

European Social Movements and Muslim Activism



Another World but with Whom?

Timothy Peace



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European Social Movements and Muslim Activism

Another World but with Whom?

Timothy Peace

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Abbreviations

ARD	Association Rencontre et Dialogue (Meeting and Dialogue Association)
ATTAC	Association pour la taxation des transactions financières et pour l'action citoyenne (Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions and Citizen Action)
ATMF	Association des Travailleurs Maghrébins de France (Association of Maghrebian Workers of France)
AYM	Asian Youth Movement
CEDETIM	Centre d'études et d'initiatives de solidarité internationale (Centre for the Studies and Initiatives of International Solidarity)
CEPT	Collectif une école pour tous-tes (A School for All Collective)
CFPE	Collectif des Féministes Pour l'Égalité (Collective of Feminists for Equality)
CMF	Collectif des Musulmans de France (Collective of French Muslims)
EPA	European Preparatory Assembly
ESF	European Social Forum
FN	Front National
FSQP	Forum Social des Quartiers Populaires (Social Forum of Working Class Neighbourhoods)
FTCR	Fédération des Tunisiens pour une Citoyenneté des deux Rives (Federation of Tunisians for Citizenship on Both Shores)
GJM	Global Justice Movement
GLA	Greater London Authority
GR	Globalise Resistance
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IWA	Indian Workers Association
JALB	Jeunes Arabes de Lyon et Banlieue (Young Arabs of Lyons and Its Suburbs)
LCR	Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist League)
LDH	Ligue des droits de l'homme (Human Rights League)
LO	Lutte Ouvrière (Workers' Struggle)

MAB	Muslim Association of Britain
MIB	Mouvement de l'Immigration et des Banlieues (Movement of Immigration and the Suburbs)
MIR	Mouvement des Indigènes de la République (Movement of the Indigenous of the Republic)
MRAP	Mouvement contre le Racisme et pour l'Amitié entre les Peuples (Movement against Racism and for Friendship between Peoples)
MTA	Mouvement des Travailleurs Arabes (Movement of Arab Workers)
NMP	Newham Monitoring Project
NPA	Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste (New Anti-capitalist Party)
NPNS	Ni Putes Ni Soumises (Neither Whores Nor Submissive)
PCF	Parti Communiste Français (French Communist Party)
POS	Political Opportunity Structures
PS	Parti Socialiste (Socialist Party)
RAR	Rock against Racism
RTS	Reclaim the Streets
SMO	Social Movement Organisation
StWC	Stop the War Coalition
SWP	Socialist Workers Party
UJM	Union des Jeunes Musulmans de Lyon (Union of Young Muslims of Lyons)
UFAL	Union des Familles Laïques (Union of Secular Families)
WDM	World Development Movement
WSF	World Social Forum
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction: Muslims and Social Movements in Europe

This book is about the participation of Muslim activists within the alter-globalisation movement, the worldwide social movement against neo-liberalism characterised by the slogan 'Another world is possible'. Muslim participation in this movement was marked by contrasting reactions on either side of the English Channel. On the whole, Muslims were welcomed and encouraged in Britain by other activists and leaders in the movement. Yet, in France they largely faced incomprehension and hostility. The subtitle of the book (*Another World but with Whom?*) is a reference to this apprehension and paraphrases a newspaper article published in 2004 in which Muslim involvement in the movement was questioned by the leader of France's most well-known anti-racist organisation SOS Racisme.¹ Muslim participation in the alter-globalisation movement was therefore a contentious issue in France which even attracted some national media interest. The reference to a religious identity posed a dilemma for some in the movement in Europe, while for others this constituted an opportunity. In fact, the levels of participation, the reactions to it and the eventual outcomes were all very different in the two countries studied. This book explains why and explores how progressive social movements, traditionally populated by secular left-wing activists, deal with religious pluralism and the novel reality of those who identify as Muslims. In this Introduction, I first explain who I am referring to when I use the word 'Muslim'. I then discuss the relevance of this topic and demonstrate its wider importance. Next, I introduce the research questions which drove the study and address them using concepts developed within the study of social movements and contentious politics. I discuss the selection of the case studies and detail the methodology I employed to acquire my data as well as some of the ethical issues involved in conducting this research. Finally, I provide

an overview of the subsequent chapters to guide the reader through the rest of the book.

Who is a 'Muslim activist'?

Muslim communities and citizens in Europe are very diverse. They are separated not only by national borders but also by ethnic origin, linguistic and cultural heritage, schools of Islamic thought and much else besides. 'The millions of Muslims living in the EU are a complex and heterogeneous population that includes migrants, converts, European citizens, foreigners, men and women, old and young, believers and non-believers, secular Muslims, traditionalists and radicals' (Jonker and Amiraux 2006: 16). In this research, I consider 'Muslims' to mean those who defined themselves as such, regardless of individual religious beliefs/practice or personal backgrounds. 'Muslim' therefore operates as a sociological category for identification rather than a strict faith category, although most of my respondents did happen to be practising Muslims.² During the course of my research, I also came across activists from a Muslim background but who did not define themselves as such. This was common in France among activists from groups such as the *Mouvement de l'Immigration et des Banlieues* (MIB), the *Fédération des Tunisiens pour une Citoyenneté des deux Rives* (FTCR) and the *Association des Travailleurs Maghrébins de France* (ATMF). They form part of the study because they worked alongside more religious activists but they are not classed as 'Muslim activists'. When I wish to refer to both religious and secular activists, I have employed expressions such as 'migrant origin activists'. However, the focus is on those who primarily identified themselves as Muslims (which does not exclude the fact that they had multiple identities and/or affiliations).

In Chapter 2, I discuss how 'Muslim' has become a recent label to identify those who were previously seen as 'immigrants' or 'ethnic minorities'. Such terms are ineffective for a study of this nature because it incorporates too many potential actors and erases the specifically religious dimension of the activists involved. Since the late 1980s, and particularly in the post-9/11 world, Muslims have become more likely to assert their Islamic identity and draw on it in terms of their political commitment. More importantly, it is the 'Muslimness' of the activists in this study which is important because the research investigates not only whether their religion encouraged them to mobilise (Chapter 4) but also how their religiosity is perceived by others, such as leaders of social movements (Chapter 5) and political parties (Chapter 6). We should not,

however, get too bogged down in definitions about the word ‘Muslim’. It is of course ‘no more a singular, undifferentiated term than, say, “woman” or “working class” but if this was to inhibit the use of such internally differentiated and complex concepts, or even to inhibit marking them by a singular noun, social science, let alone speech, would be impossible’ (Modood and Ahmad 2007: 209).

Relevance

My interest in this topic was sparked when I was living in France and working as a language assistant at the Lycée Robert Doisneau in Vaulx-en-Velin. In 2003, a number of controversies emerged involving Muslims in France, one of which was their participation in the alter-globalisation movement. This was picked up in the national media and a number of French public figures became concerned by these developments, and in particular the involvement of the Swiss Muslim academic Tariq Ramadan. A series of polemical publications ensued. Pierre André-Taguieff (2004) argued that a dangerous convergence was taking place between the movement and Islamism which was unwittingly promoting extremism and antisemitism. The journalist Caroline Fourest (2004) published an exposé about Tariq Ramadan in which she criticised his attempt to get involved with the alter-globalisation movement, claiming that this was merely part of a ‘strategy of collaboration’. The following year, she published another book in which she accused a part of the French left of surrendering their ideals to ‘totalitarian Islamists’ by allowing Muslims to participate in the movement (Fourest 2005). This book won the prestigious *Prix du Livre Politique* in 2006, despite containing many factual errors regarding the participation of Muslims in the alter-globalisation movement. In the same period, the leader of SOS Racisme, Dominique Sopo, published a book entitled *SOS-antiracisme* in which he too attacked Tariq Ramadan and the alter-globalisation movement (Sopo 2005). So interest in this topic was significant in France even if it tended to be reported in a distorted manner.

In Britain, much less attention has been paid to these developments. The two exceptions are the journalist Nick Cohen, who dedicated a chapter of his book *What’s Left* (Cohen 2007) to what he regarded as the ‘disgrace of the anti-war movement’ and the European Social Forum (ESF) of 2004, and the historian Walter Laqueur (2007), who mentions the link between the *Association pour la taxation des transactions financières et pour l’action citoyenne* (ATTAC)³ and Tariq Ramadan in his apocalyptic *The Last Days of Europe*. As we will see, however,

in Chapter 3, most of these largely polemical accounts do not tally with the facts. It is thus necessary to provide a more accurate and less ideologically driven account of Muslim participation within the alter-globalisation movement in order to set the record straight. Although some other studies touch upon the participation of Muslims in the anti-war movement in the United Kingdom (Gillan *et al.* 2008, Phillips 2008), there has been no cross-national or systematic study of Muslim activism within the wider alter-globalisation movement (or any other social movement for that matter).

Why should the participation of European Muslims in social movements be of interest? I would argue that it is important to study such a phenomenon for a number of reasons. Firstly, although the relationship between Muslims and civil society in Europe is often debated, very little systematic research has been conducted into this nexus. Church groups, religiously inspired charities or NGOs and initiatives for inter-faith dialogue are indeed often perceived as being the very essence of civil society along with other institutions such as political parties and trade unions. However, some scholars have suggested that Islam and civil society are mutually exclusive alternatives. In his classic text *Conditions of Liberty*, Ernest Gellner points to the fact that Islam is a religion that cannot be left and entered freely:

Civil Society is a cluster of institutions and associations strong enough to prevent tyranny, but which are, none the less, entered and left freely, rather than imposed by birth or sustained by awesome ritual. You can join (say) the Labour party without slaughtering a sheep, in fact you would hardly be allowed to do such a thing, and you can leave it without incurring the death penalty for apostasy... the charismatic community which penalizes apostasy with death is a different matter again, and it cannot easily cohabit with Civil Society. The real *Umma* was and is altogether different in its moral intuitions, as the Western public learnt to its horror through the Rushdie affair. (Gellner 1994: 103)

The sociologist of religion, Peter Berger has also argued along similar lines. He too believes that Islam and the development of civil society are incompatible and has stated:

Islam, even in its moderate forms, has certain characteristics that are unfavourable to the development of civil society. I would particularly

emphasize two aspects – the understanding of religious law and the role of women.

(Berger 2005: 18)

While such claims can easily be refuted, actual empirical investigations of the role Muslims could conceivably play within European civil society are thin on the ground. Another area of investigation that scholars have left largely untouched is that of Muslims and the left. Academic literature which covers left-wing interpretations of Christianity abounds, but the same cannot be said for Islam.⁴ All Muslim activists who were interviewed for this research indicated a strong attachment to the left and some even made references to ‘liberation theology’ and how this could be compatible or developed within Islam. The factors motivating involvement with the alter-globalisation and its justification in terms of compatibility with Islam are thus explored in Chapter 4.

The second reason to conduct research into Muslim involvement in the alter-globalisation movement is that it connects to wider public debates about Muslims and political participation in Europe. Participation in social movements and other aspects of civil society could be a reasonable indicator of civic engagement and an important step for building identification with the mainstream community. Indeed, there is now a whole host of new research on the political activity of Muslims in Europe (Akhtar 2013, Nielsen 2013, Mustafa 2015) which indicates that this positively contributes to their sense of identification with European societies. Since the watershed of 9/11, there has been no shortage of interest in religious activism, particularly that involving Muslims in the West. However, there is still little in the way of research regarding religion and European protest movements. There is also relatively little research that looks at how social movements deal with pluralism and in particular religious pluralism. This book complements previous studies of the political mobilisation of ‘migrants’ and tests whether the findings can be applied to Muslim *citizens* of the ‘second generation’ (and beyond), who have been socialised within European societies.

Research questions and theory

The main question driving this research is: How do social movements deal with religious pluralism and religious political activism? Beyond

this overarching research question, I outline three sub-questions to be tackled:

- What factors explain Muslim mobilisation and participation within the alter-globalisation movement? (Chapter 4)
- What explains the internal dynamics of support or opposition to Muslim participation within the movement? (Chapter 5)
- How do we account for different outcomes of Muslim participation? (Chapter 6)

I attempt to answer these questions using theoretical concepts developed in the study of social movements, in particular framing processes, discursive opportunity structures and political opportunity structures (POS). I have investigated three aspects of social movements that are common in the literature: motivation for participation (micro-level), strategies and decisions made by movement leaders (meso-level) and movement outcomes (macro-level).

Studying framing processes is an approach that is used widely in the study of social movements and was developed as a means of assessing the effects of individual social psychological processes on collective action by allowing us to 'capture the process of the attribution of meaning which facilitates the activation of mobilisation' (Della Porta and Diani 2006: 74). Thus developed the notion of 'framing' which results in 'collective action frames' that 'focus attention by punctuating or specifying what in our sensual field is relevant and irrelevant, what is "in frame" and what is "out of frame", in relation to the object of orientation' (Snow 2004: 384). David Snow and Robert Benford developed a number of additional terms that now make up the conceptual architecture of frame analysis including frame alignment processes (Snow *et al.* 1986), core framing tasks (Snow and Benford 1988) and the concept of 'master frames' (Snow and Benford 1992). Frame alignment is the process of getting people in the population to align their frames with the movement. Snow and Benford proposed four types of frame alignment processes: bridging, amplification, extension and transformation. Frame amplification refers to the clarification and invigoration of an interpretive issue, problem or set of events. In Chapter 4, I look at how existing values or beliefs are harnessed in order to support mobilisation by Muslim activists, in particular how they used Islamic references to get people involved. There are three core framing tasks: a diagnosis of the problem, a prognosis of what needs to be done about it and a call for action to execute the strategy. This is referred to as diagnostic,

prognostic and motivational framing. Again in Chapter 4, I look at whether Muslim intellectuals have engaged in all three types of core framing tasks in order to encourage Muslim involvement in movements for social change. Master frames perform the same functions as movement-specific collective action frames, but on a larger scale. The study of master frames usually shows how they have been used by social movement leaders in order to mobilise large numbers of people to take part in social movement activity. In Chapter 5, the focus is on how these leaders use a master frame in relation to the meaning of French secularism or *laïcité* in order to argue their position internally within their organisation (about whether Muslim participation is desirable or not). The two master frames I identify are *laïcité républicaine* and *laïcité ouverte*.⁵ What I mean by these terms is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Another approach which is utilised in Chapter 5 is that of ‘discursive opportunity structures’, a term coined by Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham to denote ‘which ideas are considered “sensible”, which constructions of reality are seen as “realistic” and which claims are held as “legitimate” within a certain polity at a specific time’ (Koopmans and Statham 1999: 228). When they examined mobilisation by, against and for migrants in Europe, they noticed that variation between states depends primarily on ‘different conceptions of national identity and their crystallization in nation-specific integration and citizenship policies’ (Koopmans *et al.* 2005: 6). Adopting their approach here, I demonstrate how the same is true for leaders in the alter-globalisation movement and how it affected their reactions to the participation of Muslims. In this book, discursive opportunities therefore refer to the distinctive approaches to post-colonial immigrants and their descendants – what have been termed the ‘philosophies of integration’ (Favell 1998). In Britain, the ‘philosophy of integration’ has been that of ‘race relations’ and subsequently ‘multiculturalism’, and in France, it is a colour-blind and assimilationist ‘republican model’.

The United Kingdom never formally declared itself to be a multicultural nation, but ‘British multiculturalism’ was formed through a combination of a state-led idea that rejected integration based on cultural assimilation, a series of localised public policy measures implemented at the municipal level and as a reaction to urban protest (Meer and Modood 2014).⁶ Despite the sustained criticism that British multiculturalism has faced in recent years, it has not been abandoned but merely undergone a process of ‘civic re-balancing’ (Modood and Meer 2009). Indeed, the British model has always been culturally

pluralist and has remained a dominant philosophy, particularly for those on the left. In France, on the other hand, the idea of 'integration' was always closely linked to the ideal of assimilation (Hajjat 2012). The French outlook is often linked to the republican tradition, rooted in the inheritance of the French Revolution, whose traditional vocation has been universalism. According to universalist principles, the rights of minorities cannot be recognised.⁷ In the 1980s, a national debate emerged about the problems of immigration and the danger of a cultural threat posed by Islam.⁸ In 1989, the first headscarf affair created a national hysteria about the integration of 'immigrants' (many of whom had been born and raised in France). It is from this moment onwards that we see an explicit theorising and outlining of a 'French model of integration'.⁹ Over the years, it also became known as the 'republican model', although this has actually become a kind of broken promise which 'does not correspond to the experience of whole segments of the population' (Wieviorka 2014). Despite this discrepancy between theory and lived reality, the French model can still be conceived as an ideal that acts as a discursive opportunity structure. Indeed, whereas multiculturalism has been increasingly critiqued in Britain as a result of various controversies involving Muslims, the same phenomenon in France has led to an increased commitment to their notion of integration. Nicolas Sarkozy even introduced a ministry for immigration, integration and national identity when he became president in 2007. Despite this ministry eventually being abolished in 2010, laws enacted during this time merely reinforced the idea of a 'French model'.

Finally, in Chapter 6 the role of POS is explored. Using a POS approach can help understand variations in the strategies, structures and outcomes of similar movements that arise in different places. The most widely used definition of political opportunities states that they are 'consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations of success or failure' (Tarrow 1994: 85). I look at why outcomes were different in Britain and France with reference to four categories of POS: formal institutional structures, national cleavage structures, party procedures and alliance structures. By examining factors such as the electoral system, residential segregation and the strength of local ethnic networks, I suggest why the outcome of an electoral alliance with the radical left was possible in Britain but not in France. Beyond this, the chapter also suggests why French left-wing parties seem to refuse to select ethnic (and in particular Muslim) activists as election candidates.

Case selection

The alter-globalisation movement operated at a transnational level and organised various events and protests at a European level. It is therefore accurate to speak of 'European social movements' even though the focus here is on activists from just two countries within Europe: Britain and France. I adopted a case-orientated approach and a 'most-similar systems' research design (Della Porta 2008: 206). More specifically, I engaged in a paired comparison of Britain and France, that is a 'distinct analytical strategy for working through complex empirical and historical materials using the leverage afforded by the differences and similarities of comparable cases' (Tarrow 2010: 243). Case-orientated research tends to select paradigmatic cases for comparison, and Britain and France can certainly be considered as such. It is no surprise that a number of other paired comparisons related to migrant political incorporation, race politics and citizenship have also used the Franco-British comparison (Lapeyronnie 1993, Favell 1998, Bleich 2003, Garbaye 2005, Maxwell 2012).

There are a number of similarities which make these two countries ideal for such a paired comparison. As well as exhibiting obvious similarities in terms of both being Western European advanced democracies, they share a colonial history. As a result, post-colonial migration and settlement were remarkably similar in both countries. Most Muslims in Britain and France can, in fact, trace their origins to this wave of migration that occurred in the post-war period. This, in turn, means that the size of the Muslim community is relatively similar and has been established for a similar period of time. Both countries have liberal forms of citizenship and thus the second and third generations are considered as French and British citizens. It is those who have been raised in Britain and France who are the focus of the research, although a few activists interviewed were also first-generation migrants. Methodological concerns aside, the selection of these cases was also shaped in part by practical factors, the most important of which being the fact that they were the only countries where there was any significant participation of Muslims within the alter-globalisation movement.

The movement is a complex phenomenon that would be impossible to study in its entirety. In order to reduce the scope of the object of study, participation in the ESF was used as a proxy for identification with the movement, for both individual activists and the organisations they represented. I have narrowed the focus to those who explicitly participated in the preparation and/or spoke at these events. Muslim activists

are considered on an individual basis; there is no attention given to the strategies or actions of specific 'Muslim organisations'. Studying Muslim activism on an individual rather than an organisational level makes more sense because the number of Muslim activists who participated in the alter-globalisation movement is relatively small. I was only interested in the organisational responses of social movement organisations (SMOs) that explicitly identify with the alter-globalisatic movement. A decision was made to study just one SMO in each country and that this should be the most relevant, influential and representative organisational actor.¹⁰ In order to cover as many of the various tendencies in the movement as possible, 'umbrella groups' that attempted to federate different forces were chosen.

For the French case, ATTAC was chosen; this SMO fits the criteria perfectly. Firstly, because Muslim activists made a (failed) attempt to become involved with this organisation. Secondly, its influence within the movement is unrivalled, not only in France, but also around the world. ATTAC is intricately bound up with the history of the social forums which are at the heart of the alter-globalisation movement. Indeed, its first president, Bernard Cassen, helped to set up the World Social Forum (WSF; Cassen 2003a). Thirdly, ATTAC was also highly representative; its founding members included those involved with trade unions [Confédération française démocratique du travail (CFDT), Confédération générale du travail (CGT), Fédération syndicale unitaire (FSU), Union Syndicale Solidaires (formerly known as G10)], left-wing magazines and newspapers (*Le Monde diplomatique*, *Alternatives économiques*, *Politis*), groups representing the excluded [Agir ensemble contre le chômage (AC!), Association pour l'emploi, l'information et la solidarité des chômeurs et des précaires (APEIS) Droit au logement (DAL), Droits devant !! (DD), Mouvement national des chômeurs et précaires (MNCP)] and various other fair trade, environmental, feminist, anti-racist and anti-imperialist groups. The British case selection was not quite as straightforward. An ideal comparison would have involved ATTAC UK. However, unlike in other European countries such as Italy and Germany, this remained a small and marginal group.¹¹ It therefore fulfilled none of the above-mentioned selection criteria. Most observers agree that the movement in Britain is quite peculiar when compared to its continental European counterparts; this is partly due to the presence and strength of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).¹² It was necessary to choose an organisation that included this party but also represented other strands within the movement.

Globalise Resistance (GR) was such an umbrella group. It was conceived as a means to federate different forces of the left in order to get involved in the emerging movement in Britain which was initially dominated by anarchist groups such as Reclaim the Streets:

We tried to pull together the widest spectrum of people who had some sympathy for the movement and thought that it was important. That included some of the more active NGO people, activist journalists like George Monbiot – we worked very closely with him early on, left-leaning academics and people from political parties like Tony Benn and Jeremy Corbyn. We got some people from the movements abroad to come and speak and report on what was happening there, people like Susan George and Christophe Aguiton from ATTAC in France... then we also tried to attract younger activists and tried to put all this together in a way that would create as many links as possible but also create a very loose framework that would allow the possibility of mobilisation.¹³

GR was nowhere near the same size as ATTAC in terms of its membership or influence, although it was the closest thing to a British equivalent of ATTAC.¹⁴ The organisation was known as ‘the travel agent of the movement’ as it organised transport for international protests. One of its first major achievements was organising the British mobilisation for the protest against the G8 in Genoa in July 2001. GR played an organisational role for British protesters at all the subsequent ‘summit hopping’ events and the ESFs in which it played a key role. Due to the semi-official ban on political parties, GR was the mechanism chosen by the SWP to engage in the ESF organising process and was the most dynamic British organisation at the European Preparatory Assemblies (EPAs; Cassen 2003a). The leadership of the group was always dominated by the SWP; in fact, it was often described as a front group for the party. In 2002 however, as it began to grow, it opened up its steering committee to include more ‘independent’ activists. This was the result of a deal struck with these activists where the GR leadership agreed to recognise that it could no longer be controlled by the SWP and that it would allow genuine internal democracy within the steering committee. A number of Muslim activists made up these ‘independents’ on the steering committee, as well as people involved in NGOs. This compromise lasted for about two years. Within ATTAC and GR, I was most interested in the approach of their leaders to the participation of Muslims (Chapter 5). When these two organisations are mentioned, it

specifically refers to their leadership: the steering committee in the case of GR and the National Bureau and Administrative Council for ATTAC.

Methodology, data collection and ethics

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with movement activists and leaders. The choice of qualitative semi-structured interviews was driven by the need to assess the context of motivations, beliefs and attitudes of both Muslim activists and SMO leaders for which it can be misleading to rely on discrete statements and categorical answers obtained by only using questionnaires or more structured interviews. The selection of interview partners varied according to two levels: the micro-level (Muslim activists) and the meso-level (alter-globalisation leaders and movement intellectuals). The selection of the micro-level interviewees was based on the level of their involvement in the movement (although not everyone agreed to be interviewed). The selection of the meso-level interviewees was based on their relevance and importance within the SMO. All those who were part of the decision-making bodies in the two organisations being studied between 2002 and 2006 were contacted for interview. I also interviewed people involved with the Scientific Council of ATTAC as well as those involved with the local chapter in Lyons (ATTAC Rhône).¹⁵ Interviews were conducted in English and French and took place in London, Paris, Lyons and Lille. All translations from interviews and other written French sources are my own.

The second source of data was obtained through relevant movement documents and websites. These were used to complement interview materials to investigate how SMOs reacted to Muslim participation. Of particular importance were the digital archives of ATTAC France and ATTAC Rhône which were consulted and searched online. Similar documents for GR could not be consulted because they are not available to the public. A significant amount of information was also gleaned through other sources on the Internet which included Muslim websites such as *oumma.com* as well as publications associated with the alter-globalisation movement such as *Politis* in France and *Red Pepper* in the United Kingdom. Secondary information was also obtained from national newspapers and magazines. I also collected a series of other documents during my fieldwork, including tracts and flyers; some of these were provided by interview partners and I was also allowed access to internal documents of some working groups in ATTAC. In addition to this, I carried out an analysis of the texts of Muslim intellectuals, in particular the works of Tariq Ramadan, who was often cited as

an intellectual point of reference by Muslim activists.¹⁶ Finally, ethnographic data was obtained through participant observation as part of my fieldwork, in particular at the *Forum Social des Quartiers Populaires* (FSQP) that took place in St Denis and Nanterre (June 2007 and November 2008), the Marxism festival in London (July 2007 and 2008) and the ESF in Malmö (17–21 September 2008). These events served as useful networking opportunities in order to introduce myself to activists and find potential interview partners. Field notes were also made during my fieldwork, the vast majority of which was undertaken in 2008. I was based for extended periods in London and Paris and also attended a number of meetings and events connected to the activists I was studying.

Finally, some reflections on the ethical issues involved in the research. I am neither a Muslim nor part of the alter-globalisation movement, and therefore during the course of this research I consciously situated myself as an outsider. Much research on social movements has been conducted by insiders, or at least those who are explicitly sympathetic with their goals. The alter-globalisation movement is certainly no exception and much has been written about the movement by activist scholars. It has strong links with academia and many of its most prominent figures are (or have been) university professors. Although both the insider and outsider positions have their advantages and drawbacks, I would argue that outsiders can provide valuable perspectives on the taken-for-granted assumptions of social movement participants (Blee and Taylor 2002). Being considered different to your interviewees can allow them to speak more openly because they will not feel that you are being implicated in their criticisms. All interviewees were informed in full about the nature of the research and that their names would appear in the text, unless they chose to remain anonymous. I preferred the use of activists' real names because much of this information is actually already in the public domain and many of my interviewees actually wanted this information to be open and transparent.

Overview of the book

In chapters 1 and 2, I provide the historical context which is necessary in order to understand the following substantive chapters. Chapter 1 provides a history of the alter-globalisation movement and discusses the role of religious activists within it. Chapter 2 deals with the history of Muslim political activism in the post-war period within the two countries under study. By looking at this history, we can identify

a set of dimensions that are useful to explain Muslim participation in the alter-globalisation movement as well as reactions to it. By situating Muslim activism historically, this chapter demonstrates the effective continuity between migrant struggles of the first generation and that of their children, who grew up as European citizens. Chapter 3 outlines how Muslim activists came to be involved in the movement and in particular their relations with ATTAC in France and GR in Britain. Given the attitudes of social movement leaders and other activists, and their perceptions of Muslims as being essentially different, Chapter 4 explores what (if anything) is specific about Muslim activists and whether they *are* substantially different from other activists in the movement. I touch upon the following points in particular:

- How Muslim activists became involved in political activism and the alter-globalisation movement
- The role of Muslim intellectuals and religious ideas
- How Muslims relate their participation to their faith
- The differences in the levels of activism between British and French Muslims.

This chapter looks at the micromobilisation of Muslim activists and what Bert Klandermans (2004) referred to as the ‘supply and demand’ of participation. On the supply side, I concentrate on two types of framing processes: the micro-level framing of the Muslim activists and the meso-level framing of certain Muslim intellectuals in their written texts. By examining the micro-level, we can investigate how these actors define themselves and whether a Muslim identity trumps other forms of identification. It also sheds light on the relationship between religious beliefs and activism. By examining framing at the meso-level, I focus on the core framing tasks that some Muslim intellectuals have engaged in as a means to encourage Muslim participation in the movement. In particular, I look at attempts to develop an ‘Islamic liberation theology’ and forms of what some have called ‘liberal Islam’ (Kurzman 1998). On the demand side, I briefly analyse the background of the activists and their political socialisation.

Chapter 5 examines how leaders of the SMOs reacted to Muslim participation. These leaders exhibited very diverse reactions, not only between the two countries, but also internally. I look at the prevailing political culture and in particular the discursive opportunity structures in the two societies that affect the leaders of SMOs. Chapter 5 covers the following points:

- Why British SMO leaders welcomed Muslims into the movement but French leaders appeared to shun them
- The various positions in the debate in the French case
- The idiosyncrasies of the decision-making process in ATTAC.

The importance of discursive opportunities highlights the fact that social movement cultures and attitudes are shaped by the dominant political and public discourse no matter how anti-systemic or anti-conformist SMOs claim to be. Notionally ‘transnational’ or global movements are actually still highly contingent upon the national context. Using the idea of discursive opportunity structures cannot explain everything, though it refers to general trends. In France, some movement leaders were open to Muslim participation; I argue that this is due to differing master frames. I also show how the decision was taken in ATTAC to avoid working with Muslim activists. In Chapter 6, I look at the consequences and outcomes of Muslim mobilisation within the movement. In particular:

- How could Muslim activists and the radical left form an electoral alliance in Britain but not in France?
- Why do French radical left parties not select Muslims as election candidates?

I consider the POS in each country in terms of four broad categories and a series of variables within these categories. By elaborating on these variables, I demonstrate why we could expect different outcomes. Finally, the conclusion reflects on some of the findings of the research and evaluates the current state of the alter-globalisation movement and Muslim activism.

1

The Development of the Alter-Globalisation Movement

Introduction

In this chapter, I explain what I mean by the term ‘alter-globalisation movement’ and provide a history of its development. The first section of the chapter deals with the issue of its definition as this was a ‘movement of movements’ that acquired several different names. Having defined the object of study, I detail the specific history of the movement in Britain and France. This is necessary in order to understand how it differs slightly between the two nations. I then provide a brief overview of the participation within this movement by religious activists. By doing so, I wish to highlight their importance within the movement, something that has often been overlooked by many other scholars. I also outline the forms of participation within the movement by those from what we might term ‘Muslim majority countries’.

What is the ‘alter-globalisation movement’?

This book deals with a movement that most people are familiar with as the ‘anti-globalisation movement’. Yet this terminology is imprecise, as it does not accurately describe what the people involved were actually protesting against. They were, in fact, opposing neo-liberalism and what is known as ‘the Washington Consensus’. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the Washington-based international economic organisations (also known as the Bretton Woods institutions), represent the movement’s key symbolic opponents and targets. This opposition also extends to other symbols of trade liberalisation such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) as well as the leading industrial

nations, incarnated by the Group of Eight (G8), which are perceived to benefit most from the current financial system at the expense of developing countries. This movement opposing neo-liberalism actually assumed different names according to different languages and territories. In French, it became known as *le mouvement altermondialiste* and the ideas associated with it as *altermondialisme*, which is usually translated into English as 'alter-globalisation'. However, in the English-speaking world, the movement did not develop such an instantly recognised label. Indeed, a variety of alternative terms have been used by movement actors and academics alike; these include the 'global resistance movement' (Kingsnorth 2003), the 'globalisation countermovement' (Birchfield 2005), the 'movement against corporate globalisation' (Juris 2008), the 'counter-global network' (Featherstone 2008) or simply the 'anti-capitalist movement' (George *et al.* 2001, Callinicos 2003). Later the term 'Global Justice Movement' (GJM) became popular and was adopted by prominent academics who studied it (Della Porta 2007, Moghadam 2009, Eschle and Maiguashca 2010, Flesher Fominaya 2014). In this book, I have decided to use the terms 'alter-globalisation movement' and 'global justice movement' interchangeably, with the acronym GJM used for convenience. They refer to the same movement and this choice merely reflects the fact that in French-speaking countries the former is preferred while the latter is more common in the Anglophone world (Pleyers 2010).

Various definitions of the movement have been offered, but due to its nature as a 'movement of movements' most fall short of describing its complexity. What we can state, however, is that the unifying core of the alter-globalisation movement is opposition to neo-liberalism, and despite no unitary ideological position, it can be broadly placed on the left of the political spectrum. The main rallying events of the GJM are the World and European Social Forums, which are regulated by the Porto Alegre Charter of Principles. The goals of the movement are summarised in the Porto Alegre Manifesto. Therefore, I consider an organisation or individual activist to be part of the alter-globalisation movement if they have participated in, or at least identify with, either the World Social Forum (WSF) or the European Social Forum (ESF). By doing so, they (at least implicitly) subscribe to the Porto Alegre Charter of Principles and share the goals of the Porto Alegre Manifesto. What is more, I specifically chose to study organisations and activists that have been at the heart of the ESF process and closely identify with it.¹ The key action repertoire that the movement developed was the concept of a counter-summit whenever institutions such as the G8 or

WTO met for talks. This was invariably accompanied by large-scale public demonstrations. Sometimes these demonstrations turned violent and this generated media interest, although this coverage often obscured the movement's actual purpose and demands.²

Despite the movement being global and transnational, it has developed from very different national histories and has specific characteristics in each country. If we limit our focus to the movement as it has emerged in Western Europe, we can trace its origins to previous movements of contention dating back to the 1960s and perhaps even beyond. However, the true beginnings of the movement, in terms of direct contestation of neo-liberalism, can be found in the mid-1980s. This is hardly surprising given that this was the era when such economic reforms were starting to be implemented. The movement slowly developed throughout the 1990s until it finally exploded on to the world scene with the protest against the WTO ministerial conference in November and December 1999, later dubbed the 'battle of Seattle'. Gustave Massiah (2011), one of the key leaders in ATTAC, has identified three key phases in the development of the alter-globalisation movement:

- 1980–1989: Struggles against debt, famine and structural adjustment programs.
- 1989–1999: Contestation of international organisations connected to globalisation.
- 2000–2008: The development of the social forums and a worldwide movement.

Although the events of Seattle in 1999 remain key in the history of the GJM, the people and organisations involved did not really coalesce into a genuine and coherent world movement until the decision to create the WSF, which was first held in January 2001. This was initially conceived as simply another counter-summit, this time in opposition to the annual World Economic Forum that takes place in Davos. It nevertheless developed into the most important meeting of the movement and, perhaps more importantly, produced the documents that became its key reference points – the Porto Alegre Charter of Principles drawn up in 2002 and the Porto Alegre Manifesto signed during the 2005 WSF. It also developed what became known as the slogan of the movement – 'another world is possible'. The success of the WSF inspired the creation of a number of other social forums around the world, most notably the ESF. Just like the WSF, the ESF became the meeting point of the various

components of the alter-globalisation movement in Europe who use this event to discuss issues, coordinate their campaigns, share ideas and refine organising strategies (Della Porta 2009a). The ESFs were organised by leading activists through a series of transnational meetings known as the 'European Preparatory Assemblies' (EPAs). At the second WSF in Brazil, it was decided that the first two ESFs would be held in Italy and France in recognition of the strength of the movement in those two countries. Indeed, French and Italian activists have always remained the core of those organising the ESF. Since its inception, the ESF has taken place in Florence (2002), Paris (2003), London (2004), Athens (2006), Malmö (2008) and Istanbul (2010).³ Like most social movements, the GJM is composed of a number of social movement organisations (SMOs); however, 'the unity of the movement should not be confused with the existence of a single organization encompassing its various components' (Pleyers 2010: 11).

There are, of course, a myriad of competing interests within the movement, and each national alter-globalisation movement is typified by its own cleavages and idiosyncrasies. There is one major division in the movement, often referred to by activists as 'horizontal' versus 'vertical'. The former are those who believe in the benefits of an absence of hierarchy between members and favour deliberative decision-making on a collective basis. The latter are characterised by clearer distinctions between rank and file activists and their leaders. They are more likely to employ practices that resemble traditional representative democracy.⁴ 'Horizontal' are usually part of smaller groups, often take part in direct action and put a great deal of emphasis on 'autonomy' and independence from organised structures. They tend to believe the way they take decisions should embody the democratic ideals of the movement itself, while 'verticals' are more interested in efficiency and results (Flesher Fominaya 2007). 'Verticals' are usually associated with left-wing parties and trade unions but could also include NGOs and other umbrella-type organisations such as the two SMOs studied in this book (ATTAC and Globalise Resistance). It should be stressed here that this study only concerns the 'vertical' tendency of the movement, as I was interested in formal organisations and their leaders. It also focuses on the period 2000–2008 which represents the high point of the movement. Since then, the Occupy movement and the various anti-austerity protests such as *Indignados* have taken on the baton, although they could equally be theorised as just the latest phase of the alter-globalisation movement. This is discussed further in the concluding chapter.

A history of the movement in Britain

The GJM in Britain has always been relatively small and never became as influential as its counterpart across the other side of the channel. It is worth remembering, however, that some of the first ever protest events that form the beginnings of the GJM actually took place in the United Kingdom. NGOs and charitable organisations form the first of three main strands that made up the movement in Britain. An important precursor was the anti-debt campaigns that started in the late 1970s and pressed for the reduction of the foreign debt of developing countries. The aim was to lobby Western governments and highlight the disproportionate burden placed on the poor by structural adjustment programs (SAPs), mandated by the IMF and the World Bank as conditions for debt rescheduling and reduction. The first ever counter-summit to oppose the meeting of the group of leading industrialised nations took place in London in July 1984 during the 10th G7 summit. This was known as TOES (The Other Economic Summit) and one of their main demands was debt relief. A number of figures involved in TOES went on to form the New Economics Foundation (NEF) in 1986. The NEF was one of the key players behind the development of Jubilee 2000, a campaign that called for the cancellation of the debt of the world's poorest countries by the year 2000 (Mayo 2005). The idea for this campaign had been mooted at the beginning of the 1990s but was only set up officially in 1996. By the time of the next G8 summit in the United Kingdom in 1998, Jubilee 2000 was a well-organised and publicised campaign that involved churches and religious groups all over the country in conjunction with charities and NGOs such as Christian Aid, Oxfam and the World Development Movement (WDM). In the city of Birmingham, where the world's leaders were meeting, Jubilee 2000 organised a human chain to encircle the city. The campaign achieved a certain amount of success when, at the following G8 summit in Cologne in June 1999, creditor governments accepted a substantial reduction in debt.

The second strand of the British GJM relates to the 'autonomous' direct action groups, whose politics is often influenced by anarchism. The first ever protests by this strand of the movement were the 'Stop the city' demonstrations that took place in 1983 and 1984, taking their inspiration from the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp. New forms of environmental protest also developed in this period, with the anti-roads movement being particularly successful. This was pioneered by a group called 'Earth First!' that was launched in 1991 (Wall 1999). Members of this group later went on to form Reclaim the Streets (RTS),

which garnered much attention from 1995 onwards after a number of high-profile publicity stunts designed to disrupt urban areas with high levels of traffic. Their usual repertoire of action consisted of invading a road, occupying the space and holding 'street parties' with activists and the general public. Over the years, the group developed a more precise anti-neo-liberal and anti-capitalist agenda by opposing the policies of international bodies such as the IMF. They also aligned themselves with the Liverpool dockers labour dispute in a move which some have seen as one of the first examples of the kind of coalition building that became the hallmark of the GJM (Bradley and Knight 2004). In May 1998, when the G8 meeting came to Birmingham, RTS was one of the instigators of a protest called the 'Global street party' organised in a number of cities around the world. The largest protest took place in Birmingham itself and at this time the two strands of the emerging GJM came together, with both sets of activists involved in the human chain. The direct action movements organised another protest event the following year in order to coincide with the G8 meeting in Cologne. This became known as the 'Carnival Against Capitalism' (codenamed J18 because it took place on 18 June) and was modelled on the 'stop the city' demonstrations from the 1980s. The main demonstration in London surprised bystanders by the scale of the protest which at the time was quite unique in Britain. The following year another demonstration took place in London for the international May Day protests which famously resulted in the defacing of a statue of Winston Churchill in Parliament Square.

The third strand of the GJM in Britain is the socialist sector which is dominated by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) but also involves some trade unions. There are tensions between the anarchists and socialists which often revolve around the role of the SWP (Ibrahim 2011). This party has been influential within the ESF process and played a major role in the organisation of the third ESF in London.⁵ They also enjoy transnational ties to other political parties that are involved in the alter-globalisation movement, such as their sister parties within the International Socialist Tendency (IST). The SWP domination of the movement in Britain has been lamented by many, but scholars do admit that the party has 'undoubtedly contributed to the dynamism of the movement, as it has sought, by involving itself in campaigns, locally as well as nationally, to encourage popular mobilization and, by injecting a revolutionary socialist critique of capitalism, to move those campaigns toward the left' (Rootes and Saunders 2007: 154). It is not just leaders within the SWP that are important, members of the party are active at

the local level in a variety of GJM campaigns. 'SWP activists are both more intensely, even exclusively, committed to their political work, deploy considerable energy and organisational skills and experience, and so make things happen that would not otherwise happen' (Saunders 2008: 12).

Activists from the SWP arrived late on the scene but were active in J18 as well as the N30 protest in London on 30 November 1999.⁶ After the May Day protests in 2000, contacts were made between the direct action and socialist strands of the movement (although some anarchists decided to remain separate). They joined together for the protests against the World Bank and the IMF in Prague on 26 September 2000 (S26) in which three separate marches were organised – yellow, pink and blue (Chesters and Welsh 2004). It was after this event that the first idea of creating a single organisation to co-ordinate such protests in the United Kingdom was raised. In February 2001, a series of eight conferences were held around the country with speakers such as George Monbiot and Kevin Danaher. The success of this initiative led to the founding of Globalise Resistance (GR) which attempted to federate the three main strands of the movement. Not everyone, of course, neatly fitted into one of these three main strands. Some activists in Britain considered themselves part of the 'independent left', meaning they had no ties to a particular party or organisation. *Red Pepper* magazine, edited by Hilary Wainwright, is representative of this tendency. The focus in this book is on British activists and social movement leaders associated with the third strand of the movement and in particular those involved in GR.

The development of alter-globalisation in France

At the beginning of the 1970s, the Larzac plateau in southern France became the centre of non-violent protests against the French government's decision to expand a military camp. The ensuing Larzac movement attracted activists from all over the country, including José Bové. He eventually set up home there as a producer of Roquefort cheese and, along with Bernard Lambert, became one of its most famous leaders. Their struggle is seen as an important precursor to the development of the *mouvement altermondialiste* in France (Alland 2001). Indeed, Bové later became the personification of alter-globalisation in France, and through the media he is 'considered to speak for the movement as a whole, as though, indeed, he were the movement's voice' (Williams 2008: 65). Testament to the importance of the Larzac plateau as a site

of historical memory for the movement in France was the organisation by Bové and the *Confédération paysanne* of the 'Larzac 2003' event which celebrated the 30th anniversary of a solidarity demonstration that took place there in 1973.⁷ However, the first kind of counter-summit event in France was organised in Paris during the 15th G7 summit in July 1989.⁸ Inspired by the experience of TOES in London, but also the demonstrations organised in Berlin one year earlier in September 1988 against the World Bank and IMF congress (the first large-scale GJM protest in Europe), activists from the *Centre d'études et d'initiatives de solidarité internationale* (CEDETIM) organised their own TOES (Agrikoliansky 2005). This was followed by the creation of the *Comité pour l'annulation de la dette du tiers monde* (CADTM) in March 1990.⁹ As in the United Kingdom, the anti-debt movement was an important catalyst for the alter-globalisation movement in France.

