

Muslims in Spain and Islamic Religious Radicalism

MICROCON Policy Working Paper 8

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Muslims in Spain and Islamic Religious Radicalism

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Abstract: Immigration is a recent phenomenon, and the most important socio-economic change that has taken place in Spain in recent years, putting an end to Spain's demographic stagnation and energising its economy. Recent polls indicate that immigration and terrorism are among the main concerns of Spaniards. This paper offers an analysis of the situation of immigrants in Spain from predominately Muslim countries. A first section focuses on recent immigration into Spain from all sources to help put the situation of Muslim immigrants into perspective. The second gives a brief recent history of the Muslim community in Spain and a description of how its institutions have been formed. The third section provides a study of the tensions and conflicts revolving around the 11 March 2004 attacks, their political impact, the court trial and judgement. A final section looks briefly at the situation of the cities of Ceuta and Melilla, Spanish enclaves in Morocco. The conclusions offer some reflections on the future of the Muslim community and its potential for integration.

Keywords: Radicalisation; Islam; Spanish; youth; terrorism; integration

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Introduction

Spain has historically been considered a country of emigration, but this has recently changed. The year 2000 was a turning point, as since then the immigration issue has been on the political agenda. Indeed, the administrative institutions for managing immigration were created between 2000 and 2004. Spain's immigration law was amended four times during that period and four regularisation processes were implemented. A further 600,000 immigrants underwent a regularisation process in 2005.

Immigration is the most important socio-economic change that has taken place in Spain in recent years, putting an end to Spain's demographic stagnation and energising its economy. Between the years 2001 and 2006, 50% of GDP growth was owing to the positive effect that immigration had had on per capita income (Cámara Madrid 2007).

Immigration in Spain is thus a recent phenomenon. As a result, there are no clear models with which to approach this issue, nor are there well-established social structures to deal with possible conflicts or social confrontations. There is still much to be done and while this is the cause of uncertainty, it is also the source of many opportunities to improve and learn from other European experiences.

This paper starts from the assumption that the process of integration in Spain is different from that in other EU countries and that it is marked by two main characteristics. First, immigrants from Muslim countries are fewer in number than immigrants from Latin American countries. Second, the existence of domestic terrorism, through the Basque separatist group ETA, tempers the impact of tensions and conflicts from radical Islam.

Recent polls indicate that immigration and terrorism are among the main concerns of Spaniards. According to the 2007 Opinion Barometer survey conducted by the Sociological Research Centre (CIS 2007), immigration (a concern for 11.6% of the population) stands fourth behind terrorism (23.6%), unemployment (14.4%) and housing (14.1%) in terms of the problems perceived as affecting Spain most acutely. This reference to terrorism focuses more on that perpetrated by ETA than that of the Islamic terrorist cells. Of course, the 2004 Madrid attacks changed many aspects of Spaniards' perception of Islamic terrorism, making it much more real and threatening.

Nevertheless, ETA's permanent campaign and the failed Basque peace processes are still much more at the forefront of people's minds.

Therefore, the tensions and conflicts having the greatest impact on Spain do not appear to focus on immigrants from Muslim countries. These groups blend together with other groups of immigrants – the majority of whom are South American – and the threat of Islamic terrorism is blurred by the ETA attacks, street violence in the Basque country, extortion of the Basque business community, court trials of ETA members, the capture of wanted terrorists and the permanent debate among the majority parties on the nation's stance against ETA.

Taking all these issues into consideration, this paper offers an analysis of the situation of immigrants in Spain from predominately Muslim countries. A first section focuses on recent immigration into Spain from all sources to help put the situation of Muslim immigrants into perspective. The second gives a brief recent history of the Muslim community in Spain and a description of how its institutions have been formed. The third section provides a study of the tensions and conflicts revolving around the 11 March 2004 attacks, their political impact, the court trial and judgement. A final section looks briefly at the situation of the cities of Ceuta and Melilla, Spanish enclaves in Morocco. The conclusions offer some reflections on the future of the Muslim community and its potential for integration.

One of the overarching questions dealt with in this research project is how one can change the al-Qaeda narrative and undo the relationship established between Islam, al-Qaeda and international terrorism (Roy 2002). We feel that this is genuinely possible in Spain if the government is able to help the first and second generations of immigrants to integrate, especially the Moroccans as the largest group, because it is our belief that, for the time being, the Muslim community in Spain has not embraced violence but rather integration.

1. Recent immigration in Spain

As mentioned above, immigration has grown considerably over the last several years. A closer look at the figures helps to put the reality of Spain's Muslim communities into context.

Immigration in Spain is very recent and has progressed swiftly. In just a decade, the number of immigrants has skyrocketed, growing from half a million in the middle

of the 1990s to over 5 million today. The largest group is from Morocco (676,405) followed by Ecuador (451,072), Colombia (326,459), Argentina (287,760), Bolivia (238,605), Peru (160,603), Brazil (140,942), Venezuela (142,709) and the Dominican Republic (113,681). There are in total 2,273,324 Latin American immigrants residing in Spain (the sum of Central and South Americans plus Mexicans) compared with approximately 800,000 from Arabic-speaking and Muslim countries (Morocco, Algeria, Senegal, Nigeria, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan).⁴ These figures point to a clear difference between Spain and the other European countries analysed in this volume, where in most cases the number of Muslim immigrants is well over the 1 million mark. For example, in France, Muslim immigrants account for between 7 and 10% of the total population while in Spain that figure is barely above 1%.

