

Working on the Margin
Class, Economic Restructuring and the Formation of Political Identity *
Pandeli M Glavanis
Centre for the Study of Globalisation, Ethnicity and Marginality

Over the last two decades major changes in the nature of work and employment have occurred on a global level. The restructuring of the global economy, for example, along with the growth of trans-national companies, favours decentralised production and a cheap and flexible workforce employed on a casual basis (Glavanis, 1996 and Sassen 1991). Casualised labour is not marginal to the modern industrial economy, which is dependent on these earnings, yet workers are marginalised within society. Casual workers, however, are often denied all employment rights and are exploited by their employers, in turn pressured by the manufacturers, to obtain the maximum level of production for minimum levels of pay. (Fekete, 1997) Furthermore, public discourse and policy-making have converged, so as to highlight some of the negative effects of the drive to enhance “*economic growth and competitiveness*”. In particular, this convergence has highlighted the manner in which this may have contributed to an increase of the “*social exclusion and marginalisation*” for different social groups and communities within the European Union. This paper will explore this argument with reference to one community; namely European Muslims (immigrants and settlers) who constitute one of those vulnerable and marginalised of these groups and who appear to have experienced discrimination in the labour market and the societal effects that have followed the drive for economic competitiveness and the concomitant increase in flexible employment practices.

The focus on European Muslims also derives from a parallel concern to deconstruct an increasingly popular account, which has gained currency both within the field of academia and among policy makers at the local, national and European level¹. This is the *essentialist* account of the recent emergence and increasing visibility of *Muslims Voices*² within the European Union, which it is argued derive from a loyalty to an anachronistic and traditional Islamic culture, which is incompatible with modernity. As such these accounts also have contributed, albeit inadvertently, to the emergence of a new form of “racism” within Europe; *Islamophobia*. (Glavanis, 1998 and 1999) Furthermore, such accounts also suggest that European Muslims are able to make use of their particular cultural capital (Islam) in order to both minimise the effects of economic restructuring as well as to exploit niche markets within the changing European economy. This, of course, it is argued, allows European Muslims to temper the effects of this economic restructuring and thus, contrary to received wisdom, negate some of the socio-economic ramifications of their social exclusion and marginalisation which, may have intensified due to the economic restructuring process.

Such accounts, however, raise a number of conceptual and empirical concerns, which will constitute the focus of this paper. First, is the conceptual paradox where an apparently traditional and anachronistic culture (Islam) constitutes the particular social capital that allows European Muslims, albeit some of them, to compete successfully in a very “*modern*” and contemporary phase of capitalist development. This in effect raises the issue of the extent to which it is appropriate, conceptually at least, to perceive of Islam as a socio-cultural set of values that are incompatible with modernity. Second, is the assumption, derived almost entirely from aggregate quantitative economic indicators, that because some European Muslims are able to mobilise and exploit their particular cultural capital, they in effect are less vulnerable to some forms of social exclusion and marginalisation. Instead, this paper will explore the emergence of *Muslim Voices* within Europe in an analytical account, which gives conceptual privilege to an articulation of the two recent processes noted above: globalisation and economic restructuring and the formation of Islamic political identities (Muslim Voices) on the European political canvas.

Muslims in Europe: The Stranger Within

For more than a century Western social science had accepted that the assimilation of cultural and religious identities into a national society was a necessary precondition for socio-economic and political development. In fact, diverse and competing ethnic and religious communal identities were seen as a primary factor in dividing post-colonial societies and hindering development. European scholars perceived ethnic and religious identities as inimical to rational social planning and economic development, and instead highlighted the classical European model where, it was assumed, modernity had eroded communal identities in favour of citizenship and loyalty to the state.

Furthermore, conventional European social sciences also assume that communities of immigrants, settlers and/or ethnic origin will invariably follow a course characterised by the privatisation of religion, which it is also assumed is the case in the “host” societies. Nevertheless, Political Islam in Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East, since the 1970s, has continued to furnish evidence for the salience of ethnicity (religion) as an organising principle for political action, and is forcing a number of scholars in different areas of the social sciences to re-

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think the long-standing theoretical and conceptual models regarding the relationship between the ethnic (religious) identities and citizenship/nationhood. This was particularly the case in 1989 and after the fall of the Berlin Wall. For as Gilles Kepel has noted

