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INTEGRATING ISLAM: POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS CHALLENGES IN CONTEMPORARY FRANCE

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. GORDON: (In progress) — were often described in this country at least as having something to do with the rising role of Islam in France, and of course, it fits in a broader context as well of the whole discussion of Islam in Europe and the terrorists attacks, not only the Hamburg cell that was involved in 9/11, but the 2004 attacks in Madrid, and then last year on July 7th in London. So it is a broader context as well, and I say, Justin and Jonathan's book is a comprehensive, thoughtful treatment of this question, and they are going to present it for you today.

It is a particular pleasure to have them here. Justin and Jonathan were the first Visiting Fellows at the Center on the U.S. and Europe in the France Program and the Italy Program, respectively. They are old friends and colleagues, and they are also great experts on this topic. Jonathan is a professor at Boston College. He has published on a wide range of issues on Europe and on Islam in Europe. Indeed, his Ph.D. dissertation at Harvard University recently won the American Political Science Association's Harold D. Lasswell Award for the best dissertation on a policy issue, a treatment of the question of Islam and the State in Western Europe in the past thirty years.

Justin is an historian, a very accomplished historian, not only on European issues, but on this country. He has written a number of books on the United States and on the history of the neoconservative movement in the United States. He has published with Pierre Hassner and on U.S. foreign policy, and with Pierre Melandri on the United States and the world. In Paris recently, he has been working on this question of Islam in Europe.

In addition to our two authors who have been at Brookings, we are really delighted to have Chris Caldwell. I am sure you all know from his work at The Weekly Standard and in the Financial Times, and his numerous essays that have appeared in The Washington Post, The New York Times, and practically everywhere else that we have read him; he is one of the most prolific journalists and analysts. And Chris is also at work on a book on immigration and Islam and Europe, so he has his own views on this subject, and we really could not have a better commentator than Christopher Caldwell. It is nice to have you here. He also was just released from jury duty, so on the legal aspects of this question I think he may have some particular insights.

I should also say before I ask Justin to begin the discussion that this book was a Brookings product of collaboration between the Center on the U.S. and Europe, and the Saban Center for Middle East Policy and its Project on the United States and the Islamic World. That was a project that was set up and launched by Peter Singer who is with us here, and Peter was influential in thinking of this idea and encouraging the authors to do it and guiding them through the process I think extremely successfully. And Peter has recently turned over the reins of the Project on the U.S. and the Islamic World to Steve Grand, who I am delighted to say is also with us and pushing that project forward.

So with that by way of introduction, let me turn it over to the speakers to kick off the discussion. I think Justin Vaisse is going to start, and I will ask him if he likes to go up to the podium and give us some thoughts.

MR. VAISSE: Thank you, Phil, and thank you to the Saban Center and the Center on the U.S. and Europe for having supported us during these 3 or 4 years of research

and work. It has been a wonderful environment to work in, even if it was a long-distance relationship. I arrived in the U.S. about 10 days ago, and going from Boston to Washington and other cities I toured the bookshops and I was looking for books on Islam in Europe. And the only titles I could find, the only books I could find, bore titles like *While Europe Slept: How Radical Islam is Destroying the West from Within*, by Bruce Bauer; *The West's Last Chance: Will We Win the Clash of Civilizations*, by Tony Blankley; *Eurabia, The Euro-Arab Axis* by Bat Ye'or; or *Menace in Europe: Why the Continent's Crisis is America's, Too*, by Claire Berlinski. Again and again these books would show up in different bookshops, ours would not, but I think with some time it will, hopefully. And more generally, even more serious authors like Bernard Lewis or Neil Ferguson write things or give interviews speaking of the Islamization of Europe, the reverse colonization, the demographic time bomb that is threatening Europe, et cetera, with the suggestion that the sky is falling. In this literature that we call the alarmist school, you would generally find four inaccurate premises. The first one is about demography. Myth number one, if you want, is about demography. It is the idea that Muslims taken as a demographic bloc are gaining against the native population. The second myth is about sociology and culture. It is the idea that Muslims form "a distinct, cohesive, and bitter group" in the words of a 2005 *Foreign Affairs* article.

Myth number three is about political attitudes. The alarmist view has it that Muslims seek to undermine the rule of law and the separation of church and state in order to create a society apart from the mainstream whether by imposing head scarves on young girls, campaigning for gender segregation in public institutions, defending domestic abuse as a cultural prerogative, or even supporting terrorism.

The fourth and last myth is about domestic and foreign policy. Because they supposedly form a bloc, Muslims are supposed to influence more and more heavily the political process whether in domestic issues or, more importantly, in foreign policy issues. The idea is that France, Europe in general, but France more precisely, is kind of held hostage by its growing Muslim population and that it is tilting towards a more anti-Israeli and anti-American position.

What we did in the book, we did not write the book to paint a kind of rosy or optimistic picture as opposed to this dark or alarmist one. What we set out to do was to write a book to paint an accurate picture relying on much specialized literature as we can find, and firsthand empirical research, many interviews, and et cetera. What we have tried to do is go beyond the headlines and snapshots and document the way integration is actually taking place on a daily basis rather than to try to make a political statement.

More importantly, what we tried to do is offer a tour of the actual conditions in which French Muslims live and work, pray, participate in French politics, rather than using abstract categories. One of the conclusions that is sort of imposing itself is that there is no essence of Islam to be integrated into the French fold. Islam is constructed and constantly transformed by changing practices all over the world. It is really what Muslims make of it.

One of the points that our book tries to convey is that in France as elsewhere, there are dozens of ways to be a Muslim, and the forms invented in France, what we do may carry a larger significance not only because of the number of Muslims in France, 5 million out of a population of 61 million, but also because of the French universalistic definition of

citizenship. So let me try to give you a concrete idea of what we are trying to do in the book in terms of debunking the four myths of the alarmist school that I mentioned earlier.

For example, the demographic myth. The number of Muslims in France is not growing as fast as the alarmist's school has it. There are now about 5 million Muslims out of a population of 61 million, and some others have made a wild extrapolation that suggests there could be 20 million by 2025, or even more dramatic numbers. Actually, we did some data mining and we looked at all the serious studies that have been published, and what we found is that fertility rates deceased dramatically compared with the country of origin. So for immigrants once they are in France, the fertility rate decreased dramatically, and over the generations, immigrant women and their daughters have fewer and fewer children. They tend simply to conform to the social and economic realities of France today.

