the attachment to it that the vast majority of Muslims share in common with the general population, have not favoured strong demands related to separate Muslim schools. Such a claim has remained very secondary among Muslim organizations and even more among Muslim population. The 2004 law that bans religious symbols from public schools may encourage other developments, but it is likely that Muslim schools will not receive the same degree of support than they have done in Britain.

Following the interpretation developed by Modood, it can be stressed that the difficulty and length of the process that has conducted to the recognition of public funding for Muslim schools in Britain is not linked to multiculturalism in itself, but to the presence within it of a significant secularist and liberal current. Unlike Britain, this secularist position that draws a rigid boundary between the public and the private sphere has been shared in France by large sectors of elites as it correspond to a long political tradition. The French state was built against the Catholic Church’s influence on the social and political sphere. This explains why French governments have been able to demonstrate such assertiveness when dealing with the headscarf issue.

Another significant aspect for better understanding Islam-related education policies in France and in Britain is the differentiated conception of the school system prevailing in the two countries. One of the particular features of the French institutional and political configuration is indeed the centrality given to the school system in the conception and development of a specific pattern of citizenship, based on a universalistic and individualistic view of the public sphere (Déloye, 1994). Since the nineteenth century, education has been presented as the major means of educating future citizens. Such a feature has certainly to do with the strong tensions that have marked the French debate on the place of Islam within the school system and the very modest changes in the accommodation of Muslims’ demands in this sphere compared to other sectors. In other policy areas, France has gone further towards the pragmatic accommodation of Muslims. The arrangements set up for the chaplaincies in prisons and hospitals, for the slaughtering of animals according to the Islamic rite or the creation of Muslim grave fields in some French cemeteries are examples of such a move. A

Council of Muslim Faith (*Conseil Français du Culte Musulman*, CFCM), a national representative body with consultative status, was also established in 2003 under the initiative of the French state. Hence, while in the education area the situation has little changed, going rather towards a reaffirmation of a strict *laïcité*, the French state has also found ways of accommodating Muslims in other fields.

In Britain, education long played a lesser role. The decentralization of the system and the place given to parent power and choice and to religious groups within it have made the education system rather a go-between between the state and the civil society. Over the last decades, the role of the school system in the formation of a common citizenship and national identity in Britain has been reasserted and some reforms led to a greater centralization. Nevertheless, the previous trends have persisted and the system remains characterised by a greater diversity and decentralization compared to France. This internal plurality contributes to give minority parents higher opportunities for promoting their own cultures in the educational experiences of children.

Muslim-related education policies in France and Britain have to tackle a common challenge, the conciliation of two imperatives that go in different directions: the building of a common citizenship and culture on the one hand, and the respect for the plurality of society and the communities' will to maintain their own habits and identities, on the other hand. Given the complexity of the issue and the irremediable tension between these two imperatives, contentious debates and policy changes characterize the policies approaches that deal with this question. While the French and British responses have been strongly differentiated from each other, they have also varied through time. It is true that France has only marginally questioned its pattern of non-recognition of groups within the public sphere, at least regarding the area of education. However, the 1970s witnessed the birth and development of an intercultural vision of education among educationalists and some state actors, which eventually were not translated into significant education policies. More accommodating policy lines were also developed in the late 1980s and early 1990s by the left-wing governments, in particular when dealing with the headscarf issue. Regarding the British case, there have been significant public debates for two decades about multiculturalism. Multicultural policies have been prominent overall, but they have also been questioned and reverted on several occasions. The Education Reform Act of 1988 was criticized at its time as being too ethnocentric and assimilationist for it reaffirmed the place of Christian traditions and restricted the place of multiculturalism to options separated from the mainstream curricula. Attacks on multiculturalism have been fuelled again following the 9/11 events and the riots in English northern cities in summer 2001 involving youth of south-Asian origin. Many actors, from the right wing but also from centre-left circles, pointed to the limits of multicultural orientations and put forward a greater need for a common ground. Muslim schools, again, were at the core of the debates, and were criticized as a source of division and lack of common national identity. Such debates have not led to profound changes in policy orientations but have certainly contributed to slow down some moves, especially regarding the access of Muslim schools to public funding or the provision for Islamic religious education classes.