*With the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, an entire way of conceptualising the twentieth century world disappeared. At a stroke not only the confrontation between east and west, but also conflicts between social classes expressed politically in the left-right opposition became obsolete...However, along with the end of the old order symbolised by the wall, 1989 also brought events which signalled new dimensions reflecting some of the contradictions of the world to come...in Britain's rundown inner cities working-class Pakistanis burnt copies of **The Satanic Verses** [and] in France, instead of uniting in celebration of the bicentenary of the 1789 Revolution and the values it proclaimed, was rent by divisions as it had not been since the Dreyfus affair, over an apparently trifling incident: could French society allow three Muslim girls (living in an underprivileged city suburb) to wear an Islamic veil to attend state school? (Kepel, 1997:1)*

The analytical significance of exploring the emergence of *Muslim Voices* derives from the fact that these new socio-political and cultural movements have established themselves outside the 'space' where Islam has traditionally been presented as a socio-political ideology and force. Thus it has also blurred the long-standing '**us and them**' view held by most Europeans (Orientalism), as they have had to accept within Europe the existence of substantial settler communities of Muslims: four million in France, two million in Germany and just under two million in Britain (using conservative estimates). Western scholarship, of course, has addressed the issue of Political Islam and its role in reshaping political space in the Middle East, Asia and other parts of the non-European world (see Said, 19--; Ayubi, 1991). What it has failed to do, however, is to consider the extent to which it can also constitute an alternative basis for the mobilization of global political order, and thus its ability to affect political organization *within* Europe. In other words, can Islam and especially contemporary 'Political Islam' exemplify a non-Western way in which political space can be organised and thus challenge the 'European' (Westphalian) state system, which emerged during centuries of socio-political and cultural struggles that were grounded in a Judeo-Christian tradition (Allen 1995; Beeley, 1995).

A consideration of the failure of Western scholarship to seriously consider the possibility of any other socio-cultural tradition as being capable of influencing changes on a global scale is of course beyond the limitations of this short paper. Nevertheless, it is important to quote Peter Worsley's comment on this matter. Following an extensive analysis of various theoretical and conceptual models of the nation-state, Worsley notes that

none of the models so far discussed take culture into account. All of them are variants of one kind or another of political economy, though without cultural dimension is impossible to make sense of a modern world in which nationalism religion and inter-ethnic hostility have been far more important than internationalism and secularism. Models based on political economy alone, therefore, are quite incapable of explaining such phenomena as the rise of a modern version of Islam, which is wrongly labelled 'Fundamentalism' ...the modern world has been shaped by cultural communities, From the Catholic Church and Islam to secular ideologies and movements like communism which transcend the boundaries of even the largest and most centralised state (Worsley, 1990, pp.92, 94).

It is for the above reasons that the primary analytical objective of this paper is to place on the European social research, intellectual and political agenda issues which are relatively submerged at the present time. This is to locate the study of "Political Islam" and "Muslim Voices" within the European Union in an analytical framework which will distance itself from the commonly held assumption that the Western European narrative has an overriding importance in the analysis of modernity. (Asad, 1993) Instead, this paper argues that the study of European Muslims and the manner in which they express their socio-political and cultural identities should be located in an analytical framework where they are "agents of their own history", albeit within a broader global socio-political and economic structure. In this respect this paper moves beyond the thesis presented by Worsley, which tends to privilege, even if it is only conceptually, the specific cultural dimension over the global economy and its implications.

Thus, in the first instance such an alternative account must highlight the broader canvass on which the varieties of European "Muslim Voices" have made their mark. For although European Muslims should not be subsumed analytically into the Western and European narrative, the analysis of Political Islam cannot be located outside the path of the modern juggernaut of global capitalism. (Asad, 1993: 5) In other words, we need to highlight the economic, social and political structures within which European Muslims have adopted the vocabulary of Political Islam as a means of expressing their identities and bring attention to their narratives. It is only then that we will be able to consider whether *Muslim Voices* are incompatible with the vocabulary of modernity (if at all), and the extent to which (if at all) European Muslims have succeeded in tempering the socio-economic effects of globalisation and economic restructuring.

Globalisation, flexible employment and marginality

The increasing globalisation of economic, political and cultural processes has profound research and policy implications. Issues concerning European competitiveness, policy and social stability must now be viewed in the

context of the internationalisation of social and economic life. Furthermore, the establishment of trading blocks in Europe, North America and South-East Asia has created a global “golden triangle”. As the respective states in these regions are unable to manipulate trading relationships in order to win competitive advantage, they seek instead to maintain an advantage by reference to “supply-side” policies. Thus, in all European countries the encouragement of entrepreneurial activity, the development of new skills and, in particular, the introduction of new forms of work organisation (flexibility in employment practices) have become major issues on the policy agenda (Brown and Crompton, 1994).

