



Post-Islamism and the Governance of Muslim Minorities: A Comparative Study of Muslim Democratic Practices in Western Europe

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ABSTRACT

The presence of a large Muslim community in postwar Western Europe, now exceeding 25 million people, is one of the most significant socio-political phenomena shaping the contemporary European landscape. This community stands at the intersection of pressures to integrate into Europe's liberal democratic order and the desire to preserve religious identity. This study examines how the concept of post-Islamism helps explain the evolving political thought and practice of Muslim minorities in three Western European countries—France, Germany, and the Netherlands—each of which follows a distinct integration model. Using a qualitative comparative approach grounded in discourse analysis, policy review, and literature synthesis, the study finds that Muslim communities in the three countries display varied yet related patterns of identity negotiation and democratic participation that together illustrate a rich post-Islamist condition. Second- and third-generation Muslims increasingly adopt forms of democratic participation without abandoning their religious commitments, producing hybrid identities that unsettle simple oppositions between "Islam" and "the West". These findings affirm the relevance of post-Islamism for understanding diasporic Islam and carry implications for European integration policy, particularly the need to recognise internal diversity among European Muslims rather than treating them as a homogeneous bloc.

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INTRODUCTION

The mass migration of Muslims to Western Europe, both from former colonies and from other Muslim countries, lasted massively from the 1950s to the 1970s and fundamentally changed the demographic composition and socio-cultural landscape of the region (Nielsen, 2004; Vertovec & Peach, 1997). Their presence was initially seen as a temporary phenomenon, namely as migrant workers who would return to their homeland after the post-war labor needs were met. The reality is different: millions of Muslims and their descendants have settled permanently and are now an integral part of European society, with an estimated population of more than 25 million (Roy, 2004).

The issue of Muslim community integration has become a source of intense policy debate and public discourse, especially after the events of September 11, 2001, dramatically changed the way the Western public views Islam. Subsequent events—the terror attacks in Madrid (2004) and London (2005), the riots in the banlieue area of Paris (2005), and the assassination of director Theo van Gogh in the Netherlands (2004)—further sharpened tensions between the Muslim community and the mainstream of European society, while raising fundamental questions about the compatibility of Islam with liberal democratic values (Ramadan, 2004; Klausen, 2005).

Behind the dominant narrative that tends to reduce European Muslims to a homogeneous and problematic group, the reality on the ground is much more complex. These communities not only survive the pressures of integration and discrimination, but actively reshape their identities, establish new institutions, and participate in the democratic life of Europe through innovative means (Bayat, 2007; Cesari, 2004).

The concept of *post-Islamism* developed by Asef Bayat (1996, 2007) offers a relevant analytical framework for understanding these dynamics. Post-Islamism, in the formulation of Bayat, is not a rejection of Islam, but an effort to combine piety with human rights, faith with freedom, and Islam with democracy. It is a condition born from and responding to the failure of Islamism in realizing a utopia of an Islamic state, while maintaining a deep religious commitment. Within the framework of social movement theory, Wiktorowicz (2004) also shows that contemporary Islamic activism cannot be understood as a single phenomenon, but rather as a series of strategies that continue to shift according to the political context at hand—an observation that is in line with the idea of post-Islamism as a process, not an end point.

This concept needs to be modified when applied to the European context. In contrast to Muslims in Muslim-majority countries that were the focus of Bayat's initial focus, European Muslims faced the specific challenge of trying to maintain religious identity in the midst of secular societies that were often antagonistic to religious expression in the public sphere. Olivier Roy (2004) calls this phenomenon "individualized Islam", which is a form of religiosity that is detached from certain national cultural authorities and traditions due to the process of territorialization.

