



Islamic Challenge: Politics and Religion in Western Europe

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Introduction

JOANNE MYERS: I'm Joanne Myers, Director of Public Affairs Programs, and on behalf of the Carnegie Council, I would like to thank you for joining us this afternoon as we welcome Jytte Klausen, discussing her book, [*Islamic Challenge: Politics and Religion in Western Europe*](#).

The recent riots by Muslims across France, their uproar over Danish cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad, and bombings in London and Madrid have raised questions about the presence of the growing number of Muslims in Europe and the problems they have integrating into European society. As we try to understand the nature of these protests and what these demonstrators are asking for, we also want to understand who these Muslims are. Are they terrorists, radical fundamentalists, Islamic militants, or simply a new constituency who represent a clash of values between two old European parties, secular and conservatives, who are each struggling to come to terms with religious pluralism?

In *Islamic Challenge*, our speaker this afternoon, Jytte Klausen, a widely respected sociologist and professor of comparative politics at Brandeis University, has spent the past two years searching for answers to these questions and exploring the issues surrounding the integration of Muslims in Europe. In the course of her research, she has spoken to more than 300 of Europe's leading Muslims in six countries: Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Among those interviewed were members of parliament, community activists, religious leaders, doctors, and lawyers. It is hoped that they will be the key that unlocks the door to what is needed for Muslims to successfully integrate into European society.

Two questions drove Professor Klausen's research: First, who speaks for Europe's Muslims? What, exactly, do European Muslim leaders want, if not war with the West?

Although her sample of interviewees includes a few Islamic activists and religious conservatives, Professor Klausen sees the majority of Muslims as being overwhelmingly secular in outlook and supportive of core liberal values. They do not remotely conform to the popular stereotype of radical Muslims whose compatibility with liberal societies is always questioned.

This book is unusual for several reasons, but primarily because it looks at the challenges of integration from the perspective of European Muslim leaders. Although Muslims first began to come to Europe in the 1950s and 1960s, mainly as guest workers, they were not expected to remain. As our speaker says, it is ironic that it was the collective recognition by Europe's Muslims themselves that they were in Europe to stay that triggered these recent conflicts and raised many concerns, which Professor Klausen will discuss with us today. These include:

- How does one explain the escalation of conflict in Europe over the accommodation of Islam?
- What is it that the Muslim political elite want from European governments?
- How committed to liberal values are Muslim leaders?
- Is there a distinction between believers in the Islamic faith and terrorists?

For the answers, please join me in welcoming our speaker, whose timely and scholarly work is now being discussed all over Europe and in America as well.

Thank you for joining us, Professor Klausen.

Remarks

JYTTE KLAUSEN: Thank you, Joanne, for that excellent introduction, and thanks to the Carnegie Council.

Let me start by first explaining why I started this research.

I was struck by the claim that European Muslims were a threat to European liberalism. It didn't make sense to me because most Muslims in Europe have, in one way or another, made the choice to come there. When [Helmut Schmidt](#) published his biography and expressed his regret that when he was chancellor of Germany, the country had opened the doors to Muslims—it was, he said, a mistake because it was now clear that Christians and Muslims could not live together—that raised questions about the precise nature of the conflict.

[Samuel P. Huntington's](#) ideas about [the clash of civilizations](#) between Islam and Christianity describe what is going on in Europe today. Huntington explained that the cause of conflict is that neither religion is just a religion, but that both are civilization systems. Therefore, he argued, citing [Bernard Lewis](#), that when the minaret meets the cross, there must be a fight for domination.

These are very pessimistic and apocalyptic statements. People generally practice religion without getting engaged in issues of theology. The sociologist in me suggested that the reality of conflicts might be quite different from what such pronouncements would lead us to suggest.

Nonetheless, it is clearly the case that European voters and political leaders are taking Huntington's predictions as an accurate description of their daily experience. Many Europeans view the headscarf as just another expression of Islam's incompatibility with liberal values.

