

REPORT

POLITICAL ENGINEERING AND THE EXCLUSION OF RELIGIOUS CONSERVATIVE MUSLIMS IN EUROPE

ŞENER AKTÜRK

POLITICAL ENGINEERING
AND THE EXCLUSION OF
RELIGIOUS CONSERVATIVE
MUSLIMS IN EUROPE

MUSLIM PARLIAMENTARIANS AND THE PROHIBITION
OF ISLAMIC PRACTICES IN WESTERN EUROPE



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FOUNDATION FOR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH
مركز الدراسات السياسية والاقتصادية والاجتماعية

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FOREWORD

In European politics and parliaments, the representation of Muslims living in Europe is vitally important in terms of social peace on the continent and the integration of Muslims into the countries where they are living. However, Muslims are seemingly underrepresented in European legislatures as Muslim minority representation is not proportionate to their share in the general population. It has also been revealed that the political involvement of the overwhelming majority of Muslim legislators in the issues of the masses they presumably represent does not meet expectations, nor do the values of these representatives necessarily coincide with those of the represented. The reasons are rooted in the fact that in European countries with Muslim minority representation, the political filtering mechanisms exclude religious conservative Muslims from the system, while the dominant secular political culture in Europe also pushes them out.

Consequently, marginal left groups “capture” Muslim representation and form a hegemony in the political arena, creating in this manner a real predicament. Such hegemony sets a critical obstacle to sound and healthy democratic representation that embraces all segments of society in European democracies.

This representation gap does not only harm Europe’s relations with conservative and religious Muslims but also hinders a sound relationship between Europe and the Islamic world, since almost all of the marginal left groups, who are supposedly representing conservative Muslims as well, have an ideological agenda in relation to the latter.

Turkey is one of the countries affected the most by this negative state of affairs because the population of the Turkish diaspora in Europe stands at about five million. Overwhelming majority of this diaspora consists of religious conservatives. However, the representation of the Turkish diaspora has been captured by marginal left groups some of whom are even affiliated with terrorist organizations, such as the PKK and the DHKP-C. This phenomenon inevitably creates constant tension in the relations between Turkey and Europe.

The aforementioned situation negatively affects social peace in Europe, the views of European countries on Islam, and the relations of Europe with the Islamic world. For all these reasons, the political representation of Muslim minorities in Europe increasingly gains importance and has become an interesting topic of discussion. The current report by Associate Professor Şener Aktürk, who conducts praiseworthy studies on Muslims in Europe, is a “first” in its field. We expect that it will make a remarkable contribution to new discussions and raise awareness on the issue. We predict that it will be an important resource and a reference guide for academics and researchers who study this field, as well as for other interested parties. I would like to thank Şener Aktürk for his work and wish that it will be a cause for blessed returns.

Professor Burhanettin Duran
SETA General Coordinator

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a descriptive overview of the Muslim members of parliament (MPs) and controversies over Islam in twelve Western European countries where Muslims make up a sizeable percentage of the population. There are several conclusions that pertain to the Muslim representation over time across Western European democracies. First, there has been a wave of prohibitions against Islamic practices ranging from ritual animal slaughter to the building of mosque minarets, from male circumcision to women's headscarves in multiple Western European countries. Moreover, this wave of prohibitions against Islamic practices does not seem to be abating and even seems to be rising. Second, the descriptive representation of Muslim minorities (i.e. the number of Muslim-origin members of national parliaments) has increased significantly over time in several key countries. Third, and contrary to the gradual improvement of the descriptive representation of Muslim minorities, the ideological profile of Muslim minorities has not diversified as much in that leftist parties continue to have a hegemony, and in some countries even a monopoly, in the representation of Muslim minorities in the national legislatures. Fourth, in most countries including the country with the highest number of Muslim MPs, namely Germany, Muslim MPs continue to be disproportionately female compared to non-Muslim MPs. Fifth, and related to the leftist hegemony observed in Muslim minority representation, the substantive representation of the religiously specific interests of Muslims has not improved in

tandem with the improvement in the descriptive representation of Muslim minorities in continental Europe. Sixth, and relatedly, there are almost no religious conservative Muslim minority MPs elected to the national legislatures of continental European countries. Thus, the magnitude of descriptive underrepresentation of Muslim minorities in the national legislatures masks an even deeper form of substantive exclusion, which can be considered as a form of “political segregation” targeting the religious conservative segments of Muslim minorities in continental European countries.

In terms of the substantive representation of the religiously specific interests of Muslims, the report highlights several issues that became increasingly politicized in multiple continental European countries during the 2010s. These include political initiatives seeking to criminalize, prohibit, and/or restrict several religiously motivated practices of European Muslims such as among others, the ritual animal slaughter necessary for the production of *halal* meat, the wearing of headscarves or veils by women, circumcision of male children, and the construction of mosque minarets. Muslim-origin MPs in the national legislatures have *not* been leading a “Muslim civil rights movement” against such political initiatives to prohibit or restrict Islamic religious practices, which is a significant observation indicative of a major disconnect between the descriptive and substantive representation of Muslim minorities. Some of these patterns regarding the disconnect between religious conservative Muslims and their leftist or liberal representatives are not unique to Muslim minorities and can be partially observed, for example, in the political representation of African Americans in the United States.

The democratic deficit or the gap between descriptive and substantive representation of Muslim minorities has political and policy implications for the future. First, as has been observed in Germany and the Netherlands already, there are likely to be more attempts to establish a (de facto) “Muslim party” in European countries where the Muslim minority is significantly large but enjoys very little substantive representation. In this context, DENK provides an electorally successful example of such a “Muslim party” in the Netherlands, whereas BIG and ADD have not been nearly as successful in Germany. However, such “Muslim parties” have a somewhat better chance at getting into the European Parliament (EP), since they are not hindered by national legislative thresholds in the EP elections. Second, higher levels of citizenship acquisition and voter turnout are likely to force political parties to take into account the substantive representation of Muslim minorities’ interests. Third, the selection or “nomination” of MP candidates, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, by political party organs is often at least as important as, if not even more important than, the popular election itself. Therefore, in order to gain more substantive representation, Muslim groups and individuals may need to also focus on the candidate nomination process within the major political par-

ties. Fourth, in order to avoid the dilemmas of being a voting bloc “captured” by the Left, Muslim minorities may also need to seek out the representation of their interests through political parties in the conservative (including “Christian” Democrat), liberal, and other ideological traditions. Fifth, Muslim voters may apply pressure on the leftist parties in order to motivate an ideological revision in their party programs so that they include religious diversity and alternative lifestyles as part of their conceptualization of multiculturalism. Sixth, and most directly, Muslim voters and outside observers (including external actors such as foreign states) may seek to raise awareness by organizing public campaigns about both the economic and religiously specific discrimination that Muslim minorities face, with the goal of passing legislative acts and other measures necessary to guarantee equality of opportunity in the job market and equality of religions in public policy.

PREFACE

I have been tracing the variation of Muslim minority representation in European (and some non-European) parliaments for at least the last eight years, and have published my initial observations and reflections in January 2010 in *Insight Turkey*. This continued with my presentation on the same topic at the *American Political Science Association* annual meeting in Washington, DC, in 2010, and numerous other presentations following my return to Turkey in the second half of 2010. This report is an auspicious case of academic spillover: a multiyear research project I have been pursuing since 2010, and which still continues, on the structural and agentic causes of variation in levels of “descriptive representation” of Muslim minorities in Western and post-Communist legislatures motivated me to write a separate, policy-oriented report that is critical of the lack of “substantive representation” of Muslim minorities’ religiously specific demands, needs, and rights in twelve Western European polities. The auspicious coincidence occurred when Enes Bayraklı of the Turkish-German University approached me on behalf of SETA Foundation for a policy-relevant report on a topic of significance for Muslim minorities in Europe. The exclusion of religious conservatives, the political engineering that is evident in the nomination (“selection”) of Muslim-origin members of parliament, and the prohibition of certain Islamic practices in many European polities, were the very scarcely addressed (if addressed at all) substantive concerns of political significance that came to my mind. I would like to thank SETA foundation and

Enes Bayraklı for their invitation, and their commitment to publishing this report. As mentioned above, this report benefitted from a subset of a much larger database of Muslim minority representation in 45 European countries (25 Western and 20 post-Communist Eastern European countries) that I put together as part of an unpublished manuscript-in-progress. I would like to thank Kerry Eickholt, Beril Duman, Aydın Gündüz, Yury Katliarou, Idir Lika, and Endri Ziu, who provided assistance in collecting the list of parliamentarians for specific countries on different occasions between 2010 and 2017 in the process of putting together the database mentioned above. Needless to say, none of the people mentioned nor any institution with which I have been affiliated in these years is responsible for any part of the content, arguments, interpretation, facts, or any mistakes that may be found in this report. Above all, I hope that the publication of this report provides much needed publicity for the problems that I claim to have diagnosed: the political engineering that the Muslim minorities in most European countries face, the prohibition of increasingly many Islamic practices, and the exclusion of religious conservative Muslims from political processes, especially from those central representative institutions of modern democracy, the national legislatures.

Şener Aktürk
Sarıyer, Istanbul
November 2017

POLITICAL ENGINEERING AND THE EXCLUSION OF RELIGIOUS CONSERVATIVE MUSLIMS IN EUROPE

MUSLIM PARLIAMENTARIANS AND THE PROHIBITION OF ISLAMIC PRACTICES IN WESTERN EUROPE

Muslims constitute the largest non-Christian minority in most European societies. They currently constitute between four percent and ten percent of the population in several Western European polities (such as Belgium, France, Germany, and the Netherlands). Moreover, almost every Western European polity has a Muslim minority that is one percent or more of its population. In comparison, Jews, the only other historically significant non-Christian minority in Western and Central Europe, make up around one percent of the population in only one European society, France; in all other European societies, the Jewish minority is currently smaller, and often much smaller, than one percent of the general population. As such, Muslims are the only sizeable non-Christian religious community that most Europeans will ever encounter in their daily life, if they encounter any “non-Christian” religious community at all.¹ Thus, the political representation of Muslim minorities, both at the descriptive and the substantive level, is almost tantamount to the overall representation of non-Christian religious diversity in European politics. In other words, political representation of Muslim minorities is almost synonymous with the political representation of religious diversity at large, or lack thereof, in the European context.

1. I do not define any group as being non-Christian if they self-identify as being Christians. Nonetheless, it is true that some Christians may consider various interpretations or “sects” of Christianity as not being Christian. For example, at least historically some Catholics did not consider Protestants as Christians, and vice versa, although today most Protestants and Catholics accept and recognize each other as Christians. Nonetheless, even at present, some Christians may not consider Mormons as Christians. However, since all of these groups (sects, denominations, interpretations, etc.) self-identify as Christians, I also consider them as being Christians for the purposes of this report.

How well are Muslims represented in European politics? There are several different levels at which this question can be answered. Even focusing on national legislatures alone, which is the classical focus of studies on political representation of minority groups and also the level at which Muslim representation is evaluated in this report, one can examine two different types of Muslim minority representation: descriptive representation and substantive representation. Descriptive representation refers to the number and proportion of parliamentarians who can be considered as being Muslim. For the purposes of this report, “being Muslim” will be conceptualized and operationalized as being of Muslim origin, demonstrated by having a Muslim-origin name, and not having publicly renounced Islam (e.g. “I am not a Muslim” or “I am an atheist”) or not having adopted another religion (e.g. “I am a Catholic” or “I converted to Protestantism”) publicly. As such, anybody who is of Muslim-origin, and who has neither publicly claimed to be an atheist nor converted to another religion will be considered as being Muslim. Although any kind of alleged or observed religiosity is irrelevant for my initial definition of a Muslim political representative, such observable religious conservatism is consequential in my discussion of “substantive” representation, which is my distinctive focus in this report, as opposed to studies that only focus on descriptive representation. Thus, any person of Muslim origin is defined as a Muslim for the purposes of this study, which is also the most commonly followed convention in the comparative studies of Muslim representation in Western politics.²

First, Muslim minorities are significantly underrepresented in Western European politics, albeit with meaningful variation across countries. At a purely descriptive level, on average, Muslims are only represented approximately by one one-third, or even only one-fourth (depending on the method of aggregation), of what their actual demographic weight in Western European polities would suggest. In other words, if Muslim minority representation were to be proportionate to their share of the population, there would be at least three times, and at most four times as many (depending on the method of aggregation) Muslim-origin representatives in Western European legislatures as there are today. In some polities, such as France, the level of underrepresentation can be described as egregious. There was not a single Muslim-origin member of parliament (MP) in the French national assembly representing mainland France (the so-called “hexagon”) in 2010, whereas if French Muslims were proportionately represented, there would have been 48 Muslim-origin MPs.

2. For a prominent and early example of a comparative study of Muslim minority representation across Western national legislatures using such a name-based method, see Abdulkader H. Sinno (ed.), *Muslims in Western Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).

The causes and causal mechanisms of Muslim underrepresentation in Western European politics are complex and very much disputed, as the increasing number of scholarly publications on specific Muslim minorities in certain Western European countries attests, and the causes of descriptive underrepresentation as such fall beyond the scope of this report. More comparative and systematic analyses across polities and across different election cycles are necessary to uncover the sources of underrepresentation, which are likely to be (at least in part) structural since Muslim underrepresentation in politics is persisting across time in most European polities. Nonetheless, independent of the causal mechanisms underlying this phenomenon, it is important to expose the overall descriptive (quantitative, statistical) level of political underrepresentation that Muslim minorities suffer across Western European countries.

Secondly, the differences in Muslim minority representation between different Western European countries are enduring across time, rather than converging to a similar level of representation. Such enduring differences in the levels of Muslim representation between different Western European countries across time lends credence to the claim that there are distinct national political incorporation regimes, which result in differential rates of minority representation. For example, Belgium and the Netherlands are the only two Western European countries where Muslim minorities have been proportionately represented across multiple election cycles. In contrast, in France, Italy, and Spain, Muslim minorities have been severely underrepresented in politics, with very few or no Muslim-origin representatives in national legislatures. Moreover, as noted above, with the exception of Belgium and the Netherlands, all other Western European countries evidence various levels of Muslim underrepresentation in their national legislatures.

Thirdly, and most significantly for the purposes of this report, descriptive representation of Muslim minorities is not necessarily indicative of their substantive representation. When confronted with issues of ethno-religious significance for the Muslim minorities, such as attempts to criminalize ritual animal sacrifice that is necessary for the production of *halal* food, discriminatory measures against Muslim women with headscarves, attempts to criminalize circumcision,³ attempts to obstruct or prohibit the building of mosques with or without minarets,⁴ Muslim-origin politicians do not necessarily support the traditionally Muslim causes. For example, it is not unusual for a Muslim-origin MP to support banning Mus-

3. For a critique of the most recent attempt to criminalize circumcision before the age of 16 (an extremely advanced age for the Judeo-Islamic religious tradition), see Şener Aktürk, "Debating the circumcision ban in Norway," *Daily Sabah*, July 13, 2017. <https://www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2017/07/13/debating-the-circumcision-ban-in-norway#>

4. Şener Aktürk, "Of Mosques and Synagogues: Religious Diversity in Europe", *Hürriyet Daily News*, January 18, 2010.

lim women with headscarves from teaching in public schools, or to remain silent or abstain in the face of an attempt to prohibit circumcision or ritual animal sacrifice. These are somewhat paradoxical stances given the symbolic and substantive importance of such ethno-religiously specific issues for many if not most members of the Muslim minorities. Thus, various studies have confirmed that even in the few countries where the descriptive representation of Muslim minorities is proportional to their share of the population, such as the Netherlands, Muslim-origin MPs are as likely to voice opinions that are suppressive of Islamic religious expression and religiously-specific practices as they are likely to voice opinions that are supportive of Islamic practices and religious expression.⁵ The United Kingdom appears to be an outlier in the sense that British Muslim MPs are much more likely to be supportive of Islamic religious expression than their counterparts in continental Europe. Therefore, throughout this report, I will often refer to the general observable patterns of Muslim representation in “continental Europe,” which includes eleven of the twelve countries covered in this report – that is, all countries with the exception of the United Kingdom.

Fourthly, a different dimension of substantive underrepresentation of Muslim minorities is the persistence of what I have labeled as the “representation gap” between “conservative Turks (or Muslims) and their leftist representatives.”⁶ This ideological disconnect between the political preferences of the voters and their political representatives is not entirely unique to the Muslim minorities and can be observed, to some extent, in the political representation of many other disadvantaged minorities such as African Americans, who are on average more conservative than African American legislators in key issues such as gay marriage.⁷ As Tucker-Worgs and Worgs have argued in the case of same-sex marriage legislation in the United States, “Black legislators may serve as a buffer against black social conservatism.”⁸ Historically disadvantaged and marginalized minorities such as African Americans and Muslims are rebuffed by the conservative parties in the political party spectrum of their respective countries due to their identities, and they are left with the choices of supporting leftist or liberal parties, running as independent candidates, forming their own parties, and in the worst case scenario, which is a rather common outcome unfortunately, abstaining from voting altogether.

5. Nermin Aydemir and Rens Vliegthart, “‘Minority Representatives’ in the Netherlands: Supporting, Silencing or Suppressing?”, *Parliamentary Affairs* 69, no.1 (2016): 73-92.

6. Sener Aktürk, “The Turkish Minority in German Politics: Trends, Diversification of Representation, and Policy Implications,” *Insight Turkey* 12, no. 1 (2010): 65-80. Especially see pp. 71-72.

7. Donn Christopher Worgs, “Unpredictable? Black State Legislators and the Issue of Same Sex Marriage,” *Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting*, Chicago, IL, April 14, 2013; Tamelyn Tucker-Worgs and Donn C. Worgs, “Black Morality Politics: Preachers, Politicians, and Voters in the Battle Over Same-Sex Marriage in Maryland,” *Journal of Black Studies* 45, no. 4 (2014): 338-362.

8. Tucker-Worgs and Worgs, “Black Morality Politics.”

Fifthly, and related to the patterns of substantive underrepresentation mentioned above, Muslim religious conservatives are almost completely excluded from elected offices in continental Europe. In continental Europe,⁹ there are almost no Muslim MPs reported to be regularly attending a mosque or performing daily prayers, fasting, or performing the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca. These are already sufficiently significant indicators since daily prayers, fasting during Ramadan, and pilgrimage to Mecca are considered to be three of the five pillars of Islam, and the ones that are somewhat easier to observe and measure in the case of individuals elected to public office.

In the case of female Muslim MPs, an additional visible dimension of this exclusion is the fact that despite numerous political and public controversies on the headscarf issue, there is not and has never been a single Muslim woman with a headscarf elected to a national parliament in any continental European country, including both Western and Eastern European countries.¹⁰ This absence is particularly stunning if we consider the fact that there have been dozens of Muslim-origin women elected to the national legislatures, and that in many European countries (such as Germany and Austria) Muslim women were elected to the national legislatures before Muslim men, and continue to be represented in greater numbers. Even on the subnational level, Mahinur Özdemir of Belgium alone is often cited as the first, and still the only, Muslim MP wearing a headscarf in a regional legislature in continental Europe. Significantly enough, following a controversy over an episode of mass violence involving Muslims and Christians a century ago, she was forced to resign from her party and her political career came to an abrupt end – this holds true at least at the time of this report.