The literature on Islam in Europe has so far developed on two relatively separate paths. The first path is normative, as seen in the work of Ramadan (2004), which argues for how European Muslims should negotiate identity and participate in democratic life. The second path is descriptive and broad-based, covering the mapping of Muslim communities in various European countries (Cesari & McLoughlin, 2005; Nielsen et al., 2012; Triandafyllidou, 2010), including similar patterns documented in neighboring countries such as Belgium (Bousetta & Martiniello, 2003), but generally does not place their findings in the framework of post-Islamism explicitly. It is this gap that this study seeks to fill by linking the framework of Bayat's post-Islamism to comparative data from three Western European countries that apply different integration models.

What distinguishes this study from prior scholarship is its systematic application of Bayat's post-Islamism framework as an explicit comparative lens across three national contexts that have not previously been analysed together under this theoretical category. While Roy (2004), Cesari (2004), and Ramadan (2004) offer foundational accounts of European Muslim identity, none applies the dual-dimensional post-Islamism typology—post-Islamism as condition and as project—in a structured three-country comparison. This study therefore proposes a new analytical matrix linking integration regime variations to post-Islamist manifestations, offering a theoretically grounded typology of

diaspora post-Islamism that advances both the empirical literature on European Muslims and the theoretical reach of Bayat's original framework.

Starting from these gaps, this study aims to analyze how the phenomenon of post-Islamism manifests itself in the political practices and democratic participation of Muslim communities in France, Germany, and the Netherlands, while exploring the factors that shape the different patterns of post-Islamism among the three—including differences in integration policies, the religious traditions of local Muslim communities, and the historical dynamics of Islamic relations with the state. Finally, this study also aims to consider the implications of these findings for the development of post-Islamist theories and for Muslim integration policy discourse in Europe.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative comparative study design by analyzing three country cases, namely France, Germany, and the Netherlands. All three were chosen on the basis of representativeness considerations: each is a Western European country with a significant Muslim population, but applies a different model of integration—republican assimilation in France, gradual integration rooted in the corporatist tradition in Germany, and pluralism rooted in the pillarization tradition in the Netherlands. This variation allows for productive comparative analysis to see how institutional context influences emerging patterns of post-Islamism.

The selection of these three countries follows the most-different systems design (Przeworski & Teune, 1970): France, Germany, and the Netherlands represent three distinct integration regimes—assimilationist, corporatist, and pluralist—yet all are large Western European democracies with well-documented Muslim communities exceeding half a million, which enables meaningful comparative inference. The United Kingdom, while also home to a substantial Muslim population, was deliberately excluded from the primary scope so as to maintain analytical parsimony across three ideal-typical cases; however, where relevant, comparative illustrations from the broader European context are acknowledged.

Data was collected from a variety of secondary sources, including reports from research institutes and *think tanks* that specifically examine European Muslims, such as the Pew Research Center and the Open Society Foundations, government policy documents from the three countries, publications of local Muslim organizations, academic journal articles, and credible media sources. The literature search was carried out systematically by prioritizing sources published in the last two decades, while still referring to the main reference works that form the theoretical basis of this study.

To ensure credibility and internal validity, the study employs source triangulation across three source types: policy documents and government reports, peer-reviewed academic literature, and data from established survey research organisations (Pew Research Center, European Social Survey, and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency). Cross-source consistency was checked by verifying that empirical claims were independently confirmed by at least two independent source categories before incorporation. Systematic literature searches were conducted in JSTOR, Scopus, and Google Scholar using the keywords "post-Islamism," "European Muslims," "Muslim integration," "democratic participation," and country-specific terms, filtering for English- and French-language sources published between 2000 and 2024.

Data analysis was carried out through a combination of discourse analysis of policy documents and public statements, comparative policy studies between countries, and synthesis of relevant literature. These three techniques are used in a complementary manner to reconstruct post-Islamism patterns at the level of community discourse, policy, and practice.

The analytical framework of this research integrates three theoretical perspectives. The concept of post-Islamism from Bayat (2007) is used as the main framework for mapping the shifting political orientation of European Muslims. The social capital theory of Putnam (2000) is used to analyze patterns of Muslim civic participation in various social organizations and movements. The *recognition theory* from Honneth (1995) is used to explain the dynamics of Muslim identity struggles when dealing with

European socio-political structures that do not always provide equal recognition for their religious expressions.