Indeed, one of the curious features of what's going on in Europe is a strange rapprochement between European conservatives and feminists, who are agreeing that Muslims must be forced to integrate, or, like [Ayaan Hirsi Ali](#)—the member of the Dutch Parliament of Somali origin—should consider converting. The British government has announced a new approach to counterterrorism, and the argument is that good theology needs to be put against bad theology.

Terrorism is a serious issue, but the current problems, above all, derive from domestic causes. Europeans have trouble adjusting to immigration and religious pluralism because they are much less secular than they presume themselves to be. If you ask Europeans if they believe in God, over 55 percent, on average, say that they do. There are only two countries—the Netherlands and the former East Germany—where nonbelievers are the majority. I call this the "empty pews fallacy."

It is argued that Europeans don't believe in God because they don't turn up on Sundays in church. But in reality, they have come to expect the provision of religious services from the government, much like they get social services, and they continue to rely on the church for all essential events in their lives, from birth to death.

The conflicts over headscarves, mosque construction, whether European cities accommodate minarets,

animal rights versus ritual slaughter— all predate 9/11. Terrorism has clearly added fuel to the conflict. Many fear that Europe is breeding the next generation of terrorists because of conflicts over Islam and social exclusion.

One piece of evidence to suggest that this is not primarily a global problem is that integration problems have been more serious in Germany and France than in Britain. Germany and France have not supported U.S. foreign policies, while Britain has.

In the United Kingdom, Muslims represent about 3 percent of the population. In France, estimates vary widely because the French census does not ask about faith. The only way we have of estimating the Muslim population is by figuring out descendants of immigrants from Muslim countries and how many immigrants have been from predominantly Muslim countries. Most demographers argue today that 5 million is probably a high number. Others say that 2.6 million is a more accurate figure.

When you add up all of the numbers, you come to about 15 million in Western Europe. In sum, Muslims are always a religious minority. That said, Islam is the largest religious minority both in the Catholic South and the Protestant North.

Another misunderstanding is that Muslims are Arabs. When I explained my research, many people would ask me, "Do you speak Arabic?" I didn't need to speak Arabic to talk to the people I was meeting. They speak Danish, Dutch, English, French and Swedish. When Muslim associations meet today, the language of business is the national language. The weight is on new national interethnic Muslim associations, self-consciously modeled on other organizations, often on Jewish organizations, to find a place in Western European political systems.

Many Muslims cannot vote. I did not include Italy and Spain, in part because, although there are large Muslim populations— about 2 million is the common estimate for Italy — only about 50,000 can vote, which means that there is little actual representation.

In the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, 50 percent of the Muslim population can vote, and you can see the emergence of a Muslim minority voting bloc which the political parties take into consideration.

In Germany, there are about 3 million Muslims, only half-a-million of whom can vote.

Between one-quarter to one-third of Muslims can vote. Because of restricted access to citizenship, these numbers change very slowly. There is no guarantee that today's Muslims will become any more politically important than their parents' generation.

Nearly 1 million Muslim voters turned out in the May 2005 British election. Their victory was the election of [George Galloway](#). Many are now having second thoughts about whether that was such a great idea, particularly after Mr. Galloway appeared on a survivor show dressed up as a cat, licking the hands of a woman who was petting him.

In many respects, what is going on in Western Europe now, when you consider the strongly anti-Muslim rhetoric and the way people often feel fearful and estranged from Muslims, is that with the high residential segregation, you have clear patterns of social exclusion in some places, particularly in the Paris housing projects, inner-city Berlin, and certain areas of London. Many of the socioeconomic aspects of the problems with integration of Muslims are beginning to look like the United States before the civil rights acts.

Nonetheless, we have not had much civil-rights activism. The Paris riots in 2005—not the most recent riots, but those last fall—were classical riots, as we know them from Watts and the Bronx in the United States and Luton and Birmingham in England. They were a product of special socioeconomic problems and residential patterns. But Islam did not play a very major role in that. The two kids who died and set off the riots were a Christian African and a Muslim North African.

By my count, there are about thirty Muslims elected to Western European parliaments, out of a population of 15 million. There is also significant representation on city councils in certain cities.