The strength of the movement in France and its emergence in the national consciousness at the end of the 1990s were closely linked to the creation of a whole host of new combative social movements earlier in the decade as well as important developments among French trade unions. These social movements included a range of groups that became known as *les sans* or the 'have nots', such as the unemployed (*sans-emploi*), undocumented migrants (*sans-papiers*), the homeless (*sans-logis*) and others who felt socially excluded (*sans voix*). At this time, new and more radical trade unions were also appearing and challenged the role of the traditional confederations that were legally recognised as 'representative' in France by calling for a new unionism of 'social transformation'. These new unions such as the *Groupe des dix-Solidaires* (G10) were to come to the fore after the French government decided to embark on a series of reforms to the age of retirement and social security benefits for workers in the public sector.¹⁰ The proposed reforms announced on 15 November 1995 by the government of Alain Juppé were met by a wave of public sector strikes, the biggest seen since 1968, which managed to virtually paralyse the whole country. As many scholars have noticed, the genuine birth of *altermondialisme* in France can be traced back to these strikes. Other groups also joined this wave of contestation so that 'new links were forged between different political groupings and there was a growing realisation amongst many that they shared a common struggle' (Waters 2003: 4).

The strikes were followed by the 'Call of the have nots' (*appel des sans*), and groups such as *Droits devant!!* (DD) and *Droit au logement* (DAL) engaged in acts of mass protest in the public domain by organising demonstrations, occupations, petition movements and other symbolic

acts of protest. In June 1996, the G8 met in Lyons which again led to a mass demonstration by various actors within what was then known as *le mouvement social* as well as the organisation of a counter-summit by CEDETIM activists. This was followed by a series of marches against unemployment during 1997 and another wave of demonstrations and occupations at the end of the year that carried into early 1998.¹¹ In December 1997, the chief editor of *Le Monde diplomatique* Ignacio Ramonet published an editorial in which he called for the implementation of the Tobin tax.¹² The newspaper received thousands of letters of support and thus it was decided to create an association for the Tobin tax (ATTAC), which became the key organisation of the alter-globalisation movement in France. In early 1998, activists started to mobilise against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), a campaign which accompanied the formation of ATTAC which officially came into being in June 1998. Demonstrations held throughout the year led to France's withdrawal from the agreement in October and the subsequent collapse of the MAI negotiations which was seen as a major victory.

The movement steadily grew over the next few years, with ATTAC membership peaking at around 30,000 in 2002–2003 (Wintrebert 2007). ATTAC became an influential player in French politics by making contact with political elites and had members in both upper and lower houses of parliament. The decision of the French government to bring in Tobin tax legislation in November 2001 was certainly due to the influence of ATTAC (Desbos 2007). Another notable political achievement was the rejection of the EU constitutional treaty by French voters in 2005 on which ATTAC campaigned heavily. Although the French movement had its own divisions and various strands, it remained much more united than in Britain. This is due in no small part to the success of ATTAC, which managed to bind the various factions together and play an almost hegemonic role to the extent where the line between the association itself and the wider movement it represented was extremely blurred. Indeed, within France the movement itself is largely associated in the popular imagination with this one organisation (Sommier and Combes 2007).

Religious actors in the alter-globalisation movement

Within the alter-globalisation movement, we find the strong influence of values related to both the historical experience of the left and organised religion (Della Porta and Diani 2006: 66). However, this latter element is often ignored by scholars of the movement. As Frank

Lechner (2005: 117) has remarked, within this movement 'religious actors are more important and religious voices more articulate than many have realized'. This should really come as no surprise when we consider the contribution of religious groups to 'Global Civil Society' as a whole (Juergensmeyer 2005). However, the participation of religious actors within the GJM depends on the specific national context. In Latin America, religious actors form an integral part of the movement. One of the most influential figures in the WSF process is the Brazilian Catholic activist Francisco 'Chico' Whitaker. He is credited, alongside other figures such as Oded Grajew and Bernard Cassen, as being one of the founders of the WSF and has also become the figure who legitimises involvement in the alter-globalisation movement for non-Brazilian Catholics (Joshua and Raison du Cleuziou 2005: 241). The Brazilian Commission for Justice and Peace (which operates under the aegis of the National Brazilian Bishops Conference), of which Whitaker is the Executive Secretary, helps to organise the WSF along with other faith-based organisations that sit on the WSF's International Council, including Caritas Internationalis, the *Coopération internationale pour le développement et la solidarité* (CIDSE) and the *Centre de recherche et d'information pour le développement* (CRID).¹³

Christian charities and NGOs form one of the major components of the GJM worldwide and have been well represented at various counter-summits and social forums (Grannec 2011). Ecumenical organisations such as the World Council of Churches (WCC) regularly organise seminars and send their representatives to the WSF. The WCC has a history of involvement in progressive social struggles and first started taking a political stance during the anti-apartheid movement (Webb 1994). At the third edition of the WSF in 2003, the WCC's Justice, Peace and Creation Commission organised a series of workshops with the theme 'A Spirituality of Resistance'. These positive experiences led to the decision of the WCC to hold its Ninth Assembly in Porto Alegre in February 2006. It has not been uncommon to see inter-religious worship gatherings at the WSF in Porto Alegre as well as other events with a Christian theme. According to the survey conducted at the WSF in 2003, 62.6% of participants (86% of whom were Brazilian) described themselves as religious (IBASE 2003).¹⁴ The religious aspect has remained important even when the event has taken place outside Brazil. At the seventh WSF in Nairobi in 2007, survey data revealed that 28.26% of participants described themselves as 'somewhat religious' and 43.9% as 'very religious' (Reese *et al.* 2008).¹⁵

In Europe, religious groups are not as prominent in the movement, no doubt due to the secularisation of European societies as a whole and

the important role played by the radical left. Religious actors are mostly involved in the anti-debt and pacifist sectors of the movement but have also been closely involved with the ESF process. According to the surveys that have been carried out at these events, 16% of activists in Florence (2002) were active members of religious groups (Della Porta *et al.* 2006: 47), while one year later in Paris (2003) this figure was only 6% (Fillieule and Blanchard 2005: 162). In Athens (2006), it had fallen to 3.5% (Della Porta 2009a) and in Malmö (2008) it increased only slightly to 4.7% (Sörbom and Wennerhag 2010). Given that at each ESF a large proportion of the participants were from the host country, these figures give a good indication of the importance of religious groups to the movement in Italy, France, Greece and Sweden. Data from the first ESF show that around 20% of the Italian, German and British participants were affiliated to religious groups, while in France and Spain this figure was 12% (Della Porta *et al.* 2006: 47).¹⁶ Seminars with a religious theme have usually been hosted by Catholic organisations that could be described as theologically 'progressive' or 'liberal', such as Pax Christi, Emmaus, *Tavola Della Pace* or even those which are openly critical of the Vatican, such as the International Movement We Are Church (IMWAC) or the magazine *Golias*. The prominence of these critical groups as well as the dominant role of the radical left has meant that the more 'mainstream' Catholic organisations are wary of participating in the event. If we take the example of the organisations that are part of Caritas Internationalis, both *Caritas Italiana* and the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) decided not to get involved in the ESF in 2002 and 2004 because of the links the event had with the radical left. In France, when the *Secours Catholique* decided to participate in the 2003 ESF, there was much internal tension and external criticism (Raison du Cleuziou 2007).

Christian groups and activists play an important role in the British GJM, and particularly within the anti-debt/NGO strand. Jubilee 2000 was guided by Christian religious principles and was promoted in churches. It also involved a wider coalition of other faith groups, including Muslims.¹⁷ Jubilee 2000 was followed by the Trade Justice Movement (TJM) and regrouped many of the same organisations such as CAFOD and Christian Aid. Another mass campaign was launched to coincide with the return of the G8 summit to Britain in July 2005 – Make Poverty History (MPH). This was a 'mega coalition' that went well beyond the scope of Jubilee 2000 and TJM (which were partner networks within the MPH campaign), and again many faith groups were members. MPH was the British section of the worldwide alliance named the 'Global Call to Action Against Poverty' (GCAP) which was launched at the fifth WSF in

Porto Alegre in January 2005 (Mati 2009). The high point of the campaign was reached on 2 July 2005 with a series of 'Live 8' concerts held in each of the G8 countries (and South Africa) as well as demonstrations. As the G8 was being held at Gleneagles in Scotland, 225,000 people marched through the streets of Edinburgh. The massive contribution of churches in this march led one observer to remark that it 'seemed more a procession of witness than a protest' (Rootes and Saunders 2007: 128). It is, however, important to put this kind of participation into perspective as many of those involved in such a march would not necessarily identify themselves as part of the GJM and may have never attended a social forum.

Christians in France have been even more involved in the alter-globalisation movement. The foundations were laid for Catholic social teaching through the papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* and French Catholics have been involved in progressive forms of political action ever since. The establishment of the *confédération française des travailleurs chrétiens* (CFTC) trade union, the series of movements created by the Catholic Church under the banner of Catholic Action (JOC, JAC, JEC, etc.) in the early 20th century, the participation of Catholics in the French resistance and the experience of the 'worker-priests' in the post-war period (Cuchet 2005), all testify to this rich history. During the late 1950s, anti-colonial movements, and in particular opposition to the war in Algeria, were supported by a number of left-wing Catholics (often referred to as *les cathos de gauche*) alongside other leftists. The newspaper *Témoignage chrétien* became the symbol of this new trend and also played an important role in fermenting opposition to the war in Vietnam.¹⁸ Indeed, it was this movement that led to the emergence of even more radical Catholic tendencies, including the development of a *gauchisme catholique* in the aftermath of the turbulent events of 1968 (Pelletier 2002). This nevertheless remained a marginal phenomenon and the antecedents of French Catholic participation within the alter-globalisation movement are firmly rooted in solidarity and pacifist movements. Three figures in particular became important symbols of this progressive Catholic tendency – Abbé Pierre, Lanza del Vasto and Jacques Gaillot.

The Catholic priest Abbé Pierre rose to prominence through his advocacy of the poor and homeless, founding the Emmaus movement in 1949. The campaign he launched during the winter of 1954 saw an outpouring of charitable donations leading to the significant expansion of the Emmaus communities, which later formed the worldwide charity Emmaus International. Throughout the years that followed, Abbé

Pierre supported other progressive causes which often put him in direct conflict with the Vatican. He voiced his support of the emerging *sans* movements in the 1990s and famously declared Alain Juppé to be a liar during the 1995 strikes. The Italian Lanza del Vasto was a pacifist who came to France in 1939 and founded the Community of the Ark in 1948. His political activism was based on the non-violent principles he had learnt from Gandhi during his time in India. He came to public attention with a number of hunger strikes, for example against the use of torture by the French army in Algeria in 1957 and also in 1963 during the second Vatican council in order to encourage the Pope to declare opposition to war. It was, however, his role during the struggle on the Larzac plateau that cemented his reputation as a modern-day 'Catholic Gandhi' figure. In 1972, he performed another hunger strike in support of the farmers and then set up one of his communities in the area, occupying land which had been bought by the army. Jacques Gaillot, known as the Red Cleric, was the Bishop of Évreux from 1982 to 1995. He gained a reputation as a maverick figure for his progressive stance on a number of issues. For example, in 1989 he marched alongside Alain Krivine of the *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire* (LCR) during the anti-G8 protests in Paris and was also one of the founders of *Droits devant!!* in 1994. One year later, he was punished for his unorthodoxy by being stripped of his position as diocesan bishop and given the titular see of Partenia in the Sahara Desert as a form of symbolic punishment.

Organisations such as the *Comité catholique contre la faim et pour le développement* (CCFD) and the *Secours Catholique* have also played an important part within the alter-globalisation movement. Both were involved in the preparation of the second ESF in Paris as part of the organising committee, and the CCFD has been an important player in the WSF due to its links with Chico Whitaker. It also sponsors activists from developing countries to attend the WSF and provides funding for the organisation of local social forums (Cheynis 2008). Through such sponsorship, it seeks to contribute to the emergence of the GJM in other countries. This assistance is seen within the framework of its mission to strengthen local civil society in the developing world. Catholic farmers' unions such as the *Centre National des Jeunes Agriculteurs* (CNJA) and the *Mouvement Rural de Jeunesse Chrétienne* (MRJC) are another source of Christian activism within the movement (Purseigle 2005). These join other, more leftist, farmers' unions such as the *Confédération Paysanne*, of which José Bové was a spokesman. It must also not be forgotten that Christian groups are regularly involved in the creation and running of

various local social forums around France. Given this historical context, the presence of Christian activists within the alter-globalisation movement in France has raised few eyebrows. As we shall see in Chapter 3, this was not the case for Muslim activists.

The alter-globalisation movement in the ‘Muslim world’

The alter-globalisation movement is strongest in Europe and South America, where most religious activists are Christians and Muslims form a minority. The movement does exist in Muslim majority countries but remains marginal. Local chapters of ATTAC can be found in Morocco, Tunisia and Lebanon and similar organisations have been set up in other countries, such as the Anti-Globalization Egyptian Group (AGEG) or the Anti-Globalization Activists of Syria (*al-Badil*). A number of social forums have taken place in North Africa. The first regional Maghreb Social Forum took place in El Jadida in Morocco in 2008, and in 2013 the WSF was held in Tunis. However, the implication of explicitly religious organisations in these events is relatively rare. In this respect, alter-globalisation activists in the region closely resemble the majority of their counterparts in Europe – left leaning and often not particularly religious. Turkey is one of the few Muslim majority countries where explicitly religious groups take part in the movement although left-wing organisations (including parties and trade unions) still dominate (Erdi Lelandais 2011). The importance of secularism in the Turkish context makes it comparable to France, although the secular left in Turkey has managed to overcome its suspicion of religious groups and join forces with them – a feat that proved much harder in France. The importance of the GJM in Turkey led to Istanbul being designated as the host city for the ESF in 2010. Muslim majority countries in sub-Saharan Africa have also witnessed a number of social forums, most notably the African social forums in Bamako (2002), Conakry (2005) and Niamey (2008), and of course the WSF itself held in Bamako in 2006 and Dakar in 2011. The Indian subcontinent has also hosted a number of social forums, most notably the WSFs of 2004 in Mumbai (a city with a sizeable Muslim minority) and 2006 in Karachi, Pakistan.¹⁹

Although the aim of the WSF is to be a genuinely global meeting, when it was held in Brazil the number of participants from the ‘Muslim world’ had been relatively low. According to data collected by a survey of the WSF in Porto Alegre in 2003, only 0.7% of participants classed themselves as Muslims (IBASE 2003). However, when the event was held in Nairobi in 2007, this percentage had increased

to 8.6% (Reese *et al.* 2008). No data are available on the religious background of the participants at the WSFs that were held in the Muslim-majority countries, although we can reasonably assume that many were religious.²⁰ Many activists from developing countries are dependent on sponsorship from Western NGOs in order to take part in such international gatherings. Obtaining necessary visas to travel to the various events may also hinder the participation of such activists. For example, many North African activists were denied entry into Spain for the Mediterranean Social Forum in Barcelona in 2005. The social forums are an important place to network with like-minded activists in other countries, but for those who cannot attend these events in person, the Internet provides a vital link with other groups within the alter-globalisation movement. The importance of the Internet for the movement has been remarked upon; however, for less mobile activists in developing countries it is even more crucial.

Islamic NGOs have been largely absent from the WSF; this also explains their absence from the International Council (although NGOs from the Arab world are present). One exception is the NGO Islamic Relief based in Birmingham whose founder Hany El-Banna has attended the WSF on several occasions. Muslim speakers at the WSF include the Indian Imtiaz Ahmed and Malaysian Chandra Muzaffar; however, they are usually outnumbered by those belonging to Christian denominations. Some Islamist movements have also sent delegates to GJM meetings such as the WSF. The most important of these are Hezbollah from Lebanon and *Al Adl Wal Ihsane* (Justice and Spirituality) from Morocco. However, given that in most Muslim-majority countries Islamist organisations and the left are usually in conflict, it is not surprising that their representation within the movement remains marginal. The left and Islamists are more likely to join forces during the more radical movement meetings such as the Cairo anti-war conferences held annually from 2002 to 2009 (which involved the Muslim Brotherhood) and the international forums of Beirut held in September 2004, November 2006 and January 2009 (featuring the Lebanese communist party and Hezbollah). At the WSFs, a number of debates and disagreements have occurred regarding the nature of relations with organisations tied to political Islam, most notably at the 2006 WSF in Karachi. Some activist scholars have stated that Islamism and the GJM are in fact incompatible because although they may share enemies, they seek radically different goals. Valentine Moghadam (2009: 120) argues,

A key difference between the Islamist movement, on the one hand, and the feminist and global justice movements, on the other, lies

in the framings as well as the collective action repertoires. Islamists are not preoccupied with neoliberal capitalist globalization; rather, the problem is framed as Western imperialism or cultural invasion or Islam in danger. Global social democracy, or even local democratic practice, is not presented as a solution; rather 'Islam is the solution'.

These arguments are not dealt with specifically in this book as it is not my aim to argue about the normative aspects of the participation of Muslims (be they Islamists or not) within the GJM. As we shall see in Chapter 3, many Muslims who participated in the alter-globalisation movement were labelled as 'Islamists' in order to discredit them.²¹ Surprisingly, it was only in Britain and France where European Muslims participated in any significant numbers (despite the existence of many other countries in Europe with both a dynamic GJM and a sizeable Muslim minority).

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide a suitable background in order to understand the rest of the book, in particular by providing a history of the movement that is studied and the role of religious groups and actors within it. It is not appropriate to describe it as being 'anti-globalisation' when it opposed neo-liberalism rather than globalisation per se. Therefore, the terms 'alter-globalisation' and 'global justice movement' have been preferred. The main rallying events are the WSF and the ESF, with the latter being studied in this book, whose focus is on Europe. Although the start of the alter-globalisation movement is typically dated to the protests against the WTO in Seattle in 1999, this chapter has shown that its origins can be traced back much further with the first counter-summits taking place in the 1980s. In Europe, the movement represents the unification of a series of previous social movement struggles waged by the various incarnations of the political left. By the late 1990s, they had converged around a common cause, thereby re-energising several older activist movements (Agricolansky 2005).

The movement is however divided between 'horizontal' and 'vertical', with the latter tendency forming the basis of this study. The creation of GR was an attempt to federate the various groups within the movement in Britain, although some perceived it as front group for the SWP (Ibrahim 2011). In France, a much more representative organisation emerged in the shape of ATTAC. This format was so successful that it was exported around the world. The movement could also count on well-known public figures like José Bové, who made his

name dismantling a McDonalds franchise and destroying genetically modified crops. Although they are often ignored in published accounts of the alter-globalisation movement, religious activists and organisations are prominent. This is particularly the case in the Global South but also applies to Europe, where such participation is often through NGOs and campaigns like Jubilee 2000 and Make Poverty History. The left-wing Catholic tradition in France has supplied many activists to the alter-globalisation cause. This is in contrast to the situation in Muslim-majority countries where the movement has not been particularly strong, with the exceptions of Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey. However, social forums have been held all over the world which testifies to the global nature of the movement.

2

Muslim Political Participation and Mobilisation in Britain and France

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a chronological account of the participation of 'Muslim migrants' and their descendants in social movements and contentious politics in the two countries under study in the post-war period. It traces the history of this participation in various political struggles from the 1950s to the 1990s. In particular, it charts the rise of identity politics and how these actors came to define themselves as 'Muslims'. The chapter presents a set of dimensions that are useful in explaining Muslim participation in the alter-globalisation movement (explored further in Chapter 3) as well as the reactions to this (the subject of Chapter 5). Participation within the emerging movement against neo-liberal globalisation, at least for many of the older Muslim activists who were interviewed, was the logical consequence of their involvement in previous political struggles and left-wing activism. This chapter demonstrates the continuity of mobilisation from the first generation of migrants to the second generation that was raised in Britain and France. It also sheds light on the origins of some of the groups that later took part in the ESF process.

Talking about 'Muslim participation' of course necessitates picking the Muslim 'strands' out of the general narrative of the history of post-colonial migrants and their political struggles (Mahamdallie 2007). The focus here is on the political participation of North Africans in France and those originating from the Indian subcontinent in Britain. In the latter case, such activism involved those of various faiths (and none). Yet this was not really an issue because religious identity was subordinate to an 'Asian' or 'Black' identity.¹ In France too, despite arriving

from Muslim majority countries, their 'Arab' identity was much more prominent. In fact, it was only during the 1990s that these 'Asians' and 'Arabs' started mobilising as 'Muslims'. This chapter traces this development and pays close attention in particular to the mobilisation of the 'second generation' in each country, that is, those who were either born in Europe or who arrived there as young children. One could have started this history by looking at political activism before decolonisation. Emigrants in Europe helped to achieve independence back home by founding organisations such as the *Étoile Nord Africaine* (ENA) in France and the Indian Workers Association (IWA) in the United Kingdom. Political mobilisations during the period of colonial rule had a significant influence on later struggles in the post-colonial *métropole*. This chapter concentrates on those demands made by post-colonial migrants in the post-war era that were aimed at gaining social and political rights – from strikes in the workplace to the fight against racism. It then focuses on the movements that were initiated by their children.

Early struggles by post-colonial migrants in Britain

There has been an Asian presence in Britain for the last 400 years (Visram 2002). However, it was not until after the partition of India in 1947 that migrants from the former 'jewel in the crown of the empire' started to arrive in large numbers. The 1948 Nationality Act gave those living in Commonwealth countries the right to British citizenship and therefore the right of entry and settlement on the British mainland. The vast majority of migrants to Britain from the Indian subcontinent came in order to fulfil labour shortages during the 1950s and 1960s. A second wave of immigration began during the 1970s: first, from Bangladesh after the war of independence in 1971 and then with the arrival of Asian communities which had fled from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi and Zanzibar. Life was hard for the vast majority of Asian migrants to Britain in the post-war period. They were often obliged to work unsocial hours for rates of pay and conditions that were less favourable than those of their native British counterparts. Even if they were unionised and had been in their jobs longer than others, they were often the first to be dismissed in times of redundancies which undermined the 'last in, first out' principle (Wrench 2000).

Their socio-economic situation created fertile conditions for involvement in leftist activism, although it is important not to overstress the level of such involvement. Indeed, 'not every South Asian migrant to

Britain joined the communist party or some other left group, but the history of such struggles is known amongst the South Asian communities today' (Hutnyk 2005: 351). From the earliest days of settlement, labourers coming from South Asia became unionised and were involved in various workers' campaigns (Kalra 2000, Visram 2002). The most important organisations involved in this were the Asian Workers' Union and the IWA which had been revived in 1958 by the new wave of migrants to Britain with the aim of federating the various new workers groups that had sprung up in several British cities (Josephides 1991). It served as a vehicle not only to represent Asian migrant workers but also to get them involved in left-wing and class-based politics in Britain. The IWA was keen to make links with the British trade union movement despite being constantly confronted by the problems of racism from within this movement itself. Trade unions, in fact, consistently 'failed to counter the racist views and actions of some of their members' (Virdee 2000: 133).

This forced the IWA to organise its own industrial action, and the 1965 strike at the Red Scar Mill in Preston is the first ever example of an 'immigrant strike' in Britain. Other important organisations that developed in this period included the National Federation of Pakistani Associations and the offshoots of the IWA – the Pakistani Workers' Association and later the Bangladeshi and Kashmiri Workers' Associations. Involvement in these groups was important as it introduced many Asian migrants to left-wing activism and would shape their later political engagements, whether within social movements such as the anti-racist struggle or electoral politics with the Labour Party. Garbaye (2005: 119) has noted how after involvement with the Asian unions 'many Pakistanis moved to activities as shop stewards in a union at their workplace, which in turn shaped their approach to politics, with activism in the Labour Party an almost natural step for many'. A number of high-profile strikes by Asian workers took place in the 1960s and 1970s, often without the support of the major unions and the majority of their white colleagues. Instead, they had to rely on support from within their own community. The most emblematic strikes were those at Red Scar (1965), the Coneycgre Foundry in Tipton (1967–1968), Mansfield Hosiery Mills in Loughborough (1972–1973), Imperial Typewriters in Leicester (1974), Grunwick film processing in Willesden (1976) and Chix Bubblegum factory in Slough (1980). During this same period, new forms of activism also developed outside the workplace in response to increasingly restrictive government immigration policies and the racism that post-colonial migrants suffered at the hands of employers, colleagues and the police – who would routinely stop and search them.

There was also the physical intimidation by right-wing extremists linked to the National Front (NF) as well as racist individuals acting on their own initiative. In a time of recession, migrants and their children became easy scapegoats for the economic woes of the country. The rise of the NF in the early 1970s led to the formation of localised anti-fascist movements which galvanised the radical left in Britain (Copsey 2000). Asians engaged in anti-fascist struggles in conjunction with what, for want of a better term, might be termed 'the white left'. The International Socialists (IS), a Trotskyist political formation led by Tony Cliff, were at the forefront in this fight and their activists confronted the NF in the streets. According to IS statements, this gained them respect and brought them 'into close contact with Asian organisations and especially groups of young Asian workers'.² After a number of racist murders, such as that of Gurdip Singh Chaggar outside a pub in Southall in June 1976, Asians became more involved in the anti-fascist movement. In 1977, the NF was confronted in London at Wood Green and then Lewisham by both IS activists and local second-generation Afro-Caribbean and Asian youths.

These events led to the creation of the Anti-Nazi League (ANL) and the IS changed its name to the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). This organisation also sponsored the Rock against Racism (RAR) campaign which lasted from 1976 to 1981 and produced not only an anti-racist fanzine (*Temporary Hoarding*) but also a series of anti-racist concerts across the country with leading bands of the day. The focus of this campaign was on creating black-and-white unity through punk and reggae music which naturally focused more on the Afro-Caribbean experience; nevertheless, it also 'helped to establish the conditions for a more self-confident and assertive mood with Asian communities across the UK' (Goodyer 2009: 84). RAR and ANL jointly organised a number of marches and festivals, and in this period a number of Asian activists joined radical left groups such as the SWP (Malik 2009). However, these activists could not always rely on their white comrades and certain episodes created distrust of the 'white left'. For example, in September 1978, the NF decided to march on Brick Lane in East London which had become the centre of Britain's Bangladeshi community. Residents responded with a 'Defend Brick Lane' campaign and activists went to Brockwell park where an RAR concert was taking place in order to ask for an announcement to be made to tell people to come and help fight the fascists. However, this call was ignored as, according to one journalist, 'people preferred to lie in the sun and enjoy the music' (Hutnyk 2000: 158).

The pioneers of the Asian Youth Movements

Those who had been born in the United Kingdom to immigrant parents, or had arrived there as children due to family reunification, often had to endure racism both at school and in their local community. These experiences strongly shaped their upbringing. The impetus for the formation of organisations of the 'second generation' was their daily encounter with racism, the lack of protection they believed they were receiving from the police and their frustration at the hesitancy of their parents to call for direct action. After the racist murder of Gurdip Singh Chaggar, local youths in Southall decided to march to the police station and hold a sit-in. The inadequate response of the Southall IWA, 'who requested extra police to control rioting Asian youth outraged by police denial of any racist motive in Chaggar's stabbing by a white gang' (Lent 2001: 120), led to the creation of the Southall Youth Movement. Similar organisations were then created, such as the Bradford Asian Youth Movement in 1977 and the Bangladeshi Youth Movement in 1978 which followed the fatal stabbing of Altab Ali in the Whitechapel area of East London. Similarly, the murder of Akhtar Ali Baig in the summer of 1980 was followed by the formation of the Newham Youth Movement, the forerunner of the Newham Monitoring Project (NMP). These initiatives were then emulated in other British towns with large South Asian populations, such as Birmingham, Burnley, Leicester, Luton, Nottingham, Manchester and Sheffield. These became known as the Asian Youth Movements (AYMs).

Although the AYM were founded by a new generation of activists, they owed a huge debt to the activism of their parents' generation. Their cross-cultural and cross-religious nature was something they explicitly borrowed from the IWA (Ramamurthy 2013). The AYM were symbolised by two slogans: 'come what may, we're here to stay' and 'here to stay, here to fight'. Despite not federating into a single national organisation, the AYM co-operated with each other at various moments. Although their identity was 'Asian', these groups also considered themselves as 'politically black'. This was a means for anti-racists from all groups to unite under one common identity:

The Asian Youth Movements (AYMs) of the 1970s and 1980s were powerful examples of political movements that were influenced by black politics and a version of secularism that became a unifying force between different religious communities... the term 'secular' implied

a unity-in-diversity between those of different religious backgrounds, without suppressing their particular religious identities.

(Ramamurthy 2006: 39)

The AYMs often utilised the image of the Black Power fist in their literature. The South African Black Consciousness Movement and the apartheid struggle were also a source of inspiration. The Newham Youth Movement actually adopted one of the slogans of the anti-apartheid struggle: 'Don't mourn, organise'. The AYMs also tried to connect their activism with their heritage, in particular by valorising the fight for independence from British colonial rule and drawing inspiration from this. Figures from the Indian liberation movement such as the Sikh revolutionary Udham Singh were thus rediscovered by a new generation of activists.³

In the summer of 1981, after hearing about the plan of the NF to march through the predominantly Asian neighbourhoods of Bradford, a group of local Asian youths decided to create and store petrol bombs in the event of an attack on their community. These bombs were discovered by the police and 12 activists, who subsequently became known as 'the Bradford 12', were arrested and charged with conspiracy to cause an explosion. They were all members of a group called the United Black Youth League (UBYL), a splinter group of the Bradford AYM. The various AYMs up and down the country all united in their campaign for the acquittal of those on trial. This campaign was undoubtedly the high point of the AYMs. The slogan 'self-defence is no offence' became their new rallying call. During the trial, the defendants admitted making the petrol bombs but argued that it was necessary in order to defend their community. They were acquitted and this led to community self-defence being enshrined in English law.⁴ This was a significant success for second-generation Asian activists who had fought the law and won. However, subsequent events meant it was later viewed as a pyrrhic victory as it indirectly contributed to the demise of the AYMs.

In the wake of the trial, Bradford city council realised it had no means of communicating with the Asian community. Fearful of the possibility of urban unrest, it adopted race relations policies inspired by those enacted by the Greater London Council (GLC):

The council reached for the GLC template. It drew up equal opportunities statements, established race relations units and threw money at minority organisations. A twelve-point race relations plan declared that every section of the 'multiracial, multicultural city' had 'an equal

right to maintain its own identity, culture, language, religion and customs’.

(Malik 2009: 73)

These policies were, in fact, enacted at local government level in many areas of the country that had high numbers of ethnic minorities, especially in light of the recommendations of the Scarman Report produced after the Brixton riots of 1981. Groups could only gain local government funding if they were seen to represent a particular ethnic community. In this sense, the state was successful in neutralising an emerging radical political force:

Through funding criteria, the state split the communities into Asian and Black and the broad-based concept of a political black identity that had been embraced by the youth movements struggled to maintain influence. Within the context of state funding, an identity based on black resistance gave way to new identities focused on the cultural domain.

(Ramamurthy 2006: 56)

Thus leaders within the AYMs became co-opted, some even going on to join the Labour Party and start their political careers. The Bradford AYM in particular was greatly weakened over internal disputes about the Labour Party and some started campaigning within the party for ‘black sections’ (Lent 2001). The decline of the AYMs was also consistent with the reduction in racist street violence in Britain and the collapse of the NF. By the end of the 1980s, they had effectively ceased to exist or had morphed into other, less political groups. The only remnants are today’s anti-racist groups such as NMP and the Southall Monitoring Group as well as the feminist organisation Southall Black Sisters, all of which participated in the ESFs.

The failure of political blackness and the rise of Muslim identity politics

The use of the term ‘black’ to encompass all ethnic minorities, and therefore the colour of one’s politics and not of one’s skin, was heavily influenced by the work of Ambalavaner Sivanandan and others from the Institute for Race Relations. However, this terminology did not outlast the 1980s and the demise of the AYMs merely reflected wider trends encouraged by the local government policies described above. By the

time of the 1991 census, the first to include a question on ethnicity, there already existed separate categories such as 'Black Caribbean', 'Black African', 'Indian', 'Pakistani', 'Bangladeshi' and 'Chinese'. The end of political blackness was also accelerated by new academic theorising. Tariq Modood (1988) outlined the limitations of traditional anti-racist discourse in Britain and its focus on political blackness, which he argued did not apply to Asians and also ignored the category of religion as a means of identification. This article also criticised the hugely influential work, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (Gilroy 1987), for its emphasis on the condition of Black Britons from the Caribbean at the expense of any other 'black' experience. Ominously, Modood's article pre-empted later events as it was published just months before the Rushdie affair was to explode onto the scene and firmly condemn political blackness to obscurity. In subsequent work, he reiterated his position, arguing that the concept of blackness was not only inadequate but actually harmful for Asian Britons as it understates the distinctive concerns of Asian communities, smothers their ethnic pride and has been imposed upon them by others (Modood 1990, 1992, 1994).

By the mid-1990s, 'black' as an all-encompassing term had been well and truly abandoned and was limited to describing those of Afro-Caribbean heritage. Later research into political mobilisation by minorities in Britain demonstrated that the idiosyncrasies of the 'race relations' approach had clearly shaped patterns of political contention in terms of the identities that were used (Statham 1999). Therefore, Afro-Caribbeans mobilised as 'Blacks' along racial lines, whereas Indian subcontinent minorities did so along lines of race, religion and national and ethnic origin such as 'Asian', 'Muslim', 'Sikh', 'Bangladeshi', 'Pakistani', 'Punjabi', 'Bengali' and so on. The Race Relations Act of 1976 was not initially designed to protect religious groups, but the legislation was eventually invoked in case law in order to enshrine the protection of Jews and Sikhs, who became classed as racial groups, and thus protected under the 1976 Act. Muslims and Hindus were deemed to fall outside its jurisdiction despite campaigns on this issue and a number of court cases. The various Industrial Tribunals and Employment Appeal Tribunals consistently held that these are neither ethnic nor racial groups. This situation, of course, did not help Muslims who wanted to introduce provisions based on their religious needs such as providing *halal* food or prayer facilities. Nevertheless, at the local level, Muslim groups did manage to gain a number of concessions through lobbying tactics. The Bradford Council for Mosques, formed in 1981, was one of the first pressure groups created in order to negotiate with local government

and in its early years successfully persuaded the local education authority to be 'responsive in the curriculum and ethos of local schools to their religious and cultural traditions' (Lewis 1994: 146).⁵ The Council for Mosques also played an important role in the development of the controversy surrounding Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* culminating in the decision to burn the book in Bradford Town Hall Square on 14 January 1989.

What became known as the Rushdie affair politicised a generation of Muslims in Britain. It was a pivotal moment which had global repercussions that went far beyond Britain and its Muslims. It led to a certain kind of multiculturalism and a move away from a focus on 'saris, samosas and steel bands'. Modood and others like Bhikhu Parekh formulated a concept that was grounded in political theory ideas of equal respect and recognition and wanted to include Muslims as a religious group. Much later, authors looked back on the Rushdie affair as the start of the crisis of multiculturalism (Malik 2009, Weller 2009), as it contributed to the formation of a specific 'Muslim consciousness' (Meer 2010) in Britain and provided the foundation for future mobilisation 'as Muslims'. Protests calling for the banning of the book saw the first major demonstrations by Muslims in Britain on a national scale, uniting all the various trends and political divisions (Peace 2015). It mobilised not only those who were active in Muslim organisations but also those who had actually thought very little about being 'Muslim' at all. In his account of the affair, the journalist Kenan Malik recounts a chance encounter in Bradford with an old friend:

It was Hassan, a friend from London, whom I had not seen for over a year. 'I'm doing some interviews about Rushdie,' I told him. 'But what are you doing in this God-forsaken place?' Hassan laughed. 'Trying to make it less God-forsaken,' he said. 'I've been up here a few months, helping in the campaign against Rushdie.' And then he laughed again when he saw my face. 'No need to look so shocked,' he said. He had had it with the 'white left'. He had got tired of all those dreary political meetings and the hours spent on street corners selling newspapers that no one wanted. But it had also become something more than simply disaffection with radical politics. He had, he said, lost his sense of who he was and where he'd come from. So he had returned to Bradford to try to rediscover it. And what he had found was a sense of community and a 'need to defend our dignity as Muslims, to defend our values and beliefs'. He was not going to allow anyone – 'racist or Rushdie' – to trample over them. The Hassan

I had known in London had been a member of the far-left Socialist Workers Party (as I had been for a while). Apart from Trotskyism, his other indulgences were Southern Comfort, sex and Arsenal. We had watched the Specials and the Clash together, smoked dope together, argued together about football. We had marched together, chucked bricks together at the National Front, together been arrested.

(Malik 2009: xx)

This brief portrait of Hassan illustrates the ‘conversion’ of a previous generation of young Muslims who had until then been fighting for political rights and against racism, often in conjunction with the radical left. Leftists in Britain felt unable to join Muslims in this campaign as it appeared to attack free speech and the rationalism and enlightenment values that they held so dear. What is more, Rushdie was admired on the left for his strong commitment to anti-racism (Lewis 1994).

The protests by British Muslims against Rushdie culminated in a demonstration in London on 27 May 1989. Smaller-scale protests, which passed off largely unnoticed, were also organised against the United Kingdom’s involvement in Operation Desert Storm in 1991. Muslims were also mobilised during the wars in the former Yugoslavia and many became involved in organising humanitarian aid. As one activist who later became involved in the anti-war movement recounts, ‘In 1993 I went to Croatia during the war in Bosnia and I suppose that was the first active type of involvement in a political cause. I was working with a medical convoy that went to refugee camps called Convoy of Mercy.’⁶ The lack of co-ordination between various Muslim groups in this period meant that the British government did not really know who to deal with. In March 1994, the Home Secretary Michael Howard called on Muslim leaders to establish a unified voice, eventually leading to the creation of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) in 1997 and the institutionalisation of Muslim political demands. That same year the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) was also established and became an affiliate of the MCB. These organisations were, however, dominated by older first-generation migrants and no groups were created by Muslims who were born and raised in Britain. This situation changed rapidly after 11 September 2001.

Post-war political activism in France among migrants

Algerian labour migration to France started long before the Second World War and thus there were a significant number of Algerians already

working in France when the war ended (MacMaster 1996). Many of their compatriots joined them in the post-war period to help with the reconstruction process. This was then followed by labour migration from Morocco and Tunisia. Whereas in the United Kingdom Commonwealth citizens in this period had a legal right to enter and settle in the country without restriction, immigration in France in the immediate post-war period was much more controlled. This was done through the *Office National de l'Immigration* (ONI), which was tasked with recruiting migrant workers to those sectors of the economy which were most in need (Silverman 1992).⁷ Most went to the industrial centres of France to work in the automobile, building and metallurgical industries and were at first forced to live in shanty towns (*bidonvilles*) with some housed in workers hostels known as *foyers de travailleurs migrants* (FTM). Similar to the situation of migrants in the United Kingdom, their first post-war political struggles were those that took place in the workplace. French trade unions, like their counterparts in Britain, held an ambiguous position towards migrant workers from North Africa. They were in fact 'torn between a universalist proletarian internationalism and the particularist desire to protect the national workforce from competition' (Lloyd 2000: 119). Although the union confederations shared a restrictive attitude to immigration, once the migrants were part of the workforce they were generally encouraged to get unionised and join the working-class struggle. Workers from North Africa therefore took an active part in the labour movement. However, March 1956 was a significant moment as the *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF) voted in favour of the Special Powers Act for Algeria. This created considerable tensions between Algerian workers, and indeed other North African workers, and the *Confédération générale du travail* (CGT) trade union (tied to the PCF).

May 1968 represents a milestone in the post-war history of the labour movement in France, and North African migrants were at the frontline of the strikes during this historic moment. They not only joined the struggles of their French counterparts but also made demands related to their own working conditions, such as equal pay and better and longer contracts. In the Renault factory in Billancourt, for example, a group of mainly Algerian migrants decided to create a unified platform for all migrant workers involved in the protest, thus setting themselves apart from the official line of the CGT, the union running the strike there. However, although there were real tensions with the CGT, the participation of migrant workers in the 1968 strikes did not lead to any breaks with the various trade union organisations (Vigna 2008). Participation in the strikes and protests on the barricades came at a high cost for all

migrant workers, including those from European countries such as Italy, Spain and Portugal, as factory owners used their right to immediately dismiss and then deport them. The Minister for Immigration Raymond Marcellin also ordered police to arrest and deport migrant workers who were 'disturbing the peace'; this led to a solidarity movement formed by students and other workers under the slogan 'We are all foreigners'. This coincided with the creation of immigrant support groups such as the *Associations de Soutien aux Travailleurs Immigrés* (ASTI) and later the *Groupe d'Information et de Soutien aux Travailleurs Immigrés* (GISTI).

The strikes of 1968 were not isolated events though. If the names Red Scar and Hosiery Mills became synonymous with the first migrant labour disputes in the United Kingdom, the same could certainly be said of a number of strikes that took place in factories across France in the early 1970s. This included Penarroya–Saint Denis (January 1971), Girosteel–Bourget (February 1972), Penarroya–Lyons (February–March 1972) and Renault–Billancourt (March 1972, March–April 1973). The French government was attempting to restrict immigration in the early 1970s and French unions supported migrants by campaigning against these measures and for the awarding of migrants with equal rights. This did, however, rest on the assumption that they were only temporary workers, that is, they would eventually return to their countries of origin (Mouriaux and Withol de Wenden 1987). There was a wave of protest and hunger strikes against the restrictions on immigration called for in the Marcellin-Fontanet circulars in 1972 (Abdallah 2000). Struggles also developed in this period pertaining to migrant workers' living conditions. This was symbolised by the rent strikes in the hostels run by the state agency *Société nationale de construction de logements pour les travailleurs* (SONACOTRA). These strikes involved over one hundred hostels and thousands of migrant workers from both North and sub-Saharan Africa between 1974 and 1979 (Bernardot 2008). They represent the most emblematic struggle conducted by migrant workers in France. This was also a time when a number of political organisations were created by North African migrants.

The *Mouvement des Travailleurs Arabes* (MTA) was the best example of an organisation that sought to represent Arab workers while retaining its independence from the French unions as well as the governments of the Maghreb who attempted to control migrant workers through the *Amicales*.⁸ The MTA emerged out of the 'Palestine Committees' which regrouped politically aware North African workers and students who wished to support the Palestinian struggle after the events of Black September (Aissaoui 2009). The MTA was founded in June 1972 with

the aim of fighting against racism, improving the working conditions of 'Arabs' and fighting against their deportation. The use of the term 'Arab' testifies to a desire to go beyond strictly national identities and was also a legacy of the pan-Arabism of the 1960s. The Palestinian issue itself was seen as emblematic of Arab identity and pride, and indeed some members of the MTA were from other Arab countries such as Lebanon. The MTA was ideologically tied to the radical left and influenced by the Maoist group *Gauche Prolétarienne*. They organised strikes in factories, played a key role in the SONACOTRA rent disputes and conducted hunger strikes for those migrants facing deportation – indeed the hunger strike became a key weapon in their action repertoire. The lack of support, and on occasion hostility, shown towards the MTA by French trade unions, naturally suspicious of such a competitor, forced the MTA to develop its position of 'autonomy'. This concept, although rarely defined, came to represent a rallying call as well as the solution to their problems (Hajjat 2008a). Although by 1976 the MTA had effectively ceased to exist, its insistence on grassroots organising and 'autonomy' made it a reference point for the movements and SMOs that were to form in later years. Some of the organisations representing migrants and their descendants that went on to become involved in the alter-globalisation movement trace their history back to the MTA.

