

**Do Muslims Make the Difference:
Explaining Variation on Mosque Building Policies in Western Europe**

by

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Abstract

The research question this thesis asks is what accounts for the intra state variation of mosque building projects in Western Europe, using as case studies Britain, France, Germany and the Netherlands. Two mosque projects are considered in each case study state and two theories are proposed and tested: resources mobilisation theory and opportunity structure theory.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the last twenty years major incidents that have provoked discussion under the rubric of Islam in Europe include the Rushdie Affair, the Headscarf Affair(s), bombings in London, Paris and Madrid, the murder of Dutch Filmmaker Theo Van Gogh and the car bomb attack at a Glasgow airport. These kinds of events suggest that Muslim immigrants and their European hosts are at an impasse, that Europe has become a battleground between Muslim fundamentalists and secular liberals. While these events are significant and do have an effect on how Islam can exist in Europe, they present an incomplete picture. For the vast majority of Muslims in Europe conflicts with the host country play out very differently. Rather than seeking to *subvert* the state, their struggle is to *convince* the state to accommodate their practical needs. For example, they are interested in obtaining space in cemeteries that will allow them to comply with Islamic burial regulations. They wish to secure the availability of *halal* meat in institutions such as hospitals and school cafeterias, and they seek to build places of worship where they can practice the important rituals that are part of the Muslim faith.¹ Mosque building in particular has been a contentious issue in Europe because it literally thrusts Islam into public view in a way that the other two issues do not. A request to build a mosque is a request to occupy physical space and to make Islam part of the visible landscape.

It is not surprising that the level of controversy associated with mosque building projects varies from state to state in Western Europe given that each state has its distinct history, culture and legal system. What is perhaps surprising is the fact that considerable variation exists *within* states when it comes to all aspects of mosque building. The

¹ Jocelyn Césari, "Mosque Conflicts in European Cities: Introduction," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31, no. 6 (2005): 1018.

research question this thesis will ask is: What accounts for the intra state variation of mosque building projects in Western Europe, using as case studies Britain, France, Germany and the Netherlands. It is plausible to think that the intra state variation with respect to how mosque building projects play out in Western Europe is the result of minor political actors at the municipal level of government interpreting national laws differently. Even though policies that govern religion tend to be articulated in national legislation and constitutions, or agreed to by national governments when they sign on to international agreements, much of the enforcement for these policies falls to the municipal level of government. However, I suggest than an alternative hypothesis is equally plausible. It is my contention that the reason behind that intra-state variation is, in fact, the result of differences between the Muslims themselves – differences in the way they approach the state to gain permission for mosque building projects and differences in the nature of the projects themselves.

1.1 Historical Context

Finding ways to meet their religious needs requires Muslims to engage with existing political institutions, which is often quite difficult since these institutions were not created with Islam in mind. Far from waging *jihad* on Europe, Muslims have demonstrated considerable flexibility and commitment to democratic norms when it comes to negotiating with the state. For instance, when legislation banning the headscarf was introduced in France in 2004 Muslim leaders who objected to the ban announced plans to challenge it in the courts but encouraged citizens to obey the law.² Similarly, mosque committees in many cases have agreed to relinquish various architectural

² “French Muslims, French Values,” *Hartford Courant*, 9 September 2004.

features that are ordinarily associated with mosques in order to fit into the neighbourhood.³ Indeed, what is striking about Muslims in Europe is not their capacity for violence. Rather, it is their patience in the face of glaring inequality and xenophobia, their willingness – despite so many barriers – to ‘play by the rules’ to achieve recognition.

As mosques become more visible in the public spaces of Western Europe, so too does the Muslim presence that uses them.⁴ Initially, when large numbers of Muslim immigrants started coming to Western Europe to service the post-war economy as temporary guest workers, these men – and they were almost all men – were, in effect, invisible. Both the workers themselves and the host countries shared the expectation that they would return home when they were no longer needed.⁵ With the mindset that their stay would be temporary workers did not make it a priority to secure space for the dead in cemeteries because they sent the bodies of loved ones to their home countries to be buried. They did not request that *halal* meat be provided in institutions such as schools and hospitals because they simply were not using these services in sufficient numbers to make it worth their while. Finally, they did not attempt to build permanent houses of worship but instead made use of prayer rooms allocated by companies that owned the factories where they worked, or they met for prayer in spaces that were originally intended for some other purpose such as abandoned warehouses and hotel rooms.

Some workers put Islam on hold altogether while they were away, believing that they could return to the religious life when they returned home. During this period

³ Césari, “Mosque Conflicts,” 1020.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Gilles Kepel, “Islamic Groups in Europe: Between Community Affirmation and Social Crisis,” in Steven Vertovec, Ceri Peach ed. *Islam in Europe: The Politics of Religion and Community* (New York: St. Martin’s Press Inc., 1997), 48.

Muslims were not a major concern for the host populations since they were there to contribute economically and were not making any real demands. This all changed, however, when the economies started to stagnate and the host countries introduced legislation designed to stop immigration. While Britain did not have a formal guestworker scheme, it nevertheless introduced this type of legislation in 1962 and Germany and France followed suit in 1973 and 1974 respectively.⁶ Once this happened, Muslims started to become more visible. The new legislation had the unintended consequence of encouraging further immigration when the workers, fearing they would not be able to re-enter the country if they returned to their families, brought their wives and children over to join them instead. The Netherlands did not introduce formal legislation of this sort but a similar pattern of settlement occurred there owing to the collapsing economy and the same fear among Muslims that if they left, they could not come back.⁷

This first generation of Muslim immigrants in Western Europe and in some cases their children, who were also born in the sending country, clung to the “myth of return” – the idea that they would eventually go back to live permanently in their country of origin. For this reason many of them were not in a hurry to secure provisions for their religious needs, even after a decade of settling. Over time, however, it became clear to these immigrants and certainly to their children and grand children, many of whom were citizens of the host country by this point, that returning “home” was an unlikely prospect.

⁶ Vassoodeven Vuddamalay, “Research on Immigration, Islam and Citizenship in Western Europe,” in Rémy Leveau, Khadija Mohsen-Finan, and Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, eds., *New European Identity and Citizenship* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002): 7.

⁷ Philip Muus, “The Netherlands: A Pragmatic Approach to Economic Needs and Humanitarian Considerations” in *Controlling Immigration: A Global Perspective* (2nd edition), edited by Wayne A. Cornelius, Takeyuki Tsuda, Philip L. Martin, & James F. Hollifield. (Stanford University Press, 2004): 269.

To begin, most of Europe's Muslim immigrants came from poorer countries and despite the marginal position they occupied in their adopted lands, conditions at home were often much worse – politically, economically, and otherwise. And so, with fewer links to their native lands, these temporary guest workers and their offspring began to accept that they were staying in Europe for the foreseeable future.

This psychological shift from being temporary guest workers to permanent residents precipitated the need for proper religious facilities where small prayer rooms had previously sufficed. When the men were on their own and were still convinced their sojourn in Europe was temporary, the make-shift mosques in hotel rooms and factories seemed adequate, but raising a family under such conditions was unacceptable. To solve the problem of a lack of adequate space for worship Muslim communities formed mosque-committees, purchased land and sought building permits in an effort to fill this need. In some cases these mosque-building projects encountered little or no opposition and resulted in mosques that are presently visible and open for worship. Some of these projects even received public funds.⁸ In other cases mosque committees met with resistance at every stage; they were prevented from buying land, denied building permits and even had their in-progress building projects vandalised and destroyed. Sometimes this resistance came from private citizens or private organisations but in many cases it was sanctioned, indeed encouraged, by local authorities.

At the heart of most conflicts between Muslims and the state is the question of whether or not it is possible to be both Muslim and European and disputes arising from

⁸ Jocelyn Césari, "Mosques in French Cities: Toward the End of Conflict," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31, no. 6 (2005): 1038.

mosque building are no exception.⁹ With the advent of secularism questions about religion in most European states were seemingly resolved, but Muslim difficulties in gaining religious accommodation in the last three decades indicate that religion remains a persistent political cleavage.¹⁰ This is partly due to the fact that the rules governing secularism emerged from a Christian context and Islam cannot be easily slotted into the existing infrastructure and be governed the same way. From an organisational perspective Islam is different to Christianity because it lacks a hierarchical structure. In other words, there is no ready-formed interlocutor to represent Muslims and communicate their needs and demands to the state. The fact that Muslims are such a diverse group has made it difficult for them to form bodies that can represent all of their interests to the state and do so according to the model that already exists. Religious groups that have a lengthier history in Europe i.e. Christians and Jews have the dual advantage of a robust hierarchical structure that developed organically and channels to communicate with the state that were tailor made to suit their organisational structure. The same is not true for Muslims and these practical considerations do make governing Islam in particular a challenge for European states. Their difficulties are often compounded by the fact that so many Muslims are immigrants or the children of immigrants which comes with its own set of challenges. On the other hand, it is unclear that this burden is particular to Muslims by virtue of their religion being Islam, because chances are that for any non-traditional religious group that might arrive in Europe there

⁹ Aristide Zolberg and Long Litt Woon, "Why Islam is Like Spanish," *Politics and Society* 27, no. 1, (1999), 6.

¹⁰ Jocelyn Césari, "Islam, Secularism and Multiculturalism after 9/11: A Transatlantic Comparison" in Jocelyne Césari and Sean McLoughin, (ed), *European Muslims and the Secular State*, (London: Ashgate, 2005): 40.

will be resistance from the host countries. This is because in European states a very particular kind of Christianity is still understood, albeit implicitly, as a defining characteristic of the nation. Indeed, Hindus and even smaller Christian sects such as Baptists have encountered difficulties in seeking religious accommodation from the states of Western Europe.¹¹

Muslims and the states where they reside are now in the process of negotiating the terms of their relationship, but Muslims are undoubtedly at a disadvantage in this exchange: Secularism in all Western European states privileges Christianity and to a lesser extent Judaism, even in those states such as France that claim to have neutrality with respect to religious groups. This privileging is evident in various aspects of governance, some more obvious than others. For instance, in France the state provides funding to privately run Catholic and Jewish schools while denying such funding to Muslim schools.¹² Similarly the German state collects a tax (*Kirchensteuer*) on behalf of Catholic, Protestant and Jewish corporations but it does not collect this tax on behalf of Muslim organisations, even though Muslim organisations are technically eligible.¹³ In an effort to address some of these issues, some states have encouraged the formation of official Muslim organisations to act as liaisons. However, inasmuch as the states may accept these bodies as representing Muslims, the Muslims themselves are often quite dubious about the legitimacy of this representation.

The less obvious examples of how Western European secularism privileges Christianity are perhaps some of the greatest barriers for Muslims since they are not

11 Jytte Klausen, *The Islamic Challenge* (Oxford University Press, 2005): 107-108.

12 Joel Fetzer and Christopher Soper, *Muslims and the State in Britain, France, and Germany* (Cambridge University Press, 2005): 85.

13 Seyla Benhabib, *The Rights of Others* (Cambridge University Press, 2004): 194.

necessarily the result of Institutional discrimination but are instead the outcome of various historical processes. People often fail to see that there are alternative ways of doing things because they have the sense that they have always done things a particular way and that it has always worked. This means that they are more ingrained and more likely to be taken for granted by the public as “the way things are” rather than as factors that can disadvantage Muslims. Examples of this privileging of Christianity include the church steeples that form part of the built landscape across Western Europe and are simply taken for granted by residents. Minarets, on the other hand, are considered foreign, and disruptive. Mosques are not necessarily a typical feature of the visible landscape in most European communities, even those with a high concentration of Muslims. This means that Muslims are “starting from scratch” when it comes to institutionalising their religion. Ironically, the surplus of churches in Western Europe that is the outcome of declining religious observance among Christians has benefited some Muslims with a number of churches being converted into mosques.¹⁴ But these conversions are not without their critics. Some Christians find it objectionable to have their buildings converted and for Muslims it can be frustrating as well since they are sometimes prevented from making adjustments to the building to accommodate their worshipping needs.

In short, the issue of mosque building in Western Europe has become increasingly salient in recent years as the result of several developments, including a growing Muslim population that is becoming more visible and is making greater demands on the government and the public in terms of religious accommodation. Whereas three or four

¹⁴ Marlise Simons, “Neglected Churches are given new use in the Netherlands,” *New York Times*, 10 March 1997.

decades ago many Muslims were satisfied with small, out-of-sight out-of-mind prayer rooms, today they are looking to add purpose-built and permanent mosques to the visible landscape of the neighbourhoods where they live. They want to exercise their religious rights and practice their faith openly. At the same time, fears about Islamic terrorism are on the rise in much of the Western world because of both real and imagined threats. Incidents such as the June 2007 discovery in London of two cars filled with explosives which have been linked to Al-Qaeda only serve to exacerbate existing tension and make it more challenging for ordinary Muslims to get religious accommodation. Many people now view those once invisible prayer rooms with suspicion and are reluctant to stand by and allow Muslims to erect new mosques. Indeed, several anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim politicians across Western Europe have been able to capitalise on the public's fear about terror plots and have managed to stymie efforts to build new mosques. A handful of politicians have even managed to build their careers on this one issue.

1.2 What exactly is a Mosque

Islam has no clergy, no ruling body, and there is no real pomp and ceremony required to become a Muslim. The standards for what constitutes a mosque are no exception to this simplicity: All that is needed according to the lore is “sand for the floor and sky for the roof”.¹⁵ Muslims also require some feature in the space to orient them toward Mecca, but the real point is that just as Catholics do not *require* stained glass and ornate mouldings to have a church, Muslims can – in terms of theology at least – worship almost anywhere. Of course, while Muslims may be able to make a mosque out of any

¹⁵ Untitled article, *Economist*. 9 July, 1977.

structure, there is something to be said for having a mosque that is identifiable as such from the outside so that anyone who sees it knows what it is.

The thousands of buildings across Western Europe that Muslims use as places of worship are often hidden from the outside because these buildings were never intended for such use. The number of actual purpose-built mosques, on the other hand – the kind with muezzins and minarets, for example – is quite low. As Muslim populations in Western Europe continue to grow so too does their desire to have adequate, or perhaps better than adequate, facilities to practice their faith. Rather than seeking out more abandoned factories and churches, Muslims are interested in building mosques that are permanent and visible. This has led to considerable changes in how they organise to achieve their goals but it has also led to changes in how the state responds to such enterprises. Indeed, a careful examination of the discourse around mosque building in Western Europe demonstrates that the relationship between Muslims and the state is dynamic and varied. It suggests that Islam is malleable – the complete opposite of what anti-immigrant forces have claimed about Muslims for decades.

One of the key points that I will raise to support my argument throughout this thesis is that Muslims across Western Europe are diverse and practice their faith differently. Muslims form the second largest religious group in several Western European states including Britain, France, Germany and the Netherlands – the four case-study states considered here. They are a diverse group in terms of their mother tongue, their somatic characteristics, their countries of origin, the theological teachings they follow, and especially in terms of their levels of religiosity. Indeed, much has been written about the various ways that Muslims define themselves and very often it has

nothing to do with faith. To some, being a Muslim is about culture or ethnicity. For these Muslims, attending the mosque may have less to do with spirituality and more to do with spending time among family members or staving off the anomie that can accompany a secular life.

