

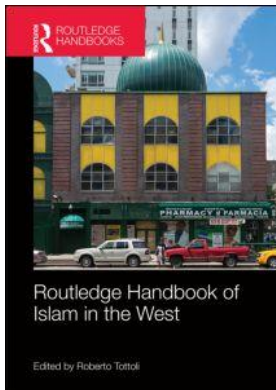
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Roberto Tottoli

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Elisa Banfi

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Islamic organizations in the West

New welfare actors in the new welfare systems in Europe

Elisa Banfi

Introduction

In December 2010, the Bishop of the diocese of Milan, Dionigi Tettamanzi, sold his collection of static nativity scenes at auction to increase the resources of the diocesan fund for unemployed workers and poor families. The population hailed this event as a sign of divine providence. Contrary to popular belief, however, the Catholic fund was created in 2009 to combat the effects of the financial crisis and fill the gap created by the inability of public institutions to help the local community. Catholic organizations have also not been alone in the fight to combat the social chaos created by the global crisis. Other, less noticed actors have also organized welfare services to maintain a minimum of social cohesion in this context. For instance, although they haven't made headlines with it, local Islamic organizations have increased their distribution of daily meal vouchers and monthly family allowances, unemployment credits, and child benefits in Milan. Their services have reduced the consequences of economic instability in one of the most precarious social strata within Italian society: immigrants. Both Catholic and Islamic organizations have provided welfare services, offering real "safety valves" for immigrants, who have limited access to institutional social services.

Furthermore, Milan is not an isolated case. Beyond the Alps, other forms of Islamic welfare agencies have been developed in recent decades. For instance, in Geneva, the imam of the Bosnian community has become a source of help for Bosnian refugees over the years. Doctors, teachers, and psychologists have regularly relied on the imam's spiritual gifts in seeking to treat their Bosnian patients and students better. In addition, many other Islamic organizations have structured social activities other than religious services in an attempt to address the tragic aftermath of the war in former Yugoslavia or to ease the psychological and social burden of the emigration process.

These anecdotes briefly illustrate a new social reality that has arisen in European countries over the last two decades: increasingly, Islamic public actors have developed a relevant welfare strategy that is similar to the Catholic/Protestant one. However, this Islamic social agency is absolutely unprecedented for the simple reason that Islam is still largely an immigrant religion in

Europe. Whereas Catholic and Protestant welfare activities are the core of a historical legacy that stems from the church–state relationship, Islamic welfare initiatives are barely recognized by public authorities and seldom studied by scholars. In fact, Islamic welfare agency is commonly studied in ancient (Rijpma 2011; Arjomand 1998) and contemporary Islamic societies (Bozzo and Luizard 2011; Schultz Hafid 2010; Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2008; Ibrahim 2008; Clark 2004; Shatzmiller 2001), but not yet in European ones (Bäckström and Davie 2010; Bommès and Geddes 2000).

This chapter aims to describe welfare programs organized by Islamic organizations in European countries. I also simultaneously investigate three causal factors that promote such programs in Islamic organizations: (1) the migratory nature of the Islamic religious presence, (2) transnational influences, and (3) the church–state relationships across Western European countries.

First, the fact that the majority of Islamic believers are still residents (Bommès and Geddes 2000; Faist and Dörr 1997) in the studied countries has affected the welfare activity of Islamic organizations in manifold ways. As migratory regimes differ in European countries and the majority of Muslims are still immigrants, access to social welfare also varies across national contexts.

However, independently of the model of citizenship adopted, labor immigrants and their families who enter a country with a short-term permit have a limited legal position. Along with asylum seekers, refugees, and undocumented immigrants, they are prohibited from accessing many social services or benefits. In fact, neither countries that adopt the multicultural and republican model of citizenship nor countries that employ the ethno-assimilationist model grant full social benefits to labor immigrants and their families. The status of such immigrants in Western European countries is still deeply influenced by the *Gastarbeiter* model. Immigrants have to come to work, and they can stay only if they produce some added value in terms of labor productivity. Otherwise, they have to leave the country. Even though there are Muslims in Europe who are full citizens, especially in multicultural countries, the majority of Islamic immigrants continue to have a legal status that has reduced or delayed their access to social welfare systems.

In this way, Islamic organizations have had a relevant role in the lives of their members, who have scarcely benefited from public social services such as housing, unemployment benefits, and general social care. The quality and the quantity of the social services provided by Islamic organizations depend on the legal status of their members (citizens, residents, undocumented immigrants). In fact, migratory regimes create the potential for social agency for Islamic organizations, though the degree of potential varies from nation to nation. The Islamic associations that were established in the 1960s and 1970s provide religious services to the very highly educated immigrants who immigrated to Europe as students or diplomats. In the 1980s and especially in the 1990s, the same associations served a large number of labor immigrants who arrived to perform unskilled labor. For that reason, Islamic associations have reoriented their activities by restructuring their relationships with their host countries and their homeland.