Rotterdam, certain areas of Berlin, Kreuzberg, some cities in the United Kingdom, Marseilles all have significant Muslim participation in city government.

But the Muslim leaders are not the descendants of the earlier waves of labor migrants. One—or at most, two—out of every five leaders are native-born. There were more native-born in Britain than in the Netherlands. But most of the current generation of leaders have arrived either as political refugees or as young adults, as university students. Most of them have completed their education before coming to Europe. They were already middle-class people, and their political commitments often predated their arrival.

You may remember that [Fouad Ajami](#) wrote that the current Muslim associations and the Muslim population in Western Europe act as Trojan horses for the banned Islamic organizations of the Islamic countries. Particularly, he was thinking about the [Muslim Brotherhood](#).

My discovery that most of the Muslim leaders are foreign-born and that their political engagement predates their arrival in Western Europe would seem at first glance to lend some credence to his ideas. Indeed, there are people who fit the profile. Abu Khattab, [Abu Hamza](#), and [Moussaoui](#) are among the most famous, but there is also [Abu Laban](#), the infamous Danish sheikh who was responsible for the cartoon crisis. All were political refugees who arrived in the early to mid-1980s. They were political and religious entrepreneurs. But the majority of political refugees are of a very different conviction. They are deeply committed to human rights, because they were democrats before they came, and they left for political reasons.

Contrary to what we would think based on Ajami's predictions, their past as political refugees from Islamic countries acts as an anchor, as a source of moderation for many people. When I asked how they felt about the current problems in Western Europe, many leaders said, "Believe me, it was much worse where I came from. However bad it gets here, I just remind myself that at least I can open my mouth and my life will not be in danger."

When I asked the second generation-born leaders the same question, they answered very differently. They were much angrier. They said, "We've been lied to. Promises were made that have been broken. We were told if we did everything right, if we got an education, if we learned the language, we would get jobs. But now we are experiencing discrimination. Now all people can tell us is that the problem is that we are Muslim."

The anger was quite high, but it was significantly higher among the native-borns.

Who is a Muslim? There is a sociological answer to that question and a religious answer. Many people would say that a Muslim is a person who practices Islam. In reality, it doesn't work that way. I did not take for granted that because you were of Muslim origin, you were also a practicing Muslim. There was no "Who's Who among Muslim Leaders" when I started this work, so the first thing I had to do was to figure out who had been elected to the various city councils and parliaments, and call up and say, "Hi. I'm a professor from Boston. Are you Muslim?" People would ask, "What do you mean by that?" I said, "I don't know. What do you think it means?" I asked people how important their faith was. Four out of five said that Islam was personally important to them. Three out of five said it was very important. That means that one out of five said it was not important. Nonetheless, they identified themselves as Muslim.

This was something, many said, that had only come to them quite recently. Speaking to a young Social Democrat in the Dutch Parliament, I asked her the same question. She pulled down on her miniskirt and said, "I didn't use to think much about this business about Islam. My father has gone to the Hajj. My mother wears a headscarf. But I didn't think it mattered. But now, when they start talking about 'these people,' I want to put up my hand and say, "Actually I'm one of them."

This self-identification as a Muslim is clearly growing fast. The concept has changed meaning very radically in the last few years. More and more, people accept that being a Muslim is not just a matter of faith, but also sociological fact. It's in the eyes of the beholder. So there has been a reciprocal mobilization of a new ethnicized category of religion. This suggests that religion and Islam is becoming a

very serious political conflict issue in Western Europe. This is a very important source of political mobilization, organization, and counter-mobilization for both xenophobic voters and Muslims.

I asked also, what is your primary political identification? The more religious people tended to identify themselves as belonging to the center. Among the very religious, people belonged to the Christian Democratic parties—they would say, “Those parties are concerned about the role of religion in Europe, and for us, that is the main issue.”

The Dutch Christian Democrats have accepted this. Two Muslim members of the Dutch Parliament were elected from the Christian Democratic Party.