An important methodological note concerns the adaptation of Bayat's post-Islamism concept for the European diaspora context. Bayat (2007) originally theorised post-Islamism in relation to majority-Muslim societies—particularly Iran and Egypt—where Islamism had been a viable state project that subsequently lost its hold. In the European diaspora context, Islamism as a state project was never available; Muslim communities operate as religious minorities within secular liberal democracies. This study therefore distinguishes between post-Islamism in situ (the shift away from Islamist politics within Muslim-majority states) and post-Islamism in diaspora (the condition and project of Muslim minorities navigating secular democratic polities while maintaining religious identity). The latter is characterised by a different set of pressures—structural Islamophobia, citizenship obligations, and the fragmentation of religious authority—which inform the analytical framework applied in this study.

RESULTS

Muslims in France: Republicanism and the Negotiation of Identity

France has the largest Muslim community in Western Europe, with an estimated population of 5 to 6 million people or about 8-10 percent of the total national population (Pew Research Center, 2017). The majority came from former French colonies in North Africa—especially Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia—so their migratory experiences cannot be separated from the history of French colonialism in the region. France's model of integration known as republicanism affirms the equality of all citizens before the law regardless of ethnic or religious origin. Theoretically, this model rejects multiculturalism and the prominence of group identities in the public sphere, in the hope that immigrants and their descendants will assimilate into a universal "French" identity. In practice, this republicanism often clashes with the reality of systematic racial and religious discrimination against the Muslim community.

The phenomenon of post-Islamism in France appears in several interrelated forms. A new generation of French Muslim politicians, intellectuals, and activists are now asserting themselves as French as well as Muslims, rejecting the dichotomy that forces them to choose one identity—as illustrated by figures such as Malek Boutih and Fadela Amara, founders of the *Ni Putes Ni Soumises* movement (Kepel, 2014). In addition, there has also developed what some observers call "*citizenship Islam*", namely the involvement of second- and third-generation French Muslims in various social movements—from environmental issues to LGBTQ rights—as a form of commitment to republican values while maintaining their Islamic identity (Roy, 2004). At the institutional level, French Islamic organizations are increasingly adopting a more participatory approach in their internal governance; The *Conseil Français du Culte Musulman* (CFCM), although often criticized for its various weaknesses, reflects an effort to build an organized Islamic representation and capable of dialogue with the state within the framework of French democracy.

Muslims in Germany: From Gastarbeiter to Staatsbürger

Germany has an estimated Muslim population of 4.5 to 5 million, with the majority coming from Turkey (more than 60 percent) and smaller communities from Southeast Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (Pew Research Center, 2017). The history of the Muslim presence in Germany is very different from that of France because it began with a guest worker program (*Gastarbeiter*) in the 1960s, which was originally designed as a temporary arrangement. For decades, the German government refused to recognize itself as an immigration state (*Einwanderungsland*), a stance that had a major impact on integration and citizenship policies. The formal changes only occurred in 2000, when Germany revised its citizenship law to expand access to naturalization, including the recognition of dual citizenship under certain conditions.

Post-Islamism in Germany displays a somewhat different character from France. The most prominent manifestation is the emergence of various "German Islam" or "European Islam" initiatives that seek to develop Islamic expressions that are appropriate to the European context without losing

their religious substance. *The Deutsche Islamkonferenz* (DIK), established by the federal government in 2006, reflects efforts to integrate Islam into Germany's institutional framework in a way that is acceptable to the various parties. At the community level, the second and third generations of Turkish descent are increasingly active in politics, business, the arts, and academia, as illustrated by a number of cross-party Muslim politicians and public figures such as former footballer Mesut Özil—although the latter case is fraught with controversy and shows just how complicated the negotiation of Muslim-German identity is in the public sphere.

