Interpreting Muslim Religious Interest Groups in Spain:

Frames, Organisation and Influence

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Spain is characterised by its historical rejection of Muslims' cultural traditions and practices. Massive immigration in the last decade has increased such negative perceptions about "the Moors". It is common to associate Muslims with insecurity, delinquency and incivility. Therefore, the social and political integration of religious minorities is very limited. Institutional marginalization and social obedience are applied by the Spanish institutions. This article provides a review of all factors determining the structure of political opportunities of Muslim interest groups. Three conclusions can be highlighted: First, the Muslims have enormous difficulties in participating in politics as they find it difficult to find allies to carry out their initiatives. It is argued that this is a result of institutional and social rejection. Second, their lack of influence in Spanish politics is also due to poor organization and a hierarchical sense of Islamic idiosyncrasy that does not permit the establishment of cohesive, representative organizations. And third, despite its outsider position, their persistence over long term strategies is ultimately successful. This article analyzes the politics of Islamic cemetery in Granada, Spain, by reviewing its main events, the characteristics of the actors, the evolution of demands over time, and the relations of power among actors. The interviews, questionnaires and documents review have been conducted to support our argument. Moreover, the paper has applied social network analysis to the case study.

Keywords: Muslim communities, religious interest groups, Spain, Islamic cemeteries, social networks

Europe has to promptly deal with nascent problems concerning religious diversity and the integration of immigrants. Far from accepting multicultural solutions, today any moral claim becomes a matter of "black or white" behind rambling arguments which end up in the stereotyping of individuals and groups (Stenger, 2005; Bail, 2008). There is a widespread view that anti-immigrant parties, Islamophobia and ghettoization are increasing phenomena throughout Europe (Brug, Fennema, & Tillie, 2000). So far, if there was to be a European strategy, with a shortage of exceptions, it has unfolded in two ways: On the one hand, national governments have been prone to regulating the general conditions for religious diversity whereas; on the other hand, local governments have unevenly struggled in giving response to quite polarised conflicts, often with very few, uncoordinated resources (Maussen, 2006).

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Despite obstacles, if conflicts affecting Muslims are common, whether they concern natives or newcomers, then one should expect some kind of political mobilisation. According to this basic principle of pluralist theory (Bentley, 1908), there have been enough political attempts to prevent Muslims from social power so that their latent interests would have emerged as a collective response (Truman, 1951). Nevertheless, Muslim interest groups are neither visible nor influential, at least not as much as the Catholic Church is.

But, how do we reach Muslim religious interest groups? Actually, little has been written on such a specific issue and, as a consequence, our understanding of both Muslim interest group organisation and behaviour is limited (Fowler, 1985; Weber & Jones, 1994; Hofrenning, 1995). One may uphold the idea that they share similar patterns and flaws as any other groups. Broadly speaking, interest group theorists have long pondered a suitable set of questions when it comes to identifying the power of any group (Olson, 1965; Lowi, 1969; Dunleavy, 1988; Knoke, 1990; Miller, 1990; Gais & Walker, 1991). In a nutshell, our analysis is based on organisation (members, resources), activity (strategies, contacts) and outcomes (effectiveness, policy goals) in a long-term policy process.

There are three aims in this article: First, the paper deciphers the structure of political opportunities for Muslims in Spain; secondly, it defines the potential determinants of the influence capacity of Muslim religious interest groups; thirdly, it tests the hypotheses by offering a case study on the establishment of an Islamic cemetery in the city of Granada, Spain. For this purpose, we have conducted various interviews and questionnaires to the main actors involved in the process as well as gathered documents from the institutions, private associations and the media.

Contextualizing Muslim Religious Interest Groups in Spain

In 2008, 19.5 million foreign citizens resided in the EU27, a sum that accounted for 6.2% of the population of the European Union (Eurostat, 2009). Germany (7.3 million), Spain (5.3 million), the United Kingdom (4.0 million), France (3.7 million) and Italy (3.4 million) recorded more than 75% of foreign residents in the European Union. The main immigrant groups come from Turkey (2.4 million), Romania (1.7 million), Morocco (1.7 million), Italy (1.3 million), Poland (1.2 million) and Albania (1.0 million). The growth of the foreign population has been a sharp, rapid trend, for example, this trend has doubled immigration figures in Ireland in the period between 2002-2006 and has come to represent an increase of more than three quarters in Spain for the same period (Eurostat, 2008).

