

REVIEW ESSAY

Individualization and Religious Authority in Western European Islam

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Introduction

In the literature on Western Europe's Muslim communities,¹ the question of whether Muslim beliefs and practices are transforming (or not) in a historically new environment and, one hastens to add, in a new global setting, has become a central issue in the course of the last decade or so. In an often highly politicized environment where transformation continues to be measured by the criteria of compatibility with supposedly European values, interest in this question has notably stimulated an ongoing debate about the structure of religious life inside Europe's Muslim populations. The question is one of the degree of individualization characteristic of Muslim religiosity, and the usefulness of a study of Muslim institutions which have been rapidly increasing in number in almost all the countries of Europe.² Put differently, two interrelated questions are whether Muslims are 'Europeanizing' *through* individualization, and whether the claims made by Islamic groups and organizations nevertheless need to be taken into account by public actors on the basis that these groups do represent the views of 'ordinary' believers.

While a substantial number of important studies have until recently identified individualization of religious beliefs as the major development in Europe's Muslim communities, today a growing number of authors have become interested in the thorny issue of religious authority in Islam and have attempted to examine its modulation in the Western European context. Although these two strands of scholarly work often address similar questions and partly overlap in their concerns, direct engagement between them has been until now rather limited and the apogee of the scholarly debate still seems to lie ahead. Substantial differences in the extent and orientation of theorizing by scholars participating in the debate, and the usual obstacles posed by disciplinary boundaries, are only two reasons

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for this situation. In the limited space available here, this article will provide a broad survey of the current literature. The following discussion of some of the key scholarly contributions aims to explore convergences and divergences with respect to the questions of individualization and religious authority and, more generally, attempts to demonstrate possible interconnections in a sometimes fragmented research field.

Individualization of Islam

In a recent article on the literature on Islam in Germany, Tezcan has pointed out that the theme of individualization has become one of the dominant key words in current research on Islam (Tezcan, 2003, p. 151). A cursory look at the literature in other European countries suffices to show that this remark is valid outside Germany too. French research in particular has produced an important number of works devoted to the study of this development (see for example Babès, 1997; Roy, 1999; Tietze, 2001). One of its main proponents in France, who has also succeeded in reaching a broad international audience, is Jocelyne Cesari. The individualization of religious beliefs is indeed central to Cesari's studies; it is one of her primary research results and it is a key argument in her engagement with public debates about Muslims in the West. In her numerous studies, the thesis of individualization is an almost symbolic manifestation of the fundamental ruptures which supposedly characterize the relationship between Muslim beliefs and practices in Europe and those in the migrants' countries of origin. It is in the West, Cesari insists, that the normative Islamic tradition transforms and dissolves as Muslim minorities settle and 'a Muslim individual' emerges (2003, p. 259). Cesari argues that the grafting of Islam into 'the French democratic environment' has set in motion a 'cultural revolution which is linked to the minority experience in a pluralist context and which introduces [Islam] . . . in these postmodern transformations which have not yet reached Muslim countries' (1998, p. 14).³ Individualization is thus described as part of a triadic development which links Muslim communities up to modern societies in the West: '[The] social adaptation process of Muslim minority groups has placed Islam within the three interrelated paradigms of secularization, individualization, and privatization, which have until recently been distinctive characteristics of Western societies' (2003, p. 260).

Does France then, after all, offer *une chance pour l'Islam*? Rather, the fact that Islam in France is individualizing is important for Cesari since it allows her to reject 'essentialist' visions of Islam which emphasize the potential conflicts related to the new Muslim presence (2003, p. 253). In her analysis, as in that of many other writers, individualized Islam thus not only becomes the keyword for naming the discontinuity which characterizes the relationship between Islam in France and Muslim practices and beliefs on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, but also supplies the central argument for proving a possible and indeed already progressing integration of Muslims into European societies.⁴

But how exactly is the term individualization used in the study of Muslim religiosity? In Cesari's writings, individualized Islam is meant to signify primarily an Islam lived in the private sphere. It is an Islam where the believer decides autonomously which elements of Islam (s)he considers to be binding or not, the principal limits to this 'free' decision-making being, according to Cesari, the constraints of endogamy and circumcision (Cesari, 1994, p. 58). While this understanding of individualization is not consensual and the concept itself is not always referred to explicitly in other publications, it is nevertheless safe to say that in many ways, Cesari's account of the transformation of Islam in the

