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### *A “Diagnose” of Muslims’ Social Integration in Madrid*

#### ABSTRACT

In the current context of increased attention to the Muslim minority and the religiously framed conflicts of some segments of Islam, this paper aims to contribute with empirical evidence on Muslim “problematicity” in Madrid, exploring their main barriers to social integration by analyzing the data from semi-structured interviews with Muslim leaders. Although the Muslim minority is officially recognized by the Spanish State, the legal provisions are not fully implemented. The lack of implementation hinders the Muslims’ proper social integration in Madrid and reveals the first category of problems identified, of operational character, which – with the proper implementation of the agreement – could be easily solved. Furthermore, the second type of problems emerges and refers to the increased concern on Muslim youth. The ongoing tensions between the majority and Muslim minorities, altogether with the tensions between Muslim parents and Muslim youth pose significant challenges to the latter and to the Spanish society as a whole, in long term, especially with the rise of the radicalization of Muslim youth.

**Key words:** Muslim minorities, social integration, Madrid, Islam

#### INTRODUCTION

During the last decades, the Muslim presence in Western democracies has been increasingly perceived as problematic. The integration problems altogether with the radicalization processes of some segments of Islam biased the majorities’ opinion that Muslims and Islam are not compatible with Western secular societies and their social integration is impossible. Spain was not exempted from these global trends and here the Muslim “other” is many times framed as alien and external to the Spanish society.

Drawing on the existing research in the area of social integration benefits for the well-being of society, this paper aims to contribute with empirical evidence on

Muslim “problematicity” in Madrid, exploring their main barriers to social integration by analyzing the data from semi-structured interviews with Muslim leaders.

Although the Muslim minority is officially recognized by the Spanish State through a cooperation agreement that has the status of a law, these legal provisions are not fully implemented. The lack of implementation hinders the Muslims’ proper social integration in Madrid and reveals the first category of problems identified, of operational character, which – with the proper implementation of the agreement – could be easily solved. Nevertheless, the second type of problems, of a completely different dimension and complexity, emerges and refers to the increased concern on Muslim youth. The ongoing tensions between the majority and Muslim minorities, altogether with the tensions between Muslim parents and Muslim youth pose significant challenges to the latter and to the Spanish society as a whole, in long term, especially with the rise of the radicalization of the next Muslim generation.

This paper, therefore, is structured into two main parts. The first one will describe the theoretical concept of social integration, introduce the particularity of the Madrid context and the research methods used to collect the empirical evidence. In the second part, the fieldwork data will be analyzed and classified correspondingly, on structural barriers faced by the Muslim minorities and the perspective of long-term risk for the Spanish society.

#### THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION

The social integration concept represents a complex and multidimensional construct and due to the lack of a commonly agreed definition among scholars, it has been explained in different terms by different authors. Cynthia Hewitt de Alcántara sustains this idea and she argues that “(...) to some, it is a positive goal, implying equal opportunities and rights for all human beings (...). To others, however, increasing integration may conjure up the image of an unwanted imposition of conformity. And, to still others, it is simply a way of describing the established patterns of human relations in any given society” [Hewitt de Alcántara 1994: 5]. Later on, the author offers her own and simplified definition of the concept that means “(...) a broad-ranging synonym for greater justice, equality, material well-being, and democratic freedom” [Hewitt de Alcántara 1994: 5]. Nevertheless, this simple definition, of a general character, does not properly reflect the case of minorities that suffer from injustices, inequalities, poverty and whose freedom of religion is jeopardized. Then, one obvious question to ask is what could be the most appropriate meaning of the social integration concept that could serve best in the current study of Muslim religious minorities in Madrid.

A starting point in this process of clarification could be the social integration concept emphasized by Émile Durkheim’s studies on social conditions [Durkheim 1897]. He was a pioneer in bringing empirical evidence of the link between the so-

cial structure of religious groups and the influence on individual well-being. In his work, Durkheim tried to explain the constancy of suicide rates in some religious groups when compared to other ones. Religion as part of the culture is the main focus in Durkheim's puzzle and he argued that culture influences the types of social relationships that prevail in a group. The understanding of the culture for Durkheim is binary and balances between two extremes: individual and group culture. The individual culture for him gives too much prominence to individuals (such as in modern societies) and the group culture is referred to small traditional societies where the members are strongly bounded and active. Based on this division, Durkheim distinguishes two types of causality of possible self-destructive results. Consequently, individual cultures lead to egoistic or anomic suicide. While the second one leads to altruistic or fatalistic suicide. While Durkheim admits that individual self-destruction is possible in both types of cultures he argues that it is just in one that a higher rate prevails. According to Durkheim, if a person lacks ties with the community and religious group and when he/she is isolated (single), then he or she is more prevalent to acquire an "anomic" behavior and commit suicide. To address this problem, he suggests a possible solution *via* a stable social structure and widely held norms that would regulate the "anomic" human behavior. In this way, the stable structure altogether with the norms should act as a social control filter for the society, encourage the positive and discourage the negative behavior. In summary, the social integration, according to Durkheim, is a product of the social condition of human beings, that is culturally biased and influences the participation into the society. Consequently, the degree of human beings' social integration varies and is strongly linked with the extent to which people interact with each other and with the extent to which they identify with something larger than their individual selves. Peter Blau, inspired by Durkheim's work, was of similar opinion as he pointed out that "social integration prevails in a group if bonds of attraction unite its members" and based on empirical evidence he argued that the "acceptance as a pair depends on approachability as well as attractiveness" [Blau 1960]. Therefore, the more sympathetic attitude of the majority towards minorities (and *vice versa*), the greatest the chances of social integration of the society. Similarly to Durkheim, Blau connected theory and empirical research to develop a theory that would provide a more general (structural) explanation of the sorts of interactions and relationships in society. He began with the idea that social interactions are of particular value to people, and to understand collective outcomes he explored the forms and sources of this value.