At the same time, a new typology of Islamic associations began during the 1990s to provide welfare services to Islamic labor immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees, and undocumented immigrants who needed to establish themselves during that time. The emergence of the Muslim second and third generations in Europe, along with converts and Muslim European citizens, stimulated the rise of these new associations. Such organizations provide welfare services in cooperation with local associations and institutions, sometimes not only for Islamic members but also for the local poor regardless of their religious faith. They provide food for disadvantaged families and individuals, homework clubs for children, and education programs,

crèches, and women's educational support centers, all intended to improve social cohesion at the local level. Overall, migratory regimes can impact the foundation and the development of Islamic associations, which offer social services to their believers based on how migratory regimes manage material and immaterial immigrant needs.

The second explanatory factor is the transnational influence of homeland Islamic reference groups, which can also influence the welfare programs of Islamic organizations in European countries. Transnational organizations such as *Millî Görüş*, the Nur movement, or the Muslim Brotherhood can influence economically and ontologically how different Islamic organizations implement welfare services in cities across Europe. Even though the majority of Islamic organizations are founded mainly to fulfill the spiritual demands of Muslim immigrants in Europe, they often develop parallel socio-economic activities. Furthermore, many Islamic organizations are affiliated with Islamic movements that consider welfare programs a substantial part of their religious strategy. In recent decades, many organizations have increased in strength and transformed their objectives through welfare services provided in the context of diasporas.

Last but not least, the separation of church and state is the third factor that affects how Islamic organizations produce welfare services. The quantity and quality of the welfare services provided by Islamic organizations can be influenced by the role of religious communities in the public sphere in each national context. The degree of cooperation among public institutions and religious actors in providing social services to the resident population impacts how the Islamic organizations design their welfare programs in the public space. A weak separation between governmental and religious authorities can help Islamic organizations to participate in the development of public policies as well as to provide welfare services. Islamic organizations can more easily provide welfare services in societies in which religious organizations act alongside public institutions implementing social policies. The church–state relationship partially explains the redistribution of welfare programs across various actors in state and civil society at different levels of governance. This paper focuses on these three explanatory factors in describing why the social activities of Islamic organizations vary within neighboring countries and revealing how they even adjust themselves to the local features of urban communities.

Restructuring of public services by religious welfare actors

For centuries, each country has offered a specific welfare system (Arts and Gelissen 2002; Esping-Andersen 1990) by adopting different criteria for subsidies and redistribution as part of its national social policies (Korpi and Palme 1998; Bonoli 1997; Ferrera 1996; Leibfried 1993). Each national welfare system develops options and constraints for associations that wish to provide social services. Social policies can encourage particular sub-national cultures by helping certain associations (immigrant, religious, autochthonous, profit, or non-profit organizations) to act as agents of the welfare state (Ireland 2004). On the one hand, immigrant and/or religious associations can increase their legitimacy among members by playing relevant roles in the redistribution of welfare resources. On the other hand, public institutions can control divisions within civil society and reframe communitarian identities.

Social policies also promote various models of stratification and redistribution in civil society. Not only may social policies target subgroups within the population, but particular institutions can also aim to assist special subcategories within targeted subgroups (e.g. women, elderly individuals, young people, immigrants, nationals). However, institutions can also deprive subgroups within the population of social rights. If the welfare system distributes resources non-homogeneously, forms of “ghettoization” may destroy social cohesion. For instance, a welfare

state that provides asymmetrical services to non-nationals and nationals allows these two groups to profit differently from state social benefits.

If the homogeneous redistribution of social services is intended to provide social cohesion, non-homogeneous or limited redistribution can foster decentralized and communitarian welfare systems that generate social cohesion from below. For instance, immigrants often ask for housing, schooling, and health assistance outside the institutional market for welfare provision. They are partially excluded from social citizenship by institutional policies. Consequently, they address their welfare requests to pro-minority, anti-racist, non-profit, religious, and immigrant associations.

Among these actors, religious actors are relevant because since the medieval period (Rijpma 2011; Henderson 2006) they have been invested in social welfare. In fact, religion is an important explanatory factor in the variance within the welfare state regimes in Western European countries. Recently, scholars have challenged the most traditional theory (Esping-Andersen and Van Kersbergen 1992), according to which only working-class and socialist organizations have paved the way for social democratization. The recent book *Religion, Class Coalitions and Welfare States* has accurately reviewed the corpus of theories on the contributions of religion within Western European welfare states (Van Kersbergen and Manow 2009). Van Kersbergen and Manow have showed the incompleteness of theories that represent the welfare state exclusively as an historical response to the capitalist forces that make societies disintegrate (Flora 1986) and commodify (Polanyi 1944). On the contrary, these authors have emphasized the complex and indirect role of the Christian religion in originating and fashioning the welfare states in Western European countries. They have also suggested that the church-state conflicts stemming from European national revolutions have greatly influenced the differences across the Western European welfare states (Van Kersbergen and Manow 2009).

