

Looking Away from Europe's Muslim Problem

Steven Emerson, the expert on terrorism, has caused a sigh of relief among the *bien pensants* of the Western world. By making inaccurate and false [*banlieues of Paris*](#). Physical (if not social) mixing of populations is evident.

In Britain, Muslim populations like those in Birmingham have relatively poor educational attainment and high rates of youth unemployment, crime, and imprisonment. This is not likely the result of discrimination, because Hindus and Sikhs, present also in large numbers, have lower rates of youth unemployment than whites and much lower levels of crime than whites. The Sikhs have the second-highest average household wealth when such wealth is broken down by religious affiliation. Sikh households are richer than Christian ones; Muslim households are much poorer. The causes of this disparity are a matter of speculation, and of course, group characteristics don't apply to every individual.

Because of their high rates of consanguineous marriage, Muslim children have relatively high rates of serious genetic conditions, about which a kind of *omertà* has long prevailed, though it is not uniquely medical. In my experience, school inspectors *never* inquire as to why Muslim girls go missing from school for long periods, though I have known white parents prosecuted because their refractory adolescent child failed to attend school as the law required for only short periods. The same kind of *omertà* was surely one reason for the shameful disregard shown by the police in Rotherham of the systematic sexual abuse of young white girls by Muslim men there—though whether the police were more afraid of Muslim reaction or accusations of racism in the liberal press is uncertain.

Forced marriage (very different from arranged marriage) is common among the Muslims, though it is difficult because of social secrecy to estimate just how common. Certainly I was able to recognize a pattern among my young Muslim female patients, down to the withholding of their passports when they returned "home" to Pakistan, aged between 15 and 20, to marry their first cousin in their "home" village. Resignation to their fate merged by degrees into consent; all of them knew of honor killings of young women such as themselves, which exerted the same psychological effect as lynching did on blacks in the American South.

Supposedly to placate Muslim sentiment, local authorities have sometimes agreed to or imposed measures worthy of an apartheid regime. For example, the Birmingham Central Library provided women-only tables, in practice for the use of Muslim women. I don't know whether this gesture came in response to a request or was an anticipatory cringe; the argument in its favor would almost certainly have been that without such separate facilities Muslim women would not have been allowed by their males to use the library at all. It is unlikely that such an argument would have succeeded for any other religious or social group, and indeed it would have provoked feminist ire, in this case notably absent, presumably because of fear.

In France, the problems are both similar and different. France is *de jure* secular, Britain only *de facto*. This difference leads to opposing views on such matters as the wearing of the veil. The relative inflexibility of French labor laws virtually guarantees a higher unemployment rate, though not necessarily a lower income, among youth of the lowest social class. The geographical and social origins of most of France's Muslims are different from those of Britain's: North African rather than Indian subcontinental. Since the fate of immigrants depends on what they bring with them as well as their reception in their new country, and since Islam, whatever its claims, does not exhaust a people's cultural

characteristics, differences are only to be expected.

But similarities are also striking: for example, low levels of educational achievement and high rates of youth unemployment and crime (60 percent to 70 percent of French prisoners are Muslim, on some estimates, and this is unlikely to be the result of prejudice alone, even if such prejudice exists). These are not characteristic of other immigrant groups, for example the Vietnamese.

While some of the *banlieues* of Paris and other big cities are relatively cut off from their metropolises, as were the townships of South Africa, it would be an exaggeration to call them no-go areas—even if that is what some of the criminal youth would like them to be, so that they can get on with their domination and trafficking with more impunity than they already enjoy. Schools and other state or public institutions remain in these areas. The police and the fire brigade may sometimes be stoned by the grateful recipients of their services, but they are not totally absent. They are therefore not extra-territorial in the most literal sense. Other European countries—Belgium and Sweden, for example—have not dissimilar problems.

But of course the most worrying aspect of the situation is the attraction of jihadi ideology for young Muslims. It is impossible to gauge exactly the degree or strength of support for it: opinion surveys are all but useless. The least one can say, however, is that jihadism attracts both those with bright and dim futures, and according to official calculations, some 2,200 youthful jihadis from France, Britain, and Belgium alone have gone to Syria. This is a far more than sufficient pool of murderous religious ideologues to cause untold havoc in Europe.

By his inaccuracy, distortions, and exaggerations, however, Steven Emerson has provided a convenient and enjoyable distraction for his critics, an excuse for them to indulge in

displacement activity, like mice that lick their paws when faced by a cat. It is easier to mock him than to suggest the correct way to deal with the threat of Islamism. It is easier and more fun for the Mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, to sue Fox News (for what, exactly?) than to improve life in the largely Muslim *banlieue* of Clichy-sous-Bois. Here is a resident's testimonial to that suburb of Hidalgo's city: "A piece of advice: come armed! What I like about Clichy-sous-Bois? No need to look for public toilets. They are under the sky, in the buildings. What don't I like about Clichy-sous-Bois? What can I say . . . No, it would take too long. I'm going to vomit."

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