Of the Muslim immigrants, the Moroccans are those who tend most to come with their families, 20% of them being under the age of 16, while those from Nigeria, Senegal, Algeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India are mostly men who immigrate alone in search of employment. According to the National Statistics Institute, on 1 January 2008 there were 676,405 Moroccans, 55,042 Algerians, 44,898 Senegalese and 33,692 Nigerians legally residing in Spain. There are 944,672 total immigrants from Africa. Additionally, there are 47,422 immigrants from Pakistan, 28,367 from India and 7,565 from Bangladesh. There are 281,402 total immigrants from Asian countries, the majority of whom are from China, accounting for 125,301.⁵

A study of the immigrant Muslim population was conducted in 2007 by Metroscopia, funded by the Ministries of Justice, Labour and Social Affairs and the Interior. The survey was conducted during June and July 2007, involving 2,000 persons from Morocco (57% of the sample), Senegal (12%), Pakistan (11%), Algeria (5%) and Gambia, Mali, Bangladesh, Mauritania and Nigeria (all under 5%). The questions were designed to discover Muslim immigrants' perception of their integration process in Spain, their standard of living, their work and family situations, their image of Spain and their expectations. The results showed a Muslim population that is integrated into Spanish society, Westernised and tolerant. This mirrors the results of the study conducted by the PEW Research Centre of Washington D.C.,

⁴ See Instituto Nacional de Estadística (retrieved from <http://www.ine.es>).

⁵ Although there are no figures grouping immigrants by religious affiliation, these numbers broken down by nationality help us to calculate the number of Muslims residing in Spain.

which in 2005 confirmed that Spain had a Muslim community that was very well integrated.

Immigrant integration has been a concern of the Spanish government, and at the national, regional and local levels, it has begun to create an infrastructure designed to formulate and implement immigration policy. Over the last several years, at the national level the Comisión Interministerial de Extranjería [Interministerial Commission for Alien Affairs], the Foro para la Integración Social de los Inmigrantes [Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants], the Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración [Permanent Immigration Observatory], the Consejo Superior de Política de Inmigración [High Council for Immigration Policy] and the Fundación Pluralismo y Convivencia [Pluralism and Co-existence Foundation] have been created.

In February 2007, at the request of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the cabinet of the Spanish government approved the 2007–10 Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration. This plan targets both immigrants and Spanish nationals in that it holds that integration is an issue concerning all members of the community. The plan follows the directives of the European Commission and seeks more suitable management of migratory flows and integration processes. It is considered the framework plan for cooperation among all stakeholders, its principles being equality and non-discrimination, citizenship and interculturalism. The plan's main areas of action are reception, education, employment, housing, social services, health, children and youth, equality, women, participation, awareness-raising and co-development. The budget for 2007–10 is €2,005 million, 40% of which is earmarked for education, 20% for reception and 11% for employment.⁶

Muslim immigration in Spain is part of a recent immigration flow that has been diverse but largely from Latin America. As such, the challenges for immigration in Spain are not so much based on the integration of Muslim immigrants but rather on the integration of nearly 2 million Latin Americans. In this connection, the tensions and conflicts focus as much on Muslim immigrants as they do on those from Latin America. Two recent attacks against immigrant women in Barcelona and Madrid involved Ecuadorians. The Latin gangs formed by young immigrants have caused concern in some local communities owing to a few isolated cases of aggression. In

⁶ For further information, see the website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (<http://www.mtas.es/migraciones/Integracion/Planestrategico/Docs/160207pecitextocompleto.pdf>).

Barcelona, the Latin gangs turned things around and formed an association for immigrant youth rejecting the violence of the young gang members.

Immigration was an important factor in the debates leading up to the March 2008 elections. In some of these debates, it was argued that immigrants are inundating the free health services offered in Spain. The most provocative references in this connection were directed at Latin Americans who, given their numbers, are the most visible.⁷ The nearly simultaneous arrival of immigrants of different nationalities minimises the impact of Muslim immigrants, differentiating Spain from the rest of the cases studied in this volume.

2. Recent history of Islam in Spain

To understand the social reality of Muslims in contemporary Spain, it is necessary to begin in the middle of the 1950s, when General Franco's regime began to close the cultural gap with countries of the Near East. Cultural exchanges were encouraged, including the arrival of students at Spanish universities. These initial contacts resulted in the influx of hundreds of students at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s from countries such as Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Jordan and Egypt. In 1971, some of these students formed the Muslim Association of Spain (Spanish abbreviation AME). Some of them were influenced by Islamic currents rooted in their home countries that have had a degree of influence on the Muslim community in Europe such as the Muslim Brothers or *At-tala'i* (known as *Atalayas* in Spanish), which evolved into associations in the main Spanish cities, especially in Granada and Madrid. The AME acted for some time as a federation of Spain's 17 regions⁸ and has maintained its legal personality. Prior to the formation of the AME, a small Muslim community called the 'Muslim Community of Melilla' had arisen in the city of Melilla in 1968. No other organisation was formed in Spain until after the establishment of democracy and the ratification of the 1978 Constitution and the new Religious Freedom Act of 1980.