In the case of male Muslim MPs, the exclusion of religious conservatives is also observable, as already mentioned, in that there is almost no Muslim MP who is reported in the media as attending weekly Friday prayers in continental Europe (again, the United Kingdom being the non-continental exception), with one or two exceptions among dozens of MPs across eleven countries in the three electoral cycles reviewed in this report. Friday prayers are very significant for observational purposes because they have to be performed in public as part of a Muslim community and cannot be performed by individuals in isolation. It is not without reason that Friday prayers are sometimes compared to Sunday

9. “Continental Europe,” by definition, does not include the United Kingdom, which has a different pattern of Muslim representation as already noted. Thus, every mention of “continental Europe” in this report is meant to emphasize the general patterns and findings that pertain to all continental European countries, but not necessarily to the United Kingdom. If the pattern includes the United Kingdom, “Europe” is employed instead of “continental Europe.”

10. Mahinur Özdemir, whose election and expulsion will be discussed as part of the last country case study (Belgium) in this report, was elected to the regional parliament of the Brussels-capital region in 2009 - and not to the national parliament of Belgium, which is the Chamber of Representatives.

service at Christian churches and observing the Sabbath and attending Jewish synagogues on Saturdays. If not a single African American, Catholic, or Jewish member of the U.S. House of Representatives was reported as attending church or synagogue, this would offer a comparable scenario to the magnitude of exclusion Muslim religious conservatives suffer in continental European legislatures. In an earlier work, I referred to this phenomenon as the greater and true challenge of multiculturalism in Europe, while critically noting the lack of religiously observant Muslim minority politicians in national politics in Germany and elsewhere across continental Europe – a fact that is rather problematic from a democratic point of view.¹¹

These five cross-national and inter-temporal observations about patterns of Muslim minority representation in continental Europe point to a strange kind of reverse or inverted representation from the top to the bottom, rather than from the bottom to the top, as the idea of political representation is conventionally understood. Throughout processes of political selection and election, Muslim minorities in continental Europe are subjected to a form of social engineering, whereby party leaderships acting as gatekeepers nominate and promote what they consider to be desirable role models for the Muslim minorities, rather than seeking out the authentic representation of the ideas, interests and demands of the Muslim minorities. In other words, in their nomination of Muslim-origin candidates for the national legislatures, European political parties aspire to dictate how Muslim minorities “should be,” rather than how they really are.

The following review of Muslim minority representation in twelve key Western European countries provides many examples and observations that are indicative of the general patterns outlined above. Every country-specific discussion starts out by stating the number of Muslim-origin MPs in the national legislature, and then continues with an assessment of the Muslim share of the national legislature in relation to the Muslim share of the general population in the country, thus arriving at a quantitative measure of the level of Muslim representation in the country. The ideological party positions (left-right) and the gender of the MPs will also be discussed, since disproportionately leftist and disproportionately female representation of Muslim minorities are consistent with and indicative of the “representation gap” that I previously observed between conservative Muslims and their leftist representatives.¹² Finally, in every country, I also pay special attention to the stances that the MPs of Muslim origin have taken in

11. Sener Aktürk, *Regimes of Ethnicity and Nationhood in Germany, Russia, and Turkey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), especially see pp. 269-270.

12. Sener Aktürk, “The Turkish Minority in German Politics: Trends, Diversification of Representation, and Policy Implications,” *Insight Turkey* 12, no. 1 (2010): 65-80.

ethno-religiously specific controversies and public debates such as Islamic religious education, ritual animal sacrifice (*halal* food), the headscarf, circumcision, mosque construction, the call to prayer, and the teaching or use of languages such as Arabic and Turkish that are considered the native languages of the populations' Muslim-majority countries of origin.

AUSTRIA

Significant underrepresentation
in a post-imperial polity with an
old Muslim minority

There are a number of historical structural similarities between the situation of Muslim minorities and the relationship between Islam and the national identity in Austria and France along with several obvious differences. Just as the very violent secession of Algeria (1954-1962) left an indelible legacy in French national identity, one that in part explains the periodic resurfacing of anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic attitudes and initiatives, the centuries-long Ottoman-Austrian struggle over central Europe, epitomized in the Ottoman sieges of Vienna in 1529 and 1683, has been frequently utilized to demonize Muslims and to shape Austrian national identity in an Islamophobic direction.¹³

Austria, again similarly to France, has a relatively old Muslim minority by Western European standards, which dates back to the Austrian occupation (1878) and annexation (1908) of Bosnia and Herzegovina more than a century ago. This also explains why Austria had a law codifying and regulating the practice of Islam (*Islamgesetz*) since 1912, which was controversially amended in 2015. On the other hand, there is also a long history of anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic public discourse in Austria, exemplified in the memorialization of the Ottoman siege of Vienna in September 1683, which has

13. Sener Aktürk, "September 11, 1683: Myth of a Christian Europe and the Massacre in Norway," *Insight Turkey* 14, no. 1 (2012): 1-11.

been the subject of significant historical revisionism and myth-making in the service of Islamophobia.¹⁴

Muslims in Austria are significantly underrepresented in the national legislature, although their numbers are increasing. As of 2014, 5.1 percent of Austria's population was estimated to be of Muslim origin. Thus, if Muslims were proportionately represented, there would have been 9 MPs of Muslim origin in the Austrian parliament which consists of 183 members. However, as of July 2010, Alev Korun of the Green Party was the only MP of Muslim origin in the Austrian parliament. This situation changed significantly in the following electoral cycle. As of 2014, there were four MPs of Muslim origin in the Austrian parliament: Aygül Berivan Aslan, Asdin El Habbassi, Alev Korun, and Nurten Yılmaz. Thus, four out of 183 members of the Austrian parliament, corresponding to 2.2 percent of the total, were of Muslim origin, which was still significantly short of the 5.1 percent of the Austrian population that was of Muslim origin in 2014. As this report was in the final stages of publication, Austrian legislative elections were held in October 2017 and five Muslim-origin candidates were elected to the parliament: Nurten Yılmaz, Selma Yıldırım, and Muna Duzdar from the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ), Efgani Dönmez from the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), and Alma Zadic from *Liste Pilz*.¹⁵

Three of the four MPs of Muslim origin in the previous parliament, and four of the five MPs of Muslim origin in the current parliament, are women. Asdin El Habbassi, of Moroccan origin, was the only Muslim male elected to the Austrian parliament in the previous legislative cycle, whereas Efgani Dönmez is the only Muslim male MP in the current legislative cycle. In their respective parliaments, El Habbassi and Dönmez were also the only Muslim-origin MPs elected from a conservative party, the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), which is the traditional Christian Democratic party in Austria. In contrast, Aslan and Korun were elected from the Green Party, whereas Duzdar, Yıldırım, and Yılmaz were elected from the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ). Another dimension that differentiated El Habbassi from the other Muslim-origin MPs was his self-identification as an observant, practicing Muslim, which is indeed very rare among Muslim MPs in continental Europe. For example, El Habbassi openly stated that he prays five times a day and fasts during the month of Ramadan.¹⁶ Yet another dimension that distinguished El Habbassi from the other three MPs

14. Ibid.

15. I thank Enes Bayraklı of the Turkish-German University for providing this information during the final revisions of this report.

16. "Asdin El Habbassi: Mit dem Kreuz in der Schule habe ich kein Problem," *Kleine Zeitung*, June 22, 2013. Available at <http://www.kleinezeitung.at/politik/4061751/Asdin-El-Habbassi_Mit-dem-Kreuz-in-der-Schule-habe-ich-kein-Problem>.

in his legislative term was his country of origin, namely Morocco - the country of origin of the other three Muslim MPs was Turkey. In the current legislative term, a Palestinian (Duzdar) and a Bosnian (Zadic) woman joined the ranks of Muslim MPs in the parliament. Nonetheless, it is also worth noting that the MPs whose country of origin was Turkey also differed in terms of their attitudes vis-à-vis the main political parties in Turkey. For example, Aslan openly sympathized with the Kurdish socialist party in Turkey.¹⁷ In sum, Austrian MPs of Muslim origin have been overwhelmingly female, leftist, and from a seemingly secularist background. Nonetheless, until October 2017, there was a notable but singular exception to this pattern in the person of Asdin El Habbassi, who self-identified as an observant, practicing Muslim.

There have been numerous controversies regarding Islamic religious practices and Muslims in Austrian politics in the 2010s. The Islam Law (*Islamgesetz*) was amended in February 2015 amidst significant controversy.¹⁸ The new Islam Law, unlike the century-old previous one, banned any kind of foreign funding of mosques and religious leaders, which would result in the end of the support provided to the Turkish-speaking imams and mosques by Turkey's Directorate of Religious Affairs. However, many Turkish-speaking Muslims in Austria are not given Austrian citizenship, and hence are Turkish citizens permanently living in the country. As such, the Islam Law's intervention can also be seen as an attempt to cut the services provided through Turkey's Directorate of Religious Affairs to Turkish citizens who reside in Austria. Given the peculiarly restrictive citizenship laws in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, one has to bear in mind that a large segment of the Muslim minorities permanently living in these countries are citizens of their countries of origin, and thus, the assimilationist measures directed at them amount to an attempt to assimilate other countries' citizens by their West European host states. This dimension of their legal status transforms the controversies around the regulation of Muslim minorities' religious practices, rights and freedoms into international conflagrations between the Western European host states and the Muslim minorities' countries of origin.

The most direct solution to this problem would be the mass naturalization of Muslim minorities so that they become citizens of the countries where they permanently reside (e.g. Austria, Germany, Switzerland, etc.) and in order for their rights and freedoms to be considered strictly within the domain of domestic politics. The current status quo, whereby a large segment (in some Western European

17. Aslan placed her photo while taking a "selfie" with Selahattin Demirtaş, the leader of the HDP, the Kurdish socialist party in Turkey, as her "pinned tweet" in Twitter, the popular social media outlet. See <https://twitter.com/Berivan_Aslan_/status/794341256583331841>.

18. "Austria passes controversial 'Islam law,'" *AlJazeera*, February 25, 2015. <http://stream.aljazeera.com/story/201502251406-0024589>

states even the majority) of Muslim minorities are denied citizenship, and yet are also targeted by the state-led restrictions and assimilationist social engineering projects, is destined to create international crises between the host states and the countries of origin whose citizenship is retained by the Muslim minorities.

FRANCE

Extreme underrepresentation of
a relatively old Muslim minority
with citizenship

France is the Western European country with the largest Muslim minority population, both in terms of the absolute number of Muslims, and also as a proportion of the general population. Thus, in a purely demographic sense, it is logical to begin a general review of Muslim political representation in Western Europe with the case of France. Moreover, in 1830, France occupied Algeria, a Muslim-majority territory and subsequently incorporated Algeria as a department (province) of France, rather than as an overseas colony. As such, we could also consider France as the oldest among all the Western European polities to have an uninterrupted Muslim presence in its modern polity.¹⁹ In other words, the Muslims of Algerian origin were incorporated, rather forcefully, into the French polity as early as 187 years ago. Finally, the relatively “civic territorial” and “liberal” French citizenship regime²⁰ suggests that most Muslims in France have citizenship and voting rights, compared to, for example, neighboring Germany or Switzerland. All of these fac-

19. Spain, Portugal, and Italy (especially Sicily and Lucera) also had very sizeable Muslim minorities if not majorities in their modern-day territories until at least the late Middle Ages. These Muslim populations were gradually, or in some cases rather abruptly, completely eradicated through a mix of conversions, expulsions, and massacres by the early 16th century. Thus, I deliberately described France as having “the oldest uninterrupted Muslim presence as part of its modern polity” from the occupation of Algeria in 1830 to the present day.

20. Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

tors - the magnitude (absolute and proportional), the relatively early encounter with, and the incorporation into, French politics and society (since the 19th century), and the high rates of citizenship - would predict higher levels of Muslim minority representation in French politics compared to other Western European polities where Muslim minorities do not possess these demographic, historical, political and legal advantages.

In stark contrast to the seemingly favorable conditions listed above, Muslims in France have one of the lowest levels of political representation in all of Western Europe. In 2010, 8.55% of Metropolitan France was estimated to be of Muslim origin and there are 577 members in the French parliament, known as the “National Assembly.” If the representation of the Muslim minority in the French National Assembly was proportionate to its share of the population in Metropolitan France (also known as the “hexagon”), there should have been approximately 49 Muslim members in the French parliament. Instead, in 2010, there was not a single Muslim MP in the National Assembly representing Metropolitan France. The only Muslim in the parliament at the time represented Mayotte, a southeast African island off the coast of Madagascar, which is 99% Muslim.

This situation was not necessarily specific to one election cycle either. After the following election cycle in 2012, where the socialists fared somewhat better, there were 4 Muslim MPs, corresponding to 0.7% of the parliament, which is still less than one-tenth of what their share of the population (8.55%) would suggest. This was the parliament that was elected in the June 2012 elections, where the Socialist Party came first. In other words, the French parliament had only four Muslim MPs, and was “missing” 45 Muslim MPs, even in an electoral cycle where the Socialist Party, which receives the overwhelming support of the Muslim minorities, was relatively successful. Finally, the historic victory in the June 2017 legislative elections that gave French President Emmanuel Macron a sweeping parliamentary mandate brought 8 Muslim-origin MPs into the National Assembly, the quantitative peak of Muslim representation in the French legislature.²¹ These MPs were Said Ahamada, Belkhir Belhaddad, Brahim Ham-mouche, Fadila Khattabi, Mustapha Laabid, Mohamed Laqhila, Mounir Mah-joubi, and Naima Moutchou.

However, even with this historic spike in minority representation, the French Muslims are 41 MPs short of what their proportionate representation in the French legislature would suggest. The extreme underrepresentation of French Muslims is particularly surprising given their demographic weight, rela-

21. Françoise Marmouyet and Romain Houeix, “Diversity gains ground in France’s new-look National Assembly after vote,” *France24*, 21 June 2017, available at <<http://www.france24.com/en/20170621-france-diversity-gains-ground-new-look-national-assembly-after-legislative-election>>, accessed on November 27, 2017.

tively long-term familiarity with French culture, language, and politics, as well as the fact that a large majority hold French citizenship compared to many other Muslim minorities in Western Europe who are not citizens of the country in which they reside.

Who are the Muslim MPs in the French parliament? What, if anything, can the ideological and gender composition of French Muslim MPs tell us about Muslim representation in France? As already noted, there were no Muslim MPs representing Metropolitan France in 2010.²² In 2014, there were four Muslim MPs in the National Assembly representing Metropolitan France.²³ These were Pouria Amirshahi, Kheira Bouziane, Seybah Dagoma and Chaynesse Khirouni.

Three of the four French Muslim MPs were female and one was male (Pouria Amirshahi), thus indicating a significant overrepresentation of women, which is in stark contrast to the remarkable underrepresentation of women in the French parliament at large. “By 2007, the proportion of women in the National Assembly had increased slightly (18.5 percent), yet France remained in nineteenth place among 25 EU member states for women’s political representation in Parliament.”²⁴ In stark contrast, the proportion of women among Muslim MPs was 75 percent, more than four times the proportion of women in the French national parliament. The observation of female overrepresentation among French Muslim MPs as such is similar to the prominence of women among Muslim MPs in other key European national legislatures such as Germany, and thus may be indicative of a continental European pattern.

In the 2012-2017 legislative cycle, all four French Muslim MPs belonged to the Socialist Party, indicating a leftist monopoly on Muslim representation in French politics. This is also the starkest version of a pattern observed across European polities, where leftist hegemony, in this case even a monopoly, can be observed among Muslim-origin MPs. As a direct consequence of such leftist hegemony, the Muslim representation rises and falls in tandem with the fortunes of the Socialist Party in France. In terms of their birthplaces, two of the French Muslim MPs were born in Metropolitan France (Dagoma and Khirouni), whereas Bouziane was born in Oran, Algeria, when it was still part of France (1953), and only one (Amirshahi) was born outside of France (Tehran, Iran).

22. The only Muslim MP among 577 members of the National Assembly was Aly Abdoulatifou representing the island of Mayotte off the coast of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean.

23. The MPs representing the department of Mayotte, Ibrahim Aboubacar (socialist) and Boinali Said (socialist), were likewise Muslim. Mayotte is almost exclusively inhabited by Muslims.

24. Sylvain Brouard and Vincent Tiberj, “Yes they can: An experimental approach to the eligibility of ethnic minority candidates in France,” in Karen Bird, Thomas Saalfeld, and Andreas M. Wüst (eds.), *The Political Representation of Immigrants and Minorities: Voters, parties and parliaments in liberal democracies* (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 165.

According to reputable national public opinion surveys in France, “70% of French Muslims of both sexes and across the age spread claim to fast for the entire month (of Ramadan)” as Claire Adida, David Laitin, and Marie-Anne Valfort cited in their most recent book on this topic.²⁵ Based on the same survey, “39% of Muslims in France adhere to the strict regimen of five prayer interludes each day” and “74% report regularly buying only *halal* meats.”²⁶ The headscarf “is worn by nearly one-third of religious Muslim women in France.”²⁷ These figures evidence a relatively high level of observable religiosity, especially compared to the non-Muslim majority in France. For example, based on these numbers, if women wearing Islamic headscarves were proportionately represented in the French parliament, there would be approximately seven female MPs wearing headscarves in the French parliament, when at the moment there is none, and there were never any in previous legislative terms either. Similarly, two-fifths of the Muslims living in Metropolitan France claim to pray five times a day, while there has never been any Muslim MP from mainland France claiming to perform daily prayers. In short, there is a virtual absence of religious conservative Muslims in the French parliament, despite the fact that religious conservatives make up a significant portion of the Muslim minority in France. This situation points to a significant democratic deficit in the representation of the Muslim minority in France, which persists across both sexes. The fact that there are increasing numbers of secular Muslim MPs in the French parliament is undoubtedly good news, since they constitute a very large portion of the minority, but the fact there are no religious conservative Muslim MPs in addition to the secular MPs is a major problem.