These changes, however, have also been accompanied by even more important transformations in the nature of employment relations and practices. By far one of the most important changes here is the dramatic decline of the power of trade unions as significant social partners and the concomitant decline in union membership. As traditional, unionised manufacturing industries have closed and high levels of unemployment, especially among white skilled males, has continued to increase, so the bargaining position of unions has all but been eliminated from the social contract. “In their place managements have emphasised the importance of increasing the ‘flexibility’ of their workforces, for example by employing at least some of their workers on contracts of employment which are ‘non-standard’ in the sense that they offer less than full-time employment and/or are not open-ended in duration (e.g. part-time, temporary, and fixed-term contracts)” (Brown, 1992 and 1997).

In this respect it is possible to suggest that workers’ experience of work during the last two decades is characterised primarily by three interrelated elements: insecurity and precarity of employment (unemployment); the intensification of work in the work place; and the increasing demands by employers for greater flexibility in employment practices. Insecurity in employment has been maintained by the increasing high levels of unemployment in all the European Union states and the intensification of work can be seen in the heavier workloads, longer and more demanding working hours, un-social shift work and an increased pace of production.

It is not surprising, therefore, that it is increasingly immigrants (legal and illegal) who are prepared to work under such conditions. It is important to note, however, that the increasing reliance on immigrant workers during this phase is significantly different than during the post-war period when Europe looked to cheap immigrant labour as a way of re-building its shattered economies. This was very much the case in such sectors as textiles, car manufacturing, electrical industries and metal manufacturing. Nevertheless, as these “older” industries have gradually disappeared from the economic landscape, immigrant workers have been confronted with diminishing alternatives and have thus had to accept the more casualised and flexible employment opportunities in the new economic activities (primarily in the service and clothing sectors). Thus, as the expectations of secure jobs in these “older” industries have been replaced by insecurity and unemployment, immigrant labour has had to adjust its own aspirations and make important economic behaviour decisions with regard to individual and household survival.

The significant element, concerning this new situation, is that flexibility in employment practices also means a flexible supply of labour. In other words, it has led to an increased demand for temporary immigrant labour in order to maximise the competitive advantage of these European industries, which are compelled to compete in an increasingly globalised economy in which supply-side costs are the only elements that can be controlled. In this context, settler immigrant populations constitute more of a burden than an asset and this is in distinct contrast to the post-war era when they were a central component in the re-building of the national economies. The social cost (housing, health care, welfare, and education) needed to sustain a settler immigrant population is, of course, the central issue here. There is only one way, however, in which such a dilemma can be resolved: reduce or remove the citizen and resident rights from settler immigrant populations (especially from new immigrants) and thus render their stay in European countries precarious and contingent. Thus, a variety of new regulations need to be introduced which would ensure that only those legally entitled can and do benefit from the welfare regimes in each of the European countries. The problem, of course, is how these various legal entitlements are defined and implemented.

Given the above, it is not surprising that one of the most striking and visible characteristics in the cities/regions of most European states is the presence of increasing numbers of immigrants and the particularly high rate of unemployment among them (Modood, 1997 & Cross, 1997). As Malcolm Cross notes,

migrants who arrived in many European cities from former colonies or those recruited under gasterbeiter systems in the 1960s and the early 1970s, originally revealed very low rates of unemployment. After 1980, this pattern changed rather dramatically and migrants and ethnic minorities are now strongly over-represented in the ranks of the long-term unemployed...In Germany, for example, older industrial cities on the Ruhr have undergone de-industrialisation with major job losses in then traditional sectors of mining and steel production. In Frankfurt in 1970 the foreign population was 11.8% while by 1994 had risen to 29.2 % ...this rise was not due to foreign bankers arriving to work in global finance; the fastest growing groups in the period from 1986-1994 were Yugoslavs, Moroccans and Poles (Cross, 1997: 1-2).

Similar patterns can be observed in a variety of other European cities. What is important to note, however, is that although there is a visible rate of high unemployment amongst immigrant workers, there is also a very visible

increase of their numbers; even in the context of de-industrialisation and the dramatic decline of the traditional industries. In Greater London, for example, immigrants constituted 20% of the population in 1991, compared with 9% a decade earlier. At the same time, immigrants are more strongly represented among London's unemployed than they were a decade ago, both because they are more numerous and because they appear to have been disproportionately affected by the downturn in economic fortunes affecting the Capital at the end of the decade of the 1980s. Thus, the Bangladeshi population has seen unemployment rates rise from 16.7% to 35.8% within one decade (Cross, 1993).