The recent debate on the historical role of the religions in Europe in providing welfare has arisen as Christian organizations are entering a new period of social engagement in many Western countries. As social services are privatized and decentralized, the involvement of churches and other religious groups in the provision of welfare services is increasing. Moreover, the shrinking of social policies is helping to valorize religious “non-profit” organizations that provide services to citizens. However, there are still not many studies on how new residents of various religions are turning to religious organizations for welfare activities in Western societies (Beaumont and Cloke 2012). In fact, new religious actors such as Islamic organizations are facing dramatic changes within European welfare systems. Religious associations voluntarily promote social policies thanks to different forms of privatization. Their “special” workforce is becoming attractive to public institutions that have been forced by national deficits to cut social expenditure. In this way, the “subsidiarity and complementarity” of non-state actors providing social services has become the core of the new welfare programs (Powell 2007; Dahlberg 2006, 2005). Thus, public institutions are allowing religious organizations to reacquire their medieval function in financing, organizing, and providing social services.

Due to immigration, new religious organizations emerged in Europe after World War II, which has modified the religious panorama in many Western countries. As an “immigrant religion,” Islam shares much of the Christian theology and social doctrine, which supports the engagement of religious organizations in social activities that benefit disadvantaged people. Equality and social justice are the core of Muhammad’s revelation, and both concepts are integrated into the *arkan al-islam* through the principle of the *zakat* (Ybarra 1996). Moreover, Islam emphasizes welfare as necessary to establish an effective Islamic society (Hawting 2006). In fact, the social project of the Prophet was to redistribute and manage wealth to create cohesion within Islamic society. The redistribution of wealth is especially focused on *al-Masakin*, *al-Fuqara*,

and *al-Gharimin*, categories that are outside of the labor market, which the *zakat* enables to survive without public institutions. For centuries, redistribution through the *zakat* has provided the Islamic community with a pragmatic means of realizing the Islamic ideal of a fair society, just as Christian organizations have done in Europe.

In Europe, the *zakat* endows Islamic organizations with constant incomes that allow them to implement social services among their members, who are very often residents. In fact, European Muslims are mostly still immigrants with short- or long-term permits and limited access to welfare state services. The conflicting status of immigrants who are workers but residents creates a gap between them and other citizens in terms of access to social, political, and civil rights. In Europe, the emergence of new welfare systems is intertwined with the arrival of workers from all over the world. As in the past in Europe, the relationship between immigration and new care services appears noteworthy. As Bäckström and Davie outline,

the transformations taking place at the start of the new millennium can be seen in some senses to mirror those that occurred some hundred years or so ago – above all in the movement of people. As industrial societies gathered pace, large sections of the European population moved rapidly from the countryside to the cities. Given the extent of these dislocations, it was hardly surprising that traditional forms of social care – those that depended on the household and the churches – no longer functioned effectively. Here, in fact, was the stimulus for new forms of social support.

(Bäckström and Davie 2010: 2)

At the beginning of industrialization, migration and urbanization meant that religious forms of care disintegrated and fostered national, secular welfare systems. Conversely, at the beginning of this century, forms of decentralization and privatization within public social services fostered newfound involvement in welfare provision by religious agencies. In fact, the globalization of labor and recent migratory patterns have created new opportunities for capitalist forces to reorganize social services for workers or non-workers and for citizens or residents by involving religious social agencies. However, Islamic religious identity is barely associated in the public sphere with welfare services. On the contrary, Muslims are seen as “foreigners” who lack the cultural legitimacy to participate in social policies in European societies. This chapter would like to fill this gap in the available information about the Islamic contribution to welfare systems in several European countries.

The Islamic welfare state in Europe

There are very few comparative research studies that involved data collection related to Islamic welfare agencies. For instance, the project Finding a Place for Islam in Europe: Cultural Interactions between Muslim Immigrants and Receiving Societies (EURISLAM),¹ funded by the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Commission, paved the way for further researchers by collecting data about the social, religious, and cultural activities of Islamic organizations in Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The Institut de recherches sociales et politiques (RESOP),² a multidisciplinary research center within the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences at the University of Geneva in Switzerland, has collected additional data about the welfare activities of Islamic organizations in Italy and Switzerland, especially in Geneva, Milan, Rome, and Zurich. Extending the work of these projects, in this section I analyze the cross-national variance in social engagement within different Western countries using case studies.