West converges with the general results of many other studies which, broadly speaking, highlight the ongoing fragmentation of authority structures.⁵ Her insistence on the decline of the role that mosques play among the younger generations (Cesari, 1998, p. 27) echoes similar statements concerning the relative loss of influence of imams and religious institutions in general, in the studies of Frégosi (2004), Khosrokhavar (1997, pp. 103, 105), Martín Muñoz *et al.* (2003, pp. 133ff.) and Mohsen-Finan (2003, pp. 88ff.). Likewise, her description of the ‘new Islamic spaces’ (1998, p. 99), i.e. new types of Islamic associations and religious communitarization, can be supported by numerous other studies dealing with new Islamic elites, both feminine and masculine, in their relationship to ‘second-generation’ Muslims (see for example Geaves, 1996; Frégosi, 1999, 2000, 2004; Klinkhammer, 2000; Bouzar, 2001; Jonker, 2003; van Bruinessen, 2003). More generally, one notes that Cesari’s theme of the declining influence of ‘classical’ Islamic institutions (mosques, imams, etc.) as a result of the profound generational changes has by now become an almost unquestioned truth in research on Western European Islam.

Having said this, important divergences in the current research can be discerned when it comes to identifying the outcome of these interrelated processes. Briefly put, we find two opposing positions: one sees individualization and/or the fragmentation of religious authority as leading to the liberalization of Islam, while the other considers that in spite of individualization and the diversification of authority structures, the current situation is characterized by a relative stability of dogma and, in any case, not by a liberalization of Islam.

The former position is defended by Peter Mandaville, among others, whose wide-ranging study examines the transformations of politics and, more particularly, political Islam in the post-national era. Contrary to Cesari, Mandaville identifies as the principal force of change not ‘Europe’ or the ‘West’, but the effects of travel and migration⁶ and, to a lesser extent, the use of new media. In his account, the transformation of Islam comes about in a translocal space, ‘in which the political community of the host society is not accepted or embraced (in terms of configuring one’s political identity) but, crucially, neither is that of the cultural “point of origin”, nor its Islam’ (Mandaville, 2001, p. 105).⁷ In this setting, Mandaville discerns a trend, whose scope he is cautious not to overestimate (2003, p. 141), towards the emergence of ‘critical Islam’, i.e. ‘a particular orientation towards Islam, one that is marked, above all, by a willingness to historicize the normative import of particular religious interpretations’ (2003, p. 130). The emergence of this critical Islam is in part a reaction to the heightened intra-Islamic pluralism of the diaspora, which is increasingly valorized by Muslims in Europe. Following other authors, Mandaville also considers that this development is driven primarily by the young British-born generations who ‘are largely dissatisfied with the Islam of their parents’ (2001, p. 121). Highly sceptical about the ability of the *‘ulama’* to rearticulate the Islamic tradition in the vernacular language, youth associations are emerging as new places of transmission and reflection on Islamic knowledge (2001, p. 124).⁸

A somewhat similar position is defended by the German anthropologist Werner Schiffauer. In his landmark study on the Kaplan community in Germany (Schiffauer, 2000), he also extensively examines the changing attitudes and approaches to Islam within Germany’s Turkish communities. In this very nuanced analysis, Schiffauer departs from conventional models of generational change. The new understandings of Islam to be found among young Muslims are, as he shows, not entirely disconnected

from the transformations that can be observed among primo-migrants.⁹ Rather, Schiffauer points out that the first-generation migrants had already (to a certain degree) realized a conscious (re)appropriation of the Islamic tradition, and this trend was to become ever more important in the following generation(s) (Schiffauer, n.d.). Much like Mandaville, Schiffauer insists that the ‘radically anti-traditionalist aspect’ of the Kaplan movement and, more generally, of fundamentalist projects that posit a return to the origins, have an important critical potential and, moreover, ‘contain an awareness and an admission of relativity’ (Schiffauer, n.d.). Seeing the development of Islamic fundamentalism as following that of fundamentalism in general, Schiffauer recognizes the possible totalitarian outcomes of Islamic fundamentalism, but strongly pleads for its democratizing potential to be taken into account too, and points to the increasing number of Muslim voices demanding an intellectual space open for critical engagement.