The emergence of contentious politics among migrant workers during the 1970s should have been the catalyst for their massive recruitment as future union representatives and leaders and eventually their incorporation into the left-wing parties that controlled them, such as the PCF and *Lutte Ouvrière* (LO). However, unlike with previous generations of migrants, left-wing parties seemed unable to find the necessary figureheads to fulfil such a role (Mouriaux and Withol de Wenden 1987). It is difficult to attribute specific causes for this situation, and it can probably be explained as much by the actions of the French left as by the suspicious attitudes of post-colonial migrants themselves. The PCF was tainted in many eyes by the lukewarm support the party gave for the Algerian independence struggle, and Marxist arguments about the Palestinian cause not being part of the class struggle (and thus only to be worthy of 'critical support') did not enamour Arab activists to these organisations either (Bouamama 2008). Indeed, the French radical left was conspicuous by its absence during many of the struggles conducted by migrants themselves such as the SONACOTRA strikes (with the exception of the Maoists).

By the mid-1970s, due to the tightening of immigration rules, many migrant workers had decided to remain in France and brought their

wives and families with them. Buoyed by the various struggles they had been involved in, Muslim workers became more confident in making demands related to the religious domain in the workplace. This presented the trade unions with an 'equal-versus-special-treatment dilemma' (Pennix and Roosblad 2000), although the sheer number of migrant workers meant that unions usually acquiesced. One might be surprised to learn that during the late 1970s and early 1980s French trade unions made numerous efforts to support Muslim workers when they asked for prayer rooms to be allocated in factories or needed flexibility regarding their working routine and the dates of their annual leave (Mouriaux and Withol de Wenden 1987). This religious dimension was later exploited by politicians wishing to discredit migrant workers striking at the Citroën and Talbot factories in 1982–1983. News reports showed images of hundreds of factory workers at prayer time, thus creating in the minds of the general public a false symmetry between the striking workers and the religious fervour of the recent Iranian Revolution. Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy famously accused those on strike of being agitated by religious and political groups that had little to do with 'French social realities' (Deltombe 2005).

The second generation in France and *le mouvement beur*

From the 1950s onwards, the French government built new housing projects on the outskirts of major cities. As family reunification took place in the 1970s, increasing numbers of migrants made their homes in the *banlieues*. Thus the so-called second generation started to go to school and grow up in France. Although this generation did not come to the attention of the general public until the 1980s, like their British counterparts, they had been involved in political activism since the late 1970s. In 1977, the French government created an initiative for voluntary repatriation of migrants and their families. Migrant youth fought against these measures and at the same time were also confronted by racists in French society who sometimes resorted to extreme levels of violence, resulting in the deaths of several young people. These racist murders coupled with the increasing police presence in migrant neighbourhoods and the significant numbers of migrant youths being either sent to jail or deported made for an unbearable situation. At this time, transnational links were established between second-generation youths in Britain and France (Sadgui 2008). Having been told of the success of the RAR concerts in the United Kingdom, the idea was exported to France in 1979 but was given the name 'Rock Against Police', as it was

felt that the police incarnated the racial discrimination that they were suffering from. A series of free concerts were organised, the first of which took place on 19 April 1980 in Paris. The concert in Lyons led to the establishment of a group called *Zaâma d'Banlieue* by second-generation female youths. This group campaigned against police repression and its (sometimes fatal) violence. France's first major urban riots were sparked in the summer of 1981 and took place in the *banlieue* town of Vénissieux near Lyons. Images of joy riding and subsequent burning of cars were relayed back to homes across the country.

These events took place in the context of the election of François Mitterrand to the French presidency. He ushered in a new era for migrants and their descendants by relaxing some of the more restrictive measures that had been brought in by the previous right-wing administration. He also extended the work permits of thousands of migrant workers in response to the hunger strike carried out in April 1981 by Hamid Boukhrouna and two priests from Lyons – Christian Delorme and Jean Costil.⁹ Another change by the incoming president was the law of 9 October 1981 that allowed 'foreigners' (including those born in France without French citizenship) to legally form voluntary associations according to the law of 1901. Previously, authorisation was required (and often refused) from the Ministry of the Interior, meaning that associations formed by migrants were 'unofficial' and thus deprived of any state or local government funding. The new law allowed for the creation of a whole host of local associations which both migrants and their children were able to benefit from. Although these new measures were cause for some optimism, the French *banlieues* in the early 1980s were feeling the weight of massive unemployment and a bleak future for their young inhabitants. An ever-increasing number of racist murders over the following two years coupled with the rise of the extreme right party *Front National* (FN) added to the depressing climate. After a violent confrontation with the police in the Minguettes neighbourhood of Vénissieux on 23 March 1983, 11 youths living in the area decided to go on hunger strike and create the association *SOS Avenir Minguettes*. In June of the same year, the president of the association, Toumi Djaidja, was shot by a policeman and on his hospital bed decided with Christian Delorme to organise a march along the lines of those organised by Gandhi and Martin Luther King. This was named the 'march for equality and against racism' and also known as the 'march of the *beurs*'.¹⁰

The march left Marseille on 15 October 1983 and made its way northward stopping at various cities where local anti-racist and solidarity groups organised 'welcoming committees'. The question of Islam was

not raised as part of the demands of the march. Indeed, it is widely acknowledged that the majority of *beur* activists were not in any way religious (Beaud and Masclat 2006). Islam was not only absent from the march; it was even looked upon by disdain by the majority of those involved, despite the fact that they were mostly born into nominally Muslim families. As this activist explains, his status as a practising Muslim made him question his involvement:

Personally, I didn't want to take part in the march because of Islam and being a practising Muslim. I stopped for prayer and I knew that would be an issue on the march. I knew some of the people involved and what they were like and I asked myself 'Is it right for me to get involved in that?' Guys who smoked, drank alcohol, chased after girls and all that. While I was in other place. I was afraid of being badly received by other Arabs! At that time, Islam was seen as something backward and archaic – by young Arabs themselves I mean. For the French, it was something invisible.¹¹

The march ended with a triumphant arrival in Paris on 3 December 1983 with an estimated 100,000 people joining the demonstration. A group of young *marcheurs* was received in the Élysée Palace by Mitterrand and they obtained the concession of a 10-year residency permit for migrants and their children (most of whom did not yet have French citizenship). However, some were unhappy at the way in which the march had been organised and portrayed in the media. Much of the organisational work was carried out by Christian charities and migrant support groups and was led by the Lyons branch of the Protestant solidarity organisation CIMADE. The heavy involvement of these solidarity groups in the organisation meant that there were effectively two separate marches. The first was by ecumenical anti-racists encouraged by the Socialists in power who tried to keep demands moderate, and the other was by the young people from the suburban housing projects who were denouncing racist crimes and police harassment (Abdallah 2000).

Furthermore, the initial euphoria of the march was abruptly punctured by the mass redundancies of those of their parents' generation at the Talbot factory in Poissy. This involved violent clashes between migrant and French workers after the migrant workers had occupied the factory in protest at being dismissed. Many of the young marchers came to the factory to hold a demonstration expecting the same kind of media interest and sympathy and the same mobilisation of anti-racist groups that had greeted them in Paris, but it was not to be. Thus came the

realisation that the fight for equality had not been won; it had in fact only just begun. In June 1984, a conference was held in Lyons to discuss the future of their new movement. During this three-day congress, two factions emerged. On the one side were those who argued for complete autonomy whereby young North Africans should build their movement independently of all political parties and anti-racist groups. On the other, those who insisted on the need for allies among other sections of French society, even among political parties (Cesari 1994). The inability to reach a consensus led to the failure of the conference, with a second one organised in September in Saint-Etienne by members of the latter faction. They decided to organise another event called *Convergence 84* where, instead of walking to Paris, they would 'converge' on the capital from the four corners of France on mopeds. The slogan for this event was 'France is like a moped, to move forward you need a mix'. By the time they arrived at their destination on 1 December 1984, they were greeted not only by a supportive crowd (although much less impressive than the year before) but also by the presence of people selling little yellow badges in the shape of a hand with the inscription 'Don't touch my mate'. *SOS Racisme*, a government-sponsored anti-racist organisation, had been launched with the explicit aim of riding on the wave of the *beur* movement in order to help the *Parti Socialiste* (PS) gain a youth vote and counter the rapid rise of the FN of Le Pen, who had been elected as a member of the European Parliament just a few months previously.¹²

All Muslim activists interviewed for this research describe the creation of *SOS Racisme* as a hijacking of *their* movement and a calculated political decision designed to neuter the *beur* movement and confiscate it from its founders in favour of a moralistic form of anti-racism devoid of any political demands that might upset the status quo. The slogan chosen by *SOS Racisme* was infused with a condescending and paternalistic tone; the subliminal message to be portrayed was that of a good French citizen protecting the poor defenceless black or Arab kid (his 'mate'). Above all, it was a marketing tool designed to directly benefit the PS and maintain a good image with the youth of France. This was initially done through the organisation of free open-air concerts such as the one in Place de la Concorde on 15 June 1985. Most *beur* activists did not immediately realise the political agenda behind *SOS Racisme* and many enthusiastically got involved by selling the badges and other paraphernalia. The eventual realisation about its true nature led some of those involved in the *beur* movement to create their own 'autonomous' associations.

It was again in Lyons where the first of such new associations were created. Of particular interest is *Jeunes Arabes de Lyon et Banlieue* (JALB) which succeeded *Zaâma d'Banlieue* in 1985. The name of this group was a means of counteracting the *beur* label which had become appropriated by the media and politicians in Paris (Sadgui 2008). Therefore the term 'Arab' for these activists functioned in the same way as 'Black' for British Asian youths in the AYMs. The leaders of JALB, Nacer Zair and Djida Tazdaït, took part in a hunger strike in June 1986 to oppose the restrictive immigration laws brought in by the new right-wing government which made it easier to deport those who had not yet acquired French citizenship.¹³ This led to a national campaign called 'I'm here and I'm staying' (*j'y suis, j'y reste*). The name of this campaign echoed the slogans of the AYMs in Britain. Nevertheless, the deportations, racist murders and confrontations with the police in the *banlieues* continued. The *beur* movement did not lead to the formation of any nationwide initiative which could carry on the struggle against racism and for political rights. In this sense, we can speak of a genuine 'failure' of this movement and that of French anti-racism in general (Negrouche 1992, Fysh 1998).

Many of those who had been involved began to question their political engagement, and the late 1980s and early 1990s saw a return to Islam on the part of many of the second generation – symbolised by the conversion of Toumi Djaïdja while he was serving a prison sentence. Tariq Ramadan has described this phenomenon as a reaction to the feeling of being manipulated as well as an attempt to 'de-islamise' Muslims in the name of fighting for equal rights.¹⁴ At this time, some of the first grassroots Muslim interest groups started to spring up, many of which were based in and around Lyons (Bouregba-Dichy 1990). The *Union des Jeunes Musulmans* (UJM) was created in 1987 by a combination of Muslims brought up in both France and North Africa (Makri 2008). At first it had close links with the Union of Islamic Organisations in France which had been set up in 1983 by Islamist students from various Arab countries. The UJM opened a bookshop and then developed its own publishing arm (Éditions Tawhid). Local authorities did not look favourably upon the creation of groups such as the UJM, which also sought to be political. In Lyons, groups such as the JALB, considered as 'secular' (and therefore safe), were promoted by the local authorities as a means of opposing the UJM, who they considered to be 'dangerous extremists'.

The emergence of 'Islamic' activism

The Rushdie affair brought the issue of Islam to the forefront of the attention of the general public, although demonstrations by French

Muslims were on a much smaller scale than in Britain (Kepel 1994). One demonstration which did receive a lot of media attention was held in Paris on 26 February 1989 by a small radical group. One of the founders of the UJM has described how its members reacted by organising a demonstration to counter the radical slogans and death threats.¹⁵ Despite these efforts to position themselves as ‘moderates’, the activists from the UJM were consistently presented by the French media as fellow radicals. This reputation would taint their organisation for many years to come. The Rushdie affair was, however, only a precursor for an event of even greater importance in terms of its effect on French society – the first ‘headscarf affair’ that erupted in October 1989 (see Chapter 5). Most Muslim groups deplored the exclusion of the young girls from school; however, again these demonstrations were on a relatively small scale and remained calm (Bouregba-Dichy 1990). Just as in the United Kingdom during the Rushdie affair, public opinion was stacked against those who contested the decision to expel the schoolgirls even if anti-racist groups such as *SOS Racisme* declared their opposition to exclusion and denounced the virulent campaign being waged by the French media (Peace 2012). The Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox churches also published a joint statement which declared that ‘the exclusion of people and communities for religious reasons is inadmissible’.¹⁶

The Gulf War provided another opportunity for French Muslims to mobilise collectively, with surveys showing that 68% opposed military action against Saddam Hussein. Nevertheless, to the surprise of many, there was again no significant demonstration organised by Muslims in France against the War (Schnapper 1993). Indeed, both the Jewish and Muslim communities were thanked by President Mitterrand for their ‘wisdom and keeping a cool head’ during the conflict (Geisser and Zemouri 2007: 235). Despite keeping such a low profile, the loyalty of French Muslims was still questioned by others in the media and during national debates. Certain French intellectuals insisted that they were not well integrated, which had the effect of actually driving them further away from the rest of French society (Beaud and Masclat 2006). The return to Islam was thus also a direct reaction to the increasingly public opposition to this religion. Other events arrived in succession over the following years which continued to place the question of Islam at the very heart of public debates in France. After the election victory in Algeria of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in December 1991 and the civil war that ensued, the French authorities used particularly heavy-handed techniques against Muslim communities in response to the threat posed by the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA). Mass arrests, in which many Muslim activists in the *banlieues* (most of whom had no

connection to terrorist groups) were caught up (Foley 2013), took place in November 1993 and August 1994. The Algerian conflict was brought to France in 1995 with a summer bombing campaign carried out by the GIA which killed 10 people and wounded over 150.

In the meantime, activists in the UJM had decided to create a national umbrella organisation called the National Collective of Young French Muslims, which was set up in 1992, for similar groups around the country. This was later renamed as the *Collectif des Musulmans de France* (CMF). At this time, activists from the UJM came into contact with the Swiss Muslim intellectual Tariq Ramadan. Thus began a long-standing partnership between Ramadan and Muslim activists in Lyons who invited him regularly to take part in conferences and debates and started publishing his books and selling recordings of his talks through Éditions Tawhid. In November 1995, Ramadan was banned from entering France by the then minister of the Interior Jean-Louis Debré. This was part of the clampdown on a number of Muslim figures in response to the terrorism threat France was facing following the attacks carried out by the GIA. Anti-racist groups, in particular the *Ligue des droits de l'homme* (LDH), mobilised against the decision to ban Ramadan in conjunction with senior clergy within the Catholic Church from the Lyons area and created a support group called the 'Committee for the free expression of Muslims in France'. This group gathered prominent humanitarian figures such as Abbé Pierre and Albert Jacquard, intellectuals such as Guy Coq and specialists on Islam like François Burgat and Bruno Étienne. The committee was headed by Gilles Couvreur and Michel Lelong who were part of the Catholic Church's Secretariat for Relations with Islam (SRI).¹⁷ The events of 1995 and the effect this had on communities in the *banlieues* provided an issue on which both 'secular' and religious groups could jointly mobilise, and they started to work more closely with each other (Boubeker 2008).

Indeed, political activism by those of the second generation did continue in 'secular' forms. In May 1995, the *mouvement de l'immigration et des banlieues* (MIB) was created which federated a number of local associations that had developed in the French suburbs, such as *Agora* in Vaulx-en-Velin and the *Association des Jeunes de Sartrouville*. Its main goal was to draw attention to police violence and what it considered to be the racist legal arrangement whereby those not holding French citizenship who were convicted of crimes could be subsequently deported from France (known as *double peine*). In fact, the MIB was immediately preceded by the *Comité national contre la double peine* and most of its leaders had also been involved in this particular campaign (Fuchs 2007). The

MIB sees itself as inheriting the legacy of previous 'autonomous' immigrant movements like the MTA and later initiatives such as Rock against Police. It is a secular organisation in the sense that most of its activists who are from Muslim families are non-practising, although this doesn't stop them from working with religious activists.

In 1997, Tariq Ramadan created the informal network *Présence Musulmane* with a number of activists from the CMF who, over the coming years, organised his conferences and various workshops all over France. *DiverCité* was also founded in 1997 and created an association that united the various activist groups across the different suburbs of Lyons and also included activists from the UJM. This gave Muslim activists a certain legitimacy that they had previously been denied by the local authorities (Azahoum 2008). *DiverCité* was an initiative that encouraged secular and religious activists to work together under the same banner. This would provide a template for the collaboration that would later take place when these activists started getting involved in the alter-globalisation movement. All these developments meant that those of North African origin born in France became more and more identified as 'Muslims' even if they did not all do so themselves. As noted by Christian Delorme, the priest who accompanied the march for equality and against racism, when young North Africans arrived in Paris in December 1983, nobody would have thought to ask them about Islam. Fifteen years later, their younger brothers and sisters were associated automatically with this religion, whether they practised it or not (Benzine and Delorme 1997).

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that post-war migrants to Britain and France and their children were involved in a whole host of struggles for political equality, from industrial action in the workplace to the fight against restrictions on immigration. Muslim participation in the alter-globalisation movement did not come out of nowhere; it was the continuation of previous struggles that had been waged by activists of the 'second generation'. The Asian Youth Movements and the *mouvement beur* were the most symbolic of these social movements; in both countries these activists fought against racism and police brutality. NMP and the MIB still exist today as secular legacies of these movements and both groups took part in the ESFs. The year 1989 represented a watershed with the Rushdie affair in Britain and the first headscarf affair in France; in both countries a 'Muslim' identity became

more prominent. However, while the Rushdie affair and the Gulf War led to significant large-scale demonstrations by Muslims in the United Kingdom, only a tiny minority did so in France. This we would indeed expect according to the different discursive opportunity structures, as mobilising on a religious identity would not be accepted by the general public in France. During the 1990s, the forms of mobilisation between Muslims in Britain and France were very different:

British Muslim group demands are mostly proactive...unlike the British, a significant proportion of French Muslims' group demands are made in response to actions by the French state. This shows a more defensive stance by French Muslims than their British counterparts and gives a first indication that it is the French state's assertiveness in applying a universalist and assimilationist approach to cultural pluralism that defines the context of claims making for group demands...we find fewer protest events for mobilizing group demands in France than in Britain...French protests have demonstrative rather than confrontational or violent action forms.

(Koopmans *et al.* 2005: 169)

British Muslims have indeed been more assertive at putting forward their demands and gaining official recognition from the government in the shape of the MCB in 1997. French Muslims remained seemingly more passive, despite intense media scrutiny throughout the 1990s. The only occasions when they mobilised were in protest at girls being excluded from school because of the headscarf.

The evidence in this chapter presents a set of dimensions that help us explain differences in Muslim participation in the GJM between the two countries. Firstly, French Muslim activists of the second generation went on to form their own organisations which later regrouped under the umbrella of the CMF. These groups mobilised not only on Muslim issues but also on wider questions connected to global justice (police brutality, social and welfare issues, asylum seekers). There was no such development in the United Kingdom. Groups that established themselves in the 1990s such as the Muslim Parliament, the Islamic Society of Britain and later the Muslim Association of Britain were founded by first-generation migrants and were almost exclusively concerned with religious issues. Secondly, in France secular groups such as the MIB started to work with religious groups such as the CMF; this again did not happen in Britain and the existence of an association such as *DiverCité*, which actually regrouped secular and religious activists, was also unique to France.

Thirdly, Tariq Ramadan became an important figure for French Muslims who could merge religious commitment and political activism. This was again lacking in Britain. The relevance of these factors will become apparent in Chapter 4 when a comparison is made between the levels of activism in each country. The difficult relationship between the political left in France and migrants also helps us to understand some of the reactions to Muslim participation (explored in Chapter 5) and the difficulties of forming electoral alliances between the two sides (Chapter 6). The following chapter is an account of Muslim participation in the alter-globalisation movement and continues the narrative from the late 1990s into the 21st century.

3

Muslim Participation in the Alter-Globalisation Movement

Introduction

This chapter provides an outline of the history of the participation of Muslims in both Britain and France within the alter-globalisation movement. In order to make sense of the chapters that follow, it is necessary to have an understanding of the nature and extent of Muslim participation within this movement. From a historical perspective, this chapter continues the narrative of Muslim participation that was started in Chapter 2 and takes us from the late 1990s through to 2012. Particular focus is given to the ESFs that took place in Paris in 2003 and London in 2004, a period which could be described as the high point of both the movement and Muslim involvement within it. In fact, despite being numerically marginal, Muslim activists made an important impact on the movement (Peace 2008). In the first section of this chapter, I recount how French Muslim activists started working with figures on the French left who later became leading actors in the alter-globalisation movement, as well as the unsuccessful attempt by Tariq Ramadan and his *Présence Musulmane* network to establish formal links with ATTAC. I conclude this section with a description of the preparation for the ESF that took place in Paris and its suburbs and the contribution of Muslim activists to this event. In the second section, I provide the background for understanding Muslim participation in Britain and the parallel mobilisation of the wider Muslim community through the anti-war movement. I then focus on how some activists became involved in the preparation for the third ESF that took place in October 2004 in London and the fallout in France over this event. In the third section, I look at some of the outcomes of participation within the GJM. In France, this included a campaign against the law on religious

symbols in schools, the creation of a new feminist organisation and a separate social forum process for activists from the *banlieues*. In Britain, the main outcome was the development of the Respect Party which, perhaps surprisingly, went on to achieve some notable electoral success.

Alter-globalisation activism among French Muslims

Involvement with the GJM was part of a natural progression for Muslim activists in France, and links between them and other activists in French social movements predate the creation of the social forums and the emergence of the alter-globalisation movement in the late 1990s. Although relations were sometimes strained, migrant-origin activists (whether explicitly Muslim or not) had a history of working alongside the various human rights, solidarity and anti-racist organisations in France, such as the *Mouvement contre le Racisme et pour l'Amitié entre les Peuples* (MRAP), the *Ligue des droits de l'homme* (LDH) and the *Centre d'études et d'initiatives de solidarité internationale* (CEDETIM). All these organisations were founding members when ATTAC was created in 1998. The campaign against the expulsion of Tariq Ramadan in late 1995 was an important moment as it allowed Muslim activists to come into contact with new allies (Makri 2008). This was the start of collaboration between Muslim activists and a part of the French left that came to be later known as the *altermondialistes*. A number of debates and conferences featuring Tariq Ramadan and left-wing intellectuals from *Le Monde Diplomatique*, *La Ligue de l'enseignement* and the LDH were subsequently organised, eventually leading to the creation of the *Commission Islam et Laïcité* in 1996 (Morineau 2006).¹ A number of activists from Ramadan's *Présence Musulmane* network also joined these discussions. Secular and religious actors from the *banlieues* started to work with associations such as *Droits Devant!!* (DD) and *Droit au Logement* (DAL) and were also heavily invested in the defence of undocumented migrants (*sans-papiers*). In this sense, there was no one time when we can identify the start of Muslim participation within a movement for global justice, as they were already mobilising on issues which could be identified with such activism in France. However, an important entry route for many to what came to be known as the alter-globalisation movement was through the Palestinian cause and the figure of José Bové.

Since June 2001, a number of 'protection missions' to the West Bank had been organised by the *Campagne civile internationale pour la protection du peuple palestinien* (CCIPPP). This group had links to the MIB, and in early 2002 its leader Nahla Chahal gathered together a number of

leading figures from the French alter-globalisation movement to take part in another solidarity visit. This included Jean-Claude Amara from DD, Jean-Baptiste Eyraud from DAL and of course José Bové from the *Confédération Paysanne*, while MIB was represented by Fatiha Damiche (Bové *et al.* 2002). This was the 11th 'protection mission' and took place in March–April 2002. It gained significant media coverage as Bové and the other activists met Yasser Arafat and acted as human shields in his compound in Ramallah before finally being expelled by the Israeli authorities. On his return to France, Bové was invited to participate in a debate organised by *DiverCité* in Vénissieux. Contacts were established and activists from *DiverCité* and the MIB publicly supported Bové on a number of occasions when he was in court for destroying genetically modified crops.² Bové returned the favour by supporting their struggles by coming to the *banlieues* in order to garner more media interest in crimes committed by the police. For example, he went to Nîmes in March 2003, after a 17-year-old boy was shot dead by a gendarme, and in June 2004, he visited the neighbourhood of Le Petit Bard (*banlieue* of Montpellier) to support the occupation of a gymnasium by local residents.

Activists from *DiverCité* also started working with other groups in the Lyons area who identified with the emerging movement, in particular the anti-consumerist group *Les casseurs de pub*. In an interview with *Le Monde* in September 2002, one of the leaders of this group proudly claimed how they had started working with local Muslim youths in an effort to combat consumer culture.³ Working together on campaigns designed to educate young people about branded clothing and sweat shops was somewhat ironic given the fact that at their first meeting *DiverCité* activists turned up wearing Nike footwear. The humorous account of this meeting by one of the leaders of *DiverCité* reveals the class divide that existed between activists from the poorer *banlieues*, where brands such as Nike are seen as important status symbols, and the more middle-class activists who were involved in *Les casseurs de pub* (Berkani 2003). Nevertheless, it also demonstrates the mutual learning process that was involved as activists from the *banlieues* got more involved with the alter-globalisation movement.

DiverCité activists tried to get involved with the local chapter of ATTAC for the Lyons area (ATTAC Rhône) but faced some resistance. Its President Jean-Luc Cipièrre, although favourable himself to their inclusion, felt that he could not accept them for fear of creating an internal split. Many members appeared extremely reticent at associating themselves with 'Muslim fundamentalists' who were linked to

the UJM – an organisation which did not have the best reputation locally. Activists in other places such as Paris and Roubaix experienced similar problems. Nevertheless, French Muslims were getting increasingly involved in the movement. Those who became the most active were those within the CMF who were close to Tariq Ramadan and participated in his *Présence Musulmane* network. The most notable were Ali Rahni and Siham Andalouci in Roubaix, Karim Azouz and Fouad Immaraine in Paris, and Abdelaziz Chaambi and Yamin Makri in Lyons. Some of these activists travelled to Florence for the first ESF in November 2002. Fouad Immaraine and Tariq Ramadan spoke at a seminar, entitled ‘The place of Islam in Europe and Islamophobia’, organised by the LDH.⁴ Ramadan also participated at a plenary session entitled ‘the role of religions in the critique of globalisation’ alongside Catholic figures such as the liberation theologian Giulio Girardi, the bishop Luigi Bettazzi (Pax Christi) and Mexican prelate Samuel Ruiz. The first ESF also saw the creation of a network called *No Vox*. This regrouped all those groups in Europe fighting against exclusion, including associations of the unemployed, homeless and undocumented migrants. French activists from DAL and DD were particularly important in this initiative and contacts were made between their leaders and Muslim activists.

The positive experience of Florence (often hailed as ‘the best ESF’) convinced Muslim activists to get more involved in the movement. Together with others from the MIB, the ATMF and the FTCT, they decided to get involved in the preparation for the second ESF in Paris. They attended the first preparatory meetings at the *bourse du travail* in Saint-Denis, although most other French activists were bemused by their presence:

There were meetings for the preparation of the European Social Forum in Paris which were open to all the organisations that adhered to the Porto Alegre charter of principles and considered themselves part of the alter-globalisation movement. So we decided to go along. The first time we took part in one of these meetings, when we introduced ourselves we were questioned about our motives: ‘what are you doing here?’ ‘The Collective of French Muslims? What do *you* want?’ So we replied: ‘we want to take part in organising the social forum’. One of them said ‘you need a letter, a written request which explains why you’re here’. I said to him, pointing at all the others in the room, ‘all these other people here, did they have to write a letter?’. Of course not, so we refused to supply this letter.⁵

After digging their heels in, they were reluctantly accepted as part of the organising process. They became part of the organising committees that met up monthly and later weekly in the run up to the ESF itself. Alain Gresh, a journalist for *Le Monde Diplomatique* who knew Tariq Ramadan well from their work together in the *Commission Islam et Laïcité*, thought it would be a good idea to put Ramadan in contact with ATTAC as a means of getting more people of migrant background involved in the alter-globalisation movement. Gresh was not part of ATTAC himself but was a colleague of Bernard Cassen and an informal meeting was arranged between him and Tariq Ramadan: 'Ramadan told me that we could work together, ATTAC and his movement. I wasn't convinced by that.'⁶ Despite his scepticism, Cassen agreed to a second meeting with other members of ATTAC's National Bureau and a number of activists from the *Présence Musulmane* network so that they could put forward their case for inclusion.⁷ The Muslim activists were well received at first, and explained that they saw themselves as part of the alter-globalisation movement and wanted to contribute to ATTAC. However, a fractious debate soon ensued within the leadership in ATTAC revolving around the issues of *laïcité* and gender equality. One activist recalls how this lasted for almost two hours and yet issues such as the Tobin Tax were never discussed.⁸ Despite Ramadan's insistence that they accepted these two principles, many remained sceptical and no agreement was reached.⁹

Although the meeting organised between ATTAC and Muslim activists was ultimately unsuccessful, it did give them a certain amount of legitimacy, and therefore activists in Lyons were finally accepted into ATTAC Rhône. They also continued to take part in the organising process for the ESF and attended the various European Preparatory Assemblies (EPAs) that took place in Berlin, Brussels, Geneva and Genoa. Some Muslim activists dedicated the whole of 2003 to preparing for the big event. Siham Andalouci, for example, was delegated by her employer to work full time on this alone. During the various EPAs, Muslim activists fought hard to influence the selection of themes, seminars and speakers. They succeeded in obtaining an additional general theme for the ESF programme related to racism and exclusion and secured the organisation of three plenary sessions and 12 seminars. They achieved this by forming alliances with other organisations that represented migrants such as the MIB, the ATMF and the FTCT, as well as some activists within *No Vox*. These groups also worked together within the working group on enlargement which met once a week in the build up to the ESF

with the remit of encouraging further participation from sectors of society not usually present at such events. Within this working group, activists from the *banlieues* suggested a range of ideas, such as holding meetings in areas on the outskirts of Paris in order to increase interest from working-class people. These ideas were never acted upon by the leaders of the alter-globalisation movement. This 'failure' convinced those from the *banlieues* that those who claimed to want to expand the movement were not really committed to this goal. Many activists noted how the leaders of the movement, who were often university academics living in bourgeois neighbourhoods, preferred to treat the working classes as an object of sociological enquiry rather than allowing them to speak about how globalisation affected them (Hmed 2007).

In late May 2003, some activists attended the counter-summit 'Another Summit for Another World' in Annemasse as part of the protests against the G8 meeting that was being held nearby in Évian. At this point, it was decided to form *Résistances citoyennes* – a network which regrouped activists from the MIB, the CMF and *DiverCité*. On 4 June 2003, Tariq Ramadan published an opinion piece on the French Muslim website Oumma.com in which he vented his frustration at the inability of French activists to fully accept Muslims as part of the alter-globalisation movement (Ramadan 2003a). On 9 June 2003, a public meeting was organised by activists from *Résistances citoyennes* in Saint-Denis in view of the ESF later that year. This featured a number of leaders in ATTAC such as Annick Coupé, Gustave Massiah and Bernard Cassen as well as Tariq Ramadan. The debate passed off without incident, although Cassen was less than impressed with the decision to have separate entrances for men and women and made his feelings known during the debate.¹⁰ Ramadan's article was later republished in the weekly left-wing magazine *Politis*:

Too often, those involved with the alter-globalisation movement consider religious and cultural diversity as a simple gesture of goodwill to speak of rather than a reality which they must actually deal with. It is not uncommon to meet women and men who hold progressive views on social, political and economic issues, while their discourse on cultural factors remains tainted by a colonial outlook...there can be no future for the alter-globalisation movement without an open and sincere dialogue with the world of Islam.¹¹

This forced Bernard Cassen to respond in the same magazine to Ramadan's criticism:

ATTAC was of course founded in France, but has since spread to the rest of Europe, then to the Americas, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and Japan. Our friends in the existing ATTAC branches in places like Morocco, Tunisia, Ivory Coast, Senegal and Burkina Faso, or those wishing to set up branches in places like Algeria, Egypt and Lebanon, do they not also belong to this diversity that is evoked by Ramadan?¹²

Among the leadership of ATTAC, the question of Muslim participation had been reawakened and this topic was discussed throughout the summer. In August, the ATTAC electronic newsletter *Grain de Sable* published an interview with Pierre Khalfa, a senior figure within the association, and Muslim activist Yamin Makri, which discussed Muslims in the alter-globalisation movement in France.¹³ Khalfa also weighed in with a contribution to *Politis* in which he argued that the participation of Muslims in the movement could be interpreted as a positive challenge:

The first [challenge] concerns the alter-globalisation movement. It must be able to integrate political currents which are inspired by Islam, just like progressive movements in the past have integrated, albeit with occasional difficulty, those organisations which were inspired by Christianity or Judaism. The second [challenge] is for those progressive Islamist trends which need to be able to embrace the cause of all humanity in spite of their specificity.¹⁴

In the meantime, José Bové invited *Résistances Citoyennes* to participate at the Larzac 2003 demonstration that summer. This was undoubtedly the high point of Muslim participation within the movement and Abdelaziz Chaambi was asked to appear at the opening of this event. Any optimism was, however, soon to be dashed by the controversy that came to be known as the 'Ramadan affair'.

A month before the ESF in Paris, Tariq Ramadan published an article (which had been refused by the editors of *Le Monde* and *Libération*) in which he accused certain intellectuals and public figures in France of developing positions that were based not on universal principles of equality and justice but rather on their Jewish origins (Ramadan 2003b). Making such a statement at a time when France was witnessing a significant rise in acts of antisemitism could not (and indeed did

not) fail to produce a massive critical response from many politicians and the mainstream press.¹⁵ An article that appeared in the left leaning *Le Nouvel Observateur* was the first to attack and set the tone for the ensuing debate. The journalist Claude Askolovitch described the internal tensions within ATTAC relating to the figure of Tariq Ramadan and how Muslim groups had spent several months preparing for the ESF. However, Muslim participation in the GJM was caricatured as opportunistic political 'entryism' rather than something they sincerely believed in.¹⁶ Until this point, most people involved with the alter-globalisation movement in France were unaware of the participation of Muslims. Suddenly the issue became national news and other articles concerning Ramadan's text soon followed in the main daily newspapers. This happened to coincide with the news that two French schoolgirls (Lila and Alma Lévy) were being expelled from school for refusing to take off their headscarves, the event that ignited the 2003–2004 headscarf affair which led to the ban on religious symbols in schools. Tariq Ramadan also became implicated in this controversy as newspapers reported that the girls had converted to Islam after listening to his recordings.¹⁷ Ramadan had quickly become public enemy number one in France and the media were talking about the ESF, not in relation to the demands of the alter-globalisation movement, but the rights and wrongs of allowing the Swiss Muslim intellectual to participate.

A series of politicians from the PS who were attempting to gain some political capital at the ESF called for Ramadan to withdraw from the event as did SOS Racisme and the anti-racist group *Ligue internationale contre le racisme et l'antisémitisme* (LICRA). Most of the key figures in the GJM, including those in ATTAC, supported the right of Ramadan to speak. The controversy did however lead to much discussion between the various organisers of the forum before it was confirmed that he would still be invited. The day before the start of the ESF, a group of feminists published a complaint about Ramadan's participation in the newspaper *Libération*.¹⁸ All this negative publicity had an effect on the way that other Muslim activists were perceived at the forum (Zemouri 2005: 43). Nevertheless, despite the negative publicity associated with this controversy, the whole affair did at least give Muslim activists improved visibility and probably led to increased interest in the seminars which they had organised (Hmed 2007). Despite the setbacks, two prominent Muslim activists published an article on Oumma.com just days before the start of the ESF aimed at encouraging participation from those living in the *banlieues* (Andalouci and Makri 2003).

Muslim activists had originally hoped that the ESF in Paris would be the moment when they were officially welcomed into the alter-globalisation movement, not only in France, but also at a European level. Instead, the hostility shown to them during the preparation phase was then exacerbated even further by the Ramadan affair: 'In the end our contribution was reduced to one thing, whether Tariq Ramadan had the right participate in the ESF.'¹⁹ Once it became clear that these activists (in particular, those who identified themselves as Muslims) were not entirely welcome at the ESF, the event itself became an opportunity for some of them to denounce other groups in the movement rather than trying to build potential partnerships (Hmed 2007). The ESF in Paris was judged by many Muslim activists to have been a real missed opportunity. The commitment and hard work they had dedicated to the organising process was completely overlooked by the controversy surrounding Tariq Ramadan.

The press campaign against Ramadan during the ESF in 2003 was also damaging for ATTAC, which had hoped to improve its public image and gain new members.²⁰ Instead, its reputation became tarnished as an organisation hostile to *laïcité*. This is rather ironic in light of the frosty reception actually given to Ramadan and other Muslim activists by the leadership of the organisation. At the same time, many grassroots ATTAC members began to ask themselves why the organisation was being linked with such a notoriously controversial character. Dis-sent within the organisation led to the setting up of a working group on *laïcité* in January 2004 within the framework of 'the question of alliances that the organisation should favour'.²¹ A total of 12 working groups were set up at this time and the one tasked with the question of *laïcité* was headed by Francine Palisson (who represented the magazine *Golias*) and also included the academic Henri Pena-Ruiz as an external consultant. The timing of such an initiative should be understood within the context of a period of heightened discussion in French society about Muslims and Islam because of the headscarf affair which was raging at this time and eventually led to the infamous 'headscarf law' of 15 March 2004. Just like most of the French left, ATTAC was divided on this issue. So setting up such a working group would help to deflect demands that the organisation take a stand on it. Avoiding discussion also reduced the potential for internal conflict, although in the meantime some members had made their opposition to any proposed law on headscarves in schools clear by joining the campaign against it (see the following).

The debates continued at the organisation's 'summer university' in Arles in August 2004.²² Later that year, after the London ESF and the

visible presence of a number of Muslim organisations, the National Bureau of ATTAC decided to produce a document about the various Muslim organisations in France.²³ The aim was to create a kind of index of Muslim groups and organisations in order to come to a decision as to who they could potentially work with. In November, it was decided to create an actual working group to complete this task.²⁴ Despite officially being a member of this working group, Bernard Cassen was still criticising those who wished to work with Tariq Ramadan.²⁵ Throughout 2005, *laïcité* remained a perennial topic of debate for ATTAC and was again discussed widely at the 2005 summer university in Poitiers. No new decision was taken regarding the participation of Muslim groups because relations between those in the association were becoming increasingly strained.

In fact, tensions had been simmering between leading figures in ATTAC for over a year. In the summer of 2005 this erupted into a clear power struggle for the leadership of the association.²⁶ This pitted one camp led by Pierre Khalfa against that of the then President Jacques Nikonoff. This latter group used the issue of *laïcité* to influence potential supporters during the power struggle. The Nikonoff camp tried to convince potential supporters that the opposing camp held positions at odds with the principles of *laïcité* (Wintrebert 2007: 266). The group later created by supporters of Nikonoff, called *Avenir d'Attac*, made a clear statement to members regarding this issue: 'For us, gender equality and equality between all women on earth must take precedence over any ethnic or religious considerations. This idea is by no means shared by all the members of the Administrative Council.'²⁷ Pierre Khalfa claimed that these issues were used merely as a pretext in order to weaken their position:

This political debate [regarding Muslim participation] was used as a cover for other arguments within the association ... Bernard Cassen tried to use the question of *laïcité* in order to marginalise and discredit us by saying that we didn't respect the principle of secularism ... I'm convinced that if we hadn't had these internal problems in ATTAC, the question [of Muslim participation] would have been discussed in a more rational and level-headed manner.²⁸

Although it would be inaccurate to argue that divisions around *laïcité* were the cause of the eventual split in ATTAC which took place in 2006, they certainly made an important contribution. Muslim participation had thus caused important knock-on effects on the

movement as a whole in France, and certainly left its mark on ATTAC.

‘Resist the racist backlash’: Muslim participation in the United Kingdom

In Britain, Muslim activists were also involved in the ESF process but on a much smaller scale. This is somewhat counterintuitive given that they faced no significant hurdles to participation like their counterparts in France. The most prominent activists were Asad Rehman, Ruhul Tarafder and Naima Bouteldja. Naima was actually born and raised in France and moved to the United Kingdom in 2000 after finishing university. She had briefly been involved with a local chapter of ATTAC in the southwest of France and some of her French comrades put her in touch with members of the SWP who had come over to France to attend the trial of José Bové in Millau. She got to know some of these activists in Luton who encouraged her to attend the annual Marxism festival:

I went to Marxism 2001 and they were organising a train from London to Genoa full of activists. So I went there and it was a very good experience because I met British activists. I thought nothing was happening in this country [UK] in terms of activism! So I went with them on the train and met a lot of people. When we got there we went to meetings and were discussing the G8 and then went on demonstrations, networking with people and so on and so forth.²⁹

When she moved to London, she continued her activism and was involved in the failed attempt to set up ATTAC in the United Kingdom. She was persuaded instead to join GR which was the nearest equivalent and became part of the steering committee. She was joined by Asad who was a long-time figure on the left and started his activism within the AYMs and carried on as a founding member of NMP. He and other activists in this group like Ruhul had been in contact with RTS when the GJM was first developing in Britain. They saw parallels in the way they were organising:

We spent time talking to people from RTS and even had debates with them about the lack of black people involved in their protests. They were saying things like ‘there’s not really a leadership in our group, we’re just trying to do things together without rigid structures’ and

we thought 'well that's just like NMP!' Nobody is the chair and there's no leader, it's just a group of people who spend six hours talking over every issue until we reach an agreement and a consensus and then we do it! So we could see parallels between what this emerging movement was trying to do and how we worked. So we became really interested when the idea of the social forums came around.³⁰

Asad had closely followed the emergence of the first WSF in early 2001 as he worked for Amnesty International. He also attended the anti-G8 protest in Genoa that summer.

The events of 11 September 2001 marked a real turning point for the movement (Pleyers 2003). In Britain, attention in activist circles quickly shifted to stopping the bombing and invasion of Afghanistan. In fact, over the next two years the alter-globalisation movement became very much entwined with the anti-war movement, to the extent that it was not really possible to distinguish between the two.³¹ The SWP invested most of its organisational resources into the Stop the War Coalition (StWC) that it helped to set up on 21 September 2001. Shahed Saleem, a British Muslim with hardly any experience in political activism, attended one of the first organisational meetings of the StWC:

There were around 300 people there and different groups of people were saying 'we're going to organise nurses against the war' or 'we're going to organise lawyers against the war' etc. So I put my hand up and said I was interested in mobilising Muslims against the war. Everyone broke up into groups and we coalesced into one of about 10 people and that's how it all started.³²

This was the start of Just Peace, a group that aimed to 'promote Muslim participation in movements that campaign for freedom from oppression and injustice'. It recruited most of its members from the City Circle, a network set up in 1999 for young Muslim professionals in London (Lewis 2007). Just Peace had around 10 core activists and was led by Shahed and Shahedah Vawda (the two later married). The group regularly met up in order to mobilise the Muslim community for the anti-war movement:

For most it was their first experience of political action. Muslim social action groups up to this point had tended to centre on the 'Muslim condition' and were overtly, to a greater or lesser degree, religious.

Just Peace was different in this regard – although its members practised their religion, it was not a religious organisation as such.³³

Shahed and Shahedah became part of the steering committee of the StWC, as did Asad Rehman. Naima was the chair of the StWC in Luton and Salma Yaqoob, another female Muslim activist, became the chair of the StWC in Birmingham. It was these activists that initially rallied Muslims into joining protest marches and ensured that Muslim speakers were present at StWC rallies.

