# Engineering a European Islam: An Analysis of Attempts to Domesticate European Muslims in Austria, France, and Germany

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ABSTRACT *Today, a number of European states' policies on religion aim at creating a nationalized Islam. In many Western European countries, the Ministries of the Interior have institutionalized 'dialogue platforms' to discuss issues of Islam, society, inclusion and extremism with Muslim actors. This reveals the implicit assumptions of these governments when talking to Muslims. The underlying message is that Muslims pose a security threat to the state and society, a perception that is manifested in many countries, and that Muslims are seen simultaneously as a threat and an ally. This article analyzes the Ministry of Interior's attempts to institutionalize Islam in the cases of Austria, Germany, and France and it compares these states in order to investigate different modes of operation, similarities and differences.*

## Introduction

Richard Traunmüller shows in his quantitative empirical study that there was an increasing tendency in the EU 27-member states[3] from 1990 to 2011 to regulate religions.[4] Although Traunmüller's study speaks of a general trend and does not deal with differences in the states' policies in regard to different religious communities, this trend is especially true for Islam. As Jonathan Laurence shows in his study, from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s, "gone were the ad hoc responses […] and in came corporatist-style institution building and the establishment of 'state-mosque' relations."[5] Especially in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on 9/11, European countries became more and more interested in gradually taking "'ownership' of their Muslim populations because it grants them unique influence over organizations and leadership."[6]

By influencing how Islam should look, national governments aim at creating "the institutional conditions for the emergence of a French or German Islam, e.g., rather than just tolerating Islam 'in' France or Germany."[7] This reflects two

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aims of these states: i) to free Muslims and disconnect them from an allegedly foreign policy agenda, especially from the influence of the embassies of their origin countries, and ii) to 'moderate' those Muslim organizations that have a transnational link to Islamist movements.[8] Many authors share the observation that states want a domesticized, "democratic European Islam" in the context of debates about Islam as constituting a threat to "security,"[9] "integration," and "European values,"[10] while others also problematize the racial dimension that structures these attempts.[11]

In most European countries, the initiative to create 'state-mosque' relations comes from Ministries of the Interior, which have institutionalized 'dialogue platforms' to discuss issues of Islam, society, inclusion and extremism with Muslim actors. For Muslim civil society actors, the main purpose of participating in these state initiatives is to negotiate the institutional incorporation of Muslim institutions into the political system, and the accommodation of Muslim religion, as Luis Manuel Hernández Aguilar shows for the case of Germany.[12] While a number of analyses discuss these Islam policies on a European level,[13] in a comparative perspective in different European countries[14] or single cases such as Austria,[15] Germany,[16] France,[17] or Great Britain, there is little critical research comparing Islam Politics on a cross-national European level.

One of the most quoted works by political scientists is Fetzer and Soper's comparative study on the accommodation of Islam in Germany, France and Britain.[18] Drawing on social movement theory, their main insight is that historically built church-state relations pre-structure the accommodation of Islam. This basically affirms the approach of path dependency as taught in theories of institutionalism, which is also shared by other authors.[19] Tatari has added to the four theories of social movement theory (SMT) discussed by Fetzer and Soper (resource mobilization theory, political opportunity structure theory, ideological theories, and approaches highlighting the influence of church-state relations) a fifth explanatory factor, which is "to account for the religious traditions characteristic of a particular group."[20] Others rather questioned the SMT approach. For instance, Loobuyck *et al.* have demonstrated that church-state regimes did not have an impact on the institutionalization of representative Muslim organizations, which is an important critique of Fetzer and Soper's work, who take the different treatments of Muslims –compared to the dominant churches– by the state as given. In their analysis of cases in Belgium, France, Germany and the UK, they argue that "several states have abandoned their traditional methods when dealing with the institutionalization of Islam."[21] They conclude with the observation of a trend that "transcends disparate regimes and relies mostly on other factors such as acknowledgment of Islam, security and integration policy."[22] The evidence for this claim lies in the timing of the beginning of these policies alongside political incidents, explicit refer-

ence to de-radicalization –or at the very least "dialogue"– and the call for a "European Islam" to replace a variety of Islamic trends and traditional Muslim cultural practices in Europe."[23] This approach draws on other authors' work, who argues not to overemphasize state-church relations.[24]

The debate and state policies targeting Muslims reached a new level after the 9/11 attacks. Since then, there is a general trend in Europe characterized by "increased surveillance and police activity around Muslim actors and organizations, banning of groups and deportation of radicals and greater limitation on

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the religious practice of Muslims" such as the minaret, headscarf, halal slaughter and male circumcision bans.[25] Yükleyen argues that in the post 9/11 era the laissez-faire approach of many European countries vis-à-vis Islam and Muslims "has been replaced by policies that monitor Islamic religious activities and by recognizing representative bodies that claim to speak in the name of all Muslims."[26]

In recent years, there has been more critical work that looks at Islam Politics from a perspective of race,[27] discourse,[28] postcolonialism,[29] and critical studies such as the anthropology of secularism.[30] This article draws on these works and uses a racism studies-informed postcolonial approach to look not at the specific accommodation of certain aspects of Islamic practices, but rather at the approach federal state agencies, governments and the states take to create what has been called Austrian, German or French Islam in those countries. These strategies operate on a different level and do not deal with specific fields of practice like chaplaincy or the institutionalization of Islamic Theology, but rather take the grand strategy of states and governments into account.