Islamic welfare in London

In 2006, the Masjid and Community Affairs Committee of the Muslim Council of Britain commissioned the report *Voices from the Minarets*, which presents the results of surveys and focus groups with ninety imams who are members of the Management Committee (MC) of Mosques of the United Kingdom. The report collects quantitative and qualitative data, revealing the most typical services offered by mosques in the United Kingdom. These are counseling and family support services, supplementary education courses, and youth facilities and programs. Some mosques also provide training and development courses, adult language classes, employment services, and health and community cohesion projects. The report attests to the relevance of the welfare services offered to Muslims and non-Muslims by mosques in the United Kingdom. It shows how mosque environments can provide services to portions of the population that are difficult to reach and improve cohesion in challenging areas of cities (Maussen 2005; Lindo 1999; Joly 1995). However, the report admits that there are few mosque structures that are adequate spaces for organizing social services for women, young people, and non-Muslims and that the good examples should be imitated. The report concludes that mosques should interact more with public institutions to improve cooperation in social policies. Clearly, the Islamic associations have developed their welfare agencies differently in the public sphere in the United Kingdom. However, they have increasing visibility as agents of social cohesion, and local authorities recognize the role of such institutions by financing their services. In London, several mosques show how this partnership with public authorities can impact the functional role of religious centers. Since the 1980s, public institutions have financed the Islamic community in London to promote a large array of social policies. One relevant case is that of the North London Muslim Community Centre (NLMCC),³ established in 1980 in Hackney. At first, this organization was financed by the Department of the Environment and Hackney Council to run youth activities. Since it was founded, the NLMCC has consistently supported projects for non-Muslim users, offering an advice center, a youth club, and a mental health project. The Department of Education funds the organization's online center, which provides free internet access and training courses. In 1999 the Department of Education refurbished the organization's original building. The advice center is one of the most popular services at the NLMCC. This program provides advice and counseling on welfare benefits, assisting users in making claims for housing benefit, council tax benefit, jobseeker's allowance, income support, employment allowance, pension credit, child benefit, working and child tax credits, social fund grants and loans. It also advises residents on general housing register applications. The advice center also provides translation and interpretation services. The Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) has authorized the NLMCC to provide immigration advice and services through the general immigration and nationality advice program. Since 1980, the NLMCC has been providing youth and children with facilities within Hackney, one of the poorest boroughs of London. The NLMCC runs the mental health care project to help Muslims and non-Muslims who suffer from mental health problems. The center also has a mental health liaison officer who helps families to complete carer's allowance forms, visits disabled and mentally ill clients in their homes, and helps them to submit benefit applications. In addition, the Ihsan Children's Centre supports mothers and children and promotes good health for poor and vulnerable families. At the center, children and mothers can meet regularly with professionals and obtain access to health care. The center also offers pre-school respite care to foster independence and education for mothers, and is financed by the government as a part of the Sure Start initiative. Since 1984, elderly individuals have been able to participate in the old age pensioners' luncheon club in the mosques, where they can eat healthy meals and meet with professionals to discuss any health and psychological issues.

Another similar example is the East London Mosque and London Muslim Centre (ELMLMC), which is located in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The center implements education, health, and environmental projects with Tower Hamlets Council, the local primary care trust, the East London Communities Organisation, the Tower Hamlets Interfaith Forum, and the Metropolitan Police. The center fights anti-social behavior and drug use by providing mentoring and educational courses. The childcare services are connected with programs that promote women's participation in the cultural and social life of London. The East London Mosque also offers programs that inform Muslims and non-Muslims about different health problems and improve their access to the health services available across the territories.

The ELMLMC and the NLMCC in London show how Islamic associations and public institutions can interact to improve social policies for the most disadvantaged among the population. However, these cases show how the government interacts with and finances Islamic mosques only at the local level and in targeted "trouble spots" where the government has trouble meeting the needs of the population. On the one hand, Islamic welfare agencies are conceived of as a special local resource by public institutions. On the other hand, they are seen as occasional agencies, and the Islamic associations have had to make efforts to improve their recognition and financing in the public sphere. Public and Islamic actors have developed partnerships in providing welfare services based on short-term trends and without systematic planning. In fact, UK Islamic welfare programs are consistent with the liberal polity type described by Koenig (2005). For this author, the UK model of religious integration within the public sphere encourages a plurality of religious orientations and associated charity organizations. According to Koenig, the UK institutional structures offer the opportunity for Islamic organizations to implement religious public programs in a decentralized manner by negotiating with civil society actors at the local level.

Islamic street welfare in France

Unlike the UK, the French state has adopted a centralized republican model that does not integrate and recognize particular religious identities in the public sphere (Koenig 2005). Consequently, French institutions do not seek out interaction with religious organizations in providing welfare services and shaping social policies. An analysis of Islamic charity in France reveals a high degree of centralization and homogeneity in the assistance provided to targeted groups that are completely isolated from state institutions.

The most important Islamic charity organizations were founded to obtain financial resources in France to implement humanitarian activities at the international level. At the national level, these activities began with the distribution of meals during Islamic festivals in the 1980s and 1990s. Especially during the last decade, French Islamic charity organizations have centralized and reorganized specific national services for the homeless and poor people, especially through meal distribution. The arrival of a large number of Islamic immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and undocumented individuals from Iraq, Afghanistan, Tunisia, and Libya in 2011 forced the associations to reorient their resources toward more local programs. Furthermore, the global crisis has reduced quality of life for a portion of the French population. Consequently, the Islamic charity associations also extend their services to the non-Muslim sector of society. One example of this recent trend is provided by the Islamic organization Au Coeur de la précarité (ACDLP),⁴ which was founded in 2009 and has 300 volunteers who find homeless and poor people on the street and provide hot meals and psychological support. The organization also provides meals during the month of Ramadan for the homeless. These services are provided to all people independent of their religion; however, the majority of the people helped are

Muslims, immigrants, or illegal residents. The ACDLP also cooperates with the Hotel Social de Villepinte in visiting and assisting the families of refugees, offering after-school courses and food for refugee families. The organization is also engaged in cleaning activities across the most difficult neighborhoods of Paris.