Robert Faris, Just as Blau, believed that social integration positively correlates with individual well-being. His extensive researches in the hospital records showed that "(...) the «shut-in» or «seclusive» personality (...) is the result of an extended period of «cultural isolation», that is, separation from intimate and sympathetic social contact" [Faris 1934] and showed that with time many spatially isolated peoples develop mental illness. In his analysis, Faris tried to look back to the origins and he found out that "(...) an examination of the early social situation indicates

that the large number of schizophrenics came from communities in which the social disorganization was very marked and an intimate social life was difficult to achieve” [Faris 1934:155]. In this way, Faris emphasized the importance of social contacts and he argued that social interaction is essential to normal personality development and for appropriate social conduct. Consequently, both Faris and Durkheim considered that greater levels of social interaction are associated with greater personal well-being. Such a statement seems to be relevant to all human beings, regardless of their ethnicity or religion. In the particular case of Muslim minority this is highly relevant as the existence of more social interactions between the minorities and majority could foster the Muslims’ social integration, establish stronger bonds with the hosting society and offer the opportunity to know better each other, foster the feeling of belonging as well as become an active member of the society. But to establish any relationship it requires a degree of *participation* from both sides through which the opportunities could be accessed, some role could be taken up and a sense of meaning could be given. In this regard, Peggy Thoits considered that “people’s identities are tied to the social positions or roles they occupy” [Thoits 1983: 176] and suggested that roles provide people with information about who they are in an existential sense. It is implied that a sense of meaning in life is an integral component of psychological well-being and failing to have a sense of meaning often leads to improper conduct and deviant, self-destructive behavior [Thoits 1983]. Sheldon Cohen went even deeper into the analysis of the social roles and he claimed that the ability to meet role expectations may result in cognitive benefits and these benefits, afforded by holding multiple social roles, lessen psychological despair and generate positive effect [Cohen 1988]. Consequently, the multiple roles a person can undertake in society and their fulfillment help both the person and the society and increase social integration. A higher level of social integration, thus, could help to reduce the cultural clashes, offer an additional chance for people to know each other and it can help to feel more connected to the larger community, by promoting positive behavior and preventing the negative ones.

In a later work, Cohen et al. advance the research and propose a definition of the social integration concept, described as “the extent to which an individual *participates* in a broad range of social *relationships*” [Cohen et al. 2000: 54]. According to the authors, the participation in any kind of relationships is essential, but if one looks at the case of Muslim minority, it could be easily seen that the participation is undermined by prejudices and marginalization.

A work in which Thomas Scheff advanced the knowledge on the theory of social integration, defined this concept based on two variables: *alienation* and *solidarity* [Scheff 2007]. It is precisely the polarity between these two extremes that could characterize best the social integration concept according to the author. It is particularly Scheff’s conceptual framework that provides the basis to see the problem of Muslim minorities’ social integration framed between the degree of solidarity with the Muslim minorities and the degree of alienation. After a sound literature

review, Scheff analyzed the existing concepts of social integration and classified them according to their level of social integration that could be achieved. His linear scale is divided into three parts: too much social integration, too little social integration, and a third middle part, not defined. It is particularly this middle part that the author seems to consider the best (or the golden middle) and here he considers that solidarity should be placed. Thus, a highly cohesive society provides the best basis for social integration of its members, both majority and minorities, being also an optimal condition for the society, while the other two extremes (of too little and too much social integration) are both inadequate for the well-being of the society. Too little social integration causes anomie [Durkheim 1897], alienation [Seeman 1975] and isolation [Bowen 1994], while too much social integration leads to altruistic behavior [Durkheim 1915], self-estranged [Seeman 1975], and engulfment/fusion [Bowen 1994]. Although Scheff did not refer explicitly to a community, but rather put the emphasis on the individual, regardless his or her ethnic, religious, cultural origin, his analysis leads to the conclusion that social disintegration is a problem existent, to different degrees, in any society. Nevertheless, minorities, due to their disadvantaged status, might face additional problems of social integration compared with the majority members. In the particular case of minority groups, the concept of social integration has been used to refer to situations where minority groups come together or are incorporated into the majority society, and, to some extent, feel part of a larger community [Cummins 2017]. Thus, social integration could be understood as a *process* of agreement on a system of meaning, language, culture, and the like. But this process requires the active participation of all parts of majority and minorities in inclusive social relationships and under a framework of shared norms.