Migration has been one of the factors that have increased the stalled religious complexity in Europe (Davie, 1994, 2000, 2006a, 2006b; Levitt, 2007). The presence of new religious communities has forced to redirect the religious affairs into public scrutiny to the extent that they are all increasingly demanding changes in the European way of doing things, the inclusiveness of their practices and more places of worship. As a consequence, alarmist reactions considering social and religious disputes have appeared (Klausen, 2005). Public authorities have been quick to promote resources to quell any outbreaks and citizen protests, while looking for stable partners with whom to negotiate the demands of Muslims (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2010). Notwithstanding to date, there is no such European model to deal with religious diversity. In fairness, one can find a tremendous lack of uniformity between experience in, for instance, France, Germany and the UK (Doomernik, 1995; Spencer, 1997; Favell, 1998; Fetzer & Soper, 2005; Geaves, 2005; Maussen, 2005, 2007).

In order to contextualise the Spanish case, the paper points out the dynamics affecting the political and social scenario in which Muslims are expected to interact. Also, it highlights some particular religious and

organisational traits that may be the obstacles for deeper effectiveness. As shown in Figure 1, up to five variables are taken into account, namely: (1) The framing of religious issues; (2) The social acceptance of Islam; (3) The legal recognition of religious diversity and its implications in tackling integration policies; (4) The organisational characteristics of Muslim groups; and (5) The evolution of the actor's network. Of course, there should be a kind of multi-level feedback amongst this array of concepts and processes in which local conflicts shift into a state-wide concern and vice-versa.
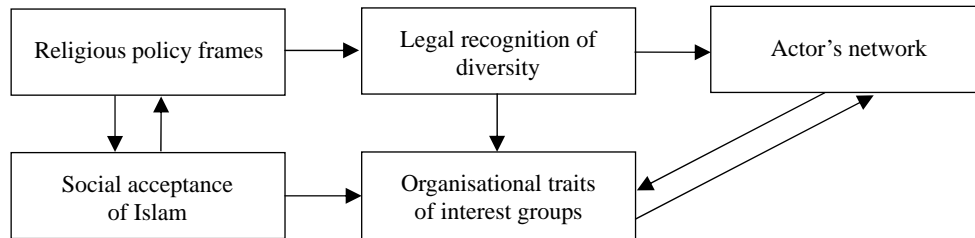

Figure 1. Feedback among processes affecting Muslim religious interest groups. Source: The authors' own research.

Religious Policy Frames

Islamophobia has filled the institutionalization and integration of Muslims throughout Europe with hostility and prejudice (Poole, 2002). Some issues are less accepted than others because of their alleged level of consciousness and social intolerance which, in turn, "implies a dichotomy between non-ethnic 'us' and ethnic 'others'" (Bloul, 2003, p. 6). Islam is widely perceived in the political sphere as a fanatical, fundamentalist and repressive threat (Marranci, 2004; Goldberg, 2006). It is in vogue to discriminate Islamic culture (Foner, 2005).

The process of ethnic distinction has led to a "re-Islamisation" of younger generations (Laurence & Vaisse, 2006). They have embraced their own culture, sometimes in pure orthodoxy, as a way of protesting against such social discrimination and cultural marginalisation (Cesari, 2004). With this, the ability to include faith-based claims in the public agenda contrasts with a background full of biased perceptions, lack of understanding and mutual disinterest.

As for Spain, Zapata-Barrero (2006) had given accounts of the deep-rooted negative perceptions of "the Moors". Chiefly, four points may be suggested: First, surveys on Spanish nationhood always stress the Spanish preference that Muslims should not damage the features of the Spanish identity (Díez, 2005); second, discourses about immigration are relatively unsophisticated (Bail, 2008); third, there is huge interest in the Spanish media in reporting Al-Qaeda's activity (please, remember Madrid terrorist attack); and fourth, the (permanent) Moroccan desire to recover the Spanish cities of Ceuta and Melilla.

Social Acceptance of Islam

Social acceptance, as a social attribute, is heavily intertwined with the development of the religious frame. Attitudes are used as an argument to justify public policies. Islamophobia has degenerated in the subsequent establishment of symbolic boundaries (Abbott, 1995). These boundaries are determined by culture (language, clothing), religion (traditions), space (neighbourhoods, recreation areas) and even education (schools). These symbolic boundaries are fishing grounds for many other social boundaries (i.e., citizenship laws) whose immediate impact is by far more profound.

By examining the entire configuration of symbolic boundaries, one can identify how the social boundaries previously protected by race are renegotiated. In this way, the boundary-work literature attempts to explain why majority groups choose certain symbolic boundaries, incorporating some groups while excluding others. The

manner in which symbolic boundaries are policed or made permeable reveals the strategic—although often subconscious—interests of majority groups (Bail, 2008, p. 39).