The other point is that French women in general have more babies than other European women. Fertility rates are higher, to the range of 1.9 to 2 babies per women which means that immigrant children do not account for as many new births as, for example, in Germany and Italy. And one last aspect of it is intermarriage rates are pretty high, so the idea of a Muslim bloc, a native bloc, is just dissolving by itself. The new research has shown that intermarriage rates are between 20 and 50 percent for immigrants in France of persons of foreign origin, whether immigrants or children of immigrants or grandchildren of immigrants with persons that are not either immigrant children of immigrants or grandchildren of immigrants. So this is also one of the signs that we give of a background process of ongoing integration.

On the second myth that I pointed out about sociology and culture, the idea that Muslims would be a "distinct, cohesive, and bitter group," to quote the Foreign Affairs article again, this actually could not be more wrong. Muslims in France do not form a cohesive group, and certainly do not vote as a cohesive group, and I will get back to that later on. Merely speaking of the Muslim community in France can be misleading and inaccurate. Like many other immigrant populations, Muslims in France exhibit strong cleavages based on the country of origin, the social background, political orientation and ideology, and the branch or sect of Islam that they practice when they do, because the reality is that many of the persons we are talking about as Muslims are just neither believers nor practitioners.

Also with the exception of the French Council for the Muslim Religion, known by its French initials as CFDM, an institution created by the state for purely religious purposes, and Jonathan will talk about that later on, there exists no common association or central representations for French Muslims, so the idea of a cohesive group is just inaccurate.

On the third myth about political attitudes, what happens is that in poll after poll after poll, Muslims voice their desire to integrate in France as regular citizens, and also they are sure of their confidence in France and French democracy and a much higher rate than in other European countries, the U.K., for example.

Let me give you just two examples taken from different sources of this. One particularly interesting source was the poll taken by the U.S. State Department, the Office of Research, in 2005, one year ago, and I am just reading from its conclusion. It reads, "Large majorities of Muslims in France voice confidence in the country's government and feel partly French and support integrating into French society. The question is whether widespread

incidents of racial or religious discrimination will harden Muslim attitudes in France." So here you have in poll after poll after poll the same conclusion is here, a very strong idea to integrate, and at the same time a complaint about discrimination and racism, and we will touch on that later on.

Confidence in institutions, for example, is pretty high. French Muslims say they are confident in public schools at 89 percent, in local government at 68 percent, in the national government at 65 percent, even more than in uleman imams (?) in which their confidence is at only 56 percent, for example. So this is one example.

Another one is pupils that you have heard of that was released in June with very interesting data, and there are really a lot of things that could be said about it, but in just trying to pick one particular fact, we have heard extensively about anti-Semitic attacks starting in September 2000, and which fortunately receded greatly in 2005. These were indeed dramatic incidents which in no way should be minimized, and to a certain extent in some specific places, and we are documenting that in one of our chapters about anti-Semitism among Muslims in France, in some volume in some specific places there is a kind of anti-Semitic subculture that is developing which is pretty worrying.

But if you look beyond the headlines about the anti-Semitic acts, the spike that began in 2000, what you have is a generally tolerant population even with other minority groups they allegedly compete with for resources and influence. Let me quote from the Pew Center Poll on attitudes towards Jews, "Seventy-one percent of French Muslims express a positive view of Jews, compared with only 38 percent of German Muslims, 32 percent of British Muslims, and still lower numbers in the predominantly Muslim countries surveyed.

In this, Muslims reflect the view of a larger French public among whom 86 percent express a favorable opinion of Jews, a higher proportion than among the American public, at 77 percent." So what you get there are the facts of the anti-Semitic acts that have been rising in numbers from 2000 to 2005, and then you get many polls like this one which confirm this sort of benign view.

So what do you make of it? Of course, there is some political correctness. You do not say to a pollster I hate the Jews. But this cannot really only be about political correctness, otherwise, for example, German Muslims would have answered pretty much in the same way; you would have expected to have about the same numbers from them who were particularly sensitive due to the national culture or the national environment being sensitive to this question of intercommunity relations. So it cannot be only about this political correctness.

What this probably reflects is that pollsters have not gone to, I would say, the most problematic places, in the bonlieu (?) in the city where this anti-Semitic subculture is developing, but, rather, they have polled the rising Muslim middle-class. This is one of the stories that is really not very well known, the rise of this Muslim middle-class in France. And probably also another element, which is that many of the Jews living in France, about half of them or more than half of them, originate from the exact same countries as most of the French Muslims, that is, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. Not to say that there is any love lost between communities, but the situation is certainly not as bad as it seems, and certainly also much more complex when you get into the differences inside this community. So that was for the third myth.

Let me get to the fourth one. It was about the impact on domestic and foreign policy. First of all, Muslims are not a voting bloc, for the reasons I said earlier, it is not a cohesive community. About half of the 5 million Muslims living in France are just not citizens, and so they do not vote. Many of those who are citizens are under 18 years of age or are recent immigrants, and recent immigrants tend not to register to vote. As a result, Muslims are not a political force in France. And even if one assumes that there is somewhere between 1.2 and 1.5 million Muslims living in France that are eligible to vote, they actually do not constitute any kind of voting bloc, as the French electoral system in general is not predisposed to such blocs. And when Muslims try to get into politics, and that is one of the big challenges and difficulties that exist, and Jonathan will talk about that later on, they do not form a Muslim body of any sort, and they try to get into the mainstream parties with great difficulty.

The second reason why they do not have such an impact on domestic or foreign policy, on foreign policy in particular, is that foreign policy is not a top priority for them. What matters to them first, and they say it and repeat it in many polls and in many interviews that we did, is about jobs, unemployment, discrimination, welfare, housing conditions, and things like that, and foreign policy comes as a very low priority.

Last but not least, French foreign policy vis-à-vis the Middle East was set in its major lines at the end of the 1960s by Charles de Gaulle, and that means before the massive influx of the Muslim population, before there was a real Muslim community in France, to speak of, and the lack of impact is demonstrated by the fact that French foreign policy has indeed been very constant since the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, for good or for

worse, and that things did not change much, and the same could be said about the fight against terrorism.