While the question of whether the fragmentation of religious authority is conducive to liberalization will ultimately be decided by future developments (for a comparative discussion of developments in the Islamic world with the Catholic *aggiornamento*, see Casanova, 2001), other studies suggest that it might be beneficial to complicate and reformulate this question. A particularly important contribution is made in this respect by Olivier Roy, author of a number of influential studies that deal with developments in the wider Islamic world including Western Europe (see notably Roy, 1992, 2002). Roy has developed since the 1990s a highly elaborated defence of the thesis of the individualization of Islam. In his account, the main factor underlying this process, which, according to him, is not at all specific to the ‘West’, is the loss of Islam’s social plausibility, resulting in a heightening of the need for the individual believer to reflect on his religion. Individualization, in Roy’s terminology, refers primarily and almost exclusively to a democratization of the religious sphere and not to any significant changes in dogma.¹⁰ In fact, he stresses that the currently observable ‘sectarisme’ is grounded in the believer’s concrete choices and not in any new religious concepts (Roy, 2002, p. 93). It is precisely the fact that individualized Islam only rarely brings forth a ‘critical discourse’ and instead remains tightly linked to the ‘dogmatic affirmation of immutable principles’ (*ibid.*, p. 90) which, according to him, constitutes the main difference from developments in Western Christianity (*ibid.*, p. 92).¹¹

One might wish that Roy had taken into account more thoroughly the numerous empirical studies which have argued that far-reaching changes are taking place in the religiosity of young Muslims (see for example Babès, 1997; Klinkhammer, 2000; Tietze, 2001; Nökel, 2002; and cf. Jacobson, 1998; Küçükcan, 1999). Roy’s observations are nevertheless important in two respects. First, the distinction which is drawn here between different types of individualization merits emphasis in order to sharpen current discussions on Islam in Western Europe: Roy does observe an institutional deregulation and a fragmentation of authority structures, which can be traced back to at least the mid-nineteenth century, but he rejects the thesis that this leads, almost inevitably, to more profound types of individualization, such as bricolage or the exclusive autovalidation of an individual’s beliefs. One could object to this argument by pointing out that there is a certain imbalance between the remarkably strong urge by broad strata within Muslim societies to participate in the religious sphere on the one hand and the postulated stability of definitions of Islam on the other; this indeed raises the question of why people want to become religious actors in the first place. However, this seeming tension only heightens the interest of exploring how we can usefully describe the correlation between the institutional deregulation of

Islam and/or the fragmentation of religious authority on the one hand, and changes in the understanding of Islam on the other. One might add that it is probably at this point that the benefits of more focused case studies on the functioning of Islamic institutions and their relationship to believers would come to full fruition.

Islam as Discursive Tradition

While it is impossible here to decide the question of whether or not a ‘critical’ or ‘liberal’ Islam is emerging in Europe, one could ask which factors might limit religious change and make Islamic dogmas continue to prevail in the age of modernity. A particularly interesting approach which can also be used to elucidate this question has been presented by Schirin Amir-Moazami and Armando Salvatore (2003). Contrary to the mainstream of current research, Amir-Moazami & Salvatore do not see current developments among young Muslims as evidence for processes of reflexive individualization, but propose to explain them with reference and in relative continuity to the reformist discourses as they were developed in the late nineteenth century in the Islamic world. Crucial to their argument is the concept of tradition as defined by Asad (1986) and MacIntyre (1981). In their reading of this concept, it is particularly the aspiration to coherence of Islamic traditions (Asad, 1986, pp. 16ff.) and the transformation of tradition through ‘internal interventions’ (Amir-Moazami & Salvatore, 2003, pp. 53, 71) that are highlighted. In the study of Islam in Europe, the need to conceptualize in some way the relationship of current Islamic practices and beliefs to other temporal and spatial settings in which Muslims have lived, is clearly a desideratum. The concept of tradition can, as Amir-Moazami & Salvatore convincingly show, also respond to this need.