While Muslim-related education policies greatly differ in Britain and in France, they both went with thorny debates and strong oppositions, which shows that the accommodation of Muslims' demands is not easy in these two countries, as elsewhere in Europe. This difficulty must certainly be partly connected to the "European anxiety" (Parekh *in* Modood & *al*, 2006) towards Islam. From the 1980s, Muslims' capacity and even willing to integrate into Western



societies have been questioned. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism in diverse parts of the world combined with events such as the Iranian revolution, the Rushdie affair, international Islamic terrorist acts have contributed to fuel the perception of an insurmountable opposition between the secular values and Judeo-Christian original traditions of Western societies and the ethos of the Islamic tradition, considered as an homogenous set of values and behaviours. Women inequality in Islamic ethos, in particular, has often been put forward, as well as Muslims' undemocratic values and weak attachment to the nation. These perceptions have been widespread in the media and in the political circles in Britain as in France. They are also assumed in many social sciences works. The negative vision of Islam as an opposite culture to Western values and practices has deeply shaped the policies implemented in Britain and in France. These policies are deeply tied to pre-existing institutional and political configuration, as the stark contrast between France and Britain suggests, but the fear of Islam has also greatly contributed to the criticisms of multiculturalism and to the education policy changes in Britain, as well as to the French state's firm position on the headscarf issue and to the very limited accommodation of Muslim religious needs.

However, the perception of Islam as a threat to Western values is not really supported by evidence. Only a very small group of militant Muslims in Europe engage or support Islamist terrorist violence. Results from surveys also demonstrate Muslims' national loyalty and attachment to democratic institutions. The idea that their higher religiosity go with a weaker sense of national identity does not hold: according to the Gallup international survey among Muslims in London, Paris and Berlin, Muslim respondents were not less likely than the general populations to say they identify strongly with their country. In Paris, the same proportions were found (46%); in London, Muslims were even more likely than the whole resident population to express this opinion (57% against 48% of all residents). These survey data also fail to support the idea that Muslims do not respect democratic institutions. When asked whether they have confidence in such institutions as government, honesty of elections, judicial system and local police, Muslims in Paris and in London were as likely – in some cases more likely, such as in the United Kingdom – to answer positively. The questions of equality of sexes or of the toleration for some sexual behaviours such as homosexuality are thornier ones. Different surveys (The Gallup organization, 2007; Brouard & Tiberj, 2005, for France) show the high level of conservative attitudes among Muslims compared to the general population on questions such as homosexuality, sexuality before marriage for women and women's social role. In such matters, the prevailing liberal values seem to run counter to those of a majority of Muslims, hence meaning that the inclusion of Muslims implies society's willingness to accept those differences while maintaining its equality-related legal requirements. This is not an easy task and would require a range of accommodations and negotiations. However, surveys also underline that Muslim communities do not have homogeneous attitudes and that there is also a significant minority of liberal and permissive Muslims nowadays. It is not possible to say that these conservative values will necessarily bring down in the future. The difficulties are certainly not to be underestimated. But in any case, the vision of a culturally homogeneous community is seriously challenged.

In addition, many of the Muslims' actual political claims are not to be seen as "unreasonable" and threatening for the existing institutional and political arrangements both in Britain and in France. In this debate, it is often forgotten how the Christian heritage has shaped those arrangements, in Britain and, to a lesser extent in France. The place granted to the main religion's schools within the state school system and the school official calendar are traces of the Christian heritage in both countries. The secularist rhetoric that is pregnant nowadays hence refers to a rigid separation between the public and the private spheres that does not

exist in many of actual practices, particularly in Britain. Notwithstanding the very differences between France and Britain, secularity in these countries means that the main religion no longer controls public life and society. It does not mean that there are no relations between the state and the various religious groups. Most Muslim demands have not sought to turn down these existing secular arrangements; they have simply asked for a better recognition of their religious needs within them. When advocating the public funding for their schools, British Muslims have only demanded a right that other religious groups already got. In France, Muslim organizations have also based their claims on the principle of *laïcité* and merely aimed at making it more respectful for some basic religious symbols.