Two slogans were adopted for the protest marches which aimed to show support with the Muslim community – ‘Defend civil liberties’ (against anti-terrorism legislation) and ‘Resist the racist backlash’ (against the targeting of Muslims for reprisals). A particularly symbolic moment came on 18 November 2001, when an anti-war demonstration organised by the StWC in London during Ramadan came to a halt so that Muslim protestors could break their fast. Other protestors joined in with the *iftar* as the call for prayer rang out across Trafalgar Square. The anti-war movement mobilised British Muslims in a way that had never been seen before. As Yahya Birt (2005: 102) has noted, the novel aspect of this mobilisation was ‘the willingness of younger Muslims to form expedient alliances of dissent outside of their community, which was certainly not true of the Rushdie affair in 1989 or the Gulf War of 1991’. As the anti-war movement grew, the leadership of the StWC began to look for an organisation that could mobilise even larger numbers of Muslims on a nationwide scale for their protest marches. The Muslim Association of Britain MAB had organised successful demonstrations for the Palestinian cause which convinced the StWC that they could help do the same for the anti-war movement (Phillips 2008). An agreement was reached between the two parties for them to co-organise the demonstrations. From September 2002 onwards, the role of Just Peace was largely superseded by this organisation, although its activists remained involved (Peace 2015).

Both Asad and Naima attended the EPAs in the run up to the first ESF in Florence. Asad was representing multiple organisations (Amnesty International, NMP, StWC) and got involved with the programme group, while Naima was a representative of GR. She suggested inviting Tariq Ramadan to speak in Florence, a proposal that encountered hostility from some French and Swiss activists.³⁴ British GJM leaders who were part of the StWC were also pushing for the organisation of a worldwide day of protest against the upcoming invasion of Iraq at these preparatory meetings. Many French leaders were also against this decision.³⁵

Nevertheless, at the final EPA in Barcelona in early October 2002, it was agreed that a call to demonstrate on 15 February 2003 would be issued during the ESF in Florence (Verhulst 2010). At the social forum, Asad spoke alongside Tariq Ramadan during the seminar on Islamophobia and was also a speaker at a plenary session entitled 'Immigrants and fortress Europe'. The ESF closed on 9 November 2002 with a huge anti-war protest in Florence that was remembered very fondly by all for the atmosphere of unity and hope. Both Naima and Asad attended a European anti-war meeting in Copenhagen in December 2002 and the third WSF in Brazil in January 2003. Their activism also continued with the EPAs for the second ESF, where they were able to link up with their French counterparts. Aided by the bilingualism of Naima, these activists jointly fought at the EPAs, along with sympathetic French activists from *No Vox*, to obtain plenaries and seminars and worked to organise them together.

The demonstration on 15 February 2003 against the invasion of Iraq in London was the largest political demonstration ever in Britain with an estimated 2 million people on the streets, among them thousands of Muslims. This was largely thanks to the mobilising efforts of the MAB, whose placards were omnipresent. This organisation was however seen as 'too conservative by other Muslim groups, such as those wishing to express a more radical voice, to link anti-war protest to anti-capitalist campaigns or to take direct action' (Gillan *et al.* 2008: 67). Collaboration with long-standing left-wing activists in the anti-war movement had, in fact, allowed for the cross-fertilisation of ideas and an introduction to the activities of the GJM for some young Muslims. One such activist was Omar Waraich, who had led students against the war at his university. He was persuaded by Naima and Asad to join the steering committee of GR. The leaders of Just Peace had also been persuaded to take part in the preparations for the Paris ESF. On 11 October they organised a debate in London with Tariq Ramadan and Bruce Kent from Pax Christi entitled 'Religion and the Global Justice Movement' in order to encourage British Muslims to attend the event in Paris. The ESF in Paris featured seminars jointly organised by Just Peace and NMP as well as French groups such as the CMF and the MIB.

After the second ESF, the organisation for the third edition in London started with a first meeting in December 2003 at City Hall, headquarters of the GLA. A division between 'horizontal' and 'vertical' quickly became apparent; each camp had a radically different vision of how the ESF in London should be organised (Andretta and Della Porta 2009). As the event was to be largely financed by the GLA under the authority

of the then Mayor of London Ken Livingstone, the 'verticals' took control of the organising process, supported by the SWP. Muslim and other independent activists within GR disagreed with the position taken by the SWP and were more inclined to support the horizontal actors such as those who had set up the London Social Forum (a group of independent left activists). Tensions grew, and in February 2004, Naima, Asad and Omar along with Nick Dearden from the NGO War on Want resigned from the steering committee of GR. They were then also subsequently 'purged' from the StWC by leaders in the SWP, who decided to punish them for their decision.³⁶ However, they continued to be involved in the organising process for ESF 2004. Ken Livingstone was keen to ensure that it would serve as a vehicle for his own self-promotion and, given his reliance on the support of minority groups, for the event to reflect London's diverse communities and promote the city as a thriving multicultural European capital. Muslim participation was thus to be encouraged, and Naima and Ruhul were tasked with mobilising Muslim groups and organisations to get involved with the ESF in London. They also attended the EPAs and helped to set up a London Muslim Coalition with the help of Kumar Murshid, a Labour councillor in the London borough of Tower Hamlets.

This coalition aimed to encourage national Muslim organisations such as the Muslim Council of Britain, the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) and Q-News to join the organisation process along with smaller grass-roots groups such as the Kingston Muslim Women's Welfare Association and the London Pakistan Network. Other groups set up to oppose anti-terrorism legislation were also encouraged to get involved, such as the East London Campaign against Terrorism, Stop Police Terror and the Campaign against Criminalising Communities (CAMPACC). These groups were largely made up of young and politicised Muslims. The International Muslim Activist Network (IMAN) was set up by Naima and Asad shortly before the forum in an attempt to connect Muslims with left-wing political activism and the alter-globalisation movement. A seminar entitled 'Joint Struggle for Justice: Muslims and the Left' was designed to tackle this issue. A number of other seminars connected to 'Muslim issues' were also organised. One in particular was entitled 'Hijab: a woman's right to choose' and was organised by the GLA as a means of condemning the law on religious symbols that had recently been passed in France. The large number of seminars connected to 'Islamic themes' caused some consternation in France. The satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*, which just of over 10 years later would become the centre of the world's attention, was one outlet that

found this situation problematic. The newspaper was a founding member of ATTAC and published an article entitled 'Another jihad is possible' claiming that Yusuf al-Qaradawi would be attending at the behest of the London organisers.³⁷ This article was picked up on by the leadership of ATTAC, whose President Jacques Nikonoff decided to circulate a document about this matter to members of the Administrative Council (Bouteldja 2004).

The third ESF in London was officially opened by Ken Livingstone with a welcome event at Southwark Cathedral. A number of Muslim activists from France attended along with Tariq Ramadan, who was listed as a speaker in several different seminars. At this time, he was largely unknown in the United Kingdom and despite some opposition from the National Union of Students (NUS), his appearance passed off without incident and the press took little interest in his participation.³⁸ Yet his role at the ESF in London provoked fierce criticism in France. The seminar on the *hijab* featured Salma Yaqoob and the French feminist Christine Delphy and didn't fail to live up to expectations. A number of French activists vocally protested against the seminar, and during the discussion Bernard Cassen attempted to explain the French decision to pass the headscarf ban only to be shouted down and accused of racism (Fougier 2005). It should be stressed, however, that British Muslim activists did not ask for this seminar to be organised. It was a top-down initiative by those in the GLA and the SWP which was designed to show just how 'progressive' and forward thinking they were in relation to their comrades in Europe (Bouteldja 2004). After the event, left-wing publications in France were extremely critical of what they saw as the over-representation of Muslim themes at the ESF. *Le Nouvel Observateur* described it as 'confused', pointing the blame squarely at the SWP and its strategy of 'an alliance with Islamic movements'.³⁹ *L'Humanité* was equally critical of what it described as a 'veering off course which jars with the majority of alter-globalisation activists'.⁴⁰

Pierre Khalfa from ATTAC used this opportunity to suggest that it was necessary to integrate political currents that took their inspiration from Islam just as certain Catholic currents had been integrated into wider social movements in France.⁴¹ The journalist Caroline Fourest responded with a vicious tirade, accusing the Muslim organisations involved with the ESF of being anti-feminist, homophobic, prudish and reactionary.⁴² Again, French Muslims involved in the GJM were portrayed as not being genuinely interested in the movement but merely wishing to use it as a diabolical method of advancing their 'reactionary version of political Islam'. The strong reactions stirred in France by

the ESF in London and its supposed 'Islamic' character were somewhat ironic in the light of the rather weak participation of British Muslims at the event itself. The few Muslims who were involved in the preparation actually perceived the ESF as a huge disappointment and felt quite demoralised by the whole experience. First, because of the way the forum had been organised and dominated by the GLA/SWP; second, because the larger Muslim organisations such as the MCB did not really make much of an effort to mobilise their members; and, third, because the goal of attracting Muslims to the alter-globalisation movement was not achieved. Although some British Muslims with no previous experience of activism did attend the ESF, very few went on to join any activist groups:

The irony is that the involvement of Muslims in France, despite all the tensions and controversies, was much more concrete and meaningful than in Britain. In London it was very superficial and it was also a reflection on the organisation of the social forum which was a complete disaster. It divided more people than it united. At least in France there were some positive outcomes.⁴³

In fact, this event effectively marked the end of involvement in the ESF process by Muslims in Britain. Participation in the anti-war movement continued but on a much lower scale.

Despite the success of the anti-war movement in terms of mobilisation, the links it forged between Muslim and non-Muslim activists were hard to maintain. Scholars who have studied this movement in detail claim, in fact, that the interaction between Muslim and non-Muslim anti-war activists was quite superficial and tokenistic and that meaningful dialogue did not really take place:

The involvement of Muslims, in large numbers, was a singular feature of the British anti-war and peace movements in recent years. Among anti-war activists there has generally been enthusiasm towards participation of Muslims, but a reluctance to engage in serious dialogue, not least for fear of giving offence and seeming to be exclusionary on grounds of religion. Concern has been combined with eagerness to maintain unity as well as to resist signs of Islamophobia.

(Gillan *et al.* 2008: 194)

Groups of progressive Muslims such as Just Peace who had shown an interest in the ESF process eventually disbanded and the only real legacy

was the Respect coalition (discussed in the following). If the London ESF seemed to signal the death knell for British Muslim participation within the ESF process, some French activists still desired to attend the ESF in Athens in 2006. They were, however, constrained by the cost of travel, as one activist recounted:

The reason why we can't attend is down to money. You need to remember that in some of the alter-globalisation networks there are people, I call them the globe trotters of activism, who have so many resources that they can afford to travel round the world. Every time a new cause springs up, they're on the scene! They're bobos [bourgeois bohemians]. We're not bobos, unfortunately! Sometimes we can't even scrape together enough money for a train ticket to Paris to participate in a meeting.⁴⁴

Indeed, the only trace of a Muslim presence in Athens was Tariq Ramadan, who was invited to speak at a seminar on Islamophobia and the Danish caricatures controversy.⁴⁵ This does not mean, however, that there was no legacy of Muslim participation in the alter-globalisation movement. On the contrary, a number of outcomes can be directly linked to this experience.

Une école pour tous: Outcomes of participation in France

The Paris ESF was disappointing for many Muslim activists in France. However, they did at least receive support from certain actors within the alter-globalisation movement who joined their campaign to fight against the proposed ban on religious symbols in public schools. In December 2003, the CEDETIM organised a meeting for all those activists who wanted to campaign on this issue and the *Collectif une école pour tous-tes* (CEPT) was born. The CMF, MIB and *DiverCité* all associated themselves with this campaign along with the groups from *No Vox*, and an open letter was published in *Le Monde*.⁴⁶ For the next three months, they campaigned on this issue, organised demonstrations and even made a documentary film, *Un racisme à peine voilé*, directed by Jérôme Host, about their struggle. Siham Andalouci was regularly invited onto TV talk shows to represent CEPT, also fulfilling the role of the 'token veiled woman' in debates that were often engineered in favour of those who supported the headscarf law. On 10 February 2004, the National Assembly voted massively in favour of this law, with 494 in favour and only 36 opposed. In response, the CEPT organised its largest

demonstration on 16 February 2004. Nevertheless, this law was ratified by the Senate and became law n° 2004–228 on 15 March 2004.

The major weakness of their campaign was that not one high-profile French politician supported their initiative, demonstrating the huge consensus the law achieved across the political spectrum. The only French parliamentarians who supported them were Gilles Lemaire and Noël Mamère from the Green Party and the communist Jean-Claude Lefort, minorities within their own parties. They didn't even receive backing from the parties of the extra-parliamentary left, although the leadership of the LCR was highly divided on this issue (Lévy 2010). In fact, the most high-profile individual within CEPT was Christine Delphy. She, along with other female members of the campaign group, including female Muslim activists who had been involved in the ESF, formed a new feminist group called the *Collectif des Féministes Pour l'Égalité* (CFPE). This group also involved two high-profile feminists within ATTAC – Monique Crinon and Catherine Samary, as well as *Le Monde Diplomatique* journalist Marina da Silva and the sociologist Sylvie Tissot. According to Nicolas Dot-Pouillard (2007), the creation of the CFPE severely disrupted the French feminist movement. It became the only mainstream feminist group in France to accept Muslims wearing the headscarf, and its formation was seen as a means of giving these women a voice. It produced a newsletter entitled *Inch'allah égalité* and later published a book gathering testimonies of Muslim girls who had been refused to enter school because of the headscarf law (Chouder *et al.* 2008).⁴⁷

The second major outcome of Muslim involvement in the alter-globalisation movement in France was the *Mouvement des Indigènes de la République* (MIR) which was launched in January 2005. The initiator of MIR was Houria Bouteldja, who had been a leading figure in CEPT and had initially set up a feminist group called *Les Blédardes* in opposition to the PS-sponsored group *Ni putes ni soumises* (NPNS).⁴⁸ Again, the CMF and MIB were signatories of the initial rallying text of MIR entitled *Nous sommes les Indigènes de la République* as were some members of ATTAC such as Bernard Dréano, Gustave Massiah, Julien Lussion, Jean-Luc Cipièrre, Thomas Coutrot and Catherine Samary. This created another occasion for members of ATTAC to criticise each other in public, this time in the pages of the Italian newspaper *Il Manifesto*. First, Bernard Cassen poured cold water on the idea of the MIR, which he viewed as a dangerous example of cultural relativism, and again criticised Tariq Ramadan.⁴⁹ Dréano, Crinon and Samary responded by arguing that engaging in social movements as a specific interest group (whether that

be women, Muslims or farmers) does not necessarily mean enclosing oneself into relativism. On the contrary, they argued that this should be seen as an opportunity to listen to other perspectives while still fighting for universal values.⁵⁰ Muslim activists who were involved in the ESF, such as Abdelaziz Chaambi and Karim Azouz, went on to take a leading role in the MIR, although not all of those who had been involved in *Résistances Citoyennes* agreed with this initiative.

A third outcome of Muslim mobilisation and increased collaboration with a section of the alter-globalisation movement was the creation of the *Trans'Form'Action* network. This was set up in late 2005 after the civil unrest that had swept across many of France's *banlieues*. It was conceived as a means to provide support and training to youngsters wishing to set up new political associations. Again, all the 'usual suspects' were involved (MIB, CMF, *DiverCité*, CEDETIM, CFPE, MIR) and the association was based in the French regions of Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Île-de-France and Rhône-Alpes. This initiative could hardly be qualified as a spectacular success; it only survived for a couple of years. Nevertheless, during this time a number of workshops were organised in Lille, Paris and Lyons. Something which achieved much more attention in the media was the campaign of José Bové during the 2007 French presidential election. A number of activists involved in *Résistances Citoyennes* actually worked for his campaign. They formed a group called *Banlieues et immigration avec José Bové* and targeted voters in their neighbourhoods.

Many of these activists had become deluded with the ESF process, seen as a talking shop for intellectuals rather than a means to organise grass-roots activism. One activist from the MIB described the social forum process as a movement of intellectuals who 'spend their time talking, going to see the poverty in Porto Alegre before returning home and then talking about it all over again for another year'.⁵¹ Despite this criticism of the ESFs, the format of the event profoundly influenced the organisations and associations from the *banlieues* that had been involved, such as the MIB, CMF and *DiverCité*. They decided to host a social forum event of their own which they called the *Forum Social des Quartiers Populaires* (FSQP). They hoped that this event would lead to more concrete political outcomes and in particular what they called an 'autonomous political movement'. The first edition of the FSQP was held in Saint-Denis in June 2007 with the intention of initiating the creation of either a new party or an electoral alliance with the left that would represent the *banlieues*. The aim was to have some kind of organisation or agreement in place ready for the local elections in March 2008.⁵² This plan did not materialise and further attempts were made at both the second FSQP in Nanterre in

2008 and the third edition in Montpellier in 2009.⁵³ On both these occasions, the activists attracted the attention of the leader of the LCR Olivier Besancenot, but no agreement was ever reached. The fourth edition of the FSQP took place in November 2011 at Paris-VIII University in Saint-Denis and ended with a common declaration to create an 'autonomous united political front'. The following year these activists announced the creation of a *Force Citoyenne Populaire* (FCP), which was presented as the first party to represent the inhabitants of the *banlieues* (Burlet 2012). Unfortunately, this initiative again failed to materialise into a concrete new organisation or political party.

RESPECT: An unexpected outcome in Britain

In Britain, the most notable outcome of Muslim mobilisation in the alter-globalisation movement was the creation of a political party, initially called 'Respect – the unity coalition'.⁵⁴ This had a much greater resonance than any of the initiatives that developed in France. Although many radical left parties in Europe were close to the GJM, such as the LCR in France and *Rifondazione Comunista* in Italy, Respect represents the only example of one which was created as part of a response to it. This statement from the party's 2005 manifesto makes clear the link to the wider movement and its objectives:

Respect rejects the way in which the globalisation of the world economy is taking place at the expense of jobs, conditions, the privatisation of public services and the destruction of the environment. It hands immense powers to the multinational corporations and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) – whose job is to enforce their agenda onto its member states... We are told that this process is inevitable, that corporate power is unstoppable, and that environmental protection is too expensive. Respect rejects this view of the world. Our allies are not the powerful governments of the G8, or the World Bank, or the WTO. Our allies are the working people of the world, whose struggles are reflected in the great global justice movement, which started in Seattle in 1999 and continues today as an alternative to the domination of multinational capital.

(RESPECT 2005)

Nevertheless, it would be inaccurate to give sole credit to the GJM for the formation of Respect. Clearly, this was an initiative that was designed to harness the success of the anti-war movement and exploit

the political anger that the Iraq War created among many disgruntled Labour voters (including many Muslims). Secondly, it was envisioned as a new space to federate all those to the left of the Labour Party. In this sense, it was the successor to the Socialist Alliance electoral list, which had received a paltry 57,553 votes (0.2% share) in the 2001 general election. From May 2003 onwards, Labour started performing poorly in local and by-elections which was attributed to anti-war sentiment, particularly in Muslim communities (Peace 2013a). Respect was co-founded in January 2004 by Muslim activist Salma Yaqoob and *The Guardian* journalist George Monbiot, who is considered a figurehead of the alter-globalisation movement in Britain.⁵⁵ The SWP was also a significant component in the coalition and its activists were the organisational engine of the project. Its most high-profile leader was the MP George Galloway, who had been expelled from the Labour Party after encouraging British troops to disobey orders in Iraq.

The first elections that Respect contested were held on 10 June 2004 for both the European Parliament and the London Assembly. The party sought to position itself as a 'genuinely left' alternative to New Labour, although in certain neighbourhoods its electoral strategy was largely based on targeting disenchanted Muslim voters dismayed by the government's decision to invade Iraq. Election material specifically projected Respect as 'the party for Muslims' and focused not only on the Iraq War but also on anti-terrorism legislation brought in by the government (Peace 2013b). In cities such as Sheffield, Preston, Brighton and Bristol, Respect reflected the wider alter-globalisation movement. These first elections used proportional voting systems and therefore confidence was high that they could elect some of their candidates. Many of them had been involved in the anti-war movement. Lindsey German (convenor of the StWC) was Respect's London mayoral candidate; Anas Altikriti (MAB) headed the European list in the Yorkshire and Humber region; Omar Waraich who had been part of the steering committee of GR was a candidate for the London Assembly as was Oliur Rahman – one of the leaders of the Tower Hamlets branch of the StWC. Asad Rehman was a campaign manager and had to defend the party from the accusation of only targeting a Muslim vote: 'Respect has got to be pragmatic. Its challenge is to achieve some kind of victory within a period of 40 days. It has to therefore target potential voters, and the people who became the most politicised through the anti-war movement were overwhelmingly Muslims and young people.'⁵⁶

The party polled a quarter of a million votes in the European election and also achieved 4.5% of the vote in the London Assembly contest,

narrowly missing out on a seat.⁵⁷ The breakdown of the vote showed that they had outperformed all other parties in the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Newham with more than 20% of the vote. These areas of East London are home to many Muslims which was the first indication that the success of the party would be tied to Muslim voters. Respect featured prominently during the third ESF in November 2004 that took place in London. A large fringe meeting was organised, and because the SWP was able to largely dominate the organisation of the ESF, Respect was at the forefront of many meetings and seminars. The event was seen as an obvious place to recruit potential new members and prepare for the 2005 general election. The Respect coalition put forward 26 candidates in England and Wales for this contest with a focus on winning seats in East London. The party won on average 6.9% of the vote in the constituencies it contested and George Galloway was elected MP for Bethnal Green and Bow, overturning a Labour majority of over 10,000. A number of other Respect candidates finished second, including Salma Yaqoob in the Birmingham Small Heath and Sparkbrook constituency with a credible 27.5% of the vote. By the end of the year, two Labour councillors and one Liberal Democrat had defected to Respect in the London borough of Newham. In 2006, the party stood over 150 candidates at the local elections with its manifesto using the slogan 'another world is possible' (RESPECT 2006). In Birmingham, Salma Yaqoob was elected as a local councillor with the party receiving an impressive 55% of the vote in the Sparkbrook ward. The London borough of Tower Hamlets saw the party's biggest success to date with 12 councillors being elected, subsequently making it the official opposition to Labour.

Yet the very success of the party became a cause of internal tension as only Muslim candidates were ever elected. Despite all the efforts put into electing Respect candidates by members of the SWP, they could never seem to elect one of their own. 2007 was a difficult year for Respect as petty squabbles concerning the function and nature of the party developed into deep divisions (Peace 2013a). By November, it found itself in a major crisis and eventually split into two rival factions, the first mainly consisting of those connected to the SWP and the second led by Galloway and Yaqoob. At the London Assembly elections in May 2008, the SWP faction presented itself as 'The Left List', but neither party won a seat in the Assembly. The Galloway faction continued as 'The Respect party' but did not put forward candidates for the European elections of 2009. At the 2010 General Election, the party put forward 10 candidates but failed to elect an MP because of the high turnout which depressed their support. Many thought that this would be the end of the party as it

also lost most of its local councillors. However, in 2012 George Galloway won a by-election in the constituency of Bradford West, proving that Respect was not dead and buried (Peace and Akhtar 2015).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of how Muslims became involved in the alter-globalisation movement and in particular the nature of their participation at the ESFs in Paris and London. We can note some important differences between Britain and France concerning the levels of participation. French Muslim activists were already mobilising on issues that were important in the movement before it became firmly established. They had been in contact with figures such as Alain Gresh through the *Commission Islam et Laïcité* and had also established links with José Bové. Despite this, when these activists showed interest in taking part in the organisation of the ESF in Paris, they were met with bewilderment. They played an important part in this process but were still rebuffed by ATTAC when Tariq Ramadan suggested forming closer links. In Britain, despite the existence of a strong anti-war movement and positive encouragement from movement leaders, the number of Muslims who became involved in the GJM itself was significantly lower than in France. The number of Muslims who attended the ESF in London was also much lower than in Paris despite it being dubbed as an 'Islamic social forum'. The seminars that dealt with 'Muslim issues' at the London ESF were actually imposed from the top by the British organisers of the event in a bid to seem more progressive than their European counterparts. The seminar about the *hijab* was, in fact, a direct provocation towards French activists who, for the most part, supported the law banning religious symbols in schools. The debates at this seminar demonstrated the gulf that existed between leaders in Britain and France who were ostensibly part of the same movement. Most of the Muslim organisations present in London were there despite having contributed very little to the organisation of the ESF.

Given the evidence provided in Chapter 2, these developments should come as no surprise. British Muslims lacked an organisation with a history of participation in progressive political activism such as the CMF which could rally Muslims and encourage them to participate in the ESF. There was also a lack of secular groups representing those of migrant origin such as the MIB, the ATMF and the FTCL. Leaders of the GJM in Britain welcomed Muslims with open arms, but this was more of an attempt to increase numbers on anti-war protest marches rather than

actually being engaged with their concerns. Opposition to the wars in Afghanistan and then Iraq came to the detriment of the development of the wider alter-globalisation movement in Britain. Muslim activists who had joined GR became exasperated with the practices of the SWP and left in early 2004. This same problem resurfaced in 2007 and led to the split in the Respect coalition and the withdrawal of the SWP from this project. In some ways, the creation of Respect was an unexpected outcome; however, it suited all of those involved at the time. In France, Muslim activists were rejected by a majority of actors in the movement but some were interested in genuine collaboration. This led to the creation of initiatives such as CEPT, CFPE and *Trans'Form'Action*. Activists in France would have liked to achieve an electoral alliance like Respect through the FSQP, but this was not to be. The reasons for this are explained in Chapter 6. In both countries, Muslim activists were generally perceived as being very different. To what extent were such attitudes justified? What motivated those Muslims who got involved in the movement? This is explored in the next chapter.

4

Motivations for Participating in the Movement

Introduction

This chapter examines the reasons why Muslims decided to participate in the alter-globalisation movement and the ‘supply and demand’ factors related to this (Klandermans 2004). It is therefore a study of the micro-mobilisation context, the settings ‘in which processes of collective attribution combined with rudimentary forms of organization produce mobilization for collective action’ (McAdam 1988: 134). Sometimes, mobilisation is facilitated by membership of pre-existent political groups such as unions; in other occasions, it may be the result of friendship or other informal networks. Examining the biographical experiences of the activists in this study will allow us to understand why they decided to participate in the movement. This forms part of the demand side, and the first section of this chapter therefore looks at the social and political background of the Muslim activists who became involved in the GJM and how this compares with other activists in the movement. Personal experiences may, however, not suffice in order to explain the development of what Doug McAdam calls an ‘insurgent consciousness’. External influences may also be required and the second section looks at some of the potential intellectual inspiration produced by Muslim thinkers who have attempted to encourage Muslims to participate in movements for social change such as the GJM (supply side). Particular attention is given to the writings of Tariq Ramadan, who has been an important figurehead (particularly in France). Other attempts to develop a kind of ‘liberation theology of Islam’ will also be considered, in particular, how these authors use ideas derived from the study of the Qur’an and the deeds and sayings attributed to Muhammad (*hadith*) in order to encourage Muslims to fight for global justice. The

second section examines framing processes at the meso-level and the core framing tasks employed by Muslim intellectuals. The third section examines how Muslim activists interpret their faith and the extent to which it informs their participation within civil society. Do religious beliefs actually affect participation or are Muslims simply motivated by the same reasons that inspire non-religious activists? It also looks at how they too have invoked certain religious principles in order to encourage their peers to join the movement. At the micro-level, then, the 'frame alignment strategies' that activists engage in are taken into account. The fourth section looks at why we might expect more interest in the movement from Muslims in France than those in Britain by considering the broader political context and the nature of the Muslim community in each country.

The route into activism

Muslim activists were often perceived as different by others in the alter-globalisation movement; but how different really were they compared to their peers? Research on those attending the ESF has highlighted the participation of highly educated activists and the fact that many of the movement's most committed supporters possess postgraduate qualifications. In fact, these activists, 'with their high level of cultural capital, do not mirror the general level of education found in the European population' (Andretta and Sommier 2009: 115). The vast majority of Muslim activists interviewed possessed a university education. In the case of Naima Bouteldja, what she had studied gave her a particular interest in what the GJM was trying to oppose:

I went to university and studied International Economics and then I did a masters degree and wrote a dissertation on the structural adjustment programs of the World Bank and how they had been imposed on Ghana and Ivory Coast. That really politicised me a lot and it was at that moment when I started getting interested in ATTAC which had been set up that year.¹

Muslim activists followed a familiar route towards involvement in political activism which started in their teens and their political conscience was further developed while at university. Many of the activists had taken a leading role in student politics. In the case of French activists, this meant joining student unions such as UNEF (*Union nationale des étudiants de France*) and some British activists were involved in the National

Union of Students (NUS). Four British activists who were interviewed were implicated in societies for black and ethnic minority students and Omar Waraich was even elected as the 'black student officer' for the student union.² For many Muslim activists, their first involvement in collective action started at a relatively young age because of their daily experiences of racism. This was particularly important in creating a sense of social injustice but also gave them a first taste of activism through opposing such discrimination. Abjol Miah, Asad Rehman and Ruhul Tarafder had all led strikes against racism in their schools and the failure of the authorities to act. Their anti-racist activities were then continued while at university:

There was a lot of racism at my school and it was quite hard. Myself and a few other Asians had to learn martial arts just in order to survive! My school was mostly white but when I went to university there were loads of Asians and African-Caribbeans. I was elected as president of the Asian society whilst I was there and later became a sabbatical on the student union. Me and a few friends tried to politicise people because this was the time of the Stephen Lawrence murder and demonstrations associated with that. We organised coaches from our university to anti-racist demonstrations and also brought in people to give lectures such as Asad Rehman from NMP and Lee Jasper from 1990 Trust. We saw the level of racism from the university and the student union towards us. One year they gave us no funds, just because we forgot to attend the budgetary meeting, even though other groups who didn't go were given a budget to spend. We had to get one thousand signatures in order to force a new meeting and we mobilised everyone and got it.³

In France too, fighting racism and joining anti-racist groups such as the *Mouvement contre le racismisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples* (MRAP) was a natural part of their political trajectory. Activists who came of age in the early 1980s speak of the 1983 march for equality as a particularly important moment. Many activists were enthusiastically involved with *SOS Racisme* when it first emerged and went to demonstrations to sell the little yellow badges in the shape of a hand emblazoned with the slogan *Touche pas à mon pote!* This continued until they realised that the PS was using the organisation for its own ends, or as Abdelaziz Chaambi put it, 'until we realised that it was a scam!⁴ Groups and associations dedicated to the defence of migrants and ethnic minorities were a common route into activism in both countries. Asad Rehman helped to found NMP

after finishing his course at the University of Essex. Ruhul Tarafder, who had met Asad through his activism at university, also went on to work for NMP as well as other anti-racist organisations such as the 1990 Trust and BRAIN (Black Racial Attacks Independent Network).

Some activists had come to Europe in order to study there. For these individuals, it was often events back home that helped to politicise them. Karim Azouz was a political dissident from Tunisia and Shahedah Vawda grew up in apartheid South Africa as part of the South Asian diaspora community. These activists were therefore also politicised by a struggle against injustice, although in radically different contexts to those in Europe. International issues were extremely important for the majority of activists who had grown up in Europe. Sometimes this was due to conflict in their countries of origin (e.g., the situation in Algeria in the 1990s) or simply those that involved Muslims, such as the first Gulf War in 1991, the war in Bosnia or the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Indeed, a good number of these activists took a particular interest and inspiration from the Palestinian cause:

I was very active on Palestine during the first *intifada* and was interested in the idea of the popular committees as a form of resistance. This idea of creating an alternative space and having a popular committee on health and a popular committee on education and doing all this on a local level throughout the occupied territories where people tried to resist the occupation by creating a completely different way of existing.⁵

Most Muslim activists had been involved in some way with the Palestinian cause and this was certainly the most mentioned political conflict. Concerns were not, however, limited to conflicts involving fellow Muslims. This same activist was also involved in the question of Northern Ireland and would take regular trips to Belfast in the framework of exchanges between the Republican community there and the ‘black community’ in London.

Despite most Muslim activists expressing their interest in politics from an early age, involvement in political parties, in most cases, was avoided and trust in political parties was low. This echoes the feelings of most other activists who got involved in the GJM and saw the movement as responding to their concerns better than traditional left-wing parties. One of the leading figures in ATTAC remarked how a large part of their supporters are people disappointed with left-wing party politics and who feel that traditional parties of the left, and even radical

left, have no answer to their problems.⁶ As well as general disappointment in political parties, Muslim activists also had other reasons for giving them a wide berth. In France, a common complaint was their condescending or even hostile attitudes towards Muslims. Despite their sympathies for left-wing politics, most activists avoided contact with parties as they realised that their Muslim faith would cause problems. Muslim women in particular knew that wearing a headscarf would not be readily accepted. Others became disillusioned with certain parties after the events of the *beur* movement. The *Parti Socialiste* in particular was perceived to have suffocated and hijacked their movement through the creation of *SOS Racisme*. The reactions of this party to the various headscarf affairs caused even more anger and the creation of NPNS only served to increase this mistrust. Britain's centre-left party, Labour, was also not held in the highest regard. One activist considered that minority communities were exploited by Labour:

Political parties for me are about managing communities rather than representing communities. For example, in Tower Hamlets you have Bangladeshi councillors who are not actually there to represent the interests of the community. They're there to manage the community on behalf of the Labour Party. These people are given positions as councillors even though some of them can't even speak English properly. But because they have good links with people back home [in Bangladesh] and therefore bring votes in, they are deemed fit to be a councillor.⁷

Their parents had always massively supported the Labour Party. However, given the rightward shift of the party since Tony Blair became leader, most activists did not still consider it as part of the political left.

Two activists who were politicised in the late 1970s had brief experiences in radical left parties. Asad Rehman joined the Militant Tendency at the age of 14 but left after observing its inability to deal with the racism that emanated from the 'white working class'.⁸ Asad was a founding member of an AYM in his native Burnley; his was, in fact, a classic trajectory for those involved in these movements. As Ramamurthy (2006: 43) notes for the movement in Bradford:

The formation of the Asian Youth Movement in Bradford was an expression of the failure of 'white' Left organisations in Britain to effectively address the issues that affected Asian communities. Among the founding members of the Bradford Asian Youth

Movement were young Asians who had left the International Socialists (forerunner of the SWP), Militant and the Revolutionary Communist Group.

Abdelaziz Chaambi, one of the few activists who did not have the opportunity to go to university, decided to join the French Trotskyist party *Lutte Ouvrière* (LO) after experiencing the exploitation of workers, and in particular migrant workers such as his father. He made the decision to join LO after seeing how some trade unions appeared to defend the interests of their organisation and leadership rather than the ordinary workers: 'The first experiences [of political action] I had at work were the difficult relations with the trade unions. I realised that they didn't really defend the interests of the workers but rather the interests of their organisation.'⁹ At this time, he was not actually a practising Muslim, but this experience of getting involved in labour disputes and defending his fellow workers had a lasting impact on his political outlook. In fact, despite sometimes difficult relations with certain organisations, virtually all Muslim activists, whether French or British, identified with the political left.

For those of the *beur* generation in France, this was part of a very natural process. They had grown up in the post-May-1968 atmosphere and instinctively associated themselves with the left, both because of the situation of their exploited parents and also due to the fragility of their own economic and social condition (Beaud and Masclet 2006). The same process made British activists naturally associate with the left. They tended to place themselves in a political space to the left of New Labour but not as far left as parties such as the SWP. They were in fact typical of many traditional 'Old Labour' voters and those who sympathised with the Labour left. When asked where he placed himself on the political spectrum, Omar Waraich explained his affiliations thus: 'If you take Guardian readers, I'd be on the left wing of that i.e. someone interested in social issues, someone who likes reading Gary Younge's column and articles by George Monbiot and Seumas Milne.'¹⁰ Those who did not explicitly identify with the left still expressed their interest and sympathy for progressive ideas:

I've always been interested in the left, I think now I'm getting older I'd define myself as more of a liberal. I wouldn't call myself a socialist or a leftist really but I've always been interested in their ideas and I did go to a couple of Marxist meetings in the mid-1990s.¹¹

French activists, on the other hand, clearly situated themselves as either left or extreme left even if none of them identified themselves as Marxists.

The professional and extra-professional activities of the Muslim activists interviewed for this research were reminiscent of many others who identify with the alter-globalisation movement. After finishing university, many activists became involved in campaigning groups and NGOs. Asad Rehman worked for Amnesty International and then for Friends of the Earth. Ismahane Chouder was employed by CADTM (*Comité pour l'annulation de la dette du tiers monde*) and worked in partnership with other NGOs that provide aid for development in sub-Saharan Africa. Muzzamal Hussain was involved in the local branch of the World Development Movement in Brighton after he finished university. Others worked for more locally based associations or even helped to set up their own. In Roubaix, for example, the *Association Rencontre et Dialogue* (ARD) was created by Ali Rahni in 1995. It organised various humanitarian initiatives such as providing food for the homeless and needy during winter and also organising solidarity campaigns for Third World countries such as Benin and Niger. Siham Andalouci also worked for ARD and Karim Azouz worked for a similar kind of local association in Garges-lès-Gonesse. A large number of activists also had experience as youth workers. Abjol Miah, for example, was employed by the London borough of Tower Hamlets to act as a 'gate keeper' between the Bangladeshi origin youth and the local authorities. Terms such as 'activist' do not really do justice to many of those interviewed because they actually worked full time in the voluntary sector and also dedicated much of their free time to politics.

A number of French female Muslim activists I interviewed described themselves as feminists and had also been part of feminist associations. The fact that these activists wear the headscarf has meant that their feminist credentials have always been questioned. One of the outcomes of Muslim participation in the alter-globalisation movement in France was, of course, the creation of the CFPE. Even before this, *Femmes Françaises et Musulmanes Engagées* (FFME) led by Saïda Kada had been active in Lyons since 1995 (Kada 2008). A number of debates were organised by Muslim activists at the various ESFs regarding Muslim women and feminism. This question goes right to the heart of the debate regarding Muslim participation within the GJM. The seminar on *hijab* at the London ESF encapsulated many of the tensions generated by this participation and the mutual incomprehension

between British and French activists. Ismahane Chouder recounts her experience:

During debates, there was always a French specificity that emerged. The participants [at the London ESF in 2004] who came from France, involved with ATTAC and other groups, were always having a go at Tariq Ramadan. Their preferred target was him and they would say things like 'Muslims want to divide the alter-globalisation movement'. I and others from the CFPE took part in a workshop on feminism where Christine Delphy and Salma Yaqoob were speaking. There were many veiled female activists from Britain who were involved in Respect and Stop the War. The room was full and many activists from Britain and other European countries said they couldn't understand what was going on in France and why Muslim women were being excluded and discouraged from becoming part of the alter-globalisation movement. That was the general feeling and this made me and other female Muslim activists from France really happy as this incomprehension showed that this issue was something particularly French... In France they gave us a choice, when we didn't speak we were 'being manipulated' and when we did speak we were the ones manipulating others!¹²

There has been a surge of interest in 'Islamic Feminism' in recent years. Ismahane and Siham, who are active with the *Commission Islam & Laïcité*, helped to organise a conference in September 2006 on this topic that was held at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris (*Commission Islam et laïcité 2007*). This shows how these activists have tried to marry their religious principles with a feminist stance and connected it to a wider identification with progressive politics. There was no contradiction in such a position for these activists as the example of the liberation theology movement in South America had given them an ideal template of how faith and activism could be combined (Smith 1991).

Islamic liberation theology?

Chapter 1 described some of the liberal and progressive interpretations of Christianity which are associated with the alter-globalisation movement. Some Catholic activists within the movement take their inspiration from the works of liberation theologians such as Gustavo Gutiérrez. What is perhaps surprising is that many Muslim activists that I encountered also mentioned liberation theology as an inspiration.¹³

Even those activists who did not explicitly define themselves as 'Muslims', such as the activists in the MIB or Houria Bouteldja (founder of MIR), could draw inspiration from the liberation theology movement:

I disagree with those who claim that religion is a form of oppression for everyone, irrespective of their ethnicity, nationality, origin, culture, sex, etc. Emancipation does not mean combatting religion. That is Franco-French idiocy. There are societies which don't need a separation of church and state and for whom religion isn't a problem. I don't agree that religion is the opium of the people... it can be, but the matter needs to be contextualised. Religion can actually be a form of emancipation, which has been the case in Latin America with Liberation Theology... *Laïcité* in France, for me that's a religion, that's also a system which can be oppressive.¹⁴

Is there an equivalent of liberation theology in Islam, or rather among Muslims? Scholars have referred to liberal or progressive strands of Islam (Kurzman 1998, Safi 2003), but what concrete attempts have been made to develop an 'Islamic liberation theology' or at least use Islamic sources to encourage Muslims to fight for global justice?

Tariq Ramadan is no doubt the most influential figure to have contributed to the involvement of Muslims in the GJM. He could comfortably lay claim to the title of 'chief theorist' of Muslim participation in this movement through his writings. His own personal history of involvement in progressive causes mirrors that of many other activists. In a published interview with Alain Gresh, he recounts how he worked with several NGOs such as ATD Fourth World, *Médecins sans frontières* (MSF) and *Terre des Hommes*. He explains that he travelled to South America and Africa and became acquainted with people like Hélder Câmara and Thomas Sankara as well as figures in Europe such as Abbé Pierre, Guy Gilbert, Sœur Emmanuelle, Edmond Kaiser, Albert Jacquard, Hubert Reeves and Jean Ziegler (Gresh and Ramadan 2002). Coming into contact with those close to the liberation theology movement such as the Brazilian Archbishop Hélder Câmara appears to have had a significant impact on the world view of Ramadan. In particular, it seems to have acted as proof that one can engage in progressive causes without renouncing one's faith in God (Zemouri 2005: 234). This was also cited by a French Muslim activist involved with the alter-globalisation movement as one of the reasons why he became involved with Tariq Ramadan.¹⁵

Through his writings, Ramadan has encouraged European Muslims to be active citizens and refuses the notion that they should think of themselves as minorities. This was cited as extremely influential by French Muslims. Saïda Kada, a key activist in *DiverCité*, notes that Ramadan was one of the first who tried to reconcile the idea of being both Muslim and a French citizen (Kada 2008: 228). Naima Bouteldja was also attracted to this novel way of looking at being a Muslim in Europe. His books were, in fact, the first ones she ever read about Islam.¹⁶ Ramadan's message is articulated clearly in his two most widely read books *To Be a European Muslim* (Ramadan 1999) and *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Ramadan 2004). This second book in particular, written in the aftermath of 11 September, is particularly explicit about how and why Muslims should engage in society through social commitment and political participation. Ramadan identifies neo-liberalism as a problem (diagnostic framing), argues that Muslims need to oppose this (prognostic framing) and justifies such actions by recourse to Islamic teachings (motivational framing). He claims that these teachings are intrinsically opposed to the basic premises and the logic of the neo-liberal capitalist system and valorises the alter-globalisation movement, suggesting that Muslims should join groups associated with this movement using the example of Christians inspired by liberation theology:

The international popular movement that has recently developed across the world (which must not be confused with the violent tendency of some groups and individuals) expresses critical theses and demands reforms that for the most part are completely in accord with the Muslim ethic. Organizations that call for the establishment of fairer trade (of the type proposed by Max Havelaar or development cooperatives); those that want to promote more responsible management of the economy and the financial markets (in the manner of the ATTAC movement or, more locally, of institutions committed to ethical investment); the Peasant Confederation and the supporters of a Christian theology of liberation and resistance (now found throughout the world) must become in time, with many other resisters on the local level, the objective allies of this plural front for which we long. It is the responsibility of Muslims to commit themselves to this way, to decide what kinds of alliances are possible, taking into account their limits as well as their demands.