This initial, minority Islamic movement changed after 1990 with the appearance of immigrants from the Maghreb and the rising number of mixed families, mostly

⁷ See newspapers of February and March 2008 such as *El País*, *El Mundo*, *ABC* or *La Vanguardia*. *El Mundo* published declarations from a People's Party politician who complains about the number of immigrants, referring especially to those from Latin America (*El Mundo*, 7 February 2008).

⁸ Spain is divided into 17 autonomous communities.

Spanish-Moroccan, within the Islamic community. Owing to the settlement process during this period of economic immigration from countries where the majority of the population is Muslim (many from Morocco), Islam has become increasingly visible in Spain in the form of personal symbols (e.g. the headscarf and *chilaba*) and community structures (prayer houses, mosques and *halal* butcher shops).

Hence, the Muslim community's arrival and settlement process in Spain has taken place in two major stages. The first started with the creation of the first Muslim religious organisation at the beginning of the 1970s and went on to the signing of the Cooperation Agreements between Spain and the Spanish Islamic Commission (CIE) in 1992, which had been created to represent all Muslims in dealings with the government. The second stage began with the immigration of citizens from countries where the majority of the population is Muslim and it continues up to today. The turning point, however, was not the approval of the Cooperation Agreement between Spain and the CIE but rather the growing wave of immigration. Both of these events (the increase in immigration and the signing of the Agreement) took place around the same time in 1991–92.

During the first stage, the Spanish Muslim community was very small and had two main components, a scholarly group of immigrants/students from Muslim countries and the first native-born Spaniards who converted to Islam during these two decades.

The aim of the scholarly group, formed mainly of young, single or recently married men with a high level of education and from a middle or upper social class, was to complete their studies, collect their diplomas and return to their country of origin rather than settle down and form families in Spain. Given that their stay was temporary, most did not feel the need to group together into an organised community in order to protect their rights and places of worship. From a socio-economic perspective, being university students and economically well-off, in contrast to the majority of today's Muslim immigrants, facilitated their integration. As for religious practices, the majority of this group was Sunni but there was also a minority Shiite component, mostly from Lebanon and Iraq. Many made their way to Spain as refugees fleeing from their countries for political reasons or because of armed conflicts plaguing the Middle East: the Palestinian conflict, the civil war in Lebanon and the war between Iraq and Iran.

Regarding the Spanish who converted to Islam, two generations can be identified: the generation of those who converted in the 1970s and 1980s, almost all of whom are Sunnis (although there is also a Shiite minority), and the generation of converts from the 1990s. The former were mostly university students who yearned for cultural exposure and identified with Islam in the public sphere, and almost all of whom were associated with Sufism. The latter features men and especially women who married immigrants from predominately Muslim countries and who converted to Islam either before or after marriage.

The majority of the converts who embraced Islam were originally Catholics who did not identify with the Catholic religion and felt attracted by Islam as an alternative for religious, political and social reasons. These reasons include the fact that Islam is a religion without clergy, in other words it has no ecclesiastical hierarchy. There was also a degree of idealisation of the Arab and Muslim world within the sphere of art and culture, which in some cases had to do with a certain exotic flavour related to the hippie movement, but was mostly the path taken by some groups that participated in the May 1968 movements.

Finally, new groups of Muslim immigrants began arriving in Spain around 1990. These were primarily economic immigrants. Currently, the largest group of Muslim immigrants comes from Morocco, with Algeria a distant second source, mostly along the eastern Mediterranean coast. These two countries are followed in number by immigrants from Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Muslims from other European and Asian countries account for the lowest percentage: Kosovars, Albanians, Bosnians, Tatars, Chechens and Azerbaijanis. Generally speaking, there are more men than women immigrants from countries that are predominately Muslim, although in the case of Morocco the percentage of women is gradually nearing that of men. For the rest of the countries, the percentage of men is much higher.

While the second stage of immigration is more significant from a quantitative standpoint, it was during the first that the Muslims organised themselves. At the end of the 1980s, the government offered minority faiths (Jewish, Protestant and Muslim) the possibility of signing Cooperation Agreements with the condition of appointing a single representative for each. The Muslims had already formed two federations, the *Federación Española de Entidades Religiosas Islámicas* [Spanish Federation of

Islamic Religious Groups, FEERI] and the Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España [Union of Islamic Communities in Spain, UCIDE]. The Federation was the first of the two organisations. Because of internal differences, a splinter group later formed the UCIDE. Faced with the requirement of having a single representative, the two federations formed the above-mentioned CIE, although the two federations do not have a close relationship. This is why the two federations have maintained their legal identities within the CIE. There are, therefore, two secretary generals, one for each federation, as well as two representatives of each of the federations (four in total). The two federations operate independently of one another and the CIE only meets when it has to communicate with the national government. Hence, coordination within the CIE is anything but seamless.