If one were to do a survey across Western Europe one would find marked differences in the kinds of activities that take place inside mosques. For example, some are restricted to the most basic religious functions while others are involved in a range of non-religious activities including sports and language lessons. Even where worship is concerned the practices differ considerably. While some congregations insist on strict separation between men and women in the mosque and build walls to facilitate this, others are more flexible and use only a scrim or allow mingling of the sexes. Indeed, mosques vary a great deal when it comes to structure and architecture. Some of these differences can be attributed to the national origins of the people who worship there. However, they are also the result of differing attitudes toward religion in general, access to resources, government and public tolerance.

1.3 Why do Mosques Matter

Mosque-building is a complicated enterprise for all concerned because as much as it is about the practical need to have a place to pray, it is also a microcosm of some of the fundamental issues with which political science is concerned, namely citizenship and immigration, national identity and belonging and, finally, how people reconcile their disparate views of the good society. In short, as the subject of a careful study – one that questions both conventional wisdom and facts often implicitly assumed within academia

about Islam – can give us a true sense of the state of relations between Muslims and the wider societies of Western Europe.

Mosque building projects reveal information about how immigrants and citizens perceive themselves in relation to their surroundings; for example, a mosque committee that voluntarily consults with the wider, non-Muslim community about their building plans suggests that committee members feel safe and are willing to be flexible to preserve their relationship with that community. On the other hand, when a mosque-committee eschews seeking input from the neighbourhood it might indicate that members feel unwelcome or unsafe there. Similarly, the way in which non-Muslim members of a neighbourhood or community register their attitudes about a mosque building project speaks volumes about how that group feels about Muslims in general. This latter category is typically limited to cases where people object to projects since feelings of support or indifference tend not to be articulated. In other words, how people register their objections can say much about their true feelings towards Muslims: Do they use established democratic channels – the ones we might expect them to use if they were opposing a non-Muslim project such as a mall or office development. Or, do they use other approaches that involve violence and intimidation such as evoking the idea of Muslims as terrorists and mosques as sanctuaries for dangerous characters.

As the subject of research, Mosque building projects provide a framework to look at the relationship between minority groups and the state, as well as the relationship between minority groups and the wider public. For example, the case study countries considered in this thesis are party to numerous international agreements which contain clauses about rights to religious freedom. One can get a strong sense of how these

agreements are enforced at the lower levels of government by considering the issue of mosque building, and particularly by considering how much these international agreements factor into the policies that govern mosque-building.

Finally, mosque building projects are an important source of data because they allow the researcher to explore how the state responds to Islam compared with how it responds to other religions. For example, when Sikhs and Hindus seek religious accommodation from the state to build temples, do they encounter as much resistance as Muslims do? Further, these projects are concrete examples to use in considering whether or not regimes that developed between *church and state* in secular Europe have adjusted to address Islam or whether new and separate regimes have developed between *mosque and state*?

There are certain tropes that dominate any discussion about Muslims in Europe and this is certainly true of discussions about mosques and mosque building projects. As Jocelyn Césari suggests, opposition to mosque building, though it may be couched in terms of noise and traffic nuisance, is always connected to a meta-narrative about Islam, and that narrative, she argues, always depicts Islam as a security threat.¹⁶ For example, opponents of mosque-building projects often interpret Muslim efforts to create permanent places of worship as attempts to create parallel societies, supporters, on the other hand, argue more accurately that such efforts reflect Muslim desires to institutionalise Islam in Europe. In other words, allies understand attempts to build mosques as a sign of Muslim interest in joining society whereas adversaries see this same act as a statement about Muslim unwillingness to join. Some people who are against a particular mosque building project may have genuine concerns about traffic or noise and are not in principle opposed

¹⁶ Césari, “Mosque Conflicts,” 1019.

to Muslims enjoying their right to religious freedom. There are nevertheless many other opponents of mosque building projects for whom it is either not possible or not desirable to institutionalise Islam, the former because of the widely held assumption that it is a backward religion, the latter because it conflicts with the widely held (though often unspoken) assumption that Western Europe is a Christian, albeit secular, domain. For proponents of these views, to institutionalise Islam would not simply be a matter of making just concessions to a sizable population who reside in and even hold citizenship in Europe; instead it would be tantamount to destroying the existing order – changing it into something unrecognisable. At stake in the minds of many opponents of religious accommodation for Muslims is not simply security as we would ordinarily think of it. In other words, they are not simply resistant because they fear terrorist attacks. Rather, they are concerned about the security of their national culture and of life as they know it now.

The scope of this particular study on mosque building is too narrow to consider each of the above-mentioned themes in turn. However, these themes will form the backdrop this thesis, as well as highlight areas for further research. The main focus of this study will be intra-state variation on mosque building policies and why it exists. There are two goals I hope to accomplish by considering this issue and by focusing specifically on the relationship between Muslims and the state. The first is to demonstrate that intra-state variation in mosque-building policies in Western Europe is the result of differences in how Muslims approach the state. The second is simply to demonstrate that Muslims are a diverse group which is significant in and of itself. When Muslims encounter resistance from the state or the public toward their mosque-building efforts it is perceived as resistance to the Muslim presence more generally and can arouse a sense of

being discriminated against, even among this latter category of Muslims who are not particularly religious. In other words, while they are a diverse group, Muslims recognise that they are not always seen as such by the broader public. There is a certain amount of solidarity among Muslims, in spite of all their differences.

Part of the reason this issue is important, especially in the post September 11th context, is that Islam is frightening to many Westerners and this makes for an awkward relationship between host societies and a group of people who are not going to be leaving any time soon. When Muslims are seen as a unified group – particularly when it seems that the loudest voices among them are calling for an all out assault on Western civilisation, Islam is that much more terrifying. An illustration of the meaningful differences that exist within the Muslim populations of Western Europe would assuage some of the fears surrounding Islam and this, in turn, could garner more fruitful relationships as opposed to awkward ones. Furthermore, it is important to draw attention to the differences within Europe's Muslim population for the sake of academic integrity: There is a strong tendency among scholars of Islam in Europe to treat Muslims as a single category of people which is inaccurate and can lead to some questionable conclusions within academia. But academic conclusions can and do make their way into policy considerations which affect peoples' lives.

In addition to the points mentioned above, there is also normative value in looking at intra-state variation in mosque-building because of the integrative role that mosques play for immigrants in new host societies, a fact that many states have only recently become aware of. Studies on mosque building have already demonstrated that mosque committees are one of the chief organising bodies for Muslim communities in Western

Europe. This shows that Muslims can, and indeed do, adapt to their surroundings. Since Islam lacks a clergy or some other analogous hierarchical structure Muslims have had to change the way they organise themselves in their efforts to get mosques built and secure other provisions for their religious needs because the states of Western Europe tend to prefer, if not require, that representative bodies act as interlocutors for communities as opposed to having each community approach the state separately. Muslims have managed to organise themselves into representative bodies and this goes against much of the popular discourse on Islam which holds that it is a backward religion and that its followers are incapable of integrating into European societies. This view of Muslims has no doubt had an influence on how states respond to their requests. Continued efforts to explore the issue of mosque building in the context of political science will hopefully help to dispel other negative stereotypes about Muslims, but where this is not the case, the information gleaned can be a valuable learning tool and an opportunity to improve the situation.

One final reason why this study is a worthwhile enterprise is that there is already some evidence to suggest that the states of Western Europe do have some genuine reasons to be concerned about the institutionalisation of Islam through mosque building, and these reasons are not based strictly on xenophobia and deluded ideas about Muslims. Mosques are often financed by foreign powers – state and non-state actors – and these foreign powers wield considerable influence in the mosques they pay for or rather over the people who worship in the mosques they pay for. They do this in a variety of ways but most commonly through the Imams they send to preach in the mosques. This practice could be construed as undermining democracy and it hints at the possibility of what

Western European states fear the most: that their Muslim populations will become – if they are not already – a fifth column. In other words, they fear that Muslims will settle in Europe but will have loyalties to other states. Given that financing and Imams from foreign countries do pose potential problems, a study that looks at within country variation of mosque building outcomes would reveal whether or not this is a factor in how states respond to Muslims seeking to build a mosque. There is mounting evidence to suggest that states’ fears of Islamic terrorism have been a catalyst in changing mosque building policies. However, the change in policy direction seems to differ from state to state. In France, for example, things seem to be getting easier for Muslims looking to build mosques. One article quotes a Muslim man saying that authorities now “practically run up to you and ask ‘Are you sure you don’t want a mosque?’”¹⁷ For British Muslims, on the other hand, getting permission to build a mosque has become increasingly difficult.

¹⁷ Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 90.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The question this thesis was originally going to explore was “what accounts for the variation in mosque-building policies *between* Western European states?” However, a recent publication titled “*Muslims and the State in Britain, France and Germany*” asks and answers this very research question. The authors Joel S. Fetzer and J. Christopher Soper test several hypotheses and ultimately provide a convincing explanation as to why variation exists between states with respect to mosque building. Fetzer and Soper make a meaningful contribution to the discourse on religious accommodation in Western Europe, and on mosque building in particular. However, there are still some gaps which their work does not address. For example, their theory, that church-state institutions are the most important determinants for how a state accommodates religious demands, does not account for intra-state variation that exists with respect to mosque building, most notably the variation over time. In their case study of mosque building in France, for example, Fetzer and Soper draw examples from three different decades without distinction.¹⁸ This is problematic because there is evidence to suggest that conditions have improved over the last thirty years for French Muslims seeking to build mosques. For example, the mosque building conflicts that first arose in Western Europe had Muslims pitted against the state or the public or both. Today, however, much of the trouble related to mosque building is the product of disputes between different Muslim groups and not between Muslims and the state or the local authorities.¹⁹ Ultimately Fetzer and Soper make a

¹⁸ Ibid., 87-90.

¹⁹ Césari “Mosque Conflicts,” 1036.

valuable contribution to the scholarship in spite of the limits of their work and the intra-state variation that Fetzner and Soper overlook now forms the basis of my thesis.

Islam in the West has inspired a good deal of controversy in the last two decades, not only between Muslim and non-Muslim citizens but also among academics. Since Samuel P. Huntington first heralded the “clash of civilizations” in 1993 there has been a deluge of research devoted to exposing the inaccuracy of his claims.²⁰ While much of his work has been discredited, his assertion about the incompatibility of Islamic and Western cultures echoed an existing uneasiness that has characterised scholarship on Muslims for decades, perhaps even centuries as described in Edward Said’s seminal work *Orientalism*.²¹ Said argues that Western discourses on Islam since the early days of Western imperialism have produced and reproduced negative images of Muslims creating an essentialised view of them as “The Other”. Ironically, over the years even some of those works intended to promote the cause of Muslims in the West have inadvertently reinforced damaging stereotypes because this essentialised view is so pervasive. These works often fail to take account of the diversity of beliefs and practices within Muslim populations in Western Europe, treating them instead as a monolith. This perspective belies the dynamism of Islam and suggests that Muslims are incapable of adapting to new surroundings.

In most of the research that exists on mosque building in Western Europe, which is limited, the main kind of variation that is addressed is cross-national variation. In Britain, France and Germany – three of the four states that provide the case studies for this thesis, there is both within-country variation as well as variation over time. For

20 Samuel P. Huntington, “Clash of Civilizations?,” *Foreign Affairs* (Summer 1993).

21 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 1978).

example, mosque building projects have differed both in terms of state responses and Muslim approaches from one city to the next within the same state and, in some cases, within the same city.²² Moreover, Muslims and states have changed over time in terms of the way they treat mosque-building projects. These points are not addressed by one of the most important works on mosque building in Western Europe “*Muslims and the State in Britain, France and Germany*” by Joel S. Fetzer and J. Christopher Soper. These authors are concerned only with cross national variation and do not address the within-country variation that is taken up in this thesis. Fetzer and Soper’s study yields considerable insight into state policies on religious accommodation in spite of its shortcomings. For example, they devote very limited space to the issue of diversity within Muslim populations and the extent to which this diversity influences political outcomes. This lack of coverage provides a skewed picture of the issue of mosque building in Western Europe, one that reduces a rather complex, multi polar political landscape to a bipolar setting with Muslims on one side and the states of Western Europe on the other. Inaccuracies and oversights such as this that crop up regularly in scholarship have real world consequences. As Marcel Maussen, a Dutch scholar of Islam, points out: Academic researchers “have played a key role in providing interpretations and vocabularies to talk and think about Islam and mosques in Western Europe.”²³ In his article titled *Making Muslim Presence Meaningful*, Maussen describes how academics have been instrumental in creating policy around Islam and mosque building because “they wrote policy reports, participated in expert meetings, gave

²² Césari, “Mosque Conflicts,” 1019.

²³ Marcel Maussen, “Making Muslim Presence Meaningful: Studies on Islam and Mosques in Western Europe,” ASSR working papers series May 2005: 32.

newspaper interviews or commented on policy proposals.”²⁴ The consequence of this is that any biases or errors in the scholarship on Muslims and Islam are reproduced in policy decisions and ultimately shape public perceptions about Muslims and their religion.

Existing theories that might explain the variation in state accommodation of Muslim religious demands can be divided, broadly speaking, into two categories: one looks to the state itself – its institutions, laws and policies – to explain outcomes, while the other looks to the Muslim actors making the demands. For instance, scholars look for variation in social capital, external sources funding, mobilisation strategies, and electoral clout, which corresponds to and thus explains variation in state accommodation of their religious demands. I will refer to these categories as the state-centred and the actor-centred approach respectively. The state-centred category of research is seemingly more compelling than the actor-centred in terms of explaining outcomes of mosque building projects because state institutions, laws and policies set the terms for how Muslims approach the state and constrain Muslim actors. States limit what Muslims can ask for based on what they have done for other religious groups, and states. In other words, the most that Muslims can ask for is parity with other religions which is determined by the state.²⁵ In countries where there is an established state church, such as The Church of England in Britain, achieving parity is a seemingly more lofty goal than in states where this is not the case. Yet, in spite of this fact, Muslims in Britain have encountered less resistance in building mosques than Muslims in France, for example, where there is no “official” state religion.

²⁴ Ibid., 5.

²⁵ Pnina Werbner “Divided Loyalties, Empowered Citizenship?: Muslims in Britain,” *Citizenship Studies* 4, no. 3 (2000): 315.

There is also a growing body of research that combines of the first two categories of research I mentioned earlier and may constitute a third category in and of itself. Instead of attributing greater importance to either the state or the Muslim actors in determining outcomes, this research looks at how the two interact and in that process how they change each other. It is a dialectic model and is best represented by a small group of researchers known collectively as The Network of Comparative Research on Islam and Muslims in Europe (NOCRIME). I would also include Dutch scholar and expert on mosque building in Western Europe, Marcel Maussen, in this group. Although he is not explicitly associated with NOCRIME, he is nevertheless concerned with the same themes. This theoretical approach is still in its infancy and the work being done by these scholars will help to inform this thesis. Indeed, one of the theoretical approach that I will test – opportunity structure theory – arguably falls into this category, although as I will discuss in greater detail below, as a theory it is flexible and proponents of opportunity structure define ‘opportunity’ differently depending on the case at hand.