Amir-Moazami & Salvatore’s approach successfully calls into question the emplotment strategy which has over the last decade become normative for a great number of studies on Europe’s Muslims. This plot line is organicist and starts with the ‘transplantation’ of Islam to Europe through the first large-scale migration movements after World War II. After the ‘true’ establishment of Islam inside Europe, through a demographic renewal and the coming-of-age of a ‘second generation’ of Muslims, the way is paved for the emergence of a Europe-compatible Islam characterized more often than not as an individualized religiosity.¹² Amir-Moazami & Salvatore complicate this narrative, and not only do they relocate its beginning, but they also alter the whole story—its actors and causality—through the introduction of the concept of tradition. By considering Muslim religiosity as taking shape inside a discursive tradition, an alternative perspective to individualization is offered for understanding processes of change in Islam. At the same time, this approach also provides an analytical frame within which to explore the role of religious authorities as the often necessary mediators of this tradition.¹³

Amir-Moazami & Salvatore’s article also prompts us to reflect on the criteria by which we actually measure individualization in Islam. Put differently: what is the Islamic *doxa* from which individualizing Islam departs? And, from a different perspective and perhaps not less important, how can we distinguish between ‘internal interventions’ in the tradition of Islam on the one hand and individualized Islam on the other? While it is more than doubtful that these questions can be answered in a straightforward way, they do have the merit of making explicit a significant problem in uses of theories of individualization in the Islamic context (as well as underlining the need to sharpen our use of the concept of tradition). As Tezcan has pointed out (2003, pp. 256ff.), the evidence presented in favour

of theses of individualization and/or modernization of Islam is sometimes far from being conclusive. Rather, this evidence is in need of being analysed by taking more into account the great diversity of modes in which Islam has been and continues to be expressed and lived. This not only underlines the need to complicate the concept of individualization, but also shows the importance of not conceiving of such processes as something taking place in separation from institutionalized Islam. Indeed, as Hervieu-Léger reminds us, theology changes in interaction with the spread of eclectic beliefs ‘in order to restore its cultural credibility in a secular environment’ (1999, pp. 48ff.). This line of thinking, it seems, could be fruitfully extended to the study of Islam as well.

While much thus recommends Asad’s concept,¹⁴ it should also be pointed out that the question of how Islamic traditions (and their transmission) are related to specific forms of religious authority is not dealt with. This makes the use of this concept more difficult, to say the least, and this fact might be reflected somewhat in Amir-Moazami & Salvatore’s study where we find that little or no attention is paid to either religious institutions, media or individual actors who busy themselves with the transmission and interpretation of Islam. The power structures inside which the believer articulates his or her understanding of Islam—in other words: the structures that make the Islamic tradition endure—are only partially analysed. In order to overcome this problem, it might have been interesting to draw also on the results of other studies on institutionalized Islam and community building among Muslims in France.

On a different note one might also wish that in Amir-Moazami & Salvatore’s study, as well as elsewhere, more consideration were given to the social dimension of the reform of tradition. In the context of the individualization debate, Hervieu-Léger has reminded us that when studying individualization and the bricolage of beliefs, one needs to be attentive to the fact that individuals have differing competences/capacities—according to class, gender, generation or, more generally, their socialization—to engage in the eclectic construction of ‘their’ belief (*compétences bricoleuses*) (1999, pp. 48, 69ff.) and this remark also seems to hold true for any engagement with the Islamic tradition. This not only points us, again, to the difficulty of separating the study of religious individualization from that of institutions of religious education, Islamic media and, broadly speaking, structures of religious authority (see also *ibid.*, p. 70), but it also raises another question, namely: who—apart from the upwardly mobile educated Muslims who are the usual suspects in most empirical studies on the market—is individualizing his or her religious beliefs (and how)?¹⁵ And how can we describe the profile of persons attracted by reformist groups in Europe?¹⁶ An exploration into the social dimension of the current processes of transformation of Islam might not only provide a corrective to an obvious bias underlying many of today’s studies, but also lead us to enlarge our understanding of the diversity of the ongoing transformations in Europe’s Muslim communities. Mahmood has demonstrated for Egypt that an examination of how ‘hierarchies of class, gender and generation’ (2005, p. 82) influence readings of Islam is highly relevant for our understanding of religious authority, and similar research seems entirely feasible in Europe as well.

