The new "Religioscapes": Cultural politics and Muslim populations in China and France

Anwar Ouassini

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THE NEW "RELIGIOSCAPES": CULTURAL POLITICS AND MUSLIM POPULATIONS IN CHINA AND FRANCE

by

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Bachelor of Arts
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

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Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
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is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Examination Committee Chair

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ABSTRACT

The New “Religioscapes”: Cultural Politics and the Muslim Minorities in France and China

by

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This paper will present a comparative historical analysis of Muslim minorities in France and China, analyzing state policies towards the Muslim minorities and the Muslim response to those policies. In France, the democratic negotiations between state and minority are constructing new definitions of what it means to be a citizen, allowing the French state to fashion policies geared towards a multicultural approach rather than the traditional assimilative process. This is producing a proliferation of Muslim identities that are both domestically and internationally oriented to France and the global Islamic ummah or nation. In China, policy towards the Muslims reflect their minzu policies that managed the Muslim minorities as the ‘Other.’ Conversely, the minzu referenced the Muslim minorities to the global Muslim ummah by maintaining the language of integration through localized Islamic identities, thereby allowing for the development of a succinct domestic and foreign policy based on the political and social happenings of the global Islamic ummah.
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CHAPTER 1

MUSLIM MINORITIES: BETWEEN US AND THEM

One irony of growing cultural and economic globalization is the extent to which it has been accompanied by a renewed focus on minority ethnic and linguistic struggles for state and national recognition. These minorities oftentimes had been a part of the larger geographic and 'national' framework in these contexts for centuries and some are more recent with the emergence of an ever increasing proliferation of identities in our contemporary, interdependent, globalized setting. The informal structures of the post-modern nation-state that house these minorities¹ are producing various policies that reflect the nation's political traditions and historical perceptions toward the minority populations in an attempt to maintain control over these communities.

The nation-state in the post-modern era is progressively becoming reduced in power regarding issues that bypass traditional institutional means of control, including the breakdown of class formations² around which 'politics' have been traditionally structured. These 'structures' furthered the deconstruction and fragmentation of identities and values

¹ Many 'nation theorists' argue that the nation-state is increasingly reduced in power as our global world shifts from modernist conception of reality to a post-modern understanding. Allowing many theorists to argue that globalization and vulgar capitalism are the root causes. See Arjun Appadurai, Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization (New York: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) .... Partha Chatterjee's, The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993).

² See Kate Nash, Contemporary Political Sociology: Globalization, Politics and Power (Maiden, Massachusetts, Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 2-3
that allowed previously taken-for-granted social identities to become politicized. From within, these contexts emerge social and political movements and networks that organize officially and or unofficially in order to negotiate for power within the state.

One of the most pressing questions that is not only historically shaped but also contemporarily driven is what role should the Muslim minority play in a majority non-Muslim state and inversely what effect does state and national policy have on Muslim minority identity? This study reveals that in the current global context rebellions, civil wars, and draconian government policies have produced a degree of mistrust between the Muslim minority populations and the non-Muslim majority nation-state. In Russia, the Chechen jihad led by various Salafi (Islamic literalists) and indigenous movements has ravaged Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union; in democratic India, a Kashmiri Muslim-led rebellion has been ongoing since the partition of Pakistan from India in 1947; and in numerous other non-Muslim majority states Muslim minorities are engaged in proxy wars, rebellions, and civil wars. There also exist many examples of non-Muslim majority nations and Muslim minority populations coexisting in relative peace, nations like Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and Singapore where Muslims play an active role in fostering unity within the democratic structures of the state. This is also the same case in many

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3 The historical perceptions of the Muslim world in the West have been influenced greatly by antagonistic Western perceptions and thought. These ideas varied from specific events like the crusades to great literature like Dante’s Inferno, where the Prophet Muhammad was stationed in the lower ebbs of hell. The constructions of these perceptions about Muslims are further entrenched in Western orientalism, producing various academic and non-academic literatures regarding the orient that has continuously perpetuated this thought. See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, Random House Publishers, 1979). In this text, Edwards Said traces the history of orientalism by analyzing the writing of great Western literature.

4 Other nations include the Philippines, Thailand, and Nigeria.
Western nations, where Muslims have been passively integrating into the socio-political and economic framework of the state for decades.\(^5\)

These divergent cases allow many academics and political analysts alike to argue that Islam is the primary impediment for Muslim integration within non-Muslim nations. While other scholars argue that, the general influence of colonialism and post-colonial rule dramatically affected the situation of the Muslim minorities in non-Muslim majority states. This study will focus on two national contexts from which the minority Muslim populations are increasingly making headlines as each nation-state discussed seeks policies that effectively allow for the integration of their Muslim minorities into the larger national framework.

These national contexts include China and France, two nation-states that are increasingly negotiating from within their constitutional frameworks and historical paradigms the role the Muslim minority should play in each developing context. This analysis will follow the new shift away from "state centered, class based models of political participation or no participation,"\(^6\) to work that is present in the new political sociology which is above all concerned with cultural politics as understood by Nash in the broadest “possible sense as the contestation and transformation of social identities and social structures.”\(^7\) Not only are state policies shaping these contested roles, but also transnational politics and the impact of the global Islamic resurgence. Furthermore, the

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\(^5\) These nations include Australia, United States, and Western European nations including large South American nations with sizable Muslim minority populations including Chile, Argentina, and Brazil.

\(^6\) Nash, *Contemporary Political Sociology*, 2-3

\(^7\) Nash, *Contemporary Political Sociology*, 2-3
Muslim minorities’ response and impact in transforming the locality of these contexts will be analyzed at both the micro and macro level. Producing various notions of what not only it means to be a Muslim in those contexts, but also constructing a new national identity, transforming both domestic and foreign policy in order to accommodate and inversely appropriate the Muslim minority.

In France, the democratic negotiations between state and minority are constructing new definitions of what it means to be a citizen, through drastic integration measures as the state fashions new policy that is geared towards a multicultural approach rather than the assimilative process. Therefore, unlike the Republic’s concepts of liberté, égalité, and fraternité, the general tendency in France is to manage their Muslim minorities as citizens but not ‘Frenchmen.’ However, in the French democratic political structure, a proliferation of Muslim identities emerge is emerging that is both domestically and internationally oriented to France and to the global Islamic ummah allowing for a varied policy domestically and abroad.

In China, the Muslim presence is as old as Islam and has been a part of the basic framework of past Chinese empires beginning with the Tang Dynasty (589-907) through to the Chinese nation-state as first theorized by Sun Yat-Sen (1912-1925). The Peoples Republic of China (PRC) adopted Sun’s modernist formation of the nation-state in order to envelop the large Muslim minorities in historic China and new territory (Xinjiang) received from the Soviet Union in 1953. The Soviet Union handed over Xinjiang to the PRC government for no explainable reason. Small skirmishes over this territory would almost lead to an all-out war between the Soviet Union and China in the decades following the handover.
minzu policies⁹ that managed the Muslim minorities as the ‘Other’ inversely referencing the Muslim minorities to the global Muslim ummah. Furthermore by maintaining the language of integration through localized Islamic identities the PRC developed a succinct domestic and foreign policy based on the political and social happenings of the global Islamic ummah.

This study further argues that China set out to enact both soft and hard policies in order to maintain stability at home, cracking down on any movement or individual that appeared to be secessionist while sustaining a separate identity for the Muslims from the larger Han Chinese. The French Republic utilized every measure to assimilate their Muslim minority populations in order to extirpate their cultural and religious identities, thereby constructing good Frenchmen. Their policies were not successful, allowing for a paradigm shift in policy construction that began to accommodate the various Islamic identities while still maintaining an assimilationist agenda. Nevertheless, the democratic political tradition of the French republic allowed for a proliferation of identities to emerge, while under the dictatorial power of the PRC the Muslims became a part of the ‘Other’ or the larger ummah.

An analysis of both contexts is offered with the inception of the with the inception of the PRC in 1949 to the beginning of China’s economic prosperity in 1995; and post-World-War-II France is studied to the mid-1990s where policy was structured on past developments. This paper will further contextualize Chinese and French domestic

⁹ The Minzu program was a set of policies enacted by the PRC that supported ethnic and racial distinctions in the state. However, the hegemonic aspects of this policy attempted to direct the non-Han minority populations towards the Han culture. This argument was a distinct feature of the influence of Marxism, which warranted that non-Han minorities were inferior to the Han because they are culturally and economically ‘backward.’
policies and ensuing Muslim reactions in measurement are studied in relation to the
global Islamic context utilizing Thomas Kuhn’s concept of the paradigm to explain the
gradual shifts in domestic policies in light of the global resurgence of Islam and Islamic
fundamentalism. The paradigm in this paper is used as a simple model or pattern, which
is adaptable as an aid to explain the abrupt shifts in Chinese and French domestic policies
towards the Muslim minorities.10

This is not an exhaustive list of both Western European and Asian states. Yet there
are several reasons why these are appropriate nations to compare. More Muslims live in
France than any other Western European nation while China also has the largest Muslim
minority population in Asia, second to India, but statistically proportionate in number to
the Muslims in France. In China, the majority of the Muslim population has resided in
geographic China for centuries, while in France the Muslim minorities are a relatively
new phenomenon whose first wave of immigration was primarily for economic means.
The nations in this study also vary in political traditions: in France, the stable democracy
is committed to having the freedom of religion while not officially recognizing religion
as a variable of identity; in China, the Muslims are a recognized minority primarily
through their differing racial and religious identities. Furthermore, in the contemporary
context an analysis of Muslim minority and non-Muslim majority nation-states provides
insight for the reader into the ‘clash of civilization’ discourse. This allows the reader to
understand the potential impact that permit these state policies have in perpetuating the

10 This paper utilizes Kuhn’s paradigm simply as an adaptation of Kuhn’s thesis to aid in
understanding PRC policy towards the Muslims; the reader should not take the analogy
literally or in the same literal way Kuhn used the term. See Thomas Kuhn, The Structure
of Scientific Revolutions (University of Chicago Press, 1996) and also, Robert L. Beisner,
From the Old Diplomacy to the New 1865-1900 (Harlan Davidson, 1986), 33-89 for an
adaptation of Kuhn’s thesis in diplomatic history.
clash and what elements are at play that accord these nation-states to defer a possible clash scenario.

This is evident in the November 2005 French riots that have caused destruction and devastation in nearly every major French city. These riots are a result of various failed policies that the French state implemented towards the Muslim minorities. Such policies ignored the Muslim presence by marginalizing the Muslim minorities to the periphery, in large suburban ghettos. After years of marginalization, the minorities who lived in these ghettos erupted with rage against a system that preached equality and liberty for all but afforded draconian policies that disallowed integration into the socio-political structures of the state. This eruption by Muslim and non-Muslim ethnic minorities has been co-opted by the French right in order to enhance their political platform that supports the clash thesis, blaming the riots on Islam and Muslims and their inability to integrate, while at the same time disregarding the economic and political variables that are at the roots of the problem.

The current debacle for the French state demonstrates the impact of state policies on Muslim minorities and their influence on the state, as France seeks to debate its discriminatory minority policies that have enraged and impoverished millions. This example gives the reader ample reason why it is imperative to understand the contexts discussed as we enter an age that is increasingly setting the line of demarcation between Islam and the rest of the world.
Literature

How does the literature explain the different subtleties and the contrasting state responses to their Muslim minorities, and just as important, how do we understand the Muslim reactions? There are many resources regarding Muslim minorities in larger majority non-Muslim contexts, including *The Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, which discusses the various theoretical and contextual settings of Muslim minorities. Although this journal has published various pieces for nearly two decades, it has been primarily concerned with discussing and describing the Muslim minorities of various regions with very little thorough theoretical discussion. Other general sources regarding the Muslim minorities published recently attempted to synthesize theory and descriptive information regarding the minorities in their respective contexts, even though European comparative approaches did feature in articles.

Authors like Jurgen Neilson, Riva Kastoryano, Jonathan Lipman, Raphael Israeli, and Dru Gladney write specifically on the contemporary context of Muslim minorities in France and China with a vast array of theoretical perspectives in order to understand their presence. However, nothing specific was written that developed an international comparative approach between two differing contexts. Although their does exist plenty within the literature regarding European comparative approaches which are dominated by articles and books on Germany, France and the United Kingdom. These texts for the most part describe the Muslim minority setting in these geographical regions with little theoretical explanation, often discussing the effects of state policies towards Muslim minorities, but offering nothing substantial with regard to identity construction and the impact of the global Islamic *ummah* on these identities. Furthermore, no consensus exists
within the literature on what drives these policies. The two authors that have enveloped past theoretical perspectives regarding the current conditions of Muslim minorities in Europe and are on the forefront in the theoretical discussion regarding the Muslim minorities in Europe are Riva Kastoryano and Jurgen Neilson.

Kastoryano and Neilson are representative of the literature because they are the most often quoted and well-published regarding Muslim minority studies in Europe. Although their theoretical ideas converge in basic agreement of one another, they tend to construct hermeneutically different works regarding the Muslim minorities. While Jurgen Neilson is known for some of his theoretical works in discussing the Muslim minorities, his primary works focus on describing the Muslim minorities in each geographic region, looking at state policies, and the Muslim response to those policies. Riva Kastoryano’s work reflects her scholarship regarding many theoretical perspectives in understanding the Muslim minorities building off many other scholars in the field including Paul A. Silverstein’s seminal work on Algerian Muslims in France, and French Muslim scholar Jocelyne Cesari whose work has transformed the theoretical perspectives regarding the Muslim minorities in Europe. What ties these scholars together regarding the scholarship on Muslim minorities is an understanding of the Muslim minorities through the socio-economic context from which they emerge, while also theorizing the developments of culture and identity, as well as ethnic and religious mobilization.

There is another perspective regarding the Muslim minorities in Europe, one that tends to view the Muslim minorities through the lens of fundamentalist Islam, which is increasingly coming to the forefront of Western Scholarship. Scholars like Oriana Fallaci, Daniel Pipes, Giles Kepel, and Bernard Lewis write extensively on the Muslim minority
populations in the West, regarding them as an ultimate threat to the very existence of the Western tradition. Bernard Lewis, a premier scholar of Islamic history, argues that Muslim enmity against the West is a historical continuation of perpetual hostility that the Islamic world and Muslims in general have proportioned against the West; starting with the inception of Islam and its subsequent expansion thereafter. Lewis states: “Islam was never prepared either in theory or in practice, to accord full equality to those who held other beliefs and practiced other forms of worship.” Lewis accentuates in nearly all his recent texts that Islam is ultimately the primary impediment for integration with larger non-Muslim populations.

These scholars further argue that the Muslim presence in these nation-states sheds light on the ‘impending clash of civilizations’ as theorized by Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis. These scholars maintain that Muslims entertain serious apprehensions against non-Muslim civilizations and ultimately harbor reservations against the West raising the question that Huntington and other theorist’s alike raise. Do Muslims fit in non-Muslim societies? The construction of this question presupposes a radical opposition between Islam and the non-Muslim civilization. According to Cesari this “opposition forms the basis of orientalism, which has implicitly informed many subsequent theories on Islam and politics,” which has greatly influenced how many analysts and politicians


14 Cesari, Muslim Minorities in Europe: The Silent Revolution, 2.
alike view their Muslim minority populations feeding off unfounded historical perceptions.

Edward Said best analyzed these negative historical perceptions in the monumental work, *Orientalism.* In this text, Said argues: "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self."\(^{15}\) It is in these lines that Huntington and Lewis contend that Muslims are not integrated into non-Muslim majority nations because they assert Islam does not allow for such assimilation or hybridization of cultures to occur which Said suggests is a "result of cultural hegemony."\(^{16}\) This manifests itself in their texts through the collective identification of 'us' and 'them.' These scholars impact on how the Muslim minorities are viewed from within the European context is increasingly making headway challenging other scholars as they use contemporary events to demarcate the divide.

Like the scholarship emerging regarding the European context, one of the most active areas of research in recent years in Chinese studies focuses upon the Muslim’s historical and contemporary presence in modern China. In the past thirty years, dozens of articles, mainly in the fields of anthropology and sociology, were published on the Muslim minorities, producing rich ethnographies and brief historical surveys documenting the lives of various Muslim ethnic and racial minorities in Communist China.\(^{17}\) The field

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\(^{15}\) Said, *Orientalism*, 3.


\(^{17}\) Beginning in the 1980s hundreds of articles began to appear on the Muslims of China, covering almost every field from evolutionary theory to musicology. See Shirin Akiner, (continued) *Cultural Change and Continuity in Central Asia* (London: Kegan Paul International: 1991). This book has various articles on the Muslims of China including demographic and linguistic based research. Also in the field of anthropology and sociology see Dru Gladney; an anthropologist by training, he has published: more works
within Chinese studies producing the most literature on the contemporary Muslim presence in China has been published by scholars who conduct research on the Chinese minority populations and the policies they are afforded by the PRC. This usually includes excerpts and chapters on Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) minority policies towards Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and other heavily populated Muslim autonomous regions.

In the field of history, Sino-Muslim scholars Jonathan Lipman and Raphael Israeli have produced numerous articles and books on Chinese Muslim history prior to the establishment of the PRC, but nothing substantive on the contemporary history of the Muslim presence in Communist China. While there is a rather small amount of literature on the history of Muslims in China, two main theoretical perspectives arise, those of Jonathan Lipman and Raphael Israeli. Their ‘schools’ dramatically differ in approach and in understanding of the Muslim presence in China.

Israeli presents the Muslim community in China as a potential violent threat to the security of the Chinese nation-state. Israeli argues that Muslims historically<sup>18</sup> and contemporarily are prone to revolt against the Chinese government because according to Muslim doctrine, Muslims must always be politically and economically superior to the non-Muslim. The Muslims of China, Israeli contends, seek to dominate the political and social sphere because Islam is not only a culture, but also a total, all-encompassing

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18 Israeli primarily cites the Illi revolts of the mid-eighteenth century, when the Muslims of China conducted a Jihad against the Qing government for attempting to colonize Muslim regions.
system synthesizing politics and religion.\textsuperscript{19} Israeli further argue that in contrast to other minorities in China, the Muslims do not identify with the Chinese State but instead with the universal Islamic nation or \textit{umma}, further creating an impetus for pan-Islamic sentiments and disloyalty to the Chinese state.

This \textit{umma}, Israeli posits, is also present within the confines of the Chinese nation as the Muslims historically and contemporarily relay patterns of Muslim unity for the sake of Islamic brotherhood. Israeli argues the Islamic theoretical notion of the \textit{umma} ultimately undermines China’s \textit{minzu} ideology, which seeks to differentiate between the Muslims through ethnicity markers. Israeli concludes that it is increasingly hard for the Chinese to create a peaceful state with Muslims present within their borders.\textsuperscript{20}

Israeli further postulates the Muslim populations cannot be dealt with regionally or geographically but as a demographic problem present throughout China. This Islamic demographic is always the case because Islam, with all its political and social ideals, is in danger of creating and nurturing separatist aspirations, likening the situation to other Muslim minorities in Chechnya, Russia, the Philippines and next door in Jammu Kashmir, India. In such regions, Muslims have all fought the dominant non-Muslim majority for Islamic independence.\textsuperscript{21}

Lipman, in his analysis, takes another approach and argues that the Muslim presence in China has actually been peaceful, but violent state intrusions in Muslim affairs cause


\textsuperscript{20} Israeli, "The Muslim Minority," 902-903.

reciprocal violent Muslim reactions. Lipman further argues as Clifford Geertz does in his monumental study *Islam Observed* (1962), that Muslims are not monolithic in ideology or religious practice. They differ in social and political contexts, making the Muslims unique in each cultural and geographical area. Lipman argues that Muslim history in China is unique and is different, not only geographically within the Chinese nation-state (the Muslims experience differs dramatically in Xinjiang as opposed to Beijing), but also globally. In each respective context, Muslims have constructed a cultural-religious system differing from their other Muslim counterparts, producing various ideological and theological beliefs. Lipman usefully contends that in order to understand Muslim Chinese history the researcher must cease Western perspectives on Islam and attempt to approach the subject hermeneutically and contextually.

Description of Muslim Minorities

In order to improve one’s understanding of the Muslim presence in China and France, one must consider situating the Muslim narrative within China and France geographically and theoretically. One may further argue PRC policy toward Muslim populations endowed them with characteristics as a part of the larger global Islamic *ummah*, and in France, the mixed policies allowed for a proliferation of identities tied to both the larger

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23 See Clifford Geertz in *Islam Observed* (University of Chicago Press, 1962). Geertz’s monumental ethnographic work in both Morocco and Indonesia revealed that Islam as it is practiced in each social setting is qualitatively different in each setting, where Islam as an ideology takes on a peripheral role to the dominant culture.


ummah and France. Three factors contributed to this: government identification of Muslim populations, the intricacies of identity amongst the Muslims and the inherent nature of Islam, and the global notion of ummah.

At present, in China, Muslims constitute anywhere from four to five percent of the national population, exceeding 20 million according to Chinese state statistics, and over 40 million according to various Muslim Chinese exiled groups in Europe, the United States and the Muslim world. In France, although numerically overwhelmed by the Muslim population in China, the Muslims in France are demographically proportionate to China constituting about four to five percent of the population with over 5 million Muslims according to French officials and 10 million according to various Islamic organizations. The French Muslims are the second largest religious group in France behind 45 million Catholics but numerically outnumber the 1.1 million Protestants and 500,000 Jews.

The Muslim populations in China and France are as diverse in racial and ethnic characteristics as they are in religious devotion. According to PRC racial and ethnic classification systems, ten different Muslim minority nationalities exist in China. The

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26 See, Dru Gladney, “Cyber Separatism and Uyghur Ethnic Nationalism in China,” in http://www2.hawaii.edu/~dru/. This is an excellent article surveying various Uyghur nationalist internet websites and the information they produce on the Muslim minorities of China.

27 There is no consensus within the literature regarding the percentage of Muslim minorities in France because the French state refuses to count religion and ethnicity as variable in the national census.

28 For an excellent account of Muslim ethnic nationalities see, Gladney, Ethnic Identity in China and other published articles and books by Gladney as ethnicity and race are his major areas of study. This paper does not go into detail about the ethnic minorities because there is already a wealth of knowledge published.
largest and the best established are the Hui Muslim population, the third most populous minority of China's fifty-six recognized minority nationalities. The Hui, the most widespread nationality inhabiting more than ninety-seven percent of China's counties, are historically and racially indigenous to China. Unlike the Hui, the Uyghur and Kazak Turkic populations have their own language, culture, and customs and primarily reside in Xinjiang, China's most western province. This study primarily concerned with these three ethnic groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Uyghur</td>
<td>Turkic</td>
<td>7,214,431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Kazak</td>
<td>Turkic</td>
<td>1,111,718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Kyrgyz</td>
<td>Turkic</td>
<td>141,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Uzbek</td>
<td>Turkic</td>
<td>14,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Tatar</td>
<td>Turkic</td>
<td>4,873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Salar</td>
<td>Turkic</td>
<td>87,697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Dongxiang</td>
<td>Turkic</td>
<td>373,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Bonan</td>
<td>Mongolian</td>
<td>12,212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Tajik</td>
<td>Indo-Euro</td>
<td>33,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Hui</td>
<td>Sino-Tibetan</td>
<td>8,602,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>17,597,370</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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In France, many ethnic and cultural groups represent the Muslim population. The diversity presented within the French context is a rather new phenomenon, unlike the Chinese nation-state, which has lived with their minority populations for centuries. In France, the Arab minority (Algerian, Moroccan, Tunisian, Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian) is the largest Muslim ethnic group compromising nearly seventy percent of the Muslim population. The second largest Muslim ethnic group is comprised of Turkish Muslims at nearly twenty per cent, with ethnic Kurds comprising nearly five per cent of the latter.

The rest of the Muslim population consists of various post-colonial subjects including West Africans (Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Mali) and Asians (Pakistanis, Indians, Chinese, and Malays). In recent years through conversions and intermarriage the ‘white’ Muslim population is at present nearly five percent of the overall Muslim population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Origin</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Algeria</td>
<td>1,550,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Morocco</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tunisia</td>
<td>350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Black Africa</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Turkey</td>
<td>315,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Converts</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Asylum Applicants/ Illegal</td>
<td>350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Asians</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Other</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,155,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Geographically, the Muslim minorities live everywhere in France, from the city of Paris in the north to the port city of Marseille in the south. One distinctive feature about Muslim geographical setting in France is not so much their dispersion across France, but the social space they occupy. They are to be found in the outskirts of each city in large American style mid-twentieth century projects where small ghettos emerged outside the city. The Muslims in China, like in France, live everywhere with the densest populations along the Silk Road connecting Central Asia with Northwest China.

In Northwest China lies Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous region, the heart of Muslim China. Here over half of the Chinese Muslim population reside and are close to neighboring Muslim-dominated states including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmir, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Across the northern plains in Ningxia, Gansu and Qinghai provinces contain large populations of Hui Muslims who inhabited this geographic area for nearly fourteen hundred centuries, as long as the existence of Islam. This is often called China's 'Quranic belt.' In the Northern and Southern borders of China, Hui Muslims dominate the minority population spread in Beijing with about two-hundred-fifty thousand Hui Muslims and in the south in smaller clusters across the Yunnan province. In addition, Hui Muslims comprise a considerable population across various cities and provinces in China including Shanghai, Taiwan and Inner Mongolia.

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Nation-States in Crises

Classical theorist viewed the nation, society, cultures and ethnicities as complex wholes. However, recent scholarship that previously sought to construct these variables is now deconstructing these notions in which the modern world has its foundations. Within a host of modernization theories, the Chinese and French nation-states are both undergoing unprecedented form of Tönnies’ Gemeinschaft, a community attempting to forge an identity between dynastic forms of governance and the construction of a new nation that is culturally Han and French.

The nation-state demands that the individual assimilate into the whole in order to create a homogeneous culture inside these constructed, imagined borders. These constructions are the result of state control over the minorities through the implementation of drastic assimilation policies into the states paradigm of governance. The concept of minority assimilation was first taken up by the Chicago School of Sociology where this theory was expanded into a coherent field of analysis. Robert E. Park, the founder of assimilation theory, conducted extensive research regarding the Americanization process of minorities in the United States. This assimilation process according to Park tried to make all who are external to the ‘nation’ into citizens or part of the traditional imagined community. For China and France, this view towards the construction of each nation-state has failed as ethnic and religious identity endured through the decades and centuries of attempts towards full assimilation of the minority.

In contrast to the Chicago School of Sociology, many studies concluded that the role of racial and religious identity plays a “comparably, independent role in determining the

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nature and role of the immigrants' place in society." This new measure regarding the importance of racial and religious identity is progressively making headway in the contemporary French and Chinese context. Hence neither the French nor the Chinese nation-state was successful in managing its minorities as a part of the imagined community leading towards the institutional discrimination of the minority population. Unfortunately, the Muslim in these territories has become a prototype of what Georg Simmel called the stranger, one who "is the other who arrived today and stays tomorrow. His presence is not dimmed by distance, we bump into him, we cannot help seeing him and cannot ignore his existence. He is neither the exotic native of a far away lands nor a bizarre nomad." The Muslims in China have taken on this social type over the centuries and specifically with the creation of the Chinese nation-state, which emphasized Han culture and identity. The elite French Muslim populations enveloped this role as they emigrated to France. These Muslims wanted to be a part of French society but were not accepted as Frenchmen as they became "distant and near at the same time," often being called on as 'confidants' by both the Muslim laborers and the French public. However, in the current context the French and Chinese Muslim minority elite challenged their existence as strangers by redefining and transforming into qualitatively different Frenchmen.

Accordingly, when analyzing the contemporary Chinese and French nation-state, one

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does not find a single imagined community, but rather many tiers of imagined communities transcending the traditional notion of the nation-state. Benedict Anderson’s book *Imagined Communities* (2003), where the term ‘imagined communities’ was first coined, generated new ideas and foundations for understanding nationalism and the nation-state. Anderson argued that the modern form of the nation-state is an imagined community that was introduced, constructed, and enforced by European capitalism and enlightenment.