(Ramadan 2004: 173)

The reference to ATTAC is telling and he also favourably quotes Susan George, who was the vice president of the association. The book was

first published in French in January 2003 at exactly the time when Ramadan was attempting to secure closer ties between his *Présence Musulmane* network and ATTAC. Ramadan also wrote articles on the website *oumma.com* that encouraged Muslims to participate in the movement. These articles were then republished in a small book entitled *Les Musulmans face à la mondialisation libérale* (Ramadan 2003c), which appeared just before the ESF in Paris.¹⁷ This was, however, a rather rushed effort to provide an intellectual basis to convince Muslims to fight neo-liberal globalisation.

In fact, Ramadan did not produce a thorough attempt at what might be called a theory of liberation in Islam until many years later with the publication of *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation* in 2008. He is particularly critical about the absence of intellectual production by today's scholars of Islam on contemporary political, social and economic issues. For Ramadan, contemporary Islamic political thought is out of touch and has not 'led to the necessary reforms and to the critical reassessments of vision and thought that our globalized world requires today' (Ramadan 2008: 287). Ramadan is of course referring to the most influential Muslim scholars, those based in the Muslim World who are producing their work in Arabic which might not be accessible to many European Muslims. Nevertheless, there have been some attempts to develop an 'Islamic liberation theology' by some thinkers who are less mainstream and whose work has been either published or translated into English.

One of the first to write on this topic in English is Dr Asghar Ali Engineer, an Indian activist scholar. In his book *Islam and Liberation Theology* (Engineer 1990), he seeks to outline what he sees as the 'liberative elements in Islam', a religion which he considers as 'revolutionary' but whose theology gradually gave way to 'stagnation and conservatism'. For Engineer, Islam came to:

Change the status quo in favour of the oppressed and exploited... Any society which perpetuates exploitation of the weak and the oppressed cannot be termed as an Islamic society, even if other Islamic rituals are enforced... Unfortunately the revolutionary Islam was soon transformed into the status quoist Islam within no time after the death of the Prophet. Right through the medieval ages, it further imbibed feudal practices and the *ulama* also came to support the powerful establishments. They wrote more on the ritual practices and spent their energy on subsidiary matters (*furu'at*) of the *Shari'at* and completely played down its élan for social justice and its active sympathy with the weak and the oppressed (*mustad'ifin*). They came

to identify themselves with *mustakbirin* (the powerful and arrogant). Thus the received Islam is a status quoist Islam. It is highly necessary to abolish the capitalist system based on exploitation of man by man, if [the] true Islamic spirit is to pervade in an Islamic society.

(Engineer 1990: 5–6)

In this statement, we also see both diagnostic and motivational framing. The capitalist system is the problem and should be opposed on the basis of the 'true Islamic spirit'. There is a lack of prognosis however; in other words, what is the proposed solution to the problem? Engineer is known for his rather radical statements. His Qur'anic hermeneutics have led him to suggest that *tawhid* refers not merely to the unity of God but also to the unity of mankind (through a classless society) and that emphasis in the Qur'an on *jihad* is for liberation and not aggression. Some of Engineer's suggestions may seem rather heterodox, but other statements would probably achieve consensus with many other scholars of Islam. He stresses the importance of justice in the Qur'an and regards *zakat* (alms giving – one of the five pillars of Islam) as a means of ensuring socio-economic justice and an early form of the welfare state. Just as Jesus is often portrayed as a sort of freedom fighter by some liberation theologians, Engineer also describes Muhammad as a liberator. He is also keen to stress tolerance and respect for other religions, using the oft-quoted Qur'anic verse about there being 'no compulsion in religion'.

In this way, his work mirrors that of the South African Muslim scholar, writer and political activist Farid Esack, currently professor in the Study of Islam at the University of Johannesburg. He has set himself the task of identifying a 'socially relevant Islam' that is 'committed to social justice' (Esack 1999). Through his involvement in the anti-apartheid struggle, Esack learnt the importance of different religious groups working together. Like Engineer, he contrasts two expressions of religion in the face of oppression which he calls 'accommodationist' and 'liberatory':

In a context of oppression, it seems that theology, across religious divisions, fulfils one of two tasks: it either underpins and supports the structures and institutions of oppression or it performs this function in relation to the struggle for liberation. Accommodationist theology tries to accommodate and justify the dominant status quo... liberation theology is the process of praxis for comprehensive justice, the theological reflection that emerges from it and the reshaping of praxis based on that reflection.

(Esack 1997: 7–8)

Like Engineer, Esack offers a contextual approach to the Qur'an in order to develop a 'Qur'anic theology of liberation'. The diagnostic framing of Esack shows the articulation of an 'injustice frame' (oppression), and his motivational framing is again linked to what is written in the Qur'an. Another scholar who has argued in a similar fashion is Hassan Hanafi, the Egyptian professor of philosophy at Cairo University. He is known for promoting the concept of the 'Islamic Left' and reconciling the views of the Muslim brotherhood and more liberal, Nasserist and Marxist strands (Wahyudi 2006). In the two-volume *Islam in the Modern World*, he deals with topics such as social justice, ethics, world peace, liberation and revolution:

Liberation theology is first a liberation from theology, from the primacy of dogma; and second a liberation through theology. The Eternal in man is the purest and deepest motivation for praxis. Not committing mischief, and doing good on Earth, is the highest implementation of faith. This is nearly the Islamic vision: 'I only desire betterment to the best of my power' (11: 88); 'Do not [engage in] mischief on the Earth after it hath been set in order' (7: 56, 7: 85).

(Hanafi 2000: 222)

Here the prognostic framing is limited to 'doing good' without an explicit agenda for social or political activism.

More radical and revolutionary approaches by Muslim scholars have also been theorised in a body of work one could call 'Islamic anti-capitalism'. Two important Muslim ideologues of the 20th century who embodied this approach are the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb and the Iranian Ali Shari'ati (Tripp 2006). Shari'ati referred to his views as 'red shiism' and was clearly influenced by the Marxism and *tiersmondisme* he had encountered in Paris as a student. However, he eventually became disillusioned with Marxism and denounced it in his later years in his influential work *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies*. Qutb's disgust of capitalism and materialism was never influenced by Marxism, but rather his two-year stay in the United States and his first major work *Social Justice in Islam* (Qutb [1949] 2000) was published during this time. On his return to Egypt, Qutb joined the Muslim Brotherhood and over time his views became more extreme. Such a thinker cannot be compared with liberation theologians and perhaps only Shari'ati and Hanafi could be considered on par with the likes of Peruvian Gustavo Gutierrez and Brazilian Leonardo Boff. Others might use the concept of 'liberation theology',

but what they are proposing is rather different (Akhtar 1991, Dabashi 2008).

The only contemporary European Muslim intellectual who has identified political activism as the proposed solution to the problem of neo-liberalism is Tariq Ramadan. Most activists in this study were keen to stress how much they appreciated his intellectual contribution. In the case of the majority of French activists, this is not surprising, as they had been involved with him since the mid-1990s and were active in his *Présence Musulmane* network.¹⁸ The London-based City Circle has invited Ramadan to speak on many occasions and they have also organised talks with the likes of Hassan Hanafi and Asghar Ali Engineer. The weekly talks at the City Circle have become a unique venue for progressive Islamic thought in Britain:

The speakers are drawn from the growing pool of distinguished Muslim writers, academics and religious scholars within Britain, as well as from across the Muslim world. A British academic, Iftikhar Malik argues for the need to retrieve ‘Muslim Civil Society – The Lost Heritage of Islam.’ An Egyptian scholar, Hassan Hanafi, clarifies what an Islamic civil society today might look like. An evening is devoted to a conversation with the reformist thinker Anwar Ibrahim, a former deputy prime minister of Malaysia. The Indian scholar Dr Asghar Ali Engineer deconstructs the notion of an Islamic state, insisting that whatever state approximates to the key Qur’anic values of justice, benevolence, compassion and wisdom would qualify as an Islamic state, irrespective of the label attached to it.

(Lewis 2007: 64)

Despite this, Muslim activists in Britain still complained about a lack of scholars that encourage their fellow co-religionists to contribute to movements advocating global justice. One activist bemoaned the lack of a British equivalent to Tariq Ramadan who Muslims in that country could relate to. Someone who, in his words, can ‘look to the West as well as the East’.¹⁹ The contribution of Muslim intellectuals is therefore important in order to mobilise Muslims. However, as we will see in the following section, the activists interviewed for this research were not only motivated because of religious principles and ethics.

Invoking Islam?

What exactly is the nature of the relationship between Muslim activists in the GJM and their religious faith? Although all the activists

interviewed were born into nominally Muslim families, a number of them claimed to have 'returned to Islam' after a period of reflection. During our interviews, most activists displayed outward signs of religiosity by wearing a headscarf, praying and fasting during Ramadan. However, they did not usually invoke the importance of their faith in terms of their political activism unless they were specifically prompted with a question regarding this. Most deemed their faith to be important, but this was not framed as the overarching reason for their involvement in contentious politics. Shahed Saleem, who had relatively little experience of political activism before joining the anti-war movement in late 2001, describes his decision thus:

I think my faith was a motivating factor in as much as I felt I had an obligation to do something. It wouldn't have been right for me to not act and not contribute to the cause, so yes that was a sort of faith based decision. It was also about trying to bring Muslims in from the cold and getting them to speak for themselves instead of being represented by others.²⁰

Indeed, a number of activists were eager to stress that, although their faith helped them, the fact that they were involved in activism could be detached from being a Muslim:

I don't fight for social justice because I'm a Muslim. But it's true that my faith helps me and provides me with energy and the will to keep going. I have so many projects and am involved with so many different campaigns that sometimes I wonder if it's all worth it... So yes it [faith] helps me but fighting for justice is just part of who I am. Even when I was little I was always defending my classmates!²¹

This sentiment was also echoed by others who resented being pigeon-holed as 'Muslim activists' rather than being recognised simply as citizens with a social conscience who happened also to be Muslim:

I'm not interested in just coming [to political activism] as a Muslim, that's not my goal. I am a Muslim, of course, and I act in the name of my values, but these values don't just belong to Muslims. The values that I defend belong to any person with a certain idea of equality, justice and the rule of law. I want my work to be recognised as a positive contribution, not as a 'Muslim contribution'.²²

Although in Britain it was more common to hear interviewees use terms such as ‘Muslim activists’, they too were occasionally wary of being labelled as such. As Omar Waraich explains:

For some reason we were bracketed as ‘Muslims’. Asad [Rehman] has been an activist long before anyone had even heard of British Muslims! I myself am rather confused as to when I stopped being a ‘British Asian’ and started being a ‘British Muslim’... there was something condescending about it... I’m convinced that even if I had been from any other religious or ethnic group I would still have the same views.²³

There is a certain irony to these statements when we consider that one of the reasons cited by certain leaders in France for their reticence regarding the participation of Muslims was the fact that they were supposedly putting their Muslim identity ahead of anything else. Indeed, it reveals how much the Muslim identity was, in many cases, imposed upon these activists from the outside. In Britain, this appeared to be a consequence of the obsession of social movement leaders to show how diverse their organisations were. In France, it revealed a parallel obsession with the dangers posed by Muslim activists and this ‘diversity’.

Religious principles *were* cited by some activists as a form of motivational framing in relation to their political activism. Most often this was connected to the importance of justice in Islam and how the Qur’an instructed believers to oppose injustice. According to a British activist, ‘standing up against injustice is what Islam is about’.²⁴ Some were able to cite specific passages from the Qur’an or a *hadith* which they found particularly important as a guide to how they should conduct their lives:

For me, a Muslim who doesn’t understand that we need to support the poor, and show solidarity with those who don’t have a roof over their heads, don’t have a job, or healthcare or education, for me that is someone who hasn’t understood what Islam is about. The prophetic tradition and the Qur’an are full of references to justice and respect for fellow man and the environment. The Prophet said ‘He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while the neighbour to his side goes hungry.’ That is a fundamental part of my faith. A Muslim who does not fight for justice, the improvement of the condition of the poor, in favour of peace between peoples, for mutual respect, for me that is someone who hasn’t understood the meaning of Islam.²⁵

Indeed, because the concept of justice is so widely acknowledged in Islam, activists could also use this in order to convince other Muslims to join them. Muslim activists did, in fact, engage in motivational and strategic framing tactics in order to attract others. As the two activists who led the Just Peace group explain:

The announcement at City Circle was very much from the angle of 'your religion tells you to stand up for justice' although we didn't say people should join because it was a war in which Muslims were involved. We did it very much from a human rights perspective, the concept of justice is very strong within any religion and we used that to appeal to people to get involved.²⁶

All the people in our group [Just Peace] were observant Muslims but there was no religious agenda and we didn't have a religious ideology that underpinned what we were doing. We didn't say 'we're doing this because we're Muslim'. Having said that, we did use religion in order to persuade people to join us... I remember we tried to find quotes from the Qur'an, one of my favourites was about standing up for justice whether it's against your father, your brother, yourself, or whoever. The idea of justice is important in Islam so we used that on our leaflets.²⁷

This particular tactic can be seen as a good example of what Snow *et al.* (1986) called 'frame amplification', which involves the invigoration of existing values or beliefs (in this case in Islam). Using an appeal to 'justice' is, of course, a common tactic by SMOs, particularly within the GJM. By describing their activism within a religious idiom, this could only serve to increase identification with the cause. In another example of this tactic, Ali Rahni referred to the political struggles he engaged in as a form of *jihad*. He therefore was able to give this activism a religious justification as well as provide an alternative interpretation of a highly contested concept that is often associated with violence. However, when referring to their own particular experience, faith did not appear as central to their implication within the alter-globalisation movement as one might expect. Islam seemed to complement their political views rather than actually shape them.

Indeed, during the interviews, it became apparent that Muslim activists did not subscribe to the view that Islam was inherently compatible with the goals of the movement. Rather they showed

awareness of the fact that this was their particular interpretation of their religion and that other interpretations were of course also possible:

Liberation Theology is not the Catholic Church, it's a branch of the church which, in the name of spirituality and the example of Jesus, seeks to support the poor. Islam also has a branch which we might call 'humanist' which defends those who are less well-off and tries to improve the lot of humanity in its entirety.²⁸

Muslim activists thus used a variety of expressions to define their interpretation of Islam, the most common being 'progressive Islam'. Abdelaziz Chaambi was particularly interested in this notion which he developed in an article written with other activists and published on the *oumma.com* website (Girard *et al.* 2007). Asad Rehman was equally concerned with promoting progressive Islam, and within the NGOs that he worked for, he tried to counteract the assumption that there was only one interpretation of that religion. He invited certain Muslim scholars to act as speakers at events on human rights, arguing that they had their place there alongside representatives of Christian churches. He was keen to stress that, when the anti-war movement started, it was the 'progressive Muslims' who were the first to act:

It was the progressive element of the Muslim community, Muslims with a social conscience, who first went out into the Muslim community and were getting people to come on demonstrations. The progressive Muslims who were either those who were already active in community organisations or the anti-racist movement and then there were the young professionals like those in Just Peace. The progressive Muslims were the facilitators and were able to bring that constituency to the demonstrations and made it relevant by making sure that Muslims were speaking on the platform.²⁹

This helps us to understand how these Muslim activists relate to the rest of the Muslim community. They are in no way representative of the 'average Muslim'. This contrast was particularly marked in Britain, but French activist Yamin Makri also admitted that they were a minority.³⁰ 'Progressive Islam' was often contrasted with the positions of other Muslim organisations such as the MAB or the *Union des Organisations Islamiques de France* (UOIF) which have links with the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab world. As Asad Rehman explains:

The anti-war movement colluded with MAB and people like that which reinforced this idea that *they* were the voices of the Muslim community. Whereas our argument right from the beginning from the war in Afghanistan was to say 'no, *nobody* speaks for the Muslim community'. There are lots of voices and *we* are the progressive and left element and we speak about these issues, and you can have a Muslim speaking from a religious point of view too. It's the same on the left, you don't see just one person speaking for the left. You have a trade unionist and this, that and the other. So how come they then say that Muslims must speak as one? But that relationship they [StWC] had built up with MAB meant it was 'MAB you decide who the Muslim speakers will be, we'll decide on everybody else'. So of course MAB are going to decide to invite their religious speakers, so the voices that were heard came from a very narrow space of people. You didn't hear the alternative voices and that was one of the criticisms we made of the left, we said 'you have done what the right wing Muslims have always wanted to do; you've helped them silence the progressive Muslim voices'.³¹

Shahedah Vawda had been part of the Muslim Students Association of South Africa (MSA – also linked to the Muslim Brotherhood) and when she first moved to Britain she attended some meetings of the MAB and the Islamic Society of Britain. She found both organisations to be too rigid and felt isolated as a woman. She described discovering the City Circle as a breath of fresh air and a welcome change from what she had been used to. She saw this group as 'trying to bring a progressive agenda to the mainstream'. Shahed Saleem also described it as promoting a 'liberal political form of Muslim involvement'.

Another factor which marked out these activists was their perception of secularism. As we will see in the next chapter, the debate in France among leaders in ATTAC regarding the participation of Muslims within the alter-globalisation movement revolved around their interpretation of *laïcité*. However, Muslim activists had already come to the conclusion that *laïcité* was actually beneficial to them as a minority religious community (if applied correctly) and that it should serve as a model for other countries. This stance was, in large part, due to their experience within the *Commission Islam et Laïcité* and their interaction with people from the *Ligue de l'enseignement*. In fact, they had discussed and studied the concept so much that they could consider themselves as veritable experts: 'For them [ATTAC] we needed lessons in *laïcité*, but we are experts in *laïcité*! We have been to so many meetings, conferences

and debates about that over the last 10 years that we have become authorities on the subject.³² Although Muslim activists were in favour of *laïcité*, they did not describe themselves as ‘secular Muslims’ (*musulmans laïques*) as this would denote those who were not religious. In Britain, there is of course no exact equivalent of *laïcité*; however, activists did stress that they too were in favour of the separation of church and state. They saw no contradiction between holding such views and being a good Muslim, or in other words, ‘being Muslim without thinking that secularism is a dirty word’.³³

In terms of role models, sometimes fellow Muslims were mentioned, but their admiration was also reserved for other figures involved in political struggles for freedom and justice such as Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King and Gandhi:

If you look at social movements in history and leaders like Gandhi, they emphasised relating to people with less power. There’s a chapter in the Qur’an that was revealed to Muhammad after an incident in which he was trying to approach the powerful people and a blind man came up to him to find out more but he turned him away. In the revelation God admonishes him for ignoring the blind man and I found that a real powerful verse. It also reminded me of the biography of Abdul Ghaffar Khan *Non-violent soldier of Islam* which I read.³⁴

Through his non-violent opposition to British rule in India, Abdul Ghaffar Khan could be seen as the embodiment of an Islamic liberation theology put into practice. The US civil rights movement and the struggles conducted by African Americans in the Black Power movement also served as a great source of inspiration to activists. The One Million Man March inspired the idea for the march for equality and Against Racism in 1983 and the British anti-war protests in 2002–2003 (Murray and German 2005). Malcolm X was also repeatedly referred to by activists in both countries. Shamiul Joarder stated:

Malcolm X is someone who I respect a lot because he used to evaluate himself and his position all the time and say ‘no I used to think like that but I’ve rejected things from my past and now I’ve re-evaluated the situation and now I think this is the way forward’. I think it takes a certain strength of character to say ‘actually I was wrong’ and then change your perspective.³⁵

In France, a group of activists led by Fouad Imarraine (CMF) founded the *Centre Malcolm X* in 2005 in Fontenay-sous-Bois on the outskirts of Paris as a kind of social centre that regularly hosts debates. Asad Rehman described how the Black Panthers influenced the philosophy of NMP:

Newham Monitoring Project drew its inspiration from what the Panthers were doing in the U.S. The idea that as community activists you base yourself in your community and... you use the law to fight for your rights. There was the classic image of the Panthers with an Armalite in one hand and the law book in the other. Actually the law book side was much more powerful for the Panthers even though they became known as an armed group.³⁶

Comparing Muslim activism in both countries

Muslim activists from both Britain and France have so far been presented together, as there were no substantial cross-national differences to be observed either in their background, politics or religiosity. In terms of their engagement with the alter-globalisation movement, one difference was, however, quite apparent. French activists were much more involved in the ESF process and participated in the event on several different occasions as well as other meetings such as Larzac 2003. The majority of the British activists who were interviewed only took part in the ESF when it came to London. The only exception to this rule was Asad Rehman who was involved in the ESF process from the start and also attended the WSF. Many of the British activists had, of course, discovered the movement through their involvement in the StWC. The massive participation of British Muslims in opposing the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq should not however be mistaken for a wider identification with the GJM. Only a handful of those who went on the demonstrations against the war subsequently took an interest in the ESF process. This is a reflection of the weakness of the alter-globalisation movement in the United Kingdom and its inability to connect to a wider audience. It should also be seen as a failure of leaders in Britain to capitalise on the mobilisation of British Muslims and draw them into the movement. For some in the SWP, the Respect coalition was seen as part of this next step (Callinicos 2008, Harman 2008). This tactic was not, however, very fruitful and the small number of Muslims who attended the ESF in London was a testament to the wider failure to engage them in the GJM that was alluded to in the previous chapter.

Although both British and French activists I interviewed admitted that they formed a minority within the Muslim community, this was certainly more marked in Britain. In this country, activists felt that their fellow Muslims were quite conservative and not generally inclined to participate in progressive causes. The activities of a group like Just Peace and its involvement in the anti-war movement was poorly received by some because they worked openly with non-Muslims:

By positioning itself unambiguously as a collaborator with non-Muslim secular organisations, Just Peace met with hesitation and criticism from the Muslim communities. Was it permissible to work with secular and atheist organisations? Were there shared values that both could come together over? Was this not the road to corruption and dilution?³⁷

Just Peace had to invite Muslim scholars to the Friday meetings of the City Circle in order to justify what they were doing (Lewis 2007: 62). Shahedah Vawda was baffled at the reluctance of some Muslims in Britain to work with those outside their own religious community:

Being South African, it was just normal for me to think that we needed to do something [about the war] and that Muslims are part of the resistance because we were all considered to be black. Muslims, Christians, Hindus, whatever, we all stood side by side for those big demonstrations against apartheid.³⁸

Muslims in France organised conferences where Tariq Ramadan would speak and encourage Muslims to participate in civil society. However, they did not feel they needed to justify working with non-Muslims in social movements as being *halal* (permissible). The reception of Tariq Ramadan illustrates the difference between the two countries, both in terms of the Muslim community and the wider population. In France, he is considered by much of the general public as conservative (even reactionary by some) but is generally respected by the Muslim community. In Britain, he is considered to be a liberal by the general public (at least by those who have heard of him) but many in the Muslim community reject him as a 'sell out'.³⁹ This fact was highlighted by two Muslim activists who spoke about Ramadan's influence in Britain:

The conservative element [among British Muslims] is probably too strong at the grassroots level. You'll find he [Tariq Ramadan] will be

fairly discredited amongst most... I know many people who don't rate him very highly because they see him as a kind of sell out. I'm not sure that the grassroots is ready for that kind of position and his call for reform.⁴⁰

As a scholar I think someone like Tariq [Ramadan] is a great asset for the left, particularly in terms of presenting a face of Islam that is acceptable to mainstream society. What he says makes a lot of sense but there are some who say he's a sell out and that some of his views conflict with that of other scholars.⁴¹

Given the level of conservatism in Britain, it is hardly surprising that involvement in wider social movements is rare. It would be wrong, however, to attribute this to the influence of the first-generation migrants. Polls of young British Muslims indicate that they are even more conservative than their parents and grandparents (Lewis 2007). The evidence presented in Chapter 2 also showed that working with non-Muslims in political struggles for the 'first generation' was not considered as a problem.

In Britain, organisations that regroup progressive Muslim activists are extremely marginal. Just Peace totalled only ten core activists and the City Circle is merely a registered charity that also provides an open forum for debate. It is not a political group that can be compared to UJM and others in France that are affiliated with the CMF. This is a national organisation present in a number of different cities in France of which there is no equivalent in the United Kingdom. The number of British Muslims who are interested in activism involving broad social movements appears to be incredibly small. There is a certain irony to this situation, as a French activist remarked: 'In France, we [Muslims] want to take part but they [leaders of the alter-globalisation movement] close the doors. In Britain, they open the doors wide open but Muslims don't seem interested in getting involved. The equivalent of the CMF simply doesn't exist in Britain, everything seems much more conservative.'⁴² This was also the impression of Naima, who had lived in both countries:

There are more Muslims in France who are active within the political and social sphere who speak about universal and common values. They are more likely to get involved in broader issues. Someone in Britain who is close to what the CMF have been saying for many years is Salma Yaqoob. She works within her community but also

works very easily with others on progressive issues such as workers' rights.⁴³

In her public statements, Yaqoob herself would often claim that the anti-war movement had ushered in a new era for Muslims in Britain. She gave enthusiastic and optimistic assessments about the possibility of a new form of 'Islamic political radicalism' which would see the success of progressive coalitions uniting Muslims and others (Yaqoob 2007). This does not seem to have been borne out by the facts on the ground, or if this is the case, it is still developing at a slow pace.

British activists recognised that most of their Muslim brothers and sisters did not participate in social movements: 'I don't think there's a huge amount of involvement of Muslims in social movements. It's either because they are insular or it could be that there is simply a different culture of activism. I think Muslims get more involved with charity work than social or political stuff.'⁴⁴ This was often accompanied by a sense of frustration. When asked why he decided to form an Islamic environmental group, this activist explained:

Other environmental groups exist of course but Muslims tend not to join them. I guess this is the same reason why, when I give talks on GM foods to Muslims, I try to bring in an Islamic perspective, that's a central part of the talk. If I didn't bring it in, there might be someone questioning me saying 'what has this got to do with Islam'? I don't think it should be like that, but unfortunately sometimes people need their ideological model to justify something which is just common sense! In that sense, religion can be a hindrance if people don't recognise the inherent value of doing something to avert an environmental crisis.⁴⁵

Indeed these Muslim activists did not shy away from making criticisms of the Muslim community. They considered it to be often too focused on 'Muslim issues' and not inclined enough to look at the bigger picture:

Muslims need to be concerned about justice but I'm not just talking about 'Muslim issues.' Whether it's in Venezuela or Ethiopia, there are problems of poverty, global justice, the environment and all of these things. We need to educate ourselves as well because sometimes in our community we feel the sense of injustice towards Muslims

but don't show the same concern for other issues in the same way. Saying that, I do think that there are more and more Muslims who are engaging in all spheres of society.⁴⁶

These comments were also echoed by another British activist who took some of the mainstream Muslim organisations to task about their lack of commitment to global issues that did not just concern Muslims:

We have the concept of the *umma*, the brotherhood or community of all Muslims. We [progressive Muslims] would say that the *umma* has to mobilise for all humanity not just Muslims who are being oppressed. That's the main argument we had with Islamic groups, we said 'where are you on the big international issues? Why don't you come to the social forum process?' When I speak at the events organised by Conflicts Forum, I use the example of Latin America and liberation theology where people of faith show real solidarity with the people and stand up against American imperialism.⁴⁷

Thus we see that these activists differentiate themselves from the mainstream by their concern for global justice in a larger sense.

This seemed to be less of a problem in France where the activists I interviewed were often stereotyped as being concerned with 'Muslim issues' when this wasn't really the case:

When we talk about social problems, that's something that concerns everyone. In their myopic vision of things, they think we just talk about us [Muslims] and for us, as if it was us against the rest of the world. Nothing could be further from the truth. When we raise certain issues, whether it be insecurity of working conditions, housing problems or social apartheid and urban ghettos, that concerns everyone – even if we might be the ones most affected. We're often doubly affected, firstly as the children of the working class, and secondly as the children of immigrants. So that's a double whammy but nonetheless what we are talking about concerns everyone.⁴⁸

This betrays signs of the universalism that is so important to French political culture. These activists are thus in some ways more French than the French. The same activist put it this way: 'We're typically

French: loudmouths who are never happy!⁴⁹ French Muslim activists had the opportunity of being part of a network such as *Présence Musulmane* which acted as a kind of training ground and allowed them to develop a spiritual reflection and consider the best way of putting this into practice through political activism. Nothing similar existed in Britain. However, before making a simple connection between the conservatism of the British Muslim community and the lack of activism, we must also consider the lack of a strong culture of political activism in Britain as a whole. If only a tiny minority of British citizens are interested in alter-globalisation and progressive social movements more generally, it is unrealistic to expect Muslims to be any different. In Chapter 1, it was pointed out that Christians in France seem to be more engaged in the movement as a legacy of France's rich tradition of political activism and contestation. The same trend may simply be apparent as far as Muslims are concerned.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that Muslims became involved with the alter-globalisation movement through a process that is comparable with most other activists in the movement. Their political trajectories match those we would expect of those involved in the alter-globalisation movement including a university education and experience of working in the voluntary sector. They generally identified with the left and, like many others who were drawn to the movement, were disillusioned with existing political parties. The factors that explain Muslim mobilisation and participation within the movement are therefore much the same as for other non-Muslim activists. In fact, interviewees resented being labelled as 'Muslim activists' as this was an identity that was often imposed from the outside. The only thing that set them apart was their personal experience of fighting against racism. Like many Christian activists within the GJM, Muslims saw liberation theology as a positive example and drew parallels with their own interpretation of Islam. Muslim scholars have also attempted to develop Islamic versions of liberation theology, even if the influence of such work is limited. These efforts might be considered as not authoritative enough and potentially too liberal for many Muslims. What is certain, is that there exists a general lack of Islamic intellectual production about the issues on which the GJM campaigns. As Tariq Ramadan notes:

The world has changed, and all these transformations have serious consequences. But it all happens as if the thinking of Muslim *ulama* and intellectuals had stalled, particularly in the field of economics. We observe, like everyone else, the phenomenon of globalization; we study its basic precepts and its logic; we perceive its serious ethical shortcomings; but we hardly offer an alternative, or at least a critical perspective on the basis of the scriptural sources and an understanding of the context.

(Ramadan 2004: 175)

Ramadan himself is indeed the only scholar who was mentioned by a majority of Muslim activists as someone who has adopted what we might call an alter-globalisation discourse and engages in the core framing tasks of diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing. His importance for activists in France was widely acknowledged and the lack of a British equivalent was lamented by activists in the United Kingdom.

However, interestingly enough, for all of the activists interviewed, their activism could be detached from their faith. It would be wrong to presume that Muslims got involved in the GJM simply because the Qur'an speaks about justice. Religious principles were certainly cited and this was an important part of their personality and world view. However, Islam seemed to complement their political views rather than actually mould them. They did not frame their activism as some kind of religious obligation, even though they sometimes employed strategic framing tactics in order to encourage other Muslims to join them. Religion might have been important in their lives, but these activists could just as easily find inspiration from Gandhi or the Black Panthers as the words and deeds of Muhammad. The assertion by the journalist Caroline Fourest (2005) that these activists were radical Muslims at war against modern and progressive Islam appears patently false. The evidence presented in this chapter points to the contrary. Muslim activists who participated in the GJM represented the progressive or liberal wing of the Muslim community and as such should be seen as a kind of minority within a minority. This was much more pronounced in the British case, where it appears that Muslims are much less likely to be involved in social and political activism that does not simply concern other Muslims. The lack of involvement in broader social movements by British Muslims could appear as counterintuitive given that social movement leaders are more open to their participation (as will be highlighted in Chapter 5). However, the British Muslim community is more conservative and less

receptive to ideas from progressive Muslim intellectuals. Muslims in France on the other hand are more likely to get involved in broader issues and are very keen to join wider movements. This may not only be a reflection of different normative versions of Islam but could also be linked to the broader political culture of contentious politics and protest.

5

Reactions to Muslim Participation

Introduction

This chapter attempts to explain the reactions of organisations within the alter-globalisation movement to Muslim involvement. As we have seen in Chapter 3, the strategies adopted by alter-globalisation SMOs in light of Muslim participation differed greatly between the two countries under study. The first section of this chapter attempts to provide an explanation of why this was the case. Generally speaking, we can characterise the reaction of French activists and movement leaders as at best apprehensive and at worst openly hostile. This is in spite of the fact that ATTAC was seeking to expand and attract new adherents, especially those from the poorer suburbs. In GR, on the other hand, and among the majority of other British activists, attitudes to Muslims were more open and welcoming. Muslim activists were even actively recruited to the steering committee of both GR and the StWC. Some activists within the movement attributed the negative reactions in France to racism and xenophobia. This is an unsatisfactory explanation as we are discussing people who place themselves on the political left who would probably define themselves as anti-racists. Koopmans *et al.* (2005) noted that there are two basic conceptions of anti-racism, universalism and differentialism, which are linked to the 'philosophies of integration'. These conceptions affected the campaigning of anti-racist groups and the same factor was at work in the alter-globalisation movement regarding attitudes to Muslim activists. Rather than unwarranted prejudice, it is argued instead that 'discursive opportunity structures' affect how social movement leaders perceive Muslim activists. The Republican–assimilationist model in France rejects outward signs of difference. The multicultural model in the United Kingdom celebrates such

differences and even accentuates them. A woman wearing a headscarf in Britain is not problematic because different identities are recognised and respected as such. The participation of such a woman would be seen as an asset for a social movement in Britain because this conveys a sense of their openness and tolerance. In France, however, such an outward sign of difference is perceived as a sign of separation as well as a negation of the advances of the women's rights movement. The national differences, encompassed within the discursive opportunity structures, help to explain overall trends between the two countries. In the first section of this chapter this is demonstrated with references to statements made by GJM leaders and also the testimonies of Muslim activists. Statements from the leaders in both countries also show how they viewed each other's position on the matter.

Taking into account different discursive opportunity structures can only help to identify general trends. It is not sufficient to explain all the various opinions that may exist within an SMO. After having interviewed a number of people who were part of the leadership of ATTAC, it became clear that quite a few of them were actually open to the idea of Muslim participation. What is more, even though Muslim activists were effectively rejected by the national association, they did participate in some local chapters of ATTAC. This indicates that, in the French case at least, we need to look beyond discursive opportunity structures if we want to understand some of the more nuanced positions of certain actors. It is argued here that interpretations of the meaning of *laïcité* conditioned whether leaders in ATTAC thought that Muslim activists should be included or omitted. I class these as two competing master frames which are described in more detail in the following. The third section of this chapter is devoted to a closer study of the national level (ATTAC-France) to illustrate why the decision was made to not work with Muslim activists. I also look at why the opposite decision was made in one of the local chapters in Lyons (ATTAC-Rhône). These examples point to the importance of key figures within the leadership and their influence, as well as a lack of genuine consensus decision-making.

Reactions to Muslim participation as a result of discursive opportunity structures

Discursive opportunity structures related to the philosophies of integration in each country largely account for reactions to Muslim activists. Accordingly, a multicultural worldview in the United Kingdom means

that Muslims and their 'difference' are to be celebrated and welcomed into the alter-globalisation movement. All interviewees in Britain agreed that there were no major disagreements regarding the participation of Muslim activists within GR or the wider movement. It was rather seen as a valuable asset and advertisement for the movement. The leaders of GR saw Muslim participation in an extremely positive light and were proud of the fact that Muslim activists were present on the steering committee. The first Muslim to become part of this body was Naima Bouteldja at the end of 2001. What is important to note is that she was actively recruited by GR rather than asking to join the steering committee herself:

I first met Naima at a meeting in Luton and when she moved to London I asked her to stand for the steering committee of Globalise Resistance. Primarily because she was a good activist but also because I thought having a Muslim involved at a high level in the organisation would send out an important message about inclusivity, acceptance and respect.¹

Muslim participation in the organisation was thus viewed positively because it would give GR legitimacy in terms of it being genuinely 'representative'. It was also conceived as a kind of tactic in order to attract more people into a movement whose members were quite homogeneous. Having a Muslim on the steering committee meant the possibility of attracting other ethnic minorities who were underrepresented. Chris Nineham, who held leadership positions in GR and the StWC, felt that the idea of Muslim activists and non-Muslim activists working together at a time when Muslims were being stigmatised would send out a powerful message:

To have Muslims involved with the left in movement events was important. Firstly because of imperialism and the fact that the Muslim community was obviously an important element in the anti-imperialist movement against the war [in Iraq]. Secondly because of the question of Islamophobia which is obviously dangerously divisive in British society. So anything you do to overcome it is extremely valuable. You can see now that they [the government] are using Islamophobia as a way of justifying the war and turn people's bitterness against a minority. That's a potent weapon in the hands of the establishment and the powers that be. Equally though, the combination of hundreds of thousands of Muslim activists working together with hundreds of thousands of non-Muslim activists is also a potent

one. It involves a dynamic and interchange of ideas and perspectives that is pretty powerful.²

This passage highlights a number of assumptions about Muslims that clearly fit within a multiculturalist mindset. They are perceived as a unified community; there is a distinct 'Muslim community' out there with similar views and aspirations. Muslims are also contrasted against other activists in rather binary terms, that is, Muslims and non-Muslims. Their prime concerns are also perceived to be related to their Muslim character, for example, Islamophobia. These kinds of attitudes, although well-meaning, often angered Muslim activists who did not necessarily want to be seen as different:

When we were organising for a demonstration, there was a guy helping me to make some banners, someone who actually became a good friend of mine. He said to me 'I think it would be good if the Muslims marched together' and I said 'Sorry, that's just defeating the whole purpose. The point is that we stand together in solidarity!' It's about common values, it's not about Muslims, or Muslims in the West etc. That's what we are trying to move away from.³

The same activist was also aware that her presence was symbolically important and that to some extent her 'difference' was effectively being exploited: 'I was very aware of the fact that I was being used in a sense, but I didn't mind. For the Left it was important to get Muslim authenticity on board and the easiest way to do that was to put a woman with a headscarf on the stage.'⁴ Muslim activists accepted this situation as it was seen as mutually beneficial. However, a number of them also felt that attitudes towards Muslim activists were often condescending even if people were trying to be 'nice'.

The positive valuation placed on Muslim activists in Britain was in sharp contrast to what activists experienced in France. Naima Bouteldja, who had the experience of living in both countries, compared her experiences in activist circles with the following anecdote:

When I first met Christophe Aguiton [ATTAC] at an EPA it was very symptomatic of the French psyche. He could clearly hear that I was French and asked me '*tu es de quelle origine?*' I responded 'officially or unofficially?' and he said 'oh I don't care' and I thought to myself 'if you don't care, why is that the first question that you asked me?' ... I'm not saying that it's a racist attitude, not at all. It's just

telling that the first thing he sees is that I'm a 'foreigner' despite the fact that I am also clearly French. It's funny because once when I met a woman activist from the SWP in Luton she asked me my name and when I said 'Naima Bouteldja' she said 'wow'. I know that in France nobody would think that my name sounds cool. This is the mindset that exists in France, even on the left.⁵

Members of the CMF who attended the preparatory meetings for the Paris ESF confirmed that other activists were extremely surprised to see Muslims there. Karim Azouz described this general feeling of confusion and incomprehension:

When we came to the preparatory meetings for the ESF in Paris there was a certain amount of incomprehension on the part of most French activists. They were saying things like 'what brought *them* here?' and 'what's *that* all about?' In their minds that was something that didn't make sense. Muslims – they're the ones in the mosques right? For them, I was like some kind of Muslim Bishop. As if the Bishop of Paris suddenly turned up and asked to take part. There's a kind of mental and political block for people regarding the participation of those who are religious.⁶

Siham Andalouci confirmed that French activists were extremely surprised by her presence. Her headscarf seemed to jar with what is expected of an activist in the GJM. She has been quoted as saying that the first time she entered the hall where the ESF preparatory meeting was taking place, the woman hosting the event interrupted her speech as she was so surprised to see a veiled woman.⁷ However, when she attended the EPAs in other countries, she saw that people were not always so apprehensive towards women wearing headscarves. The way activists from the SWP acted towards Muslims was a pleasant surprise for her: 'When I saw the SWP and their openness I thought to myself "why don't we have that in France?" OK, you could tell that there was a certain strategy behind this, but it was still impressive.'⁸

However, for many on the French left, outward signs of Muslim religiosity, and the headscarf in particular, represent the antithesis of the French notion of equality. Nicolas Dot-Pouillard (2007) points out that for many on the French left, the headscarf represents a rolling back of the rights won through the feminist movement and at the same time the negation of republican and secular equality. For many activists therefore, the headscarf appears as a visual symbol of inequality between the

sexes, something that they have fought through their involvement in or support of the feminist movement. Gender equality was a recurrent theme in all the interviews with alter-globalisation leaders in France, something that was 'in their DNA'.⁹ In the eyes of some of these leaders, working alongside practising Muslim activists who wear the headscarf would somehow mean they were renegeing on their core values: 'Many French left-wing activists could simply not imagine campaigning alongside a woman who wears a headscarf.'¹⁰ The importance of the feminist sector within the alter-globalisation movement in France should not be underestimated. The feminist umbrella group CADAC was a founding member of ATTAC and *Les Pénélopes* was also represented by founding member and Secretary General Michèle Dessenne. The vast majority of French feminists are resolute opponents of the headscarf. Just as French anti-racist groups are affected by the universalist paradigm, the same is true for feminist groups. Feminist arguments against the participation of Muslims were, however, employed by both male and female actors in ATTAC.

When interviewees were asked about reactions to Muslim participation on the other side of the English Channel, there was often a lack of consideration and empathy for where the other side was coming from. Asad Rehman would regularly clash with French activists over these issues at the EPAs and often grew exasperated at what he perceived as French intolerance and double standards:

We said to the French: 'Everywhere you look there are massive demonstrations against the [Iraq] war. Paris had the weakest demonstration. Look at the countries where there are big Muslim communities, they are out in force – in London, Copenhagen, Amsterdam. Everywhere there are Muslims demonstrating, so why not in Paris? They had a different demonstration, a separate demonstration that the Muslims organised against the war. You know why? Because *you* are expecting the people who come on this demonstration to fit into your model. You are asking them to make a declaration: I am for gay rights, I am for women's rights, etc. You are not asking anybody else to do that. Are you asking the Jewish community to do that? Are you asking them to do a test before you work with them? No, you don't, but you *are* asking the Muslim community to do that!'¹¹

Alter-globalisation leaders in Britain were also critical of French attitudes to Muslims. Noel Douglas, a member of the steering committee of GR, saw this as a form of racism which he deemed incompatible with

left-wing values. He found it 'quite shocking the way that the left, or at least people who called themselves left-wing, can be so racist towards Muslim people'.¹² Alex Callinicos, another leader in GR and the SWP, claimed that an Islamophobic atmosphere has been created in sections of the French Left. He contends that 'secularism in the contemporary French context has acquired an ethnic and exclusivist connotation, slipping into what amounts, relative to a more genuine and egalitarian universalism, to a racially coded particularism' (Callinicos 2008: 163). While many British leaders regarded their French counterparts as racists, those implicated in their criticisms thought that British organisations such as the SWP were cavorting with religious fundamentalists: 'One only needs to look at the website of the SWP to see that they advocate alliances with Islamists against American Imperialism. We are totally against that idea. We need to combat all forms of imperialism as well as fundamentalism.'¹³ These views nicely illustrate the differences encapsulated in the discursive opportunity structures. For British leaders, their counterparts on the other side of the channel are merely racists. For the French, the British are akin to 'useful idiots' whose reasoning can be reduced to 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend'.