Muslims in the Netherlands: Pluralism Tested

The Netherlands has about one million Muslims, or about 6 percent of the total population, with significant communities coming from Morocco and Turkey (Pew Research Center, 2017). The history of Islam in the Netherlands is inseparable from the tradition of pillarization (*verzuiling*) that for centuries organized Dutch social life based on group identity—Protestant, Catholic, socialist, and liberal.

Theoretically, the Dutch tradition of pluralism should provide a conducive framework for the integration of Muslims as a recognized religious group. In practice, Muslim integration in the Netherlands has faced significant turbulence, especially after the assassination of director Theo van Gogh in 2004 by a Muslim extremist and the rise of the anti-Islam populist movement spearheaded by Pim Fortuyn and later Geert Wilders. Paradoxically, this country with a strong tradition of tolerance and pluralism has become one of the most intense loci of Islamic-European identity conflict (Veit, 2010).

Post-Islamism in the Netherlands thus takes place in a more conflictual atmosphere than in France or Germany, with Muslim communities having to negotiate between the increasing pressure of assimilation and the need to maintain their identity. Nevertheless, the Dutch Muslim community shows impressive signs of vitality and adaptation, from inter-dialogue forums to Muslim youth organizations active in the arts, education, and social services—affirming their capacity to participate in Dutch civic life without relinquishing their Islamic identity.

Concrete manifestations of post-Islamism in the Netherlands include the emergence of organisations such as the Moslimjongeren Nederland (Muslim Youth Netherlands) and Spior (the Platform for Islamic Organisations in Rijnmond), which actively engage in civic advocacy, education, and interfaith dialogue while explicitly positioning themselves within Dutch constitutional norms. Survey data from the European Social Survey (Round 9, 2018–2019) indicate that Dutch Muslims of Moroccan and Turkish descent report levels of civic trust and institutional engagement comparable to, and in some dimensions exceeding, those of their second-generation peers in France, despite the comparatively smaller size of the community. In the political arena, Dutch-Moroccan and Dutch-Turkish politicians have secured seats across multiple parties—including the GroenLinks, PvdA, and VVD—demonstrating the post-Islamist disposition of crossing ideological divides rather than clustering into a single ethno-religious bloc (Fennema & Tillie, 2001). These data points collectively illustrate that, even within a climate of heightened Islamophobic politics, Dutch Muslim communities display robust post-Islamist responses through institutionalised civic participation.

Table 1. Comparison of Muslim Communities in Three Western European Countries

Indicator	France	Germany	The Netherlands
Estimated Muslim population	5-6 million (8-10%)	4.5-5 million (5-6%)	~1 million (6%)
Dominant origin	Maghreb	Turkey	Morocco, Turkey
Integration model	Republican assimilation	Gradual integration	Pluralism (in transition)
Political representation	Growing	Growing	Limited
Identity conflict level	Height	Medium	Height

Source: *Pew Research Center (2017), processed by researchers.*

Cross-Case Analysis: Patterns of Post-Islamism Across Three National Contexts

A cross-case reading of the three national contexts reveals three overarching patterns. First, in all three countries, post-Islamism as a condition is well established: the pursuit of an Islamic state system is not a meaningful political orientation for the overwhelming majority of Muslim citizens born or raised in Europe. Second, post-Islamism as a project is most institutionalised in Germany and the Netherlands, where state-structured dialogue forums (the Deutsche Islamkonferenz and the Contactorgaan Moslims en Overheid, respectively) have created formal channels through which Muslim organisations engage with democratic governance. France presents a more contested picture: while post-Islamist civic actors are numerous and visible, the republican model systematically excludes religious identity from formal political representation, generating what may be termed "subterranean post-Islamism"—a robust civic engagement that proceeds largely outside official political channels. Third, the intensity of identity conflict is inversely related to the depth of institutional accommodation: the Netherlands, despite its pluralist tradition, shows the highest visible conflict precisely because it offered the most explicit recognition to Muslim communities, making any retreat from that recognition politically salient. These cross-case patterns suggest that integration regime type does not determine post-Islamism, but it significantly shapes its form and visibility.