It is imagined, Anderson posits, "because the members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives an image of their community." Anderson’s analysis of nationalism is certainly true for China and France, which postulates the construction of the nation-state with multiple identities. An ‘imagined community’ is an absolute necessary element for national unity in these contexts; the collective social engineering of the nation-state, which in almost all cases allows for the periphery to become associated with the center, is necessary for the modern nation-state in order to create one large, unified imagined community. The ‘imagined community’ for Anderson is an ongoing process of construction and identification that is continually shifting and changing.

In China, the nation-state as imagined and repackage
modernity began its nationalist idealization during the Qing Empire and fully culminated during the Republican period under Sun Yat-Sen. Yat-sen was influenced by strong currents of Japanese nationalism, and adopted the *minzu* paradigm. This paradigm advocated the idea of the “Five Peoples of China”: the Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Tibetan and Hui, and uniformly categorized all Muslims in China as Hui, the Chinese word for Muslim in the period. The PRC would later change the concept and create ten minority groups from the traditional Hui categorization.

This process of categorization by the nation-state towards minority populations is an ongoing process of construction and deconstruction of identity continually imposed by the state towards the minority population. Unfortunately, one of the primary methods utilized to create a cohesive imagined community, including all the minority populations, was through the enforcement of *minzu* policies enacted by the state in order to ‘Hanify’ the local minority populations. The aim was to bring them from feudal and superstitious cultural conditions to an advanced Han culture intricately tied to being “Chinese,” and ideologically on the higher scale of Marxist civilizational development.

The important role of the minzu paradigm and the Hanification program instilled by the PRC is best explained by Ernst Gellner’s approach to nationalism. Gellner argues that nationalism and the nation-state are the necessity of modern industrial economies, which inherently require complex new skills and social formations beyond traditional kinship

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42 See Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, Introduction. Lipman deals with the Minzu paradigm to show its underlying dominant racist ideology.

ties and tribal loyalties. Such skills can only be provided by a public educational system, integrated by a single language and within a centralized political, economic, and social system that demands a state to protect it, and nationalism to allow it to flourish. The socio-political and economic networks of the nation-state demand the spirit of nationalism that ultimately draws from a homogenous culture. Gellner states: “The industrial order requires homogeneity within political units, at least sufficient to permit fairly smooth mobility, and precluding the ‘ethnic’ identification of either advantage or disadvantage, economic or political.” Gellner’s analysis further demonstrates how modernization and the centralized socio-political economic system reinforce the racist ideology of the state towards the larger Han narrative, where the Han are the “vanguard” of the people. This process is a necessary program that each modern nation state has utilized in order to maintain political, economic, and social stability as well as superiority over the Other.

France also seeks to construct a viable cohesive nation-state, in order to make ‘good Frenchmen’ out of their Muslim minority populations. Where China recognizes their Muslim minorities as succinct minority groups evolving into the greater Han “example,” France does not recognize race and religion in their state policies; a person is either culturally French or not. The French nation-state constructs and divides its citizens and

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residents into good Frenchmen and the Others\textsuperscript{48} alienating anyone who does not “adhere to French standards” of Frenchness.\textsuperscript{49}

The conflict between the Muslim minorities and the French government is usually played out regarding religious and cultural practices that the French government finds contrary to the law of the “\textit{la laïcité}.” The “\textit{la laïcité}” is a system of laws that endorses the strict separation of church and state. The policy of the “\textit{la laïcité}” dates back to the French revolution from the reign of Napoleon Bonaparte to the present. The “\textit{la laïcité}” was first signed into law in 1801, when Napoleon signed a Concordat with Pope Pius VII. The intent was to please both the secular intellectual establishment and the Catholic Church by allowing Catholicism to become the official religion of the state, but not the established state religion; hence this set the basic framework toward a strict separation between the two entities. Regardless of national, religious, or ethnic origin, religious minorities were seen through the lens of citizenship. Nevertheless, this very emphasis on equal citizenship also meant that cultural and ethnic diversity was not tolerated by the state. Consequently, other populations were alienated and their otherness was reinforced, creating thereby multiple communities within the larger French community.

This French nation-state is qualitatively different from China because it understood the assimilation process as the basis for equality. Moreover, in contrast to France, the Chinese state appears as the anti-model Accordingly, the model that emerged from the

\textsuperscript{48} The “Others” include either European (Spaniards, Portuguese and Italians) or Muslim groups (North and West Africans, Syrians, Egyptians) who did not assimilate into French culture.

\textsuperscript{49} In the globalized contemporary context, the French are finding it increasingly hard to maintain an imagined community based on traditional French cultural values as both the Americanization of French culture and simultaneous hybridization of Arab and French culture is increasingly changing French identity.
legacy of the French revolution gave birth to the modern nation-state seen “through
territorial unity and collective consciousness as well as a common identification among
its members who share the same rights and the same privileges.”® This ‘common
consciousness’ for the French state allowed citizens to transcend divisive constructs in
order to create a unified state realized through the frameworks of national institutions.
This was the vision of Ernest Renan who viewed the “the nation as a soul, a spiritual
principle, a common will to live together,”® rejecting political representation of minority
or ‘interest populations’ which he believed greatly undermined the ‘nation.’

Like the Chinese state, which sought to impose Communist doctrine and ‘national
responsibility’ on their populations, France followed the approach of Rousseau and
Durkheim.® These scholars emphasized the importance of the nation-state through the
hegemonic tool of education in order to shape citizens into model Frenchmen, thereby
constructing and enforcing a collective memory and national consciousness based on
French national ideology. But to which community are the Muslim minority tied when
their identity is no longer accepted as a part of the integrated whole?

Collective Memory and the Nation-State

Maurice Halbwachs was one of the first to recognize every collective memory
unfolds within a spatial framework. Halbwachs, like Gellner, believed that the socio-

50 Roger Brubaker, Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany. (Cambridge,
MA, Harvard University Press, 1992)

51 Remy Leveau, New European Identity and Citizenship, 81.

52 Durkheim theorized that the foundations of the modern nation-state were dependent on
social integration and national thinking in order to maintain a sense of mechanical
solidarity and avoid anomie through communitarianism.
political and economic networks of the nation-state demand the spirit of nationalism from a homogenous culture. Moreover, for Halbwachs this homogenous culture sets the framework for the ‘memory community’ that shares the ‘space’ of a geographical context. This hegemonic recollection of the past is an active, constructive process that the mass community performs in order to recreate and reconstruct the present. In the contemporary French and Chinese context, memory is increasingly playing a dynamic role in how each nation-state is coping with their minorities. Jan-Werner Müller states that “memory shapes the present constellations,” specifically in these contexts because, “collective memory constrains, but also enables new policies.” Accordingly, in the French and Chinese contexts, the hegemonic memories produced by the state are progressively transforming, as individuals and groups challenge contested ‘collective memories.’ Consequently, previously taken-for-granted identities are fusing within the larger collective memory of the nation.

Zerubavel in his analysis of invention of legends and traditions discussed the legend and myth-making process in the construction of Israeli national consciousness. An important element in that process is the role of the contemporary political and social context in aiding these constructions of national identity. Zerubavel states: “[W]hen a society undergoes rapid developments that shatter its social and political order, it needs to


restructure the past is as great as its desire to set its future agenda." In China, the role of
the monument is co-opted in a contentious political environment to reformulate meanings
that restructure and unify national consciousness. At the center of Chinese Muslim
culture and identity are 'Muslim monuments' which include Sufi shrines, old mosques,
and tombs of prominent Muslims in Chinese history. These shrines and tombs are
currently at the center of contention and dialogue between Chinese Muslims and the non-
Muslim Han, as China attempts to construct a cohesive modern state.

These monuments confirmed the Chinese Muslims distinct ethnic identity in China as
these monuments contain their Arab and Persian ancestors, facilitating the construction
of an identity that is not a component of Chinese national consciousness. For the PRC,
these shrines confirmed the 'foreignness' of Chinese Muslims who are deemed backward,
pre-modern, and 'non-Chinese.' These 'monuments' epitomized the rationale that both
parties used to keep from being associated with the 'Other.'

In the post-Mao era, political and economic liberalization occurred in a relatively
short period, there has begun to be a crystallization of the two communities of memory,
uprooting and transforming traditional memory. Chinese Muslims and non-Muslim Hans
are reconstructing this new memory based on the historical tombs and sites that dually
link Chinese Muslim history and identity to the larger Chinese historical and national
narrative. In Margaret Olin’s and Robert S. Nelson’s text they cite three components of

56 Gillis, Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity, (United Kingdom:
Princeton University Press), 105-106.

57 The Muslims maintain this belief although the overwhelming majority are not related
to the Arab and Persian populations.

58 Dru Gladney, “Muslim Tombs and Ethnic Folklore: Charters for Hui Identity,” The
interaction with a monument as represented in travel, time, and destruction and
reconstruction that facilitates this process. The first component, travel, is “the relation of
the monument to movement.”\footnote{Robert S. Nelson and Margaret Olin, Monuments and
Memory, Made and Unmade, (University of Chicago Press: 2003), 11.} For the Muslims, pilgrimage to their sites allows the
Muslim to maintain a sense of identity connected to both Muslim and Chinese identity.

This recent resurgence of identity emerged during Deng Xiaoping’s term in office.
Prior to Xiaoping’s administration, ‘travel’ was heavily restricted during the Republican
period as war characterized the first half of the twentieth century, and as massacre after
massacre caused displacement and death of thousands of Muslims. During the early years
of the PRC, travel was restricted to tombs and places of worship. Moreover, PRC
legislation closed and destroyed thousands of mosques, tombs and shrines because of
failed policies attributed to the Great Leap forward and the Cultural Revolution.

The resurgence of travel to the monuments by Muslims has unconsciously united
many Muslim tribes of various ethnicities as they became aware of each other’s presence
within China. Hence, when a Han Muslim from Beijing visits a pilgrimage site in Gansu
and meets a Mongolian Bonan Muslim or a Turkic Uyghur Muslim this ‘meeting’ creates
Muslim awareness of the vast Muslim groups within China. Including the Han Muslim,
whom non-Han Chinese Muslims who live in the periphery of Han population centers
exemplified their understanding of the ‘Other.’ Moreover, this is also embodied through
travel to old Muslim tombs. When a Uyghur Muslim travels from Kashgar to Guangzhou,
over fifteen-hundred miles away to visit the tomb of Saad Ibn Waqqas,\footnote{Saad Ibn Waqqas is
the Prophet Muhammad’s uncle and an important figure in the Islamic religious discourse.}
a relative of the
prophet Muhammed buried in Chinese soil fourteen hundred years ago, this increases Chinese Muslim awareness of their historical tie to the land. In essence, the pilgrimage conducted by the Chinese Muslims has not only constructed the notion of Islamic nationality within China, but also a larger, growing consciousness of their Chinese nationality.

The Chinese government is beginning to acknowledge their Islamic historical past as it utilizes its Muslim minorities to open up relations with the Islamic world. The has advertised in the Arab world throughout their satellites and newspapers, calling on the Muslim populations abroad to visit their brethren and historical Islamic tombs and shrines. The PRC also successfully allowed unprecedented access to the Muslim world for documentation of the Muslim minorities of China and their mosques in order to present a good image in the Islamic world with hopes of creating a tourist industry and bring economic aid toward their Muslim regions. Non-Muslim Chinese also make visiting the tombs of their Muslim populations a priority whenever they are in the Islamic autonomous regions, to show respect and inclusiveness of their culture and religious way of life.61

The next component that characterizes the social role of the monument is what Olin and Nelson classify as time. For the Chinese Muslims the monuments’ presence, through time has legitimated their ethnicity and geographic presence in these areas. Chinese Muslim historical consciousness is present with each tomb, whether it is the fourteen hundred year old tomb of Saad Ibn Waqqas or the tomb of Zheng He the famous Chinese Ming explorer. Chinese Muslims see their tombs, mosques, and shrines and acknowledge

the accomplishments that have influenced Chinese society. Many of the tombs and shrines commemorated are of important Islamic Chinese figures that contributed in all Chinese dynasties, from the Tang dynasty (589-907) through to the present. These tombs are further acknowledgement by the Muslims that China is their ‘home.’ In essence, they are living their past in the present, as they use these tombs to rectify and reconstruct the past to maintain a sense of self that is not only tied to Islamic history also to the larger Chinese narrative.

In creating a nationally cohesive state including the Chinese Muslims, the Chinese government began acknowledging Muslim historical figures that greatly influenced Chinese history. An important figure resurrected in the Chinese Muslim discourse is Zheng He, a Chinese Hui Muslim explorer in the early fifteenth century during the Ming Dynasty. Zheng He led a fleet of three-hundred ships and a staff of over twenty-eight thousand men, visiting more than thirty nations throughout Africa and Asia. In the late 1990s, speculation arose in the West that Zheng He might have been the first explorer to officially come to the shores of the United States and circumvent the world. Worldwide attention began to spotlight the accomplishments of Zheng He, with the new book 1421: The Year China Discovered America (2002) and the PBS documentary that highlighted Chinese maritime accomplishments. Chinese intellectuals were quite embarrassed that American and British historians were complimenting Chinese History without any real acknowledgement amongst the Chinese intellectuals. This is because he was not only a eunuch, but also a Muslim and not ethnically Han. His tomb was not acknowledged as a

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major historical site until the mid-eighties when a few Chinese scholars acting on their
own behalf refurbished the tomb and officially sanctioned it a national treasure.
Thousands of Chinese, Muslim and non-Muslim began to celebrate ‘their’ Chinese
heritage.63 The historical presence of the tombs through time has situated and resurrected
positive Chinese views towards the Muslims as contributors to Chinese history and
civilization.

The third element is the deconstruction and reconstruction of the monuments. In
China’s case, the deconstruction and reconstruction process created new meanings for the
Chinese Muslims and the Chinese state. During the Cultural Revolution, primarily under
the rule of the “the Gang of Four” (1975-1978) the destruction of tombs, mosques and
shrines was official governmental policy, further denying the Muslims a national or
ethno-religious identity. In 1979, under Deng Xiaoping’s reform era, government policy
towards the Muslim population shifted dramatically as the socio-political and economic
context of the global order changed. The Chinese government understood that Muslims
were a part of the grandeur Chinese ethos, and thus as they encouraged and even funded
Muslim institutions throughout China. During this time, a renaissance took place in the
building of mosques, tombs and shrines. Muslims lacking the fear that was present before
began moving in hordes to large cities building new mosques while also changing the
urban landscape.

Reconstruction also developed a new sense of being Muslim, reviving the religious
rituals (Sufi orders) that accompanied the tombs like the Ramadan fast, prayer and other

63 Kristof, Nicholas. “1492.”
16, 2004).
Islamic traditions. This change in policy dramatically changed Muslim national consciousness, as Muslims became a part of the Other, the larger Islamic ummah. The relatively recent upsurge of memory and national identity is creating a proliferation of identities tied to the nation-state and larger Islamic ummah, which is increasingly working against Chinese minzu policies that sought to assimilate the Muslim populations towards the greater Han cultural paradigm.

In the French nation-state, unlike the Chinese memory community, memory is enveloped around the era of colonialism. The collective memory of colonialism is still one of the most important variables separating the French Muslim and non-Muslim community in the contemporary context. Although the French government recently began to reconcile the memories of the two communities regarding colonialism, and of the savage wars between the Muslim colonial subjects and the larger French community, three types of memories have ensued. The first are those that recognize Muslim accomplishments in France facilitating the development of a national consciousness amongst the French and Muslim masses. In 2002, the French states officially re-acknowledged Muslim sacrifice in World War I, World War II, and the insurgency in Vietnam where over sixty-thousand Algerians and Moroccans were killed, both in service to and against empire.

In 1926, the French government allowed for the construction of the mosque of Paris. This mosque was built in gratitude for Muslim wartime efforts after World War I. Only recently have the French government and the Muslim minorities shifted the discourse and reconstructed a new collective memory around the mosque signifying Muslim sacrifice and service towards the state and the overall presence of Islam in France. This process of
remembering and contemplation on Muslim minority domestic politics allowed both the Muslim minority and the French state to reconstruct and retrieve an identity from within the French state, legitimizing their presence. The ‘recapturing of Muslim memory’ brought about the ‘return of history’ where the collective memories were now liberated from constraints imposed by the remnants of the old colonial regime. Consequently, Muslim minorities are progressively written into French history, as the “liberators of Marseille,” the “back bone of De Gaulle’s struggle against the Vichy government,” and the “men who expelled the Nazis.”

The second of these memories is regarding the brutal Algerian war for independence, where over one million Algerians and nearly ten thousand Frenchmen died. This contested memory is a divisive issue in France, because the state refused to recognize any wrongdoing in the Algerian war, blaming the insurgency, and indirectly the Muslim minority for the brutality of the war that eventually ended French glory. Thus, for French citizens, the North African within French society is a representative of everything that went wrong with the French nation after WWII, disregarding the evils that were committed by French troops in the region. The French public collectively remembers the Algerian through sporadic acts of violence that the Algerian Liberation Front (FLN) committed against the French occupying army.

The Algerians on the other hand viewed the French state with contempt. The French were seen as hypocritical in their policies towards the Algerian. The French republic officially state that the Algerians were socially and politically equal to the French; but

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64 Müller, “Introduction,” in Müller, ed., Memory and Power, 7.
when the Algerians viewed themselves in relation to their French neighbors who occupied their land, they saw that they were third-class citizens. Colonialism and war for the Algerians represented a culmination of everything the Algerians already knew and experienced regarding the French Republic, including French vulgar racism and mass murder. The occupation of Algeria and the subsequent war has been transplanted to France and is being continually played out in the present French context.

The French Muslims are targeted by the French state for not ‘assimilating’ into the French context. However, French Algerian Muslims do not understand how the French government can complain about miniscule issues, such as an Algerian not changing his name from Muhammad to Jacques, or not shedding his or her traditional attire. French Muslims find this hypocritical, considering the fact that the French occupation of Algeria not only transformed the culture and history of the Algerian people, but implemented policies that forcibly transformed the lingua franca from Arabic to French. Furthermore, the French stole and exploited Algerian resources for nearly a century utilizing the Algerian populations throughout the empire to maintain French glory, making them fight in key battles including the Franco-Prussian war, World War I, World War II, the Vietnam War, and finally the Algerian war. In addition, the fight for independence cost nearly 1.2 million Algerian lives including 200,000 Algerians who fought with the French Republic and were subsequently abandoned by the republic after they left Algeria.

Therefore, French Muslims do not understand the French public when they complain about a Muslim man or women wearing traditional clothes or because the Muslim may be a shade darker than their fellow Frenchmen. The Algerian war for French Muslim is collectively remembered as everything wrong with the contemporary French state. Gillis
states: "[T]he core meaning of any individual or group identity, namely, a sense of
sameness over time and space, is sustained by remembering; and what is remembered is
defined by the assumed identity."\textsuperscript{65} The inability of the French state to reconcile the
memories of the two communities is increasingly affecting the unity of the nation-state
producing two opposing communities.

The third and most recent development occurred with the hybridization of cultures in
France. The hybridization of French and Muslim cultures is a product of memory in the
new generation of Muslim and non-Muslim Frenchmen. The hybridization is occurring
because of the impact of the Muslim minorities in the public sphere as they are found in
all facets of French public life including the political, economic, and social realm of
French society. Inversely, this is also the same for the second and third generation
Muslim minority, who only know France and French culture, forgetting the importance
and general impact of the Algerian War on their psyche as French history and culture
becomes an important point of reference. It is this new generation that French public
officials are attempting to accommodate by locating vestiges of French Muslim memory
to construct a national consciousness including the Muslim minorities.

Race and Identity

Another important hegemonic\textsuperscript{66} variable in the conception of the Chinese and French
nation-state is the concept of race. Race as it is understood and approached today in


\textsuperscript{66} This paper utilizes hegemony in the Gramscian sense in that he believes the definition
of hegemony is the cultural leadership exercised by the ruling class. For Gramsci
hegemony is coercion that is exercised by legislative and executive powers, which in are
case are the Chinese Communist Party and the French Republic.
China and France follows sociologist Howard Winant's argument that race is a "constitutive element, an organizational principle, a praxis and structure that has constructed and reconstructed world society since the emergence of modernity." Race, Winant argues, does not have to be understood in biological formations, but also cultural and economic systems creating hierarchical divides between communities. The minzu paradigm is an example of Winant's organizational principle emerging from modernity and the nation-state, and a necessary element utilized by the state in order to maintain stability, inequality, and negative stereotypical views of the minority Muslim populations. The Chinese nation-state attitudes toward Muslim populations as being the 'Other' further reinforces a Muslim imagined community extending from Han-dominated China to the Islamic world.

The notion of nationalism as practiced by the Chinese nation-state through its minority policies reinforces multiple 'imagined communities' based on a self-ascribed race and ethnicity, which for the Muslims of China is directly tied to a religious identity. For the Hui Muslim, racial and ethnic identity is based on the notion of being Arab, Persian, and Muslim. As one Hui cadre states: "If you don't believe in Islam, you are not Hui." This is also true for the Uyghur and Kazakh whose identity is intricately tied to the Turkic race and whose majority is Muslim. The implications of state categorizations and subsequent Muslim loyalty to that identity reinforces an identity that is no longer tied to the larger nation-state, but rather with the self-ascribed identity that is inherently

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Islamic and anti-state.

In France, Winant argues that the breakdown of colonial rule was also a breakdown of “systems of citizenship at least citizenship conceived as membership” into the French collective memory. For Winant, the strict standards regarding membership of the Other is producing two results, the first is the continuing process of creating loyal post-colonial subjects, and the second is appropriating indigenous Muslim identity towards the Muslim world. However, unlike the PRC where the dictatorial government does not allow for the political expression of identities pertaining to either race or religion, the French Muslim population, under *la laïcité*, on the other hand, is changing the socio-political context from which it is emerging as an important and vital political player. The democratic structure allows Muslims to participate in the state’s socio-political infrastructure in order to demand their rights as a community and challenge institutional racism. In this way, various policies are emerging that allow the Muslims a voice in their negotiations with the state.⁶⁹

Globalization and Transnationalism

Globalization is principally theorized as the “flows of goods, capital, people, information, ideas, images, and risks across national borders, combined with the emergence of social networks and political institutions which constrains the nation-
This is important for many scholars because these flows allow for a continual exchange of ideas and processes that undermine the national project as theorized by China and France. Appadurai takes this notion of globalization and imagined community even further by constructing a theoretical framework to enable the analysis of global fragmentations. This cannot be understood by older models of the nation-state. Arjun Appadurai, instead, proposes a theory of “scapes,” arguing that in the modern world there are five dimensions of global-cultural flow: technoscapes, finanscapes, mediascapes, ideoscapes, and ethnoscapes. This study suggests a further “scape:” a “religioscape,” which helps understand the Muslim Ummah or ‘imagined community’ beyond the borders of China and France and the PRC and the French Republic helped to construct and that resurgent Muslim ideology reinforced.

Unlike the mediascapes and ideoscapes that Appadurai claims are built on ethnoscapes, technoscapes and finanscapes, such “religioscapes” are actually built on all of the “scapes” just mentioned. Here one can utilize the Marxist metaphor whereby the five “scapes” become the base and the religioscape the superstructure. While “scapes” for Appadurai are a means to understand the contemporary cultural economy, the religioscape is built on the foundations of both the traditional and modern world. The religioscape’s endurance throughout the decades, specifically for the Muslim populations, lay in the developments and historical transformations of the scapes in each context, prior

70 George Ritzer, Modern Sociological Theory, 38


72 Nash, Globalization, 91.

73 Kate Nash, Globalization, 91
to the formation of nation-states and beyond the nation-state.

In China, the Muslims maintain a sense of the Other through the transfer of ideas amongst believers when they congregate in ‘foreign’ mosques, conduct the Hajj pilgrimage, and conduct trade with the Muslims, where the transfer of ideas and goods including tapes and books allow the Chinese Muslims to maintain a ‘tie’ with the Muslim world. Inversely, the religioscape is further strengthened through Chinese reinforcement of racial and ethnic identities that are solely tied to their distinctive Islamic identity, which is further linked to the global Islamic ummah. In France, the religioscape is not only reinforced by mosques services the Hajj, and the trading of goods and technology, but also the relative openness of French society which allowed the religioscape to enter easily. Thus not only Muslim identity is being transformed, but also the French state itself.

The religioscape is not defined through a distinct Islamic ideology or practice but through the very essence of Islam. Regardless of the specific school of thought or ideology that one may follow, the Muslim religioscape is based on the foundations of the Islamic faith, the belief in Allah, the prophet Muhammed as the last messenger and other general articles of faith that are indisputable in the Islamic tradition. Furthermore, Islam’s impact on various cultures that it has permeated cannot be discounted, as many Muslim nations’ identity and culture are solely tied to Islam. For example, Pakistani national identity is tied to Islam not only because of the Islamic faith but also because the Pakistani nation-state was constructed for Muslims. This is also true for Muslims who maintain cultural values that are a product of the Islamic faith. In France, Muslims who are self-proclaimed atheists are also a part of the Muslim religioscape. Although these
Muslims do not adhere to the fundamentals of Islamic worship, their identity is a result of the socio-political Islamic contexts from which they emerge.

The religioscape allows an identity to materialize and reproduce globally and locally connected solely to the basic tenets of Islam and Islamic culture. There are interesting similarities and differences between the Jewish minority in nineteenth-and-twentieth century Europe and those who adhere to the Islamic faith. The Jewish community in Europe possessed a proliferation of identities that included two extremes: Zionism and Jewish identity that was second to one’s national origin. While some French Jews saw themselves as French first, others defined themselves as Zionists Jews first. Such a situation permitted competing identities to emerge that are vied to be resolved through religion, culture, and ethnicity. However, the Muslim religioscape, unlike the Jewish example, is more one-sided, in that the religious, cultural, and ethnic character of Muslims in France and China remains secondary to Islam and Islamic culture, no matter which political ideology one group may employ.

Islamic Ummah and Domestic Islam

This historically and religiously based ‘religioscape’ of which the Chinese and French Muslims are a part is often associated with the notion of the Islamic Ummah. The theoretical underpinnings of the Islamic ummah are found in the textual sources of the Quran and Hadith. Muslims argue that the ummah is an intricate pillar of the Islamic

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74 The Quran for Muslims is the literal word of God as revealed through Mohammed, and the Hadith is the sayings of the prophet Muhammed, which are also viewed as legal doctrine.
faith, overriding all divisions amongst man, including race, class, ethnic group, language, and the larger nation-state because the overall “community” of Muslims is the political and social expression of Islam.\textsuperscript{75}

The ummah is a tenet of Islamic legal and political theory, historically developed under the political confines of the caliphate, which was considered Dar-ul-Islam or the ‘house of Islam,’ the abode where Muslims lived and ruled. This tenet in Islamic political philosophy is still vibrant today is becoming one of the pillars of Islamic law and faith, practiced when Muslims conduct daily prayers, conduct the Hajj pilgrimage, or volunteer to help their fellow Muslims fight a jihad against non-Islamic forces.\textsuperscript{76} Consciousness of the ummah has always been a historical variable in Muslim actions since the emergence of Islam in the seventh century. An excellent example of an earlier event that established Muslim unity under the confines of the ummah could be identified during the Muslim-led Illi rebellions of 1840-1880 against the Manchu ruling dynasty. This Jihad, according to Israeli, was directly inspired by other Muslim-led Sufi rebellions.\textsuperscript{77}

In Nigeria, Uthman Dan Fodio, a leader of the Hausa tribe, rallied his Muslim followers to a jihad against the British in 1860, almost defeating the world’s largest

\textsuperscript{75} All the modern Islamist literature produced by various scholars attempts to undermine the nation-state in order to re-construct the caliphate or a global Muslim body. See Shireen Hunter, \textit{The Politics of Islamic Revivalism: Diversity and Unity} (Indiana University Press, 1988).