To the extent that a feature of the collective memory of the Spaniards is their massive rejection of the Muslims (Barnier, 1997), it is producing a gradual growth of racism among young people (Jiménez, 2006). A major critique of this situation is the media's interest in perpetuating some sort of pernicious expression. Journalists often tend to label Muslim children as "Muslims of second or third generation", although they have been born in Spain. In addition, Moreras (2005) suggested that the conflict has taken an intellectual dimension due to a publishing boom of books such as *Spain and Islam, The New Islamic Terrorism* or *3/11, Revenge*.[1]

Legal Recognition of Diversity and Policies of Integration

Historically, Spain has used a discriminatory recognition favouring Christians and Spanish-speakers over other groups (Zapata-Barrero, 2010). The *Transición* left unresolved problems associated with religion, language and national pluralism. Although the Spanish Constitution equates the rights of nationals to foreign residents (art. 13.1 SP), it recreates a "framework of institutional discrimination or ethnicisation, with only 'preferential nationalities' receiving full political rights" (Zapata-Barrero, 2010, p. 389). Two examples: On the one hand, it excludes immigrants from voting, except in some cases; on the other hand, it promotes an asymmetric privileging of church by which the state funds religious schools and allows the broadcast of a weekly mass on public television.

Labrador suggested that this short-sightedness has led to "reduce the multiple dimensions of immigration almost exclusively to work ... and a problem of public order and security" (Labrador, 2004, p. 9). In that sense, the Foreign Law is thoroughly discriminatory with regard to labour issues. Recruitment of Spanish or EU citizens take priority over the non-EU workers who are obliged to obtain a work permit before arriving in Spain (Zapata-Barrero, 2010). Reinforcing this idea, Howard (2005) placed Spain as one of Europe's most restrictive countries in the politics of citizenship, scoring 0 out of 6 on issues such as ascription/birth, naturalization and dual citizenship.

Regardless of the Foreign Law, three public programs have supplemented the governmental action with regard to immigrants: the socialist PISI (Plan for the Social Integration of Immigrants, 1995), which only offered recommendations to avoid a conflict between natives and immigrants (Agrela, 2002); the GRECO Plan (Global Programme of Regulation and Coordination of Foreigners and Immigration, 2000) while ruling the *Partido Popular*, which was designed by the Ministry of Interior and not by the Ministry of Social Affairs, and therefore the plan focused rather on the control of immigration than on integration (Ruiz, 2003); and the Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration (2007), under the Socialist Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which propelled immigrant integration through multidimensional means (education, employment, housing, social services, health, etc.). However, the financial crisis caused adjustments in the ministry (now labour and immigration) and the prioritization of programs of voluntary return of immigrants and quota restrictions on entry.

Actors and Networks

Rath, Penninx, Groenendijk and Meyer (2001) perceived the local level as pivotal for analysing religious conflicts. It is there where cultural tensions are palpable and materialize into concrete demands. At the same time, disputes boost leaders and stimulate the organised action of individuals. While the state-level becomes the forum where legal frameworks are discussed (Hackett, 2005), local negotiations discuss Mosques, Islamic

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[1] Please, note that titles are a translation from Spanish.

cemeteries, schooling for newcomers' children, or licenses for establishments to Muslims.

It must be pointed out that in complex situations, "in-group and out-group perceptions tend to be profoundly biased" (Del Sarto, 2005, p. 322). If networks fail in using reciprocity, it provokes the increase of misconceptions and errors of communication. Therefore, common elements—such as culture or shared interests—serve as references for collective action, although these may be exaggerated or invented (Bloom, 1990). Del Sarto emphasized that there was a tendency to antagonize cultures—"Arab-Islamic" versus "Europe and the West"—so that "in fact (it) tends to increase the perception of homogeneity within the respective culture" (Del Sarto, 2005, p. 323).

Organisational Traits of Muslim Religious Interest Groups

Islam's historical idiosyncrasy is, as Gregorian explained (2003), a mosaic, not a monolith. There are four denominations within Islam, so to speak, branches that share the same religious beliefs but with important legal and theological differences. In a nutshell, about 90% of Muslims are Sunnis, who believe that Muhammad was a prophet and an exemplary person who should imitated. The second largest branch is Shi'a who are primarily located in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain and Lebanon. The third branch is the Ahmadiyya whose members believe that the caliph must be elected by the community. Finally, Sufism is a spiritual practice with Sunni and Shi'a followers around the world.