## A Postcolonial Analysis of Islam Politics

Farid Hafez has drawn on Foucault's notion of the dispositive, which is understood to be made of "disproportionately heterogeneous ensembles, discourses, institutions, architectural institutions, regulating decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral or philanthropic

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doctrines […] The disposition itself is the network that can be intertwined between these elements."[31] He frames Islam Politics as a dispositive.[32] In our analysis, we will make use of this dispositive analysis to understand the approach of Austria, Germany, and France in their dealing with Islam. Although there is no uniform definition of postcolonial studies, a common ground to all approaches is that they deal in the widest sense with the nature and the effects of colonialism.[33] Chandra proposes a postcolonial informed political science research program that is characterized by a stronger incorporation of non-Western knowledge, as well as an "openness to anthropological and historical knowledge as well as area studies."[34] Chandra explicitly refers to three possible approaches, which are not meant to be exhaustive: (i) critiques of existing Eurocentric theories of comparative politics; (ii) bottom-up ethnographic and historical understandings of politics in particular contexts; (iii) re-evaluating key political concepts such as the state, democracy, nationalism, and war in the light of different non-Western experiences.[35]

In a broader sense, Chandra is critically concerned with the Eurocentric knowledge production found in political science, especially regarding the so-called 'Third World.' His concern is an appreciation of local knowledge, respecting the knowledge production of other human groups in the so-called Global South.[36] Or as other decolonial theoreticians would say: It is about creating pluriversality instead of (Western) universality.[37] For Chandra, postcolonial studies share many of the interests and approaches which can be found in political science, such as critical race theory, feminist studies, etc.[38]

Ziai argues additionally that postcolonial subjects within the Global North should be taken into consideration as a central category for domestic political relations.[39] Ziai points out that postcolonial policy research is based on the usual methods used in political science, primarily qualitative research methods,[40] as we use Foucault's notion of the dispositive here.

## The Construction of an Austrian Islam by the Austrian Government

Islam was already institutionalized in Austrian territory by the Islam Act of 1912, following the Austria Hungarian Empire's annexation of Bosnia Herze-

Sebastian Kurz (R), Austrian Foreign Minister and leader of ÖVP greets supporters on October 15, 2017 in Vienna. While in 2010, Kurz had argued that he was against a headscarf ban, and condemned such a demand as populism; he has now become the champion of this ban.

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govina. In 1979, the Islamic Religious Community was established as a corporate body that represents the religious interests of all Muslims living in Austria. In early 2011, then-state secretary of the Ministry of Interior, Sebastian Kurz, presented the "Dialogue Forum Islam" as a means to "improve coexistence and increase the sense of belonging of Muslims."[41] This seemingly inclusive mode of speech, which superficially opposed discrimination and called for the improvement of the lives of Muslims, was used to support this new institution. But soon it became clear that this initiative attempted to introduce a new Islam Politics that differed from the state's approach to other legally recognized religious communities and churches. It used an ambivalent discourse, which on the one hand is directed against racist generalizations about Muslims, while on the other hand co-opts right wing concepts such as counter-society, a concept developed from that of a parallel society.[42]

Already during the press conference held in January 2012, Kurz declared that he aimed to amend the Islam Act of 1912 and draft a proposal for the Federal Government.[43] A first draft was presented in autumn 2014 and was fundamentally criticized by legal scholars.[44] Richard Potz regarded the draft of the Islam Act as neither conformable to law, nor non-discriminatory.[45] According to Hafez, a number of articles in the law were legitimized with the help of an Islamophobic frame.[46] Hafez reveals this with § 2.2 of the proposed law. This paragraph stresses that the Islam Act "comply with general state norms" as well as "their pre-eminence against internal religious societies or doctrine."[47] According to Potz, this "formulation cannot be found in any other special law

of religion."[48] Minister of Cultural Affairs, Ostermayer, emphasized this aspect when presenting the draft: "A clear principle is that state law prevails over religious law."[49] According to Hafez, this discourse builds on those Islamophobic stereotypes that characterize the figure of the disloyal Muslim citizen. Indeed, no similar paragraph can be found in any other law concerning other religions in Austria. There is not a single similar rule and, according to the Austrian constitution, every religion must be treated in the same way under the law. The second aspect is the linking of the new Islam Act with the German language. Kurz emphasized the importance of the German language from early on. For him, "the Islamic faith should be more transparent, understandable and open,"[50] and Imams should speak German. The emphasis on the German language expresses two things: On the one hand, othering is used to draw a line between Muslims and the rest of the society, while a potential inclusion is made possible by the acceptance of the German language. On the other hand, with the intention of Germanization, the Muslim figure is subject to transparency, as is not the case with other churches and religious societies like the Greek or Bulgarian Orthodox church or the Arab speaking Coptic Church. Thus, inclusion is only superficial. In a critical discourse analysis of the parliamentary debates in the National Council and the Federal Council, Hafez also observes a partial takeover of right wing Islamophobic positions by members of the government parties, albeit more ambivalent and contradictory.[51]