\textsuperscript{76} The Hajj pilgrimage is conducted annually by Muslims to Mecca and Medina; a Muslim is obliged to go to Mecca once in his lifetime. When the person goes, he wears a white robe to signify unity and equality before God. When they pray for themselves and Muslims worldwide asking for forgiveness and repentance.

\textsuperscript{77} Raphael Israeli, “Muslim Minorities Under non-Islamic Rule,” \textit{Current History} 4 (1980): 159-164, 184-185. In this text, Israeli briefly discusses Muslim revolts that occurred under non-Muslim rule in a global context.
Twenty years later, the Mahdi of Sudan began his rebellion, inflicting heavy casualties on the British army. Closer to China, Imam Shamyll Daghestani’s revolt in 1844 under the Naqshabandiya Sufi order, also present in China, started a large-scale revolt against the Russians lasting for twenty years until it was finally defeated in 1859. Contemporarily, this notion of the ummah is best represented during the Afghan campaign against the formidable Soviet troops. Muslims from around the world including French and Chinese citizens organized and sent people to fight with their fellow brethren against the ‘atheist’ Soviet regime.

This was also recurrent in the Serbian conflict with Bosnian Muslims, the modern Chechen campaign against the Russians, and in Kashmir where thousands of Muslims worldwide financially and physically helped the Mujahideen fight against the Indian army. The political and social expressions enacted by the Muslims in the contemporary and historical context are intricately tied to both religious and ideological frameworks inherent in Islamic tenets of faith, through the various cultural, political, social, and economic ties instilled in the Muslim’s identity-religious practitioners.

The Muslim minorities of China and France practice various forms of Islamic rituals, tying them to the worldwide Muslim community, but at the same time, they have many distinct localized characteristics in their practice and philosophy. Rudelson points out in his ethnographic work in Xinjiang that Islamic practices even from within China differ. In the south, specifically in the city of Kashgar, a bastion of conservative Islam, women dress in full burqas, made famous by the Taliban in Afghanistan. Islamic scholars also have more power in the everyday life of the average Muslim. The city of Turpan is less

conservative. Women only wear headscarves as opposed to the burqa, practicing a form of Islam that is not as politically and socially active in the Muslim's life.\(^7^9\)

This is also the same in France where a Muslim individual might proudly wear the burqa, beard, traditional robe, and maintain strict Islamic dietary habits in order to assert his or her identity in society. On the other hand, a self-professed Muslim might actually be an atheist, shave, promiscuous, love French wine and not necessarily believe in Islamic tenets, but selectively observes Islamic rituals as a cultural practice or tie with other fellow Muslims. Muslims may vary in their understanding of certain religious practices and rituals, but there still exists in all Muslim communities a sense of brotherhood, of belonging to a larger Islamic body. This is only apparent in the Islamic practices that are present in China and France contemporarily and historically. Almost every “wave” of Islamic thought historically and contemporarily in the Muslim world is present today in the both Chinese and French context.\(^8^0\)

In China, the predominant Islamic school of thought is the Hanafi School. This school maintains the considerable use of reason in legal decisions and is essentially non-hierarchical and decentralized, which has made it difficult for the Chinese state to incorporate its religious leaders into the strong centralized state system.\(^8^1\) This school is the most liberal school of the five Islamic schools of thought, maintaining a liberal view towards the practice of religious rituals and law. This school also maintains a very liberal

\(^7^9\) Justin Jon Rudelson, *Oasis Identities: Uyghur Nationalism Along the China’s Silk Road* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 45-51.


\(^8^1\) Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 723-725.
interpretation regarding relations with the non-Muslim populations. An analysis of the Muslim world demonstrates how this school of thought is adopted primarily by Muslims who live in non-Muslim majority countries or have large non-Muslim minorities.

The Muslims of India, Russia, West, and East Africa all utilize this school of thought because of its practicality towards non-Muslim populations. This is important in order to understand the Muslims of China, because everything that is legitimated as a political and social practice has to be worked out through the framework of this legal school. This further allows the Muslims of China to maintain a religious justification for their presence in China, to proselytize the local populations, as their ancestors intended, or to maintain a presence of Islam in China, where the majority is non-Muslim.

The Muslims of China practice Sufism, a specific form of Islam adhering to the traditional five schools of thought. Sufism contains many mystic elements not found in traditional Islamic legal doctrine. In the early 13th century, Sufism became the principle vehicle to express Islamic beliefs and rituals, spreading to all four corners of the Islamic world. Sufism is a Muslim form of mysticism built upon the teachings of Islam. It guides the individual believer toward a direct experience of the realities of God's existence. The Sufism practiced in China and the rest of the Islamic world emphasizes the faith in saints and holy men. To ordinary Muslims, these saints are the link between them and the faith of Islam as personified by Muhammad. By following these saints, it assures the possible intercession between the holy man and God.

The social organization following the Sufistic principle is one where the Sufi masters uphold all authority in religious and secular affairs. Another implication for the nation-state that Sufi organizations have is that individual members are loyal to and identify
more with the Sufi organization and master than the state. In China, where the predominant form of Islam is Sufism, this causes many problems for the state's attempts to create a cohesive imagined community. In China, a young Ahong (religious leader) by the name of Hong Yang currently leads one of the Sufi orders in Ningxia province, commanding over one million Muslims.\textsuperscript{82} The Naqshbandi Sufi orders, one of the largest Sufi orders, present in almost every geographic region in the world from the United States to China and is led by Sufi Master Sheikh Nazim who lives in Cyprus. Theoretically speaking, the loyalty of a Chinese Muslim to an entity like Sheikh Nazim 'living in Cyprus' is stronger than the loyalty to any race, ethnic group, province, or nation, further complicating matters for the Chinese nation-state.

Like Chinese Islam, the Muslims of France are of such a diverse background that Muslims of all persuasion can be found including Shiites, Salafis (Islamic literalists), and practitioners of all schools of thoughts. Nearly all the official Muslim organizations have declared in their respective charters that they follow the orthodox schools of Islam mentioned before, which ties the Muslims to the larger Islamic world. For example, a salafi Muslim adherent who strictly follows the Salafi school of thought finds that his medium of authority is in Saudi Arabia, not France. This is important for the future of the French state because from the onset of heavy Muslim immigration from the Muslim world, government policy allowed for international government and associations alike to govern the religious practices within France, including providing the Mosque Imam funds to maintain the mosque.

This relative open policy regarding Islam allowed for the flourishing of various Islamic ideologies, radical and reactionary, conservative and liberal. In France and Britain, many Islamists were given refuge from oppressive Muslim regimes. These Muslims were allowed to practice their faith freely without government intervention; conversely, this allowed the development of specific ideologies that were able to be disseminated throughout the Islamic world from France and Britain. For example, the call to Jihad or armed struggle in Bosnia in the mid-nineties was primarily conducted and organized by radical elements in England and France. Although there has been a challenge to radical and reactionary, Islamic ideology in France, a radical fringe of Islamists still operates there.

In recent decades, beginning in the late eighties, Muslims in France unlike the Muslims in China began to transform their Islamic practices towards what many now call European Islam or French Islam, an active negotiation with Islamic tradition that introspectively analyzes what fits and what does not fit into their new French context. Muslims are not only actively engaged with modernity in their new local contexts, but are actively engaged in reconstructing and reformulating Islamic law to confer with modernity’s discourse on democracy, the rule of law, and other variables that simultaneously allows for the creation of a viable, working Islamic program for France. This is occurring in France today as religious authority is being transformed, as Weber notes, from a traditional and charismatic authority which governed the development of Islamic law to a new rational-legal authority where Islamic law derives its rules ‘rationally’ and ‘legally’ by various individuals who are not tied to a tradition, culture,
and charismatic personality. One of the major Islamic scholars to emerge as a proponent and ideological head of European Islam, and in particular French Islam, is Tariq Ramadan.

Tariq Ramadan’s discourse is important in understanding the Muslims’ presence in France because his theoretical perspectives undermine the clash thesis. The latter purports that Islam is not compatible with the modern world. However, it is also developing programs and methodologies that will enable the Muslim populations to modernize and create a succinct French identity without throwing out the Islamic tradition. Ramadan’s quite revolutionary attempt to reform Islamic law in order to modernize Islamic tradition is primarily done through his concept of tajdid (renewal).

Unlike other Islamic reformers like Ali Shariati, Ramadan goes further in analyzing Islamic renewal, not only from an Islamic perspective, but also in response to Western norms and values that prior theorists ignored. Ramadan believes that in synthesizing the two, Muslims in Europe can be loyal citizens co-existing with the non-Muslim population. Ramadan states:

> Within this whole system, I differentiate between principles and models. For example, from the Greek concept of democracy we take at least four principles: state of law; equal citizenship; universal suffrage and accountability- the main universal principles in the Western model of democracy. These four principles can also be extracted

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84 Ali Shariati was an Iranian Islamic intellectual who studied in France in the sixties and seventies. While there he wrote dozens of texts regarding Islam and the modern world that became the impetus for the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979.
Ramadan deploys in his text *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (2003) a 'how to guide' for the Muslims living in the modern world. Ramadan’s work regarding European or French Islam is vital to the new construction of not only Muslim identity, but also French identity allowing France to become an important intellectual center of Islamic reform.

In the current French context, French Islam is constructing an inclusive body of Islamic jurisprudence that maintains the framework of Islamic tradition with different epistemological foundations. Although European Islam is the other side of the coin of French Islam, there is a qualitative difference. In French Islam, there are specific cultural variants that are not present from within German Islam or British Islam. European Islam is far more concerned with larger, macro issues that govern the Muslim minorities’ presence in these contexts including reformulating issues of Muslim-non-Muslim relations, religious tolerance, gender practices, and the separation of traditional cultural values from religious tradition. Although French Islam is concerned with all these variants, its primary concern is orienting Islamic tradition within French cultural values.

The re-interpretation of Islam in France has generated various policies that are enhancing Muslim assimilation into the public sphere. One interesting development in French Islam that represents the overall growth of an indigenous Islam is the recitation of

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the Quran in Arabic. Islamic tradition specifically states that for a prayer to be valid one must recite it in Arabic. In the French contemporary context, a few Muslim scholars formulated an Islamic fatwa or ruling based on Islamic tradition interpreted through the context of France, that it is religiously valid to pray in French.\(^7\) Although the ruling divided the Muslim community, this hermeneutic approach in analyzing Islam from the lens of both Islamic tradition and French cultural values is increasingly shaping the development of Islam in this context. However, for Chinese and French Islam, a distinctive cultural and racial diversity is still connected to the Islamic world, not only by government policy reinforcing the identity to an external other, but also from within Islam as an inclusive faith and ideology.\(^8\)

In China, the recent relative openness of the Chinese state with bordering Muslim states has allowed radical Islamic ideology to enter the fold of traditional Sufi Islamic teachings transforming specific Islamic localities. These transformations are producing a qualitatively different Islamic ideology that is mixed with local Chinese Muslim Sufi custom and resurgent Islamic ideology. As a result a locally inspired, globally influenced politicized Islam is emerging.

The narrative regarding these specific contexts further allows this study to formulate a dialectic between culturally and politically differing non-Muslim majority nation-states' impact on the global ummah and inversely the global ummah's impact on each specific

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\(^8\) Although there are undoubtedly other variables that could be included as motivation for patterns of Chinese and French hard and soft policies towards the Muslim minorities, this author believes that these variables are primarily guiding domestic policy towards their own Muslim populations.
context. The religioscape connects the global and the local. Muslim identity is constructed from diverse cultures, values, histories and life experiences, all of which simultaneously transform the localities in which Muslims live, but also transform the ummah into a heterogeneous entity. The impact of European Islam on the global Islamic ummah cannot be underestimated as Western-oriented Muslim nation-states that are based on traditional European models are looking for new ‘Islamic models’ that fit within similar state paradigms. The general impact of Islamic religioscapes on Islamic identity is further crystallizing the global with the local, allowing the nation-state the means to mediate, accommodate, and appropriate between the two interconnected poles.
CHAPTER 2

MUSLIM RELIGIOSCAPES IN CHINA: BETWEEN ACCOMMODATION AND APPROPRIATION

This chapter identifies four periods of Chinese/Islamic world soft and hard policies towards the Muslim populations. During the first period, categorized as the early grace period (1949-1958), the PRC enacted soft policy measures towards the Muslim populations in order to construct a viable and cohesive nation-state. Domestically, the PRC steadily established communist dictates nationwide; while still appeasing Muslim minorities in order to ward off constant rebellions and talk of “splittism,” both of which were connected to the Muslim religioscape. Globally, the PRC understood the political and social significance of Muslim minorities as political actors, by exporting Maoist revolutionary ideology and revitalizing old political ties between China and the Islamic world.

The terminology of “soft and hard policies” is primarily utilized by various scholars in the field of political science to explain the gradual shifts in policies by a nation or group towards their constituents. Rudelson uses these terms in his article. See Justin Benadam Rudelson, “HIV/AIDS as a Regional Security Threat,” published in: http://www.csis.org/china/030605rudelson.pdf. PRC use of hard and soft policies towards the Muslim populations will include examples from the Islamic world to show parallels with Chinese policies.

This was the concern of many newly formed Muslim nations as their primary focus was the formation of the nation-state. See Shireen Hunter, The Future of Islam and the West (London: Praeger, 1998).

Splittism is the word that PRC officials regularly utilize in describing Muslim rebellions and revolts. Whenever the People’s Daily or New York Times quotes a Chinese official, they usually tie this word with “feudalism” and “superstition” in order to describe the Muslim populations.

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world.

The second period is characterized as the fall from grace (1958-1975): the shift from soft to hard policy during this period reflected the role of ideologies in the global Islamic world context that was further reflected through the prism of the Cold War. In China, Marxist explanations were the primary paradigmatic lens towards other ideologies and systems of thought, reducing the Muslims domestically and abroad in two obvious classes and thus foregoing the importance of the Muslim religioscape. Throughout the Islamic world, various powerful Muslim nations also tested new socialist, capitalist and even Marxist notions of state, while rejecting Islam as a socio-political and economic system. During this period, the PRC and other Muslim nations viewed Islam as a feudal ideology embedded in a superstitious system of thought impeding both progress and modernization, while giving rise to a “false consciousness” amongst the Muslim masses religiously or socially adhering to Islam.

The third period is categorized as the great change (1976-1990). Chinese Muslims and Muslims abroad began to regain and reassert their political rights: to worship, rebuild mosques that were destroyed, and organize for political and social rights. This came in response to the global revival of Islam and Islamic political ideology that countered the failing Western, dictatorial, and anti-Islamic systems of thought. Throughout the Muslim world (Iran, Afghanistan, Sudan, Algeria, the Gulf, Pakistan, Kashmir, China, etc.) Islam

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92 The importance of the Cold War in shaping government policy in the 50s through to the 80s heavily influenced both domestic and global policy of all the nation-states as they conformed to the global world context. See Martin Walker, The Cold War: A History (New York: Henry Holt & Company Inc., 1993).

93 In the Cold War era, the Muslim world largely rejected traditional Islamic notions of state, as secularism became the dominant worldview. For more information, see Derek Hopwood, Egypt: Politics and Society 1945-1990 (New York: Routledge, 1993).
and Islamic movements began to reassert themselves into the political and social spheres of each Muslim country. The PRC, noting these large-scale changes in the Islamic world, shifted their hard line policies toward soft policies.

In the final period, *The Challenge* 1990-1995, China and other Muslim nations were caught in a catch twenty-two. The PRC desired to implement policies towards Muslim minorities favoring their domestic and foreign policy agenda, as they became quite dependent on both the Islamic world’s oil and the regional resources present in Muslim geographic areas. The problem was that if China pressed too hard on Muslim populations, the Muslim world might sever political and economic relations supporting the Muslim insurgencies. However, at the same time if the government became too liberal, a strong Islamist trend would pose a threat, simultaneously leaving China with similar Islamic insurgencies that their large and powerful neighbors have not managed to bring to an end.

1949-1958: The Period of Grace

The Islamic world in the post-World-War-II context was in a state of disarray and hope. Colonization was still a large part of the Muslim’s life, as Africa and Asia were still under the grip of colonial rule. The Muslims of Africa, including the larger nations of


95 Many China analysts note that if China reacts to strongly against the Muslim populations they may ferment a worldwide global Jihad against the PRC, as was done against the Russians in Afghanistan and Chechnya, the Indians in Kashmir and now the Americans in Iraq, attracting Jihadi’s from across the whole world. Gladney in his article "Transnational Islam and Uighur National Identity: Salman Rushdie, Sino-Muslim Missile Deals, and the Trans-Eurasian Railway" *Central Asian Survey* 11:3 (1992): 1-18. discusses the potential crises the PRC may have if Muslim anger is shifted toward China.
Morocco, Nigeria and Algeria began their fight for independence against their French and British colonial masters. In Southeast Asia, the Japanese defeat of European allies in the War of the Pacific created newfound optimism for the indigenous populations of Indonesia and Malaysia to resist their Dutch and British colonial masters. In the Arab Middle East, new states began to emerge onto the world stage including Egypt, Iraq, Syria and the smaller Gulf nations, demanding world recognition and looking for guidance to modernize their newly founded nations.

While in some Muslim nations, freedom of self-determination was in sight, other Muslim populations were still under the throng of colonization, as each dominant nation-state raced to consolidate land and power in less developed regions. Russia, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century through the post World War II period, nearly colonized a third of the Islamic world, spanning from the Southern regions of Chechnya through Azerbaijan to the vast oasis land of Kazakhstan. Russia dominated these territories until the 1990s. Farther east, the PRC was making headway across Northern China in heavy Muslim populated regions of Gansu and Ningxia province near Mongolia through to Xinjiang province or East Turkistan in order to consolidate these regions. This geographic expansion culminated in the creation in the new Chinese ‘imagined community.’

In the newly formed Muslim nation-states not under direct occupation by the Russians, Chinese or the Europeans, the primary concern was constructing a national identity and consolidating power to a central government. The Muslim nation-states sought to modernize by disregarding their traditional religious, political, and social philosophy, as they cast their gaze upon both East and West. This was also the primary
concern for the new government in Beijing regarding their own endeavor toward nation-building. 96

John King Fairbank characterized the first eight years leading up to the Great Leap Forward, as the “reconstructive stage.” 97 Like other newly formed Muslim governments, the PRC had the tumultuous task of uniting China in order to create a politically and economically powerful, cohesive “imagined community” based on a uniform ideology, i.e., Maoist Communism. Chinese policy towards Muslim minorities during this period was primarily concerned with four important factors. The first factor was to secure the geo-political borders of Xinjiang and other outlying Muslim-dominated regions from outside interference, mainly from India and the Soviet Union. The second factor was to secure and exploit the natural resources for use in national reconstruction. The third factor was to implement the hegemonic minzu policies, which included the Hanification campaign of the Muslim constituency through the drastic migration and settlement of Han populations in Muslim regions. 98 Finally, the fourth factor was the appropriation of Muslim minorities as they utilized the Muslim religioscape to direct foreign policy measures towards the Muslim world.

96 I briefly present the Islamic world context to the reader because of its important to understand that China, like other Muslim nations, were primarily concerned with the same problems as each attempted to modernize their nation state after each nation gained freedom from colonial rule.


98 See Justin Jon Rudelson, Oasis Identities: Uyghur Nationalism Along China’s Silk Road (New York: Columbia University Press 1997), 35. Rudelson cites the first three factors, while this paper adds a fourth.
On September 25, 1949, Xinjiang Province officially came under CCP control adding fifty percent to the total Muslim population of China. This made China the twelfth largest Muslim nation in the world, with larger Muslim populations than Saudi Arabia and Iraq. The Muslim leaders of Xinjiang initially supported the CCP takeover of Xinjiang and other outlying Muslim regions as an alternative to Soviet rule. The Soviets ruthlessly banned and transformed the indigenous cultural and religious practices of all the Central Asian regions through harsh and repressive policies closing down thousands of mosques and seminaries. In one such campaign, the Soviet regime arrested and killed nearly one hundred-thousand Muslim clerics over a thirty-year period. From 1949 to 1954, the administrative powers in Xinjiang and other Muslim regions were primarily concerned with consolidating and creating a new loyal Muslim communist class in order to secure the region within the larger Chinese imagined community.

Xinjiang was mostly governed by military leaders who were all ethnically Han, but allowed the Muslims to maintain their own leadership apparatus under military rule as long as they adhered (or at least outwardly adhered) to official CCP doctrine. This was the beginning of official policies that supported the marginalization of the Muslim minorities from the socio-political and economic structures of Xinjiang. One such case of PRC ouster was the case of Muhammed Emin Bogra, a former development minister for the nationalist regime, and Isa Yusef Aliptakin, a former East Turkestan official, who

99 The contemporary Muslim population of China is unknown but estimates by reliable scholars agree that the Muslim population ranges from 20 -35 million. Allowing China to have one of the largest Muslim populations in the world.


were purged and exiled to Kashmir for maintaining that Xinjiang should be an independent state of East Turkestan. They argued that Mao promised support for self-determination, which was the only reason they supported the PRC takeover of Xinjiang. Although Mao officially abandoned the thought for Muslim independence in 1938, he did not publicize it. These two men would later become central figures in the fight for independence of Xinjiang from PRC control.  

The first official statements produced on minority rights by the PRC were in the Common Program, a document that was passed by the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference of 1949. Within this document, three important policies emerged regarding the minority populations. The first, in Article 50, stated that all ‘chauvinisms’ local or Han would be opposed in order to facilitate a cohesive Chinese government: “Greater Nationalism and chauvinism shall be opposed. Acts involving discrimination, oppression and splitting of the unity of the various nationalities shall be prohibited.” Article 51 called for the establishment of autonomous governments in areas largely inhabited by minority populations: “[R]egional autonomy shall be exercised in areas where national minorities are concentrated and various kinds of autonomy organizations of the different nationalities shall be set up according to the size of the respective populations and regions.” The regional governments were directly

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controlled by the CCP and would eventually become disproportionately represented by Han cadres.

In Article 53, the Common Program guaranteed equal rights for all nationalities including the freedom of religion and the preservation of language and cultural practices, stating: "[A]ll national minorities shall have freedom to develop their dialects and languages, to preserve or reform their traditions, customs and religious beliefs. The People's Government shall assist the masses of the people of all national minorities to develop their political, economic, cultural, and educational construction work." These policies were later incorporated into the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, adopted by the First Session of the First National People's Congress in September 20, 1954.

The constitution officially recognized the various different ethnic and racial groups of China, allowing the minority populations to preserve their customs, cultures, and languages. In a political gesture to the people of Xinjiang, the PRC reversed and abolished the use of the Chinese name Tihwa for the capital of Xinjiang, replacing it with the original Turkic, Urumchi in 1953. The 1954 Constitution recognized the state, as defined by Stalin; a nation was a community of people evolving over time, with a common language, common territory, economic base, and psychological makeup. For the PRC, this was an easy classification system. The Uygher distinctively shared these characteristics while the Hui shared with the Han majority three out of the four

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characteristics. It was more difficult to make Islam the only unique variable allowing for the establishment of a distinct autonomous region. On October 1, 1955, both the Hui (Ningxia/Gansu) Autonomous Region and the Xinjiang Uyghur A.R. were officially recognized by the state strengthening the Muslim religioscape in these regions. After the establishment of the constitution in 1954, the official written policies towards the Muslims would not change throughout subsequent PRC rule, including the amending of the constitution in 1978, 1982, 1988, and 1993.

During the first four years prior to officially recognizing Xinjiang and other Muslim populated areas as A.R, the PRC sought to maintain a large presence of the army. They did so for two reasons, first to quell any resistance that might arise, and as a measure to maintain good relations with the Soviet Union while still securing border ordeals. For the Muslim populations, PRC military represented the Chinese nation-states' hegemonic and domineering presence as the Muslims reluctantly joined the PRC 'memory community.'

On March 27, 1950, the Soviets and Mao signed the Moscow-Peking Act, which called for two joint companies to exploit the regions vast petroleum, mineral and metal resources. Companies like the Xinjiang Nonferrous Metals Company and the Xinjiang Petroleum Company, of which both the Soviet Union and China financially benefited from, brought thousands of Han workers to the region. These corporations funded many development projects as the government sought to modernize the cities of Xinjiang through heavy industrialization. The industrialization and forced urbanization of the


Muslim minorities transformed the urban landscape as Chinese markers of identity challenged and deconstructed Muslim collective memory. Economic integration of Xinjiang and other Muslim regions was one of the first official actions conducted by the PRC. The PRC’s emphasis on the economy over ideology fits within the Maoist paradigm, which sought to quell any support for the resistance and assimilate the Muslim minorities by shifting local nationalistic aspirations towards the state. This policy would not work as the PRC failed to acknowledge the role of culture and religion in the construction of Uyghur and Hui identity.

The PRC during this period was aware of the local populations yearning to create a separate state, an imagined community alongside China, based on a Turkic Muslim identity. The Turkic Muslims first embarked to create a nation-state beginning in the late nineteenth century through to the 1930s and late-1940s to create a separate state of East Turkestan. This dream of a separate East Turkestan dramatically failed as Turkey and other Central Asian Muslim Turkic states were occupied with their own struggles for independence and existence as national entities. During the 1920-40s, Turkey’s nationalist leader Ataturk broke up the Ottoman Empire and began to subdue both Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism to focus on the Turkish ‘imagined community’ as a sovereign, secular entity that was separate from the larger Muslim religioscape. In Central Asia, Soviet intrusion throughout the traditionally Muslim Turkic land further isolated the Uyghur and other Muslim populations in Xinjiang, as the local populations’ grip on power ceased to create an independent state.

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Aspirations to gain independence were still present throughout the Muslim regions. Active revolts in Henan by Hui Muslims called for an Islamic state in Henan province and independence for the rest of their Muslim brothers, which caused a scare of a national Muslim uprising. In Xinjiang, the Kazak Muslim populations led by Osman Bator and Janim Khan terrorized the Han cadres throughout the late-1940s and early-1950s demanding a separate Islamic state. The government finally quelled the rebellion by 1950, killing or capturing nearly 14,000 Kazakhs. Although there was large-scale sympathy for these small rebellions, no large-scale actions by the Muslims took place because Muslim scholars officially denounced the rebellions as counterproductive and un-Islamic. They further maintained a middle position as they criticized anybody who became official CCP members, calling them the “Jackals that serve the Han,” and traitors to Islam and Muslims.

In response to this environment, the CCP still maintained a peaceful stance towards the Muslims, recognizing that former Chinese governments were not the most tolerant and formidable environments for the vast minority populations in China. With the inception of the CCP, Mao intended to signal in a new era for Muslim-Han relations: [I]n which all-ethnic groups in China enjoy equality, unity and mutual aid. In the big, united family of ethnic groups in the People's Republic of China, based on equality of all rights, the people of all ethnic groups unite of their own accord for mutual promotion and common development and dedicate to the building of a strong, prosperous, democratic and

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Between 1950 and 1952, delegations were organized by various Muslim minorities to visit Beijing and other CCP political institutions throughout China, allowing for the minorities to orient themselves to the larger Chinese ‘imagined community.’ The delegations from Xinjiang to any national meeting usually included two Uyghur politicians, one Uyghur Islamic scholar, and one Kazakh politician in order to maintain thorough representation of the minorities.

The CCP also dispatched “ethnicity recognition and investigation teams” to various Muslim dominated localities to make sure they received national recognition, and created an avenue for the CCP to maintain good relations with the different nationalities by getting to know the local culture and religious lifestyles of each minority. These investigative teams furthered ethnic minority identification with the Muslim religioscape by affording policies that emphasized the different qualities of the Muslim minorities as opposed to the larger Han population.