Islam is a decentralized, non-hierarchical religion with multiple and often competing schools of law and social requirements. In contrast to Catholicism, Islamic religious leaders have no enforcement mechanisms to obtain obedience from their adherents; there are no sacraments in Islam which can be withheld from Muslims in order to obtain compliance with the wishes of imams or other "clerics" regarding policy decisions which they may support or condone. Islam's decentralized structure prevents Islamic organizations from making credible commitments about their actions to others. Further, Islam does not provide organizational structure which can easily give private rewards to those who participate in collective action and which can punish those who free-ride. This lack of hierarchical religious authority is exacerbated in Europe, where there is neither embedded Islamic tradition nor state support for a particular religious interpretation and set of practices (Warner & Wenner, 2006, p. 461).

As mentioned above, the lack of hierarchies forces Muslims to establish local communities so that they can provide religious assistance, cultural hegemony and social identification. These communities are, at the same time, the meeting point between Muslims and local authorities. Thus, such communities end up becoming interest groups in defence of the interests of immigrants. Many of the leaders of these communities promote religion as an alternative source of social and national identity, and are often funded by grants from Islamic countries or Diaspora organizations (Pfaff & Gill, 2006). In short, the internal politics of a religious community is defined by four factors: (1) religious doctrine; (2) the proclaimed aims; (3) the means of realising those goals; as well as (4) offered benefits and incentives (Marczewska-Rytko, 2003). The lack of a consensual doctrine allows the existence of various Mosques in the same municipality, and the demand by Muslims to have such distinction. The doctrine essentially fixes attitudes toward the world and how to act, from moderate to extremist positions. The accession of Muslims to them is a matter of self-identification, but also a matter of the status of the community. The status provides evidence whether its events and initiatives are public and socially tolerated.

Influence and Power of Muslim Religious Interest Groups in Spain

The review of the structural and organizational conditions of Muslims in Spain has clarified a number of

barriers that hamper any attempt to accomplish objectives through collective action. We could accept that lacking a powerful peak association, whether a political or a religious one, makes it more difficult for Muslims to achieve structural reforms. There are neither representatives of religious minorities in Parliament nor pro-Islam media. According to the so-called "institutional marginalisation", if we must await some sort of influence, it would be likely to occur at the local tier (see Table 1).

Table 1

Expected Scenarios for Muslim Religious Interest Groups

Level	Muslim presence	Sort of demands	Example of demands	Expected scenario
National	Weak. Ad-hoc associations Poorly integrated	Structural Controversial	Legal changes Institutional reforms Cultural acceptance Citizens policies Migration policies	High media coverage State-wide reaction Social rejection
Local	Fairly high. Religious communities Religious associations Mosques	Concrete Community-based demands	Cemeteries Mosques Cultural celebrations Integration policies	Low media coverage Local scope Neighbour tensions

Note. Source: The authors' own research.

However, this scenario, with some nuances, could be quite similar to any group purporting to reform the established status quo through outsider strategies (Grant, 1978). As they are settled at the local level, their achievements become small pieces of a massive puzzle. Nevertheless, any successful demand helps reinforce the set of benefits and incentives needed for the cohesion and co-operation within the community. In light of these statements, the paper proposes three hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): The lack of social acceptance of Islam hinders the political mobilisation of Muslims.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Public authorities will avoid reaching formal agreements with Muslims because of the religious controversy of their requests.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Muslims will persist in their efforts to pressure government if their goals are related to their cultural and religious identity.

Case Study: Actors and Policy Dynamics of the Islamic Cemetery in Granada, Spain

Main Events in the Establishment of the Islamic Cemetery of Granada

The current Islamic cemetery of Granada emerged as a war cemetery for the burial of soldiers from Franco's Guardia Mora during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). The cemetery is bounded at the municipal cemetery, inside the estate of Dehesa del Generalife, which is part of the whole Generalife.[2] After several centuries, in 1921, the state recovered the ownership of the cemetery, but the City Council has been responsible for the management of the Islamic cemetery, which was approved by the Mayor in 1938.

After the Fracoist dictatorship, the Spanish Government enacted a law on "Municipal burials" (Law 49/1978) which established the obligation to perform burials without any discrimination. Three years later (1981), the Statute of Autonomy for Andalusia was approved. According to Article 13.27, the regional government has exclusive jurisdiction over heritage which, in turn, gives the region the decision on the usage of

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[2] "Built between the 12th and 14th centuries, the Generalife was used as a place of rest for the Muslim royalty. It was designed as a rural villa in the vicinity of the Alhambra, with decorative garden, fruit and vegetable patches, courts and other structures". More information can be found at: http://www.alhambra-patronato.es/index.php/The-Generalife/31+M5d637b1e38d/0/

the estate. But the *Patronato de la Alhambra y el Generalife*, a state-region partnership in charge of preserving both UNESCO's world heritage, was entitled to manage such estate.