Studies on Muslim Religious Authorities in Europe

Over the last few years an increasing number of studies have attempted a reading of developments in Europe’s Muslim communities with a focus on the question of religious authority. A cursory survey of this literature first of all indicates that, somewhat

paradoxically, given the often acclaimed weakness of institutionalized religious authorities in Islam, most of these studies concentrate on specific types of religious actors and institutions, particularly on imams, but increasingly also on muftis, preachers and intellectuals. While this actor-centred approach—and, more importantly, the underlying simple equation of religious authority with leadership—have proven their worth in many studies (and could be considered as indispensable to a certain point), one wonders if a more resolutely supra-individual perspective might not also be fruitful.

Van Koningsveld & Tahtah thus study the fatwas of prominent Dutch–Moroccan imam el-Moumni (1998), Caeiro (2004, forthcoming) examines a European institution of legal advice (European Council of Fatwa and Research), and Shah-Kazemi the Islamic Shariah Council in the UK (2001). An important number of studies approach the role of imams in Western Europe from different perspectives. Shadid & van Koningsveld (1995, 1997, 1999; see also 2002) and Landman (1992, 1997)¹⁷ offer sophisticated studies of the Dutch situation, Boender & Kanmaz (2002) examine in a comparative perspective the respective functions of imams and Islam teachers in the Netherlands and Belgium, Lewis (2004) analyses developments among British imams of the Deobandi tradition,¹⁸ and Kroissenbrunner's study deals with the role and profile of Turkish imams in Vienna (Kroissenbrunner, 2002).¹⁹ In Spain, a study by Moreras (1999) offers a systematic analysis of the roles of imams in Barcelona,²⁰ whereas Reeber, in a large number of studies, scrutinizes particularly the political dimension of *khutbas* in France (e.g. 1991, 1993, 2000, 2004) and Frégosi (1998) offers a more comprehensive study of Muslim leaders and particularly imams. Various authors, again particularly in France, have studied 'new' types of religious authority such as preachers and *conférenciers*; among these, Tariq Ramadan is a particularly cherished topic of research (see Frégosi, 1999, 2000; Bouzar, 2001; Mohsen-Finan, 2002, 2003). Somewhat less attention is paid to Muslim intellectuals. In addition to Stenberg's study (1996), which examines Ziauddin Sardar and Maurice Bucaille,²¹ is Mas who has studied more recently Franco-Maghrebi Muslim intellectuals Mohammad Arkoun and Malek Chebel (Mas, 2004, forthcoming). Various studies have adopted a broader approach to the question of religious leadership and chosen to examine its changing configuration in the context of institutionalization and community building. Canatan's monograph on Turkish Islam in the Netherlands (2001) and Jonker's study on the Süleymançı communities in Germany (2002) offer particularly fine examples of this strand of work.²²

Any generalization about the orientation of these studies will necessarily do injustice to some of them and can only be suggestive. Bearing this in mind, one remarks that many of these studies are particularly interested in exploring connections between the changing forms of religious authority on the one hand and the societal environment, variously defined as non-Muslim, secular or modern, on the other. Changes in the structure of religious authority are explained primarily in relation to the 'new' environment and with the 'second generation' whose outlook is determined by socialization in this new environment. However, the authors differ in their evaluation of the changes that have taken place. While Lewis thus describes in Britain the emergence of a self-confident group of new '*ulama*', working at the margins of the mosque milieu and often dispensing with training in both religious and secular institutions (Lewis, 2004), one finds that his analysis is far from being shared by other authors.²³ In fact, most studies put the emphasis on the relative decline of imams, criticize the obsession of policy-makers with this group of actors, or point to 'new' Islamic actors, such as preachers, as their partial replacement.

If nothing else, the diverging research results underline the problems inherent in equating a religious function with a specific type of actor and, ultimately, in using the latter to frame a study of Muslim religious authority.