A similar tri-dimensional definition, but with some differences in terms of the social integration concept, is presented by Vida Beresneviūtė. She analyses the three dimensions of the social integration concept divided into social participation, social exclusion, and social capital, in the context of ethnic studies. She argues that "the advantage of the integration perspective comes from its focus on various social dimensions that are crucial in the evolution of ethnic groups" [Beresneviūtė 2003: 97]. Although she agrees that all three dimensions can be part of separate studies, she argues that the dimension of social participation, social exclusion, and social capital could emphasize best the social integration concept in minorities' studies. Her formula of success for minorities' best social integration would be when the majority of the population of different ethnic groups has a full *social participation*, when there is no marginalization and no scarcity of material and social opportunities, no lack of skills to participate in an effective way and no alienation or estrangement from the main part of society (social exclusion/inclusion). A positive outcome of participation in the social context (*social capital*) is also of importance.

Based on these tridimensional explanations of the social integration concept, as well as on the concept definition provided by other authors cited above, for an exploratory study of social integration of Muslims in Madrid, the current paper uses

the definition of the social integration concept based on three parts: Social Relationships, Social Participation and Equality (Figure 1).

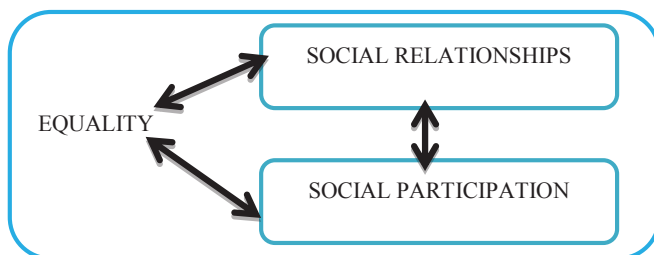


Figure 1. Social integration concept for minorities' studies

Source: Author's own study.

Although strongly bound together and reciprocally dependent, the three indicators of the social integration concept have different weight. Equality is the basics and comprises the legal and normative regulations for the whole society, while social relationships and social participation are of lesser importance but are equally important and necessary for the minorities' and majority's well-being. In this way, increased equality, through stable social structures and widely held norms, can enable minorities to participate, while increased social participation means taking more social roles in society and fosters the feeling of belonging. Participation creates opportunities to build strong ties or connections and relationships or social contacts can facilitate access to participation opportunities and reduce unconscious bias and discrimination.

The policy-relevant question for those who look at social integration in these terms is not how to increase integration *per se*, but how to promote a kind of integration which favors the creation of a more just and equitable society. The cultural diversity leads to the juxtaposition of people who often share neither a common language nor a common religion, and who have very different customs, and unusual demands on human tolerance and understanding. Feelings of marginality and the disruption of existing forms of local solidarity are two elements exacerbating ethnic and religious conflicts and jeopardize social integration.

#### THE LOCAL CONTEXT OF MADRID

The local context is crucial for the religious minorities' access to a religious infrastructure as well as it is the main drive towards social integration or disintegration of Muslim minorities. Therefore, in a "«hostile context of receptivity»", when minorities feel unwelcome, excluded and discriminated against by members of the receiving

society with which they interact personally or professionally (...) influences a range of individual outcomes" [Portes, Rumbaut 2006].

Madrid is a diverse city, a municipality and the capital, and one of the largest cities in Spain. Additionally, Madrid municipality is among the most populated territories in Spain and it had 3,221,824 residents as for 2018, with about 21% of the immigrant population being born outside of Spain; comparing to 2017 it registered a growth of 4.6%. Here the percentage of residents born outside of Spain has seen a constant growth during the last years; a growth that is registered also in the level of the nationalization of foreign citizens. An even bigger increase (5.8%) corresponds with the number of immigrants that live in Madrid and accounts for 13.1% of the total population of the city during 2018 [Ciudad de Madrid 2018]. These data show that Madrid immigrant population keeps increasing and along with this increases the city's diversity in cultural, linguistic and religious terms. Among these diversities one can notice an increase in the presence of Muslims population in Madrid. According to the estimations of the Andaluz Observatory, Madrid is among the cities with the biggest Muslim population and the Municipal Census of Inhabitants estimates the Muslim population to be about 285,993 [Observatorio Andalusi 2018: 13]. Besides the numerical presence, some Muslim minorities come from different parts of the world that make the Madrid Muslim minority a diverse one in itself. The nationalized Muslims altogether with Muslims born in Spain and the Spanish converts represent 61% of all Muslims living in Madrid, with a high percentage of Muslims coming from Morocco (26.49%). As for the other immigrant groups, a smaller comparative numerical difference can be noticed: 3.01% from Nigeria, 1.87% from Bangladesh, 1.23% from Pakistan, 1.10% from Senegal, 0.69% from Algeria and 3.55% from other countries as Egypt, Mauritania, Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Tunisia, Jordan, Indonesia, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia [Observatorio Andalusi 2018: 13].