As well as a reflection of discursive opportunities and a multicultural and differentialist worldview, the logic of numbers also conditioned British attitudes to Muslim activists. This was particularly evident in the organisation of marches for the anti-war movement. Muslim activists felt that British leaders were sometimes quite cynical in their attempts to recruit more Muslims to the cause. It seemed that the overall aim was not encouraging progressive Muslim activists who might share their political views but rather to get as many Muslims on the marches as possible: 'You would have meetings of the Stop the War Coalition where anything to scare them [Muslims] off was prevented – it was a complete and utter party line – we don't talk about capitalism, anti-capitalism – we don't talk about direct action.'¹⁴ Therefore, although the anti-war movement represented a unique occasion to get more Muslims interested in the wider GJM, such opportunities were squandered for fear of somehow offending them. The selection of the MAB as a privileged partner in the anti-war movement also betrayed the opportunistic logic of the British organisers. Several Muslim activists describe the MAB making political mileage out of the anti-war movement as they were smart enough to bring all the placards to the demonstrations. Hence the SWP thought the MAB was 'the Muslim organisation' and thus made it a partner despite it not being particularly representative. In fact, once the agreement of the MAB had been secured, no more organisations were sought. Just

Peace, the group of progressive Muslims, was eventually marginalised. The leaders of the StWC (many of whom were also involved in GR) believed that they had found the organisation for 'the Muslims' and did not seek out a range of different actors to represent them.

This vision of a unified Muslim voice in many ways mirrored the British government's creation of the Muslim Council of Britain as a representative organisation to speak for the 'Muslim community'. This naturally follows the logic of Britain's philosophy of integration in terms of holistic communities. The StWC leadership did not take into account the opinions of those 'progressive Muslims' who had worked with the coalition from the start and were also involved in the GJM. These activists, in fact, criticised movement leaders in Britain:

The white left followed what the state had done by looking for a single Muslim voice... There are a lot of Muslim activists who don't sit within a strictly religious space. They've come from the antiracist movement, or the black movement, but all those voices got a bit silenced and we had problems in different places. In Birmingham there were activists who'd been very active in terms of community politics and who came from black left type groups and said 'you [the anti-war movement] have done what they [the state] couldn't do. We kept the religious lot in the mosques!' If you want to be [overtly] religious, stay in the mosque. If you want to do politics, come as you are but not as a religious label. Now that has happened because they [religious right] have been brought on to these platforms and now have much more influence.¹⁵

MAB leaders even admitted that they did not want to be closely associated with the left and refused to become merely another member of the StWC. As Anas Altikriti explained:

When the StWC first approached us, they asked if we'd like to join as a member of the coalition but we declined. Then they came back and asked us to be partners, so the demonstrations would be jointly organised by the StWC and MAB. We thought we could do that because the Muslim community needed to identify with something. I mean, I couldn't get 100,000 or 200,000 Muslims to rally under the banner of a trade union or a socialist or a communist organisation!¹⁶

Anti-war leaders were thus willing to compromise in order to secure the all-important and highly symbolic mass participation of Muslims in their marches. They were willing to sacrifice certain political principles

and work with an organisation that many described as conservative and right wing, in order to achieve their aim of mass mobilisation.

In fact, the inclusion of the MAB as a co-organiser of the anti-war demonstrations was a cause for concern for some and reservations were expressed by organisations such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and the Alliance for Workers Liberty (AWL). For this latter organisation, they did not think that those on the left should be joining forces with a group that was linked to the Muslim Brotherhood:

The problem for us with MAB is that they are a right-wing organisation, that's why we objected to them. We don't suspend our critique of those on the right just because they happen to be Islamic in their focus. MAB are – by their own admission – linked to the Muslim Brotherhood which is a conservative movement. In fact, Tony Cliff, founder of the SWP, writing in 1946, described the Brotherhood as clerical fascists – and I think he was right!¹⁷

Those who questioned the involvement of the MAB were, however, silenced by the leadership of the StWC with the accusation of racism:

Nothing should be allowed to confuse anybody about what was the absolute priority, which meant that the arguments, complex arguments about secularism and religion were not heard... So, for example, pretty early on, those people who questioned the link with MAB were castigated as Islamophobes.¹⁸

In France, much opposition to Tariq Ramadan was similarly premised on the notion that he was part of the Muslim Brotherhood because his grandfather founded the organisation. It was widely assumed therefore that he was a dangerous extremist. These kinds of opinions were occasionally challenged at events such as EPAs: "The French were pretty solid [in their resistance to Tariq Ramadan] saying no. But sometimes there were smaller groups like *No Vox* who would stand with us and say, "They don't speak on behalf of all the French left." "¹⁹ If activists from *No Vox* could be characterised as taking a 'British stance' to the participation of Tariq Ramadan, the AWL had a position comparable to that of many on the French left concerning the wearing of the headscarf by Muslim women. They were highly criticised by activists in the SWP for expressing such views:

Many lies were spun about our [AWL] position – that for example we were hostile to Muslims being involved [in the movement] or that we

didn't think the left should fight racism which is complete nonsense really. A lot of nonsense was also said [in Britain] about the French left's position on the veil. The majority of the LCR had the same position as us which was: against the ban on the veil but critical of it. It is an instrument and symbol of women's oppression in my view, but does that mean I wouldn't get involved in a campaign with somebody who wears the veil? Of course not! You don't let something like that stand in the way of class struggle but it doesn't mean you have nothing to say about it. Whereas I think the SWP collapsed into a position of 'well it's fine if you wear the veil, we don't care' ... I think the French left is generally more sane on these questions, whereas the dominant politics of the British left – largely shaped by the SWP, have gone a bit off the rails.²⁰

These examples highlight the fact that discursive opportunities are not absolute conditions; they merely shape general trends in society. The vast majority of activists in France were wary of Muslim participation in the alter-globalisation movement and most British activists welcomed them. Dissenting minorities were, however, present in both countries. In the following section, closer attention is paid to the leadership of ATTAC, which was actually split on the issue of Muslim participation.

Master frames: *laïcité républicaine* or *laïcité ouverte*?

For some leaders in ATTAC, the idea of working with Muslims (or at least those outwardly visible as such) was inconceivable. For others, this idea did not pose such a problem. How do we explain this situation? Should they not all share a common ideology of what it means to be on the left, part of the alter-globalisation movement, committed to progressive politics and so on? Muslim participation was not evaluated on the basis of what groups such as the CMF did or said, as most were completely ignorant of this. The issue was generally couched in terms of the compatibility of such participation with the principle of *laïcité*. This subject was of course discussed and debated widely in ATTAC, particularly in the period 2003–2006. Among leaders in the association, there existed two separate conceptions of what *laïcité* implied; I describe these as *laïcité ouverte* and *laïcité républicaine*. These competing conceptions acted as master frames that shaped activists' reactions to the participation of Muslims. In order to explain these differences, we need to review the concept of *laïcité* in France and its history.

The French law separating church and state came into force on 9 December 1905. It attempted to put an end to the conflicts of the 19th century between the two main cleavages in French society: the secular and republican left and the religious right. France has actually only defined itself as a *République laïque* since 1946 and, as Olivier Roy (2005) has pointed out, *laïcité* in France can refer to at least three separate principles – legal, philosophical and political. Those on the left in France are traditionally the strongest defenders of *laïcité*. They regard the law of 1905 as a hard-fought political victory against the Catholic Church and the left is perceived as both the guardian and standard bearer of the principle. It has often been the area of education where the fight over *laïcité* has been at its strongest. The last battle between this old cleavage of the secular left and religious right in France was played out in 1982–1984 regarding the proposed changes to private schools by Education Minister Alain Savary. This led to a mass protest movement (*mouvement de l'École libre*) which successfully forced the socialist government to back down. The first headscarf affair marked a new era for the partisans of *laïcité* as Catholics were no longer the central protagonists. On 18 September 1989, in the town of Creil, three school girls were expelled for wearing a headscarf (*foulard*) judged to be incompatible with the principle of *laïcité* by the headmaster. The local newspaper published an article about this on 3 October and the ensuing media frenzy captivated the nation for the following weeks and even months.²¹ It opened up the debate about how *laïcité* was to be reconciled within a society that was now multi-ethnic. For some, excluding the girls from school was a necessary means of safeguarding *laïcité*. This event marked the transition when *laïcité* became not only a value associated with the left but also a 'national value'. Being *laïque* meant being French, and of course well integrated. It thus imperceptibly became an important part of France's 'philosophy of integration'.²²

The subsequent headscarf affairs in France have all been framed as moments of crisis for the principle of *laïcité*, and at each occasion it has come to be rediscovered and celebrated. When the law against religious symbols in schools (law of 15 March 2004) was promulgated, it was highly symbolic, as this came just one year before the centenary of the 1905 law. Yet not everyone agrees as to what the law of 1905 actually means in practice. Some concentrate on the idea of 'public space' and believe that places like schools, hospitals and government buildings should remain 'religiously neutral' (Bowen 2007). Others focus on the role of the state, stating that *laïcité* ensures freedom of conscience and non-discrimination. The first conception has come to be known

as ‘republican secularism’ (*laïcité républicaine*) and the second as ‘open’ (*laïcité ouverte*) or ‘tolerant secularism’ (Laborde 2008).²³ These competing conceptions, which act as ‘master frames’, are associated with the two leading experts of *laïcité* in France – Henri Pena-Ruiz and Jean Baubérot.²⁴ Naturally, both figures insist that their interpretation of *laïcité* represents the true spirit of the law of 1905. This battle over the meaning of *laïcité* can be seen as a classic example of a ‘frame dispute’ (Benford 1993). For proponents of *laïcité républicaine*, French secularism is analogous to a civil religion and a ‘means of educating free and tolerant citizens’ (Jennings 2000: 578). It is associated with the ‘common good’ and explicitly positions itself as a French exception that is in opposition to Anglo-Saxon models (Baubérot 2013). Expressions of religion should be banned from ‘public space’, so, for example, even civil servants should refrain from exhibiting their religious beliefs. By visibly showing outward signs of religiosity in such public spaces, for example, by wearing a headscarf, Muslims are routinely accused of defiling this neutrality. Those who propose the need for *laïcité ouverte* put stress on the freedom of the religious believer and the refusal of discrimination because of one’s beliefs. Although the state should remain neutral, this does not mean that religion must be confined to the private sphere. A summary of the key principles behind each interpretation is listed in Table 5.1.

The debate in ATTAC

Within the Administrative Council of ATTAC, both conceptions of *laïcité* were represented. This cleavage regarding the interpretation of *laïcité* was also well recognised. Pierre Khalfa summarises the situation thus:

The presence of Tariq Ramadan and all these polemics touched upon a certain number of political problems that have not been dealt with properly in France related to the question of *laïcité* and in particular the debate about the headscarf. It all came down to what was one’s perception of *laïcité*. The fact is: there is an unequal treatment of religions in France – which is accepted by many people.²⁵

Khalifa and Vice President of ATTAC Gustave Massiah were the most high-profile representatives of the *laïcité ouverte* position. The key figures in favour of the *laïcité républicaine* position were Bernard Cassen (president from 1998 to 2002 and then honorary president), Jacques Nikonoff (president from 2002 to 2006) and Michèle Dessenne (secretary general from 2002 to 2006), incidentally the three most influential people in

Table 5.1 The master frames of *laïcité*

<i>Laïcité ouverte</i> (Baubérot)	<i>Laïcité républicaine</i> (Pena-Ruiz)
Stress on freedom of religious expression for the believer.	Stress on freedom of the individual from any particular religious or ideological dogma.
Religious practice can enter the public sphere on the condition that it doesn't impinge on the rights or freedom of others.	Religious practice should remain strictly a private matter. 'Public space' associated with the state should remain devoid of religion and its symbols.
Separation of the political and civil spheres – neither should interfere in the affairs of the other. This is linked to the state's neutrality.	The state has a responsibility to promote the common good and may be required to control religion in the name of <i>laïcité</i> .
Guarantee of equality for all before the law irrespective of religious convictions. No discrimination should be permitted based on these convictions.	The state may be required to intervene in certain areas to maintain neutrality, even if this entails discrimination.
Religious actors can play a role in civil society as long as they do not impose their views.	Religious actors can play a role in civil society but should refrain from invoking their particular beliefs.

the association at that time. Underpinning the conception of *laïcité républicaine* is the normative ideal that expressions of religion should remain private. Working alongside religious actors in political activism becomes complicated when religious beliefs are (a) ostentatiously visible and (b) perceived to be the primary means of identification. As opposed to Christian activists whose faith may go unnoticed, Muslims sporting headscarves or beards are likely to draw attention to themselves, which is deemed unacceptable. This is interpreted as a sign of refusal, or even defiance towards *laïcité*:

Certain people said that they didn't want to prepare for the ESF alongside women wearing the veil. They were constantly raising the question of *laïcité*. I explained that it had nothing to do with *laïcité*: and that everyone taking part in the meetings agreed with the principle, including them [Muslims].²⁶

These constant references to *laïcité* as a basis for their objections exasperated many of the Muslim activists who could not conceive how their

mere presence was defiling the principle of French secularism. Some saw the issue of *laïcité* as an excuse and merely a convenient way of masking racist attitudes.²⁷ This echoes the opinions of some of the British alter-globalisation leaders. However, as pointed out earlier, it is quite unlikely that leaders in the alter-globalisation movement with strong anti-racist and left-wing credentials would be simply motivated by racism. Indeed, many of the leading figures in France's anti-racist movement have also come out against the headscarf (Peace 2012).

The second issue for proponents of *laïcité républicaine* relates to the importance activists give to their Muslim identity. In other words, are they activists who happen to be Muslims or are they Muslims who are also activists? The following quotes from Bernard Cassen and Michèle Dessenne illustrate this concern:

What shocked me about the ESF in London was the intention to create alliances with some Muslim organisations *qua* Muslims. One doesn't open up a dialogue with a Muslim organisation, or any other religious group for that matter. One does so with citizens who might also be Muslim, which is completely different.²⁸

The question is not whether Muslims participate or not at the ESF. The point is knowing whether this participation can be reduced to their religious affiliation. Isn't that a way of depoliticising the debate? As if religious beliefs were more important than political views.²⁹

According to this worldview, working alongside religious individuals is acceptable, but their faith must be privatised and one should not join forces with overtly religious organisations. The irony of these statements is that Muslims themselves did not see their activism in these terms. As we have seen from the previous chapter, they did not want to be labelled as 'Muslim activists' even if they were part of a larger organisation such as the CMF. The argument about not wanting to work with religious organisations appears weak when we consider the numerous Christian organisations that are part of the alter-globalisation movement. This point was, in fact, also raised by Muslim activists when they met the leadership of ATTAC to discuss their participation. They pointed out the hypocrisy of having problems with Muslim activists when they were happy to work with people such as Abbé Pierre or organisations such as *Secours Catholique* (Caritas).³⁰ When questioned on this point, Bernard Cassen's response was that Christian organisations in France respect *laïcité* whereas 'some Muslim organisations consider that

their faith or dogma is above the laws of the land'.³¹ It was generally assumed that Christian organisations were not a problem because they had been tamed through their acceptance of *laïcité*. Yet Muslim organisations did not fully accept these rules of the game. What is more, many of the Christian groups who participated were well known as left-wing Catholics (*cathos de gauche*), and thus non-threatening because they seemed less overtly religious.

The idea of equivalent left-wing Muslims appeared to many as a sort of oxymoron. However, those who supported the participation of Muslims often used the example of left-wing Christians as an argument for the inclusion of Muslim activists. Pierre Khalifa, for example, argued that the alter-globalisation movement needed to integrate political movements inspired by Islam just as in the past broader left-wing social movements had integrated those organisations linked to Christianity and Judaism.³² The problem is that many simply assumed that Muslims could not be progressive. Consider the following extract from a questionnaire published for distribution at a national ATTAC meeting in 2005. It articulates well the joint concern of respect for *laïcité* and gender equality that is inherent in the *laïcité républicaine* worldview:

What position should ATTAC adopt regarding its relations with Muslim movements, whether moderate or less so, who defend the interests of their community against neo-colonial capitalism and against American imperialism (for example Tariq Ramadan's movement)? Should the respect of *laïcité* and gender equality remain as non-negotiable principles, even at the expense of creating a wider anti-neoliberal and anti-imperialist alliance?³³

The assumption is that Muslims (a) defend the interests of their own community rather than universal principles, (b) respect neither *laïcité* nor gender equality and (c) cannot become an integral part of the movement, but merely a partner in a wider anti-neoliberal alliance. This, in fact, mirrors some of the 'essentialist' attitudes found in Britain towards Muslims even if the end result is much different.

Those leaders who fell into the category of *laïcité ouverte* never actually categorised themselves as such. They too simply considered themselves to be *laïques*, although those in the opposing camp tended to appropriate this label for themselves. Those taking the *laïcité ouverte* position should not be confused with the multiculturalist views of British activists. They still believed in a universalist conception of the common good but were more sensitive to the potential for exclusion.

Nevertheless, their position was often caricatured as engaging in a dangerous form of cultural relativism, a point made forcefully by the President of *Union des Familles Laïques* (UFAL) Bernard Teper in various public interventions. The notion of *laïcité ouverte* was only used in a derogatory manner by its opponents, who suggested that it was an attempt to water down the importance of secularism in France.³⁴ However, rather than calling for the 1905 law to be changed, the figures who were criticised by the likes of Teper and Cassen merely thought that the principle of *laïcité* was not being applied correctly. Catherine Samary, an academic at the Dauphine University in Paris who faced much criticism for her position both within ATTAC and the LCR, saw it as a division between those who considered the separation of church and state as a means to eradicate the societal influence of religion with the power of the state and those who considered the state as the guarantor of religious freedoms (Samary 2005). Muslim activists also put forward similar arguments and also expressed their attachment to *laïcité*:

The *Collectif des Musulmans de France* is not asking for a change to the [French] Republic, rather, we are asking for the founding republican and democratic principles to be applied in full. The difficulty relating to how the country deals with its Muslim minority resides in the belief that a certain norm [relating to *laïcité*] is universal rather than recognising that this is merely a certain interpretation of that norm.

(Makri 2003)

We identify as being secular [*laïques*], for us *laïcité* is a model that should be adopted elsewhere. It means that the state remains neutral which guarantees freedom of conscience and freedom of worship. You can believe in whatever you want as long as you don't impose that on other people. That's what *laïcité* means!³⁵

These quotes illustrate the distinction that is evident between the works of Jean Baubérot and Henri Pena-Ruiz, between a focus on religious freedom for the individual and that of religion needing to be confined to the private sphere. The master frames of *laïcité ouverte* and *laïcité républicaine* help us to understand the various positions in the debate. However, in order to understand the outcome itself (why active collaboration with Muslim groups was denied in ATTAC), we also need to look more closely at what happened in this association, both at a national and at a local level.

Why ATTAC closed the door on Muslim activists

Muslim participation was *a priori* desirable for ATTAC as it was seeking to expand in order to attract new activists. After witnessing exponential growth in its first years, the founders hoped that it could become a genuinely representative organisation and extend its sphere of influence outside of the usual constituents who get involved in this type of political activism. In an interview with *New Left Review*, Bernard Cassen discussed the socio-economic make-up of the membership of ATTAC:

We are an association recruited from the lower-middle classes upwards, above all in the public services, with a significant proportion of students and teachers, but employees and executives of the private sector are also present. We also have a sprinkling of farmers and unemployed. What we do not possess – any more than anyone else – are roots in the working class, or ‘popular’ sectors more broadly. (Cassen 2003b)³⁶

This inability to put down roots among the working class was considered a major problem for an organisation designated by its founders as a movement for ‘popular education’.³⁷ ATTAC’s leadership saw part of its role as educating the masses, and reaching the working class was seen as particularly important as they were perceived as those who were the first to suffer from the ravages of neo-liberalism and the retreat of the state. Also, it was often remarked how many working-class voters had deserted the traditional left-wing parties in favour of the FN. Thus, for many ATTAC leaders and activists, recapturing working-class neighbourhoods for the left also appeared to be a moral cause, particularly in the wake of Le Pen’s presence in the second round of voting for the presidential election of 2002.

Within ATTAC, it was agreed that it was necessary to reach out to working-class people, but a strategy for achieving this was never really achieved (Loeillet 2005). Countless examples of references to the working classes and the organisation’s difficulty in reaching them can be found in the minutes of ATTAC meetings or yearly activity reports. The second ESF that was to take place on the outskirts of Paris, where many working-class people lived, was seen as an ideal occasion to reach out to these sectors of the population. Although within the leadership everyone agreed on the necessity of making an impact within working-class areas, the means for achieving this were a source of great debate.

On the one hand, there were those who believed that this should be achieved by changing recruitment strategies and the way they went about their activism. Others thought that alliances with movements and groups that were already based in working-class areas would be a more fruitful strategy.³⁸ Among the proponents of the latter strategy were figures such as Pierre Khalfa and Gustave Massiah, who saw both secular groups such as the MIB and religious ones such as the CMF as ideal conduits for spreading the alter-globalisation message within the *banlieues*. This would allow ATTAC to gain a foothold in France's poorer neighbourhoods and therefore fulfil its cherished aim of reaching out to the working classes.

When Tariq Ramadan met with Bernard Cassen in order to join forces with ATTAC, he explicitly played on his popularity in the *banlieues*, presenting himself as a kind of spokesman for these areas.³⁹ A press release by ATTAC in November 2003 explains the position of the association and its 'dialogue' with Muslim organisations within the framework of its desire to widen its membership to working-class areas:

ATTAC has made enlarging its membership to include those from the working classes as one of its top priorities. In this perspective, it wishes to enter into dialogue with all those who share this concern and whose experience may be useful. The debate with Muslim organisations enters this context but is not limited to such groups.⁴⁰

Muslim activists were, of course, aware of this internal debate regarding enlargement and used it to their advantage during the meetings for the preparation of the Paris ESE, not only in order to justify their presence (which was often contested), but also as a means of securing seminars related to their interests. However, despite the rhetoric of reaching out to working-class populations, ATTAC leaders did not make any significant move towards achieving this goal; perhaps because they were unsure whether they would be able to get their message across. The following comment from Bernard Cassen illustrates this hesitancy:

This is a movement which discusses rather abstract concepts like the Tobin tax or the WTO. If you go into the *banlieues* and start using that vocabulary, people will say to you 'what are you talking about?' So the issues that we discuss are not perceived as being directly related with the everyday life of, say, an unemployed person from the *banlieues*. Of course, neo-liberal globalisation does have an impact on his life, but it takes time to explain all that.⁴¹

The decision not to work with Muslim activists from the *banlieues* appears even more puzzling as they could have helped to spread and explain this 'complicated message' in these areas. In fact, a majority of those in the Administrative Council agreed on this, and yet this strategy was not pursued. This is because decision-making in ATTAC was more dependent on the influence of particular individuals than democratic procedures.

At this time, ATTAC included representatives from all the various streams of the alter-globalisation movement. Large organisations such as trade unions were represented not *per se* but by individuals who are affiliated to them and act as representatives. This means that an individual's influence is not coterminous with the size of their organisational affiliation. This was a calculated choice by Bernard Cassen, who wanted to avoid large structures dominating the organisation (Wintrebert 2007). In order to understand what happened inside ATTAC, an appreciation of where the real power lay, and who the most influential individuals were, is indispensable. The structure of the association consists of four main bodies: the National Bureau (*bureau national* – BN), the Administrative Council (*conseil d'administration* – CA), the Scientific Council (*conseil scientifique* – CS) and the Founders Association (*collège des fondateurs* – CF). The first two had decision-making powers and the CS is composed of intellectuals (often economists) who are tasked with producing knowledge and expertise on the subjects which the organisation concerns itself with.⁴² The CA was originally conceived of as the main decision-making body within ATTAC and the BN was designed to merely implement these decisions and deal with the day-to-day running of the organisation.⁴³ The most important figures in ATTAC were members of both these bodies, and power was concentrated in the hands of a small number of individuals.

Democracy and the manner in which decisions are taken by SMOs that are part of the alter-globalisation movement are crucial to its self-identity. Internal democracy is particularly relevant for this multifaceted and heterogeneous movement. Four basic conceptions of internal democracy have been identified within the movement: the associational model, the assembleary model, deliberative representation and deliberative participation (Andretta and Della Porta 2009). Both ATTAC and GR would be considered as exhibiting an associational model where the everyday politics of the group is managed by an executive committee.⁴⁴ According to the statutes of ATTAC, discussion precedes every decision taken within the CA, and consensus is the main decision-making procedure, which is then checked with

a vote. Nevertheless, the issue of internal democracy was constantly being debated by both senior and ordinary members. The latter category is represented through the 12 delegates elected as members of the CA and can only vote on motions that are presented at the annual conference. Given the size of the organisation (which at its peak reached over 30,000 members), it is clear that not all members could take part in regular decision-making. For most members, taking an active part in ATTAC meant becoming involved with one of the local chapters – the *comités locaux* (CL) – as a means of debating issues and taking decisions (over 200 CLs have been created in France). Nevertheless, the CA of ATTAC-France was regularly condemned for its ‘democratic deficit’. Criticism of the leadership of ATTAC was not restricted to grass-roots members; some leading members of the CA itself also registered their displeasure with the perceived lack of democracy and excessive concentration of power in the hands of a small number of individuals.⁴⁵ It is for this reason that, despite its overtures regarding democracy, many inside observers characterised the organisation as an oligarchy.

Given the large number of potentially competing interests inside ATTAC, the organisational structure applied was probably necessary in order for it to function properly and avoid potential gridlock or a succession of power struggles. Indeed, it functioned reasonably well without any major internal disagreements for the first five years of its existence. During this time, due to the frequency of its meetings (once per week), and the relationship between key actors within it, the BN gradually became the real seat of power where the most important decisions were made concerning the organisation’s strategy and ‘policy’. The CA remained important, but certainly less than originally intended. Therefore, to understand the main decisions taken by ATTAC in the period under consideration (2002–2006), one needs to take into account the composition of the BN. The issue of Muslim participation was a potentially explosive topic for the organisation and so efforts were made to keep the discussion restricted to the leadership.⁴⁶ In fact, most ordinary members of ATTAC, and other activists in the alter-globalisation movement, would have had no idea that Muslims were interested in participating until at least June 2003 when Bernard Cassen appeared on stage during a debate with Tariq Ramadan. A significant amount of power was concentrated in the hands of Cassen, Nikonoff and Dessenne. Cassen even referred to this group as the ‘real leadership’; in other words, those who really ran the show (Wintrebert 2007: 206). Cassen himself exerted considerable influence on the organisation

Table 5.2 Two main factions that developed within ATTAC and key personalities within them

Nikonoff camp	Khalfa camp
Jacques Nikonoff (BN, CA)	Pierre Khalfa (BN, CA)*
Bernard Cassen (BN, CA)*	Gustave Massiah (BN, CA)*
Michèle Dessenne (BN, CA)	Susan George (BN, CA)*
Jean-Pierre Beauvais (CA)	François Dufour (BN, CA)
Pierre Guiard-Schmid (CA)	Julien Lusson (BN, CA)
Francine Palisson (CA)	Serge Le Quéau (BN, CA)
Bernard Teper (CA)*	Annie Pourre (CA)*
	Sophie Zafari (CA)*
	Jean Baptiste Eyraud (CA)
	Bernard Dréano (CA)*
	Jean-Luc Cipièrre (CA)*
	Stéphane Cuttaia (CA)
	Maya Surduts (CA)

Asterisk indicates that they were interviewed for this research. All were contacted but some refused to participate.

and its decisions and was known for his authoritarian style of leadership. Such was the overwhelming concentration of power in the hands of these individuals that the other key personalities in the organisation became exasperated and started pushing for a change in the way ATTAC was run. These factors are all crucial in attempting to understand how the discussions surrounding Muslim participation were played out, decided upon and then re-entered the debate a few years later.

Two distinct camps developed within ATTAC from 2003 onwards. This split, illustrated in Table 5.2, pitted the 'Khalfa camp' against the 'Nikonoff camp'.⁴⁷ What is particularly pertinent for our purposes is to note that this split almost perfectly replicates the divisions within the organisation concerning Muslim participation, with the Khalfa camp characterised by openness and the Nikonoff camp by reticence (and sometimes outright hostility). In fact, the issue of Muslim participation, usually subsumed under the euphemistic heading of *laïcité*, became a major issue which separated the two camps and also contributed to the crisis which engulfed ATTAC from 2005 onwards.⁴⁸ The positions of the various actors in the debate can be traced to shared ideological perspectives and common membership in other groups and organisations. For example, the CEDETIM and its related groups were represented by Gustave Massiah, Julien Lusson and

Bernard Dréano who all sided with Khalfa. These individuals are characterised as being very internationalist and anti-imperialist and are associated with Third-Worldism (*tiers-mondisme*). On the other side, we find less radical organisations such as the Cooperative umbrella group *Confédération générale des SCOOP* represented by Michèle Dessenne and Pierre Guiard-Schmid. Dessenne also represented a feminist group called *Les Pénélopes* which was very critical of Muslim women wearing the headscarf. Also to be found in this camp was Bernard Teper from UFAL, one of the strongest opponents of the participation of Tariq Ramadan and Muslim groups. His views were completely in sync with *laïcité républicaine*.

As Table 5.2 aptly demonstrates, the Nikonoff camp, and by extension those who were hostile to Muslim participation, formed a numerical minority within the decision-making structures of ATTAC, particularly within the BN. How, then, can the subsequent decision to not work with Muslim activists be explained? We must assume that, had a genuine democratic debate and decision taken place, the outcome would have been quite different. The minutes of the BN on 23 December 2002 announced a forthcoming meeting with *Présence Musulmane* and called for a report about this meeting to be drawn up for the next meeting of the CA.⁴⁹ However, there is no trace of such a report subsequently being made available. The next time this topic is mentioned in the archives is April 2003, in the minutes of a meeting of the BN under the heading 'Reflection on Muslim associations':

This debate is aimed at identifying the new forms of public expression of Muslim groups. The internal debate in ATTAC should go beyond the religion of Islam and be tied to questions regarding *laïcité*. A new discussion will take place within the National Bureau in order to consider the practical steps needed going forward.⁵⁰

There is no mention here of the substantial debate that took place between members of the BN. The further discussion that was promised was a means of strategically avoiding the issue because the leadership, which included Cassen, had already made up its mind. There was indeed no further mention of the subject in the archives until the 'Ramadan affair' erupted just before the ESF in October 2003. Bernard Cassen had effectively poured cold water on the idea of any kind of co-operation or alliance between ATTAC and *Présence Musulmane* and ensured that the subject was not further debated internally. This proves the overwhelming influence of the Cassen–Nikonoff–Dessenne trio which effectively

closed the doors on any potential partnership with Muslim groups. Had this been decided democratically, collaboration between ATTAC and Muslim groups would probably have been sanctioned. As early as 2002, the national conference of local ATTAC chapters denounced the fact that the culture of consensus which the leaders of the association claimed to espouse actually covered up a culture of domination (Wintrebert 2007: 151). The veracity of this statement is confirmed by examining the decision not to work with Muslim activists. The experience in one of ATTAC's local chapters in Lyons (ATTAC-Rhône) also demonstrates the importance of a core leadership group and 'executive decisions'.

The Lyons experience

The city of Lyons and its suburbs have a special history concerning mobilisation and activism by descendants of post-colonial migrants. It also represents one of the areas in France where activism within the framework of an Islamic perspective first developed, notably with the creation of the UJM in 1987. As Abdellali Hajjat (2005: 88) has remarked, it is no coincidence that the suburban neighbourhood of Minguettes which gave birth to the march for equality later became the home to numerous Muslim associations. Lyons represents one of the few areas where there was a genuine collaboration, albeit sometimes strained, between the alter-globalisation movement and ethnic minority activists (Muslim or not) in ATTAC-Rhône. This demonstrates that working with these activists was possible in France and that through this experience certain prejudices can even be overcome. Similar problems regarding the participation of Muslims were raised, thus recreating the divisions at the national level between *laïques républicaines* and *laïques ouvertes*. In fact, although activists from *DiverCité* had shown an interest in joining the group as early as 2001, they were discouraged from doing so by the leadership who knew that this would not be readily accepted. As Yamin Makri recalls, 'collaborating with us [Muslims] was too dangerous for their internal cohesion'.⁵¹

The president of ATTAC-Rhône was Jean-Luc Cipièrre, who was also part of the CA of ATTAC-France. He personally was favourable to Muslim participation. However, it was only after the meeting in Paris between the BN of ATTAC-France and *Présence Musulmane* that the participation of activists from *DiverCité* was sanctioned within ATTAC-Rhône, even if not all of these activists were practising Muslims. Although they had been accepted into the group, this did not mean that everything ran

smoothly. This example from the minutes of an ATTAC-Rhône meeting illustrates some of the internal tensions:

Georges asked a question about the *DiverCité* group: how do we situate them within the wide array of associations which are active within the suburban neighbourhoods, in particular concerning their support of religious ideas? François clarified this matter by stating that *DiverCité* is the result of a merger of several movements including the MIB. It is in fact a very diverse movement which does not pose any problems.⁵²

When such questions were raised, the leadership had to reassure members that they did not represent any kind of threat. ATTAC-Rhône went on to take part in debates and discussions with Tariq Ramadan – much to the displeasure of some members. Ludovic Arnaud, a member of the CA, recalls that when activists from *DiverCité* organised a talk with Tariq Ramadan, there were plenty of people in ATTAC-Rhône who got upset and argued that these were ‘people who they shouldn’t be working with’.⁵³ In fact, a number of activists even insisted on instigating a meeting dedicated to the topic of *laïcité*:

The political identity linked to Islam that is supported by Tariq Ramadan has initiated an unresolved debate on *laïcité*. Is it possible for ATTAC (as a space for reflection, debate and openness) to participate in an initiative with alter-globalisation activists who base their activism on different [intellectual] reference points and who have very different backgrounds? Is it legitimate to claim a religious identity when discussing subjects which for us are purely political and economic? Is this something which blocks further debate, despite the fact that a political identity connected to Islam is now a social reality? There will be a meeting dedicated to discussing this debate about *laïcité*.⁵⁴

This nicely summarises the crux of the debate, not only in Lyons, but in France as a whole. Cipièrè’s leadership was crucial because through his insistence on the importance of working together with *DiverCité*, things were able to move forward. According to him, a period of ‘acclimatisation’ was needed so that activists who were previously hostile to the idea of Muslim participation could be won over and have their fears allayed.⁵⁵

DiverCité eventually became an integral part of ATTAC-Rhône and its members were involved in the organisation of a local social forum in Lyons prior to the ESF in Paris. Debates around the headscarf affair of 2003–2004 were also the occasion for *DiverCité* and some activists from ATTAC-Rhône to come together to campaign with the CEPT (*Collectif une école pour tous-tes*), and the same people also helped to set up the *Trans 'Form'Action* network in late 2005. The ability in Lyons to form partnerships between activists from both inside and outside the *banlieues* should not be mistaken for an unqualified success. Many remained disappointed by the experience, claiming that differences between them could not be overcome. Some noted that there was a gap that could not be bridged between the mostly middle-class activists from the city centre and the working-class activists from the suburbs. The specific problems faced by migrants were also largely ignored:

Most rank and file French alter-globalisation activists work in the public sector. But one needs to remember that the public sector has not always treated us [migrants] very well and we once had this discussion [in ATTAC Rhône] that was completely surreal. We were asked to come to a demonstration to protect jobs in the public sector, even though many of us are effectively excluded from working in such jobs. Foreigners cannot become civil servants in France and in certain cities you're not even allowed to drive a subway train if you don't have French nationality!⁵⁶

Although it was possible to work together, which is more than can be said for many other areas, tensions persisted and incomprehension remained. The majority of activists within ATTAC-Rhône remained sceptical about Muslim participation. This indicates that the overall importance of discursive opportunity structures still applies.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to clarify what explains the internal dynamics of support or opposition to Muslim participation within the alter-globalisation movement. On a general level, it has been argued that discursive opportunity structures, which are linked to different philosophies of integration, meant that Muslims were welcomed into the movement in Britain and more sceptical attitudes were found in France.

Muslim participation was seen in a positive light by the leaders of GR, among whom there were no disagreements on this issue. Indeed, there was a kind of obsession of social movement leaders in Britain to show how diverse their organisations were. In France, there existed a parallel obsession of the dangers posed by Muslim activists and this 'diversity'. Based on existing literature, this is unsurprising and is what we might indeed expect. Indeed, although leaders in both countries criticised each other's attitudes, both actually held essentialist attitudes and made assumptions about Muslims. British leaders assumed that 'anti-Imperialism' and 'Islamophobia' were the only issues that interested Muslim activists. Support for their participation in social movements in Britain was rather superficial and linked to the need to mobilise large numbers of people for protest marches rather than actually being interested in progressive Muslims as a new constituency. French leaders assumed that Muslims did not accept *laïcité* and gender equality and presumed that they were putting their Muslim identity before anything else. This was despite assertions to the contrary by those in question and an insistence on their admiration for the law of 1905.

Although looking at discursive opportunities can help us understand general trends, it is not sufficient on its own to explain the specific dynamics of support and opposition to Muslims in ATTAC. Some leaders were in fact open to the idea of Muslim participation; this can be linked to their conception of *laïcité*. Proponents of *laïcité républicaine* believe that religious beliefs should be kept private and that it is illegitimate to identify oneself in religious terms. The *laïcité ouverte* interpretation does not see a contradiction between religious identification and respecting the conditions of French secularism. Muslims should therefore be afforded the same status as other religious activists whose faith may, however, be less visible. Among the leaders of ATTAC, this was actually the position of the majority. In theory therefore, Muslim participation should have been sanctioned. If the leadership had enacted an actual democratic decision, the situation may have played out quite differently. The negative reaction to Muslim groups participating within ATTAC was therefore a result of the rather undemocratic practices that were occurring in the organisation and the domination of certain key figures. It was, in fact, this situation that led to the acrimony and later split in 2005–2006. The centre–periphery comparison between Paris and Lyons also demonstrates that leadership matters more than democratic deliberation. If the

leadership is favourable, such as in Lyons, collaboration is possible despite the reticence of certain activists. In fact, through interaction and cross-fertilisation with Muslim activists opinions may also change. Nevertheless, it may only be possible to convince a small number of people, and the discursive opportunities still shape the attitudes of the majority.

6

Outcomes and Consequences of Muslim Participation

Introduction

This chapter attempts to explain the different outcomes of Muslim participation within the alter-globalisation movement. In particular, I look at why Muslim activists could form an electoral alliance with the radical left in Britain but not in France.¹ How did political opportunities affect the transition from involvement in social movements to participation in elections? In order to answer this question, I have adopted the explanatory model employed by Odmalm and Lees (2006), who studied migrant movements in Sweden and the Netherlands and their entry into electoral politics by comparing political opportunity structures.² These should not be thought of as creating rigid conditions which social movements and activists cannot do anything about. They are 'not deterministic in their effect at all but rather provide the settings for political agency' (Odmalm and Lees 2006: 2). They help us understand why some outcomes may be more likely than others but should not be confused with hard-and-fast 'rules'. The formation of the Respect coalition in Britain was, in many ways, an unexpected outcome of Muslim participation in social movements. However, French activists also cited entry into electoral politics as a political aim (some even seeing Respect as a kind of model). Why, then, were British Muslim activists able to form this electoral alliance with other elements of the radical left while French Muslims struggled to do the same? Related to this, why do French left-wing parties refuse to select Muslim activists as candidates in elections?

The fact that Muslim activists in France could not create an electoral alliance similar to Respect, or even get selected as individual election candidates, is puzzling for several reasons. First, as we established in

Chapter 4, Muslims in France appear more willing to get involved in political activism and identify with the left. There is thus a bigger pool of potential candidates in France. The difficulty radical left parties face in getting their candidates elected, even at the local level, means that they should be working harder to present candidates who resemble their electors. These parties would appear to have little to lose and one may reasonably ask why radical left parties more generally have not made more effort to either join forces with activists from ethnic minority backgrounds (whether Muslim or not) or select them as their own candidates. The Marxist scholar Gilbert Achar points out that French ethnic minority candidates have been conspicuous by their absence when we look at the lists put forward by radical left parties such as the LCR (now NPA) and LO. Yet the potential of this electorate was demonstrated when the Euro-Palestine list was set up for the 2004 European elections (Achar 2005: 188).³ After the disturbances in the French *banlieues* in late 2005, the time seemed to be right for activists from these neighbourhoods to take a larger role in local elections. Journalists remarked how these events led to an increase in people registering their names on the electoral roll and a desire of local activists to take part in the local elections of 2008.⁴ After the election of Nicolas Sarkozy to the presidency in 2007, *diversité* became the new buzzword in France and in January 2008 the new president declared that he wished to see the term enshrined within the constitution. The 2008 local elections (*élections municipales*) were supposed to see an increase in the number of candidates from minority backgrounds, the so-called *candidats issus de la diversité* (Geisser and Soum 2008, Avanza 2010). These elections should have, therefore, provided an ideal opportunity to recruit ethnic minority activists to radical left party lists or at least form electoral alliances in certain areas. This did not take place, however, and history was again repeated at subsequent elections.

The absence of minority candidates for the PCF, despite the party's domination of what used to be called the 'red suburbs' (*banlieues rouges*), is particularly surprising. The strained relationship between activists in these areas and the local Communist authorities has been documented by Olivier Masclat (2003) in his book which looks at the town of Gennevilliers on the outskirts of Paris. He shows how political activists from the *beur* generation have never been recognised or valorised by the local section of the PCF that controls the city council. What is more, these activists were ignored and effectively excluded from local politics despite possessing all the attributes that would make them ideal candidates as local councillors. He describes this situation as

paradoxical because the children of immigrants were active in their local neighbourhoods throughout the 1980s and 1990s. They contributed to the continuation of a working-class activist culture and would have been the obvious candidates to groom for eventual positions of power in local government, but this does not appear to have taken place (Masclat 2006).

Migrant-origin activists are certainly interested in joining parties, but this has often led to disillusionment (Hajjat 2008b). The failure of the radical left to support their concerns represented the confirmation to many activists in the *banlieues* that they would have to go it alone and create what they called an 'autonomous political movement'. However, creating a brand new party requires significant financial backing and other skills. One activist from Seine-Saint-Denis who wanted to create an independent list described a triple handicap that people like him were faced with: a lack of contacts, a lack of finances and being young.⁵ Even in the United Kingdom, Muslim activists would have struggled to create their own independent party. However, certain conditions in Britain favoured the formation of the Respect coalition. The following sections examine these political opportunity structures in order to explain (a) why forming such an alliance was possible and (b) why Muslim activists were seen as ideal election candidates. Conversely, it will be shown why the same was not true for Muslim activists in France.

Formal institutional structures

Institutional structures refer to relatively fixed aspects of the political system. The first element of the institutional structure that encouraged the formation of an electoral alliance between the radical left and Muslim activists in Britain is the electoral system. Minor parties in Britain have always been disadvantaged because of the single-member plurality voting system, known as 'first past the post' (FPTP), which is in place for most elections. This, along with their lack of finances and organisation (required for sustaining credible election campaigns), makes it hard for smaller parties to win seats. However, FPTP does favour those parties whose support is geographically concentrated (Boucek 1998). This is particularly true at the local level, where councillors are elected to specific wards which may have a concentration of voters from a particular social or ethnic background. It is this situation that has made ethnic minorities kingmakers in local elections in Britain because they are often concentrated in certain parts of the city. Indeed, the electoral results of Respect show that they have succeeded in gaining

local representation in those wards which have a high number of Muslim residents, such as Sparkbrook in Birmingham, Shadwell in the London borough of Tower Hamlets, Green Street West in the borough of Newham and Manningham in Bradford.