DISCUSSION

Post-Islamism as a Condition and Project: Cross-Border Findings

A comparative analysis of the three cases above shows that post-Islamism needs to be understood through two interrelated dimensions. The first dimension is post-Islamism as a condition, that is, a historical-social situation when Islamism as a political project to implement Islam as a state system is no longer a relevant option for the majority of Muslims, including European Muslims. The second dimension is post-Islamism as a project, which is the conscious effort of some Muslims to develop a synthesis between Islamic commitment and participation in liberal democratic institutions (Bayat, 2007).

In Western Europe, these two dimensions are present simultaneously. The majority of European Muslims, especially the young generation born and raised on the continent, are no longer interested in the Islamist project in its classical sense. A Pew Research Center survey (2011) showed that European Muslims generally support democracy and human rights, even though they still maintain conservative values in certain areas such as sexual morality. At the same time, a number of Muslim intellectuals and activists systematically developed theology and jurisprudence that supported democratic participation. Tariq Ramadan, despite being a controversial figure, made an important contribution through the theological argument that European Muslims were not only allowed, but morally obligated to participate in the democratic life of the country in which they lived (Ramadan, 2004).

Secularism, Public Space, and the Politics of Religious Symbols

One of the most controversial arenas in European Muslim life is the debate over religious expression in the public sphere. In France, the ban on conspicuous religious symbols in public schools (2004) and the ban on the niqab in public spaces (2010) sparked a major debate over the boundaries of *laïcité*, religious freedom, and women's rights. Similar debates, albeit with different nuances, are also taking place in Germany and the Netherlands (Göle, 2011; Joppke, 2009).

From the point of view of post-Islamism, the controversy over the hijab and other symbols of Islam in the public sphere is a manifestation of the broader negotiation of identity, citizenship, and the boundaries of pluralism in European society. The post-Islamist position on this issue is not simply a binary opposition between Islam and secularism, but rather a more fundamental question of what form of secularism should be embraced by a democracy that values diversity, and how the rights of religious minority groups can be protected without sacrificing social cohesion (Cesari & McLoughlin, 2005; Roy, 2007; Shadid & Van Koningsveld, 2002). A number of European Muslim intellectuals, including Tariq

Ramadan, reject the framing of "Islam versus secularism" as an irreconcilable dichotomy, arguing that authentic secularism should make room for religious expression in the public sphere as long as it does not violate the basic principles of democracy (Ramadan, 2004).

The Third Generation and the Transformation of Identity

The findings of this study show that the post-Islamism dynamics are most pronounced in the young generation of European Muslims who were born and raised on the continent, speak European as their first language, and have internalized many European values without immediately adopting all aspects of its secular culture. This generation describes what some scholars call "cosmopolitan Muslims" or *Euro-Islam*—an identity that consciously blends Islamic heritage with the European context, resulting in a hybridity that is not just a compromise, but a genuine synthesis (Roy, 2004; Onodera, 2015).

This phenomenon is even more complex when it comes to the third generation—the child of parents who were born in Europe themselves. For this generation, the question of "where is my home" does not have a simple answer: they are entirely European, but live in a society that does not always accept them as such. Data show that the level of socio-economic integration of the third generation tends to be higher than that of previous generations, but this is not directly proportional to the decline in their Islam. On the contrary, there is a phenomenon called *religious renewal* or neo-traditionalism among young European Muslims, a kind of "*piety paradox*" when religious observance actually increases along with deeper socio-political integration (Buitelaar, 2006; Zolberg & Woon, 1999). These findings challenge the linear narrative of assimilation that assumes that each subsequent generation will further distance itself from the religious identity of its ancestors.

Structural Islamophobia and Digital Space as a New Arena

The most significant factor shaping the development of post-Islamism in Europe was the rise of Islamophobia—prejudice, discrimination, and violence directed at Muslims solely because of their Islamic identity. Experimental studies in France, Germany, and the Netherlands have consistently documented systematic discrimination against individuals named Arabs or Muslims in the job market, housing, and education (Open Society Foundations, 2010; Kaya, 2012; Triandafyllidou, 2010).