In terms of the number of communities, as of 31 March 2008, 559 Muslim communities were registered in the Ministry of Justice's registry of religious organisations: 315 from UCIDE, 57 from FEERI and 187 that were not affiliated with either of the two federations. Registration of religious communities in Spain is not compulsory and thus there are unregistered Muslim communities. The total number of communities (both registered and non-registered) is estimated at 700.

The main catalyst behind this process was the creation of the Fundación Pluralismo y Convivencia by the Spanish government. The aim of the foundation is the funding of cultural, educational and social action projects of minority faiths that have signed a Cooperation Agreement with the government, i.e. Muslims, Jews and Protestants. More important than the very limited economic support earmarked for projects, the foundation has secured the recognition of these communities as social actors and this has sparked their own further calls for recognition. They are now on the political agenda and hence more open and no longer relegated to the private sphere. This openness has been evident at both state and local levels where they have begun to interact with city councils and other social organisations. The other important element in this recognition process has been the publication of the first school textbook on the Islamic religion entitled *Descubrir Islam* [Discover Islam]. The Muslims have been given the opportunity to teach religion in public schools in accordance with the Cooperation Agreements signed in 1992, but this has been done without any printed material and in Arabic. The publication of this book in Spanish by a Catholic publishing house has contributed to the mainstreaming process.

This important movement has also had an impact on the reorganisation of the federations within the CIE and the emergence of new initiatives and community groups, which will eventually lead the CIE to rethink its structure to adapt to the political organisation of Spain (and its 17 autonomous communities). Now there are at least four new, federal-type initiatives that are grouping communities together and seeking to form part of the CIE.

Regarding different groups within Islam, there is a movement attempting to join like-thinking groups together in the CIE restructuring process. This is more evident in those regions where there are a large number of communities (Madrid, Catalonia and Murcia) but is much less significant in other places where there is only one mosque per municipality (or even per district) attracting all of the Muslims of the area regardless of their branch of Islam. There are, therefore, many ‘neutral’ mosques where attempts to establish a particular branch of Islam are not meeting with success.

Finally, the proximity of Morocco to Spain has had an effect on the kind of person immigrating to Spain and the influence this country attempts to hold over this group. Yet, this factor may be more significant when attempting to classify communities rather than currents or branches of Islam.

3. The 11 March 2004 attacks

The terrorist attacks of 11 March 2004 are crucial to understanding the process that Islam has undergone in Spain. It is even possible to speak of a new stage in the Muslim reality in Spain resulting from the attacks. After more than four years since those events, however, it remains clear that objectively there is hardly any connection between the Islam of the religious communities in Spain and the Islam of the attacks – two worlds whose paths have not crossed, and are still not crossing now. This specific idea must be at the centre of any political proposal for action.

According to the 28 September 2005 decision of the Criminal Chamber of the National High Court delivered by Magistrate Juan del Olmo regarding the 11 March attacks, Islamic activities carried out in Spain prior to 2002 can be broken down into three stages:

- 1) initial organisation, which began at the start of the 1990s;
- 2) expansion and interconnection with other networks of the jihad and the recruiting of new members from among the immigrant community; and

- 3) a third stage after the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., with growing hostility towards Spanish interests.

During all of this time, jihad members had been using Spain to escape from the persecution they were subject to in their countries of origin. They soon took advantage of their refuge to devise propaganda activities, recruit new members and send them to training camps, collect funds and transfer them to terrorist cells in other countries, falsify documents, purchase material and seek support for their fight against governments considered unfriendly in predominately Muslim countries. Their functions were mostly logistical, consisting of support for 'combat' cells. It has even been proven that Spain was used during the preparation of the 9/11 attacks (Jordán 2003).

The first attack of this sort in Spain occurred on 12 April 1985 at a restaurant in the vicinity of what was then the American base at Torrejon de Ardoz (Madrid). Eighteen people were killed and a further hundred were injured in this attack, and although the target was clearly the US military personnel who frequented this establishment, all of those killed were Spanish nationals. The ensuing investigation was unable to determine who was responsible for the attack.

Still, the establishment of Islamic terrorist cells and networks in Spain is more recent. The first arrests were made in 1997, indicating that the first contacts and establishment of residence in Spain took place at the beginning of the 1990s. Fifteen Algerians linked to the GIA (Armed Islamic Group) were arrested in Valencia and Barcelona. This was a support cell, typical of the role played by these groups in Spain with varying importance over time.

As early as 2003, some experts (Jordán 2003) were already suggesting a series of preventive measures as part of a strategy to thwart Islamic terrorism, which remain valid in 2008:

- *Assume that terrorists can carry out attacks in Spain* and that their consequences could be extremely serious, as was borne out by the 11 March 2004 attacks.
- *Involve the Islamic communities settled in Spain in the prevention and fight against Islamic terrorism.* At that time, it was already believed that Islamic communities were not a security problem per se and that they should be

sheltered from terrorist penetration, because they could potentially contribute to terrorist objectives.