The State Centred Approach

The state-centred approach presupposes a certain degree of uniformity within states by virtue of the fact the state is the unit of analysis. For this reason, Fetzer and Soper’s book “*Muslims and the State in Britain, France and Germany*” falls into this category of research. Fetzer and Soper overlook the internal variation that exists within states which, I argue, is attributable to the Muslim actors themselves because they presuppose that any within country variation that may exist with respect to this issue is negligible. The actual question that Fetzer and Soper pose is what accounts for the variation in state accommodation of Muslims’ religious needs. They use as dependent

variables religious instruction in state schools, state aid to Muslim schools, and policy on mosque building. They test four popular theories: resource mobilization, political opportunity structures, ideology (state), and church-state institutions, each of which could plausibly explain the cross national variation that exists. While each theory does offer some insight when tested, Fetzer and Soper argue that the legacy of church-state institutions has the greatest explanatory power²⁶ Fetzer and Soper demonstrate that resource mobilization theory, for example, does not account for the differences between states in terms of how they respond to Muslim demands for religious accommodation because if it did, then states with the more organised Muslim populations would be more accommodating of Muslims' religious demands when in fact this does not hold true. Muslims in France are as organised as Muslims in Britain – if not more so, claim Fetzer and Soper, but British Muslims have the right to wear *hijab* in the classroom of public schools, to receive public funding for private Muslim schools, and they have had virtually no controversy surrounding mosque building projects, although this appears to be changing.²⁷ French Muslims are legally prohibited from wearing the *hijab* in public schools, have no publicly funded private schools and have encountered considerable resistance when trying to build mosques. On the other hand, as I will discuss further in my theoretical framework, resource mobilisation theory and political opportunity structure theory may have significant explanatory power when it comes to intra-state variation on mosque building outcomes.

Fetzer and Soper argue that the precise way that states choose to respond to Muslim requests for religious accommodation, namely mosque-building, is the result of

²⁶ Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 15-16.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 46-47.

broader national policies about religion in general. They seek to discover what the underlying mechanism is that determines these broader national policies and ultimately they find that variation in state responses to Muslim requests for religious accommodation can be attributed to differing church-state relations; Fetzer and Soper claim that “the legacy of church-state relations shapes public policies relating to the religious accommodation of Muslims because it shapes the public’s perception about the place of religion in society.”²⁸ For instance the French form of secularism known as *laïcité* is imbued with anticlerical undertones because it developed partly as a reaction to the tyranny of the Catholic Church. It is also a fundamental component of the Republican project which seeks to eliminate differences between people in the public sphere so that they are better positioned to form a single and unified nation.²⁹ French policymakers have thus tended to treat religion – any religion – as a strictly private matter. This conception of secularism has been interpreted with varying degrees of strictness over the years, depending on the government of the day. The combination of the *lois laïques* (secular laws) the first of which was implemented in 1882, and the formal separation of church and state in 1905 has, according to Fetzer and Soper, resulted in a somewhat suspicious attitude toward religion in France, particularly where it could be perceived as creeping into the public sphere.³⁰ In light of the widely held notion that the Muslim faith makes no distinction between religion and politics, the French animus toward religion is particularly sharp when it comes to Islam.³¹ Therefore, when Muslims

²⁸ Ibid., 15.

²⁹ Jane Freedman “Secularism as a Barrier to Integration? The French Dilemma,” *International Migration* 42, no. 3 (2004): 10.

³⁰ Ibid., and Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 77.

³¹ Jocelyne Césari “Introduction” in Césari and Sean McLoughlin (ed), *European Muslims and the Secular State*, 4.

request permission to build mosques or schools or attempt anything that could be understood as endeavouring to build a separate community, the state and the public can turn to *laïcité* to argue against such endeavours.³² It provides a kind of script for French policymakers and the French public to use in opposing such projects.

There are additional factors in France that complicate the relationship between Muslims and the state, most notably the Algerian War of Independence. Fetzer and Soper note in several instances how this event distinguishes the French case from other European states with larger Muslim populations. “One cannot overemphasize,” they declare, “the searing effects of the Algerian War of Independence on the psyches of both ethnic European and ethnic Arab or Berber residents of France and Algeria.”³³ While this fact distinguishes France from other states, it is not clear that the psychological scars from the war are worse in some parts of France than in others. It is therefore not a significant factor in terms of the research question at hand. Fetzer and Soper also note that the separation of church and state is not, strictly speaking, complete in France given that the Catholic Church receives public funding for private schools as was mentioned earlier. The idea that *laïcité* is a defining feature of the French state is nevertheless a powerful force and influences French ideas about the place of religion in society.³⁴

Part of why it is important to consider within country variation is not only the fact that it raises it challenges widely held assumptions about Muslims, but also because it challenges widely held assumptions about the states of Western Europe. For example, that national philosophies and historical legacies are more powerful than they really are.

³² Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 19.

³³ Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 63-64.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

Antipathy toward religion in the public sphere is not an issue in Britain where there is an established state church. For this reason British policymakers are more willing to concede to Muslim requests for religious accommodation and even to assist in funding them, although this appears to be changing.³⁵ Fetzer and Soper point out that the existence of a public religion in Britain has provided a reference point for Muslims who seek recognition for their own faith. In other words, Muslims have a model that is known and accessible to work with in trying to get their religion recognised unlike in France where the state is publicly committed to neutrality on religious matters despite implicitly playing favourites with Catholic organisations. There are, nevertheless, conflicts surrounding some mosque building projects in Britain. The difficulty for Muslims in Britain, Fetzer and Soper argue, lies in convincing the state to accommodate their needs even though they were not party to the original arrangements that led to the current state of affairs regarding religion in the public sphere.³⁶ This is also the case for the convincing the public which, while accepting of religion in the public sphere, is particular about what that religion is. Simply because religion in general is not forbidden in the public sphere does not mean the British public sees the Church of England as interchangeable with Islam. Indeed, the term “islamophobia” was coined in Britain and hostility toward Muslims in the form of discrimination is not uncommon in there, in spite of the fact that British Muslims have typically been more successful in their efforts to build mosques than Muslims in other countries of Western Europe. What is peculiar about this is that British Muslims are not expressly guaranteed religious freedom in the way that French Muslims are. In an article on differing state responses to school girls

³⁵ Ibid.,18.

³⁶ Ibid.

wishing to wear the headscarf in France and Britain, Sebastian Poulter points out that there is no “broad constitutional safeguard” [in Britain] with respect to Muslim rights to practice their faith such as there is in France even though both states are signatories of numerous agreements that identify religious freedom as a human right that ought to be protected.³⁷ As of recently, the British Government appears to moving in a new policy direction in how it deals with Muslim religious accommodation, one that is less flexible. For example, in 2006 the Blair government announced that it would revoke funding to Muslim organisations that were not perceived as promoting British values.³⁸ Similarly, in October 2006, a high ranking Labour MP, Jack Straw, stated publicly that he asks women who wear a full veil to remove their face covering when they visit his constituency office.³⁹ This statement was not out of character for Mr. Straw. But when Prime Minister Tony Blair subsequently spoke out in support of Straw, the issue received tremendous coverage from the broadsheets, since it represented a shift in policy direction. The recent terrorist attacks in the UK will likely keep policy moving in that direction potentially adding a layer of new challenges for Muslims in Britain trying to build mosques.

Fetzer and Soper claim that Germany is similar to Britain in terms of the state’s willingness to work with religious groups.⁴⁰ However, those religious groups are typically Christian or Jewish in denomination, not Muslim. Germany has a corporatist system which does not expressly exclude Muslims. Muslim groups can apply to gain status as a public corporation although presently all such applications have been rejected.

³⁷ Sebastian Poulter “Muslim Headscarves in School: Contrasting Legal Approaches in England and France,” *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 63.

³⁸ “The uncomfortable politics of identity,” *Economist*. 21 October, 2006.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 98-99.

Status as a corporation means that the state will collect taxes on the corporation's behalf known as a *Kirchensteuer*. However, as Fetzer and Soper point out, the possible advantage that Muslims in Germany have over French Muslims, for example, is that they have a model to use as a guide for framing their religious demands since unlike France, the German state accepts religion in the public sphere. In spite of this Muslims in Germany have repeatedly encountered resistance in gaining religious accommodation for mosque building projects among other endeavours.⁴¹

Jonathan Laurence, in an article titled *(Re)constructing Community in Berlin* raises some ideas that challenge Fetzer and Soper's theory that differing church state relations explain variation in mosque building policies in his consideration of Germany. For example, Fetzer and Soper emphasise historical forces as the major influence on policy. However, they place greater emphasis on early history such as the Reformation whereas Laurence emphasises the German experience of World War II as a more important historical influence on religious accommodation of Muslims in Germany today. He nonetheless presupposes uniformity across the state in not addressing within country variation. His work therefore belongs in the state-centred category of research. Laurence notes that German Muslims face a rather unique set of challenges which highlight the resilience of xenophobic attitudes in that country with respect to notions about citizenship and belonging by considering the differences between how the state treats religious accommodation for Jews versus Muslims. According to Laurence there are several reasons why differences exist in the way Germany deals with Muslims and Jews but that ultimately it comes down to reconciling past injustices and cultural

⁴¹ Ibid., 18.

stereotyping. Germany has been eager to address its history and “make reparations to Jewry as a whole.”⁴² This has been the case since very soon after World War II when Germany endeavoured to attract Jewish immigrants and raise the Jewish population which was decimated in the Holocaust. Because of this sincere desire to right past wrongs, Germany has made considerable funding available to “Jewish” projects and programs and has devoted numerous resources to Jewish immigrants in an effort to help them integrate.⁴³ According to Laurence there is another reason, however, that Germany has been willing to help Jews in a way that it has not been willing to help Muslims and that is the widely-held belief that “in generally supporting Jewish culture, one is indirectly supporting German culture.”⁴⁴ The “foreignness” that Germany once ascribed to Jews who had long been residents and citizens of the state, it now ascribes to Muslims, albeit without the vitriol, who are often in the same position.⁴⁵ There is a pervasive view in Germany that Jewish immigrants are more like Germans and will therefore have an easier time integrating than Muslims who are mostly ethnic Turks and who are perceived as incapable or unwilling to integrate. This latter point, Laurence argues, is not supported by the evidence because, in fact, many Jewish immigrants, particularly those from the former Soviet Union, have a good deal of trouble finding employment and learning the language. They also receive considerable financial assistance that is not made available to Muslim immigrants.⁴⁶ The point here is that Laurence emphasises the history of the nation as whole in explaining mosque building policies and project outcomes and while

⁴² Jonathan Laurence "(Re)constructing Community: Turks, Jews and German Responsibility," *German Politics and Society* 19, no.2, (Summer, 2001): 26.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

his article is insightful, it lacks adequate treatment of the extent to which Muslims have been able influence their own fate in spite of the state.

Fetzer and Soper do not consider the Netherlands in their analysis. Their theory that the legacy of church-state relations explains the variation between states in terms of their response to Muslim requests for religious demands is nonetheless supported by the evidence in the Netherlands. For example, the split between the church and state happened relatively late in the Netherlands with formal changes to the Constitution made in 1983.⁴⁷

In short, Fetzer and Soper explain the variation between states of Western Europe in the way they accommodate Muslim religious demands as owing to the way in which secularism developed in each state: The legacies of church-state relations differ from state to state and since it is these legacies that determine policies on religious matters, there are bound to be differences between states in how they respond to Muslim efforts to build mosques.⁴⁸ Yet if it is indeed church-state relations that determine how states respond to Muslim requests to build mosques, and the evidence presented by Fetzer and Soper is convincing, then what accounts for the variation that exists within states? Why then have Muslims in Mannheim faced more resistance to building a mosque than Muslims in Stuttgart, for example?

I have included Fetzer and Soper's study in the state-centred category of research because of three of the four theories they test are state-centred, and because ultimately conclude that a state-centred approach has the greatest explanatory power. In addition to this, their book is premised on the fact that the most important differences is between

⁴⁷ Jan Rath, Rinus Penninx, Kees Groenendijk and Astrid Meyer, *Western Europe and its Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 113.

⁴⁸ Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 18.

states as opposed to within states. Using the state as the unit of analysis presupposes that a theory will apply to a whole state., However, had they asked the same question I am asking in this thesis, they may still have chosen to test opportunity structure theory and resource mobilisation theory – two of the four theories they test with their own research question – since these could also plausibly explain within country variation; neither of these are, strictly speaking, state-centred approaches. Opportunity structure as a theoretical framework is not by necessity a state-centred or an actor-centred approach because it depends on whether the theory assumes that opportunity structures allow scope for human agency. In other words, it depends on whether the same set of institutional structures might yield different outcomes in different contexts if the actors involved use different strategies. In this case the question would be whether or not the Mosque committees are always making comparable demands but sometimes getting a different answer, or if they deliberately frame their requests in a particular way depending on who they are asking, for example a left-leaning government versus a right-leaning one. As Fetzer and Soper deploy the theory, opportunity structure would most appropriately be classified in the state-centred approach because they define the opportunities as: “key regime characteristics – such as whether it is a unitary or federal polity; the type of electoral system; the separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government; and the position of key political elites”⁴⁹ The presumption in their book is that Muslim groups are a relatively constant in each state across time because they want the same thing and they do not change their strategies or approaches.

⁴⁹ Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 11.

In other words, Fetzer and Soper suggest that these “key regime characteristics” influence the way Muslims organise and approach the state, not the other way around.

There are both advantages and disadvantages in deploying opportunity structure theory as a state-centred approach – that is to say by treating the Muslim groups making the request for religious accommodation as a constant. The advantage is that it is easier to measure since it only requires the researcher to consider changes on the “supply side” and not the “demand side”. On the other hand, this approach can generate incomplete results because even if the researcher does not measure it, the Muslim groups may very well be dynamic. I will discuss this in greater detail in my own theoretical framework section as well as how I will mitigate this research dilemma.

Resource Mobilisation

As discussed earlier, resource mobilisation theory falls into the actor-centred approach because it assumes that the relative resources of the actors involved in a political struggle can determine the outcome of that struggle. Fetzer and Soper, and a number of scholars whom they refer to in their discussion of resource mobilisation theory, argue that Islam itself is sometimes a barrier to success in Western Europe because the religion lacks an organised hierarchy and because its adherents are so diverse, ethnically and otherwise. This arguably causes Muslims to have trouble forming a national movement and thus prevents them from getting concessions from the state. It does not, they claim, adequately explain the variation between states with respect to how national governments treat their requests for religious accommodation. I argue, however, that it could provide an explanation as to why variation exists within states with respect

to this same issue. Resource mobilisation is discussed in more detail in my theoretical framework section and is one of the theories I will test in my case studies.

Fetzer and Soper acknowledge that differences exist within Muslim populations in terms of ethnicity and language for example, but in a potentially contradictory point Fetzer and Soper also contend that ultimately all Muslims in Western Europe want the same thing. The authors' make the explicit assumption that "Muslim citizens and permanent residents in [Britain, France and Germany] have identical goals: Muslims want to build mosques for public worship and religious schools to transmit the faith, and they want the state to make the concessions necessary so that they can practice their religion."⁵⁰ It is here where I think the third category of research mounts an important challenge to Fetzer and Soper's contentions; researchers from the "dialectic" school draw attention to the tendency in both academic work and public discourses to treat Muslims as a single category of people, as though they all think alike and share the same hopes and desires. For Example, Marcel Maussen notes that Muslims do not have a uniform set of goals and objectives even in terms of the seemingly simple issue of securing provisions for worship, i.e. mosque building. Maussen points out that mosques in Western Europe vary substantially from one to the next in terms of their architecture, but more importantly, in terms of their function.⁵¹ In other words, Muslims do not have identical goals. While some are simply looking for a space to pray, others are looking for more than that.