Saskia Sassen, amongst many others, has presented an explanation of what appears to be a sociological dilemma: the continuous increase of immigrants in a context of a dramatic decline of productive economic activity that had attracted them in the first place. Sassen argues convincingly that the hallmark of such a social phenomenon is the dramatic growth of low-level service jobs, usually accompanied by short-term labour contracts, privatised services, part-time work, a growing dependence on female labour and a general informalisation of economic activities (Sassen, 1991). Similarly, Cross and Modood have also argued that these European cities/regions, which exemplify an expanding informal sector, have also constituted the location where immigrants have embarked into entrepreneurial and self-employment activities.

In fact it is such accounts which explore the relationship between the persistence of thriving informal economies and state policies favouring privatisation and free competition that also highlight the extent to which competitive market forces are tempered by the way in which immigrant populations fall back upon "*ethnic identities and loyalties*" and use them to engage in a social dialogue with the state. What is not clear, however, is the origin of these ethnic identities and loyalties and their relationship, if any, to modernity and the process of globalisation and economic restructuring. As such these studies tend to imply a *fixed* formulation of ethnicity, which appears to exemplify an analytical pedigree that derives primarily from the conventional Race Relations School, which highlights the essentialist characteristics of race and ethnicity. In other words, although such accounts acknowledge the dynamic and changing nature of global economic systems, they fail to consider the extent to which these dramatic changes may also have a role in conditioning ethnic identities, especially the way in which they are mobilised with respect to particular engagements with the state or other economic competitors.

Instead, these accounts tend to assume that marginalised immigrant and/or settler communities derive economic decision-making from presumed cultural value systems that are said to be associated with particular ethnic and/or religious identities. This is then usually contrasted to the manner in which indigenous populations make "rational" choices. Thus, the current literature tends to polarise "rational" with culturally determined behaviour, but fails to explore the interaction between the two. What such academics fail to do is to consider the way in which cultural, religious and ideological values may be tempered by economic opportunities and as specific responses to particular policies. In effect they fail to consider the way in which *cultural, social, religious and personal values, structural economic changes and opportunities, and state policies and incentives* may come together in order for a decision to be made or for a particular form of behaviour to be articulated. In other words an analytical approach, which highlights the points at which, these three intersect and thus consider the dynamic relationship between the *economy, the individual and society*.

Muslim workers in Europe: A case study³

Evidence from the research project suggests that atypical working patterns, in conjunction with low wages and labour market immobility are responsible for an atypical social life and conditions of poverty for many Muslims⁴ in Europe, resulting in marginalisation or exclusion from society. Although Muslims across Europe occupy a wide variety of positions and levels in most sectors of the economy, there is a high concentration to be found at the lowest end of the job market. Many hold part-time, flexible, temporary jobs and are invisible in statistics. Recent immigrants are often employed as unskilled or semi-skilled workers due to a lack of language skills and/or qualifications, or due to the intention of returning home. In Germany for example, migrants are largely employed in mining, manufacturing, commerce, hotels, restaurants and construction. As heavy industry and manufacturing have been particularly affected by the restructuring of the economy, migrants are also most adversely affected by job losses. Seasonal workers employed in the agricultural sector, hotel and building trades in Switzerland are recognised to have the lowest status, living without their families on low wages and in poor housing conditions. In Greece and Italy, migrants find seasonal work as builders and unskilled industrial and agricultural workers, or work in the retail industry. In the UK, different minority groups tend to be concentrated in different industries; South Asian Muslims for example, are concentrated in the textiles and clothing industry and, more generally, in transport and communications⁵. There are also a large number of Muslims, particularly women, employed in the service sector in many European countries, as hotel and restaurant workers, domestic help, cleaners and porters. These workers often do not have contracts, health insurance or holiday entitlement and are forced to work long hours for low wages. There is a low representation of Muslims in senior positions and management levels in most European countries. In the UK, where there are a considerable number of Muslims employed in the medical profession, these statistics mask the fact that they are often employed in inner city areas with a lack of resources. The perception of Muslims in Belgium as a problem-generating social category, plus the division of society into ethnic classes maintains the low-status of Muslim workers.