- *Foster the integration of immigrants from predominately Muslim countries.* The importance of the socio-economic and cultural integration of immigrants and especially their descendents as an effective preventive measure to head off the emergence of radicalism had been highlighted prior to the 11 March attacks.⁹

Among the reasons Madrid was chosen as the site for a new major attack is the prior existence of radical Islamic networks organised in Spain for the provision of logistical support and the alignment and active participation of the Spanish government in the decisions leading up to the occupation of Iraq, with Spain being the ‘weakest’ member of that strategic alliance (formed basically by the US and the UK). The reasons also include the far greater political priority and effort placed on the fight against domestic terrorism (ETA), thus drawing attention away from this new threat.

On 11 March 2004, Spain suffered the greatest terrorist attacks in its history, an event that has marked the subsequent years of Spain’s political and social life. That morning, ten explosions on four commuter trains took place between 06:45 and 07:40. In the event, 191 persons lost their lives and 2,057 were injured.

The first official versions claimed that the Basque separatist terrorist group ETA was responsible for the attacks, but during the course of the day, it became increasingly clear that the attacks had been perpetrated by radical Islamic groups. The proximity of the date of the attacks to the general elections (scheduled for 14 March) led to insistence on the part of the government (People’s Party, PP) that ETA was responsible. The PP was accused by different media of manipulating information, for example by sending a note to Spanish embassies abroad urging them to blame ETA and its efforts to force through a UN resolution condemning ETA for the attack. The general media confusion caused a political and social rift that set the tone for the whole of the legislative period that followed, and which remained apparent in 2008.

On 12 March, nearly 11 million people marched through the streets of Spain condemning the attacks. On 14 March, the PP-led government lost the general elections. An endless round of political debates ensued, which mostly claimed that the perpetrators of the attacks had won given that they had managed to alter the results of

⁹ Subsequent events point to the partial failure of these policies throughout the European Union.

the elections. Although it is true that the polls prior to 11 March indicated that the PP would win the election by an absolute majority, the reasons for the Socialist Party's (PSOE) victory are complex. In the aftermath of the attack, the Spanish electorate decided to punish the ruling PP party. Spain's participation in the war in Iraq was repudiated by nearly 90% of the population. The Spanish people viewed the 11 March attacks as a consequence of Spain's participation in the invasion. The PP government's manipulation of information in the initial hours following the attacks, doing everything in its power to link them to Basque terrorism, was what triggered the population to take a stand against the government. These events prompted a much higher-than-expected voter turnout and that is what led to the PSOE's victory in the elections. In his electoral campaign, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero had announced that if elected, he would bring Spanish troops home unless the UN took charge of the situation in Iraq. This measure was one of the first he implemented after he won the elections. The Madrid attacks and the search for those responsible monopolised the political arena for quite some time.

On 3 April 2004, as a result of a police siege, eight members of the Islamic cell responsible for the attacks blew themselves up in Leganes (a neighbourhood in Madrid). An assistant police inspector belonging to the National Police Corp's Special Operations Group also lost his life in that explosion.

For its part, the Spanish parliament called for the creation of an investigation commission (enquiry) charged with analysing the political consequences of the attacks and with tabling proposals to address similar situations in the future. The report was approved with the votes of all members of parliament with the exception of the PP. In addition to recommendations and proposals, the report censured the media manipulation and the actions taken by the government at the time of the attacks and proposed five overarching principles on which the fight against international terrorism should be based:

- solidarity with the victims of terrorism;
- unity among all democratic political forces;
- cooperation at different levels, i.e. international and European, collaboration among the national, regional and local governments and coordination among the state police and security forces and intelligence services;

- international initiatives to eradicate the underlying causes conducive to or aiding the criminal actions of terrorists; and
- protection of civil liberties and citizens' rights.¹⁰

*Court proceedings and the judgement concerning the 11 March attacks*¹¹

After several years of investigation and numerous arrests, the legal order that brought the investigative stage of the terrorist attacks to a close put 29 individuals on trial (9 of whom were Spanish nationals). This same court decision affirmed that the attacks had been inspired but not executed by al-Qaeda and identified the Islamic Moroccan Combatant Group, the most representative group of the jihad Salafist movement in Spain, as being responsible for the attacks.

The judgement convicted those directly responsible for the attacks but failed to find sufficient evidence to convict those accused of being the intellectual planners. Of the 29 accused, 7 were acquitted by the judgement and another was exonerated during the trial. The participation of ETA was also ruled out. Among those accountable for the massacre (aside from those convicted and those who died in Leganes), 4 remain at large and 7 genetic profiles have yet to be identified. Appendix A reports those who were convicted.

The trial of the leaders of the attacks concluded with the certainty that al-Qaeda inspired the attacks but did not order or organise them. The group that carried out the attacks was formed by young immigrants, some of whom were childhood friends from Tetuán (Morocco), who had ended up taking part in a network selling hashish. The genesis of this group was around phone centres and not mosques. In fact, one of the group's most violent members was expelled from Madrid's main mosque because of his violent opinions. It was the community itself that had expelled him.

These Islamic terrorist groups are composed of very young persons whose community of reference is not visible but rather virtual and who see themselves as 'heroes'. They do not have direct contact with al-Qaeda leaders but nonetheless form part of a virtual space that nourishes them with ideology. Within this space is a jihad

¹⁰ See the opinion containing the conclusions of the investigation debated at Spain's Cortes Generales at the 22 June 2005 session.