CCP policies during this period reflected the government’s need to gain support from the local and global Muslim populations, consolidating power at home and easing Muslim suspicions abroad. The PRC also created various Islamic institutions in order to represent the Muslims of China domestically and globally in the wider Islamic world. This helped to maintain direct control of Islamic thought through religious scholars occupying various local government positions. The policy also allowed the PRC to control the Muslim religioscape within Chinese borders. The most well-known and largest Islamic organization in China was the Chinese Islamic Association, which was

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officially created in 1953. The organization played a mediating role between the domestic Muslim religious communities, giving policy advice to CCP officials regarding Islam and Islamic thought. Globally, the Chinese Islamic association also played an important role during this period as foreign policy envoys for the CCP to Muslim nations as they attempted to co-opt the power of the Muslim religioscape.

In 1954, after much debate between the Soviet Union and the PRC, Nikita Krushchev went to Beijing to relinquish the Soviet stake of Xinjiang province, giving up special economic and political influence in the Muslim region. This allowed the Chinese to consolidate the region into mainland China with no fears of Soviet intrusion into the region’s affairs. From 1954 onward, the CCP pursued a policy of relative minority autonomy, while attempting to undermine the Muslim religioscape and reinforce Muslim identity towards the larger Chinese imagined community.

The PRC attempted to construct loyal party members, through the reorganization of the school system by systematically eliminating Islamic and Turkic cultural and religious doctrines, revised textbooks, and through the daily indoctrination of government workers. Furthermore, the local government established radio and television networks broadcasting movies and songs in local languages, and expanded of cultural activities that discreetly promoted Maoist thought and Han language and culture throughout the region in order to transform the local culture. The CCP invested millions in infrastructure, schools and the reconstruction of hundreds of mosques in a bid to create a bond between the state and the Muslim minorities.


After consolidating full power in the region, the CCP established autonomous areas where the minorities exercised self-government, requiring the “election of a certain percentage of members of minority nationalities to public offices,” functioning like other Han majority provinces. The minority leaders imposed by the CCP tended to be Muslims who were loyal to the Communist cause, but were also seen by their communities as legitimately Islamic. The Communist party relied on figures like Yang Ching-jen, the Imam or community religious leader in Gansu province and Ma Yu-huai. They both joined the Hui cavalry brigades in the early 1930s and held various positions in administrating Xinjiang during the period. When the CCP came to power, they became the vice-chairman of the Nationalities Affairs Commission and First Secretary of the Ningxia Hui Party Committee. Chinese policy towards the minority areas sought to expand and empower the Muslim elites who were both Communist and experts in regional affairs.

The period officially designated the "transition to socialism" corresponded to China's first Five-Year Plan (1953-57). The period was characterized by efforts to achieve "industrialization collectivization of agriculture, and political centralization," which transformed the infrastructure of Xinjiang. From 1955 onward, policies toward the Muslims began to be more Maoist in approach, while still simultaneously criticizing 'Han

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120 June Dreyer, “China’s Minority Nationalities,” 515-519.

121 Fairbank, China: A New History, 345-367.
Chauvinism by specifically punishing all abuses conducted by the Han majority on the Muslim minority. The PRC executed policies that respected minority customs and beliefs, and also implemented party policies according to local cultural and “environment conditions.” Rudelson notes that the CCP during this period also slowly began to employ policies that fused both Uyghur culture and identity to Chinese Communism. The racial formation policies that sought to assimilate the Muslim became more apparent as the government steadily introduced script changes to the Uyghur, Kazak and Kyrgyz languages. This policy was enacted in order to dually modernize these populations and undermine Islamic influences in the Muslim regions, as was done decades earlier by Ataturk in Turkey.

The economic transition to “socialist agriculture and Soviet style industrialization,” was also the main vehicle of further integration and Han settlement into the Muslim regions. The business “corps” that were created by the PRC began bringing ethnic Han recruits from all over the country to transform the demographic, economic, ideological and social outlook of their Muslim compatriots. The corps also transformed the structural landscape of Xinjiang and other Muslim regions to conform to the architectural designs in mainland China.

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125 John King Fairbank, China: A New History, 357.

126 The business “Corps” were Han-run corporations that were established in Xinjiang. They primarily dealt with construction, oil and nuclear technology.
The face of Xinjiang began to change as the CCP built monuments and public memorials to honor Communist leaders and revolutionaries. Statues of Mao began to dominate the traditional mosque structures throughout the city. These structural changes transformed the memory communities in both Muslim and Han communities. The Han Chinese identified Xinjiang and other outlying Muslim autonomous regions with the rest of China through the urban landscape. The Muslim minority was forced to negotiate with the new urban landscape and find an identity that was tied to both China and the larger Islamic religioscape. Beyond the urban transformation, the CCP also went on recruiting campaigns to enlist non-Han communist cadres in the CCP’s intense effort of emphasizing ideological indoctrination and conformity to Mao’s dictates.

Globally, the PRC began to view developments in the Islamic world through the paradigm of the Cold War context as many Muslim nations began implementing socialist and even communist policies. The CCP utilized this opportune time to employ Muslim populations in order to gain international recognition and spread Maoist communist doctrine where social conditions of revolution were ripe. The Dawn Pakistani newspaper editorial noted:

[F]or the preservation of our Islamic state and to minimize the risk of Hindu Bharats aggression against it, we must now turn to China, and this we can do with no risk to our Islamic ideology. In Hindu Bharat Islam is hated because it is Islam and Muslims that are periodically butchered in large numbers merely because they are Muslims. In Red China religion as such may be decried, but of all religions only one, namely Islam, is not singled out for denigration and of all communities only one, namely the Muslims, are not singled out for violent persecution.127

127 Dawn Pakistan, April 26, 1963.
The CCP also, quite careful about not alienating the Islamic world by treating their own Muslim population favorably, allowed Islamic institutions to be established and politically supported Muslim insurgencies against the colonialist West.

They also utilized Chinese Muslim scholars to appeal to Muslim nations to forge a path toward Maoist Communism. In a speech by Burhan Shahidi, the Chairman of the China Islamic Association, at a reception honoring Muslim delegates to the Peace Conference of the Asian and the Pacific Regions on October 18, 1952, said: “China has about ten million Moslems of ten nationalities... The establishment of the People’s Republic of China... marked a milestone in the history of China’s nationalities of Muslim faith and other nationalities. National discrimination and oppression are gone, and a new, happy life has unfolded before them.” The CCP clearly recognized the importance of the Muslim religioscape in various Muslim contexts, but also believed that the religioscape could be shaped and replaced by Maoist communist dictates as they emphasized the importance of economic determinants over cultural and religious identity.

The PRC empathized with the Muslim populations who were under the fold of imperialism as the PRC also shared the common interest to dispel the influence and power of Western imperialism. In 1953, when Muhammad Mossadeq attempted and won democratic elections in Iran against the Pahlavi regime, and was later ousted by American and British troops, the Chinese sided with the democratic opposition that

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128 Burhan Shahidi was an important Muslim figure who played a mediating role between the Muslims and the CCP in Xinjiang prior to Deng Xiaoping’s rise to power. Shahidi held many leadership positions throughout the first twenty-five years of PRC rule in the region. There are very few sources on Shahidi or any other Muslim leaders in Muslim A.R.

sought to nationalize their oil and further socialize the economy. A Beijing broadcast stated: "[T]he sympathy of all the people of Asia and the Muslim masses is with the Iranian people."\textsuperscript{130} In the first international conference that China hosted, the Bandung Conference of 1955 five African delegations met with China; all were either Muslim or had large Muslim minority populations. Every delegation that Zhou met with accompanying him was a known "pious" Chinese Muslim Scholar, further suggesting that the Muslim population at home was regarded with respect and equality.\textsuperscript{131}

One of the ways the Chinese sought to appeal to the African Muslim nations was through the concept of common experience, specifically stating in the People's Daily:

\begin{quote}
 Despite the long distance that separates China from Africa, the friendly contacts and cultural interflow between the Chinese and African people date back to ancient times. According to historical records, China had trade relations with Egypt as early as the second century... friendly contacts were not broken off until after the 16\textsuperscript{th} century as Western colonialists forced their way into Africa and China.\textsuperscript{132}
\end{quote}

The PRC used the records of Zheng He, a Muslim explorer, to claim that Islam and Muslims were an intricate part of the larger Chinese nation and to the larger Islamic identity.\textsuperscript{133} This attempt to reconstruct global and domestic Muslim identity with the Chinese state was an attempt to forge a memory community that was united through


\textsuperscript{131} Yitzhak Shichor, \textit{The Middle East in China's Foreign Policy}, 20.

\textsuperscript{132} \textit{Peoples Daily}, December 14, 1963.

“common experience.” However, by the end of the 1950s, China began to forgo Islam as a foreign policy measure because the Muslim nations were not concerned with Islam and Islamic law, as many Muslim nations turned to alternative ideologies, namely secular, capitalist and communist visions of state.

After the relative success of the five-year plan, (1953-1957), national incomes grew throughout China as agricultural output expanded by 3.8 percent. The Soviet model of industrialization worked to modernize Xinjiang. Grain production rose by 60% and the gross industrial value product rose over four times as compared to 1949. By 1958, jobs for minority workers increased by 800,000 and by 1959 there included over 500,000 minority party members and over 900,000 Minorities League Members. However, the dissatisfaction of the Muslim population was growing as CCP policy toward the Muslims became more Maoist in approach and ceased to recognize the importance of Islam.

During the brief “Hundred Flowers” campaign, the CCP invited criticism from the masses. The Muslims attacked the authority of the Communist party and Han emigration into Xinjiang and other heavily populated Muslim regions. Raphael Israeli notes that some of the open criticism emanating from these attacks even called for and demanded independence, while other demands were more subtle, calling for more autonomy. The criticism went too far too quickly and things got out of hand for the Communist Party’s hierarchy. The CCP’s position was threatened and in June 1957, Mao suddenly cracked down on all criticism emanating from the opposition and various Muslim groups and illegal organizations. This event would greatly marginalize the Muslim minorities

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towards the Muslim religioscape. Muslims were indiscriminately killed by Han government forces for expressing negative views towards the state; these same views had been initially encouraged by the state. There was no culminating sequence of events leading to Mao's decision to heavily crack down on what he called "local splittism," a variant that Mao believed stemmed from feudal economic dependence and backward, superstitious cultural framework that existed in Islam and traditional Islamic practices.

This was also the intellectual and political response of many Muslim nation states towards political Islam, as in the late 1950s at the height of the Cold War, Muslim nations were still asking Bernard Lewis's infamous question of "what went wrong." The answer came in the form of modernization through relinquishing the importance of the Muslim religioscape and looked towards the West and East for viable answers. In Egypt, Gamal Abdul Nasser called on the Arab world to unite under Arab Socialism against all false ideologies including capitalism and Islamic law to create an Arab republic uniting the Arab masses from Saudi Arabia to Morocco. This process was enforced top down: government officials closed down mosques and Islamic higher institutions of learning, Nasser's government purged all the leaders of Al-Azhar and created a new class of Islamic scholars that were loyal to Nasser and his pan-Arab ideology. The Arab world attempted to deconstruct the Muslim religioscape and reconstruct an identity based on Arab ethnicity.

The Egyptian government executed thousands of individual members of the "Muslim

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Brotherhood,” (who also had members in China), including Sayid Qutb, the father of Islamic fundamentalism, whose ideas would later be revived by Osama Bin Laden. In Turkey, Atatürk’s de-Islamization policy underwent a process of state-directed secularization and nationalization in which Islam was forbidden to be practiced in the public sphere. Turkey’s gaze shifted towards the West in order to construct a national identity based on both Turkic ethnic identity and a humanist philosophical worldview that dramatically varied from the traditional Islamic “weltanschauung.”

Muslim Africa abandoned Islam as the primary tool for identity, as state-endorsed secular, socialist and capitalist forces impeded traditional Islamic culture and society. In Central Asia, Soviet Communism erased any identity of Islamic culture. From Azerbaijan to Tajikistan, Islam was nearly wiped out of the social, cultural, political and intellectual sphere. In Iran, vulgar capitalism under the dictatorship of the Shah Pahlavi further enhanced his power as Iran began to redefine its national identity based on pre-Islamic Persian, Zoroastrian cultural and religious identity. All the while, the Shah demeaned Islamic practices and stripped Islamic scholars of any political or social positions of power.

The Muslim world during this period fell into the paradigmatic shift that occurred at the height of the Cold War. The shift emphasized an enormous profusion of ideologies that produced two main ideological camps: capitalism or communism. The Muslim world was primarily concerned with their own nation-state in this era of ideology that stipulated the primacy of the nation-state or imagined community over religious and ethnic

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identities. PRC policies toward Muslim minorities reflected the global Islamic world context, as now their Muslim populations began to be distinctively viewed through the Marxist paradigm. This period changed not only the way Muslim nations viewed their own citizens but also changed the way foreign policy was traditionally practiced, as the Muslim populations globally were primarily concerned with their imagined community conceding the importance of the Muslim religioscape.

Even from within the Islamic world any criticism toward the PRC primarily came from within the Cold War paradigms. Pro-Western Muslim regimes namely Iraq, Lebanon, and Turkey condemned Chinese policies towards their Muslim population, while the major Islamic countries including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, Syria and Yemen abstained from condemning China. This further convinced the PRC that the Islamic countries were not concerned with their co-religionists and that ideology was the rule of the day.

1958-1975: The Fall From Grace

The anti-rightist drive that began in 1957 was followed by the Great Leap Forward (GLF) campaign under the new "General Line for Socialist Construction." The GLF was aimed at accomplishing the “economic and technical development of the country at a vastly faster pace and with greater results,” and was designated to eliminate all ethnic

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and class divisions between the minority and Han population’s through assimilation and acculturation of the non-Han minorities into the larger Han population. The CCP did not realize like other nations that attempted to assimilate their minority populations that culture and religious identity is an important factor that cannot easily be erased as assimilation theorist theorized a decade earlier.

The Muslim populations were forbidden to outwardly practice Islam as thousands of mosques and cultural institutions were shut down in order socialize the minority Muslim population along Marxist lines. The CCP attacked minority languages and customs as many Hui Muslims were forced to eat pork and intermarry with non-Muslim Han, which is strictly forbidden in Islam. The CCP also restructured traditional Muslim familial life by creating a “liberation campaign for Muslim women” in their attempts to free the Muslim women from “feudal backward Muslim practices.” The PRC enforced the legal changes that were granted by the Common Program and subsequently the 1954 state constitution towards women rights.

The CCP encouraged and enforced the female population to attend schools and be more socially productive in the political and economic arena. The CCP also legally forbade women to wear the headscarf in government institutions and secondary schools in the larger, heavily Muslim populated cities. These policies were viewed by the Muslim populations as state aggression towards neutralizing Muslim identity and culture in order to disseminate Maoist dictates in the Muslim regions. These hegemonic policies enacted by the PRC are not only specifically oriented toward the Muslim populations but also other native ethnic non-Han groups who are a part of the Chinese ‘imagined community.’

The CCP set out “clear lines of demarcation between the feudal privileges of the temples and religious habits, between patriotic law-abiding religious workers and counter-revolutionaries operating under the cloak of religion.” The CCP disbanded the Chinese Islamic Association, and confiscated and forcibly replaced religious courts with ‘People’s Courts.’ Tens of other organizations were abolished as the discontinuation of Islamic publications and closing down of mosques increased even further under the 1958 Religious System Reform Campaign. The decree stated that Islamic ahongs (religious leaders) preach a feudal understanding of religion that goes against socialist principles. This was a beginning of a new era for Chinese Muslim and Han relations as the CCP further attempted to consolidate the region by creating a campaign that explicitly and publicly stated the need to “Hanify” the Muslim populations in order to maintain full control of the region.

The dissatisfaction with the PRC was beginning to be expressed publicly, as the Muslim populations began calling for more economic progress, an end to state enforced cultural assimilation, and a limit to Han migration into the capital of Urumchi and other outlying cities. The authorities responded to Muslim calls to grant even greater autonomy, by administrating through the indigenous populations who were ‘whole heartedly’ communist and Han in their language, customs, and culture. The PRC also believed that Muslim dissatisfaction would be relieved with greater economic development and modernization of the Muslim regions. But with greater economic investment into Xinjiang and other Muslim regions came greater Han control, as


thousands of Han cadres and laborers flocked to the Muslim regions for work and housing subsidies that the government offered.

In response to increased Hanification policies and the abysmal failure of the Hundred Flowers campaign, there began a rise in Islamic and ethnic solidarity calling for an independent East Turkestan. These yearnings for an independent Turkistan were immediately attended to by Chinese government officials through purging of local leaders who sympathized with the calls, including Zia Samedi, a well known Uyghur intellectual and political representative, and Kazhkumar Shabdanov, a Kazakh writer and intellectual who would later become vital to the ‘East Turkestan movements.’ The PRC government also cracked down on any cultural or religious activities that might provoke ‘Islamic splitism.’ These Hanification policies reaffirms Gellner’s notion that the Chinese nation-state with the development of Chinese ‘industrial order’ required a homogenous state that reinforces the Han narrative as the vanguard of the people.

In April and June of 1958, an Islamic movement led by Ma Zhenwu, a Hui religious leader from Ningxia. Revolted against the government, purporting to establish a Chinese Muslim Republic in Ningxia, Mao immediately crushed all elements of his movement. The CCP launched crude attacks on any individual or organization that called for secession, greater autonomy or criticized CCP policies in the region. In Shanxi province, hundreds of Muslim minorities or government-labeled “counter-revolutionaries” were


146 See China’s Last Nomads: The History and Culture of China’s Kazaks (New York: M. E Sharper, 1998) Benson and Svanberg give an in-depth analysis Uyghur and Kazak intellectuals. Also, see, Justin Rudelson, Oasis Identities.

147 Israeli, “The Muslim Minority,” 905.
executed because they attempted to organize against Communist rule to restore capitalist modes of economic production and feudalism.

PRC officials often stated in newspaper reports that military and political policy in Xinjiang and other Muslim provinces reflected the CCP struggle against “ethnic chauvinism,” but also “Han chauvinism” which the CCP argued also undermined national security and unity. In Ningxia Hui A.R, the Regional Peoples Congress called for new struggles against “local nationalism” in their efforts to avert ethnic and religious uprisings that were spurring up everywhere in response to PRC policies in the region.

In response to the uprisings, the local government decided to carry out regional mass education programs. These programs were primarily aimed at opposing local nationalisms and strengthening solidarity amongst the nationalities in order to undermine the Muslim religioscape. They further stated that “local chauvinists who confuse nationality with religion [are] contrary to the historical realities of the world and is anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist” and anti-progressive. The PRC produced elaborate public statements and propaganda tools to fight against what they perceived as local nationalism. One often quoted PRC line stated that the “aim of this theory (local nationalism) is to obscure the working people’s comprehension to attempt to keep the working people under the yoke of religion and superstition forever and to oppose the thorough emancipation of the working people.”

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149 Gladney, Ethnic Identity, 67

of the Muslim populations were set from within the Marxist paradigm. Any request for autonomy or criticism of PRC policy was quickly crushed and viewed as linked to 'bourgeois capitalist forces.'

From 1959 onward, the PRC mission was to "bring complete political, economic and cultural equality to the nationalities of China and lead them onto a higher stage of development, the stage of communism, thereby fundamentally solving the "problems of nationalities." The government during this period began a heavy-handed process to 'socialize' the nationalities to bring them to the road of prosperity, because "only socialism can furnish the nationalities with a high degree of development and prosperity. And only socialism can solve our nationalities problem." This would allow the nationalities to catch up to the Han nationality in economic, political, and cultural development leading to Gellner's homogenous state. Under the GLF program, PRC policies became more internalized in their approach, producing policies towards the Muslims that they saw were in line with their paradigmatic view of history, culture, and religion, as understood by Mao and other influential Communist writers.

The CCP began to establish communes throughout the Muslim regions as they attempted to create a loyal Chinese Muslim communist class. These communes were to


demand full cooperation with central governmental policies in the regions and also attempted to recruit minority populations into the CCP. Although the communes were set up to ensure the autonomous regions were abiding with CCP policies, they ignored their own protocols towards the minorities. The CCP utilized discreet political measures to further Han migration into the region increasing the Han population by over 1000% over the next ten years as the CCP internally colonized Muslim regions.  

In 1960, the CCP announced that they would launch a ten-year program to turn Xinjiang into China’s main industrial and agricultural base, building steel plants, textile mills, petroleum industries, sugar refineries and a large-scale electric power network. Although the face of Xinjiang and other Muslim regions began to change, the GLF was an abysmal failure, as poor management and heavy industrialization ceased to economically develop the region while widespread famine during this period had cost over thirty million lives throughout China. The ensuing socio-political environments in the Muslim regions were infested with political repression and economic malaise as new calls for resistance against the PRC began to emerge.

The direct consequence of the GLF and deteriorating Sino-Soviet relations led to the mass emigration of an estimated 60,000 to 100,000 Kazakhs from Xinjiang province to Soviet Kazakhstan, as they claimed they fled political, cultural, religious repression, and economic malaise. This mass exodus of Chinese Kazakh Muslims greatly worried

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156 See Gladney, *Ethnic Identity*, Chapter 1 and 2. In this text, he discusses the changing demographic between the Han and the Muslim minorities over the years beginning pre-PRC.


China that continual Soviet intrusion into the Muslim regions would be used to incite rebellions and “local nationalisms.” The Soviet Union attempted to undermine and denigrate Chinese communism globally and domestically. For the Soviets, the exodus of tens of thousands of Xinjiang peasants exemplified the Muslim voting with their feet; this was cited as proof of China’s failed policies towards the Muslims. Soviet officials made matters worse for the Chinese nation-state by inviting the Muslim populations to flee Xinjiang and other Muslim regions by distributing free passports to all Muslim populations. The Soviets claimed that their fellow Muslim Turkic brethren had the right to freedom of worship and maintenance of traditional culture; something the CCP has not afforded the Muslim populations.

The Soviet Union was at the center of the Cold War against the United States. Now China put political pressure on the Soviet Union to gain world support for Soviet-style communism. This pressure on the Soviet regime increased as the Chinese nation-state increased in economic and military power, but also provided a different communist alternative to the Soviet model, which was not conducive non-industrialized nation-states. The nations that the Soviets believed the Chinese state had most potential influence over were Muslim nation-states who had similar economic structures as China. The Soviets attempted to co-opt the Muslim religioscape to gain favor with the Soviets but their calls went relatively unheeded, since as the Muslims from China had experienced the heavy-handed policies under Soviet rule.

As tensions increased between the Soviet Union and China, the Soviet Union incited numerous revolts in cities throughout China. In 1962, a revolt by Uyghur Muslims in
Kuldga and Tacheng province took months to suppress, while in Ningxia province Hui Muslims led an armed rebellion, which led to over 20,000 to 50,000 deaths in a counter-government attack. The PRC closed the borders with the Soviet Union, India and even friendly neighbors Pakistan and Afghanistan for fear of outside interference from the Soviet Union, India and the United States. The Muslim religioscape was suppressed by the PRC but manifested itself in the minds of the people as the Muslim population through to the Cultural Revolution became but mere passive spectators as China shifted into its darkest hours.

The PRC during this period was a strong ally with the Muslim world, supporting Muslim nation’s independence and struggles against what the Chinese perceived as Western imperialism. The Chinese supported the Palestinian cause against Israel and even called Israel “the tool of American imperialism for aggression against the Arabs.” Yasser Arafat described China as “the biggest influence in supporting our revolution and strengthening its perseverance.” The PRC also supported Communist revolts and rule in Yemen and Oman and rekindled ties with Pahlavi’s Iran for economic trade specifically in oil and gas. The PRC supported the popular Algerian resistance against France, which further enhanced China and Maoist Marxism as an alternative ideology to the prevalent Soviet and Western models.

The worst period for the Muslim minorities in China and other Muslim-dominated nations was during the sixties and early seventies when secular ideologies, corrupt

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160 Lillian Craig Harris, *China Considers the Middle East* (London: I. B Tauris & Co Ltd, 1993), 110.

161 Lillian Craig Harris, *China Considers the Middle East*, 120.
leadership, and totalitarian regimes devastated each nation. For the Muslim world, the 1967 Arab-Israeli war was a dramatic defeat on Muslim consciousness as now the third holiest site, Jerusalem's Al Quds Mosque, was occupied by Israel, humiliating the Muslim world. Islam was the number one target in explaining the Muslim nations lag behind the West.

Domestic policy became more oppressive regarding Islamic culture and law in Muslim society. In Iran, Tunis, and Turkey, Islamic symbols like the headscarf were forbidden in public. In Egypt, Iraq, and Syria, thousands of mosques were closed or taken over by the government to be the mouthpiece for their secular ideologies. In Central Asia, the Russification of the Muslim population further digressed Islamic consciousness (social and cultural) into Soviet/Russian nationalism. In Indonesia, Suharto cracked down on all Islamist and Communist opposition setting up one of this century's worst untried political genocides.

In China, the Cultural Revolution took on the same characteristics as the CCP furthered their 'reform' to the next level of application. In Xinjiang, the Cultural Revolution occurred quite differently because of the alarm of the possible secession of Xinjiang into the Soviet Union. Since the inception of the Cultural Revolution, violent struggles formed throughout China's Islamic regions; in Xinjiang anti-Maoist forces supported by the Soviet Union used tanks and heavy artillery supplied by the Soviet Union to shoot down one of the PRC military fighter planes. The rebels who were primarily supported by the Soviet Union took over important oil fields in order to inflict

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162 The large Islands of Indonesia were Islamicized by both Arab and Chinese Muslim traders in the 14th century.

heavy losses on communications throughout the country.

Urumqi was one of the first cities to welcome the Red Guards, Wang Enmao the ethnic Han leader of Xinjiang outwardly accepted the Red Guards, but secretly sought to discredit them. In December of 1967, Wang Enmao traveled to Beijing in his attempts too halt the Cultural Revolution in Xinjiang. The Chinese government attentively listened but immediately after his return to Xinjiang, there were deadly clashes between pro-Wang August First Field Army and anti-Wang Red Guard units from outside the region. Mao was reported to have sent 40,000 troops to Xinjiang to quell the rebellion against the Red Guards revolutionary policies and undermine Wang Enmao, thereby increasing his own power in the region.  

The clashes with Maoist forces further dispelled into large bloody street battles in which Wang’s house was ransacked. Other leading Uyghur, Tatar and Kazak officials were stripped of their posts for empathizing with the struggle against the Red Guards. For the next year, as in other parts of China during the Cultural Revolution, Maoist Read Guard forces completely caused havoc throughout the region, as Red Guard and anti- Red Guard elements battled for power, killing innocent civilians, destroyed property, and traditional cultural institutions indiscriminately. The Muslims throughout China clashed with the Red Guards and Security Forces who viewed Islam as a feudal system. Copies of the Koran were burned publicly and mosques desecrated. Any religious and cultural observances that were maintained through the GLF were forbidden as the CCP categorized anything Islamic or culturally prevalent amongst the Muslims as a part of the

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The Chinese Muslim response to PRC policies was a direct consequence of the Muslim religioscape, as other Muslim populations throughout the Muslim world also responded to heavy-handed policies. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood started a campaign to limit Gamal Abdul Nasr’s grasp on Egyptian society by creating organizations that depended on violence to stop Nasr’s policies from eliminating their cultural and religious identity. In Iran, the Ulema class (religious scholars) organized to respond to extreme modernization policies by attacking Pahlavi’s ideological foundations and state sponsored crackdowns by the Savak through large street processions, protests and occasional violent acts. In Beijing, a Hui Muslim group called the “Rebel Corps of Hui People” was established to resist the onslaught against “old ideas, culture, customs, and habits and the ensuing efforts to replace them with new ones based on Maoist thought.” This group often went on killing sprees against the Red Guards in Beijing and throughout most of Hui dominated cities, where the Red Guards attempted to subdue Islamic cultural and religious practices.

