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Spain

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Demographics

Spain's interaction with the Muslim world extends back to the 9th century and Islamic expansion into Europe. Most Muslims were expelled in 1492, although there is strong evidence that some did remain behind and publicly proclaimed Catholicism but privately practiced Islam. This tendency faded over time, and the Muslim presence in Spain disappeared until the 1960s.

Initially, many Moroccans entered the tourist industry on the Mediterranean coast. They were primarily undocumented and transient, often attempting to get into France. The profile of these Moroccans began to shift, and they began to come from the Spanish protectorate area in northern Morocco, and settle in Catalonia.

As countries further north of Spain began controlling immigration more tightly, many immigrants began settling in Spain so that by the late 1970s it is estimated there were 100,000 Moroccans in Barcelona.

Since the 1980s most of the growth of the Muslim population has been due to family reunification. Current estimates put the Muslim population of Spain at 500,000, predominantly Moroccan.

Other points of origin include Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq whose citizens came as students and entrepreneurs. By 1977 these numbers expanded to include Palestinian refugees, and in 1979 Iranian refugees. While socially important, demographically their impact is minimal.

An important group of Muslims in the country is composed not of migrants, but of converts. In the 1970s there seems to have been a marked increase in the number of Spaniards accepting Islam. Various theories have been put forward as to why this might be the case, including the need to recover an authentic Spanish identity by look back at the period of Muslim rule. The result has been that in the mid-1990s converts had founded over half the Muslim groups. Current estimates place their numbers at 6,000 individuals.

Labor Market

Muslim immigrants tend to be employed in the lower sectors of the economy, such as service and labor.

Education

The OECD collects data on education from various statistical agencies within the country, the majority of which comes from census data from the year 2000. The OECD classifies educational achievement using the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED): ISCED 0/1/2: Less than upper secondary; ISCED 3/4: Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary; ISCED 5A: "Academic" tertiary; ISCED 5B: "Vocational" tertiary; ISCED 6: Advanced research programs. 0-2 are considered low, 3-4 as medium, and 5 and above are considered high. This data is not reported by religion, but does have country of origin as reported by the respondent. It is thus possible to construct an approximate picture of the educational achievement of the population in the country with ancestry from predominately Muslim countries. One significant problem is that some countries, such as India and Nigeria, have large Muslim populations but the immigrant population cannot be readily classified as predominately Muslim or non-Muslim. As such, the educational data is split by predominately Muslim origin, predominately non-Muslim origin, and a separate category for those

whom classification would not seem justified. Proportions are for all reported data, individuals with no reported ancestry or education are excluded.

	High	Medium	Low
Muslim	11%	13%	76%
Non-Muslim	20%	17%	63%
Indeterminate	17%	20%	63%

State and Church

In Spain, although special treatment of any religious organization is considered illegal, the state does have agreements with the Vatican that give the Catholic Church unique rights. Some, but not all, have been extended to Islam and other faiths, although these religions do not receive state funding through the tax system. Despite the legal status of Islam, recognized in 1992, there have been difficulties with getting the state to follow through on its policy [1]. Muslims have had some difficulties with establishing chaplains in prisons and the military (US State Dept., 2004). More recently, however, the Socialist government has made moves to downgrade the special status of Catholicism and introduced the study of Islam to school curricula [2].

The 1978 Spanish constitution formerly declares Spain to be a secular state with no state religion. However, it does allow the state to enter into agreements with religious bodies to aid in ensuring rights and privileges. In 1992 the government of Spain entered into such an agreement with the Islamic Commission of Spain. The agreement, in part, deals with "the status of Islamic Religious Leaders and Imams, determining the specific rights deriving from the practise of their religious office, their personal status in areas of such importance as Social Security and ways of complying with their military duties, legal protection for their mosques, civil validity of marriage ceremonies held pursuant to Muslim rites, religious services in public centres or establishments, Muslim religious education in schools, the tax benefits applicable to certain property pertaining to the Federations that constitute the Islamic Commission of Spain, commemoration of Muslim religious holidays and finally, co-operation between the State and such Commission for the conservation and furthering of Islamic Historic and Artistic Heritage." [3]

Some of the practical implications of this accord have been in the workplace. Workers are allowed time off for prayers, and to take off an hour early from work during Ramadan. There is some speculation that while the accord may have been legally beneficial, it is providing a means for discrimination in the work place as employers can argue that certain positions cannot be filled by those who take the time off from work.

Muslims in Legislatures

It does not appear that any Muslims have been elected to the national or European legislatures.

Muslim Organizations

Muslims are represented by the Islamic Commission of Spain (CIE), formed in an agreement with the Spanish state in 1992. It is composed of two federations: the FEERI, the Federation of Spanish Islamic Entities, and the UCIDE, the Union of Islamic Communities in Spain. These organizations are domestic and long-standing. All is not perfect, though. There have been ongoing problems with the implementation of the agreement, both because of difficulties with the Muslim leadership and delays by the government [4].

Islamic Education

The agreement between the state and the Islamic Commission authorizes Islamic religious education in public schools. However, there has been little implementation of this right. One of the ongoing debates is the state's role in funding Islamic education in the public school system. While Spain is a secular state, it does enter into reciprocal relationships with religious organizations, including the funding of schools. Muslims are arguing that Catholic schools receive preferential treatment in state support. In the islands of Ceuta and Melilla, which are predominantly Muslim, disagreement has arisen over the certification necessary to teach Islam in the schools. The Spanish government wants religious education teachers to receive the same level of certification as teachers in the secular school.