Furthermore, increased restrictions are placed on immigrants due to immigration policies and employment regulations. In Switzerland for example, only Swiss nationals can be employed in the public sector. In Greece, undocumented Albanian migrants are unable to receive welfare benefits despite making social security contributions through labour market activity.

Muslims in Europe are also more strongly represented among the unemployed⁶. In the UK, even in cities with relatively small minority populations, they account for a disproportionately large number of the unemployed. The proportion of young unemployed men from ethnic minorities is considerably higher than for young white men, even with the same levels of education and qualifications. These statistics are similar in the other European countries⁷. For example in Germany the sectors with the highest levels of unemployment are those with the highest proportions of Muslim immigrants. A high level of unemployment is therefore common amongst immigrants, despite the fact that the majority of the immigrant population is of employable age. In Switzerland, permanent resident migrants are three times more likely to be unemployed than Swiss nationals. In Italy, although long-term unemployment is not a common problem for Muslim workers, the majority change or lose jobs frequently, leading to precarious employment.

As a consequence of the difficulties in securing employment in the formal sector, they become over-represented in the informal economy. The informal economy covers a wide range of activities, some legal and others illegal, including tax evasion, unpaid economic activities undertaken for the household or friends, the criminal economy or any profitable activity undertaken outside of legal obligations. Employers exploit the lack of alternatives available to immigrants by using clandestine workers who are cheaper and more flexible than legal labour. Illegal labour often corresponds to illegal residence and this is also reflected in the crime statistics: the number of resident immigrants sentenced in Switzerland is 1.3 times higher than among Swiss citizens of the same age and 8 times higher among asylum seekers, the differential here mainly due to infractions of the Federal Law on the Stay and the Establishment of Immigrants. Asylum seekers and refugees in Germany cannot work without a work permit; in Switzerland they must wait for three months from filing the application, and in both cases they therefore often become hidden, illegal labour. Immigrants from outside the EU, for example Turks in Germany have limited conditions of residence in the EU and can easily become illegal workers due to pressure to engage in atypical employment. Homeworking is increasingly common, but often crosses borders into illegality with respect to safety conditions and rates of pay or because the income is undeclared. The Netherlands emphasises the vague distinction between the informal and formal sectors, which means that legislation can be difficult or unfavourable to enforce, but it appears that those who profit most from the informal economy are young and well-skilled, rather than illegal workers with little education, who are also forced to the lower end of the informal economy.

It is not surprising therefore that the research project identified a significant rise in Muslim entrepreneurship in all of the eight European countries within which the project was carried out. Faced with a lack of employment options, self-employment can be interpreted as a way to avoid exclusion in the labour market; the fact that the levels of self-employment increase with a rise in unemployment would appear to illustrate this⁸. Muslim workers are able to take advantage of social networks (e.g. family labour) and ethnic niches in the economy (e.g. *halal* food), although many have expanded considerably beyond the '*ethnic economy*'. As discrimination comes into play particularly at the *threshold* of the world of business Muslim workers therefore retreat into sectors such as shop keeping and restaurants to cope with exclusion. Small firms are favoured by the rise of the service sector and the growth of the financial sector and European Muslims are able to take advantage of opportunities in self-employment in small businesses, which can meet unstable demand, and necessitate only a small amount of capital, in addition to using family labour. The development of ethnic enterprises in Italy, for example, is credited to gaps left by native Italians in, for example, productive craftsmanship and services. The project, however, also highlights similarities between immigrants and/or settlers and indigenous entrepreneurs based on age, education levels and (low) participation of female entrepreneurs. It suggests that the cultural background is only one aspect pertinent to small enterprises, concluding that the high percentage of Muslim enterprises is due rather to long-term unemployment of minorities. Furthermore, the main impetus for self-employment among Muslims in the UK was found to be unemployment, underemployment, job dissatisfaction and blocked opportunities, with racism being seen as a significant factor⁹.

Muslim women and employment

In focusing on Muslim women and employment, the project also explored connections between gender, marginality, Islam and work. In general, the research concluded that Muslim women are more marginalised in society than men, due to a combination of different factors, but it also notes an increasing participation in the labour market despite such obstacles. Many of the difficulties Muslim women face in the labour market are the same as for Muslim men, comprising racism and religious discrimination, the lack of secure, full-time positions available, lack of language skills and qualifications in some cases, high levels of unemployment, restrictions of immigration policies etc. The growth of the service sector has resulted in lower unemployment levels for Muslim women than men due to increased opportunities in this sector, albeit in very low-paid and insecure employment. However, there is a much higher concentration of women, both Muslim and non-Muslim, in part-time