Fetzer and Soper emphasise the religious angle in their discussion of mosques and, by doing so, they overlook other possible interpretations of the meaning of mosques.

⁵⁰ Soper, J. Christopher and Fetzer, Joel S, "Explaining the Accommodation of Muslim Religious Practices in France, Britain, and Germany." *French Politics* 1, no. 39 (2003): 44.

⁵¹ Maussen, "Making Muslim Presence Meaningful," 25.

Jocelyn Césari, another scholar with expertise on this subject identifies examples of mosques organising sports games, as well as providing language lessons and professional development courses.⁵² Maussen also notes the increasingly important role that mosques can play in representing the interests of migrants – more of a political role than a religious one.⁵³ My point here is that the legacy of church-state relations – the mechanism that Fetzer and Soper offer to explain variation between states with respect to mosque building – is not terribly rigid because there are differences within states across space and time. Fetzer and Soper’s work suffers from the same problem that so many other comparative works suffer from which is the tendency to overemphasise the differences between states and to suggest their policy choices are “rooted unchangeably in long term historical legacies.”⁵⁴ In other words, it helps to perpetuate a myth that states use to justify not making concessions where they do not wish to.⁵⁵

In the actor-centred category of research, some of the gaps left by Fetzer and Soper are taken up in the November 2005 issue of *The Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies (JEMS)*, which is devoted entirely to the topic of mosque building. It features articles on France, Britain, Germany, Italy, Belgium and The Netherlands and provides clear examples of the variation that exists *between* states, but also *within* states with respect to policies that govern mosque-building projects. In the introduction, Jocelyn Césari argues that much of the variation is the result of historical immigration patterns. States that have a lengthy history of receiving Muslim immigrants such as France and Britain have fewer conflicts nowadays than states where this is a new phenomenon such

⁵² Césari, “Mosques in French Cities,” 1030.

⁵³ Maussen, “Making Muslim Presence Meaningful,” 8-9.

⁵⁴ Adrian Favell, *Philosophies of Integration* (New York: Palgrave, 2001): 245.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

as Italy and Spain.⁵⁶ Césari suggests that it is because the states with a longer history of receiving Muslim immigrants are more inclined to accept that these “newcomers” are here to stay and that they therefore ought to be accommodated, at least in some ways. Germany is the exception since it has only recently stopped insisting that it is *not* a country of immigrants even though it has a significant Turkish population which includes many people who are third generation German-born.⁵⁷ She argues that this can apply at the local level as well – cities or towns that have had a Muslims presence for a longer period of time are less likely to resist mosque building projects.

In her article on France, Césari specifically addresses some of the issues that are missing from Fetzer and Soper’s work. For example, she includes a lengthy discussion on how religion and culture are often conflated in France which means that the secular function which mosques fulfil is overlooked by policy-makers.⁵⁸ Accordingly, mosques get denied funding for projects that are not religious in nature but are treated as such because they are administered through the mosque thus automatically considered religious. This point leaves room for the possibility of my own assertion that Muslim groups that emphasise the cultural role their proposed mosque will play in their community will be more successful in obtaining approval for their projects than those groups which do not use this approach. Césari and the other authors writing in *JEMS* also consider chronology in their analysis, which as was mentioned earlier, is not given adequate treatment in Fetzer and Soper. Indeed, Césari attributes much of the progress in France with respect to Muslim-state relations to a new breed of Muslim leadership and

⁵⁶ Césari, “Mosque Conflicts,” 1019.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Césari, “Mosques in French Cities,” 1038.

developing elite.⁵⁹ But Césari’s article has limited explanatory power given that it only considers mosque building in France. Indeed one of the limitations of this entire set of articles in *JEMS* is that it is not comparative. Each one is a stand alone case study of a single country. The articles do, however, provide excellent data for the analysis that is the cornerstone of several case studies including both mosques in the Netherlands section, the York Road Mosque in the British case study section, the Marseille Grand Mosque in the French case study section, and the Mevlana Mosque in Berlin-Kreuzberg in the German case study section. .

The issue of leadership is one that is beginning to appear more often in the literature on religious accommodation particularly with respect to Islam. States are slowly becoming more sensitive to the powerful role of Imams in influencing their congregations for example. Jytte Klausen, in her 2005 book titled “*The Islamic Challenge*” focuses on Muslim leadership across six states of Western Europe with a view to finding out their views on the role of Islam in Western Europe and what Muslims ought to be prioritising. However, she looks not to Imams and other clerics. Rather, she speaks with whom she calls “Europe’s new Muslims political elite” which includes people from a range of professions and who have chosen to become active in politics in some way.⁶⁰ Her book elucidates major differences between Muslims and lends support to my own hypothesis that these differences influence how Muslims behave. Her work belongs in the dialectic category of research because she also discusses how the state and Muslims in Western Europe have influenced one another. Furthermore, she offers

⁵⁹ Ibid., 1032.

⁶⁰ Klausen, “The Islamic Challenge,” 1.

staunch criticism of the role of academics in contributing to the notion that a culture war or a clash of civilisations is taking place right now in Western Europe.

On the other hand, Klausen's book also demonstrates how in a broad sense Muslim leaders across Western Europe share much in common as well and this is the crux of her argument. One of the key points she makes is that the majority of Muslims are interested in religious accommodation and not the remaking of Western Europe into a new caliphate. Klausen is also careful to point out that the European governments have the potential to improve the situation "but only if they act together with a broad spectrum of Muslim representatives."⁶¹

With respect to mosque building, Klausen devotes only limited space but nonetheless raises important points about mosques and their significance in the wider struggle that Muslims are engaged in. For example, she makes the point that Imams frequently work along side Rabbis in Western Europe to try to repeal zoning regulations that prohibit religious building projects – a point that runs counter to much publicised incidents of anti-Semitic acts of aggression by some Muslims.⁶² Klausen also discusses the challenge of getting European-educated Imams due, in large part, to the lack of institutions within Europe that can provide Imams with a religious education that is more compatible with liberal democratic values than the education that foreign institutions provide. This is by and large a funding issue since foreign Imams are often paid by foreign governments to provide religious leadership in Western Europe. This helps to ensure that a particular stream of Islam is taught. These foreign sources of funding would likely not be forthcoming for Imams who are also educated in Europe and would, by

⁶¹ Ibid., 211.

⁶² Ibid., 131.

necessity, have a different take on religious instruction.⁶³ Where then would the money come from?

It is my contention that resource mobilisation theory in the actor-centred category of research has greater explanatory power than simply looking at the state-centred approach in terms of explaining within-state variation on mosque building outcomes. As I will demonstrate in this thesis, Muslims in Western Europe are not a monolithic entity in terms of their belief structures, their ethnicity or the strategies they deploy to achieve their goals. While they are limited by the state in terms of the opportunities they have, they can and do use different approaches to get their needs met and these strategies and approaches are part and parcel of their resources – particularly their leadership. I believe that it is this fact that accounts for most of the within country variation in terms of determining the rate of success of mosque building projects.

⁶³ Ibid., 116-117

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Fetzer and Soper's study is a cross national comparison. It treats each case study state as a whole and does not address within country variation with respect to mosque building or religious instruction in state schools and state aid to Muslim schools – the other issues under consideration in the book. This is where I depart from Fetzer and Soper's work. I argue that the within country variation is substantive and calls into question the robustness of their claims. Fetzer and Soper's study on Western Europe is one of many that discuss how policymaking, particularly when it comes to citizenship and immigration, is path dependent. While this point is true inasmuch as governments have to build new policy on to old ones, there is a danger in placing too much emphasis on the influence of history within academic discourse in that these types of explanations justify certain state behaviours.⁶⁴ Moreover, it belies the fact that within country variation does exist which is important because to ignore it could be tantamount to perpetuating a myth – the same myth that allows states to continue behaving in a way that is unfairly discriminatory to some Muslims. For example, for years the German state denied access to citizenship to immigrants on the basis that Germany was not a country of immigration.

I propose that two kinds of intra-state variation exist with respect to mosque building and that both can be attributed in large part to the Muslims themselves. In other words, I argue that the differences in outcomes of mosque building projects from one community to the next within the same state are the direct result of differences in the way Muslims organise and in turn how they approach the state with their requests. More

⁶⁴ Favell, *Philosophies of Integration*, 247.

specifically, I argue that Muslim organisations and mosque committees which place particular emphasis on the non-religious role their proposed mosque will have in the lives of its parishioners are more likely to be successful in their efforts than those groups which do not do this. I base this assumption on the fact that many of the studies I have consulted for this thesis note that municipal governments are unwilling to provide funding to existing mosques for religious purposes but are often willing to make funds available when these mosques provide non religious services to the community. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that if governments are willing to provide funding for cultural, non-religious purposes, they are more likely to approve projects that include this non-religious component than those that are strictly religious.

There are several compelling theories that might explain the variation on mosque building outcomes that exists across the states of Western Europe. While Fetzer and Soper ultimately attribute variation between states to the legacy of church state relations in each state, they acknowledge that the other three theories they test - resource mobilization, political opportunity structures and ideology (state) - also have considerable explanatory power and cannot be entirely discounted. Indeed, one of the criticisms I have of their book is that it does not rule out or “falsify” any of the theories tested and this ultimately weakens the power of their conclusion. In considering within country variation on mosque building, however, two of the theories that Fetzer and Soper test may also provide plausible explanations: resource mobilisation and political opportunity structure. It is these two theories I will test in my case studies to explain variation in mosque building outcomes.

3.1 Resource Mobilisation Theory

Fetzer and Soper distil the work of several scholars who write about resource mobilisation and provide an excellent summary in their own theory section. In this overview they define resource mobilisation theory as attributing political outcomes to the “relative resources” of the people or groups involved. Within this framework politics is treated as a competition whereby the actor or actors with the greatest resources at their disposal fare the best in that competitive process. Resources are defined broadly in this theory and include financial capital, internal cohesion, and skilled or politically connected leadership. These latter two resources we might refer to as ‘social capital’. To the category of social capital I would add “strategy” which could be linked to deliberate decisions made by the leadership of a Muslim group. However, it could also be the result of genuine desires in terms of what the Muslim group is looking to achieve. In other words, a mosque committee that emphasises the cultural role their mosque will play in their community may be more successful than a committee that emphasises the religious one. This could be attributed to savvy leadership who simply understand that culture can sometimes have more cache than religion when it comes to getting any sort of concession from the state, but it could also be because one group has a genuine policy or vision about the cultural role of their mosque and so this is the angle they emphasise. Either way, “strategy” reflects the choices and influence of the leadership.

Jocelyn Césari and Jytte Klausen also note the importance of leadership in influencing how Muslims fare in gaining concessions from the state. For instance, Césari contends that changes over time with respect to mosque building in France – specifically the fact that Muslims today face far less resistance from the state – can be attributed in

large part to the fact that French Muslims now have more sophisticated leaders at the helm.⁶⁵ She argues that conflicts around mosque building in France today revolve in large part around differences between Muslim groups and not between Muslims and the state or the public at large.⁶⁶ Klausen, too, demonstrates that Muslim leaders in today's Western Europe base their appeals for religious accommodation on liberalism; “[t]hey invoke human rights to claim equality, or they appeal to the principles of humanist universalism to argue for the ‘equal worth’ of Christianity and Islam.”⁶⁷ In other words, they have learned the rules and developed improved strategies for approaching the state and getting what they want.

3.2 Operationalising Resource Mobilisation Theory

My own hypothesis is that resource mobilisation will provide the greatest explanatory power of the three theories. In other words, I argue that the independent variable that explains variation on the dependent variable – outcomes in mosque building projects – is the Muslims themselves – that is to say the resources the Muslims have at their disposal. Since I have argued that strategies deployed reflect the leadership of a group, and leadership, in turn, is a resource according to resource mobilisation theory, I have chosen to use “strategy” as a proxy for resources in general. In other words, “strategy” is the independent variable that I will test to see if the theory that resources mobilisation can explain intra-state variation on mosque building in my four case study states is accurate.

⁶⁵ Césari, “Mosques in French Cities,” 1029.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 1038.

⁶⁷ Klausen, *The Islamic Challenge*, 204.

To simplify this theory and ensure that it has measurable and observable implications, I will define strategy in very basic and specific terms: cultural versus religious. In using the term culture here I intend to include any kinds of activities the mosque committee proposes which are not religious in nature. For instance, if the mosque committee makes a request for permission to build a mosque, and mentions in the proposal that the mosque will provide day-care, language lessons, and classes on the Koran, then I will consider the first two items listed as “cultural” and the last one “religious”. If my assertion is correct, and resource mobilisation can account for within-country variation of mosque building policies and outcomes, then we would expect to observe the following in the data:

1) differences in outcomes are accompanied by differences in approaches.

There will be a pattern showing that Muslims who are successful in their efforts to build mosques consistently deploy evidently different strategies and approaches in their efforts to do this when compared with Muslims who are unsuccessful. *ceteris paribus*. Similarly, Muslims who emphasise the religious aspect of their project and who initially encounter resistance from the state will find success if they change their approach and emphasise the cultural or non religious aspect of the project.

To observe the differences in approaches means looking at “decision points” which occur prior to the outcome of a project. That is to say, we must look at events leading up to the approval or denial of a mosque building project to make a judgement about the strategy that a given Muslim group uses in making an appeal for permission to build a mosque. This may include the initial application for a project, a request to change zoning regulations, even the initial purchase of the land. It may also include statements issued

by the local government and discussions in town meetings. All of these exchanges may yield information about the strategy of the Muslim group behind the project. Again, it is important to note that strategy as a concept may reflect deliberate attempts to manipulate the outcome or it may reflect the actual nature of the project. For example, one group may emphasise the religious angle of their project because that is the sole purpose of the mosque they wish to build, while another group may emphasise non-religious aspects of their project for the same reason. On the other hand, while a group may only wish to have a mosque built to serve a religious function, they may emphasise the non-religious benefits to the community as a way of garnering support for the project. The point here is that it may not be clear what the motivation is to build a mosque and, for this reason, I will determine the type of strategy a group uses based on what is observable – actions and statements – as opposed to motivations which are not observable. Unfortunately, much of the information that could be used to make a determination about strategy is unavailable as I will discuss in greater detail in my methods section. However, if resource mobilisation is the appropriate theory to answer my research question, then where the data about decision points is available, I would expect to see that at each stage leading up to a final outcome will support my initial claim. For example, if a project is successful, then at each stage of the process, the Muslim group proposing the project will have emphasised non-religious benefits and features of their mosque and where a project is unsuccessful, the reverse will be true.