So this is why with all these facts we tried to show a more complex picture, generally a less alarmist one, one that documents what is really going on on the ground. I will leave it at that and ask Jonathan to continue.

MR. LAURENCE: Thank you, Justin. We might also think about what Justin referred to as the "alarmist school" in terms of the so-called "Eurabia" thesis. Those who utter the term "Eurabia" conjure up a mutant European continent under pressure from oil-producing states that has all but abandoned its values and policies to a horde of Arab immigrants. Our book attempts to dismantle that position by exploring the actual evolution of French policies towards Muslims and organized Islam since the 1970s. We try to do away with one of the false premises of "Eurabia," namely, that French and European governments – fuelled by self-loathing multiculturalist policies -- have capitulated to Muslims' cultural and religious demands. Secondly, we dispatch the odd assumption that integration and state-religion policies since the mid-1970s have stood still in time. Of course, once it became clear that post-war labor migrants were there to stay in France and elsewhere -- which was not as obvious then as it seems now -- policies towards immigrants and indeed towards Islam as an organized religion in fact evolved dramatically, and I would like to go into some of that in detail here.

It is true that some governments, including the French, entered into a series of economic and trade agreements with oil-exporting countries while under the threat of an oil embargo. And it is also true that included in certain of these agreements were some minor

articles concerning the cultural ties between immigrants and their home countries, namely, that these relationships should be left undisturbed and that migrants' cultural and religious heritage should be respected.

This could be seen as undermining successful integration. Indeed, these articles were included in those agreements at the time because of a mutual assumption that these migrants and perhaps even their children might eventually return "home" to their countries of origin, and so they were encouraged to maintain their linguistic and cultural traditions. But it would be wrong to extrapolate some sort of French or European surrender to Islam from the highly formal and frankly marginal clauses in those agreements.

It is also anachronistic to suggest a particular concern with religion at that time among migrants themselves or even the largely secular oil exporting countries in the mid-1970s. To the extent that religious observance was a concern, it was manifested in the worry that the Muslim diaspora in Europe may become a sort of launching pad for fundamentalist movements aiming to destabilize regimes in North Africa and the Middle East.

But most importantly, what has been missing from accounts of Islam in France and Europe – and which we set out to rectify – is the actual development of government policies towards this minority. In fact, for a variety of reasons, the French government did rely on foreign imams and foreign funding for prayer spaces. Of course, there was an historical relationship with the Great Mosque of Paris – funded first by the French and then by the Algerian government since the early 1980s – which the French treated as the de facto representative in Muslim religious affairs. But this reliance ended

essentially by the late-1980s, partly in synch with a very simple demographic evolution that had taken place. Namely, what had been a mostly single male population of workers, temporary and rotating as well as those who had come to stay permanently, had evolved into a population made up of families with women and children, and this led the government to begin to alter their policies. Governments went from "outsourcing Islam" – that is, outsourcing the management of religion to the countries of origin, such as Algeria – to attempting to organize Muslim leaders in a single national forum. We argue that a few specific events between 1988-1990 precipitated that change.

The first of these was the Rushdie affair, and the well-known *fatwa* issued by Ayatollah Khomenei against the author of *The Satanic Verses*. The second would be the first headscarf affair at the middle school in Creil, also around the same time. Third of all, the first Gulf War, alongside those first two events, led to a fear amongst administrative and government figures that the cumulative transnational pressures to mobilize in favor of these international causes could have a ripple effect on this vulnerable minority . It is at precisely that moment, 1989 to 1990, that the French government makes the first step towards domestically orienting the formal Muslim leadership and creating Council for Reflection on Muslim in France. That council itself was short-lived, but it launched a process that would eventually last nearly 15 years, and which culminated in around 2003 with the French Council for the Muslim Religion, otherwise known as the CFCM.

I will get into that in a moment, but I would just like to mention that if the confrontation thesis or the Eurabia thesis were true, we have had a couple of recent opportunities to test it and see whether it holds any water. One ripe opportunity, of course, to

test this thesis of a clash came with the publication of the caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed. That led to serious conflict and violence in much of the Arab and Muslim world, from Nigeria to Pakistan, to Syria, Lebanon, Libya, et cetera, but it is noteworthy that there was no violence in Europe. There has been a recent disclosure that an attempted bombing of a German train may have been related to the incident, but there were no incidents of violence among these important Muslim minorities in reaction to the publication of the caricatures.

Even though there was clearly a failure to communicate between Danish Muslims and the Danish government in the fall of 2005, which fed the misunderstanding and led the ambassadors to Denmark on a tour of the Middle East, we could see the entire caricature affair as a successful test for the integration of Muslims in France and elsewhere in Europe. What I mean by that is Muslims in France and in Germany and Italy for that matter took legal channels to express their outrage. They unanimously condemned the cartoons but they also condemned violent acts in response to the cartoons, instead filing lawsuits as allowed under existing legislation and holding peaceful demonstrations. In other words, they pursued a law-abiding strategy of opposition, along the lines of how Jewish and Catholic groups have reacted to editorial cartoons and advertising that they did not like -- in other words, by trying to have them retracted through legal means.

A second opportunity to test the clash thesis came two years earlier, in the form of the head scarf law – which could be seen as particularly provocative measure. Some French Muslim leaders called for demonstrations against a reasonably unpopular government in the winter of 2004 when the bill was being considered to ban conspicuous religious

symbols in primary and secondary public schools. The rallies drew meager crowds by Parisian or Strasbourgeois standards. If you look at the rallies that took place, their size never grew beyond the several thousands.

Once the legislation was passed, it was observed and taken as binding by Muslim organizations. Many leaders criticized it, and when Justin and I went to the annual conference of one of the main federations last year there were forceful speeches given and petitions being circulated against the law, but there were no calls for civic disobedience. So we argue that the establishment of a forum like the French Council for the Muslim Religion has created essentially channels of communication that did not exist 5 or 6 years ago, and which can help defuse crises.