employment, work associated with lower pay, lower status and fewer possibilities for promotion. In addition they face the sexual division of work and gender discrimination in the labour market. The specific employment choices, career paths, types of work undertaken and work preferences of the women interviewed for this project are shown to be extremely diverse and varied depending on levels of education, qualifications, length of time spent in the partner country, nationality, age, culture, generation, family responsibilities and relationship with Islam. The life histories that make up part of this project illustrate the extent of the marginalisation of Muslim women in Europe and describe their different ways of coping with social exclusion due to their 'Muslimness'. The part-time, 'flexible', temporary, casualised labour seems to be more common among Muslim women¹⁰. In France, Muslim women frequently hold jobs in the 'mobile tertiary sector', comprising work such as private or domestic service and shop keeping; only 16% are salaried employees in the public sector with its associated benefits. When difficulties are encountered in seeking employment, for example racism or religious discrimination due to names or wearing headscarves, women from several countries described how they must resort to informal networks and contacts in order to secure work. This requires a high degree of initiative, determination and flexibility. Some women reported that they did not wear a headscarf due to fear of discrimination or inability to find work; others searched for alternative types of employment, for example homeworking, self-employment, social or youth work.

Muslim women often find themselves in a position particularly vulnerable to discrimination due to their visibility if they wear a headscarf¹¹. This conditions to a large extent the types of employment available to Muslim women, or the types of employment they will themselves consider. For example, it is for this reason that some Muslim women choose to be self-employed or to work from home.¹² Whereas Arab women in general working in Switzerland felt that the labour market was open to all, women wearing headscarves have found the headscarf to be 'incompatible' with the labour market. Similarly, some Pakistani Muslim women in the UK held the belief that with adequate skills and qualifications, Muslims will not face discrimination in the labour market, but women wearing headscarves who have more contact with the community all condemn racist attitudes and comments towards them. Muslim women of Turkish origin living in Germany face the additional challenge to their choice to wear headscarves, as the issue is also fiercely debated in Turkey.

Headscarves have become a self-conscious decision, particularly for women from the younger generation. Where for the older generation the headscarf is traditional, for younger women it represents greater freedom. They feel constantly challenged to defend their choice and justify their views, which has led them to acquire an in-depth knowledge of Islam and the Koran and a new self-understanding. In Germany, women known as 'veiled feminists' demand positions in political parties, criticise male interpretations of Islamic practices and patriarchal structures and deem gender-specific spatial segregation unnecessary. Ironically, protests have led to increased participation of pro-Islamic women in society and politics. Muslim women in the Netherlands have protested at the pressure on them to become 'emancipated', stressing that "*'modernisation'/'emancipation' is not the same as westernisation or 'Dutchification'*". In Belgium, the young headscarf wearers feel that their identity is challenged and their own responsibility goes unrecognised. They also feel that they are seen as a collective by Belgian society rather than as individuals and are more likely to be considered 'fundamentalists'. On the contrary, their status as Belgian citizens, they believe, gives them the right to express their faith publicly and to be accepted as Belgians along with their faith, signalling "*the transition from politeness to politics*". Headscarves thus, in certain situations, become a political attribute, "*instruments of reaction to mechanisms of domination, of mobilisation in public, and of claiming the right to equality*". Similarly, the older generation of Muslim women interviewed in Germany see themselves as 'guests' in Germany who therefore ought to adapt to the host society, whereas the younger generation see the headscarf as compatible with German society: they have a constitutional right to practice their faith, they feel 'at home' in Germany, and therefore have the right to assert their interests.

Women born in the host country, and having citizenship are the most likely to enjoy a sense of stability, socialisation and permanence and they hold the greatest variety of occupations in society. Work, rather than being a financial necessity is a symbol of fulfilment and opportunities in society. This group of women are also more likely to be critical of the labour market situation, holding the lack of acceptance of a different culture accountable for inequalities, rather than assuming that the lack of qualifications or language skills is responsible. Their identity is most often expressed in terms of their faith and the nationality of the host country, for example Muslim British women, whereas for their parents their identity is based on their nationality, Pakistani Muslim. The German report likewise suggests that self-definition for the younger generation is expressed via culture and religion: although links to the country of origin are weaker, links to Islam become stronger in order to "*achieve a new cultural justification of their minority status*". Even non-practising Muslims who have a greater attachment to their culture of origin assert that Islam plays an important role in their lives. However, there are also young Muslim women who prefer to be discreet in their religious practices or reject an Islamic identity altogether. The attitudes of the host society to second and third generation Muslim women is ambiguous: they are either regarded as doubly discriminated against because they face resistance both from within their community and from outside

it, or conversely they are seen as having a privileged position due to their insights into the western *and* the migrant/Muslim culture.