However, in spite of their differences in evaluating the relative importance of imams, these studies often have in common the fact that they approach the study of imams primarily from the perspective of their relation to the majority society, i.e. in the context of integration debates. Few studies attempt to conceptualize the complex interplay of functions of an imam within Muslim communities and in relationship to the majority society (for an example see Canatan, 2001).²⁴ While it would be naïve to dismiss the debate on integration or to underestimate the influence it has not only on the way imams are perceived, but also on their actual function, one wonders whether the focus on this perspective may lead us to neglect other factors. The way in which the organizational order and the community structures of a specific group are related to its specific religious system is seldom touched upon (on this latter question see more generally Tezcan, 2003). Also, one misses an exploration of how intra-Muslim relations influence the shaping of structures of religious authority.²⁵ One study which has addressed these questions in an admirable way is Pnina Werbner's work on Muslims in Manchester (Werbner, 1996). In this article, Werbner has shown how 'specific grammars of salvation' in South Asian Islam, and particularly in Barelwi Islam, are related to different types of authority structures and how these, by partly shaping 'the social organizational conditions for the production of discourses' in Britain, can explain current developments in the discourse of *'ulama'* and lay preachers. Werbner thus argues that while authority structures are determined by specific understandings of salvation, they cannot be reduced to them, but also themselves have a direct impact on the development of Islamic discourses.

While Werbner does provide a rich analysis of the situation of Muslims in the wider British context, she combines this with a highly developed awareness of the dynamics resulting from historically grown understandings of authority specific to an Islamic tradition and the ensuing discursive changes among British Muslims. Werbner's approach might not be transposable to any other context, given the diversity of Muslim life in Western Europe, but it seems that her ability conceptually to overcome certain analytical restrictions resulting from the integration debate could and indeed should be emulated.

Without a doubt, theories of individualization have stimulated the study of Muslims in Europe immensely. Nevertheless, the problems inherent in the use of this concept in Islam, not the least of which is its presumed relation to a rather specific form of institutionalized religion, cannot be ignored and raise tricky questions. Considering the conceptual quagmire into which the use of this concept leads us, the appeal of its political interest to many researchers lessens considerably. To date, the concept of tradition offers the most convincing counter-approach. But here again, serious obstacles need to be surmounted. For one, the claim to continuity inherent in this concept needs to be established directly *vis-à-vis* contending theories of individualization, as much as the latter needs to prove empirically its case against an understanding of Islam as discursive tradition; this, it seems, is an arduous task which still waits to be tackled. Also, excluding the option that the mediation of tradition is considered to be neutral (i.e. having no impact on the content of tradition), this concept, in order to be fully convincing, needs explicitly to address the relationship between authority structures and the transmission of tradition. From this point of view, a study of religious authority in Western Europe is clearly a

matter of the utmost necessity. In other words, we have gone full circle: just as any study of individualization needs to be based on a certain understanding of institutionalized Islam, concepts of tradition cannot do without a reflection on religious authority. However, looking at the studies undertaken so far, one notices that the study of authority as being shaped within a tradition is rather being neglected to the advantage of the study of authority as a function of various integration problematics. While these latter studies have greatly enhanced our understanding of Europe's Muslims, adopting a broader perspective on authority seems entirely possible and could contribute much to a better understanding of ongoing developments in Europe's Muslim communities.

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Notes

1. This essay deals exclusively with Western Europe. However, for convenience's sake, Europe and Western Europe will be used here interchangeably.
2. See Nielsen (2004) and Maréchal *et al.* (2001) for an overview on Muslim community structures and institutionalization processes in Western Europe.
3. In her most recent publication, Cesari, while maintaining her conceptual basis, also deals with developments among Muslim scholars in the West, particularly in the articulation of Islamic law (see Cesari, 2004).
4. See Tezcan (2003) for a lucid critique of this line of argument.
5. Amiraux's fine study of Muslim women in Germany (2000), which is based on an original theoretical approach to the issue of individualization in Islam, cannot be properly dealt with here.
6. In a fine theoretical discussion, Mandaville is careful to point out the complex impact of travel on Islam, criticizing those who depict migrancy simply as an empowering act (2001, pp. 105, 109).
7. Mandaville's use of the concept of translocality—'being in-between two places (Islam and Europe)'—seems to be somewhat in contradiction with his own empirical evidence which concentrates on Muslims who identify strongly with the national setting in which they live.
8. Mandaville also points to the role of new Muslim leaders in this young Muslims' movement. A highly diverse group of people, ranging from Mawdudi to Ziauddin Sardar and from Fazlur Rahman to Tariq Ramadan and Yusuf al-Qaradawi, are being included (2003, p. 134).
9. On this point see also Schiffauer (1991).
10. While Roy has been very sceptical about the possibility of an *aggiornamento* in Europe (Roy, 1999, pp. 85, 89), more recently, he has admitted the possibility of such a development which would legitimate 'the de facto emergence of a liberal islam' (see Roy, 2005, p. 166).
11. On the question of individualization and its relation to different types of community see Hervieu-Léger (1999).
12. While this narrative of the 'adaptation of Islam to the European context' through generational change can to a certain degree be defended empirically, the aura of self-evidence which surrounds it today needs to be questioned. One wonders, in fact, if this self-evidence derives also from problematic ideas about the presumably limited capacity of primo-migrants to simply feel 'at home' as Muslims in the host environment, just as their children will do later. Also, one notices that the heavy emphasis put on the impact of generational change on the 'adaptation of Islam to the European environment' tends to lend weight to those who portray, from different perspectives, the Islam practised by first-generation migrants as 'problematic'. This last assertion raises a number of issues concerning the necessary 'conformity' of religion to its social environment which are yet to be fully discussed in the literature. Both questions need further examination and cannot be dealt with here.