The German Christian Democrats have had a great deal more difficulty with this. Nonetheless, there are a number of Muslim members of the Christian Democratic Party, at the more local level and at the Lander level.

Although many expressed great frustration to me—one young man who had his own company had decided that he didn’t want to invest in politics anymore, because the more successful he got—he had been elected to a Lander parliament—the more people accused him of being an Islamist. He was tired of having to explain that he was not an Islamist; he was a religious Muslim.

I asked what some of the main problems were. I did not take for granted that people, just because they are Muslim, would argue that religion and the integration of Islam was the most important problem. But it was. I thought that the Left would say socioeconomic problems were the most important and that the Right would say that religion and cultural issues were more important, but that was not the case. There was general agreement between Left and Right that the integration of Islam is the most important issue.

People were exceptionally unhappy. I am a political scientist, although all of this might have sounded very anthropological to you. But I do have a measure of unhappiness, a “feeling thermometer.” I could scale people’s sentiment from -6 to +6. So, given that people usually aren’t happy politically, I thought the median value would come out slightly negative. But it came out at around -4.

But there were some very important differences. British Muslims said, “I’m born and bred Muslim. I belong here.” I asked questions about both political issues and also about people’s sense of their personal opportunities. The British Muslim leaders were very optimistic and thought, “You can make a life for yourself. My children will do better than I do.”

That was not the case, particularly, in the Netherlands and in Denmark. In both countries, I met a member of parliament who said, “I can’t stand living here. There’s no opportunity for my children. I want to leave.” They wanted to go to either the United States or to Britain.

In Germany, I met two Turks who said that they thought about going back to Turkey, but only if Turkey joined the European Union, because then it would be good for business.

There was a very strong consensus from across the party spectrum, but also across the very religious to the not-religious, that the number-one priority is to build European Islam in a way that makes it independent of the Islamic countries. The Muslim leaders I spoke to felt the dependency on the Islamic countries for religious services, for money for building mosques, for the training of imams, for the recruitment of imams, for the recruitment of theological scholars—they experienced it as an enforced, unwanted dependency. Many were quite unhappy about the efforts on the part of Islamic countries to exercise control over how Islam is to be developed in Europe.

Those of you who followed the cartoon crisis carefully might also have noticed that European Muslims said that they didn’t like the cartoons, but they also value free speech. They didn’t think that the paper should be censored, and they would rather that the Islamic countries stay out of the crisis. For them, the problem was that the cartoons were stereotyping Muslims.

This broad consensus on the necessity to build an institutional foundation for Islam in Europe broke down into wide disagreement when I asked questions about the means. There was very little consensus on how

this should be done.

I asked a set of questions about Islam designed to get people's sense of the faith itself: Is Islam compatible with liberal values? Only two groups thought that Islam was incompatible with European values: the strongly anti-clericals, who would say things like, "I ran away from the mullahs. I don't want them here," or the neo-orthodox, people who said, "Islamic scholars trained in the Islamic countries at the Islamic universities know best, and it is important that we keep the anchor of the faith in the Islamic countries."

The latter group was predominantly found in Britain, and most were of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin.

Then I asked another set of questions about mainstreaming Islam, about who should pay the salaries of imams, where should imams be educated; if antidiscrimination law was made much stronger to include religion, should Muslims accept that mosques have to hire women as imams—or "imamas". Many people said, "Yes, what goes for Christians goes for Muslims."

Between these two sets of questions, I found four categories.

1) The anti-clericals were about 15 percent of my sample. They were mostly Turks in Germany and a few people of Arab origin, particularly young people, who were strongly anti-Islamic. They said, "Yes, ethnically speaking, I am a Muslim, but the faith is beyond repair." These were the people who shared Ayaan Hirsi Ali's viewpoint.

2) Secular integrationists are people who expressed the view that if the pastor is a civil servant, then the imam should be one, too. Imams should be educated at theological faculties, the public universities, just the way Christian clergy is. They are about 20 percent of my sample. I found them predominantly in Germany and in Scandinavia, and most of them are of Turkish origin, but some are also Algerians in France.