The data estimations made by the Andaluz Observatory show that the majority of Madrid Muslims are nationalized which means that the social disintegration of Muslims should be approached as an internal Spanish problem and not as a migration issue. The second biggest group, according to the same source, coming from Morocco, will probably follow the same path and in the near future it will probably naturalize. Furthermore, the increasing number of Muslim religious entities registered by the Ministry of Justice is in favor of settling the Muslim community and establishing places of worship nearby. Such an affirmation is emphasized when comparing the foreign population from Muslim-majority countries (Table 1) with the geographical location of religious entities in Madrid (Table 2).

Nevertheless, the segregation of Madrid Muslims is evident when one looks at the distribution of the Muslims settled in the districts of Madrid (Table 1). This data emphasizes the concentration of the Muslims in the areas with a high presence of similar or different ethnic migrants, more exactly these are the districts: Centro, Villaverde, Carabanchel, Tetuan, Fuencarral-El Pardo, Puente de Vallecas, Usera. A relevant fact to consider is that the housing cost, which is much more costly in the

Table 1. The City of Madrid population by districts and nationality. Data from the Municipal Register as of 1 January 2018

	01 Ciudad de Madrid	02 Argan- zuela	03 Retiro	04 Sala- manca	05 Chamar- tín	06 Chamar- tetuán	07 Cham- berí	08 Fuen- carral- -El Pardo	09 Moncloa- Aravaca	10 Latina	11 Carra- banchel	12 Usera	13 Puente de Vallecas	14 Moraa- tallaz	15 Ciudad Lineal	16 Horta- leza	17 Villa- verde	18 Villa de Vallecas	19 Vical- varo	20 San Blas- Cunil- lejas	21 Barajas	
Total popula- tion	3,221,824	132,352	152,907	119,011	145,268	144,894	155,967	138,418	242,928	117,835	235,785	248,220	136,978	230,488	94,261	214,463	183,930	145,523	107,649	70,962	156,149	47,836
Spanish	2,799,105	103,218	138,346	110,602	127,075	131,729	127,810	123,605	223,680	106,125	201,653	204,022	108,793	193,074	86,322	186,176	166,805	119,276	95,524	62,837	138,834	43,599
Inmi- grants	422,718	29,134	14,561	8,409	18,193	13,165	28,157	14,813	19,248	11,710	34,131	44,198	28,185	37,414	7,939	28,287	17,125	26,247	12,125	8,125	17,315	4,237
Morocco	21,716	1,146	404	174	325	295	1,373	311	914	1,501	2,253	919	3,354	268	1,015	429	3,277	1,611	838	637	325	
Saudi Arabia	248	7	4	2	25	8	4	8	19	10	1	1	1	0	19	90	1	0	0	48	0	
Bangla- desh	5,625	2,732	361	28	36	23	203	52	20	226	396	163	588	18	161	24	410	64	33	73	2	
Indonesia	270	19	2	5	19	18	18	12	17	4	4	8	2	0	68	28	11	0	4	11	11	
Iraq	361	46	7	5	5	15	2	29	15	12	16	43	30	2	18	62	10	11	2	25	1	
Jordan	222	17	7	3	17	13	26	1	40	4	7	6	8	3	19	13	2	4	0	2	3	
Lebanon	292	56	15	4	47	29	16	20	13	8	9	3	6	4	21	20	1	3	2	5	3	
Syria	760	43	21	9	11	20	66	15	102	38	62	19	119	19	55	13	26	10	14	46	0	
Turkey	690	108	43	32	58	41	44	56	52	33	12	46	9	16	32	26	7	19	3	39	6	
Algeria	1,145	86	33	12	26	17	65	21	54	39	78	57	159	4	149	62	87	37	7	92	3	
Egypt	584	60	17	9	46	22	47	20	41	28	25	17	18	2	31	24	64	19	10	22	11	
Libya	454	17	3	1	6	123	36	17	57	6	10	13	10	9	26	74	22	0	7	16	0	
Mauri- tania	252	22	3	0	6	3	7	2	1	10	43	2	44	4	37	2	18	12	1	3	1	
Niger	13	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	
Senegal	2,088	521	228	28	33	18	64	19	36	14	230	58	261	12	56	38	242	77	30	68	13	
Tunisia	286	24	7	7	18	9	23	4	13	12	9	11	16	0	18	59	11	6	2	17	0	
Total Muslims	4,904	1,155	320	680	644	2,007	560	1,408	580	2,011	3,228	1,329	4,634	353	1,726	967	4,191	1,873	953	1,104	379	

Source: Ayuntamiento de Madrid (Madrid City Hall), Padrón Municipal de Habitantes (Municipal Register), 1 January 2018.