In French local elections, at least as far as the major cities are concerned, rather than a series of different wards, a city-wide single constituency is in place which inhibits the formation of such alliances.⁶ Parties produce a list of candidates, the first of which is their candidate for mayor, but they do not represent particular areas of the city. Therefore, because the electoral territory is much larger, the influence of communities with high levels of residential concentration is severely reduced. Incentives to involve activists with minority backgrounds are lacking because they cannot just represent 'their' neighbourhoods. What is more, this electoral system also discourages the formation of small independent lists as there are two rounds of voting. Those electoral lists which do not have the support of mainstream parties are likely to be eliminated after the first round. The two-round system is also employed for parliamentary elections where candidates represent a particular constituency (*circonscription*). In theory, therefore, there are more incentives to pick minority candidates. Nevertheless, these areas are divided up into such large areas as to render this aspect null and void.⁷ In any case, the selection of minority candidates as a political issue is still confined to local politics. Local councillors in France have always been more representative of the electorate in terms of their social background and it is at the local level where the question of the political representation of minorities has been debated (Avanza 2010: 404).

In addition to unfavourable electoral rules, a strategy to target a particular group would, in any case, be less effective in France because of the ethnic make-up of the *banlieues*, which are much more diverse than some of the inner-city areas where Respect has become successful. An absence of ethnic statistics makes residential segregation impossible to quantify in France. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that neighbourhoods are not dominated by one single ethnicity as is often the case in Britain or the United States. Loïc Wacquant (2006: 23) has observed that despite being described as 'ghettos', the French *banlieues* are examples of segregation based on class rather than ethnicity.⁸ Residential concentration in Britain, on the other hand, is confirmed by ethnic and, since 2001, religious statistics gathered by the census. This has allowed for a precise mapping of where certain ethnic and/or religious communities are concentrated, which in turn facilitates an electoral campaign that focuses on an 'ethnic vote'.

National cleavage structures

There is much more electoral support in France for the political extremes of both right and left. Indeed, the existing size and strength of the radical left gives a strong indication as to why party leaders in Britain may have felt more impetus to join forces with Muslim activists. The British radical left is, in fact, extremely weak and had been electorally irrelevant until the arrival of Respect. This means that they are always desperate to find new supporters and allies. The mobilisation of the Muslim community for the anti-war movement was a revelation for the radical left in Britain. For once, 'normal working-class people' were attending their meetings:

Anybody on the left in Britain who lived through the 80s and the 90s knows what it was like, speaking at tiny meetings with three men and a dog – that was your relevance! You were not loved much and it was quite a hard experience. You went to left meetings full of other left people. Now suddenly you go to a Muslim meeting and there are 500 people there, ordinary people – 'oh my god it's the workers, it's the working class!' It's a huge community, it's active, if funds are needed that's no problem, raising money is easy, there are structures for that. This was a completely new experience for a lot of the white left. We knew all this because we had been engaged in community politics. But for all their rhetoric about working with the working class and the black community, they had never found a way of penetrating these communities. Suddenly the anti-war movement gave them that and they went from meetings of 20–30 people to meetings of hundreds of people.⁹

The gradual shift to the right by Labour created a natural political space for a radical left coalition to fill. This had initially been done by the Socialist Alliance which was eventually replaced by the Respect coalition. When the party was created in 2004, it had no credible electoral challenger to the left of Labour.¹⁰ In France, on the other hand, the radical left is well represented by the PCF (now part of the *Front de Gauche*), the LCR (since 2009 known as the *Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste*), the *Parti des Travailleurs* (which became the *Parti ouvrier indépendant* in 2008) and LO.¹¹ These parties are not negligible if one looks at the support they receive at election time, despite the PCF being the only party capable of winning seats in the National Assembly. In the period under study, radical left parties represented around 8% of the electorate in France but

less than 1% in Britain (see Tables 6.1 and 6.2). Therefore, even if we might expect them to seek more votes by creating ad hoc alliances and aligning themselves with a new constituency, French radical left parties seem to not feel the need to do so. Temporary electoral alliances only seem to form between these parties themselves, as has often been the case during regional and European elections (notably between LO and the LCR).

The strength of the extreme right is also a significant factor. The FN has often set the tone of the debate on questions of race and ethnicity in France and thus 'imposed a xenophobic bias on French party politics' (Garbaye 2005: 63). This has even affected parties of the left who actually have to compete with the FN for working-class votes (Platone and Rey 1996, Mayer 2002). This is a phenomenon which has taken place in many *banlieues* where the FN is the strongest opposition party to the ruling communists or socialists (Masclat 2003). This is a process that has affected a number of European democracies, as Bale *et al.* (2010: 412) point out:

Successful populist radical right parties siphon off votes that might otherwise have gone to the left, namely those in blue-collar occupations and those who are unemployed or in casual labour. This problem has been made more acute by the way the populist radical right has recently begun to appeal to these groups not just on the authoritarian end of the authoritarian-libertarian dimension but also on the left side of the state-market dimension.

An alliance with French ethnic minorities, and especially Muslims, could therefore potentially damage support among working-class voters, who parties of the left would consider to form their natural base. Leaders of the main radical left parties do not criticise and attack the FN as much as could be expected. Instead, they reserve much of their invective for the governing parties of the centre right and left. The sociologist and political activist Saïd Bouamama (2008: 244) has criticised the radical left's reaction to the rise of the FN in the early 1980s as a form of 'vague anti-racism'. Somewhat ironically, as Koopmans *et al* (2005) have shown, there has been a strong anti-racist movement in Britain despite the extreme right itself being much weaker. The British radical left has been the main driving force in the anti-racist movement and confronted the far right in a much more frontal manner compared to France. This first occurred with the rise of the National Front in the 1970s when the SWP created the Anti-Nazi League and

organised the Rock against Racism campaign. The SWP has continued to put much of its organisational muscle into anti-fascist initiatives to oppose the resurgent neo-fascist British National Party (BNP) such as the campaign group Unite against Fascism (UAF). French radical left parties only give tacit support to such groups. Social movements which actively combat the FN such as *Sections carrément anti-Le Pen* (SCALP) and *Ras l'front* (RLF) do not have any links to radical left parties despite their ideological affinities. Therefore, although some activists in these groups may also be involved with radical left parties, there is no official support. This is not to suggest that these parties do not oppose the extreme right in France, but merely to highlight that their ambiguous position in relation to the FN could be rooted in an electoral reality which avoids alienating poor working-class voters who may be susceptible to the xenophobic discourse of Jean-Marie Le Pen (and now his successor Marine).

Certain political issues can create national cleavages which act as opportunities for new electoral alliances. The Iraq War created a significant cleavage on the left in British politics. Without this issue, the Respect coalition would have never seen the light of day. Respect could fill the ideological gap vacated by Labour on the Left but at the same time also position itself as the natural choice for those who opposed the War, irrespective of previous partisan preferences. Muslim voters were an obvious target as they were almost unanimously opposed to the War. Indeed, there was a massive shift of votes from this community. In Bethnall Green and Bow, the constituency where George Galloway was elected as an MP for Respect in 2005, the party managed to overturn a Labour majority of more than 10,000.¹² Respect could have enjoyed even more success had it attracted more support from those within the left of the Labour Party who were critical of the leadership and the decision to go to war.¹³ The French government's refusal to join the US-led coalition in Iraq meant that such a cleavage was not created. This in turn had an impact on the French anti-war movement which, unsurprisingly, was much weaker than its British counterpart.

The French headscarf affair of 2003/2004 had the potential to create an important cleavage in French politics which may have facilitated the emergence of an alliance on a much grander scale than the CEPT. If we analyse the positions of the various actors during the debate, we can see that opinion was certainly divided (Lévy 2010). Most PCF members of parliament voted against the headscarf law, but some of its MPs voted in favour and actively campaigned for it. Having no representation in parliament, there could be no vote for or against by those in the other

main radical left parties LO and the LCR. The first of these came out clearly in favour of the law as did the PT. The LCR was extremely divided on this issue and eventually was forced to adopt a position of 'neither the law nor the veil' in order to satisfy all and stop the debate from tearing the party apart. Muslim activists criticised the leadership of this party for not having the political will to clearly oppose the ban. However, the leadership of the LCR could, in fact, never have realistically come out against the law. Many of its members and local activists are teachers, the large majority of whom approve of banning headscarves from the classroom. Indeed, the two teachers at the Lycée Henri-Wallon in Aubervilliers who initiated the headscarf affair of 2003–2004 were Pierre-François Grond and Georges Vartanias, national leaders in the LCR and LO respectively. In addition to this, the 2004 regional elections took place one week after the vote on the headscarf law in the National Assembly and the LCR had already agreed to run alongside the LO on a joint ticket.

When the *Indigènes de la République* was launched in January 2005, this initiative received a rather cool reception from the radical left in France. While a tiny minority signed the initiative, many others harshly criticised it, including the leading intellectual figure of the LCR Daniel Bensaïd. This prompted the academic and SWP leader Alex Callinicos to remark:

Is *now* – at a time when the French Right is dominated by Nicolas Sarkozy, now President of the Republic, who as Minister of the Interior denounced the youth of the banlieues as scum and threatened to clear them out with pressure hoses – the moment to mount a serious political assault against black and Arab radical intellectuals whose texts... base their critique, not on postcolonial difference, but on 'egalitarian universalism'?

(Callinicos 2008: 156)

What is more, parties of the radical left in France criticised the actions of the youths of the *banlieues* when they revolted in November 2005. According to LO, this action was without concrete demands and political prospects.¹⁴ These three episodes all constitute missed opportunities and illustrate, in the words of Saïd Bouamama (2008: 245), the 'chasm that separates a large part of the extreme left from activists of migrant origin'.

These reactions, are of course, related to the national philosophies of integration which is another important difference. This has led to

a certain path dependency in the way that both minorities mobilise politically and how other actors react to this. Research by Koopmans *et al.* (2005) shows that minorities in the United Kingdom are much more likely to make political claims based on identity politics than those in France. This was also borne out through my interviews with British activists who often referred to themselves as Muslims, Asians or very occasionally 'black', while the key marker of identity for many of the French activists appeared to be the fact that they were from the *banlieues*. French activists, in fact, merely asked to be treated as equals by other left-wing activists whose attitudes they often described as paternalistic and condescending. Given the extensive existing research which has well-documented French reticence of the use of ethnic categories, or recognition of difference, it is unsurprising that parties are wary of allying themselves with what they see as 'particularistic' concerns. The Republican consensus ensures the inadmissibility of anything that is seen to encourage *communautarisme*, that is, the 'closing in of ethnically defined communities on themselves' (Bowen 2007: 156). Equally though, minority activists from the *banlieues* attempt to avoid being

Table 6.1 Comparative electoral performance of the radical left (2001–2002)

Party	Election	No. of votes	% of total vote
Scottish Socialist Party	UK General Election 2001	72, 516	0.3
Socialist Alliance	UK General Election 2001	57, 533	0.2
Socialist Labour	UK General Election 2001	57, 288	0.2
Socialist Alternative	UK General Election 2001	1, 454	N/A
Other	UK General Election 2001	4, 732	N/A
Total	UK General Election 2001	192, 753	0.7
PCF	FR 2002 Legislative	1, 216, 178	4.82
LCR	FR 2002 Legislative	320, 467	1.27
LO	FR 2002 Legislative	301, 984	1.20
EXG	FR 2002 Legislative	81, 558	0.32
Total	FR 2002 Legislative	1, 920, 187	7.61
LO (Laguiller)	FR 2002 Presidential	1, 630, 145	5.72
LCR (Besancenot)	FR 2002 Presidential	1, 210, 562	4.25
PCF (Hue)	FR 2002 Presidential	960, 480	3.37
PT (Gluckstein)	FR 2002 Presidential	132, 686	0.47
Total	FR 2002 Presidential	3, 933, 873	13.8

Table 6.2 Comparative electoral performance of the radical left (2005–2007)

Party	Election	No. of votes	% of total vote
Scottish Socialist Party	UK General Election 2005	43, 514	0.2
Respect	UK General Election 2005	68, 094	0.3
Socialist Labour	UK General Election 2005	20, 167	0.1
Socialist Alternative	UK General Election 2005	9, 398	N/A
Other	UK General Election 2005	8, 242	N/A
Total	UK General Election 2005	149, 415	0.6
PCF	FR 2007 Legislative	1, 115, 719	4.29
EXG	FR 2007 Legislative	887, 887	3.41
Total	FR 2007 Legislative	2, 003, 606	7.7
LO (Laguiller)	FR 2007 Presidential	487, 857	1.33
LCR (Besancenot)	FR 2007 Presidential	1, 498, 581	4.08
PCF (Buffet)	FR 2007 Presidential	707, 268	1.93
PT (Schivardi)	FR 2007 Presidential	123, 540	1.15
CIUN (Bové)	FR 2007 Presidential	483, 008	1.32
Total	FR 2007 Presidential	2, 812, 884	7.6

Results for French elections refer to the first round of voting only.

EXG = Generic label used to regroup 'extreme left' parties. For the 2002 figure, most votes refer to those cast for the PT. In 2007, both the LCR and LO were included under EXG.

Socialist Alliance = Electoral alliance including the SWP (immediate precursor to Respect).

Socialist Alternative = Electoral list of candidates of the Socialist Party (ex Militant Tendency).

Other = Communist Party, Workers' Revolutionary Party, Worker's Party (Northern Ireland), Alliance for Green Socialism, Socialist Environmental Alliance (Northern Ireland) and Socialist Green Unity Coalition. None of these parties received more than 2,500 votes.

labelled with this tag. The paradox therefore lies in the fact that alliances are hard to establish, despite activists from the *banlieues* putting very little focus on their 'ethnic/racial' concerns. The most important issue for these actors is usually that of police violence which has been systematically ignored by the alter-globalisation movement and the radical left in France.

Party procedures

Considering the case of the selection of Muslim activists as potential election candidates, much can be attributed to procedures used within the parties in question. French parties are, on the whole, much more

centralised compared to their British counterparts and the levels of government are also much more closely related. This contrasts with the clearer separation between local and national politics in the United Kingdom. Candidate selection is often enacted by the local branch of British political parties which have more autonomy from the national organisation. In France, on the other hand, although candidate selection is made by local party officials, these decisions need to be ratified by party leaders in Paris. This model is applicable to most parties, even those of the radical left. Another factor that may hinder the chances of Muslim (or any other ethnic minority) activists being selected as candidates is that party leaders are much more likely to endorse the candidacy of a local activist who has been a member of the party for a long period of time. These activists may not want to give up their place on the election list to a minority candidate. Because of the size of the radical left in France, the competition for places will already be significantly higher than that in the United Kingdom. By way of contrast, the task of actually finding candidates willing to stand for the Respect coalition was sometimes a problem. Former SWP leader John Rees claimed that when they started 'we had to hunt around for people to stand as candidates'.¹⁵ Many of those who eventually did stand for Respect had very little political experience and were often quite young.

In Britain, co-operation between the political left and minority groups has a rich history. From the 1970s until the end of the 1990s, the Labour Party was the natural ally of ethnic minority concerns, particularly campaigns concerning racism. This does not merely refer to support from the Party in terms of legislation seen as favourable to minorities, but also included grass-roots solidarity on local or indeed national campaigns from Labour supporters. This led Anthony Messina (1989: 151) to conclude that 'Labour is the party of, if not unambiguously for, non-whites.' In fact, this relation became so entrenched that, come election time, ethnic minority voters were addressed 'on the premise that they were primarily concerned with issues specific to their non-white character' (Garbaya 2005: 53). This existing procedure of co-operation was merely imitated by alter-globalisation and anti-war activists, many of whom would have been involved in the struggles of the earlier years under the auspices of Labour.¹⁶ The long history of successful co-operation with Muslim communities enjoyed by the Labour Party was a template that could, if desired, be simply transferred to another party (in this case Respect). Indeed, some local Labour left activists deserted their party and campaigned for Respect; such was their disgust at the government's decision to invade Iraq.

In France, on the other hand, there is an absence of such a legacy of co-operation. What is more, there is a great deal of mistrust and hesitancy on the part of some Muslim activists to enter into political agreement with other left-wing forces. There are two reasons for this. The first is related to the experience of *SOS Racisme* and the subsequent stifling of the nascent *beur* movement. Although this anti-racist organisation was the brainchild of the PS, most other radical left parties also supported its creation too. Indeed, activists within the LCR were at one time very influential inside it (Gibb 2001). There is thus a genuine fear of exploitation and that attempts by parties to join forces with them will neutralise their independence. The PS itself is an unlikely partner because it is seen as particularly hostile to practising Muslims. As Vincent Geisser points out, the discourse of *SOS Racisme* and NPNS, which are both linked to the PS, points to a reversal of the hierarchy of dangers for community cohesion; the enemy is no longer the FN but 'Islamists' such as Tariq Ramadan (Geisser et Zemouri 2007: 147). The second reason for Muslim activists to remain wary is that they fear being picked as election candidates as a mere form of politicking, being there as a token candidate.¹⁷ Those of the *beur* generation also remember the recruitment of North African origin candidates for the local elections in 1989 as part of the campaign by France Plus. Most of those who were elected did not stand again in 1995 as they realised that they had been exploited for short-term political gain (Geisser 1997). Anger with the political left was expressed on numerous occasions by my interviewees in France who often spoke in terms of betrayal or even treachery. Contacts at the local level may exist with activists from the radical left, but they too are tinged with constant suspicion.¹⁸

Despite periodic initiatives to get more minority candidates, the tradition of trying to capture an 'ethnic vote' does not exist for French political parties. As we have pointed out, the residential concentration of particular communities and the electoral systems used don't really encourage parties to chase such a vote anyway. Even in parliamentary elections which employ a plurality system, it is rare to find politicians openly canvassing for such an electorate. Indeed, if they were to do so, they would probably be condemned for encouraging *communautarisme*. In Britain, on the other hand, it is accepted that certain 'communities' of say Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin can be organised by community leaders to provide bloc votes for parties. Minority communities, in particular Asian communities, have been commonly used as vote banks in a pattern of co-optation of 'community leaders'. This has led to undemocratic practices, as electors from these communities are encouraged to

vote according to family or kinship relations. In Pakistani communities, for example, the *biraderi* (extended clan) has been used to secure votes from whole swathes of a community (Peace and Akhtar 2015). This is in turn linked to how ethnic and religious minorities have been institutionalised. The British model has encouraged an ethnic vote which is accepted as such in British party politics. For many years, Labour relied on this ethnic vote, which remained unquestioned among Muslim communities until the arrival of Respect. This party picked up the majority of its votes among the Bangladeshi community in East London and the Pakistani community in Birmingham and subsequently Bradford.

Alliance structures

For radical left parties, the question of whom it is possible to form an alliance with, and under what conditions, is often linked to their particular conception of Marxism. In the case studied here, the approach Marxists take regarding the inter-related questions of race and ethnicity is particularly relevant. Spurred on by the influence of the New Left, Marxists in Britain have commonly held the view that struggles by racial minorities are inherently progressive and should be supported. According to Tariq Modood (1994: 861), the political concept of 'black' was in fact 'devised by New Left radicals to mark a transcendence of ethnicity and origins in favour of a new colour-solidarity and political formation'. Struggles against racism which appeared in the 1970s were conceived as being linked to liberation struggles and the process of decolonisation. 'Race' and 'class' became almost synonymous for British leftists.¹⁹ Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, British left-wingers enthusiastically supported these new 'black struggles' (certainly in theory, sometimes less often in practice). The later development of post-colonial theory, influenced by a number of Marxist and neo-Marxist scholars, contributed to this intellectual elaboration. This analysis of race became the received wisdom on much of the British radical left.²⁰ However, many French Marxists have retained a colour-blind interpretation of race issues which considers this as subsidiary to the class struggle and working-class unity.²¹ This was certainly the dominant interpretation inside LO and also found an echo in the LCR despite its members having more sympathy for other forms of left-libertarian/identity politics and the 'new social movements'. The irony of this is that Muslim activists in France are actually more likely to mobilise on a class-based identity than a racial or religious one, even if they do raise issues of racial and religious discrimination.

The French left and British left naturally took opposing stances when activists started to mobilise as 'Muslims'. Alex Callinicos (2008) of the SWP and GR argues that republican ideology has clouded the judgement of French Marxists, leading to 'at best mistaken, at worst reactionary positions on questions of oppression'. It is thus the 'oppression' suffered by Muslims which constitutes the overriding consideration in this situation. However, this interpretation of Marxism could just as easily be considered as heterodox by his French comrades. Even those who were in favour of fostering closer links with Muslims, such as the LCR's Gilbert Achar (2005: 186), criticised Respect because British Marxists had allied themselves with the MAB.²² Respect was conceived of, and defended by figures within the SWP, as the incarnation of the 'united front' as developed by Lenin and Trotsky. Having achieved the support of Muslims, it was hoped that they could eventually be 'won to revolutionary socialist politics' (Callinicos 2008: 159). The eventual split in Respect in 2007 which saw the departure of the SWP spoke volumes for how they perceived Muslims within the coalition:

There were also more principled people in favour of working with Muslims, but worried about working with people from organisations influenced by historically right wing versions of Islamism, such as that of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Against these views we argued that some of those influenced by such organisations were being opened up to new vistas by their involvement in the movement against war, as well as the struggle against Islamophobia, alongside socialists, trade unionists and people of other religious beliefs or none. Only the course of the struggle would show whether particular individuals' horizons had been widened enough for them to be drawn to the left. In any case, as with any united front, what mattered was not chiefly the attitude of the leaders, but whether it was possible to win over their followers, something that would only be discovered in practice.

(Harman 2008: 35)

The SWP was left disappointed that virtually no Muslims had been 'converted' to its particular brand of revolutionary socialist politics and had clearly underestimated why many had actually joined or supported Respect in the first place.

Another point to note is that activists working in the French *banlieues* are often isolated from what should be their own base. Before even attempting alliances with other political actors, these groups need to

ensure their own grass-roots support at the local level in which they operate. In a context of rapid de-politicisation, attracting new activists to their cause, especially from the younger generations, can prove extremely difficult. This in turn does not make them attractive alliance partners because, apart from a small core of devoted and hardworking activists, they cannot assure a large number of votes. It was striking that, at the first two editions of the *Forum Social des Quartiers Populaires* (FSQP) which I attended, the number of local inhabitants participating in the activities and debates was rather low. A journalist summed up this lack of local interest in the second edition of the event:

The tower blocks of the Picasso neighbourhood point their noses to the sky while turning their backs on the ephemeral tents that have been erected here in Nanterre for the second *forum social des quartiers populaires*. Activists from the MIB, DiverCité and the CMF have gathered from the four corners of France in order to create an 'autonomous political movement'. A pledge that has been made for the last 10 years without success due to the lack of support amongst the local population. The stadium where the event is taking place seems deserted, despite the existence of people huddled in the tents.²³

Many activists confided their frustration at their inability to connect with other, less politically active, residents in their neighbourhoods. The lack of interest from young people is particularly demoralising because they represent the next generation to carry on the struggle: 'There were no young people, they just don't come, it [FSQP] obviously doesn't interest them.'²⁴ In the United Kingdom, there are relatively strong local networks among minority communities. The Bengali community in Tower Hamlets and the Pakistani community in Birmingham were mobilised with relative ease for Respect election campaigns, even if certain 'community leaders' maintained their attempts to secure votes for Labour in order to maintain their patron-client relationship.

Many of the French Muslim activists are firmly committed to maintaining their 'autonomy' from established political actors, even the most anti-systemic radical left organisations. This approach has even been theorised by movement intellectuals such as Saïd Bouamama and Mogniss Abdallah, a tradition continued by a new generation of activist scholars like Youssef Girard. The desire to retain this autonomy is a crucial factor and leads to intra-group tensions between those who want to remain completely independent and those who see the need to create wider alliances with left-wing parties if they are to have any

real impact.²⁵ British activists did not seem as concerned with such issues, perhaps hardly surprising given the trajectory of many of those involved (for whom this was their first foray into political activism). This highlights a salient generational issue. Many of the French Muslim activists I interviewed were older and shared the collective memory of struggles of the *'beur generation'*. In Britain, Muslim activists were, on the whole, younger and largely unaware of the history of the previous generation's struggles. Hajjat (2005) has asserted that the collective memory of post-colonial migration in France and its associated political struggles has not been transmitted to subsequent generations. This is a situation that is even more pronounced in Britain, where even less is known about previous struggles such as RAR and the AYMs. Suspicion of working with the radical left was thus not generally seen as an issue. Those who did have this experience saw the issue in very pragmatic terms: 'There's an issue of the role the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) plays in Respect. The SWP is a significant force in the coalition, but it is only one element. If people are concerned about its influence they should make the SWP even more of a minority by joining Respect.'²⁶

Illustrations of the role of POS

I now proceed to illustrate the importance of the political opportunity structures (POS) mentioned above with a few examples. The attempt by a radical left party to select a Muslim candidate in 2010 illustrates the difficulty of this issue in France. As the LCR moved towards becoming the NPA in 2008, its leader Olivier Besancenot began to show a real interest in gaining more participation in his party from the suburbs and he attended the second FSQP.²⁷ Besancenot participated in joint campaigns with FSQP activists and also attended the third FSQP in 2009.²⁸ At this time, the NPA was starting to attract more activists from the *banlieues*. One such activist was Ilham Moussaïd from Avignon who was impressed with the party's leader and his message: 'When the LCR became the NPA it was an opening out to the *quartiers populaires*. Olivier Besancenot said to us, "If you want to fight capitalism – welcome"'.²⁹ Ilham joined up and in February 2010 she was selected by her local section of the NPA in the Vaucluse area as one of its candidates for the regional elections of that year. Because Ilham was a female Muslim candidate who wears a headscarf, this created a media storm and the leaders of all other major parties condemned her candidacy.³⁰ A huge internal crisis also erupted inside the NPA itself, many members were

furious with the decision and a number of other NPA candidates stepped down in protest. The executive committee was forced into issuing a press release stating that the decision taken by their comrades in Vaucluse did not represent the official policy of the party.³¹ Feminists within the NPA were up in arms, despite Ilham affirming that she herself was a feminist. Even though a minority did come out in support of Ilham, this episode confirms the fact that a radical left party such as the NPA is not ready for a candidate who wears the headscarf. Her candidacy was only made possible because of the fact that, since the LCR became the NPA, local sections have gained autonomy for their own candidate selection. The section in question, however, eventually split on the issue.³²

Thus, it appears currently impossible for a practising Muslim activist to be chosen as a candidate for a radical left party. The likelihood of activists from the *banlieues* forming an electoral alliance with the radical left is also low. However, the example of the *Motivé-e-s* list in Toulouse demonstrates that this *is* possible under certain conditions. As early as 1995, a number of activists from the northern *banlieues* of Toulouse joined an electoral list led by the LCR and the Green Party named *La ville en mouvement*. This was followed by the creation of an association named 'Tactikollectif' in 1997, involving, among others, members of the music group Zebda. Further collaboration over the following years with local political actors, including those in the GJM, led to the formation of *Les Motivé-e-s*:

Strong personal networks between members of Tactikollectif, ATTAC, SUD and the *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire* were developing and thickening during this period of time. Individuals from these different organizations were talking to each other and establishing early precedents for cooperative, multipartner mobilizations around a wide variety of issues... In the summer of 2000, Tactikollectif, with the support of individuals from these different organizations, sought to formalize this network through the creation of a political and social movement organization: *Motivé-e-s*. The intent was to transform the informal network of radicals into a formal political entity, and to use this entity as a means of linking the interests of all associations (neighbourhood and national) operating in the city to the local political system.

(Nicholls 2003: 363)

This alliance building was successful and they went on to record 12.5% in the first round of the 2001 local elections. They then decided to enter

into a coalition with other left-wing parties (PS, PCF, PRG, *Verts*) for the second round. Despite losing out to the right, four local councillors were elected for *Les Motivé-e-s*. This may appear, then, as a good example to follow for other activists, in particular the links that were built with other elements of the radical left.

A number of elements contributed to the establishment and success of *Les Motivé-e-s*. First, Tactikollectif was financially stable, thanks to the sales of a Zebda CD. This allowed them to announce that they would run an 'autonomous list' for the elections of 2001. They were then solicited by other left-wing activists, such as those in the LCR and ATTAC, who wanted to join their initiative. Second, those who were of North African origin did not make any reference to their religion or ethnicity during the election campaign for fear of being accused of *communautarisme* (Amokrane 2008: 268). Forces of the right did in fact try to discredit the list and racist flyers appeared during the election campaign with the slogan 'No Arabs in City Hall'. It was commonly perceived as an 'Arab list' by many because of Zebda and the spokesman of *Motivé-e-s* Salah Amokrane (who is of Algerian origin), but this was far from the truth and it included people from a range of backgrounds (Leroux 2005). The success of *Motivé-e-s* was not all plain sailing. When, in the post-9/11 climate, its activists started a campaign against the stigmatisation of Muslims, many of their former left-wing allies deserted them. For the 2008 local elections, the *Motivé-e-s* ran on a joint list with the LCR and the *Collectif d'initiative unitaire nationale* (CIUN), but none of their activists were re-elected.

Rather than looking towards the parties of the radical left, a more fruitful strategy for Muslim activists who wished to be selected as election candidates was the Green Party (*Les Verts*). Two activists interviewed for this research from Roubaix, Ali Rahni and Siham Andalouci, have both been members of this party for a number of years. Ali was in fact selected as a candidate for the party at the local elections in 2008 and 2014. How has it been possible for the Greens to achieve what seems impossible for other parties on the left? Taking into account some of the factors mentioned above, we can see how this has been made possible. First, the Green Party is decentralised and takes decisions on a local level rather than receiving instructions from Paris.³³ Thus the local section in Roubaix is able to make its own choices, including that of election candidates. The second factor is that *Les Verts* in Roubaix was led by Slimane Tir, a charismatic leader who is himself of North African origin. Third, as opposed to other areas in France, Roubaix is known for its concentration of residents of North African origin. It is, in fact, one of the few

areas where political parties of all stripes have been consistently selecting candidates of North African origin which has led to the 'emergence of politically astute North African activists, who have gradually transferred their ambitions from community politics to city council politics' (Garbaye 2005: 197).

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide explanations for the ability of British Muslim activists to form an electoral alliance with the radical left in the form of the Respect coalition and highlight the factors that reduce the chance of something similar emerging in France. It has also looked at why parties of the radical left in France seem reluctant to select Muslim activists as election candidates. This was achieved by referring to the various POS in place in the two countries. Formal structures such as the electoral system and the residential concentration of ethnic minority communities mean that there are more incentives for alliances in the United Kingdom. Similarly, when observing national cleavage structures such as the strength of the radical left and extreme right, it makes more sense for parties in Britain to seek out such allies. The issue of the Iraq War also created fortuitous conditions for the formation of Respect. Another important factor was the issue of discursive opportunity structures. French parties leave themselves open to accusations of *communautarisme* if they ally themselves with Muslim activists, this despite the political wind blowing in the direction of increased representation of minorities. The procedures of parties were also seen to contribute to the difficulty for French Muslim activists to not only form such an alliance with the radical left but also simply get selected by these parties as candidates. Candidate selection procedure is often centralised in France and there is no tradition of either ethnic minority co-operation with the left or parties trying to capture an ethnic vote. The reverse is true in the British case. Lastly, existing alliance structures can be affected by conceptions of Marxism, the strength of local ethnic minority networks and the importance Muslim activists give to their independence or 'autonomy'. Activists who have strong links with the community they claim to represent are attractive partners for political parties while those who insist on retaining 'independence' and 'autonomy' from the party structure are clearly not.

Despite more pressure on parties in France to pick members of ethnic minorities as candidates for local elections, the selection of, for example, a veiled candidate is simply unthinkable for the time being. In fact,

during the 2008 elections, female ‘diversity candidates’ were chosen to represent successful integration, in other words that they did *not* wear the headscarf and defended France’s philosophy of integration (Avanza 2010: 420). This has a strong relation to the discursive opportunity structures in France, and this means that parties are loath to pick anyone who is immediately recognisable as a practising Muslim. The furore over the NPA’s decision to choose a female candidate wearing a headscarf for the 2010 regional elections reinforces these findings. Only the Green Party seems immune to this trend. However, when Ali Rahni was selected as a candidate for *Europe Écologie* in the European elections in 2009, the party was attacked in the media; so it is unlikely that even this party would be ready to select a veiled female candidate in the foreseeable future.³⁴

Many activists of migrant origin (Muslim or otherwise) in France are so distrustful of political parties that they insist on the idea of creating an autonomous party. The MIR announced the creation of its own party, the PIR (*Parti des Indigènes de la République*), in 2010, although they are yet to actually stand for election. Similarly, those activists involved with the FSQP announced the setting up of an independent political movement in 2012, the *Force Citoyenne Populaire* (FCP), although this has also not led to anything concrete in terms of electoral participation.³⁵ The chances of actually electing someone without entering into some kind of electoral coalition are extremely low. As the example of the *Motivés* has shown, the only viable solution in order to get elected is to form links with other parties. Initiatives for ‘autonomous parties’ contain an inherent contradiction – the desire to be independent of other political forces despite the obvious need of their support in order to succeed.

In Britain, the SWP was crucial in providing the organisational muscle to get the Respect project off the ground. The charismatic leadership of George Galloway and the competence of other Muslim candidates such as Salma Yaqoob meant that the party could enjoy some notable successes. The conditions seemed ideal for Respect: residential concentration of Muslim communities, no competition on the radical left, a tradition of an ethnic vote to tap into and, most importantly of all, the issue of the Iraq War on which to campaign. Ten years on from the foundation of the party, it has remained surprisingly resilient despite a succession of setbacks. During the general election of 2010, many former supporters were not willing to ‘waste their vote’ on a smaller party when the chances of Labour losing the election were so high. The high turnout overall meant that their core vote was ‘swamped’ and they lost

their only MP. Yet just two years later, George Galloway managed to win a stunning by-election victory in Bradford and Respect subsequently elected a handful of local councillors (Peace and Akhtar 2015). This was even more surprising than its previous electoral victories, as by this time there was virtually no input from activists of the radical left. Indeed, the party as it exists today is very different to the coalition that was originally formed in 2004 even if the policies it promotes are still firmly anchored in left-wing values.

Conclusion: The Future of Muslim Political Activism in Europe

Research findings

This book has investigated how social movements react to religious pluralism by using the example of the participation of Muslims in the alter-globalisation movement. It has first looked at the role of religion in encouraging participation in social movements. While it may be true that faith can play an important role in social movement activism, this research suggests that we should not overestimate the role of religion. It should not be assumed that religious activists are primarily motivated by their faith. The information presented in Chapter 4 showed that this was not a strong explanatory factor for the involvement of Muslim activists in the alter-globalisation movement. Their activism was more conditioned by their life experiences, educational background, political affiliation with the left and previous involvement in progressive causes and organisations such as NGOs. Activists may, in fact, be inclined to interpret their religion in line with their existing political views. The arrival of Tariq Ramadan in the mid-1990s in France was important not because he told Muslims to get involved in political activism but because he showed how Islamic values could be found in the activism that they were already involved in. As one activist put it, Ramadan allowed them to 'connect their Muslim values with their political engagement'.¹ Activists in Britain, who had no previous contact with Ramadan, or anyone similar, had still been involved in activism before the GJM emerged. They had not waited to be told that this was the right thing to do. This is one of the factors that sets the Muslim activists that I interviewed apart from others in their community who may seek some kind of religious justification before engaging in contentious politics.

Secondly, this research has added to our knowledge about how social movements deal with 'difference' and activists that might call into

question existing preconceived ideas. This is an area of research that social movement scholars have neglected, largely assuming that movements will always want to mobilise the largest number of people possible. This *does* appear to be part of the logic that SMO leaders in the United Kingdom adopted. Pluralism, for them, was seen as an asset that might broaden the appeal of the movement to new constituents and turn bystanders into participants. British SMO leaders believed, or at least convincingly argued, that the diversity of the movement could also be part of its strength. This is a theme that is common to many other interpretations of the alter-globalisation movement, which was heterogeneous not only in terms of those involved but also in terms of the different causes it enveloped. The GJM is marked by a high degree of openness to multiple identities and prides itself on its tolerance (Della Porta 2005). Nevertheless, for activists in France, Muslim participation created tensions, and this tolerance was severely tested. Religious actors posed dilemmas to their collective identities and mobilisation strategies. Is it possible for someone to engage in collective action alongside a woman who wears a headscarf when this symbolises oppression for them? Should SMO leaders ally themselves with a new constituency even if this risks creating divisions in the ranks and alienating existing adherents?

It has been shown that the diverse reactions to religious pluralism are shaped by largely national characteristics. Claims that activists and leaders in the GJM are somehow anti-conformist and challenge dominant views in society should be seriously questioned. It should come as no surprise that a universalist political culture will make people more reticent to accepting pluralism. In fact, the same factor is also responsible for the crises that both the French anti-racist and feminist movements have been experiencing (Dot-Pouillard 2007, Peace 2012). Conversely, we would expect a country that valorises difference within its national philosophy of integration to view pluralism in a social movement as a positive development. The evidence presented in this book reinforces the assertion by Sommier *et al.* (2008) that the alter-globalisation movement is very much shaped in each country by the domestic context rather than some vague 'global identity'.

Divergences in how SMOs responded to pluralism demonstrated cross-national differences, but one factor was constant. All reactions, whether positive or negative, were premised on the assumption that Muslims were fundamentally different to others in the movement and that their motives for participation were not the same as everybody else. This research has stressed how the exact opposite was true, but, nonetheless,

underlying prejudices and assumptions can exist even in progressive and cosmopolitan circles such as the alter-globalisation movement. In Britain, the fear of causing offence shows how deeply ingrained the notion of the 'irrational and over-sensitive Muslim' has become in the public imagination. In France, the stereotype was that of the sexist Muslim who did not want to accept the validity of the law of 1905. The decision of ATTAC to set up a working group on Muslim organisations was an admission of just how ignorant the leadership was, but this did at least also show a willingness to learn more.

This study has also demonstrated the importance of cross-fertilisation for movements such as the GJM. As activists come into contact with one another, stereotypes can be broken down and attitudes can change. Co-operation was possible between Muslim activists and previously sceptical activists in France through forced interaction. The creation of initiatives such as the CFPE was a demonstration of how different activists could work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and learn about each other. In Britain, this same process was also achieved even if interactions between activists from different backgrounds could also be very superficial. This had negative consequences for the development of more durable alliances and mutual learning processes. The success of large-scale Muslim mobilisation for the anti-war movement did not lead to mass participation in other progressive social movements. SMO leaders were open to their participation but showed no desire to actually learn about Muslims. Difficult questions were also avoided that were at least posed and discussed in France: Can you be a feminist and wear a headscarf?

Thirdly, this study has looked at the outcomes of social movements and participation within them. One of the interesting findings of this research is that activists who generally have low trust in political parties still seem to see them as the only viable way of influencing the political agenda.² However, entry into electoral politics by those involved in activism is constrained by the external political environment. French activists had, in general, more experience than their British counterparts but found it harder to either get selected as election candidates or form alliances with other political groupings. This confirms the findings of other recent research into social movement outcomes which stresses the fact that 'the political impact of social movements is conditional and contingent on the presence of facilitating external factors pertaining to their social and political environment' (Giugni 2008: 1592). The outcomes of Muslim participation in the alter-globalisation movement were certainly not negligible. The issue contributed in part to the split

in ATTAC, and the participation of Tariq Ramadan at the ESF in 2003 created a wave of negative publicity for the movement. Viewed from this perspective, the decision to ostracise Muslims by Bernard Cassen *et al* could even be interpreted as a rational decision based on the knowledge that French society seemingly wasn't ready for such a development. In Britain, the impact of Muslim participation on the GJM itself was perhaps rather insignificant, but this is also a reflection of the weakness of the movement as a whole in that country. In the anti-war movement, the massive participation of Muslims contributed to the short-term success of these mobilisations (in terms of the numbers of people on the streets), even if this could not stop the war itself. On the political scene, Respect's electoral results may appear modest. However, the election of George Galloway in 2005, and later in 2012, was a significant achievement and testament to how political activists can influence an electoral outcome with a well-focused local campaign.

Much previous research on Muslims focused on their experiences as migrants, or the children thereof, and how they adapt to their host society. This research has shown the need to go beyond investigating Muslims simply as part of their religious and/or ethnic communities and to see them as autonomous political actors who may be drawn to participation in wider social movements. It also demonstrated, however, the time gap in this process between activists in both countries. Activists in France made a quicker transition from mobilisation for group demands (such as the demand for equality inherent in the *mouvement beur*) to that of more general demands (such as opposition to neo-liberalism). In Britain, this process has taken much longer, which also explains why British activists were often much younger and more inexperienced than their counterparts in France. Muslim participation in the alter-globalisation movement was more widespread and meaningful in France. Despite often being rejected, these activists continued to participate, demonstrating their commitment to the cause. My research indicates that there are more Muslims in France who are interested in getting involved in progressive social movements and broader issues outside of those that typically affect the Muslim community.

This is a positive reflection on the state of the Muslim minority in France and their place in society. Foreign observers may have criticised the French approach to its Muslim minority by pointing to events such as the civil unrest in the *banlieues* in November 2005. However, most academics who have studied the situation carefully in France have shown that this general impression of the Muslim population as disgruntled and on the verge of revolt is patently false. Jonathan Laurence

and Justin Vaisse have, I think, rightly claimed that ‘the integration of persons of Muslim origin in French society is, on the whole, going in the right direction’ (Laurence and Vaisse 2006: 5).³ John Bowen (2010) comes to the same conclusion and shows how French Muslims are adapting the norms and institutions of Islam to the local setting, thus creating a very ‘French Islam’. Drawing on a survey conducted in 2007–2008, it has also been shown that although religiosity decreases the likelihood of feeling French among Muslims, the same factor causes lower levels of feeling French among Christians. So being religious in France is a greater impediment to feeling French than being Muslim, and tensions surrounding Muslims’ self-identification with France are likely to decrease in future generations (Maxwell and Bleich 2014). Indeed, back in 1987 the scholar of Islam Bruno Etienne was already predicting such an outcome in his evidence to the Long Commission (Long 1988a: 135).

The research presented in this book shows that there can be a positive relationship between Islam and civil society and Muslims can be just as progressive as their secular counterparts. However, the kind of progressive Muslim activism that was the focus of this study is still a minority phenomenon and the political activity of Muslims may still be largely confined to specific issues such as the Palestinian cause. This is certainly true of the UK case, and British Muslims are generally more conservative in their outlook than their French counterparts. An illustration of the differences between British and French Muslims can be found in the reception of Tariq Ramadan. He appears to hold some legitimacy at the grass-roots level in France. In Britain, on the other hand, he is lightly regarded by the grass roots and in particular by young Muslims. Survey evidence has shown that British Muslims appear to suffer more from a sense of victimisation and are the most dissatisfied in Europe (Pew Global Attitudes Project 2006). This despite the state being more accommodating to Muslim claims for recognition. It has been common to blame this situation on the inadequacies of the British multicultural model and therefore celebrate French ‘firm-handedness’:

Considering that, in the dreaded ‘Jacobin state’ across the Channel, which did much less on the ‘respect and recognition’ front and instead prescribed one-size-fits all *citoyenneté* on its Muslim minority, the non-Muslim majority and the Muslim minority held equally benign views of one another, one might take this as a failure of British multiculturalism and a success of French Republicanism.

(Joppke 2009: 467)

However, the problem with such a statement is that it is difficult to collect evidence that would prove that it is the specific national context, and the philosophy of integration in particular, that has created these differences between Britain and France. Other factors could be equally important, such as country of origin or the culture of protest in French society. Indeed, a major flaw of the sociology of integration has been its failure to take into account the major changes forced upon the individual by globalisation (Wieviorka 2014). Similarly, political science scholarship on migrant incorporation has mainly focused on the policies targeted at migrants and their children and pays little attention to the basic structural features of European political economies such as education and training systems, labour market rules and welfare systems (Guiraudon 2014). It is therefore dangerous to enter into a normative discussion over which integration model 'works best', as the model itself could be irrelevant.⁴ Given the relatively small (and perhaps unrepresentative) sample of Muslim activists that I interviewed, it would be unwise to claim too much wider relevance when discussing issues of integration.