3.3 Opportunity Structure Theory

Opportunity structure theory is more amorphous than resource mobilisation theory because “opportunity” is an ambiguous term – it simply refers to context. Fetzer and Soper define opportunity structure as government infrastructure – “key regime characteristics – such as whether it is a unitary or federal polity; the type of electoral system; the separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government; and the position of key political elites.”⁶⁸ Essentially Fetzer and Soper test to see if the differing government infrastructures in their country cases can explain differing outcomes with respect to religious accommodation in each state. For example, in their French case study they note highly developed networks of Muslim organisations at the national level including the Conseil Français du Culte Musulman (French Muslim Council) – an organisation that the state itself was instrumental in creating in 2003 for the purposes of consolidating the various other Muslim organisations to make consultations more streamlined.⁶⁹ Britain has no equivalent organisation that exercises the same level of legitimacy in the eyes of the state. Yet British Muslims have typically succeeded in securing religious accommodation on a much grandeur scale than French Muslims.⁷⁰ This suggests that opportunity structure theory cannot explain why there is variation *between* the states of Western Europe. On the other hand, it may explain the variation on mosque building outcomes *within* the states of Western Europe. Neither France nor Britain can boast that Muslims within each respective state have been treated the same on the issue of religious accommodation whether that be across time or across space. The question is then: Can the differences be attributed to opportunity structure? As Césari notes in her

68 Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 11.

69 Césari, “Mosques in French Cities,” 1029.

70 Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 46-47.

discussion of mosque building conflicts, how a state intends to govern religion tends is articulated at the national level but enforced at the local level.⁷¹ This is by virtue of the fact that the actual requests that religious groups make in terms of accommodation tend to involve practical considerations that are simply beneath national governments to bother with. For example, the potential obstacles when it comes to mosque building are issues like building permits, zoning laws, and traffic patterns – municipal concerns, even though – as Césari also points out – these issue are always connected to a meta narrative about security.⁷²

3.4 Operationalising Opportunity Structure Theory

My alternative hypothesis is that opportunity structure, not resource mobilisation, can explain the variation on mosque building projects in my cases of Western Europe. In other words, variation on the dependent variable, mosque building project outcomes, is the result of variation on the independent variable, opportunity structure. Since I have noted that the it is local government that grants building permits, creates zoning regulations etc, and since these represent some of the major barriers that can hold up a project or, indeed, prevent a project from ever coming to fruition, I am going to use partisanship i.e. party orientation as a proxy for “opportunity” in my analysis.

Party orientation is a suitable proxy because there is considerable room to interpret legislation that may be applicable to mosque building projects. This suggests that the decision on how to interpret that legislation rests with the municipal council and will, by necessity, be influenced by their underlying political beliefs. Immigration is a

⁷¹ Césari, “Mosque Conflicts,” 1021.

⁷² Césari, “Mosque Conflicts,” 1019.

key political issue in all four case study states here and, indeed, across all of Western Europe. In cases where there is a coalition government, particularly when that coalition is built of parties with different ideas about immigration, there will be evidence of disagreement about the project which will be evidenced by differing voting patterns when the municipality makes a decision about whether or not to approve the project. The parties that have a stated position that is more favourable to Muslims in particular or immigration in general will vote in favour, while the parties of the far right and parties that have a stated position that is hostile to Muslims in particular and immigrants in general will vote against.

To simplify partisanship as an independent variable and ensure that it has measurable, observable implications I will use the political platform of the party in power to identify whether or not the party is more likely to approve mosque building projects or more likely to inhibit the success of these projects. In other words, if the party has made statements that can be deemed as favourable to religious accommodation for Muslims then this would qualify as an opportunity for Muslims, and they will be successful in getting their proposed mosque built. On the other hand, if the party has made comments that can reasonably be considered hostile to religious accommodation for Muslims, then this means that an opportunity does not exist and Muslims will not be able to successfully complete their mosque building projects. Specifically, I will look at what the party's own publications say with respect to religious accommodation concerning Islam. However, where the party makes no overt reference to the issue, I will consider other statements that can reasonably be used as an indicator of a party's orientation i.e. favourable or unfavourable. For instance, if a party has made overtly anti-immigrants statements, it

stands to reason that the party is not likely to support religious accommodation for Muslims. If a party has made overt statements in favour of immigration or, at the very least, statements that are critical of the parties that are anti-immigrant on this basis, then it stands to reason that such a party is more likely to approve requests for permission to build mosques. If there are cases where no such reasonable assumptions can be drawn based on the party's platform, then I will identify such cases.

3.5 Alternative Argument

If opportunity structure theory, specifically the orientation of the party in power at the local level, can explain the variation on the dependent variable – mosque building projects, then we would expect to observe the following in the data:

1) differences in outcomes are accompanied by and correspond to differences in party orientation at the local or municipal level of government

In other words, where the outcome of a proposed mosque project is success, the party in power at the local level of government in the jurisdiction where the proposed mosque is built will be considered favourable to religious accommodation for Muslims based on criteria outlined above. If the outcome of a proposed mosque is failure (the mosque was not built) then the reverse will be true: the party in power at the local level of government where the mosque was proposed to have been built will be considered unfavourable to religious accommodation for Muslims based on criteria outlined above.

To determine whether or not opportunity structure theory can answer the research question at hand requires not only a consideration of the outcome, but also a consideration of the events leading up to the outcome. One of the key decision points

that will yield evidence in support of or in opposition to the opportunity structure theory will be a change in government. For example, if a proposed mosque is rejected by a far right party and a change in office occurs that results in a new party with a political orientation favourable to Muslims and/or immigrants, then and if the committee resubmits its application, the results will be approved. Other decision points might also include attempts to obtain land for a project. For example, if a committee makes an attempt to purchase land that is owned by the city or district for the purposes of building a mosque, but is barred from doing so, then we would expect to find (assuming no legitimate bureaucratic reason exists) that there is a far right party or a party that is hostile to Muslims and/or immigrants in power. If, on the other hand there is a party that is favourable to Muslims and/or immigrants forms the government in power, then the reverse will be true.

3.6 Relationship between the Independent Variables and the Limits of the Theories

Where a project fails, I will identify the specific reason that the mosque project was unsuccessful if that information is available. For example, the municipality would not approve the building permit etc. I anticipate the reasons a project is successful or unsuccessful will clearly help serve to falsify one or both of the theories I am testing. Where the reasons are contested by the actors involved, I will identify all of the explanations and suggest which one is more convincing based on the evidence available. However, there are countless additional reasons that a project may not succeed and these reasons may exist independently of either theory. For example, funding from a private source could be withdrawn; a mosque committee may simply be making unreasonable

requests that no party would approve of etc. Where I have access to the reason that a mosque project failed, I will include that information.

If, on the other hand, resource mobilisation can best explain within country variation on mosque building, then the party in power will be of little consequence. In other words, if committees use the appropriate strategy, that is to say if they emphasise the non-religious aspect of their project, they will be more successful in more instances than if they emphasise religion and this will be true independently of the political orientation of the party in power. Where the party in power has no stated position on immigration or Muslims then I assume the results will also be random if opportunity structure theory is correct.

4. METHODOLOGY AND CASE SELECTION

There are two methodological approaches that would be suitable to use in a project such as this. The first type is the large N approach which means the researcher tests his or her theory using as many cases as possible. The results of a well-designed large N study are considered reliable because, as in any scientific experiment, the more times a test is repeated the more likely it is that the researcher will discover patterns and thereby falsify or lend support to the plausibility of a theory. This ultimately assists all researchers in making predictions about the future.

The second type is the small N approach. This method uses case study approach whereby the researcher considers fewer examples in total but instead develops a deeper understanding of each of the cases he or she is theorising about. Sometimes a small N study actually only involves a single case. While researchers who use this approach may not generate enough results to draw conclusions that can be applied more generally to other cases, or to make predictions, this approach does have advantages that large N studies do not have. For example, in a large N study, the researcher cannot possibly become an expert in each case that is subjected to a test and therefore must draw conclusions about the aggregate data without ever knowing if any one case was subject to extenuating circumstances. In a small N study, on the other hand, the researcher is more likely to have intimate knowledge of each case study under consideration and can therefore analyze and make judgments about the results of each test without having to rely on aggregate data to draw conclusions.⁷³

⁷³ Gary King, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba., *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994): 45.

In part it is the research question itself that determines which approach a political scientist will use. If he or she is interested in a unique or “one off” phenomenon, then the data required to conduct a large N study may not exist. Moreover, the researcher may not have the resources required to conduct such a study even if the data were available.

In ideal conditions, political scientists might have access to both the resources required to conduct large-N studies as well as the time to develop expertise about each case under consideration. However, this is often not possible. Innovators in the field of political science have in recent years developed new methodological tactics to mitigate some of the problems associated with research projects that rely on case studies thus generating results from these projects that are as robust as those of large N studies. One such innovation is process tracing.

Process tracing involves examining the links in a causal chain to see if they support a posited theory. In other words, if a researcher asserts that Dependent Variable X was caused by Independent Variable Y, that researcher cannot recreate the conditions in a lab to test the theory and substitute different Independent Variables to see if her own assertion is falsifiable. She can, on the other hand, look for observable implications of her theory by considering the relationship between X and Y, then demonstrating that there exists a solid and logical set of links between the two. This approach is useful in case studies because it increases the number of possible observations and more closely approximates a large N study. Instead of looking at a single outcome that is to say instead of having only one observation per case study, the researcher can make multiple

observations by considering events that occur in sequence leading up to the outcome that is of most interest.⁷⁴

With respect to the question I have asked in this thesis: what accounts for the variation in mosque building project outcomes in Britain, France, Germany and the Netherlands I have asserted two possible explanations: Resource mobilisation and opportunity structure. I have stated that, if resource mobilisation theory is correct, mosque building projects succeed or fail because Muslim leaders employ the right strategy. On the other hand, I have offered opportunity structure theory as an alternative theory. If it is correct then mosque building projects succeed or fail because there is a sympathetic government in office at the municipal level where the proposed mosque is to be built. Using process tracing to test these theories means that rather than focusing only on the outcome: success or failure, and considering only the two dependent variables: strategy employed and orientation of the government in office at the local level, I will look instead at several outcomes that must occur in a chronological order before the final outcome can occur.⁷⁵

To build a mosque a committee must accomplish several tasks. Indeed, long before the project succeeds or fails there are numerous stages it must go through, each of which is a link in the chain of logic that I assert exists between the Independent and Dependent variables. Mosque committees, for example, must first purchase land and ensure that land is properly zoned to have a mosque there. If it is not zoned to have a mosque, then the committee must approach the municipal government and make an appeal to have the zoning by-law changed. As far as testing my theoretical framework,

⁷⁴ Andrew Bennett and Colin Elma “Qualitative Research: Recent Developments in Case Study Methods” *Annual Review of Political Science* (2006): 460.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 459.

this “decision points” in the mosque building process is an opportunity to observe whether or not there is evidence to support or discount the theory under consideration.⁷⁶

If the mosque committee makes an appeal on the basis that this mosque will provide services to the community that fall outside the scope of religion, and if their appeal results in the zoning laws being changed so that a mosque *can* be erected on a plot of land where it had previously been outlawed, this might not be proof, but it is evidence in support of the claim that mosque projects succeed or fail based on what strategy the leadership chooses to employ in the process.

Mosque committees must also obtain a building permit, secure financing, and at any moment, they must ensure they have support or, at the very least, ensure they do not have prohibitive opposition from the public at large. Each of these points can be considered decision points in the mosque building and through a process tracing methodological approach can generate observations that have the possibility of lending support to or detracting from the resource mobilisation and the opportunity structure – the two theories that I have offered as explanations for the dependent variable under consideration in this thesis.⁷⁷

4.1 Data: Sources

The sources of data I will use in testing my two hypotheses were selected primarily from national daily papers from Europe, although there were exceptions to this. I also used some news magazines such as *The Economist* and *Time*. All of these have been accessed through Lexis Nexis, an online database containing electronic versions of

⁷⁶ Ibid., 460.

⁷⁷ King, Keohane and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, 212.

hundreds of newspapers and magazines form around the world. Other sources of data include academic journals such as *The European Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* and books such as Christopher J. Soper and Joel M. Fetzer's book "*Muslims and the State in Britain, France and Germany*" referred to throughout this thesis. The approach I used to obtain relevant newspaper articles from electronic sources was initially to use broad keyword searches such as "mosque + Europe". As I became more acquainted with particular mosques and controversies surrounding them, I was able to develop more advanced searches and generate articles that included more detailed coverage of particular projects and proposed projects in the four countries I have selected for analysis. I also used keyword searches based on particular mosques referred to in some of my hard copy sources such as Fetzer and Soper's book.

In terms of determining party orientation to test opportunity structure theory, I will add additional sources to include materials published by the party where such a determination cannot be made using the sources listed above. These additional sources are will mainly include party websites that contain English text. Otherwise, I will obtain a strong sense of the party orientation through secondary sources and primary sources that include quotes from party elites or unambiguous determinations from reputable scholars that include statements such as "party X is centrist, left-wing, far right etc."

4.2 Data: Limitations and Potential Bias

As with any study, the data have limitations. In this case, there are two major challenges that this thesis cannot overcome as a result of these limitations. The first is simply that the data is scant. Due to my own resource deficits including time and access

to information, the data is simply not going to allow me to do everything I need to do in order to fully subject my hypotheses to the test. To begin, most of the information on the “decision points” that I have referred to in my case study states is not addressed in the sources I have access to. Since zoning laws and building permits are local concerns, these issues tend to be covered in local papers that are not by and large accessible online – at least not through the databases to which I have access. The problem with this is that there are certain links in the causal chain that I will not be able to demonstrate. Fewer of these types of observations means that whatever conclusion I am able to draw from the tests I am able to do will be weaker than they might have been had I been able to consider these links. There is simply no feasible way to mitigate this limitation so I have simply chosen to articulate it and to bear it in mind when analysing my results.

A second limitation of my data is also partly a methodological problem which is that I have excluded hundreds of cases and therefore created the risk of a bias in my results. Due to the limitations I outlined above with respect to the data that is available to me for this study, I have had little choice but to select a limited set of cases. I cannot test an exhaustive list of mosque building projects because I am only aware of the projects that are published in the sources I have access to and of those, I am limited by the amount of detail about each project that is published as I require more detail in order to test each case. The reason this is a problem is because the cases that are written about in the sources I have access to – national papers as opposed to local ones, for example – may have something particularly interesting or different about them to make them qualify as national news. Therefore, whatever conclusions I draw from my results might only apply

to those cases that have something sensational about them.⁷⁸ There is no way to mitigate the bias potential. I am therefore stating that I am aware of this risk and will factor it into the conclusions I draw from the results of my tests. However, given that there are many cases of mosque building projects that are referred to in national papers but simply lack adequate details for me to use them, I argue that the cases I selected are, in fact, representative samples and that the reason I was able to use them based on an arbitrary decision that a journalist made about whether to include particular details or not. The reason that any mosque building project is newsworthy is not necessarily that it is unique. Rather, it is that they are a part of the broader issue of Islam in Europe which is a “hot topic” in Europe and has been for several decades.

⁷⁸ King, Keohane and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, 172.

5. CASE SELECTION

The countries under consideration in this comparison are France, Britain, Germany and the Netherlands. There are seven reasons motivating this choice of case selection: The first reason is that these four states along with Greece are home to the largest Muslim populations in Western Europe when measured as a percentage of the overall national population.⁷⁹ A larger Muslim population can yield more data because it increases the likely number of mosque-building projects that can be observed and considered. More data points ensure that the results of the test are more robust.