Table 2. Muslim religious entities in Madrid by districts

	Madrid																				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
District	Centro	Arganzuela	Retiro	Salamanca	Chamartín	Tetuán	Chamberí	Fuencarral-El Pardo	Moncloa-Aravaca	Latina	Carabanchel	Usera	Puente de Vallecas	Moratalaz	Ciudad Lineal	Hortaleza	Villaverde	Villa de Vallecas	Vicálvaro	San Blas-Canillejas	Barajas
Number	7	1	0	2	1	4	1	3	0	1	4	3	3	0	2	0	4	2	2	1	1
Total	42																				

Source: Author's own study based on the data available at Observatorio del pluralismo religioso en España, <http://www.observatorioreligion.es/>

capital city, and that many Muslim move to the surrounding municipalities, creating small religious communities there.

In the whole Community of Madrid, there are 126 religious entities (mosques and religious organizations) but only 42 are in Madrid City while the rest are outside of Madrid. The Madrid Muslim religious entities are present in the Centro (7), Villaverde (4), Carabanchel (4), Tetuan (4) followed by the districts of Fuencarral-El Pardo (3), Puente de Vallecas (3) and Usera (3) (Table 2). According to the data of the Observatory of Religious Pluralism, Madrid is the city with the highest number of religious entities. Consequently, it represents the most plural religious sample in Spain. Madrid Muslims constitute the second largest religious minority after Evangelicals [Observatorio del pluralismo religioso en España n.d.]. Considering the multi-religious and multi-cultural aspect of the City of Madrid as well as the highest concentration of Muslim religious entities, it represents the focus of the current paper.

## THE RESEARCH METHOD

The study followed the qualitative method, considered to be the most adequate for exploratory studies as well as deepening the understanding of the social integration of the Muslim minority in Madrid. Through semi-structured interviews, the empirical evidence was gathered, with a reduced level of formality, which helped to gain a deep insight into the Muslims' social integration in Madrid. The semi-structured interviews were targeting the active members of Muslim religious organizations, such as presidents, and informal leaders, Imams, secretary or members of the board of directors of the Muslim religious organizations. All the Muslim organizations interviewed were registered in the Registry of Religious Organizations (Table 3) and

Table 3. Selection criteria of the target group (interviewer)

Selection criteria				Codified interviews		
Federated status	UCIDE	FEERI	Other federations	MM1	MM4	MM7
Leadership role	Imam	President / Secretary	Board of directors member	MM2	MM5	MM8
Muslim religious entity	A1	A2	A3	MM3	MM6	MM9

Source: Author's own study.

had to comply with the following criteria of selection: 1) to be federated religious entity – be part of a Muslim network (federation/union/commission) both officially/formalized and unofficially/not formalized; 2) to offer social integration services to their community members, classified in the following three types of activities:

- Basic: A1) Religious activities (Islam) and Arab teaching;
- Medium: A2) Religious activities (Islam) and Arab teaching (A1) plus additional activities of social integration financed by the Foundation of Religious Pluralism; and
- Complex: A3) This activity comprises medium activities: A2 plus additional or extra activities of social integration delivered with the extra support (different actors and policy contribution: EU, private, Muslim states, embassies, etc.).

It should be noted that the criteria specified above are based on the analysis of the activities of Muslim religious entities in Spain. Additionally, it was considered important to identify the Muslim social integration according to the experience of these three main types. Nevertheless, this classification is not exhaustive and more complex ones could be provided depending on the research aim.

#### CLUES ON SOCIAL (DIS)INTEGRATION

The social integration of the Muslim minority in Madrid seems problematic due to the persisting inequalities, little relationships between the Muslim minorities and the majority and little social participation. Durkheim, as well as other authors cited in the first part, argued that social integration is positive for society and personal well-being. But he considered that it is necessary to fulfill some particular requirements or to foster the society's social integration. Among these there is the call for equality, which he sees as structural and normative. Consequently, the state structures through their normative power should provide the minorities with an equal framework and equal opportunities to practice their minority religion. The agreement signed in 1992 between the Spanish State and the Islamic Commission of Spain (*Comisión Islámica de España*, CIE) was requested by the Muslim minority particularly to achieve the equality that complies also with the constitutional provisions of religious freedom. After signing the agreement, the Muslim minority could establish their own worship structures and freely practice

Islam. This equality provision offered the Muslims the opportunity to comply with their identity need: “All good Muslims need to practice Islam, and when a Muslim settles a little bit, the first thing to do will be to look for a place where a Mosque could be established and where they could go to meet their religious needs (...)” [MM1]. Other researchers notice a similar trend. For example, Ángeles Ramírez and Laura Mijares [2018] emphasize “(...) that the idea of living Islamically is identified as a model for Muslims (...)” [Ramírez, Mijares 2018: 144].