France witnessed many ethno-religiously specific initiatives and political controversies directly related to Islam and the Muslim minorities between 2010 and 2017. For example, already by August 2016, at least 15 French towns banned wearing the “burkini,” a type of swimsuit for women that was designed by and popular among Muslim women.²⁸ In one particularly controversial confrontation, “armed police officers forced a woman at a Nice beach to remove some of her clothing as part of the French city’s controversial ban on the burkini.”²⁹ This was the most recent manifestation of an unenviable political “tradition” of administra-

25. Claire L. Adida, David D. Laitin, Marie-Anne Valfort, *Why Muslim Integration Fails in Christian-Heritage Societies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 83. The survey that is their source for this and the following footnotes is Institut français d’opinion publique, 2011, “Analyse 1989-2011: Enquete sur l’implantation et l’évolution de l’Islam de France.” <http://www.ifop.fr/media/pressdocument/343-I-document_file.pdf>.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

28. “Burkini ban: Police in Nice force woman to remove part of clothing,” <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/08/24/europe/woman-burkini-nice-beach-incident-trnd/>

29. *Ibid.*

tive and executive bans on various symbols of Islamic religiosity in France, including the well-known legislation in 2004 that banned headscarves in schools, and the 2011 decree that banned women from wearing the *niqab* in any public space.³⁰

The year 2015 was particularly difficult for the Muslim minority, when terrorist attacks against satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in January and the Bataclan theater in November, which killed many French people including French Muslims, led to increasing pressure on the Muslim minority, including police raids of mosques but also “at least 63 attacks against mosques.”³¹ This is despite the fact that many of the terrorists were born and raised in socioeconomically troubled French *banlieues*, and most of them were not regular attendees of mosques and cannot be considered typical religious conservatives but rather disoriented youths who had experimented with several forms of radicalism. The rise of Islamophobic bestsellers such as the books by Michel Houellebecq, Eric Zemmour, and Alain Finkelkraut, is very likely to have contributed to the consolidation of Islamophobic prejudices in the public sphere.³²

The structural discrimination that Muslims suffer in the job market is probably the most important negative aspect of the prevailing anti-Muslim public discourse on the everyday life of ordinary Muslims in France. Claire Adida, David Laitin, and Marie-Anne Valfort conducted an experiment to gauge whether and to what extent anti-Muslim discrimination existed in the job market. Based on a “matching strategy,” they constructed two French African personalities with almost identical qualifications reflected in their CVs, who only differed in their first name, Marie Diouf and Khadija Diouf. Diouf is a commonly recognizable African-Senegalese last name, so in this way, the researchers were controlling for both anti-African prejudice, and testing whether African Muslims, who are considered allegedly “less Muslim” than Middle Eastern Muslims, are subjected to a lower level of discrimination. The results were striking in that, “for every 100 positive responses received by Marie Diouf, Khadija Diouf received only 38 positive responses, or 2.5 times less.”³³ Considering that this is only the level of discrimination African Muslim women suffer vis-à-vis African Christian women, one might expect that Arab Muslim women and Arab Muslim men suffer even more devastating levels of discrimination in the job market. In short, the striking

30. “Full-face veils outlawed as France spells out controversial niqab ban,” *Guardian*, 3 March 2011, <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/03/niqab-ban-france-muslim-veil>>, accessed on November 27, 2017.

31. Olivier Esteves (2016): *Islamophobia in France: National Report 2015*, in Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016, p. 173. For the many negative consequences of the counter-terrorism measures on the Muslim minority, see especially pp. 169-176.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 171-172.

33. Claire L. Adida, David D. Laitin, and Marie-Anne Valfort, “Identifying barriers to Muslim integration in France,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, vol. 107, no. 52 (2010), pp.22388. Available at <<http://www.pnas.org/content/107/52/22384.full.pdf>>.

discrimination against French Muslims in the job market is probably the most consequential injustice suffered by ordinary Muslims.

Despite these ethno-religiously specific developments directly concerning the Muslim minority in France, French Muslim MPs at large did not lead any social protest movement or political challenges against these seemingly anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim initiatives (e.g. the burkini ban), trends (e.g. increasing attacks against mosques), and structural discrimination (e.g. the discrimination against Muslims in the job market). This is somewhat surprising given the prominent roles that minority MPs assumed in the advancement of civil rights in other contexts such as in the United States. Nonetheless, given the increasing number of Muslim MPs in the French legislature and the dramatic level of economic and cultural discrimination that the Muslim minority experiences in France, there is reason to be cautiously optimistic about the future prospects of a Muslim civil rights movement in France.

A discussion of Muslim representation in French politics would be incomplete without at least some reference to the deep trauma that the colonization of Algeria and the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) left in French politics and society. Hundreds of thousands of Muslim Algerians were killed during the military conflict between the French army and the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN). The French effort to keep Algeria a part of France while denying citizenship and voting rights to roughly nine million Muslim Algerians, who made up approximately 90% of Algeria's population, ultimately failed.³⁴ A genuine reckoning with the deliberate brutality and mass violence of the Algerian War, including a public recognition of the French state's culpability in these major war crimes, would be a major step toward achieving equal citizenship and restoring the dignity of the Muslim minority.

In conclusion, the political representation of the Muslim minority in France epitomizes many of the patterns and trends one observes across European polities, perhaps highlighted more vividly than observed elsewhere. France has the largest Muslim minority in the West, both in absolute and relative terms, and yet this minority is extremely underrepresented in national politics. Given the relative size of their population, there should be approximately forty-nine Muslim MPs in the French parliament, whereas there have been between zero and eight Muslim MPs depending on the electoral cycle. Second, all the Muslim MPs in the 2012-2017 legislative cycle were from the Socialist Party, indicative of a socialist monopoly or at least socialist hegemony in the representation of Muslims. This also overlaps with the preferences of most ethno-racial and religious minorities in France.

34. Sener Akturk, "Religion and Nationalism: Contradictions of Islamic Origins and Secular Nation-Building in Turkey, Algeria, and Pakistan," *Social Science Quarterly* 96, no. 3 (2015): 778-806.

For example, eighty percent of African- and Maghrebini-French voters supported Segolene Royal, the socialist candidate, against Nicholas Sarkozy, in the presidential election of 2007.³⁵ Third, women are very significantly overrepresented among Muslim MPs, which is particularly striking given the notable underrepresentation of women in French politics at large. Fourth, Muslim minorities suffer from vast socioeconomic discrimination and legal-political barriers to religious observance in France, in addition to the deep trauma of the crimes against humanity during the Algerian War, and yet Muslim MPs do not appear to be leading a political or societal movement related to these major issues of specific concern to the Muslim minorities. The case studies that follow demonstrate that these characteristics of Muslim minority representation in French politics are not necessarily specific to France, but are characteristic of Muslim minority representation in a large number of European polities.

**TABLE 1. EXPECTED AND ACTUAL NUMBER OF MUSLIM MPS
IN THE FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (2010-2017)**

Legislative Term	Total number of MPs	Muslim share of French population	Expected number of Muslim MPs	Actual number of Muslim MPs	Muslim representation ratio (actual/expected no. of Muslim MPs)	Number and percentage - leftist	Number and percentage - female
2010-14	577	8.55%	49	0	0	N/A	N/A
2014-17	577	8.55%	49	4	0.08	4 (100%)	3 (75%)
2017-ongoing	577	8.55%	49	8	0.18	Centrist ³⁶	2 (25%)

35. Vincent Tiberj, "3.2 France," in Karen Bird, Thomas Saalfeld, and Andreas M. Wüst (eds.), *The Political Representation of Immigrants and Minorities: Voters, parties and parliaments in liberal democracies* (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 69.

36. Six of the eight Muslim MPs belong to the *La République en Marche*, led by the current president Emmanuel Macron, who has been described as the "quintessential centrist" and who does not explicitly identify as a leftist or a rightist. The other two Muslim MPs belong to the *Mouvement Démocrate et apparentés* faction in the parliament, which is similarly centrist. Classifying either one or both of these parties as right wing or left wing may be criticized as inaccurate.

SPAIN

No Muslim representation
despite more than a thousand
years of Islamic history

Spain, despite having had very large numbers of Muslims and an Islamic civilization for at least eight hundred years (8th-16th century), and despite having more than a million Muslims at present, did not have a single Muslim-origin MP as of 2014. This situation did not change in the following electoral cycle either, and as of July 2017 there was not a single Muslim-origin MP in the Spanish parliament. By July 2014, Muslims already made up 2.3 percent of Spain's population, which would correspond to 9 MPs (out of 350) in the Spanish parliament if they were proportionately represented. This is somewhat surprising, as mentioned above, since Spain of all the Western European polities arguably has had the deepest encounter and engagement with Islamic civilization and Muslim peoples. However, as the previously discussed examples of France (with its Algerian provinces since 1830) and Austria (with the occupation and annexation of Bosnia Herzegovina in 1878-1908) demonstrate, having a long historical familiarity, or engagement, with Muslim populations does not necessarily promote high Muslim minority representation, and might even prevent or suppress Muslim minority representation through the recycling of centuries-old myths (e.g. Siege of Vienna), fears, traumas, and Islamophobic images in the public domain. Thus, some researchers argue that in Spain "discrimination against the 'Moor'... dates back to the al-Andalus period and

stretches to the conquest of the peninsula by the Christian kingdoms, that is the 15th century.”³⁷

There is no Muslim-origin MP in the Spanish parliament, and there are very few and limited studies on the political preferences and partisan affiliations of Spanish Muslims. There is a Spanish survey “asking immigrants their party preferences *if they had voting rights*,”³⁸ and this survey includes Moroccans in Barcelona and Madrid, the two cities where the largest Muslim minorities probably reside in Spain at present. According to the results of this survey, 42% and 56% of Moroccan immigrants in Barcelona and Madrid, respectively, indicated their preference for the main socialist party in Spain (PSOE), whereas the second most popular choice, conservative PP only received the support of 3% and 7% of the Moroccan immigrants in Barcelona and Madrid, respectively.³⁹ A large segment of the Moroccan immigrants, 46% in Barcelona and 33% in Madrid, did not indicate a preference for any political party, which may be interpreted as a sign of profound estrangement from, or lack of familiarity with, the Spanish political system. Nonetheless, the main Spanish socialist party, PSOE, appears to have an overwhelming majority bordering on near-monopoly among the Moroccan immigrants who expressed any partisan affiliation, which is consistent with the pattern observed in previous electoral cycles in other major Western European democracies such as France, at least until the 2017 electoral cycle, and Germany until at least the early 2000s.

37. Alfonso Casani Herranz (2016): *Islamophobia in Spain: National Report 2015*, in Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016, p. 468.

38. Santiago Perez-Nievas, “Party choices among immigrants and visible minorities in comparative perspective: 3.11 Spain” in Karen Bird, Thomas Saalfeld, and Andreas M. Wüst (eds.), *The Political Representation of Immigrants and Minorities*, New York: Routledge, 2015, p. 96.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

ITALY

Almost no Muslim representation
despite more than a thousand
years of Islamic history

Italy, despite having had large numbers of Muslims and an Islamic civilization for at least four hundred years (9th-13th century), especially in Sicily and in some locations in Southern Italy, and despite having approximately one and a half million Muslims at present, had only a single Muslim-origin MP as of 2014. Muslims made up 2.45 percent of Italy's population at the time, which would correspond to 16 Muslim-origin MPs (out of 630) in the Italian parliament, if Muslims were proportionately represented.

As of 2014, Khalid Chaouki, born in Morocco in 1983, and a journalist by profession, was the only Muslim-origin MP in the Italian parliament at a relatively young age.⁴⁰ He is a member of the Democratic Party (*Partito Democratico, PD*) in Italy, which is a center-left social democratic party in Italian politics, led by Matteo Renzi, who served as the prime minister until his resignation in December 2016 following a national referendum that rejected his constitutional reform plan. Somewhat similar to the ethno-religious profile of Asdin El Habbassi, the Austrian Muslim MP from the ÖVP, Khalid Chaouki also self-identifies as a Muslim and has been involved in Islamic organizations since his youth, being one of the founders of Young Muslims of Italy. Thus, he is among the rare Muslim-origin

40. See Khalid Chaouki's website at <http://www.khalidchaouki.it/> accessed on July 28, 2017.

MPs in continental Europe with a somewhat religious conservative profile. Moreover, he played a role in pushing forward the new citizenship legislation that is meant to expedite and facilitate the acquisition of citizenship by second-generation immigrants, which include a large number of Muslims.⁴¹ Finally, he is also directly engaged with the specifically religious needs of the Muslim minority such as the discussions around building “a mosque for Rome.”⁴²

Somewhat similar to the case of Spain, Italy, and especially the Italian island of Sicily, has had four centuries of Islamic heritage (9th-13th century), which complicates the relationship between the Italian national, the Sicilian regional, and the Islamic religious, cultural, and civilizational identities. For example, Italian intellectual Pietrangelo Buttafuoco converted to Islam, or according to his own interpretation, he returned to the Sicilian Islam of his forefathers, taking the new name of Giafar al-Siqilli (Ja'far of Sicily), in honor of the Arab-Islamic emirs of Sicily.⁴³ Such a simultaneous coming to terms with the Islamic heritage of Italy, especially of Sicily, and Muslim religious identity in public, can be considered as a very promising step forward in the acceptance and equal citizenship of the Muslim minority. Nonetheless, the political representation of the Muslim minority in Italy remains among the lowest in Europe.

41. “Interview with Mr. Khalid Chaouki, Italian MP from Moroccan descent,” available at <http://www.ccme.org/ma/en/interviews/46003> accessed on July 28, 2017.

42. “A Mosque for Rome?” available at <http://www.khalidchaouki.it/khalidchaouki/?p=15304> accessed on July 28, 2017.

43. “Allah conquista Buttafuoco: ‘Chiamatemi pure Giafar,’” *Il Giornale*, April 8, 2015. Available at <http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/politica/allah-conquista-buttafuoco-chiamatemi-pure-giafar-1114089.html> accessed on July 28, 2017.

GERMANY

Exclusion of religious conservatives despite diversification of representation

Unlike Italy and Spain, Germany did not have Muslim minorities for many centuries. Unlike France and Austria, Germany did not acquire substantial Muslim minorities through territorial annexation (i.e. French Algeria and Austrian Bosnia) more than a century ago. In contrast, Germany's Muslim minority is a relatively new Muslim minority that is the result of the postwar labor migration of the 1960s, and thus differs from Austria, France, Italy, and Spain.

In absolute terms, Germany has the second largest Muslim minority in Europe with 3,850,000 Muslims, corresponding to 4.66 percent of Germany's population as of 2014. If Muslims' representation were to be proportionate to their share of the population, there would be 29 or 30 MPs of Muslim origin among the 634 MPs in the Bundestag. Instead, there were 13 MPs of Muslim origin in the Bundestag in 2014, which is still a very significant improvement compared to the previous legislative term, when there were 8 MPs of Muslim origin.

Muslim-origin MPs first appeared in the social democratic SPD and the Green Party in German politics as far back as the early 1980s. Muslims' initial identification with the SPD was in great part due to the fact that almost all of the Muslim-origin people in Germany arrived through the guest worker programs in the 1960s, and as such, they were all originally "workers" or "proletariat" (and/or spouses and

children of workers who constitute working class families as such) by definition.⁴⁴ This original identification with the SPD very slowly but steadily eroded as the Muslim minority representation went through an ideological diversification.⁴⁵ Despite this gradual erosion and ideological diversification, however, the SPD remained the most popular political party for the Muslim minority in Germany for several decades, even though each of the five major political parties attempted to attract Muslim voters and eventually nominated Muslim-origin candidates.

As of the 2013-2017 legislative cycle, thirteen MPs of Muslim origin were elected to the Bundestag: Sevim Dağdelen, Ekin Deligöz, Karamba Diaby, Cemile Giousouf, Metin Hakverdi, Cansel Kızıltepe, Özcan Mutlu, Omid Nouripour, Cem Özdemir, Mahmut Özdemir, Aydan Özoğuz, Azize Tank, and Gülistan Yüksel. It has to be emphasized that this is the maximum number of Muslim-origin MPs that one can estimate by using the name-based definition of ethno-cultural Muslim origins that was articulated at the beginning of this report. In contrast, some news sources only refer to six of these MPs as self-identifying as Muslims (Deligöz, Giousouf, Mutlu, Nouripour, Cem Özdemir, and Özoğuz), whereas only three MPs list “Muslim” as their religious identity on the website of the Bundestag.⁴⁶

Six of the Muslim-origin MPs were elected from the social democratic SPD (Diaby, Hakverdi, Kızıltepe, Mahmut Özdemir, Özoğuz, and Yüksel); four from the Green Party (Cem Özdemir, Deligöz, Mutlu, and Nouripour); and two (Dağdelen and Tank) from the socialist Left (*Linke*) Party. Cemile Giousouf is the only Muslim-origin MP elected from a center-right party, namely, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). Liberal democratic FDP was the only party that did not have any Muslim-origin MPs in the Bundestag during the 2013-2017 legislative cycle. Six patterns regarding the partisan affiliation, ideological diversification, professionalization, ethno-national origins, gender distribution, and religious self-identification of these MPs can be observed from their listings in the Bundestag website directory.

First, almost half of the Muslim-origin MPs, six out of thirteen, are affiliated with the social democratic SPD, and almost all of them, twelve out of thirteen, are affiliated with left of the center (green, social democrat, and socialist) political parties. Thus, there is an overwhelming majority or a near monopoly of leftist parties in Muslim minorities’ political representation in the German national

44. Aktürk, Şener. *Regimes of ethnicity and nationhood in Germany, Russia, and Turkey*. Cambridge University Press, 2012, Chapter 2, “The Challenges to the Monoethnic Regime in Germany, 1955-1982”, pp. 47-72.

45. Aktürk, “Turkish minority in German politics.”

46. Greg Wilford, “All of Germany’s Muslim MPs voted in favour of same-sex marriage,” *Independent*, 2 July 2017. Available at <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/angela-merkel-chancellor-germany-same-sex-marriage-vote-lgbt-muslim-mps-berlin-bundestag-cdu-sdp-a7819391.html#gallery>>, last accessed on November 28, 2017.

parliament. The singular exception in this picture is CDU's Muslim MP, Cemile Giousouf, a Muslim female of Turkish origin from the Western Thrace region of Greece. This observation is consistent with my earlier finding that the representation of Turkish minority in German politics is disproportionately leftist.⁴⁷ The partisan diversity of Muslim-origin MPs, including four of the five largest political parties in the Bundestag (CDU, Greens, Left, and SPD), is also consistent with my earlier findings that Turkish representation (all Turkish MPs are also nominally considered Muslim origin) in German politics is diversifying. It may be noted that the FDP, the other major political party in German politics, also had a Turkish/Muslim-origin MP in the previous (2009-2013) legislative term, Serkan Tören. Thus, all five major political parties in German politics currently or very recently have had a Muslim-origin MP in the Bundestag.

The partisan distribution of Muslim-origin MPs broadly parallels the voting pattern of the Muslim-origin immigrants. According to Andreas M. Wüst, “among the largest group of former labour migrants and their descendants—naturalized citizens of Turkish origin—there is a clear preference for the SPD (over 60 per cent) and for the Greens (over 20 per cent).”⁴⁸ Similarly, ten of the thirteen Muslim-origin MPs in the Bundestag (77%) were elected from the SPD (six MPs) and the Greens (four MPs), which is broadly consistent with their voting pattern as estimated by Wüst.