3) The single largest group was people who I called "volunteerists." They expressed concerns about efforts to Christianize Islam. The more the governments were saying things like, "Islam must integrate," and the more governments were beating up on Muslims, the more people tended to express concerns about becoming too dependent on public policy. They would agree that, for reasons of funding and institution building and education, government policy must change to support the development of an independent Islam, but Muslims should have "help to self-help." About one-third of my groups were of that view.

4) The neo-orthodox were nearly one-third as well. They argued that Islam is what Islam is. They were resistant to the idea that any particular reforms were necessary. They thought that Islam has always been very flexible. Some were more conservative than others. Some would admit, "Yes, there is a problem in Islam with women's rights." But others would say, "Islam has always been fine." A handful of people in my sample were real Islamicists and argued for the creation of the caliphate in Europe.

This suggests, first of all, that European Muslims are overwhelmingly liberal, and the problems facing Europe are quite familiar problems. Europe has a problem because the 20th century has not produced one aspect of the liberal revolution that we are used to in this country—namely, religious toleration. There is no separation of church and state. It's not a realistic goal for Europe. But now Europe, because of migration, has to face issues of religious pluralism.

There is a great deal of anger, and displacement of that anger. I argue against the perception that religious discrimination is driving socioeconomic exclusion. If we solve Islam's problems in Western Europe, there will still be socioeconomic problems for Muslims, as there are for other immigrant groups.

JOANNE MYERS: Thank you for sharing your research with us. I would like to open the floor to questions.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: Since you made it clear at the beginning that you were not taken in by Samuel Huntington's nonsense, what came as a surprise to you when you started the research?

JYTTE KLAUSEN: I did not find such strong support for the view that the dependency on the Islamic countries was a problem. Muslim leaders were more ready to acknowledge the problems with political nonsense in the mosques than I had expected. It quickly emerged as the number-one issue. People expressed very strong viewpoints about the necessity of getting homegrown imams who can speak the local languages and project a picture of Islam that is compatible with social advancement for the young. They argued that right now, because of the conservatism and the isolation of imams, young people are not getting an appropriate religious education.

Many imams expressed the same viewpoint. I saw a very prominent imam in Britain, who has since died. I promised to keep his name secret, because he said, "I belong to an Islamic university that might remove my degree if it becomes clear to them what I'm saying." He argued that not having educated imams is "like having people drive cars without ever teaching them how."

QUESTION: I really know only one European country well, and that is Germany. A number of immigrant groups have integrated into Germany fairly easily. Even though the Germans typically are not particularly welcoming to strangers, second and third generations integrate quite well.

However, you may have seen the *New York Times* article about the Turkish community in Berlin, which clearly is not integrating the second and third generation, and is becoming more conservative or orthodox in its Islamic faith.

How does one integrate a group that is, in itself, becoming less oriented towards the society in which they live? The Muslims mention that they are not respected by the societies they live in, and yet the behavior of the Muslim mobs in many of the Islamic countries is practically designed to destroy respect for their level of civilization or their ability to integrate.

Is there a broad brush in Europe which says that all Muslims are alike, and it makes no difference where they are from? Is there any real important voice in Islam in the European Islamic communities that is willing to stand up and not be afraid to say, "That kind of behavior does not represent our behavior. This is not what we consider Islam"? Is there a voice that's willing to risk opprobrium by the rest of the Islamic community?

JYTTE KLAUSEN: One problem in Germany is that Germans are inclined to tales of woe. The German Muslim problem is not nearly as big as it is often made out to be. Berlin does have a problem, in general, because unemployment is very high. If you go to Stuttgart, you see Muslims living in the suburbs in new houses, driving new cars.

Germany has the highest rate of non-citizens in the political elite. That means that people want to join politics, but German citizenship reform has not worked.

Why have we not seen the numbers of citizenship applications that we expected? One reason is that you cannot get citizenship if you have any sort of public subsidy. Since most people in Berlin, for instance, live in public housing and get housing help, they are disqualified from becoming citizens.