In 1980, the performance of burials in this cemetery was resumed by the first Muslim community established in Granada, the "Society for the Return to Islam in Spain". There was a demand for the regularisation of burial and for dignifying the cemetery, which should start by fencing off the perimeter.[3] In 1982, the City Council refused to build the fence, although the Muslim communities had proposed to bear all the costs by grants from some Arab states. In fact, burials were financed entirely by the communities themselves. Therefore, Muslim communities began to figure out the necessity of signing an agreement with the local authority. In 1983, after the repeated claims of Muslim communities, the General Secretariat (GS) of the City Council acknowledged the transfer in use of the estate to the Muslim communities, so the GS urged to make the fence around the Islamic cemetery and accepted that burials were to be made (Soddu, 2003).

Muslim burials ran smoothly until 1992-1993. At that time, there was a problem derived from the ban by the managers of the Municipal Cemetery for moving a deceased Muslim to the Islamic cemetery. The managers, with the support of the City Council, justified their decision based on legal arguments. The situation led to the rejection of the three Islamic communities in the city, and generated a high degree of tension between them and the municipal authorities. New Islamic burials in the cemetery were banned, arguing that the non-denominational nature of the Municipal Cemetery allowed hosting Muslim burials. Muslim communities expressed their total disagreement with this decision and asked the municipal authorities for more favourable solutions to their interests, especially the two alternatives: either the opportunity to continue with the performance of burials in the Islamic cemetery—which was the preferred solution for them—or the designation of a parcel of Municipal Cemetery for Muslim burials. The communities were not willing to accept any other similar case.

The next death of a Muslim took place several months later: It was a newborn son of a Muslim couple in the municipality. In view of the situation, the child's father unexpectedly evoked, in front of the courthouse, about 50 Muslims from the three Islamic communities settled in the town. The demonstrators, carrying the Spanish Constitution in one hand and the Koran in the other hand, protested energetically about the situation, which they understood as helplessness, taking advantage of the presence of journalists (television and press) who had been warned previously by the communities. In the end, the judge agreed to allow the burial to take place in the Islamic cemetery. The burial was attended by most of the Muslims of Granada and was widely reported by media.

According to Muslim communities, the episode showed the need to accelerate the conclusion of an agreement with the City Council on burials in, and management of, the Islamic cemetery. Muslim communities appealed to the fulfilment of the Law 26/1992 by which the Cooperation Agreement was constituted between the state and the Islamic Commission of Spain. Its Article 2.5 recognises the Muslim communities'—belonging to the Islamic Commission of Spain—several rights, for instance:

(1) Right to have their parcels reserved for Muslim burials in municipal cemeteries;

(2) Right to rule their own Islamic cemeteries;

(3) Right to carry out burials according to Islamic rules.

In this regard, in 1994 the Patronato de la Alhambra y el Generalife confirmed that an agreement with the City Council was only needed for permitting the Muslim communities to manage the Muslim cemetery (Soddu, 2003).

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[3] In a nutshell, the objectives were: to build a new fence for the cemetery and a room for washing and preparing bodies for burial according to Islamic rite, as well as maintenance and monitoring the cemetery.

In 1999, due to increasing demands, the Islamic Council of Granada [ICG] was formed. This Council was created under the auspices of the City Council and the then five Muslim communities. The ICG was supported by the Spanish Federation of Islamic Religious Entities [FEERI], but not for the Union of Islamic Communities of Spain [UCIDE], both warring at the national level. The IGC was intended to act as coordinated and united as possible in defence and pursuit of Muslim interests in Granada, while maintaining the autonomy of communities. However, the ICG failed to register as a religious entity in the Ministry of Justice, so it was not legalised.

It was not until 2006 that the ICG was legalised, after a period of relative inoperability and clashes between UCIDE and FEERI. Despite the problems that plagued its internal politics since its inception, the ICG managed to sign the agreement regarding the Islamic cemetery (2002). Its delegates—converts Pedro Coca Domínguez (Abu Umar Muhammad) and Manuel Maza Vielva (Zakaría Al-Qurtubi)—were qualified and respected voices of Islam in Granada and representatives of relevant Muslim religious interest groups (respectively, the *Junta Islámica* and the Spanish Islamic Community of the At-Taqwa Mosque). However, some communities were critical about the individual interests that had guided the negotiations, particularly highlighting the friendship ties between the "converts" and the authorities. This agreement legalised the burials, but did not get the City Council to make essential reforms in the cemetery.