A discussion between Kurz and far right FPÖ Chairman, Heinz-Christian Strache, reveals the concerns Kurz follows on the level of public discourse: "First, the primacy of Austrian law before beliefs is in the act. Second, the presentation of the beliefs in German, also of the Koran, is part of the act. Third, German as a language of instruction is self-evident. And fourth, I was the first politician who demanded that the sermons in the mosques be held in German."[52] Regarding the latter, Strache replied maliciously: "Mr. Kurz, I have already claimed this when you were not even in politics."[53] This summary briefly shows the extent to which the Islam Act is characterized by othering, and at the same time the dominant society is confirmed as an invisible actor in the background: an imagined, transparent, Austrian, German-speaking identity. All these aspects convey a linguistically bound identity construction of Austria, which in turn requires transparency from Muslims and is based on an assumed contradiction between Islamic practices and Austrian laws.

At the same time, the Islamic Religious Community (IGGiÖ) saw more intense clashes. Many –especially smaller religious groups among Muslims– positioned themselves against the draft law and even forced the IGGiÖ to publish a comprehensive critique of the draft.[54] Ultimately, however, the leadership of IGGiÖ agreed to the new Islam Act. The new constitution of the IGGiÖ was adapted in accordance with the basic conditions, thus strengthening the large associations by transforming them into public entities (*Körperschaft öffentli-*

*chen Rechtes*), as was the case before only with the IGGiÖ.

Simultaneously, the IGGiÖ was strengthened by gaining direct control over those smaller entities which were formerly outside the IGGiÖ's direct sphere, since they had been organized under the Association Act and not the Islam Act; thus these entities lost their independence. Put differently, the Islam

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In March 2017, the Anti-Face-Covering Act became part of the Integration Act. Article 2 (1) provides:

> The objectives of this Federal Act are the promotion of integration by strengthening participation in society and securing peaceful coexistence in Austria. Integration is a comprehensive societal process. Its success depends on the participation of all people living in Austria and is based on personal interaction.[55]

In case the law is broken, one is punished with a fine of up to €150 (Article 2.2). This repressive restriction will certainly affect only a small number of women, since there are only very few wearing a face veil according to media reports.[56] Before the Integration Act was put in practice, the government also discussed a headscarf ban for several professions such as police, military, judge and prosecuters. In the end, the government refrained from an explicit prohibition in the law. The government agreed on a neutrality requirement in these professions. According to the spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior, it was said that the police uniform regulation now provides "that only that which is normalized as part of the uniform is allowed. These are not religious symbols."[57] The Ministry of Justice stated that there is currently "no immediate need for action."[58] Thus the liberal headscarf policy,[59] which had prevailed for a long time in Austria, seems to have taken a turn. While in 2010, Sebastian Kurz had argued that he was against a headscarf ban, and condemned such a demand as populism, which does not serve the integration of Muslims,[60] he now became the champion of this ban.

In the above-mentioned debate between Strache and Kurz, the latter referred to the Islam Act in the following way: "With the Islam Act, we contribute to

the fact that there can be an Austrian Islam (literally: Islam of an Austrian imprint)."[61] This should make it possible "to be, at the same time, a proud Austrian and a Muslim believer."[62] This theorem of an Austrian Islam can be seen as a central discursive element of the Islam dispositive. It originates from an inner-Muslim discourse but was reframed by Kurz. The IGGiÖ, for example, spoke of an Austrian Islam already in 2003,[63] and the Austrian Muslim Youth had used the notion of an Austro-Muslim identity already in the late 1990s.[64] Thus, Kurz simultaneously makes use of restrictive policies and a discourse of inclusion. Kurz uses a set of policies for his Islam dispositive. He calls for informing people about Islam and explains that "events such as expert conferences with the participation of young people as well as brochures are measures which will enable a European Islam in the future."[65]

These measures are explicitly identified as strategic activities, which are also reflected in the publications of Kurz and other state actors of integration policy. A commentary entitled "European Islam: Muslims in the Midst of Society" was published in the name of Sebastian Kurz himself.[66] Franz Wolf, who had been working in the ÖIF (Austrian Integration Fund) since 2003, and then became deputy office manager in the State Secretariat for Integration, is now managing director of the ÖIF, which is in close cooperation with the BMEIA.[67] Wolf published an op-ed entitled "How much Europe does Islam need?"[68] and conferences with the title "How much Europe does Islam need?"[69] were organized.

Kurz understands the European character of Islam as a disconnection from the global Muslim community: "The independence of European Muslims from states and parties in the Muslim world is growing. Muslims who are part of Austria and other European countries share the goals of a peaceful society, in which each individual can make a contribution."[70] Kurz draws a picture that is based on a discursive inclusion of Muslims as a "part of Austria and other European countries." At the same time, this seemingly inclusive position draws an image which implies that only those Muslims who share the "goals of a peaceful society" live here. Like the colonial practice of the Habsburg monarchy, he designs a domesticated Austrian Islam in contrast to a foreign and dangerous Islam.