Second, an absolute majority of the Muslim-origin MPs, seven out of thirteen (53.8%), were women, a significantly higher proportion than the representation of women in the Bundestag overall, which was 36.5%.⁴⁹ All four parties had Muslim-origin female politicians, including three in the SPD, two in the Left Party, and one each in the Green Party and the CDU. In fact, the Muslim-origin MPs of the Left Party and the CDU were all women; in other words, the CDU and the Left Party did not have any Muslim-origin male MPs. This finding is also consistent with my earlier finding that the representation of Turkish minority in German politics is disproportionately female. In fact, if one removes Omid Nouripour and Karamba Diaby, who are not of Turkish origin, seven out of eleven MPs of Turkish-Muslim origin (63.6%) were women. This pattern persisted in the next electoral cycle when 12 of the 19 Muslim-origin MPs (63%) elected to the Bundestag (including both Turkish and non-Turkish individuals) were women. The curious puzzle regarding the overrepresentation of women among Muslim minority MPs is likely the result

47. Aktürk, “Turkish minority in German politics,” pp. 66-68.

48. Andreas M. Wüst, “Chapter 3: Party choices among immigrants and visible minorities in comparative perspective—Germany”, in *The Political Representation of Immigrants and Minorities* (Karen Bird, Thomas Saalfeld, and Andreas M. Wüst eds.), New York: Routledge, 2015, p. 91

49. Deutscher Bundestag, *Facts: The Bundestag at a glance*, p. 7. Available at <https://www.btg-bestellservice.de/pdf/80140000.pdf> accessed on June 29, 2017.

of political engineering from above by party leaderships and gatekeepers. On this puzzling reality, I concur with Abdulkader Sinno, who argued already in 2008 that, “[overrepresentation of women among Muslim MPs] is most likely because party leaders in proportional representation (PR) systems have much discretion over the selection of minority members of their list and are likely to choose liberal Muslim women who conform to their visions of Muslim assimilation.”⁵⁰

Third, an overwhelming majority of the Muslim-origin MPs, eleven out of thirteen (85%), were of Turkish origin in 2013-2017. The other two Muslim-origin MPs were of Iranian and Senegalese origin. In fact, Senegalese origin Karamba Diaby became the first ever African or black MP in the German parliament when he was elected in 2013. This is also consistent with the previous legislative cycles, while the entry of these Iranian- and Senegalese-origin MPs made Muslim minority representation in the German parliament more ethnically diverse than it had hitherto been. This might be because many of the countries of origin for Muslim immigrants in Germany, such as Iran, are not multiparty democracies, and thus, immigrants from these countries may be particularly unfamiliar with multiparty politics. Turkish-origin immigrants may have been accustomed to competitive multiparty politics more than other Muslim-origin immigrants since Turkey has held competitive multiparty elections since 1946 and before then, the Ottoman Empire, held elections since 1908.

Fourth, there has been a gradual but steady increase in the number of Muslim-origin MPs in the German parliament. The number of Muslim-origin MPs increased from two in 1994-1998 to three in 1998-2005, to five in 2005-2009. The number of Muslim-origin MPs has increased most remarkably in the last two electoral cycles. Whereas there were eight Muslim-origin MPs in the 2009-2013 legislative term, this number increased to thirteen in the 2013-2017, and to nineteen in the 2017-2021 legislative term.

Fifth, it is an observable fact that once a Muslim-origin person is elected as an MP, s/he is likely to be reelected in the following terms. For example, Ekin Deligöz of the Greens was first elected in the 1998-2002 legislative period (14th legislative term), and then was reelected in 2002-2005, 2005-2009, 2009-2013, 2013-2017 and 2017-2021. As such, she has had an uninterrupted presence in the Bundestag for the last six legislative terms, or since 1998 (-2017, continuing). Cem Özdemir (Greens), Sevim Dağdelen (Left), Lale Akgün (SPD), and Aydan Özoğuz (SPD) were also elected for two or more legislative terms. This phenomenon of Muslim-origin MPs serving multiple terms is evidence of the emergence of a professional class of politicians.

50. Abdulkader Sinno (ed.), *Muslims in Western Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), p. 76.

Sixth, and somewhat more directly related to my key arguments in this report, only a small minority of Muslim-origin MPs, four out of thirteen (30.8%) in the 2013-2017 legislative term, self-identified as Muslims in the Bundestag directory online. These MPs were Ekin Deligöz (Green), Cemile Giousouf (CDU), Omid Nouripour (Green), and Aydan Özoğuz (SPD). In stark contrast, two-thirds of the non-Muslim Bundestag members self-identified as Protestant (*evangelisch*) or Catholic. This demonstrates that while two-thirds of Christian-origin parliamentarians choose to declare a religious sectarian affiliation, only about one-third of the Muslim-origin MPs choose to do so. This is a remarkable indicator of the degree to which the Muslim-origin MPs disavow identification with Islam compared to the non-Muslim (i.e. Christian-origin) parliamentarians in Germany. The low level of public identification with Islam among the Muslim-origin MPs can be interpreted as another sign of the relative exclusion of religious conservatives. Nonetheless, it is also noteworthy that the remaining nine Muslim-origin MPs simply do not indicate any religious affiliation at all; however, they also do not choose to identify as “confessionless” (*konfessionslos*) or as “atheist,” as is the case of some non-Muslim MPs (e.g., Thomas Nord of the Left Party). Finally, there was no Jewish or other non-Christian religious affiliation besides Islam among the German MPs in the 2013-2017 legislative cycle.

In the September 2017 elections, a total of 19 Muslim MPs were elected from three political parties: Aydan Özoğuz, Metin Hakverdi, Mahmut Özdemir, Cansel Kızıltepe, Karamba Diaby, Yasmin Fahimi, Gülistan Yüksel, and Elvan Korkmaz from the SPD; Omid Nouripour, Cem Özdemir, Danyal Bayaz, Ekin Deligöz, Canan Bayram, and Filiz Polat from the Greens; Amira Mohamed Ali, Evrim Sommer, Gökay Akbulut, Niema Movassat, and Sevim Dağdelen from the Left Party. Altogether 8 Muslim MPs were elected from the SPD, 6 from the Greens, and 5 from the Left Party, representing all three leftist parties in the German parliament. In stark contrast, no Muslim MP was elected from any of the three right-wing parties that passed the 5% electoral threshold and gained representation in the Bundestag, namely, the CDU/CSU, FDP, and the new far-right populist party, AfD (*Alternative für Deutschland*). As such, the leftist parties monopolized (100%) the representation of Muslim-origin MPs in the Bundestag in an election cycle where the number of elected Muslim-origin MPs peaked. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the most recently elected Bundestag (19th legislative term) had 709 MPs compared to the previous Bundestag (18th legislative term), which had 634 MPs. Thus, at least about 10% increase in the number of Muslim-origin MPs was to be expected, even if one assumes no change in the relative size of the Muslim minority population (Table 2). Somewhat paradoxically, however, the number and percentage of Muslim-origin MPs in the German parliament increased, while their ideological diversity decreased. This development is contrary to the trend

I observed earlier regarding the gradual but steady ideological diversification of Muslim minority representation across different political parties in Germany.⁵¹

**TABLE 2. EXPECTED AND ACTUAL NUMBER OF MUSLIM MPS
IN THE GERMAN BUNDESTAG (2010-2017)**

Legislative Term	Total number of MPs	Muslim share of German population	Expected number of Muslim MPs	Actual number of Muslim MPs	Muslim representation ratio (actual/expected no. of Muslim MPs)	Number and percentage - leftist	Number and percentage - female
2009-13	622	4.45%	28	8	0.29	6 (75%)	3 (38%)
2013-17	634	4.66%	30	13	0.43	12 (92%)	7 (54%)
2017- ongoing	709	4.66%	33	19	0.58	19 (100%)	12 (63%)

Does descriptive representation lead to substantive representation in the case of German MPs of Muslim origin? Germany witnessed many controversies surrounding Islam and Muslims, at least since the early 1990s, if not much earlier. For the purposes of gauging the link between descriptive and substantive representation, it is appropriate to limit the temporal scope of the inquiry to the last six legislative terms (1998-2017), since there have been Muslim-origin MPs in the Bundestag in all of these terms. Within this 20-year time period, among other topics of specific interest for the Muslim minority, the following topics have been prominently discussed in the public sphere in Germany: bans on Islamic ritual animal slaughter, male circumcision, and women's headscarves; the building of mosques and/or minarets; both serial (NSU) and seemingly isolated (Marwa el-Sherbini) murders of Muslims; and citizenship and language tests.

The murder of Marwa el-Sherbini's by an ethno-religiously motivated ethnic German in Dresden in July 1, 2009, did not become a major topic in any of the Muslim-origin MPs campaigns or public speeches.⁵² In a bitter irony, the murder of el-Sherbini "spark[ed] Egyptian fury," many Egyptian politicians reacted, and there were protests in Egypt, but the German political establishment, including even the highest profile Muslim-origin politician in Germany Cem Özdemir, did

51. Aktürk, Sener. "The Turkish Minority in German Politics: Trends, Diversification of Representation, and Policy Implications." *Insight Turkey* 12, no. 1 (2010): 65-80.

52. For background, see "Fünf Jahre nach dem Mord: Gedenken an Marwa el-Sherbini," *Der Tagesspiegel*, July 1, 2014, available at <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/fuenf-jahre-nach-dem-mord-gedenken-an-marwa-el-sherbini/10127968.html> last accessed on July 30, 2017.

not bring publicity to this hate crime.⁵³ As I concluded in 2012, “[w]hat can be described as Germany’s ‘Dreyfus affair’ caused demonstrations that drew tens of thousands of people in Egypt, but not in Germany.”⁵⁴

There have also been many cases where Muslim-origin MPs even actively intervened *against* the demands for the public expression of Islamic religious practices. The opinions that the MPs of Muslim-origin publicly expressed during the discussions over the headscarf bans in Germany provide many examples of such cases. For example, Lale Akgün, who has been twice elected as an MP from the SPD (2002-2009) and who has been the “Islam commissioner” (*Islam-Beauftragte*) of her party, was publicly critical of the removal of the headscarf ban for schoolteachers.⁵⁵

That the Muslim-origin MPs are not representative of the religious conservative opinions found among the Muslim minority became abundantly clear once again, when “all of Germany’s Muslim MPs voted in favour of same-sex marriage” in the parliamentary vote over same-sex marriage in 2017.⁵⁶ The measure legalizing same-sex marriage in Germany was opposed by 226 MPs, including Chancellor Angela Merkel, but was approved with the support of 393 MPs including all the Muslim MPs. This is not to suggest that all or even most Muslims in Germany oppose same-sex marriage; however, it is also an undeniable fact that many, perhaps even the majority, of the Muslim minority has an unfavorable opinion vis-à-vis the legalization of same-sex marriage. In fact, BIG (Union for Innovation and Justice), the first de facto “Muslim party” that participated in German federal elections in September 2013, openly campaigned against the adoption of children by same-sex couples, which can be considered an indication that there is significant opposition to same-sex marriage among the Muslim minority.⁵⁷ Thus, against the background of intra-Muslim differences of opinion, the fact that all Muslim MPs, regardless of political, ethnic, regional, and other differences, voted in the same direction, including the sole Muslim MP from the conservative CDU, is a testimony to the magnitude of socially liberal opinions endorsed by the Muslim

53. “The headscarf martyr: murder in German court sparks Egyptian fury,” *The Guardian*, July 7, 2009. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jul/07/german-trial-hijab-murder-egypt> Last accessed on July 30, 2017. A Google search on “Cem Özdemir Marwa el-Sherbini” yields no results, which is stunning since Özdemir is the highest profile German politician of Muslim origin, a multiple-term MP and also a co-chair of the Green Party.

54. Aktürk, *Regimes of Ethnicity and Nationhood in Germany*, pp. 110-111.

55. “Kopftuch-Urteil: ‘Ich verstehe auch die ganzen Jubelschreie nicht’. Lale Akgün im Gespräch mit Thielko Griess.” Available at http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/kopftuch-urteil-ich-verstehe-auch-die-ganzen-jubelschreie.694.de.html?dram:article_id=314210. Last accessed on July 30, 2017.

56. “All of Germany’s Muslim MPs voted in favour of same-sex marriage,” *Independent*, July 2, 2017. Available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/angela-merkel-chancellor-germany-same-sex-marriage-vote-lgbt-muslim-mps-berlin-bundestag-cdu-sdp-a7819391.html#gallery>. Last accessed on July 30, 2017.

57. “Almanyada tarih yazan Türk partisi: BIG,” *Haber7*, September 9, 2013, available at <http://www.haber7.com/dis-politika/haber/1071543-almanyada-tarih-yazan-turk-partisi-big> last accessed in December 20, 2017.

MPs. As mentioned in the beginning of this report, this pattern resembles the disconnect between conservative blacks opposed to same-sex marriage in the United States, and their black representatives who vote in favor of same-sex marriage.⁵⁸

Within the constraints of this brief report, the opinions that the Muslim-origin MPs have voiced, or rather have not voiced, regarding Marwa el-Sherbini's murder, the headscarf controversy, and same-sex marriage legislation, and their lack of religious self-identification as Muslims in the Bundestag directory, were presented as evidence of their observable distance from the religious conservative opinions among the Muslim minority. These are also manifestations of what I originally defined as the "representation gap" between "conservative Turks and their leftist representatives" in German politics.⁵⁹ Finally, the case of Germany presents abundant evidence that descriptive representation does not necessarily translate into substantive representation in terms of religiously specific issues for the Muslim minorities.

58. Tucker-Worgs and Worgs, "Black Morality Politics."

59. Aktürk, "Turkish minority in German politics," pp. 71-72.

SWITZERLAND

Persistence of ethno-religious
exclusion in a direct confederal
democracy

Switzerland evidences an extreme underrepresentation of the Muslim minority in national politics, which is comparable in its magnitude and severity to the Muslim underrepresentation observed in Italy. Even though 4.5 percent of the population of Switzerland was estimated to be of Muslim origin as of 2014, only one of the 200 members of the Swiss parliament (*National Council*), Fathi Derder, was of Muslim origin as of February 2014, corresponding to 0.5 percent of the parliament. If Muslims' representation was proportionate to their share of the population, there would have been nine Muslim MPs instead of one in the Swiss parliament in 2014. In the following national election in 2015, a second Muslim-origin MP, Sibel Aslan, was elected, while Fathi Derder was reelected, thus bringing Muslim minority representation to 1 percent of the parliament, still significantly short of nine Muslim MPs corresponding to 4.5 percent. Such extremely low political representation is also in great part due to a very restrictive and exclusionary citizenship law, which has resulted in only about 12 percent of Muslim residents of Switzerland having Swiss citizenship.⁶⁰

Fathi Derder, a journalist born in 1970 in Lausanne, one of the French-speaking cantons of Switzerland, was the only Muslim-origin MP in the Swiss parlia-

60. "There are between 350,000 and 400,000 Muslims living in Switzerland; 12% of these are Swiss citizens." Saira Bano Orakzai (2016): *Islamophobia in Switzerland: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016, p. 532.

ment in the 2011-2015 legislative cycle, and was reelected in 2015.⁶¹ He belongs to the Liberal Radical Party in the Swiss parliament. The Liberal Radical Party was relatively recently formed through the merger of the Radical Democratic Party and the Liberal Party in 2009.⁶² Sibel Arslan, a lawyer born in 1980 in Tunceli, Turkey, was elected for the first time as an MP from the Green Party in 2015.

Fathi Derder, the two-time Muslim-origin MP in the Swiss parliament, was previously embroiled in a controversy that pitted him against representatives of the Islamic community in Switzerland when he was working as a journalist in 2010.⁶³ Sibel Arslan, on the other hand, made the news in March 2017, when she attended a pro-PKK - a Kurdish socialist organization recognized as a terrorist organization by the EU, the United States, and Turkey - rally, where there were banners that read "Kill Erdogan [Turkey's president]."⁶⁴ More importantly for the purposes of this report, Arslan's explicit display of support for a Kurdish socialist organization, which is considered a terrorist organization by most Muslim and non-Muslim states, and which started out as a militant atheist organization following the Bolshevik/Soviet model, is another indicator of the non-religious, if not anti-religious, orientation of another Muslim-origin MP.

Switzerland is a country that has been facing mass Islamophobic developments, which in some respects are unprecedented. The most notorious and well-known case is the popularly approved constitutional amendment that banned the construction of mosques with minarets in Switzerland.⁶⁵ Yet, the Muslim-origin MPs have not been leading a counter mobilization against these Islamophobic developments.

In sum, the Muslim minority is severely underrepresented in the Swiss federal parliament. Moreover, neither one of the two Muslim-origin MPs can be said to have a religious conservative profile. On the contrary, both of the Muslim-origin MPs have been involved in controversies that pitted them against other Muslim

61. See Fathi Derder's profile on the official website of the Swiss parliament, available at <<https://www.parlament.ch/en/biografie?CouncillorId=4079>>, accessed on May 25, 2017.

62. "FDP. The Liberals." Available at *Encyclopedia Britannica*, available online at <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/FDP-The-Liberals>>. Accessed on May 23, 2017.

63. For the controversy sparked by Fathi Derder's article that was found to be Islamophobic by Tawfiq El Maliki, the spokesman of the Islamic Council of Switzerland, see Gregoire Corthay, "Fathi Derder fache les musulmans," *20 minutes*, June 23, 2010. Available at <<http://www.20min.ch/ro/news/vaud/story/27500322>>, accessed on August 1, 2017.

64. "Turkish Foreign Ministry summons Swiss ambassador over PKK rally in Bern," *Hürriyet Daily News*, March 25, 2017. Available at <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-foreign-ministry-summons-swiss-ambassador-over-pkk-rally-in-bern-.aspx?PageID=238&NID=111250&NewsCatID=510>>, last accessed on August 1, 2017. For a news story on the same rally with the "Kill Erdoğan" posters by Turkey's official news agency, see, "Terör örgütü İsviçre'de Erdoğan'ı hedef gösterdi," *Anadolu Ajansı*, March 25, 2017. Available at <<http://aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/teror-orgutu-isvicrede-erdogani-hedef-gosterdi-/779622>>, last accessed on March 25, 2017.

65. Şener Aktürk, "Of Mosques and Synagogues: Religious Diversity in Europe," *Hürriyet Daily News*, January 18, 2010.

groups that can be considered as being religious conservative (e.g. Islamic Council of Switzerland). The Muslim-origin MPs being drawn into conflicts against more conservative or religious segments of the Muslim minority is a common pattern that one encounters in most continental European countries. This may be related to the fact that rather than nominating Muslim-origin candidates that are representative of the minority, political parties choose to nominate candidates that they think should be role models for the minority, which often happen to be far more leftist, secular, and non-religious than the minority as a whole.