Globally, the PRC did not fear calls from outside observers that a severe crackdown on Islam could unite the Muslim world against the PRC. As the official Chinese response rejected the notion that the Muslim world are of one family, stating that “some Muslims belong to the families of the proletariat and some to families of the bourgeoisie, it’s up to

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165 See Fairbanks, China: A New History, 393.

the Muslims to decide what family to be a part of.\textsuperscript{167} Islam was not an important organizing factor during this period. The principle expression of resistance and unity in the Muslim world were primarily represented by leftist groups who all had communist sympathies as Chinese policy towards the Muslims continued to follow the strict Marxist notion that religion plays a peripheral role in the Muslim world.

The Cultural Revolution officially ended in Xinjiang and other Muslim-dominated regions in the summer of 1969 as fear of continuous clashes with the Soviet Union near Druhzba and other border cities throughout the Cultural Revolution increasingly recalculated the fears of a Soviet invasion of Xinjiang.\textsuperscript{168} In addition, the leader of Xinjiang, Wang Enmao seemed indifferent to Soviet calls for an independent state as he never criticized nor supported the Soviet Union, which caused many PRC members in Beijing, to fear that Enmao may switch allegiances to the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the Soviet Union utilized the Muslim masses specifically the Kazakh and Turkic populations to subvert Chinese rule in the region alarmed the CCP.

Overall, the Cultural Revolution in Xinjiang and other outlying Muslim regions was not as bad as it was throughout China's vast regions the impact on which the PRC is still trying to mend today. Immediately after the Cultural Revolution, China began rebuilding the Communist Party in the Muslim regions as the Muslim regions were drifting towards war-lordism. A significant political move by Wang Enmao in the post-Cultural Revolution revealed to CCP officials his tendency towards regional autonomy. This

\textsuperscript{167} "Peking Cracking Down on Dissident Moslems,\textquotedblright Los Angeles Times, February 21, 1967.

perplexed the central government because he was ethnically Han and not Uyghur. The political move, which infuriated Mao and other PRC officials, was the nineteenth anniversary of the founding of the PRC when ten chairpersons of the Provincial Revelatory Committees did not show up including Wang Enmao. This showed increasing signs that China was falling into localism while the state became increasingly fragmented. In 1969, Mao ousted Enmao and accused him of “mountain- stronghold mentality” and of attempts to preserve “his independent kingdom.” This led China to rethink its policy in the region in order to maintain full control of Xinjiang and other outlying areas.

Beginning in the 1970's, border clashes between the Soviet Union and the PRC eased off, but espionage and Soviet subversion in Xinjiang still continued as new organizations like “The Free Turkestan Movement” were established in neighboring Kazakhstan to undermine Chinese rule by inviting Muslim minorities to cross the border into Kazakhstan. Constant revolts by Muslims to reassert themselves unto the larger political and social sphere maintained their vibrancy. In 1975, the Yunnanese Muslim population after months of non-violent conflict with the revolutionary factions of the remnants of the Red Guards about ethnic nationalism, state autonomy and other pressing issues, the Muslim Hui movement revolted asserting their constitutional right to freedom of religion, a move in which the authorities interpreted as a secessionist gesture. The government intervened and killed 1,400 Hui Muslims. This crackdown on the Hui Muslim population received condemnation from all the Muslim groups from within the PRC, as the rhetoric of Islamic “splittism” from the CCP remained until 1978 through the demise of the

“Gang of Four.” The Chinese Muslim religioscape ceased to die during one of the darkest periods of Chinese history and would in the coming years increasingly exert itself into the public sphere.

By 1978, Chinese policies towards the Muslims of China shifted dramatically as China economically invested in the Muslim regions and cracked down on officials who supported the Cultural Revolution and the infamous “Gang of Four” who had terrorized the region, specifically the minority nationalities. The philosophy for integration and assimilation was primarily conducted through economic development, which was a reversal of policies first enacted by Mao in the early 1950’s. Nevertheless, although economic development was viable theory, there were really no concrete measures to extend and secure power to local Muslim populations, until the Islamic resurgence that began in the late 1970’s.

1976-1990: The Great Change

External developments outside of China have deeply affected Chinese domestic policies towards their Muslim minorities as the Muslim religioscape took on more significance in China and the Muslim world at large. The first important development in the Islamic world was the Arab oil boom in the 1970s, which enhanced the confidence of the average Muslim. The oil boom relayed a sense of global power to the Muslims, which gave the modern Arab world global leverage over constant marginalization in world politics. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia used oil money profits to export Wahhabi Islamic doctrines, thereby becoming one of the primary causes for the re-Islamicization of

Muslim societies. The Saudis built thousands of Islamic institutions around the world, including over ten mosques in Xinjiang alone. The Saudis helped construct worldwide Islamic institutions that supported the notion of the religioscape over imagined community as formations of international Islamic bodies began to form, including the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) and the International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations (IIFSO), who were primarily funded by the Arabian Gulf nations with their newfound oil money.

The second important external factor that influenced the rise of the Muslim religioscape was the Afghan–Soviet war, which ended in an Afghan-Muslim victory (with the help of China and the United States). The Muslim victory over the Soviet Union was a sign for the Muslims as “God’s renewed mercy because Muslims have rediscovered the right path.”

Afghanistan served as both a military training ground and as camps for the indoctrination of Islamic militant organizations that would spread all over the Muslim world immediately after the War in 1989.

The third external factor that heavily affected the resurgence of Islam in the modern world was the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. The Iranian revolution changed the landscape of the Middle East and Islamic world. For the first time in modern Islamic history, a full-blown revolution transformed the secular-capitalist, socio-political and economic sphere towards an Islamic one. Iran offered the Muslim masses an alternative to the capitalist and communist formations of the Muslim worlds failed states. This revolution began to change the landscape of the Islamic world as now Islamist groups have come to the forefront demanding political and economic change while reasserting

their cultural heritage and religious identity onto the public sphere.

The paradigm shift that occurred during this period was dependent on many variables including economic initiatives, the necessity for a cohesive imagined community and the impact of resurgent Islam and the Muslim religioscape. In 1978, the Fifth National People’s Congress approved the new revised constitution of the PRC, which reverted to the 1954 ethnic minority constitutional rights that the Common Program had first afforded China’s minorities. After Mao’s death and the subsequent fall of the Gang of Four, Hua Guofeng began to move away from the culturally assimilative and economically harsh Maoist policies and allowed more political, social, and economic rights towards the Muslim minorities, even urging the Han cadres in minority regions to “learn the local language and respect customs and ways.”

The PRC was not fully aware of the Muslim revival and its potential impact on China, so they supported it initially, they began to allow Muslim individuals and governments abroad to donate and fund hundreds of mosques to be rebuilt in the region. The PRC under Deng Xiaoping allowed Muslim students to study abroad in Islamic universities across the Arab world. The Hajj pilgrimage, the most important connection historically and contemporarily between China and the Islamic world, was reintroduced coincidently in 1979. In neighboring Pakistan, president Zia-ul-Haqq began his own Islamicizing process and the two nations agreed to re-open the road between Xinjiang and Northern Pakistan to allow for trade and cross-cultural exchange. In 1978, the PRC, in sign a of

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172 Gladney, Ethnic Identity, 153.

goodwill towards the Muslim populations, fired Burnahadeen and other administrators in Xinjiang province for their ties to the ‘Gang of Four.’ The CCP relayed its political and social policies toward the Muslim populations as they reopened old Islamic institutions and religiously significant sites in order to appease the Muslim population. The re-signing of the constitution in 1982 again reaffirmed the freedom to practice one’s religion, overriding past administrations views toward religion, which legally opened the way for the resumption of religious activities for not only Muslims but also other religious groups in China.

Greater support came in 1983 as the government allocated $300,000 dollars just to refurbish mosques and an additional $300,000 in subsidies for Muslim religious personnel. This was in addition to the salaries paid to 15,000 Muslim religious leaders. The PRC also allowed more than 200,000 Islamic texts from the Arab world and Pakistan to be dispersed throughout China, including the printing of Qurans in local languages. In 1985, the PRC built a seven million dollar mosque in Ningxia, including China’s first Islamic cultural center. For example, foreign Muslims helped the government fund many of these projects. In 1985, a Jordanian Business man donated $1.5 million to reconstruct the Ashab Mosque. This interaction with Muslims globally and domestically in China strengthened the Muslim religioscape as the Chinese imagined

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community sought to take advantage the Muslim religioscape even as it was being co-opted.

Economically, the average Uyghur in 1980 earned four times the average income of peasant families in the rest of China, but less than the average Han Chinese in Xinjiang. Muslim Students in Xinjiang were allowed to go to school using their own native languages. The PRC government even ordered that they be allowed to take the university entrance exams in their mother tongue, instead of in the Mandarin language. Gladney in his anthropological studies of the Muslims in Ningxia saw the manifestations of the Muslim religioscape evident in increased attendance to mosques, Arabic language courses, and Islamic study programs throughout China’s universities. Gladney noted that culturally the Muslims were also increasingly distinguishing themselves from non-Muslims through dress and the Islamic way of greeting, thereby reasserting their identity in the public sphere.

The PRC realized that in order to steer away from conflict with their Muslim minorities domestically or abroad they would have to allow more freedoms to the Muslims. The primary reason this policy of relative freedom and autonomy was enforced was because of the Afghan Mujahideen war against the “Atheist” Soviet Union. This war became a rallying cry for the Muslim world to help their Muslim brethren against the atheist Communist power that was abusing, killing and trampling on the Muslim rights to worship. The PRC did not want the Muslim community abroad to give the Muslims a


rallying cry for Jihad, which would negatively affect China.

The PRC were quite aware of the hundreds of Uyghur Muslim dissident groups that maintained a base within the Islamic world, and if they were allowed to shift the focus towards another Communist entity that abused Muslim rights, it would be indeed disastrous. The Soviet Union during this period attempted to utilize negative Chinese policies towards the Muslims against the PRC in hopes of creating a similar insurgency within PRC borders. The Soviet Union increasingly broadcast in Muslim and Western media that the PRC government had no respect for Islam and that the policies of the Cultural Revolution continued across China against the Muslims. A Russian diplomat stated: “Beijing’s crimes against Islamic nations are an open challenge to the principles of Islam.”180 Another Moscow analyst saw it this way:

Why does Peking need this pretty picture of the happy life of the people of China who profess Islam? For whom is it intended? The authorities are trying to present the situation of the national minorities in China in a light favorable to Peking. However, the main reason for the suddenly aroused love for the Moslem peoples lies elsewhere. The Peking strategists have begun to turn towards the Middle East; they want the key to the oil-rich Moslem countries. This is the reason why they don the garb of defenders of Islam.181

This propaganda reflected the Soviet Union’s own problems with dealing with their Muslim populations, turning the Muslim world against them by the mid-1980’s as the fermentation of Jihad was beginning to be planted in the heart of Russia. This was not the

180 "Peking’s Crimes Against Islamic Nations" BBC Summary of World Broadcasts—Russia, February 21, 1980.

case in China. Policy towards the Muslims changed for the better as they allowed more freedom for their Muslim minorities even allowing Muslims to head top government positions throughout the autonomous region. In Xinjiang in the late 1980s Tomur Dawamat, a Uyghur, and three of his six deputies of Uyghur, Hui and Kazakh descent led the local government. Twenty-eight of the 47 members of the standing committee of the Xinjiang People's Congress came from minority groups and 64 per cent of the region's 667 delegates who attended the first session of the Sixth People's National Assembly in Beijing in 1983 represented the Uyghur's and other national minorities. 182

Recognizing their stake in the Chinese imagined community, the Muslim minorities began to exert themselves politically and socially by publicly protesting PRC policies in the region that countered Islamic values. In one report hundreds of Uyghurs attacked a movie studio killing Han Chinese randomly for showing promiscuous videos that were anti-Islamic. This prompted Wang Zen to give a speech in the politburo calling for national unity among all nationalities. 183 In 1981 a small skirmish between the local Han and Uyghur's population exploded when officials did not properly treat the body of a murdered Uyghur youth Islamically, which led to a citywide Uyghur protest as they rampaged through the morgue grabbed the body, killed two Hans and beat up others until the army restored order. 184

The government seemed so desperate to maintain ethnic solidarity and cohesiveness


that they even gave rewards to those who had contributed to ethnic unity during an "ethnic unity month" event each year.\(^{185}\) The Muslims of Kashgar became so empowered during this period that they painted over old Maoist slogans in defiance of the central government, with no large-scale government response.\(^{186}\) The Muslims were also central in the first anti-nuclear protests in China that brought worldwide attention as the Muslim students gave the central government a list of demands, which included stopping nuclear testing in the region, easing family planning policies and fulfilling the guarantees of ethnic autonomy that Xinjiang has under the Constitution.\(^{187}\)

The PRC realized that in order to maintain peace within the region and also a favorable foreign policy with the Muslim population they would have to allow more freedom for the Muslims to practice Islam. As a result, Deng Xiaoping gained favor from the Muslim world by realigning the Muslims of China to the Muslim world. In 1985, a delegation lead by Ismail Amat, Chairman of the Xinjiang Uyghur A.R was sent to Saudi Arabia to visit Shaikh Abdullah Ibn Baz the Mufti (religious figurehead) and also the symbolic leader of Wahhabi Islam. Bin Baz was critical in the formation of an ultra-conservative Islam that was practiced in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia; he was also the crucial religious figurehead who supported the Mujahideen in Afghanistan and other regions in the world.\(^{188}\)


\(^{186}\) "China’s West is challenged by ethnic mix," *New York Times,* July 10, 1983.


\(^{188}\) The PRC also gave money to the Mujahideen of Afghanistan.
These meetings brought about a lot of praise from Muslim scholars and governments abroad, who were concerned about the Muslim situation in China. During the Muslim minorities’ state visit to the Gulf they met with Kuwaiti governmental and religious leaders who promised better relations between their fellow “Muslim brothers” by financially and 'spiritually' supporting Islamic causes. The PRC even utilized their Muslim populations to show the Islamic world the prosperity that the Muslims of China had acquired under the PRC. By 1987, Chinese Muslim delegations visited more than 20 Islamic countries in five years and hosted Muslims from over 30 Islamic countries to further relations and Chinese interests in the region. In one trip by Libyan Quranic recitor Burhan Shahidi states,

I am glad about the development of friendly relations between china and Libya. Exchanges between the Moslems of our two countries are beneficial to the enhancement of the friendship between our two peoples.¹⁹⁰

During this period, China opened up the physical barriers that kept the Muslims isolated from the rest of the Muslim world. The Chinese opened up the Pakistan-Karakhoram highway in 1986, established a direct air route between the two Turkic capitals of Urumchi and Istanbul in 1988, and by the end of the decade completed the Trans-Eurasian Railway through Central Asia. The removal of physical barriers allowed the reciprocal change of ideas and goods between Muslim populations in the region and a further fermenting of pan-Islamic sentiments. Now Muslims could easily travel in and out

of Xinjiang visiting Muslim sites abroad and domestically as the Muslims of China and abroad reconstructed memory communities.

Furthermore, the PRC began construction companies that conducted development projects in third world Muslim nations throughout the Middle East and Africa, which created stronger economic ties between the two communities. The construction corps were led by Hui and Uyghur Muslim populations who were fluent in the local languages including Turkic, Arabic and Persian. The Sino-Muslim scholar, Yitzhak Sichor, estimates that before the first Gulf War there was nearly seventy construction corps just in the Middle East totaling a turnover of $8 billion annually. By the end of the decade not only had China’s economic development worked, but also, thanks to the Muslim region’s industrial and agricultural output, the national income increased by 12% in 1986 alone.

The soft policies enacted by the government, which included better economic and structural arrangements, allowed the Muslims to reinforce their identity and traditions, which were and continue to be spiritually connected to the Islamic world. In the 1980s there was a rise in preferential policies towards the Muslim minorities in family planning and education. Sautman in his article on the CCP preferential policies towards minorities cited the overwhelming changes the PRC had implemented into policy that carried preferential treatment towards the minorities. He stated those policies toward the Muslim during this period in regards to family planning and the one-child policy was not

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imposed on the Muslim populations, allowing a choice to either follow the law or not; allowing the minorities to have up to four kids in 1984. Toward education, the PRC enacted affirmative action plans that invested more money towards the education of Muslim minorities, while not including tough barriers like entrance exams. The soft policies enacted by the Muslim populations further empowered the Muslims to demand more rights and freedoms from the PRC.

In 1988, Salman Rushdie published the controversial book, *The Satanic Verses*, which heavily trivialized Islam and the historical depiction of the prophet Muhammad. Rushdie became the center of Muslim anger and wrath as Ayatollah Khomeini's fatwa decreed the death penalty for Rushdie's life. This fatwa had a profound impact on the Muslims of China, who also protested a similar book that was published in China criticizing and ridiculing Islam. On May 12*th* 1989, a student protest led by Uyghur, Wu’er Kaixi, protested a book titled, *Sexual Customs*. In it, the author "compared minarets to phalli, tombs to vulva and the pilgrimage to Mecca as an excuse for orgies and sodomy with camels.”193 The Muslims, inspired by the global Islamic protest of Rushdie’s book, protested the text and demanded the immediate banishment of the text by the state and punishment of the author. The protest rally was led by four of the ten Muslim nationality leaders, including 3000 people in Beijing, 20,000 Muslims marched in Lanzhou and 100,000 filled the streets Xining, thereby showing Islamic unity within Chinese borders. The government met all the demands of the Muslims including a closure of the Shanghai Cultural Publishing house, punishment and imprisonment of the author.

and a large book burning protest in Lanzhou’s main square.¹⁹⁴

This protest was a result of the rise of a larger global Islamic consciousness as explained by one Hui cadre “As a Hui cadre, in common with all Muslims, I am extremely angry. The masses have called for punishment according to the law for those concerned with publishing, distributing, and editing this book. This is quite fair and reasonable.”¹⁹⁵ Gladney cites the rise of Islamic fundamentalism influencing even the daily relations between the Muslim and Han populations. He cited a Han woman discussing the dynamics between the Muslims and non-Muslims changing over the years:

Since 1979, we have had less and less social contact with the Hui in the other teams. There are no problems between us, but the Hui are more devout now and less willing to come to our homes and visit or borrow tools. We raise pigs in our yards and eat pork, so they are afraid it will influence their religion.¹⁹⁶

The rise of Islamic consciousness in the Muslim regions of China was undoubtedly a result of the liberal policies enacted by the state towards their Muslim populations. The liberal policy program of the PRC mirrored other Muslim majority states as they also Islamicized in order to maintain political power and control over the Muslim masses.

By the end of the decade, the liberal policies enacted by the Muslim governments towards their Muslim populations and other Islamist elements saw a rise in Islamic movements and groups organizing to attain power. In the Palestinian territories, the resistance was no longer upheld by the secular Yasser Arafat, but by Hamas and Islamic

¹⁹⁶ Gladney, Ethnic Identity, 57.
Jihad. In Algeria, the civil war between Islamist elements and the army cost over 100,000 deaths. In neighboring Afghanistan, the Mujahideen fighters brought a world power to its knees forcing the Soviet Union to disengage from Afghanistan, while an Islamist state was being constructed by the Mujahideen and later the Taliban.

In neighboring Kashmir, Muslim militants were gaining support against their long and drawn out battle against the non-Muslim majority India. In the Philippines another non-Muslim majority country, the Moro Liberation Front and the Abu Sayyaf have continued their long drawn out struggle against the non-Muslim governments in Manila that for years have oppressed the Muslim minority. In the newly independent states of Central Asia, the resurgence of Islam as a political identity further enhanced Chinese fears that the Muslim population is a potential fifth column in China.

In Russia, Chechnya, a large republic in the south, began its fight for independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union, causing to date more deaths to Russian soldiers in the first two-years of the war, than during the entire span of time the Russians were in Afghanistan. In neighboring Tajikistan, a civil war between the secular and Islamist forces ravaged the country throughout the decade as thousands were killed and instability reigned throughout. The sudden turn in worldwide events in the Muslim world forced China to renegotiate its relations with its Muslim populations, carefully treading a fine line, allowing for a new paradigm to emerge including both soft and hard policies. The PRC were careful in neither alienating nor appeasing the Muslim world as they attempted to control the Muslim religioscape.
1990-1995: The Challenge

In the 1990s, China has witnessed a resurgence of Muslim religious and ethnic violence, as tens of small-scale rebellions and terrorist activities have reformulated relations between the state and its Muslim citizens. A 2001 PRC report claimed that since 1990, Xinjiang province has been attacked by over 200 terrorist actions by Islamic fundamentalist, leading to 162 deaths. These small-scale attacks plunged the PRC in an uneasy predicament with both the domestic Muslim populations and the global Islamic world.

In 1990, Tomur Damawat, chairperson of Xinjiang Province A.R government, gave a speech calling for a "telling blow" against separatism and warned outside religious groups against inciting trouble in the Muslim regions.\(^{197}\) Damawat charged that rioting in Xinjiang a month earlier left twenty-two people dead. Damawat claimed these riots were incited by religious fanatics who proclaimed a "holy war" to establish an independent state in Xinjiang, writing slogans on official government buildings that "Islam would triumph over Marxism and Leninism."\(^{198}\) These clashes in Kashgar were the first in twenty years; the whole city was on lockdown and entry was forbidden to foreigners who were blamed for inciting the conflict or uprising. In Qinghai's capital, Xining, "large-scale" street protests by Muslims demanding independence for an Islamic state led to the


massacre of 150 protesters. The PRC finally understood that the Islamic resurgence had hit home.\textsuperscript{199}

The violence continued throughout the early 1990s. In 1992, six people were killed in a bus bombing in Urumchi, and shortly afterwards the Uyghur nationalists fled to neighboring Kazakhstan and threatened to launch border operations into Xinjiang.\textsuperscript{200} In Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang Uyghur A.R, over 30 bombs exploded in 1996 alone, killing nine people. The government blamed the bombings on Muslim separatists, eventually charging and executing eight people and arresting hundreds for engaging in separatist activities. One report stated that the intense fear by PRC officials of a large scale separatist movement was only apparent in the “speeches, commentaries and visits by high Chinese officials, which indicated Beijing takes the threat of further unrest seriously as local television reports stated 6,490 people were convicted of fermenting rebellion in the first half of 1990 alone.”\textsuperscript{201}

These were the daily headlines in China in the first half of the 1990s as the end of the Cold War and the global rise of Islamic consciousness led many Uyghur and Hui Muslims to demand more freedom and independence from the PRC. In response to these domestic actions and other global events, China’s policy towards its Muslims population in the 1990s was primarily concerned with three important factors. The first was neutralizing the impact of the new Central Asian nations. The second was to implement


\textsuperscript{201} “Uneasy Truce With Moslems in Desert Northwest,” \textit{Associated Press}, September 12, 1990.
policies that did not upset relations with the Muslim world and ferment a global jihad within China’s borders. Finally as method of stability, the PRC promoted Han emigration to the Muslim dominated areas.

Initially the PRC implemented policies similar to the rest of the Islamic world, which implemented both soft and hard policies towards their Muslim populations. Throughout the Arab world, in Egypt Hosni Mubarek’s grip on power was maintained through outlawing all Islamist parties that challenged his rule, but simultaneously funding thousands of Islamic projects and shifted domestic policy towards an Islamic line. In Iraq, Saddam Hussein, a vehement anti-Islamist, began to Islamicize the nation in order to conjure support for his domestic and foreign policy initiatives, even adding, “God is Great” to the national flag. In neighboring Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, Islam initially came to the forefront of state identity as each former Soviet nation was attempting to reconstruct a lost identity. This reconstruction of identity for the former Soviet nations came at a cost as Islamic fundamentalist movements waged a civil war that impeded political and economic progress and a reformulation of domestic policies that maintained a balance between soft and hard policies. Uzbekistan, Karimov, the new president, after adopting an Islamic names, supported supported Sufi non-violent, non-political Islamic groups, while savagely cracking down on every other Islamic expression publicly or privately, becoming one of the worlds worst human rights violators in the 1990s.

The first action taken by the PRC was to reformulate domestic policy to support moderate Islam or apolitical Islam to counter fundamentalist strains. The PRC began implementing policies that favor the Islamicization of the Muslim regions while cracking down on fundamentalist movements. Clerics were purged from top positions if they had
fundamentalist leanings. In 1991, some 10% of 25,000 clerics were removed from their positions at Xinjiang Academy of Social Science. The PRC endorsed Islamic activities; in 1995, the government hosted a Quran recitation contest for the Muslim population, something that is not even present or disallowed in many dominant majority Muslim countries. The PRC understood the religious climate of their geographic areas, Islamic consciousness was high, and they did not want to create an environment that would attract jihadis from all over the region to aid the Muslims in China to create an independent state. The PRC’s Islamic Section of the government’s Bureau of Religious Affairs encouraged Muslims to make pilgrimages to Mecca in order to show there was no hostility between the state and the Muslims. Gladney in his anthropological fieldwork quotes a Muslim Chinese student relaying the growing Islamic consciousness:

I supported the United Nations condemnation of Iraq and prayed that Saddam would recognize his mistake and withdraw. I believe that eventually this is exactly what would have happened, but the US went much too far: it bombed thousands of innocent civilians, destroyed countless holy mosques and shrines, not to mention other non-military targets such as schools, hospitals, and residential areas, and, most offensive to me as a Muslim, the US sent hundreds of thousands of troops to the holy Islamic lands in the Saudi peninsula. This stirred up so many memories of the crusades that I realized the war in the Gulf had much less to do with rescuing Kuwait than it had to do with colonialism, the reassertion of Western geopolitical power. If it had to do with the applying the United Nations sanctions, as the Americans claim, then why had they not enforced them before? The US .... has always ignored repeated UN

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condemnations of Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians and occupation of the West Bank. It is clear that the US only intervenes when its own interests are at stake. It is because Saddam Hussein has stood up to this kind of self-interested militarism that I now have reversed my opinion of him: I now believe that Saddam is a hero, not only for all Muslims, but for all peoples oppressed by foreign imperialism, be it political or economic. When my fellow Muslims are being bombed mercilessly by a foreign infidel power, despite their attempts to sue for peace, I can only support them with my heart and pray that Allah rescue Saddam Hussein so that he can lead all Muslims, 1/5 of the world’s population, in forging a united Muslim coalition that will enforce the justice of Allah’s glorious Quran throughout the entire world.  

The PRC allowed the Muslims to maintain their religious freedoms as long as they did not turn into secessionist aspirations cracking down on any movement, group, or person who talked of jihad or an independent East Turkestan. The closing down of mosques or religious and cultural institutions was selectively done, as increased Han immigration further changed the demographics of Xinjiang. The CCP began working with their fellow neighbors to curb Islamist secessionist movements in the region. The CCP signed pacts with neighboring Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan in order to prevent cross-border infiltration and support for the fundamentalist activities. In Afghanistan, the PRC even signed a deal with the Taliban in order to quell any support for the various Uyghur movements that had trained in Bin Laden camps.

Another important reason why the PRC during the early 1990s placated their Muslim minorities was the Tiananmen Square massacre. China was primarily trading with the Muslim world because the West induced sanctions and trading barriers towards China,

204 Gladney, “Sino-Middle Eastern Perspectives,” 683
which further allowed China to become dependent on Muslim nations.\textsuperscript{205} Gladney quotes an Islamic Imam, Shi Kunbing, a former Mosque leader of Oxen Street Mosque in Beijing: “[W]ith so much at stake in the Middle East, the government cannot risk antagonizing its Muslim minorities.”\textsuperscript{206} In addition, as China grew economically, the need for oil and other natural resources became necessary elements for development. This affected the need to maintain good relations with the Muslim world, specifically the Islamic oriented nations of Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and other Gulf nations.

The PRC government's hard and soft policies played off as many Muslim nations supported China's efforts: in 1992, the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, praised Chinese ‘openness’ policy towards the Muslims, supporting the crackdown on fundamentalist strains of Islam.\textsuperscript{207} This praise for the PRC was an important success because by mid-decade, high on the PRC domestic and foreign policy agenda was what Gladney called the “Bosnia effect,” in which government repression was followed by Western intervention, or the “Chechnya effect,” whereby repression was followed intensely by bloody civil war. Gladney noted that China could not ignore the act that the only thing Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey agreed on was the Bosnian and Chechnyan Muslim issue.