Kurz sums up this approach on the website of the ÖVP's youth organization: "An Austrian Islam –there should not be any contradiction between being a faithful Muslim and a self-conscious Austrian,"[71] a statement that would be widely shared by many Austrian Muslims themselves. He goes on: "I advocate for a European Islam, legally recognized –but without any financial dependency from abroad. I advocate for European Imams born and grown up here… Imams financed from abroad are one of the largest integration and social policy problems and are no longer possible."[72] This is how Kurz promoted the new Islam Act. Hafez has already identified the strategy of the Habsburg monar-

chy as one of the colonial separation of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Ottoman Empire in order to strengthen the authority of the emperor by means of religious separation.[73] Divide and rule is reformulated by disconnecting Muslims from transnational links and domesticating them.

As mentioned above following a conference of the BMEIA, the managing director of the ÖIF published an op-ed in *Die Presse*, entitled "How much Europe does Islam need?"[74] As in the colonial discourse of the Habsburg monarchy, we can observe an equation of Europe with progress. Here, Europe becomes a symbol for modernization and cultural superiority. In his explanations of particular questions of sexuality, we understand what Wolf means specifically. In his opinion, there are "limits of freedom of religion."[75] He argues that the IGGiÖ does not allow discussions about "swimming instruction for Muslim girls" and veiling with reference to their religious practice. Wolf's androcentric perspective presents a policy of sexuality centered on the imagined hypersexuality of the Muslim man,[76] which has to be regulated according to a well-known colonial practice of the "white men […] saving the brown women from brown men."[77] A second focus in his op-ed is that Islam should learn from Europe the "separation of politics and religion."[78] Wolf argues that transnational connections should be dissolved, since this would have "fatal consequences on Islamic associations and organizations in Europe."[79] A central leverage for reform would lie in the institutionalization of theology chairs at Austrian universities. Austria and Europe are thus imagined in the background as progressive examples of secular, gender-appropriate and enlightened social and political formations. Here, the main function of 'othering,' the definition of oneself, becomes obvious.

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## The German State's Attempts to Discipline Muslims through "National Dialogue"

### The Non-recognition of Islam from the State: Islam as an Outsider Entity

First of all, unlike Austria, Islam has never been recognized as "public entity" in German history. One may argue that this difference emanates from the historical experiences of both states. Austria first occupied (1878) and then annexed Bosnia Herzegovina with a substantial Muslim population in 1912. Consequently, Islam was recognized and institutionalized by the Islam Act of 1912 in Austria. However, Germany did not have a substantial Muslim population in its history and therefore, there was no need to recognize or institu-

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tionalize Islam. This changed with the migration of Muslim guest workers to Germany in the post-Second World War era. As a result of this migration, the number of Muslims living in Germany reached nearly 5 million in 2018, which makes up 6.1 percent of the whole population.[80]

However, there *is* a legacy of German colonial politics, as Levent Tezcan reveals in his work. Tezcan shows how many of the discursive positions held by the state in the German Islam Conference (DIK-Deutsche Islam Konferenz), which will be discussed more in detail later, had already been uttered during the two colonial conferences, where it was declared that Islam must be civilized.[81]

One may argue that the German state ignored the new migrants and their religion for quite a long time, since first it believed that the guest workers would return to their countries, and second they were tolerated under a multiculturalist paradigm.[82] However, this relaxed attitude started to change after the end of Cold War with the portrayal of Islam as the new "Other" of the western world, which also coincided with the realization that the guest workers were not going to leave as expected. There followed an intense public debate and an effort by different state actors to 'integrate' or, better put, 'assimilate' these new subjects to Germany. In these debates Muslims were mostly portrayed as inferior subjects who had to adapt to vaguely defined 'German values,' which were understood primarily as secular, yet having a Judeo-Christian heritage.[83]

### The German Islam Conference: Shaping the Rule of Deliberation from the Top-down

Like other European countries, Germany also became more and more interested in establishing a control mechanism over its Muslim subjects under the pretext of creating an institutionalized 'dialogue' mechanism. In this regard, the establishment of the German Islam Conference by the Interior Ministry of the Federal Republic in 2006 was a turning point to regulate Islam on a national scale in Germany.

The DIK is a regular event organized by the Ministry for the Interior, which selects the participant organizations as well as the topics discussed. Through DIK, the Federal Republic of Germany aims to set a range of recommendations concerning the regulation and control of Islam that each individual state

within the republic (Land) might implement. In Germany, the supervision of faith and its regulation (tax, teaching, organization, etc.) belong to each Land. Therefore, there are as many regulations over Islam as the number of Lands (up to 16). Each Land decides whether religious organizations (and which one(s) and how) should be recognized as a "public entity" (*Körperschaft öffentlichen Rechtes*), and therefore as able to levy taxes on its members (fiscal jurisdiction) and to employ public officials (especially for religious teaching).