The worship place, the Mosque, represents a complex mix of aid, support, social and cultural reference for Muslims. With some slight differences, the Mosque, during the research, proved to be a primarily religious place but also a social and cultural one, which sometimes goes beyond its primary aim and welcomes public officials from the countries of origins, political leaders and hosts most intimate family celebration (birth, weddings celebrations, etc.). Also, the Mosque is a social capital construct for many Muslims, it serves as a place where Muslims, in some cases, share available employment opportunities and look for future employment, engage in some civic participation and establishing relationships with other Muslims. The Mosque is also a fundraising platform, for both the Mosque maintenance costs as well as helping the Muslims in need (e.g. to fundraise to help families to transfer the diseased body to the country of origin, to help poor Muslim families, etc.). It is important to point out the ethnic and geographical diversity of members. They are part of a plural society but at the same time they are a plural community themselves. Although the majority of Muslims in Spain comes from Morocco and they are mainly economic migrants (with different status: economic migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, etc.), there are others who come from different parts of the world. Although at the moment this might not be a “big” problem, in time it can become a problematic one. The differences among Spanish Muslims are mostly emphasized by the Muslims that consider themselves very different from the Muslims from Morocco. They underlie their differences in linguistic, cultural and racial terms that most of the time are not considered and, thus, no accommodation means are provided: “They seem not to understand our religious (Islam) necessity and that it’s a right and not a favor (...)” [MM1]. The lack of activities is interpreted by the Muslim community as not addressing the occurring problems and not looking for sustainable solutions: “There is a distance between the Muslim Community and Spanish institutions (...), also the interaction with them is only in cases when something happens (...) but for the rest of the time, there is nothing (...)” [MM2].

These findings emphasize the need to tackle the problem of Muslim minorities’ inequalities and barriers that could hinder social integration. These general claims introduce the specific problems of the Muslim community in Madrid that has been classified as structural (redistribution and recognition and Imams) or as the ones that refer to the perspective of long-term risks (the Muslim youth).

## STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TO SOCIAL INTEGRATION

The main structural barrier to social integration faced by the Muslim minorities in Madrid relates to the fact that the cooperation agreement is still not fully implemented. The lack of implementation jeopardizes the Muslim minority equality as well as their participation in the Spanish society and the possibility to establish meaningful relationships with the majority. The lack of implementation leads to several social integration problems such as lack of resources to foster social integration and the ability to meet role expectations by Imam.

The first one, related to the lack of resources (financial and human), is among the main barriers to social integration emphasized by the Muslim minority in Madrid. This lack has a direct impact on Muslim minorities' participation as equal members of society and diminishes the opportunities to establish more diverse social contacts. In this regard, Nancy Fraser argues that the redistribution of the financial resources plays a central role rather than identity recognition [Fraser 2000].

The issue of the redistribution for the Muslims was tackled by the Spanish state after 2004 and particularly after the Madrid train bombings (11M) took place. The redistribution started to be implemented by a newly created public organization called "Foundation of Pluralism and Coexistence" (FPC), established with the main aim to promote religious diversity as well as offer some financial assistance to the recognized religious minorities, including Muslims. Although such a redistribution of resources is an important step for the Muslim minorities, the general claim argued is that there is no equal redistribution comparing to the Catholic majority. Such inequality hinders social integration due to the fact that it shows up differentiated norms and not the one widely held as Durkheim suggested. Moreover, while the Catholic mass attendance falls, Muslim communities claim that their place of worship is overcrowded and hardly can cope with the growing number of attendees.

Besides the financial resources, the Muslim minorities of Madrid point out the lack of qualified human resources among their members. This is perceived as the main barrier to access financial resources that most of the time requires knowledge and skills that Madrid Muslim minorities declare to lack: "The majority of Muslims are economic migrants that have no education or have a basic one and cannot engage in the activities when they lack the adequate knowledge and qualification, for example, to write a project proposal (...) and when we present a project there is always something missing in it and we do not fill the requirements" [MM2]; "(...) we miss qualified people to write projects, to implement them, to report and justify the costs (...)" [MM5].

The above statements show that the problem of resources is deeply rooted into the socio-economic and institutional inequalities that set the frame for social disintegration of Muslim minorities in Madrid. On the one hand, there seem to be structural social exclusion of the Muslim minorities: "There is a rejection to

collaborate with religious (Muslim) organizations and this does not allow to access to funding" [MM1].

On the other hand, the underprivileged and unequal situations of Muslim minorities deepen in cases when they have to assure financial sustainability: "(...) the community tried to present projects to be financed, but the requirement was to advance the money from their own resources and this was a big challenge for them" [MM2].