¹¹ The judgement was delivered by Section Two of the National High Court's criminal chamber on the 11 March 2004 attacks.

composed of cells that individually decide on their objectives. It was within this framework that the 11 March attacks were perpetrated.

Today, it is the communities themselves that have the greatest vested interest in preventing violent movements within their ranks and swiftly expelling those who upset the community. A close look at the arrests made through anti-terrorist operations in the last three years that have targeted Islamic violence in Spain shows that only one focused on a mosque-based group. All of the arrests, with the exception of those made in January 2008 in Barcelona at a mosque frequented mostly by Pakistanis, were of persons who recruited at the community level (appendix B).

4. The situation in Ceuta and Melilla

An analysis of the situation in Spain requires special mention of Ceuta and Melilla, which, owing to their geo-strategic location, play a major role concerning the Arab-Muslim world in Spain. Approximately 50% of the population of these two autonomous cities professes the Muslim religion, which makes them an ideal observatory to study potential conflicts and the possibility of the co-existence and cohesion of a multi-faith society.

A close look at the local press indicates that these issues appear much more frequently than in other regional or national media. The basic problems of inter-religious relations are much more evident and the political discourse of Spain's major parties makes exceptions when referring to the populations of Ceuta and Melilla.

Political discourse opposed to Muslim women wearing the *hijab*, claiming that this poses a threat to Spain's alleged national 'Christian essence' (some right-wing and extreme right-wing groups), or a threat to the separation of church and state (some left-wing parties), is toned down in references to Ceuta and Melilla. Women's right to wear the Islamic veil freely is defended because 'they are Spanish', or comment is simply withheld.

Owing to their geographical and geo-strategic position, these two cities are also key to some of the most important issues on the political agenda in Spain. These two small enclaves are consistently at the heart of matters such as immigration, foreign relations with the Moroccan government and Islamic religious radicalism. The issue of radicalism and terrorism is crucial not only because these cities have been or could be terrorist targets as temporary homes to potential jihadists or operation centres for

radical Moroccan groups, but also – over and above the pride felt for the harmonious mix of cultures – there is a growing concern about the tension between Catholics and Muslims caused by fear of terrorism.

Yet, of the 32 persons arrested up to August 2008 for their alleged ties with Islamic terrorism, only 2 were arrested in Melilla and that was the fruit of police cooperation with Morocco, where they had been wanted by the judicial authorities.

Conclusions

When addressing the issue of Islam it is fair to say that we have two very different groups operating in two very different contexts but which are perceived by Spanish society as a single group, and this could have negative consequences if an active policy is not implemented.

First, we have a group that includes the vast majority of Spanish Muslims, whose numbers in 2008 reached 800,000. This group is composed of immigrants practicing their faith who are from predominately Muslim countries and who have permanently settled in Spain. The second generation (their descendents) are becoming Spanish citizens, and are in the process of finding their place in society. In other words, even if they are not yet all Spanish citizens they are destined to be in the near future.

Not all are Muslims. According to recent studies (Metroscopia 2007) nearly 20% of the immigrants from predominately Muslim countries consider themselves ‘non-believers’. It is therefore erroneous to confuse ‘Moroccan’ with ‘Muslim’ or ‘Muslim’ with ‘immigrant’. The second generation is caught up in the same processes as the rest of the Spanish youth. A strong secularisation process is giving rise to a fall in the number of believers.

Before the 11 March attacks, what the public saw were ‘immigrants’ rather than ‘Muslims’. After that date, the religious factor was used to refer to this group of immigrants. In other words, the collective mindset viewed this as more of a ‘cultural’ than a ‘religious’ phenomenon.

Second, there are the international terrorist groups operating in Spain. These groups are ideologically aligned with al-Qaeda, especially the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat and more recently the Moroccan al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. While there are other factions (Jordán 2005; Jordán 2003) motivated

through Islamic websites, these groups do not have strategic interests in Spain (Halliday 2008; Avilés 2005) but rather use Spanish territory as a base for fundraising and the recruitment of persons willing to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan. Their operations revolve around phone centres but they have no roots or relationships with the religious communities. Nearly all authors agree that these groups have no real intention of 'recovering the ancient al-Andalus', the latter only forming part of a narrative to attract young persons willing to fight for an intangible cause. Their real objective is to radicalise their societies of origin by attacking Western societies as a tactical ploy.

Although what we have here are two different worlds, we must also be aware that under certain circumstances they may intersect and therefore feed off one another. Such a situation would be more liable to arise if a deep sense of belonging is not developed among young Spanish Muslims and a generation of socially maladjusted youth emerges. Here we run the risk that if a person does not have a clear identity associated with the society in which s/he lives and is compatible with the latter, this identity may be sought in 'virtual Islam' (Sageman 2004; 2008). This situation is especially prevalent in a context of economic crisis linked to economic cycles and processes involving the dismantling of the welfare state. To keep situations such as these from emerging, sufficiently specific, active policies must be implemented so that society is capable of clearly distinguishing between these two phenomena. Spain could be at a crucial crossroads in the prevention of radicalism of second- and third-generation immigrants by promoting their integration and drawing a clear distinction between their identity and that of Islamic terrorists (Fukuyama 2006).