Unlike the ACDLP, the Secours islamique France (SIF)⁵ was founded in 1991 and was engaged mainly in humanitarian activities outside of Europe. At the beginning meal distribution for refugees and immigrants inside France was a marginal activity for this organization. However, during the last decade the association has increased its distribution of food parcels and hygiene kits among the homeless and refugees in collaboration with institutions and civil actors such as the association Restos du coeur.⁶ The organization has developed a project named EPISOL in Paris that provides a network of grocery stores that provide food to low-income individuals and micro-credit offices. Since 2009, the SIF has also provided night and day residences for the homeless in the winter. At first, the association organized the distribution of meals as a seasonal activity that was not conceived of as complementary to state activities. However, during the last five years the association has transformed its offerings into regular services in cooperation with the public authorities. The SIF increasingly helps disadvantaged people to use the state health and social services in cooperation with Catholic associations. Also, the association Une Chorba pour tous,⁷ which was founded in 1992, aims to improve access to public services for the most disadvantaged portion of the Parisian population. At first, the organization provided meals during Ramadan. Since 2006 it has offered daily food packages and hot meals. In addition, more recently it has organized a legal service that explains to residents and citizens how to obtain housing and social benefits from public institutions. Since 2008 it has organized regular school support courses, professional training programs, and literacy courses.

Based on the above examples, it is evident that in the last decade French associations have increased their cooperation with other civil society actors and public institutions. However, the republican model of excluding religious organizations from the public sphere still influences the patterns of the French Islamic welfare agencies. Islamic charity organizations are not integrated into the public framework for social policy. These organizations target the most excluded residents, those who are not entitled to the social rights of citizens or residents. In summary, the increase in the number of Islamic welfare agencies in France is more closely related to the worsening of conditions for urban residents than to new patterns of interaction between religious organizations and public institutions or to new subsidy programs.

Turkish Islamic welfare programs in Germany and the Netherlands

The Islamic welfare agencies in Germany and the Netherlands provide a useful example of how transnational and national factors jointly impact the incorporation of Islamic associations into European countries. In Germany and the Netherlands, several Turkish Islamic movements include social activities as part of their religious strategy.

However, the prevailing models of citizenship and migratory regimes in the two countries impact the recognition of Islamic organizations and the social needs of immigrants differently. Consequently, the welfare services offered by Turkish Islamic organizations can vary according to the institutional environment. On the one hand, the Netherlands proposes a multicultural model of citizenship that is associated with the pillar system (Lijphart 1968). On the other hand, according to the German corporatist model only institutionalized religions can be a part of the public sphere (Koenig 2005). Furthermore, in Germany the *ius sanguinis* model of citizenship has only recently been modified. In the 1980s and 1990s, guest workers were excluded from

the national welfare system via a nationality law based on an ethnic assimilationist model (Bommes and Geddes 2000). Bommes considers German Islamic organizations to have facilitated access to social resources for excluded individuals at the transnational and local levels:

In the highly regulated German society, with its high levels of welfare provision and social services, Islamic associative networking is seen as an attempt to set up welfare services as alternatives to those offered by the German welfare state.

(Amiroux 2000: 239)

In Germany, Turkish Islamic organizations compensate for public policy by serving residents and vulnerable citizens. For this reason, the welfare services of Millî Görüş in Germany can be seen as providing a way for the organization to play a public role even when state institutions refuse to recognize that role. In fact, the role of Millî Görüş in providing welfare services and the relevance of the association's welfare agency in Germany are proportional to the conflicting relationship between the organization and public institutions.

Conversely, in the Netherlands several Turkish Islamic movements (including the North Millî Görüş Federation) structure social activities in such a way that they are complementary to (rather than parallel to) institutional policies. For instance, Diyanet in Rotterdam owns seven mosques, only one of which is exclusively religious; the others are mainly engaged in social activism (Canatan et al. 2003). The social mosques target young people by developing after-school courses, organizing sports activities, and providing scholarships for students. On the other hand, the Gülen movement provides an array of educational services that help to improve the socio-economic integration of Turkish immigrants. In the Netherlands the Gülen movement has ten student dormitories that are a part of the National Organization of Boarding Schools (Yukleyen 2012: 214). The dormitories are part of a larger strategy that is intended to motivate second- and third-generation immigrants to achieve higher levels of education. Different research attests to the positive influence of these dormitories on student performance. For that reason, the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science and the Rotterdam Municipality have financed some of these dormitories and their activities, as in the case of Het Centrum in Rotterdam (Yukleyen 2012: 215)

In both countries, the Islamic organizations develop similar social activities but integrate them into a different framework of state–religion interactions. In the Netherlands, the state recognizes multicultural contributions in the public sphere and encourages Islamic organizations to cooperate with public institutions in projects that foster social cohesion. In Germany, the religious welfare activities targeting residents increase the strength and the authority of Islamic organizations in proposing an alternative to state-run public services. Furthermore, in the case of Millî Görüş, the welfare agency plays a role in advocating for the recognition of religious minorities in the public sphere. The Dutch and German cases suggest that the recognition of a religious group and the national citizenship model interact in shaping the role and function of the Islamic welfare agency in European states.

Islamic cantonal welfare in Switzerland

In Switzerland, the variety of cantons has produced twenty-six different types of integrative policy (Cattacin and Bülent 2001) and twenty-six types of relationship between secular and spiritual authorities (Marti et al. 2010). The federal constitution does not recognize any religion as the national religion. Article 72, paragraph 1 Cst. states that the relationship between religion and the state must be managed at the cantonal level.