Muslim women also face discrimination on the basis of their gender. As with many non-Muslim women, they must cope with a 'double day' of work plus domestic and family responsibilities. Paid work is often the subject of negotiation within the family, particularly concerning the type of work that can be undertaken and the hours worked. First-generation Muslim women of Turkish origin in Germany complain that the negative attitudes of Turkish men towards their work limits their choice of occupation. These differing cultural norms also affect the type of work Muslim women are occupied in, for example it is more common for a woman to work in Turkey than in Morocco, and correspondingly, there are more Muslims of Turkish origin working in the Netherlands, than those of Moroccan origin. Muslim women in both the UK and in the Netherlands assert that Islam is no barrier to women working. Dutch research has determined two 'emancipation models': an orientation towards work and an orientation towards care. Rather than being dependent on nationality, religion or immigrant status, socio-economic position was found to be a major determinant. Dutch women with young children from low socio-economic backgrounds also fit into the model 'orientation towards care'. Low wages do not pay for childcare, and women in this position are therefore unable to take paid work. Muslim women of Pakistani origin working as homeworkers in the UK cite disadvantages inherent in homeworking very similar to those experienced by white British women homeworkers: long hours for low pay, with no benefits or security and the stress of combining work with child care and domestic tasks. The reasons for undertaking this type of work are also replicated, in terms of child care and the responsibility for taking care of the household, in addition to the reluctance on the part of their husbands for them to take paid work outside the home. Pakistani Muslim women however, particularly first-generation, face the additional disadvantages of a lack of language skills and educational qualifications, and they tend to be concentrated in the lowest-paid jobs. Yet younger, second- and third-generation Muslim women with the advantages of language skills and qualifications, still experience racism in the labour market, leading to their effective exclusion from many sectors of the economy.

It is clear from the above schematic account of Muslim workers in Europe, and especially of women workers, that economic status and generation do constitute determinants of marginality and the typical response of individuals from this immigrant and settler community does not rely solely on cultural values. On the contrary it can be concluded that *cultural values* do articulate with a variety of economic conditions to produce varied responses and that it is almost impossible to conceptualise a *typical* Muslim worker or Muslim woman worker. In this respect Islam, as a cultural set of values, cannot be seen as having any analytical privilege in any account of the socio-economic conditions of European Muslims; in the period of globalisation and economic restructuring. Nevertheless, Islamic values and Muslim identities cannot be dismissed from the analysis. Instead what this paper has suggested is that European workers, and in this case Muslims, may well employ any set of cultural values at their disposal in order to respond to the dramatic changes brought about by the economic restructuring. Thus, it is not surprising that European Muslim may make use of Islamic networks or even political identities to cope with their marginalisation and social exclusion.

This, of course, is not to imply that Islam is incompatible with modernity or that using Islamic values tempers the effects of economic restructuring. On the contrary it suggests that *Muslim Voices* are very much part of modernity and that those European workers who resort to such Islamic political identities, may temper the effects, but at a cost of attracting other forms of socio-cultural exclusion and marginalisation; *Islamophobia*. In this respect, it is possible to conclude by noting that approaches which analytically polarise economy and culture in their accounts of ethnicity will fail to grasp the dynamic relationship between the two and thus produce static and essentialist interpretations. Culture and economy do not possess analytical priorities over each other and it is the analytical framework, which is able to articulate both together that will allow us to grasp the subtleties, diversity and contingencies which characterise the process of ethnic formation.

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NOTES

¹ The accounts referred to are primarily those written from with the race relations paradigm which tend to account for ethnicity in essentialist terms and are exemplified by the work of Michael Banton. It does however, also include some of the critics of the race relations paradigm such as Robert Miles, Stuart Hall and Fred Halliday who tend to privilege European modernity and secularism and thus fail to grasp the complexity of the politics of identity. For a critique of these latter authors see Glavanis 1998 and 1999.

² *Muslim Voices* is used in this paper to highlight the diversity in the way in which European Muslim settlers exemplify their socio-cultural identities in the different locations where they reside. This should not be confused with *Political Islam*, which is also used in this article. The latter term represents a very particular political ideology, which is a global ideology and shared by only a small minority of the European Muslim settlers. Unfortunately, this is the fundamental confusion, perpetuated by Western media and even academic accounts which tends to assume that all European Muslim settlers who exemplify an Islamic socio-cultural identity are also adherents and supporters of the political ideology.