The CFCM is not a political representation of Muslims in France. It is, rather, the representation of French Islam. What I mean by that is those who vote in the elections for the CFCM are simply delegates of the prayer spaces throughout France, of which there are around 1,600. We get into the exact numbers in the book, but roughly 1,200 to 1,300 of those prayer spaces actually participate in CFCM elections. This government-sponsored -- although not technically governmental -- forum provides a space for discussion of all of the practical issues that come up in state religion affairs. This is, you could say, a kind of temporary substitute while political integration is underway. It is meant only to address questions of religious observance, and not political ones, although, obviously, the line between these is often quite fine.

There are, however, also repressive sides to the French policy response to integration challenges and these are related to the very distinctive French state view of the

role of religion in society. In the book, we get into how the Third Republic codified this view of religion as a potential contaminant, as potentially interfering in the authority of the state. If we look at things like the headscarf law which is representative of the republic's firm hand, even if it is ultimately a symbolic response it is also by nature a repressive one. Of course, head scarf wearing was never very widespread in French schools. There were never more than 1,000 or perhaps 1,500 girls out of a potential population of several-hundred thousand Muslim girls who may have ever worn a head scarf, but, nonetheless, the ban on conspicuous religious symbos served as a reminder of the state's authority and, of course, as a protection of the secular sanctuary of French public schools for the past 130 years.

The other repressive aspect, just to take one example, is the monitoring of religious sermons and the deportation of imams that has taken place. Several dozen have been deported in the last few years for having incited violence or giving sermons that condoned terrorist acts. Again, this is a reflection of the French attitude towards the potential trouble to public order posed by religious communities. The French Interior Ministry has a Central Religion Bureau which monitors speeches -- while the Germans and even the American FBI were debating the morality and the legality of whether or not to go into mosques and prayer spaces, the French equivalents of those secret services had been in the mosques for years and were listening in on and deporting potentially troublesome imams for a long time.

Again, this is the kind of mirror image, if you like, of the American Founders' concern of state interference with religion. The concern is reversed in France – it is the fear of religious interference with the state -- and this is not limited to a concern with Islam. This

has its roots in a deep concern with the interference, of course, the Catholic Church and the legitimacy of the French Republic in the 1870s, just as the papacy's temporal power was waning.

To conclude, we find on the religious front that there is a French Islam which is emerging and increasingly replacing the so-called Islam in France that had developed over the past several decades, and we offer evidence on various types of expression of Muslim religious, political, and cultural identity that are at home in and relatively at peace with French society. Has the presence of Muslims in fact change French society? Of course. Do Muslim organizations try and change French laws? Yes. They are political and social actors like any other, but we find that they are acting quite striclty within constitutional bounds, and we include even the so-called political Islamists in that categorization.

On the political front, there have been, of course, serious and sometimes spectacular problems and enduring challenges for the republic's promise of equality. But there have been policy responses aimed precisely at these feelings of discrimination and at the absence of Muslims in the elite, especially in the political elite, as we describe in our sections on French debates over positive discrimination.

All this is not to deny the real problems that exist. After all, we are approaching the anniversary of a serious fireworks show in the outskirts of nearly every major French city last October-November. We would emphasize that that took place in the form of property destruction rather than personal violence. However, the imagery was stark and the message was clear.

It is worth noting, however, that the riots and associated problems of discrimination, political underrepresentation, and, of course, socioeconomic inequality, are not primarily religious problems, and we submit evidence of this fact in the book. But that does not diminish their urgency or seriousness or the simple fact of segregated populations who are all experiencing a common feeling of rejection, unemployment and glass ceilings in the workplace.

The challenge of discrimination remains an issue, despite the new agency that the French government came up with for this purpose. You could say that the existing discontent among Muslims is the ironic result of the Republic's success at having sold the French dream of liberty, freedom, and equality to French Muslims. Rioters who were out in the street torching cars, and many of them were in fact of Muslim descent, were responding to their sense of relative deprivation. They had higher expectations than the reality of French society could deliver. Many have passed through the education system and yet not found jobs.

So this is unlike, for example, the German case where the sense is that riots are much less likely to break out because German Turks, for example, actually have lower expectations because they are tracked differently in the educational system. That is not the case in France, and the educational system has been opening up.

Political underrepresentation also remains a serious unresolved issue, as despite the fact that there are 5 Muslims in France, the National Assembly has not a single Representative. That number is less dramatic if you consider the fact that only half are citizens, and only a quarter of the total are both citizens and of voting age. The political

system, additionally, is not entirely friendly to newcomers - it can resemble an obstacle course. To rise in the party system and the administration, with very few exceptions, one still has to pass through training grounds and a very specific set of schools. Just take a look at the statistics of the number of ministers of the Fifth Republic who all attended the ENA, the National Administration School. So opening those doors not only to Muslims and other minorities, but also simply to socioeconomically disadvantaged people is one of the prime challenges.

Finally, there is the challenge of French Muslims' poor socioeconomic conditions. Even though educational achievement has progressed, there is high unemployment, often double that of the general population, especially if you look at the youth brackets, and we have some charts in the book that allow you to compare these things visually.

The question remains: Will the economy be strong enough to support the entry of these many hundreds of thousands of young French Muslims into the job market? And finally, will the French government continue to show flexibility in its otherwise rather rigid categories of citizenship and *laïcité*, French secularism?

Finally, we should not exclude the possibility of a nativist backlash. There are grumblings on the far-right wing, and there are serious far-right candidates and that could further restrict the room for maneuver of enterprising French politicians to continue to create new models of French citizenship.

With that, I happily cede the floor to Christopher Caldwell. Thank you.

MR. CALDWELL: Thank you for having me here today. I would like to congratulate Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaisse on what I think is really a very good book.

Let me just say that I think this is a really good book. I myself am working on a book on Islam in Europe, at least partially, and there are not many books like this. This is a really comprehensive, clear-eyed summation of pretty much all the policy research that has been done on every corner of this issue of Islam in France.

I was sitting down this morning trying to think of what this book left out, how this book could have been more comprehensive, and I did come up with a couple of things. I think there could have been more discussion of the interplay between immigration and the welfare state which is a big issue in all European countries. I myself am very interested in the historical background to immigrations like these, and there was a bit of that, but that is not what the book is about.