In order to be officially recognized by the German government as a 'public entity' and to benefit from the specific rights of this status, such as levying taxes on its members (fiscal jurisdiction) and employing public officials (especially for religious teaching), German law requires that a religious society should represent the entire religious community, should have a centralized organizational structure, and should have permanency. Because of the non-unified nature of Sunni Islam, it is extremely difficult for Muslims to achieve these requirements.[84] Only one small Muslim community has managed to obtain this status so far. In 2013 the German federal state of Hessen granted the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat with the status of "public entity" (with 35,000 members) despite the contestation of mainstream groups such as DITIB (Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs).[85]

At the first German Islam Conference, the former Minister of the Interior, Wolfgang Schäuble, declared the main aim of the conference, stating: "We want enlightened Muslims in our enlightened country."[86] This declaration explicitly implies that Muslims need to be "enlightened" and that there are Muslims who are not "enlightened," which can also be understood in the context of 'the good

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and bad Muslim' narrative. In this context, the main function of the German Islam conference become clear –that is to say– to civilize Muslim subjects, a project reminiscent of the discourse of the "white man's burden" in the age of colonization.

According to its declarations, the DIK aims to address specific problems in the Muslim community, such as concerns about the threat of terrorism, radicalization and extremism that emerge from 'parallel societies' (Muslim ghetto), 'Islamism,' gender inequality in Muslim communities, anti-Semitism in Muslim communities,[87] the lack of integration of Muslims living in Germany, the introduction of Islamic religious studies in German in state schools, the training of local imams, establishing Islamic theological faculties in German Universities, and reporting in the media.[88]

### Defining Islam as a Security and Cultural Issue through DIK, New Theological Faculties, Media Discourses and Legislative Measures

As can be seen above, the DIK is an ambitious project which aims to tackle many areas regarding Muslims and therefore can be seen as the main tool of the German State to create a national Islam. The DIK has two main goals: first, the integration of Muslims in German society, and second the institutional integration of Islam. In 2006, the Government declared the aim of the conference as "a better religious and social integration of the Muslim population in Germany. On the one hand, it is implied that a 'better integration' of Muslims and the institutional integration of Islam will prevent radicalism and terrorism. On the other hand, the segmentation of Muslims in Germany is being countered."[89] The 2008 interim resume of the DIK states that: "Integration demands a much greater level of adjustment by the immigrants, particularly in terms of attitudes of the receiving society that are based on German laws, German history, and German culture."[90] Integration is thus described as Muslims' adaptation of "German" laws, history, culture, values, and language, all of which are associated with liberalism and secularism. However, as Müller puts it there is no consensus in Germany on what integration into "German culture" and "German values" really means.[91]

Hernandez argues that the declared goal of the DIK to "integrate Islamic institutions into existing institutional structures in Germany" poses a dilemma for Muslims. On the one hand, Muslims want to enjoy the "additional rights associated with the institutional integration of Islam;" however, on the other hand, this institutional integration puts them under the control and regulation of the state authorities. Furthermore, this integration is also framed as a necessary

cooperation in national security matters to prevent the alleged radicalization of Muslims. Hernandez concludes that the racialization of Muslims is central to the integration project of the German government.[92] Foner also argues that "Islam in Western Europe is like race in the United States and Muslims share the same fate and face the same barriers as blacks in the United States."[93]

The fact that Germany decided to institutionalize its relations with its own Muslim population only after 9/11, and the ensuing problematization of Muslims as a security threat in the western world, speaks volumes. This focus on preventing radicalism, extremism and terrorism can be seen in the statements of the German Conference throughout the years. Therefore, one can claim that behind all of the declared goals of the DIK one issue stands out: that of preventing terrorism through the securitization of Islam and Muslims. Cesari defines "securitization as exceptional measures and procedures outside the rule of law, justified by emergency situations that threaten the survival of the political community."[94] In this context, Muslims are portrayed as both an external and internal threat to the survival of German society, the state and its 'values.' This justifies the extraordinary measures of the German state vis-à-vis Muslims, such as its interference into the religious affairs of Muslims, although the German constitution's principles of neutrality and parity regarding religions requires that as a secular state it has to treat all religions equally and should not be involved in intra-religious disputes among Muslims.[95]

Müller analyzed the statements of the DIK and finds that the definition of extremism and radicalism used by the DIK is quite vague. For instance, the DIK's concluding declaration of 2008 states that, "even if it is not encouraging people to support violence, the teaching of Islamist educational content can have a radicalizing effect." This very broad and vague definition of "extremism" and "radicalization" beyond the support and call for actual violence is quite problematic, since terrorism should be the main indicator for the definition of radicalism and extremism. Müller notes that even the highly controversial "Prevent Strategy" of the UK provides a more exact definition, with terrorism as the main indicator of radicalization, defining the latter as "the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism."[96]

What is more problematic is the climate of pressure and fear inside the DIK which forces Muslim associations to accept highly problematic definitions which are formulated and imposed by state officials, most of the time without consulting Muslim associations. Müller notes that,

> the analysis of DIK documents demonstrates, the official positions of Islamic umbrella organizations were very conciliatory to the intentions expressed by state officials. However, in settings of anonymized interviews, Muslim participants of the DIK have expressed serious doubts about the DIK and its effects…

one participant of IGMG claimed that the minutes and protocols that were prepared by state agencies did not reflect the actual debate and the controversies therein. Also, publications and agreements allegedly contained statements that were not even talked about in the discussions. To the contrary, as a representative of the ZMD claimed, there was a significant pressure exercised to 'waive through' the documents state employees had prepared in advance. The Islamic organizations in turn yielded to the pressure because they did not want to produce any scandals.[97]