However, since the change in government in 2004, there has been a noticeable shift in the state's approach to the Muslim minority. The new government has made efforts to implement the agreement and give equal treatment to Muslims in education. A pilot program of religious education is underway, with a more substantial implementation expected as more teachers are trained and other organizational difficulties are worked through.

Security, Immigration and Anti Terrorism Issues

Spain notably did not institute a new legal framework for dealing with the threat of terrorism after September 11th. Instead, Spain increased security at borders, airports, bases and embassies (van de Linde, et al., 2002). Similar efforts seem to have taken place after the attacks in Madrid.

Under Spanish law prior to September 11th, immigrants have a set of legal rights and privileges that conformed to European standards. While maintaining a system of border control, the legal system tended to focus on the integration of migrants into Spain rather than their repression and expulsion. It was supported by a broad range of politicians [5]. The Spanish government has a quota system for managing labor shortages, and has instituted a multi-year plan designed to present immigration as a desirable phenomenon, to integrate foreign residents and their families, control the border and manage the shelter scheme for asylum seekers. In Spain, once an asylum application is filed, asylum seekers have the right to interpreters, legal counsel and medical assistance and favorable rulings ensure social, health and education benefits and a work permit [6].

Over the last few years, however, authorities have used rhetoric about terrorism and security to enhance border control and create more restrictive immigration legislation. This has been criticized by human rights groups for damaging the rights of immigrants and asylum seekers (IHF, 2005). The new leftist government elected shortly after the attacks in March 2004 has taken some steps to soften the government's approach, notably by developing a system of regularization for illegal immigrants with employment (IHF, 2005). However, the new government, in a perfect example of the classification of domestics as foreign enemies, expelled two legal residents in May 2004 because they were considered a "threat to national security." Under Spanish law, individuals may be expelled for actions that are considered threatening to Spain's external relations or public order even if they are not charged with any criminal acts. Government sources were quoted as pointing out how these laws were part of an effective anti-terrorism policy (IHF, 2005).

Bias and Discrimination

Although there were reports of anti-Muslim violence after September 11th, it does not appear that it was very widespread. After the bombings in Madrid in 2004, there were also isolated reports, but the scale of the problems were fortunately less than many had expected.

Islamic Practice

In 1990, there were two purpose built mosques. Presently, there are approximately 12, with several hundred other premises being used as mosques. A mosque was opened in Granada in 2003 to much fanfare as a return of Muslims to an ancestral home. There have been some complaints about bureaucratic barriers to mosque construction, especially in centers of cities.

There has been little political controversy over the hijab in Spain. Research by Gema Martin-Muñoz has shown that the hijab becomes an important symbol of identity for many women. It is common among Spanish converts, and is sometimes taken up by immigrants who may not have worn it in their home countries.

Spain's recent decision to legalize gay marriage prompted calls from some Muslims for the legalization of polygamy. It does not appear that this proposal is likely to be instated [7].

The 1992 cooperation agreement permits halal slaughter and all reports suggest that the provisions have been implemented.

Public Perception of Islam

The mosque in Granada opened in July 2003 and has become a major issue for debate. The project started over 20 years ago and faced several legal challenges. In addition, there were several acts of vandalism against the construction site, encouraging the "Moors" to go home. Islamophobia and xenophobia colored the debate on mosque construction, and while the immediate concern has died down, the concern of successful inter-religious dialogue remains.

Other recent concerns have focused on using Cordoba's Mezquita-Cathedral as a mosque once more and the celebration of La Toma, the capture, commemorating a Spanish defeat of Muslims.

Media Coverage and Intellectual Discourse

Although there have been some complaints, the IHF reports that Spanish media has typically shown a balanced approach to reporting on Islam.

Recent Immigration Legislation

On May 29, 2006, EU member states agreed to help Spain to patrol the waters along the African coast in order to combat the increasing influx of illegal immigrants landing on the Canary Islands or on Spain's southern coastline. Spain and eight other European countries agreed the initiative after a meeting between representatives of the European Commission and the European Border Agency in Madrid. Austria, Finland, France, Italy, UK, the Netherlands, Germany and Greece will all take part in the patrols. This year nearly 7,000 migrants have already landed on the Canary islands. The number was around 4,750 in 2005 and just over 8,500 in 2004. Malta and Italy are also set to face increased illegal immigration during the summer months.

Recent Legislation on Islam

In early January 2005, the Spanish government authorized the teaching of Islamic studies in the elementary grades in Spanish schools in a number of Spanish cities that have high Muslim population

such as Barcelona, Madrid and Andalusia. A Spanish-language textbook on the fundamentals of Islam written for 6-10 year olds will be used. The book is strictly a definition of Islamic beliefs and practices and does not teach Islamic doctrine.

Teaching Islamic subjects has been allowed since 2000 in the cities of Ceuta and Melilla where Muslims of Moroccan origin make up the majority of population.

[1] "La Comisión Islámica Critica Las Pocas Horas De Clase De Islam." Diario Sur November 12 2004.

[2] Davies, B.T. "Spain's Struggle between Church and State." Times(UK) March 19 2005.

[3] material taken from the official translation provided by Spain's Ministry of Justice regarding Law 26 of 10 November 1992.

[4] "El Gobierno Inicia Una Ronda De Conversaciones Con La Comisión Islámica De España Para Estudiar El Desarrollo Del Acuerdo De Cooperación Firmado En 1992." Weblslam June 8, 2001.

[5] Analysis by Antonella C. Attardo <http://www.legislationline.org/>

[6] Analysis by Antonella C. Attardo <http://www.legislationline.org/>

[7] «Los islamistas quieren introducir la poligamia» ABC.es January 19, 2005