DENMARK

The exclusion of religious conservatives and social engineering

Denmark exhibits a very curious pattern regarding Muslim representation in the national legislature. There were 4 Muslim-origin MPs in 2010, and 3 Muslim-origin MPs in 2014, corresponding to 2.2 percent and 1.7 percent of the Danish parliament, respectively. Muslims were estimated to be 3.51 percent and 4.05 percent of the Danish population in 2010 and 2014, respectively. Thus, one observes that descriptive representation of the Muslim minority corresponded to about half of the Muslim share of the Danish population, which is evidence of a significant underrepresentation but still considerably higher than the descriptive representation of the Muslim minority in France, Italy, Spain, and Austria, which were discussed above. Moreover, some scholars even considered Denmark to be a “deviant case” of exceptionally high ethnic minority representation.⁶⁶ To begin with, such a characterization of the Muslim minority as having exceptionally good descriptive representation in Danish politics, even if this may have been the case for local politics in Denmark at an earlier period in history, is certainly not accurate with regards to the Muslim representation in the national parliament in 2010 or in 2014. The Muslim minority is significantly underrepresented in Danish politics as well, but the level of descriptive under-

66. Togeby, Lise. “The Political Representation of Ethnic Minorities—Denmark as a Deviant Case.” *Party Politics* 14 (2008): 325-43.

representation is not as egregious as in some other Western European polities such as France, Italy, and Spain.

The substantive representation of the Muslim minority in Denmark, and the political profiles of the Muslim-origin MPs, on the other hand, present a most intriguing and at least in part troubling picture. As of 2010, Denmark had an above average descriptive representation of its Muslim minority compared to other Western European countries, with four Muslim-origin members in its unicameral parliament, *Folketing*, namely Yıldız Akdoğan, Özlem Sara Çekiç, Naser Khader, and Kamal Qureshi. At first sight, these four MPs appeared rather “representative” as they included two men (Khader and Qureshi) and two women (Akdoğan and Çekiç); diverse origins, Turkish (Akdoğan), Kurdish (Çekiç), Pakistani (Qureshi), and Palestinian (Khader); and three leftists and a conservative. However, a closer look at their public record on Islam-related issues reveals a much more complicated and counterintuitive picture, where most of the Muslim-origin MPs exhibited various confrontations with the more conservative segments of the minority and a somewhat problematic relationship with Islamic religiosity.

What were these four Muslim-origin MPs’ positions on Islamic religiosity? Naser Khader became the immigration spokesman of the Conservative Party and advocated a complete ban of the *burqa*, an Islamic covering of the entire body.⁶⁷ This was countered by Peter Christensen, the Liberal Party spokesman, who argued, that, “it’s going too far if we start legislating on what sort of clothes people can and cannot wear. The *burqa* and covered faces should not be allowed if you work with people in the public sector -- but that is where we draw the line.”⁶⁸ Kamal Qureshi, a socialist MP of Muslim Pakistani origin, is famous for making the contents of a sex education CD available on his website that was banned by the Danish health ministry for its references to coprophilia and bestiality.⁶⁹ Yıldız Akdoğan, a social democrat, together with Naser Khader, is a founder of an organization that is controversially named “Democratic Muslims” (*Demokratiske muslimer*).⁷⁰ Finally, Özlem Sara Çekiç, a member of the Socialist People’s Party, was the other female Muslim-origin MP elected in 2007.

The 2007 election cycle was also very instructive and “controversial” in terms of demonstrating the attitudes towards another Muslim candidate for the parlia-

67. “Danish Conservatives Call for Burqa Ban,” *Der Spiegel*, August 18, 2009, <<http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,643490,00.html>>. Last accessed on August 6, 2010.

68. *Ibid.*

69. “Banned sex education CD big hit online,” *ABC News Online*, February 21, 2004, Available at <<http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200402/s1050206.htm>>. Last accessed on August 12, 2010.

70. The group “Democratic Muslims” is criticized for having a “democracy problem.” Af Hadi Khan, “Demokratiske Muslimer har et demokratisk problem,” *Kristeligt Dagblad*, 28 March 2006, available at <<https://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/debat/demokratiske-muslimer-har-et-demokratisk-problem>>, accessed on May 27, 2017.

ment, Asmaa Abdol-Hamid, a woman who was wearing the Islamic headscarf. In fact, as Rikke Andreassen argues, “[F]or over a decade, Muslim women’s veils and headscarves have been an integral part of the Danish news media’s portrayals of female ‘visible minorities’” and “during the 2000s, one woman and her headscarf (*hijab*) made headlines...[and] her name is Asmaa Abdol-Hamid.”⁷¹ She was briefly and controversially hired as a co-host on a TV program related to Islamic issues on the Danish public service TV station, *Danmark’s Radio*, following the cartoon controversy in Denmark in 2006. The infamous cartoon controversy began when a series of cartoons depicting Prophet Muhammad as a terrorist with a bomb were published in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* in September 2005.

In April 2007, Asmaa Abdol-Hamid decided to run as an MP candidate of the Red-Green Alliance (*Enhedslisten*), the most left-wing party in Denmark. This led to a huge political controversy. “A member of the Danish People’s Party, Soren Krarup, compared the headscarf to a Nazi swastika” and the same party’s member of the European Parliament, Mogens Camre, “has argued that she (Abdol-Hamid) needs psychiatric treatment.”⁷² It was generally known that *Enhedslisten* would not come to power, and would only be supporting a leftist government without being part of a coalition government. Despite this, the impression was deliberately created by the ruling right-wing government that the left-wing opposition was dependent on this one Muslim candidate wearing a headscarf from a far-left party that was very unlikely to even be part of a coalition government:

During the election campaign, right-wing parties did use Abdol-Hamid as an argument against the left wing and Social Democratic opposition. The Liberal party’s election campaign chief strategist, then Minister of Employment Claus Hjort Frederiksen, said that the leader of the Social Democrats, Helle Thorning-Schmidt, was dependent on “the controversial Muslim candidate” and... tried to discredit the opposition by arguing that a vote for the opposition was a vote for “the controversial Muslim candidate.”⁷³

Other Muslim-origin candidates were compared to and distinguished from Asmaa Abdol-Hamid by the Danish media. As Andreassen argues, even the newspaper *Politiken*, “often considered one of the most immigrant- and minority-friendly newspapers in Denmark,” in an interview with another Muslim-origin candidate, Özlem Sara Çekiç mentioned above, included the journalist’s prejudices about Abdol-Hamid and Muslim women with headscarves. The journalist Hybel maintained, “I was thinking about Asmaa Abdol-Hamid, who made us all, or at least the media, look suspiciously at all Muslim women who are getting near

71. Rikke Andreassen, *Negotiating Identity in Scandinavia: Women, Migration, and the Diaspora*, p. 61.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

73. Rikke Andreassen, *Negotiating Identity in Scandinavia: Women, Migration, and the Diaspora* p. 71

Parliament. We judge them all in relation to Asmaa...⁷⁴ The implication is that, compared to headscarf-wearing Asmaa Abdol-Hamid, Özlem Sara Çekiç appears much less “suspicious” and more acceptable.

Some other leading Muslim-origin candidates also vocally participated in the demonization of Asmaa Abdol-Hamid. Naser Khader, the then leader of the new center-right party New Alliance, and a cofounder of Democratic Muslims mentioned above, “argued that if the Social Democrat-led opposition gained power it would imply the imams gaining power: ‘With the red bloc (the opposition) you also get Asmaa and all the imams.’⁷⁵ Hence, both the mainstream media, including supposedly immigrant-friendly outlets such as *Politiken*, right-wing parties in general, including at least one prominent Muslim-origin MP, Naser Khader, openly demonized the candidate of the far leftist Red-Green Alliance, Asmaa Abdol-Hamid, seemingly only because she was wearing an Islamic headscarf.

Apart from being the candidate of a far leftist political party, Red-Green Alliance, Abdol-Hamid repeatedly emphasized that “she was against the death penalty, was a feminist and favoured LGBT rights” and yet “it was apparently legitimate to keep asking her these questions—in other words, to doubt the answers she gave.”⁷⁶ Thus, although it was impossible to depict Abdol-Hamid’s aforementioned political views as being religiously conservative, she was still excluded and demonized “as if” she was secretly a religious conservative, seemingly just because she wore a headscarf. In conclusion, the Danish political establishment and the media excluded an allegedly religious conservative candidate (although she was not a religious conservative) in the person of Asmaa Abdol-Hamid. She was not elected to the parliament in 2007, and did not run for parliament in the following election.

As of 2014, Özlem Sara Çekiç preserved her seat, and Nadeem Farooq⁷⁷ (Social Liberal Party, *Radikale*) and Fatma Öktem (Liberal Party, *Venstre*) joined her as the new Muslim-origin MPs in the Danish parliament, whereas Naser Khader, Kamal Qureshi, and Yıldız Akdoğan were no longer MPs. This corresponded to a decline in the descriptive representation of Danish Muslims, who would need to have approximately seven or eight Muslim MPs instead of three MPs, if they were to be proportionately represented. In the next legislative term, following the June 2015 elections, neither Özlem Sara Çekiç nor Nadeem Farooq could preserve their seat, while Yıldız Akdoğan and Naser Khader, who were not reelected in the previous term, came back as the newly elected MPs. Given the frequency of

74. Ibid., p. 73.

75. Ibid., pp. 71-72.

76. Ibid., p. 70.

77. Brief political biographical information about Nadeem Farooq is available in English at <<http://www.thedanishparliament.dk/Members/rvnafa.aspx>>, accessed on May 27, 2017.

reelection and the recycling of the same names across legislative terms, one might speak of the political professionalization of some Muslim-origin MPs. Nonetheless, 2010 was the peak of the Muslim minority representation with four MPs; even that, however, was only about half of the expected level of descriptive representation in relation to the Muslim minority's population, while the last two legislative terms witnessed a steady decline in the number of Muslim-origin MPs.

NORWAY

Between
multiculturalism and
social engineering

Among the Scandinavian countries, Norway occupies an interesting middle position between Denmark and Sweden. In Denmark, there is widespread hostility to any kind of conspicuous Islamic religious expression in politics, as evidenced in the vitriolic reaction to Asmaa Abdol-Hamid's candidacy discussed in the preceding section. In contrast, Sweden is seemingly the most multiculturalist Scandinavian country, which will be discussed further below. In comparison, Norway appears to be more open to Islamic religiosity than Denmark, but does not have as many Muslim-origin MPs as Sweden. The Norwegian parliament, elected in September 2013, had four Muslim-origin MPs out of 169 MPs in total, thus corresponding to 2.4% of all MPs. Since the Muslim population of Norway was estimated between 2.88%⁷⁸ and 4.2%,⁷⁹ Muslim minority representation in the Norwegian parliament can be considered as either roughly proportional or about sixty percent of what their population size would suggest. Thus, Muslim minority representation in the Norwegian legislature, although not fully proportionate to their share of the population, was not particularly low as of the 2013-2017 leg-

78. The Association for Religious Data Archives (ARDA) estimated the size of the Muslim minority in Norway as 2.9% as of August 2017. Available at <http://www.thearda.com/internationalData/countries/Country_170_1.asp>, last accessed on August 2, 2017.

79. Sindre Bangstad (2016): *Islamophobia in Norway: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016, p. 405.

islative term. The four Muslim-origin MPs in this term were Mudassar Hussain Kapur, Mazyar Keshvari, Abid Q. Raja, and Hadia Tajik. They all belonged to different political parties: Kapur (Conservative [*Hoyre*] Party); Keshvari (Progress Party); Raja (Liberal [*Venstre*] Party); and Tajik (Labor Party).

The relatively proportional representation of the Muslim minority in the Norwegian parliament is a rather recent development. Previous research on minority representation in Norway concluded that minorities had relative success at gaining political representation at the local level, but failed to do so at the national level.⁸⁰ In fact, in each of the 2001, 2005, and 2009 national elections, there was only one Muslim representative elected to the Norwegian parliament, which corresponded to 0.6% (1 of 169) of the MPs, indicating a significant underrepresentation of the Muslim minority. In 2001, Afshan Rafiq, “a woman of Pakistani background born in Norway,” was elected MP as part of the Conservative Party list.⁸¹ As such, the first Muslim MP elected was both following the general European pattern in being a woman, but also going against the general European pattern in being elected from a center right, conservative party. In 2005, Saera Khan, another woman whose parents are of Bangladeshi origin, was elected from the Labour Party as the only Muslim MP in the 2005–2009 legislative term.⁸² As such, Saera Khan’s election conformed to the general European pattern regarding Muslim minority representation in terms of both ideology (leftist) and gender (woman). In the 2009 national election, Akhtar Chaudhry was the only Muslim MP elected to the parliament from the Socialist Left Party. His election conformed to the general European pattern in terms of ideology (leftist, socialist). Thus, in three consecutive legislative terms spanning from 2001 to 2014, only one Muslim MP was elected to the Norwegian parliament, although in every legislative term it was a different person and from a different political party.

The infamous cartoon controversy that began in Denmark in September 2005 spread to Norway in January 2006 when the Norwegian newspaper *Magasinet* reprinted the cartoons.⁸³ Also similar to Denmark, there is a popular anti-immigrant far-right party in Norway, the Progress Party, which shares political power by being part of a coalition government that was still in power at the time this report was being written (August 2017). Thus, Norway also witnessed some

80. Johannes Bergh and Tor Bjorklund, “Minority representation in Norway: Success at the local level; failure at the national level,” in Karen Bird, Thomas Saalfeld, Andreas M. Wüst (eds.), *The Political Representation of Immigrants and Minorities: Voters, parties and parliaments in liberal democracies*, New York: Routledge, 2011, pp. 128–144.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

82. *Ibid.*

83. “Prophet Mohammed cartoons controversy: timeline,” *Telegraph*, May 4, 2015. Available at <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11341599/Prophet-Muhammad-cartoons-controversy-timeline.html>>, last accessed on August 3, 2017.

anti-Islamic legislative initiatives such as the attempt to ban the circumcision of children by criminalizing circumcision under the age of 16, which would make it impossible for Jews and Muslims to perform circumcision in early childhood or during infancy as required by their centuries-old religious tradition.⁸⁴

Any discussion of Muslim representation in the Norwegian public sphere and politics would be incomplete without acknowledging the momentous significance of the massacre perpetrated by Anders Behring Breivik in July 2011. Breivik murdered 77 people in the most violent atrocity in postwar Norwegian history. In committing this unprecedented crime, he was motivated by a deep hatred of Muslims and Islam. Breivik wrote a manuscript, which was over a thousand pages, titled, *2083: European Declaration of Independence*, with the goal of cleansing Europe from Muslims by the 400th anniversary of the Ottoman Empire's failed siege of Vienna in 1683.⁸⁵ Breivik copiously cited many American and European Islamophobic bestsellers in this manuscript; however, the Western mass media failed to critically scrutinize these authors' popular works which demonize Muslims and directly influenced the heinous acts of a mass murderer. Neither did this crime lead to any meaningful soul searching (at least in public) among the rather popular authors of these Islamophobic books, which seem to have provided "intellectual" justification and inspiration for Breivik's massacre. Nonetheless, Breivik's massacre created an acute awareness, at least among part of the Norwegian public, of the potentially fatal consequences of Islamophobia.

The political partisan distribution of Muslim-origin MPs in Norway demonstrates a peculiar and rather unusual, if not unique, pattern. Three of the four Muslim-origin MPs belong to parties that can be considered center right (Conservative, Liberal) and far right (Progress) in the ideological spectrum, whereas only one Muslim-origin MP belongs to the leftist, traditionally socialist, Labor Party. Three Muslim MPs, which also happen to be the ones that belong to the three right-wing parties, are male, whereas the sole Muslim female MP is also the only Muslim MP from a leftist party in the parliament. In its broad outlines, this is the opposite of the usual distribution of Muslim-origin MPs in European parliaments, since it is most common to have the great majority, sometimes even the entirety, of Muslim MPs belonging to leftist parties, and many, if not the majority, of Muslim MPs being female. In the case of Norway, both of these common patterns seem to be reversed. It is also very important to note that, following the legislative elections of September 2013, the far-right Progress Party came to power

84. Şener Aktürk, "Debating the circumcision ban in Norway," *Daily Sabah*, July 13, 2017. Available at <<https://www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2017/07/13/debating-the-circumcision-ban-in-norway>>, last accessed on July 13, 2017.

85. Sener Aktürk, "September 11, 1683: Myth of a Christian Europe and the Massacre in Norway," *Insight Turkey* 14, no. 1 (2012): 1-11.

for the first time in Norwegian history, as part of a coalition government with the center-right Conservative Party. This already has had, and continues to have, many negative repercussions for the Muslim minority in Norway, some of which will be mentioned below.

What can be said about the representation of religiously specific demands and goods for the Muslim minority? Both the cartoon controversy in the early 2006, and Breivik's massacre in 2011, put Islam and the Muslim minority in Norway under the spotlight, although with very different implications. While the protests against the cartoons that depicted Prophet Muhammad as a terrorist were framed to securitize the Muslim minority, Breivik's massacre understandably had the opposite effect of highlighting the dangerous nature of Islamophobia.

Soon after Breivik's massacre, Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg appointed Hadia Tajik, a 29-year-old Muslim woman of Pakistani origin, as the Minister of Culture, making her the highest profile Muslim-origin politician in Norway. She was not an MP in the parliament at that time (Akhtar Chaudhry of the Socialist Left Party was the only Muslim MP in the 2009-2014 legislative term), but she was elected as an MP from the Labor Party in the next national election in 2014. Her appointment as the Minister of Culture in 2012 has been interpreted as Stoltenberg's response to Breivik's attack on Norwegian multiculturalism.⁸⁶

There have been a number of political initiatives that targeted Islamic religious practices in Norway. Among the most recent ones, in May 8, 2017, the Progress Party, the junior partner in the coalition government and the third-largest party in Norway, voted to ban the circumcision of boys under 16 years of age.⁸⁷ The current Conservative-Progress coalition government also "aims to ban face-covering Muslim veils in kindergartens, schools, and universities."⁸⁸ I could not find any indication in the news stories as to whether Mudassar Kapur or Mazyar Keshvari, the Muslim-origin MPs of the Conservative and Progress Parties respectively, voicing opposition to their parties' (or coalition partner's) initiative to ban circumcision or to ban face-covering Muslim veils. While "France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Bulgaria, and the German state of Bavaria have all imposed restrictions on wearing full-face veils in public places,"⁸⁹ the more extreme initiative to ban circumcision of children has been very rare in the past; such ini-

86. Vaiju Naravane, "Woman of Pakistani origin is Norwegian Culture Minister," *The Hindu*, September 25, 2012, available at < <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/Woman-of-Pakistani-origin-is-Norwegian-Culture-Minister/article12642827.ece>>, last accessed on August 4, 2017.

87. Şener Aktürk, "Debating the circumcision ban in Norway," *Daily Sabah*, July 13, 2017. Available at <https://www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2017/07/13/debating-the-circumcision-ban-in-norway#>, last accessed on August 8, 2017.