\textsuperscript{205} Gladney, “Sino-Middle Eastern Perspectives,” 678.

\textsuperscript{206} Gladney, “Sino-Middle Eastern Perspectives,” 676.

\textsuperscript{207} “Iranian President Visits Xinjiang before leaving China,” BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, September 15, 1992.
1995 To the Present

PRC policies would remain fairly the same throughout the rest of the decade until the tragic events of 911, where upon the Chinese state sought to co-opt the tragic events in order to justify draconian policies that sought to gain more control of the region from local Muslim officials who had been empowered in the 1980s. This policy shift included the closing down of tens of mosques and Islamic centers. The Islamic world no longer criticizes the Chinese state regarding domestic policies toward the Muslim populations as the Muslim world is engulfed with its own battles to curb Islamic fundamentalism. No longer does the Chinese state fear a global jihad against it. The world community including the United States, in its “war on terror,” would no longer allow a global jihad to occur.

This development in China allowed the Chinese state to utilize the Islamic fundamentalist factor to close borders, justify political and social crackdowns, and allow the state to develop a response toward the various Islamic ideologies present within the Chinese state. The state, then, like many Muslim and non-Muslim populations is beginning to attempt to forge an Islam that is conducive to larger Chinese-Han cultural and political values. The ‘Muslim question’ is further multiplied with the development of China into an economic, political, and military powerhouse globally.

The policy implications bodes well for the Chinese state as Muslim nations who are not necessarily in good favor with the West are looking East without any demands from the PRC regarding treatment of the Muslim minorities. An excellent example is the growing relationship between China and Iran, a state that claims to represent the Islam and Muslims in the political sphere. As China needs more resources and the Iranians need
an international supporter for various programs that the West believes Iran is unfit to have, the Iranians are increasingly overlooking the political and economic subjugation of the Chinese Muslim minority.

This also true throughout Central Asia, where the Shanghai Five are negotiating to form a counter-military project to NATO with similar capacities in Asia to primarily fight the 'terrorist threat.' Furthermore, the Muslim population is increasingly becoming agitated as they watch their local resources be outsourced to Shanghai and Beijing away from the Muslim regions. This is compounded by estimates that by 2010, the Uyghur’s would no longer be the majority of the population in Xinjiang as internal colonialism takes root in the region. The policy of internal migration of Hans into Xinjiang is also paralleled by the fact that the Uyghur population cannot find work in Xinjiang because many Uyghurs cannot speak mandarin. These issues are further alienating the Muslim populations, increasingly giving rise to violent bouts between the PRC represented by the Han and the local Muslim populations. In Henan province, Hui Muslims and Han farmers fought for nearly a week over a government-administered Han takeover of Hui farming land for ‘government business.’

This revolt in Henan province in November 2004 cost 148 lives. The revolt further exacerbated fears in the Chinese state, as Muslims from all the various regions traveled to Henan province to ‘help defend the Muslim minorities from Han aggression.’208 These developments are surely going to recur and get worse in the future if the Chinese state does not attempt to integrate the Muslim minorities into the socio-political and economic structures of the state. With the increasing divide between the Muslim minority and non-

Muslim majority, the state must reverse draconian policies that are increasingly driving a wedge between the Chinese imagined community and the larger Muslim minority. Nevertheless, time will tell what lies in the future as the Chinese state becomes a global power and strengthens relations with the Muslim world.
CHAPTER 3

MUSLIM RELIGIOSCAPE IN FRANCE: BETWEEN ASSIMILATION AND INSERTION

This chapter on the Muslims of France presents three distinct periods of French policies towards the Muslim minorities and, conversely, the Muslim response to those policies. The first period 1945-1970, is identified as the colonial period. The Muslim minorities were viewed as extensions of empire, temporary laborers and workers that would ultimately go back to their country of origin. The government presumed that Muslims who acquired citizenship would eventually become socially and culturally French, disregarding Islamic and indigenous cultural values and assimilating into the French 'imagined community.' The Muslim response was to maintain a sense of identity that was linked to the larger Muslim religioscape as the decolonization process was becoming a reality.

The second period, 1970-1990, is identified as the post-colonial period, with mass immigration and the birth of a second and third generation. Muslim populations were beginning to organize for more recognition and power from within the French political system to become a part of the larger French 'imagined community.' The government responded by attempting to curb the Muslim presence, culturally and socially, but at the same time construct policies that facilitated the large Muslim minorities’ integration into
the larger French context. The Republic in this period also acknowledged the important impact the Muslim minorities had on French domestic and foreign policy in the larger Islamic world, and conversely the influence of the larger global Muslim religioscape on the French Muslim.

The third period 1990-1995 is identified as the French Muslim period. This period is characterized by negotiations between the Muslim minorities and the state. The Muslim minority acquired greater acceptance within the Republic during this period, while also integrating into the larger state framework. In this way, a proliferation of identities was constructed in the New France. France was not only changing domestically but also internationally, as traditional French political, social and cultural frameworks were deconstructed and continually reconstructed to include the Muslim minorities in the larger French landscape.

Historical Context

French-Muslim relations were historically defined by various Muslim invasions and expulsions into southern France throughout the Middle Ages and the early modern period. These historical battles left, at times, some mosques and a few Muslim settlers, but it was not until Napoleon’s expedition into Egypt in 1798 that the French Republic first embarked on official political exchange with the Muslim world. This policy

France is unique in Europe in that there was no official policy regarding Muslim nations until Napoleon’s expedition to Egypt in 1798. Although French scholars knew of and had a specific perception regarding the Muslims as ravaging infidels there was never any set relations with the Muslim powers as other European nations have had historically. These nations include Italy, Spain and Eastern Europe. See Bernard Lewis, What Went Wrong: The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East (New York &
allowed for a whole new generation of Muslim scholars and politicians to reside in France in order to attend France’s notorious military schools, learning everything from military strategy to great French classics like Rousseau and Montesquieu.

The first Muslims to settle in France were various bourgeois Muslim administrators who sent their children and elite students to study the French socio-political and economic system in order to facilitate the modernization process in the Muslim regions. These individuals included famous political leaders and great Islamic reformers including the Bey of Tunis, Kemal Ataturk, and Taha Hussein of Egypt.\textsuperscript{210} The second wave of massive migration within the empire consisted of ‘guest workers’ and military reservist who were predominantly Muslims throughout the emerging French empire. These workers and fighters were conjointly recruited by the French Republic and given in service to the French empire by indigenous clan or tribal leaders. These workers and fighters labored in French warships, military barracks or were bourgeois domestic servants becoming crucial accessories in the geographic expansion of empire in Muslim lands.

After the French expedition into Algeria, numerous Muslims began to proclaim the Republic home as many Algerians and other colonial subjects under French dominion (Tunis, Chad, Senegal, Mauritania and Morocco) emigrated to France under the auspices of the French imperial army. These Muslims were an intricate part of the empire as they

\textsuperscript{210} All these individual scholars and revolutionaries would later introduce modernization to their respective countries including Western modes of governance, technology and most importantly Western thought. See Bernard Lewis, The Middle East (Scribner: New York, 1995). In this text, he briefly discusses these individuals and their impact on the Muslim world.
were employed to maintain control of peripheral Muslim populations and fight for French glory in the Franco-Prussian war, World War I, and World War II becoming some of the primary foot soldiers for the French Republic.  

Although there was never any coherent policy formulated on immigration, the French Republic sought to assimilate and accommodate the few Muslims that were present on official territory. The Republic aspired to assimilate the Muslims as the Republic had done Jews a century earlier. Naomi Schor states that a “citizen and as a public man, the Jew was called upon to be an abstract, rights, bearing individual, while within the privacy of his own home he was free to practice his own faith.” This was the same policy afforded towards the Muslim populations. As early as 1926, the French Republic built the mosque of Paris in gratitude for Muslim wartime efforts. The mosque was primarily in use and headed by diplomats, servants, workers, and the empire’s military symbolizing Muslim presence and contributions to the French state. The mosque would play an

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211 These Muslims would also be critical in all the major wars that France fought in Europe; in fact, in some cases, were vital to the overall success of the French army.

212 This was initially also the goal of the British government regarding their minorities. As early as the late nineteenth century, Muslim workers and students alike began to call Britain home. The British government funded the formation of mosques and cultural institutions to welcome the Muslim minorities. The only difference between the French and British context is that the British did not view their Muslim minorities as a temporary phenomenon. This is also in drastic contrast to Germans who afford an exclusivist policy based on *jus sanguinis*, the blood law of belonging to a people or the *Volk*. See Leveau, Remy, *New European Identity and Citizenship*, (United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing), 103.


important role in facilitating the Muslim presence in French ‘collective memory.’

Muslims would continue to play a pivotal role in World War II, as Muslim troops from North Africa were vital in the fight against Nazism. These Muslims fought and liberated many southern French cities from German occupation including the large port city of Marseille, a fact that was not officially acknowledged until decades later.

The French Republic in this period viewed the Muslims through a Freudian lens, as biologically inferior beings whose loyalties resided with France in contrast to the “British who inherited a positive image of Muslims because of their experiences in Muslim parts of the empire.” The relatively small Muslim minority populations who professed modern geographic France as their home were never perceived as politically, culturally, nor socially French by the Republic or the French masses albeit many became French citizens. These migrants would eventually become an important facet of French national consciousness as France socially and politically transformed and attempted to construct a viable state with Muslim minorities as an important component.

1945-1970: Colonial Period

Muslim immigration began en masse in response to the severe post-World War II labor shortage. According to Cesari, it was a “laissez faire policy dependent on the emerging and developing post-World-War-II economic transformations allowing Muslim

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216 This of course was the general trend in all of the developed European nations as thousands of Muslims immigrated to Germany, England, Holland and Belgium to rebuild Europe.
migrant entry according to the development of market forces. Prior to WWII, the French state granted employers the right to recruit and select foreign workers on their own conditions with no governmental oversight. However, after the war, the French state took complete control over immigration regulation and policy. The Republic filled the labor shortage by allowing the Muslim population they governed throughout the empire to occupy these lower labor positions.

In response to the demand for workers needed to rebuild and repopulate France after the war, President de Gaulle strove for a consistent immigration policy. De Gaulle reformed the *National Code France*, which passed in October 1945. This act provided for the recruitment of foreign labor in the country providing the basic framework of French immigration policy, which remained intact through to the present. This law further created the Office of National Immigration, a government agency that was officially established in 1945 and given the task of regulating and overseeing immigration, recruiting immigrants and handling naturalization applications.

The 'task of regulating' the immigrants was principally understood as a temporary phenomenon, where the colonial subject was merely serving the 'father' country in gratitude for French presence in the Muslim regions, repaying the French republic through cheap labor. Aside from the laborers who migrated to France for work, there was also a surge of Muslim elites throughout the empire that began to call France home, either

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218 This article discusses the specifics regarding many immigration policies and institutional features that the French Republic established in order to control the Muslim migrant. M. Deley, "French Immigration policy since May 1981," *International Migration Review* 17:2 (1983): 196-211.
to obtain higher education or to learn the ‘way of the French’ in order to administer the territories. The Muslim elites and students alike settled all over Europe (Germany, England, Holland, and Belgium) in the early fifties. These students and elites would become the next generation of Muslim world leaders and intellectuals.

Beginning in the 1950s, the majority of Muslims who emigrated to France were Algerian laborers, military loyalists, and the educated elite who sought refuge in France as their lives were under threat because they were seen as complicit in the colonial subjugation of Algeria. However, in France, the Muslim elites were a vital resource for the laboring, uneducated Muslim populations. North African elites during the fifties gave a priority to republican values as they became the primary mediators between French officials and lower-class Muslim men who, for the most part, were isolated from the larger society. In the rest of Europe during this period, labor migration primarily came from colonial outposts, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Indians to England, Indonesians and Surinamese to Holland. Germany was the only nation that sought labor from both the old empire and Turkey where cheap labor was easily accessible.

By the mid-fifties, the French republic did not seek any comprehensive program to facilitate the Muslim minorities for the long term. The laboring Muslims lived in segregated shantytowns on the outskirts of major cities. These shantytowns, in the fifties alone, were responsible for the deaths of tens of people because of the poor

\[219\] Nearly 300,000 immigrants came to France because of their involvement in French colonial administrations. Millions were brutally killed for working for the French regime.

\[220\] This was a general trend throughout Europe during this period. In England and Germany the Muslim laborers lived in broken down projects in the outskirts of city communities.
infrastructure and the lax fire safety codes applied in these communities. The
shantytowns further symbolized the inability of the French republic to accept the
Muslims in the French public sphere, as they were intentionally segregated from the
larger French ‘collective memory.’ The segregation of Muslim minorities also affected
their views towards their stay in France. Sociologist Joel Fetzer notes that “many first-
generation, non-refugee Muslim immigrants initially viewed their stay in France as
temporary,” never believing it would become permanent.

This paper contends the Republic made sure it was known to these workers that their
stay was temporary. However, the workers also believed that once colonial rule ended,
life as a colonial subject would also end, transforming their respective nations into
modern, developed nation-states. This ‘fiction of temporality’ that historian Jack
Goody notes was used as an excuse by both the “host and migrants” in order to not
associate with the Other. The ‘fiction of temporality’ was quite different for the
immigrants who came to England because both Pakistan and India were independent
states when these minorities emigrated to England. Hence there was still a sense of living
in between both the new country and the old country of origin. The ‘fiction of
temporality’ was also upheld by the Muslim immigrants who migrated to Germany in the
early fifties. There were never any avenues present for these migrants to receive German

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221 In September 6, there was another large fire in France this time costing the lives of 18
immigrants who were stationed by the local government in run-down facilities. See

222 See Joel S. Fetzer & J Christopher Soper, Muslims and the State in Britain, France
and Germany, 64. Also, see Jocelyne Cesari, Muslim Minorities in Europe: The Silent
Revolution.

citizenship, which according to the German constitution was tied to the volk.

The 'fiction of temporality' paradigm that was upheld by the French Muslim minorities led to political and social apathy especially amongst the lower class Muslim minorities. Hence, they did not campaign for political and social rights as workers since they believed they would eventually go back to their respective nations. The elite response was very different, as they understood that this suppression of identity, both religious and cultural, was a part of the colonial suppression of third-world identities and sought to respond and mobilize to achieve those rights. As Evry Imam Khalil Merroun notes:

[D]uring the 1960s and on into the 70s this Islam of the Muslim immigrants was not out in the open. Moreover, where Muslims did attempt to express it, it was completely suppressed. The French sensed that there was a big elephant pushing against them with its trunk, but they did not know where the elephant came from.... So Islam was relegated to the cellars. 224

The response toward French aggression against the Muslim minorities in France and regionally in other European states was primarily realized through the assistance from leftwing and communist organizations which sought to undermine French colonial rule in the Muslim world. The leftists also assisted the lower class Muslim laborers in acquiring fundamental rights that were afforded by the state.

This fusion between the French leftwing and the Muslim minority is unique in this period in Europe because the intellectual elite were writing profusely against colonial and post-colonial rule. In the eyes of the French leftwing, the Muslims slowly became the

224 Fetzer and Soper, Muslims and the State, 64.
primary representatives of everything that had gone wrong with the French state.

However, this was not the case in Germany and England, where the Muslims did not really have any socio-political or academic channels to express any contention with the state. Although the resistance to both French colonial rule and demands for more labor-oriented rights occurred within the context of leftist, revolutionary organizations, the French Republic still interpreted every action by the Muslim minority in France or abroad as an act of ‘Islamic resistance.’\(^{225}\) The Muslim religioscape in this period did not influence French policy regarding their Muslim minorities because each Muslim state was concerned with consolidating and constructing its own ‘imagined community.’

The Muslim and non-Muslim intellectuals who were present in both France and the Muslim world knew that the French republic could no longer sustain their colonial possessions. Independence movements evolved into actual resistance to the French colonial presence in Morocco, Senegal, Mali, Tunis, and Vietnam. Although active revolts against colonial rule irritated the French republic, the latter never suspected that the poor and relatively un-educated Muslim populations had either the will or the means to create an active revolt within France. But unlike other superpowers with large Muslim minorities,\(^{226}\) France never formulated policy that took the Muslim minorities into account when constructing their foreign or domestic policies because the Muslim world and the accompanying Muslim religioscape was still, for the most part, under the

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\(^{225}\) Since the actual resistance in Algeria was covered in the media as an Islamic Jihad, any passive resistance that the Muslim minorities might have participated in domestically was considered part of the grandeur Islamic jihad to get rid of the West.

\(^{226}\) These countries include China, India and Russia.
auspices and direct control of the French republic. This was also the same for Germany whose Muslim populations could not effect the political decisions of the state because they were denied the political avenues to impact society. In England, the Muslims were primarily uneducated laborers who were neither organized or politically conscious, since British union organizations were not as active in the Muslim communities as their French counterparts.

By the late 1950's, the French republic maintained its strong request for laborers, preferring Muslim minorities who worked for the French colonial administrations in each colonial region. The French republic forcibly demanded and manipulated the Muslim minorities to leave their respective nation-state because their lives were under threat from the local populations who viewed them as traitors. The largest such group to emmigrate to France were the Harkis from Algeria. The Harkis, as they were called by the French regime, were primarily laborers, military, and police networks created by the French colonial administrators to manage Algeria. Over the next decade, nearly two-hundred thousand Harkis would immigrate to France in fear for their lives as the war for independence in Algeria escalated costing millions of lives. The Harkis were labeled the lost generation, because the French, French-Algerians, and the general Muslim population considered them traitors. Symbolizing Simmel's *stranger*, they were formally a part of each group, but not accepted as fully a part of either.

Muslims minorities were still answering French labor demands as the need increased in all business sectors. Hence, whenever the immigration agency was slow to fulfill the

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227 This was for the most part the general trend in Europe. Although European nation-states had large Muslim populations, they were never an important factor in determining policy.
requests for more foreign workers by employers, the government allowed massive illegal immigration to proceed. Speaking in a newspaper interview in March of 1966, the Minister of Labor, Mr. Janneney, declared that illegal immigration "was not without usefulness, since, if we had stuck to strict application of international regulations and agreements, we would have perhaps lacked manpower."\(^{228}\) As soon as these illegal immigrants were able to settle in France and provide proof of employment to the government, they were ‘regularized’ and legally accepted as a part of the French state. Nevertheless, there remained a temporality in the French political psyche that as soon as nations under French dominion were independent these migrants were to go back ‘home.’\(^{229}\) Otherwise, they could never assimilate into the French ‘imagined community.’

Government policy did not seek to accommodate the large Muslim minorities’ needs because they viewed the Muslims as a part of the “Other”- an extended version of the minority populations at the periphery of empire. Although the French constitution guaranteed French citizens freedom of religion, equality, and justice, the Muslims were afforded none. Article 1 of the 1958 constitution of the Fifth Republic states: “France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race, or religion. It shall respect all beliefs.”\(^{230}\) The prevalent view amongst scholars, politicians, and the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{229} Nearly all the texts that discussed Muslim minorities in France regarded French politicians and academics alike as believing the Muslims were a temporary phenomenon. See Alec Hargreaves & M. Mckinney, \textit{Post Colonial Cultures in France} (New York, Routledge, 1997) and Tariq Ramadan, \textit{Western Muslims and the Future of Islam} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).
\item \textsuperscript{230} http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/english/8ab.asp (Accessed October 3, 2005)
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common Frenchman alike regarding Islam was that Arabs and African native cultures were uncivilized and backward.

The French republic gambled on the prediction that the various indigenous cultures and identities would assimilate into the French cultural mainstream and enter the French imagined community as previous immigrant populations had done. The French government, in line with French Republican values, believed in a hegemonic racial theory that contended that their Muslim populations would cease being ‘racial’ Muslims and Arab in order to allow the “la laïcité” to be their new religion. Accordingly, many French politicians and scholars alike believed this would be the natural, rational choice of any human being. In the international arena, the French Republic ignored the almost non-existent political will of their relatively small Muslim population, as the French constructed policies that enhanced their own national interests at the expense of other Muslim nation-states, disregarding the importance of the Muslim religioscape domestically and abroad.

By the early sixties, the French republic began to formulate specific policies regarding the Muslim minority, allowing for the creation of prayer halls in small bidonville communities and established French second-language programs throughout the slums of Paris and Marseille in order to facilitate the integration of laborers in the factories they labored. However, this was as far as the government was willing to spend

231 Many French academic and politicians alike believed that the Muslims once in the French context would change their cultural and religious habits as other migrant groups and the Muslim elite have done before, including the Spaniards, the Portuguese and Polish immigrants who are all religious Catholics and have a strong identity and tie to French cultural mores and norms as well as to their own.

232 Since the Muslims were politically inactive, their political interests abroad were totally ignored and were not a factor when conducting foreign and domestic policy.
on the Muslim minorities, as the minorities created small religious and cultural ghettos throughout French cities in the republic. According to Silverstein, the ghettos were structured like small villages throughout North Africa, with their own ‘tribal’ or ‘religious’ leaders, celebrating holidays and festivals that are not tied to the French state, but with their nations of origin and indirectly to the Muslim religioscape.\textsuperscript{233} Such ghettoization further marginalized the Muslim minorities from French society. This was also the case for many Muslim minority populations in Germany and England. These minorities were physically located into the suburbs, where living conditions were poor and full-fledged ghettos began to emerge. Cities like Bradford, England, in the late sixties were transformed into large-scale ghettos; locals even dubbed the city ‘Bradistan’ after Pakistan.

With an increasing number of Muslim minorities in the French Republic, fear arose that the Muslim minorities, with the help of the ‘left,’ would legitimize an attack on France and become a potential fifth column. Scholars, like Frantz Fanon and Jean Paul Sartre, supported the resistance against French occupation through literature and active opposition to the republic. They were increasingly becoming a liability for the French state, as they supported the Algerian resistance domestically through street protests and abroad through physical and intellectual support in the Algerian War for independence. In response to the decolonization process, the French republic attacked Muslim minority rights guaranteeing the French republic that the Muslim population would not be a state liability during hostilities in the colonies. This policy assured the Muslim population that

\textsuperscript{233} See Paul Silverstein, \textit{Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation}, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004) In the text he describes French Muslims as “communities within communities.”
the Muslims were but mere strangers in the periphery of society, who lived among the French but were not accepted into the framework of the French imagined community. Accordingly, the French republic had zero tolerance towards the Muslim minorities regarding protests and any signs of political criticism through literature or the media.\(^{234}\)

The tension in France and in Algeria increased as the Algerian resistance to French occupation became an official insurgency, which took nearly eight years, and one and half million lives later to end. French policies in Algeria not only alienated the Muslim population, but also a majority of the French population who were increasingly becoming discontent with the war that cost so many Muslim and French lives. According to Silverstein, the Algerian War for independence was not just about the national liberation of Algeria for the French psyche, but was played out as a civil war within France.\(^{235}\) This civil war that matched the French Left and Right against one another, the Muslim minority against the larger French republic and finally Muslim against Muslim as the minority community could not agree on what role they should play in the War.

The Muslim minorities, with the help of many left wing organizations, protested vehemently against the war. This act of protest was the first time the Muslim minorities had mobilized against the state’s wrongdoing, becoming a pinnacle moment for the Muslim minorities. In one such case, many Muslims living in the suburbs of Paris rioted

\(^{234}\) The crackdown on the Muslim minorities for any political activism was best told to me through an interview with a French Muslim leader in August 2005. He stated the police would visit his house everyday utilizing random searches for any material criticizing the French state, There were police beatings and random arrests of Muslims leading to hundreds of lives as brutality by the police was a common practice. Ahmed Dakrer said unfortunately he was one of many who received severe beatings in jail. Ahmed Dakrer, Interview by author, Las Vegas, Nevada, 12 August 2005.

\(^{235}\) See Silverstein, *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation*, Chapter 1.
and demanded the French republic allow the Algerians obtain official ‘independence,’ not only in Algeria, but also in France. The riots in France were primarily caused by a curfew measure announced by the Paris Prefect of Police, Maurice Papen, on ‘Algerian’ French citizens because it was “necessary to ban the ‘Algerian people’ from the streets at night, and to close down the cafes they visited.” Consequently, the riot amassed nearly 30,000 protesters, including French intellectuals and other objectors of the war and its domestic consequences.

As the protest proceeded, French government forces ignited a riot that ended up in the death of hundreds of Algerians who died from being clubbed, shot, and drowned. The government initially reported that only three people died because of gang violence, but after many independent investigations, it was found that French forces killed nearly 400 people; many were unaccounted for because they had Algerian documentation. However, the French republic would not apologize or even recognize the states wrongdoing in this event until decades later.

During this turmoil in the domestic arena, internationally the French republic, in less than a decade, lost four fifths of its overall territory, and at home the entire state apparatus of the Fourth Republic was toppled. Following the fall of the Fourth Republic and successive coups by DeGaulle, the ultra conservative faction of the Organization of the Secret Army (OAS) came into power. The OAS government was keen to enact policies that at once sought to quell the resistance, but also win Muslim favor in Algeria

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237 Witte, *Racist Violence and the State*, 83

238 Witte, *Racist Violence and the State*, 83
and abroad in the neighboring nations of Senegal, Mali and Mauritania, which were still under French colonial grasp. However, with a series of street assassinations of French police officers and pro-French Algerians, the situation immediately exacerbated the fear that the ‘civil war’ was coming home. These actions by members of the Algerian resistance who lived in France pitted the larger Muslim community against the government and indirectly the people of France; meanwhile the civil liberties of Muslim minorities ceased to exist. During this period, immigration to France ceased from Algeria as both government and private businesses sought contract labor elsewhere in the Muslim world including North and West Africa.

Other than the Algerian War for Independence, nothing in the Islamic world had an impact on domestic policy towards the Muslims, as the Muslim minority was not a powerful economic and political group in France. Simultaneously, Muslims viewed their current socio-political context as a temporary phenomenon since they still maintained ties to the Muslim religioscape, disregarding French cultural norms, and reinforcing the state-imposed ghetto mentality. Silverstein argues within his text that the majority of the Muslim population in France in the mid-1970s did not support the French state and in fact, were pleased by many policies mishandled by the republic with the Islamic world, specifically the dramatic effect of the Arab oil embargo. In an interview conducted with a French Muslim who lived in Marseille at the time stated that the Muslims were “overjoyed watching the powerful French kneel to Arab power.” This was the attitude

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239 This greatly influenced the French economy but it gave the Muslim minority a greater consciousness of the power of the Islamic world over the West, as the West was scrambling to make ends meet.

amongst many Muslims who lived in shantytowns and viewed the state with contempt, as the Muslims were primarily concerned with the Islamic religioscape in the period in relation to their nations of origin.

During the never ending brutal Algerian War for independence, the Muslim students in France, notably Ali Shariati and Hasan Turabi, were busy formulating a new Islamic revolutionary ideology that would increasingly challenge the new post-colonial era with an Islamic alternative in the modern world.\textsuperscript{241} Hence, these scholars would also later greatly influence how the Muslim world viewed the French context, reformulating a quite revolutionary way of looking at a non-Muslim nation.\textsuperscript{242} These ideas emerged primarily from the context of French universities in the 1960s and the impact of Islamic revivalist thought by Muslim scholars who called France home. Moreover these ideas were influenced by Marxist and existentialist scholars who critiqued imperialism and capitalism, and sought an alternative to these systems. These scholars were vital in what later would be called French Islam, an Islam re-interpreted and reconstructed to adjust within the larger French framework but also critical in allowing the French nation-state entry into the Muslim religioscape.

By the end of the 1960s, there were nearly 600,000 Algerians, 140,000 Moroccans and 90,000 Tunisians in France and about 100,000 other Muslims including Syrians,

\textsuperscript{241} These scholars would be crucial in the construction of Islamic political and social theory that would drive the resistance against Western political and social traditions in eighties and nineties. These scholars were not only present in France during this period but also in England and Germany.