We identify two differentiated lines of political action based on the situation described. One involves police intervention at both national and international levels fighting against terrorist networks. The other focuses on integration processes and generating a sense of belonging with an irrefutable national and even European component. The latter action is the most complex but requires the greatest attention in Spain.

These politico-religious radical groups operate outside the network of mosques and places of worship in Spain and largely have logistical functions of recruiting individuals willing to fight in Iraq or fundraising. The political objectives of these groups are in Iraq or Afghanistan, and the use of Spain as a base for their terrorist

actions is a strategic decision (a means but not an end in itself); still, owing to the seriousness of the acts perpetrated, this is extraordinarily serious all the same.

We have also observed growing unease on the part of Spanish society stemming from co-existence with different cultural or religious groups, including immigrants from Latin America and Muslim countries. Despite the high opinion held by immigrants from predominately Muslim countries of Spain, of Spanish society and of opportunities gained and freedoms enjoyed, these groups are not highly regarded by Spanish society. Nevertheless, social conflict and rejection on the part of society has more to do with the very rapid growth of immigration in Spain than with issues relating exclusively to the religious factor. Not only is Spain's immigration model not exhausted but it is also safe to say that it is still under construction, thus providing an opportunity to make co-existence and social cohesion a constructive and enriching reality for all.

Hence, Spain could create a different narrative, moving away from radical Islam towards integration and an identity rooted in a different starting point, since the Muslim immigrants are part of a larger and diverse group of immigrants and the threat from ETA seems to be more real than that from radical Islam.

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Appendix A. Individuals convicted in the judgement on the 11 March 2004 attacks

José Emilio Suárez Trashorras, Spanish

Essential collaborator; sold explosives used in the attacks that he stole from the mine where he worked; contacted by Jamal Ahmidan through Rafá Zouier to supply the explosives subsequently used in the attacks.

Jamal Zougam, Moroccan

Member of the terrorist cell that perpetrated the attacks; directly responsible for planting the explosives; owner of the mobile telephone shop and phone centre that supplied the telephones used as detonators.

Othman El Gnaoui, Moroccan

Member of the terrorist cell that perpetrated the attacks; responsible for handling and falsifying documents; delivered his ID documentation to Jamal Ahmidan knowing that they would be falsified.

Hassan El Haski, Moroccan

Member and leader of an armed terrorist organisation; leader of the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group wanted by the Belgian authorities; arrested on 17 December 2004.

Basel Ghalyoun, Syrian

Member of an armed terrorist group; had numerous contacts with Mohamed Larbi Ben Sellam; recruited and indoctrinated future terrorists and provided support and assistance to seasoned terrorists; closely linked to the leaders of the cell that committed suicide in Leganes.

Appendix A. cont'd

Fouad El Morabit Anghar, Moroccan

Member of an armed terrorist group; recruited and indoctrinated future terrorists and provided support and assistance to seasoned terrorists; closely linked to the leaders of the cell that committed suicide in Leganes and with Rabei Osman El Sayed Ahmed (convicted in Italy in 2006 for forming part of a terrorist organisation).

Mouhannad Almallah Dabas, Syrian

Member of an armed terrorist group; recruited and indoctrinated future terrorists and provided support and assistance to seasoned terrorists; in charge of one of the premises where the activities were carried out; closely linked to the leaders of the cell that committed suicide in Leganes.

Sael El Harrak, Moroccan

Member of an armed terrorist group; member of the cell that committed suicide in Leganes; had close personal and telephone contacts with the other members of the group.

Mohamed Bouharrat, Moroccan

Member of an armed terrorist group; a recruiter who compiled information on possible targets for violent attacks, which he then delivered to the cell.

Youssef Beljadt, Moroccan

Member of an armed terrorist group; a member of one of the groups of the al-Qaeda network and a proselytiser who was involved in fundraising activities to finance international jihad activities. He lived in Brussels where he undertook his operations and housed radicals and jihadists. He was in Spain from the middle of February until 3 March 2004, and was arrested in Brussels on 1 February 2005.

Mohamed Larbi Ben Sellam, Moroccan

Member of an armed terrorist group; his mission was to indoctrinate, recruit and support individuals in the formation of a jihad; had close relations with Jamal Ahmidan, Mohamed Oulad Akcha and Said Berraj.

Rachid Aglif, Moroccan

Member of an armed terrorist group and keeper of explosives; in charge of buying and handling explosives; had contact with Jamal Zougam.

Appendix A. cont'd

Abdelmajid Bouchar, Moroccan

Member of an armed terrorist group and keeper of explosives; in the Leganes flat with the suicide terrorists, but had left to take out the rubbish when the police raid took place and consequently escaped.

Hamid Ahmidan, Moroccan

Member of an armed terrorist group and drugs trafficker; drugs, cash and false documentation bearing the name of Jamal Ahmidan were found in his home; personal effects belonging to the user of the stolen van used to transport the terrorists responsible for the attacks were found in his car.