Islamic associations that oppose these pressures risk being labelled as "bad" Muslims, i.e. radicals and extremists. Although none of the participating Islamic organizations agreed with the DIK outcome document of 2008, only IRD (*Islamischer Rat Deutschland*, Islamic Council of Germany), which also includes the IGMG, openly opposed and refused to support the statement of the roundtable "Security and Islamism." What followed was a stern warning to all other participating Islamic associations, and a prime example of State intimidation against Muslims in Germany. Just a couple of months after this controversy between the IRD-IGMG and DIK, six administrators of the IGMG were "prosecuted and charged with fraud, money laundering, support of a terrorist organization, and foundation of a criminal organization. In 2009, there were several large scale raids that received major media attention." Consequently, the IGMG and IRD were excluded from DIK and the Interior Minister, de Maizière, asked other participating Islamic organizations to openly denounce IRD and IGMG and draw a clear line between peaceful and violent Islamism. Here it is clear that Muslim organizations are asked to follow interpretations of state authorities without questioning them.[98]

It is clear that Germany's Islam dispositive not only consists of DIK and its initiatives but also includes the establishment of new institutions such as Islamic theology faculties with the aim of raising imams in Germany,[99] court orders regarding the religious practices of Muslims such as the headscarf ban, media discourses about alleged parallel societies and Muslims as a security problem, surveillance of Muslim NGOs and mosques,[100] and countless other initiatives. The ultimate aim of these initiatives is a domesticized national Islam, which is represented by the state-approved 'good Muslims.'

## The French State's Attempts to Discipline Muslims through a Hierarchical National Structure

The French State's attempts to organize local Muslims into a kind of "church" hierarchical structure reflect also a general will to control its members and to drive them into a nationalized (French identity) and enlightened (secular) practice of their religion. At the same time, the different state programs

intended to establish a "French Islam" structure are working as the catalyst of a general dispositive that includes laws, discourse, political statements, education directives, all aiming to discipline local Muslims.

### Muslim as a Particular Form of the Excluded

From 1990 to 2016, French governments of both the left and right wing created several official structures in order to organize, control, and 'modernize' Islam in France. Although these different policies do not constitute together a monolithic and coherent organization of Islam, they produced an intertwined set of mechanisms that all aim to control and influence –from the top– the way Muslims practice their faith

**The attempts at organizing and controlling Islam by both left and right wing governments rely upon a common post-colonial discourse of "domestication"**

in France.[101] On one hand, this complex dispositive seems to have been first conceived as an answer to the "Consular Islam," that is the policy of delegating the management of Islam to their countries of origin of the post-1945 migrant workers, especially Algeria, Morocco and Turkey.[102] On the other hand, policies of organizing, controlling and modernizing Islam rely on the old colonial discourses that promote the domestication of the "good Arab" as described by Hajjat.[103] Furthermore, the fact that in France the Minister responsible for faith affairs is the Interior Minister implies de facto a relation based upon security and control. Yet these measures contradict the principle of French secularism (the concept of *laïcité*), particularly as developed in the 1905 law, which imposes a strict separation between the State and religious organizations.[104]

It is not a coincidence that the French authorities first attempted to organize, control and modernize Islam at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. Indeed, this period saw the transformation of the "Arab immigration problem" into a "Muslim problem" in the rhetoric of most of journalists and policymakers.[105] Although this semantic shift implied new policies (such as the top-down organization of Islam discussed here), these new measures relied on an old and ongoing French post-colonial dispositive towards North African workers and families established in the national territory. This dispositive constitutes a range of segregating discourses materialized in law, urbanism and symbols that seek to relegate the targeted population to subaltern jobs, to the city's periphery (suburbs), to limited social rights and to poor civic participation.[106] In other words, through various measures and statements, the French authorities defined the North-African population as the "other," i.e. those who are not like French people and are not fully legitimate to live in the country.[107]

In the 1980s, France assisted the rise of Arab-origin French visibility in the public sphere but also witnessed the rise of the far right party in reaction.

General view taken at the start of the German Islam Conference, organized by the Interior Ministry in 2006, and a turning point to regulate Islam on a national scale.

JOHN MACDOUGALL / AFP / Getty Images

Hajjat claims that the civil rights movements launched by segregated Arab-origin French people, such as the March for Equality and Against Racism (1983), led to a conflict between the established (the French elites) and the outsiders (the Arabs), the first trying to direct the second into social differentiation and exclusion.[108] The pressure upon immigrated populations increased further when the far right party "Front National" got historical results at the 1984 European elections (11 percent), the 1986 Parliamentary elections (10 percent) and the 1988 Presidential elections (14.4 percent).[109] It is in this context that the "Arab immigration problem" became a "Muslim problem" at the end of the 1980s, following the Islamic Salvation Front's victory in the Algerian elections and the consecutive civil war (1990-1991), the exclusion of three girls wearing headscarves at the secondary school of the northern city of Creil (October 1989), and the Iranian Khomeini's fatwa against Salman Rushdie and his *Satanic Verses*.[110]