In 2008, the Spanish Ministry of Culture—through the Institute of Spanish Historical Heritage—reported that the refurbishment of the cemetery would begin immediately with a budget that finally would be financed only by the institute. The Islamic cemetery could have 577 graves in an area of 4,500 m^2. The management, control and administration of the premises would correspond to EMUCESA—a local public company, whereas everything related to burials would be conducted by personnel designated by the Muslim communities.

Finally the Islamic cemetery was inaugurated in January 2009. The inauguration ceremony was attended, on behalf of Muslim communities, by Zakaría Maza, president of the Spanish Islamic Community of the At-Taqwa Mosque; Abdul-Qader Abu Hosni, president of "As-Salam" Mosque; and Ibrahim Lopez, spokesperson of "As-Salam" Mosque. On behalf of authorities, the ceremony was attended by: María del Mar Villafranca, director of the Patronato de la Alhambra; José Torres Hurtado, Mayor of Granada; Antonio Cruz, sub-delegate of the Spanish Government in Granada; and Antón Castro, subdirector of the Spanish Institute of Cultural Heritage. All of them agreed upon the importance of reforming the Islamic cemetery as a functional path for the social integration of Muslim communities in Granada.

Policy Community and Actor's Main Characteristics

The development of the cemetery policy, a cultural policy based on a religious frame, has shown the difficulties of understanding amongst the local Muslim communities. The paper has also highlighted the strained relationship between the Muslims communities and the local authorities. Local public responses have often ranged from denial, lack of leadership and forgetfulness. Over thirty years it has been needed to achieve Muslim burials in good conditions. Table 2 shows the Muslim associations in Granada.

One could not confirm that the main institutional features and power relations between actors are those of a political community. The contacts were not fluid as the continuity of the actors has been intermittent. They have just shared some few basic values, while tensions were permanent. Some clung to their institutional legitimacy while others relied on the sporadic media coverage of their actions. Table 3 shows the institutional actors and the media with presence in Granada.

Table 2

Muslim Associations in Granada

Name	Typology	Category	Group characteristics			
			Objectives	Organizational features	Presence	Level of communication
Islamic Community in Spain	Muslim community	Muslim community	Reforming the cemetery	First Muslim community in Granada	Low	Low
Spanish Muslim Community of the At-Taqwa Mosque	Muslim community	Muslim community	Reforming the cemetery	Second community emerged in Granada, split from the "Islamic Community in Spain"	High	High
"As-Salam" Mosque	Mosque	Place of worship	Reforming the cemetery	The largest Mosque	Low	Low
"Omar" Mosque	Mosque	Place of worship	Reforming the cemetery	Mosque attached to the Granada's Muslim community	Low	Low
Islamic Council of Granada	Muslim council	Association	Coordination	Religious forum	Low	Low
"Masical Jinan" Association	Muslim association	Association	Reforming the cemetery	Exclusive for Senegalese	Low	Low

Note. Source: The authors' own research.

Table 3

Institutional Actors and the Media With Presence in Granada

Name	Typology	Category	Group characteristics			
			Objectives	Organizational features	Presence	Level of communication
Sub delegation of the Spanish Government in Granada	National authority	Institutional	Reforming the cemetery	Main authority in the province of Granada	High	High
Institute of Spanish Historical Heritage	National public agency	Institutional	Meeting the demands of Muslim communities	Public agency belonging to the Ministry of Culture	High	Middle
Patronato de la Alhambra y del Generalife	National-regional public partnership	Institutional	Meeting the demands of Muslim communities	Partnership attached to the Ministry of Culture and the Government of Andalusia	High	High
City Council	Local authority	Institutional	Appeasing Muslim demands	Local authority	Middle	Low
EMUCESA	Local company	Institutional	---	Company in charge of the works in the cemetery	High	Low
Partido Popular	Political party	Political actor	Electoral interests	Party in the government of Granada	Low	Low
PSOE	Political party	Political actor	Electoral interests	Political opposition	Low	Low
Local media	Local press	Media	Reporting news for a Catholic public	----	High	High

Note. Source: The authors' own research.

It is clear, however, that local authorities have been able to appease the demands of Muslim communities while being anchored into local frontiers. Politicians have often taken advantage of the low political expertise

of Muslim communities. In other cases, agreements have failed because of the inability of communities to maintain a representative interlocutor. Thus, personal relationships have channelled the flow of communication due to difficulties in creating organised groups.