With the exception of Greece, these Muslim populations have also increased within the same time frame and under similar conditions.⁸⁰ France, Germany and the Netherlands recruited foreign workers to fill the labour shortages resulting from the post-war economic boom, and, excepting the Netherlands, all of them enacted formal legislation with a view to preventing these workers from settling permanently once they were no longer needed. The Netherlands did not introduce formal legislation as the other states did. It nevertheless had the expectation that labour migrants were a temporary phenomenon. However, significant numbers of these migrants, many of whom were Muslims, did settle in all four states and it is precisely this period of settlement that created the need for more mosques. While Britain did not recruit foreign labour, it did experience a wave of immigration from former colonies during this same period. Therefore, in spite of the major differences in the ethnic composition of their Muslim populations, France, Britain, Germany and the Netherlands have enough in common in

⁷⁹ Jocelyne Césari, *When Islam and Democracy Meet: Muslims in Europe and the United States*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006): 9.

⁸⁰ Césari, "Mosque Conflicts," 1.

terms of their experiences with post-war immigration to provide a strong basis of comparison.

The fact that France's largest Muslim population is Algerian and given the nature of the relationship between France and Algeria, for example the psychological scars on both sides which are the result of the Algerian War of Independence, it could be argued that France constitutes too much of an exception to be comparable to the other cases included in this analysis.⁸¹ While I agree that this aspect of French history is unique, it does not have repercussions for my argument. France still followed a similar course to the other three states with respect the recruitment of foreign labourers and the subsequent decision by those labourers to settle permanently. Furthermore, it is reasonable to assume that any residual negative feelings on the part of the French or the Algerian population resulting from Algeria's War of Independence are spread across France and that any changes occurring over time will also occur at the same rate across the state. Given that this thesis is looking at within country variation there is no reason to believe that the aforementioned psychological scars are sufficient grounds to exclude France as a case study.

A second reason for selecting France, Britain, and Germany and the Netherlands as case studies has to do with the legislation restricting immigration. Britain introduced formal legislation in an effort to curb immigration in 1962. Germany and France followed suit introducing legislation to end labour migration in 1973 and 1974 respectively. This new legislation had the reverse effect of what it was intended to do. Migrants, fearing they would not be able to get back in to the country once they left,

⁸¹ James Hollifield, "Republicanism and Immigration Control in France," in *Controlling Immigration*. (Stanford University Press, 2004): 187.

decided to bring their wives and children to join them which resulted in an increase in a particular kind of immigration: family reunification. As mentioned earlier, the Netherlands did not introduce legislation of this sort but migrants stopped arriving as news of the high unemployment rates reached them. The Netherlands also experienced a wave of family reunification such as that experienced in Britain, France and Germany. It was this familial settlement, as mentioned earlier, that made mosque building and other religious provisions that much more pressing.

The four states considered here are all liberal democracies and member states of the European Union which provides a third reason for selecting them as case studies. These states share a cluster of values that have developed from the core principle of respect for human rights.⁸² All four states have articulated a commitment to religious freedom either in their constitutions as is the case with France, Germany and the Netherlands or through common law as is the case with Britain.⁸³ Similarly, all four states are signatories of various international agreements that protect the religious rights of residents and citizens alike.

The fifth reason for selecting France, Britain, Germany and the Netherlands as case studies is the availability of existing relevant research on these three states. There is a dearth of research on post-war immigration in these four states. More importantly, most of the key studies emerging specifically on mosque-building in Western Europe include these some or all four states as I will outline in my literature review. Among these works is the book *Muslims and the State in Britain France and Germany* by Joel M. Fetzer and Christopher J. Soper which this thesis critiques at length.

⁸² Rath, Penninx, Groenendijk and Meyer, *Western Europe and its Islam*, 259.

⁸³ Fetzer and Soper, *Muslims and the State*, 16.

In short, the cases I have selected are sufficiently similar to provide a basis of comparison and sufficiently different with respect to the dependent variable.

6. CASE STUDIES INTRODUCTION

As mentioned earlier, one of my criticisms of Fetzer and Soper is that they select mosque building projects from a range of time periods to support their claims when there is evidence to suggest that conditions for Muslims today are dramatically different from the 1970s and 80s when Muslims first began to make requests for religious accommodation. What is more, the Muslims themselves have changed. They have become more sophisticated and organised and are far better equipped to negotiate the complex bureaucracies of Western Europe in order to secure provisions.

Acts of terrorism and other key events that relate to Islam have influenced the situation for Muslims in Europe in recent years. September 11th, for instance, marked a major shift in attitudes toward Islam across Western Europe and made all issues relating to Muslims and Islam more visible. September 11th is likely to constitute an intervening variable and may operate that has affected policy directions in different ways in the countries under consideration in this thesis. I will therefore pay close attention to the potential impact it may have had on the cases I have selected and if it appears to have influenced project outcomes, I will address this.

In addition to September 11th, Britain and the Netherlands had their own encounters with Islamic fundamentalist including the bombings in London Underground in 2006 and the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh in the Amsterdam in 2004. These incidents have no doubt contributed to the increased suspicion of Muslims in those countries both on the part of the public and the government. This appears to be getting worse not better, although data on mosque building projects since 2004 have not been adequately studied yet to make an accurate determination.

6.1 Case Study: France

In 1926 the French state built the great Mosque of Paris as a gesture of thanks to all of the Algerian soldiers who fought for France in the First World War. The building was erected with little controversy and without a lengthy public debate about the place of Islam in France.⁸⁴ Nearly eighty years later, debate about the place of Islam in France is part of the landscape. Islam has replaced ethnicity, or subsumed it rather, as a political cleavage and the parties of the far-right that once emphasised immigrants in general as a problem, now focus most of their attention on Muslims.⁸⁵ Within this debate the issue of mosque building features prominently. Mosques across the country have been set fire to, vandalised – even illegally bulldozed. They have been targeted by police raids – some for legitimate reasons, others not. Today, the situation appears to have improved.

September 11th may have caused a shift in attitudes toward Islam in France. For instance, after September 11th the right of centre government articulated a new openness to the idea of religious accommodation for Muslims in the area of mosque building. French President, Nikolas Sarkozy, announced in 2002 when he was Minister of Finance that France ought to finance mosque building projects as a way to bring Islam out into the open and insulate it from the extremist element that thrives in the underground and out of the way prayer rooms of France.⁸⁶

It is virtually impossible to quantify the actual number of mosques in France because there is no official registry and because so many of them are housed in factories

⁸⁴ Maussen, “Making Muslim Presence Meaningful,” 31. It is worth noting that in a subsequent publication by this same author there is a reference to a small protest against the mosque by Muslim workers who oppose the state being involved in how Islam is practised in France.

⁸⁵ Evan Osnos, “Islam Shaping a New Europe,” *Chicago Tribune*, 19 December 2004.

⁸⁶ Craig S. Smith, “French minister supports state funding of mosques,” *The International Herald Tribune*, 28 October 2004.

and other sorts of non-descript buildings. They lack minarets and other details that are typical of mosques in Muslim countries which render them indistinguishable from the surrounding buildings. Many Muslims are forced to use temporary tents as mosques. Indeed, there is such a lack of adequate prayer space for Muslims in France that thousands of them are forced to worship in the streets and on the sidewalks surrounding their would-be local mosques.⁸⁷

Actual estimates of the number of mosques in France in the sources I have consulted generally agree on 2000.⁸⁸ However, the number of mosques under consideration in this case study is limited to two as this is the number of mosque projects that I was able to find sufficient information on. The two mosque building projects I have selected are Marseille, and Lyons.

6.1.1 Marseille Grand Mosque

The city of Marseille is located in the south of France and has a population of 800,000. One in four people are Muslim.⁸⁹ The project to build a Grand Mosque in Marseille has arguably been in the works for some seventy years without ever coming to fruition. In 1989 it seemed as though the project might become a reality when then mayor Robert Vigoroux expressed commitment to making it happen.⁹⁰ Vigoroux came to office of the mayor as a member of the socialist party when then elected mayor Gaston Deferre of the same party died in 1986 after 33 years in the position.⁹¹ Vigoroux was later

⁸⁷ Elaine Sciolino, "The World: 1789 to 2004; France has a State Religion: Secularism," *New York Times*, February 8, 2004.

⁸⁸ Césari, "Mosques in French Cities," 1027.

⁸⁹ Colin Randall, "France does battle over mosque funding" *The Daily Telegraph* (London) 29 August 2005.

⁹⁰ Marcel Maussen, "Islamic Presence and Mosque Establishment in France: Colonialism, Arrangements for Guestworkers and Citizenship" *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33, no. 6 (August 2007): 994.

⁹¹ Campbell Page, "Mayor to calm passions / Marseille councilors choose Robert Vigouroux as successor to Gaston Deferre" *The Guardian*, 19 May 1986.

kicked out of the party, and in 1989 ran as an independent and won.⁹² In spite of his support for the project, competition between various Muslim groups seeking control of the potential mosque resulted in the project never progressing past discussions and it was put on hold in 1990. It is worth noting here as well that the political situation for Muslims in France in general at this time was not good as the Headscarf Affair had just happened and anti-Islamic sentiment was commonplace.⁹³ Marseille soon fell into the hands of the National Front, France's far right party so it is no surprise that the project was not resurrected for some time.

The mosque came close to becoming a reality between 2001 and 2003 when then Jean Claude Gaudin was the mayor of Marseille and his centre-right party, Union for French Democracy (UDF) dominated the municipal council.⁹⁴ While I was unable to determine specifically how the UDF at this local level viewed Muslims or immigrants, Gaudin, in his other role as the leader of the UDF in the national assembly, formed an alliance with the National Front (FN) in the regional council, which suggests at least some sympathy for the anti-immigrant sentiment for which the FN is known.⁹⁵ However, at this time, the main barrier that prevented the proposed mosque from being built was a lack of unity among the various Muslim groups participating in the negotiations. The Muslim community in Marseille eventually formed a committee to resolve this issue and to oversee the operations of the mosque once it was completed. The committee was made up of a wide range of people from the community and included a variety of theological orientations with respect to the practise of Islam, but it was mainly divided

⁹² Andrew Jack, "All out to save Marseille from the right" *The Financial Times* London, 16 June 1995.

⁹³ Maussen, "Islamic Presence," 995.

⁹⁴ Césari, "Mosques in French Cities," 1037.

⁹⁵ Paul Betts, "Election Fans Marseille Racial Tensions" *Financial Times* (London) 30 April 1986.

into two groups: One group wanted the project to be a strictly religious enterprise while the other wanted the mosque to serve a variety of non religious functions.⁹⁶ When two different proposals for the mosque were put in front of municipal council for their approval, the project that emphasised the religious value of the mosque was rejected in favour of the project that emphasised culture and included an Islamic Centre as part of the overall structure, not just a space to pray.⁹⁷ However, the municipality temporarily withdrew its support for the entire project when the interim committee held an election to establish leadership of the committee on a more long term basis and the senior positions were won by the members of that had proposed the strictly religious project..⁹⁸

The project was subsequently resurrected and in July of 2006 with Jean Claude Gaudin and the UDF still in power. The city of Marseille held a ceremony to formally announce that a plot of land that was once the site of an abattoir would be leased to the Muslim group for the purpose of building a grand mosque. The actual construction was not expected to take place right away as the municipality had stipulated that the committee would have to fund the project privately with only limited contributions from foreign sources. Once again, it is unclear if this project was intended as a solely religious enterprise – in other words, if it was simply a plan for prayer space – or if it included facilities to be used for non-religious purposes. The municipality and the committee were in agreement about the project and it seemed as though the barriers that had previously prevented the project from moving ahead were now out of the way. However, shortly after the municipality allocated the land, the project was once again put on hold, this time due to a legal challenge mounted collectively by the National Front (FN), the Movement

⁹⁶ Maussen, “Islamic Presence,” 996.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Césari, “Mosques in French Cities,” 1038.

for France (MPF) and the National Republican Movement (MNR).⁹⁹ Although they were not in power in Marseille, they jointly filed a lawsuit against the city arguing that the 300 euro per year charge for a 99 year lease amounted to a religious subsidy that violates the 1905 *lois laicque*.¹⁰⁰

In conclusion: From as early as 1989 the mosque had the approval of the local council as well as high profile support from the mayor which suggests that opportunity structure cannot fully be discounted. However, when the council had the opportunity to look at two different proposals, they chose the one that included a variety of non-religious components in addition to the prayer space of the mosque.

6.1.2 Lyons Grand Mosque

Lyons is known as France's second city. It is located in the Rhone-Alpes region and, second to Paris, has the largest population of any city – 1.2 million in the late 1980s.¹⁰¹ Of this total, roughly 130,000 inhabitants of the city were Muslim.¹⁰² The Grand Mosque of Lyon was first proposed in 1980 by then French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing.¹⁰³ However, a decade later the project had still not progressed past the proposal stage. In 1990 the Mayor of Lyons, Michel Noir, officially endorsed the project and the city made a piece of land available and provided a permit for the building that same year. I was not able to determine the strategy of the Muslim group that proposed the project. However, the mayor, Michel Noir, belonged to the right of centre Gaullist party, Rally for the Republic (RPR) which took over control of the city from the other

⁹⁹ "French far right aims to end local council 'subsidies' for building mosques" *BBC Monitoring Europe*, 8 May 2007.

¹⁰⁰ "French far-right groups block Great Mosque plans" *Agence France Presse*, 17 April 2007.

¹⁰¹ "French election Silken Chains" *Economist*, 22 February 1986.

¹⁰² Alan Riding "Lyons Journal: A New Mosque as a Beacon for a 'French Islam,'" *New York Times*, 29 October 1994.

¹⁰³ Howard LaFranchi, "Mosque Project in Lyons Stirs Controversy" *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 November 1990.

centre-right party, the UDF in the 1989 elections. Noir has been a staunch critic of the FN throughout his political career.¹⁰⁴ He has stated publicly that they use immigration as a “gimmick to win votes”.¹⁰⁵ A centrist contingent of the Union for French Democracy (UDF) had been in power in Lyons since 1976.¹⁰⁶

Around the time the city granted permission for the Grand Mosque project to start building, a rival Muslim group in Lyons also sought permission from the city to build a large mosque, this one would have an Islamic cultural centre attached to it.¹⁰⁷ The spokesperson for this second project also made a point of criticising the group behind the original project arguing that the community that wants the mosque ought to pay for the construction of that mosque.¹⁰⁸ This was in reference to the fact that the group behind the original project secured funding for it from a Saudi Arabian king. Based on the data available, it does not appear that the authorities who approved the project found this fact objectionable.¹⁰⁹

The Muslim group that proposed the original project had support from other prominent community members – the Catholic Archbishop of Lyons and the Chief Rabbi of Lyons – in addition to support from the local government.¹¹⁰ However, many residents of the area surrounding the site of the proposed mosque were strongly opposed to the project and mounted an unsuccessful legal challenge to try to block it from being built. The National Front, though not in power in Lyons, also launched a vociferous campaign

¹⁰⁴ Howard LaFranchi, “Gaullists are Torn by Doubts” *Christian Science Monitor*, 28 February 1990.

¹⁰⁵ Paul Lewis, “Barbie is a Spectre in a Cabinet Rift in France,” *New York Times*, 20 May 1987.

¹⁰⁶ Patrick Marnham “Modern manager challenges old patron in Lyons” *The Independent* London, 4 March 1989.