There seems to be a high level of solidarity inside the Muslim minorities but little or a complete lack of it outside such a minority. For example, in order to face the minorities' financial needs, a common practice engaged by the Muslims in Madrid is mainly self-financing that assures the functioning of the mosque and the social security costs of the imam.

The second one is related to the ability to meet role expectation by an imam in Madrid. An imam is selected at the community level and normally the members of the Muslim community choose someone who is considered knowledgeable and wise to take the role of a spiritual leader. Among the requirements for imam is to know and understand the Quran, and to be able to recite it correctly, however, no special training is required. He is often chosen from the existing members of the Muslim community and there is no universal governing body to supervise imams. The main role and responsibility of an imam is to lead Islamic worship services. He can also serve as a member of the larger leadership team in a Muslim community. The Muslim communities show high respect for the imam and the imam's counseling may be sought in personal, family, religious or daily life matters. Thus, the imam plays a central role not only for the Muslim minorities but he is also crucial for the rest of the society members' well-being. Nevertheless, such an important social role is neither regulated by the State nor it is provided any special courses on the Spanish society. It has to be mentioned here that the Muslim minority has no tools to check the imam's previous references, especially when they come from other states. It is particularly the Barcelona attacks (17A) that brought big attention to the role of imam for the Muslim minority. According to the research data, there are several inconsistencies in the existing legal provisions. On the one hand, the existing legal provisions are supposed to regulate religious organizations but they do not intervene in the specific situation of the Islam and Muslims: "(...) the state officials register the Muslim religious organization but it has no control over the community decisions in terms of religious leadership, for example, to check the imam profile or his preparation" [MM3].

These decisions are practically left up to the Muslim minorities who face several constraints when referring to them. For example, it is impossible for Muslim minorities to find out whether a man who stands as a candidate for taking up the role of Imam has any criminal records in other countries. In order to change it, some Muslim leaders consider that there should be a deeper engagement of the public administration into the process of Imam employment:

The issues of imams have to be taken seriously. For example, in Spain, there is no register of Imams and the imams are hired by the Muslim community. In this way, nobody checks their qualification, preparation, knowledge of Spanish, etc. Thus, there is a need for better collaboration from all sides to solve it and not to leave the things as they are, because what we saw after what has happened in Barcelona behind all this was an Imam! This imam had criminal records and was contracted by the Muslim community! But if there is control of imams by the authorities such situations could be avoided. The imam has a very important role in the community! He is the counselor, guides the community and the members listen and apply what he says [MM3].

On the other hand, there is not any financing from the Spanish public authorities (neither national nor local) to cover the imams' employment costs and these costs are covered by the Muslim community themselves. In this regard, some Muslims argue that by covering the employment costs, the Spanish authorities could gain some social control over the figure of the imam and avoid radicalization situations as was the case of imam involved in the 17A attack.

#### PERSPECTIVE OF THE LONG-TERM RISK

The main problems cited above are not exhaustive and most probably their intensity as well as the number could differ in other Spanish cities but an emerging problem with the Muslim youth has been identified as one of the highest risks in the long term and point out to some failure as far as their social integration in Spain is concerned.

The issue of Muslims children and youth in Madrid is of a controversial nature. On the one hand, the Muslim youth is referred to as completely integrated into the Spanish society, based on the fact that there is a huge difference in terms of knowledge compared to their parents. Muslim minorities recognize that for the Muslim youth it was easier to learn as most of them arrived in Spain as very small children or they have been born here. Thus, they have been naturalized and have been able to integrate easier. Some leaders recognize that many Muslim families were against their children's study and the leaders of the local communities invested a great deal of effort in explaining the advantages of achieving higher education. Now, the Muslim community in Madrid proudly declare to have some models of success (of young Muslim doctors, physicians, managers, etc.) to refer to. Obtaining a qualification in Spain helped young Muslims to opt for qualified employment, better salaries and a better life in general. Nevertheless, the fact that more and more young, educated, highly skilled Muslims radicalize (committing suicide attacks) [Reinares, García-Calvo 2016] questions the real integration of Muslim youth and shows a deep and generational social disintegration experienced by young Muslims. The lack of ties

with the community in general and life in Muslim enclaves altogether with cultural isolation might be the main reason for such state of affairs.

On the one hand, big intergenerational discrepancies have been observed between the Muslim youth and their Muslim parents. They do not feel so attached to their parents' country of origin and prefer to be more like their Spanish mates: "Youngsters want to be independent, to be free, to have no control from parents, etc." [MM3]; "(...) there is a problem of mentality between parents and children. Parents do not know Spanish well but their children study here so they are fluent and there is a misunderstanding between them (...)" [MM3].

These intergenerational clashes increase the Muslim parents fear that their children will forget their roots and will become totally assimilated into the Spanish society: "The most worrying for us at the moment is our future generation (...) our children (...) will not have the same vision as their parents (...) They were born here, studied here and have to live here and work for this country and do not want to go back to Morocco" [MM3].