\textsuperscript{242} Scholars like Tariq Ramadan and Mohammed Arkoun extensively studied the works of these scholars.
Palestinians, Lebanese and West Africans. As the Muslim populations were taking advantage of family re-unification laws, new generations of French-born Muslims were beginning to influence the identity of the French state, transforming the memory community in France. Government policy, on the other hand, attempted to handle the Muslim ‘problem’ by imposing many policies which sought total assimilation of the Muslim populations into the French social and cultural framework while preventing access for political integration.

After the colonial period, the Muslims of France that were present on French soil became official citizens of the French national framework. The attempted full assimilation, socially complicated matters’ for the French state. This policy varied drastically from other European and Western nations that took on a multicultural approach of integration ignoring the most important element of integration, political expression. The Muslims could not create organizations or political rights groups to fight on their behalf within the state; they could only utilize existing political and social organizations that often did not represent the Muslim minority’s needs.

In the late 1960s, the French government and society got their first inklings that the Muslim minority population had acquired a certain permanence in France. The French republic understood that the Muslim minorities in France were becoming an important foreign and domestic policy tool for France. Many independent Muslim states that had been formerly under the French empire began wielding powers as soon as France was no

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243 Winant, *The World is a Ghetto*, 211.

244 The Muslims were primarily represented by organized labor and many leftist groups that did not understand the Muslim minority needs. For example, separate ‘time’ for Islamic prayer was something many labor unions believed was not an issue that they should fight for since prayer is according to the French belongs at home.
longer in direct control of the vast resources of its old empire. The French government, understanding both the role of the Muslim religioscape and the importance of the Muslim minority in accomplishing foreign policy, began to ease many restrictions as they allowed mosques to be built under the auspices and control of former colonies.

A great example was the mosque of Paris, which was officially taken care of by the Algerian government. The latter paid and supplied the Imams to the mosque and other surrounding Islamic community centers. Nevertheless, the impact of these nations on the Muslim minorities ceased to produce any real domestic advantage, as most of these nations were not powerful enough to have a great impact on French foreign and domestic policy until the mid-1970s. At this point, a culmination of world events began changing Muslim consciousness and greatly influencing not only the French domestic political scene, but also foreign policy initiatives.

1970-1990: Post-Colonial Period

By the mid-1970s, the Muslim populations had grown tenfold as labor demands increased and illegal immigration flourished. This led the state to attempt a halt to legal immigration and a crackdown on illegal immigration. In 1974, under Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's administration, the government began to abandon the laissez faire approach towards immigration due to a recession that hit the economy and created an extreme rise in French national unemployment. The French government stopped recruiting and admitting any foreign-born workers, officially closing the country's borders to immigration.

245 This was also true for other Mosques that were primarily governed by various Islamic governments including Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Tunis, and Senegal.

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The French government now only legally admitted immigrants into the French state when specific corporations or local agricultural business demanded more labor, which more often than not sought non-Muslim labor from sub-Sahara Africa. President D'Estaing even tried to ban family reunification laws but the conseil de'Etat put a stop to the president's efforts. However, Giscard was successful in implementing the government's Seventh Plan (1975-1981) which was a government decree that demanded that the state take measures to assimilate the Muslim population. The Seventh plan utterly failed.

The assimilation policies regarding the Muslims were implemented quite differently by Giscard. Giscard passed policy that allowed Arabic classes in the public schools, television programming representing minority cultures, and even allocated space for Islamic cemeteries. In addition, the state purchased native literature in order to enhance literacy amongst the Muslim populations. This communitarian policy went as far as indirectly providing salaries to Imams in small mosques through foreign nation-states, contradicting the strict separation law of December 9, 1905 that strictly stated that the French government would "neither recognize nor pay salaries or other expenses for any form of worship." The Giscard administration allowed the development of these policies in order to have indirect rule over the Muslim population, practicing internal

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246 When one speaks of assimilation in French history, the term is constantly changing within each differing geographic and periodical context. See Robert J. Pauly, *Islam in Europe: Integration or Marginalization* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate: 2004). The author's comparison between Muslim minorities in various European contexts categorizes the assimilation policy that was granted by the British government as qualitatively different: as the policy formed in England was assimilation through multiculturalism means assimilating Muslims into the state's political culture. Assimilation for the French state meant assimilation into the cultural frameworks, essentially ignoring the socio-political and economic structures of the state.

247 Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 70.
colonialism by using the Muslim elite from the largely poor Muslim communities in order to maintain order and power over the Muslim populations. Both Germany and France enacted similar policies under the rubric of multiculturalism. Accordingly, each nation introduced policies that sought the integration of the Muslim minority through indirect control.

Nevertheless, because of the relative openness of French democratic traditions and the power and mobilization of the left, the Muslim populations were able to obtain some rights that the state offered through secular organizations. However, the intellectual environment of the period was not conducive towards Muslim religious practices as they were seen in an overall irrational light. However, even within this antagonistic environment, the Muslims utilized the lax policies of the period to advance their agenda by gaining permission to build state-funded mosques and cultural institutions, thus advancing the Muslim community, socially, politically and economically. The Muslim minority used this newfound freedom to lobby for a policy shift regarding the dreaded bidonvilles in e.g., the Paris suburbs of Champigny, Nanterre, and Saint Denis, as well as outside the port city of Marseille.

The Muslim and North African Jews that occupied these bidonvilles lived in sub-standard, hazardous high rises with no heating arrangements for the winter, and a lax fire safety code that created havoc and even death in many apartment buildings through the years. The Muslims and Jews organized, in part, with many leftist and communist organizations and demanded a change of policy regarding government maintenance of these broken-down buildings. The government gave in and steadily began funding these buildings, but only for a short period, in order to gain the left's support. This gave the
Muslim minority a first glance at how, via political mobilization, they could gain power and incur change within the system.

Nevertheless, even with Muslim attempts to change the sub-housing standards, the indecisive and bad urban planning of the late 1970s further segregated major French cities between the Muslim minorities and the larger French population. Thus, a simulated colonial separation was bringing Algiers and Dakar to Paris and Marseille. The state housing system built the bidonvilles in order to integrate and civilize the Muslim minorities; consequently, these same buildings turned out to create further divisions between the Muslims and the ‘French.’ This structural segregation of daily life between the two populations further engrossed the Muslim populations in a ghettoized mentality that was reinforced by the state’s policy towards the Muslim religioscape. These policies allowed many French Muslim scholars to call the highly populated Muslim regions “Islamic suburbs” or centers for the implantation of Islam within France.

With the general increase of ghetto-mentality amongst the Muslim populations and the subsequent rise of Islamic resurgent thought, a consciousness grew amongst the Muslims that moved closer to the Islamic ummah enveloped in the Muslim religioscape. In France, a whole new generation of Muslims emerged who wore traditional Islamic clothing, donned the hijab, while hundreds more prayer rooms and halls popped up throughout France. Furthermore, various asylum seekers from the late 1970s and early 1980s would greatly influence the Muslim communities regarding Islam and other political, geo-political situations in the Muslim world.\footnote{The Ayatollah Khomeini was one example of an individual who used the French context in order to carry revolutionary reforms and change in Iran.}
The Muslim communities were further encouraged by the social happenings outside of France. The 1973 war with Israel, in which many Arab Muslims believed the Arab world won, aroused new hope for the Muslim populations who believed the Muslim world would soon develop into an economic, political, and military superpower like the West. With the subsequent Arab oil embargo, which left the West on its knees, and the global impact of Islamist thought in Egypt, Syria and Pakistan further transformed Muslim consciousness in France that led many Muslims to accept an Islamic alternative to the present socio-political and economic standards that were ‘imposed’ on them. Finally, the support from the Gulf’s petrol-dollars helped construct religious and cultural institutions that transformed the psyche of the Muslim minority and indirectly the French republic through ideology and the urban landscape.

These institutions played a vital role in inserting Islam into the French public sphere as illegal Muslim groups and organizations had the means and independence to implement various actions to further their goals. Furthermore, this also changed the French republic in that this funding allowed Muslims to enter into the public sphere through the urban landscape as new mosques were being built, similar to the structures present in any large Middle Eastern city. A survey of mosques and cultural institutions in France by Giles Kepel found that outside resources had funded nearly all the Islamic and cultural institutions in France.\(^{249}\)

These developments were also true for other European states with large Muslim

\(^{249}\) This phenomenon is catching up to bite both the Muslim minority in France and the French state because in funding these institutions, the Muslims minority do not have full control over them as they are governed and controlled by the source of the funding. This also causes a backlash for the French state because then the Muslims are influenced by a ‘foreign Islam’ that does not always represent the interest of the French state regarding integration and assimilation.
minorities. Muslims in England, more so than France and Germany, began to be impacted by these large-scale socio-political and economic developments. Muslim organizations in England mobilized the Muslim minorities to attain power domestically through the ballot box, and develop Islamic programs for the Muslim world, integrating both Western and Islamic models of governance in order to construct an alternative model. One such group was the Hizb ul Tahrir. This group had been present in England since the early 1950s, playing somewhat of an insignificant role with very few followers. By the mid-1970s thanks to heavy funding from Saudi petro-dollars and Pakistani Islamists movements, this organization became one of the largest Islamic organizations in the world, seeking to construct the old caliphate in the new global context. Although this organization maintained an existence in France during this period, it could never grow to the size that it had in England, due to the French lack of state support for religious organizations.

The Islamic world and France alike also understood the importance of the Muslim minority as a potential conciliatory factor between the former occupied Muslim nations and the former occupier, France. The French government hosted large banquets for local Muslim leaders and foreign dignitaries to break the Ramadan fast, and large continent wide and global Islamic conferences in order to portray to the Muslim world that France is in solidarity with Muslims and Islam. Muslim governments and Islamic movements each attempted to appropriate the Muslim minorities by funding traditional secular institutions with large Muslim minority representation in order gain lobbyists in the French government.

The Hizb ul Tahrir organization is also present in France. This organization seeks to reconstruct and establish the caliphate through the unification of the Muslim world. Although many of their leaders are Western educated and trained, they are vehemently anti-Western using the democratic structures of the states to pursue their ends.
Islamic movements throughout the world funded thousands of illegal Islamic associations in order to gain a foothold in France where their ideology had free reign on French Muslims who were alienated from the establishment. An excellent example of such a group was the Jamaat Tabligh, which beginning in the early 1970s were few in numbers, never reaching more than twenty members from Pakistan and Morocco, and who dedicated their lives to preaching and strengthening traditional Islam through heavy propagation efforts. But by the end of the millennium, this group would be the largest Islamic movement in France with more than fifty thousand members, even though the group had not sought recognition from the state as an official organization.

By the late 1970s, the Muslims were engrossed in their cultural and religious communities. The government, in seeing the development of a greater Islamic consciousness amongst the French Muslims, increased their policies of further assimilation of the Muslim minorities into the French cultural and social context, but ignored the most crucial components of assimilation, economic and political accommodation. This further alienated the Muslim minority from the French republic, and ultimately failed because the Muslims did not find any tangible reward in scrapping their identity. To do so they would have been rejected by the Muslim community, and simultaneously rejected within the French community which upheld their- stranger identity.

Similar to the unfortunate tradition of anti-Semitism in France, which according to Schor was an ideology that rendered assimilation impossible for the Jews, Muslims were


also put to task on the feasibility of Muslim assimilation within France. The ‘Jewish
deficiency’ problem’ was redirected toward the immigrant Muslim minority who during this period
was blamed for not assimilating into the French state. Anti-Muslim propaganda was
created for public consumption by many right-wing neo-Nazi organizations that sought to
dispel the Muslim minorities.

The Muslim minority and the larger French majority increasingly grew apart, which
consequently allowed for the emergence of more xenophobic attitudes regarding the
‘Other.’ Hate crimes were on the rise as was the crime rate in the ghettos. National and
local newspapers targeted Muslim minorities, portraying negative images of the Muslims
in the general media. These immigrants had been victims of xenophobic attitudes in
France prior to the 1980s. However, with the increasing divide, not only socially and
culturally, but also physically through the urban landscape, the situation now became
heightened to a level never seen before.

Anti-immigrant protesters and police officers often killed Muslim minorities
indiscriminately. Moreover, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim organizations began to
spring up everywhere such as the Club de l’Horloge or the Marseilles Defense
Committee. Hate crimes and police prejudice against the Muslims became so bad that
Journalist Fausto Guidice stated that in the “post 1968 France one can kill Arabs with
impunity.” Brigitte Bardot, a writer and an activist who for more than a decade had led
campaign against the slaughter of sheep during the Eid ul-Adha festival, believed plain


254 To read more about the history and ideology of these organizations see,
http://solcidsp.upmf-grenoble.fr/cidsp/publications/articles/ivaldi_fn_vb.rtf

255 Fetzer and Soper, Muslims and the State, 67.
and simple that the Muslim immigrants were invaders, stating, "I am against the Islamisation of France. For centuries our forefathers...our fathers gave their lives to chase all successive invaders from France." These hostile attitudes towards the Muslims eventually led their way to the political front, with the rise and popular support for the French right-wing party, the Front National.

Benefiting from the poor economy, The Front sought to blame all negative occurrences in France on the Muslim population. Le Pen, the founder of The Front stated that the Muslim minorities were, "undesirable immigrants who lead the French Social Security to bankruptcy, who colonize our cities and villages, who overcrowd our prisons, who rape and kill." The backlash on the Muslim minority during this period was present in all European nations that had a large Muslim minority population. In England, backlashes against the large presence of Muslims, specifically the Indo-Pak community, were on the rise as mosques were vandalized, Muslims harassed, and stricter laws were passed by local governments that outlawed the construction of new mosques and cultural institutions. Especially in former East Germany, the rise of neo-Nazi organizations around the discourse of ‘throwing out the foreigner’ became platforms for many widely supported right-wing organizations who sought to ‘purify the German nation.’

In 1977, French politicians representing conservative parties even went as far as to bribe Muslim immigrants from North Africa, offering them ten thousand francs to go back to their country of origin. In 1978, Prime Minister Stolera attempted to pass a draconian bill that would have deported hundreds of thousands of foreign-born workers.


and their families; but his bill never passed legislation. The Front fueled the discourse even further by initiating discussion regarding who or what was French. “Will we be French in thirty years?” shouted Le Pen, on October 30, 1985 during the broadcast of The Hour of Truth a prime time television program, in order to arouse fear in the public imagination regarding the Muslim population. The Muslim response to the radicalization of French society was to mobilize, not only politically, but also socially, taking it upon them to define who or what they were in the society that they now called home.

The impact of Muslim and leftist mobilization changed the political course in the 1980s when immigration policies became more political. President François Mitterrand and his government put an end to the ‘aide au retour’ program begun in 1977. Mitterrand also ended the forced return of immigrants to their countries of origin, got rid of the forced expulsions of immigrants, and granted legal status to thousands of illegal immigrants. For Mitterrand, his administration ushered in a new era of relations between the Muslim minority and the rest of the public. In 1981, his government enacted the association law that “extended the freedom of association to foreigners… in particular it does away with the requirement of government authorization for the creation of such organizations.” Although the Muslims were eligible to receive public funding, the state had the right to dissolve any organization they viewed as a danger to state diplomatic interests or undermined foreign countries. The Muslim response was highly favorable.

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258 Riva Kastoryano, Negotiating Identities: States and Immigrants in France and Germany (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 21
260 Margo Delay, “French Immigration,” 206
Thousands of organizations sprang up throughout the nation, as they no longer hid in the denizens of basements and factories. While policy shifted for the Muslim minority in France, in England the Muslims were entering the Margaret Thatcher era where it became increasingly hard for Muslim minorities to reunite family members and get funding in order to build cultural and religious institutions.

Mitterrand had a specific perception towards integration: he welcomed non-European immigrants and their families into the national solidarity. This dramatic shift in policy toward immigrant and religious associations was a compromise of the “la laïcité” because the state had begun officially funding religious organizations that prior to Mitterrand’s law was non-existent. This law was implemented because it disallowed foreign interference in Muslim religious affairs and allowed the French state to be in charge and control of Muslim needs. The subsidies awarded by the French state toward Muslim cultural and religious organizations were crucial in the development of these organizations, both Islamic and cultural. This was a direct consequence by funding of the Ministry for Social Affairs through the Fonds d’Action Sociale (FAS). These government organizations also assisted voluntary associations run by members of ethnic minorities in order to facilitate integration while maintaining a sense of national identity and solidarity.

These associations would play a dual role in the French political landscape; they helped develop a national collective identity while simultaneously integrating the Muslims into the state’s socio-political and economic structures. Even though the Muslims were still seen in the larger public as foreign, a dramatic shift had taken place, not only in policy that now recognized the Muslim presence, but also in the Muslims who recognized that France was their home and that they should work to achieve a niche
within the fabric of French society. It was during this period that one finds Muslim intellectuals, writers, community, and religious leaders asking the tough questions regarding their presence within France.

This shift in policy from assimilation and integration into insertion\textsuperscript{261} prevented immigrants from traveling to their country of origin and normalized their status by supporting their right to vote and expanding their representation in government. However, there was also a shift in policy towards multiculturalism. This policy used state funds in order to support and maintain various cultural and religious institutions in France maintaining that cultural diversity invariably enriches French culture. However, a year into Mitterrand’s reforms the republic decided that allowing a proliferation of Islamic organizations to arise was a negative development. This applied not only to Muslims, which made integration more difficult, but also to French political values, which set a clear line of demarcation between church and state. Mitterrand’s reforms underestimated the impact Islam played in the Muslim minorities’ lives as many politicians disregarded religion as a mobilizing philosophy, believing that since the majority of Muslims worked in factories that trade unions would be the unifying factor. However, it was the religious organizations and the building of mosques that flourished immediately after the reform. These organizations became powerful institutions defining not only what Islam means in the French context, but also mobilizing on domestic and international issues that were important for Muslims.

By the mid-1980s, Muslims slowly began defining themselves in the public sphere.

\textsuperscript{261} This is a term Jocelyn Cesari uses throughout her writings. She argues that the state recognizes that assimilation policy of the past has failed dramatically, so what the French government is attempting to do is insert the Muslim populations into the larger state framework, thus assimilating the Muslims, where assimilation can be actually realized.
Some Muslims joined radical Islamic organizations and sought to Islamicize the Muslims and non-Muslims of France. Two such organizations were the Jamaat Tabligh and Dawa Salafiyya. Members in the Islamic world supported both of these organizations as they attempted to define the Islam practiced in France. Other Muslims sought to deconstruct Islam and construct an Islam that was compatible with French values. These individuals were represented by scholar-academics Muhammad Arkoun and Muhammad Hamidullah. Many Muslims further alienated themselves from society by not attempting to assimilate in society, while the majority of the Muslim population sought to integrate within the French socio-cultural and political framework without losing their faith and identity as Muslims. With the proliferation of identities emerged a new public face of Muslims, as they became political activists, union workers, artists, and sportsmen.

The French government became increasingly worried about the strength of Muslim identity within the French nation. The global rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the Muslim world in neighboring Algeria, Palestine, and the Jihad in Afghanistan increasingly worried the French authorities. French republic fears came true as these conflicts abroad were now being felt at home. In 1981, Palestinian residents in France bombed a Jewish Consulate killing eight people. In the same year, over three hundred French Muslims went to Afghanistan to participate in the war against the ‘godless’ Soviet

262 The Tabligh Jamaat and the Dawa Salafiyya are Islamic fundamentalist movements that seek to Islamicize both Western and Islamic societies through propagation. In France, these groups are primarily funded and supported by regimes and individuals that do not live in France.


264 Jeremy Shapiro, “The French Experience of Counter-Terrorism,”
Union. There was also fear that the global Islamic movements, primarily funded by Saudi oil money, were planting the seed of radical Islam in France, as an ideology that saw itself in direct contradiction with the French state.

After Mitterrand failed to win a re-election bid in 1986, Jacques Chirac took office winning on the platform that he would get tough on immigration. Chirac distanced himself from the reforms of Mitterrand. His government adopted a new refugee policy that "allowed border control officers to sort out and reject asylum seekers before they could be examined by the agency in charge of refugees." The French citizenship law was also rewritten. Whereas previously the law had gone by the principle of *jus solis* (namely, anyone born...citizenship), now the law specified that children of immigrants born on French soil had to show their ‘willingness’ to become a French citizen, and have a clean record.

In the beginning of his administration, the Muslim minority understood that they were not going to have a sympathetic administration under Chirac, so many Muslims continued to mobilize for reforms by utilizing the democratic features of the state. Their efforts resulted in many court victories that allowed for the construction of mosques that had been blocked by petitions from the local communities. The Muslims were also victorious fighting court cases that increased the Muslim communities’ civil rights, including the end of racist hiring practices and an end to published racist bigotry. Although Chirac’s administration was quite tough on immigrations issues, domestically


267 This measure was passed by Chirac in order to appease the many voters who lay on the right hand of the spectrum but not going too far, allowing the left to ignore the passage.
the administration continued to spend on many programs that sought to integrate the Muslim populations.

These policies attacked the 'problem of the suburbs' as the French state increased funding for education and social service organizations in poor Muslim neighborhoods partly because of Muslim mobilization. The government funded schools with immigrant populations exceeding thirty percent of the total population and gave additional resources like the Social Action Fund for Immigrants assisted in vocational training in order to aid the immigrants’ integration into the larger French workforce. Although these developments allowed for more political and social integration into the framework of the state, the negative cultural perceptions toward the Muslims continued and even flourished during this period as the economy began to wane and the Islamic world increasingly destabilized.

The French response to the immigrant was not only through the discourse of fear of an eventual threat that the immigrant posed to French society, but also what they viewed as the “harlemization” of French culture. In the newspaper article “Long Live the Ghetto,” the author argues that the “suburbs are a right of passage for many immigrant communities.”268 Politis even emphasized a new popular form of culture born in these areas as inspired by the American ghetto where they believe dual Americanization and Arabization of French youth culture was occurring. These perceptions regarding Muslim housing were represented in various polls taken throughout the 1980s through to the present, which have continually reported the same numbers. In one survey, the respondents stated that around sixty-three percent said there were too many “Arabs” in

France, compared to forty-three percent of blacks and twenty-one percents who said there were too many Asians. These were the attitudes developing in France regarding the Muslim populations where the public's view toward Muslims expressed not so much fear of the immigrant as fear of Islam itself.

By 1987, state legislation drew greater emphasis on determining what was French. The legislation emphasized Frenchness as any individual who was socially and culturally distinct from the Muslim population. This lead to the Pasqua Law, which reformed the 'National Code' making it more difficult for the children of foreign-born immigrants to become citizens. Although it failed in the 1986-87 election, in 1994, the code entered law further alienating the Muslim population and de-legitimizing their presence as parents of French citizens.

In the late 1980s, the French government set about to improvise a place for Islam in the secular room of the laicite in order to counter failing and counter-productive policies towards Muslim integration. Muslim leaders responded by attempting to assimilate their Muslim populations by deconstructing and reconstructing Islam, in order to theoretically construct an Islam that was both compatible with French values and could satisfy the traditional Islamic order. Scholars and philosophers like Tariq Ramadan and Muhammad Arkoun led these efforts in order to assimilate Islam into the larger French national identity.

These efforts by Muslim scholars and community leaders were at first largely rejected by the French establishment. Nevertheless, in the coming decade in the French Islamic ethos, the Muslims were not only negotiating their presence within the larger French identity.

context, but also debating amongst themselves the merits of integration within the
democratic exegeses of the modern French state. However, a struggle within the French
state ensued to create a steady policy toward the Muslim minority population, all the
while as Muslim identities continued to proliferate. The state ceased to look at the
Muslims as separate ethnicities with differing cultures, but rather as united through Islam,
a religious philosophy that ceased to adapt to French values and ideals. This discourse
was specific to France, as Muslims in England and Germany were not politically or
socially pressured to construct a European Islam that conformed to the state’s values and
interests because of German and British multiculturalist approaches that, at least
theoretically, accommodated the Muslim minorities.

1990-1995: French Islam

Since the early nineties French analysts and scholars alike have focused on the role of
Islam in French society. The traditional racial and ethnic identity markers on the Muslim
minorities ceased as the paradigm shifted toward the Muslim minorities, no matter what
their level of faith was as subjects to Islam. However, many Muslims felt that French
authorities used Islam as an undercover tool to attack the North African Arabs because

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270 The proliferation occurs because the Muslim minorities are now being influenced by
various global and domestic Islamic ideologies that are both accepted and opposed by the
state. Furthermore, Muslim identities are also being formed in response to French state
intrusions into Muslim life either responding positively by accepting French demands or
opposing French policy by accepting and practicing radical Islam.
they were seen as undesirables. Mustafa Toougui, a Muslim living in Paris notes that the:

[W]orld now does not accept racism because it does not look good, so they make the same record, they just turn it over on the other side, and when they want to say the same thing about Arabs, they use Islam. If they say Arab, it is definitely racist, but if they say Islam, it is something intellectual, something different, they can pretend it is some kind of analysis.

The discourse in French politics during this period focused on the question to what degree is Muslim assimilation possible. In addition, what impediment does Islam impose on the Muslim population’s ability to assimilate? A former French Algeria leader, Jacques Soustelle, stated:

Islam is not only a religion, a metaphysics and ethics, but also a determining and constrictive framework of all aspects of life. Consequently, to speak of integration, that is to say assimilation, is dangerously utopian. You can only assimilate what can be assimilated.

This shift in thinking regarding the Muslim populations was the subsequent result and implementation of militant secular policy to fight and repress Muslim identity. The rise in anti-Islamic discourse was also present in the general French public who believed that Islam was the main obstacle towards the integration of Muslim minorities into the larger

\[271\] Robert J. Pauly, *Islam in Europe: Integration or Marginalization*, 44.


\[273\] Joel S. Fetzer & J Christopher Soper, *Muslims and the State in Britain, France and Germany*, 67.
state framework. This was not only apparent in French public discourse, but also the private realm as most Frenchmen believed that Islam was inherently inassimilable. Although the French public maintained that Muslims were primarily a religious oriented group, a Sondage poll taken in 1994 suggested that only thirty-one percent of Muslims pray five times a day, down ten percent from 1989.\(^{274}\) In an attempt to suppress the impact of perceived Islamic religious and cultural practices that the French state deemed anti-Republican and simultaneously anti-French, the French state progressively attempted to outline a secular form of French Islam and sell it to the Muslim community. In 1989, the interior minister Pierre Joxe created the ‘Working Council on Islam in France,’ a commission of six Imams in an effort to ‘republicanize Islam’ into a secular religion. Charles Pasqua, his successor, worked with the Grand Mosque of Paris Imam and established, the Advisory Council of French Muslims to begin regulating Islamic ritual practices as produced by various Islamic leaders.

The larger Muslim population ignored calls from both government leaders and local Islamic leaders who promoted this ideology finding it irrelevant to their lives. The majority of the Muslim populations were concerned with their socio-economic situation. In an 1991 interview, interior minister Charles Pasqua declared in the Le Monde: “France can promote the birth of a reformed Islam.”\(^{275}\) As the nation’s highest police official, his presence was a reminder to the Muslim community that however, tolerant France might be, it still viewed Islam in the context of state security. France, Pasqua warned in his

\(^{274}\) Tariq Ramadan, *Muslims in France* (United Kingdom: Islamic Foundation, 1999), 47.

\(^{275}\) Riva Kastoryano, *Negotiating Identities: States and Immigrants In France and Germany*, 32.
speech, would not compromise its secular traditions to accommodate any faith, and expected French Muslims to place the law of the land over Shariah, or Islamic law. He issued a further challenge: “It is not enough simply to have Islam in France,” he said, “There must now be a French Islam.” Others like the Stalingrad Mosque prayer leader Larbi Keshat argued down the middle stating,

As Muslims, our ideal is a Islamic society, but that is only an ideal. Of course, we would like the life of our community to be guided by our own laws, but we know that in France, circumstances do not permit it. Fortunately, Islam does not bar us from adapting. Islam in France is different from the Islam of, say Egypt or Algeria. We practice a kind of diluted Islam here, in which we live with the separation of church and state, although it offends our beliefs. If we accept the limitations imposed on us, it is because Islam also commands us to preserve the stability of the society in which we live. Nevertheless, the arrival in France of Protestants and Jews required changes in French society; now it is the time of the Muslims. To start with, we need more mosques, to replace the dingy basement rooms in which so many Muslims now pray. We propose that a committee of wise men of both cultures sit down to work out solutions to our differences. These changes need not be abrupt, but we have to assemble around a table together and agree on them.  