The federal system encourages Islamic organizations to structure their social activities inside cantonal borders. Thus, the social needs of their members are connected with the model of citizenship proposed by the canton of residence. At the same time, their social programs depend on how cantonal institutions recognize the social functions of religious associations. For instance, the features of Islamic welfare agencies vary in Geneva and Zurich, two cantons that have opposing models of citizenship and separation of church and state.

In Switzerland, the first Islamic organizations were founded in the 1960s and 1970s. However, during the past two decades they have diversified their activities to cope with demographic changes in the Muslim population in Switzerland. Since the 1980s, the variety of nationalities among labor immigrants practicing Islam has greatly increased. Furthermore, family reunification among immigrants from outside Europe has enlarged the number of female members of Islamic associations. Consequently, in the last decade Islamic organizations have multiplied their social activities for young people and female members. Many cantonal networks of Islamic organizations offer social activities, including after-school courses, language courses (French and German), sports activities, economic support for members in difficult economic situations, social chaplains in hospitals, cultural mediation, and services for refugees and asylum seekers.

However, cantonal institutional structures influence the strength and the features of the social agency among Islamic associations. For instance, the canton of Geneva does not finance religious organizations based on their religious identity. However, the cantonal institutions offer economic opportunities to associations that promote civic and secular values. These policies encourage religious associations to interact with other local non-religious actors to attain recognition and visibility in the public sphere.

In Geneva, the Islamic associations founded in the 1960s and 1970s have increased their contact with non-Islamic associations to achieve common social projects. Women and youth activists play a substantial role in providing the resources necessary to implement social projects by reframing religious identity. For instance, the Islamic Center of Geneva (ICG) is one of the oldest Islamic centers in Europe. It was founded in 1961 by Said Ramadan to support Islamic intellectuals in diasporas. Recently, the ICG has increased its activities and relationships with local secular associations to support labor immigrants spiritually and materially. The ICG currently provides services to the most vulnerable immigrants in Geneva with the cooperation of local institutions such as social services and the police force. On the other side of the city, Saudi Arabia created the Islamic Cultural Foundation in 1978. This multi-service center organizes a wide range of activities. Its 1,500-person capacity makes the mosque a resource for Muslims in the city.

In both centers, many volunteers work to meet the various needs of refugees and immigrants. Furthermore, women and young people organize the most innovative activities, improving the relationship between these two centers and other civil society actors in Geneva. In addition, a new type of Islamic organization has recently emerged in the canton. The Islamic Cultural Association in Meyrin, founded in 2007, and the Association *nouvel horizon*, founded in 2006, focus on encouraging active citizenship among their members. Both associations have prominent female and second-generation leaders, which has improved the organizations' local strategy for interacting with other institutions and local actors. These organizations offer relevant social services such as crèches and after-school courses for Muslim and non-Muslim populations. Islamic associations of this new type, however, do not yet exist in Zurich, where the state finances the role of the churches in society and where the logic of integration is more ethno-assimilationist than in Geneva.

In Zurich, mainly mono-national (Pakistani, Albanian, Turkish, and Maghrebian) Islamic organizations offer social activities as part of their religious identity rather than because of a

desire to emphasize civic engagement. The Gülen movement has encouraged school support for non-Muslim and Muslim students, especially by motivating second-generation students to continue their education. Since 1963, the Ahmadis have organized environmental activities (e.g. cleaning public parks, ecological learning) and activities that support the elderly Muslim and non-Muslim populations. The center Dzemmat der islamischen Gemeinschaften Bosnians, founded in 1982, became a resource for the Bosnian community by developing social activities for children, women, and the elderly. The Albanian Muslim communities centralize their religious, social, and cultural lives around the Albanisch-islamische Gemeinschaft. This center helps families to use cultural mediation to enable successful integration by the second generation. Similar services were implemented in 2002 by the Stiftung der islamischen Jugend and in 2001 by Al Hidaya Verein, an association whose main focus is Maghrebian Muslims.

The comparison between forms of Islamic welfare in Zurich and Geneva shows how cantonal autonomy can influence Islamic welfare agencies. Cantonal institutions indirectly affect Islamic social actors by positioning differently welfare services, the separation of church and state, and immigration.