And there was a third thing that I found myself eager to find out which I think is actually a structural problem that exists in French data collection. One of the main problems that the authors allude to in French integration of Muslims is French racism and French prejudice, and this, given the nature of French data collection, is almost to quantify. The authors have given it a good try with the best documentation available to them which are things like anonymous résumés with name changes and that sort of thing, but still the degree to which French society is unwelcoming to immigrants remains very hard to measure. I think you have a good idea from listening to the authors just how intensive their research has been, and just what a different picture you can get of the situation of immigration in France if you look more closely.

One thing that was really impressive to me is that they were very attentive to things that did not happen in the last 5 years, and I will list just a few of them. For instance, when the head scarf ban came in in the early months of 2004, there were a couple of minor protests, but no major ones, and the authors have documented how the number of Muslim activists protesting at the beginning of each school year has fallen very sharply, and we should have the new numbers of what sort of protests we had about the head scarf ban this year quite, but that is very impressive.

Another example, when Yasser Arafat died in Paris in late-2004, there were only a handful of people standing vigil outside of the hospital. This is in sharp contrast to what we think of as French Muslims being heavily dug in on the issues of the Middle East, and particularly regarding Palestine.

A third thing, or dog that did not bark, is that during the revolt in the bonlieu in late-2005, there were no Iraqi or Palestinian flags or any kind of linkage on the part of the rioters to French foreign policy engagements or to U.S. involvement abroad. In fact, it was a very leaderless and still hard to figure out rebellion.

But since the focus of a lot of what we have discussed this morning is how differently these issues of Islam in France look when you look at them from this side of the ocean than when you look at them from Paris, I would like to try to explain why Americans, and I include, I know Jonathan is an American, but why Americans who look at France from a distance are less optimistic about integration in France than the authors are.

I think a lot of this has to do with the structure of the book. I think that the authors are looking at what has been tried to integrate Muslims into the very idiosyncratic

French constitutional structure, and what has worked. So they have a policy orientation. They are interested in showing what works and what does not, and you need a little bit of optimism to do that.

Americans look at this issue not in terms of policy, in terms of journalism, in terms of stories. We do not have a dog in the fight of how well Islam is integrated into French life, or let's say we do not have as big a dog I that fight as the French do. So if I could just go through a few of the things that the two authors mentioned and try to address how they look different from this side of the Atlantic.

One is demographics. Yes, it is true as the authors have demonstrated that the population that has issued from Islamic immigrants is growing less quickly than it was. There were some spectacular, although I do not know how accurate, numbers that were published 5 or 10 years ago when in the Middle East Quarterly about the birth rates of people broken down by country from North Africa, and I think some of them were up around 7.1 children per woman, and as the authors show, those numbers are down below 3. But there is still a tremendous amount of demographic pressure in France in general, and it comes not from any strategy of immigrants to overpopulate the country, but just by the very great proximity of Europe to a very populous and very impoverished continent. In the recent events of boats from West Africa coming to the Canary Islands, I think there 2,000 immigrants arrived over the weekend before last shows that there is deep-seeded population demographic pressure on that it seems can be stopped only by heavy militarization of the waters around Europe.

The other thing that looks different from the United States is this issue of the diversity of the French Muslim population. The authors show very clearly that French Muslims differ widely on a number of dimensions, their degree of religious belief or their affiliation to political parties. I do not think that it is yet clear that they are that diverse on the important issues of the future. They are more diverse on foreign policy and political issues than other Muslims in Europe, but there is a funny thing about the French political system which shows how well Muslims have integrated into it. A lot of French political scientists have complained over the past decades, but especially since the strikes of 1995 and the demonstrations over the fio (?) educational reforms, that there is something about the French system that bottles up pressure too much and it gets released only in explosions and you cannot really tell what the people is until there are zillions of them out in the streets. So I still do not know how divided Muslims are on the important issues of the future. The important thing remains to capture them.

One thing that makes me a little bit pessimistic is the strengthening of Muslim as opposed to national identity that the authors document. They say that among school kids, I believe the figure is that 85 percent of Muslim teenagers say that their religion is an extremely important part of their identity, and only 35 percent of French Franche de susha (?) say the same thing.

The final thing I would say is a lot of the discussion around French Islam, and Jonathan alluded to it, involves an Islam *en France* with an Islam *de France*. I am not sure how important that distinction is going to be over the long run. I think it is inevitable that the Islam in France is going to become an Islam of France, the question is whether that is going

to involve adopting French ways of looking at things or of just finding ways to come into greater and greater power in the French system.

To take an American example, I cannot imagine Spaniards in Monterey in the 1820s who were worried about the influx of U.S. Southerners into Texas and saying, yes, they are foreign, but as long as they become Texans, we will be happy. I am not trying to make a joke about that, but I do not think that an Islam *de France* will necessarily be an Islam that is not a worry for the rest of France. Thank you.

MR. GORDON: Chris, thank you, especially for providing a bit of a different emphasis that may help us launch the discussion. I know there are no doubt lots of questions out in the audience and I am going to turn to that and open it up, and maybe if I could just begin with one or two of my own clarifying and pressing the authors on a couple of points.

One, and I would like to maybe begin with Justin, is the question of how different France is from other countries. Listening to you and reading the book, we have often talks about French exceptionalism on a number of different issues, and I wonder the degree to which you are saying there is a French exceptionalism on this issue. When you try to put this in context on the demographic point you say French birth rate is higher than Spain, Italy, and so you. You talked about the polling numbers on attitudes towards Jews among French Muslims and so on.

Is your thesis when you say that many Americans exaggerate the issue of Muslims in France saying that is because France is different from the rest of Europe, and we should really be worried about the rest of Europe, but France has some particularities, or does your point apply more to the continent as a whole?

MR. VAISSE: Maybe I will let Jonathan answer at least part of the question because he is really the comparitist among us.

What I would like to emphasize is we have done a book, we have interviewed many Muslim leaders and Muslims in France, we have looked at the specialist literature, et cetera, but in the end, the book is pretty much about France, that is to say, the particularities, the sort of singularities of the French system, and especially the whole idea of exceptionalism of a different take on, for example, religion in society, laïcité, the French take on the proper position of church and state, or the universalistic definition of citizenship. What I mean is that the reaction could not be the same as in other countries with very different cultures, so this gives you the first bit of an answer for your question, that is to say, yes, the system is different, first, because it is a very different country with its particularities, but maybe Jonathan could say more about the comparative take on the issue.