Rafá Zouhier, Moroccan

Trafficker and supplier of explosives in collaboration with a terrorist organisation; police confidant; the contact person between José Emilio Suárez Trashorras and Jamal Ahmidan for the sale of explosives.

Agdelilah El Fadoul El Akil, Moroccan

Collaborator with an armed organisation and a friend of Jamal Ahmidan's; in Holland in the 1990s, he and Ahmidan contacted Imad Eddin Brakat Yarkas, the person responsible for recruiting jihad terrorists at that time; he shipped a car used to transport the explosives to Ceuta.

Nasreddine Bousbaa, Algerian

Falsifier of official documents; forged two passports and driving licenses that he then gave to Jamal Ahmidan; these were delivered before 6 March 2004 to the Lavapies neighbourhood of Madrid.

Mahmoud Sleiman Aouin, Lebanese

Falsifier of official documents; carrying false documentation when arrested.

Raúl González Peláez, Spanish

Supplier of explosives; collaborated in the organisation of the transport of explosives.

Antonio Iván Reis Palicio, Spanish

Transporter of explosives; transported explosives from Asturias to Madrid on 9 January 2004 for a fee of €300.

Appendix A. cont'd

Sergio Álvarez Sánchez, Spanish

Transporter of explosives; transported a 40kg bag of explosives from Asturias to Madrid on 5 January 2004 for a fee of €600; these were delivered to Jamal Ahmidan and used in the attacks.

Gabriel Montoya Vidal, Spanish

Transporter of explosives; convicted by Juvenile Court given that he was a minor at the time the crime was committed; transported explosives from Asturias to Madrid at the end of January or beginning of February.

Source: Derived from the judgement delivered by Section Two of the National High Court's criminal chamber on the 11 March 2004 attacks.

Appendix B. Arrests of alleged Islamic terrorist cells in Spain, during the period 2005-08 - Dates, places (numbers arrested) and description

January 2005, Bilbao (1)

One Algerian individual in relation to the 11 March court case

February 2005, Leganés, Madrid and Melilla (6)

Individuals related to the 11 March court case

March 2005, Fuenlabrada (1)

Individuals related to the 11 March court case

April 2005, Madrid (14); Operation 'Saeta'

Individuals related to the 11 March court case

May 2005, Madrid and Granada (3)

Individuals related to the 11 March court case; arms traffickers and those involved in financing their business

July 2005, Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia and Cadiz (18); Operation 'Tigris'

Individuals from the Iraqi branch of al-Qaeda involved in fundraising activities

Appendix B. cont'd

July 2005, Madrid (5); Operation 'Sello'

Individuals related to the 11 March court case

November 2005, Alicante (8), Granada (2) and Murcia (1)

Algerian members of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat who stole cars and other property, printed counterfeit cards and were involved in drug trafficking to finance their activities in Algeria

December 2005, Malaga (7)

Algerian members of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat who harboured Algerian terrorists on their way to Iraq

December 2005, Malaga (9), Lleida (3), Seville (1) and Palma (1)

Individuals who recruited others to send to Iraq

January 2006, Vilanova i la Geltrú (16), Madrid (3) and Lasarte (1)

Individuals who frequented phone centres with the aim of recruiting others to carry out terrorist attacks in Iraq

December 2006, Ceuta (11)

Individuals who formed part of a Moroccan Salafist cell under surveillance by the police of that country

June 2007, Barcelona (2)

Individuals who formed part of a group known as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, composed of Moroccans recruiting followers for operations in North Africa

January 2008, Barcelona (14)

Arrest at a mosque of Pakistanis who met in one of the mosques in the El Raval neighbourhood; material intended for the manufacture of explosives was confiscated

February 2008, Vitoria (3)

Arrest of persons at a phone centre, who had a police record for petty crime

April 2008, Melilla (2)

Arrest of individuals wanted by the Moroccan police force for alleged involvement in Islamic terrorism networks and arms trafficking; one of those arrested was linked to the 'Maghreb Mujahideen Movement' and to the Casablanca attacks of 16 May 2003. The other was linked to a terrorist network dismantled by the Moroccan authorities in February 2008.

Appendix B. cont'd

June 2008, Barcelona, Castellón and Pamplona (8)

Eight Algerians were arrested, accused of indoctrination and economic and logistical support of terrorists forming part of the al-Qaeda structure in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI). Most of those arrested belonged to the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat.

July 2008, Huelva and Guipúzcoa (4)

Algerian Salafist group accused of funding al-Qaeda activities in the Maghreb by falsifying documents and brand-name clothing. Those arrested were allegedly linked to an investigation conducted in the UK in 2001.

August 2008, Alicante (1)

One person was arrested in Alicante in relation to the June 2008 arrests, having escaped to Algeria on that occasion. He was accused of recruiting mujahideen and sending funds to the Maghreb to finance the AQMI.

October 2008, Burgos (6)

Algerian group accused of fundraising for terrorists imprisoned for the Casablanca attacks and of recruiting and indoctrinating mujahideen through the Internet; according to those leading the investigation, the cell was based in Spain but formed part of a more complex structure operating internationally. Its leader had a record for petty crime.

Source: Data based on press clippings from Spanish newspapers.