³ This section derives from research carried out within a European (TSER) sponsored project entitled "*Muslims Voices in Europe: The Stranger Within*", which was conducted in eight European countries (Belgium, France, Holland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Switzerland and the UK), during the period 1996 to 1999. The project carried out quantitative and qualitative research and examined both the cultural and economic dimensions of the formation of identity among Muslim settler communities. The analytical framework highlighted the relationship between social exclusion and marginalisation and the emergence of the *politics of identity* across the eight European countries and thus presented an account of the diverse socio-economic, political and cultural backgrounds, which gave rise to the different "Muslim Voices" identified by the project.

Given the limitations of space only some indicative data is used in this abbreviated summary, but all the statistical and other quantitative indicators as well as qualitative information from the project can be found on the following web site: <http://socialsciences.unn.ac.uk/eumuslim>.

I am indebted to Ms Emma Hughes (my research assistant) for assisting in the preparation of this short abstract from volumes of data collected in the eight countries.

⁴ Throughout this paper the term "*Muslims*" refers to European residents (citizens or non-citizens) who represented in the statistical data by their country of origin, e.g. Bangladeshi, Moroccan, Turk, etc. The assumption that is made is that they are Muslims since in these countries Islam is the religion of the vast majority of the population (over 95%). The reason for making such an assumption is that in all the countries concerned the statistics do not identify workers by religious or cultural identification. Furthermore, it should also be noted that relying upon such an assumption does not imply that all Muslim exemplify socio-cultural Islamic identities (Muslim Voices). In fact, the project has estimated that approximately one third of the European Muslim settlers exemplify secular Western identities, even if the media and society at large tend to ignore this fact and assume that all those whose originate from these countries (even if second and third generation) is by definition a person who will exemplify Islamic socio-cultural characteristics (Muslim Voices) and quite possibly an adherent and supporter of Political Islam.

⁵ In the UK, for example, whereas only 3% of all women work in the textile and clothing sector, for South Asian women (predominantly Pakistani and Bangladeshi – i.e. Muslim) the figure increases to 13%. Similarly, whereas

just over 1% of all men work in this sector the figure increase to 7% for South Asian men and very high concentration of Bangladeshis

⁶ In London, for example, unemployment among Bangladeshis rose from 16.7% to 35.8 during the census period 1981 to 1991, and while there was a similar increase among Pakistanis, the increase for Indians was from 11.4 to 11.8%.

⁷ In Germany, for example, whereas the relationship between the unemployment rates of Turkish workers and Germans was 5% as compared to 3.8% respectively, by 1997 it had changed to 20.45% as compared to 11%. Thus the relative unemployment rate for Turkish workers in 1997 had increased to 85.5%, as compared to 31.6 in 1980.

⁸ In Holland for example self-employment among Muslim ethnic settlers increased by over 300% from 1986 to 1997. Furthermore, whereas in 1986 only 3.3% of the ethnic settlers were categorised as self-employed by 1997 this figure had practically doubled to 7.4%. Similarly, it is estimated that in 1997, seven out of every ten newsagents in Greater London were Asian owned.

⁹ In France, for example, the research project identified a distinctive “*halal economy*” which is represented by the increasing number of second generation North Africans (young settlers) who find significant difficulties in gaining access to the labour market and confront even greater difficulties in promotion when inside it.

¹⁰ One Muslim woman interviewed in Manchester noted “...*even though you get the degree, this amounts to nothing. I see educated boys every day. They are working in take-aways and taxi firms. The degree amounts to nothing. The prospects for the next generation are worse. Hijab-wearing women won't get jobs. They can get the jobs at Tesco, or doing some menial admin work, but they won't get higher level jobs.*”

¹¹ One Muslim woman interviewed in Manchester noted that “...*once anybody sees you wearing a scarf there is an image of you straight away where people think you are a downtrodden Muslim woman and everything that you do, you walk a step behind your husband, all these things, they automatically come into place in that person's mind once they see you... so people automatically do start judging you and there's definitely discrimination there.*”

¹² For example a young Muslim woman in Germany who, after countless attempts to secure employment where she was always asked to remove her scarf, eventually started a community newspaper and many Muslim women of Pakistani origin in the UK who work at home sewing garments for the clothing industry.