However, there is a fantastic movement among German mosque associations, where some of the most innovative work is being done. For instance, the Hamburg Shura is an association of eighteen mosques, all interethnic, run by very professional young businessmen and businesswomen. (And the businesswomen sometimes wear the headscarf, which can make Germans very upset.) They have managed to come up with some very innovative ideas. One position paper that I saw was, "Can Islam Be a Church?"

They are looking for ways to create the possibility of organizing Islam so that Muslims can get the same public recognition as a faith that Jews, Protestants, and Catholics have. That would enable Muslims to get on the tax returns so you can check off that you want to send your church tax to Muslims. The federal

government collects the tax and funnels it back to the religious associations.

Twice, administrative courts have said that Muslims do not qualify for such recognition, because they are not unified in a hierarchical organization with clear leadership.

Right now there is a strong effort to create an umbrella organization. The Turkish government is working hard to push this and has forced the Turkish Association of Mosques to work with the non-Turkish mosque associations to create a unified organization, for the purpose of obtaining public recognition.

So Germany is not at all quite as bad as it always is made out to be.

QUESTION: I have the impression that the Muslim community in Britain is much more successful economically than in France, perhaps because they are Asian, largely, and not Arab.

Yet there's a paradox. There has been absolutely no sign of integration whatsoever over the last ten years.

JYTTÉ KLAUSEN: Economic structures matter greatly. Britain is much kinder to small businesses than the rest of Europe. We do know also from the United States that if you want to encourage immigrant entrepreneurship, that's also typically where immigrants get jobs first. Immigrants hire other immigrants.

Some of the countries with the worst records of employment have been Denmark and the Netherlands. That is because small employers take up much of the labor market, and they won't hire immigrants. Germany does much better on these scores than either of those countries.

It is true that the visible signs of integration in Britain are different. Britain allows people to live in their own communities in a way that other European countries will not tolerate. It is also true that the only country in my study where I found any support among Muslim leaders for the use of [Sharia](#), in what we call legal federalism or legal dualism, was Britain. Partly, that is because of the South Asian background. There are examples from India of that kind of coexistence of different legal systems.

I found some important gender differences also among the very religious. Women thought Sharia was a bad idea. But when I related one of my findings to a young woman who runs her own company of solicitors and specializes in making Sharia applicable in secular courts, she said, "I love the Sharia." I said, "But what about divorce?" "Oh," she said, "you can't let imams make those decisions. You have to have professionals make the decisions."

So the vision that she and others have of what using Sharia means is that you have a body of professionals codifying the Sharia law in ways so that it is compatible with existing law systems. One of the Sharia councils, the U.K. Council of Mosques and Imams, set up a specialized Sharia law council to provide helpful advice to women in divorce cases. Right now there are competitive Sharia councils, and when you go into any divorce, you can find a Sharia council for both sides in the argument.

A number of banks have designed Sharia-compatible loan programs. This is something that the British Home Office has certainly declared might be a competitive advantage for British banks abroad.

QUESTION: [Olivier Roy](#) spoke here recently, and many others have attempted to convince us that the bulk of the Islamicists in Europe want to become middle-class citizens and make money like everybody else. But there are others who have taken some very definite stands against that, feeling that there has been not that much discrimination, but that the cultural elites of Europe have bent over backwards, in the academic world, in the political world, to accommodate a number of Islamicists, most of whom are not really political refugees.

The New York Times recently ran an article saying that one of the imams has now issued a fatwa banning statues from private homes, and left it pretty much open as to whether that would be the case in public places.

You mentioned that there are some 15 million Muslims in Europe. If 15 million evangelical Christians, who

also oppose having statues of saints and the like, decided to move into Europe as political refugees, would the cultural elites bend over backward to accommodate them, as they have with the Islamicists, who are not of the same culture, whereas most of the evangelicals would be?

JYTTE KLAUSEN: But people have not bent over backwards. One of the interesting findings in my book was that the French elite felt that they had a special phone line to the government. So Roy's description is true for France.