The death of the alter-globalisation movement

Twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, a poll conducted by the BBC found widespread dissatisfaction with free-market capitalism across the world. In France, over 40% of respondents thought that it was fatally flawed and that a different economic system was needed.⁵ Despite this vindication of their ideas, all but the most hardened and optimistic activists and supporters could fail to recognise the decline of the alter-globalisation movement since 2008 compared to its apogee in the first half of the decade. This is particularly true in Europe, which along with South America was considered as one of the hotbeds of the movement. The global economic crisis that erupted in 2007 and the recession that has followed provided a cruel irony for supporters of the alter-globalisation movement. At the very moment that their warnings about the excesses of global capitalism were proved to be right, the movement seemed to run out of steam. This was acknowledged by one of my interview partners who was a leader in GR: 'Ironically, and unfortunately, all the things that we in the movement said would happen, actually have happened. Yet we are much weaker now.'⁶ ATTAC was severely weakened by the events of 2006 and the internal split. This marked a definitive turning point for the association and was accompanied with a huge drop in members. Bernard Cassen was already speaking

of 'post-alter-globalisation' at a conference held on 26 January 2008, a day designated as a global day of action by GJM leaders. This 'worldwide event' was organised in place of the WSF that year, but protests were noticeably low key. The ESF in Malmö later that year was also poorly attended despite the fact that at this time the global financial crisis went into its most critical stage.

A number of figures from ATTAC tried to seize the initiative by holding a press conference in March 2009 on the eve of the G20 Summit in London. Sophie Zafari declared that drastic measures were needed, including the introduction of a tax on financial transactions and the end of tax havens.⁷ These activists had, of course, been proposing such solutions for over ten years and thus it was a cruel irony to see world leaders discussing the idea of eliminating tax havens as if no one had thought of this idea before. It may have also been particularly galling to see the British Prime Minister talking about the need to implement the Tobin Tax!⁸ This should have been the moment for the alter-globalisation movement to come to the fore; instead, it was ignored. Protestors did however converge on London in order to voice their disquiet. The demonstrations were specifically aimed against bankers and it seemed initially like a return to the heady days of the Carnival against Capitalism (J18) ten years previously. However, this did not provide the spark for a reinvigoration of the GJM in Britain, or indeed anywhere else. Unfortunately, like in Genoa in 2001, the protests in London were overshadowed by a fatality due to police violence.⁹ The alter-globalisation movement did not capitalise on the feeling of anger directed at financial institutions despite attempts by its leaders to propose a 'new strategy' (Massiah 2011).

However, the movement did not simply disappear. Instead, the networks of activists that made up the movement demonstrated a capacity to re-invent themselves. From 2008 onwards, the alter-globalisation movement was, to a certain extent, succeeded by the anti-austerity 'movements of the crisis' such as *Indignados* and Occupy Wall Street:

The two waves of protests, therefore, are, to some extent, linked by and to the economic and financial crisis, although from two mirror positions: the Global Justice Movement represented a warning that the worst was still to come for vulnerable social groups; while the present wave of protests was sustained by citizens who experienced the worst becoming reality at the peak of the economic and financial crisis that erupted in 2008.

(Della Porta and Mattoni 2014: 5)

Others previously engaged in the alter-globalisation movement became more orientated towards the issue of climate change. The Camps for Climate Action became the most attended events for progressive activists in the summer of 2009, and in December protestors descended on Copenhagen for the United Nations Climate Change Conference. This did not mean the immediate end of the social forums which were the hallmark of the GJM. The WSF continued to take place in 2009, 2011, 2012 and 2013. However, the last ESF took place in Istanbul in 2010 and this process can be considered as officially over. There have been attempts to revive the idea with the Firenze 10 + 10 event in Florence in 2012 and the Alter Summit in Athens in 2013, but they were both one-off meetings. Nevertheless, ATTAC continues as a successful organisation in France (and around the world) with thousands of members. GR is also still active, despite the revelations that an undercover police officer had infiltrated the group at the height of its powers (Evans and Lewis 2013). The group continues to organise small-scale events such as the 'Festival of Resistance' in 2011 and 2012 and the 'Another world is possible festival' held in 2014.

What then is the legacy of Muslim involvement in the alter-globalisation movement between 2000 and 2008? In France, the *Commission Islam et Laïcité* has continued and is led by Ismahane Chouder. She is also still active within the CFPE, a group that recently celebrated its 10-year anniversary.¹⁰ In 2008, Abdelaziz Chaambi founded the anti-racist group *Coordination contre le racisme et l'islamophobie* (CRI) which provides legal assistance to victims of discrimination. Yamin Makri founded the *Union Française des Consommateurs Musulmans* (UFCM) in 2011 which seeks to change Muslim consumer habits and encourage reflection about waste, the environment and other ethical concerns. Some activists in France have also stood as candidates in elections. Norredine Iznasni, one of the main organisers of the FSQP, accepted an invitation to join the electoral list *Ensemble avec la Gauche* in Nanterre and was subsequently elected as a city councillor in March 2008. He was then re-elected in 2014 for the *Union de la Gauche* list.¹¹ Ali Rahni continues his activism within *Europe Écologie Les Verts* (EELV) and is a member of both the local and regional bureau of the party. He was an unsuccessful candidate for the 2009 European elections, the 2011 cantonal elections and the 2014 local elections. For others, their lives have been transformed by external events. Following the Tunisian Revolution, Karim Azouz became the Console of Tunisia in France (Sana 2012).

In Britain, some activists have continued to be closely aligned with the environmental movement. Asad Rehman leads Friends of the Earth's

campaign for international action to prevent climate change and is a key spokesperson at UN climate negotiations. Muzzamal Hussain continues to run the Islamic environmental association *Wisdom in Nature* (formerly known as the London Islamic Network for the Environment), helping to organise events such as 'Islamic eco-theology workshops'. Although British Muslim involvement in the alter-globalisation movement quickly fizzled out after the ESF in 2004, events such as '6 Billion Ways – Making Another World Possible' showed that they were still interested in exploring the causes and finding the solutions to the global financial crisis.¹² New groups have now emerged that encourage Muslims to campaign on a range of political and social issues. MEND (Muslim Engagement and Development) was founded in 2008 to help empower and encourage British Muslims within local communities to be more actively involved in British politics. 'MADE in Europe' (Muslim Agency for Development Education) founded in 2009 aims to be a mass movement of young Muslims across Europe fighting global poverty and injustice.¹³ The future of Muslim political activism in Europe therefore looks bright and involvement in social movements post-9/11 can be seen as a crucial stage in the development of 'European Muslim Civil Society' and the new generation of progressive Muslim activists.

Notes

Introduction: Muslims and Social Movements in Europe

1. 'Un "autre monde" mais avec qui?' *Libération*, 14 October 2004.
2. The term 'sociological Muslims' was popular in French scholarship and has been reintroduced into the literature by John Bowen (2010: 11), who uses it to denote 'people whose background and traditions form part of the long history of Muslim civilization, regardless of whether they worship regularly or what they believe'.
3. When ATTAC was set up in 1998, it was known as the *Association pour une taxe Tobin d'aide aux citoyens*. Its name was then changed to the *Association pour une Taxation des Transactions financières pour l'Aide aux Citoyens*. More recently, the name has changed again to the *Association pour la taxation des transactions financières et pour l'action citoyenne*.
4. One major exception is *Marxism and the Muslim World* by Maxime Rodinson, originally published in 1972. There are also books on progressive and liberal Islam (Kurzman 1998, Safi 2003).
5. I have chosen to deliberately leave the term *laïcité* untranslated as terms such as 'secularism' could cause confusion. There is, in fact, a distinctiveness to French secularism (Troper 2000) and for this reason many other scholars who have written on *laïcité* in English do not translate the word.
6. The advent of this 'British multiculturalism' is often traced back to a speech made by Roy Jenkins in 1966, although it was not used in public discourse until the mid-1980s. The role of protest was also crucial in ushering a supposed move away from multiculturalism when, after a series of 'race riots' that occurred in several northern English towns in the summer of 2001, government policy documents started promoting 'community cohesion' (McGhee 2008).
7. Nevertheless, the French also flirted with a multicultural approach until the mid-1980s. When primary immigration was ended in 1974 with the election of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, rather than trying to integrate/assimilate those 'problematic' (non-European) immigrants who remained, the French government favoured a strategy of cultural separation. The hope was that this would reverse migration flows and encourage migrants to return home, an approach that was also adopted in Germany with Turkish migrants. In May 1975, the *Office national pour la promotion culturelle des immigrés* (ONPCI) was created for this very purpose, which sponsored art exhibitions and TV programmes that aimed at creating a sense of nostalgia in the immigrant worker. When the Socialists came to power in 1981, they wanted to break with the discriminatory policies of their predecessors. They promoted cultural diversity and *droit à la différence* and spoke of the *insertion* rather than *intégration* of immigrants in France. Strong feelings about the problems of immigration re-emerged from the early 1980s onwards and the issue once again became highly politicised with the emergence of the 'second-generation immigrants'

- (the children of migrants) and the rise of the extreme right *Front National* (FN). By this time, it had become clear that migrant workers wanted to stay and the coming of age of their children was further proof of this. Jean-Marie Le Pen manipulated ideas about diversity in order to highlight the irreconcilable differences between 'immigrants' (both migrants and their children) and 'true Frenchmen' which eventually led to the dropping of references to diversity by the ruling Socialists (Guiraudon 1996).
8. In October 1985, the front cover of *Le Figaro magazine* asked the apocalyptic question, *Serons-nous encore français dans trente ans?* (Will we still be French in 30 years' time?). This was accompanied by a photo of Marianne in a veil, and the front cover of *Le Nouvel Observateur* in February 1986 used similar menacing images. A commission presided over by Marceau Long was set up in 1987 in order to debate nationality laws and what it meant to be French. The commission included prominent academics such as Dominique Schnapper and Alain Touraine. Sessions of the commission took place in the autumn of 1987 and were televised. The transcripts were eventually published in the first volume of the report *Etre Français Aujourd'hui et Demain* (Long 1988a). The propositions of the commission were outlined in a subsequent report which above all considered integration as a 'necessity' (Long 1988b: 236). There was however no reference to how this integration was supposed to work or a particular model which it was based on.
 9. The French government set up the *Haut Conseil à l'Intégration* (HCI) in December 1989. Its first report was suitably entitled *Pour un modèle français d'intégration* and favourably contrasted the French method to the multicultural models in place in other European countries such as Britain and the Netherlands. At the same time, *La France de l'intégration* was published by Dominique Schnapper (1991). This work and her subsequent contributions would have an enormous influence on the development of the consensus of what became known as the 'French model of integration'.
 10. Relevant in terms of the participation (or attempted participation) of Muslims within the organisation, influential in terms of its position as a recognised leader within the movement and representative in terms of the number of different groups that the organisation covers.
 11. Local groups of ATTAC were set up in Jersey, Oxford, Cambridge and London. The only group that survived was ATTAC Jersey, largely because of its status as a tax haven.
 12. In our interviews, Bernard Cassen attributed the failure to successfully establish ATTAC in Britain to the dominance of the SWP, and Noel Douglas also thought the SWP impeded the growth of ATTAC 'because we took that space that ATTAC occupied in other countries'.
 13. Interview with Chris Nineham. The group is still campaigning today although it is much less influential. <http://www.resist.org.uk/>
 14. At their respective peaks of membership, ATTAC had around 30,000 members and GR around 1,000 (although many more were subscribed to its e-mailing list). GR in fact had just one full-time employee (Guy Taylor).
 15. In total, over 50 interviews were conducted, most of which were done in person, although a handful were done using Skype. These were supplemented

with printed interviews with certain activists that can be found in the books *Faut-il taire Tariq Ramadan?* (Zemouri 2005) and *Histoire politique des immigrations (post)coloniales* (Boubeker and Hajjat 2008).

16. Tariq Ramadan did not take part in this research despite being contacted on several occasions.

1 The Development of the Alter-Globalisation Movement

1. This is necessary in order to delineate between movement bystanders or sympathisers and those who are actively involved. Many people may join a march in favour of dropping Third World debt or against war, but this does not make them part of the movement. Participation in the ESF is a good indicator of their identification with the wider movement.
2. For more in-depth discussions of the global justice movement, refer to the series of books published as part of the 'Democracy in Europe and the Mobilization of Society' (DEMOS) project (Della Porta 2007, 2009a, 2009b, Della Porta and Rucht 2013).
3. Attendance estimates for the first five events are as follows: Florence – 60,000; Paris – 60,000; London – 25,000; Athens – 35,000; and Malmo – 13,000 (Della Porta 2009a: 13–14).
4. Geoffrey Pleyers (2010) describes these two tendencies as the way of subjectivity and the way of reason. The former being focused on creativity and the other on rationality.
5. Their decision to ally themselves with those working for the Greater London Authority (GLA) in the organisation of the London ESF led to much criticism (Andretta and Della Porta 2009).
6. This was the global day of action organised to coincide with what was happening in Seattle.
7. Larzac 2003 (8–10 August) was the biggest ever meeting of the GJM in France with an estimated 300,000 participants. It was organised to immediately precede the fifth WTO ministerial conference that took place in Cancún and encourage mobilisation against this (Williams 2008).
8. The importance of this counter-summit is not linked to the actual outcomes at that time, which were limited, but more to the fact that the organisations and personalities involved would go on to become founding members of ATTAC, in particular members of the CEDETIM, a certain number of trade unions as well as some figures in the LCR.
9. CADTM was a founding member of the WSF and its President Éric Toussaint is one of the most prominent Belgian leaders of the alter-globalisation movement. He was also part of the *conseil scientifique* of ATTAC and helped to write many of their publications.
10. Leaders of G10, later known as SUD (*Solidaires Unitaires Démocratiques*), went on to hold leading positions in ATTAC, in particular Pierre Khalfa and Annick Coupé.
11. Christophe Aguiton of the LCR was the leader of the unemployed association *Agir ensemble contre le chômage* (AC!) which was a founding organisation of ATTAC and he himself became a key figure in the association and the ESF process.

12. Ignacio Ramonet, 'Désarmer les marchés', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, December 1997.
13. CRID is not a religious organisation but a larger network that includes a number of faith-based charities. It was a founding member of ATTAC represented by Gustave Massiah (also one of the leaders of the CEDETIM).
14. The figure for Brazilians is 65.3% and for other nationalities 45.4%. The breakdown of religious denominations is as follows: Catholics 61.6%, Evangelicals 9.5%, Buddhism 2%, Judaism 1.1% and Islam 0.7%.
15. The breakdown of denominations in Nairobi was 30.9% Catholic, 36.4% other Christian and 8.6% Muslim.
16. These figures only denote those participants who had an organisational affiliation to a particular religious group and so the number of religious participants could be even higher.
17. According to Audrey Miller, former chair of the Birmingham Jubilee Debt Campaign group, 'there has always been involvement of Muslim groups in the [local] Birmingham campaign. In 1998 these groups took part in the human chain despite the request to hold hands!' (Personal communication).
18. *Temoignage Chrétien* and *Goliath* were founding members of ATTAC.
19. The 2006 WSF was 'polycentric' and took place in Bamako, Karachi and Caracas.
20. 72.3% of participants at the 2006 WSF in Bamako were Malians of which 93.8% described themselves as religious (IBASE 2006).
21. It has been common in France to label anyone who mobilises politically with a Muslim identity as an 'Islamist' (Geisser 2007).

2 Muslim Political Participation and Mobilisation in Britain and France

1. Hereafter the term 'Asian' is used to denote people of South-Asian descent.
2. IS post-conference bulletin from 1976, quoted in Goodyer (2009: 60).
3. In 1940, Udham Singh shot and killed Michael O'Dwyer, the British Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab at the time of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919. Singh was hanged for murder and during his trial he adopted the name Ram Mohammad Singh Azad as a statement of unity between the religious communities of India.
4. This defence was used again as mitigation at the trials of the Newham 8 in 1983 and the Newham 7 in 1985.
5. This was achieved not only through discussion and negotiations but also through direct action such as the 1983 boycott of schools and demonstrations outside the town hall about the provision of halal meat in Bradford's schools. Similar action was also taken in 1984 to protest against Ray Honeyford, the head teacher of a school in Bradford who caused a national controversy over his outspoken criticisms of the behaviour of Asian parents who sent their children to his school.
6. Interview with Shahed Saleem. Convoy of Mercy sent over 80 land convoys to the Balkans which transported medicines, medical equipment, clothes, books and aid workers.

7. Algeria was a part of France until 1962, and thus Algerians had a right to live and work there just like Commonwealth citizens of Britain. The ONI therefore did not apply to this group.
8. For example, the *Amicale des Algériens en Europe* (AAE), the *Amicale des Travailleurs et Commerçants Marocains en France* (ATCMF) and the *Amicale des Travailleurs Tunisiens en France* (ATTF). These are state-sponsored expatriate-related institutions (Brand 2006).
9. Mitterrand made a pre-election promise to limit the expulsions of immigrants and their descendants who had been resident in France for a long time. This was one of the first measures taken during his presidency.
10. *Beur* is a word in *verlan* (French slang involving the inversion of syllables) from the word 'Arab'. Descendants of North African immigrants became known as *les beurs* at the beginning of the 1980s, although by the end of the decade the term had gone out of fashion.
11. Interview with Abdelaziz Chaambi.
12. In 1985, another march was organised entitled *Divergence 1985*, although this was considered as a spectacular failure.
13. Djida Tazdaït was selected as a candidate for the French Green Party in the local elections of 1989 and was subsequently elected as an MEP that same year. In 2003, she helped to found the *Mouvement des Musulmans Laïques de France* (MMLF).
14. Quoted in Zemouri (2005: 137).
15. Abdelaziz Chaambi quoted in Geisser (2007: 125).
16. 'Une déclaration commune sur le racisme et l'intolérance', *Le Monde*, 25 January 1990.
17. Gilles Couvreur (1927–2006) was head of the SRI between 1991 and 1997 and had been a priest in Vénissieux where he participated with Ramadan at various inter-religious dialogue initiatives held there during the early 1990s. Couvreur was known as 'le curé des Minguettes', although this name mistakenly became associated with Christian Delorme because of his role in the 1983 *marche pour l'égalité*.

3 Muslim Participation in the Alter-Globalisation Movement

1. The commission was set up and run by the *Ligue de l'Enseignement* until 2002 when the LDH and *Le Monde Diplomatique* took over. In 2006, it became a registered non-profit association and continues to exist to this day – <http://www.islamlaicite.org>.
2. Interview with Boualam Azahoum.
3. 'Une initiative pour une rentrée sans logos', *Le Monde*, 10 September 2002. *Les casseurs de pub* is similar to the Canadian group Adbusters, of which it is a sister organisation. It also publishes the monthly magazine *La Décroissance*.
4. See the report of this seminar 'L'islamofobia dell'Europa', *Il Manifesto*, 9 November 2002.
5. Interview with Karim Azouz.
6. Interview with Bernard Cassen.
7. 'Compte rendu réunion de Bureau du 23 décembre 2002', ATTAC online archives. <https://france.attac.org/archives/spip.php?article1669>.

8. Yamin Makri, cited in ATTAC's electronic newsletter *Grain de Sable*, n° 437, 19 August 2003.
<http://www.archive.attac.org/attacinfo/attacinfo437.pdf>.
The archives of ATTAC do not mention the content or outcome of this discussion, but it has been confirmed by several interview partners.
9. This meeting was referred to in a press release 'Nos relations avec Tariq Ramadan', 10 November 2003.
<https://france.attac.org/archives/spip.php?article2236>.
10. Interview with Bernard Cassen.
11. Translated from the original, published as 'Les défis du pluralisme', *Politis*, n° 756, 19 June 2003. *Politis* was a founding member of ATTAC and, along with *Le Monde Diplomatique*, was widely read by supporters of the alter-globalisation movement in France. It was thus not by chance that Ramadan chose to publish his article in this magazine.
12. Translated from the original, published as 'Altermondialisation et Islam', *Politis*, n° 759, 10 July 2003.
13. *Grain de Sable*, n° 437, Op. cit.
14. Translated from the original, 'Islam et altermondialisme: le défi de l'universel', *Politis*, n° 768, 11 September 2003.
15. This was a period when many were speaking of a 'new antisemitism' in relation to Muslims in France (Peace 2009). Somewhat ironically, Ramadan was a speaker at the plenary discussing the problem of antisemitism.
16. Claude Askolovitch, 'L'encombrant M. Ramadan', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 9 October 2003. It is interesting to note that the opinion of this journalist has changed dramatically and he has since published a book on Muslims in France and the hostility they face from the rest of society (Askolovitch 2013).
17. 'Le retour à la religion de Lila et Alma, les deux adolescentes qui relancent le débat', *Le Monde*, 14 October 2003. In the account of this controversy written by the two girls, Ramadan is not even mentioned (Lévy and Lévy 2004).
18. 'Ramadan antiféministe', *Libération*, 12 November 2003. The groups who signed this text included the *Mouvement français pour le planning familial* (MFPF) and the *Confédération des associations pour le droit à l'avortement et à la contraception* (CADAC) which was also a founding member of ATTAC.
19. Interview with Siham Andalouci.
20. The vast majority of my interviewees concur that this was a pre-empted media campaign aimed merely at discrediting the ESF and the alter-globalisation movement. See the ATTAC press release 'Une opération médiatico-politicienne contre le FSE', 22 November 2003.
<https://france.attac.org/archives/spip.php?article2234>.
21. 'Compte-rendu du Conseil d'administration d'Attac des 30-31 janvier et 1er février 2004'. <https://france.attac.org/archives/spip.php?article2617>.
22. 'Les altermondialistes s'interrogent sur la laïcité, l'Europe et leur avenir', *Le Monde*, 31 August 2004.
23. 'Relevé de décisions validé du Bureau du 19 Octobre 2004'.
<https://france.attac.org/archives/spip.php?article3641>.
24. Known as *groupe organisations musulmanes en France*, it was headed by Julien Landfried, a close ally of Bernard Cassen.
25. 'Ces altermondialistes en perte de repères', *Politis*, 20 January 2005.
26. 'Attac: la guerre des alters', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, n° 2122, 7-13 July 2005.

27. 'Pour une Attac de deuxième génération'.
<https://france.attac.org/archives/spip.php?article6571>.
28. Interview with Pierre Khalifa.
29. Interview with Naima Bouteldja. Marxism is a 'political festival' hosted by the SWP and is very similar to a social forum.
30. Interview with Asad Rehman.
31. Vasi (2006) has classified these anti-war protests as 'miscible mobilizations', because movements with compatible ideologies and belief systems can effectively dissolve into one another and the activist communities and SMOs overlap to a considerable degree. Although he refers to the US case, this analysis can certainly also be applied to the United Kingdom, where leaders from the SWP were heavily invested in both the GJM and anti-war movement. For example, Chris Nineham was a prominent leader in both GR and the StWC.
32. Interview with Shahed Saleem.
33. Shahed Saleem quoted in Murray and German (2005: 59).
34. Interview with Asad Rehman.
35. See the account of Chris Nineham in Murray and German (2005).
36. Interview with Asad Rehman.
37. Fiammetta Venner, 'FSE: Un autre jihad est possible', *Charlie Hebdo*, 29 September 2004. This was the start of the period when the satirical magazine began regularly poking fun at Islam, tragically culminating in the shootings of 7 January 2015.
38. The only mention of his presence at the ESF in the British press was a rather positive portrayal by Madeleine Bunting, 'Muslims urged to embrace their role in the west', *The Guardian*, 16 October 2004.
39. Claude Askolovitch, 'Les gauchistes d'Allah', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, n° 2085, 21–27 October 2004.
40. Jean-Paul Piérot, 'Les deux faces du FSE', *L'Humanité*, 23 October 2004. See also the humorous response article by Muslim activist Naima Bouteldja (2004).
41. 'L'islam, l'enjeu de l'intégration', *Libération*, 11 November 2004.
42. Caroline Fourest, 'Les "lepénistes" de l'islam', *Libération*, 21 December 2004.
43. Interview with Naima Bouteldja.
44. Interview with Abdelaziz Chaambi.
45. Once again Ramadan faced opposition from French feminist groups and of course Caroline Fourest 'Des féministes contre la présence de Ramadan', *L'Humanité*, 9 May 2006.
46. 'Une voile sur les discriminations', *Le Monde*, 17 December 2003.
47. This group is still active today and organised a series of events in 2014 to mark the 10-year anniversary of the 'headscarf law'.
<http://www.cfpe2004.fr/>
48. NPNS was perceived by many groups as too close to the state and complicit in the fear mongering associated with Muslims in France (Guénif-Souilamas 2006).
49. 'Nuovi proletari, vecchi principi', *Il Manifesto*, 12 April 2005.
50. 'Une réponse à Bernard Cassen', *Il Manifesto*, 28 April 2005.
51. MIB activist, quoted in Bargel *et al.* (2005: 225).
52. 'Les quartiers populaires en quête de leaders politiques', *Libération*, 25 June 2007.

53. 'Faim de parti', *L'Humanité*, 6 October 2008. 'Olivier Besancenot tend l'oreille aux quartiers', *Midi Libre*, 27 September 2009.
54. The name was later changed to 'The Respect party' and both names are used interchangeably in this book. RESPECT is a recursive acronym standing for Respect, Equality, Socialism, Peace, Environmentalism, Community and Trade Unionism.
55. The decision to field candidates against the Green Party led to Monbiot's resignation 'Monbiot quits Respect over threat to Greens', *The Guardian*, 17 February 2004.
56. 'Why Respect matters', *Red Pepper*, June 2004.
57. Parties must win at least 5% of the party list vote in order to win any seats in the London Assembly.

4 Motivations for Participating in the Movement

1. Interview with Naima Bouteldja.
2. The title 'Black student officer' is a remnant of the 'political blackness' concept. The NUS still uses the term 'black students' to regroup those of African, Asian, Arab and Caribbean descent.
3. Interview with Ruhul Tarafder.
4. Interview with Abdelaziz Chaambi.
5. Interview with Asad Rehman.
6. Pierre Khalfa, quoted in Desbos (2007: 161).
7. Interview with Ruhul Tarafder.
8. Interview with Asad Rehman. Militant Tendency was a Trotskyist entryist group working within the Labour Party (Shaw 1988).
9. Interview with Abdelaziz Chaambi.
10. Interview with Omar Waraich.
11. Interview with Shaheed Saleem.
12. Interview with Ismahane Chouder.
13. British and French Muslim activists jointly organised a seminar on this topic for the ESF in 2003. This gives an indication as to their level of interest in this topic.
14. Houria Bouteldja, quoted in Robine (2006: 132).
15. Abdelaziz Chaambi cited in Zemouri (2005: 16).
16. Interview with Naima Bouteldja.
17. This book also included contributions from three of the French Muslim activists who were interviewed for this research – Siham Andalouci, Naima Bouteldja and Yamin Makri. A multi-lingual version was later published as *Globalisation: Muslim resistances*.
18. Ramadan thanks Yamin Makri, Fouad Imarraine and Abdelaziz Chaambi in the acknowledgements of *To be a European Muslim* (Ramadan 1999).
19. Interview with Asad Rehman.
20. Interview with Shahed Saleem.
21. Interview with Ismahane Chouder.
22. Interview with Siham Andalouci.
23. Interview with Omar Waraich.
24. Interview with Ruhul Tarafder.

25. Interview with Abdelaziz Chaambi. The *hadith* cited (collected by al-Bukhari) was mentioned by several activists.
26. Interview with Shahedah Vawda.
27. Interview with Shahed Saleem. The translation of this verse (*sura* 4: 135) according to Abdel Haleem (2005) is: 'You who believe, uphold justice and bear witness to God, even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or your close relatives. Whether the person is rich or poor, God can best take care of both. Refrain from following your own desire, so that you can act justly – if you distort or neglect justice, God is fully aware of what you do.'
28. Interview with Abdelaziz Chaambi.
29. Interview with Asad Rehman.
30. Interview with Yamin Makri.
31. Interview with Asad Rehman.
32. Interview with Yamin Makri.
33. Interview with Shahedah Vawda.
34. Interview with Muzammal Hussain.
35. Interview with Shamiul Joarder.
36. Interview with Asad Rehman.
37. Shahed Saleem quoted in Murray and German (2005: 59).
38. Interview with Shahedah Vawda.
39. Ramadan rejects the simple opposition between 'liberals' and 'fundamentalists' and places himself in the category of 'salafi reformist' (Ramadan 1999).
40. Interview with Shahed Saleem.
41. Interview with Ruhul Tarafder.
42. Interview with Yamin Makri.
43. Interview with Naima Bouteldja.
44. Interview with Shahed Saleem.
45. Interview with Muzammal Hussain. These kinds of statements were also reflected in research on the anti-war movement. Speaking of her efforts in trying to mobilise the Muslim community, Nahella Ashraf laments that 'if I've said it's a Muslim thing, they'll turn up' (Gillan *et al.* 2008: 89).
46. Interview with Ruhul Tarafder.
47. Interview with Asad Rehman.
48. Interview with Ali Rahni.
49. Cited in Zemouri (2005: 30).

5 Reactions to Muslim Participation

1. Interview with Guy Taylor.
2. Interview with Chris Nineham.
3. Interview with Shahedah Vawda.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Interview with Naima Bouteldja.
6. Interview with Karim Azouz.
7. Siham Andalouci quoted in 'L'encombrant M. Ramadan', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 9 October 2003.
8. Interview with Siham Andalouci.

9. Interview with Julien Landfried.
10. Interview with Jean-Luc Cypièrè.
11. Interview with Asad Rehman.
12. Interview with Noel Douglas.
13. Interview with Bernard Teper.
14. Stuart Hodkinson, GJM activist in Leeds quoted in Gillan *et al.* (2008: 90).
15. Interview with Asad Rehman. See also his assessment in Gillan *et al.* (2008).
16. Interview with Anas Altikriti.
17. Interview with Sacha Ismail.
18. Mike Marqusee, press officer of the StWC, quoted in Gillan *et al.* (2008: 75).
19. Interview with Asad Rehman.
20. Interview with Sacha Ismail.
21. When Lionel Jospin (minister for education at the time) came out against the expulsion of the girls, it provoked a fierce reaction by a number of left-wing intellectuals who likened it to the 1938 Munich Agreement. Elisabeth Badinter, Régis Debray, Alain Finkielkraut, Elizabeth De Fontenay and Catherine Kintzler, 'Profs, ne capitulons pas!', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 2–8 November 1989.
22. Virtually all reports produced by the *Haut Conseil à l'intégration* (HCI) have mentioned the importance of *laïcité*, thought to be a value lacking in immigrants and their descendants and directly linked to the process of integration of said groups in society.
23. It was in the wake of the 1989 headscarf affair and the furore this caused that some intellectuals began talking of the need for a more open conception of French secularism. See the response to the famous *Nouvel Observateur* article (note 21) by Joëlle Kauffmann, Harlem Desir, René Dumont, Gilles Perrault and Alain Touraine, 'Pour une laïcité ouverte', *Politis*, 9–15 November 1989. Tariq Ramadan also contributed to this debate during the 1994 headscarf affair 'Pour une laïcité ouverte', *Le Monde*, 13 October 1994.
24. Both were members of the Stasi commission in 2003 and were also interviewed by the French parliamentary commission on the full face veil in 2009. Pena-Ruiz is critical of those who advocate for *laïcité ouverte* stating that it is promoted by those who contest the 'true version' of French secularism (Pena-Ruiz 2005: 135). Baubérot himself does not actually approve of the term *laïcité ouverte*, preferring instead *laïcité inclusive*. He claims that the original spirit of the 1905 law has been misinterpreted by an over zealous conception of Republicanism which he calls 'fundamentalist republicanism' or *intégrisme républicain* (Baubérot 2006).
25. Interview with Pierre Khalfa.
26. Interview with Sophie Zafari.
27. Interview with Yamin Makri.
28. Interview with Bernard Cassen. See also his position on the matter in the article, 'Ces altermondialistes en perte de repères', *Politis*, 20 January 2005.
29. Michèle Dessenne quoted in 'Laborieuse ouverture d'Attac aux musulmans', *Témoignage Chrétien*, 4 September 2003.
30. Activist from the CMF quoted in Hmed (2007: 265).
31. Interview with Bernard Cassen.
32. 'Islam et altermondialisme: le défi de l'universel', *Politis*, 11 September 2003.

33. 'Questionnaire pour élargir le débat', 21 October 2005. <https://france.attac.org/archives/spip.php?article5588>.
34. Bernard Cassen 'Ces altermondialistes en perte de repères', *Politis*, 20 January 2005.
35. Interview with Abdelaziz Chaambi.
36. This has also been confirmed by other studies on ATTAC which show that most of its members are from the middle classes (Desbos 2007).
37. Many progressive social movements in France associate themselves with this idea of *éducation populaire* and the provision of knowledge outside of traditional educational establishments. Their associational activities are therefore a means of educating citizens in a way that allows them to critically evaluate dominant ideas in society. In the case of ATTAC, this meant educating the masses against the supposedly hegemonic ideas of neo-liberalism.
38. 'Compte-rendu validé de la réunion du séminaire du Conseil d'administration d'Attac des 30-31 janvier et 1er février 2004'. <https://france.attac.org/archives/spip.php?article2617>.
39. Interview with Bernard Cassen. See also 'Altermondialisation et islam', *Politis*, n° 759, 10 July 2003.
40. 'Nos relations avec Tariq Ramadan', ATTAC press release, 10 November 2003. <https://france.attac.org/archives/spip.php?article2236>.
41. Interview with Bernard Cassen.
42. The CF, as the name implies, regroups those people and organisations that helped to found ATTAC in 1998. It is important because the statutes of ATTAC stipulated that 18 out of the 30 members of the CA must come from the CF, the remaining 12 being elected from the rest of the membership. Those elected to the CA from the CF can either be individuals (*personnes physiques*) or representatives of a particular organisation that helped to found ATTAC (*personnes morales*).
43. The number of members of the BN was not fixed but was on average around 12. All members of the BN were in turn part of the CA, and likewise, many of those in the CA were also part of the CS.
44. In GR, decisions were managed by a steering committee and usually taken by a vote. A more consensual model was attempted when the organisation was first set up, but this eventually proved impractical. This steering committee contained members of the SWP as well as other 'independents' such as representatives of NGOs and trade unions. The number of people on the steering committee was not fixed and fluctuated in line with the organisation's fortunes. In 2003, for example, it had nearly 30 members.
45. In September 2004, a majority of the CA signed a letter entitled 'Perspectives pour une nouvelle dynamique d'Attac' which argued for radical change in the way the organisation was run (<https://france.attac.org/archives/spip.php?article3549>). In July 2005, François Dufour, Gustave Massiah and Susan George wrote an open letter denouncing the effective control of the organisation by Bernard Cassen, Jacques Nikonoff and Michèle Dessenne. 'Lettre ouverte aux adhérent[e]s de la part des trois vice-présidents d'Attac'. <https://france.attac.org/archives/spip.php?article5266>.
46. Interview with Bernard Cassen.
47. Tensions simmered for over two years and outright confrontation did not emerge until after the end of the campaign against the European constitutional treaty in mid-2005. These two camps eventually regrouped themselves

under the names *Altermondialiste et démocratique* (Khalifa) and *Avenir d'Attac* (Nikonoff).

48. 'Attac: la guerre des alters', *Le Nouvel Observateur*, N°2122, 7–13 July 2005.
49. 'Compte rendu réunion de Bureau du 23 décembre 2002'.
<https://france.attac.org/archives/spip.php?article1669>.
50. 'Relevé de décisions du Bureau du 29 avril 2003'.
<https://france.attac.org/archives/spip.php?article2010>.
51. Interview with Yamin Makri. ATTAC-Rhône functioned in a manner similar to the national association as it was one of the largest local chapters. At its height the group had between 600 and 800 members.
52. 'Compte-rendu du bureau d'ATTAC-Rhône du 5 juin 2003'.
<http://www.local.attac.org/rhone/IMG/rtf/doc-296.rtf>.
DiverCité was often perceived as being a uniquely Muslim group, simply because many members were of North African origin (interview with Boualam Azahoum).
53. Interview with Ludovic Arnaud.
54. 'Compte-rendu du Bureau Attac-Rhône, du 1 octobre 2003'.
<http://www.local.attac.org/rhone/IMG/rtf/doc-333.rtf>
55. Interview with Jean-Luc Cipièere.
56. Interview with Boualam Azahoum.

6 Outcomes and Consequences of Muslim Participation

1. It is important to note that attempts were made in France, otherwise the comparison has no value.
2. They analytically divided political opportunity structures into four categories: formal institutional structures, national cleavage structures, informal procedures and alliance structures. I have replaced their category of informal procedures (relating to the modes through which political conflicts have been dealt with by political elites) with 'party procedures' as this is more relevant for my cases.
3. Euro-Palestine was an electoral list led by CAPJPO (*Coordination des Appels pour une Paix Juste au Proche Orient*) which obtained respectable scores in certain *banlieues* (a high of 11% in Garges-lès-Gonesse) but has not run at subsequent elections.
4. 'Des militants des quartiers dans la bataille des élections municipales', *Agence France Presse*, 20 October 2007.
5. *Ibid.*
6. In municipalities with more than 3,500 inhabitants, the first half of the seats are allocated on the basis of absolute majority, and the d'Hondt method of Proportional Representation (PR) is used to distribute the second half of the seats between lists that received at least 5% of the votes.
7. In the case of Lyons, for example, the three local authorities that we can assume have the largest ethnic minority population (Vénissieux, Vaulx-en-Velin and Villeurbanne) are all placed in separate constituencies.
8. Nevertheless, there exists an obsession in France with what is often euphemistically referred to as 'social mixing' (*la mixité sociale*). This concept is naturally ambiguous; it could refer to gender and class as different social categories which need to be 'mixed', although it is generally accepted

that when people use this terminology, they are referring to ethno-racial categories (Préteceille 2006: 21).

9. Interview with Asad Rehman.
10. Other radical left parties do exist, notably the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP), the Socialist Party (formerly Militant tendency) and the Socialist Labour Party (splintered from Labour in 1996). See Tables 6.1 and 6.2.
11. I have stuck to using the names of these parties as they existed in the period 2001–2007 which forms part of the analysis.
12. Galloway forced a 26.2% swing in his favour by overturning a 10,057 majority for Labour from the previous election (2001) by polling 15,801 votes to Labour's 14,978.
13. Those Labour MPs who were involved with the anti-war movement such as Tony Benn, Jeremy Corbyn, Tam Dalyell and Katy Clark did not leave the party and join Respect. Trade unions did not switch their support either.
14. 'Pour Lutte ouvrière, la révolte des banlieues était "stérile"', *Libération*, 16 December 2005.
15. Quoted in 'Car crash on the left', *Red Pepper*, December 2007.
16. As Lent (2001) has observed, a number of activists who were involved in social movements in the 1970s decided to join the Labour Party in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This was facilitated by decline in support for these movements, disputes between factions, the rise of the Labour Left and the pragmatic desire to join a party which had the power (at least in local government) to actually implement progressive policies.
17. Interview with Abdelaziz Chaambi. He used the term *Arabes de service*.
18. Interview with Boualam Azahoum.
19. It is thus not surprising that the IRR journal was renamed *Race and Class* in 1974 and that a number of other works by British Marxists have been published with similar titles.
20. The main exception is the Militant Tendency which did not recognise the legitimacy of cross-class struggles.
21. This does not mean that the issue of racism was completely ignored. It must be remembered that the anti-racist organisation MRAP had strong links to the PCF and this party pushed for the anti-racist laws of 1972 and 1990 (Gayssot Law).
22. Although the alliance with the MAB was key in the anti-war movement, their involvement in Respect was actually limited to the candidacy of Anas Altikriti at the 2004 European elections. After failing to get elected he subsequently left the party.
23. 'Faim de parti', *L'Humanité*, 6 October 2008.
24. Interview with Boualam Azahoum.
25. This was at the crux of many debates that I witnessed at the FSQP in both 2007 and 2008.
26. Asad Rehman, 'Respect is diverse, transparent and open to all', *Red Pepper*, 1 August 2004.
27. He was sharply criticised by many activists because of his party's attitude to the headscarf. 'Besancenot drague la banlieue... et prend une veste', *Marianne*, 9 October 2008.
28. 'Olivier Besancenot tend l'oreille aux quartiers', *Midi Libre*, 27 September 2009.
29. Ilham Moussaïd quoted in Wolfreys (2010).

30. 'Le NPA confronté à de vives critiques pour présenter une candidate voilée', *Le Monde*, 8 February 2010.
31. 'Déclaration du comité exécutif national du NPA', <http://www.npa2009.org/content/déclaration-du-comité-exécutif-national-du-npa-8-février-2010>
32. 'Candidate voilée aux régionales: le NPA du Vaucluse fait scission', *Libération*, 1 April 2010.
33. Interview with Ali Rahni.
34. 'Un adepte de Ramadan infiltré sur la liste des Verts', *Marianne*, 2 February 2009.
35. The founding text of this movement can be consulted at <http://www.f-c-p.org/Appel-Fondateur-du-FCP.html> See also the article by Laurent Burlet (2012).

Conclusion: The Future of Muslim Political Activism in Europe

1. Abdelaziz Chaambi cited in Zemouri (2005: 16).
2. This approach is, of course, not limited to activists. José Bové, who is the personification of the movement in France, also moved on to electoral politics, eventually being elected as an MEP for the Green Party in 2009 and re-elected in 2014.
3. This view was echoed by research carried out by the Pew Global Attitudes Project (2006) and the International Crisis Group (2006) which states that there are many signs of increasing social integration.
4. Even Joppke admits that integration policy has its limits and that 'successful integration is eventually the result of multiple adjustments in the multiple spheres of a differentiated society, including markets, culture and everyday life, all of which follow their own rationalities which can only minimally and indirectly be influenced or mended by the liberal state' (Joppke 2009: 470).
5. 'Free market flawed, says survey', *BBC News*, 9 November 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/8347409.stm
6. Interview with Noel Douglas.
7. 'Crise: les altermondialistes veulent des "mesures drastiques"', *Agence France Presse*, 31 March 2009.
8. 'Mixed response to transaction tax idea', *BBC News*, 7 November 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/8348895.stm>. The French government under Jospin voted in favour of such legislation back in 2001 but only under the condition that all EU member states adopted this measure (thus guaranteeing that it would never actually be implemented). See Desbos (2007) for more details. A campaign for the Tobin tax in Britain was renamed as the 'Robin Hood tax'. <http://www.robinhoodtax.org.uk>
9. On 1 April 2009, innocent bystander Ian Tomlinson was shoved to the ground by a police officer and later suffered a heart attack. Carlo Giuliani was shot dead by a police officer in Genoa on 20 July 2001.
10. Although the CFPE was set up to oppose the 2004 law on religious symbols in schools, it was also involved in the debate on the 'burqa'. Ismahane Chouder

and Monique Crinon were interviewed in December 2009 by the French Parliamentary commission into the full face veil. See also the text published by CFPE '577 députés et 367 burqas: où est le problème?' *Politis*, 17 September 2009.

11. It is worth pointing out that Norredine is a secular activist who helped to found the MIB. Had he been a practising Muslim, the chances of him being selected would have been severely reduced.
12. Organised by City Circle, Friends of the Earth, Jubilee Debt Campaign, People and Planet, Rich Mix, War on Want and the WDM and featuring speakers such as Tariq Ramadan, Susan George and Salma Yaqoob. The first edition took place in February 2009 and the second in March 2011.
<http://www.6billionways.org.uk>.
13. MEND was formerly known as iENGAGE. <http://www.mend.org.uk>. MADE in Europe promotes activities such as volunteering, campaigning and fundraising and also provides capacity-building services for Muslim NGOs and support for cross-faith initiatives in international development.
<http://www.madeineurope.org.uk>.

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