¹⁰⁷ LaFranchi, “Mosque Project in Lyons.”

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Riding, “Lyons Journal.”

to oppose the project which included a demonstration on the opening day of the mosque in 1994.¹¹¹

In spite of this resistance, the project went ahead and since then the mosque has been sanctioned to slaughter animals in a way that conforms to Islamic rules concerning halal meat – an issue that, along with the headscarf affair, was quite newsworthy issue at that time.¹¹² Moreover, protests against the mosque and complaints to the municipality about the mosque have subsided.¹¹³

Resource mobilisation theory cannot be ruled out in the case of the Lyons mosque because the strategy of the group that proposed the successful mosque project is difficult to determine due to the limited data available. However, the group did make clear concessions on the building plans which include having a smaller minaret and a call to prayer that is only audible inside the building.¹¹⁴ With respect to the political orientation of the party in power that approved the project, it was a centre right party and therefore conforms to my expectation with respect to opportunity structure theory.

6.1.3 Case Study: France, Conclusion

Due to the limited data available for France, I cannot subject my sample mosque projects in France to a thorough test. This means that my results for the French case study are inconclusive. However, there is some evidence in the case of Marseille to suggest that the authorities favour a project that has a broader scope over one that is strictly religious. Furthermore, the parties in power at the local level that supported the project were first from a left-wing party, then from a centre right party, which means

¹¹¹ Nicholas Powell, “Islamic debate returns to haunt French” *The Herald* (Glasgow), 24 September 1994.

¹¹² Mary Dejevsky, “French Muslims in Battle for Islam; Mosques at centre of power struggle,” *Independent* (London) 21 August 1996.

¹¹³ William Drozdiak, “In Lyon, a Mosque of reconciliation,” *Washington Post*, 5 March 1995.

¹¹⁴ Riding, “Lyons Journal.”

there is evidence to suggest that opportunity structure as I have theorised it may explain the outcome of the Marseille project. Similarly, in the case of the Lyons project, I could not determine the strategy of the group that proposed the mosque. However, the party in power was a centrist one and the mayor, in particular, seemed to have a sympathetic attitude toward immigrants based on what little data is available.

6.2 Case Study: Britain

Unlike in the French capital, plans to erect a central mosque in London in the early 20th Century generated considerable discussion about the place of Islam in Great Britain, an officially Christian Country.¹¹⁵ Indeed, the project was so controversial that even after then Prime Minister Winston Churchill suggested in 1940 that the national government donate funds for the project, there remained vocal opposition from Christian groups and the project was put on hold until after the war.¹¹⁶ The London Central Mosque did not open until 1976 although building continued for the next two years.¹¹⁷ By 1980, the difficulties the mosque encountered in terms of operations were no longer the result of the community at large. Rather, they were the result of internal disputes between the parishioners and the Director.

In spite of this early controversy concerning the place of Islam in a Christian country, Britain was until recently the site of far fewer controversies over mosque building projects than France for example. However, as with the other three case study states considered here, September 11th marked a gradual shift in policy direction toward

¹¹⁵ A.L. Tabawi, "History of the London Central Mosque and the Islamic Cultural Centre 1910-1980," *Die Welt des Islams* 21, no. ¼ (1981): 195.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 201.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 206.

religious accommodation for Muslims. The difference is that in France it led to a stronger resolve – ostensibly, anyway – on the part of the national government to assist Muslims in securing prayer space. In the UK the policy shift went the other direction. Whereas previously the government had not subjected mosques to very much scrutiny, particularly once they were operating, today is this changing and hundreds of mosques across Britain are now under surveillance on suspicion of promoting extremism.¹¹⁸

As with all European countries, the actual definition of a mosque is contested and there is no absolute distinction between a mosque and a prayer room. This means that the estimates of how many actual mosques exist in Britain is unclear. However, most estimates are around 1600.¹¹⁹ I will consider two of these: The York Road Mosque in Bradford Mosque and the Newham Mega Mosque in a suburb of London.

6.2.1 Bradford York Road Mosque

There are actually many mosques and prayer rooms in Bradford, at least forty-four. The city has a population of roughly 300,000.¹²⁰ Of this total, the Muslim population represents approximately 75,000 and of these, most are of Pakistani ethnic origins.¹²¹ Bradford is perhaps most notable for being the main site of the riots that occurred in response to the Rushdie Affair

The author of the main study I used for the data on the York Road Mosque notes that between January of 1999 and May of 2003 only four objections to mosque building projects were raised in council meetings, each of which was resolved quickly and without

¹¹⁸ Sean McLoughlin, “Mosques and the Public Space: Conflict and Cooperation in Bradford” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31” no. 6 (2005): 1046, 1063.

¹¹⁹ Ruth Gledhill, “Thousands of churches face closure in ten years” *The Times* (London), 10 February 2007.

¹²⁰ McLoughlin, “Mosques and the Public Space,” 1046.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

controversy. Indeed, it seems the greatest barriers to most mosque building projects in this city are the result of conflicts between Muslims groups and not between Muslims and the local government or the wider community.¹²²

The building that now houses the York Road Mosque was, in 1985, an Anglican church with a shrinking parish. The vicar of that church offered it out to Muslims first on a limited use basis.¹²³ By 1989, having realised that the church was simply not viable anymore, the vicar decided to sell the building offering the Muslim organisation that was already using the space the right of first refusal.¹²⁴ I was unable to determine what strategy the Muslim group used in their efforts to get permission to officially convert the church to a mosque. The Bradford City Council was dominated by the right of centre Conservative Party at this time¹²⁵. The council also had a Conservative mayor, Eric Pickles, who, during the Rushdie affair, was somewhat sympathetic to the Muslim outrage over the controversial book *The Satanic Verses*.¹²⁶ However, no objections were raised by city council and, in fact, since the mosque has been in operation, it has successfully secured funds for some of the activities that are community-based services such as a homework club for teenagers, day care for senior citizens, and information technology facilities.¹²⁷ It is worth noting that some of this funding may have been granted to the York Road Mosque by the left of centre Labour Party, which took over the Bradford City Council in 1990.¹²⁸ Furthermore, because this project did not involve a

¹²² Ibid., 1051.

¹²³ Ibid., 1060.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ David Thompson, "Bradford Plans First Inner-City 'Magnet' Schools" *Financial Times* (London), 22 June 1989.

¹²⁶ Richard Conrad Glover, "Book Feud Turns Town into Testing Ground for Race Relations," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 February 1989.

¹²⁷ McLoughlin, "Mosques and the Public Space," 1062.

¹²⁸ "Labour Snatch Bradford," *Press Association*., 4 May 1990.

new building, but a building conversion, there was perhaps a greater likelihood from the beginning that the project would be approved. Nevertheless, the fact that the council did not object, and that the mosque provided additional services to the community suggests that resource mobilisation theory can better explain the outcome of the York Road Mosque.

6.2.2 Newham Mega-Mosque

Strategy and partisanship are difficult to discern in the case of the Newham mosque. The building is certainly intended to be more than just a house of worship as the plans include an Islamic garden, which a spokesperson for the mosque claims would be open to all visitors regardless of their religion.¹²⁹ First proposed in 2001, the plans also include a madrassah (religious school) which would provide instruction to children.¹³⁰ However, beyond the actual services the mosque would provide, the architectural plans are extremely ambitious and at one point the building was slated to hold up to 70,000 parishioners.¹³¹ This number has been scaled back to a more modest (though still significant) 12,000.¹³² Nevertheless, the sheer scale of the project and the fact that there is a garden planned suggest that the strategy of the project backers is not, strictly speaking, religious.

The author of a study on the York Road Mosque in Bradford argues that one of the reasons mosques in general in Bradford have been erected or converted from other buildings without controversy or resistance from the council is because of the high concentration of Muslims in that city. However, in Newham, a suburb of London, the

¹²⁹ Fiona Barton, "Editorial," *The Daily Mail* (London), 16 November 2006.

¹³⁰ "Newham gets giant mosque," *The Evening Standard*, 18 October 2001.

¹³¹ Jamie Doward, "Mega-mosque falls afoul of planning laws," *Observer* (London), 5 November 2007.

¹³² "Constructing Conflict: The Politics of Mosque Building," *Economist*, 1 September 2007.

fact that roughly twenty five percent of the population is Muslim may turn out to be the reason that a mosque is *not* built there.

The Newham “mega-mosque” project is one of the most controversial building projects in Britain in recent history. One of the major points of contention is the fact that the proposed mega-mosque project belongs to a group called Tablighi Jamaat which is often accused of having links to fundamentalist terror groups both in Britain and overseas. Tablighi Jamaat denies this association.¹³³ However, there is considerable evidence to suggest that the organisation does promote fundamentalist views that are hostile toward Christians, Jews and Western values in general. For example, *The Times* (London) notes how “one leading advocate” described the purpose of the organisation as to “rescue the ummah (the global Muslim community) from the culture and civilisation of the Jews, the Christians and (other) enemies of Islam. [to] create such hatred for their ways as human beings have for urine and excreta”.¹³⁴ This is the main issue that has been raised by opponents of the mosque as a reason that the project must not be realised.

In an ironic twist, many of the people who oppose the mosque are themselves Muslim, though of a more moderate orientation, while the government supports the project in spite of the objections that have been raised by the Muslims who oppose the project. They have organised against the project in concert with The Christian People’s Alliance.¹³⁵ In spite of the alarming potential that the group proposing the mosque has terrorist affiliations, the London Thames Gateway Unitary Development Corporation an unelected quasi autonomous non-governmental organisation formed for the purpose of

¹³³ Andrew Norfolk, “Muslim group behind ‘mega-mosque’ seeks to convert all Britain” *The Times* (London), 10 September 2007.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Nick Fagge, “Outcry over super-mosque” *The Express* (London), 19 February 2007.

regeneration, and the London Development agency, the latter of which reports to the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone all support the project.¹³⁶ The former group will actually be the group charged with making the final decision as to whether the mosque will be approved to be built or not – a fact that is also rather contentious with opponents of the project.¹³⁷ Livingstone is currently with the Labour Party, although in his previous terms in office of the Mayor of London he was an independent.¹³⁸ He has a strong pro-immigrant stance and supports outreach projects to Muslim youth.¹³⁹ Newham also has its own mayor, Sir Robin Wales, also with the Labour Party.¹⁴⁰ However, it is the London Thames Gateway Unitary Development Corporation that will ultimately determine whether the project is approved. In the case of the Newham Mega-Mosque, it is therefore unclear whether either of the theories I have suggested can explain the outcome.

6.2.3 Case Study: Britain, Conclusion

The data available on both mosques in the British case study is limited and for this reason I cannot falsify either theory. In the case of the York Road mosque, the fact that the group had a good relationship with the Anglican vicar might be considered a “resource” and therefore support resource mobilisation theory as an explanation. However, I have designated “strategy” as the relevant proxy for resource mobilisation theory and there simply is not enough data in this case to make a determination of what strategy the group proposing the mosque has used. Therefore, there is not adequate

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Barton, “Editorial.”

¹³⁸ “Labour Selects Livingstone to Run for Mayor,” *The Press Association*, 3 May 2007.

¹³⁹ Craig S. Smith, “London Keeps Unusually Low Profile,” *The International Herald Tribune*, 13 July 2005.

¹⁴⁰ “Mayoral Elections,” *Press Association Newsfile*, 5 May 2006.

evidence in support resource mobilisation theory as I have theorised it to suggest that it can explain the outcomes in either project. There was also insufficient information in both cases to rule out or confirm opportunity structure. In the case of the York Road mosque, the council in power was a right of centre party and this council approved the project. This supports opportunity structure but since the group was already using the church the council's decision to approve the conversion from church to mosque as does not carry a lot of weight. In the case of the Newham mosque the party in power is the left of centre Labour Party, but the actual decision as to whether the project will ultimately be approved is in the hands of an unelected body thus there is insufficient evidence to make a claim.

6.3 Case Study: Germany

Technically, the first mosque in Germany was erected in Berlin during World War I. It was a wooden structure built by and for Muslim prisoners- of-war and it remained standing for fewer than ten years.¹⁴¹ In 1927 a proper mosque was built in Berlin out of more resilient materials and in the same architectural style as the Taj Mahal. This second building survived World War II and even today remains in use as a mosque.

In the subsequent years, mosque building across Germany has generated a good deal of controversy and conflict. Much of the resistance to the projects has come not from the government but from the public. As in other parts of Europe, mosques have been targeted by vandals and arsonists, and protests against some mosque-building projects have attracted a contingent of fringe groups who oppose the Muslim presence in

¹⁴¹ Gerdien Jonker, "The Mevlana Mosque in Berlin-Kreuzberg: An Unsolved Conflict," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31" no. 6 (2005): 1068.

general and therefore object to all mosques. Germany was the last among the four countries under consideration in this thesis to formally acknowledge that it is a country of immigration and, unlike the other three countries in this study it had no significant colonial experience, which meant that mosques seemed much more foreign to local residents than they might have to residents of towns in Britain, France and The Netherlands.

September 11th, added to an existing suspicion of Muslims among ethnic Germans. Particularly troubling for many is the fact that two of three of the suspects in September 11th lived in Hamburg.¹⁴² These men planned the attacks without ever raising suspicion of the authorities. For those people who do not object to the Muslim presence, this fact may have made them slightly less tolerant. For those people who already had a problem with the growing Muslim population, this fact provided more evidence to support their already-formed opinions.

6.3.1 Cologne Ehrenfeld Mosque

Cologne has a Muslim population of 120,000 – one of the largest in any German city.¹⁴³ Cologne already has around thirty mosques but plans to build the newest one in the city's Ehrenfeld district are proving to be quite controversial¹⁴⁴. Most of the other mosques are small and out of the way and they do not feature any traditional architectural indicators of a mosque, such as domed roofs or minarets. The proposed new mosque, on the other hand, would have two minarets standing fifty-five meters high, a dome of thirty-

¹⁴² Harry de Quetteville, "The threat where the plans for 9/11 were formed," *The Daily Telegraph* (London), 6 September 2007.

¹⁴³ "Constructing Conflict: The politics of mosque-building," *The Economist*. 1 September, 2007.

¹⁴⁴ Mark Landler, "Germans Split Over a Mosque and the Role of Islam," *New York Times*, 5 July 2007.

five meters, and the building itself would be able to accommodate up to 2000 worshippers.¹⁴⁵ It would replace a mosque in Mannheim as Germany's largest.

The Ehrefeld mosque was first proposed in 2001 and has the support of city council, including all of the major parties.¹⁴⁶ However, the Christian Democratic Union, (CDU) a centre-right party to which Mayor Fritz Schramma belongs, has requested that the dimensions of the project are scaled back, specifically, that the minarets are smaller.¹⁴⁷ The issue of immigration is contested within the CDU and Schramma himself has made comments that are sympathetic to Muslims but also somewhat cynical. For example, he was quoted as saying "For me, it is self-evident that the Muslims need to have a prestigious place of worship, but it bothers me when people have lived here for 35 years and they don't speak a single word of German."¹⁴⁸ The Turkish Islamic Union for the Institution of Religion (DITIB), the organisation proposing the mosque, has agreed to do scale back. In terms of the strategy employed by this group as a way of ensuring the project would be built, they have committed to open the mosque up for cultural events.¹⁴⁹ However, I could not determine at what point in the process the DTIB made this promise. In other words, whether it was in the initial application or any time before approval was granted so it is unclear if this played a role in the council's willingness to approve the project. The site where the mosque is planned to be build does currently have a small mosque there, but in addition to that it has a community centre and an office for the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs.¹⁵⁰ It seems reasonable to assume that these

¹⁴⁵ "German City Dwellers Resisting New Mosque Plans" *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, July 18, 2007

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Landler, "Germans Split."

