



## Finding a Place for Islam in Europe: Cultural Interactions between Muslim Immigrants and Receiving Societies

Ongoing

### SUMMARY

#### Objectives of the research

The research aims to provide a systematic analysis of cross-national differences and similarities in countries' approaches to the cultural integration of immigrants, and of Muslims in particular, and by relating these policy differences to cross-national variation in cultural distance and interaction between Muslims and the receiving society population.

#### Scientific approach / methodology

The research combines different methodologies, allowing for a triangulation of research findings and a combination of quantitative and qualitative insights. This policy brief focuses on the institutional treatment side.

#### New knowledge and/or European added value

The project evaluates how different traditions of national identity, citizenship, and church-state relations have affected the European public debate around Islam in the last ten years by identifying principal issues and by describing the interaction between state, social civil and Muslim actors involved. The results of the institutional analysis summarize different ways in which nation-states deal with religious and cultural differences.

#### Key messages for policy-makers, businesses, trade unions and civil society actors

There is quite some variation between countries on how they deal in their policies with religious and cultural differences. Building a European policy on religious and cultural differences needs to take account of these national differences, but also make use of common policy goals apparent in national policies.

#### Objectives of the research

This research addresses the development of a full, cross-nationally comparable set of indicators on the cultural rights dimension of citizenship. We aim to assess the legal context facing migrants, focusing in particular on aspects of cultural and religious provision and facilitation. Special attention is also given to policy provisions for gender issues, and the interface of these with cultural and religious provisions for minorities.

#### Scientific approach / Methodology

The institutional treatment side is addressed by gathering a systematic set of cross-national indicators using secondary sources such as policy documents and jurisprudence. These

searches for indicators of citizenship were developed from and based on previous attempts –including some by consortium members- that have more generally attempted to define the legal context facing migrants. The originality of the proposed attempt is that it will focus explicitly, and in more detail than previous attempts on aspects of cultural and religious policies and provision. Finding systematic comparative contextual indicators for aspects of cultural provision and facilitation has been less focussed on than political institutional variables, such as naturalization legislation, but is vital to an understanding of cultural conflicts and interaction, and the position of Muslims in their societies of settlement. Special attention was given to policy provision for gender issues, and the interface of these with cultural and religious provision policies for minorities.

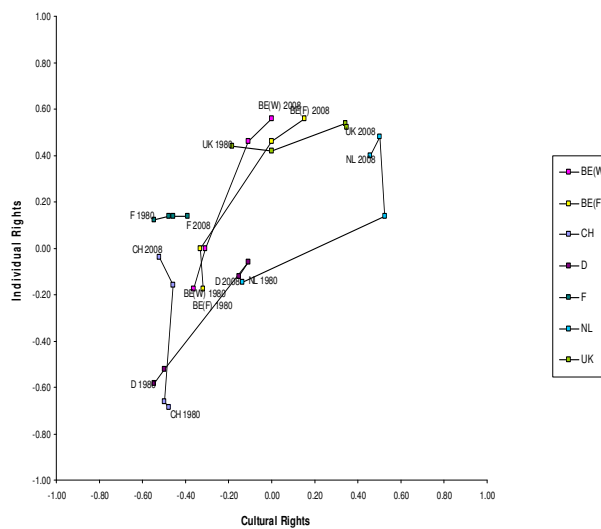
Indicators gathered include the fields of education (e.g. faith-based schools; mother tongue language provisions; allowance for exemptions from mixed sports classes and sexual education; right to wear a headscarf and other forms of facial and body covering by pupils and teachers, etc.), media (e.g., broadcasting for linguistic and religious minorities), and cultural and religious aspects of anti-discrimination policies (e.g., jurisprudence regarding conflicts among employers, employees, and job applicants regarding religious symbols and provisions).

The data collection and analysis was carried out in each country based on strictly cross-nationally comparable guidelines. The systematic information gathered was summarised in national reports and then assembled in an integrated dataset allowing for cross-national comparative analyses.

**New knowledge and European added value**

Cross-national differences in political opportunities have not become smaller over the period 1980-2008. Indeed, evidence for divergence can be found in the majority of policy areas that were investigated, while stability of cross-national differences can be found in two areas. The only areas showing evidence for convergence are antidiscrimination rights and partially protection against expulsion. Figure 1 gives an immediate snapshot of overall findings.

**Figure 1. Individual vs. Collective Rights: Cross-National and Cross-Time Differences**



In particular, the position of each country has been placed in a bi-dimensional space that combines the two dimensions of individual and collective rights. As said, our results do provide some strong support for the usefulness of an approach that takes into account the weight of cross-national differences.

However, relevant similarities are also at work across the six countries of the EURISLAM project. Findings, for example, show that in seven of the eight policy areas, and on both individual and collective dimensions, the amount of rights granted is larger in 2008 than it was in 1980. The only deviation concerns family migration rights. Settlement of large groups of Muslims has translated into a push towards extending rights on the individual equality dimension, for instance by making naturalization or access to public service employment easier. Perhaps as a consequence of the rise of a right-wing populist

countermovement against Islam, countries have also implemented restrictive twists in terms of cultural and religious rights, for instance by restricting the display of signs of Muslim faith in public institutions. Obviously further research is necessary to test our findings by extending the geographical scope beyond the six countries of the EURISLAM project.

**Key messages for  
policy-makers,  
businesses,  
trade unions and  
civil society actors**

Results suggest that immigrant citizenship rights are still to some crucial extent a national affair and there are no indications that this is fundamentally changing. In other words, our findings prove the usefulness of a cross-national approach which takes into consideration the relevance of different 'citizenship regimes'.

## PROJECT IDENTITY

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**Coordinator**

Jean Tillie, University of Amsterdam

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**Consortium**

Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung

Université de Genève

University of Bristol

Université Libre de Bruxelles

Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques

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**Duration**

February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 – January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012 (36 months)

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**Funding Scheme**

Small collaborative projects

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**Budget**

1'448'283 Euros

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**Website**

<http://www.eurislam.eu>

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**Further reading**

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**Related websites**

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**For more information**