MR. LAURENCE: I think the ironic point perhaps about France and its handling of having the largest Muslim minority in Europe is that you have this country which is so well known for its basic allergy to religion and its almost antagonistic relationship with organized religious communities, and yet it seems to have been so far one of the best positioned in terms of governance and interior ministries to engage a really wide spectrum of Muslim leaders. Again, this is only in state/church affairs, as you might call them. But where I would differ with Chris Caldwell on this point of does it really matter where the Islam is coming from, I would say it matters who is doing the preaching in mosques, it matters in what language the materials are, and the more training facilities you have in France in the French language for imams to emerge from this large population and the less

importing you have to do, just by the very nature of living in a society and growing up and knowing its mores and the ways of its schools and the social customs, you are more likely to fit in well than if you are parachuted in from Al-Zaytuna or from Al-Azhar. It is just I think a basic fact that it is in France's interests, it is in French Muslims' interests, to have more French leadership.

Regarding the special position of France with regard to the issues and Phil's question, it is not always an advantage that France has such a long history with the Arab Muslim world. This is a very fraught relationship which has a lot of blood and conflict in its past and it is a distinctly post-colonial relationship that the French government is engaged in with its Muslim population. If you compare that, again, to Germany, where you could fairly say that the German governments have a kind of mercenary relationship, if you like, with the Muslim population which settled in Germany as a voluntary labor force and then stayed, the French government feels something more of a responsibility towards its Muslim population stemming as it does from this French cultural sphere of North Africa, and Muslims in France feel that they are owed something in the same way that historical minorities in America with regard to the French government and so that creates also perhaps a disadvantage, if you like, but at least a greater familiarity with one another, a kind of mutual acquaintance that does not exist elsewhere, and I would say that overall on balance adds to the French strengths in dealing with this issue.

MR. GORDON: I do not know if you want to address this topic, but I think the more pointed version of what I was asking is, is it fair to say in Spain you had the train attacks in spring 2004 committed by Spanish Muslims in Britain, you had July 7 British

Muslims in Holland, you had the murder of the filmmaker van Gogh by a Dutch Muslim in France, you have not had a sort of spectacular terrorist attack. I guess that is the more pointed version of this, or the American version of this, is there something about either the structure of Islam in France or the way the French government deals with Islam in France that inoculates France to a degree that makes it less likely, I did not mention Germany, obviously, the Hamburg cell of 9/11, is there something about either the structure of the situation or the policies of the government that makes France different, or really is this just chance and certain things happen in one place?

MR. CALDWELL: Two things. I think in terms of the terrorism, there is a combination of two French government policies. One is that the French government has not participated in the war in Iraq which I think is probably a factor, and the other is that the French government is much more aggressive, proactive, and you could even say repressive in dealing with domestic threats to order. They infiltrate mosque sermons much more aggressively than the British ever have, and may even still do now, they deport imams, and it is a very interesting episode, the deportation of imams, specifically during de Villepin's time as Interior Minister. I think the goal is not so much to remove specific threats, as to create

I think the goal is not so much to remove specific threats, as to create a whole sieve type mechanism where people get to think of imams preaching hate as just unsuitable so that it becomes really not worthwhile sending them from foreign countries. I think the authors in this book address that problem in an interesting way, though, they say that this will be a strategy of diminishing utility should the fiery imams ever be French citizens or French born, but that is hypothetical right now.

I think that you actually have steered the discussion a bit on to terrorism, although there is an interesting chapter on that in the book, that is not the real focus of the book. Maybe what you are asking is, is the nation-state really the relevant unit at which this problem should be discussed. I do not know, but France is a very interesting qua (?) nation-state in this for two reasons. One is the size of its Muslim population, so there being roughly 5 million Muslims in France, you can say that if things go well in France, you will have a great plurality of European Muslims and the best educated part of them, arguably, right in the heart of Europe serving as a sort of hub that can help other countries with this integration project. If things go badly, the reverse is true.

But the final point I would like to make is, France does have an unusual constitution. The French concept of citoyenneté does not really exist in the same way in other European countries. I would say France is different in the way it is approaching this problem, but it is getting less different. I think that the resistance to communitarianism as it is called, the resistance to ethnic lobbies, is waning. If Nicolas Sarkozy were to become President next year, I think you would see France entering into an experiment the terms of which would be very similar to that which is going on in other European countries. And I think the resemblance of the CFCM to the *Consulta Islamica* in Italy is revealing.

MR. CALDWELL: (In progress) —the European countries are beginning to converge on a sort of common track I think what they see as best practices. I am sorry to talk so long.

MR. GORDON: Not at all, but let me pick up on your last point and ask one question about politics and then we will open it up to the floor. As Chris suggested, next

year there are important elections in France, presidential and parliamentary, and you have identified, and Jonathan talked about this, as a policy problem of how the government reaches out to Muslim groups, the degree to which it uses tools like affirmative action or not, policies in immigration. How is this playing into the political debate, and Nicolas Sarkozy is actually in town as we speak, you both saw him yesterday, have these issues, whether it is head scarves, riots or anything else, what kind of policy debate should we expect, or should we just expect more of the same?

MR. VAISSE: I am afraid we should mostly expect more of the same, given the fact that candidates will be talking and making points for the general public, and there are signs that it is getting more interested, especially after the November 2005 urban violence, in this whole question of integration and socioeconomic conditions of recent immigrants, et cetera. But then you have the other side of it which is a sort of a white backlash, if you want to call it that, and obviously, for example, Nicolas Sarkozy has been hunting on the lands of Jean-Marie Le Pen recently by suggesting that immigration laws should be toughened and has actually toughened them in the spring with a new statute. And there has been over the course of the summer, and we may hear more of that in the course of the campaign in the first half of 2007, a lot of discussions about regularization of undocumented aliens, of illegal immigrants, and Sarkozy is taking a very strong position on that. He has the credentials of having created the CFCM. He built on the efforts, as Jonathan was saying, that began very early on at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s in trying to create some sort of representation for Muslims and he was the one who managed to really get the different

groups of this very diverse community together in late-2002 and create the CFCM in 2003. So he has a sort of good image on this side.