Nevertheless, some Muslims consider that regardless of the integration outcome, a Muslim child will never manage to assimilate completely, and they put a strong emphasis on the Islamic education: "Our children will be Muslims in any way and the big challenge is to be Muslim and have no idea of Islam, thus we need to teach them Islam (...) to teach the true religion, the real one, that is peace, not violence" [MM4]. The problem of not knowing Islam, what it really means, is considered the main problem among the Muslim youth, as it seems that misinterpretations take place when there is a lack of solid knowledge of religious grassroots. Moreover, the Muslim youth define themselves correspondingly: "The second generation – our sons – are well integrated here, they define themselves as mixed, but always call themselves Moroccans" [MM2].

During the weekend, the Muslim youth have the opportunity to participate in the classes of Arab and establish networks with other Muslim mates. Such a practice comes to address the young Muslims alienation from their Muslim roots. Nevertheless, some community leaders point out that: "During the weekend classes, we have noticed that the second generation is not so interested to study Arab and that their parents oblige them to come to the school" [MM3]. Others expressively mention the parents' pressure: "Most parents want their children to study Islam and the Arab language but children do not care and are forced by their parents to come. The child is at school all week and going to the Mosque at weekends to study again is difficult and they are tired" [MM4].

On the other hand, there seem to be not enough control on the part of Muslim parents that leads to increased concern about the Muslim youth: "We know our children have many problems here. For example, there are many centers that host our sons for stupid things such as robberies or other misconduct (selling drugs)" [MM9] and "These are children that were born here and because of parents' lack of care end up there (in minor centers)" [MM3]. The gap between the education level of Muslim

parents and their children is another input to misunderstandings: “The education of the parents is not adequate. Many of them came without education, without any degree, in some cases even without religion (...) and they do not care about the real problems of their children” [MM6]; “The social structure of Moroccan immigrants that come here is of a low cultural level. Most come from underdeveloped areas, and with low education. The second generation change but as the parents are not educated there is a big school dropout” [MM9].

These data reveal an emerging concern for the Muslim youth that struggles to be part of the Spanish society and, at the same time, accommodate their parents request to maintain their ethnic and religious roots. On the one hand, the parents try to maintain their cultural and religious roots and sometimes this is a pressure for the Muslim youth. On the other hand, there seems to be an intergenerational clash between Muslim parents and their children that gets more complex taking into account the education gap. Finally, the aspiration of Muslim youth, although similar to any local youngster, seems to be jeopardized by their ethnic and religious belonging. This fosters various discriminatory and delinquent behaviors which, in consequence, is bad for society in general.

The lack of adequate resources makes it impossible for the Muslim minorities to address these complex and emergent problems. Nevertheless, they need to be referred to because this is a phenomenon with which Spanish society will have to live in the future.

## CONCLUSIONS

Being part of a secular society, the Muslim minorities of Madrid re-emphasize that Islam is part of their identity and in order to integrate with the society, they claim the freedom to practice Islam. The research on social integration reveals a positive correlation between social integration and personal well-being, and the empirical evidence on the Muslim minority in Madrid proves this link. Nevertheless, if we look at the social integration definition based on the three main parts identifies: equality, social relationships, and social participation and see the empirical evidence, one easily can understand that in case of the Muslim minority in Madrid we could speak about social disintegration instead of social integration. First of all, the barriers that Muslim minority face are connected with the lack of opportunities to practice Islam. It is particularly the lack of the full implementation of the cooperation agreement that seems to be the main driver of inequality. The lack of implementation hinders the Muslims’ proper social integration in Madrid and reveals the first category of problems identified, of operational character, which – with the proper implementation of the agreement – could be easily solved. Nevertheless, there seem to be strong relationships between the Muslim minorities but little or a lack of social contact with local authorities and local contexts (neighborhoods). This situation seems to



be a case of “cultural isolation”, as Faris described it, which negatively influences the social integration.

The particular situation of the Muslim minority in regard to their spiritual leader, the imam, is another problem identified that seems to have no regulation from the Spanish authorities. The imam can play an important role for the Muslim minority, but this role could be both positive and negative, as experienced so far in Spain, and the regulation gap, altogether with the lack of specific preparation of imams, leave the problem without a solution. The provision of such action could be a win-win solution as well as a preventive measure of social control for the Muslim minority as well as the Spanish majority.

Furthermore, the second type of problem, of a completely different dimension, emerges and refers to the increased concern about the Muslim youth. The second generation is problematic both because of the generational differences with their parents as well as growing rates in dropouts and delinquencies. It is particularly for this reason that the Muslim leaders consider that there have to be more efforts and activities directed at this particular group. Muslim youths are Spanish and Muslims at the same time and for the future peaceful coexistence, the emerging problems need to be faced as soon as possible. The ongoing tensions between the majority and Muslim minorities, altogether with the tensions between Muslim parents and their children, pose significant challenges to the latter and to the Spanish society as a whole in the long term.

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