### Establishing National Structures in Order to Resolve the "Muslim Problem"

All these elements laid the ground for a reform of France's Islam policy. In March 1990, the Interior Minister and socialist Pierre Joxe launched the Consulting Council on Islam of France (*Conseil de Réflexion sur l'Islam de France* –le CORIF). By so doing, Joxe became the first Minister since decolonization to implement a public policy that aimed to frame the representation and the organization of Islam in France.[111] The Council was composed of six French Muslim personalities that deliberated practical issues of French Muslims and proposed non-binding recommendations to the Interior Ministry.[112] Although this Council does not seem to have left a great impact on the structure of Is-

lam in France, it constituted the first attempt to control and influence the Muslim faith in France by the State. Indeed, Solenne Jouanneau argues that Pierre Joxe designed a specific discourse on Islam based on security, nationalizing and modernizing that all his successors will endorse.[113] For instance, Joxe stated that he would fight "the development of 'savage' mosques with radical, intolerant and violent imams" through "the establishment of institutes that would train French imams."[114] Similarly, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, the Interior Minister between 1997 and 2000, stated "I have analyzed carefully previous political efforts for integrating Islam into the national community. I share the same goal: supporting the rise of a French Islam (Islam Français) […] a

**This continual state intervention into Muslim's affairs did allow the state to impose its agenda upon Muslim federations, i.e. its concerns for identity, security and Modern Islam**

modern Islam in our territory;"[115] Sarkozy, the Interior Minister between 2002 and 2005, stated that "clandestine Islam is a threat, because radicalism comes from clandestine networks while civic participation leads to integration and then to a form of normalization;"[116] and Bernard Cazeneuve, Interior Minister between 2014 and 2016, declared that his goal was to "produce a Republican Islam," with the aim that "every Muslim –alongside the whole French people– get engaged in the total defense of the Republic against terrorism, Salafism, because the Republic is their first affiliation."[117] Because of this common ideological approach, some scholars affirm that the attempts at organizing and controlling Islam by both left and right wing governments rely upon a common post-colonial discourse of "domestication."[118]

The second attempt to organize Islam by the State came from the Gaullist Charles Pasqua (1993-1995) who tried to base his policy mainly on the Algerian network and the Great Mosque of Paris. The Advisory Council for Muslims in France (CRMF) was created, made up 80 representatives. Pasqua also supported the nomination of seven regional Grand Muftis by Dalil Boubakeur, the president of the Great Mosque of Paris, as well as the creation of a training institute for religious scholars beside the mosque (the Ghazali Institute).[119] Yet these structures felt apart in 1995 due to the exit of the Moroccan representatives who refused the hegemony of the Algerian network.[120] This failure shows that Muslim federations are not totally passive vis-à-vis the state's initiatives, and develop –sometimes– strategies of contestation.[121]

The third important attempt came from the socialist Jean-Pierre Chevènement (1997-2000) who organized discussion platforms (the *istichara*) that included a large scope of French Muslim trends. The goal was to encourage French Muslim communities to organize themselves within a framework designed by the State.[122] As an example of the state's intervention, the Interior Minister im-

**The current French President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron, seems to carry on the same post-colonial dispositive while presenting a face of reform**

posed upon French Islamic federations, non-affiliated mosques and prominent figures, the signature of a charter as a prerequisite for their participation in the consultation process. Through this charter, the state revealed its agenda on Islam: respect for the French law, the 1905 secular principles, French language, the fight against radicalism, equality between men and women, and respect of apostasy in Islam. In brief, Islam was perceived as a threat to French principles even before the beginning of the policymaking process. In summer 2001, all the parties involved presented "an agreement for the future organization of the Muslim religion in France," laying the grounds for the forthcoming French Council of the Muslim Faith (CFCM).

Two years later, the process was completed under the vigorous impulsion of Nicolas Sarkozy (2002-2005) with the official creation of the CFCM on May 28, 2003. The CFCM aims to be the interlocutor of the French State on every issue relative to Islam and Muslim worship in France through a national council and regional councils. CFCM presents a pyramidal structure in which French Muslims elect delegates (the number of delegates is determined by the size of the mosque), that then elect a national board, which elects a directional board and this latter elects a President. The creation of the CFCM seems to come from the alliance between the three main French Muslim federations – the Great Mosque of Paris (Algeria), the UOIF (Muslim Brotherhood) and the National Federation of the Muslims of France (Morocco)– under the Interior Ministry's pressure.[123] On one hand, Sarkozy met many French Muslim federations (including the Muslim Brotherhood UOIF) and repeated that "there [was] no project to standardize Islam, to differentiate or distinguish an official one. [Muslim federations'] internal debates are not the business of the Republic."[124] On the other hand, he directly nominated the president of the Mosque of Paris (Dalil Boubakeur) at the head of the CFCM in 2003 and 2005 though his poor score in the organization's elections.[125] Besides intervening directly in the CFCM Presidential nomination, Sarkozy indicated what kind of Islam he was waiting for: an Islam "fully integrated in the Republic… with representatives fully integrated and trained in the Republic."[126] His discourses focus on the role of imams and the use of the French language in sermons and religious courses. Therefore, though a liberal appearance, Sarkozy clearly promoted state interventionism into Muslims' affairs.