But at the same time now to be elected is sort of playing more to I would say the general native French population who is quite sensitive to his tough talk about immigration, so I am not expecting very intense discussions on this particular subject. There has been some interest recently, especially from think tanks in Paris, from the Institut Montaigne and others, or from the associations, painting the portrait of these associations in the book like SOS Racisme or others who have given ideas, et cetera, there has been some energy, but for the general political discussion in the campaign next year, I am not expecting that much.

MR. LAURENCE: I will just add briefly that the approach of the center-right upon taking power in 2002 was really to be quite innovative by French standards in terms of its outreach to minority populations to basic questions of representation, almost Clintonian in the kind of cabinet-level revolution that went on, appointing people who looked like the population of France and not just the graduating class of the ENA.

Once that was done, however, and once this policy was pursued of putting Muslim leadership on an equal footing with Jewish leadership and Catholic leadership in this domain of state/church relations, I think that the government had to also show that it could gnash its teeth and that it could bear the stick in addition to the carrot, so that is why we saw the tough talk from Sarkozy one year ago. But the extent to which Ségolène Royal has felt it necessary to put herself on the same terrain as Sarkozy, it has been in this arena of toughness.

So I think we are going to see again a slight migration toward reaching out to this minority, but there are different strategies within the political parties.

MR. GORDON: Thank you, Jonathan. Why don't we give you all a chance to ask your questions, and there are some microphones coming around. If you would introduce yourself.

MS. KOSSMAN: Kathy Kossman (?), U.S. Commission on International Religious. I have a question if there are any facilities for education of Muslim leaders in France. When I spoke when an official Muslim leader 2 years ago, he indicated that in fact it was a conscious policy of the French government to only have foreign imams so they could be deported, they would be in France on visas, and that the French Muslim community was very eager to develop their own version or versions of Islam.

Also, when I spoke to young French Muslims shortly before the riots, they indicated that they thought it would be extremely for the government to make comments to be critical when prejudicial comments were made particularly by governmental and other official leaders as they felt the government had not done.

MR. LAURENCE: The big sticking point with the government creating a theological seminary, of course, is the 1905 law which prohibits the use of public funding for religious institutions. Does that mean that they cannot encourage the existing federations to further develop their seminaries? No. In fact, they have. The UOIF which has had its seminary in Chateaux Chinon for about 10 years, the Grand Mosque de Paris, of course, has its seminary. The FNMF which is a largely Moroccan-dominated federation has recently announced plans to open a seminary in Lille. So you have a kind of reflection of the

competing federations each of whom are kind of jockeying for position, some of them very clearly influenced nonetheless by foreign funding, however, intending to create centers of religious training on the French territory.

The government did under de Villepin also create a kind of supplementary curriculum which is not obligatory but which is highly recommended. I think there is a 6-month course, it varies in duration on how long you as an imam have been practicing in France, but between 6 months and 2 years, you can take courses in Rousseau and Montesquieu and Ibn Kathir's *Noble Koran* and be exposed to the curriculum of enlightened thinking, if you like, that is meant to supplement or complement your education as an imam.

However, it is true that for the time being, government officials have continued to rely on religious authorities abroad. Sheikh Tantawi at Al-Azhar has received a constant stream of French, and indeed, other European ministers looking for his blessing of various policies. That will only change probably in the course of generations. We are not looking at months and years here, we are looking really at an historic process of shifting and creating of new centers of religious authority in Europe.

There is the European Council for Fatwa and Research of 30 Sheikhs. I think only five of them actually live in Europe, which is ironic for a European council, and only one of them was actually born in Europe. That is up to Yusuf al-Qaradawi, that is not up to the French government, clearly, but there is space, there is room for the emergence of domestic sources of religious authority.

MR. GORDON: Thank you, Jonathan. In the far back, the gentleman on the right, and then we will come up to the front.

MR. MATTHEWS: Charles Matthews with the University of Virginia. Following-up on something Christopher Caldwell had said, Olivier Roy has suggested there is a development of Islam that has become deterritorialized and has emerged across various nations in Europe and elsewhere around the world. It is an intriguing but in some ways troubling kind of idea. Did you find any evidence of this idea of a deterritorialized Islam, an Islam that is not necessarily national?

MR. CALDWELL: Have I found any? Yes,

MR. VAISSE: Yes, I would say absolutely. What we found is in many cases, and Chris alluded to that about 20 minutes ago, when he says that there was a trend of re-Islamization especially among Muslims or children or grandchildren of immigrants. What happens is that the kind of Islam they adopt is not an Moroccan one, it is not a Tunisian one, it is not an Algerian one, it is pretty much separated, at least to come extent, from their culture of origin and this sort of essence of Islam, this pure Islam that Olivier is talking about, and, by way, for further advertisement, Olivier Roy has a preface here which is very, very interesting, so it is an additional reason to buy the book.

MR. GORDON: Buy the preface, even if you do not want to buy the book. Right?

(Laughter)

MR. VAISSE: And so what happens is that often you would have young Muslims sort of fixing something, trying to — as we say to manufacture their own brand of Islam by listening to preachers such as — but sort of rejecting, for example, the mix of

culture coming from Morocco and Islam that their parents might still practice, and we have uncoded that in different places.

MR. GORDON: I would say that that is very related to the previous question about sources of religious authority, and deterriorialization, you mentioned it was worrisome, in my mind it is precisely this question of creating a kind of a kind of jurisprudence for the minority living in Europe. Islam is itself undergoing a sort of historic internal debate not for the first time, but for another time, and this idea of creating a kind of — of the Muslim minority living in Europe, that is what Qaradawi is up to with this Council on Fatwa and Research about how to essentially create essentially create dispensations for Muslims living in the West. He is not the only one up to it, and I do not mean to actually put the spotlight on him because there are many people who are riding on these issues and, indeed, engaging in this kind of jurisprudential debate. However, deterritorialization can actually be very favorable toward integration because in the same way that Jews living in the diaspora, and, of course, Jews living in 19th century Germany redefined the religion for themselves living outside of the original holy center of authority practicing holidays differently in a way more adapted and accustomed to their local environment, I think we can observe similar things, whether it is the observance of Ramadan or taking of mortgages to buy your first home.