13. Furthermore, even though the authors, as many others, strongly emphasize social activism as an outcome of the current transformations in Europe's Muslim communities, they do underline the general openness of these processes (Amir-Moazami & Salvatore, 2003, p. 73).
14. However, one might argue that the use of this concept is not without difficulties in the context of reformist Islam. Due to the prominence in reformism of various practices of selection and recombination and a highly valorized inner-Islamic plurality, the supposedly tradition-specific search for coherence seems to be more difficult to perceive here than in other Islamic currents. One notices in fact that Amir-Moazami & Salvatore (2003) themselves emphasize in the empirically based analysis the constraints of Islamic tradition much less than the use of Islam by certain believers as a 'means' for legitimating certain practices. See for example pp. 65 and 67ff. (or in the German version pp. 320, 323, 326).
15. It is interesting to note that a comparative study of Muslim and non-Muslim youths in Rotterdam, carried out in 1999, points out that educational qualifications have, in relation with ethnicity, different effects on religiosity: highly educated Muslims of Moroccan origin attribute greater importance to religion than lower-educated Moroccans, whereas this correlation is the inverse in the case of Muslims of Turkish origin (Phalet *et al.*, 2002, p. 27). This contrasts somewhat with other studies which present a directly positive relation between higher education and 'modern' religious attitude (vs. a 'strict' religious attitude—see Goldberg & Sauer, 2003) or, in a variation of this theme, a directly positive relationship between low educational background (individual or in family) and high religiosity (Brettfield & Wetzels, 2003, pp. 268–271).
16. As Sunier's study on Muslim youths in Dutch–Turkish organizations shows, this question might need to be reformulated. Sunier concludes in fact that it is less the ideological orientation of an organization than its 'atmosphere' which constitutes the binding element between its members (Sunier, 1996, pp. 182, 209).
17. See also Landman (1996).
18. See also Birt & Lewis (forthcoming).
19. See also Kroissenbrunner (2001).
20. See also Moreras (2004).
21. See also Gerholm (1994) on Akbar Ahmed and Ziauddin Sardar. On converts in general see Allievi (1998).
22. See also Bowen (2004) who offers an original analysis of conflicts around the construction of religious authority and the 'domestication of Islam' in France and Martín Muñoz *et al.* (2003) for one of the rare studies of the internal diversification processes which are currently affecting the leadership of Spain's relatively young Muslim communities.
23. Kroissenbrunner also points out that 'Turkish imams in Vienna play and want to play a crucial role in the identity formation of young Muslims' (2002, p. 200). Likewise, Moreras considers the role of imams in Spain to be of fundamental importance, but also points out that its precise location, whether only in the 'religious' field or in broader community life, is yet to be determined (2004, p. 10).
24. Canatan makes a general distinction between internally directed and externally directed leadership, whose relative importance varies according to the ideological orientation of Mosque associations. These functions can be fulfilled by persons with different legitimacies, namely traditional, charismatic, rational and functional. In general, he perceives a decline of traditional and charismatic leaders, particularly in organizations with a high degree of interaction with the broader society. However, the picture he draws is complicated by the fact that a figure like the imam combines, according to him, elements of charismatic and functional leadership (Canatan, 2001, pp. 234ff.).
25. See Birt & Lewis (forthcoming) for a study which addresses this question with respect to Deobandi 'ulama' in Britain.

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