Policy Dynamics and Relationships Among Actors

In order to test more precisely the relationships among actors, we have carried out an examination using questionnaires and, in some cases, interviews.[4] We have requested the collaboration of the eight main actors within the network, namely, Zakaría Maza (Muslim Community of the At-Taqwa Mosque), Lahcen El Himer (Omar Mosque), Serigne Chikh Diop (Masalical Jinan Association), Abu-Hosni (As-Salam Mosque), Antonio Cruz (Sub-delegate of the Spanish Government in Granada), María del Mar Villafranca (director of the *Patronato de la Alhambra*), Eduardo Moral (city councillor, *Partido Popular*), and Juan Antonio Muñoz (chief manager of EMUCESA).

Our intention was to measure the intensity of their relationships with the other actors. To this end, they were each asked about seven items on a scale of 0-10. Some of them omitted other actors as a sign of their lack of a connection. Thus, the design of the questionnaires was based on: (1) ideological affinity; (2) friendship; (3) fluency in communication; (4) intensity of collaboration; (5) resources; (6) decision-making support; and (7) influence dependence. Once the matrix was built, we used SNA software for obtaining a graphic (Figure 2). The main purpose of such a graphic is to visually decipher the connections among actors and, if feasible, be able to describe the most influential actors, the creation of alliances, the distribution of power and other traits.
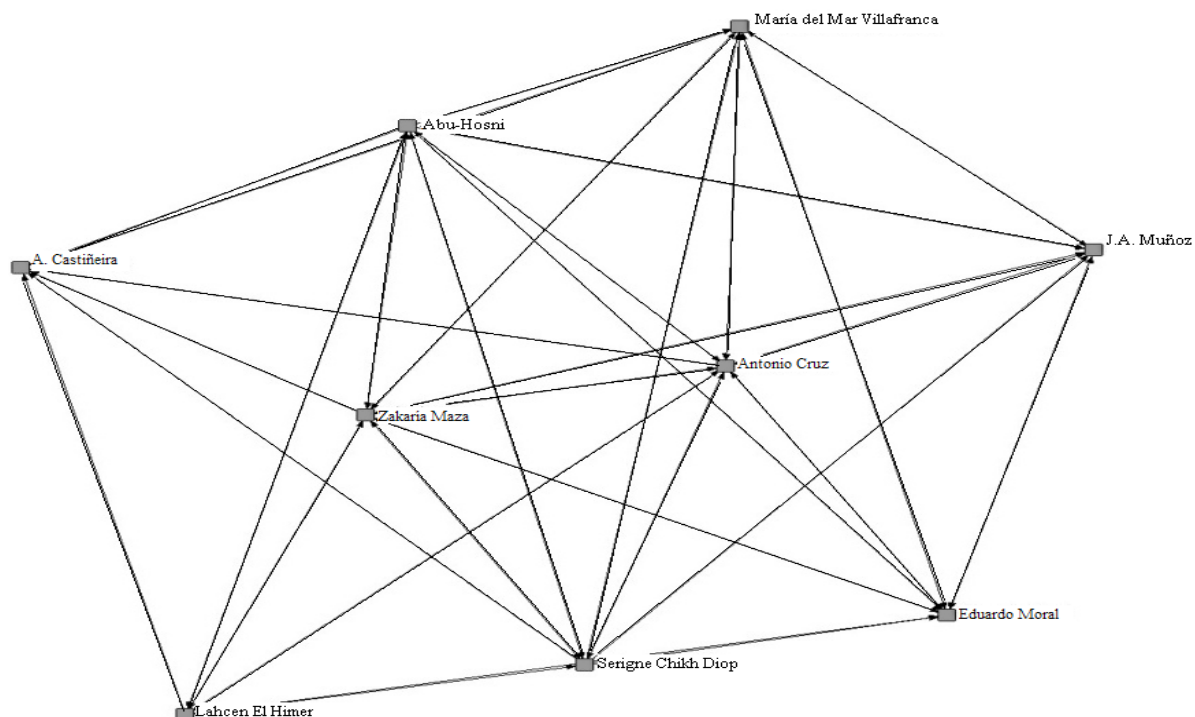

Figure 2. Granada's Islamic cemetery's network. The figure has been built using NetDraw, showing the position between the actors and defining the intensity of their relationships.

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[4] The interviews were conducted while the questionnaires were requested. Eight interviews have been conducted on those places proposed by the actors. In some cases, the interviews were needed to define some answers in the questionnaires. In other cases, the interviews served to contextualize the behaviour of the actors. All interviews were recorded.