MR. CALDWELL: I think the question of deterritorialization though can also be read in the sense of deculturalization and it creates a paradox in every European country where I have looked at it. It is that a lot of integrating an immigrant into a European country is to get him to give up his old cultural practices for the new ones of the metropol, and that

actually happens to be a lot of the goal of the most radical religious people. I have seen this in many different contexts.

I have seen hardline imams in Sweden, for instance, try to build up their kudos in the general public by taking a stand against the East African practice of genital mutilation for women. You see Pakistani imams in Britain attack the practice of wearing, I forget the name of the things that certain traditional Pakistani Sufis wear around their necks, but they are a little Koranic script, they attack this as being cultural and not religious. So there is a strange double movement, you get integration into the metropolitan culture, but you also get the stripping away of religious cultural practices and you are left with more of a religious cultural code. It is tough to say whether that ultimately assists integration or retards it.

MR. GORDON: We will gather the next three or so and give the speakers to respond in a final group.

QUESTION: Thank you for the discussion here. I cannot wait to see a debate with skeptics of this concept of integration of Muslims. And by the way, I do not like the word alarmist, if I may say so, since it has a negative connotation.

I would wager that your position is going to become increasingly tenuous as time goes on, and I think I can explain why. First of all, I heard so many claims today that I wish I had time to refute, and I think a debate would be very nice for that at some point maybe with some of the alarmists that you have mentioned, or Samuel Huntington.

I noticed that a lot of the flaws here fall into two main categories, I think. One, your challenge in measuring and defining Islam with the apologies that you gave that it

is diverse, and certainly that helps a little bit. The fact of the matter is we have a big problem. It has become huge in less than 4 decades.

France went from zero percent Muslim, effectively, to over 10 percent or something like that officially today, but in practice there are a lot more descendants of North Africa than the 5 million Muslims we keep hearing about. It is actually closer to 9 to 10 million out of them out of 60 to 61 million people, so it is getting closer to 17 percent.

Of course, we can define them as cultural Muslims with traditions or whatever that they may not be practicing, but they are there and it is growing, and as time goes on, their disintegration with the rest of society is becoming more and more visible in many ways whether it is the building of mosques or the request for more intransigence from the side of the government towards all of their traditions and laws and everything that goes with it. So that is one of the problems.

And it is growing very fast because, of course, of the illegal immigration and the differing birth rates, and now increasingly as e are going to see over the next decades, the aging of the traditional French population. So clearly there are more and more issues associated with this problem.

There is one other point, a key omission that has not been addressed here, and that is the impact on French society. I left 25 years ago, and very frankly, I keep track of all the data and statistics on what is happening over there, and it is not pretty.

The result of trying to integrate all these Muslims has been that the system is going bankrupt as we speak. There is a brain drain, there is capital flight that is unprecedented, and the system is effectively being destroyed from within because of trying to

integrate them and doing two things, throwing resources at it and both trying to feed it, house it, and so on and so forth, and trying to control it at the same time.

By the way, they have done a decent job at avoiding serious terrorist incidents like the cashing of airliners into the Eiffel Tower at Christmas 1994, and others, so they have been successful in that sense. But the resources are running dry and time is running out.

MR. GORDON: Thank you very much. Time is running out, so I think on the heels of that excellent challenge, instead of questions why don't we use that to give the authors a final chance. Maybe, Chris, if you want to respond first, and then we will give them the final word, if you have any response at all.

MR. CALDWELL: No, I don't, really. I would love to talk to somebody with the more specific stuff, but 9 to 10 million Muslims? I have heard a great variety of numbers ranging from 3.5 to 8. A demographer who I respect very much, Michelle Tribalet, has I think really made the best attempt to just go around neighborhood by neighborhood and count them with native speakers in the neighborhoods. I think she at — but she comes up with maybe a lower number than is proper, it is under 5 million. But I have a hard time believing that the French authorities could be so widely inaccurate, but I am open-minded about it.

MR. LAURENCE: I would say that of course France has changed dramatically after decolonization, and if you compare the attitudes towards earlier ways of immigration, and we get into this a bit in the historical chapter in our book, there was great fear aroused by the presence of Italians and Portuguese in southern French cities with people screaming their heads off about the death of France, and there was even anti-foreigner

violence that occurred. The concern was that France would be changed inexorably and forever.

Often, if you look at American immigrant history, the most fervent critics of new immigrant groups are often old immigrant groups concerned with their place at the table, and this is all legitimate politics. I am not trying to belittle any of this, but it is true, if you consider the construction of a mosque a blight on a neighborhood, then you are right, France is not the same.

But there were those who considered a synagogue a blight on the landscape, there were those who considered a cathedral a blight on the landscape. This is about political points of view, and, frankly, the reality is that 1 out of 4 French men and women can trace their ancestry outside of the hexagon, outside of the current French borders. So I would suggest that any image of a pristine Franco-French France lies in the realm of mythology.

MR. CALDWELL: I must say that I do not think that is the point that he is making, and there is a question of the dimension. I think he is talking about the dimension of this immigration which has to be addressed.

MR. VAISSE: We have a whole chapter on that which I encourage once again everybody to read.

We talked about official statistics, and, of course, there no official statistics. Just as in this country, the French official census does not take religion into account, and contrary to this country, it does not take ethnic origin into account. So you do not have any official statistics so you have to rely on, and as Chris was saying, Michelle Tribalat has done the work for 1999 and she came up with that number of 3.7 million of possible Muslim

background, and so when you update it you get to something a bit more than 4.5 to 5 million, and I think the numbers she comes up with are pretty solid in terms of methodology.

The ones who have asserted there are 6 and maybe 8 million Muslims in France still have to show their methodology, still have to tell us how they got to that number. A couple of others have done research in the numbers and have some up with numbers that are quite consistent with that of Tribalat, Alain Boyer, for example, at the end of the 1990s.

So we address that in chapter one, it is an important question, but I do not think any reasonable methodology can bring us to numbers such as 8 or 9 million.

MR. GORDON: This last exchange clearly shows that there is a lot more can and should be said about this issue. We are out of time though, so perhaps after you buy their book the authors will take a few minutes and chat with you about it. But until then, I would simply like to thank them for doing it and for being with us. Thank you for such a stimulating presentation. And thanks to Chris Caldwell as well for joining us, and thank you all for coming and we will see you next time.

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