[Sarkozy](#), in particular, is extraordinarily popular with the Muslim elite. This might come as a bit of a surprise. But people would, again and again, say, "He's a man we can talk to. He sat in the chair where you're sitting now. He spoke to me. He's the only one who has ever come and seen us." He is also the only person in France who has suggested that the law of 1905 was originally flexible enough to provide funding for Islam. He has raised questions about the mobilization of secularism in France— that *laïcité*, he says, has been redefined in recent years to become more and more secular in orientation, in effect banning all expressions of religion from public life, and maybe we should be careful about that.

Sarkozy also got into trouble for calling the young rioters "scum." But interestingly enough, many of the Muslim elites thought he was quite right to do so, because they think that the young people have lost respect for authority.

So I would argue that the picture you paint is a bit too monolithic. There are many imams issuing various kinds of fatwas. They make the press and then they go away. You can go on the Internet and select your own personal "fatwa of the day"

As one young woman said to me, "Who cares about the imams? The imams have already lost power."

You have to think about Islam as Europe's new 21st-century religion. In that respect, I would agree with you that the parallel to American evangelicals is quite good. People are defining what they mean by Islam. One of the results of immigration is that Islam has no structure in Europe, which means that people are making up their own structure as they go. So you have all sorts of mosque communities. There are translation projects. Everywhere you go, people are developing their own specific translation of the Koran. They all want the Koran in the vernacular language because, they say, "All the Korans we have are the Wahhabi versions. We need to go back to the sources and we need to make our own translation."

QUESTION: I assume that most of the interviews you conducted were with Muslim political leaders. How can you be sure that what you're being told reflects how they feel rather than how they think you want them to respond? How can you be sure that what they're saying reflects the views of the vast majority of Muslims who are not leaders, but rather working-class immigrants?

JYTTE KLAUSEN: People had very little reason not to share their views with me. Yes, I spoke to 300 people, all of whom are in elected or appointed office, at the national, regional, or metropolitan level. I wanted to understand how the political elite thinks about issues and problems, because they will be the bridge between Muslims. By default, they are the ones who will help governments figure out what will happen next, and governments are increasingly seeking out interlocutors among Muslims. Even people who are elected from political parties and said that they aren't particularly attuned to Muslim voters have increasingly been called upon to come up with solutions about Islam.

Often, people would tell me how happy they were that I came to talk to them. They wrote me long email messages and engaged me in long debates. Occasionally, somebody tried to say something that I knew was not true, because I would always study up on what people had said in public.

One person in a Stockholm mosque said, "Aha, I see." You aren't going to take everything I say for granted, are you?"

However, on the second part of your question, I have very few ways of understanding what the man or the woman on the street thinks. How can you poll people who are very shy about picking up the phone, if they even have one? Some select studies conducted in Denmark, France, and Germany suggest that

about 15 percent of European Muslims are what we would call Islamicist in orientation. That doesn't mean that they are terrorists, but it does mean that they are fundamentally committed to separate lives, and that religious law comes first. They connect religion with a political program.

QUESTION: Within France, were any of the leaders in the elites that you contacted from the sub-Saharan Muslim majority of immigrants? If so, did you find differences between the responses of sub-Saharan Muslims and Arabic northern Muslims?

JYTTE KLAUSEN: I found one or two. One thing that became clear very quickly in my French case study was a big divide between the elite and the rest.

A couple of questions come out of my book that I need to think about. One is that we have had the population paradigm wrong about European Muslim immigration. When we look closely at the statistics—outside Britain—fifty percent of European Muslims have arrived since 1985. That puts the problems in a somewhat new light. It's often said that we have had five, six decades of Muslim presence in Europe, so why suddenly have all of these problems? In fact, that's an inaccurate picture.

It was also clearly the case in the riots that many of the young rioters were children of people who had come in the 1980s. They were not descendants of labor migrants from the 1950s or the 1960s.

JOANNE MYERS: Thank you for an excellent presentation and for opening our eyes to a new way of looking at the Muslims in Europe.

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