88. "Norway plans to ban Muslim face veils in schools," June 12, 2017. Available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/norway-veil-ban-plans-muslim-islamic-dress-niqab-burqa-a7786826.html>, last accessed on August 4, 2017.

89. *Ibid.*

tiatives, however, are becoming dangerously common as evidenced by the failed attempt to ban circumcision in Germany. There was a previous legislation for the regulation of religious/ritual circumcision of boys, which was voted on in June 16, 2014.⁹⁰ At that time, too, there was a legislative proposal to ban circumcision for all boys under the age of 18, submitted by some members of the Center Party (*Senterpartiet*), but it was only supported by 4 MPs from the Center Party, and opposed by 100 MPs.⁹¹ Only time will tell whether the executive and the legislative initiatives to ban, criminalize, or severely restrict Judeo-Islamic religious practices such as circumcision will succeed in Norway.

90. For the exact voting record on this law, see the *Storting* (Norwegian parliament) website, available at <<https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Saker/Sak/Voteringsoversikt/?p=59665&dnid=1>>, accessed on August 4, 2017.

91. *Ibid.*

SWEDEN

Increasing descriptive
representation in an
institutionally multiculturalist setting

Based on institutional and political factors such as the electoral system and the citizenship regime, Sweden was expected to have high minority (immigrant-origin) representation, because “Sweden’s immigrant policy, with its far-reaching social and political rights, liberal citizenship laws and respect for cultural differences, is often regarded as an exemplary model of how to integrate immigrants in society.”⁹² Against the background of these expectations, in the scholarly literature on immigrant and minority representation in Sweden, which is fairly developed compared to many other countries discussed earlier in this report, there is a near-consensus that minorities are underrepresented.⁹³ As Maritta Soininen states, “[T]he puzzle... is how, despite several factors that should encourage minority representation, under-representation nonetheless persists [in Sweden].”⁹⁴ My findings regarding the representation of the Muslim minority in the Swedish parliament differ from the findings of these previous studies in that, and in conformity with

92. Henry Bäck and Maritta Soininen, “Immigrants in the political process,” *Scandinavian Political Studies* 21, no. 1 (1998), p. 29.

93. Rafaela M. Dancygier, Karl-Oskar Lindgren, Sven Oskarsson and Kåre Vernby, “Why are immigrants under-represented in politics? Evidence from Sweden,” *American Political Science Review* 109, no. 4 (2015): 703-724.

94. Maritta Soininen, “Ethnic inclusion or exclusion in representation? Local candidate selection in Sweden,” in Karen Bird, Thomas Saalfeld and Andreas M. Wüst (eds.), *The Political Representation of Immigrants and Minorities. Voters, Parties and Parliaments in Liberal Democracies*, New York: Routledge, 2011, p. 147.

the expectation of high minority representation based on the institutional and political opportunity structure, I found that the Muslim minority, which is of immigrant origin, is indeed proportionately represented, and recently even overrepresented, in the Swedish parliament.

Sweden evidences the highest level of descriptive representation of Muslim minorities in Scandinavia, and among all Western European countries - only Belgium and the Netherlands, which will be discussed as the last two countries in this report, have comparably high level of Muslim minority representation in their national legislatures. Whereas for Belgium and the Netherlands, proportional representation of their Muslim minorities has been a pattern for many consecutive legislative periods, in the case of Sweden, it is a more recent development. As late as 2010, Sweden had 7 Muslim-origin MPs in a parliament of 349 MPs, which corresponded to 2% of the parliament, whereas the Swedish Muslim minority was estimated at 2.6% at the time. Thus, the Muslim minority was underrepresented in Swedish politics until recently. The number of Muslim-origin MPs that entered the Swedish parliament doubled in September 2010, when 14 Muslim-origin MPs were elected to the parliament. In the following parliamentary elections in September 2014, the number of Muslim-origin MPs increased from 14 to 18, indicating a significant overrepresentation of the Muslim minority.

The balance between male and female Muslim MPs changed between the 2010-2014 and 2014-2018 legislative terms. In the 2010-2014 term, only 4 of the 14 Muslim MPs were female. In contrast, in the 2014-2018 term, 18 Muslim MPs exhibited a symmetrical gender distribution, with 9 females and 9 males among the Muslim-origin MPs in the Swedish parliament. If one takes into consideration the fact that Sweden is one of the few countries in the world where women reached parity with men in terms of legislative representation, then the gender distribution of Muslim MPs appears somewhat more surprising compared to other European countries. In most other European countries, such as France and Germany, although (French and/or German) women have been significantly underrepresented in parliament historically and even at present, a very large percentage if not an outright majority of the Muslim MPs tended to be women. Ironically, in one of the few European countries where women actually have equal representation with men in the parliament, both historically and at present, namely Sweden, at most half and sometimes even less than half of Muslim MPs have been women.

In terms of the ideological distribution of the Muslim MPs, one observes that half (7 out of 14) were elected from leftist parties in the 2010-2014 period, whereas three-quarters (14 out of 18) were elected from leftist parties in the 2014-2018 legislative period. This ideological distribution is not at all exceptional compared to the other European polities, since Muslim minority MPs are usually elected from leftist parties.

In the 2014-2018 legislative term, there were 18 Muslim-origin MPs out of the 348 MPs in total, corresponding to 5.17% of all MPs in the Swedish parliament. Since the Muslim minority was estimated at 3.62% of the population of Sweden, 18 Muslim MPs indicate a significant overrepresentation (of about 42.8%) of the Muslim minority in this particular legislative term. These 18 Muslim MPs and their political parties are as follows: Said Abdu (Liberal), Amir Adan (Moderate), Jabar Amin (Green), Hanif Bali (Moderate), Nooshi Dadgostar (Left), Adnan Di-brani (Social Democratic), Jamal El-Haj (Social Democratic), Tina Ghase (Moderate), Roza Güçlü Hedin (Social Democratic), Shadiye Heydari (Social Democratic), Amineh Kakabaveh (Left), Sulthan Kayhan (Social Democratic), Faradj Koliev (Social Democratic), Jamal Mouneimne (Social Democratic), Laila Naraghi (Social Democratic), Lawen Redar (Social Democratic), Daniel Riazat (Left), and Azadeh Rojhan Gustafsson (Social Democratic).

There are eight political parties represented in the Swedish parliament, *Riksdag*, and there are Muslim MPs in six of these eight parties, which indicates a high level of political diversification of Muslim representation in Swedish politics. The Social Democratic Party is by far the largest party in the *Riksdag*, having 113 MPs, followed by the Moderate Party with 83, the Sweden Democrats with 47, and the Green Party with 25 MPs.⁹⁵ The remaining parties in the parliament were the Center Party with 22 MPs, the Left Party with 21, the Liberal Party with 19, and the Christian Democrats with 16. Thus, it is not entirely surprising that the largest number of Muslim MPs, 10 out of 18 Muslim MPs, were from the Social Democratic Party. Meanwhile, the Social Democrats were still overrepresented among the Muslim MPs along the lines of European trends which see the Left dominating Muslim-origin parliamentary representation. The remaining 8 Muslim MPs were distributed as follows: 3 Left, 3 Moderate, 1 Liberal, and 1 Green Muslim MP. Thus, 14 Muslim MPs belonged to leftist parties (Social Democratic, Left, or Green), whereas only 3 Muslim MPs belonged to center-right parties (Moderate or Liberal). In terms of their ethnic and national origins, Muslim MPs with Iranian origins made up by far the largest group, and there were also ethnically Azeri, Eritrean, Kurdish, and Palestinian Muslim MPs. As per the criteria of identifying Muslim MPs that were discussed at the beginning of this report, Ali Esbati, who is a self-proclaimed atheist despite having a traditionally Muslim-origin name, was not counted as a Muslim MP, and there were also several Assyrian Christian MPs, who were excluded from this study despite possible confusion arising from their Muslim-sounding names.

Despite the fact that numerous Muslim women have been elected as MPs to the Swedish parliament, including 9 Muslim women serving as MPs in the current

95. "Parties represented in the Riksdag and number of members," available on the official website of the Swedish parliament at <<http://www.riksdagen.se/en/members-and-parties/>>, accessed on August 7, 2017.

(2013-2017) legislative term, there has never been a Muslim MP wearing a headscarf in the Swedish parliament. This is in conformity with the general European pattern, since there has never been a woman with a headscarf elected as an MP in any continental European national parliament. Nonetheless, it is worth noting in the case of Sweden, in particular, because altogether more than a dozen Muslim women have already been elected to the Swedish parliament over several legislative cycles, and thus, there has been ample opportunity to nominate (“select”) and elect a Muslim woman wearing a headscarf into the Swedish parliament, if any of the major political parties had chosen to do so.

According to Abrashi, Sander, and Larsson, “[n]egative and/or discriminating trends towards Islam and Muslims in Sweden are generally evident in every aspect of society included in this report [*Islamophobia in Sweden*]: media, legal, political, and school systems, the labor market and in public attitudes.”⁹⁶ In terms of laws and regulations regarding religious practices, concerns have been expressed regarding the legal obstacles to ritual animal sacrifice, and the rising medical and legal challenges to circumcision. “[Both] Jews and Muslims have expressed that the current regulations on slaughtering animals in Sweden pose an obstacle to enjoying their rights under international conventions (and obligations due to Sweden’s membership in the EU) to perform their religious rituals, including slaughter.”⁹⁷

More ominously, in January 2014, “the Swedish Medical Association which covers about 85 percent of doctors in Sweden,” strongly recommended banning “non-medical” (thinly veiled reference to religiously motivated) “circumcision of male newborns” until and unless they reach the age of 12 at least, and consent to the circumcision.⁹⁸ There was already a legislative motion submitted by the far-right Swedish Democrats Party to the Riksdag in September 2013 in order to ban “non-medical circumcision.”⁹⁹ Nonetheless, there is no legal and exhaustive ban on circumcision in Sweden as of the time of the current report. However, allegedly humanitarian and medical challenges to the procedure are rising in Sweden, as in Denmark, Norway, and Germany. “Ritual circumcision of underage boys increasingly has come under attack in Scandinavia, both by left-wing secularists as well

96. Aroma Abrashi, Ake Sander, Göran Larsson (2016). *Islamophobia in Sweden: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016, p. 495.

97. *Ibid.*, p. 508.

98. Vittorio Hernandez, “Denmark, Sweden Ban Non-Medical Circumcision of Boys,” January 29, 2014, available at <<http://www.ibtimes.com.au/denmark-sweden-ban-non-medical-circumcision-boys-1330592>>, accessed on August 8, 2017.

99. “Motion to ban non-medical circumcision introduced in Sweden,” *Haaretz*, September 24, 2013, available at <<http://www.haaretz.com/jewish/news/1.548861>>, last accessed on August 8, 2013.

as right-wingers who fear the influence of immigration from Muslim countries.”¹⁰⁰ Thus, we can conclude that the Jewish and Muslim families’ right to raise their children according to their own religious beliefs and thousand-year old traditions is under threat by increasingly more probable direct state intervention in the relationship between parents and their children. Whether and to what extent Muslim-origin MPs will be willing and able to defend the religiously motivated male circumcision and ritual animal slaughter when these religious practices come under more sustained political pressures remains to be seen.

100. Ibid.

UNITED KINGDOM

Religious conservative
and secular Muslim MPs in
a multiculturalist setting

At first sight, the United Kingdom appears to follow the common European pattern in that Muslims are underrepresented in its national legislature, the House of Commons - though not as severely underrepresented as in Catholic Latin European countries - and in so far as the overwhelming majority of Muslim MPs are leftist and women make up a slight majority. However, the United Kingdom differs in two very important aspects from continental Europe in that Muslim MPs publicly voice opinions that are supportive of Muslims' religiously specific needs and rights, and the British legal framework is already much more accommodative of Islamic religious practices than continental Europe. Thus, the United Kingdom exhibits moderate levels of Muslim representation in its national legislature, including Muslim MPs who are openly supportive of the religiously specific needs and rights of Muslims, combined with an institutional and legal framework that already provides better protections for the religious rights of Muslims compared to most continental European countries. Thus, it may be argued that the United Kingdom offers a much better environment than most continental European countries both in terms of the legal protection and the political representation of the religiously specific needs and rights of the Muslim minority. This is what sets the United Kingdom apart from much of continental Europe.

Fifteen Muslim MPs were elected to the House of Commons, the British parliament, in the June 2017 elections, corresponding to 2.31% of the 650 MPs in the

House of Commons. The Muslim minority in the United Kingdom is estimated at 3.36%, meaning that Muslim representation in the House of Commons is about two-thirds of the Muslim share of the British population, which is indicative of a moderate level of underrepresentation. These 15 Muslim MPs are, in alphabetical order: Rushanara Ali (Labour), Dr Rosena Allin-Khan (Labour), Rehman Chishti (Conservative), Nusrat Ghani (Conservative), Dr Rupa Huq (Labour), Imran Hussain (Labour), Sajid Javid (Conservative), Afzal Khan (Labour), Khalid Mahmood (Labour), Shabana Mahmood (Labour), Yasmin Qureshi (Labour), Naz Shah (Labour), Tulip Siddiq (Labour), Mohammad Yasin (Labour), and Nadhim Zahawi (Conservative).

Slightly more than half of the Muslim MPs in the House of Commons, 8 out of 15 (53.3%) are women, even though only 32% of all MPs in the House of Commons (208 out of 650) are women.¹⁰¹ This is despite the fact that a record number of women were elected to the House of Commons in the June 2017 election. In other words, even in the election where there were the highest number and percentage of women elected into the British parliament, the proportion of women among Muslim MPs was still much higher (about 66.6% higher) than the proportion of women among non-Muslim MPs. This observation of female overrepresentation among Muslim MPs is in conformity with the general pattern of Muslim minority representation across European legislatures.

Ideologically, 11 of the 15 Muslim MPs, corresponding to 73.3%, were elected from the Labour Party, the main leftist party in British politics, whereas the other 4 Muslim MPs (26.7%) were elected from the Conservative Party, which is the main right-wing party. There were no Muslim MPs elected from the other parties in the House of Commons (Scottish National Party, Liberal Democrat Party, etc.). This ideological distribution also conforms to the general pattern across European legislatures in that the large majority of Muslim MPs are almost always elected from leftist parties. Nonetheless, there are significantly more Muslim MPs from a conservative, right-wing party in the United Kingdom than in most continental European countries. In fact, almost one-third of Muslim MPs are from the Conservative Party, which is a higher proportion than that found in most continental European countries.

The level of Muslim minority representation in the House of Commons is more impressive than what the sheer number of Muslim MPs suggests, if one considers the fact that the United Kingdom uses a single member district electoral system. The single member electoral system requires that the candidate has at

101. "Record number of female MPs win seats in 2017 general election", *The Guardian*, June 9, 2017, available at <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jun/09/record-number-of-female-mps-elected-in-2017-general-election>>, last accessed on August 7, 2017.

least a plurality, and depending on the type of partisan concentration and competition, even a majority of the votes in a geographically defined district.

In all of the United Kingdom, there is only one electoral district, Bradford West, which has a very narrow Muslim majority at 51%.¹⁰² Neighboring Bradford East electoral district has the second highest proportion of Muslims at 37% of the total voters. Muslim voters in all the other electoral districts in the United Kingdom make up 25% or less of the total voters.¹⁰³ Thus, with the exception of Bradford West and perhaps also Bradford East, any Muslim candidate who seeks to get elected to the House of Commons has to get the support of a significant number of non-Muslim voters in a geographically defined district. In other words, the Muslim candidates were supported by the plurality of the voters in 15 electoral districts, even though only one district (Bradford West) has a Muslim majority in the United Kingdom.

In a political development of both symbolic and substantive significance, Sadiq Khan, a self-identified Muslim of South Asian origin, was elected mayor of London on May 9, 2016. He became the first Muslim to be elected as the mayor of a Western European capital. Khan is also the first Muslim elected as the mayor of a Western European city with a population of over a million. The only other example that even comes close is Ahmed Aboutaleb, who is the appointed, not elected, mayor of Rotterdam, a major port city with a population of slightly over half a million in the Netherlands. Moreover, Sadiq Khan, unlike almost all Muslim-origin elected representatives in continental Europe, does not shy away from expressing his religious observance, which demonstrates another important difference between Muslim representation in British versus continental European politics.¹⁰⁴ Soon after his election as the mayor of London, Khan openly talked about fasting in the month of Ramadan, which was observed in May/June (2016) of that year.¹⁰⁵

A comparative study of 15 BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) MPs in the House of Commons, which includes the Muslim MPs, did not find any systematic difference between the voting record of the BME MPs and that of 15 non-BME

102. "UK Elections 2017: Muslim voters to play decisive role in 38 constituencies," available at <<https://www.geotv/latest/144617-uk-elections-2017-muslim-voters-to-play-decisive-role-in-38-constituencies>>, last accessed on August 12, 2017.

103. Ibid.

104. Sadiq Khan, "Fasting for Ramadan won't be easy—it's the coffee I'll miss the most," *Guardian*, June 5, 2016. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/commentisfree/2016/jun/05/fasting-for-ramadan-wont-be-easy-its-the-coffee-ill-miss-the-most> last accessed on August 10, 2017.

105. "EU referendum: Sadiq Khan breaks 19-hour Ramadan fast on stage during Wembley debate," *Independent*, June 22, 2016. Available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/sadiq-khan-breaks-19-hour-ramadan-fast-during-wembley-eu-referendum-debate-a7094796.html> last accessed on August 10, 2017.

MPs.¹⁰⁶ The imperative of party discipline in a two-party system, and the logic of single member district voting both increase the pressures to conform with the party line. Despite conformity to the party line in parliamentary voting, at first sight BME MPs were found to be about twice more likely on average to field minority-related “questions” in the parliament.¹⁰⁷ However, upon further examination, it became apparent that three BME MPs in the Labour Party were largely responsible for this significant difference between the BME MPs and the non-BME MPs in terms of the average number of minority-related questions asked in the House of Commons. One particular BME MP “asked over 330 questions explicitly relating to ethnic minorities or immigration across virtually all policy areas except ‘housing’ and ‘science and technology.’”¹⁰⁸ Another “two Labour MPs with a BME background asked 70 and 89 minority-related questions, respectively.”¹⁰⁹ Thus, neither in legislative voting, nor in minority-related legislative questions do the BME MPs, including Muslim MPs, with the exception of three “outliers” in the Labour Party, seem to differ systematically from the non-BME (majority) MPs. These conclusions seem to suggest that even in Britain, the higher levels of descriptive representation of the Muslim minorities do not lead to significantly higher levels of substantive representation.