Figure 2 shows "Zakaría Maza" and "Antonio Cruz" as central actors. They are the best-connected individuals, therefore they have managed to have greater communication skills. The other actors have given them leadership patterns within the network, but this does not mean that there is a concentration of power. As previously discussed, each of the actors had a singular contribution in the evolution of the policy, but being at the network's edge means having a low participation. So the rest of the actors provide a moderate ability of influence at the margins. Significantly, the Muslim communities have been around "Zakaría Maza" and, otherwise, institutional actors are more connected to the sub-delegate of the Spanish Government in Granada. This suggests that Muslim communities still have weak bridges with institutions. In the absence of an organization that brings them altogether, they have chosen a leader. In fact, "Zakaría Maza" has had a high profile in the cemetery policy over the last decade.

Regarding the responses of Muslim leaders, they all share high levels of ideological significance and friendship. They claim to be very communicative and frequent collaborators. They would support any other Muslim leader's decision under any circumstances. This is especially characteristic in the relationship between Zakaría Maza, Lahcen El Himer and Abu-Hosni. However, in all cases, they claim to have absolute autonomy. An interesting comment is the perception of the representative of the Masalical Jinan Association. While the rest of Muslim leaders don't consider the association very influential or indispensable, the association stresses having great influence over all of them. In fact, the association believes having a high impact on all actors within the network. Conversely, none of them denotes that feature. The absence of a strong and active organization linking all Muslim communities has negative effects on the transfer of resources. Muslim communities scored very low in financial collaboration, the sharing of offices and staff. Communities are identified ideologically, but still have qualms about losing their own identity. Maybe they do not need the cooperation on these issues, because they receive outstanding contributions of foreign groups.

In summary, this analytical examination leads us to believe that Muslim communities in Granada share a collective imaginary, but their common problems have not generated incentives for creating shared organizations. They rely on the ability of individual leaders. However, the cemetery policy has shown them as being outsiders. This position makes it difficult to achieve objectives in the short term. This is a result of their poor ability to develop robust strategies and, especially in their poor ability to achieve the real commitment of political actors.

Final Remarks

It can be seen that the structure of political opportunities for Muslims is faced with opposition from politicians, citizens, and the media, but also with their own religious idiosyncrasy. It would be difficult to deny that for more than thirty years Spanish society has been unlikely to promote changes in its beliefs and traditions. We have to admit, however, that Spaniards have been very sceptical regarding benefits of a multicultural landscape. It is important to note that Spain has always been considered one of the most Catholic, intransigent states in Europe, so the break with this path-dependence is far from being a reality (Hypothesis 1). The integration of Muslims has been channelled through their cultural subordination. The historical legacies along with a growing Islamophobia make it difficult for Muslims to be socially valued. Politicians take advantage of this reality and show no signs of wanting to privilege Muslim demands. On the basis of these statements, it seems plausible to argue that, in political terms, Muslims have been deprived of social tolerance. Rather, they have had to pursue the state for protection against racial protests and radical movements. Rapid immigration

has caste deep, controversial mindsets on those who did not hesitate in labelling Moors as gang members, thieves and even terrorists.

Despite the political context, the paper has attempted to demonstrate that Muslims's lack of influence is also a consequence of their organisational flaws (Hypothesis 2). In the case study, Muslim communities in Granada have not been able to acquire political experience or political power for more than thirty years. They seem to be bound to keep a message of autonomy because of their religious differences. Nevertheless, such autonomy becomes a threat when it comes to defend a demand. Local authorities are unlikely to talk with each and every leader over the same issues. Indeed, City Council urged them to constitute a coordinated forum through which they can share perspectives and rank their preferences. But this project failed.

As interest groups, this lack of organisational expertise leads any group to outsider positions. Being an outsider means applying outsider strategies. In other words, they don't have access to information because they are not considered as respectable interlocutors in the decision-making process. Of course, strategy is to a large extent determined by the nature of the policy demand (Maloney et al., 1994), in so far as a Muslim community is not purported to reach an agreement on cemeteries with the City Council through permanent demonstrations and public disqualifications. However, we strongly believe that effective co-operation among Muslim communities, whether by the establishment of a federation or a dialogue forum, must have enhanced their visibility. In turn, they would have had more chances to opt-in, to know who to talk to, and to accelerate the implementation of signed agreements. Therefore, the poor organization of the Muslims and the adverse reactions of the host country are a profoundly negative mixture. However, after thirty years' full of controversies, Muslims in the city of Granada enjoy an Islamic cemetery due to, mainly, their ability to maintain this policy as an important issue for the local agenda (Hypothesis 3).

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