This structural Islamophobia creates paradoxical pressures. On the one hand, it can encourage some Muslims to withdraw from socio-political participation, or in extreme cases, towards radicalization (Khosrokhavar, 2014). On the other hand, the same pressure can also be a catalyst for the mobilization and strengthening of Muslim community organizations, encouraging more active political participation to fight for their rights (Klausen, 2005). Post-Islamist responses to this condition have been mixed: some European Muslims have taken the legal route through available anti-discrimination mechanisms, some have developed civil organizations that document and counter Islamophobia, and others have opted for an interfaith dialogue approach to reduce prejudice.

The development of digital media adds a new layer to this dynamic. Digital platforms allow European Muslims to stay connected to the global Muslim community, access religious knowledge from diverse sources, and build virtual communities that transcend geographical boundaries (Mandaville, 2001, 2007; Allievi, 2003). This "digital Islam" facilitates the fragmentation of religious authority—European Muslims are no longer tied to local institutions affiliated with the immigrants' home countries, but can choose from a variety of online sources—while opening up space for more individualistic and eclectic religiosity, as well as for more democratic and pluralistic internal debates among European Muslim communities.

Islamic Education as a Post-Islamist Arena

Another important arena that shaped post-Islamism in Europe was the education system, particularly the debate over private Islamic schools. This debate reveals the fundamental tension between the Muslim community's right to educate children according to Islamic values and the government's concerns about potential social segregation.

In the Netherlands, a number of private Islamic schools operate within the framework of a pillar-based education system that allows religious communities to establish schools with government funding but a curriculum that reflects their religious orientation. This experience shows that well-managed Islamic schools can produce graduates who are fully integrated into Dutch society while maintaining a strong Muslim identity—an empirical evidence of post-Islamism in practice (Veit, 2010; Laurence, 2012). In Germany, the debate over the teaching of Islam in public schools (*Islamischer Religionsunterricht*) reflects a different dynamic: the federal government develops a curriculum of Islam taught in a number of states with content compatible with German constitutional values. In France, the *laïcité* system that prohibits religious expression in public schools encourages Islamic religious education to take place outside the formal system—through Qur'an classes in mosques or private Islamic schools without government funding—with an ambivalent effect: it supports the privatization of religious identity on the one hand, but risks creating educational segregation on the other.

The experiences of these three countries show that education policies that recognize Islam as an integral part of Europe's socio-cultural landscape, while ensuring its content compatibility with democratic values, tend to be more successful in promoting authentic post-Islamism than policies that seek to remove Islam from the public sphere.

Political Representation and Implications for Social Policy and Theory

Another strong indicator of the development of post-Islamism is the increasing representation of Muslims at various levels of government, from city councils to national parliaments, although this representation is still far from proportional to the number of Muslim populations in each country. In France, parliamentarians who openly identify as Muslims are elected from various parties—from left to right—which precisely confirms the very nature of post-Islamism: French Muslims do not channel their political aspirations on a single "Islamic" platform, but rather spread across the political spectrum according to their own interests and values (Kepel, 2014). A similar dynamic can be observed within the three countries under study. In Germany, the election of Cem Özdemir as co-leader of the Greens party—and subsequently as Federal Minister of Agriculture—demonstrates that voters across diverse constituencies can and do support politicians of Muslim background for the highest executive responsibilities. In the Netherlands, Ahmed Aboutaleb, mayor of Rotterdam since 2009 and consistently ranked among Europe's most effective city leaders, represents a post-Islamist political figure who combines transparent Islamic identity with an unequivocal commitment to Dutch democratic values. These examples from within the study's geographic scope illustrate the same phenomenon without requiring reference to cases beyond its boundaries.