¹⁴⁹ "German City-Dwellers."

¹⁵⁰ Landler, "Germans Split."

non-religious functions would be included in the plans for the future mosque, although I cannot confirm this in the data.

As with the British example of the mosque in Newham, the local government has approved the project in principle. Resistance to the mosque being built is coming from the public.

6.3.2 Berlin-Kreuzberg Mevlana Mosque

The Kreuzberg district of Berlin is widely known as “Little Istanbul” because of the large Turkish population there.¹⁵¹ In fact, according to one study it is the largest Turkish town outside of Turkey.¹⁵² The Mevlana Mosque existed prior to 1999 as a small structure in the centre of town with little evidence on the outside of the building that it was, indeed, a mosque. In 1980 it had been the site of a violent protest between opposing Turkish groups that resulted in twenty minutes of hand-to-hand combat and one fatality – a young man who bled to death en route to the hospital from injuries incurred in the battle.¹⁵³ The two parties involved were the Milli Gorus, which ran the mosque and left-wing Turks who opposed the “Islamist political involvement” of the Milli Gorus.¹⁵⁴ On this particular day the Milli Gorus group was demonstrating outside the mosque as an expression of solidarity with Muslims in Afghanistan, which had recently been invaded by the Soviet Union. This battle, though it happened almost thirty years ago, remains a strong memory for all of the residents of Kreuzberg and has arguably influenced the subsequent events relating to the proposed new mosque building project on and around

¹⁵¹ “Resentment grows as German Islam emerges from the shadows,” *The Irish Times* 5 July 2006.

¹⁵² Jonker, “The Mevlana Mosque,” 1070.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1071.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

the original site of the Mevlana mosque.¹⁵⁵ This is especially true among the Turkish groups since all of the people who were in leadership positions at the time of the incident remain in those positions today.¹⁵⁶ For the rest of the population, the incident simply added to the feelings of suspicion and fear they had with respect to the growing Muslim presence in the city.

The strategy of the group seeking to build the mosque seemed to change from 1999 to 2006 as did the party in power at the local level. Members of the foundation behind the project to build the new Mevlana mosque purchased a plot of land adjacent to the old site for 1.5 million euros.¹⁵⁷ However, they later discovered they had paid twice the value of the land and they blamed the municipal government for their misfortune; even though they had purchased the land from a private seller who had increased the price on his own and in contravention of the municipal by-laws.¹⁵⁸ They initiated a lawsuit against the municipal government which is still pending. The municipal government for its part denied liability and essentially blamed the foundation for not speaking to them first since they offered a free service to advise on such matters.¹⁵⁹ In spite of the outstanding lawsuit, the initial proposal for the new Mevlana mosque was submitted to the municipal council in 2000. At this time, Berlin was run by a coalition government that included a mayor from the centre-right party The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and a centre left partner the Social Democratic Party (SPD). The proposal was approved in principal, contingent upon the final building plans. However, when members of the foundation realised that the community who raised the funds for the

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 1072.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 1071.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 1072.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 1073.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

project and who would ultimately be served by the Mevlana mosque was very unhappy about the small scale of the project in relation to the massive sum they had paid to acquire the land, the foundation decided to amend their initial proposal. This second submission called for the old structure to be razed and a new building to be erected with dimensions of 3500m².¹⁶⁰

Since the initial proposal called for a building with considerably smaller, 2000m² to be exact, and did not call for the destruction of the existing building, the municipal government withdrew its approval, noting several legitimate ways that the new plan did not conform to building codes and in addition made complaints about the aesthetics and size of the proposed structure.¹⁶¹ When the foundation submitted a third proposal, this time with plans to include more storeys and a shopping mall on the lower level, the municipality made an accusation that is common in mosque building conflicts, that the Muslims were attempting to build a parallel society.¹⁶² The municipality stated that while it had no objection to having cultural and social services run out of the mosque, a commercial enterprise was not acceptable.¹⁶³ However, the municipal council made a point of stating that it was not opposed to a mixed-use structure that included religious service. Their main objection was that the alternate use being proposed was commercial which was not permitted by existing zoning regulations.¹⁶⁴

Soon after this occurred there was a banking scandal that implicated then Mayor Eberhard Diepgen of the CDU.¹⁶⁵ As an interim measure, the SPD formed a coalition

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 1075.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 1074.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ “Renamed Communist Party Gains Foothold,” *Washington Times*, 31 August 2001.

with the Green Party and called elections for October 2001. In January of 2002 a new coalition government was formed, this time between the SPD and the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) formerly the Communist Party that ruled East Berlin. However, it is not clear that this change in government influenced the outcome. At the time the main study I used for the data on this project was published, this mosque remained a project.

6.3.3 Case Study: Germany, Conclusion

The data for the German case study is limited and therefore the conclusions that can be drawn from them are also limited. The Cologne case contains more evidence in support of resource mobilisation since the group proposing the mosque has agreed to open the mosque up to the public for “cultural events”. Opportunity structure theory as I have theorised it does not explain why the project, though not completed, has been supported by the municipal authorities since it is a centre right party in power there. In the case of the Kreuzberg mosque, the party in power changed from a left-wing and centre right coalition, which is the original party to approve the project before the plan changed. The strategy of the group behind the mosque in Kreuzberg does not appear to have been based solely on promoting the non-religious functions of the mosque. However, the non religious services they had in mind were not acceptable to council and, in part, proved to be an obstacle. Therefore, the results of the German case study are inconclusive.

6.4 Case Study: The Netherlands

The first mosque in the Netherlands was built in The Hague in the 1950s, much later than the other three states under consideration in this thesis.¹⁶⁶ At that time the president of the International Court of Justice, located in The Hague, was Zarfullah Khan, a Pakistani national.¹⁶⁷ It was not until the 1970s that more mosques began to appear throughout the country which were mostly converted from structures built originally for other purposes. It was another two decades before Muslims across the country started building new mosques to accommodate their growing numbers. For the most part, their efforts were met with little resistance from the municipality and public opposition was also limited. Conflicts that did arise often centred on architectural features of the project as opposed to the mosque in principle and these architectural details were negotiable.

Since September 11th, Dutch attitudes towards Muslims have become less tolerant.¹⁶⁸ Whereas the Netherlands was once considered a haven for immigrants and asylum seekers, today the political landscape is changing. Mainstream parties have become more openly critical of Muslims, which used to be considered politically incorrect. Indeed, before the far-right politician Pim Fortuyn came on the scene in 1999, nobody was making those kinds of statements at all – at least not publicly. Today, even though Mr. Fortuyn is dead, his party has found considerable support among the voters and his ideas have crept into the political platforms of the mainstream parties, a development that would have been unthinkable only a few years ago.¹⁶⁹ All of this was further exacerbated by the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh in 2004. Van

¹⁶⁶ Henriette Boas, "Islam Takes Root in Holland," *Jerusalem Post*, 11 January 1991.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ "The Dutch Transformation," *The Toronto Star* 1 October 2004.

¹⁶⁹ Simon Kuper, "Gone Dutch," *Financial Times* (London), 26 August 2006.

Gogh made a film that was critical of Islam and he was stabbed to death on the street by a Muslim who claimed it was an act of retribution. This event in particular has had a profound effect on Dutch attitudes toward Muslims. Since Van Gogh's murder the number of attacks against mosques has risen dramatically.¹⁷⁰ The data is not yet available to fully test this idea, scholars who study mosque building in the Netherlands suggest that it will only continue to become more difficult for them.

6.4.1 Driebergen Mosque

Driebergen is a small town close to Utrecht with a non-Western population of less than 1000 out of a total of 19,000.¹⁷¹ In 2006, the time the source of the information for this section was published, the conflict arising from a mosque building project in this town was still unresolved. A 2004 court order halted the construction of the mosque.¹⁷² In this case, I was not able to determine the political orientation of the party in power in the case of Driebergen.

The Muslims in Driebergen were using a former school house for worship, as well as other non-religious activities since 1983.¹⁷³ The school house was located on a piece of land at the edge of a forest and in 1995 the building was removed in keeping with a plan that had been in place for some time.¹⁷⁴ The municipality offered the Muslims who used the space another temporary location but within a year the Muslims returned to the same location where the municipality had erected two temporary structures to serve the Muslims' needs whilst they looked for another location to build something permanent.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Nico Landman and Wendy Wessels, "The Visibility of Mosques in Dutch Towns," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 31" no. 6 (2005): 1132.

¹⁷² Ibid., 1127.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 1131.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

The major obstacle for the Muslims was that this particular plot of land was not zoned for a mosque but the municipality managed to obtain an exemption for the group.¹⁷⁶ Thus, the strategy of the Muslim group seems to have been to align itself with the municipality in seeking to resolve the problem of a lack of adequate space to pray.

In the Netherlands people have the opportunity to raise objections to building projects and in this case a group of citizens that opposed the municipal exemption for the temporary mosque challenged it in court in 1999 on the basis that the plans could hardly be considered temporary when the Muslims had no other plans to build a mosque at another site.¹⁷⁷ The opponents of the project were successful and when a higher court reinforced the first court's findings and declared that the structures had to be moved. The municipality moved the prefab buildings by a few metres and by the time the opponents challenged the municipality a second time, plans to build a permanent mosque on the same site were in place.¹⁷⁸ The Muslims, having made numerous concessions on the project such as removing minarets and room for commercial space and a mortuary and, agreeing to construct the mosque far back from the road to make it less visible, had their building approved for the site.¹⁷⁹ This time the municipality won the court case and by 2004 construction had started. However, opponents launched another legal action and the building was halted.¹⁸⁰ The final outcome of this project is unknown.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 1131.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 1132.

6.4.2 Utrecht Anwar-e-Quba Mosque

Utrecht is a city of 250,000 with a Muslim population of close to 40,000.¹⁸¹ By the 1990s there were already several prominent mosques in Utrecht. However, the Muslim group responsible for the Anwar-e-Quba mosque project was using a private residence for their worship and in 1990 decided to buy a plot of land in the same area to build an actual mosque.¹⁸² Their initial search led them to a site that people already in the neighbourhood objected to them using. Even though the municipality supported their choice, the Muslims, not wanting to get into a legal battle, abandoned plans for that location and sought additional help from the municipality to find a better site.¹⁸³

In 1995 the Muslim group found a location they liked. According to a new zoning plan that had not yet been approved, this particular plot of land was zoned for religious purposes but because that zoning plan had not been approved, members of the public would have the opportunity to register opposition to the project by registering objections to the zoning plan in general.¹⁸⁴ Also, the actual building plans of the mosque would still have to be approved by the town planning committee which by 1998, they still had not been.¹⁸⁵ The town council was particularly concerned with the aesthetics of the mosque, since it would be built in an area of high visibility. They wanted it to be more contemporary, have a larger dome, and be more integrated with the neighbourhood. Once the architect incorporated these changes to the plan it was approved and made

¹⁸¹ “Some issues too sensitive for Dutch electors,” *The Irish Times*, 22 November, 2006.

¹⁸² Landman and Wessels, “The Visibility of Mosques in Dutch Towns,” 1132.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1133.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

public in 2000.¹⁸⁶ I was not able to determine the political orientation of the party in power.

Once the plans were made public people were invited to raise their objections at a public hearing. However, what few objections were registered did not change the municipality's decision to grant permission for the mosque and none of the complainants filed appeals.¹⁸⁷ The result was that in 2002 the Anwar-e-Quba mosque was built.¹⁸⁸

6.4.3 Case Study: The Netherlands, Conclusion

In the case study of the Netherlands I was not able to observe a clear strategy in either the Driebergen or the Utrecht mosque and can therefore not draw any conclusion about whether or not it is this theory that can explain the outcome in either case. Nor was I able to make a clear determination about the political orientation of the parties in power. However, the main study I consulted for the data on the mosque building projects in both Driebergen and Utrecht suggests that the actors involved on behalf of the municipality “were not motivated by a strong sympathy for Muslims” and the study goes on to say that the municipalities in both cases accepted “the Muslim claim that they needed a place for their religious activities as a legitimate and reasonable one, and were prepared to include these claims in town planning activities.”¹⁸⁹ Thus it does not appear that opportunity structure theory as I have theorised it can explain the outcome of these two cases.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 1135.

7. CONCLUSION

The news media in Western Europe has covered stories on individual mosque building projects at the centre of controversy for several decades now, but rarely has this coverage linked these individual cases to larger themes such as citizenship and immigration, identity and belonging, and religious accommodation of minority groups. Furthermore, it is only in the last few years that academic scholarship has started to contemplate what mosque building projects can reveal about these larger themes. From the limited information that is available I was unable to falsify either of the theories I have proposed as possible explanations for why some projects are successful while others are not. The table below summarises the results of my case studies and these results suggest that neither resource mobilisation theory nor opportunity structure theory as I have conceived them can adequately explain the variation. However, between the two theories, resource mobilisation has greater explanatory power than opportunity structure.

Table 1. Summary of Case Studies

Country	Case Study	Evidence in support of Resource Mobilisation Theory?	Evidence in support of Opportunity Structure Theory?	Outcome
Britain	Bradford	Preliminary evidence, more information required	Definite evidence	Successful
	Newham	Preliminary evidence, more information required	Not enough information	In Planning
France	Marseille	Definite evidence	No evidence	In Litigation
	Lyons	Preliminary evidence, more information required	Definite evidence	Successful
Germany	Cologne	Preliminary evidence, more information required	Definite evidence	In Planning
	Kreuzberg	Definite evidence	Definite evidence	Incomplete
Netherlands	Driebergen	Preliminary evidence, more information required	No evidence	Successful
	Utrecht	Not enough information	No evidence	Successful

While the strategy of the group proposing the mosque definitely has some explanatory power in terms of my research question, in the course of researching this thesis I noted several additional factors that appear to influence project outcomes but that were not captured in either of the theories I tested. For instance, a lack of internal cohesion in the Muslim community associated with a proposed mosque seems to have played a key role in stalling some of these projects and, in some cases, preventing them from being built at all. Similarly, there is some evidence to suggest that how connected Muslim leaders are to other political elites, and to what extent those Muslim leaders appear to be committed to 'European' values makes a difference in terms of project outcomes. Finally, financial capital – how much money a group can raise from non-foreign sources – appears to be an increasingly important determinate of how likely a Muslim group will be successful in terms of getting a proposed mosque built. All three of these factors fall within the scope of resource mobilisation theory and although they did not form part of my own theoretical framework, they would absolutely be worthwhile areas to consider in any future research on this topic.

In short, as the Muslim populations continue to grow in Western Europe and as more Muslims become European citizens they will no doubt begin to make more demands for religious accommodation. Mosques now form a permanent part of the physical and political landscape of Western Europe and the extent to which these buildings generate controversy will depend in large part on how Muslims and the states where they live can negotiate their relationship and settle the larger questions about identity and belonging.

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