On the other hand, in a more recent and more specific study on the representation of Muslim minorities through a discourse analysis of parliamentary discussions on Islam-related issues, Nermin Aydemir and Rens Vliegthart found that British Muslim MPs are much more likely to support the religiously specific concerns of Muslims in the House of Commons compared to the Dutch Muslim MPs in the Dutch parliament, *Tweede Kamer*.¹¹⁰

Their findings suggest that descriptive representation of Muslim minorities corresponds to more substantive representation in the British House of Commons, but not so much in the Dutch *Tweede Kamer*, a topic which will be discussed at greater length in the next section.

Unlike in Scandinavian countries and Germany, there are currently no popular political initiatives, movements, or legislative proposals to ban religiously motivated male circumcision or ritual animal sacrifice in the United Kingdom. The

106. Thomas Saalfeld and Kalliopi Kyriakopoulou, “Black and minority ethnic MPs in the British House of Commons,” in Karen Bird, Thomas Saalfeld, Andreas Wüst (eds.), *The Political Representation of Immigrants and Minorities*, New York: Routledge, 2011, pp. 230-249.

107. *Ibid.*, p. 243.

108. *Ibid.*, p. 245.

109. *Ibid.*, p. 245.

110. Nermin Aydemir and Rens Vliegthart, “Public discourse on minorities: how discursive opportunities shape representative patterns in the Netherlands and the UK,” *Nationalities Papers*, 2017 (forthcoming), <https://doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2017.1342077>

religiously specific rights of Muslims and Jews are much more secure in the United Kingdom than in most of continental Europe. Moreover, as briefly discussed above in the case of Sadiq Khan, the recently elected leftist mayor of London from the Labour Party, British Muslim politicians do not shy away from overt displays of Islamic religious observance, which is almost unheard of in the case of most Muslim-origin MPs in continental Europe.

**TABLE 3. EXPECTED AND ACTUAL NUMBER OF MUSLIM MPS
IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS (2010-2017)**

Legislative Term	Total number of MPs	Muslim share of the UK's population	Expected number of Muslim MPs	Actual number of Muslim MPs	Muslim representation ratio (actual/expected no. of Muslim MPs)	Number and percentage - leftist	Number and percentage - female
2010-2015	650	2.56%	17	8	0.48	6 (75%)	3 (38%)
2015-2017	650	3.36%	22	13	0.59	9 (69%)	8 (62%)
2017- ongoing	650	3.36%	22	15	0.64	11 (73%)	8 (53%)

NETHERLANDS

Unique case of Muslim overrepresentation and “Muslim party” in the national parliament

The Netherlands is unique in all of Western Europe in having Muslim overrepresentation in its parliament in three or more consecutive legislative terms. This is indeed both theoretically and empirically a significant fact for studies of descriptive representation of ethno-religious minorities. Furthermore, the overrepresentation of Muslim minorities in its national parliament over many legislative terms is not the only distinguishing feature of Dutch politics from a comparative perspective. The Netherlands is also the only Western European country where a de facto “Muslim political party,” namely DENK, won representation in the national legislature with three MPs in the 2017 general elections.

As of 2010, there were 12 Muslim-origin MPs in the Dutch parliament, *Tweede Kamer*, which corresponded to 8% of all MPs (150), even though Muslims were estimated at 6.15% of the Dutch population. Based on these figures, the Muslim minority was 30% overrepresented in the Dutch parliament as of 2010. As of 2014, there were 11 Muslim-origin MPs, corresponding to 7.33% of all MPs in the Dutch parliament, which indicated that the Muslim minority was about 19% overrepresented. In the most recent general elections in 2017, 14 Muslim-origin MPs were elected to the parliament, corresponding to 9.33% of all Dutch MPs. Given that Muslim-origin immigrants were estimated at 6.16% of the Dutch population in 2017, Muslims were overrepresented by about 51.5%

in parliament.¹¹¹ Thus, over three consecutive electoral cycles and legislative periods, Dutch Muslims were consistently overrepresented in the national parliament, which is a unique political outcome among all Western European polities. Belgium, which will be the next and the last country discussed in this report, resembles the Netherlands in this respect, but even in Belgium, Muslims have been slightly underrepresented in some recent legislative periods.

Ideologically, the partisan affiliation of the current 14 Muslim MPs as of August 2017 is the following: 3 DENK, 3 VVD, 2 D66, 2 GL, 2 SP, 1 CDA, and 1 PvdA MP. There are two striking features of this partisan distribution. First of all, there are Muslim MPs in 7 different political parties, indicating a very high level of partisan diversification of Muslim MPs in the Netherlands compared to all other European countries discussed in this report. Second, and also unique among Western European countries discussed in this report, a political party that is primarily supported and exclusively represented by Muslim-origin MPs, DENK, succeeded in getting into the Dutch parliament with 3 MPs in the 2017 general elections. Although political parties that claim to represent, and are primarily supported by, Muslim minorities sometimes do succeed in entering the parliament in some Eastern European countries such as Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Montenegro, such an electoral development was unprecedented in Western Europe until DENK's somewhat surprising success at the polls in 2017. Relatedly, it is also somewhat surprising and certainly noteworthy that the emergence and relative electoral success of DENK as a primarily Muslim party did not prevent Muslim candidates from being nominated by and eventually elected from the party lists of half a dozen other parties. Thus, the successful emergence of a party led by Muslim politicians did not lead to the concentration and segregation of Muslim MPs in one Muslim party only, as happened in Bulgaria for example.¹¹²

Four of the fourteen Muslim MPs are from center-right and/or Christian democratic parties (VVD and CDA), whereas the remaining ten Muslim MPs belong to various leftist, environmentalist, and progressive parties, including the Muslim-led DENK, which was founded by Muslim MPs who resigned from leftist political parties. Thus, in terms of the left-right division, Muslim representation in the Netherlands parallels the European pattern, where a large majority, in this case about two-thirds, of Muslim MPs are elected from leftist parties.

The names of the 14 Muslim MPs as of August 2017 in the *Tweede Kamer* were as follows: Mustafa Amhaouch (CDA), Khadija Arif (PvdA), Farid Azar-

111. "Netherlands," National Profiles, *The Association of Religion Data Archives*, available at <http://www.thearda.com/internationalData/countries/Country_160_1.asp>, last accessed on December 2, 2017.

112. All the Muslim-origin MPs in Bulgaria are typically elected from the Movement of Rights and Freedoms, which was founded and has been led by Muslim-origin politicians. The other Bulgarian political parties that are elected to the parliament do not include any Muslim MPs.

kan (DENK), Malik Azmani (VVD), Salima Belhaz (D66), Achraf Bouali (D66), Zohair El Yassini (VVD), Sadet Karabulut (SP), Tunahan Kuzu (DENK), Cem Laçın (SP), Zihni Özdil (GL), Selçuk Öztürk (DENK), Nevin Özütok (GL), and Dilan Yeşilgöz-Zegerius (VVD).¹¹³ 9 Muslim MPs are male and 5 Muslim MPs are female, indicating a clear majority for the male MPs, which contrasts with the gender parity or female majorities found among Muslim MPs in most continental European countries.

In terms of their countries of origin, Muslim MPs are equally split (7 each) between Morocco and Turkey, while most of them (8 out of 14) were in fact born either in Turkey (Adana, Ankara, Büyükkışla, Istanbul, and Kozaklı) or in Morocco (Hedami, Ighmiren, and Imzouren), indicating that they are first-generation immigrants. It is also noteworthy that a large majority of Turkish-origin MPs (5 out of 7) were born in Turkey, whereas a slight majority of Moroccan-origin MPs (4 out of 7) were born in the Netherlands.

In terms of attempts to criminalize Islamic religious practices in the Netherlands, there has been an ongoing and sustained effort by the Party for the Animals (*Partij voor de Dieren*, PvdD) to ban ritual animal slaughter since 2011.¹¹⁴ Although the *Tweede Kamer* approved the draft law, proposed by the PvdD, to ban ritual animal slaughter in 2011, the senate rejected it in 2012.¹¹⁵ In the meantime, a compromise was reached between the Dutch government and Jewish and Muslim leaders about some restrictive standards such as the “40-second limit” during slaughter.¹¹⁶ The PvdD “proposed a new draft law against ritual slaughtering” in September 2015,¹¹⁷ which was supported by the right-wing Party for Freedom (PVV) led by Geert Wilders. Soon after the PvdD’s proposal, “[t]he Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority advised the government to ban ritual slaughter of animals, citing pain and suffering caused to them in the process.”¹¹⁸ Implicitly referring to the “40-second principle” agreed upon following the previous attempt to ban ritual animal slaughter, “[t]he authority said it opposed ritual slaughter because it means that animals may take more than 45

113. Tweede Kamer, members of parliament, available at <https://www.houseofrepresentatives.nl/members_of_parliament/members_of_parliament>, last accessed on August 14, 2017.

114. The PvdD first submitted the proposal to ban ritual animal slaughter to the parliament in 2011; the parliament approved the proposal. “Jews, Muslims appeal ritual slaughter plan,” *YNet*, June 19, 2011. Available at <<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4083578,00.html>>, last accessed on August 14, 2017.

115. Ineke van der Valk (2016): *Islamophobia in Netherlands: National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayrakti & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016, p. 394.

116. “Dutch compromise on ritual slaughter,” available at <<https://www.rnw.org/archive/dutch-compromise-ritual-slaughter>>, last accessed on August 15, 2017.

117. Van der Valk, *Islamophobia in Netherlands: National Report 2015*, p. 394.

118. “Netherlands Food Authority Recommends Banning Kosher,” *Haaretz*, November 1, 2015. Available at <<http://www.haaretz.com/jewish/news/1.683496>>, last accessed on August 15, 2017.

seconds to die, during which time they may be subjected to stress and pain.”¹¹⁹ In February 2016, the Dutch government “announced plans to ban the export of kosher and *halal* meat in an effort to reduce the amount of animals killed through ‘ritual’ slaughter, to minimise suffering.”¹²⁰ In July 2017, upon news that the “Netherlands’ only kosher slaughterhouse” may face “closure following export ban,”¹²¹ the Dutch government announced that “it may exempt the country’s only kosher slaughterhouse from a newly introduced export ban.”¹²² Thus, there have been attempts, some of which partly succeeded through legislative channels, to restrict Islamic and Jewish religious practices such as ritual animal slaughter. The legislative success of these Islamophobic initiatives in the Netherlands is somewhat surprising given the significant number of Muslim MPs distributed across seven different political parties. On the other hand, it should be noted that there are no Muslim MPs in the PVV and PvdD, which spearheaded and supported the ritual animal slaughter ban. This contrasts with the cases of Denmark and Norway, two other countries in northwestern Europe, where the largest far-right parties with Islamophobic agendas have Muslim MPs.

Against the background of the overrepresentation and partisan diversification of Muslims in the national legislature, the most existential challenge that the Muslim minority has been facing in the Netherlands is probably the Party for Freedom (PVV) led by the unabashedly Islamophobic Geert Wilders. However, as the example of the campaign to ban ritual animal slaughter demonstrates, leftist parties such as the PvdD may also join and even spearhead some of the political and legislative initiatives to outlaw Islamic religious practices. Despite the notorious popularity of Geert Wilders, and against predictions that his party would win the following legislative elections,¹²³ the PVV was a distant second with 20 MPs in the 2017 elections, far behind the VVD that gained 33 MPs, and marginally ahead of the D66 and the CDA, both of which gained 19 MPs. After having no government

119. “Netherlands Food Authority Recommends Banning Kosher.”

120. “Netherlands bans export of kosher and halal meat to ‘minimise’ negative effects,” *Independent*, February 18, 2016. Available at <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/netherlands-bans-export-of-kosher-and-halal-meat-to-minimise-negative-effects-on-animal-welfare-a6881406.html>>. Also see, “Holland to Limit Kosher Ritual Slaughter and Ban Its Export,” *Haaretz*, February 17, 2016. Available at <<http://www.haaretz.com/jewish/news/1.703961>>. Both last accessed on August 15, 2017.

121. “Netherlands’ only kosher slaughterhouse says it faces closure following export ban,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, July 17, 2017. Available at <<http://www.jta.org/2017/07/17/news-opinion/world/netherlands-only-kosher-slaughterhouse-says-it-faces-closure-following-export-ban>>, last accessed on August 15, 2017.

122. “Netherlands may exempt kosher slaughterhouse from export ban,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, July 27, 2017. Available at <<http://www.jta.org/2017/07/27/news-opinion/world/netherlands-may-exempt-kosher-slaughterhouse-from-export-ban>>. Last accessed on August 15, 2017.

123. “However, various opinion polls taken in 2013, 2014 and 2015, have pointed to the PVV as the largest party in the Netherlands, if elections should take place at that point in time.” Van der Valk, *Islamophobia in Netherlands: National Report 2015*, p. 393.

for “225 days, a Dutch record,” the Netherlands finally established a four-party coalition between the VVD, D66, CDA, and CU by the end of October 2017.¹²⁴

The process that led to the founding of the de facto Muslim party, DENK, is also very revealing in terms of the treatment of religious identity, rights, and freedom of opinion for Muslim MPs. Deputy Prime Minister Lodewijk Asscher proposed a plan to monitor religious organizations with Turkish origins in late 2014. Tunahan Kuzu and Selçuk Öztürk, two Turkish-origin MPs of the PvdA (Labor Party), which was a partner in the coalition government at the time, opposed this plan and wrote a letter criticizing it.¹²⁵ The leader of the PvdA, Diiderik Samsom, found the letter offensive and asked the Turkish-Muslim MPs to apologize to Lodewijk Asscher, and when Kuzu and Öztürk refused to apologize, they were expelled from the PvdA.¹²⁶ As such, two Turkish-Muslim origin MPs from an unabashedly leftist party, the PvdA, lost their partisan affiliation and became independent MPs because of their opposition to increasing state intervention targeting Turkish-Muslim religious organizations as potential suspects. These independent MPs then went ahead, and together with Moroccan-origin politicians, established DENK (“think” in Dutch), which became the first de facto Muslim political party to enter into the Dutch national parliament in 2017. Given their political career trajectory and PvdA background, it is very difficult if not impossible to describe Muslim-origin MPs of DENK as “religious conservatives.” Rather, they are leftists who were alienated and expelled from the PvdA for taking a stance in defense of Turkish-origin Muslim organizations.

Overall, the Netherlands is unique in Western Europe, and in the Western world in general, in having Muslim overrepresentation through three consecutive legislative terms (at least), and more recently, for having a de facto Muslim political party in its parliament. Many of the religious minority rights that are under threat elsewhere in Europe are relatively safe in the Netherlands, although multiple and persistent attempts at banning ritual animal slaughter demonstrate that there are serious challenges at present and probably ahead. Despite Muslim overrepresentation in the legislature, and despite the existence of a Muslim party, DENK, there is no male or female Muslim MP who could be described as a religious conservative. The relative absence of religious conservatives in the Dutch

124. Cynthia Kroet and Ivo Oliveira, “Meet the Dutch government’s major players,” *Politico*, October 26, 2017. Available at <<https://www.politico.eu/article/new-dutch-government-cabinet-ministers-mark-rutte-coalition-deal-netherlands/>>, last accessed on December 2, 2017.

125. “Hollanda: Türk kökenli iki milletvekili İşçi Partisi’nden ihraç edildi,” *BBC Türkçe*, November 14, 2014. Available at <http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2014/11/141113_hollanda_millitevekili_ihrac_yusuozkan>, last accessed on August 15, 2017.

126. *Ibid.*

parliament is also corroborated by the legislative studies of Aydemir and Vliegenthart, whose “[f]indings from content analysis show that ‘minority representatives’ are rarely interested in cultural and/or religious rights and freedoms... Contrary to common belief, MPs of minority origin often adopt restrictive framings [in the Netherlands].”¹²⁷ More dramatically, “41% of the questions [by minority MPs] portray minority practices and symbols as problematic to the country of settlement and/or calling for strong measures.”¹²⁸ On the more specific topic of religion, 23 out of 31 questions (74%) asked by minority MPs had a “suppressive framing.”¹²⁹ Therefore, the high level of descriptive representation of minorities in the Dutch parliament cannot be said to result in a high level of the substantive representation of cultural and/or religious rights and freedoms of minorities.

127. Nermin Aydemir and Rens Vliegenthart, “Minority Representatives’ in the Netherlands: Supporting, Silencing or Suppressing?”, *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 1 (2016), p. 89.

128. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

129. *Ibid.*, p. 80, Table 1.

BELGIUM

Proportionate Muslim representation in the parliament, Muslim-origin ministers in government, and the first MP with a headscarf

Belgium is second only to the neighboring Netherlands, discussed in the previous section, among Western European countries for having the highest level of Muslim representation in its parliament over multiple legislative terms. Out of 150 MPs in the Chamber of Representatives, the Belgian parliament, there were 5 Muslim MPs in 2010, 7 Muslim MPs in 2014, and 10 Muslim MPs in 2016, indicative of a gradual but consistent increase in the levels of descriptive representation for Muslim minorities. While 5 Muslim MPs out of 150 was roughly proportional to the estimated size of the Muslim minority at the time (3.5% in 2010), 7 and 10 Muslim MPs in 2014 and 2016 were indicative of legislative overrepresentation - even when taking into consideration the higher estimate of the size of the Muslim minority (5.3%) by 2014. In terms of their country of origin, once again similarly to the Dutch Muslim MPs, Belgian Muslim MPs are either of Moroccan or of Turkish origin.

Belgium may have been the first Western European country to have a Muslim-origin minister, Turkish-origin Emir Kır, who became the secretary of state responsible for public hygiene and monuments and sites of the Brussels-capital region (not the federal government) from the Socialist Party (PS) in 2004.¹³⁰

130. "Emir Kir" available at <<http://www.eutrio.be/belgium/brussels/gouvernement-brussels-capital-region/emir-kir/emir-kir>>, last accessed on August 15, 2017.

Moreover, to the best of the current author's knowledge, Belgium is unique in all of continental Europe for having had a Muslim-minority woman wearing a headscarf, Mahinur Özdemir, elected to the regional parliament of Brussels (not the national legislature) in June 2009. However, she was expelled from her party in a controversy that resembles the dispute between the Turkish Muslim-origin MPs and the PvdA in the Netherlands, which as discussed in the previous section also resulted in the expelling of the Turkish-Muslim MPs.¹³¹

Following federal elections in May 25, 2014, 10 Muslim-origin MPs were elected to the Chamber of Representatives, nine of which were still serving their legislative terms at the time of writing this report (August 2017). In alphabetical order, the Muslim-origin MPs in the Belgian Chamber of Representatives were: Meyrem Almaci; Nawal Ben Hamou; Zuhail Demir; Emir Kır; Meryame Kitir; Ahmed Laaouej; Lanjri Nahima; Özen Özlem; Fatma Pehlivan; and Veli Yüksel.¹³² Zuhail Demir was serving in the federal government as the state secretary in charge of poverty reduction, equal opportunities, persons with disabilities, and science policy.¹³³ Following the European pattern, seven of ten Muslim-origin MPs in Belgium were women. Also in conformity with the European pattern, seven of ten Muslim-origin MPs were elected from leftist parties, including one from a green party, whereas the remaining three MPs were from center-right parties. In part reflecting the bilingual and federal structure of Belgium, all three Muslim-origin MPs from center-right parties were elected from two Flemish parties, Christian Democratic and Flemish CD&V, and the New Flemish Alliance N-VA. Five Muslim-origin MPs were from two different socialist parties, and one Muslim-origin MP was from a green party.