This increase in representation is not without consequences. European Muslim politicians often face double pressure: from Muslim communities who expect them to prioritize Islamic issues, and from the broader public who suspect their loyalty to democratic values. Navigating these two pressures without losing authenticity has been a challenge for many post-Islamist Muslim politicians in Europe.

Politically, the above findings confirm that assumptions that place Muslim religious observance as inherently opposed to democratic integration and participation are empirically unfounded, even counterproductive. Policies targeting Islamic expression in public spaces, such as banning the hijab or niqab, tend to exacerbate tensions without making a meaningful contribution to integration. On the contrary, policies that support the development of democratic and accountable Islamic institutions in Europe have proven to be more effective in promoting authentic integration, and it is important for policymakers to recognise the internal diversity of Europe's Muslim communities rather than treating them as a homogeneous bloc.

Beyond the policy implications, these findings also challenge a number of long-established theoretical assumptions in the sociology of religion and political science. Evidence from all three countries suggests that modernization and democratic participation do not necessarily erode religious commitment, as the classical secularization thesis assumes. These findings also challenge the notion that Islam is inherently incompatible with liberal democracy, while also undermining the simple dichotomy between "Islam" and "West" that still dominates public discourse—by suggesting that

hybrid identities that blend elements of the two are not only possible, but have become an increasingly norm reality among European Muslims.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that Muslim communities in France, Germany, and the Netherlands show strong signs of the phenomenon of post-Islamism, albeit with characteristics and dynamics that vary according to their respective national contexts. Taken together, these findings challenge narratives that reduce European Muslims as a threat to social cohesion or as an incapable group of integration. Instead, the majority of European Muslims engaged in a complex and creative process of identity negotiation, building new forms of religiosity and citizenship that blended Islamic commitment with participation in European democracy—a process that was not free from tension, but genuine and productive for the diversity of European society.

The concept of post-Islamism, although developed in different contexts, proved relevant for analyzing the phenomenon of contemporary European Muslims. To remain relevant, this concept needs to be continuously developed to accommodate the specific dimensions of the diaspora context—intergenerational dynamics, structural Islamophobia pressures, the fragmentation of religious authority due to digitalization, and the complexity of identity negotiations in pluralistic societies. Going forward, the demographic growth of Europe's Muslim population, the post-Brexit populist political dynamics, and the increasingly educated and globally connected generation of young Muslims will continue to shape the direction of post-Islamism in the region—making it not a finished condition, but an ongoing process that is worth further study, including through direct field studies that can complement the literature-based findings in this study.

On the basis of the cross-case comparative analysis, this study proposes three theoretical propositions that advance the scholarly understanding of post-Islamism in diaspora contexts. First, integration regime type modulates the form of post-Islamism but does not determine its presence: post-Islamism emerges across assimilationist, corporatist, and pluralist settings, though it takes institutionally visible forms in state-structured dialogue contexts and subterranean civic forms in exclusionary republican settings. Second, structural Islamophobia functions paradoxically as both a constraint and a catalyst for post-Islamist mobilisation, depending on the availability of legal redress mechanisms and civil society infrastructure. Third, the piety paradox—whereby socio-political integration correlates with increased rather than decreased religious observance—challenges the secularisation thesis and suggests that the relationship between modernity and religion among diaspora Muslims follows a non-linear, context-dependent trajectory.

Several limitations of this study must be acknowledged. The reliance on secondary sources and published survey data means that nuances of lived experience may be underrepresented. The three country cases, while analytically tractable, do not exhaust the diversity of integration regimes in Europe; the inclusion of Sweden, Italy, or Spain in future comparative work would further test the typology proposed here. Additionally, the relatively rapid evolution of the political landscape—post-Brexit realignments, the rise of far-right parties, and the ongoing COVID-19-related reconfiguration of civil society—may have altered dynamics that earlier studies documented. Future research should therefore prioritise mixed-methods designs combining ethnographic field research with large-N survey analysis, drawing on more recent datasets such as the European Social Survey and FRA reports from 2020 onwards, to capture the evolving trajectory of post-Islamism in Europe with greater empirical precision.

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