Italy: the organizing process for Islamic immigrants

In Italy, Islamic welfare agencies have stimulated the process of self-organization among immigrants. Scholars agree that in Italy immigrants have founded associations that have helped them to survive and overcome the lack of social resources that they have faced in settling there (Mantovan 2007; Sciortino 2003). Islamic associations have improved the legal and administrative status of immigrants by asserting the right of all immigrants to housing, as well as their human rights. Islam as a supranational ideology has played a relevant role in improving immigrant self-organization. Many Islamic religious associations, such as Mouride associations, the Union of Islamic Italian Communities and Organizations (UCOII), and the Muslim Students' Union, have played a leading role in unifying several immigrant associations throughout the country. Islamic associations provide housing services, meals, and legal support for immigrants. At the same time, they also create the organizational structures for asserting the social rights of residents and illegal immigrants and for mobilizing people in the name of this cause. The most relevant example is the direct mobilization of immigrants in the late 1980s, which included squatters' movements and demonstrations for housing rights (in Rome, Milan, and Bologna). One of the first multinational organizations was created at that time. Called the United Asia Workers Association (UAWA), this organization brought together Pakistani, Bengali, and other Asian workers (Knights and King 1998). Among the UAWA leaders were many members of the Bengali associations that had founded and financed Islamic centers in Rome in the previous decade. Especially in the Pigneto, one of the poorest municipal districts in Rome, mosques founded by Bengali leaders became multi-service centers for Islamic immigrants. During the 1990s, Italian Islamic associations developed the ability to defend Islamic interests in the larger context of legal claims. Islamic immigrants have increasingly made contact with different autochthonous actors with whom they have shared several social struggles. For instance, in 1999 the Islamic centers of Turin organized a demonstration against a rule banning the wearing of headscarves in residence permit photographs. However, the demonstration eventually also addressed the social, civil, and political rights of immigrants.⁸ In his speech, the imam Buriqi Boucha addressed citizenship rights, the issue of residence permit renewals for labor immigrants, and that of residence permits for illegal immigrants (Grisei 1999). Similarly, in the national immigrant demonstration in Brescia in June 2000, the Islamic contribution was crucial because many immigrant workers who requested the "regularization" of their immigration status were

active in Islamic Senegalese organizations. In Bovezzo, in particular, the speeches of the *marabouts* across Mouride religious circles were instrumental in the protest (Tedeschi and Penocchio 2000).

In recent decades the Islamic associations have become more integrated within the network of local organizations such as Caritas and Catholic charity associations. These associations emphasize anti-racism and projects intended to promote integration and social cohesion. For instance, the mosque al-Huda in Centocelle jointly runs a food distribution project with local municipal institutions and Catholic associations in Rome. In Milan, the Casa della cultura islamica received a municipal official reward for social engagement in 2009. The Islamic center provides notable economic support to unemployed families; it also distributes daily meal vouchers and hot meals. In the first decade of the century, Islamic organizations became steadily aware of their political and social importance, such that in 2011 the imam of one of the oldest Islamic centers in Milan became the first immigrant candidate for municipal election.⁹

A glance at the United States: American Islamic social programs

I will conclude this chapter by describing the recent engagement with social justice of American Muslims in the United States as the most innovative example of an Islamic articulation of the civilizing process (Salvatore 2011). American Islamic social programs in the United States are a result of structured and qualified cooperation with public institutions in the welfare field. In some ways, the US case study foreshadows future social programs by European Islamic associations.

The consequences of 9/11 reshaped Islamic welfare in the United States by producing a successful experience of cooperation between state institutions and Islamic organizations to implement a variety of public welfare programs.

At the national level, the participation of ICNA Relief in the federal program Disaster Response through Disaster Recovery¹⁰ clearly illustrates the emergence of a new type of interaction between domestic Islamic organizations and federal, state, and local levels of government. ICNA Relief is a non-profit organization that is a branch of the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), a large umbrella organization of Islamic organizations in the United States. It was founded in 1993 (Curtis 2010: 289). In the aftermath of 9/11, the most relevant Islamic relief organizations in the United States, such as the Holy Land Foundation and the Global Relief Foundation, were prevented from continuing their international charity activities by the US Treasury Department (GhaneaBassiri 2010: 351).¹¹ These measures have led Islamic associations such as ICNA Relief to conduct their charity activities in the United States rather than at the international level. In 2005, ICNA Relief joined the American Muslim Taskforce for Disaster Relief to assist victims of hurricanes. This organization cooperates with public institutions and other volunteer organizations, such as long-term recovery committees, that assist with disasters. In fact, ICNA Relief is currently engaged in providing legal and financial assistance and information about services and benefits for the victims of Hurricane Sandy. ICNA Relief also runs health clinics for disadvantaged people, such as the Shifa Clinic.¹² Moreover, it provides telephone and online counseling for domestic violence and suicide prevention. ICNA Relief's women's shelter¹³ and hunger prevention¹⁴ programs target the entire population by systematically cooperating with local public institutions and other religious associations. At the national level, the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), which is considered one of the largest Islamic umbrella organizations in the United States, has improved its public image by developing social programs in the United States (Curtis 2010: 298). Since the late 1990s, ISNA has created two departments for social services and community development to prevent domestic violence and to provide refugee resettlement and youth services. The consequences of

9/11 have led ISNA to increasingly focus attention on local communities and the social problems of American Muslims. This strategy has contributed to renewing organizational structures and expanding the influence of ISNA across the United States.

As international donors have decreased financing to Islamic organizations because of the fear of allegations of terrorism, Islamic organizations have increasingly based their activities on Muslim American donors. The lack of international financing has restructured the activities of the oldest Islamic organizations while paving the way for new welfare projects and new organizations that are rooted in local networks of civil society actors. The Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN) is a relevant example of how “the Islamic perspective provides insights into the interplay between civilizing processes and the modes through which cultural traditions innervate a modern public sphere” (Salvatore 2011: 55). The association was founded in 1995 to connect associations and residents who were engaged in improving social cohesion in the Chicago area.¹⁵ Afro-American Muslims and second-generation Muslims continue to be the main components of this multipurpose organization. IMAN began organizing social services by addressing various disadvantaged populations (Abdo 2006). To achieve social change, IMAN provides primary health care and support to uninsured populations on Chicago’s southwest side. Its health clinic manages health emergencies as well as chronic diseases and conducts prevention activities.