With 10 Muslim-origin MPs from five political parties in the federal parliament, Muslim representation in Belgian politics appears to be somewhat diversified in an ideological sense. Moreover, with both Emir Kır and Zuhail Demir having served as state secretaries, namely ministers) in regional and federal governments, Muslim representatives also appear to have achieved a degree of upward mobility. In terms of professionalization of political representation, it is significantly noteworthy that five of the ten Muslim-origin MPs elected in 2014 were serving their third consecutive legislative terms; namely Meyrem Almaci, Zuhail

131. "Mahinur Ozdemir: Qui suis-je?", available at <<http://mahinurozdemir.be/about-me/>>, last accessed on August 15, 2017.

132. The alphabetical listing of all members of the Chamber of Representatives is available at <<http://www.dekamer.be/kvvcr/showpage.cfm?section=/depute&language=nl&cfm=/site/wwwcfm/depute/cvlist54.cfm>>, last accessed on August 15, 2017.

133. "Composition du gouvernement fédéral et répartition des compétences des ministres et secrétaires d'État fédéraux," available at <https://www.belgium.be/fr/la_belgique/pouvoirs_publics/autorites_federales/gouvernement_federal/composition_gouvernement>, last accessed on August 15, 2017.

Demir, Meryame Kitir, Nahima Lanjri, and Özlem Özen. Six of the ten Muslim-origin MPs had an immigration background from Turkey, and the other four had an immigration background from Morocco.

As in the case of the Netherlands discussed earlier, controversies related to Turkey occasionally pitted Muslim-origin MPs against each other or against the Turkish-Muslim minority. For example, Zuhail Demir's public declaration that she will renounce her Turkish nationality in reaction to the Turkish government's policies was criticized by Veli Yüksel for being purely electorally motivated.¹³⁴ Since Demir is elected from the Flemish nationalist and conservative N-VA party, she was accused of trying to capitalize on the anti-Turkish sentiments of the N-VA electorate.¹³⁵ On the other hand, there is more unity among Turkish-origin MPs in other policy initiatives regarding Turkey, since four of the five Turkish-origin MPs voted in favor of suspending EU membership negotiations with and cutting aid to Turkey, while a fifth MP, Emir Kır, abstained from voting altogether.¹³⁶

Despite relatively high levels of Muslim representation distributed across many political parties spanning the left-right continuum, Belgium witnessed the successful passage of a legislative initiative banning ritual animal slaughter, which criminalizes a core Islamic and Jewish religious practice (production of *halal* and kosher meat), first in Wallonia, the French-speaking southern half of Belgium, but not in the similarly French influenced Brussels-capital region. This may be explained, in part, by the fact that Muslims minorities are overconcentrated in the Brussels-capital region,¹³⁷ with much less political demographic clout in Wallonia. It has been noted that the French-speaking southern region of Belgium, Wallonia, is under the influence of the assimilationist and Jacobin-secularist tradition of neighboring France, whereas the Dutch-speaking northern region of Belgium, Flanders, is under the influence of the multiculturalist, religiously tolerant and accommodationist tradition of the neighboring Netherlands.¹³⁸ However, later,

134. "Demir: 'Yüksel wil Turkse nationaliteit kwijt om te scoren bij achterban,'" *De Standaard*, August 6, 2017, available at <www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20170806_03005148>, last accessed on December 2, 2017.

135. For a Turkish-Belgian news outlet on the same controversy, see, "Milletvekili Yüksel, Zuhail Demir'e tepki gösterdi," *Gündem*, <http://www.gundem.be/tr/belcika/milletvekili-veli-yuksel-zuhail-demir-e-tepki-gosterdi> last accessed on December 20, 2017.

136. "Türk kökenli vekiller Türkiye karşıtı oy verdi!," *Avrupa Türk Gazetesi*, February 20, 2017. Available at <<http://www.avrupaturkgazetesi.com/turk-kokenli-vekiller-turkiye-karsiti-oy-verdi/>>, last accessed on December 2, 2017.

137. Some estimate that up to 20% of the residents of the Brussels-capital region are of Muslim origin.

138. "Typically these concerns are in part driven by the influences exerted on the country by its closest neighbours: France and the Netherlands. More specifically the consequences of French polemics are more keenly perceived in Wallonia and in parts of the bilingual capital, Brussels. So, for example in spite of Belgian constitutional norms of organised secularism, the French secular, pro-assimilationist model strongly shapes normative attitudes in francophone Belgium." Amina Easat-Daas (2016): Islamophobia in Belgium: *National Report 2015*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2015*, Istanbul, SETA, 2016, p. 53.

the Flanders region also passed a “ban on slaughter without stunning” which will come into effect starting on January 1, 2019.¹³⁹ At the time of writing, Muslim and Jewish groups have appealed to the Belgian Constitutional Court in order to overturn the ban on religious animal slaughter.¹⁴⁰

Directly relevant to the purposes of this report regarding the status of Muslim religious conservatives in European politics, Mahinur Özdemir became the first woman wearing a headscarf, or *hijab*, to be elected to the parliament in continental Europe, when she was sworn in as a lawmaker in the Brussels regional parliament in June 2009.¹⁴¹ However, she was not reelected, as many other Muslim-origin MPs were in the national parliament, and was not promoted to become a member of the government, at the regional or national level. Instead, her political career abruptly ended, or at the very least was severely interrupted, in May 2015, when she was expelled from her party, the Democratic Humanist Center (*Centre démocrate humaniste*, CDH) for refusing to conform to the CDH’s opinion that the events experienced by the Ottoman Armenians in the early 20th century - in 1915, to be exact – constitute a genocide.¹⁴² There is an eerie similarity between the expelling of Mahinur Özdemir from the CDH, and the expelling of Tunahan Kuzucu and Selçuk Öztürk from the PvdA. In both cases, MPs of Turkish-Muslim origin were expelled for disagreeing with their parties’ position on a current or historical controversy related to Turkey, the country of origin for these MPs. The expelled Muslim MPs were also well aware of this similarity, and they even demonstrated solidarity along these lines, when Tunahan Kuzucu declared that he supports “Mahinur [Özdemir] in her righteous struggle.”¹⁴³ Thus, Europe’s first and only Muslim woman MP wearing a headscarf lost this status when she was expelled by her party over a controversy regarding Ottoman history.

In sum, Muslim MPs in Belgium achieved a high level of descriptive representation and ideological diversification as well as professionalization and upward mobility, but these otherwise positive developments did not necessarily translate into the kind of substantive representation that can safeguard the religiously specific

139. “Ban on slaughter without stunning by 2019,” *Flanders Today*, March 30, 2017, available at <<http://www.flanderstoday.eu/politics/ban-slaughter-without-stunning-2019>>, accessed on December 2, 2017.

140. “Muslim, Jewish groups appeal slaughter ban in Belgium,” *Daily Sabah*, December 1, 2017. Available at <<https://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2017/12/01/muslim-jewish-groups-appeal-slaughter-ban-in-belgium>>, accessed on December 2, 2017.

141. Stephen Castle, “Belgium Moves to Ban Burqas Worn in Public,” *The New York Times*, March 31, 2010. Available at <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/01/world/europe/01iht-brussels.html>>, last accessed on August 16, 2017.

142. “Mahinur Özdemir partisinden ihraç edildi,” *Milliyet*, May 29, 2015. Available at <<http://www.milliyet.com.tr/mahinur-ozdemir-partisinden-ihrac/dunya/detay/2066553/default.htm>>, last accessed on August 16, 2017.

143. Beril Eski, “İhraç edilen Mahinur Özdemir: Beni inkarcı gibi tanımlamaları yanlış,” *BBC Türkçe*, June 1, 2015. Available at <http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2015/06/150601_mahinur_ozdemir_ihrac>, last accessed on August 16, 2017.

rights and demands of the minority, as evidenced in the very recent prohibition on ritual animal slaughter in both Wallonia and Flanders. Likewise, Mahinur Özdemir of Brussels became the first Muslim woman with a headscarf elected as a member of the parliament in 2009, and yet she was expelled from her party for not agreeing with her party's opinion on a historical controversy, which ultimately is not a good sign for the inclusion of religious conservatives in Belgian or European politics.

CONCLUSION

MUSLIM REPRESENTATION IN THREE DIFFERENT WESTERN EUROPEAN CLUSTERS

The Muslim minority representation in national legislatures and public controversies over Islam in twelve major Western European countries were critically evaluated in this report. These twelve countries were organized as six comparable “couples.” The first two pairs were characterized by extreme underrepresentation of their Muslim minorities despite having significantly large and relatively old Muslim minorities by Western European standards (France and Austria), or having very substantial Muslim populations and Islamic civilization(s) in their territory in the past, which were eradicated by the late medieval or the early modern era (Spain and Italy). These four countries, which I consider as two comparable couples due to the historical and present-day similarities of their relationship with Muslim minorities and Islam, were also characterized by very low levels of Muslim minority representation.

The report continued with another four countries, or two couples, which are similar geographically, culturally, and/or in terms of the process through which they acquired Muslim minorities (i.e. through postwar labor recruitment treaties). Germany and Switzerland, followed by Denmark and Norway, constituted the next two pairs of Germanic and Nordic countries that acquired Muslim minorities through postwar labor migration. These four countries, despite having

acquired or encountered Muslim minorities much more recently than France, for example, had a more moderate level of Muslim underrepresentation in politics. Yet, in all of them, there have been recurrent efforts to prohibit or criminalize Islamic practices such as ritual animal slaughter, male circumcision, Muslim women's headscarves, and the building of mosque minarets.

Finally, the last four countries, or two couples, Sweden and the United Kingdom on the one hand, and Belgium and the Netherlands on the other, evidenced higher descriptive, and even perhaps substantive, representation of Muslim minorities, compared to the rest of Western Europe. Multiculturalism, in one form or another, was an official or unofficial state policy at least for a certain period in all four of these countries. Against such a multiculturalist background, it is more surprising that religious conservatives and the religiously specific interests of the Muslim minorities are mostly excluded from the legislature and government even in these multiculturalist countries, with the notable exception of the United Kingdom.

There are six major and interrelated observations based on the cross-national review of Muslim members of parliament and controversies over Islam in twelve Western European countries. First, there has been a wave of prohibitions against Islamic practices ranging from ritual animal slaughter to the building of mosque minarets, from male circumcision to women's headscarves. This prohibitionist wave, which amounts to criminalizing Islamic religiosity as it is understood by many practicing Muslims, has no sign of abating. Instead, the anti-Muslim prohibitionist wave seems to be growing and spilling over to adjacent countries and targeting increasingly many different types of Islamic practices. Furthermore, the legal prohibitions against Islamic practices seem to originate in allegedly the most democratic and affluent northwestern European countries such as Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Norway, and Sweden. This suggests that the anti-Islamic prohibitions may have a "demonstration effect," which may explain the regional clustering of failed and successful attempts to criminalize circumcision in Denmark, Germany, Norway, and Sweden, for example. This is a very worrisome development for Western European democracies, and for democracies everywhere, given the demonstration effect of Western European democracies around the world.

Second, despite major improvements in some countries over the last decade, Muslim minorities are still underrepresented in the national legislatures of all Western European countries, except for Belgium, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Even more importantly from a practical point of view, Muslim minorities are significantly underrepresented in some of the European countries where their numbers are largest in absolute terms, including, most importantly, France, but also Germany, Italy, and Spain. In terms of the absolute number of Muslims, there are several times more Muslims in France, Germany, Italy, and Spain than in countries

such as Sweden or Norway due to the vast differences in the size of the total population between these countries. Thus, the extreme underrepresentation of Muslim minorities in France, for example, affects twenty times as many people as the proportional representation of the Muslim minority in Sweden, simply because there are approximately twenty times more Muslims in France than in Sweden. Thus, there is a general political underrepresentation of Muslim minorities in Western European countries, with the exception of three countries, and this underrepresentation is much more pronounced if we consider the situation in countries that have the largest number of Muslims such as France, Germany, and Italy.

Third, there are vast differences between Western European countries in terms of levels of Muslim minority representation in national legislatures. Although there is more than half a million Muslims living in Spain, there is not a single Muslim MP in the Spanish national legislature, whereas less than half a million Muslims in Belgium have been overrepresented in the Belgian national legislatures. Again at the most extreme end, France, although having the largest Muslim minority population in both absolute numbers and as a proportion of its total population, did not have a single Muslim MP from mainland France in its National Assembly as late as 2010.

Fourth, the descriptive representation of Muslim minorities, that is, Muslim-origin MPs in the national legislatures, does not necessarily translate into the substantive representation of the ethno-religiously specific interests of the Muslim minorities. There are many symptoms of the absence of the substantive representation of Muslim interests. In many European countries, national legislation that directly targets and prohibits certain religiously inspired practices of the Muslim minorities passed without an outcry or vocal opposition by the Muslim MPs in the legislature or in the extra-parliamentary public sphere. Examples include the prohibitions of the circumcision of boys, women's headscarves, and ritual animal slaughter, which were passed in a number of Western European countries. Muslim-origin MPs in the national legislatures have not been leading a "Muslim civil rights movement" against the background of such political initiatives to prohibit or restrict Islamic religious practices, which is a significant observation indicative of a major disconnect between the descriptive and substantive representation of Muslim minorities.

Fifth, and relatedly, there is a "representation gap" between conservative Muslims and their leftist representatives. This ideological disconnect between the Muslim constituencies and their representatives can be observed in almost every Western European country, and it seems to persist across time. This is not entirely unique, as I pointed out a striking parallel in the United States between the religiously conservative African Americans and their leftist liberal representatives in the case of their divergent opinions on same-sex marriage legislation.

Sixth, and as emphasized in the very title of this report, religious conservatives among the Muslim minority are almost completely excluded from the national legislatures. Among dozens of Muslim MPs in continental Europe, I could only identify a couple who talked about and/or publicly displayed their religious observance, including religious rituals such as Friday prayers that have to be publicly performed as part of a community. Likewise, although covering one's head is certainly not the primary or even a necessary sign of Islamic religiosity for women or for men, it is a fact that many Muslim men historically (very few at present) and many Muslim women cover their heads out of religious conviction. The symbolism of the headscarf has been captured by numerous academic books on Muslim identity politics in Europe that display women with headscarves on their cover,¹⁴⁴ and numerous legal and legislative initiatives in multiple European countries that have banned the wearing of headscarves for some public servants, students, and even ordinary citizens in part of the public space. Against this background of sustained exclusion or segregation, not a single Muslim woman wearing a headscarf has ever been elected to the national legislature in any continental European country as of December 2017, which is highly significant and symptomatic of the exclusion of religious conservative Muslims from Western European politics. There is a similar exclusion in the case of Muslim male MPs, as discussed earlier. Many of the observable characteristics and trends briefly discussed above are indicative of a political engineering by the political party leaderships ("gatekeepers") through the nomination ("selection") of candidates, whereby political party leaders only nominate Muslim-origin candidates that fit their vision of how Muslim minorities *should be*.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A MORE EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION

The democratic deficit or the gap between descriptive and substantive representation of Muslim minorities has political and policy implications for the future. First, as has been observed in Germany and the Netherlands already, there are likely to be more attempts to establish a (de facto) "Muslim party" in some European countries where the minority has a significant population but very little substantive representation. In this context, DENK (Think) provides an electorally successful example of such a "Muslim" party in the Netherlands, whereas BIG

144. Among such examples of books on Muslims in Europe that display women with headscarves on their cover, see Abdulkader H. Sinno (ed.), *Muslims in Western Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008); Jonathan Laurence, *The Emancipation of Europe's Muslims: The State's Role in Minority Integration* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Claire L. Adida, David D. Laitin, and Marie-Anne Valfort, *Why Muslim Integration Fails in Christian-Heritage Societies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).

(Union for Innovation and Justice) and ADD (Alliance of German Democrats) have not been nearly as successful in Germany. However, such “Muslim parties” have a somewhat better chance at getting into the European Parliament (EP), since they are not hindered by national legislative thresholds in the EP elections. Another telling example of surprising success is Friendship Equality Peace (DEB), a de facto Turkish-Muslim party, which came in first in the Rhodope and Xanthi regional units of Greece in the European Parliament elections of 2014.¹⁴⁵

Second, political parties may be forced to take into account the substantive representation of Muslim minorities’ interests if Muslims’ acquisition of citizenship and voter turnout increase. Citizenship is essential as it determines the eligibility to vote in most countries, and voter turnout during elections is also another critical factor that influences levels of minority representation. Third, the political party organs’ selection or “nomination” of MP candidates, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, is often at least as important as - if not even more important than - the popular election itself. Therefore, Muslim groups and individuals may need to also focus on the candidate nomination process within the major political parties in order to gain more substantive representation. Fourth, Muslim minorities may also need to seek out the representation of their interests through political parties in the conservative (including “Christian” Democrat), liberal, and other ideological traditions in order to avoid the dilemmas of being a voting bloc “captured” by the Left. Fifth, Muslim voters may apply pressure on the leftist parties in order to motivate an ideological revision in their party programs so that they include religious diversity and alternative lifestyles as part of their conceptualization of multiculturalism. Sixth, Muslim voters and outside observers (including external actors such as other states and international organizations) may seek to raise awareness by organizing public campaigns concerning both the economic and religiously specific discrimination that Muslim minorities face, with the goal of passing legislation and other measures necessary to guarantee equality of opportunity in the job market and equality of religions in public policy.

145. “DEB, Rodop ve İskeçe’de birinci parti oldu,” *Hürriyet*, 29 May 2014, available at <<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/deb-rodop-ve-iskecede-birinci-parti-oldu-26511763>>, last accessed on December 3, 2017.

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POLITICAL ENGINEERING AND THE EXCLUSION OF RELIGIOUS CONSERVATIVE MUSLIMS IN EUROPE

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In numerous European countries, there has been a wave of prohibitions against Islamic practices ranging from ritual animal slaughter to the building of mosque minarets, from male circumcision to women's headscarves. Moreover, religious conservatives among the Muslim minority are almost completely excluded from the national legislatures. As such, there is a "representation gap" between conservative Muslims and their leftist representatives. This ideological disconnect between the Muslim constituencies and their representatives can be observed in almost every continental European country, and it seems to persist across time. Despite major improvements in some countries over the last decade, Muslim minorities are still underrepresented in the national legislatures of most Western European countries. Unfortunately, the descriptive representation of Muslim minorities, that is, Muslim-origin MPs in the national legislatures, does not necessarily translate into the substantive representation of the religiously specific interests of the Muslim minorities.