## Conclusion

This approach to education policies in France and in Britain leads to highlight the impact of the pre-existing institutional and political configuration on the way Muslim identities have been accommodated within the school system.

The historical co-operation between the British state and churches in the provision of education, the conception of education, as well as the multicultural lines developed in the education field and other policy sectors from the mid-1970s onwards have created a favourable background for the accommodation of Muslim religious claims and practices in Britain. By contrast, the force of the secularist ideas in France, based on a long political tradition and shared by most contemporary elites, and the major role granted to the school system in the construction of a common citizenship have offered less opportunities to Muslim groups for promoting their religious needs within the education system. Some modest accommodations have been carried out through pragmatic local arrangements regarding less visible and symbolically significant issues, such as food provision or time-off for religious days. However, these changes remain very limited compared to those implemented in Britain and also compared to moves in other policy fields.

Institutional and political factors have also shaped to a certain extent Muslims' claims-making, as we saw that the public funding for Muslim schools have been a core demand of Muslim organizations in Britain unlike France, and is supported to a higher proportion of Muslim parents in the latter country.

Beyond this divergence in Muslim-related education policies in Britain and France, some common features have a same unfavourable impact for the accommodation of Muslim religious claims. The emergence of a religious identity in the political debate has caused in both countries strong reactions from a liberal and secularist current. This has not the same consequences in the two countries for these ideological lines correspond to a long political tradition in France whereas in Britain they are thwarted by a different historical pattern of church-state relations. However, in both cases, this secularist position, drawing a rigid frontier between the private and the public spheres, has a significant impact. It certainly explains why the changes in France have been so modest and why the battle for the public funding of Muslim schools has been a long and difficult process in Britain. What further complicates the debate is that this opposition to the presence of a Muslim identity in the public sphere is also connected to a specific fear of Islam as such in both countries and elsewhere in Europe. The public responses to Muslim claims will certainly continue to cause thorny discussions. The fact that European countries develop a better understanding of the Muslims communities

living in their territories as a diverse group and as a full part of society and public dialogue will certainly help to clarify the debate and make it less difficult.

## References

- Brouard S., Tiberj V. (2005) *Français comme les autres? Enquête sur les citoyens d'origine maghrébine, africaine et turque*, Paris : Presses de Sciences-po.
- Cesari J., McLoughlin S. (ed.) (2005) *European Muslims and the secular state*, Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Fetzer J.S., Soper J.C. (2005) *Muslims and the State in Britain, France and Germany*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kelly P. (1999) "Integration and identity in Muslim schools: Britain, United States and Montreal", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 10 (2).
- Koopmans R., Staham P. (ed.) (2000) *Challenging immigration and ethnic relations politics. Comparative European perspectives*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Koopmans R., Staham P. (ed.) (2005), *Contested citizenship. Immigration and cultural diversity in Europe*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Maurer S. (2006) *Muslim Worship in France: Practical Stakes and Response of Public Actors*, New York : International Center for Migration, Ethnicity and Citizenship.
- Meer N. (2007) "Muslim schools in Britain: challenging mobilisations or logical developments?", *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 27 (1).
- Molokotos Liederman L. (2001) "Pluralism in education: the display of Islamic affiliation in French and British schools", in *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 11 (1).
- Modood T. (2000) "La place des musulmans dans le multiculturalisme laïque", *Social Compass*, 47 (1).
- Modood T. and al (ed.) (2006) *Multiculturalism, Muslims and Citizenship. A European Approach*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Parker-Jenkins M. (1995) *Children of Islam*, Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.
- Staham and al. (2005) "Resilient or adaptable Islam? Multiculturalism, religion and migrants' claim making for group demands in Britain, the Netherlands and France", *Ethnicities*, 5 (4).
- The Gallup Organization (2007) *Special report: Muslims in Europe*, Retrieved August, 2007, from <http://www.gallupworldpoll.com/content/?ci=26410#CoreLearnings>.
- Walford G. (2004) "English education and immigration policies and Muslim schools", in Daun H., Walford G. (ed.) *Educational strategies among Muslims in the context of globalization : some national case studies*, Leiden and Boston: Brill.