IMAN uses the various migratory backgrounds of its members, especially Muslim Latinos, to promote civil rights for undocumented residents of Chicago. For instance, IMAN participated in the UCCRO¹⁶ Arizona Human Rights Solidarity Ride to fight SB1070, a racial profiling law, in Arizona. By supporting similar initiatives across Christian and Muslim communities, IMAN aims to increase “opportunities to create broad alliances with other marginalized communities that can advance the rights of all.”¹⁷

The association has conducted campaigns to promote voting, to oppose drugs, gangs and violence, and to support a state law to increase the number of fresh food supermarkets in poor communities.

In response to the SMART Act,¹⁸ IMAN created drug schools as an alternative to imprisonment for drug offenders and supported job training for drug offenders that involved renovating houses in disadvantaged areas of Chicago.

INCA Relief, INSA, and IMAN develop social programs that are typical examples of the new welfare engagement of American Muslims. In a period of economic, climatic, and social crisis, institutions and civil society recognize American Muslim organizations as relevant public actors who are improving the common good across the nation.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I analyzed several case studies of Islamic welfare programs in different European countries and in the United States. Three explanatory factors (transnational influences, church–state cleavages, and models of citizenship) interact and impact social Islamic activities differently across countries. In France and the United Kingdom, Islamic welfare programs and the relationship between Islamic organizations and public institutions are mainly influenced by the model of citizenship and migratory regimes. In Germany and the Netherlands I focused on transnational influences and migratory regimes, while in Italy and Switzerland I focused on church–state cleavages and migratory regimes. All these case studies show the emergence of the Islamic welfare presence in the public sphere across Western European countries and empirically confirm recent innovative theories.

In fact, scholars have reframed established theories on civil society by explaining the conceptual interaction between Islam and the public sphere (Salvatore 2007, 2005, 1997). In this

way, “Public Islam” becomes a concept which is historically relevant and empirically fruitful. Furthermore, LeVine and Salvatore have reconciled theoretically the two concepts of “civil society and public sphere” with Islamic social agency:

We argue that the operation performed by socioreligious movements comes close to Gramsci’s notion of “good sense” [*buon senso*] as the key to mobilize politically marginalized sectors of society. Such movements thus contribute to the constitution and contestation of norms of public life by providing services to their communities and articulating social justice claims that challenge the discourse of rights that is the daily bread of secular elites. A specific combination of “resistance” and “project” identities deployed by socio-religious movements impinge on the legitimacy of both state and (more recently) NGO elites, and through them, on the allocation of resources for development, welfare and education. This process unfolds through the creation of historically novel lines of solidarity that, without being utopically “horizontal,” challenge state-centric, vertically defined, disciplinary discourses of the social.

(LeVine and Salvatore 2010: 66)

As a result of this approach, the Islamic category of the common good (*maslaha*) has regained its relevance for the sociological and historical understanding of the Islamic presence in Europe and in Western societies in general. To conclude, in recent decades Islamic welfare programs in Europe and in the United States have indicated that Muslim communities are significantly influencing their non-Muslim surroundings by reframing concepts of social cohesion and religious social responsibility in the public sphere.

Notes

- 1 www.eurislam.eu/page=site.home (accessed September 29, 2012).
- 2 www.unige.ch/ses/resop/index.html (accessed September 29, 2012).
- 3 www.nlmcc.org.uk/ (accessed September 29, 2012).
- 4 www.aucoeurdelaprecarite.com/ (accessed September 29, 2012).
- 5 www.secoures-islamique.org/france.html (accessed September 29, 2012).
- 6 www.restosducoeur.org/content/pr%C3%A9sentation (accessed September 29, 2012).
- 7 chorbapourtous.wordpress.com/ (accessed September 29, 2012).
- 8 ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1999/10/31/la-marcia-dell-islam-torino.html.
- 9 www.alfattoquotidiano.it/2011/03/02/milano-lista-multi-etnica-per-le-comunalishaari-la-prima-novita-da-ventanni/94599/ (accessed November 15, 2012).
- 10 icnarelief.org/site2/ (accessed November 14, 2012).
- 11 The US Treasury Department charged some of these associations with terrorism. However, only the founders of the Holy Land Foundation were convicted in court by a controversial sentence.
- 12 shifa101.com/site/ (accessed November 15, 2012).
- 13 Its women’s shelter program offers temporary housing for homeless women and increases their social capital by supporting them with financial and legal aid to help them reintegrate into working life.
- 14 The hunger prevention program targets poor families to support their basic food needs.
- 15 www.imancentral.org/ (accessed November 14, 2012).
- 16 United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations.
- 17 www.imancentral.org/take-action/past-actions/on-the-road-to-arizona/ (accessed November 14, 2012).
- 18 A bill that proposed alternative “drug schools” for non-violent drug offenders.

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