In Muslim countries, this relationship “places believers, whether citizens or not, vis-à-vis national authorities closely connected with religion.” Others who were against a French Islam believed in developing institutions that supported the deconstruction and reconstruction of Islam were really a ploy to secularize the religion. The general Muslim


278 Riva Kastoryano, *Negotiating Identities: States and Immigrants In France and Germany*, 154.
population believed that Islam and the Islamic communities would become like the Jewish communities' decades earlier when many leaders who belonged to these organizations insisted on removing all religious content from their organizational goals. Nevertheless, in 1996, the French government began a drive to create new Muslim Imams (Muslim religious leaders) with the help of prestigious Islamic universities in the Islamic world, like Al Azhar University in Egypt. The larger Islamic Universities sponsored local French universities in providing the resources on Islam and Arabic. The local university was primarily concerned with teaching the new Imams French and Western tradition. This policy, the French Republic believed, would facilitate the construction of a class of Muslim clergy who are oriented to both Western and Islamic tradition as explained by director of the French Islamic institute Ahmed Jaballah:

We start here by teaching them Arabic. Then we teach them the Quran, the Hadith (the traditions based on the Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) doings and sayings), and Islamic jurisprudence, like any other Islamic university. However, there is a difference. Though our faculty was shaped in Arab institutions, most have advanced degrees from universities in France. Knowing France, we understand that we must teach Islam within the context of Western reality. The religious training we provide has a Western orientation.

This discourse perplexed the majority of the Muslim population as they repeatedly cited to French officials that traditional Islamic law dictated that every Muslim must obey the

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279 Riva Kastoryano, *Negotiating Identities: States and Immigrants In France and Germany*, 155.

law of the land even if it contradicted Islamic law. Furthermore, French Islam was an
academic construction primarily practiced and accepted by the Muslim elites who were
not connected to the larger Islamic community. Additionally, the misrepresentation of
Muslims as religiously observant individuals was another bias the French state upheld
regarding the Muslim population. Numerous studies have shown that second and third
generation Muslim minorities were not as religiously oriented as the first generation
although their identities were infused with Islam.\textsuperscript{281} Then the question arises as to why
the French state was afraid of the Muslim presence on French soil. According to Giles
Kepel, these fears primarily emerged from the impact of fundamentalist Islam abroad and
the fusion of Islam and politics in various regions in the Muslim world.

In the 1990s, Muslim identity emerged globally to the forefront of every news outlet
as Muslims began to express their discontent with secular systems, Western governments,
and authoritarian regimes that have governed the Muslim world for most of the twentieth
century. This call to break from the secular tradition was represented in three key events
that influenced the Muslim minorities. The first was the Islamic revolution in Iran, which
marked the onset of a more assertive Islamic dimension in international politics, but also
a trend where Muslims now began to perceive that Islam cannot only prevail over
Western systems of thought, but also develop an alternative to Western governance. The
second was the impact and rise of fundamentalist movements who demanded power
whether through the voting box in Algeria, Malaysia, Mali, or violence as experienced in
Lebanon, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sudan, and Palestine in the 1980s and early 1990s.
The third and most important factor was the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in

\textsuperscript{281}See Jurgen Neilson, \textit{Muslim in Western Europe}, 19-20.
Algeria, which inversely affected the Muslim community in France. The growth of Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria caught French officials by surprise, as Islamic fundamentalist thought was slowly entering French territory, dramatically influencing Muslim minority identity and the overall religious fervor in the region. The French government was terrified of an eventual guaranteed Islamic victory in the 1990 Algerian election and with the help of the Algerian Army, deterred the democratic process in order to disallow an Islamic victory.

The repercussions of French involvement in deterring democracy in Algeria were daunting; domestically the Muslims believed that the French government was a prime opponent of Islam and Islamic governance. Furthermore, French involvement indirectly confirmed their notions that the state sought to exterminate their Islamic identity from the region. Globally, the French hand in deterring Islamic democracy in Algeria would become the propaganda tool that Islamic fundamentalist used in order to argue that the West sought total dominance of the Islamic world. Moreover, this was clear proof that the reason the Muslim world continued to live in third world conditions was primarily because Western intervention dismembered Islamic activist opposition. In response to the rise of Islamic identity and activism globally and domestically, the French republic began to suppress Islamic expression in the public sphere by attacking its most potent symbol.

The most controversial issue in French public debate throughout the decade was whether Muslim students could wear the hijab on public school grounds, which the government considered federal property. Although the hijab issue had been raised by nearly all European nations with large Muslim minorities, no country had emphasized the symbolic importance of the hijab more so than France. In England, the hijab was not an
issue of contention for the government because the government viewed the hijab as a cultural and religious symbol that represented the enduring multicultural society that British policy intended to construct. Although Britain was a secular nation that upheld secular values, the state did not oppose accommodation for religious organizations, funding various programs and schools in furtherance of this policy. Therefore, unlike French policy, the specific British policy regarding Muslim students and the hijab depended on the hijab conforming to school colors, while in France the hijab was viewed as a symbol of religious expression in a state funded institution violating the very sanctity of the laicité.

The incident began when a principle of a junior high school in Creil, Paris suspended three Muslim girls for refusing to take off their hijab upon entering the school building. The principle believed that the hijab worn in the classroom violated the strict separation of church and state. Although less than fifteen thousand students wear the hijab out of three-hundred thousand French Muslim female students,282 this case continued to impact and split French public opinion as it dominated the headlines throughout the decade as immigrant groups and anti-immigrant movements alike, feminists and politicians struggled over this issue in order to determine what does it meant to be French. This further injected fear into the public of an Islamic threat to Western liberal values, where the hijab was used as a symbol in the media to portray the irrational ‘mind of patriarchal Muslims’ who forced their daughters and wives to wear the ‘brutal’ hijab. Not only was the French establishment attempting to ‘nurture’ the ignorant and naive Muslim women and men, but also present to the public the increasing cultural threat that

the Muslims posed to French society. The hijab case was an important turning point for the Muslim minorities because through the symbol of the hijab, the Muslims asserted a public display of Islamic identity.283

The Muslim reaction further developed by Muslim grass roots movements that enabled the Muslims to mobilize for their political and economic rights. Consequently, these movements shifted the democratic discourse as Muslims became eligible to vote, becoming essential players in the French political system. Moreover, various French politicians began to court the Muslim populations in order to receive the Muslim vote. The Muslim populations took advantage of these developments, understanding the potential power they held as a political voting bloc. The powerful conservative media, on the other hand, attempted to portray any party that accommodated the Muslim vote as potentially influenced by other nations where these populations’ loyalties resided.

The media presented the Muslims, not as second and third generation Frenchmen but young people of immigrant descent, who were a potential political liability as they might allow foreign powers to influence the outcome of elections.284 The Muslims politically mobilized for power creating voting drives in order to counter The Front’s accusations, regarding negative stereotypes about the Muslim minority. Muslim political and social action was also immediately implemented by ethnic and Islamic organizations because the fear, The Front would use the Rushdie Affair in England as an excuse to dismiss the loyalties of Muslim minorities in France, as was done in England after protests by angry Muslims. Although Muslims in France also protested against Salman Rushdie’s, The

283 Giles Kepel, *Allah in the West*, 153. Kepel argues that many Muslim activist used the hijab to recreate “networks of social solidarity to combat social problems of city life.”

Satanic Verses, the number of protesters was relatively low in comparison to England, as Pakistani and Iranian immigrants primarily represented Muslims who heeded the call from radical Islamists.

The immediate success of the municipal elections of March 1989 reported that more than five-hundred young people of North African descent had been elected, including fifty-four deputy mayors in contrast to twelve in 1983.285 These elections allowed the Muslim populations to realize they belonged in French society and could have a dramatic impact on policy. This collective action by the Muslims signaled an integration effort by community leaders into the French political framework. But a great set back loomed for the Muslim minority as the Algerian Civil war, that cost over a hundred thousand lives in a short span of a decade greatly impacted, not only relations between the Muslims and the state, but also the relations among Muslims in Algeria and France.

The Algerian Muslim population in France represents the largest ‘question’ for the French state as Algerian history with the French state is one that represents a collective memory of hatred, death, suppression, and oppression. The Algerians in the French context are caught between two trajectories of memory one that ties them to Algeria and one that ties them to the French state. The Algerians who live in France are taking the brunt of collective French hatred toward the Algerians that are based on assumptions that were constructed during the Algerian War for independence. However, Algerian Muslim identity has been constructed by French colonial rule, further exemplifying Simmel’s stranger, a person that lives in a society where neither (s)he nor the host feels (s)he belong.

285 Riva Kastoryano, Negotiating Identities: States and Immigrants In France and Germany, 143
In 1990, the Algerian political system for the first time allowed Islamic parties to run for presidential elections when the Islamist party unanimously won the presidential and parliamentary elections. The Army under the directive of the French government deterred democracy in Algeria by taking over the system and imposing marshal law, arresting all Islamist opposition members leading to a brutal civil war. The developments in Algeria greatly influenced French public opinion regarding Islamic Associations and the general Muslim presence in France. This was dovetailed by French news coverage on the Algerian Civil War which solely focused on the violent acts of Islamic terrorism in Algeria, afraid of a possible spill over of that violence into France, as had happened decades earlier during the Algerian War for independence.

In response to the murder of three French Consular in Algeria by the Islamic Salvation Front (GIA), the French government rounded up over 110 people who were members of the GIA, arresting eighty-eight, sending a message to both domestic and international Islamic activists that France would suppress any radical Islamic activity within its borders.286 Again, in 1994, the French government, in response to a plane hijacking in Paris by the GIA, arrested 131 people from all over France dismantling support networks for the Algerian GIA.287 These raids further incurred a response by the GIA in France resulting in two terrorist attacks.

The first involved the death sentence of two French Arabs in their involvement in an armed attack on a Marrakech tourist hotel. The second involved the summer 1995 bombings in Paris and Lyon attributed to the GIA in which two French Muslims were


involved wounding dozens. The impact of the global Muslim world was really challenging both Muslim and French identities regarding their presence in France. The Muslim minorities vehemently condemned GIA actions maintaining that the GIA did not represent Islamic or ethnic cultural values. The French political response was pivotal during this period as demands increased from the French public to expel Muslims from French territory. However, the government maintained good relations with the Muslim minority ignoring the public and right wing political parties. The Republic countered the extremist organizations and passed legislation criminalizing the act of insulting Islam and Muslims in literature or in public. If convicted, one had to pay a heavy fine or even spend time in jail.

With the political and economic empowerment of many Muslim organizations, Muslim minorities became important foreign and domestic policy tools for the French republic, but not enough to be swayed by the Muslim minorities’ will. The republic usually sided with the Muslim minorities if there were no larger state interests at stake. The French republic complied with Muslim grievances regarding the Palestinian-Israeli issue by cautiously playing both sides. In addition, the French republic is quite adamant in their support of Middle East nation-states against American intervention, portraying to the Muslim world that France supports the Muslim people and indirectly the Muslim religioscape. Nevertheless, the French carefully dismissed the interest of Muslim minorities in the first Gulf War by supporting the coalition invasion. Although the war provoked huge anti-Western sentiments, the French suburbs showed their ‘steady loyalty to the French state and its leader.’

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The event that exemplified increased permanence of the Muslim minority on French soil was the construction of the grand mosque of Lyon. Beginning in the early 1970s Muslims who prayed at broken down buildings and empty Catholic churches sought to create a mosque of their own to accommodate the growing Muslim community. Beginning in 1979, Muslim officials representing the Lyon Islamic community created an organization in order to organize to gain support from the Muslim and non-Muslim community by lobbying for funds and permission to construct a large mosque in the city center. The mosque initially gained support from the public, including Catholic officials who did not want Muslims using their church for prayer services. But the developments were tempered by setbacks, as political events including the civil war in Lebanon, the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and finally the growing trend of Islamic fundamentalism in the 1980s re-ignited fears of a Muslim 'invasion' of Lyon. Radical right wing organizations protested vehemently against the building of the mosque, The Front used this incident as a central issue and a national cause during the elections; and radical Muslims used French antagonism to maintain that the 'non-Muslim' will never allow the Muslim any freedom.

However, the Muslims who wanted to open the mosque utilized the state's democratic structures in order to get the necessary legal assurances to build the mosque. After "six administrative lawsuits, two appeals to the Conseil d'Etat, three applications for a building permit,"^289 and 19.5 million dollars of Saudi Arabian donations the mosque was opened in 1994. The mosque during this period represented the progress the Muslim minorities achieved through the years, but also represented the current socio-political

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^289 Joel S. Fetzer & J Christopher Soper, *Muslims and the State in Britain, France and Germany*, 89
developments in France as a year later, the mosque was shot up by unknown gunmen, and there was infighting among Muslims at the mosque for ideological control of the mosque.

Another important development that greatly influenced Muslim domestic relations with other minorities in the French context was the recent rise of anti-Semitism in Muslim minority communities. The Muslim minority vehement stand against Israel and Israeli policy has changed the relationship dynamics between the Jew and the Muslim, and the Jew and the French state. Many Muslim minorities who have legitimate political grievances with Israel were often shifting their hatred and antagonism towards the local Jewish population. As of 1995, nearly twenty attacks on Jewish community centers and synagogues has occurred, making it hard for the French state to maintain good relations with their Jewish populations, many of whom decided to emigrate to Israel for refuge. Although all the major Islamic and Arab cultural organizations condemned such attacks, the Muslim community during this period had neither dealt with nor faced the realities on the ground regarding the relative rise in anti-Semitic attacks on Jewish religious and cultural organizations in France. In fact, these attacks would increase in the second Palestinian Intifada.

By mid-decade with national unemployment escalating and Muslim minority unemployment levels doubling the national average, Muslims were increasingly excluded from society, as they turned inward for political, social, and economic support. The end result by mid-decade, according to Wihtol de Wendenis, was that “for the youngest, Islam grows all the more as exclusion increases: in some suburbs, the beard-wearing are the only ones present to propose to them structures of belief, of life, even family or job
and sometimes a valuable identity: it is better to say we are Muslims than unemployed.” With increasing tension and a genuine rift in French society, the Muslims continued with attempts at political reform although anti-immigration movements became even more powerful. These groups demanded Muslim immigrant expulsion arguing that the Muslim minorities were ultimately un-assimilable and the primary reason France faced an unemployment crisis.

However, resistance to this discourse came from organizations that became an important facet of the French political arena. These organizations were vital for the indigenous Muslim masses to gain social and political acceptance within France. They articulated Muslim wants and needs to local and central government powers, demanding funds for the betterment of neighborhood development programs and educational facilities for the minorities. These organizations presented Muslims as a credible political and social group within France making it difficult for the French Right to demonize the Muslims. Although the Muslims were integrating into the state socio-political and economic structures, the French population still maintained a perception of the Muslims as immigrants “whether the immigrant was born in France or retained citizenship in some North African country.” This is quite similar to German citizenship, wherein one remains an Ausländer, one receives German citizenship and is no longer a Gastarbeiter.

The Muslims at the end of 1995 were sitting at the crossroads not only of their domestic socio-political and economic situation, but also internationally as Islam and the Muslim world continued to be in the forefront of struggle and change. The Muslims

290 Pauly, *Islam in Europe: Integration or Marginalization*, 44.

291 Kastoryano, *Negotiating Identities: States and Immigrants In France and Germany*, 17.
found their identity within the French state as they continued to make inroads from within the state infrastructure. The French state in this period shifted domestic policy towards inserting the Muslim population into French society through integration and accommodation of the Muslim minority. The French state also understood their international role as a nation-state with a large Muslim population and the impact these minorities potentially have on the socio-political and economic situation in France.

1995 To the Present

From the mid-decade to the present, the French implemented policies that defined the Muslim minority through Islam as the French state began creating various Islamic bodies that would represent and allow for state control of the Muslim minorities in the political and social sphere. This was a great gesture from the French state towards the Muslim minorities, but unfortunately, the integration of Muslim minorities into the socio-political context of France is going to take more than the creation of Islamic organizations and the building of cathedral mosques. Throughout the late 1990s, the French state aided in the construction of mosques but also allowed outside sources to fund and manage the mosques as a gesture to both the Muslim community and the Muslim states that they are seeking favor.

However, what would eventually become apparent to the French state during the November 2005 riots is that constructing a few buildings and creating official Muslim organizations is not enough for minority integration into the French state. In fact, as Gilles Kepel explains, “the central minority-majority conflict in France is between insiders and outsiders: those who have a paid job and access to social protection, and
those who are excluded from the system because of their age, their educational attainment, their origin, the sound of their name or the color of their skin.” The real problem was the ‘problem of the suburbs’ as unemployment rates for the Muslim minorities were typically three to four times higher than the national average. The concentration of Muslim minorities in the bidonvilles exemplified the continual marginalization of Muslims, which further perpetuated mistrust in both sides of the communities typifying the stranger status of Muslim minorities. Nevertheless, the lack of integration of the Muslims was notably represented in the lack of political representation of Muslim minorities in relation to their overall total population in France. Secondly, the bidonville ghettos prevented social interaction between the Muslim minority and the larger ‘French’ community.

However, Muslim minorities were becoming more noticeable. Muslims increasingly occupied a place in the public sphere. Muslims were writing books on Islam in France for the French public, as Muslims defined their identity in the French state through the literature. Barriers between the French and Muslim minority youth began to break down as the Muslims represented pop and fad culture to which the French youth were attracted. Politically, by the millennium the strength of the French Muslim communities dramatically increased as the Muslim minority became a political force in various bidonvilles attracting both the right and the left in their attempts to accommodate the Muslim minorities. As Vincent Geisser notes “we are no longer in beurmania. The political system has righted this problem, and we talk about it less.” The Muslim minority also progressed in the foreign policy arena, as they increasingly become important

292 Kepel, Allah in the West, 208.
political actors from within the French state.

In the second Gulf War, two French journalists were captured by the insurgents and were threatened with execution in response to French domestic policies banning the *hijab* in public schools. The Muslim minority immediately lobbied and protested for the release of two French journalists that were captured. The general Muslim response domestically and globally was great a triumph for French policy while for the French public it was a great emotional success that momentarily brought the Muslim minorities and the larger French public together. The recent progress of Muslim minorities in the political and social arena is optimistic for Muslim minority and French relations. The full integration of Muslims in the socio-political and economic arena is a long-term project for the French state. But these developments in recent years has shown that even with great difference the Muslim minority and the French state are able to find middle ground between Islamic identity and French identity. Currently in the French socio-political environment the minorities are presently fighting for the middle ground in Lyon, Paris, Marseille demanding their rights as citizens within the state as they attempt to cease their identities as *strangers* and enter into the fold of the greater national imagined community.
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

This study presented the history of Chinese and French policies towards their Muslim minorities and conversely the Muslim response to those policies. Furthermore, this study illustrated the influence of the global Muslim religioscape on Chinese and French institutions and the Muslim minorities that reside in these nations. Based on the democratic structures of the French Republic, France is more likely in the future to accommodate and integrate French Muslims into the larger French imagined community, constructing a viable nation-state within the larger Muslim religioscape. The PRC’s undemocratic and bureaucratic government structure will further allow Muslim minority identities to be solely tied to the larger Muslim religioscape. One can determine these conclusions through minority access to politically relevant resources including, state accommodation and assimilation of minorities through the mobilization of political parties and socio-cultural organizations that represent the Muslim minorities in each context.

In France, the democratic setting allowed for the organization and growth of Muslim minority cultural, political, and social organizations to flourish and mobilize for power in order to cease a peripheral identity and become associated with the center. Whereas China, Muslim organizations were strictly constructed and controlled by the state, disallowing mobilization or attainment of any power in the national political and
economic infrastructure. In China, there is only one nationally recognized Muslim organization, the Chinese Muslim Association, while in France, there are over fourteen hundred different Muslim groups, and organizations seeking a dynamic role within the French state. These organizations facilitate the process toward Muslim accommodation and integration into the French imagined community.

Although the PRC state’s infrastructure historically set avenues for the expression of Muslim grievances, the Muslim ethnic minorities in government are essentially powerless and unrepresentative of the majority of Muslims. Moreover, these Muslims are communist cadres who ceased to identify with their ethnic communities in order to attain access to power. The Muslim minorities in France are beginning to express their political will, as nearly three million Muslims are eligible to vote in the democratic structures of the state. French state accommodation of Muslim minorities through official recognition of Islam and Muslim cultural identities allows Muslim minorities to develop within and into the framework of various French institutions, allowing the construction of a French Muslim identity and concurrently French Islam.

Furthermore, this study concluded that although the Muslims in China were allowed to maintain a sense of cultural and religious identity; this was not a direct consequence of Chinese favor over the Muslim minority but in fact, a policy entrenched in the racist foundations of the minzu paradigm. The hegemonic minzu paradigm identified the Muslim population as a part of the “Other,” which further alienated the Muslim population from the state as they were not allowed to develop the political and social capital to participate in the state’s system. While in France, the policy outcome was a
result of the immigration ideology fostered in the early 1970s, and how the political culture viewed citizenship, the nation, and integration of immigrants.

France in contrast to China still maintains a relatively strict assimilationist policy based on the republican model of “immigrant incorporation.” However, the republic has drastically changed this model in response to Muslim minority mobilization in the French state. The result was French policy toward the Muslims has fragmented into extreme assimilationist at times with the implementation of the hijab bill in August 2005, which made it mandatory for Muslim girls in public schools funded by the state to remove the hijab. Towards a policy of multiculturalism as proposed by interior minister Nicholas Sarkozy who was vital in the creation and support of Islamic organizations like the French Council of the Muslim Faith and Union of Islamic Organizations in France, which represent the Muslim populations in socio-political and religious matters. French policies inversely allowed and supported various Islamic identities local to France to emerge limiting the impact of the larger Muslim religioscape and allowing an indigenous Islam to materialize.

The impact of these policies on the minorities will ultimately influence the future of each state. The only political avenues that Chinese Muslim organizations have in the present context are illegal bodies that the PRC maintains are allies with terrorist organizations. The Chinese state used 9-11 and the “war on terror” to gain support from the United States, while justifying crackdowns on any Muslim group or organization that sought socio-political and cultural rights. Moreover, increased alienation from within the Chinese state is creating a wave of dissent that is looking towards the Muslim world for...
answers, which is why it was quite common in the beginning of the millennium to find Chinese Muslim fighters in Afghanistan and Chechnya joining the global jihad.

In France, the fragmented state of affairs is also producing many problems for the French state. The majority of the Muslims are loyal citizens of the state practicing various prescriptions of Islamic religious and cultural practices, but there also exists a radical fringe from within the French state that are supported by dissatisfied, alienated citizens. These Muslims are potential recruits for radical Islamic organizations that seek the destruction of the French republic. In France, the real battle lies in the fact the French state has to shift policy that ghettoized the Muslims over the years in order to construct a French Muslim citizen that would not have the opportunity to fall prey to the radical Islamist fringe that are gaining a strong foothold within France. This of course will take a vast restructuring of political and economic policies that fight French cultural perceptions of the Muslim minorities and furthermore implement Sarkozy’s plan for instituting affirmative action avenues for the Muslim minorities who live in the suburbs.

Since September 11, 2001, the French and the Chinese nation-states are continuing their policies from the 1990s as they seek to quell any potential threat of violence to the state by either radical Islamist or discontent Muslims. In China, the need for energy resources specifically oil will generate domestic policy that seeks to keep the Xinjiang autonomous region united with China, through political and economic incentives for the Uyghur Muslims. However, in order to legitimate and justify any harsh policy regarding the Muslim populations, China will maintain the discourse regarding the “war on terror.” The Chinese state uses the “war on terror” to gain support from Muslim countries that have similar domestic problems with opposition and secessionist movements.
Furthermore, the PRC are also currently using the "war on terror" and the significant economic role Muslim minorities' play within the Chinese context as an impetus to officially co-opt and support traditional Chinese Islamic Sufism that is apolitical and generally a quietist form of Islam.

In France, the 9-11 discourse is potentially having a greater impact on the Muslim minorities and their future in the French state. Although many neo-Nazi organizations like The Front National called for the expulsion of Muslims from geographic France immediately after 9-11, the French republic sought to integrate the Muslim populations into the framework of the state. Even after the tragic bombings in England in the summer of 2005, the French interior minister Nicholas Sarkozy bluntly stated that the French state intends to do whatever it takes to integrate the Muslim minorities economically and politically in order to answer failing French integration policies that induce alienation and ghettoization of the Muslim minority. The French state recognizes that there exists a proliferation of Muslim identities that are hard to control and co-opt because of their ties with the Muslim religioscape. Therefore, the French state has pioneered an approach to move beyond the framework of a French Islam that was proposed in the early nineties. The French government is currently seeking guidance from Al Azhar, the most prestigious Islamic University in the Muslim world in order to combat Islamic radicalism and fundamentalism within French borders by directly challenging their assumptions and paradigms.

An interesting development recently occurred in France regarding the headscarf. Beginning in the fall of 2005, all religious paraphernalia was outlawed by the Republic in public schools. Although the Muslim minorities were against this policy, the Muslim
populations complied with no real problems. Prior to enacting this law, the French foreign minister was sent to speak with prestigious Islamic scholars in the Muslim world in order to rally support for the policy. Many traditional Islamic scholars disagreed with the actual act itself, but supported the fact that the Muslims according to Islamic law have to respect the law of the land and comply with its measures.

This development in France comes during a time when second and third generation Muslim minority youth are rioting against the inequalities and lack of opportunities afforded toward the Muslim populations. This riot is a pivotal cross point for the French state as these Muslim minorities seek to challenge the current socio-political system that has labeled them “strangers” in order to integrate within the French socio-political and most importantly economic structures of the Republic. The third and fourth generation Muslim minorities who took part in the riots the past few weeks will eventually gain access to power through the democratic structures of the French state undermining the hegemonic racial policies of contemporary France, creating a hybridization of French and Muslim cultural, political, and religious identity.

This is currently taking root in France through the Muslim minorities’ impact on popular youth culture, the re-structuring of traditional party platforms that are now allowing greater Muslim minority political clout and the greater presence of ethnic minorities in the entertainment and sports industry. Moreover, Muslims are furthering the hybridization of French and Muslim identity through the urban landscape as thousands of mosques, cultural centers, and museums are producing a new self-consciousness amongst the French masses. The impact of the riots and the socio-political and cultural developments in contemporary France will coincide and generate the same political and
social developments that occurred decades earlier with the Civil Rights movement in the United States.

In China, the recent crackdown on any cultural and religious expression will ultimately lead to greater tension within the region. There is fear as of late, that with the relative openness of Chinese society today and the increase in Islamic consciousness and exchange of Islamic ideology across neighboring borders, a possible revolt or rebellion may occur. The carrot and stick policies the Chinese state incurred has ceased to quell independence aspirations from the Muslim minorities. Furthermore, as China modernizes and develops, transforming traditional Muslim Uyghur and Hui economic production, tension would further increase as seen with the recent clashes between the Han and Hui Muslims, resulting in the deaths of nearly 148 people. Unless the PRC develops, a policy that seeks to integrate the Muslim within the socio-political and economic structures of the state there will be an increasing divide between the Muslim minority and the larger Han population leading to greater conflict in China’s various regions.

A stable future in both of these contexts depends on both the state’s ability to integrate the Muslim minorities into the “national imagined community,” while still recognizing and simultaneously negotiating with the demands of the Muslim religioscape in order to construct a viable, peaceful state.

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