In parallel to the CFCM structure, the same government launched under the initiative of the Gaullist Prime Minister, Dominique de Villepin, the Foundation for the Oeuvres of Islam of France (*Fondation pour les Oeuvres de l'Is-*

*lam de France*) in 2005. The project aimed to organize fundraising in order to finance mosques under the supervision of the State. However, this Foundation has never been implemented. In 2015, the Interior Minister, Bernard Cazeneuve, tried to launch it once again under the name Foundation for Islam of France (*Fondation de l'Islam de France*). It was intended to be a consulting Council that would empower an "autonomous and Republican" Islam of France. Surprisingly enough, the Interior Minister chose to nominate another former Interior Minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, as the head of the Foundation, demonstrating the state's lack of confidence in French Muslim actors. The Foundation's website presents the aim of the project through a statement of the French orientalist Jacques Berque:

> I don't want for France a "French Islam" but an "Islam of France," that is a Gallic Islam, I mean an Islam aware of modern societies' issues, an Islam that resolves problems that it never had to resolve in the past. Figure out the repercussion of such Islam in the rest of the Islamic world![127]

Many French Muslim/Arab intellectuals, such as Abdennour Bidar, calling for an "enlightened Islam," applauded the creation of this foundation.[128]

### Bottom-up Initiatives and the Difficulty of Escaping from the Islam Dispositive

This continual state intervention into Muslim's affairs did allow the state to impose its agenda upon Muslim federations, i.e. its concerns for identity, security and Modern Islam. Yet, these different structures failed to reach many other objectives: they did not manage to represent the French Muslim communities, they did not manage to propose clear policies on Muslim issues that really reflect the religious needs of Muslims (imam training, halal certification, mosques financing etc.), and they did not take over the role of countries of origin ("Consular Islam") in French Muslim affairs. Indeed, the difficulties of the CFCM –the biggest and most elaborated structure of all the mentioned attempts– reflect an ongoing competition between foreign countries, organizations and egos.[129] Some French Muslim social activists such as Muhammad Marwan, the former president of the CCIF (Collective against Islamophobia in France), attribute this failure to state interventionism, perceived as an attempt to impose top-down policies upon Muslim communities.

However, the constant production of laws targeting Muslim citizens,[130] the increase of terror attacks over the last five years, and the use of a hard discourse on *laïcité* in response to the phenomenon of radicalization,[131] have not encouraged the State to proceed in any reform of its policy towards Muslims. In fact, the current French President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron, seems to carry on the same post-colonial dispositive while presenting a face of reform.[132] Attending the CFCM's *iftar* dinner on June 21, 2017, he defined three "fights" ("combats") that a new "structuring"[133] of French Islam must carry out:

**The Islam dispositives revealed here show that the states legitimize their interference based on this implicitly reproduced imagination of the bad Muslims, and thus endeavor to 'civilize' Muslims subjects, reminding us again of the "white man's burden"**

"a fight of thought and faith, especially towards young generations […] a second fight against a certain practice of Islam that organizes a segregation within the Republic […] a third fight focused on imams' training; they should be trained in France, suitable with Republican values."[134] Security, identity, and imam training… these issues have been the privileged tools to shape the "good Muslim" for 30 years. The next months will tell us how Macron plans to carry on his "French Islam" policy and to what extent it does reflect the on-going post-colonial dispositive to manage Muslim populations.

## Conclusion

Through the analysis of Interior Ministers' statements and policies, this article underlines the policy continuum between quite different states (Austria, Germany and France) in regard to the organization of Islam. Although each country presents its own historical background and means to regulate the relation between the state and its religious communities, they all manage a dispositive that aims to structure Islam and to discipline Muslims. This article demonstrates how this dispositive constitutes a set of actions and injunctions going back to colonial times in dealing with the "other," including discourses on security, control, integration, assimilation, domestication, ownership, differentiation between "bad" and "good" citizens, etc. As a result, the organization of a national Islam aims not only at the establishment of an official Muslim representation (the state-mosque approach) but also the subordination of one religion under the domination of the state (the post-colonial approach). In this asymmetrical relation of power, the state tries to shape the form and the content of this religion, i.e. Islam, by imposing is own agenda from the top.

Many of the measures taken to regulate Islam-state relations reveal an approach that on one side attempts to give Islam a place in their society, while on the other side clearly refers to a stereotypical imagination of the Muslim, where the notion of Europe stands for enlightenment, modernity and progressiveness, while Islam and Muslims represent the opposite. Hence, we can observe a notion of 'civilizing' Islam that goes back to colonial times and introduces a division between the good and the bad Muslim; the former who submits to the state and its rules, versus the latter, who remains the uncivilized, barbaric,

alien Muslim, prone to extremisms and fanaticism and incapable of fitting into modernity. The Islam dispositives revealed here show that the states legitimize their interference based on this implicitly reproduced imagination of the bad Muslims, and thus endeavor to 'civilize' Muslims subjects, reminding us again of the "white man's burden." ●

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